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JULIEN GREEN : RELIGION AND SENSUALITY

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by

Anthony Herbert Newbury, B.A.

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## A C K N O W L E D G M E N T S

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## ABBREVIATIONS

Ce qui reste(CH(Chaque hommeJJGMMalf.MCOO.C.Palj.PamphletSexual EthicsTLCe qui reste de jourChaque homme dans sa nuitJournalJulien GreenMofraLe MalfaiteurMille Chemins ouvertsOEuvres complètesPartir avant le jourPamphlet contre les catholiques de FranceDeclaration on certain questions concerning  
sexual ethicsTerre Lointaine

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## INTRODUCTION

When in his twenty-third year, Julien Green was asked by a friend what interested him most in life, he replied simply " la religion ! "(1) Green's literary output - novels, plays, diaries and autobiography (not to mention his pamphlets and other occasional writings), more than thirty volumes in all - now spans over half our present century, and throughout his life and work his quest for religious faith and truth, the conflict between his spiritual aspirations and bodily desires, his sensuality, and the resultant anguish, have been of paramount importance. Speaking of the origins of his autobiography, the author says :

" Je m'efforçais, dans ces pages, de relater tout ce que j'avais retenu de ma vie charnelle et de ma vie spirituelle non sans essayer de faire voir le conflit qui en résultait, parce que ce conflit qui me déchirait me paraissait aussi ce qu'il y avait de plus important dans ma destinée. Sur ce point le garçon de 1923 et l'écrivain de 1962 se rencontraient presque à chaque phrase. " (2)

However, Green warns us against considering this conflict as a straightforward, dualistic struggle between body and soul. During a

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- (1) OEuvres complètes, Vol. I, Pléiade, Ed. Gallimard, 1972, p. 1228, " Avant-propos " by Julien Green for 1963 Plon edition of the Pamphlet contre les catholiques de France. Unless otherwise stated, all books and articles referred to are published in Paris.
- (2) Robert de Saint Jean, Julien Green par lui-même, Editions du Seuil, 1967, p. 132. In this extract, Green is referring to a first attempt at writing an autobiography begun in 1923 and subsequently destroyed in 1940. Partir avant le jour, the first volume of the autobiography, was published in 1963, followed by Mille chemins ouverts in 1964 and Terre lointaine in 1966 (Ed. Grasset). The fourth volume, Jeunesse, was published by Plon in 1974.

stay in Italy, at Merano, he notes in his diary :

" On entend parler du corps et de l'âme, comme si le corps était le contenant et l'âme le contenu, comme si les deux pouvaient à plaisir se séparer, se distinguer, alors que le plus souvent ils se mêlent, un peu comme, dans la boue, se confondent l'eau et la terre.... On atteint l'âme par le corps et le corps par l'âme, c'est tout le drame de la condition humaine et qui fait de nous des êtres si profondément mystérieux. " (1)

In Green's life and work the drama has been heightened by the author's homosexuality and at the same time by his need for religious certitude. He has searchingly analysed the complex nature of the body - soul relationship and has sought refuge from the tyranny of the flesh in various religious systems, before finally returning to the Roman Catholic orthodoxy of his youth. It is our purpose in this study to explore and analyse this itinerary with particular reference to the work of the maturity, since it is in this period, from about 1950 onward, that Green has best felt able to give literary expression to the difficulties that have constituted the central drama of his life.

While a number of general studies and critical works on Green have appeared over the years in French,<sup>(2)</sup> and some in English, mainly

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(1) Journal, 1928 - 1949, (Plon, 1961), July 22, 1948, p. 801. Green's italics. Future references to the Journal will be indicated by J.

(2) Here it would be difficult not to single out the works of Jacques Petit. Details of these and other studies are given in the Bibliography and where appropriate in the body of the thesis.

in the United States,<sup>(1)</sup> works dealing specifically with the themes of religion and sensuality are rare. In fact, two unpublished American dissertations dating from 1972 have sought to examine aspects of these themes. In his Physical and Spiritual Conflicts in the Works of Julien Green, Chavarche Tchalekian attempts to encompass the whole of Green's output in a 200 page study, a process which inevitably incurs a degree of superficiality. For his part, in a shorter thesis entitled The Metamorphoses of the Self : The Mystic, the Sensualist and the Artist in the Works of Julien Green, J.M. Dunaway gives most of his attention to the earlier work, providing no real analysis or discussion of L'Ennemi, Chaque homme dans sa nuit or L'Autre. Clearly, much remains to be investigated in this field and with the publication of Ce qui reste de jour in 1972, of the " Confession de Jean " in the 1973 edition of Le Malfaiteur and of Jeunesse a year later, the material available for discussion of these fundamental concepts of religion and sensuality has been considerably enriched.

Writing of Julien Green and his work, we are dealing with a subject in which " l'homme " and " l'oeuvre " are inextricably wedded, and our study will bear constant witness to this fact in its frequent recourse to the author's autobiographical and personal publications. We begin our inquiry with a chapter on Green's early years, indispensable to a full understanding of the major themes of the later novels and plays before proceeding to a detailed consideration of these works.

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(1) Samuel Stokes' 1955 monograph, Julian Green and the Thorn of Puritanism interestingly and effectively examines much of the spiritual background to Green's novels up to that time.

In the concluding section of the thesis, the scope of our inquiry is broadened sufficiently to embrace the author's attitude to secularism and his outlook on the post-conciliar Roman Church, without forgetting that " the thorn of Puritanism " has never been fully extracted and that the private drama has persisted into old age, tempered only by the hope of attaining that invisible realm promised by Christ and his Church.

## BACKGROUND AND EARLY YEARS

Green's ancestry seems wholly British and Irish.<sup>(1)</sup> His grandfather, Charles Green, was born in 1807 at Halesowen (now in the county of West Midlands),<sup>(2)</sup> and settled in the Southern States around 1830. As a cotton merchant and owner of plantations, he amassed a considerable fortune. He married a girl from Prince William County, and Edward Moon Green, the author's father, was one of the couple's many children.<sup>(3)</sup> He was born in 1853 at "The Lawn" near Manassah, Virginia, on his father's estate<sup>(4)</sup>, and was sent to Europe for much of his education, studying in Switzerland and Paris, before spending four years in Barcelona, where he learned about the cotton trade and lived the elegant life of the privileged young gentleman. In 1880, he married Mary Hartridge, whose father Julian Hartridge, was a Savannah judge and a Member of Congress.<sup>(5)</sup> Thus we see that the writer's forbears possessed both wealth and social status, though Edward Green was later (1891) to lose his fortune. Unable to find

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- (1) See Robert de Saint Jean, Julien Green par lui-même, p. 8. "A un critique qui lui réclamait un jour 'une analyse de sang' Julien répondit par 1/4 Irlandais + 1/4 Ecossais + 1/2 Anglais = 1 Américain. "
- (2) J 1949 - 1966, (Plon, 1969), p. 1335, January 12, 1959. We learn from the diary that towards the end of the eighteenth century members of the author's family lived in Wales, at Llandudno. Ibid., p. 1361, June 5, 1959.
- (3) See Anne Green, Mes jours évanouis, Plon 1951, trans. from the English original by Marie Canavaggia, p. 11 et seq. The writer's sister has written a book of reminiscences, light in tone, that afford us numerous glimpses and details of her father and family.
- (4) Described by Green in his volume of souvenirs, Memories of Happy Days, Dent, London, 1944, pp. 141 - 142, and in J, I, 1928-49, pp. 157-8, January 12, 1934.
- (5) See Jacques Petit's "Chronologie", in the Pléiade edition of the OEuvres complètes, Vol. I, p. LI.

employment as a cotton merchant or planter, for Edward Green " ne pouvait pas être employé dans un bureau, il savait seulement être directeur ",<sup>(1)</sup> when the position as European agent for the Southern Cotton Oil Company was offered him, he seized this opportunity and left the United States with his family to settle in Le Havre in 1893.<sup>(2)</sup> Then, in 1897<sup>(2)</sup>, three years before Julien's birth, the Greens moved to Paris where Edward Green became Secretary of the American Chamber of Commerce. In the early years of the century, however, especially in the rue Rhumkorff, where Julien Green was born, the family - there were now seven children - was to know serious financial difficulty.<sup>(3)</sup> It was in Passy<sup>(4)</sup> that the Green's fortunes picked up, and here they were to stay for some thirty-five years (with the exception of a year or so spent at Le Vésinet), occupying several houses in the district. Edward Green's business interests made it necessary for him to travel extensively throughout Europe, and so the young Julien would often find himself at home surrounded by his mother and five sisters - the author's brother, Charles Green, born in 1885, left France to settle in the United States around 1904. What, then, was the atmosphere of the Green household in the early 1900's ? From the published diaries and autobiography of the author we are conscious of the strongly religious elements that he so lovingly recalls. From a very early age, he came to know the Bible through his

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(1) Mes jours évanouis, p. 89.

(2) These dates are given us by Robert de Saint Jean, in Julien Green par lui-même, p. 5, and also by Anne Green, Mes jours évanouis, p. 90. They are confirmed by Jacques Petit in his " Chronologie " in the Pléiade edition of the OEuvres complètes, Vol. I, pp. LII, LIII. This Chronology has been checked by Julien Green, though in Memories of Happy Days, he gives " around 1895 " as the date of the move from Savannah to Le Havre, and 1898 as the date of the move to Paris.

(3) See Memories of Happy Days, p. 2.

(4) According to Green, in Memories of Happy Days, the move to Passy occurred in 1903. Robert de Saint Jean, in Julien Green par lui-même, tells us the move took place in 1902, and according to Jacques Petit, in his " Chronologie ", p. LIII, 1901 is the correct date.

mother's daily readings,<sup>(1)</sup> and when he went to bed at night she would make him say " The Lord's Prayer " with her in English. Green writes :

" L'essentiel de ce que je crois aujourd'hui m'était donné alors, dans la pénombre où parlait le plus grand amour. " (2)

Both the author's parents lived out their religion to an unusual degree. Mrs. Green brought the children up in accordance with the beliefs of the Episcopalian Church, whereas Edward Green remained attached to the Presbyterian faith of his childhood,<sup>(3)</sup> until his conversion to Roman Catholicism around 1915. The author says of his father that he took the Gospels quite literally, believing wholeheartedly and fundamentally, his faith unclouded by difficulties of a theological nature. (4)

However, the religious atmosphere that enveloped the household had a negative side to it. Mrs. Green's religion was marked by a rigid Puritanism, incidents of which are recounted in the Autobiography and which inevitably influenced the author's subsequent sexual development. Green writes that when he was about five :

" Il arriva qu'un soir, ma soeur Mary se trouva tout à coup près de mon lit. Je ne l'avais pas entendue venir,

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(1) See Partir avant le jour, p. 18, and Memories of Happy Days, p. 14.

(2) Partir avant le jour, p. 24.

(3) Ibid., p. 34.

(4) Ibid. p. 76. Green goes on : " Il (His father) priait Dieu comme un enfant. Je n'ai jamais connu un homme plus droit ni plus simple dans sa vie comme dans sa foi. "

mais du reste, pourquoi me serais-je caché, ne me sentant pas coupable ? D'un geste énergique, elle rabattit la couverture jusqu'à mes pieds et avec un grand cri appela ma mère qui accourut, le bougeoir au poing. Dans la lumière, j'apparus tel que j'étais, ne comprenant rien, souriant peut-être, les mains dans la région défendue.... " I'll cut it off ! " s'écria ma mère en brandissant le couteau à pain.... Selon toute vraisemblance, j'aurais complètement oublié cette scène si l'on ne m'en avait fait souvenir un peu plus tard. Quant aux traces qu'elle laissa en moi, je ne puis m'empêcher de croire qu'elles furent profondes. " (1)

The author asks how he could possibly have understood the significance of this scene, the meaning of the knife in his mother's hand, of " cette voix qui était la voix du désespoir ".<sup>(2)</sup> In the puritan atmosphere of the home, then, surrounded by his mother and five sisters - " un garçon qui aurait six mères "<sup>(3)</sup> - in his father's absence a fully normal, healthy development would have been surprising. The immensely strong bonds between mother and son, together with

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(1) Ibid., pp. 20 - 21. Green's italics.

(2) Ibid., p. 21. In Julien Green par lui-même, p. 12, Robert de Saint Jean, in a passing reference to this scene is at pains to point out " qu'un des auteurs favoris de cette femme prétendument sévère était Maupassant. " He writes that, " Mme Green, une Hartridge, venait d'une famille portée à la mélancolie. La mort dramatique de son frère Willie, victime d'une maladie alors incurable, avait aggravé chez elle un penchant à imaginer le pire. Mais le sens de l'humour, la gaieté, la fantaisie et la bonté l'animait aussi. " A more critical view of Mrs Green and of the Green family is provided by Margaret Drabble in her biography of Arnold Bennett, the unfortunate suitor of Julien Green's eldest sister, Eleanor. Arnold Bennett, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London, 1974, pp. 128 - 133.

(3) Partir avant le jour, p. 12.



the prolonged absences of the father help to explain the author's subsequent homosexuality which has had such a vital influence on his life and work. As Bryan Magee writes :

" Over and again it is found that a homosexual person has had an intense relationship with the mother and a deficient one with the father. When I say a deficient relationship with the father, I am referring to the deficiency of the relationship, not the deficiency of the father, who may be an adequate and well-adjusted person..... He may not be on hand much - he may be someone whose job keeps him travelling most of the time. " (1)

Such was the case of Edward Green. In addition, his wife Mary was prone to excessive nervousness brought on by her husband's absence

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- (1) Bryan Magee, One in Twenty, Secker and Warburg, London, 1966, pp. 30, 31. In his work, Les dimensions de l'homosexualité, Privat, Toulouse, 1969, pp. 204-5, Dr. Jacques Corraze warns us that " la genèse du comportement homosexuel apparaît, à l'heure présente, comme multi-dimensionnelle. Il ne nous est pas possible dans l'état actuel de nos connaissances, de privilégier une dimension sur les autres, sans doute parce que chacune d'elles ne joue vraiment pas à l'état isolé. Même si l'une de ces dimensions paraît prévalente, dans un cas clinique donné, on a l'impression qu'elle n'a pu jouer que par une " complaisance " des autres dimensions. Aussi toute affirmation catégorique ne me paraît pas ressortir de la prudence scientifique à laquelle, en matière d'homosexualité, on doit rester fidèle. " Criticizing Magee's assertion that homosexuals are made not born, Corraze " opposera des jugements plus nuancés, où l'opposition entre inné et acquis ne garde pas ce caractère superficiel. " For his part D.J. West writes in Homosexuality, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1968 ed. : " The balance of evidence favours the view that obligatory homosexual orientation comes about as a result of experiences during the individual's lifetime, rather than as a consequence of any inborn physical peculiarity. " (p. 251). Dr. West goes on that " Psycho-analysts consider that in most types of homosexuality the crucial causative factors operate during infancy. " (p. 251).

from the home, and Anne Green<sup>(1)</sup> tells us of the torments her mother went through at these times, complaining to her children that Edward had had a tragic expression on his face before his departure and that he would surely never return home. Inevitably, such an atmosphere must have had a disturbing effect on the young Greens, and all the more so on Julien, the only boy. It is obviously impossible to come to any definite conclusions concerning Julien Green's childhood, to be able to say he became homosexual because of such and such event or pattern in his early life. At best, we can advance various hypotheses, based on the author's published diaries and autobiography, and to a lesser extent on such sources as the writings of his sister Anne, and of Robert de Saint Jean, his close friend. Incidents, such as the one quoted above from Partir avant le jour, had a profound effect on Green, as he himself recognizes. We learn that it was not by chance the young Julien was caught out and threatened with castration. Green tells us :

" Si jeune que je fusse, en effet, ma mère me surveillait déjà, ayant pour certaines fautes une horreur que je n'ai connue qu'à elle, et quand elle ne pouvait m'épier, car il s'agissait un peu de cela, ma soeur Mary se chargeait de ce soin à sa place. " (2)

We cannot help but think that this organized repression of all infantile sexual activity must have adversely affected the possibilities of a normal development. Still more serious was Mrs. Green's

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(1) Mes jours évanouis, pp. 321, 2, 3. It is only fair to point out that as soon as Edward Green had the means to do so, he would take his wife with him on his business trips and her torments lessened. However, as Anne Green adds : " La terreur de voir son mari l'abandonner devait pourtant toujours lui rester. " p. 323.

(2) Partir avant le jour, pp. 19, 20.

attitude towards the naked body, and more precisely the male sex organs. The author relates how his mother would survey him in the bath-tub :

" 'Le cou, disait-elle, et maintenant les oreilles et derrière les oreilles.' J'obéissais. 'Le corps à présent... Sous les bras et devant...' Le corps, the body, elle disait ce mot de telle sorte que jusqu'à l'âge de quinze ou seize ans j'hésitais à m'en servir, comme s'il eût désigné une chose honteuse. " (1)

Mrs. Green's horror of sexual indulgence, her will that her son should regard all sexual manifestations outside Christian marriage as utterly sinful and evil led her to excesses of puritanical disgust and revulsion, producing such repression and conflict in her son that eventually she succeeded in obtaining a result she would most certainly have abhorred. Another bath-time scene is revealing ; Green writes :

" J'étais étendu dans l'eau tiède et ma mère, à trois pas de moi, se séchait les mains d'un air soucieux, quand tout à coup son regard s'abaissa sur une partie très précise de ma personne. Sur le ton de quelqu'un qui parle tout seul, elle murmura : 'Oh ! que c'est donc laid !' Et elle détourna la tête avec une sorte de frisson. Je ne dis rien, mais je me sentis rougir sans savoir pourquoi. Quelque chose en moi était atteint d'une manière incompréhensible. Je pouvais avoir onze ans et mon innocence était profonde. "(2)

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(1) Partir avant le jour, p. 85. Green's italics.

(2) Ibid., p. 85.

The mother's prime concern was purity, the preservation of a narrow integrity based upon the rejection of the body as a source of pleasure. Not that the body as such was regarded as impure. It was the enemy, but it was also " la forteresse visible de l'âme et principalement le temple du Saint-Esprit.... L'intégrité du corps se liait à l'intégrité de l'âme. Il fallait demeurer intact ". (1)

As a child, Green was fond of drawing, and his drawings fell into two categories, the one " avouable " as he puts it, " l'autre non ".<sup>(2)</sup> The author points out " qu'il n'y avait pas trace d'obscénité dans ces dessins. J'ignorais ce que l'obscénité pouvait être.... Et il y avait ceci de particulier dans mes représentations de personnages nus, c'est qu'aucun d'eux n'avait de sexe ". (3)

Green tells us that at this time and for years to come he was completely ignorant of all aspects of the sexual life.<sup>(4)</sup> When he came to his mother, puzzled by certain passages in the Bible, she would tell her son to speak to his father about the problem, and he in his turn would send Julien back to the mother who would simply say : " Oh, tu comprendras ces choses plus tard.... Du reste, tu n'as pas besoin de savoir ". (5)

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(1) Partir avant le jour, pp. 86 - 87. Green does not appreciate the epithet 'Puritan' applied to his mother : " Ce seul mot lui eût fait horreur, mais elle tenait à mes soeurs un autre langage qu'à moi. Je savais qu'elle m'aimait de cet amour un peu fanatique que moi-même j'éprouvais pour elle. Autour de moi, sans peut-être le savoir, elle dressait des interdits terribles. L'idée de la pureté qu'elle formait en moi, je la tenais de ses inquiétudes ". (Ibid., p. 86 - Our italics).

(2) Palj., p. 89 et seq. " J'allais sur mes onze ans et je commençais à me rendre compte que l'inavouable ne se montrait pas " (p.89).

(3) Ibid., p. 96.

(4) Ibid., pp. 92, 93.

(5) Ibid., p. 93.

Such was the course of life for young Julien - a long, happy succession of days, months and years, the happiness of which has no doubt been enhanced in the writer's memory by the passage of time, but nonetheless for Green it seemed a kind of earthly paradise :

" Le paradis terrestre, dans l'étrange petit univers que je m'étais fait, c'était le temps où le désir ne régnait pas. La chair, c'était l'anarchie, c'était l'horreur qui assombrissait les visages. Aujourd'hui encore, comme je hais cette force inexorable qui asservit les hommes à ses tout-puissants caprices ! " (1)

Despite various attempts by other boys to enlighten or to seduce him,<sup>(2)</sup> Julien was not to know the normal awakening of sexual awareness and desire. In fact, he was almost fifteen when several fellow-pupils at the Lycée Janson de Sailly initiated him into the pleasures of masturbation.<sup>(3)</sup> Green tells us that at this time his notions of sin, " du pur et de l'impur ", were vague, and he goes on that, " Quant au geste en question, je ne le rattachais à aucune offense connue ".<sup>(4)</sup> The act over, weeks went by before Julien thought of repeating it. When the author writes that he was far from suspecting that from this time on there was in his life " un avant et un après, et que j'avais derrière moi ce qu'un auteur du XVIIe siècle a nommé le Pays Perdu ",<sup>(5)</sup> we can only feel that his attitude at the time was healthier than the subsequent attitude following the identification of the act of masturbation with a sin of the flesh. We must not forget that Julien had already lost his mother, and the author writing in 1963<sup>(6)</sup> feels that had she still been living or had a Christian friend been able to

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(1) Palj., p. 112.

(2) See, for example, ibid., pp. 99-100, p. 101, pp. 157-158, pp. 185-186.

(3) Ibid., pp. 230 - 231.

(4) Ibid., p. 231.

(5) Ibid., p. 231.

(6) Ibid., pp. 231 - 232.

warn and help him, then his life may well have taken another course. Many of us nowadays may well think that Green's conception of " péché ", of masturbation considered as an evil, is quite senseless, but we should remember that the mature artist is writing from an orthodox, conservative Roman Catholic standpoint. An incident that occurred in the winter of 1914-15, shortly before Mrs. Green's death throws a good deal of light on her horror of sensuality and on the author's own attitude.<sup>(1)</sup> Green's mother had decided to speak to him about her brother, his Uncle Willie, who had died of syphilis at an early age. About 1892, he had had an affair with a servant, thus contracting the disease which he nursed as best he could until 1895 when it was decided he should travel to Europe. Of course, in the puritanical atmosphere that surrounded him he had been obliged to conceal the truth about his illness, so that when Mrs. Green finally met her brother at Le Havre the shock was great - she was confronted with a spent force, the formerly handsome Willie was hardly recognizable and practically insane. Mrs. Green had been strongly attached to her brother and this revelation was to mark her for the rest of her life, and more especially her attitude towards Julien. The author tells us that his mother's explanations gave him a better understanding of her outlook :

" Je comprends mieux cette mère épouvantée par un souvenir ineffaçable, veillant sur son garçon, guettant avec horreur les premières indications de sensualité, d'une sensualité que Dieu avait maudite dans la personne de son frère. Je comprends, sans sourire, le couteau à pain. " (2)

Several weeks after this incident, Green's mother was dead. Well before the end, she had ceased looking after his religious instruction,

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(1) Palj., pp. 208 - 211.

(2) Ibid., p. 211.

and Green tells us that all he learned of the Protestant catechism was the opening section.<sup>(1)</sup> It seemed that his mother was no longer particularly concerned about passing on " l'héritage protestant qui lui avait été si cher. Elle ne pouvait plus parler que de l'Evangile ".<sup>(2)</sup> In fact, at this time Edward Green was about to become a Roman Catholic, and this doubtless influenced Julien's mother, who had already consulted a priest in order to clarify certain difficulties.<sup>(3)</sup> In the autumn of 1915 Julien stumbled upon the book The Faith of Our Fathers, by the American Cardinal Gibbons of Baltimore,<sup>(4)</sup> a traditionalist apology for the Roman Catholic religion. He read and re-read this treatise and, utterly convinced of its truth, decided to become a Catholic. When he made his intentions known to his father, the latter informed him that he himself was already a member of the Roman Catholic Church and would put his son in touch with a priest so that instruction could begin.<sup>(5)</sup> In this way Green came to know the Jesuit, Father Crété, who was to be responsible for his religious education for a number of years. The author expresses his debt to Father Crété and has written : " De son enseignement, j'ai retenu à peu près tout ce que je sais de la religion ".<sup>(6)</sup> Together they went through the Audollent and Duplessis catechism and an intimacy of soul established itself. They prayed together and Father Crété began to teach Julien Latin. It seems that their conversation seldom strayed from the spiritual domain, and the author tells us that the priest soon developed

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(1) Ibid., p. 169.

(2) Ibid., p. 169.

(3) Ibid., p. 217, p. 247.

(4) Published in London by Burns, Oates and Washbourne Ltd., 1917. (1st American ed. 1876). Gibbons' chief aim was to bring home the truth of the Catholic faith to the " separated brethren ".

(5) Palj., p. 242. OEuvres complètes, Vol. I, p. LIV.

(6) Palj., p. 250.

an idea of his purity and later of his religious vocation far removed from the reality. Green writes : " Sur moi, le péché semblait n'avoir eu aucune prise "<sup>(1)</sup> as he experienced no remorse following acts regarded by the Church as sinful and did not, in fact, realize that these acts were considered to be sins. Consequently, the misunderstanding between the priest and his young catechumen continued to develop, and Father Crété, convinced of Julien's religious vocation, envisaged his future as a Benedictine monk in the Isle of Wight. The idea delighted Green who thought romantically of his monk's cell : " Mon imagination me représenta une charmante petite pièce aux murs blanchis à la chaux avec une fenêtre donnant sur un paysage tel que Loti en décrivait "<sup>(2)</sup> The mature writer asks himself how this situation could have possibly arisen, how a priest of Crété's intelligence and quality could have failed to see through his adolescent mask of pride and his romantic illusions, and he reluctantly comes to the conclusion :

" Peut-être pensait-il que je ne me sauverais pas ailleurs que dans un couvent, peut-être, par une intuition que de tout coeur j'espère fausse, me voyait-il perdu si je restais dans le monde.... Prévoyait-il un grand désastre spirituel, les pièges de l'amour, de la chair, du succès ? J'incline à croire, en écrivant ces lignes, qu'il envisageait le pire et qu'il prenait sur lui de me suggérer une vocation pour m'arracher à l'enfer. " (3)

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(1) Ibid., p. 250.

(2) Ibid., p. 258.

(3) Ibid., pp. 259 - 260. In an extract from his Journal, 1949-1966, p. 1216, July 10, 1956, Green writes of Father Crété : " Ce prêtre qui était sûrement une très grande âme, manquait peut-être de psychologie comme tant d'hommes qui essaient d'agir à la place de Dieu ". And again, J, p. 1229, Sept. 13, 1956 : " Il (le Père Crété) m'aimait profondément. Quand je lui ai annoncé ma décision de ne pas entrer en religion, il m'a dit n'être pas sûr de mon salut, phrase qui a pesé lourdement sur moi et qui indignait Jacques Maritain ".



Instruction continued and on 29th April, 1916, Julien Green renounced his Protestant faith - the next day there followed his first communion ;<sup>(1)</sup> " Julien Green, catholique romain ",<sup>(2)</sup> was born.

However, the young convert was not to know any magical transformation, and Green continues to recount his adolescent struggles, both physical and spiritual, with a rare candour and sincerity. His mute love for a school-fellow, Frédéric<sup>(3)</sup> - Julien was quite unable to summon up enough courage to speak to him - a love which he confided to his friend Philippe, but which he dared not discuss with Father Crété considering it to be too absurd a subject, and the " fautes graves " committed with Philippe or alone in his room, all this the author recalls in the first part of the Autobiography. Unable to confess his " sins " to Father Crété, with the Jesuit's understanding and permission, Julien confessed elsewhere, in the anonymity of the confessional at Saint-Honoré-d'Eylau. With hindsight, Green feels that had he continued with Father Crété as his confessor, this might have enabled him to avoid grave mistakes later in life. He writes : " Ainsi prit fin une direction qui m'aurait sans doute permis d'éviter de très grandes erreurs, mais je ne savais pas ce que je faisais. C'était ma seule excuse...."<sup>(4)</sup> Already, we find the adolescent Green greatly

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(1) Palj., p. 270.

(2) This inscription was engraved on the identity disc Green wore.  
See Mille Chemins ouverts, p. 13.

(3) Palj., pp. 266 - 267. With regard to Frédéric, Green writes :  
" Aucun désir charnel ne me tourmentait. Si le coeur brûlait, les sens étaient profondément endormis et j'étais d'une froideur exceptionnelle. L'idée de porter la main sur Frédéric m'eût paru tout bonnement monstrueuse, parce que rien ne me semblait beau qui ne fût pas pur, ce mot retrouvant dans mon esprit tout le pouvoir qu'il avait failli perdre ". (pp. 267 - 268).

(4) Ibid., p. 285.

fascinated by the beauty of the human, especially male, form, whether it be Frédéric's eyes " d'un bleu admirable et qui semblaient toujours regarder au loin ",<sup>(1)</sup> or Roger's beauty " qui avait quelque chose d'éclatant.... La peau très blanche et les yeux longs et très noirs.... Le nez, la bouche, l'ovale du visage, tout évoquait l'idée d'une perfection au delà de laquelle l'imagination n'allait pas ".<sup>(2)</sup> Earlier, on the only occasion Green tells us of a friendship with a young girl, the relationship is abruptly brought to an end by the action of his sister Mary,<sup>(3)</sup> the same Mary who had surprised the infant Julien playing " dans la région défendue ", and who had brought about the subsequent " castration " scene. Green's mother, fearful of any contact Julien might have with women outside the family circle, her fears aggravated by the fate of her brother Willie,

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(1) Palj., p. 266.

(2) Ibid., p. 268. Green's astonishing memory, with its almost total recall, is a striking feature of this Autobiography, although it is prudent to bear in mind Jean Delay's caveat on the often involuntary deformations of the artist's memory : " La mémoire d'un artiste tend elle-même à devenir une oeuvre d'art, et il en est ainsi de toutes ses facultés, agencées en vue de la fabrication esthétique ". La Jeunesse d'André Gide, Vol. I, Gallimard, 1956, p. 23.

(3) Ibid., pp. 123 - 125. Green writes that Marceline Valador was " une fille d'une beauté qui n'était pas sans péril pour bien des hommes.... Avec une voluptueuse innocence, elle montrait aux regards de tous des bras et des jambes d'une rondeur sans défaut.... Quel âge avait-elle ? Dix ans, onze ans peut-être. Je l'aimais beaucoup, je l'aimais trop, j'allais la voir tous les jours.... Un jour, ma soeur Mary entra dans la chambre de ma mère avec un visage de réformateur et dit.... 'Je ne crois pas souhaitable que Julien continue à voir cette petite Marceline. A ta place je me méfiera d'elle.' " (pp. 123 - 124). Thus ended a friendship that could conceivably have helped Green evolve in a more positive way.

forbade her son to have any dealings with the servants.<sup>(1)</sup> Almost inevitably, Julien's interest and attention focused almost exclusively on his school-fellows, and here Mrs. Green, and later her daughters, were far from suspecting any untoward developments.

In 1915, Green began to read Baudelaire in depth, and he tells us that the world seemed to change for him : " La grande tristesse de la terre m'apparut, mais ornée de telle sorte qu'elle devenait séduisante. La beauté régnait dans ces vers comme une souveraine en deuil ".<sup>(2)</sup> Spell-bound by Baudelaire's use of words, the Baudelaire of carnal passion remained an enigma - Julien quite simply did not understand. However, understanding was to come, at least in part, during a stay in Italy the following year.<sup>(3)</sup> Green writes of his arrival in Italy :  
" .... mon émerveillement ne cessait pas.... Ce fut le commencement d'une griserie étrange qui devait durer pendant toute ma jeunesse ".<sup>(4)</sup>  
The recurrence of the word " griserie " in this part of the Autobiography is significant. Like so many other Americans and Northern Europeans before and after him, Green was completely captivated by Italy from the moment of his arrival. In this new world with its multiplicity of colours he felt transformed. He discovered Boccaccio's Decameron and confesses :

" Le mal qu'il me fit est à peu près incalculable. Le plaisir de la chair présenté comme la chose la plus désirable au monde trouva en moi un écho soudain qui

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(1) Ibid., see, for example, p. 163.

(2) Ibid., p. 295.

(3) See ibid., pp. 296 - 311, and O.C., I, p. LIV. Julien spent the month of August, 1916, with his sister Eleanor and her husband in Genoa and Nervi.

(4) Palj., p. 297.

couvrit la voix de la religion. L'île de Wight disparut de mon horizon et fut remplacé par un rêve confus où des garçons et des filles vêtus comme au XVe siècle roulaient sur l'herbe dans les vergers. La volupté ! Ce mot qui revenait si souvent dans ces récits m'envoyait chaque fois le sang aux joues. " (1)

However, the adolescent's rapture remained a cerebral affair, he was intoxicated not by pleasure itself, but by " l'idée du plaisir ". At Nervi, in the library of a friend of his sister's, Julien discovered a collection of erotic engravings and reproductions that further stimulated his already fevered imagination.<sup>(2)</sup> His various desires and yearnings he transmuted and sublimated in his drawings, and one particular drawing remains fixed indelibly in the writer's mind :

" Il était vraiment affreux, non sans une sorte de candeur dans son obscénité. Qu'il est triste de songer que je recherchais sans le savoir, avec un crayon noir et du papier, le rêve immémorial de l'humanité déchue, la volupté qui arracherait l'homme à la terre sans l'y laisser retomber.... On se tromperait en croyant que je me livrais à des excès d'ordre physique. Peut-être cela eût-il mieux valu, d'une certaine manière. En fait, tout devenait mental. "(3)

This abstract obsession with sensuality, devoid of any concrete, physical expression could only serve to heighten the tension in the

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(1) Palj., pp. 300 - 301.

(2) Ibid., pp. 305 - 307.

(3) Ibid., pp. 308 - 309. Our italics.

adolescent Green and render inevitable a subsequent crisis and explosion. As it was, at this time he knew periods of spiritual exaltation during which he felt once again pure and innocent. Back in Paris after the Italian interlude, Julien would receive Communion every morning, but as the author writes nearly half a century later : " De la vie chrétienne, je ne connaissais que la douceur, la paix de la conscience, la joie du salut qu'on pouvait raisonnablement espérer ".<sup>(1)</sup> The real struggle lay ahead.

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In 1917 and 1918, Green served at the front as a volunteer in the American Field Service and the American Red Cross.<sup>(2)</sup> The experience that most marked him at the time was his first-hand acquaintance with suffering and death. He relates a visit to a military hospital :

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(1) Ibid., p. 313.

(2) As Antonio Mor points out, it seems strange that the kindly Edward Green should have wished to send to the front a boy of sixteen who had not yet completed his studies at the lycée. See Antonio Mor, Julien Green, témoin de l'invisible, Plon, 1973, p. 32.

" Ce fut là, sous un ciel gris, que je connus quelques-unes des minutes qui m'ont le plus profondément marqué. Il me sembla que toute la tristesse du monde se rassemblait en cet endroit.... Simplement, il n'y avait plus de bonheur possible. La haine dominait seule, et le désespoir. " (1)

The sight of death makes Green vow never to take a human life, even in self-defence.<sup>(2)</sup> His subsequent enlistment in the French Army would seem highly contradictory,<sup>(3)</sup> yet contradiction and contradictory aspirations are by no means a rare feature in Green. He tells us : " je voulais être tout à la fois un dieu grec et un saint catholique ".<sup>(4)</sup> Reading the author's account of these early years, we are forcibly struck by the young man's otherworldliness, his cult of purity, and by the strain of angelism. For Dr. Marcel Eck, " Ce culte de la pureté pour la pureté, sans référence transcendante devait mathématiquement le conduire à Sodome ".<sup>(5)</sup> Writing of the angelist's attitude to his parents, Eck points out that the mother is the pure, untouchable

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(1) Mille Chemins ouverts, Grasset, 1964, pp. 41 - 42.

(2) Ibid., p. 37. " Je fis le voeu de ne jamais tuer, même pour me défendre, et pris Dieu à témoin de ce que je promettais ". For Green's feelings at and concerning this time, see also the testimony of his friend, Robert de Saint Jean, in his Journal d'un journaliste, Grasset, 1974, p. 307, dated September 23, 1953. Saint Jean records a conversation with Green who says : " Une expérience terrible a marqué ma jeunesse : la guerre de 1914 que j'ai connue tout jeune, comme engagé volontaire dans la Croix-Rouge. Le premier mort que j'ai vu... Tout cela a imprimé très tôt en moi le sentiment d'une violente absurdité ".

(3) Ibid., p. 159.

(4) Ibid., p. 91. See also Ibid., p. 103 : " Je voulais tout à la fois, le monde et le ciel ".

(5) Marcel Eck, Sodome, Essai sur l'homosexualité, Fayard, 1966, p. 186.

woman who should never have been sullied by contact with a man. The thought of his mother indulging in sexual relations is intolerable to the angelist, he can only accept her as " son objet à lui ".<sup>(1)</sup> Unable to rid himself of the image of the mother-figure, he regards other women as being identical to his mother and as a consequence sexual desire for women is impossible. Thus a refuge in homosexuality is the logical outcome.<sup>(2)</sup> As regards the angelist's relationship with the father, identification with the being who has defiled his mother is inconceivable. For Eck, Julien Green's work provides a pertinent example of angelism, and in the autobiography we have been able to see how the seeds of this condition have taken root.

At the front, the young volunteer was so convinced of God's protecting hand that he never knew fear.<sup>(3)</sup> He was assured of God's protection, but in accordance with the catechism and his mother's teaching, in order that his body - " la forteresse visible de l'âme " - should retain its integrity, he was to avoid all physical contact with those around him. Green's religious beliefs at the time placed him apart from his fellows, and the light-hearted, blasphemous conduct of most of them scandalized him.

It was in Italy, during his period of service on the Italian front, that Green's excessive fastidiousness in religious matters tended to break down - Italy seduced him, and at times the Greek God got the better of the Catholic Saint. In the second volume of his autobiography,

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(1) Ibid., p. 184.

(2) Ibid., pp. 184 - 185.

(3) MCO, p. 31. Green writes : " Je croyais vraiment que Dieu me gardait de tout mal.... Cette confiance était toute ma religion et je la devais à ma mère et au sens littéral qu'elle donnait au psaume 23 qu'elle m'avait fait apprendre par coeur. Dieu pensais-je, m'avait donné sa parole et je comptais dessus ". He goes on : " .... on ne pouvait me toucher, même du bout des doigts. Cela me gêne un peu d'avoir à écrire que si par hasard on me frôlait de l'épaule, je m'écartais avec une sorte de dégoût. Le mot toucher qu'employait le catéchisme n'était sans doute pas étranger à cette bizarrerie morbide ". Ibid., pp. 31 - 32.

the author recounts an incident from his Italian stay that he claims could have radically changed the course of his life.<sup>(1)</sup> During a spell of leave in March 1918, he stayed with his sister and brother-in-law at their house in Genoa. For reasons Green cannot remember, his sister was away from home for a day or two and young Julien was left with the servants, his brother-in-law and the latter's secretary, a young girl called Lola who, for some inexplicable reason was to spend the night in the house. Green tells us that the girl was pretty, about his age and probably not a virgin. Suddenly, the adolescent had a violent desire to do with Lola what he had been reading about in Boccaccio, and since his brother-in-law was expected home much later and the servants had left the house, after the evening meal our aspiring "Casanova" decided to seduce the young secretary. When he entered her room, Lola already in bed was apparently terrified, but Julien, his courage and vanity enhanced by his uniform, nonetheless sat down on the bed. He tells us that not for a moment did he think the girl would resist his advances, and in fact, after mildly reproaching him for his conduct she told him she was fond of him. However, just when Julien expressed his desire to see Lola completely naked - and despite her hesitation he was convinced everything would end in the manner of Boccaccio - the sound of his returning brother-in-law interrupted the proceedings. Startled, Julien left, having told Lola that he would return later. With just sufficient time to reach his room and bed without being discovered, he intended to go back to the girl's room once his brother-in-law was asleep, but in actual fact he fell into a deep sleep himself which lasted until the following morning. Green tells us that he cannot remember having experienced any anger or regret at this missed opportunity when he awoke. He acknowledges though that his feelings and reactions were not always the

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(1) MCO, pp. 85 - 90.



spontaneous, natural reponses of a normally constituted adolescent. He writes that : " Fasciné par ma propre personne , je n'arrivais pas à sortir de la prison que je m'étais faite sans le savoir ".<sup>(1)</sup> And he goes on : " Ce que je ne puis taire, c'est que ce lourd sommeil dans lequel je tombai changea probablement le cours de ma vie. Il me paraît clair aujourd'hui que si j'avais pu agir à ma volonté avec Lola, je ne serais peut-être pas la même personne, mais il n'est pas encore temps de parler de ces choses qui ne se décidèrent que six ans plus tard ".<sup>(2)</sup> All this may be true, but it seems strange that Julien showed little real enthusiasm or desire to try again. In his late teens, sex did not make the imperious demands on him that it makes on the great majority of adolescents. His reading of Boccaccio had doubtless provoked this " violent desire " for Lola but it was largely a cerebral affair. Had Green known the insistence of a normal adolescent's physical desire, we feel that incidents of the Lola variety would surely have recurred or he would at least have sought out the company of girls his own age.

In September 1918 the young man enlisted in the French Army<sup>(3)</sup> and when he returned to Paris in January of the following year he told his father that he still wished to become a monk in the Benedictine monastery of the Isle of Wight.<sup>(4)</sup> Advised by his father to take advantage of a stay in Occupied Germany before coming to a decision, Green left Paris to join his regiment. Despite his spells of service in the American Field Service, Red Cross and the French Army where he was in contact with a wide cross-section of humanity, the young man

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(1) MCO, p. 88.

(2) Ibid., pp. 88 - 89.

(3) Ibid., p. 153.

(4) Ibid., p. 167.

remained remarkably innocent and uninformed about physical love. He writes : " L'expérience charnelle me manquait. Ainsi fut préservée en grande partie une sorte d'enfance intellectuelle qui dura jusqu'à ma vingt-deuxième année ".<sup>(1)</sup> Such was the young man who served for several months in the French Army and who later went to study for three years in the United States. In Paris after his German sojourn Green decided he no longer wished to become a monk, he could not accept the idea of cutting himself off from the world. He tells us : " .... un poids énorme me glissa des épaules : tout le poids de la croix.... Renoncer à Dieu, il n'en était pas question, mais je cherchais la voie moyenne, celle qui n'est ni étroite, ni large, celle qui n'existe pas, parce qu'elle n'est en réalité que la voie large que le démon nous fait prendre pour la voie étroite, une voie étroite raisonnable ".<sup>(2)</sup>

A favourite pastime of Julien's was strolling along the banks of the Seine and he was attracted by the 17th and 18th century bindings at the stalls of the " bouquinistes ". These bindings belonged to religious books and Julien bought a number of them, avoiding certain austere works of the Port-Royal variety.<sup>(3)</sup> At this time he read Pascal's Pensées and such was his piety, or rather pietism, that he would kneel when he came to the " Mystère de Jésus ".<sup>(4)</sup> The adolescent

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(1) MCO, p. 180. Green goes on : " Préservée aussi une certaine qualité de foi qui ne fut mise en danger par les passions que bien après mon adolescence. A cause de cela, et malgré tous mes efforts pour me persuader du contraire, elle ne disparut jamais tout entière de mon coeur. Plus tard je me détournai du Christ, parce qu'il gênait chez moi l'assouvissement de ma faim charnelle, mais je n'osai le renier tout à fait. J'essayais d'ignorer son existence, je ne pouvais faire qu'il oubliât la mienne ". pp. 180 - 181.

(2) Ibid., pp. 229 - 230. Green's italics.

(3) Ibid., p. 233. Green was troubled by the intimidating tone and absolutism of these works.

