

Warto zatem wrócić do prostej prawdy na gruncie dyskusji o tożsamości współczesnego uniwersytetu, przede wszystkim katolickiego: filozofia *uczy używania rozumu*, a bez tej umiejętności trudno poruszać się w oparach absurdu i głupoty świata. Rezygnacja z jej nauczania jest równoznaczna z rezygnacją uczenia tego, jak używać rozumu.

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Jan Kłós, *Freedom as an Uncertain Cause in Graham Greene's Novels: A Philosophical and Literary Analysis*, Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL 2012. ISBN: 978-83-7702-542-0.

Jan Kłós, professor at the John Paul II Catholic University in Lublin, is an author of the first comprehensive study on Graham Greene (1904-1991) written in English and published in Poland. This Polish philosopher whose main interest is social and political ethics made every effort to provide a broad panorama of Greene's literary and philosophical landscape, i.e. to show the theological, philosophical, and literary aspects of Graham Greene's writing. *Freedom as an Uncertain Cause in Graham Greene's Novels* was written by an author who competently (Kłós studied both philosophy and English) discloses and describes the philosophical (mainly ethical) and theological threads hidden in different forms of Greene's works.

Who was Graham Greene? He was an English novelist, short-story writer, playwright, and journalist. After studying at Balliol College, Oxford, Greene converted to Roman Catholicism in 1926. This decision was partly made under the influence of his future wife, Vivien Dayrell-Browning, whom he married in 1927. Sometime later he moved to London, where he worked as a copy editor (1926-1930) on the editorial staff of *The Times* newspaper. The next decades of his life he was to spend in diplomacy, journeys, working in secret service and writing novels. Greene belonged to the most widely read British novelists of the twentieth century. Some critics say that the fact that he did not receive a Nobel prize is a shame on the Nobel committee.

From 1929 onwards Greene began his abundant literary production. His first novels were the following: *The Man Within* (1929), *Stamboul Train* (1932; filmed in 1934), *A Gun for Sale* (1936; filmed 1942), *The Confidential Agent* (1939; filmed 1945), *The Ministry of Fear* (1943; filmed 1945), *Brighton Rock* (1938; filmed 1948), *The Heart of the Matter* (1948), *The End of the Affair* (1951), and *The Power and the Glory* (1940; filmed 1962). Some inspirations for his novel writing Graham Greene drew from nume-

rous travels as a freelance journalist. During the World War Two he also worked for the British Foreign Office and was stationed for a while at Freetown, Sierra Leone. He was recruited into the Secret Service in 1941. As a reporter, he visited many countries. Greene also visited Poland (Lublin) in 1955. Later on, especially in the 1980s, he was a careful observer of the Polish aspirations for political freedom and self-government.

The second part of his novels falls on the post-war years. In this period we find such works as: *The Quiet American* (1956), *A Burnt-Out Case* (1961), *Our Man in Havana* (1958; filmed 1959), *The Comedians* (1966), and last four novels: *The Honorary Consul* (1973), *The Human Factor* (1978; filmed 1979), *Monsignor Quixote* (1982), and *The Tenth Man* (1985). Furthermore Graham Greene published several collections of short stories, among them *Nineteen Stories* (1947; revised as *Twenty-One Stories*, 1954). Among his plays are *The Living Room* (performed 1952) and *The Potting Shed* (1957). The *Collected Essays* appeared in 1969.

In his book, Jan Kłos does not concentrate merely on the content of Greene's novels. Rather he focuses his attention on selected three novels: *Brighton Rock*, *The Power of the Glory* and *The Heart of the Matter*. They are often called "The Trilogy." The fact that he has chosen the three as his main point of reference does not mean that Kłos leaves others out of his considerations. On the contrary, his main interest is not the plot but the moral problems in Greene's world. Kłos views the writer's literary output by means of two fundamental inclinations of his personality: his special (one might even say: keen) interest in human freedom and his attachment to Catholicism and the Catholic faith. These inclinations are permanently visible in his books.