(4) Ibid., p. 236. Green tells us that between the years 1919 and 1935, he noted down all the books he read, affirming that it is certain he read the Pensées in June, 1919.

felt very strongly his inner solitude, no longer was Father Crété there to give him advice and guidance, and although Green tells us that he doubtless continued to go to confession whenever he committed a " sin ", as well as regularly attending mass, nonetheless the desire to receive communion disappeared. His friend Philippe seemingly less ignorant of the ways of the world would instruct Julien on where to find women and on the various techniques necessary to their seduction. Julien had the idea that the sexual relationship, that " la volupté ", led to a kind of Paradise open to all-comers, so why not to himself ?<sup>(1)</sup> Yet, as we have mentioned, all this remained a cerebral matter in Julien's mind and his essential innocence was to continue for several years to come.

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In the summer of 1919 Julien's uncle, Walter, had written to say that he was willing to take the young man under his wing for four years to enable him to pursue his studies at an American University. Julien had to go along to the American Embassy to obtain his passport and he was struck by the presence of a handsome American soldier on guard-duty. He remarked the perfectly cut, elegant uniform and above all " un visage aux traits sans défaut qui faisait songer aux dieux bouclés de l'art grec ".<sup>(2)</sup> The young Green was stunned, completely

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(1) MCO, pp. 241, 2, 3.

(2) Ibid., p. 260.

taken aback by the sight of this Apollo and felt utterly insignificant and ridiculous in his presence. The mature artist writes that before he glimpsed this young American he never believed that a single human being could possess such physical grace, beauty and perfection. He adds :

" Pendant des semaines, je portai en moi cette image qui me brûlait. A vrai dire, elle ne me quitta jamais tout à fait et je la retrouvai, sous une forme ou sous une autre, à travers toute mon oeuvre. " (1)

At the University in the United States, Green was to meet many such " dieux bouclés " - the golden-haired gods of a vanished world were there beneath the trees and colonnades of the University of Virginia : " Les générations se succèdent sans toujours reproduire le même type d'humanité, mais il est certain qu'aux environs de 1920, la beauté classique telle que l'antiquité l'a aimée s'est retrouvée aux Etats Unis.... " (2) The young student was overwhelmed by this abundance of masculine beauty and time and again in Terre Lointaine Green relates the impact of a young man's face upon him. We employ the word " face " advisedly, for Julien's attention was riveted to this part of the anatomy, the rest of the body usually being quite absent from his consideration and admiration : " Le visage m'était comme un monde que je n'en finissais pas d'explorer. Le corps, je n'y songeais guère ". (3) The revelation of his true nature came to Green during a lecture given by his Classics professor. The lecturer,

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(1) MCO, p. 261.

(2) Terre Lointaine, p. 59.

(3) Ibid., p. 159.

commenting a passage from Virgil, told his students that it was pointless trying to hide the real meaning of the passage under discussion, that it was in fact an example of " la honte de l'antiquité.... l'amour des garçons (boy-love) ".<sup>(1)</sup> Green goes on : " En une seconde je compris mille choses, sauf une qui était essentielle. Je compris que la passion étrange dont parlait Virgile habitait aussi en moi. Un trait de lumière éclaira toute ma vie. J'eus peur de cette révélation qui me montrait pareil aux jeunes gens de l'antiquité. La honte de l'antiquité, je la portais donc en moi, je la portais en moi seul.... C'était comme si, à la faute originelle dont nous souffrons tous s'en ajoutait une autre qui n'atteignait que moi, car l'invraisemblable de toute cette histoire était que je me croyais seul à éprouver cet amour inquiétant. 'La honte de l'antiquité...' S'il avait dit : 'La honte de tous les temps...' ma réaction eût été bien différente, mais telles que je voyais ces choses, ma place était dans le monde d'avant le Christ ".<sup>(2)</sup> A double shock for the young student, then, since not only was he a victim of this " shame of antiquity ", but in addition he felt he alone was in this situation, the sole survivor of a pagan world. His only consolation was that the Ancients of Greece and Rome would have understood him, but " n'être compris que des morts, et de morts retombés en poussière... Il y avait de quoi m'assombrir ".<sup>(3)</sup> The result of this incident was that Green began to think about religion much more seriously than he had hitherto done so at the university. He took refuge in religion to escape from the problems raised by his late awakening sensuality, though it was not until 1938 that he actually confided in a priest.<sup>(4)</sup> Reading the Bible and

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(1) TL, p. 53. See also Glenn S. Burne, Julian Green, Twayne, New York, 1972, pp. 111 - 112. Burne's book is a brief survey of Green's writings heavily indebted to Robert de Saint Jean's Julien Green par lui-même.

(2) TL, p. 54. Green's italics.

(3) Ibid., p. 54.

(4) Ibid., p. 55.

attending early morning mass were not however enough to preserve Julien from the ravages of the heart. Green recalls his first encounter with Mark :

".... je vis courir de mon côté un jeune étudiant dont le visage me parut tel que je pensai n'avoir jamais rien vu de pareil au monde.... Tout à coup la liberté m'était enlevée. A cause de quelqu'un que je n'avais vu que trois ou quatre secondes, je devenais un esclave.... Lire, travailler, prier, il n'était plus question de tout cela.... Rien de charnel dans cet amour. Là, sans doute, était le plus singulier de toute cette affaire. Dans mon esprit, l'amour ne pouvait être que pur. Le désir était bien différent. Le désir, c'était le péché. " (1)

Love, in the form of the " coup de foudre ", has marked Green's life as it has marked his work, and the above passage inevitably prompts a comparison with the author's " Avant-propos " to Sud.<sup>(2)</sup> Green describes his youthful love for Mark as " une monstrueuse tendresse ",<sup>(3)</sup> quite devoid of desire, with the Christian religion forming an insuperable barrier between them. Yet it would be wrong to suppose that Green was unaware of physical desire at this time, and a student named Nicolls awakened in the adolescent a fierce sensual longing, far removed from the pure love inspired by Mark. Green writes of Nicolls :

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(1) TL, pp. 87, 8, 9.

(2) O.C., III, p. 1723. In this Foreword we read : " A la veille de la guerre de Sécession, un lieutenant américain a la révélation de sa nature profonde et de l'amour le plus impérieux en voyant paraître un jeune homme qu'il ne connaissait que de nom ".

(3) TL, p. 102.

".... voir ce visage était une joie qui me ravageait, non dans mon coeur, mais dans ma chair. Fuir ce supplice, c'était renoncer à un bonheur dont je n'hésite pas à écrire qu'il était diabolique. Le piège avait été bien tendu. J'aimais Mark d'un amour qui excluait toute idée sensuelle. Il n'en allait pas de même pour Nicolls. " (1)

For a long period of time Julien's best friend at the university was a student called Malcolm, " un garçon rougeaud dont les cheveux jaunes frisaient et bouclaient à la fois sur une petite tête ronde ",<sup>(2)</sup> for whom he certainly entertained no physical desire, but who attracted him by his intelligence. Green writes that he doubtless sought the company of the least good-looking for fear of being rejected by the more favoured, but he adds " le plus vilain était aussi le plus intelligent ".<sup>(3)</sup> Another friend of the young Green was Nick, " le garçon au visage déplaisant ",<sup>(4)</sup> who spoke so well and freely of philosophy and literature, especially of Shakespeare and Marlowe, and the Elizabethan love poets. Green's best friends, then, were young men he found intellectually stimulating but physically repulsive, and the reasons for his fear, when confronted by masculine beauty, have always been something of a mystery to him.<sup>(5)</sup>

If Green experienced physical desire for Nicolls, he remained unaware of its implications until Malcolm passed on to him the works

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(1) Ibid., pp. 156 - 157.

(2) Ibid., p. 83.

(3) Ibid., p. 149.

(4) Ibid., p. 92.

(5) At least until 1966, date of publication of Terre Lointaine. See TL, p. 95 : " l'effroi que me causait la beauté faisait partie de la fascination qu'elle exerçait sur moi, mais cet effroi demeurait inexplicable. Peut-être y avait-il cette idée qu'en m'approchant d'un beau garçon pour lui parler, je trahissais cela même que je voulais à tout jamais garder secret ".

of Havelock Ellis in the spring of 1921.<sup>(1)</sup> With this discovery, " le sexe devenait tout à coup d'une importance capitale, avec toute sa laideur et toute sa brutalité ".<sup>(2)</sup> It was with Nick, who shared his penchant for handsome male faces, that Julien was able to discuss his problems, the difficulties brought about by his reading of Havelock Ellis and the beginnings of the struggle between his carnal and spiritual selves.<sup>(3)</sup> Nick, however, was not content simply to contemplate the handsome young men of his age and from Green's account of his conversations with him it seems clear that he was a practising homosexual or at least was at pains to make this appear so.<sup>(4)</sup> Green himself was appalled by what he had discovered in Ellis' works and what he had consequently learned about himself. On the one hand, he realized that he was not the only victim of the " shame of antiquity ", but one of many, and that this " shame " was very much alive, but, on the other hand, his relationship with the Church suffered a severe blow. Regular observance of the sacraments was extremely important to Green and he felt totally unable to confess to a priest what he had learned about himself and the thoughts and desires to which he was a prey. Nevertheless, the discovery of sexuality and its implications did not result in a spiritual crisis for Green at this time, he desperately wanted to live and could not believe that the human beauty all around him was the work of the devil. Yet at the same time he continued to be repelled by the very idea of sexual love : " Autour de l'amour physique, comme une barrière, il y avait le dégoût ".<sup>(5)</sup> In fact, several years were to elapse before

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(1) TL, pp. 222 - 223. O.C., I, p. LVI.

(2) TL, p. 224.

(3) Ibid., p. 226.

(4) Ibid., p. 227.

(5) Ibid., p. 233.



he finally succeeded in partially overcoming this barrier.<sup>(1)</sup> He was certain that, " hormis le mariage, puisque l'Evangile le disait, le péché était dans le plaisir même, quel que fût le sexe du partenaire ",<sup>(2)</sup> and this has remained his belief after his return to the Church.<sup>(3)</sup>

When Green looks back at what he wrote in his student days, he recalls nearly everywhere the imprint of his struggle with temptation, especially following his reading of Havelock Ellis. He tells us :

" Aujourd'hui, je puis dire qu'à vingt ans, je connaissais déjà ma croix. Dans mon for intérieur, je la refusais, j'en voulais une autre, moins humiliante. Je voulais une croix qui ménageât l'amour-propre. Il n'y en a pas. " (4)

Green acknowledges, then, that once the Cross accepted, there is no way of sparing one's pride and vanity; thus, inevitably, for a gifted young man who believed himself inwardly, if not a paragon of virtue, nonetheless one of the " élus ", the process of coming to terms with his true nature and all the humiliation involved would indeed prove a highly distressing experience. As best he could, Green confided in his friends, his love for Mark to Ed Fowler, the details of his desire to Nick.<sup>(5)</sup> Green's case was aggravated by the fact that he had no confidence in his physical appearance; he felt that he was surrounded by innumerable young men more favoured than himself - " avec leurs cheveux bouclés et leurs traits droits, ils ressemblaient à des héros de l'antiquité ".<sup>(6)</sup> His resultant inferiority complex was a constant source of anguish to him which time and experience alone were to heal.

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(1) See Jeunesse, p. 132.

(2) TL, p. 234.

(3) We shall discuss this and similar notions in later chapters.

(4) TL, p. 256.

(5) Ibid., pp. 261 - 262.

(6) Ibid., p. 263.

Throughout this period of time, despite his many temptations, the young man keenly felt a need for God's presence, " comme un poisson sur l'herbe a besoin qu'on le rejette à l'eau pour vivre ".<sup>(1)</sup> It was the autumn of 1921 and the author recounts that he went to confession to make a difficult acknowledgment of his " sins ". Needless to say, the torment of unsatisfied desire continued to afflict him, and it is significant that one night at this time he dreamt there was an enormous snake in his bed :

".... j'admirai malgré moi sa grâce et la fulgurante rapidité de ses mouvements, mais l'effroi me jeta debout hors du sommeil et hors de mon lit.... Et qu'est-ce que cela voulait dire ? Fallait-il voir dans cette bête à la fois si terrifiante et si belle une représentation du mal ? Le fait est que je tremblais devant le mal. D'autres y allaient hardiment et de gaieté de coeur, moi, non : je ne le pouvais pas. Cette gaieté-là, je ne l'aurais jamais. " (2)

The part of the body that must always remain hidden, that Green refused existence when he contemplated the male form, here takes its revenge and in the shape of a serpent comes to torment him. In this direct phallic imagery we see that Green is both repelled and attracted. In the horror he experiences, there is present the accumulation of childhood memories associated with the denunciation of sex and the sexual organs as evil, and we recall the " I'll cut it off ! " admonition of Julien's mother; the repression has been severe and consequently the attraction of sexuality is clouded over by irrational fear which will never be entirely dissipated.

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(1) TL, p. 268.

(2) Ibid., pp. 269 - 270

Towards the end of 1921, a shadow was cast over Green's life in the form of a period of melancholy due to his inability to form a relationship with Nicolls or Mark. He tells us he prayed and read the Bible, but to no avail.<sup>(1)</sup> He had made up his mind to leave America and the university the following year without taking a degree, the main reason being that he felt he had already undergone sufficient suffering and that in France perhaps life would smile on him a little more.<sup>(2)</sup> But at the same time, now that France was less than a year away, leaving America meant leaving Mark and this eventuality Green refused to face. Such were his feelings for Mark that he tells us : " Une nuit, dans la désolation de mon coeur, j'allai de nouveau m'étendre sur l'herbe, devant sa porte, la face contre terre ".<sup>(3)</sup> This tension could hardly continue and one April evening in 1922 Green resolved to act and knocked on Mark's door; with this first meeting there began a friendship between the two young men that to Green was absolutely vital, and every evening he would pay Mark a visit. A strange relationship, this, as gradually growing more confident, Green would not hesitate to regard his friend with the languorous look of a lover. Mark found Green's attitude somewhat strange, but contented himself with occasionally making fun of his admirer. The latter soon learned that Mark had been in love with a young woman so realized there was no hope of a reciprocated love, and he writes :

" Jamais je n'embrasserais Mark, mais cela m'était égal... J'étais son ami, il m'avait dit un jour qu'il m'aimait beaucoup, et il me prouva par la suite qu'il m'aimait profondément, mais je le désirerais en vain. " (4)

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(1) TL, p. 271.

(2) Ibid., pp. 262 - 263.

(3) Ibid., p. 273.

(4) Ibid., p. 288.

It is difficult to establish the exact nature of Mark's feelings towards Green; we possess the author's testimony : " Ce dont je suis sûr, c'est qu'il finit par s'attacher fortement à moi ".<sup>(1)</sup> In addition many years later when Green disembarked at New York in July 1940, Mark by no means a rich man married with children, was there to meet his friend and to offer him a hundred dollar note.<sup>(2)</sup>

It would be hard to overestimate the importance of this love in Green's life and for his work. He is able to write of the beginning of the relationship : " La pureté du regard de Mark me rendait pur. J'aimais sans faute charnelle une personne de mon sexe. C'était pensais-je, dans le meilleur de l'âme que s'enracinait ce penchant vainqueur ".<sup>(3)</sup> And Green recalls : " En quittant l'Université, je laissais derrière moi le seul être au monde qui me fût plus cher que la vie, même s'il ne pouvait que me faire souffrir ".<sup>(4)</sup> A year after Green left the University of Virginia, in July 1923, Mark came to spend some time in France, and during a walk along the banks of the Seine occurred the scene of the " aveu manqué ". Green resolves to declare his love :

" 'J'ai quelque chose de très important à te dire, Mark.'  
'Bien, je t'écoute.' Mais les mots si simples me restaient dans la gorge et n'arrivèrent pas à en sortir.... 'Je regrette, je ne peux pas.' Il me serra légèrement le bras et dit : 'je comprends très bien.' Une fois de plus, j'avais mesuré le risque de perdre à jamais son affection et l'avais jugé trop grand. Ai-je besoin d'indiquer que dans mon oeuvre, Mark revient sans cesse, sous une forme ou sous une autre ? " (5)

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(1) TL, p. 290.

(2) Ibid., p. 309.

(3) Ibid., p. 285.

(4) Jeunesse, p. 9.

(5) TL, pp. 308 - 309.

The author again describes this scene in Jeunesse,<sup>(1)</sup> and Jacques Petit has observed the frequency with which it occurs in Green's works.<sup>(2)</sup> This repressed love, then, has undoubtedly provided Green with a rich vein of inspiration for his imaginative work, yet it has ravaged part of his life. The author himself recognizes that this love for Mark that he persuaded himself was pure and chaste, was in fact, deep down, a much more carnal affair. Green tells us that home in Paris, awaiting Mark's visit, " si étrange que cela paraisse, la sensualité était absente de mes songeries amoureuses ",<sup>(3)</sup> yet he is compelled to add :

" Mon ignorance ne me laissait voir dans ces désirs que les élans d'une passion innocente, mais quelle faim secrète et dévorante s'y cachait... A quoi bon me leurrer ? " (4)

Since his return to France, Green had come to a much better understanding of his true nature. At first, outwardly, his life was calm; his father made no attempts to force him into a career, and the young man, who had decided he would become a painter, went to acquire his art at the Grande Chaumière. However, several months later, Green gave up his artistic ambitions and turned to literature. He went to mass and knew periods of spiritual exaltation,<sup>(5)</sup> but inevitably

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(1) See pp. 167 - 169.

(2) O.C., I, p. LVII. Petit draws our attention to the 1930 novella, L'Autre Sommeil. See O.C., I, pp. 873 - 874.

(3) Jeunesse, p. 159.

(4) Ibid., p. 159.

(5) Ibid., p. 37.

there were the black periods, the " chutes " and the resultant disgust.<sup>(1)</sup> His life became more complicated with the arrival in France of Ted, whom he had known back in 1918;<sup>(2)</sup> at this time, Ted had been serving in the American Navy and Green had been considerably disturbed by this handsome young sailor in his well-cut uniform. Now, several years later, a friendship developed and the two young men would go for walks together, during which they would talk of philosophy, with Ted, a married man, also liking to describe his amorous conquests. Green soon fell under his spell once again, finally deciding to write a confession of his passion for Ted which he would give to the young man to read.<sup>(3)</sup> In fact, this confession took the form of an intimate autobiography in which Green tells us he wrote of his various passions and loves, finishing with an avowal of his violent desire for Ted. At the same time, he included an account of his spiritual life with all its ups and downs : "... la rage de tout dire me possédait alors comme elle me tient encore aujourd'hui.... Ai-je tort de croire qu'il y avait en moi quelque chose d'instinctif et de toujours prêt à contrarier mes désirs ? Je provoquais l'échec. On ne pouvait appeler cela de la maladresse. Je voulais et à la fois je ne voulais pas ".<sup>(4)</sup> Here again religion acts as a brake, a restraining force; Green is desperate to preserve intact a certain

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(1) Jeunesse, p. 84. Green writes : " Je tiens à noter cependant que ce geste inévitable me permit de garder un certain équilibre, contrairement aux affirmations du siècle dernier qui n'y voyait qu'un vice atroce dont le châtement était la folie. Le châtement était dans la frustration ".

(2) Ibid., p. 115. See also MCO, pp. 145 - 150.

(3) Jeunesse, pp. 117 - 118.

(4) Ibid., p. 120. We are told by the author that he never knew what Ted really thought of his confession. He simply said to Green that in no wise should he give way to his desires, but that he would like to keep the pages of the confession " si curieuses et si bien écrites ". p. 119. For the sequel to this incident, see pp. 124 - 126.

integrity. But the struggle is unequal, in the young man sexual drive, the desire to know in the Biblical sense of the word, is gaining the upper hand. Certain fears persist, however. When Green learns that Ted has contracted a venereal disease he is afraid of breathing the same air as his friend.<sup>(1)</sup> Furthermore, he is filled with disgust : " Dans des moments comme ceux-là, il me venait un dégoût subit de toute forme de sexualité et singulièrement des parties sexuelles de l'homme.... Il y avait une répulsion à vaincre et pour cela le vertige du désir était nécessaire, mais dégrisé, je tâchais d'oublier et surtout de ne plus voir ".<sup>(2)</sup> And Green adds : " Déjà naissait en moi la phobie de l'acte sexuel. Elle devait croître avec les années jusqu'à fléchir mon jugement et me rendre parfois incompréhensible à moi-même, mais à vingt-trois ans, dans mes heures de révolte, je simplifiais en jetant le tout aux enfers ".<sup>(3)</sup> Despite this irrational, persistent fear, one evening in March 1923 Green, " malade de désir ",<sup>(4)</sup> walked out into the Paris streets with one object in mind. It was not long before he found what he was seeking, and he describes the lure of vice in tones reminiscent of Baudelaire :

" Je renonce à donner une idée de l'inconnu qui s'approcha de moi sous la pluie et dans l'éclairage inquiétant des réverbères. Son visage eût dû me faire peur. D'une laideur saisissante, il exerçait le monstrueux attrait du vice et je ne pouvais que céder, pareil à une bête subjuguée par un chasseur. " (5)

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(1) Jeunesse, pp. 122 - 123. Green thinks of his mother, horrified, recounting the story of his Uncle Willie.

(2) Ibid., p. 123.

(3) Ibid., p. 124.

(4) Ibid., p. 128.

(5) Ibid., p. 132.

Following this act, Green felt a deep sense of liberation, of well-being and joy. He tells us that the horror and disgust came later.<sup>(1)</sup> The day after, he was revolted, but despite resolutions to the contrary, each evening saw Green on the streets, incapable of resisting his instincts, desperately desiring " to possess ", however fleetingly.<sup>(2)</sup>

Nevertheless, during the day-time, Green would work and study, and from 1923 until the world-shaking events of 1939 his life fitted into a regular, set pattern. A Jekyll and Hyde existence, we may think, the day's writing in the peaceful family home followed by the eight-thirty " rendez-vous with the devil ".<sup>(3)</sup> Green read and wrote studies on Blake, Lamb, Johnson and Charlotte Brontë,<sup>(4)</sup> continued to read the Bible and tackled Freud's Introductory lectures on psycho-analysis,<sup>(5)</sup> at the same time becoming acquainted with a number of writers who shared his own propensities.

It was in these circumstances, in the spring of 1924, that Green wrote what was to be his first publication in France,<sup>(6)</sup> his Pamphlet contre les catholiques de France. A friend of his, Pierre Morhange,

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(1) Jeunesse, pp. 131 - 132.

(2) Ibid., p. 133.

(3) Ibid., p. 139.

(4) Ibid., pp. 140, 147, 218. These articles, which first appeared separately in reviews, were published together in Suite anglaise, éditions des Cahiers de Paris, May, 1927. For an exact list of Green's literary efforts at the time, see Jacques Petit's " Chronologie " in O.C., I, pp. LVI, LVII.

(5) Jeunesse, p. 160. Green tells us he attempted to understand the work more than he actually read it. For his reading of Freud, see also, Ce qui reste de jour, Plon, 1972, pp. 335 - 336, pp. 363 - 364.

(6) Apart from the minor pieces, mentioned above, published as articles in obscure reviews. In the United States, he had already published in English as a student at the University of Virginia, a short story entitled " The Apprentice Psychiatrist ", University of Virginia Magazine, LXIII, 1919 - 20, pp. 334 - 346.



editor of the review " Philosophies ", asked him for a contribution to a new review he intended setting up.<sup>(1)</sup> In four or five days of frenzied activity Green composed his Pamphlet, a diatribe against what he considered to be the lukewarm attitude of French Catholics to their faith. This little book is a vituperative piece of writing and Green, while not disowning it, now recognizes the exaggerated nature of his remarks.<sup>(2)</sup> However, his essential interests are already embodied in this work, and when a friend of his said in 1967 : " 'Tu réécris sans cesse ton pamphlet' ", Green could only note : " En effet, mes préoccupations religieuses sont les mêmes qu'en 1923 ou 24 ".<sup>(3)</sup> What exactly does Green have to say against these half-hearted French Catholics ? In numbered paragraphs and in an aphoristic style recalling Pascal's Pensées,<sup>(4)</sup> the young author informs us that

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- (1) The Revue des pamphlétaires. Green's Pamphlet, written in April, 1924, appeared under the pseudonym of Théophile Delaporte in the first issue of the new review, 15th October, 1924, Darantière, Dijon.
- (2) See O.C., I, pp. 1231 - 1232, the author's " Avant-Propos " to 1963 Plon edition : " Aujourd'hui, je ne puis relire sans un peu d'effarement les énormités que je ne craignais pas d'écrire sur l'enfer, sur les bûchers espagnols, sur l'insuffisance du clergé.... Il n'en reste pas moins vrai que je retrouve dans ce petit livre un accent de ferveur sauvage dont l'écho s'est répercuté de loin en loin dans toute mon oeuvre, depuis ma première nouvelle jusqu'à Moïra où il résonne à plein.... J'ai toujours pensé que l'oeuvre d'un écrivain est en substance tout entière dans son premier livre, comme l'épi est dans le grain.... je remets la petite brochure, avec ses limites et ses naïvetés, en tête de tous mes ouvrages. En ma fin est mon commencement ".
- (3) Ce qui reste de jour, J 1966 - 1972, Plon, 1972, p. 12, dated February 14th, 1967.
- (4) Green records his debt to Pascal in his diary. See J, 1928 - 1949; p. 802. Writing on August 6th, 1948, the author records : " Beaucoup lu Pascal ces jours-ci. Ce sont les raisonnements de cet homme qui ont orienté ma vie, qui ont prévalu pendant des années; je lui dois énormément ".

" ils (les catholiques) sont absorbés par le monde et c'est le monde qui les occupe ".<sup>(1)</sup> Catholics' indifference<sup>(2)</sup> is violently denounced and considered as " la seule hérésie qui compte ".<sup>(3)</sup> Their religion has become simply a habit among others, " c'est-à-dire quelque chose de vil et de naturel ", and, " c'est l'habitude qui damne le monde ".<sup>(4)</sup> Green arraigns the clergy for its mediocrity and complete lack of conviction, expecting the priest to speak " non comme un homme, mais mieux qu'un ange.... Je lui demande de me dire des choses sublimes et inaccoutumées qui me toucheront et me convertiront....".<sup>(5)</sup> Extremism and intolerance are encouraged, since the Church is confronted with a peril far greater than the heresies of the past in the form of " la tolérance des infidèles et le tiède assentiment des catholiques ".<sup>(6)</sup> In his violence and exaggeration, Green is following a tradition common to late nineteenth-century Roman Catholic converts, such as Bloy, Claudel, Huysmans and Péguy. As Richard Griffiths has written, the greatest danger is seen as coming from within the Church :

" ....if only the Church were strong and united, violent and powerful, no enemy could deal with it. Some of the most violent attacks made by Catholic writers are against the clergy of the day and the Catholic laity, who, they believed,

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(1) Pamphlet, O.C., I, p. 882 (19). The number in brackets refers to the paragraph.

(2) Ibid., p. 885 (37).

(3) Ibid., p. 885 (38).

(4) Ibid., p. 886 (50).

(5) Ibid., p. 890 (76).

(6) Ibid., p. 892 (85).

even when they were not heretical, were cowardly and somnolent. Catholics must be not only true believers but also fighters in a violent cause. "(1)

A true believer and fighter in a violent cause, this could almost sum up Green's ideal at the time of writing the Pamphlet. Of the above writers, we know that Léon Bloy had exercised a powerful influence on the young Green, an influence that was to prove durable.<sup>(2)</sup> In the Pamphlet, then, it is Green the young fanatic who clearly emerges, greatly influenced by the intransigent, uncompromising religious faith and fervour of Léon Bloy. Hell looms large in Green's scheme of things and he boldly spells out that " LA MORT SUR LA CROIX N'A PAS ABOLI L'ENFER ".<sup>(3)</sup> The reader is warned not to rely on Christ's alleged compassion, but rather to heed menaces of eternal damnation,<sup>(4)</sup> and he is told that " les paroles les plus effrayantes de la Bible sont prononcées par ce Christ Jésus que vous croyez indulgent et débonnaire ".<sup>(5)</sup> The clergy is attacked for failing to preach the " truth " as revealed

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(1) Richard Griffiths, The Reactionary Revolution, The Catholic Revival in French Literature, 1870 - 1914, Constable, London, 1966.

(2) See MCO, pp. 126 - 127, where Mouser, the old English family friend, gave Julien a copy of Mon Journal. See also MCO, p. 159, where at Fontainebleau in 1918, we find the young infantryman buying up as many books by Léon Bloy as he could find : " Le moins qu'on puisse dire de lui est qu'il parle de la religion sans fadeur et c'était le tonique dont j'avais besoin, mais je ne savais pas bien qu'au fond de moi dormait un fanatique et que Léon Bloy le réveillait. Je voulais l'absolu sans avoir fait le chemin intermédiaire, je voulais beaucoup de choses auxquelles je n'avais pas droit, parce que je n'avais jamais vraiment mené la simple vie chrétienne, qui est une vie d'amour ". During the Second World War, Green was to write in his diary : " Nous tous qui avons lu Bloy et appris à l'aimer, nous ne savons pas au juste ce que nous lui devons.... il est le porteur d'un message immense ". Dated November 8th, 1941, J, 1928 - 1949, p. 467.

(3) Pamphlet, O.C., I, p. 896 (113). Green's block capitals.

(4) Ibid., p. 907 (189 - 192).

(5) Ibid., p. 908 (193).

in the New Testament and it is at fault for censuring the zeal of the Spanish Inquisition " dont il ne conçoit ni la grandeur ni l'utilité ".<sup>(1)</sup> Green pays homage to this very Inquisition " à qui nous devons d'avoir un dogme pur, une vérité sans mélange.... Plus je la considère et plus je regrette cette institution éminemment salubre dans laquelle triomphait une force spirituelle sans scrupules et sans humanité.... ils (les hommes) ont égard aux larmes et au sang qu'elle n'a cessé de répandre, ils ne songent pas aux millions d'âmes qu'elle a arrachées de haute lutte à des tourments sans nombre et sans fin.... Je ne crains pas l'Inquisition si elle me tue, car elle sauve mon âme...."<sup>(2)</sup> We have seen that Green himself is somewhat shocked when he now reads such passages as the above; recording in his diary an interview with Stanislas Fumet who read out the extracts concerning the Inquisition, Green writes that while listening he experienced a feeling of uneasiness and wondered why he had written such things. Thinking about this later he remembered that at the time of writing his Pamphlet he had been enjoying a liaison and the spiritual reaction, " la révolte de l'âme ", had soon made itself felt in the form of the Pamphlet. Afraid of possible damnation, the venomous attacks in Green's work were really directed against the author himself. (3)

In the Pamphlet, Green writes that he is struck by the fact that, despite the mediocrity and sinfulness of the clergy, the Church endures; there must therefore be some powerful factor at work capable

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(1) Pamphlet, O.C., I, p. 908 (198).

(2) Ibid., pp. 908 - 909 (199, 200, 201, 203).

(3) See Ce qui reste de jour, p. 197, dated 8th November, 1969.

of resisting sin and of perpetuating the Church.<sup>(1)</sup> Using paradox to advance his arguments, Green states :

" Ce n'est pas des saints qu'il faut parler si l'on veut faire preuve de la sainteté de l'Eglise, c'est des mauvais prêtres et des mauvais papes.... car une Eglise gouvernée par des saints et se perpétuant, cela est normal et humain, mais une Eglise qui peut être gouvernée par des scélérats et des ânes, et se perpétuer, cela n'est ni normal ni humain. "(2)

Although the clergy seems to Green a despicable body of men, it is nonetheless seen by him to possess supernatural powers and he fears it.<sup>(3)</sup>

The young Catholic reveals his Protestant origins when he favourably compares the latter's habit of reading the Bible to the former's general ignorance and indifference regarding the Scriptures.<sup>(4)</sup> However, the Bible is not presented as the great comforter, its presence is " effrayante ", and it is considered a strange thing for us to be able to live " sans inquiétude " in the same world as this book.<sup>(5)</sup> Furthermore, we are told to read the Bible " avec méfiance, avec horreur,

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(1) Pamphlet, O.C., I, p. 909 (205).

(2) Ibid., pp. 909 - 910 (206, 207).

(3) Ibid., pp. 910 - 911 (216).

(4) Ibid., p. 911 (219 - 220). Green adds, though, that since the key to understanding is in the hands of Catholics, Protestants read in vain. See p. 914 (235).

(5) Ibid., p. 912 (226).

et à genoux ".<sup>(1)</sup> Even heresy is preferred to the lukewarm Catholicism everywhere prevalent in France,<sup>(2)</sup> and the French emphasis on reason is blamed for the decline in belief.<sup>(3)</sup>

Green's vision of Christianity, as embodied in the Pamphlet, is a bleak, forbidding affair. While allowing for the fact that it is the work of a very young man, there is something deeply disturbing in the extracts approving the activities of the Spanish Inquisition. It is true that Green has confessed to uneasiness when re-reading these passages, yet the Pamphlet has been several times reprinted without Green's seeking to modify or omit the offending lines. We mention this, for he has seen fit to suppress certain extracts of his diary, particularly one controversial passage concerning Christ and sexuality which we shall discuss in Chapter II of this study.<sup>(4)</sup>

Especially oppressive in the Pamphlet is the notion of Fear. In the doom-laden atmosphere Green creates, one asks oneself what has become of the Good News, as Jacques Madaule has aptly written :

" .... ce qu'il (Green) oublie totalement, c'est que l'Evangile fut avant tout une Bonne Nouvelle. A l'en croire, ce serait une effrayante plaisanterie du Tout-Puissant aux dépens de la plus faible des créatures. Il va plus loin que le jansénisme lui-même qui, du moins, faisait une part à la grâce. "(5)

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(1) Pamphlet, O.C., I, p. 912 (228).

(2) Ibid., p. 914 - 915 (239, 245).

(3) Ibid., pp. 915 - 916 (247).

(4) We are referring to an extract which appeared in the Figaro Littéraire on 14th April, 1951. It is of interest to note that Green's homonym, Graham Greene, has withdrawn two early novels from subsequent reprinting : The Name of Action and Rumour at Nightfall.

(5) Jacques Madaule : Reconnaissances II, Desclée de Brouwer, 1944, p. 78.

The charge of Jansenism is one that has often been levelled at Green and we shall deal with it more fully at a later stage. Here we are concerned with the early Pamphlet where we meet Green's religious thought as a young man; certain conceptions have evolved quite considerably with the passing years. In the Pamphlet, the severe moral rigorism and fanaticism are largely directed against the author himself :

" .... je tombai sur le catholique mon semblable, mon frère, avec une rage délicate sans se douter que j'étais moi-même l'accusé principal dans cet étrange règlement de comptes.... les mauvaises pensées virevoltaient autour de moi alors que j'écrivais ces pages. On eût dit que le fait d'écrire devenait un acte sexuel, même lorsqu'il s'agissait de religion, et que la chair se mêlait irrésistiblement à l'esprit dans ces moments qui semblaient exclure le désir. " (1)

We see, then, the result of the young man's frustration and disgust with himself, of his inability to reconcile his conception of religious faith with his new-found sexual freedom. Green tells us that each time he read the proofs of his Pamphlet, it was clear to him that with the satisfaction of his bodily desires there vanished a special quality of faith : " Derrière toutes les phrases de mon petit livre se devinaient l'horreur et l'attrait de la luxure. La luxure menait à l'athéisme et en enfer ".<sup>(2)</sup> Green suffered once more

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(1) Jeunesse, p. 263. See also O.C., I, p. 1229, the author's " Avant-Propos " to 1963 Plon edition, and Jeunesse, p. 267 : " 'C'est de toi, de toi-même qu'il s'agit, me criaient ces versets rageurs. Honte sur toi qui prêches les autres et te déshonores dans les rues' ".

(2) Ibid., p. 278.

from the inner solitude that had plagued him several years earlier. Again he was quite alone; there was no one in whom he could confide his disturbed thoughts and apprehensions. Since Father Crété had disappeared from his life, the young man had not found another priest able to assist him. Green tells us he managed as best he could " dans l'effrayant chaos : le corps d'un côté, l'âme de l'autre, deux ennemis jurés selon mes convictions d'alors et avec l'atroce simplification de l'ignorance. Il fallait faire du corps un esclave sourd et aveugle, obéissant jusqu'à la mort à toutes les royales injonctions de l'âme ". (1)

Such was the state of mind of the young man who had just written the Pamphlet contre les catholiques de France, but many years were to elapse before Green was to feel able to portray in his work the essential aspects of the drama he had lived out at this period of his life.

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(1) Jeunesse, p. 278.



## THE FICTIONAL CONFRONTATION

Only with growing maturity has Green shown himself less reticent about discussing the problems posed by sexuality and religious experience. In 1950, Mofira was published, the first of Green's novels in which so much of the author's own personal experience as a young man has passed. It was in the summer of 1948 that the actual process of composition was begun, but for several months beforehand, Green had encountered considerable difficulties in his projects. At the beginning of January of that year, in fact, he wrote in his diary that he would like to feel within him " cet irrésistible élan vers le livre à faire ";<sup>(1)</sup> this, however, was not yet the case, and he suffered as a consequence. In February, Green confided that he no longer knew what God wanted of him, that he was even prepared to renounce writing, if that were His will.<sup>(2)</sup> Towards the end of March, he confessed that he had given a great deal of thought to the question of writing, adding that he no longer felt any desire to write.<sup>(3)</sup> He went on to say that the struggle to combat the sexual instinct paralyzed the novelist's imagination, since his talent has its roots in sin, " pas dans la vie pécheresse, mais dans l'idée du péché ".<sup>(4)</sup> Here is the core of the problem, on the one hand, the Roman Catholic whose ideal is sainthood and who desperately seeks release from the bonds of sexual enslavement and, on the other, the mature writer and man of desire, however sublimated, whose life has been scarred by the demands of the flesh and who remains fascinated, if not obsessed, by his carnal self. For Green, " le romancier est

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(1) J, 1928 - 1949, p. 774, dated January 5, 1948.

(2) Ibid., p. 777, February 13, 1948.

(3) Ibid., p. 785, March 29, 1948.

(4) Ibid., p. 785.

pareil à un éclauteur chargé d'aller voir ce qui se passe tout au fond de l'âme. Il en revient et raconte ce qu'il a vu. Jamais il ne reste à la surface et il n'habite que les régions les plus obscures ".<sup>(1)</sup>  
A man's soul may be a bottomless pit; consequently in his explorations the novelist is likely to make the most sombre discoveries. Green has written that the novelist must be at one with his characters in their sins; complicity is not enough; there must be complete identification. This is why, in his opinion, a Saint has never been known to write a novel.<sup>(2)</sup>

Throughout this period, then, Green is entangled in this inner debate with himself, wondering how he can possibly reconcile his aspirations as a Christian with the demands of his profession. Never a man to make easy compromises, in the summer of 1948 Green's dilemma becomes more acute. The 30th June of that year, he records a visit to an exhibition of David's paintings and is deeply disturbed by what he has seen : " Devant ces grandes toiles, j'ai cru sentir sur moi le souffle même du démon, et peut-être celui-ci n'avait-il pas de moyens plus puissants pour m'attirer à lui ".<sup>(3)</sup> Saddened beyond words, he suddenly felt Christianity to be no more than a figment of the imagination : " le christianisme m'est apparu tout à coup comme une chimère ".<sup>(4)</sup> Thus began a spiritual crisis so severe that on July 12, 1948, Green wrote : " Je me demande jusqu'où l'on peut aller sans perdre la raison ", yet added : " Et au milieu de tout cela, un étrange bonheur ".<sup>(5)</sup> This constant oscillation of feeling

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(1) J, 1928 - 1949, p. 785, dated April 12, 1948.

(2) Ibid., p. 789, May 21, 1948.

(3) Ibid., pp. 794 - 795.

(4) Ibid., p. 795.

(5) Ibid., p. 796.

is characteristic of Green, but the intransigent, youthful opposition " corps - âme " has been replaced by an attempt at acceptance of their inevitable interpenetration, for there is " Entre les deux, nulle frontière sensible, nulle frontière en tout cas qui ne soit violée à chaque minute, comme si elle n'était pas ".<sup>(1)</sup> Towards the end of July, Green is in Zurich and his crisis continues. He writes in his diary : " De nouveau, ce cauchemar de la neurasthénie ",<sup>(2)</sup> and shortly after this, back in Paris, we find him struggling to begin his novel, as well as being engrossed in reading Pascal.<sup>(3)</sup> He is in fact emerging from his crisis : " Il faut hardiment passer outre et prendre sur soi la responsabilité du mal qu'on peut faire aux autres et à soi-même, mais il résulte de tout cela une tristesse abominable ".<sup>(4)</sup> Barely a fortnight later, Green could write that he was " heureux malgré le problème charnel qui assombrit ma vie, mais cela aussi passera dans mon livre ".<sup>(5)</sup> He speaks of his main character, Joseph, as " le garçon un peu rude et fanatique, obsédé à la fois de religion et de désirs ".<sup>(6)</sup> In writing Moïra he had clearly decided that the time had come to give direct imaginative expression to some of those problems and conflicts that had so indelibly marked his life. This decision brought on a considerable amount of stress, as we see from perusal of the diary of the period.

Early in October 1948, Green records " une longue insomnie pendant laquelle j'ai pensé à la religion. C'est l'autre côté de moi-même,

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(1) J, p. 801, July 22, 1948.

(2) Ibid., p. 801, July 27, 1948.

(3) Ibid., p. 802, August 6, 1948.

(4) Ibid., p. 803, August 9, 1948.

(5) Ibid., p. 805, August 23, 1948.

(6) Ibid., p. 806, September 9, 1948.

le plus fort ".<sup>(1)</sup> In January 1949, he writes : " Chaque nuit maintenant de longues insomnies ".<sup>(2)</sup> The diary entries show us the author constantly grappling with notions of chastity and sainthood, the tyranny of carnal desire and the difficulties involved in his wish to tell all : " J'ai voulu à tout prix dire la vérité ".<sup>(3)</sup> However, for Green, " les hommes les plus sincères ne peuvent dire que des moitiés de vérité ",<sup>(4)</sup> and " on veut bien dire la vérité de l'âme, mais non celle du corps; ou celle du corps, mais non celle de l'âme ".<sup>(5)</sup> Thus the author sees all attempts at telling the whole truth, the truth of the whole man, as doomed to failure, notwithstanding the will and sincerity involved in the endeavour. In the composition of his novel, Green is conscious of the risk of the carnal side of his inspiration monopolizing the action and is consequently preoccupied with preserving a balance between the spiritual and physical content : " je dois sans cesse l'empêcher de verser dans le délire physique ".<sup>(6)</sup> This task will still be his after the publication of Moïra, as in 1952, before the first performance of Sud, when Green feared that the public would regard it as simply a " pièce charnelle " and ignore the religious nature of the tragedy.<sup>(7)</sup>

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(1) J, p. 811, October 6, 1948.

(2) Ibid., 1949 - 1966, p. 828, January 9, 1949.

(3) Ibid., 1928 - 1949, p. 818, October 24, 1948. In this extract, Green refers to the complete version of his diary to be published after his death.

(4) Ibid., p. 819, October 27, 1948.

(5) Ibid., p. 822, November 13, 1948.

(6) Ibid., p. 817, October 19, 1948.

(7) See Robert de Saint Jean, Julien Green par lui-même, p. 105.

In Mon Coeur mis à nu, Baudelaire had succinctly and forcefully summed up man's fundamental dualism in words that are well-known but particularly relevant to our inquiry : " Il y a dans tout homme, à toute heure, deux postulations simultanées, l'une vers Dieu, l'autre vers Satan. L'invocation à Dieu, ou spiritualité, est un désir de monter en grade; celle de Satan ou animalité, est une joie de descendre ".<sup>(1)</sup> Now Green, as we have seen, is striving to move on from this Baudelairean dualistic opposition to a reconciliation of the two tendencies. Early in 1949, he formulates :

" Deux forces en présence, également redoutables :  
l'énergie spirituelle et l'émotion passionnelle.  
Dans tout ce que nous voyons, il y a de l'émotion passionnelle, et dans tout ce que nous ne voyons pas, il y a de l'énergie spirituelle, mais dans tout ce que nous voyons, l'énergie spirituelle entre comme les eaux d'un fleuve qui crève ses barrages et se répand dans les prairies. Et dans tout ce que nous ne voyons pas, l'émotion passionnelle monte comme une grande marée irrésistible.... Rien n'est tout à fait pur, comme rien n'est tout à fait impur.... la fureur du plaisir n'a tout son sens et ne peut être absolument comprise si l'on ne reconnaît pas qu'il s'y mêle du divin, de la nostalgie du divin. " (2)

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(1) See Journaux intimes, ed. Crépet & Blin, José Corti, 1949, p. 62. Crépet and Blin comment : " Il serait vain d'accumuler ici tous les textes où Baudelaire a pu rencontrer cette conception de l'homo duplex puisque, aussi bien, l'opposition de la Chair et de l'Esprit constitue l'axe du christianisme ". Ibid., p. 344. Crépet and Blin have noted that J.-P. Sartre has insisted on the simultaneity of the two tendencies : " Il faut entendre, en effet, que ces deux postulations ne sont pas indépendantes - deux forces contraires et autonomes appliquées simultanément au même point - mais que l'une est fonction de l'autre ". Ibid., p. 345. See also Sartre's Baudelaire, Gallimard, 1947, pp. 81 - 82.

(2) J, 1949 - 1966, p. 827, January 2, 1949.

In his thinking, then, Green has reached a stage where he clearly recognizes the intermingling of the two forces as essential; yet despite this intellectual acceptance, emotionally the problem is far from resolved, as the diary makes clear. Later in January, Green writes that his greatest sin will have been his unwillingness to accept the human condition.<sup>(1)</sup> Towards the end of February, he records that he has reached the conclusion, after years of struggle and reflection, that he hates the sexual instinct; while recognizing its importance, he detests the notion of desire.<sup>(2)</sup> Soon afterwards, the discovery of Kierkegaard through Jolivet's book<sup>(3)</sup> was to have a profound effect on Green, so much so that he wrote : "L'Introduction à Kierkegaard m'a bouleversé comme peu de livres l'ont fait depuis que je suis au monde.... On est parfois horrifié de se découvrir soi-même en un autre et c'est ce qui m'est arrivé avec ce livre".<sup>(4)</sup> It is not difficult for the reader to note features of Kierkegaard's temperament that would have awakened a response in Green, particularly the Dane's feelings of sinfulness and his melancholy, "a melancholy which is bound up with the condition of humanity, corrupted by sin".<sup>(5)</sup> From the published diary, we know that Green followed up his

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- (1) J, 1949 - 1966, p. 828, January 16, 1949. Discussing the problem of the relation of man to the human condition, Green's friend, Jacques Maritain, has written that "what is asked of man is neither to accept purely and simply nor to refuse the human condition - it is to transcend it". See Moral Philosophy, Geoffrey Bles, London, 1964, p. 457. For Maritain, only with Christianity does the effort to go beyond the human condition come to real fruition, op. cit., p. 458, and the philosopher goes on : "The question for the Christian is to transcend the human condition but by the grace of God - not, as for the Indian sage, by a supreme concentration on oneself - and in consenting at the same time to this condition, in accepting it, although not purely and simply, without balking; for the Christian accepts it as to all that pertains to the evil of suffering proper to the human condition, not as to what pertains to moral evil and sin". p. 459.
- (2) J, p. 832, February 26, 1949.
- (3) Régis Jolivet, Introduction to Kierkegaard, translated by W.H. Barber, Frederick Muller Ltd., London, 1950.
- (4) J, p. 839, April 24 or 25, 1949.
- (5) Introduction to Kierkegaard, p. 70.

discovery of Jolivet's Introduction to Kierkegaard by further reading of the Danish thinker. Again the effect is considerable : " Lecture de Crainte et Tremblement qui me fait l'effet d'un coup de tonnerre ".<sup>(1)</sup> For Kierkegaard, " Faith is the highest passion in a man ";<sup>(2)</sup> for Green : " La foi, je sais ce que c'est.... elle est en moi si profonde qu'elle donne sa couleur à tout, au bien comme au mal ".<sup>(3)</sup> It is not our intention to give here a detailed comparison of Green's and Kierkegaard's religious thought - this is not the place for it - suffice to say that Green's intense Catholic faith is on many points far removed from Kierkegaard's own religious conceptions.<sup>(4)</sup> What the two men certainly share is a similar mysticism, where mysticism is taken in the broader sense to mean, as Jolivet puts it, " all ardent and profound spiritual life, with longer or shorter periods of tranquil contemplation ".<sup>(5)</sup> Green himself wrote in October 1949 that " Jacques Maritain a toujours soutenu que mes livres étaient ceux d'un homme vivant sur le plan mystique (il entendait cela d'une façon large) et je crois qu'en effet il y a dans tous mes livres une inquiétude profonde qu'un homme irréligieux n'eût jamais éprouvée ".<sup>(6)</sup> It is this whole anguished outlook on life, Kierkegaard's " dread of being alone in the world, forgotten by God ",<sup>(7)</sup> and Green's " effroi d'être au monde, sous

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(1) J, p. 843, May 21, 1949.

(2) Søren Kierkegaard, Fear and Trembling, trans. Walter Lowrie, Doubleday Anchor, New York, 1954, p. 131.

(3) J, p. 843, May 21, 1949.

(4) For a discussion of Kierkegaard's attitude to the Church and Catholicism, see Régis Jolivet, op. cit., pp. 172 - 177.

(5) Ibid., p. 191.

(6) J, p. 877, October 29, 1949.

(7) Søren Kierkegaard, The Journals, ed. & tr. Alexander Dru, Oxford University Press, London, 1938 (repr. 1959), p. 220.

toutes ses formes ",<sup>(1)</sup> that draws thinker and novelist together, with Christ providing the only possibility of deliverance.

For part of the summer of 1949, Green was in fact in Kierkegaard's homeland and while in its pleasure-loving capital noted significantly : " Las de ce qui me trouble, ô mon Dieu, las à en mourir ".<sup>(2)</sup> This allusion to his personal difficulties is followed by a further laconic notation on his return to Paris : " S'accepter tel qu'on est, je trouve cela difficile ".<sup>(3)</sup> Later in September, reading Barbellion's diary,<sup>(4)</sup> Green is grateful to him for having expressed his sexual anguish : " Il crie ce qu'on n'osait pas dire à son époque : " I am sex-starved ! " Il a, lui aussi, la haine de l'instinct sexuel, de cette bête féroce qui nous habite et nous dévore par le dedans ".<sup>(5)</sup> Relating his reading of Barbellion to the novel he is writing at the time, Moïra, Green adds : " A un moment, il (Barbellion) dit une phrase que j'avais mise dans la bouche de Joseph, mais tant pis, je ne changerai pas ce que j'ai écrit ".<sup>(6)</sup> It is of interest to examine the original passage in Barbellion's diary and to compare it with what Green himself had written in Moïra. Barbellion records : " Therefore it shall be told that I who am capable of passionate love am sexually starved.... I search daily in the streets with a starved and hungry look. What a horrible and powerful and

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(1) J, p. 877.

(2) Ibid., p. 860, September 2, 1949.

(3) Ibid., p. 861, September 16, 1949.

(4) The diary referred to is The Journal of a Disappointed Man by W.N.P. Barbellion (i.e. B.F. Cummings), published by Chatto and Windus, London, in 1923.

(5) J, p. 862, Sept. 24, 1949. Green's italics.

(6) Ibid., p. 862.



hateful thing this love instinct is ! I hate it, hate it, hate it. It will not let me rest ".<sup>(1)</sup> It is unnecessary to emphasize the closeness of these reflections to lines written by Green, culminating in Joseph's " Je hais l'instinct sexuel.... Cette force aveugle, c'est le mal ".<sup>(2)</sup>

Green has stated clearly that the carnal episodes he describes express part of the truth he carries in him, but they weigh on him and he hates them; he tells us that all this experience will somehow or other find its way into his novel (Moïra).<sup>(3)</sup> Were it not for the sexual problem, which he has no wish to discuss, he feels he would be perfectly happy.<sup>(4)</sup> However, his difficulties are such that he can write : " On ne saura qu'après ma mort contre quoi il aura fallu que je lutte pour continuer d'être moi-même et faire acte de présence jusqu'au bout ".<sup>(5)</sup> This unrelenting struggle, " c'est l'affreuse condition humaine. Deux hommes en nous, dont l'un veut couper la gorge à l'autre. Arrangez-vous avec cela ".<sup>(6)</sup> He describes the novel he is writing as a long cry of anger against instinct, adding, somewhat cryptically, that he thinks his case will one day appear very strange when everything is known about it; yet at the same time he is inclined to believe that it is not as uncommon as could be supposed, and he concludes that faith is the cause of this fierce conflict.<sup>(7)</sup> The

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(1) Barbellion, op. cit., Penguin Books in association with Chatto and Windus, London, 1948, p. 168.

(2) Moïra, O.C., III, pp. 86 - 87.

(3) J, p. 863, Sept. 24, 1949.

(4) Ibid., p. 865, Sept. 30, 1949.

(5) Ibid., p. 865.

(6) Ibid., p. 872, October 19, 1949.

(7) Ibid., p. 881, November 11, 1949.

extent to which Joseph's drama in Moïra is the author's own is made plain by Green who writes of his novel : " Comment ne verrais-je pas que c'est la transposition de ma propre histoire ? L'éternelle lutte contre soi-même. J'ai mis en scène un protestant comme on prend un pseudonyme, mais ici je me cache très visiblement, si je puis dire ".<sup>(1)</sup>

The young American Protestant in question, Joseph, comes to the University from his home in a neighbouring State, a township in the hills. His upbringing has been strict and puritanical and, totally lacking in sophistication, when he arrives at his lodgings he is shocked by his landlady's heavily made-up appearance and the cigarette she is smoking; when asked by her whether he approves of her smoking, his quite literal honesty obliges him to reply in the negative.<sup>(2)</sup> At the end of the day, Joseph opens his Bible and reads " avec une application passionnée; une demi-heure plus tard, ayant d'abord éteint la lumière, il se déshabillait pour se mettre au lit ".<sup>(3)</sup> These early details are significant in that they reveal to us from the beginning the two poles of Joseph's life. On the one hand, the all-important nature of the Bible and faith, on the other, rather than natural modesty an unnatural attempt to undervalue or deny a whole vital aspect of human activity. In coming to the University, Joseph has a precise aim - to learn Greek in order to be able to read the New Testament in the original.<sup>(4)</sup> He passionately desires to be close to Christ, as he says to David, his friend destined to the priesthood : " Je veux me tenir près de lui, comprends-tu ? Comme on se tient près d'une personne vivante. Et je veux le

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(1) J, p. 840, May 1, 1949. See also ibid., p. 847, June 26, 1949 : " Je crois que ce qui me pousse en avant dans ce livre c'est que le drame intérieur de Joseph est aussi le mien, avec les transpositions nécessaires ".

(2) Moïra, O.C. III, p. 6.

(3) Ibid., p. 12.

(4) Ibid., p. 13.

voir ".<sup>(1)</sup> At the same time, this vigorous, violent young man wholly accepts the Puritan concept of the body, and especially certain parts of the body, as sinful, something to be ashamed of and consequently hidden.<sup>(2)</sup> His fanaticism is such that when he concludes a passage he has not previously understood in Romeo and Juliet is obscene, he tears up his copy of the play in disgust.<sup>(3)</sup> Thereupon, he asks permission of his supervisor of studies to change his course, and when asked by Mr. Tuck what interests him most, Joseph answers simply " La religion ",<sup>(4)</sup> in the same way Julien Green himself had replied as a young man to Pierre Morhange's question. The professor adds : "... à votre âge la grande affaire de la vie, c'est l'amour, et l'amour fait faire des bêtises ".<sup>(5)</sup> To this, Joseph retorts : " Monsieur Tuck, la grande affaire de ma vie, c'est la religion ".<sup>(6)</sup> Compromise has no place in Joseph's brand of religion,

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(1) Moïra, O.C. III, p. 49.

(2) For example, ibid., p. 36, where Joseph, confronted by two naked statues, avoids looking at them : " De chaque côté de l'entrée se tenaient deux grandes statues de plâtre qu'il évita de regarder parce qu'elles étaient nues....". See also ibid., pp. 38 - 39. It is interesting to compare Joseph's attitude to the naked statues in Moïra with Wilfred's reaction in Chaque homme dans sa nuit. In the latter novel, when Wilfred enters his uncle's house, " le premier objet qui frappa sa vue fut une grande femme de bronze poli, à peu près nue et dont le poing se chargeait d'un flambeau. Elle se tenait au pied d'un escalier et souriait au visiteur qui.... la considéra avec attention. Peut-être ses pensées le menaient-elles plus loin qu'il n'aurait voulu, car il n'entendit pas qu'on s'approchait de lui....". CH, O.C. III, pp. 418 - 419. For Green's own attitude and reactions in this regard, see especially TL, p. 33, where he records his youthful unease at the sight of Praxiteles' Hermes, and p. 67, where he tells us that he himself avoided looking at certain statues.

(3) Moïra, O.C. III, p. 70.

(4) Ibid., p. 73.

(5) Ibid., p. 74.

(6) Ibid., p. 74.

it cannot accommodate any of the world's impurity. When he asks David whether he was right to tear up his copy of Romeo and Juliet, in his reply his friend observes that the world is impure and that all men are obliged to make the best of it. Joseph, however, cannot accept this, for him, " prendre son parti de l'impureté du monde, c'est renier l'Évangile ".<sup>(1)</sup> In each of their conversations, Joseph inevitably adopts the intransigent, uncompromising stance, while David is seen as the incarnation of reason and restraint.

If Joseph embodies many of the traits of the young Green, David's attitudes are much closer to those of the mature writer. Joseph's violence is quite literal and when his friend says the devil must be fought with all the means God puts at man's disposal, Joseph adds : " Avec un fouet, comme Jésus dans le temple ".<sup>(2)</sup> Then, he translates his verbal violence into concrete reality, when, teased and provoked by MacAllister, he uses his belt as a whip to strike his fellow-student.<sup>(3)</sup> However, he soon regrets his action, and, following a reading of Matthew's Gospel, despite his contempt for MacAllister's depravity, goes to ask his forgiveness, " parce qu'il céda toujours au livre, et il céda aussi aux hommes quand il croyait percevoir dans leur langage un écho du livre ".<sup>(4)</sup> This aspect of Joseph's religion with its emphasis on forgiveness contrasts favourably with his violence and the puritanical narrowness of many of his beliefs. Dismayed and revolted by the sexual mores of the student population, he is unwilling to make any concessions to his hatred of the sexual instinct, which for him is a blind, evil force.<sup>(5)</sup> David, more tolerant and mature, qualifies his friend's remarks - a

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(1) Ibid., p. 75.

(2) Ibid., p. 75.

(3) Ibid., p. 78.

(4) Ibid., p. 82.

(5) Ibid., pp. 86 - 87.

man has no right to judge his fellows, this is Christ's teaching, and he adds : " A notre âge, l'instinct est presque irrésistible, l'instinct... sexuel ".<sup>(1)</sup> He accepts the rôle of sexuality in human life and intends to marry, yet when he confides his engagement to Joseph the latter is stupefied and can only reply that marriage is a dangerous temptation.<sup>(2)</sup> He asks David : " Quand tu tiendras cette femme contre toi, penseras-tu à Dieu ? " and quotes : " Aucun impudique n'a d'héritage dans le royaume de Dieu ", while David, restrained as ever, also finds in the First Epistle to the Corinthians an appropriate rejoinder, telling his friend he forgets that St. Paul said " il valait mieux se marier que de brûler ".<sup>(3)</sup> Sensing Joseph's profoundly unhealthy preoccupation with " fornication ", David tries to put him on his guard against this, but to little purpose.<sup>(4)</sup>

Earlier, overhearing the ribald conversation of his neighbours, Joseph has quite failed to understand the references to his own sexuality : " Mais que voulait dire : refoulement ? Et cette phrase d'une mytérieuse inconvenance sur la sexualité endormie ? "<sup>(5)</sup> The Sunday morning, when Joseph realizes he has not thought of God since waking up, we learn : " C'était la première fois depuis des années, et il en éprouva un choc dans la poitrine ".<sup>(6)</sup> Informed by the servant Jemima that " the pretty Miss Moïra " has previously

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(1) Ibid., p. 86.

(2) Ibid., pp. 129 - 130.

(3) Ibid., p. 130.

(4) Ibid., p. 131.

(5) Ibid., p. 92.

(6) Ibid., p. 94.

occupied and slept in his room, in the very bed he has himself used, Joseph resolves to sleep elsewhere.<sup>(1)</sup> He is highly disturbed by all that has recently befallen him - in church he does not receive the sacrament, horrified by the minister's words on unworthy communions.<sup>(2)</sup> When he learns of the death of his fellow-student, Simon, he is unable to feel moved by the news, and such is the nature of Joseph's religion that " selon lui, prier pour Simon était désormais inutile : Simon était jugé ".<sup>(3)</sup> In the evening, undressing as usual in the darkness, this time he is nonetheless unable to resist the temptation of looking at his body : " Autrefois, son père lui disait que le corps menait en enfer et l'âme au ciel. C'était vrai : le corps était l'ennemi du chrétien ".<sup>(4)</sup> Joseph is incapable of concentrating on his prayers, his whole being is elsewhere; his conscious adult sensuality has stirred and, instead of complying with his intention of sleeping on the floor, he placed the bed in the position preferred by Moïra and " passa doucement le bout des doigts sur l'oreiller et sur le drap par un geste à la fois timide et caressant. Tout à coup, il se jeta sur cette couche étroite dont les ressorts grincèrent sous le poids de son corps et s'étendit de tout son long ". (5)

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(1) Ibid., p. 98. " Je ne coucherai plus dans ce lit ".

(2) Ibid., pp. 97 - 98. We shall return to this " thème de l'Eucharistie ", " crainte de la communion indigne ", the importance of which Jacques Petit has noted, see ibid., pp. 1584 - 5.

(3) Ibid., p. 104.

(4) Ibid., p. 106.

(5) Ibid., p. 106. Jacques Petit has pointed to Green's commentary on this scene, see ibid., p. 1586. The author writes in his diary : " Ayant appris la mort de Simon, Joseph est pris d'un violent désir physique auquel il n'entend rien. Il ne sait de quoi il est question, ne peut que se rouler innocemment dans son lit. L'étrange compensation qu'il recherche à la sinistre nouvelle. L'idée de la mort le jette dans la sensualité ". J., p. 856, July 20, 1949. The use of the word 'innocemment' in this context is interesting. The chapter in question, the end of which we have quoted, bears the date September 19, 1949 - see J. Petit's notes, ibid., p. 1585. If in his imagination, as the diary notation of July 20 would have us believe, Green sees his hero's action as innocent, then the actual text of the novel written some two months later would not seem to bear this out, for, as Joseph tells David, that night his thoughts had been far from pure, he had had a revelation of his true nature. He explains that it was because of " une certaine pensée " that came to him on looking at the bed that he had decided to sleep elsewhere, yet he gave way to temptation and flung himself down on the bed. See ibid., pp. 108 - 109.

The revelation of his own strong sensuality has come as a shock to Joseph who, given his inability to compromise, is able to see things only in terms of black and white, all intermediate variations being lost to him. Lying on the floor of his new room as a penance, his thoughts stray to Moïra who would now be sleeping in the bed he had occupied. We learn that Joseph had never before thought of a woman, "ou si fugitivement que cela ne comptait pas, que cela ne souillait pas, mais cette nuit comme la précédente, quelque chose lui brûlait le sang".<sup>(1)</sup> Now he finds himself trying to visualize the young woman but his sensual rêverie soon gives way to a sensation of fear, a feeling of another presence in the room, that of evil.<sup>(2)</sup> However, Moïra will increasingly occupy his thoughts; he has, for instance, to return to his former lodgings to collect a forgotten pullover, and his meeting with Moïra, dressed in red, "plus attirante et moins belle"<sup>(3)</sup> than he had imagined, deeply disturbs Joseph. He is shocked at the sight of the room strewn with articles of women's clothing and by its heavily scented atmosphere.<sup>(4)</sup> During a lecture, Joseph cannot help but re-enact the scene of his encounter and the redness of Moïra's dress and lips makes him think of the harlot of the Book of Revelation.<sup>(5)</sup> Yet the presence of a Roman Catholic student in his class excites his curiosity and later his proselytizing zeal; for Joseph, Terence Mac Fadden, as a Catholic, is "un de ces fils de l'abîme", irrevocably damned.<sup>(6)</sup>

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(1) Ibid., p. 117.

(2) Ibid., pp. 117 - 119. It is as though Joseph were being punished for his unclean thoughts. He no longer feels that "the Lord is his shepherd". (Ibid., p. 118).

(3) Ibid., p. 121.

(4) Ibid., p. 122.

(5) Ibid., p. 125.

(6) Ibid., p. 127.

Edmond Killigrew, the Latin assistant, who often joins in the student discussions, shows perception in his observations on Joseph, telling the young freshman that he fears his own sexuality and regards his body as an instrument of the devil. More directly than Mr. Tuck, Killigrew attempts to impress on him the normality of a young man's preoccupation with physical love, suggesting that perhaps he too thinks along these lines, a remark that serves only to heighten Joseph's irritation.<sup>(1)</sup> His incapacity to reconcile any form of sexuality with his religious convictions remains total, while the fanatic in him, armed with his converting zeal, is ever prepared to break out, as in the case of the Catholic student. The contrast between the religious convictions of Joseph and David is again well illustrated over this incident. When Joseph informs his friend of his intention to convert the young Catholic, adding that he is certain God has asked him to do so, instead of the enthusiastic response he had anticipated, David replies with circumspection. Whereas for Joseph, Terence Mac Fadden as a Catholic cannot hope for salvation, for David : " Personne au monde ne peut affirmer qu'il court à sa perte. On t'a appris comme à moi que pour être sauvé il suffit d'être baptisé et de croire en Christ. Si Terence Mac Fadden remplit ces deux conditions, il ira au Ciel ".<sup>(2)</sup> Displeased with this answer, Joseph feels that David also needs guidance and blames his lack of perspicacity on his plans to marry : " Déjà la corruption était en lui, mais il le sauverait, il les sauverait tous ".<sup>(3)</sup>

Joseph is highly conscious of what he sees as his mission, but he is no longer quite the same innocent and ignorant young man from

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(1) Ibid., p. 134.

(2) Ibid., p. 139.

(3) Ibid., p. 139.



the hills; in a matter of weeks he has come to learn much about himself and the world around him, although what he has learned, rather than make him more tolerant of ideas and ideals different from his own, has the opposite effect of sharpening his prejudices and reinforcing the fanatical aspects of his character. Even the minimum of accommodation that David accords to man's physical make-up and needs is regarded by Joseph with horror. Yet despite this reaction, his thoughts return to Moïra, as he tries to console himself that she is far from being beautiful.<sup>(1)</sup> Earlier, after seeing Moïra for the first time, he had experienced a sense of relief when he considered that the young woman did not correspond to the creature of his "rêves impurs"; fortunately, God had not permitted this.<sup>(2)</sup> At the conscious level, Joseph believes that had Moïra in reality resembled the woman of his sensual rêveries, then she would indeed have constituted a concrete threat to him, whereas in fact he feels that the real Moïra - "trop singulière, trop étrangère d'aspect pour qu'il pût l'admirer"<sup>(3)</sup> - could not conceivably be a danger. Nevertheless, however hard he tries to believe this, he is maintaining a fiction and is soon forced to the realization that the young woman does greatly attract him.<sup>(4)</sup> He has confessed to David :

" J'aurais voulu être un saint comme les saints des premiers temps. Depuis mon enfance, cette idée m'était familière que je serais l'ami de Dieu. J'aimais Dieu. J'ai aimé Dieu avant de le craindre. Maintenant, tout a changé.... je désire horriblement ce péché que je ne commets pas. Tu ne sais pas ce que c'est que cette faim du corps.... Il y a une femme à qui je pense.... Elle est entre Dieu et moi, fit-il enfin. Je la déteste."<sup>(5)</sup>

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(1) Ibid., p. 140.

(2) Ibid., p. 125.

(3) Ibid., p. 125.

(4) Ibid., p. 150.

(5) Ibid., pp. 147 - 148.

The tyranny of Joseph's bodily cravings has hopelessly compromised his youthful aspirations to purity and sainthood.<sup>(1)</sup> While admitting his attraction to Moïra, he holds her responsible for undermining the rightness of his relationship with God.

We have seen that the autobiographical nature of much of Moïra has been freely acknowledged by Green, and in certain scenes of the novel, preoccupations that the author has dealt with in his journals and autobiography are very much to the fore. We have noted that Joseph's aspirations to sainthood strongly recall Green's own keenly felt wishes, and the content of parts of the conversation between Joseph and David concerning sexuality and Christian belief bears a marked similarity to certain diary extracts. David admits that he too knows temptation, telling Joseph that St. Paul's " mieux vaut se marier que de brûler " is equally applicable to all men.<sup>(2)</sup> This leads Joseph to ask whether Christ could have known sexual temptation; for David this question is almost blasphemous, his reply being that he has never thought about it and does not know the answer. Joseph goes on that blasphemy is not his intention : " Mais il me semble que si l'on me disait qu'il a souffert aussi de cette façon, je me sentirais plus fort, je me dirais : 'Lui aussi... ' ".<sup>(3)</sup> So clouded is Joseph Day's religious outlook, so obsessed is he by sexual problems, that he seeks this knowledge; if Christ, who assumed the human condition, assumed it in its totality, knew from his own experience the whole span of man's anguish, including of course one of his most oppressive and tormenting problems, that of the sexual instinct, then Joseph feels that he would be in closer communion with his Saviour and consequently better armed in his struggle against Evil.

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(1) This aspiration to sainthood is of course an important trait in Green, being evoked both in the diaries and in the autobiographical writings.

(2) Moïra O.C. III, p. 144.

(3) Ibid., p. 145. For a similar, though fuller less discreet discussion of this problem in the modern English novel, see David Storey, Radcliffe, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1965, pp. 264, 265, 266.

The question that Joseph poses was also very much Green's own and, particularly concerned about it, during the serialization of his completed novel in La Table Ronde<sup>(1)</sup> he discusses it in detail in his diary. The cautious exchange between Joseph and David in the novel is here replaced by a much fuller treatment of the question :

" Hier, visite du père X..., à qui j'ai soumis les difficultés de mon personnage (Joseph, dans Moïra), touchant la tentation du Christ. Le Christ a-t-il connu la tentation charnelle ? 'Non' a immédiatement répondu le père X... Je lui ai demandé pourquoi, ayant connu la faim tout court, il n'aurait pas connu la faim sexuelle. 'Parce que la faim dont il est question dans l'Evangile (Matthieu, IV, et ailleurs) est toute corporelle et ne peut intéresser que le corps. L'autre porte atteinte à l'âme'. 'Mais comment le Christ, qui a véritablement assumé notre nature humaine, n'aurait-il pas été soumis à l'une des plus fortes de nos tentations naturelles ?' Réponse : 'Il y a des femmes qui n'ont jamais éprouvé cette tentation.' 'Cependant, il s'agit d'un homme.' 'Il y a aussi des hommes qui ne la connaissent pas.' Sans doute. Mais ces réponses m'ont déconcerté. Je me demande pourquoi le Christ s'est revêtu d'un corps, si ce n'est pour souffrir exactement ce que nous souffrons. Il pouvait nous sauver autrement : il a choisi ce moyen, cette incarnation, avec toutes les conséquences, semblerait-il, les plus humiliantes. Je sais bien que la pensée d'une tentation charnelle répugne à la délicatesse d'une âme chrétienne dès qu'il s'agit du Christ. On ne veut pas qu'il ait été seulement effleuré par le désir, et je le comprends : il y a des années, je pourrais presque dire des dizaines d'années, que j'écarte cette pensée, mais il faut poser la question, même si l'on ne peut y

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(1) For details see Moïra, O.C. III, " Notice ", p. 1533.

répondre; il faut la situer, il faut que la question existe. N'est-il pas évident, tout d'abord que la tentation en elle-même n'est pas le péché ? Je parle, bien entendu, du désir non consenti, du désir qui vient du fait que l'homme est constitué tel que Dieu l'a voulu. Ce désir est une faim absolument comparable à la faim dont l'objet est la nourriture, une faim tout aussi cruelle quand elle est frustrée, et qui peut, dans des cas extrêmes, pousser au suicide ou déterminer la folie. Qui a mis cet instinct dans l'homme ? Qui est l'auteur de ce désir ?... Ce qui me choque le plus, je dois dire, c'est que le désir soit présenté comme le Mal. En lui-même, il n'est que ce que Dieu a voulu qu'il fût. Qui osera dire qu'il est mauvais ? Ce qui peut être mauvais, c'est d'y consentir, dans certains cas. De même, rompre le jeûne peut être un péché, mais la faim n'est pas un péché. 'Il y a, me dit le père X.J., un vertige dans l'assouvissement d'une passion charnelle.' Oui, mais ce vertige fait partie de la nature humaine, est voulu par la nature. On raisonne toujours comme si la nature, non soyons plus net, comme si l'appareil sexuel était l'oeuvre du démon. Nous sommes tous tant soit peu manichéens.... Le silence d'emmurés des religieux à qui l'on pose ces questions. " (1)

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- (1) Le Figaro Littéraire, April 14, 1951, published as " Fragments de 'Journal' par Julien Green " and bearing the date May 3, 1950. This extract has not been included in the edition of the Journal, III, 1946 - 52, O.C., published by Plon in 1958, nor in the Journal, 1949-1966, Plon 1969, nor in Vol. IV of the Pléiade edition of the OEuvres complètes, J, 1926 - 1955. In a conversation with the present writer in May 1969, Green said that he had deliberately suppressed the diary passages of May 1950 concerning Christ and sexuality because they were " particulièrement troublants ". Needless to say, we consider their interest outweighs any other factor and hope they will one day find their place in the Complete Version of the Journal.

We quote this passage in extenso on account of its importance in illustrating Green's preoccupation at the time with this difficult question. It would seem eminently reasonable to ask why Christ, having taken on human form, should not have totally assumed the human condition and known at least involuntary sexual desire, " le désir non consenti ". As Green says, bodily desires and the sexual instinct are God-given, and while condemning abuses of sexuality, he rightly criticizes the sterile attitude of many Christians in this regard : " En plein XXe siècle, nos idées sur la religion sont encore si singulières qu'on n'est pas religieux aux yeux du monde si l'on n'est aussi tant soit peu puritain ". (1)

Green could well feel disconcerted at Father X's replies to his questions, and one can ask whether the reader is helped by some of the categorical assertions of orthodox Roman Catholic criticism. Charles Moeller writes that there are exceptional beings who have never known the temptation of the flesh : Christ did not know it because he was the perfect man and because this state of perfection is incompatible with sexual desire and pleasure; lust is seen as a consequence of man's Fall.<sup>(2)</sup> As for Green's own question concerning Christ and carnal desire, Moeller notes : " Il faut invoquer ici la doctrine de 'l'homme spirituel' selon S. Paul, se rapporter aussi au témoignage des saints ".<sup>(3)</sup> Having approached this issue with discretion, Green has not seen fit to discuss it further in his published writings; yet if Christ, as in Monsignor Moeller's conception of the perfect man, did not know the temptation of the flesh, it is not difficult to feel sympathy with David Storey's tormented homosexual protagonist, Leonard Radcliffe : " What can He tell us

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(1) J, 1928 - 1949, p. 552, dated August 1948.

(2) Charles Moeller, Littérature du XXe siècle et christianisme, I, Casterman, 1953, p. 315.

(3) Ibid., p. 315.

about our lives when He didn't even bother to acquaint Himself with the half of it that oppresses us and confuses us the most ? What a wretched and irrelevant thing He must have thought our physical love. He had no need of it ".<sup>(1)</sup> However, Joseph Day does not possess the dialectical freedom of a " modern " hero, victim as he is of so many moral constraints and quite unable to think freely. He is aware of the fatal attraction of what he considers " sin " on the one hand, and of an overwhelming spiritual love on the other. For him, there is no way of breaking out of this manichaeian situation and he is close to Dualism, which Denis de Rougemont has described as affirming the existence of Good and Evil in absolute heterogeneity. There are two distinct worlds and creations : " En effet : Dieu est Amour, mais le monde est mauvais ".<sup>(2)</sup> The dualistic overtones of Joseph's beliefs are clear, but we need not leave the New Testament to find their origin, so strong is the Pauline influence on the young man, particularly the Apostle's stressing of the constant warfare between the flesh and the spirit and his hatred of the body and sexuality. The sexual drive that directs his thoughts and feelings to Moïra is thus considered by Joseph as wholly evil, though the " evil " will prove fatally attractive, " le monstrueux attire du vice " ineluctably triumphing over him as it did over Julien Green himself.

In his book on Baudelaire, Martin Turnell has pointed out that Puritanism itself is rarely the result of sexual deficiency, but rather a form of overcompensation found in highly-sexed people possessing either strong religious beliefs or personal feelings of guilt.<sup>(3)</sup> This is true in the case of Joseph Day who certainly has

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(1) Radcliffe, Penguin edition, p. 266.

(2) Denis de Rougemont, L'Amour et l'Occident, 10/18, Union générale d'éditions, 1962, p. 65. De Rougemont goes on : " Donc Dieu ne saurait être l'auteur du monde, de ses ténèbres et du péché qui nous enserre ". God's creation was a spiritual one, completed in the material order by Lucifer or Satan.

(3) Martin Turnell, Baudelaire, Hamish Hamilton, London, 1953, p. 58.

strong religious convictions together with strong feelings of guilt and anguish on account of his irreconcilable sexual cravings. Working in the cafeteria, he is unable to clear his mind of Moïra; yet the religious impulse is never far removed, and the shock produced within him at hearing his comrades constantly blaspheme abruptly alters the course of his thoughts. Then, he sees the beloved, blasphemed name of Christ as the one reality : " La seule réalité, c'était ce nom qu'on ne prononçait, même dans un blasphème, qu'avec la permission divine ".<sup>(1)</sup> Joseph comes alight, is filled with the conviction that the spreading of the Gospel message is his vocation; as Jacques Petit remarks, his strongest spiritual exaltation occurs shortly before his most violent sensual crisis.<sup>(2)</sup> This late section of the novel also puts one in mind of Green's wartime diary notation concerning a passage from the Spanish mystic, St. John of the Cross, in which the Saint says that as human nature yearns for God, there is inevitably present in his aspiration after good a simultaneous rising flood of carnal desires.<sup>(3)</sup>

Yet for a short period Joseph is certain of his own salvation, of the fact that he has been chosen by God, and his refound proselytizing zeal and sense of mission are again seen in contrast to his friend David's moderation.<sup>(4)</sup> If David's brand of religion seems to tend towards mediocrity, then Joseph's would certainly appear excessive in its stressing of the Fear of God to the detriment of His all-embracing love, and the reader is reminded of passages from Green's own youthful Pamphlet. It is instructive that in his wish

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(1) M, O.C.III, p. 155.

(2) Ibid., " Notes ", p. 1591. " Ici la plus forte 'exaltation spirituelle' précède de peu la plus violente crise sensuelle ".

(3) J, pp. 409 - 410, February 13, 1941. We shall return to this interesting notation and St. John of the Cross's words in our chapter on L'Autre, Ch. VI.

(4) M, O.C. III, pp. 159 - 160.

to 'save' his fellow students, Joseph's proposed methods should lay such emphasis on fear and violence and should single out for explicit condemnation the sin of the flesh : " J'ai cela en moi, la crainte de Dieu, et je la leur ferai passer jusque dans les os, jusqu'à ce que leurs entrailles se liquéfient, comme dit l'Ecriture, et qu'ils ne puissent plus même regarder une femme dans les yeux ".<sup>(1)</sup> Joseph fully recognizes the difference in the religious attitudes of David and himself, as he tells his friend : " Tu aimes le Seigneur dans la paix, mais moi, j'ai la rage de Dieu ".<sup>(2)</sup> He knows his weakness, that as " un homme de désir " his state of grace is a precarious one, yet his ardour cannot be contained and the images of fire he conjures up well match this strange, almost pathological, temperament. Joseph, transported by his mystic élan, reveals to David his preoccupation since childhood with thoughts of Heaven and Hell, but now sure of salvation he tells his friend : " Nous brûlerons, David, nous brûlerons dans une éternité de joie ".<sup>(3)</sup> He feels compelled, however, to confess the desire he had felt for Moïra, although from the seeming security of his state of exaltation he considers this a thing of the past. It is of interest to note that at no time does Joseph's zeal to convert those about him seem to extend to Moïra herself. Identified with the Scarlet Prostitute of Revelation she would appear to represent for Joseph the very incarnation of Evil and thus be irrevocably lost.<sup>(4)</sup> During the composition of the book, the

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(1) Ibid., p. 160.

(2) Ibid., p. 160.

(3) Ibid., p. 161.

(4) Green's choice of name for his novel and for its heroine has been variously commented on. In a preface the author has noted that Moïra is the Irish form of Mary, adding : " Que Moïra soit également un des noms donnés par les Grecs au destin, c'est là une rencontre que je n'ai pas cherchée, mais dont je ne saurais me plaindre ". M, O.C. III, p. 1533. The overtones of hope and confidence that the name of Christ's mother carries stand in sharp contrast to the rôle of Moïra in the novel.



author had remarked upon his hostile attitude to his female character : " D'avance je la hais, mais je serai juste avec elle ".<sup>(1)</sup> It is when Joseph feels free of Moïra, when he is certain that his religious faith and fervour have definitively gained the upper hand, at the highest point of his spiritual exaltation, that Moïra makes her entry and Joseph is confronted with this totally unexpected presence that will try his resolve to breaking-point.

Irate at the failure of his attempts to expel her from his room, obliged to accept her continuing presence, Joseph inevitably comes face to face with his true feelings. In Moïra's presence, the strength of his religious convictions cannot mask the fact that his physical self desires Moïra, but : " Ce n'était pas sa faute s'il la voulait. Son corps d'homme la voulait, mais le corps menait en enfer si on lui cédait. Ce que voulait son corps, son âme ne le voulait pas. Lui aussi, comme saint Paul, avait une écharde dans la chair, et l'ange de Satan le souffletait ".<sup>(2)</sup> Joseph has come to accept the inevitability of physical desire, but of " le désir non consenti "; what is vital is to resist this desire and he is confident that his spiritual self will win the day. However, under Moïra's provocation, irreparable damage is being done, and the young student's simmering sensuality, in reality as violent and irrepressible as the religious impulse, flares up to a henceforth uncontrollable degree. To use Jean Sémolué's terminology, the libido excellendi has been frustrated and is finally defeated by the libido sentiendi.<sup>(3)</sup> Yet this moment of weakness, that in most serious young men of religious inclination would have aroused at most a great deal of self-questioning, is for Joseph an unmitigated disaster. His expression for love-making - " faire le mal " - tells us much about his state of mind, and having

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(1) J, p. 864, Sept. 27, 1949.

(2) M, O.C. III, p. 170.

(3) Jean Sémolué, Julien Green ou l'obsession du mal, Editions du Centurion, 1964, p. 116.

committed this act he has passed the point of no return, can no longer accept himself, feels utter disgust : " elle avait cédé tout à coup; tout à coup, elle était devenue pareille à une bête.... Le mot de Killigrew lui revint à la mémoire : lupa, la louve. C'était cela, Moïra, et l'amour, c'était cela ".<sup>(1)</sup> His revulsion is such that he kills the very object of his desires<sup>(2)</sup>; " Sa haine du mal, qui avait atteint ce jour-là même son paroxysme, s'est emparée de ses membres, a commandé ses gestes ".<sup>(3)</sup> Father Blanchet goes on to stress the danger of regarding Moïra as a satire of Christian moral values, of seeing Joseph as the repressed victim of the intolerable demands and pressures of Christianity.<sup>(4)</sup> For him, the young student is a sick man : " Joseph n'est pas devenu anormal en lisant la Bible, il a lu la Bible en anormal ".<sup>(5)</sup> Yet it would seem clear to the attentive reader that what Green is attacking in Moïra is not Christian values but the excesses of Puritanism, all versions of Puritanism : ".... je voulais dépasser les frontières confessionnelles et atteindre le puritanisme de quelque religion qu'il fût, le puritanisme catholique comme les autres ".<sup>(6)</sup> He had written this after receiving from Allen Tate a letter concerning Moïra which the American critic had seen as " une parabole de la grande névrose protestante de notre monde ".<sup>(7)</sup> Green interestingly adds to his diary entry the

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(1) M, O.C. III, p. 173.

(2) Ibid., p. 1593.

(3) André Blanchet, La Littérature et le spirituel, II, Aubier, 1960, p. 133.

(4) Ibid., p. 133.

(5) Ibid., p. 134. A number of critics e.g. Albert-Marie Schmidt and Maurice Nadeau have dwelt on Joseph's alleged abnormality and denied interest and relevance to a personality considered as maniacal and perverted, and a psychiatric case. See Jacques Petit's " Notice ", M, O.C. III, pp. 1566 and 1569.

(6) J, p. 949, March 16, 1951.

(7) Ibid., p. 949.

declaration of a group of American bishops : " Sex is one of God's endowments. It should not be ignored or treated as something bad ".<sup>(1)</sup> As regards Joseph's mental state and his alleged abnormality, it is plain that he is an extreme case, the unfortunate product of a highly unfortunate, bigoted religious outlook; it is equally plain that the responsibility for any abnormality imputable to Joseph must lie with the Puritan community that reared and instructed him.

Green's indictment of Puritanism is a telling one, and both during and after the composition of Moïra he endeavoured to free himself from the belief that sex was synonymous with sin. At this time, he could write : " Je crois que si l'on donnait le nom de Mal au manque de charité au lieu d'accabler le pauvre corps humain de cet anathème, on ferait chavirer tout un faux christianisme et du même coup on ouvrirait le royaume de Dieu à des millions d'âmes ".<sup>(2)</sup> However, as we shall see, this seeming acceptance of the rôle of sexual love, this wish to exclude sexuality from the category of sin will not automatically lead to a new liberal approach on the part of the writer and, although always desirous of being guided by charity and compassion, Green's thoughts and feelings on this matter will fluctuate and be considerably influenced by the orthodox Roman Catholic viewpoint. Suffice to say that around 1950 the author became more frank and open in his discussions relating to human love and sought a possible accommodation with his religious beliefs.

In Moïra, we have observed how aptly the discussions on religion between Joseph and David illustrate Green's own spiritual interests and preoccupations, and the final exchanges between the two friends before Joseph's arrest, in revealing a David more human and

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(1) Ibid. American bishops' declaration in italics in text.

(2) Ibid., p. 907. Undated 1950, but inserted between two extracts for April of that year.

commiserative than the reader has hitherto seen, point to a greater understanding and charity on the part of the author. David does not attempt to pass judgment on his friend. Joseph says to him :

" 'David, toi et moi nous croyons les mêmes choses.  
Te souviens-tu que Christ a défendu de juger ?  
- Je ne te juge pas, et je ne t'ai jamais jugé, fit  
David avec un élan et une sorte de précipitation.  
J'ai toujours cru que tu valais mieux que moi. Je  
le crois encore. Moi, je ne serai jamais qu'un petit  
pasteur. Mais toi...' Les mots s'arrêtèrent dans sa  
gorge et il posa une main sur la poitrine de Joseph.... "(1)

Despite Joseph's crime, the words of David suggest hope; as Jacques Petit has written, " si faible soit-elle, une lueur d'espérance brille au dénouement, que symbolise le crépuscule encore lumineux ".(2)

Striking features of Môïra are the transitions and fluctuations in Joseph's moods, culminating in the final fall from a state of apparent grace to one of sin, the passage from spiritual exaltation to naked sensuality. Green has remarked in his diary on the ease with which

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(1) M, O.C. III, p. 192. Here we are reminded of the words of Péguy :  
" Le pécheur est au coeur même de chrétienté.... Nul n'est aussi compétent que le pécheur en matière de chrétienté. Nul, si ce n'est le saint. Et en principe c'est le même homme.... Le pécheur tend la main au saint, donne la main au saint, puisque le saint donne la main au pécheur.... Celui qui n'est pas chrétien, celui qui n'a aucune compétence en christianisme, en chrétienté c'est celui qui ne donne pas la main ". Oeuvres en prose, 1909 - 1914, " Un nouveau théologien ", Pléiade, 1957, pp. 1020 - 1022. See also Basic Verities, a selection of Péguy's prose and poetry in a bilingual edition translated into English by Anne and Julien Green, Pantheon Books, New York, 1943, pp. 178 - 182. The first lines of the extract we quote have been used by Graham Greene as an epigraph to his novel, The Heart of the Matter.