Jan Kłos observes that the experience of freedom is still present "in its complex and complicated circumstances: internal (personal) and external (political) constraints" (p. 14). Of course, here it is not a matter of so called abstract "pure freedom," but the human experience of real freedom, which is the basis for moral deeds. Freedom is the most important aspect of human life, for it concerns man's good and evil acts in their individual and social dimensions. It is so important because "these deeds cause internal harmony or disorder of human being. Freedom is a special sphere, in which we create ourselves and our surroundings" (p. 9)—Kłos explains. Greene is deeply interested in moral issues and he describes them in all complexity of his literary milieu. And yet one remark is needed: the English writer avoids treating the human being as an ahistorical one, i.e. in a rationalistic mode, from a purely logical point of view. Rather he focuses his attention on individuals "with concrete traditions, beliefs, antecedent probabilities, prejudices and presumptions," articulating them with a special polysemous language (p. 11-12).

Kłos strongly underlines "the fact that Greene was converted to Catholicism and that that Catholicism had an influence on his writing cannot be treated as being of secondary importance" (p. 12). That is why he wants to show Greene's Catholicity against the theological and philosophical backdrop. The English writer was commonly recognized as a Catholic, even though he despised being thus categorized, and to some degree distanced himself from the teaching of the official Catholic Church, sided with liberation theology,

and was selective in his sympathies towards the popes, i.e. he was an admirer of Pope John XXIII and strongly criticized Pope John Paul II. It is indeed difficult to understand his support for the Catholic Church and Soviet communism (Gorbachev was his very positive hero). One could hardly accuse him of naïveté or lack of political insight. Nevertheless, for these and other reasons Graham Greene called himself a Catholic agnostic.

In other areas of Catholic dogmas he also had his private views, a good evidence that he was often very far from Catholic orthodoxy. For instance, he approved of the existence of Purgatory, but not the existence of Hell. "Greene's reluctance"—Jan Kłos writes—"to be labelled a Catholic writer may presumably be accounted for by his fear of being accused of ideology" (p. 91). But on the other hand the English writer recognizes Catholic values and Catholic literary tradition. He is constantly referring to the world of Catholic dogmas, liturgical rituals and sacramental life. Generally speaking, Graham Greene was deeply imbued with Catholicism, but in his own, individual, one might even say "Protestant," manner. Probably he was drawn to Catholicism by such famous converts from Protestantism as John Henry Newman, and he sharpened his sense of good and evil by reading Henry James, Joseph Conrad or Robert Louis Stevenson. Jan Kłos devotes a great part of his book to demonstrate their influence on Graham Greene's life and his abundant literary output. Greene himself admitted to have been immensely affected by John Henry Newman.

Kłos began his book by outlining the philosophical, religious, and literary background of Greene's writing. He calls it philosophy, religion and literature his "three interpretative hermeneutic contexts with which can one enter Greene's world" (p. 20). In order to better understand Greene's philosophical background, relatively much space is devoted to show his inherent sources of inspiration found in such authors as Saint Augustine, Saint Thomas Aquinas (the Middle Ages), John Locke, Søren Kierkegaard (Modernity), Karl Jaspers, Jean Paul Sartre, Gabriel Marcel, Hannah Arendt, Isaiah Berlin, including Marxists. Graham Greene manifested his sympathy to Marxist social philosophy, seeing in it a better offer for the poor people in Latin America than in the social teaching of John Paul II. The latter pope is called a "misguided pope" (p. 46). For obvious reasons, this philosophical background is brief and the reader may still hesitate which philosophical context was decisive for Greene.

Undoubtedly, it was John Henry Newman who exerted the greatest influence on young Greene. The writer himself confessed: "Newman has often influenced me. I read him before my conversion. I still read him frequently. I greatly admire him" (p. 50). Kłos recapitulated it in the following way: "At any rate, Newman stressed the individual approach in religious experience. All Greene's heroes are radical individuals in this area; they learn that there are no ready-made props or easy excuses on the path of faith in the modern world" (p. 53).

The religious background is still present in Graham Greene's writings, which are imbued, or even intensely penetrated, with a specific religious atmosphere. His religiosity was of unique colouring, nearer rather to Protestant mentality than the Catholic one. Jan Kłos describes it as "often manifested by gloomy visions of human sinfulness" (p. 65).