(2) Jacques Petit, Julien Green " l'homme qui venait d'ailleurs ", Desclée de Brouwer, 1969, p. 238.

one can pass from God's realm to that of the Devil; commenting on Prévost's novel Manon Lescaut, he writes of the alternation of religious fervour and sexual passion in the hero, des Grieux, and relates this to a similar phenomenon in his own life.<sup>(1)</sup>

In Moïra, Green treats the problem of sexuality with a frankness and candour hitherto unknown in his published work, although the homosexual theme elsewhere explicit, receives only implicit treatment.<sup>(2)</sup> Joseph remains in ignorance of Simon's passion for him,<sup>(3)</sup> even after the young man's suicide,<sup>(4)</sup> and he shows no understanding of Edmond Killigrew.<sup>(5)</sup> The attraction between Joseph and the enigmatic figure of Fraileau is never really elaborated in Moïra, yet Green has described " l'histoire de Joseph et Fraileau " as the book's real subject.<sup>(6)</sup>

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- (1) " Au plus fort de sa passion, des Grieux est repris par le souvenir de la foi, qui est douce et donne la joie, et puis le désir revient, saccageant ce paradis intérieur où il n'a fait qu'avancer d'un pas. Hélas, je connais cela. Passer de la grâce au péché est d'une facilité extrême. Cela se fait en une seconde ". Ce qui reste de jour, Journal 1966 - 1972, p. 238, April 24, 1970.
- (2) Already in L'Autre Sommeil (1930), Green had discreetly introduced the homosexual theme. Chavarche Tchalekian emphasizes the book's importance on this account in his doctoral dissertation, Physical and Spiritual Conflicts in the Works of Julien Green, University of Texas at Austin, 1972, p. 24 and p. 104. Green records that his short story was criticized by Gide : "... ce n'est pas le livre important que j'attendais. On dira qu'il s'agit d'un amour platonique... ". J, p. 23, July 18, 1930. Gide himself does not appear to have mentioned the book in his Journal.
- (3) M, O.C. III, p. 61 and p. 65.
- (4) Ibid., pp. 103 - 104.
- (5) The character of Killigrew is clearly based on Linnie, described in Terre lointaine, pp. 265 - 268. Compare with Green's description of Killigrew in M, O.C. III, pp. 67 - 68. The somewhat sinister Killigrew in vain attempts to force Joseph to an understanding of his nature, see ibid., pp. 133 - 138. The phrase he uses in his conversation with Joseph : " vous êtes tellement.... virginal ! " (p. 133), recalls Gide's : " Vous êtes tellement virginal ! " addressed to Green himself. See " Rencontres avec Gide ", O.C. III, p. 1361.
- (6) J, p. 901, March 24, 1950.

Very early in the novel Simon guesses that Joseph is " in love " although, in the ambiguity of his relations with Praileau, Joseph never does consciously recognize any attraction towards his fellow-student.<sup>(1)</sup> During the fight between the two young men at the edge of the pond, in his moment of victory Joseph experiences " une joie folle " and has " l'impression d'assouvir une faim mystérieuse ",<sup>(2)</sup> but is not consciously aware of any sexual element. Praileau, however, is fully aware of his feelings for Joseph, even admitting to discontinuing to take his meals at Mrs. Dare's on account of Joseph's presence.<sup>(3)</sup> Although Praileau does not again directly intervene in the narrative until the final pages of the novel, his presence is alluded to and he continues to take an interest in Joseph, as in the cafeteria incident, when he warns off the practical jokers and reties Joseph's apron strings.<sup>(4)</sup> After the murder, when Joseph is in need of advice and assistance, it is Praileau who offers concrete help in the form of a plan to escape and leave the country.<sup>(5)</sup> Joseph is unable to understand Praileau's motives in wanting to help him, and in his ignorance of his feelings he vainly asks his helper why he had not wished to have any further contact with him earlier on. Praileau's

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(1) See M, O.C. III, p. 16 and p. 1573, where Jacques Petit notes : " En dépit de sa 'sottise', Simon a deviné ce que Joseph éprouve.... "

(2) Ibid., p. 24. Remarking on this scene in his diary, during the composition of Moïra, Green wrote : " Mon héros a la folie homicide, c'est sûr. Il veut tuer tout ce qu'il désire. Quelle lumière cela jette sur son corps à corps avec Praileau ! Mais il n'en sait rien. Praileau, lui, le sait parfaitement ". J, p. 816, Oct. 13, 1948. Again, following the publication of his novel, Green confirmed that the fight at the pond's edge was in reality a love-scene. J, p. 919, Sept. 23, 1950.

(3) M, O.C. III, p. 26.

(4) Ibid., p. 155.

(5) Ibid., pp. 185 - 189.

sole reply is that it is too late to discuss this question and, as a rejoinder to Joseph's insistent demand, he adds that he could never provide an answer.<sup>(1)</sup> Having abandoned all ideas of flight, before giving himself up, Joseph asks David to pass on to Praileau a message : " - Tu lui diras simplement que ce n'était pas possible. - Comprendra-t-il ? - Il comprendra ce que je comprends moi-même à présent ".<sup>(2)</sup> These words refer of course to Joseph's refusal to escape, yet at the same time they are ambiguous, enabling an unwitting Joseph to convey to Praileau something more. Between Praileau, however, the assured young 'man of the world', fully aware of his tendencies and desires, and the intense and limited Joseph, a slave to the contradictions of his nature, the gulf is very wide indeed. Despite his unconscious feelings, at a conscious level it is impossible to envisage Joseph ever coming to terms with the fact of homosexuality, all the more so given his excessively negative reactions to normal heterosexual relations; for in the light of Joseph's Puritanism, ingrained and intransigent as it is, any kind of compromise would be anathema. Joseph is outraged not only by Killigrew, the advocate of refined paganism and sensuality,<sup>(3)</sup> but is even scandalized by some of the remarks of his friend David, the rational representative of a reasoned and reasonable Christianity.<sup>(4)</sup>

The extremely cautious, discreet allusions to the homosexual theme in Moïra will give way to fuller, more detailed treatment in later

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(1) Ibid., pp. 188 - 189. Yet another example of the 'aveu manqué' or 'aveu impossible' in Green's work. See ibid., p. 1594.

(2) Ibid., p. 193.

(3) Ibid., pp. 68 - 70 and pp. 133 - 135.

(4) See ibid., p. 75, for Joseph's reactions to David's : "... il faut gagner les âmes par la douceur, par la patience, et d'une certaine façon les séduire ". See also p. 77, and pp. 129 - 130 where David makes known to Joseph his engagement.

works, whether in the novel, drama or personal reminiscence. It would seem from Green's own admission and from that of such close friends as Robert de Saint Jean that the composition of Moïra was a personal ordeal for the author in that it raised and probed some of his most intimate and vital interests.<sup>(1)</sup> Green's fear was that people would see his novel as nothing but a story of sensuality, thus overlooking the spiritual anguish and tension, and he recounts that when he explained to Jacques Février that he had above all intended to write a religious work, the pianist appeared very surprised.<sup>(2)</sup> Green's evolution from the vague, dream-like atmosphere of much of his earlier work to a more tangible and clearly defined subject-matter did not please all his critics, as for example Robert Poulet, who expressed disappointment at the lack of mystery and increasingly explicit Christian content he found in Green's work at the time.<sup>(3)</sup> Yet such criticism ignores the fact that Moïra marks a crucial step forward in the fictional representation of Green's universe, the first published exploration in depth of the central core of his preoccupations.

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- (1) Green speaks of " l'angoisse qui s'y trouve presque à chaque page ". (J, p. 900, March 19, 1950). Besides the writer's own notations, we have the testimony of Robert de Saint Jean : " A présent qu'il tire à sa fin, dit-il (Green) de son roman, je puis dire qu'aucun de mes livres ne m'aura fait vivre dans une telle tension d'esprit ". Journal d'un journaliste, Grasset, 1974, p. 288, dated Dec. 14, 1949.
- (2) J, p. 900.
- (3) See O.C. III, pp. 1655 - 1656, where Jacques Petit quotes Poulet's remarks. The latter was to welcome the publication of Chaque homme dans sa nuit in May 1960, since for him this novel " a recouvert toutes les vertus de la première manière ". O.C. III, p.1656. [Reproduced from Poulet's article, "Les deux Green", Carrefour, May 25, 1960].



## THE DRAMATIC TRANSPOSITION : A MAINLY THEATRICAL INTERLUDE

Following the publication of Moïra in 1950, Green was to turn to the theatre, encouraged by Louis Jouvet.<sup>(1)</sup> While the author was working on the composition of his play, a significant event during this period was the loss of his much older friend, André Gide. The death of Gide in February 1951 prompted Green to write several articles on their friendship<sup>(2)</sup> and to note in his Journal Gide's attitude to his Catholicism after his return to the Church.<sup>(3)</sup> For Gide this return was a sort of scandal, and every time Green and Gide met after 1945, the latter would attempt to win his younger friend over to unbelief :

" La conversion, dans mon cas, était à ses yeux un fléchissement devant les forces de l'hérédité, et Gide n'admettait pas qu'on fléchît.... Ce qu'il y avait en lui de religieux donnait à son athéisme une forme particulière et à sa non-croyance l'aspect d'une religion. D'autre part, l'intuition extraordinaire qu'il avait des êtres lui permettait de savoir à quel point j'étais troublé par nos entretiens sur le catholicisme, quelque soin que je misse à lui cacher mon état d'esprit.... il ne renonça jamais tout à fait à me convertir, et il le faisait visiblement par acquit de conscience et quelquefois contre son gré. " (4)

- (1) J, p. 925, Oct. 11, 1950. Several false starts were to precede the successful composition and completion of Sud in March 1952, including an attempt at a play entitled Demain n'existe pas : " L'idée m'en a été suggérée par le tremblement de terre de Messine ". J, p. 928, Oct. 25, 1950. See also Ibid., pp. 957, 964.
- (2) O.C. III, pp. 1358 - 1361, " Rencontres avec Gide ", and pp. 1793 - 1795.
- (3) J, p. 951, March 24, 1951.
- (4) Ibid., p. 951, March 24, 1951. Green's italics.

Later in 1951 Green again emphasizes to what extent he was disturbed by Gide's endeavours to undermine his Christian faith; after his meetings with Gide he required time to overcome the doubts that the latter planted in his mind.<sup>(1)</sup> In the same year, another of Green's friends, Georges Poupet, died; he had been attentive to Poupet's suffering, and following a visit to pay his final respects to the dead man, he could not help comparing the sadness and dejection of his friend's expression - " il y a des années de grandes douleurs morales et physiques dans ces traits " - with the stern and triumphant countenance of Gide on his death-bed.<sup>(2)</sup>

References in Green's Journal to his general dissatisfaction with his life during this period are not uncommon, though he wonders about the precise nature of the life he dreams of leading.<sup>(3)</sup> With advancing years and the corresponding diminution in the intensity of physical desire, Green comes to grips with what is essential, what really counts for him - prayer and his reading of the Bible : " Les quelques minutes qu'on donne à la lecture de la Bible et à la prière, cela est vrai, le reste ne l'est pas. Le reste est une sorte de rêve grotesque auquel je n'arrive jamais à croire tout à fait ".<sup>(4)</sup>

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- (1) Ibid., p. 967, July 11, 1951. Green's diary references to Gide are far more frequent than Gide's to Green, and in his Journal, 1939 - 1949, Pléiade, 1954, we find that Gide makes only a passing reference or two to Green. In his published diary at least, Gide has not referred to these conversations on religion.
  - (2) J., p. 971, 21 or 22 July, 1951. Green adds that the contrast between the two is surprising " et m'éclaire tant sur l'un que sur l'autre et je ne puis m'empêcher de croire que celui de ces deux êtres qui paraît le plus abaissé est, qui sait ? le plus près du Christ, mais je ne veux pas juger ".
  - (3) Ibid., pp. 975 - 976, Oct. 14, 1951. " Je voudrais mener une vie différente, mais quelle est cette vie dont je rêve ? Je ne crois plus ce que disent les hommes ".
  - (4) Ibid., p. 983, Dec. 11, 1951. Several days later, Green writes : " Peu de choses m'intéressent, parce que ma vie est ce qu'elle est, mais je serai toujours fasciné par l'essentiel ". Ibid., p. 983, Dec. 15, 1951.

At the same time, Green works at the composition of Sud, although the play, completed early in March 1952, will wait a year for its première at the Athénée. In Sud, Green was anxious to achieve a serious treatment of a very important theme, and in the Preface to his play he wrote :

" J'ai écrit cette pièce en réaction contre une littérature de qualité inégale dont les origines remontent aux environs de 1925 et qui gâtait à mes yeux un grave et noble sujet en le situant presque tout entier sur le plan charnel.... Il va de soi que ce drame serait impossible en 1953, mais nous sommes en 1861, au milieu d'un siècle où pesait sur des passions de ce genre un silence écrasant. Le péché de Ian Wiczewski n'est pas d'avoir aimé Erik Mac Clure, mais bien d'avoir cruellement fait souffrir une femme à qui il demandera pardon. "(1)

Green stressed in an interview with his friend, Robert de Saint Jean, the fact that for the Christian homosexuality is simply one aspect of the much larger problem of sexuality, and he continues : " Si j'avais donné à Sud un autre titre, 'Le lieutenant Ian', par exemple, le parallèle avec Moïra eût été plus facile à saisir, et plus instructif. Chez Joseph Day comme chez Wiczewski, en effet, une sensualité impérative s'accompagne de la haine de l'instinct sexuel, car ces deux hommes sont à la fois charnels et spirituels, et peut-être tirés davantage par le haut que par le bas ".<sup>(2)</sup> Green's questioner goes on to mention the author's fears that the public would misunderstand the nature of Sud, that they would think of the play as a

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(1) O.C. III, pp. 1723 - 1724.

(2) Robert de Saint Jean, Julien Green par lui-même, p. 105.

" pièce charnelle ", not perceiving its religious character. However, in his reply, Green remarks that in general the public had accepted his play as he would have wished, though he feels the need to emphasize Ian Wiczewski's 'outsider' qualities : "... Wiczewski vient 'd'ailleurs', et pour bien d'autres raisons que la singularité de sa passion ".<sup>(1)</sup> And Green cites the young officer's Polish origin and his consequent lack of involvement in the struggle between North and South. Drawing a parallel with Joseph Day in Moïra, Green adds that Joseph too with his red hair, coming to the university from a small town in the hills, is very much the outsider. The same is true of Pierre, in L'Ennemi, a bastard and a man who has forsaken Holy Orders.

In the very first scene of Sud, Wiczewski is made aware of his 'foreignness' by Regina, Edouard Broderick's young niece : " Vous avez beau faire, vous ne serez jamais de chez nous.... Vous restez étranger, malgré cet uniforme ".<sup>(2)</sup> Yet sympathy for Wiczewski does not come readily on account of his arrogance and his disdainful attitude towards Regina<sup>(3)</sup> and more generally on account of his seeming racial prejudice.<sup>(4)</sup> It is only in the final act of the play, fully aware of his true nature and love and the impossibility of its expression, somehow chastened by the experience, that Wiczewski asks

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(1) Ibid., p. 106.

(2) Sud, O.C. III, p. 1000. As Wiczewski himself says much later in the play : " Ce débat entre le Nord et le Sud n'est pas mon débat, cette guerre n'est pas ma guerre ". Ibid., p. 1069.

(3) E.g. his attempt to extract a confession of love from the young woman, ibid., pp. 1000 - 1001, and in a later scene - Act II, Sc. II - when he vainly orders her to find Angelina for him and his verbal violence almost becomes physical (pp. 1044 - 1045).

(4) " Les Noirs ne comptent pas. Les Noirs, c'est comme des meubles ". Ibid., p. 1000. Whether in fact these words are ironic, intended simply to antagonize the liberal Regina, is uncertain.

Regina to forgive his previous attitude and behaviour towards her : " Nous sommes seuls, de nouveau, mais pour la dernière fois, et maintenant c'est moi qui ai quelque chose à vous dire.... Je suis venu vous demander pardon.... Je ne veux pas m'en aller sans vous demander pardon.... Je souffre comme vous et de la même manière peut-être.... Me pardonneriez-vous jamais ? Dites seulement oui, tout bas et je serai en paix, je m'en irai en paix ".<sup>(1)</sup> By way of reply, Regina storms out of the room, but at the very end of the tragedy she admits that, although she had not answered Ian, her heart had been at breaking-point. (2)

Ian Wiczewski's feelings at being an outsider are considerably aggravated when he meets Erik Mac Clure; recognizing the nature of his sentiments, he quickly understands the grave difficulties inherent in this situation. With the encounter between the two young men, Wiczewski's personal drama begins, in the midst of a society which execrated such passions. However, Green's avowed purpose in Sud was to portray a homosexual love which would transcend purely physical attraction : " L'amour dont il s'agit est, dans son essence, bien au-delà du désir; c'est l'amour fort comme la mort dont parle l'Ecriture et qui unit pour toujours une âme à une autre ".<sup>(3)</sup> Edouard Broderick, the owner of the plantation where Ian is staying and who reserves a deep affection for the young officer, seems to have seized upon the nature of his difficulties.

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(1) Ibid., p. 1065.

(2) Ibid., p. 1083.

(3) Ibid., p. 1721. Extract from a text of introduction to a partial recording of Sud. This " amour fort comme la mort " based as it is on a " coup de foudre " would appear to be a somewhat romantic conception and hardly convinces.

Broderick struggles to win the confidence of the young man, for he too has something to confide. His personal difficulties in youth have probably been of a similar order :

" E.B. : L'idée vous a-t-elle effleuré que je devine ce qui se passe en vous ?.... J'avais la rage de me connaître. J'ai voulu savoir et je sais. Il eût mieux valu pour moi ne pas savoir. Ignorant de moi-même, j'aurais conservé quelques illusions nécessaires.... La rancoeur, les désillusions, le sentiment d'avoir été frustré de ma jeunesse ont agi sur moi comme un poison lent et subtil. Plus d'une fois, j'ai été tenté de me confier à quelqu'un, à ... vous, oui, Ian.  
IAN : Il ne le faut pas.... C'est peut-être une erreur de se taire, quelquefois, mais c'est une erreur plus grande de parler lorsqu'il est trop tard. E.B. : Comment savez-vous ce que je veux vous dire ? IAN : Je le devine et ne veux pas l'entendre. " (1)

In an endeavour to cover up for what he sees as indiscretions in his conversations with Broderick, Wiczewski claims he is in love with Angelina, the plantation owner's daughter and asks for her hand in marriage; Broderick, however, is not in the least misled by his young friend's subterfuge and is fully aware of the lieutenant's true feelings, telling him he is in love neither with his niece, Regina, nor with his daughter, Angelina : " Voulez-vous que je vous dise de qui vous êtes amoureux ?.... On n'échappe pas à son destin, Ian, on n'échappe pas à ce destin-là ".<sup>(2)</sup> Wiczewski is incapable of

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(1) Ibid., pp. 1054 - 1055 (Act II, Sc. IV).

(2) Ibid., pp. 1056 - 1057.

commenting on Broderick's statement, and following the latter's natural refusal to accord him his daughter's hand, Ian informs Broderick that he will leave the plantation once and for all. Broderick agrees with this course of action : " Je vous entendrai partir, mais je ne vous dirai pas adieu ".<sup>(1)</sup> Wiczewski's attempt to show he is in love with Angelina is believed neither by Broderick nor by his son Jimmy, nor by Angelina herself.<sup>(2)</sup> Even with a man of Broderick's understanding and tolerance in these matters, Ian is unable to break out of his impenetrable reserve. As Green has written of his hero : " Il ne peut pas dire sa vérité. D'où la violence de son attitude. Il étouffe ".<sup>(3)</sup> Given this inability to confide in any man or woman, Wiczewski can turn only to the fourteen year-old Jimmy. He knows he can speak to the boy, for though he will listen attentively, Wiczewski is aware that Jimmy will not grasp the significance of what is said to him :

" Tu ne peux pas encore bien comprendre et c'est parce que tu ne peux pas comprendre que je vais te confier... un secret. Mon secret.... beaucoup plus tard, quand tu auras vingt ans, ou peut-être seulement quand tu seras un vieux bonhomme de trente ans, tu te souviendras de ce que je vais te dire, et alors tu comprendras.... Je suis amoureux, Jimmy, amoureux comme jamais un être humain ne l'a été avant moi. Tous les hommes disent cela sans doute, mais chacun d'eux a raison. Je ne peux plus vivre.... Un coup d'oeil m'a suffi pour entrevoir de longues années de souffrances inutiles.... Je n'ai pas honte, mais je suis seul. Je me sens affreusement seul. " (4)

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(1) Ibid., p. 1057.

(2) See ibid., p. 1052, where Angelina says : " Pourquoi montez-vous, lieutenant Wiczewski ? Vous savez parfaitement que vous ne m'aimez pas ". For young Jimmy's reaction, see p. 1058 : ".... je ne peux pas me figurer que vous soyez épris d'Angelina ".

(3) J, p. 986, Jan. 15, 1952. Green's italics.

(4) Sud, O.C. III, pp. 1058 - 1060 (Act II, Sc. IV).

Like so many of Green's characters,<sup>(1)</sup> Wiczewski remains an isolated figure cut off from any real communication with his fellows. Faced with the impossibility of realizing his love, he does not feel he possesses sufficient courage to go on confronting life. All he can envisage is long years of useless suffering, he can see no higher purpose in this life which he prefers to end prematurely. In fact, nominal Catholic though he is,<sup>(2)</sup> religious faith seems singularly lacking in Wiczewski and disillusion and despair set in. Pierre Blanchard has written of Ian : " Il désespère parce qu'il ne s'adresse pas au Libérateur, à Celui qui peut briser toutes les chaînes, même celles-là ".<sup>(3)</sup> His proud, secretive, unbending nature remains enigmatic, and the theatre does not provide an ideal setting for the exploration of his motives and feelings.

The autobiographical character of Sud - indeed of Green's three plays - has been commented on and the central importance of the scene of the encounter pointed out.<sup>(4)</sup> Late in February 1952, a week before completing his play, Green noted : " Comment ne pas comprendre que le sujet de ma pièce est l'amour de Ian Wiczewski

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(1) See the author's comments, J, p. 964, July 3, 1951.

(2) See Sud, O.C. III, p. 1000.

(3) Pierre Blanchard, Sainteté aujourd'hui, Desclée de Brouwer, 1954, p. 14. Blanchard goes on to point out that Wiczewski is nonetheless aware of the existence of divine love : " Il le dit à Jimmy, en lui révélant l'infinie sollicitude de Dieu pour chaque âme ".

(4) See, for example, J. Petit's " Notice ", O.C. III, Théâtre, p. 1716 : " .... Sud qui met en scène la rencontre, racontée plus tard dans Terre lointaine, et lui donne son sens véritable : elle est découverte de l'amour et de soi-même ".



pour Eric Mac Clure ? La scène de la déclaration camouflée devrait être la meilleure ".<sup>(1)</sup> This confrontation between the two young men in Act III of the tragedy brings out to the full the impossibility of Wiczewski's situation. The ambiguity of the dialogue, much appreciated by Albert Camus,<sup>(2)</sup> enables Wiczewski to believe for a few moments that his love may be reciprocated.<sup>(3)</sup> He comes very close to a confession when he says to Mac Clure : " Il me suffirait d'un mot pour vous ouvrir les yeux, mais ce mot que je meurs de ne pouvoir dire vous semblerait plus mystérieux et plus abominable que tout le reste ".<sup>(4)</sup> Mac Clure, who has already mistakenly thought that Wiczewski was referring to the problems raised by the prospect of war,<sup>(5)</sup> again fails to grasp the significance of the young officer's words.

Anxious to defend himself against any charge of Puritanism, Erik Mac Clure admits that he himself is in love and that he is far from

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- (1) J, p. 990, Feb. 24, 1952. The names of the characters bear witness to a slight change of orthography. Eric in the J becomes Erik in the final version of the play and the Wicziewski of the diary and the Wicziewsky of the serialization of Sud in La Table Ronde become finally Wiczewski. It is of some interest to note that the Polish word wieszcz means seer, poet, or man of vision, wieszczka, prophet and wieszczcy, prophetic. One thinks of Act II, Sc. IV of Sud, where Wiczewski relates to Broderick his vision or premonition on seeing Erik Mac Clure for the first time. See p. 1053.
- (2) See his letter to Green, dated March 30, 1953, reproduced by Robert de Saint Jean in Julien Green par lui-même, p. 107. Camus' letter includes the following : " Votre lenteur est ici nécessaire, vos réticences sont celles du sujet, et l'ambiguïté du dialogue que j'ai goûtée par-dessus tout est celle même de la fatalité que vous dépeignez..... Notre théâtre..... a besoin de créateurs et d'écrivains comme vous qui lui rendent enfin sa noblesse ".
- (3) Sud, O.C. III, p. 1070.
- (4) Ibid., p. 1071.
- (5) Ibid., p. 1069.

considering love as a sin.<sup>(1)</sup> Yet Ian soon learns that Erik's love is for Angelina and that his own passion is condemned. He derides the young man's " amour bien raisonnable ", criticizing his timorousness and fear and what he regards as the life-denying rigour of his outlook. Then, unable to control himself any longer, Wiczewski's temper flares and his attitude towards Mac Clure hardens into brutality : " Que faites-vous ici, seul avec moi dans cette pièce, à parler d'amour ? "<sup>(2)</sup> Seizing hold of Erik's arm and pushing him in front of the mirror, he goes on, adopting the familiar form of address : " Regarde-toi !.... Regarde ce front pur de tout désir, cette bouche sur laquelle nulle bouche ne s'est posée parce que tu as peur et que tu fais peur... "<sup>(3)</sup> Just before Edouard Broderick's entry, Wiczewski adds with menace : " Je ne te cherche pas querelle, imbécile ! Je veux ta mort "<sup>(4)</sup> In a previous typed version of this scene, the lieutenant says revealingly : " S'il est vrai que je dois mourir, je ne veux pas que tu lises dans d'autres yeux que les miens le désir qui me tue "<sup>(5)</sup> Here, the intensity of the young officer's passion is crystal clear, together with his egoism and possessive jealousy.

When Wiczewski has insulted and struck Mac Clure, both men insist on a duel to be fought without delay, but Erik's " Je ne puis attendre " is followed by the lieutenant's confession : " Je ne puis pas plus attendre que l'amoureux qui court à son rendez-vous "<sup>(6)</sup> If Wiczewski

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(1) Ibid., p. 1071.

(2) Ibid., p. 1074.

(3) Ibid., p. 1074.

(4) Ibid., p. 1074.

(5) Ibid., p. 1750.

(6) Ibid., p. 1074.

cannot possess the object of his passion, then he will try to ensure that no other individual has the possibility of doing so by the domination and destruction of this desired, yet ever unattainable object. During the combat, however, his attitude changes : " On le sentait offert comme une victime à cette fureur qu'il avait déchaînée. L'autre était terrible, frappait, frappait... Vous auriez dit l'ange exterminateur ".<sup>(1)</sup> Mac Clure has fought hard, realizing too late that Wiczewski had resolved to die by his hand. Attention has been drawn to Mac Clure's " fureur " in the duel and to the use of the term " ange exterminateur " to describe the young man, one's thoughts inevitably focusing on Joseph Day.<sup>(2)</sup> Nevertheless, it would be imprudent to draw too close a parallel between the two characters, since the pathological Joseph, whose Puritanism will brook no compromise with the desires of the flesh and for whom all human physical love is synonymous with weakness and sin, is in fact at a number of removes from Erik Mac Clure, for whom there is no incompatibility between human love and Christian faith.<sup>(3)</sup> Indeed, as we have seen above, the young Presbyterian freely acknowledges his love which he sees as a perfectly legitimate emotion. Again, it is tempting to equate Wiczewski with Praileau, both of whom share a certain nobility, self-assurance and arrogance. Yet in Moïra Praileau remains a shadowy and enigmatic figure, who nonetheless

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(1) Ibid., p. 1081. Act III, Sc. II.

(2) Ibid., p. 1751, and see J. Petit, Julien Green l'homme qui venait d'ailleurs, p. 253. See also ibid., p. 256 : " Ne doit-on pas admettre qu'Eric éprouve en face de Ian, comme Joseph devant Praileau, un trouble qu'il ne comprend pas ? Sa violence dit un désir à peine reconnu ".

(3) Compare, for example, Joseph's reaction to David's announcement that he is engaged to be married in Moïra : " Le mariage est une tentation dangereuse.... La chair, le plaisir de la chair et toutes les impuretés que cela suppose... " p. 130, with Erik's words to Ian in Sud : " Je ne suis pourtant pas fait d'une autre chair que la vôtre.... L'amour n'est pas un péché ". pp. 1069 - 1071.

watches over Joseph, actively trying to help him when adversity strikes. It is difficult to gauge the depth of Fraileau's feelings for Joseph, whereas we learn from Wiczewski's own mouth of the overwhelming nature of his passion.<sup>(1)</sup>

Green himself tells us that the character of Ian Wiczewski was somewhat influenced by the person of August Von Platen, as revealed in his Tagebücher which Green re-read in the spring of 1949.<sup>(2)</sup> It is instructive to examine a little more closely the affinities between the poet Platen and Green's Lieutenant Wiczewski : the aristocratic and noble bearing together with the homosexual nature, the cause of so much frustration and embitterment; as well as the fact of living in a century when homosexuality was looked upon as an unmentionable perversion. And Wiczewski too could join with Platen in saying of the loved one, unaware of the passion he inspires :

" Du weisst es nicht, und soll ich dir's beschwören ?  
O nein ! Ich wage kaum, mit dir zu sprechen,  
Um nicht den Traum, der mich beglückt, zu stören. " (3)

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(1) Sud, O.C. III, p. 1060.

(2) See J, p. 836, April 5, 1949, pp. 836 - 837. " Il (Platen) a souffert abominablement.... et c'est ce qui m'attache à lui ". See also, ibid., p. 997, April 6, 1952 : " Pensé à Platen qui a dû agir tant soit peu sur mon imagination quand j'ai créé le personnage de Wicziewsky ". Green refers to Platen's diaries on two other occasions in 1952, firstly in January : ".... le journal de Platen. Sa liaison avec Eduard Schmidtlein est un des récits les plus douloureux que je connaisse. " p. 986, Jan. 17, and more revealingly in September : " L'idée de terminer ma pièce par un duel m'est venue en entendant raconter l'histoire de Nicolas Youssouppoff. J'ai compris que pour Ian la mort devait venir de cette façon, mais il fallait que ce duel fût une manière de suicide. August Von Platen est un peu au fond de tout cela pour la tendresse violente du personnage. " p. 1015, Sept. 27.

(3) Platens sämtliche Werke 2., Sonette, 75 (XIII), Cotta, Stuttgart, n. d., p. 102.

The young officer's dream of a reciprocated love is soon to be dissipated, however, and the duel, this 'manière de suicide' as Green puts it, remains his sole means of deliverance from the cruel bonds of a hopeless, human passion.

In killing Wiczewski, Erik Mac Clure considers himself to be no more than the instrument of God : " Nous ne pouvons rien à ce qui est prédestiné.... Dieu a permis tout cela ".<sup>(1)</sup> Broderick, for his part, is insensed by the young man's phrase, considering that Mac Clure has committed an act of murder, and he invokes the Gospels, asking what place they occupy in Mac Clure's 'théologie de sang'. For the outraged Broderick : " Si Jésus était ici, nous le ferions pleurer de honte, oui, de honte devant le perpétuel échec de sa parole ".<sup>(2)</sup> It is Christ himself who has been insulted and struck down by Mac Clure's action : " c'est le sang du Christ qui a coulé sur le visage de cet homme ".<sup>(3)</sup> Such righteous reflections coming from the mouth of the slave-owner lack real persuasive force; one feels that Broderick would be better employed examining the 'beam' in his own eye before inveighing against the 'mote' in the young Mac Clure's. Yet Broderick is grief-stricken, for he loved Wiczewski, and whereas his words concerning his feelings for the lieutenant have been toned down in the final version of the play, in a previous typed version the full force of his emotion clearly emerges when he says to Mac Clure : " Vous ne savez pas ce que Cyrille (Wiczewski) était pour moi.... J'aimais Cyrille. Ce qu'il y avait dans ma vie de

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(1) Sud, O.C. III, p. 1082.

(2) Ibid., p. 1082.

(3) Ibid., p. 1082.

plus pur et de plus profond, c'était cela ".<sup>(1)</sup> Again, when Broderick asks Regina whether she ever supposed that she was not alone in her love for Wiczewski, she replies : " Oui, je savais ".<sup>(2)</sup> As the tragedy concludes, Regina makes it clear to Broderick that she knew the truth about Ian Wiczewski's passion, then, alone with the body of the man she loved, she refers to the moment when Ian came to ask her for forgiveness : " .... je n'ai rien dit, mais mon coeur éclatait, Ian, comprends-tu ?.... Dieu essuiera toutes les larmes. Il l'a dit lui-même. Il essuiera tes larmes et les miennes ".<sup>(3)</sup> In her grief, Regina's faith remains intact and with her reference to the Book of Revelation and its promise of " a new heaven and a new earth " without pain, the play ends on a note of Christian hope.

As was the case with Moïra,<sup>(4)</sup> Green feared that the religious aspect of Sud would be overlooked, and he remarked to Robert de Saint Jean about his play : " On se trompera sûrement sur le sens

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- (1) Ibid., p. 1751. Broderick's nature and feelings have been remarked upon by François Mauriac, who also comments on the significance of the thrashing given to the fourteen year-old Jimmy in this light : ".... je ne me retiens pas de déplorer que le jeune héros de Julien Green ne demeure pas le seul, dans la pièce, qui soit voué à 'l'erreur étrange et triste' et que le père de famille (bien que nous ne le sachions pas expressément) semble atteint du même mal, ce qui donne à l'épisode, en apparence bien innocent, du jeune garçon qu'il faut fouetter, une signification trouble ". La Table Ronde, April 1953, (Bloc-notes, pp. 125 - 130), p. 129.
- (2) Sud, O.C. III, p. 1752. Text published in La Table Ronde and to be found in a previous typed version of the play.
- (3) Ibid., p. 1083. See Revelation, Ch. 21, v. 4 : " And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain : for the former things are passed away ".
- (4) See above, p. 80.

que je voulais qu'elle eût. On y verra une pièce charnelle, un drame du désir ".<sup>(1)</sup> The author's fears were to a certain extent justified,<sup>(2)</sup> though, as was to be expected, both François Mauriac and Albert Béguin were responsive to the religious and metaphysical aspects of the tragedy.<sup>(3)</sup> Green's characters in Sud are representative of a wide range of Christian belief, from the deeply felt faith of Regina and Uncle John to the nominal, lukewarm Christianity of the adolescent Angelina and Mrs. Strong.<sup>(4)</sup> Uncle John would seem to represent Edouard Broderick's conscience - the old and blind Negro, freed by the plantation owner many years earlier, recalls to Broderick his Christian obligations : " La libération d'un esclave ne suffirait pas. Il faudrait les libérer tous ".<sup>(5)</sup> Broderick, however, who has

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(1) J, p. 1012, Sept. 1, 1952.

(2) See O.C. III, pp. 1729 - 1733, where in his " Notice " to Sud Jacques Petit surveys the critical reaction to the play.

(3) O.C. III, p. 1733. See further the Mauriac article itself, cited above.

(4) For Mrs. Strong the fact that the Old Testament patriarchs possessed slaves is sufficient justification for the continuation of the practice. See Sud, O.C. III, p. 1013. For her, God's chief characteristic is silence, ibid., p. 1014. She welcomes the duel like a little girl : " Un duel aux lanternes. Bravo. J'aime ça. Pour un peu j'irais voir ". Ibid., pp. 1076 - 1077. Yet when " something has happened " and she is compelled to come to grips with reality, she tries to pray : " Je ne veux pas qu'il soit arrivé quelque chose. Si tu es tout-puissant, tu peux faire que rien ne soit arrivé.... Je ne veux pas souffrir ". Ibid., p. 1080. See also, J. Petit, Julien Green l'homme qui venait d'ailleurs, p. 257. Concerning Angelina, Petit remarks that the young girl " pense un peu comme sa tante ", and he goes on to quote her words to Regina : " Oh, les prières ! Tu sais comme moi qu'elles ne sont jamais exaucées.... Autant parler à un sourd ". (Sud, p. 1028) Petit quotes Angelina's affirmation that she is a Christian, reads the Bible and goes to Church on Sundays together with her repeated assertions that God does not answer one's prayers (See Sud, p. 1028), commenting that Green's intention here was not caricature : " l'attitude d'Angelina situe exactement le problème, qui n'est pas seulement de la foi, mais de la relation à Dieu ". Op. cit., p. 258.

(5) Sud, O.C. III, p. 1020.

already freed a number of his slaves, is held back by material considerations; Uncle John is not swayed : " Si vous me permettez de vous le dire, monsieur Edouard, je vous aimerais mieux ruiné que perdu ".<sup>(1)</sup> The limits of Broderick's tolerance are clear, his policy of gradualism will remain unchanged, but Uncle John continues, prophesying the coming tragedy in his former master's house. For the aged visionary " Dieu est amour ", yet the wrath of God is provoked by the absence of love : " là où il n'y a pas d'amour, il n'y a pas de religion. Mais on ne se moque pas de Dieu. L'Ecriture le dit.... Si vous n'aimez pas votre prochain comme vous-même et plus que vous-même, vous êtes perdu ". (2)

The authentic evangelic tone of Uncle John's utterances marks a strong contrast with the pronouncements on religion of other characters in the play, as does Regina's religious attitude. The latter, unencumbered by dogma and nominal church-going, is inspired and strengthened by a simple, profound faith in God and by an example of New Testament teaching that would appear to be rooted in the Unitarian tradition.<sup>(3)</sup> Broderick is well aware of his niece's beliefs and in fact envies her faith.<sup>(4)</sup> Although he has previously remarked

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(1) Sud, O.C. III, p. 1020.

(2) Ibid., p. 1021.

(3) See ibid., p. 1025, where Regina says to Angelina : " Je ne crois ni à la Trinité, ni à la divinité du Christ, ni au baptême.... Je crois simplement en Dieu, le Dieu du Christ qui est en nous tous ".

(4) Ibid., p. 1017. Broderick is speaking to Ian : " Je voudrais avoir la foi de Regina.... je sens qu'elle a la foi. Elle croit, elle s'appuie sur quelqu'un ou quelque chose qu'on ne voit pas. Moi, il me semble que je fais semblant - un peu... Il le faut, vous comprenez. Je ne suis pas sûr. Elle est sûre ". See also J. Petit, op. cit., p. 258.



that he believes, like Regina, that God speaks to every individual human being,<sup>(1)</sup> he has become a prey to severe anxiety. Beneath an assured surface, this anguish gnaws away at Broderick. Anguish on account of the political climate and the approach of war, yes, but deeper than this, the anguish of his condition as a man who loves other men and who has been denied the possibility of expressing this love over a considerable period of years. In other circumstances, Broderick's fate might also have been Wiczewski's, for as François-Régis Bastide has aptly remarked : " Sans l'arrivée de Mac Clure, Ian restait incertain de lui-même et ignorait peut-être cette incertitude. Il aimait peut-être Régina, il l'emportait vers le Nord, vers leur pays commun.... Il devenait un Edouard Broderick ".<sup>(2)</sup> Had this been the case, however, it would doubtless have been no more than a temporary solution, a staving off of the inevitable moment of confrontation with some other Erik Mac Clure; then, living as another Edouard Broderick, Wiczewski in his turn would have come to know the tormenting anguish of a constantly repressed and hidden desire.

Neither in the case of Wiczewski nor of Broderick does religious belief offer solace in their respective situations. The young officer endeavours to find release in violent action, while the glimmer of faith in Broderick remains weak and vacillating. It is noteworthy that Green has chosen the form of tragedy for his portrayal of the homosexual theme; within this doom-laden structure, his protagonist " struts and frets his hour upon the stage ", only to face the realization that in this earthly life happiness and satisfaction are

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(1) Sud, O.C. III, p. 1015.

(2) F-R. Bastide, " Le théâtre : Sud, de Julien Green ", La Table Ronde, April 1953, p. 158.

denied him. The forgiveness and understanding, together with the note of Grace, provided by Regina, offer an other-worldly consolation. Purely human love, whether hetero - or homosexual, is assured of a sombre destiny in Green's scheme of things. Only Christian faith would seem capable of offering man a way out of his dilemma.

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When he considers the chaos in his own life, Green often looks with a certain nostalgia in the direction of Port-Royal. He feels an evident attraction for the moral rigorism of the Jansenists and, while engaged in the composition of Sud, he recalled a conversation with the theologian, Father Louis Bouyer : " Beaucoup parlé des jansénistes. Je crois que si l'on pouvait établir d'une façon indiscutable qu'ils n'étaient pas hérétiques, je serais en paix, car il me semble que je vais un peu de ce côté-là, mais je me méfie un peu de cet attrait ".<sup>(1)</sup> Held back by the convert's mistrust, based on his fear of identification with a heretical doctrine, the fascination is nonetheless strong. The Jansenist suppression of " les 'effets' et les astragales de la religion et des autels "<sup>(2)</sup> would also have appealed

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(1) J, p. 965, July 8, 1951. See also ibid., p. 959, June 7, 1951.

(2) In Henry de Montherlant, Le Maître de Santiago, Harrap, London, 1955, ed. J. Marks, " Introduction ", p. lxii.

to Green, whose Protestant origins would have found here a further point of contact.<sup>(1)</sup>

His friendship with the above-mentioned Father Bouyer was to prove valuable to Green, for here was a kindred spirit who had similarly made his way from a boyhood Protestant faith and upbringing - and indeed, in Bouyer's case, from the Lutheran priesthood - to find his true home in the Roman Catholic Church. Green was influenced by Bouyer's writings, and already in 1948 he records the profit he had derived from an article by the priest on psychoanalysis.<sup>(2)</sup> In November 1952, after reading a chapter of Bouyer's book on another eminent convert, Cardinal Newman, Green could note that for the first time in a long while he had gone to sleep in peace.<sup>(3)</sup> Then, in the summer of 1954, commenting on the ever widening gulf between the life he is living and his religious beliefs, he writes : " J'essaie d'oublier le monde plutôt que de lutter frénétiquement comme je l'ai fait en 1948. Sur le plan humain, sur le plan des choses explicables, il y a eu un concours de circonstances qui ont sans doute motivé ce changement. La lecture du livre du Père Bouyer, Du Protestantisme à l'Eglise, aura été pour moi un événement presque aussi important que la découverte de Kierkegaard ".<sup>(4)</sup> Several days later, Green repeats

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- (1) Although the author would doubtless protest that he had not become a Roman Catholic in order to seek points of contact with his Protestant background.
- (2) J, p. 784, March 18, 1948.
- (3) Ibid., p. 1016, November 8, 1952.
- (4) Ibid., p. 1059, July 19, 1954. Louis Bouyer's book, published by Les Editions du Cerf (2nd edn. 1955), is in Bouyer's own words " un témoignage. Il dit simplement par quelle voie l'adhésion à l'Eglise catholique en est venue à s'imposer à la conscience d'un protestant ". " Avant-propos ", p. XI. Following a dense analysis, ranging from the Reformation to present-day relations between the Protestant Churches and the Roman Catholic Church, Bouyer looks forward to a general return of Protestants to the Mother Church. However : " La conclusion ultime de cet essai ne peut qu'être de rappeler aux catholiques ce qu'eux-mêmes doivent réaliser pour rendre possible ce retour; d'abord cette compréhension du sens premier et profond du mouvement protestant.... puis une conscience renouvelée de ce qu'est et de ce que signifie le fait de l'Eglise catholique elle-même : de sa nature profonde et de tout ce qu'elle implique ". p. 245.

his admiration for this work, adding : " Il faut rentrer en soi, chercher Dieu à tout prix, et c'est cela seul qui compte.... C'est à contre-cœur que j'ai suivi l'instinct charnel, et souvent avec une horreur dont on ne pourrait se former une idée si on ne l'a pas éprouvée soi-même ".(1)

Green's personal quest for spiritual improvement has been charted in L'Ennemi in the person of Elisabeth, and much of the author's moral anguish at the time has found its way into L'Ombre transposed in the character of Philip Anderson.<sup>(2)</sup> The fifties were for Green a decade of intense self-examination and questioning, as the published diaries amply illustrate. The reading of Louis Bouyer's Du Protestantisme à l'Eglise was to prompt Green to look more closely at certain aspects of the Protestant faith and for a time he became particularly interested and engrossed in the works of Calvin. In fact, August 1954 saw Green in the fief of the Reformer reading l'Institution chrétienne.<sup>(3)</sup> His pleasure at obtaining a copy of Calvin's own French translation was great, several long diary extracts summing up his impressions : ".... on trouve dans ces pages un sens de la religion qui ne peut tromper, un accent, une foi, quelque chose qui transporte et dont on ne peut supposer qu'il vienne d'ailleurs que de Dieu ".<sup>(4)</sup> Two days later, while noting his admiration for Calvin's total lack of religious sentimentality, a quality Green considers the Reformer shares with St. John of the Cross, he nonetheless recognizes Calvin's excesses, for although " la rigueur de sa logique est accablante.... il est extraordinaire que, si forte et si puissamment armée, elle ait pu

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(1) J, pp. 1060 - 1061, July 23, 1954. And again, ibid., p. 1063, August 1, 1954.

(2) L'Ennemi, completed in September 1953, was performed at the Bouffes-Parisiens in March 1954 and published later that year. Written during 1954 and 1955, L'Ombre had its première at the Antoine theatre in September 1956 and was published towards the end of the year.

(3) See J, p. 1066, Aug. 9, 1954 and p. 1067, Aug. 11, 1954.

(4) Ibid., p. 1070, Aug. 20, 1954.

dévier d'une manière aussi monstrueuse ".<sup>(1)</sup>

The author tells us that from his reading of Calvin there sprang up a whole series of metaphysical reflections. Regarding his relationship to God, he could write : " Ai-je vécu un seul jour sans penser à Dieu ? Je crois pouvoir dire que non, en tout cas depuis l'âge de quinze ans et sans doute avant cela, mais cette idée constante s'est trouvée mêlée à des préoccupations temporelles de manière qu'il faudrait parler de tout cela ensemble, si l'on voulait savoir la vérité ".<sup>(2)</sup> After his return to Paris, Green continued to deepen his knowledge of Calvin,<sup>(3)</sup> as well as reading other works on Protestantism and on Christianity more generally.<sup>(4)</sup> A passage in Felice's Histoire des protestants français, concerning the sixteenth century and the appalling tortures imposed by both Catholics and Protestants alike, prompts Green to comment on the constant failure of the Gospel message : " Toujours et partout, des deux côtés, l'échec de l'Evangile, sauf au plus secret du coeur de certains. La Réforme de l'Eglise se fait au plus profond de nous-mêmes ".<sup>(5)</sup> Despite his study of Protestantism and his awareness of the debt Catholics owe to the Reformation for direct access to the Scriptures in the vernacular,<sup>(6)</sup> Green is anxious to make clear that since early

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(1) Ibid., p. 1071, Aug. 22, 1954. Green cites the chapter on predestination. See also ibid., p. 1072, Aug. 24, 1954. " Lorsque Calvin s'égare, il est effroyable. D'un livre hérissé de contradictions apparentes, l'Ecriture, il tire des conclusions dont il fait un faisceau horrible ".

(2) Ibid., pp. 1071 - 1072, Aug. 22, 1954.

(3) See ibid., pp. 1077 - 1078, Sept. 11, 1954 and pp. 1079 - 1080, Oct. 12, 1954.

(4) For example, he mentions Funck-Brentano's Luther and his re-reading of part of Henri Bremond's Histoire littéraire du sentiment religieux en France, See ibid., pp. 1083 - 1084.

(5) Ibid., p. 1080, Oct. 29, 1954.

(6) Ibid., p. 1081, Oct. 30, 1954.

adolescence his adherence and commitment to the Catholic Church have never been so strong : " Depuis l'âge de quinze ans, je pense ne m'être jamais senti plus près de l'Eglise, n'avoir jamais été plus profondément d'accord avec elle ".<sup>(1)</sup>

When Green wrote the above lines, unequivocally expressing his solidarity with the Church, L'Ennemi was already behind him and he was working on L'Ombre. These years of groping towards spiritual improvement have coincided with publications in the field of the novel and drama in which the author reveals more of his preoccupations and obsessions than ever before. In 1950, Moïra had openly and frankly illustrated the dangers of a narrow, hidebound puritanism with all its unfortunate ramifications particularly in regard to the individual's sexual development, followed two years later, by Sud,<sup>(2)</sup> which highlighted aspects of the homosexual predicament. Both L'Ennemi and L'Ombre reflect a great deal of the author himself, more especially the former - " L'Ennemi est pour moi un très grand enseignement. C'est un miroir "<sup>(3)</sup> - while the latter, written during a highly agitated phase of Green's life culminating in the crisis of the summer of 1955,<sup>(4)</sup> seeks to convey much of the anguish he felt - " Toute cette angoisse de Philip Anderson, de quoi serait-elle faite sinon de ce que j'éprouve moi-même ? "<sup>(5)</sup> Furthermore,

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(1) Ibid., p. 1089, Nov. 29, 1954. While he had been reading Calvin in the previous August, Green had not hesitated to point out what he considered the Catholic content of the Reformer's writings; he thought it all but certain " à la lumière du livre du Père Bouyer qu'une partie importante de la vérité catholique a été souverainement exprimée par Calvin. Les controverses ont obscurci ce fait capital ". Ibid., p. 1070.

(2) The play was actually staged and published in 1953.

(3) J, p. 1030, Aug. 24, 1953.

(4) Ibid., p. 1148, Aug. 11, 1955 and p. 1151, Sept. 1, 1955.

(5) Ibid., p. 1147, Aug. 5, 1955.

towards the end of January 1955, Green had again taken up the manuscript of his novel, Le Malfaiteur,<sup>(1)</sup> which deals directly with the homosexual theme. These years, then, constitute a period of intense self-revelation, thus preparing the way for the publication of the volumes of autobiography in the 1960's.

While Green was writing his own plays, he was impressed by the dramatic works of two great atheist contemporaries, Sartre and Montherlant, the one passionately anti-clerical, the other gifted with a remarkable ability to penetrate and interpret Catholic thought " as if from the inside "<sup>(2)</sup> Green listened with rapt attention to Le Diable et le Bon Dieu - " ce drame étrange qui touche aux seules questions intéressantes en ce monde "<sup>(3)</sup> and noted his admiration for Huis-clos, considering that the play could have been written by a Catholic with very little modification.<sup>(4)</sup> Of greater interest and relevance, however, are Green's reactions to Montherlant's Port-Royal, in that this play with its Jansenist theme and content - " d'une austérité janséniste à souhait " -<sup>(5)</sup> is close to much of Green's own religious thought and temperament. Guarded in his comments on the religious aspects of Port-Royal, he nevertheless writes concerning Jansenism that it seems to him " qu'il s'agit moins d'une hérésie que d'une conception particulière de la religion ou si l'on veut, d'une tendance à la rigueur. C'est affaire de

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(1) See ibid., p. 1099, January 30, 1955 and O.C. III, Chronologie p. XI and p. 1595. The novel, begun at the end of 1936 and abandoned in 1938, was published in the Oeuvres complètes, Romans, IV, in 1955.

(2) J.W. Batchelor, " Religious experiences in Henry de Montherlant's dramatic characters ", Australian Journal of French Studies, Vol. III, N° 2, 1966, p. 180.

(3) J., p. 960, June 12, 1951.

(4) Ibid., p. 1025, May 17, 1953. " L'enfer, c'est avant tout de ne pouvoir aimer ". See also, p. 1063, Aug. 1, 1954.

(5) Ibid., p. 1092, Dec. 14, 1954.

tempérament, non de foi ".<sup>(1)</sup> A month later, admitting to a much greater admiration for Port-Royal after having seen a stage performance, Green adds that Montherlant's Jansenists remind him of the Presbyterians he had known in his youth.<sup>(2)</sup>

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L'Ennemi, as we have noted, was completed in September 1953, and the author has commented on the ease of composition : " Cette oeuvre m'a été donnée d'un bout à l'autre. Je l'ai écrite rapidement et sans une rature ".<sup>(3)</sup> This apparent facility is a rare feature in Julien Green's writing, his numerous difficulties of composition being constantly recalled in the diaries. Yet L'Ennemi is indeed a special case : reflecting as it does so much of the author's personal conflicts and experience, it is in reality the

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(1) Ibid., p. 1084, Nov. 15, 1954. See also Green's article on Montherlant's play reproduced in O.C. III, pp. 1363 - 1365. [These pages originally appeared in La Table Ronde, in the December issue, 1954].

(2) J, p. 1092, Dec. 14, 1954.

(3) See J, p. 1208, June 11, 1956, and O.C. III, p. 1753. Although, elsewhere in his diary, Green does admit to several false starts, see J p. 1026, June 1, 1953, as well as to having to rewrite part of the play, p. 1030, Aug. 16, 1953. For further comments on the author's methods of composition, see ibid., p. 1034, Nov. 14, 1953.



product of long years of anxious struggle, the actual rendering into dramatic form constituting a comparatively straightforward task for the author. The extent of Green's commitment and of his involvement in L'Ennemi is made clear by a number of diary entries. He has said of the play : " C'est qu'en effet elle me ressemble trop pour qu'on m'y reconnaisse ".<sup>(1)</sup> Regarding his heroine, he has confessed to a critic " à quel point Elisabeth est un reflet de ce que je suis moi-même ", adding : "... je me trouve dans L'Ennemi beaucoup plus que dans mon journal ou dans mes romans ".<sup>(2)</sup> In fact, Green was to note some fifteen years later that the key to his conversion was to be found in this play : " Evidemment on ne sait que ce que j'ai dit en clair, on ignore que la clé de ma conversion se trouve dans L'Ennemi. Pourtant cette clé est là. C'est l'histoire de la lettre volée de Poe : elle est sur la table, bien en évidence, et personne ne la voit ".<sup>(3)</sup> The religious question is indeed much to the fore in L'Ennemi, and in a text written for the performance of the play, Green clearly expressed his intentions :

" La question religieuse était à l'arrière-plan de Sud : elle prend dans L'Ennemi une place beaucoup plus importante, puisqu'il s'agit d'un drame passionnel qui met aux prises l'amour de Dieu et l'amour charnel.... On retrouvera dans cette pièce beaucoup des préoccupations qui ont marqué les dernières pages de mon journal dont

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(1) Ibid., p. 1031, Oct. 12, 1953.

(2) Ibid., p. 1138, July 7, 1955.

(3) Ce qui reste de jour, p. 262, Oct. 5, 1970. See also J. Petit, Julien Green " Les écrivains devant Dieu ", p. 103. [Note 9].

elle forme en quelque sorte le prolongement sur le plan dramatique, tant il me paraît vrai, aujourd'hui, que nous n'inventons rien. " (1)

As with Sud, Green has chosen to give his play a historical setting; Sud was set in the American South, just before the outbreak of the Civil War, while the action of L'Ennemi takes place in the French provinces some four years before the Revolution. It is significant that Green has set this intimate work - his "château de l'âme", as Robert de Saint Jean has termed it<sup>(2)</sup> - in the eighteenth century, a century which has long fascinated the author. Writing about its tragic aspects, in an article dating from 1949, Green pointed out that for him the tragedy was not so much in the presence of the scaffold as in the loss of religious faith: "L'échafaud n'est là que comme le terme nécessaire d'un siècle secrètement désespéré. Il a perdu la foi et s'ennuie comme seulement on s'ennuie quand la foi est perdue. L'ennui est pour lui l'ennemi numéro un et la seule affaire sérieuse est de lui régler son compte."<sup>(3)</sup> The main characters in L'Ennemi well illustrate this situation; here, at the outset of the play, we are introduced to the members of a noble family who live without faith in a château of the Ile-de-France. Four short years before the Ancien Régime is to crumble, these aristocrats seek by the means at their disposal to banish the all-pervading boredom of a mediocre, purposeless existence.

Philippe de Silleranges, his wife Elisabeth and his younger brother, Jacques, are non-believers, yet their attitudes to religion

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(1) O.C. III, p. 1754.

(2) Julien Green par lui-même, p. 110.

(3) "D'un siècle sans espoir...", O.C. III, p. 1348. The article originally appeared in Le Figaro Littéraire, dated April 2, 1949.

differ. For Philippe, it is the duty of the " seigneur " to give a lead to the common people; appearances must be kept up, as he says to his half-brother, Pierre : "... dans une époque troublée comme celle que nous traversons, il faut donner l'exemple au gros peuple, quitte à faire un peu semblant quelquefois. Ni vous ni moi n'en sommes plus à croire, avec M. le Curé et quelques vieilles femmes, que le Dieu de la nature se trouve dans une bouchée de pain azyme..."<sup>(1)</sup> Philippe's drama lies in his impotence and in his consequent inability to satisfy the young and beautiful Elisabeth. He is aware that his wife seeks compensation for her sexual deprivation and that his brother, Jacques, is the recipient of her favours, if not of any deep-felt love. Priding himself on being a man of reason, free from " Catholic superstition ",<sup>(2)</sup> Jacques, who has lived at Silleranges very much in his elder brother's shadow has also suffered on account of his half-brother Pierre's superior gifts and talents, more particularly following the latter's conversion and entering into Holy Orders : " Depuis cinq ans, on me rebattait les oreilles de ses vertus.... Il y avait autour de Pierre je ne sais quoi de surnaturel qui en imposait aux incroyants les plus déterminés. Moi seul n'était [sic] pas dupe.... "<sup>(3)</sup> Jacques, his personality warped by his cynicism and jealousy, experiences a vengeful satisfaction, however shortlived, at seeing his half-brother reduced to the level of a " fugitive ", seeking refuge in the Silleranges château. He derides Pierre's " lubies mystiques "<sup>(4)</sup> and from his mouth we learn certain facts about Pierre's adolescence :

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(1) L'Ennemi, O.C. III, p. 1127. For Jacques' comment on Philippe's religion, or rather lack of it, see ibid., p. 1088.

(2) He nonetheless - " par un scrupule " - removes the crucifix from above Pierre's bed. See ibid., p. 1088.

(3) Ibid., p. 1088.

(4) Ibid., p. 1089.

" A dix-huit ans, il était arrogant, brutal, glorieux. Par voie de conséquence, les filles l'adoraient.... Sa conversion subite nous frappa de stupeur. D'un jour à l'autre, elle fit de lui l'homme le plus ennuyeux du monde ".<sup>(1)</sup>

Pierre has returned to Silleranges after five years spent in a monastery, and in a conversation with Jacques he explains his change of heart, admitting that he had been living " dans des croyances qui offensaient la raison du matin au soir.... Je ne fus jamais ordonné prêtre, mais on fit de moi un portier chez les Augustins de Sainte-Geneviève. Mon frère, j'étais bon religieux... ".<sup>(2)</sup> One day, a young woman comes to the monastery for confession, and Pierre, despite his claim to be " dans les sentiments d'une piété fervente ",<sup>(3)</sup> is overwhelmed by her beauty, to such an extent that he resolves to abandon his vows. He has exchanged no more than a few words with this " personne extraordinaire ", before he finds himself beginning to form a prayer; yet this is no ordinary prayer, but rather a satanic invocation that the woman be his : " 'Donne-la-moi. Livre cette femme entre mes mains. J'abandonne tout le reste, mais je veux cette femme. Toi qui rôdes autour de moi depuis mon enfance, je me tourne vers toi, parce que l'autre ne m'écoute pas, parce que l'autre est sourd, mais toi, je t'ordonne de m'obéir' ".<sup>(4)</sup> Whatever power or influence God - " l'autre " - had exercised over Pierre

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(1) Ibid., p. 1090.

(2) Ibid., p. 1095. It is interesting to note that Green brings out the fact that Pierre was never ordained, thus somewhat lessening the gravity of his subsequent faults, and one is reminded of a remark recorded by J. Petit in Julien Green " Les écrivains devant Dieu " : " Je crois n'avoir jamais fait le portrait d'un réprouvé dans mon oeuvre. Il y a là une sorte de limite que je ne puis franchir ". [ p. 103, note 10 ]

(3) L'Ennemi, O.C. III, p. 1096.

(4) Ibid., p. 1097.

previously has been swept aside, the snares and beauties of the visible world have won his allegiance; he has chosen a new Master. Indeed, Pierre admits that in spite of his efforts over five years at spiritual improvement, in his heart of hearts he has known from childhood that he had chosen Evil, and he specifies, " ce que l'Eglise appelle le mal ".<sup>(1)</sup> Fear had been the mainspring of his conversion : " J'ai eu peur et je le dis. J'ai reculé devant le mal, devant le pouvoir qui m'était offert comme il fut offert à un autre, jadis, sur le sommet d'une haute montagne.... Pendant cinq ans j'ai lutté contre cette tentation indescriptible ".<sup>(2)</sup> Pierre does not hesitate to compare his temptation with that of Christ; he considers himself " une grande âme ", a worthy subject of dispute for the powers of Good and Evil.<sup>(3)</sup> Now, once again at Silleranges with the young beauty of the monastery already assigned to oblivion - " Il ne s'agissait pourtant que d'une femme du peuple.... je fis d'elle mes délices pendant une semaine.... "<sup>(4)</sup> - Pierre's immediate purpose is to seduce Elisabeth, in the full knowledge that the wife of Philippe de Silleranges is Jacques's mistress. In fact, certain of his powers, Pierre spells out his course of action to Jacques, whose initial astonishment swiftly changes to fear and anger, together with a promise that he will see to it Pierre pays dearly for any attempt to take Elisabeth from him.<sup>(5)</sup>

Elisabeth herself meets Pierre for the first time in Jacques's company, and in the ensuing conversation her own attitude to religious belief emerges : " Depuis ma première communion que je fis

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(1) Ibid., p. 1100.

(2) Ibid., pp. 1100 - 1101.

(3) Note how he expresses his superiority over Jacques : " Vous avez une petite âme, une toute petite âme qui n'ira jamais loin dans le péché ni dans la vertu, si ces termes ont un sens ".  
Ibid., p. 1100.

(4) Ibid., pp. 1097, 1101.

(5) Ibid., pp. 1101 - 1103.

sans bien savoir de quoi il s'agissait, la foi chrétienne m'apparaît comme un prodigieux amas d'idées fausses. J'assiste à la grand-messe du dimanche pour ne pas désobliger mon mari.... J'ajoute que, par une de ces incohérences féminines qui font sourire les hommes, j'ai horreur du blasphème ".<sup>(1)</sup> The young châtelaine thus appears to share the views of many of the Enlightenment élite, though her horror of blasphemy could imply a concealed faith.<sup>(2)</sup> Pierre's conversation exercises a hold over her, and she opposes it to the 'insipidités' and 'fadeurs' she is wont to hear at Silleranges.<sup>(3)</sup> The indifference, even hostility - " Je veux qu'il s'en aille " <sup>(4)</sup> - Elisabeth had shown towards Pierre's presence at the château early in the play, changes when she actually encounters him, and she gradually succumbs to his spell.

Whereas Philippe and Jacques are above all rationalists, Pierre's words in this scene with Elisabeth and Jacques reveal a being who seeks beyond the world of appearances to a realm of deeper significance : " Peut-être avez-vous comme moi le sentiment que ce monde qui nous entoure est l'effet d'une illusion à laquelle vous croyez, cependant, comme on croit à un rêve pendant le sommeil ".<sup>(5)</sup>

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(1) Ibid., p. 1104.

(2) J. Petit is categoric here, see ibid., p. 1764. See also, ibid., p. 1138, where Elisabeth says she has often been aware of the presence of " L'Ennemi " which is none other than the presence of God. See below, the present chapter.

(3) L'Ennemi, O.C. III, p. 1106.

(4) Ibid., p. 1090.

(5) Ibid., p. 1106. For this theme of the illusory nature of the physical world, see J. Petit, Julien Green l'homme qui venait d'ailleurs, p. 263 and p. 270. Petit has related the theme to its use in L'Autre Sommeil, as has Dr. J. Uijterwaal. In Julien Green : Personnalité et création romanesque, Van Gorcum & Comp., Assen, 1968, pp. 172-173, linking the idea in the passage from L'Ennemi with L'Autre Sommeil, Uijterwaal cites the novella's epigraph taken from Pascal : " Qui sait si cette autre moitié de la vie où nous pensons veiller n'est pas un autre sommeil un peu différent du premier, dont nous nous éveillons quand nous pensons dormir ? "

Although she admits to having thought of this idea only to dismiss it summarily, Elisabeth nevertheless soon comes to agree with Pierre's reasoning, eventually transcending it. Indeed, here we shall come very close to some of Green's own deeply held beliefs, and while L'Ennemi was being staged in March 1954, Robert de Saint Jean noted his friend's comments in this regard : " Green, ce matin : - Dans toute mon oeuvre j'ai essayé de suggérer que le monde réel n'existe pas tel que nous le voyons, et j'ai l'impression que les mots ne m'ont pas permis de rendre ma démonstration aussi concluante que je l'aurais voulu... Dans l'Ennemi j'ai dénoncé l'imposture des apparences ".(1)

In following the dialogues between Elisabeth and Pierre, we are better able to understand Green's purpose. We notice in Elisabeth a natural receptivity and affinity for certain of Pierre's ideas, only disturbed by a momentary lapse into hostility early in their first conversation together.<sup>(2)</sup> In his endeavour to seduce Elisabeth, Pierre stirs in the young woman feelings and aspirations over which he will have no control and which will lead her on to a mystical plane where physical, sensual love no longer has any place or meaning.

Pierre loses no time in making it clear that whatever he does in life, he approaches the task with high seriousness, even " ce qu'on nomme le plaisir ".<sup>(3)</sup> This is evident in his conversation with Elisabeth, in the subtlety of his attempt at seduction, in his ability to draw out her interest and attention. Naturally, his

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(1) Journal d'un journaliste, p. 311, dated March 12, 1954.

(2) L'Ennemi, O.C. III, p. 1109.

(3) Ibid., p. 1107.

evocation of " l'inexorable ennui qui forme le fond de toute vie humaine " finds a ready response in Elisabeth who knows only too well " ce monstre délicat " and who has almost always been aware of the emptiness of the world - " Ce vide abominable, je le portais en moi ".<sup>(1)</sup> When Pierre says that he does not belong to the world of Philippe and Jacques, a world in which Elisabeth cannot believe, but exists in the same realm as the young woman herself, that he, Pierre, is in some mysterious way Elisabeth - " Moi, je ne suis pas de ce monde auquel vous ne pouvez croire. Je suis vous-même "<sup>(2)</sup> - these words profoundly affect Elisabeth. She is conscious of a new presence - " J'ai l'impression que quelqu'un est entré ici.... Rien n'est changé et tout est changé "<sup>(3)</sup> - Pierre's words bringing her a hitherto unknown solace. He has succeeded in winning her confidence to a surprising degree, has established that she is not in love with Jacques,<sup>(4)</sup> and he seems close to achieving his purpose. Having attained a mental proximity to Elisabeth, he hopes for a swift physical conquest. When she refuses his initial advances, Pierre makes a declaration of love; admitting he has already proffered amatory declarations on many occasions - " C'était le moyen le plus ordinaire de séduire ma proie "<sup>(5)</sup> - he denies that this is another example of his skill, claiming : " Pour la première fois de ma vie, je me trouve devant une femme que j'aime ".<sup>(6)</sup> Elisabeth, however, tells

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(1) Ibid., p. 1110.

(2) Ibid., p. 1110.

(3) Ibid., pp. 1110 - 1111.

(4) Ibid., p. 1111.

(5) Ibid., p. 1112.

(6) Ibid., p. 1113.



Pierre that she does not share his love, though at the same time she feels that his presence is a necessity for her : " Vous venez des pays lointains auxquels je rêvais dans mon enfance, les pays où le bonheur était possible, un autre monde qui se cachait derrière ce monde. Tout ce que j'aime est ailleurs qu'ici ".<sup>(1)</sup> He has opened her eyes to the invisible world whose existence she had previously only vaguely suspected and now, without consciously realizing it, she has already begun her journey, albeit a tortuous one, to belief in the Christian God. It is the paradox of Elisabeth's situation that her route to faith leads through what the Church would consider as sin although her brief relationship with Pierre is seen as instrumental in bringing her to actual belief ; in Kierkegaard's words, " through sin one first sights blessedness ".<sup>(2)</sup>

Pierre has been persistent, firm in his conviction that Elisabeth will love him, " parce que l'amour est le seul refuge des âmes comme la vôtre et la mienne et que je suis seul à pouvoir vous comprendre ".<sup>(3)</sup> He claims that, like Elisabeth, he has undergone a transformation : " Tout à l'heure, j'étais égoïste et dur.... J'ai lutté contre vous, mon orgueil a lutté contre vous, mais vous m'avez vaincu.... Tout ce qu'il y avait de mauvais dans mon coeur, vous l'avez miraculeusement purifié ".<sup>(4)</sup> Following on his conversation and declaration of intent to Jacques, it is no easy task to believe in the sincerity of Pierre's words to Elisabeth, and having concluded the initial interview with an embrace and the young woman's assurance she will return that very evening, the burst of laughter and the " Et voilà! "<sup>(5)</sup> which he reserves for Jacques - his " réplique de

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(1) Ibid., p. 1112.

(2) The Journals, p. 90.

(3) L'Ennemi, O.C. III, p. 1113.

(4) Ibid., pp. 1113 - 1114.

(5) Ibid., p. 1115.

don Juan " as Jacques Petit puts it<sup>(1)</sup> - the reader remains even more sceptical. For Petit, Pierre's reaction on seeing Jacques is one of vanity; he is playing out a part, while in Elisabeth's presence he is sincere. (2)

Act II of L'Ennemi takes place some three weeks later, opening with a short scene between Jacques and the assassin he has hired to murder Pierre. The latter's success in seducing Elisabeth has prompted Jacques to put his threat into action; his admonition to his half-brother to leave Silleranges naturally falls on deaf ears,<sup>(3)</sup> the retention of Elisabeth in his power being Pierre's sole aim. Having evoked his freely-chosen allegiance to Lucifer - " J'ai librement et hardiment choisi, comme un homme. En récompense, j'obtiens de lui ce que je veux et ne crains aucun ennemi "<sup>(4)</sup> - Pierre affords a practical demonstration of his essential hardness of heart and basic lack of charity in his open hostility to the peasant woman and her child who come begging alms.<sup>(5)</sup> While the far from admirable Jacques nonetheless directs the poor woman to the kitchen, Pierre desires her immediate departure, unable or unwilling to understand her presence in the château grounds. One thinks of Pierre's " Tout à l'heure, j'étais égoïste et dur ", and his claim that Elisabeth had cleansed him of evil assumes an increasingly bitter irony in the light of this incident. Yet there is a complexity and enigmatic quality inherent in Pierre's character, as his words to Jacques illustrate : " Le malheur veut qu'on ne saurait toucher au diable qu'on ne touche à Dieu "<sup>(6)</sup> The idea of the intermingling and inter-

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(1) Julien Green l'homme qui venait d'ailleurs, p. 263.

(2) Ibid., p. 264.

(3) L'Ennemi O.C. III, p. 1119.

(4) Ibid., p. 1121.

(5) Ibid., p. 1122.

(6) Ibid., p. 1122.

penetration of Good and Evil is central to so much of Green's work, and the parallel between this utterance of Pierre's and the author's own words in his " Préface aux Lettres de Surin " : "... la rencontre avec le prince de ce monde peut être aussi la rencontre avec Dieu "<sup>(1)</sup> has been pointed to by J. Petit.<sup>(2)</sup> In these pages, we explore the itinerary of Elisabeth, whose contact with the powers of Evil that Pierre represents, sets in motion her own spiritual awakening and conversion.

However sincere the mutual love of Pierre and Elisabeth, from the point of view of Roman Catholic doctrine it is manifestly a culpable love; its expression and consummation could never find acceptance in the eyes of the Church. Despite his impotence, Philippe de Silleranges remains Elisabeth's lawful husband, and quite unwilling to countenance the annulment of his marriage.<sup>(3)</sup> He has accepted Elisabeth's relationship with Jacques and later the liaison with Pierre, while Jacques himself, having lost his sister-in-law's favours though still in the grip of his passion, has become a prey to a boundless jealousy. The sexual jealousy Elisabeth rouses in Jacques is paralleled in Philippe, whose character, more subtle and complex than that of his brother, commands our attention.<sup>(4)</sup> In

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(1) O.C. III, p. 1379.

(2) Ibid., p. 1766.

(3) See L'Ennemi, O.C. III, p. 1132, where Philippe mentions this unwillingness, " parce que j'aime cette femme. A-t-elle jamais souhaité que la liberté lui fût rendue ? Je ne le pense pas. Elle n'en a jamais dit mot ". Later, Philippe continues to resist when Elisabeth has in fact asked for an annulment so that she may be free to enter Holy Orders, see ibid., p. 1155.

(4) See the comments of Maria Casarès, who played Elisabeth in the stage production of the play, recorded by Green in his diary : " Maria Casarès me dit que de tous les rôles d'homme, dans L'Ennemi, celui de Philippe, le mari impuissant, lui paraît le meilleur ". J, p. 1038, Dec. 1, 1953. Green adds in the same extract : " J'avais offert ce rôle à un acteur qui doit avoir à peu près l'âge du personnage et qui l'a refusé avec une indignation à peine contenue. 'Je suis fait pour jouer les rôles d'amants, non les rôles de cocus !' Voilà ce qu'il a vu dans cette pièce ".

the conversation between Pierre and Philippe in the second act, facets of the latter's character emerge that reveal a tortured and brooding temperament, and he subsequently takes on an interest that would in some measure justify Maria Casarès' comment. Philippe is considerably embittered by the fact of his impotence, and the blow that fate has dealt him, far from bringing consolation in religious faith, serves only to heighten his sense of divorce from God : " La rage me prend à certains jours devant l'injustice de mon destin. Et l'on voudrait que je croie en Dieu ?.... Je porte en moi une sorte d'enfer.... J'ignore si la chasteté est le paradis de l'âme, mais elle est l'enfer du corps... ".<sup>(1)</sup> For Philippe, then, the injustice of which he is a victim precludes faith and belief in God, and in his constant physical and mental frustration, provoked and tormented beyond his capacity to endure, he spies on his wife and brother " avec une patience et une sorte d'acharnement qui ne peuvent se décrire ".<sup>(2)</sup> But there is more than zeal in Philippe's behaviour, as he tells Pierre : ".... si étrange que cela vous paraisse, un sombre plaisir se mêlait à ce jeu. J'étais le chasseur qui poursuit sa proie ".<sup>(3)</sup> Philippe's relentlessness in tracking down his " prey " betrays a thoroughly diseased mind, and the " pleasure " he derives from this activity can only be described as pathological. At the same time, his mind remains alert and penetrating, as is amply illustrated during the interview with Pierre in the subtlety with which he goes about his attempt to extract a confession.<sup>(4)</sup>

Whereas the conversation with Philippe has put Pierre on his guard, Elisabeth for her part is so engrossed in her love that she is

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(1) L'Ennemi, O.C. III, p. 1128.

(2) Ibid., p. 1130.

(3) Ibid., p. 1130.

(4) Ibid., pp. 1127 - 1132.

incapable of circumspection. Yet she makes a distinction between the everyday world of appearances and her love on the one hand, and on the other " tout ce que je sens en moi d'indiscutable et de sûr, cette voix que rien ne fait taire et qui, nuit et jour, me redit que le monde est comme s'il n'était pas, que la vie est ailleurs...."(1) For the first time, Elisabeth's religious feeling breaks through, and already she appears to have been touched by a kind of Grace. She does not yet know where Pierre's allegiance lies, comparing her lover and herself to children, " deux enfants qui auraient entendu un secret chuchoté à travers une porte.... cette porte, c'est la création tout entière.... et derrière cette porte, il y a quelque chose qui fait que tout ceci n'est rien. Ce secret, c'est cela, et ce secret nous lie pour toujours ".(2) However, simultaneous with this somewhat confused mystical élan, there remains the attraction and beauty of the visible world : ".... jamais personne ne jeta sur ce monde illusoire un regard à la fois plus attentif et plus ébloui que le nôtre.... Oh ! Pierre, avant de vous connaître, je ne regardais pas, j'étais comme une aveugle.... Mais pourquoi faut-il que ce soir j'ai de nouveau le sentiment d'un obstacle entre nous ? " (3)

While Elisabeth's physical love for Pierre is still intact and she recognizes the powerful attractions of the visible world - however illusory that may be - despite the lovers' shared belief in, and knowledge of, the realm of the invisible, the source of their inspiration is at variance, and Elisabeth senses something of this basic discord. It is Pierre's task to reassure his mistress; for him, their love is the only certainty : " La certitude, c'est notre amour,

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(1) Ibid., p. 1135.

(2) Ibid., p. 1136.

(3) Ibid., p. 1136.

la certitude, c'est vous et c'est moi ".<sup>(1)</sup> Elisabeth, however, cannot help but evoke " cette autre voix " that does not speak the same language as Pierre, whose presence she has come to know and fear when she is alone and which she terms " L'Ennemi " - " L'Ennemi, c'est celui qui m'empêche d'être tout à fait heureuse avec vous ".<sup>(2)</sup> Going on to describe this " Enemy ", Elisabeth tells her lover that she has been aware of this presence from her childhood : ".... j'ai le sentiment qu'il vient vers moi. Parfois, il s'éloigne et je l'oublie. Des mois passent et de nouveau il y a cette présence... ".<sup>(3)</sup> She explains to Pierre that he - the Enemy - was present the first time she saw him, and she expresses her fear that this Force seeks to separate her from her lover, hence her choice of term to describe this superhuman presence. Pierre for his part is convinced that his mistress has in fact come to know Satan, whose purpose it is to unite the lovers : " .... nous sommes ici par sa volonté et il lui plaît que nous nous aimions ".<sup>(4)</sup> Indeed, Elisabeth does believe Pierre has come to Silleranges " par sa volonté ", but she is far from thinking that " his will " is that of the Devil, and it is at this point in the drama that a significant change occurs in the young woman. The stage directions here - " Elle hésite " - and Pierre's reaction - " Votre voix est changée tout à coup " - mark this change. She is able to envisage the possibility of physical separation from her lover with a certain equanimity, and experiencing a foreboding of future danger she exhorts Pierre to leave the château.

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(1) Ibid., p. 1136.

(2) Ibid., p. 1137. Green has emphasized that " l'Ennemi c'est Dieu, ennemi de tout le mal qui est dans le coeur d'Elisabeth ". See J. Petit's Julien Green, " Les écrivains devant Dieu ", p. 103.

(3) L'Ennemi, O.C. III, p. 1138.

(4) Ibid., p. 1138.

In Christian terms, this transformation denotes the working of Grace in Elisabeth, however unaware she herself is at the time of its importance and consequence. As for Pierre, his resistance to Elisabeth's plea is total; he cannot consider giving up what he has acquired at such high cost : " Dès les premières minutes, je vous aimais si follement que j'offris ma vie en échange de votre amour... "(1) In an echo of his declaration of love in Act I, alleging that he had not experienced love before knowing Elisabeth, Pierre admits that he had freely made the sacrifice of his life in order to possess her; his words - " Que m'importe de vivre si je dois être privé de vous ? "(2) would seem sincere, tending to reinforce J. Petit's interpretation that " devant Elisabeth, il ne joue plus "(3) It certainly appears paradoxical that, in order to pursue a love he considers pure and all-important, Pierre feels compelled to summon up and rely on the Powers of Darkness. Yet the Christian God could hardly be invoked in the pursuit of a union necessarily illicit from a Roman Catholic point of view. God no longer has any place in Pierre's scheme of things; it is exclusively through his " alliance " with Satan that the former religious seeks to achieve his aims. And he does triumph, albeit briefly, before the Evil he has conjured up takes his life away, in the form of Jacques's hired assassins. Deeply troubled by Pierre's admissions, Elisabeth is now inescapably aware of her lover's Satanic allegiance and inspiration, just as he is to become conscious of the divine origin of his mistress's feeling, ruefully commenting in Act III : " Elle va vers Dieu; elle m'échappe "(4) As Act II draws to an end, in spite of, or rather because of her love, Elisabeth

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(1) Ibid., p. 1139.

(2) Ibid., p. 1139.

(3) See Julien Green l'homme qui venait d'ailleurs, p. 264, and above, p. 114.

(4) L'Ennemi, O.C. III, p. 1150.

repeatedly implores Pierre to leave Silleranges; her words - " Je vous aime, Pierre, mais je m'en vais "<sup>(1)</sup> - translate an attitude almost Cornelian in its emphasis on a higher moral and spiritual obligation, which will progressively gather strength in Elisabeth. At this juncture, however, about to leave Pierre's room, " un peu comme une somnanbule ",<sup>(2)</sup> she faints, and the young man's triumphant smile as he rushes towards her recalls his derisive laugh at Jacques's expense which concludes Act I.<sup>(3)</sup>

In this scene between the two lovers, then, we have witnessed a very real modification in Elisabeth's outlook. From the impatient young woman who strikes at the shutters of her lover's room with thoughts only of the " eternity " of love they have before them that night, to the Elisabeth aware first of an " obstacle " to their love and increasingly conscious of the workings of God within her, then finally to the perplexed and frightened woman of the end of the act, the transition is rapid and inexorable. Elisabeth's fear is for Pierre and what she sees as the inevitably disastrous consequences of his pact with the Devil; of the " Enemy " she is no longer fearful, since she has come to an intuitive understanding of his true nature : ".... il m'attire à lui avec une irrésistible douceur ".<sup>(4)</sup> Thus, Elisabeth has evolved to a state approaching faith : " En elle se fait le passage de l'amour humain à l'amour divin, mais sans rupture et sans véritable conflit ".<sup>(5)</sup>

Early in Act III, we find Elisabeth divulging to her confidante her newly-discovered faith in God : " Moi, j'y crois depuis cette

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(1) Ibid., p. 1141.

(2) Ibid., p. 1142.

(3) See J. Petit's note, ibid., pp. 1768 - 1769.

(4) Ibid., p. 1141.

(5) Julien Green l'homme qui venait d'ailleurs, p. 265.



nuît, et j'y crois de telle sorte que le monde s'évanouit à mes yeux comme un songe dont on s'éveille et dont on se dépêtre ".<sup>(1)</sup>

The presence of God exposes the emptiness and futility of the visible world, yet it is through her contact with the world of the senses embodied by Pierre that Elisabeth has come to God : " Il a fallu que Pierre entre ici, à Silleranges, et me mène à lui sans le savoir.... Je l'appelais l'Ennemi, parce que je ne savais quel nom lui donner, et qu'il se tenait toujours entre moi et l'accomplissement de mon désir, non pas comme une ombre, mais comme une muraille de lumière qui me séparait de moi-même ".<sup>(2)</sup> Her " sinful " love for Pierre has been chastened and purified; she loves him " comme la bête aime son petit.... le plaisir ne compte plus, l'amour anéantit le plaisir comme un brasier fait d'une feuille morte ", and she has now achieved a harmony and unity of purpose - " Un seul coeur pour aimer Dieu et les hommes "<sup>(3)</sup> - considering that there is no conflict between her new-found love of God and the heightened, transmuted love she harbours for Pierre.

Elisabeth's conversion has by no means changed her into a meek and submissive suppliant; on the contrary, to the horror and astonishment of her pious confidante, she issues God with a challenge, she demands Pierre's salvation : " Je veux que Pierre soit sauvé.... Arrache-le à la mort, ou s'il meurt, c'est que tu es mort en vain ".<sup>(4)</sup>

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(1) L'Ennemi, O.C. III, p. 1144. Elisabeth's words here are very close to Green's own recorded in his diary. Asked by Maria Casarès about the character of his heroine and the meaning of Grace, the author replied : " 'Je crois que la présence de Dieu a ceci de particulier qu'elle frappe d'inanité la création tout entière. Sans doute n'est-ce là qu'une illusion, mais elle est très puissante.' " J, p. 1045, Jan. 21, 1954.

(2) L'Ennemi, O.C. III, p. 1144.

(3) Ibid., p. 1144.

(4) Ibid., p. 1145.

Her concern for Pierre is a total concern : her fear for his spiritual salvation is matched by her presentiment of a physical threat to his life, and sure in her resolve that she will be stronger than Pierre and able to resist his pressures, during what is to be the lovers' last meeting Elisabeth yet again multiplies her entreaties to Pierre to leave Silleranges : " Pierre, allez-vous-en, je vous en supplie. Il y a quelque chose de terrible dans cette pièce et j'ai grand-peur, j'ai peur pour vous et pour moi ".<sup>(1)</sup> Recounting to Pierre her mystical experience of the previous night, the images of fire she evokes - for Green symbolic both of Heaven and Hell - recall Joseph Day's " Le feu est ma patrie.... Dieu est feu.... et il l'est tellement que l'horreur de sa non-présence s'exprime encore par du feu, par du feu noir... ".<sup>(2)</sup> Elisabeth identifies herself with the divine fire : " Tout flambait autour de moi.... J'étais une de ces flammes.... j'étais moi-même ce feu qui dévorait tout, mais je n'avais pas peur.... un ravissement comme je n'en ai jamais connu m'arrachait à moi-même... ".<sup>(3)</sup>

Illumined as she is, her " Vous êtes perdu "<sup>(4)</sup> to Pierre comes as a dread premonition; for the young man, however, Elisabeth is simply the victim of illusion, and he desperately tries to win her to his point of view, knowing that she is slipping away from him. Although the polarity in belief between the lovers is now more marked than ever, on the level of sentiment there is continuity. Elisabeth re-asserts the strength of her love for Pierre, but highly conscious of the fragility and transience of human life on this earth, uppermost

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(1) Ibid., p. 1147.

(2) Moïra, O.C. III, p. 160, and see J. Petit's notes, O.C. III, p. 1770.

(3) L'Ennemi, O.C. III, p. 1148.

(4) Ibid., p. 1148.

in her mind is the fervent desire for salvation : " Derrière la mince cloison du temps brûle le paradis de l'éternité. Je veux que tu sois au paradis avec moi ".<sup>(1)</sup> Firm in her resolve, temporarily at least, she leaves Pierre alone in his rooms; despite her protestations to the contrary, he is nonetheless convinced that she will return to him. Later, when in fact Elisabeth does come back, the crime has been committed and Pierre is dead. In his last monologue, before the assassins strike, the young man momentarily questions the existence of the spiritual realm when he asks : " Ah! n'est-ce pas la plus grande farce du monde et lorsqu'on parle au diable ou à Dieu, n'est-ce pas à soi qu'on s'adresse ? "<sup>(2)</sup> But his last words are addressed to the Devil, in the form of an order to make Elisabeth return. Before she does, however, the Powers of Darkness intervene, ignominiously snuffing out the life of the man who had arrogantly considered himself " une grande âme " worthy of occupying a privileged position in Satan's legions.