Greene is fascinated by different, indeed infinite, manifestations of evil, which are carefully and in detail depicted in his novels. The English writer had a tendency to highlight and elevate evil to a metaphysical level, to demonstrate different, even drastic instances of evil, present in the lives of his literary heroes. As it seems, Greene personally sympathized with human ambiguous attitudes, with human utter sinfulness after the Calvinistic manner. "The writer"—Kłos quotes from Greene—"is driven by his own vocation to be a Protestant in a Catholic society, a Catholic in a Protestant one, to see the virtues of the capitalist in a Communist society, of the communist in a Capitalist state" (p. 80).

There are noticeable struggles between good and evil, a constitutive factor of the writer's own awareness. Kłos perfectly shows this kind of tense ambiguity towards good and evil that is present inside Greene's mind; he is capable of finding wrongdoing, but he is very far from condemning the wrongdoer. Greene attributes a great role to human conscience. Following his intellectual master (if we may say so), John Henry Newman, Greene acknowledges the important role of conscience in morality, but simultaneously he is not that inclined to connect it (like John Henry Newman does) with "the voice of God in the human heart," so that it does not become a mere subjective impulse. The best safeguard against subjectivism is a conscience that is "shaped by the Word of God and the Tradition of the Church." Greene, however, "closes his eyes to the cardinal's unconditional trust in God through mediation of the Church" (p. 71). According to Kłos, Greene's Catholic agnosticism does not allow him to radically follow cardinal. The cardinal, says Kłos, "addresses himself to the believers who are in the world but not of the world; Greene's heroes are certainly very profoundly settled in the world" (p. 72).

The English writer accuses people in the modern epoch of becoming lukewarm and incapable of making radical moral decisions, too weak to confront their spiritual struggles. Obviously, in this sense Greene's portrayal of the contemporary man is very realistic (although often exaggerated). In real life and in literature the modern individual is characterized with his or her diluted morality, a creature that "no longer feels the burden of religious demands of the past" (p. 77). Greene dislikes average heroes, individuals of small stature. He is not a blind confessor of enlightened reason and an admirer of simplified rationalistic schemes. In particular, he disagrees with Max Weber's enthusiasm related to the so-called modern disenchantment of the mysterious Christian world of the Middle Ages. Indeed this disenchantment was a process of rationalisation and secularisation of social life. Greene did not believe in the explicable power of scientific reason. For him, the human being is always an unsolved puzzle. Kłos explains: "Greene, like Newman, noticed the overwhelming power of unexplained evil, indeed, the mystery of of iniquity. He wrote: Even "the greatest saints have been men with more than a normal capacity for evil, and the most vicious men have sometimes narrowly evaded sanctity" (p. 78). There is an inexplicable evil, in the face of which every rationalistic philosophy of man is powerless.

Finally, in his book Jan Kłos points out the literary background of Greene's writing. As it was mentioned before, Greene could be regarded as a disciple of Newman, espe-

cially in his portrayal of evil, but he also was inspired by the knowledge of human nature, drawn from Mojerie Bowen (*The Viper of Milan*), Henry James and Robert Louis Stevenson (*Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*).

In the second part of *Freedom as an Uncertain Cause in Graham Greene's Novels* we find a series of detailed analyses. Jan Kłos carefully considers some traits of concrete Greene's heroes, discloses their motivations, ambiguity of their characters, hypocrisy, the dark sides of their personalities. Such an endeavour is not an easy task. In order to do it with some success, it is necessary to a good command of all Graham Greene's literary world. And, let it be stressed, erudition is not enough. Jan Kłos manifests yet one more important aspect in his book. He himself has published a collection of short stories with a clear philosophical message and written in an elegant literary language. Among his works one can find quite numerous articles "on the border" of philosophy and belles-lettres. His efforts to combine a philosophical analysis and philosophical rigour with a literary style are well manifested in the book under review.

The reader will have not only an opportunity to learn more about an important figure of the twentieth-century literary world, his position amidst the changing political horizon, but also will have a chance to become acquainted with a broad philosophical context which inspired them. And last but not least, Kłos has mastered the English language not only in terms of its vocabulary, but first of all with regard to its stylistic clarity and phraseological mastery.

Certainly, *Freedom as an Uncertain Cause in Graham Greene's Novels* can be a favourite item on the reading list for all those who love well-written English books.

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