The final part of the play - the " second tableau " of Act III - takes place a month later, Elisabeth having decided to ask for the annulment of her marriage in order to enter a convent. Philippe has no intention of releasing his wife,<sup>(3)</sup> and - well aware of the implications of his words - to Jacques's surprise and satisfaction he expresses his wish that life continue as before.<sup>(4)</sup> However, when we see and hear Elisabeth in the closing minutes of the drama, it is to realize that she has been far more than disturbed by the murder of her lover. Her mystical utterances are those of a deranged

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(1) Ibid., p. 1149. Again the first words of Elisabeth echo Joseph Day's : " Nous ne sommes séparés du ciel que par l'épaisseur d'une flamme ". M, O.C. III, p. 161.

(2) L'Ennemi, O.C. III, p. 1152.

(3) Ibid., p. 1155. [And see above, p. 115, n. 3].

(4) Ibid., pp. 1155 - 1157.

mind, but deranged in purely human terms, for on the spiritual plane her words take on an altogether different significance. Indeed, spiritually her madness is unimportant; as Green has written in reply to a person who confessed to unease at the fact that Elisabeth - who has found faith in God - succumbs to madness : "...Elisabeth ne fait naufrage que sur le plan humain. Elle perd la raison et il y a de quoi : on a étranglé son amant. Sur le plan surnaturel, elle garde la foi comme elle peut et comme Dieu veut. Elle récite des bribes de l'acte de contrition dans son délire, elle est sauvée ".<sup>(1)</sup> Pierre haunts her memories; he has appeared to her in a vision : " Il est venu cette nuit, dans ses vêtements tissés de flammes. Ecoute, m'a-t-il dit, la prédication du feu. Rien n'existe en dehors du feu. Le monde et ses plus belles apparences ne te tromperont plus désormais....".<sup>(2)</sup> All he says confirms what the young woman already knows, that this earthly world is no more than an illusion, the real world being beyond - in fact, Elisabeth is now largely a part of this other, invisible realm. Her words just before the curtain falls are sombre in a worldly sense, but the one sure consolation is seen as God's infinite love and understanding which Elisabeth is so anxious should embrace Pierre; her mind returns to the recent past when physical happiness was still assured and awareness of the world of the spirit had not yet irrevocably destroyed its enjoyment : " Tout est noir en ce monde. Mon Dieu, j'ai un très grand regret... Pourquoi Pierre ne vient-il pas avec nous ?... parce que vous êtes infiniment bon, infiniment aimable.... Où es-tu donc Pierre ?.... Tu te caches derrière la porte, derrière la grande porte qui monte jusqu'à Dieu. Te souviens-tu ? C'est la création tout entière, et derrière cette porte, quelqu'un chuchote un secret. Toi et moi nous l'avons entendu....".<sup>(3)</sup> Elisabeth will plead for Pierre's salvation,

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(1) J, p. 1053, May 9, 1954.

(2) L'Ennemi, O.C. III, pp. 1157 - 1158.

(3) Ibid., p. 1158.

yet we remember her previous assertion - " Vous êtes perdu " - and the fact that her lover made a conscious choice in opting for Lucifer.

Is it possible, then, to imagine Pierre other than damned ? The Italian critic, Antonio Mor, does not hesitate to write of " Pierre damné " and of the " éternelle séparation de deux âmes ",<sup>(1)</sup> and it is indeed no easy task to interpret Pierre's ultimate fate in less sombre terms; for, as Maurice Pons writes : "... aucun dialogue n'est possible entre les forces ennemies de la rédemption et de la damnation. Elle (Elisabeth) marche vers le monde de la Grâce, comme Pierre s'avance vers sa mort, poussés l'un et l'autre par des forces inéluctables, qui se sont rencontrées un instant dans leur amour, mais qui les sépareront à jamais ".<sup>(2)</sup> Consequently, in the terms of the play, the issue of Pierre's fate would appear clear-cut and unequivocal, although it is as well to recall that the author himself believes he has never portrayed a réprouvé in his work.<sup>(3)</sup> This comment written after 1970, fits in with Green's increasingly optimistic outlook regarding eternal life and his acceptance of a belief approaching universalism, as perusal of the diaries reveals.

The fluctuations in the author's thought concerning eschatological problems, particularly in regard to hell and damnation have been pointed to by both J. Uijterwaal and Fernand Bernier.<sup>(4)</sup> Green's essential compassion has always made it difficult for him to accept

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(1) Julien Green, témoin de l'invisible, p. 198.

(2) La Table Ronde, April 1954, p. 161.

(3) See above p. 108, n. 2.

(4) See Uijterwaal, op. cit., p. 98, and Bernier, " Le sentiment religieux chez Julien Green ", La Revue de l'Université Laval, Québec, Vol. XVII, n° 7, March 1963, pp. 619 - 622.

the idea of a limited atonement and passages in the New Testament together with the testimony of later saints and luminaries of the Church to this effect have been a source of very real distress to him. The following diary notations suffice to show the writer's mingled fears and hopes regarding this gravest of matters in the years preceding the composition of L'Ennemi. In July 1949, Green reflects : " Le salut de l'humanité. Tourmenté de nouveau par cette question insoluble. Quand Dieu a créé le monde, se peut-il qu'il ait consenti à la damnation de toute une partie de l'humanité avant même qu'il eût tiré Adam du limon ? Peut-être tout le monde est-il sauvé, après tout. Je ne voudrais pas qu'un homme me répondît sur ce point. A certaines réponses, je préfère l'effrayant silence ".<sup>(1)</sup> Later in the same year, St. Jude's evocation of " the vengeance of eternal fire " and " the blackness of darkness for ever " promised to the ungodly does not fail to arouse Green's most keenly-felt apprehensions : " La lecture de l'épître de saint Jude m'a rempli d'inquiétude.... L'épître en question est on ne peut moins rassurante en ce qui concerne le salut de chacun de nous. L'auteur était cependant tout près du Christ par le temps et par l'esprit. Comment soutiendrait-on qu'il était trop sévère ? "<sup>(2)</sup> Julien Green would find precious little to quibble with in Martin Turnell's words " that the alternatives salvation-damnation are the greatest reality, indeed the only reality, in the world ".<sup>(3)</sup>

For Green, the Devil's presence in this world is very real; he is no mere invention or literary device as in the case of Gide,<sup>(4)</sup> but

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(1) J, July 11, 1949, p. 852.

(2) Ibid., Oct. 24, 1949, p. 874.

(3) Modern Literature and Christian Faith, Darton Longman & Todd, London, 1961, p. 69.

(4) See Justin O'Brien, Portrait of André Gide, Secker and Warburg, London, 1953, pp. 293 - 294.

much closer to Mauriac's conception : " Qu'on nous entende : nous sommes de ceux qui croient que le mal, lui aussi, est Quelqu'un (quelqu'un qui est multiple et qui s'appelle 'légion') ".<sup>(1)</sup> And Mauriac goes on to distinguish between the commonplace, everyday sinner who has momentarily lost Grace and the man who has really given himself over to Evil, who - like Pierre - has opted for Satan : " Ce qu'on trouve presque toujours à la source de ces destins, c'est un choix lucide, un refus de Dieu, un renoncement délibéré à sa Grâce..... Dans une créature ainsi réprouvée, les éléments du saint qu'elle aurait pu être apparaissent presque toujours.... la foi en l'éternité, la connaissance du monde invisible, une expérience presque physique de la vie surnaturelle appréhendée par en bas.... Elles (ces créatures) marchent à l'abîme, les yeux grands ouverts ".<sup>(2)</sup> How true much of this is of Pierre ! It is indeed through Pierre's intuition and knowledge of the invisible world that Elisabeth has come to belief; she has experienced and benefited from the Good in her lover, while being powerless to obviate the Evil, to prevent Pierre from walking " open-eyed to the abyss ". Green has many times pointed to the proximity of saint and sinner, and his imagery of Fire and Flame symbolizes both the torments of Hell and the mystic FEU of love; as well as " le brasier de la présence de Dieu " there is also " le brasier allumé par l'absence de Dieu ".<sup>(3)</sup> Joseph Day's

(1) François Mauriac, Sainte Marguerite de Cortone, Flammarion, 1945, p. 137. Green has recorded his admiration for Mauriac's book in his J, pp. 844 - 845, dated May 25, 1949. In his Journal d'un journaliste, Robert de Saint Jean has interestingly noted : " Il (Green) retrouve dans une page (de Sainte Marguerite de Cortone) l'écho d'une conversation avec Mauriac avant la guerre. (Il avait été parlé du démon.).... - Le démon est quelqu'un. Et c'est terrible. Mais il y a le sentiment d'une autre présence aussi, dont la voix domine ". p. 249, April 12, 1946.

(2) Sainte Marguerite de Cortone, pp. 138 - 139.

(3) Moïra, O.C. III, p. 160.

words and his reference to " la brûlure au coeur des apôtres à Emmaüs et la brûlure au coeur de Wesley "<sup>(1)</sup> extend beyond the bounds of Green's fiction to find an echo in the writer's own life. Passages in the diary, one towards the end of 1949 and another dated November 1954, refer to moments of illumination experienced by Wesley and Pascal, Green's deeply-felt and reverential attitude to these events commanding attention.<sup>(2)</sup>

Confronted with such an intensely personal statement as L'Ennemi, one is inevitably inclined to relate Elisabeth's ravissement to experiences in the author's own life. In 1970, he has in fact referred in his journal, and in somewhat veiled language, to an event that occurred in 1948 : " Quand je serai mort, on trouvera dans mon journal, en 1948, le récit d'une nuit singulière. Tout ce que je puis en dire aujourd'hui est que je vis du souvenir de la splendeur de Dieu ".<sup>(3)</sup> And later in 1970, he has again referred laconically to " une nuit indescriptible " that he experienced at the age of forty-seven.<sup>(4)</sup> Already in 1960, Green wrote of the bouts of insomnia that began to assail him from around 1947,<sup>(5)</sup> and we have earlier described the author's spiritual crisis of 1948, as recorded in the diary at the time.<sup>(6)</sup> However, he has shown discretion in writing directly

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- (1) Mofra, O.C. III, p. 160. The biblical reference is to the final chapter of Luke's Gospel.
- (2) For the diary extracts, see J, p. 1085, Nov. 16, 1954, and p. 888, Dec. 18, 1949, where Green writes concerning the mystical experiences of Wesley and Pascal : ".... ce sont peut-être là les plus grands événements du monde ".
- (3) Ce qui reste de jour, p. 217, Feb. 2, 1970.
- (4) Ibid., p. 244, May 22, 1970.
- (5) See J, p. 1417, July 24, 1960.
- (6) See above, Chapter II.



about his spiritual or mystical experiences, transcription either in fictional or dramatic form being his means of conveying his own vital religious experience : " Lorsque dans mes livres quelque chose a l'air d'être inventé, on peut être sûr que là est la vérité de la vie réelle non transposée, qu'il s'agit d'un événement personnel et incontestable. Ainsi dans L'Ennemi, tel discours d'Elisabeth, et dans ce roman que j'écris, [ L'Autre ] l'expérience religieuse de Karin ".(1)

The ravissement described by Elisabeth in L'Ennemi so close, then, to Julien Green's own illumination, in its turn corresponds to the mystic experiences of men and women who figure prominently in the volumes of the author's diaries. As Jacques Chevalier has justly remarked, evoking some of the greatest of these names in pages devoted to Pascal's ravissement and conversion :

" Tous les mystiques vrais, tous ceux et celles qui ont eu, dès ici-bas, cette révélation de la présence de Dieu au-dedans de soi, saint François d'Assise et sainte Catherine de Gênes, sainte Thérèse D'Avila et saint Jean de la Croix, nous ont décrit ce grand feu d'amour qui embrase les âmes, et qui, pour s'entretenir, a sans cesse besoin de nouveaux aliments que l'âme par elle-même n'a pas la force de trouver si elle ne les reçoit de Dieu; ce feu divin, qui ne brûle pas, mais qui illumine : ignis divinus, non comburens, sed illuminans, est-il dit en l'office de matines du lundi de la Pentecôte.... " (2)

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(1) Ce qui reste de jour, p. 230, March 9, 1970.

(2) " Le Mémorial de Pascal et sa conversion ", La Table Ronde, December 1954, pp. 92 - 93.

While Green would be the very last person to put his own experience on the same level as that of these great Christian mystics of the past, the inspiration and kinship are nonetheless evident. The long years devoted to meditation and to the study of religion have given him an awareness and an insight into spiritual experience that lends his later work considerable significance as Christian literature. The eminent Catholic critic, André Blanchet, can, for example, write of the journal that it is " assurément le document spirituel le plus important de la littérature actuelle ";<sup>(1)</sup> and for the Jesuit Chaque homme dans sa nuit is " l'un des trois ou quatre grands romans chrétiens de notre littérature ".<sup>(2)</sup>

Compared with the broad canvas of the Journal or the 1960 novel, L'Ennemi is very much a private work, although, as we have seen, it is in this play that Green has endeavoured to distil the quintessence of his religious experience. L'Ennemi is the author's most autobiographical composition in the sense that it portrays highly personal aspects of deeply-felt experience as well as illustrating the powerful, at times irresistible, attractions of the physical world. It is certainly not without interest to note that Green dedicated his play to his life-long friend, Robert de Saint Jean.<sup>(3)</sup> This great friendship which has endured for over half a century was already

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(1) Blanchet, op. cit., p. 149, his italics; see also F. Bernier, " Le sentiment religieux chez JG ", La Revue de l'Université Laval, n° 8, April 1963, pp. 721 - 722.

(2) Blanchet, op. cit., p. 208.

(3) The dedication - 'A Robert' - which appears on the title page of the play in the Plon edition of the OEuvres complètes, and is incidentally the only dedication in this Collected Edition, has been omitted from the OEuvres complètes in the Bibliothèque de la Pléiade.

thirty years old when L'Ennemi appeared in 1954.<sup>(1)</sup> In 1944, Green had written concerning his friend : " Je lui ai dit qu'il était seul au monde à me connaître parfaitement et que je pouvais en conséquence, tout lui dire, sûr qu'il comprendrait ".<sup>(2)</sup> Reading Robert de Saint Jean's published journal, one is struck by the contrasts between the shy, retiring Green and Saint Jean, the assured man of the world, the " grand reporter " with his rich experience in international affairs, seemingly as much at home with statesmen, mingling in Parisian high society or with his fellow men of letters.<sup>(3)</sup> It is naturally enough in this latter category that most of the mutual friends are to be found, the names of Gide, Mauriac and Cocteau especially, recurring in the pages of both men's diaries, as do those of such female contemporaries as Colette, Simone, and Louise de Vilmorin; indeed for Julien Green, his sister Anne, and Robert de Saint Jean, who for many years shared a common address in the rue de Varenne, a number of these literary and artistic friendships have provided a rich fund of joint experience.

In addition to the anecdotal aspects of Journal d'un journaliste, and more relevant to our present inquiry, is the light Saint Jean occasionally sheds on Green's state of mind and intentions as he ponders and composes his works. During the preparation of his third play, L'Ombre, Green told his friend of the profit he had derived from

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- (1) In his autobiographical works, Green makes discreet reference to his first meeting with Robert de Saint Jean in 1924. See, for example, TL, p. 312, where he refers to the happiness that awaited him, and Jeunesse, p. 293, where the author is more explicit on this account. In Memories of Happy Days, written in the United States during the early forties Green has recorded : "... in writing my novels I have always had it at the back of my mind that I was telling Robert a story....". p. 183. See also Antonio Mor, op. cit., pp. 48 - 50.
- (2) J, p. 592, Feb. 28, 1944.
- (3) Saint Jean began his professional life as assistant editor of François Le Grix's Revue Hebdomadaire, the magazine which published part of Green's first novel, Mont-Cinère, and is still conseiller for a publishing firm. His novel, Le Feu sacré was published by Gallimard in 1936. From 1936 until the outbreak of war, Saint Jean was director of the London office of Paris-Soir.

his study of the Institution chrétienne, and he went on : " Ma dernière pièce tient à moi par la hantise du problème religieux. Calvin a réveillé en moi des appréhensions qui me viennent sans doute d'ascendants fanatiques ".<sup>(1)</sup> Indeed, we have seen above in extracts from Green's own journal how absorbed the author had been in the Protestant reformer's writings in the summer and autumn of 1954. Furthermore, Green is prone to stress the effect on his mental and spiritual make-up of past generations of fanatical ancestors, fanatical in the sense that they subscribed to the tenets of a rigid puritanical faith based far more on fear than on love. The author's interest in atavism has been noted,<sup>(2)</sup> and he has recorded cases of melancholia - " des cas de mélancolie aiguë (je dirais simplement de démente) " - in his own family back in the mid-nineteenth century caused in his opinion by the Presbyterian or Calvinist ideas of predestination.<sup>(3)</sup> Earlier Green had written that following the death of his parents and the removal of the protection they afforded him, " Il y a eu, à un moment, une sorte d'irruption massive de l'hérédité dans mon être. Manie religieuse et le reste ".<sup>(4)</sup> Green's tendency to stress the atavistic phenomenon enables him to disculpate his parents from any responsibility in his subsequent development. Yet, as we have shown,<sup>(5)</sup> despite the author's emphasis on his parents' exemplary lives - " C'étaient, à leur manière, des saints. "<sup>(6)</sup> his own account of his childhood unequivocally if unwittingly indicts his mother.

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(1) Journal d'un journaliste, p. 313. Extract dated September 21, 1954.

(2) See, for example, J.M. Dunaway, The Metamorphoses of the Self : The Mystic, the Sensualist and the Artist in the Works of Julien Green, unpublished doctoral dissertation, Duke University, 1972, p. 145.

(3) J, pp. 1073 - 1074, August 26, 1954.

(4) Ibid., p. 902, March 29, 1950.

(5) See above, Chapter I.

(6) J, p. 902.

Unquestionably, the darker side of Green's nature with its obsessive thoughts and continual harping on the past served to nourish the character of Philip Anderson, for whose tormented conscience God is no consolation : " Il me fait peur. Avant ma naissance il savait ce qui se passerait. Il savait comment je finirais. Tout est fini. Je suis perdu ".<sup>(1)</sup> Anderson is a strange figure, very different from the other creations of Green's later period; his obsession is not with the carnal-spiritual dichotomy but is centred on his continuing love for his first wife, Evangéline, ten years after her death in which he, blinded by jealousy, had been implicated. The play is weakened, however, by its disjointedness : ambiguities and obscurities abound and there is certainly a discrepancy between Green's intention in the creation of L'Ombre and his actual achievement,<sup>(2)</sup> which remains 'shadowy' and insubstantial, especially when compared with the richness and depth attained in Sud and L'Ennemi.

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(1) L'Ombre, O.C. III, p. 1233.

(2) On this point, see Marilyn Gaddis Rose, Julian Green Callio-American Novelist, Berne and Frankfurt/ M., Herbert Lang, 1971, p. 88.

## AN INVERT'S TRAGEDY

It was while writing his third play that Green resumed work on the manuscript of Le Malfaiteur, again a disjointed composition,<sup>(1)</sup> but one which does present coherently and with penetration at least one of Green's major themes. The author's problem, writing in 1955, was to recapture the state of mind of his thirty-seven year old self;<sup>(2)</sup> he had abandoned his novel in 1938 on account of an important change in the centre of his interests, when his return to the Roman Catholic Church was imminent. In an introduction to Le Malfaiteur for the 1955 volume of his OEuvres complètes, Green explained : " Depuis plusieurs années, en effet, des préoccupations religieuses me détournent de plus en plus du monde et des problèmes abordés dans Le Malfaiteur ".<sup>(3)</sup> Just before his second conversion and the outbreak of the Second World War, the problems of the homosexual predicament could no longer occupy the foreground in the writer's mind, whereas in 1955 he desired to conclude his novel, feeling an inner necessity to contribute to a greater understanding of the invert's condition. The main reason Green himself gave for wishing to bring the novel to a successful conclusion was in the author's own words " de porter à l'attention de lecteurs sérieux un des aspects les plus tragiques de la vie charnelle dans notre monde moderne, tragique parce qu'il engage d'une façon parfois violente toute la vie affective et qu'il touche gravement à la vie spirituelle ".<sup>(4)</sup> Despite these remarks, for some of Green's best critics, Peter C. Hoy for example, basing his comments on the 1955 edition of the book which appeared without the " Confession de Jean ",

(1) Green himself had already noted this in 1937, see J, p. 276, May 20, 1937.

(2) J, pp. 1099 - 1100, January 30, 1955.

(3) O.C. III, p. 1596.

(4) Ibid., p. 1597.

" Le Malfaiteur n'est pas le roman de l'homosexuel ni même un roman sur l'homosexualité, c'est la tragédie de la femme amoureuse d'un homme qui ne peut répondre à son amour ".<sup>(1)</sup> The inclusion of the " Confession de Jean " in the 1973 Pléiade edition - and retained in the Livre de Poche edition the following year - restores a necessary balance to the novel, and while the young Hedwige's hopeless love for the spineless Gaston Dolange is indeed an important aspect of the book,<sup>(2)</sup> Jean's drama assumes its full value and significance. It is obvious that in this text, which has been worked and reworked over a period of many years, there have inevitably been shifts of emphasis and intention, right down to the modifications of 1972.<sup>(3)</sup>

If Green had broached homosexuality as a theme in his play Sud, it was in a period and setting remote for modern audiences, as well as being cast in a noble language and treated with a discretion that again served to muffle its immediate effect, so much so that many of those who attended early performances of the play seemingly misunderstood the true nature of Ian Wiczewski's passion.<sup>(4)</sup> Le Malfaiteur, precisely situated in twentieth-century France with its common references probes the subject with much more directness, though never does Green's treatment sink into vulgarity. Indeed, he tells us that he might not have completed and published the novel, had it not been for his wish to provide a corrective for what he terms the

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- (1) " Images crépusculaires et images eidétiques chez Julien Green ", in Configuration critique de Julien Green (ed. B.T. Fitch), La Revue des Lettres Modernes, nos. 130 - 133, Minard, 1966, p. 63.
- (2) Green noted in his " Introduction " : " Dans Le Malfaiteur, j'ai voulu comprendre la tragédie de l'amour impossible telle que la femme pouvait la concevoir ". O.C. III, p. 1597.
- (3) See ibid., p. 1596. In his excellent " Notice ", Jacques Petit fully discusses the evolution of Green's text, ibid., pp. 1595 - 1607.
- (4) See ibid., pp. 1729 - 1730.

" avalanche de romans obscènes " that had appeared on the subject.<sup>(1)</sup> Le Malfaiteur was, then, his way of attempting to redress this situation.

The two characters who most attract our attention here and who best illustrate our themes are Jean and Hedwige - more particularly the former - both in the grips of a hopeless passion for the same man, the homosexual Dolange, and both destined to take their own lives when blank despair unrelieved by any ray of spiritual hope finally overwhelms them. In his characterization and treatment of Jean and the milieu he describes in his " confession ", Green has drawn on his own experience as comparison with the autobiography reveals : an early example in the opening pages of the novel is the hankering after the innocence and happiness of childhood and the presence and love of the mother.<sup>(2)</sup> But during his adult life Jean has known neither deep love nor a lasting religious faith and at forty he finds himself ravaged by a hopeless, unrequited passion and the pangs of sexual hunger that leave no place for spiritual meditation or improvement. Ensnared by his vice, a prey to insomnia, when he is not seeking out pleasure in the streets he spends his nights in vain attempts to record " une vérité qui n'est pas du tout bonne à dire ".<sup>(3)</sup> All he can do is dream of what his life might have been, " sa vie tragiquement faussée ".<sup>(4)</sup>

In some ways, perhaps, Jean has been fortunate : he has his place in the Vasseur household, receives an allowance and is considered

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(1) Ibid., pp. 1597 - 1598.

(2) Le Malfaiteur, O.C. III, pp. 198 - 199.

(3) Ibid., p. 199.

(4) Ibid., p. 200.



by the family as a scholar and recluse.<sup>(1)</sup> His relations with the members of the family are correct but minimal and for the most part he is indifferent to their opinion of him.<sup>(2)</sup> His affection goes to the " gentille provinciale ", Hedwige, who as an orphan had been taken in by the Vasseurs, and to the goodhearted M. Vasseur, his benefactor of many years.<sup>(3)</sup> Yet Jean is only too conscious of his moral isolation and he experiences the desire to be like the mass of humanity, to be able to slough off the differences that set him apart from most of his fellow men, to concede and conform to the multitude's wishes : " Tu mangeras comme nous, tu penseras comme nous, et comme nous aussi, tu aimeras. Ressemble-nous ou nous t'étouffons ".<sup>(4)</sup> Jean has precious little strength left for a struggle; he is weary and can only look forward to death to break this terrible " solitude morale ". It is a bleak and sombre vision without any hint of human solace or commiseration.

Only in his written confession addressed to Hedwige - but unfortunately discovered by the deathlike Mme Pauque<sup>(5)</sup> - is Jean able to express himself, to free himself from some of the weight of guilt and oppression that has burdened him for so many years. In this way alone is Jean able to speak from the heart, imagining his reader to be the naïve and comparatively innocent girl<sup>(6)</sup> who nonetheless feels the same consuming passion for Gaston Dolange as he himself.

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(1) Although Mme Vasseur's daughter, Ulrique, soon learned of Jean's secret vice : see ibid., p. 321.

(2) Ibid., p. 200.

(3) We shall see later the significance that this minor character assumes.

(4) Malf. O.C. III, p. 202. Green's italics.

(5) See ibid., pp. 272 - 278.

(6) We say " comparatively innocent " for Hedwige too is capable of mental cruelty, as when she tries to tease and frighten poor Félicie. The attempt, however, is short-lived; the seamstress soon sees through the artless Hedwige. See ibid., pp. 365 - 369.

In his conversation with the girl, Jean had been unable to reach the point of avowal;<sup>(1)</sup> this he can achieve only after much effort in writing. The tone and style of Jean's narrative bear witness to the "fin lettré" that the so-called transgressor undoubtedly is, but he is a broken man and a frightened one: "Reconnaissez dans les hésitations de ces premières phrases le tremblement d'un homme qui a peur. A la minute où je vous écris, le jour va poindre et ce qu'il reste d'ombre dans le ciel vacille comme un grand édifice qui va crouler.... C'est le moment où la vie paraît le plus triste à ceux qui n'ont plus d'espoir, c'est l'heure du néant".<sup>(2)</sup> At this blackest period of his life, then, Jean pieces together his "story", and this confession ostensibly meant for Hedwige is just as much an attempt on Jean's part - in Julien Green's own words - "à voir plus clair en moi-même".<sup>(3)</sup>

Jean describes the harshness of his upbringing, owing to the uncompromising, puritanical principles of his father, Dr. Rollet, and of his first tutor (Jean is considered too delicate to attend school), the tyrannical M. Boron.<sup>(4)</sup> However, our interest focuses on Boron's replacement, M. Pâris, who in some ways prefigures the adult Jean. Pâris is first presented to us as the exemplary young man, "un garçon modeste et tranquille dont les yeux reflétaient une âme en apparence fort innocente".<sup>(5)</sup> The darling of the pious ladies of the district and of Jean's kindly mother, the new tutor nevertheless does not succeed in smoothing over Dr. Rollet's reservations as to his suitability for the post.<sup>(6)</sup> Doubtless suspicious of Pâris' charm, the

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(1) Ibid., pp. 244 - 248.

(2) Ibid., p. 279.

(3) J, p. 1, Sept. 17, 1928.

(4) See Malf., O.C. III, pp. 279 - 282.

(5) Ibid., p. 282.

(6) Ibid., pp. 282 - 283.

strait-laced doctor suspends judgment; his son has in fact sensed something of the effect of his tutor's charm on the fashionable female parishioners, and without being conscious of the significance of his words, the thirteen-year old Jean tells his mother that he finds the young teacher " charmant.... beau, que les traits de M. Pâris me paraissaient beaux comme ceux d'une statue dans un jardin public ".<sup>(1)</sup>

Following this description of what would seem to be a paragon of traditional, pious Christian virtue and of the effect of Pâris on his parents and those about him, Jean recounts another aspect of his tutor's character, one which as a thoroughly innocent and inexperienced schoolboy reminiscent of young Julien Green himself, he was certainly very far from suspecting and obviously unable to appreciate or evaluate at the time. On a visit to the local museum with his pupil, M. Pâris lingers amidst the Greek statues : confronted by these " Apollons à la taille étroite, aux hanches puissantes ", the young Rollet is ill at ease, " et le petit catholique que j'étais alors reculait d'instinct devant ces démons ".<sup>(2)</sup> M. Pâris' admiring defence of the Ancient Greeks and their culture meets with all but mute incomprehension on the part of Jean. Already we perceive something of the unfortunate consequences of the education meted out by Dr. Rollet and the unfeeling Boron.

Shortly afterwards, Pâris, accused by Jean's father of soliciting, albeit without any formal proof, is dismissed. Rollet's interrogation of his son in an attempt to establish whether he had been " contaminated " by Pâris is a scene that Jean regards as crucial in his development.<sup>(3)</sup> The doctor's inquisitorial methods together with

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(1) Ibid., p. 283.

(2) Ibid., p. 285.

(3) Ibid., p. 288.

his triumphant attitude on learning of the incident at the museum - in his innocence Jean relates everything thus unwittingly contributing to his tutor's downfall <sup>(1)</sup> epitomizes a mentality that in the name of a narrow, cloying virtue stigmatizes and condemns without appeal the least manifestation of difference or dissent. For Pâris' dismissal and subsequent condemnation by society on the flimsiest of pretexts not only wrecks his career as Jean's mother had foreseen <sup>(2)</sup> but also destroys the good in him; as he says to Jean when they meet in Paris some years later : " Votre père a tué en moi ce qu'il y avait de bon ". <sup>(3)</sup> At the time of his tutor's disgrace, Jean understood nothing of the possible sexual implications of his conduct. Although Pâris is categorized by Jean's father as a " malfaiteur ", as a criminal, years will elapse before Jean grasps the true significance of these words and the implications for his own life.

In the meantime, the adolescent is sent to a Catholic school where he comes under the spell of religion to such an extent that, like Julien Green, he is tempted by the monastic life. <sup>(4)</sup> Purity is the virtue desired above all others by the sensitive and immature Jean, but it is a pureté désincarnée bordering on angelism, and when he is bluntly informed of " the facts of life " by an older schoolfellow, the inevitable trauma ensues. <sup>(5)</sup> However, he subsequently refers to his total lack of curiosity regarding sexuality, putting this down to " Soit lenteur d'esprit, soit froideur naturelle, " <sup>(6)</sup> though at

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(1) Ibid., pp. 289 - 290.

(2) Ibid., p. 287.

(3) Ibid., p. 302.

(4) Ibid., p. 291 and see p. 1623 where J. Petit notes some of the autobiographical elements in Green's portrait of Jean.

(5) Ibid., p. 291.

(6) Ibid., p. 292. And cf. Palj., pp. 267 - 268. See above, Chapter I, p. 17, n. 3.

the height of his protracted " crise religieuse " he comes to experience a deep platonic love for a fellow collégien, whom he can only admire from afar such is his timidity and the gulf of interest and experience between them. For three years, enmeshed in his adolescent piety, Jean continues to " love " the handsome but mediocre Philippe : " Ce sentiment si fort et si pur, on m'eût bien étonné en me disant qu'il était coupable. Il eût fallu d'abord m'expliquer que j'étais amoureux et que s'éprendre d'une personne de son propre sexe constitue un de ces péchés innommables qui crient au Ciel ".<sup>(1)</sup> But this prolonged innocence was not to go on indefinitely; already, as his secondary schooling came to an end and Philippe was seen no more, Jean sensed a discrepancy in his life : " A la vérité, toute mon ignorance ne m'empêchait pas de flairer quelque chose d'insolite dans ce penchant que je ne confiais à personne ".<sup>(2)</sup>

At seventeen, between school and the world at large - destined by his father to the medical profession, but still aspiring to Holy Orders, and supported in this by mother and confessor - Jean undergoes a radical change. Two events in particular throw his life into confusion : his gaining of a degree of self-knowledge as to his true nature and the sudden death of his father. In his reading, Jean lights upon a book that treats his personal problem, even though the context is Ancient Greece. The revelation he experiences makes it plain to him that through homosexual love he is linked and united to great figures of antiquity, yet in his naïveté he assumes from the text he has read that he alone in the modern world has inherited this passion !<sup>(3)</sup> His absorption in religion gives way to a mechanical repetition of the rites, but somehow, despite this weakening in Jean's religious fervour and the almost imperceptible awakening of sensuality, the

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(1) Malf. O.C. III, p. 293.

(2) Ibid., p. 294.

(3) Ibid., pp. 295 - 296. And see above, Chapter I, p. 29, for the resemblance with the twenty year old Green's own revelation of his true nature as described in TL.

spiritual impulse lives on, as a vestige will continue to do so years later long after innocence has been lost : " Car il n'est si grande apostasie que le moine ne continue à vivre à côté du pécheur. Ces deux existences parallèles s'empoisonnent l'une l'autre, mais je vous tiens le langage du chrétien que je ne suis plus, et pourtant..."<sup>(1)</sup> Clearly these words carry strong autobiographical overtones and one should not lose sight of the fact that Green's first draft of parts of Le Malfaiteur dates from 1936 - 1938, before his second conversion and return to the Roman Church in 1939, and sums up his own personal drama of the time.<sup>(2)</sup>

Begun after the publication of Minuit, with its strong Buddhist imprint, and abandoned in favour of Varouna, where the Christian content is more marked,<sup>(3)</sup> the early Malfaiteur was drafted at a time when Green's spiritual interests were perhaps at their most varied. While he was engrossed in the study of Hinduism and Buddhism, the Jewish and Christian scriptures were still of importance in his life; this was the period when he spent a great deal of time learning Hebrew in order to read the Old Testament in the original.<sup>(4)</sup> In a diary extract dating from the spring of 1937, during his stay in the American South, in one paragraph Green speaks of his novel and of the scene in which Jean half confesses to Hedwige - "... il sait qu'elle ne comprendra rien à son histoire. " - and in another he notes his painstaking reading of the Bible in Hebrew : " J'ai lu assidûment la

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(1) Malf., O.C. III, p. 297.

(2) For an account of Green's metaphysical and spiritual problems between the years 1934 and 1939, with emphasis on his interest in Buddhism and its expression in Minuit and Varouna, see Samuel Stokes' excellent chapter in Julian Green and the Thorn of Puritanism, pp. 53 - 79. Stokes is unable to consider Le Malfaiteur as the novel was published in the same year as his study, and without the " Confession de Jean ".

(3) See Stokes, op. cit., pp. 94 - 95. And see J, pp. 413 - 415, Feb. 28, 1941.

(4) Cf. Stokes, op. cit., p. 95, and J, p. 248, n.d. Feb. 1936; p. 253, May 9, 1936; p. 258, Sept. 20, 1936 and p. 269, Jan. 2, 1937.

Bible en hébreu, avec un plaisir de plus en plus vif. Mais quel est le sens de cette lecture ? Je veux dire, quelle place occupera-t-elle dans l'ensemble de ma vie, et quelles transformations en puis-je attendre ? C'est ce que je me demande chaque jour ".<sup>(1)</sup> These notations are significant in that they show clearly the dichotomy in Green's interests. While he searches for religious belief, hoping that his reading and study will bring him into the way of faith, he endeavours to give literary expression to the carnal obsession that had dominated such a large part of his youth and early manhood. But the tense atmosphere of the mid and late thirties is hardly conducive to tranquil reflexion and taking stock, and the homosexual problem falls into the background, temporarily at least - hence the abandonment of Le Malfaiteur just after the completion of the confession. The progression and development in his religious thought and belief leads Green via the Old Testament prophets to the Incarnation, the discovery of St. Catherine of Genoa's Traité du Purgatoire and a conversation with Jacques Maritain helping to strengthen resistance to the " hérésie de la métempsycose " and opening the road to a profound Christian faith.<sup>(2)</sup>

The period between late summer 1937 and spring 1938, however, saw Julien Green deeply involved in his portrait of Jean, the novelist's alter ego and more trenchant in his judgments than Green the diarist. When, for example, he recounts the privations he and his mother were to know after his father's unexpected death, Jean writes bluntly : " La religion a peu d'attrait quand le ventre est vide et qu'on frissonne dans une pièce glaciale. Sous sa forme actuelle, le christianisme n'a rien à dire à ceux qui ont faim ".<sup>(3)</sup> In the straitened

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(1) J, p. 277, May 20, 1937.

(2) See J, p. 414, Feb. 28, 1941 and Stokes, op. cit., pp. 95 - 97. See also J. Petit, Julien Green " Les écrivains devant Dieu ", p. 43.

(3) Malf. O.C. III, p. 297. In his diary Green does comment on the scandal of the poverty he witnessed in the Naples area during his Italian journey of 1935 [J, pp. 222 - 223, May 5, 1935] - and in Rome he remarks that in St. Peter's he felt as much emotion as in a railway station [J, p. 215, April 11, 1935] - but there is no attack on the Roman Church's lack of social concern.

circumstances Jean and his mother experience and in the wake of the former's lapsed vocation, a relative, the kindly M. Levasseur,<sup>(1)</sup> sends money and finds Jean a modest situation in Paris as roundsman for a chemist.<sup>(2)</sup> Here again another autobiographical touch is introduced, young Julien having accepted a " place de livreur " in Paris on his return from America, only to be prevented from plying his trade by an irate Edward Green !<sup>(3)</sup> But whereas the pride of the young author-to-be who was spared the obligation of taking up such employment did not express itself in an arrogant " dédain des emplois modestes ",<sup>(4)</sup> that of our young " transgressor " who had no option but to accept this humble occupation was on the contrary wounded. Nevertheless, with the benefit of hindsight, Jean is able to contemplate this phase of his life with a certain philosophic detachment : " J'aurais dû me dire qu'au regard de Dieu, je valais peut-être mieux dans mon tablier de livreur que penché sur des ouvrages où s'agitait la question de l'être et de l'essence. Mais pour tirer profit de mon état présent, il eût fallu du courage et du bon sens, et je n'étais que vanité ".<sup>(5)</sup>

Despite his lowly situation, Jean is soon delighted to be in Paris ; left to his own devices, he indulges in nocturnal strolls which rapidly bring him into contact with a world completely new to him. His accidental discovery of a public garden favoured by homosexuals as a meeting place finds him torn " entre l'horreur de ce que je devinais et une curiosité sans mesure. Ce qu'on appelle le sens catholique n'est pas chose vaine. Si je perdais la foi, je conservais du moins

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(1) Who becomes simply M. Vasseur on p. 309. We shall see something of the importance of this character later in the chapter.

(2) Malf. O.C. III, pp. 297 - 298.

(3) See Jeunesse, pp. 70 - 71.

(4) Ibid., p. 71.

(5) Malf. O.C. III, pp. 298 - 299.



une sensibilité religieuse et flairais le mal avec un instinct infailible ".<sup>(1)</sup> There follows the encounter with M. Pâris whose sorry plight induces in Jean a mixture of pity and disgust. Jean and Pâris' descriptions of and comments on the sordid homosexual milieu evoked in Le Malfaiteur were later to be paralleled in Green's autobiographical depiction of this milieu in Jeunesse.<sup>(2)</sup>

Pâris himself is the embodiment of the raté, not only professionally but equally in his private life, though if his dismal fate prefigures Jean's subsequent ruin, unlike the latter, he has the excuse of the harsh and unjust treatment he had received at the hands of Dr. Rollet. He well sums up the tragedy of the pleasure-seeking homosexual in a France but a remove or two from us : "... courir après le plaisir, la tristesse des avenues sans fin le long desquelles on erre toute la nuit, pendant des années, les déceptions, les dangers, la solitude ".<sup>(3)</sup> Jean, raw and inexperienced, is incapable of understanding much of what Pâris tells him at their first chance meeting, but on a later occasion his eyes are fully opened to the squalid reality of his former tutor's situation.<sup>(4)</sup> Ironically, however, Pâris' ill fortune serves as a catalyst, setting Jean off on his own life of homosexual adventure. Unlike poor Pâris, Jean is successful in the quest for pleasure : fortune never fails to smile on him, at least during his youth.<sup>(5)</sup>

Looking back on his life from the vantage-point of his forty-five

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(1) Ibid., p. 300.

(2) See, for example, Jeunesse, pp. 128 - 140 and pp. 148 - 151.

(3) Malf. O.C. III, p. 302.

(4) Ibid., pp. 304 - 307.

(5) Ibid., pp. 307 - 308.

years,<sup>(1)</sup> Jean vindicates his passion :

" La passion qui s'est ancrée en moi peut vous sembler bizarre et répugnante. A moi, elle paraît belle. Elle m'a enrichi plus que ne l'eussent fait les tranquilles amours de l'homme à femmes, elle a aiguisé mon intelligence et développé dans mon âme timide le goût du risque et de l'aventure.... j'ai détruit en moi toute estime pour un ennemi sans intérêt, je sais à présent ce que valent les défenseurs de la vertu : ils se recrutent pour la plupart dans la foule immense des adultères. " (2)

This spirited apology for the homosexual condition together with the scorn for the traditional defenders of bourgeois morality would not have displeased an André Gide.

Whenever Jean's craving for sexual pleasure momentarily subsides and his interest in art and literature reasserts itself, M. Vasseur is invariably present to minister to his young protégé's needs, the very caricature of a maecenas.<sup>(3)</sup> Jean finally comes round to the idea of writing a book, swiftly passing from a history of art to a novel, and although the attempt is an abortive one, the thought process involved in this proposed composition is of interest. The young man's decision

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(1) In making Jean 45 years old [ibid., p. 309] Green raises a chronological problem, projecting his novel forward to 1941 - for on p. 317 we learn that Jean was 22 at the time of the Great War Armistice. In the mid-thirties Green could not have foreseen the pattern of events to overwhelm France at the end of the decade, yet when he later completed his novel it seems strange that he should not have emended the chronology, given that incidents such as Hedwige's outings to see Arlette and Dolange, or Jean's journey to Italy, do not in the least reflect the atmosphere or limited possibilities of movement in war-time France.

(2) Ibid., p. 309.

(3) See ibid., p. 311.

to entitle his narrative Le Malfaiteur with M. Pâris as the transgressor is soon followed by an inner conviction, a voice telling him that the wrongdoer is in fact Jean himself. Any bewilderment he feels is the result of the thought that in his father's eyes he, Jean, would doubtless have been regarded as just as much a malefactor as Pâris. Far from troubling him, however, the novelty of this idea excites the young man's imagination, " car avec mon père, c'était la société entière qui me reniait et je me trouvais avoir contre moi l'armée des honnêtes gens ".<sup>(1)</sup> Jean is spurred on in his enterprise not only by his youthful urge to épater le bourgeois but also by what he terms his " esprit d'apostolat ", his wish to bear witness and defend those who dared not open their mouths.<sup>(2)</sup> But when he has filled several pages with an account of his amorous escapades, the inner voice resumes, questioning the advisability of continuing, and it is here that Jean's debate joins Green's.

In these pages of interior duologue,<sup>(3)</sup> despite the humorous aspect of the style, a whole drama is contained, one that Julien Green knew so intimately for much of his adult life. For Jean, this inner voice that announces " Encore un qui flanchera tôt ou tard "<sup>(4)</sup> is truly prophetic, since he will never complete, let alone publish, his early work of vindication; indeed, many years will pass before he actually succeeds in writing his confession, this narrative that caused Green such heart-searching, from its inception and first draft in the thirties, through the revision withheld from publication in 1955, to the version that finally saw the light of day in 1973. The above remark recorded by Jean has justly been related by Jacques Petit to a

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(1) Ibid., p. 312.

(2) Ibid., p. 312.

(3) Ibid., pp. 312 - 314.

(4) Ibid., p. 314.

conversation between Green and Gide early in 1930,<sup>(1)</sup> when the latter warned the young writer who was then working on L'Autre Sommeil not to waver : " 'Vous savez, il ne faudra pas flancher.... J'en ai tant vu flancher.' Remarque suivie de ceci qui est vrai et profond : 'Si vous manquez maintenant de courage, vous vous en ressentiriez toute votre vie.' "<sup>(2)</sup> In the same extract, Green mentions Gide's attempts to goad him on to unashamed revelation in his work, sensing in the older master " outre son amour pour la littérature, qui n'est pas feint, une prédilection pour le scandale ".<sup>(3)</sup> Green was very likely thinking of the publication of Corydon in 1924; as a friend of Maritain, he was doubtless aware of the philosopher's attitude to the book and of his attempt to persuade its author against publication.<sup>(4)</sup> What really made Green indignant, however, was Gide's subsequent sentence which he noted as follows : " 'Et si on vous cherchait noise à cause du sujet de votre nouvelle, vous n'auriez qu'à dire que votre récit est fictif et vos personnages inventés. De cette façon, vous seriez à l'abri.' "<sup>(5)</sup> These words that so incensed the younger novelist echo Wilde and Proust's admonitions to Gide not to use the first person in his writing, recommendations which the author of Corydon found equally unacceptable.<sup>(6)</sup>

Yet Green was to resolve his dilemma with far greater discretion than Gide, the younger man at no time aspiring to the rôle of provo - cateur; he was anxious to express his truth, but in his own time and

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(1) Ibid., p. 1625.

(2) J, Les Années Faciles, p. 112, dated Jan. 7, 1930. The extract has been omitted from the J, 1928 - 1949 (it re-appears in O.C. IV, Pléiade edn., pp. 60 - 61); there is no reference to the above conversation in Gide's published Journal (Pléiade).

(3) Les Années Faciles, p. 112.

(4) For Gide's account of this incident, see his Journal, 1889 - 1939, Pléiade, pp. 771 - 774, at the date of Dec. 21, 1923.

(5) Les Années Faciles, pp. 112 - 113.

(6) See Justin O'Brien, op. cit., p. 259.

in his own way. When in the spring of 1944 he read Browning's Paracelsus, he recorded that certain lines were most certainly written for him :

" Yet we trusted thou shouldst speak  
The message which our lips, too weak,  
Refused to utter... " (1)

And in the same passage he reproached himself for his silence, at a time when he could and should have spoken out. Significantly, he added that he still possessed the means to speak, and indeed the moment would eventually come.

But for Green's protagonist, Jean, the moment would never come, his silence would be a permanent one. Seeing this failure to come to terms with his condition as the source of his downfall, Jean analyses his feelings towards himself, avowing his deep-seated shame, " car s'il ne m'en coûtait pas de faire le fanfaron avec des gens qui partageaient mes goûts, je bravais difficilement le mépris et la malveillance des hommes prétendus normaux ".<sup>(2)</sup> And he admits to a desire to keep up bourgeois appearances, " le souci de ne pas contrevenir aux lois, le regret indéracinable de n'être pas comme tout le monde, et par-dessus tout une crainte mystérieuse et profonde du scandale ".<sup>(3)</sup> At ease with his own kind, then, Jean is tongue-tied before the heterosexual majority, unable to affirm himself in the bourgeois society that has reared him and, despite himself, moulded him at least to the extent of desiring a certain conformity. His fear of scandal and of its consequences has necessitated his living a lie

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(1) J, p. 603, May 27, 1944. [For Browning's lines in context, see The Poetical Works of Robert Browning, O.U.P., London, 1940 (Reprinted 1960), p. 27].

(2) Malf. O.C. III, pp. 314 - 315.

(3) Ibid., p. 315.

with the resultant loss of integrity and self-esteem. This is Jean's major reproach to society's moral code : for the homosexual's personality it means deformation and distortion :

" .... on ne peut demander à un homme de jouer un personnage toute une partie de sa vie, si l'on veut qu'il reste sincère. C'est là le plus dur châtement de l'individu qu'un penchant sexuel met au ban de la société; il en est réduit à feindre ou à faire un éclat, et si le coeur lui manque de se déclarer, il est injustement contraint à vivre en hypocrite. "(1)

To avoid pretence on the one hand - one thinks of Gide's denunciation of what he termed Proust's " camouflage "(2) but also scandal 'à la Gide' on the other, that was what Green was aiming at. Yet given the nature of society at the time, if the homosexual wished to retain the respect of his 'normal' fellow citizens, where was the acceptable middle ground to be found ? The question is largely rhetorical, for if the homosexual failed to live out his life with at the very least an excessive caution verging on deceit, whether he was simply open in his dealings or resolved to be deliberately outspoken, in either eventuality society would be only too ready to condemn him without appeal. The course of action adopted by the wealthy, famous Gide with his taste for scandal, and reflected in his hero Michel in L'Immoraliste, was of course an impossibility for Green's humble Jean, in whom the kindly down-to-earth M. Vasseur had soon discerned " l'exquise sensibilité du râté ".(3)

Despite the outward, material differences between Julien Green and

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(1) Ibid., p. 315.

(2) See Gide's Journal, 1889 - 1939, p. 705, dated Dec. 2, 1921, and Justin O'Brien, op. cit., pp. 253 - 255.

(3) Malf. O.C. III, p. 318.

his fictional transgressor, we have already seen that psychologically he reflects the author's thought, certainly as much as Michel does Gide's.<sup>(1)</sup> Just as Si le grain ne meurt... was to confirm much of what critics had gleaned about André Gide from L'Immoraliste, so the publication of the series of autobiographical volumes beginning with Partir avant le jour shed much new light on the young Julien Green, confirming the highly personal nature of a large part of the fictional output. Yet the omission of "Jean's confession" from the 1955 edition of Le Malfaiteur poses an interesting question: was it, as J. Petit has stated, because Green judged that following Sud it was no longer necessary, or was it omitted, as the author suggested to Petit, because publication might have made it impossible for him to write his autobiography?<sup>(2)</sup> At all events, it would seem that in 1955 the author was not yet ready to publish 'his truth'; as we have mentioned and as we illustrate in the present chapter, the "Confession" in Le Malfaiteur is much more precise, detailed and direct than anything in Sud, and Green needed more time before he was able to commit to a more generally enlightened public this particular "histoire secrète", for him the most secret and obsessive of all.

Green's hero continues his reflections on the homosexual condition, on his own homosexual condition, relating the tragedy of passing youth and the ineluctable solitude that soon sets in. For youth passes, but desire remains; conjuring up the spectacle of handsome, beautifully proportioned young men sunbathing on a Scandinavian beach, Jean tries to express what it means to desire not one but all of these latter-day Apollos.<sup>(3)</sup> Along with this thought, however, comes another,

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- (1) It is not our intention to take this particular analogy further. Michel's homosexuality in L'Immoraliste remains latent and it would be imprudent to identify him too closely with his creator.
- (2) See O.C. III, p. 1599, and Julien Green l'homme qui venait d'ailleurs, p. 177.
- (3) Malf. O.C. III, pp. 315 - 316. Green has noted: "La beauté, pour moi, est avant tout nordique". J., p. 913, July 21, 1950. The evocation of the Scandinavian beach will occur again in L'Autre O.C. III, pp. 954 - 955. For the origin of this scene, see J. pp. 292-293, Aug. 21, 1937, and Ce qui reste de jour, p. 207, Dec. 15, 1969.

more sinister - a bleak sadness at the persistence of this desire in the mature man : " Tout à coup je fus triste, triste de porter en moi des désirs de jeune homme alors que mon corps vieillissait, triste de mon visage enlaidi par l'âge et le plaisir, triste surtout de ma grande solitude.... 'Pourquoi, me demandai-je, la nature nous a-t-elle voulus ainsi, nous autres ?' "(1) The process of ageing brings home to Jean the futility of his quest for pleasure; although desire remains, sex is no longer seen as the great liberating experience : "... l'amour charnel finit par ressembler à un excellent livre qu'on a lu trop souvent ".(2) Nevertheless, the sexual instinct and habit are so ingrained that, despite his lucidity and self-knowledge, Jean carries on living as before, ever hoping for the " heureuse rencontre " that will put everything to rights, that will make it all worthwhile. Fully aware of his contradictions, he sums up his position thus : " La nature humaine a parfois d'inexplicables bizarreries; je désire âprement ce qu'au fond je ne désire plus. Le corps a pris l'habitude d'un plaisir que quelque chose en moi déteste.... ".(3)

For Jean, first in Paris then in Lyon, the comedy continues, assured as he is of M. Vasseur's material support. He has succeeded in hiding his true tastes and nature from the Vasseur family,(4) for whom he is the studious, somewhat eccentric " parent pauvre ". Until his mother's death, he would accompany her to mass, keeping up a pious external front, " car de savoir qu'elle avait donné le jour à un monstre eût certainement abrégé sa vie ".(5) Strong though the italicized word is, Jean recognizes that for many members of the society

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(1) Malf. O.C. III, p. 316.

(2) Ibid., p. 318.

(3) Ibid., p. 319.

(4) Excepting Ulrique.

(5) Malf. O.C. III, p. 321. Green's italics.



of which he forms a part, however peripheral, it does correspond to the reality, and the reality, albeit unpleasant and unjust, cannot be ignored. In his weakness he needs a degree of acceptance.

If in the past he has been unable to write about himself and his condition, in the relative tranquillity of the Vasseur household Jean has nonetheless written : we learn that his very real interest in art has led him to the study of the iconography of St. Sebastian through the ages and for some ten years he has been engaged on this work.<sup>(1)</sup> The subject does of course provide a special fascination for Jean, enabling him to sublimate to some extent his immoderate desires. For St. Sebastian was reputedly a fine, handsome figure of a man and " grâce à un de ces tours d'adresse dont l'Eglise est coutumière, il a supplanté Apollon lui-même dans la religion du menu peuple. Aussi nous apparaît-il, en général, sous les traits d'un jeune homme aimable et voluptueux, non d'un martyr à la mine ascétique. C'est le dieu ressuscité sur les autels chrétiens.... ".<sup>(2)</sup> Jean's interest in art and his passion for the male form have thus found a fertile point of contact and he sees St. Sebastian as the representation of " cet amour indéracinable que l'Eglise chrétienne a voulu faire disparaître ".<sup>(3)</sup> Green's treatment of these aspects of religious art in Le Malfaiteur was not universally appreciated, particularly in ecclesiastical circles, one priest objecting to such passages as the brief description

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(1) Ibid., pp. 322 - 323.

(2) Ibid., p. 322. It is instructive to compare the above passage with a diary extract of the period. Green is in Rome, admiring a painting of St. Sebastian : " Il est couché sous un autel dans une de ces attitudes voluptueuses qui justifient la mauvaise humeur des protestants à Rome, mais il est très beau. Trop beau. C'est un Apollon martyrisé qui forme un digne pendant à la sainte Thérèse de Sainte-Marie de la Victoire. Le dieu païen s'est glissé dans l'église chrétienne pour dormir tranquillement sous l'autel de son rival ". J, p.220, April 30, 1935.

(3) Malf. O.C. III, p. 322.

of Michelangelo's Saint Sebastian and to what he termed the author's " obsession du nu ".<sup>(1)</sup>

In the gallery of Green's tormented heroes, Jean is one of the very few who could be categorized as an intellectual - despite his professed loathing for members of this class<sup>(2)</sup> - and to his aspiration to the studious, reflective life, he adds a longing for religious faith. In lines which could have come out of Green's diary, he writes :

" .... je suis un homme d'étude fourvoyé dans le plaisir. Au fond de moi, il y aura toujours la nostalgie d'une cellule blanche où le bruit du monde n'arrive pas et d'où la tentation est absente. En travaillant, il me semble que je rétablis un mystérieux équilibre entre le vrai et le faux. Je ne veux pas que le temps qui me reste soit dévoré par de médiocres aventures, de sinistres rencontres dans des hôtels louches. " (3)

The yearning for the white monk's cell with its absence of temptation smacks more of romanticism than of a true vocation. More genuine and realistic is the understanding of the therapeutic effect of work and the deeply-felt wish to be rid of promiscuity.

In the concluding section of his confession, Jean describes his relationship with Gaston Dolange and the hopeless passion he has conceived for this man; the middle-aged homosexual is seen at his

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(1) See J, pp. 1207 - 1208, June 3, 1956. It should be remembered that the " Confession de Jean " was not included in this edition of the novel. The description of Michelangelo's Saint Sebastian occurs on pp. 275 - 276 of the novel : " De longs cheveux bouclés encadraient son visage. Pas un fil ne couvrait ses membres robustes ".

(2) Malf. O.C. III, p. 325.

(3) Ibid., p. 323.

lowest ebb. It is this passion for the young Dolange, half his age, that is to precipitate Jean's downfall, as the last vestiges of self-respect swiftly disappear. The description of Dolange's looks is certainly not without interest : " Beau, cela va sans dire, mais d'une beauté voisine de la laideur, laid même, si vous voulez, irrésistible ".<sup>(1)</sup> This inevitably recalls another description that we have quoted earlier in this study, where the victim of the " laideur saisissante " was the young Green himself.<sup>(2)</sup> With these good looks that verge on ugliness yet exercise an irresistible spell over the beholder, we enter a pagan, but intensely real, world of vice. While recognizing the absurdity of his passion - Dolange is an unscrupulous profiteur simply out for his own gain and pleasure, in the author's words " veule et insignifiant ",<sup>(3)</sup> and without any of Jean's finesse - Jean is defenceless; he actually admires the hot-blooded Dolange, his youth, his insolence, going so far as to declare his love, his " ridicule amour ".<sup>(4)</sup> Rebuffed by the young man, such is Jean's state of abjection that he offers him money, and for several months thanks to M. Vasseur's generosity, he is able to buy Dolange's favours, his companionship and his youth. Needless to say, the money is soon dissipated and the relationship ends. At the same time, Jean's disgust with himself over his behaviour reaches such extremes that he longs to transform his life; however, all religious faith has fled : " Je ne croyais plus du tout, j'avais tué en moi le seul libérateur possible ".<sup>(5)</sup>

Over the years the constant quest for pleasure and a fleeting happiness has taken its toll; a terrible void has replaced spirituality

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(1) Malf. O.C. III, p. 323.

(2) See above, Chapter I, p. 39.

(3) O.C. III, p. 1514. [Extracted from an interview with Guy Dupré, Carrefour, April 25, 1956].

(4) Malf. O.C. III, p. 323.

(5) Ibid., p. 324.

in Jean's being. Attempts at prayer in these circumstances are meaningless : " J'essayai de réciter des prières, mais prier dans le vide, quoi de plus démoralisant ? Il me semblait que par un strict retour, j'éprouvais tout le désespoir de M. Pâris ".<sup>(1)</sup> Here we encounter a notion that Green holds very firmly and which the author considered especially relevant to Le Malfaiteur : ".... l'habitude du plaisir finit presque toujours par détruire en nous quelque chose dont nous ne pouvons pas nous passer dans la vie spirituelle; je veux dire une disposition à recevoir ce que Dieu veut nous donner ".<sup>(2)</sup> In 1950, in a conversation with a young religious, Green had said that carnal sin was a serious offence because ultimately it always hardened a man's heart : a young man is seemingly immune from the effects of sin, for " la pourriture, l'endurcissement ne paraissent qu'à la longue, mais paraissent toujours... ".<sup>(3)</sup>

This, then, is Jean's predicament : pleasure has destroyed his earlier receptivity to spiritual experience, his heart has indeed hardened. Green had already noted in 1937, while working on the first draft of the novel, that " Le plaisir tue en nous quelque chose ";<sup>(4)</sup> he added that he had thought along these lines and experienced moments

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(1) Ibid., p. 324.

(2) O.C. III, p. 1514. [From the above-mentioned interview with G. Dupré]. And see P.C. Hoy, The Portrayal of Man's Condition in the Novels of Julien Green, unpublished master's thesis, University of Wales, Bangor, 1958, pp. 296 - 297. See also Jeunesse, p. 269 : " La certitude grandissait en moi, venue d'où, je ne sais, que l'amour dégagé des sens était immortel et que le plaisir le tuait. Ces idées profondément inactuelles m'auront accompagné ma vie durant, car il est improbable qu'elles changent à l'âge que j'atteins ".

(3) J, p. 906, April 15, 1950.

(4) Ibid., p. 282, June 9, 1937.

of rebellion against himself for several years, without being able to summon up sufficient resolve to speak of these problems. But whereas the author was to find hope and consolation in the Roman Catholic Church, his fictional hero, Jean, is denied such comfort. The habit of sexual pleasure is too deeply rooted, even if a faint glimmer of hope seems to emerge following the rupture with Dolange :

" Je ne voulais plus ce que voulait mon corps; entre lui et moi s'opérait une espèce de divorce.... Je m'entendais parler et me voyais agir sans vraiment prendre part à ma vie charnelle ".<sup>(1)</sup> Sadly, though, Jean's sexual cravings become more intense : " Cependant mes désirs s'exaspéraient. Ce que Philippe [Gaston Dolange] ne me donnait pas, je le cherchais ailleurs, je le cherchais dans les rues ".<sup>(2)</sup> Briefly but unflinchingly, he describes his descent into the twilight world of the pègre, the riff-raff of the regional metropolis. Jean's indiscretions do not fail to attract the notice of the police who set in motion the classic operation of the plain clothes decoy;<sup>(3)</sup> he is thus brought face to face with the harsh reality of his situation, that if he does not change his way of life, arrest followed by an ignominious charge will be his inevitable and unenviable fate.

Envisaging the years ahead, the prospect of the ageing homosexual forced to beg the company and favours of young men horrifies Jean. Furthermore, he becomes obsessed with the idea of arrest : ".... l'idée fixe de l'arrestation grandissait en moi. Il me semblait inévitable qu'un jour ou l'autre, un des deux policiers dont je vous ai parlé me prît en flagrant délit. Je le redoutais. A voir la manière dont j'agissais, on eût dit que je le voulais ".<sup>(4)</sup> As a consequence of his

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(1) Malf. O.C. III, pp. 324 - 325.

(2) Ibid., p. 325.

(3) See ibid., p. 326.

(4) Ibid., p. 327.

fear, Jean does make a short-lived attempt at reforming his life; for a few days and nights he remains in his room to write and study, glimpsing a possibility of salvation in the discipline of regular work. There is no religious aspiration or élan here, he makes clear : " .... il ne s'agissait pas.... de sauver une âme à laquelle je ne croyais plus comme jadis, mais de préserver du malheur les années qui me restaient à vivre ".<sup>(1)</sup> Yet even this limited ambition is to prove a chimaera, for when Jean comes to the realization that his conduct is known to many through past imprudence, his resolution fails.<sup>(2)</sup> While he feels that having lost all sense of faith and purpose in life the best solution would be suicide, the basic instincts for self-preservation and sexual release continue to assert themselves.

An inner compulsion drives Jean back to his old haunts; in the ill-lit station waiting-room a good-looking young workman smiles at him : " J'oublierai tout, mon âge, ma tristesse et ces craintes qui me harcelaient ".<sup>(3)</sup> Even the presence of the agent provocateur does not deter the now reckless Jean from following the youth into the night in an endeavour to " arracher à la vie quelques minutes d'un rare et difficile bonheur ".<sup>(4)</sup> In the meeting with the young worker, with all the sordid details of the proposed exchange, Green has painted a picture of vice repulsive in the extreme. " Cette louche et sinistre aventure," comments Jean, " c'est cela la joie de vivre ".<sup>(5)</sup> The irony bites deep, for indeed the reality could scarcely be uglier. With the policeman's inopportune arrival almost resulting in Jean and his companion being caught in flagrante delicto, the former's humiliation is complete.

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(1) Ibid., p. 327.

(2) See ibid., pp. 327 - 328.

(3) Ibid., p. 328.

(4) Ibid., p. 330.

(5) Ibid., p. 331.

The scene with the worker not only reveals to us Jean's recklessness, but also his lack of scruples. It is soon obvious to him that the youth is younger than he had first imagined, and he notices that this fact has not escaped the policeman.<sup>(1)</sup> Jean's opinion on this score is reinforced a little later in conversation with the adolescent; when he admits to being eighteen and a half, Jean's mental reply is that the boy is lying, that he is younger. Nevertheless, to the hardened homosexual and man of pleasure that Jean has become, moral considerations appear irrelevant; notwithstanding his lassitude and disgust, he cynically reasons : " Mais puisque le plaisir est là, profite-en, même si tu n'en veux pas. Tu le regretterais trop, plus tard ".<sup>(2)</sup>

Jean's aimless wanderings in the rainswept streets following this incident are accompanied by cruel thoughts on the misspent years : his disturbed mind ranges self-pityingly over this period, over his whole life, up to that night and the confrontation with the representative of a law he despises. It is at this juncture, in an attempt to dispel " toute l'amertume de la solitude "<sup>(3)</sup> obsessed as he is with the details of his wasted life, that he decides to knock at Hedwige's door - Hedwige, in Jean's eyes the embodiment of purity and innocence, all that he has irrevocably lost.<sup>(4)</sup> Of course, he is unable really to confide in the young girl; he knows full well that precisely on account of the purity and innocence he so prizes she will not be able to understand him.<sup>(5)</sup> Similarly, he has no guarantee that his written

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(1) Ibid., p. 329.

(2) Ibid., p. 331.

(3) Ibid., p. 333.

(4) Jean's conversation with Hedwige is recorded in the first part of the novel, see ibid., pp. 244 - 248.

(5) See P.C. Hoy's above-mentioned thesis, pp. 151 - 153, for the theme of " counterfeit and anonymous confession ".

confession will reach her.<sup>(1)</sup> Plainly, however, it is not so much the fact of being read that is important for Jean, as he himself records : " .... je me demande parfois si je ne suis pas en train de parler tout seul. Que m'importe, au fond ! J'ai voulu dire la vérité, je ne puis contraindre personne à l'entendre ".<sup>(2)</sup> These words of Jean's provide us with yet another autobiographical trait : the compulsive desire to tell the truth, so marked in Green's personal writings and so succinctly stated in the diary : " J'ai voulu à tout prix dire la vérité ".<sup>(3)</sup>

The author has gone so far as to confer on his hero literary ambitions,<sup>(4)</sup> largely frustrated it is true, but nonetheless finding some outlet at least in the confession and the study on St. Sebastian. Jean Rollet is indeed Julien Green as he might have been, had circumstances been less favourable, had he not made the acquaintance of certain individuals at vital stages in his development. In this respect, the importance of the meetings with Robert de Saint Jean in 1924 and with Jacques Maritain in 1925 can hardly be overestimated.<sup>(5)</sup> Jeunesse shows us very clearly Julien Green's disarray as a young man in 1923 and 1924 and his obsession with " l'horreur et l'attrait de la

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(1) Indeed, it is Mme Pauque who stumbles upon the document, see Malf. O.C. III, p. 278.

(2) Ibid., p. 330.

(3) J., p. 818, Oct. 24, 1948. And see Marcel Lobet, Ecrivains en aveu, Essai sur la confession littéraire, Editions Brepols, Brussels, 1962, p. 175.

(4) See Malf. O.C. III, p. 328 and p. 333.

(5) We have already seen something of the impact of the relationship with Saint Jean on Green's life and work, but the influence of the older Maritain, so different in kind, is certainly of importance. Green has noted : " Une des plus grandes faveurs que Dieu m'ait faites a été de mettre Jacques sur ma route, en 1924 ". J., p. 1133, June 18, 1955. The first actual meeting between the philosopher and the young writer took place in 1925. See O.C. I, p. LVII and p. 1231.



luxure ",<sup>(1)</sup> an obsession which of course remained, but for the most part firmly under control. In Green, despite the youthful carnal excesses, thanks to certain ineradicable elements in his personality and surely nurtured by his life-long friends, a spiritual disposition providing a degree of refuge and protection remains intact even during the years of estrangement from the Church; indeed, he claims never to have doubted God's existence.<sup>(2)</sup> For Jean Rollet, though, there is neither the firm guiding hand of friendship at critical moments,<sup>(3)</sup> nor any kind of religious belief to help redeem the soul of a man who slips daily deeper and deeper into vice, until towards the end of his life immoderate sexual passion dominates and blots out practically all higher considerations.

In the closing pages of Jean's narrative, and in its complement constituted by his letters to Hedwige from Naples, the tragic outcome is foreshadowed and announced. Recounting the effect of seeing Gaston Dolange once again, Jean's words take on a Racinian colouring : " Je le vis.... j'attachai la vue à cette tête bouclée que j'avais tenue dans mes mains et ma bouche prononça son nom, mais si bas qu'il ne put m'entendre.... De nouveau je le désirais. Si étrange que cela vous paraisse, j'avais oublié ses traits, sa beauté de jeune brute, sa démarche insolente, tout ce qui faisait son charme.... ".<sup>(4)</sup> This passion that racks Jean, however misdirected and sterile it may be, is his reality, and yet he knows that the sole reasonable solution to

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(1) Jeunesse, p. 278.

(2) See J, e.g. p. 345, dated Feb. 8, 1939 : "... je fus préservé de l'athéisme.... L'idée que Dieu pût ne pas être ne m'a jamais seulement effleuré ". And see F. Bernier, " Le sentiment religieux chez Julien Green ", La Revue de l'Université Laval, n° 5, Jan.1963, pp. 438 - 439.

(3) The support of the self-effacing Bernard Vasseur scarcely comes into this category. Jean's benefactor shows kindness and generosity, but relations remain distant, on a superficial level.

(4) Malf. O.C. III, p. 334.

his predicament lies in renunciation.<sup>(1)</sup> In one respect, circumstances force him to act : having compromised himself with a large number of young men,<sup>(2)</sup> his reputation known and the police at his heels, in order to avoid arrest and dishonour for the Vasseur family, he leaves for Naples, ostensibly to carry out a programme of research.<sup>(3)</sup>

Realizing that his life in Lyon and his relationship with Dolange are at a definite end and faced with his gravest moral crisis, in the final lines of his confession Jean is at pains to point out that no church can help him in his unbelief : " A quelle foi me fussé-je converti, moi qui ne trouvais plus dans aucune église le secours que je cherchais ? "<sup>(4)</sup> Yet paradoxically, without daring to name him directly, so strong are his feelings of worthlessness and guilt, Jean evokes his longing to confide in Christ, for " aux heures les plus sombres, quand tout semblait perdu, quand j'avais trop menti pour m'estimer encore, quand je me souvenais de toutes mes humiliations, de tous mes déboires, des injures que j'avais provoquées, et que mon coeur se serrait de désespoir, alors je le sentais près de moi, attiré sans doute par ma grande pauvreté, et je devinais confusément que lui seul ne me méprisait pas, parce qu'il m'aimait ".<sup>(5)</sup> Christ beckons, then, but if at some of his worst moments Jean feels his comforting presence, the feeling remains diffuse without any positive effect or consequence. Indeed, Jean's remarks in his first letter to Hedwige reinforce the reader's impression of his remoteness from the organized religion of the churches. " Avec une foi plus vive, " he writes to the young woman, " je me confesserais peut-être. Les églises ne manquent

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(1) Ibid., p. 335.

(2) Ibid., pp. 327 - 328.

(3) See ibid., pp. 268 - 270.

(4) Ibid., p. 336.

(5) Ibid., p. 336.

pas. Mais loin de moi, hélas, ces facilités réservées aux âmes pieuses ".<sup>(1)</sup>

Clearly, the incorporation of the " Confession " in a novel that still includes Jean's letters does give rise to a certain amount of repetition and overlap, since the letters - particularly the first one with its discreet allusions to Jean's nature and passions - which in the early version of the novel replaced the " Confession " now have precious little to add to the reader's understanding of Jean's homosexuality.<sup>(2)</sup> What they do underline is his moral bankruptcy leading to his final despairing act, yet at the same time, in spite of the cloying weakness and self-pity of Green's " unheroic hero ", they emphasize his concern to protect Hedwige's unsullied innocence, to put the girl on her guard against Gaston Dolange. In addition to this concern, in an echo of the " Confession ", Jean voices his disapproval of those for whom the homosexual is an object of contempt, those whom he characterizes as " mes ennemis qui ne me pardonneront jamais d'être tel que Dieu m'a créé ".<sup>(3)</sup> This is not the place to reopen the debate about whether homosexuals are made or born;<sup>(4)</sup> the important thing here is the plea for tolerance for the adult homosexual who finds himself as confirmed in his orientation as the heterosexual in his, a tolerance and understanding that large parts of society and the Church seem quite unable to provide. The attitude of the Catholic Church to homosexuality, which we discuss later in this study, was referred to by Green in his " Introduction " to Le Malfaiteur, but what appears important to the author is the fact that Christ in the Gospels remains silent on this particular issue.<sup>(5)</sup>

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(1) Ibid., p. 355.

(2) For Hedwige, of course, who does not read the " Confession ", the letters retain their importance. See ibid., p. 1627, n.

(3) Ibid., p. 355.

(4) See above, Chapter I.

(5) O.C. III, p. 1598. J. Petit draws our attention to a similar passage in the diaries, dated Sept. 23, 1944 [J, p. 632].

In Green's novel, it is Mme Pauque who, after acquainting herself with Jean's " Confession " and reading out his letter to the uncomprehending Hedwige, well illustrate the stock bourgeois reaction with her blunt " Jean est un malfaiteur ".<sup>(1)</sup> Too weak to protest against society's judgment and too weak to fight his passion, from his Neapolitan retreat Jean writes that he would willingly lead a life of deprivation if only his former amorous chagrin could be restored, if only he could " voir de nouveau le visage dont le souvenir est pour moi une torture que je renonce à décrire ".<sup>(2)</sup> But in the absence of any possible consolation from this quarter, he swiftly comes to look upon suicide as his one means of maintaining at least a semblance of dignity.

Written and revised over many years, much of Le Malfaiteur nonetheless belongs to Green's " first phase ", indeed to the period preceding the author's second conversion; this explains the absence of an explicit Christian content or atmosphere which permeates the other novels published since 1950. As we have seen above, although autobiographical material abounds in Le Malfaiteur, it would certainly be erroneous to regard the aridity of Jean's spiritual life as a mirror-image of the author's own at the time. It is nevertheless true that Green's questing spiritual nature did share similar thoughts concerning Christianity and organized religion, as for example the feeling of remoteness and estrangement from the Churches.<sup>(3)</sup>

One incident of importance in the novel which would seemingly have an autobiographical basis concerns not Jean but Hedwige. This is the

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(1) Malf., O.C. III, p. 356. Though it is only fair to add that she does somewhat temper her judgment when she refers to " ce malheureux Jean que je ne veux pas accabler ". Ibid., p. 358.

(2) Ibid., p. 356.

(3) In his Julien Green, " Les écrivains devant Dieu ", p. 48, J. Petit records a diary extract to this effect : " Tristesse de se sentir loin de toutes les Eglises ". [J, p. 296, Nov. 5, 1937].

young woman's dream<sup>(1)</sup> in which she undergoes a richly symbolic experience without any awareness of its true significance. Her cognizance remains at a superficial level : suddenly confronted in her room by a poorly-dressed man of humble demeanour, yet somehow reassuring, she is mysteriously invited to divest herself of all her possessions. Such resistance as she offers is soon overcome; in fact, a feeling of well-being comes over her : " Pour la première fois de sa vie, elle était vraiment heureuse; un poids énorme glissait de ses épaules.... ".<sup>(2)</sup> However, the test is not complete, since her belief that she has abandoned everything is unfounded; like Jean, she clings tenaciously to one thing - her passion for Gaston Dolange. The vision of the sensual Dolange is too powerful, exercising a magnetism whose pull inexorably draws her to it : ".... dans ce visage d'une laideur séduisante, tout respirait le bonheur charnel et la fureur d'aimer ".<sup>(3)</sup> When her visitor asks Hedwige to renounce her passion, her negative reply marks the end of the dream, a dream in which she has unwittingly been the object of contention in a playing-out of the basic drama of the two realities. She has failed to recognize Christ in the man who demands her renunciation, and she has been unable to discern or apprehend the powers of evil embodied in Dolange's brute sensuality.

In his introduction to Le Malfaiteur, Green wrote of the importance that he attached to this scene : " Sans doute le passage le plus significatif est-il celui où l'héroïne voit en rêve un homme qui essaie de la faire renoncer d'abord à tous ses biens terrestres, puis à un amour voué à l'échec; or cet homme est le Christ, mais elle ne le sait

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(1) See Malf. O.C. III, pp. 239 - 241. J. Petit has drawn a parallel between this dream and Green's own experience dating from 1934 and recorded in Les Années Faciles, pp. 570 - 571. See JG, " Les écrivains devant Dieu ", p. 51, and O.C. III, pp. 1615 - 1616, n.

(2) Malf., O.C. III, p. 240.

(3) Ibid., p. 241. Again, we are struck by the conjunction of " laideur " with " séduisante " - we have already seen the combination " laid.... irrésistible " (ibid., p. 323) and " d'une laideur saisissante " (Jeunesse, p. 132) - as though sexual attraction must needs be accompanied by connotations of ugliness and vice.

pas ".<sup>(1)</sup> Christianity plays no part in Hedwige's life and, unlike Jean, she has not experienced a religious upbringing : " Jamais il n'était question de religion à l'hôtel Vasseur. Hedwige elle-même avait grandi dans l'incroyance et passait devant les églises comme on passe devant un palais de justice ou tout autre monument où l'on est à peu près certain de ne jamais mettre les pieds ".<sup>(2)</sup> Years of a sheltered existence in the Vasseur household have scarcely served to broaden her horizons and her ignorance of life is considerable. Although both she and Jean are to an extent " outsiders " at the Hôtel Vasseur, the gulf in their individual experience and interests is too wide to permit the exchange of confidences. This fact is unfortunate for Jean, who is genuinely fond of Hedwige and respects her somewhat naïve candour : " Hedwige ne ment pas; l'intérêt ni la politesse ne peuvent obtenir d'elle qu'elle atténue la vérité ".<sup>(3)</sup> He feels that if he were not so unsociable, so " sauvage ", he could at least make friends with Hedwige, but her laughter and teasing ways disconcert him<sup>(4)</sup>: ".... et puis, surtout, elle lui suppose des vertus qu'il n'a pas. Cela seul suffit à l'écarter d'elle aux moments où il voudrait se confier à quelqu'un ".<sup>(5)</sup>

For Hedwige, Jean's nature and habits remain shrouded in mystery; indeed, despite various hints and allusions,<sup>(6)</sup> only at the end of the novel from the mouth of an inebriated Félicie does she really seem to grasp the truth about Gaston Dolange and Jean.<sup>(7)</sup> Yet as she ponders

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(1) Malf. O.C. III, p. 1596.

(2) Ibid., p. 393.

(3) Ibid., p. 201.

(4) See, for example, ibid., p. 223.

(5) Ibid., p. 201.

(6) See ibid., pp. 246 - 248, p. 351, p. 358, p. 363, pp. 367 - 369.

(7) Ibid., pp. 406 - 407.

Félicie's words, she mentally records that the seamstress had in fact taught her nothing that her innermost self had not already sensed : " Au fond d'elle-même elle avait toujours eu le sentiment de cette vérité qui lui faisait peur.... ".<sup>(1)</sup> What is now forcibly and somewhat crudely brought home to her is the full unpalatable truth that Dolange is a practising homosexual not averse to prostituting his favours and totally impervious to her own type of ingenuous feminine charm. Faced with these facts, Hedwige's fragile equilibrium is shattered; for a short while the emptiness of her life has in a way been compensated by this passion, the result of the briefest of meetings with Gaston Dolange when the latter's robust sensual appeal had effortlessly seduced and enslaved her.<sup>(2)</sup> Of the truth that those around her are so reluctant to divulge, she seizes on certain scraps of selective explanation such as Arlette's " C'est exactement comme s'il ne pouvait pas ",<sup>(3)</sup> interpreting these words as a confirmation of Dolange's impotence.<sup>(4)</sup>

While this belief increases her sense of despair, her own sensuality has been stirred and her rêveries concerning Dolange continue : " Elle rêva. Il était nu devant elle. Son corps brillait pareil à celui d'une idole, et elle voyait sa poitrine et ses flancs palpiter.... Hedwige ressentait une intolérable brûlure sur toute sa chair et n'existait plus que par ses yeux qui suivaient le regard de l'homme, et tantôt ce regard se portait vers la droite, tantôt vers la gauche, mais jamais il ne se posait sur elle, et de toutes ses forces elle criait.... ".<sup>(5)</sup> In the intimacy of sleep, then, she gives vent to her intense sexual longing only to be frustrated by the inescapable if intolerable fact

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(1) Ibid., p. 407.

(2) See ibid., pp. 226 - 228.

(3) Ibid., p. 351. Green's italics.

(4) Ibid., p. 358.

(5) Ibid., p. 361.

that Dolange has no interest in her. As her dream continues, she is warned of the hopelessness of her infatuation : "... peu à peu elle reconnut le visage de Jean.... Les mains étendues pour l'éloigner, non pour l'accueillir, il secouait tristement la tête ".<sup>(1)</sup> This warning is followed by those of Arlette and Mme Pauque; again, one is tempted to deduce that deep down Hedwige knows more of the truth than she will admit to at a conscious level. For although she is the victim of a protracted sexual innocence and is either misled or told half-truths by those around her, remarks such as those of Mme Pauque referring to Dolange as " ce petit misérable "<sup>(2)</sup> together with her allusions to " de telles gens " and " ces choses honteuses "<sup>(3)</sup> could not easily be interpreted as relating to the condition of impotence. For the American critic, M.G. Rose, Hedwige is treated by the Vasseurs as though she were an adolescent boy rather than a girl.<sup>(4)</sup> She considers that in Hedwige Green has created " the predicament of his own teenage naïveté ", noting that in the writer's case neither the lycée nor his war service succeeded in opening his eyes to the reality of homosexuality.<sup>(5)</sup>

Hedwige's sensual yearnings remain essentially innocent; her short life is marred and destroyed by the nefarious influence of Mme Vasseur's daughter, Ulrique, whose " regard à la fois méprisant et curieux " is evoked in the early pages of the novel.<sup>(6)</sup> It is Ulrique who has introduced Hedwige to Gaston Dolange, obviously aware of the vast

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(1) Ibid., p. 361.

(2) Ibid., p. 358.

(3) Ibid., p. 363.

(4) See Rose, op. cit., p. 80, who goes on : " That is, on the crucial issue of Gaston's and Jean's homosexuality the other characters act as if she were a boy who had already picked up such information at school, instead of a sheltered girl who would need a tactful, candid explanation ".

(5) Ibid., p. 80. And cf. above, Chapter I.

(6) Malf. O.C. III, p. 200.



differences in milieu and experience between them. Indeed, Jean sees this act as a deliberate piece of mischief-making on Ulrique's part, directed not only against Hedwige but equally against himself. In his last letter to Hedwige just before his suicide, he informs the young woman of his views : " Sans en avoir de preuves, je suis convaincu que votre cousine voulait voir ce qui se passerait, car elle est la proie de l'ennui et le ressort de presque toutes ses mauvaises actions est l'impossibilité où elle se trouve de jamais être heureuse. Cela l'amusait aussi de faire souffrir une autre personne encore plus profondément amoureuse que vous de ce même jeune homme. Il y aurait beaucoup à dire sur ce point et je me tais ".<sup>(1)</sup> These lines, intended to help Hedwige, yet too allusive in their discretion to enable her to grasp the truth about Dolange, do shed light on Ulrique's distorted character, and Jean has accurately pinpointed the basic ennui and dissatisfaction with life that prompt her to seek compensation in hurting others.<sup>(2)</sup> Whether in fact Ulrique was actually aware of Dolange's homosexuality when she introduced him to Hedwige does not seem possible, as her own reflections and conversation with Arlette confirm.<sup>(3)</sup> What she was most certainly conscious of, having made the acquaintance of Dolange through her libertine friend, was the fact that he was manifestly a grossly unsuitable match for her cousin.

Green is singularly successful in his portrayal of characters like Ulrique, able in a few lines to depict all the frustration, malevolence

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(1) Ibid., p. 397.

(2) See ibid., p. 262, where Ulrique expresses her scorn for her mother as well as her loathing for her husband, Raoul, and the methods she uses for heightening his desire and jealousy.

(3) Ibid., p. 228 : "... elle s'expliquait mal la réserve de M. Dolange. Qu'Hedwige n'eût pas réussi à le fasciner quoi de plus normal ? Mais elle, Ulrique ?.... " and p. 264 : " Gaston Dolange ! s'écria Ulrique. Je n'en voudrais pour rien au monde. J'avais quelqu'un en vue à qui il pouvait plaire.- Futée, pensa l'antiquaire ".

and loathing such a personage exudes. Ulrique, at twenty-three, married to a " pétulant imbécile "<sup>(1)</sup> and ashamed of the lack of sophistication of her father - who has nonetheless provided her with the means of leading a cosseted existence of ease and comfort - seethes with discontent, having no positive ambition or purpose in her life. Only too aware of her beauty,<sup>(2)</sup> she is consumed by an unhappy combination of vanity, coquetry, and a warped attitude to sexuality exacerbated by her disastrous marriage of convenience.<sup>(3)</sup> Ostensibly she seeks after her ideal of masculine beauty, though " Au fond, cette recherche du beau absolu dans un domaine où il semble rare n'était que de la froideur déguisée, mais Ulrique n'eût pas accepté une explication aussi simple et elle préférerait se croire la victime de ce qu'elle appelait lourdement son sens artistique ".<sup>(4)</sup>

Jean and Ulrique share feelings of mutual detestation, and Green's protagonist bluntly expresses his rancour : " Tout m'exaspérait chez cette femme trop belle.... Pourtant, elle a fini par devenir son nom, elle en a fait quelque chose qui est elle-même, le hennissement d'une cavale en rut ".<sup>(5)</sup> But honesty compels Jean to admit that Ulrique and he are creatures of a kind, that they both dream " au même visage lisse et pur " and both seek " une espèce de beauté violente, à la fois chaste et voluptueuse, que nos régions ne connaissent pas ".<sup>(6)</sup> At times Ulrique is able to sublimate something of her pent-up emotion and frustration in music, as, accompanying herself on the piano, her voice

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(1) Ibid., p. 201.

(2) Ibid., pp. 218 - 219.

(3) Ibid., p. 262.

(4) Ibid., p. 263.

(5) Ibid., p. 320.

(6) Ibid., p. 320. And, one might add, the author himself at this period of time. Green's predilection for Nordic beauty has already been noted.

risés in " Un chant étrange.... doux et funèbre à la fois, sans larmes, sans éclats, mais calme et dédaigneux dans le désespoir. Tout l'ennui de la vie passait dans cet harmonieux monologue, la longue plainte de l'âme qui n'aspire qu'à la mort et gémit dans son corps comme une emmurée ".<sup>(1)</sup>

If this musical expression translates her innermost, secret desire for the release of oblivion - and this aspiration is as near Ulrique comes to any considerations of a metaphysical order - she is more likely to seek out the company of her friend Arlette who plies the twin trades of antique-dealer and procuress. The embodiment of a base, unfettered sensuality, Arlette, with her circumstantial accounts of her profligate amorous escapades, both repels and fascinates the younger woman.<sup>(2)</sup> Furthermore, despite her friend's excessive vulgarity, Ulrique secretly envies this life of sexual intrigue and excess.<sup>(3)</sup> For herself, however, when faced with the choice of Arlette's offers of male company or her own musical solitude, she will opt for her love of music which affords her " un peu de cette sombre joie qu'elle affectionnait ".<sup>(4)</sup> Rather than partake of the tawdry or inferior, Ulrique prefers the pangs of abstinence.<sup>(5)</sup> Yet the ideal Ulrique yearns after, her vision of a " grand Hermès bouclé ", is plainly extravagant and unattainable, though as Green the omniscient narrator informs us, she would have been astonished to learn that her dreams were those of a little girl and that she was unbecomingly - and we might add - ineffectually - prolonging her childhood.<sup>(6)</sup>

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(1) Ibid., pp. 228 - 229.

(2) Ibid., pp. 263 - 264.

(3) Ibid., p. 264.

(4) Ibid., p. 265.

(5) See Jean's remark, ibid., p. 320 : " J'aime sa hauteur, sa façon de mourir de soif plutôt que de boire d'eau corrompue.... ".

(6) Ibid., p. 265.

Of the array of characters depicted in Le Malfaiteur, only one, considered by his wife and daughter to be vulgar and insignificant,<sup>(1)</sup> consistently manifests good and positive qualities. Presented to us as "honnête" and "souriant", Bernard Vasseur has acquired wealth without harming the interests of others;<sup>(2)</sup> however, his good and simple nature, if somewhat lacking in worldly refinement, precisely on this account serves only to expose him to ridicule and scorn at the hands of the precious Ulrique and Emma Vasseur.<sup>(3)</sup> Having come to the aid of Jean and his mother when they had fallen upon hard times and before he had made his fortune,<sup>(4)</sup> M. Vasseur continued to help and support his protégé generously and with tact, as Jean acknowledges: "La délicatesse et l'humanité de M. Vasseur m'attachaient à lui et forçaient mon respect".<sup>(5)</sup> In his narrative, Jean provides us with a number of examples of Vasseur's discreet assistance, both during his youthful Paris days and in the pain and difficulty of his early middle-age at Lyon.<sup>(6)</sup>

Hedwige too is aware of and has benefited from M. Vasseur's kindness, recognizing his essential goodness: ".... elle sentait trop vivement, en effet, que cet homme simple et bon souffrait de la voir malheureuse et lui voulait du bien".<sup>(7)</sup> Searching in different rooms of the "hôtel" for the letter she had written to the deceased Jean, it is in Bernard Vasseur's room - "dans ce décor d'une banalité infernale"<sup>(8)</sup>

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(1) Ibid., pp. 216 - 218.

(2) Ibid., p. 201.

(3) Ibid., pp. 216 - 218.

(4) Ibid., p. 297.

(5) Ibid., p. 309.

(6) See, for example, ibid., pp. 310 - 311 and p. 324.

(7) Ibid., p. 392.

(8) Ibid., p. 392.

that the young woman is taken aback, surprised to glimpse above her uncle's bed a little black cross.<sup>(1)</sup> For the agnostic Hedwige living in a house where religion is never even mentioned, still less practised, this detail is quite inexplicable; then, after thinking that Vasseur too must nonetheless share " ces idées-là ", she concludes that the little cross is possibly no more than a family souvenir.<sup>(2)</sup>

However, Green's hint that Bernard Vasseur could be inspired by Christian ideals certainly fits in with the man's attitude and conduct in the action of the novel; his tact, patience and generosity to all around him have been noted.<sup>(3)</sup> Significantly, at the end of the novel, when the despairing Hedwige is close to death, it is Bernard Vasseur who calls out to her, who comes looking for her.<sup>(4)</sup> But just as Hedwige had been unable to respond to Christ's appeal in her dream, she similarly fails to answer the call of one who is perhaps in some way Christ's humble representative.

If unsatisfying as a finished work of art on account of its disjointedness, Le Malfaiteur is of particular interest for its illumination of certain aspects of the homosexual condition (especially as revealed in the " Confession de Jean "), for its description of the plight of a minority whose conduct offends the sensibilities of majority opinion. As Benjamin Constant so well put it - the context is different but the remark no less relevant - : "... le sentiment le plus passionné ne saurait lutter contre l'ordre des choses. La société

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(1) Ibid., pp. 392 - 393.

(2) Ibid., p. 393.

(3) And more than once Jean speaks of M. Vasseur's " délicatesse ", ibid., p. 309 and p. 297. This genuine tact and discretion that Bernard Vasseur possesses contrasts glaringly with his wife and daughter's false refinement and sophistication.

(4) Ibid., pp. 408 - 409.

est trop puissante : elle se reproduit sous trop de formes. Elle mêle trop d'amertumes à l'amour qu'elle n'a pas sanctionné ".<sup>(1)</sup> Like Constant's hero Adolphe, Green's protagonist Jean similarly possesses a high degree of lucidity and self-knowledge coupled with an incapacity to act positively to change his life. In a chapter on Constant, Martin Turnell aptly quotes Paul Bourget's words when he speaks of the most ineffectual lucidity of mind coexisting in a single soul with the worst sensual or emotional disorder.<sup>(2)</sup> How accurately this sums up Jean's mental state ! The lucidity of mind is indeed tragically ineffectual and the sensual disorder could scarcely be of a more serious nature, to such an extent that the continuance of life becomes intolerable and the temptation of release in death too powerful to be resisted.

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- (1) B. Constant, Adolphe, ed. Rudler, M.U.P., Manchester, 1919 (Reprinted 1961), p. 100. And compare with Jean's words, Malf. O.C. III, p. 315 : " L'homme comme moi perdra toujours son procès contre la société.... ".
- (2) See Turnell, The Novel in France, Penguin Books, Peregrine edn., Harmondsworth, 1962, p. 90, and Bourget's Essais de psychologie contemporaine, I, Plon, 1926, p. 27 : " Cette coexistence, dans une même âme, de la lucidité d'esprit la plus inefficace et du pire désordre sensuel ou sentimental est le trait le plus représentatif de Baudelaire ". (The moral sickness of the poet of Les Fleurs du mal is compared with that of Constant's Adolphe).

## OUT OF THE GLOOM

With L'Ombre and Le Malfaiteur behind him, Julien Green will soon begin work on Chaque homme dans sa nuit.<sup>(1)</sup> During this period, he continues his diary, publishing the volume for the years 1955 - 1958 under the title Le Bel Aujourd'hui in the latter year.

The book's reception was a mixed one, and the reactions of one or two Catholic writers are interesting and instructive. For his fellow convert from Protestantism, Graham Greene, the criticism was adverse and the Englishman expressed his "irritation" with this volume of the Journal: "It seems to me impregnated with nothing so strong as spiritual pride but with spiritual vanity. He talks too much of God and the saints. In one passage he talks of a need to eliminate everything which is not pleasing to God."<sup>(2)</sup> But is God pleased with a succession of pious platitudes on his nature?<sup>(3)</sup> It is not difficult to understand the essentially negative response of the socially committed Greene to the highly meditative journal of a shy and retiring man, who would be the first to admit to a feeling of malaise in the world of action. Yet if the Catholicism and way of life reflected in the pages of Le Bel Aujourd'hui smack of pietism and the ivory tower to a writer of Graham Greene's stamp,<sup>(4)</sup> Julien Green's great French co-religionist, François Mauriac, expressed his criticism more subtly and with greater understanding. This is perhaps only to be expected

(1) Started and re-started in the early months of 1957. See J, p. 1260, Feb. 4; p. 1262, Feb. 13; p. 1264, Feb. 25; p. 1268, March 27; p. 1279, May 21; p. 1280, May 23.

(2) Presumably a reference to "... il faut se déprendre de tout ce qui n'intéresse pas Dieu ". J, p. 1213, July 6, 1956.

(3) Graham Greene, In Search of a Character, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1968, p. 29.

(4) It is noteworthy that at the time of reading Julien Green's journal - in the early months of 1959 - Graham Greene was amassing material for his novel A Burnt-Out Case in a Congo leper-colony.

of a friend,<sup>(1)</sup> and Mauriac does reveal his admiration and approval of the purity and quality of Green's faith, while, as a Catholic committed to progressive social action and causes, he is less happy with the lack of application of Green's Christian faith to concrete social and political issues : " La doctrine qui s'exprime ici est austère; elle pousse une profonde racine dans le jansénisme, c'est l'atmosphère, très pure, un peu sèche, que j'aime : quelle admirable rigueur !.... Il n'empêche qu'il y a dans ce style de vie religieuse je ne sais quoi de retranché, d'indifférent à la condition des autres hommes ".<sup>(2)</sup> A certain harshness in this comment is soon tempered when Mauriac tries to widen the debate, asking whether an intense Christian life is compatible with man's incorrigible hedonism; by way of replying, the ageing novelist writes that " Il se trouve dans la vie de tout homme une croix à sa mesure. Se convertir c'est s'y étendre.... Et puis, si chacun de nous est aimé de Dieu, il est aimé tel qu'il est, avec les traits qui le rendent différent de tous les autres ".<sup>(3)</sup>

It is clear that as Green grew older, he tended to take refuge in a contemplative and traditionalist form of Catholicism, anxious for a faith that preached a doctrine of immutable spiritual values untroubled by the multiplicity of problems, economic, social and political, that so singularly beset modern man. Yet Green's need for certitude in matters spiritual and his wholehearted adherence to a Rome-centred, authoritarian Christianity is a distinctive feature of the convert -

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(1) It will be remembered that Mauriac wished to see Julien Green at the Académie française and that Green was in fact elected to Mauriac's seat in 1971.

(2) François Mauriac, Le Nouveau Bloc-notes 1958 - 1960, Flammarion, 1961, p. 151.

(3) Ibid., p. 152.



" Il ne faut jamais oublier que le protestant converti tient beaucoup à Rome. Il est plus attaché à Rome. Il est catholique romain. "<sup>(1)</sup> and especially of the homosexual convert : " C'est, en effet, la séduction de l'autorité.... qui porte avec une remarquable constance, les homosexuels " convertis " à préférer le Catholicisme à toute autre forme de religion ".<sup>(2)</sup> The solitude of the individual with his conscience as unique authority that the Protestant faith imposes would constitute an intolerable burden for such a being, whereas the pre-conciliar Roman Church with real authority vested in its priests provided a fully cohesive framework within which the homosexual convert could feel he had found his place. In his survey of the homosexual convert's religious feelings, Robert Merle observes that his conversion will present him with two possible courses of action : " il va essayer de vivre honnêtement, rigoureusement et héroïquement sa foi. Ou bien, il retombe, au bout de peu de temps, dans l'habitude de son vice ".<sup>(3)</sup> In Green's case, the period in question shows him striving to live out this rediscovered Catholic faith, his understanding of which he is ever seeking to deepen; at the same time, as we have seen, he is well aware of the dark currents that constantly threaten to burst the dam he has so laboriously constructed.

From the time of Julien Green's conversion in 1939 until 1958, the destinies of the Roman Catholic Church had been presided over by Pius XII, a Pope for whom Green harbours enormous respect and admiration<sup>(4)</sup> and who was for men like him the very embodiment of the great tradition of continuity and harmony in Roman Catholic belief and doctrine.<sup>(5)</sup>

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(1) O.C. III, pp. 1525 - 1526. [From an interview with Lucien Guissard, " Entretien avec Julien Green ", La Croix, March 30, 1971].

(2) Robert Merle, Oscar Wilde ou la 'destinée' de l'homosexuel, Gallimard, 1955, p. 132.

(3) Ibid., p. 145.

(4) See, for example, J, p. 1320, Sept. 29, 1958.

(5) Although the unity was more apparent than real. See, for example, Peter Hebblethwaite, The Runaway Church, Collins, London, 1975, p. 13.

In contrast, we shall be struck by the author's apprehensions in the face of the sweeping changes instituted in the reign of John.

Until Pius' death, however, a surface unity prevailed and to Green all - or nearly all - seemed well in the spiritual domain. He shows complete confidence in the Roman Church and the truth it represents,<sup>(1)</sup> and interestingly in this respect he quotes a line of St. Augustine : " 'Je ne croirais pas à l'Evangile si je ne croyais pas à l'Eglise.' Cette phrase de saint Augustin me frappe chaque fois que je la retrouve ".<sup>(2)</sup> Green quietly pursues his reading and study of the great Christian writers, saints and mystics of the past, and we particularly notice the names of de Caussade, J-J Surin, Johannes Tauler, St. Teresa of Lisieux, St. Catherine of Siena, as well as some of the men of Port-Royal to whom Green unfailingly returns : Jean Hamon, Saint-Cyran and of course Pascal. He reads critically several volumes of Sainte-Beuve's Port-Royal<sup>(3)</sup> and a life of the saint who is dear to him above all others, St. Francis of Assisi.<sup>(4)</sup> Further reading of Premond prompts enthusiastic comment from Green that truth is to be found in " la patrie des mystiques et de tous ceux qui croient à l'invisible et qui y croient de telle sorte que leur vie quotidienne en est bouleversée ";

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(1) It was in 1955 that he wrote : " Depuis 1938, je n'ai jamais eu l'ombre d'un doute, en ce qui concerne la foi. La foi catholique, avec tous ses mystères et ses obscurités, me paraît l'évidence même, mais l'évidence vue d'un monde de ténèbres ". J, p. 1129, June 1.

(2) Ibid., p. 1130, June 9, 1955.

(3) See ibid., p. 1225, Aug. 12, 1956, where he vents something of his displeasure with the " eminent Romantic ".

(4) The biography mentioned is the nineteenth-century work by Emile Gebhart, see ibid., p. 1109, April 4, 1955. Green's fascination for St. Francis, " peut-être le plus grand saint que l'Occident ait donné au monde " (ibid.), is reflected in previous notations concerning his reading of other lives of St. Francis : cf. his war-time comments on Joergensen's work, " qui m'a fait une impression très profonde " (ibid., p. 569, July 11, 1943) and his later interest in Omer Englebert's biographical study (ibid., p. 868, Oct. 9, 1949).

this statement of faith in what is for him the real world of the invisible is followed by a sally against politics, for Green " le pays de la pseudo-vérité dont il ne reste rien au bout de quelques mois... ".<sup>(1)</sup>

Such a remark as the latter enables the reader to gain an even better insight into the attitudes of Mauriac and Greene noted above, more especially into that of Graham Greene who was both a convinced socialist and resentful of " the conservatism of Catholic custom and fashion at the time ".<sup>(2)</sup> Here the contrast between the two converts is glaring : for Julien Green, so sensitive to Roman Catholic custom, regret and indignation marked his reaction to changes in the Church's liturgy, and on Good Friday 1956 he recorded : " Des psaumes beuglés en français.... Comment les catholiques ne se révoltent-ils pas contre tant de laideur ? On regrette amèrement le latin de jadis ".<sup>(3)</sup> Of course, Green was far from being an isolated figure in his response to liturgical change. Many writers shared his feelings on this issue; in England, among prominent converts, the protests of Evelyn Waugh are typical.<sup>(4)</sup>

Yet the fears went deeper than this. As Peter Hebblethwaite has pointed out, if change occurred in a liturgy which had remained unchanging over the centuries, it would not be long before changes made themselves felt in other ways, in other areas of the Church's life.<sup>(5)</sup> For converts like Julien Green - and for his sister Anne who had renounced the Anglican " heresy " and adhered to the Roman Church in 1947<sup>(6)</sup> - the prospect was a daunting one, so much so that he could

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(1) Ibid., p. 1184, Jan. 3, 1956. Green's italics.

(2) Christopher Sykes, Evelyn Waugh, A Biography, Collins, London, 1975, p. 328.

(3) J, pp. 1197 - 1198.

(4) See Christopher Sykes, op. cit., pp. 381 - 382.

(5) P. Hebblethwaite, op. cit., p. 27.

(6) J, pp. 757 - 758, July 24, 1947.

write years later in 1970 : " Personne plus que moi ne souhaite la fraternisation des Eglises, mais non la confusion des Credo et l'affaiblissement des affirmations millénaires de l'Eglise de Rome. Anne et moi nous sommes demandé : 'Pourquoi nous sommes-nous convertis ?' ".<sup>(1)</sup>

In the years covered by Le Bel Aujourd'hui, however, the dominant tone revealed by the diary is one of tranquil hope. These pages also express a deeply-felt joy over certain elemental aspects of life and nature, sustained and heightened by a faith in God marked by steadfastness and serenity. Entries dating from February and March 1956 well illustrate this : " Deux choses qu'on peut regarder indéfiniment : le feu qui brûle et la neige qui tombe. Il faut les regarder avec beaucoup de patience pour qu'ils se mettent à parler. Et que disent-ils ? Je n'en sais rien mais ils ont beaucoup à dire et ce qu'ils ont à dire est important ".<sup>(2)</sup> It is noteworthy that Green's examples, fire and snow, have symbolic value as cleansing, purifying agents,<sup>(3)</sup> providing a link with the eternal, with the freshness and purity of the Godhead : " Nous vieillissons et nos civilisations caduques s'en vont les unes après les autres, mais Dieu est toujours nouveau, il est toujours là comme un beau matin frais et pur et c'est ainsi que nous le retrouvons après la nuit et l'orage du péché. Ses trésors de pardon sont sans limites. Il est la jeunesse éternelle ".<sup>(4)</sup> If such a tone of calm devotion and piety could appear fairly naïve and facile to some, it is surely the confidence and quality of faith, so felicitously expressed, that moves most readers and gains their adhesion.

Green has evolved, and if he has not completely succeeded in

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(1) Ce qui reste de jour, pp. 213 - 214, Jan. 19.

(2) J, p. 1190, Feb. 13.

(3) Cf. their importance in Mofra.

(4) J, pp. 1193 - 1194, March 8.

extracting " the thorn of Puritanism " that has so plagued his existence, nonetheless a clear note of optimism - something of the true spirit of the Good News - has entered his religious belief, clearing the way for the composition of Chaque homme dans sa nuit.<sup>(1)</sup>

Again in this novel, as in L'Autre a decade later, Green deals with his obsession with homo duplex, a fact which has occasioned a fair amount of hostile comment among some critics. Nicholas Kostis, for example, while accepting that a series of novels on the same theme can be justified, provided that sufficient freshness and variation of treatment are introduced thus affording the reader greater insight and understanding of the subject, claims that Green has been overwhelmed by his themes and has failed to provide the necessary variation and subsequent insight; as a consequence, he sees Green's novels as no more than obsessive repetitions of the same themes.<sup>(2)</sup> Another North American critic, William Bush, reproaches Green for an unhealthy and adolescent preoccupation with sexuality which has in his opinion weakened his work and deprived it " of any really positive spirituality since the tumorous growth of the author's obsession saps its strength ".<sup>(3)</sup>

At this point it is pertinent to reply to such criticism. Of course Green repeats himself (what creative writer does not !) but we would argue that he does so with variation and renewal; of course he is the victim of an obsession, yet here again we believe that the obsession is almost a prerequisite for the creation of great and durable works which we consider Julien Green's finest books to be. Indeed, we would

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(1) The title of the novel was apparently a late addition. See O.C. III, p. 1658, J. Petit's n. Various commentators have pointed to the source of this title and have completed Hugo's alexandrine : " s'en va vers sa lumière ". Les Contemplations, " Ecrit en 1846 ", Garnier, 1969, p. 268.

(2) See N. Kostis, The Exorcism of Sex and Death in Julien Green's novels ( "De proprietatibus litterarum", Series practica 71 ), Mouton, The Hague - Paris, 1973, p. 109.

(3) William Bush, Georges Bernanos, Twayne, New York, 1969, p. 144.

agree with Mr. Graham Greene when he writes : " Every creative writer worth our consideration, every writer who can be called in the wide eighteenth-century use of the term a poet, is a victim : a man given over to an obsession ".<sup>(1)</sup> At the same time, we feel that our analyses of the central themes in Mofra, Sud and L'Ennemi, and in Le Malfaiteur, have amply shown the variety and depth of treatment that Green achieves. More generally, the richness and the evolution of Julien Green's work have been admirably analysed in Jacques Petit's fine study.<sup>(2)</sup> As we proceed to explore aspects of Chaque homme dans sa nuit and L'Autre, the range, depth and intensity of Green's treatment will become readily apparent.

To dismiss Green's preoccupation with sexuality as morbid and adolescent is a caricature : this is to confuse the experience of say one character, such as Joseph Day, with the Greenian experience as a whole. The sexual and spiritual problems that the major characters of the later works grapple with reveal an author whose constantly questing spirit is unable to accept facile compromise solutions yet who, although continuing to be strongly influenced by his puritanical background, has become increasingly open to the notion that sex is a God-given activity and to be appreciated as such.<sup>(3)</sup>

In his book published in 1955, Samuel Stokes wrote perceptively of Green, having emphasized the basic importance of depth and sincerity of feeling in his work : " Consequently, even though he may repeat himself, we may be sure that he will continue to provide strong character portrayals, and although aspects of his interpretations are particular to him, he will appeal to many who have similar emotions and a

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(1) Graham Greene, Collected Essays, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1970, p. 108.

(2) JG l'homme qui venait d'ailleurs.

(3) See above, Chapter II, p. 69 and p. 75.

puritanical heritage ".<sup>(1)</sup> Stokes' prophesy has proved to be highly accurate, and in such characters as Wilfred, Angus and Max in Chaque homme dans sa nuit and Roger and Karin in L'Autre, Julien Green has enabled us to gain still further insight into homo duplex and his most basic and pressing problems, problems concerning the Flesh and the Spirit and their frequently inevitable opposition for the Roman Catholic and many other Christians. Yet even for the reader who does not feel directly concerned by the theological drama being played out in these works, the characters portrayed have an inner life and compulsion that grips and fascinates in a manner not dissimilar to that experienced in reading Dostoyevsky.<sup>(2)</sup>

For Green, in Chaque homme dans sa nuit, the central issue is faith and the problems it poses. During the early part of the novel's composition, the author envisaged the question in these terms : " Aujourd'hui, j'ai entrevu le sens général de ce roman que je suis en train d'écrire. Tout le problème du personnage principal est celui de la foi. La foi qui ne provoque pas la contradiction est une foi chétive et mourante ".<sup>(3)</sup> At the time of publication, in conversation with Guy Dupré, Green commented : " Le drame de Wilfred est le drame du chrétien devant le monde moderne obsédé de sexualité ".<sup>(4)</sup> For the 1973 edition of the novel, the author added a revealing preface, acknowledging the powerful autobiographical inspiration and content of the book.<sup>(5)</sup> As for the characters, he could write : " Tous mes personnages n'en formaient qu'un seul qui était tellement moi-même que je ne le reconnaissais pas. Les excès et les tentations de Wilfred, la folie pleine de bon sens de

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(1) S. Stokes, op. cit., pp. 137 - 138.

(2) See below, pp. 224 - 227.

(3) J, p. 1282, June 11, 1957.

(4) O.C. III, p. 1515. [Conversation with Guy Dupré, Arts, April 27, 1960].

(5) O.C. III, p. 1633.

Max, la gravité de Mr. Knight.... De même, les passions charnelles de Wilfred et l'amour désincarné de Phobé m'ont trahi à mon insu ".<sup>(1)</sup>

The setting Green has chosen is near-contemporary, a large American city and its surroundings " en plein milieu du siècle ".<sup>(2)</sup> His protagonist, Wilfred Ingram, is a young man of twenty-four;<sup>(3)</sup> of limited means,<sup>(4)</sup> he sells shirts and underwear in a big department store,<sup>(5)</sup> and in the opening pages of the novel he, the poor member of an old-established and wealthy family, is paying a last visit to his dying Uncle Horace at Wormsloe, his relative's large and rambling country property. Alone in a dominantly Protestant family, Wilfred like Horace is a Roman Catholic.<sup>(6)</sup> To the bare fact of Wilfred's Catholicism that we learn in Chapter One there is added early in Chapter Two a very precise indication concerning the young man's sensuality. This is provided by the way he reacts to the bronze statue of an all but naked woman in the hall of his uncle's home.<sup>(7)</sup> A little later he is again looking at the statue : " .... ces membres parfaits, toute cette chair. Regarder était une sorte de bonheur auquel se mêlait de la souffrance,

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(1) Ibid., p. 1635.

(2) Chaque homme dans sa nuit, O.C. III, p. 530. Not as a number of critics have written, doubtless thinking of Moïra and Terre lointaine, the twenties. [ See, for example, Pierre Brodin, Julien Green, Editions Universitaires, 1963, p. 115, and Annette Lavers, " Julien Green ou la docte ignorance ", Configuration critique de Julien Green, La Revue des Lettres Modernes, nos 130 - 133, 1966, p. 172 ]. Speculation about the location of the novel [ see, for example, Henri Peyre, French Novelists of Today, O.U.P., New York, 1967, p. 204 ] has been scotched by Green's admission that it is a composite, Baltimore, Washington and New York providing different elements. See O.C. III, p. 1636.

(3) Chaque homme, O.C. III, p. 424.

(4) Ibid., pp. 413 - 414.

(5) Ibid., p. 415 and pp. 506 - 507.

(6) Ibid., p. 415.

(7) Ibid., pp. 418 - 419. And see above, p. 59, n. 2.



de la faim, quelque chose qui dévastait le coeur ".<sup>(1)</sup> Any thoughts of a close resemblance between Wilfred and Joseph Day have soon been dashed : while the hero of Mofra had been a very young man just beginning his studies at the university, fanatical in his narrow Puritanism and totally ignorant of and prejudiced against all manifestations of sexuality, Wilfred is five or six years older than Joseph with a correspondingly greater knowledge and acceptance of the world; indeed, despite his religion, he not only accepts his sexuality but is a slave to it, although his promiscuity is, as we shall see, no tranquilly accepted state but rather a constant source of remorse and anguish. As Jacques Petit has written : " Wilfred est au début du roman ce qu'est Joseph au dénouement de Mofra, un être perdu dans le monde, torturé, écartelé.... ".<sup>(2)</sup>

The first meeting at Wormsloe with his rich and handsome cousin, Angus, shows up Wilfred's intellectual limitations, but at the same time reveals his basic honesty and good faith.<sup>(3)</sup> At twenty-seven,<sup>(4)</sup> Angus is elegant and self-assured, conscious of his superiority and initially indifferent to Wilfred's presence. However, when Angus has really seen Wilfred - we are informed that the cousins have not met for several years<sup>(5)</sup> - his concern over a missed rendezvous is soon forgotten : " Au fond, ce rendez-vous n'avait pas beaucoup d'importance. Je m'en rends compte à présent, depuis une minute ".<sup>(6)</sup> Wilfred is far from understanding his cousin's remark, but for the reader its significance is only too obvious.

Declaring himself to be an agnostic, Angus teases Wilfred about his Catholicism; Wilfred, despite himself, conveys an impression of genuine

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(1) CH O.C. III, pp. 420 - 421.

(2) JG l'homme qui venait d'ailleurs, p. 300.

(3) CH O.C. III, pp. 421 - 428.

(4) Ibid., p. 527.

(5) Ibid., p. 421.

(6) Ibid., p. 423.

piety. His impulse to tell his cousin the truth about his own sensual nature is held in check by his naïve fear of betraying his fellow believers : " Il pensa : 'Si je m'explique, j'aurai le dessous et je trahirai, je trahirai tous les autres. Il croira que tous les catholiques sont comme moi, coureurs comme moi.' Et puis, on ne pouvait pas discuter avec Angus ".<sup>(1)</sup> At this point, Angus comes across as a thoroughly intelligent, if rather unpleasant, snob, and it is Wilfred who, despite his lack of repartee and his literal religious belief, does in fact engage our sympathy. The straightforward nature of his Catholic faith - appearing very much as " la foi du charbonnier " - is shown up following an exchange with his uncle's old coloured servant concerning the question of salvation, Horace's and his own.<sup>(2)</sup> For Wilfred, the old Negro was a Protestant who could not know the truth about such matters, whereas " les catholiques savaient qu'il y a un purgatoire et que tout peut s'arranger à la fin, même pour l'oncle Horace qui avait maintenant une telle peur de Dieu ".<sup>(3)</sup>

Wilfred has been musing about his own deceased father who, like Horace, had enjoyed a life of pleasure and debauchery but who, unlike Horace, had dissipated his whole fortune in its pursuit. Morbidly, his train of thought passes from sensual pleasure to the final agony of the flesh : " Tous les lits où l'on avait goûté le bonheur de la chair n'étaient que la figure de cette couche épouvantable ".<sup>(4)</sup> Already Wilfred's anguish and fear of death are readily discernible, the anguish and fear that for J. Petit constitute the real subject of the novel.<sup>(5)</sup> Furthermore, as Green underlined in his conversation with G. Dupré, eschatological considerations are seldom out of his hero's mind :

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(1) Ibid., p. 425.

(2) Ibid., pp. 432 - 433.

(3) Ibid., p. 435.

(4) Ibid., p. 435.

(5) See JG l'homme qui venait d'ailleurs, pp. 298 - 299. " Là est le vrai sujet du roman, même si Julien Green ne l'a pas voulu en l'écrivant ". (ibid. p. 299).

".... il a le sentiment très vif et presque continuel des 'fins dernières'.... ".<sup>(1)</sup> Yet the strong current of sensuality repeatedly bursts through, even at the moment of his uncle's death, even in the presence of his aunt, Angus' mother Mrs. Howard, whom he cannot resist picturing at an earlier age " toute nue, jeune, belle et pâmée ".<sup>(2)</sup> He reacts in similar fashion to the young black nun who had come with an older colleague to keep vigil at the dead man's side.<sup>(3)</sup>

It is in the second scene between Wilfred and Horace<sup>(4)</sup> that we see and understand something of Wilfred's true nature and strength, though it does not become apparent at the outset. Apart from their allegiance to Rome, uncle and nephew are united by another factor : an excessive sensuality. The young " homme à femmes " is confronted with his double;<sup>(5)</sup> the aged debauchee is now a completely spent force, about to enter eternity yet totally unprepared, desperately groping for the Faith he had so lightly treated during a lifetime of promiscuity. Horace believes Wilfred to be a " good Catholic ", able to speak to his condition as no priest could. Face to face with his dying uncle, however, Wilfred's disarray is overwhelming. On account of his fear of death and in view of the function Horace is demanding he fulfil, he requires resources that he feels are quite beyond him. His gestures and thoughts at this stage seem at first to indicate that his impressions of spiritual impotence do in fact correspond to the truth : he leaves his uncle's bedside to go over to the window and secretly gulp down the alcohol he carries in a small flask;<sup>(6)</sup> then, soon after

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(1) O.C. III, p. 1515.

(2) CH O.C. III, p. 449.

(3) Ibid., p. 473. " Elle était fort jolie sous son voile noir et baissa immédiatement les yeux. De nouveau il sentit les joues lui brûler ".

(4) Ibid., pp. 458 - 465

(5) See O.C. III, p. 1654 - "Le dédoublement" - for J. Petit's comments on this. The dédoublement of characters in Green's later writings is referred to by C. Tchalekian, op. cit., p. 132, and in the works more generally by J.M. Dunaway, op. cit., p. 7 and p. 16.

(6) CH O.C. III, p. 461.

he returns to his uncle, it crosses his mind that the young servant girl he had seen the previous day had been Horace's mistress, " et malgré lui, il imagina ce corps délicat dans le lit qu'il touchait maintenant du bras ".<sup>(1)</sup>

In the light of these illustrations, underlining still further Wilfred's sensual nature and showing that an instinctive courage is not the foremost of his attributes, the development of the scene is all the more surprising. Despite his moral faults, Wilfred's faith remains intact, and there is something in his appearance and manner that convinces those around him - right down to the dying Horace and only excluding James Knight as we shall see later - that he not only has faith but is truly Christian in the life he leads. Furthermore, in extreme situations as here in the case of his uncle, other people's convictions regarding the quality of his faith are seen to be not at all illusory but firmly grounded in reality : notwithstanding his fears and doubts, Wilfred is capable of sustaining his uncle. And yet, in his weakness, he feels unable to pray, struggling for guidance and faith : " Mon Dieu, donnez-nous la foi à tous les deux. Faites n'importe quoi pour cela, mais donnez-nous la foi ".<sup>(2)</sup> Scarcely a prayer, Wilfred's simple but deeply-felt entreaty seemingly has some effect : ".... le bonheur envahissait tout, un bonheur étrange qui effaçait la vie quotidienne, le temps et la terre ".<sup>(3)</sup> A short while later, in the grounds of his uncle's property, this happiness resumes, as he experiences a blissful release in the silence and beauty of the evening. In this natural setting, Wilfred comes to know a joy in which the sensual and the spiritual seem to fuse. The young man is at peace, " et brusquement il lui sembla qu'il était amoureux. De qui, il n'aurait su le dire. Son coeur contenait tant d'amour qu'il y en avait, pensa-t-il, pour une

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(1) Ibid., p. 462.

(2) Ibid., p. 464.

(3) Ibid., p. 465.

vie entière, mais il aimait de toutes ses forces quelqu'un qu'il ne connaissait pas ".<sup>(1)</sup>

Already in this first part of the novel, the spiritual dimension has assumed a certain prominence in the form of fragments of religious discussion between Wilfred and successively, his cousin Angus,<sup>(2)</sup> Horace's black servant,<sup>(3)</sup> Horace himself,<sup>(4)</sup> Mrs. Howard,<sup>(5)</sup> and the final dramatic conversation with his uncle.<sup>(6)</sup> In the closing chapters of Part One, the debate deepens and increases in interest when Wilfred meets another cousin, James Knight and his wife Phoebé. The initial severity of James Knight, slim and upright, on the threshold of middle-age, immediately makes itself felt, the crisp precision of his introduction and questions and the anti-Catholic allusions that litter his conversation swiftly disconcerting the young Wilfred.<sup>(7)</sup>

Before he encounters Phoebé and before the second ominous meeting with James Knight, Wilfred has a brief exchange with the priest, Father Dolan, the only face to face conversation with a priest in the novel<sup>(8)</sup> and a prefiguration of the much more important rôle played by the priest in *L'Autre*. The conversation with Father Dolan offers no surprises, indeed Green confers on his cleric an air of brisk efficiency - " l'air d'un homme d'affaires " - which leaves him only with his parting words : " Ce que nous faisons importe, certes, mais en définitive, c'est ce que nous sommes qui compte, parce que c'est ce que nous sommes que Dieu voit surtout ".<sup>(9)</sup>

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(1) *Ibid.*, p. 470.

(2) *Ibid.*, pp. 423 - 426.

(3) *Ibid.*, pp. 431 - 433. For Wilfred, " tous les nègres étaient un peu sorciers, sorciers chrétiens ". (p. 433).

(4) *Ibid.*, p. 442.

(5) *Ibid.*, pp. 450 - 452. " Je ne suis pas ennemie de la religion, en doses raisonnables ". (p. 450).

(6) *Ibid.*, pp. 459 - 465.

(7) *Ibid.*, pp. 471 - 473.

(8) If we exclude Wilfred's confession (*ibid.*, pp. 546 - 547) and James Knight's account of his conversation to Angus (*ibid.*, pp. 707 - 708).

(9) *Ibid.*, p. 475.

Dolan's simple phrases with their tolerance and understanding stand in stark contrast to the utterances of James Knight, this "presbytérien de la vieille espèce".<sup>(1)</sup> For Knight "la foi sauve, et c'est la vie qu'on a menée qui porte témoignage de la foi".<sup>(2)</sup> He makes no attempt to conceal or moderate his beliefs : his fanaticism, hatred of the Roman Church, and his distrust of the young, of sensuality. His diatribe is excessive and irritating; what makes it interesting is the knowledge he has gleaned of Wilfred, of his sensuality, but also of his faith. Unerringly he has come to the truth about the one as about the other, and when Wilfred protests to Knight that he has kept his faith the latter replies that not for a moment does he doubt the young man's word : " Cela est aussi évident que le reste, Wilfred, et vous savez ce que j'entends par le reste ".<sup>(3)</sup> James Knight is not happy that Wilfred has made the acquaintance of his wife<sup>(4)</sup> and warns him to resist any temptation he might have of subsequently paying them a visit.<sup>(5)</sup>

It was in his uncle's death-room fearfully gazing at Horace's body that Wilfred had first glimpsed Phobé Knight : "... il vit entrer une jeune femme d'une beauté sérieuse et délicate qui se dirigea de son côté.... elle paraissait à peine plus de vingt ans et gardait de la première jeunesse un teint vermeil qui n'était pas dû au fard ".<sup>(6)</sup> In the remainder of his short life, this is the woman who will inspire in Wilfred a deep love that he has not hitherto known, a love that is conceived in the lugubrious atmosphere of Horace's room, where the themes of religion and sensuality, death and love converge and intermingle. It is Phobé who - as her name implies - brings a note of light

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(1) Ibid., p. 476.

(2) Ibid., p. 474.

(3) Ibid., p. 485.

(4) Ibid., pp. 483 - 484.

(5) Ibid., p. 487. Cf. Phobé Knight's very different attitude, ibid., p. 480; and see J. Petit's n. ibid., p. 1669.

(6) Ibid., pp. 476 - 477.

and hope to this bleak Wormsloe atmosphere so heavy with death. Wilfred, who has already been moved by his cousin's grave and fragile beauty, is now affected by her warm, ingenuous manner, as she introduces herself to him.<sup>(1)</sup> The reputation Wilfred has acquired as a man of faith has not failed to reach Phoebé's ears and she vainly attempts to instigate a conversation on religion, seemingly quite unaware of the effect she is having on Wilfred, who is too disturbed by what he sees as the incongruity of this extremely attractive young woman talking about religion to be really able to respond to her words.<sup>(2)</sup>

The first part of Chaque homme dans sa nuit (exactly a quarter of the novel in fact) has taken place at Wormsloe,<sup>(3)</sup> while the opening chapter of Part Two sees Wilfred back in his modest furnished room, distinguished only by the ivory crucifix above the bed. In these non-descript surroundings, " Seule cette croix était à Wilfred qui la tenait de son père. Le reste, à ses yeux, était du néant ".<sup>(4)</sup> Yet something of the spirit of Wormsloe lingers on here : unable to sleep, Wilfred tears open the large envelope his uncle had bequeathed him before his death and (ignoring the shares that make him a reasonably prosperous young man) he avidly reads the love-letters of Horace's youth that it contains, unconsciously substituting himself for his uncle while doing so. The photograph of Horace as a young man, handsome and complacent, but particularly the portrait of Alicia - " blonde et fluette.... d'une beauté à la fois si pure et si charnelle, tout ce visage tendu vers le bonheur comme une fleur avidement tournée vers la lumière "<sup>(5)</sup>

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(1) Ibid., p. 477.

(2) Ibid., pp. 477 - 479.

(3) The symbolic value of the name of Horace's property will not have escaped the reader's attention. A house of this name was in fact known to Green, see J, p. 157, Jan. 12, 1934.

(4) CH O.C. III, pp. 488 - 489.

(5) Ibid., pp. 489 - 490.

completes the hallucinatory nature of the scene as Wilfred all but relives this love-affair of a past generation.

Wilfred has been unable to resist noting the resemblance between Alicia and Phobé<sup>(1)</sup> and when he later meets an old lady<sup>(2)</sup> - " sa pauvre face molle et meurtrie semblait avoir été boxée par la mort "<sup>(3)</sup> - finally realizing that this indeed is Alicia,<sup>(4)</sup> the effect on the young man is profound. " C'est d'humaine beauté l'issue ! " lamented Villon's Belle Heaumiére,<sup>(5)</sup> and for Wilfred the revelation of the transience of human beauty and sexual love afforded by Alicia Beauchamp is a deeply chastening experience. " Je ne serai jamais plus la même personne que j'étais hier " says Wilfred afterwards, " Je l'ai compris il y a un instant ".<sup>(6)</sup>

But before this striking disclosure which marks the beginning of the last phase of the novel, the young man still has weeks of his customary existence to live out : after the day spent selling shirts over his counter in the large department-store of this unnamed American city, Wilfred seeks his pleasure in the bars of the port. Without being particularly good-looking, yet nonetheless sure of his charm and powers of seduction,<sup>(7)</sup> he proceeds from conquest to conquest spurred on by " la tyrannie de son corps qui voulait sans cesse du plaisir ".<sup>(8)</sup> His sexual

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(1) Ibid., p. 608.

(2) Ibid., pp. 557 - 558 and pp. 675 - 677.

(3) Ibid., p. 675.

(4) Ibid., p. 677.

(5) Villon, Poésies complètes, Livre de Poche, 1964, p. 76.

(6) CH O.C. III, p. 677. And see J. Petit, JG l'homme qui venait d'ailleurs, pp. 292 - 294.

(7) See, for example, CH O.C. III, p. 494 : " Il n'était pas beau, mais il attirait les femmes ".

(8) Ibid., p. 494.



adventures are brief and furtive : " Il ne voyait jamais deux fois la même femme ".<sup>(1)</sup> This fact helps explain his heightened interest in the amorous correspondence between Horace and Alicia, since the briefness of his affairs precludes any such epistolary contact.

It is, however, at this point in the novel that Wilfred's relations with Angus and the Knights begin to take on new significance. At the same time he makes the acquaintance of the man who is to have a considerable effect on his last weeks of life and who is mysteriously destined to end that life. It is Sunday, for Wilfred always an ordeal : " Entre la faute et le repentir, il y avait un intervalle de dégoût, le dégoût de la chair et le dégoût plus horrible encore de la religion ".<sup>(2)</sup> Following mass at the Polish Church, feeling unable to receive communion, Wilfred has left St. Aloysius forgetting the missal in which he had once proudly inscribed his name and address, thus enabling the young man in the soiled yellow raincoat to trace its owner.<sup>(3)</sup> The description of the stranger is forceful and concise, and " il faisait songer à un romanichel " though there was in his appearance " quelque chose de modeste et de réfléchi ".<sup>(4)</sup> His red lips contrast with the black hair and eyes,<sup>(5)</sup> and despite Wilfred's reassurance as to his physical appearance,<sup>(6)</sup> the loquacious Slav will nevertheless leave him perplexed and angry.<sup>(7)</sup> His manner and conversation discompose Wilfred : the

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(1) Ibid., p. 500. The description of Wilfred's long succession of sexual escapades lacks conviction in terms of heterosexual behaviour, seeming far more appropriate to promiscuous homosexual activity where this type of swift and impersonal sexual release (we are not dealing with prostitution) is prevalent. Roger, in L'Autre, appears more convincing in the rôle of " homme à femmes ".

(2) CH O.C. III, p. 492.

(3) Ibid., pp. 500 - 501.

(4) Ibid., p. 501.

(5) On the importance of the colour black in CH, see N. Kostis' comment that " Black in this novel is synonymous with sin, a lack of faith, and death, all of which are translated into the threat of eternal damnation ". (op. cit., p. 100).

(6) CH O.C. III, p. 502.

(7) Ibid., p. 504.

eyes that settle on the crucifix,<sup>(1)</sup> the deferential tones that dare to touch on what is for Wilfred the most private and intimate of subjects, his religion.<sup>(2)</sup>

The stranger's name, Wilfred will learn later,<sup>(3)</sup> and later still the fact that Max is a homosexual,<sup>(4)</sup> a prostitute and deranged.<sup>(5)</sup> On that particular Sunday Max had taken communion - " avec tout le monde "<sup>(6)</sup> - and had noticed that Wilfred alone remained in his place. From this action he has deduced that Wilfred must possess a deep faith having been unwilling to make a sacrilegious communion, while many others, less scrupulous, had not hesitated to go up to the altar rail.<sup>(7)</sup> Confused and taken aback as Wilfred is by Max's comments and reflections on his religious behaviour - " il n'admettait pas qu'un inconnu lui parlât de religion, surtout d'une manière aussi indiscrete, aussi personnelle "<sup>(8)</sup> it is with Max that he will have his most profound religious exchanges.<sup>(9)</sup>

Green loses no opportunity of emphasizing his hero's sexual obsession :

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(1) Ibid., p. 502.

(2) Ibid., p. 503. And see Phoebé's remarks, ibid., p. 478.

(3) Ibid., p. 518.

(4) Ibid., p. 605.

(5) Ibid., pp. 694 - 698.

(6) Ibid., p. 501.

(7) Ibid., p. 503. And see above, p. 62, for Joseph Day's horror of making an unworthy communion. In a Roman Catholic context, it is of interest to compare Scobie's attitude to the problem in Graham Greene's The Heart of the Matter (p. 210, p. 213, pp. 223 - 225, Penguin edn.) with Wilfred's (CH, pp. 493 - 494, p. 560) and Max's (CH, pp. 516 - 518).

(8) CH O.C. III, p. 504.

(9) On this point see J. Petit, JG " Les écrivains devant Dieu ", p. 76.

" Il faut dire qu'il ne pensait tout le long du jour qu'à cela, comme il l'appelait mentalement. Il y pensait même quand il avait l'esprit occupé d'autre chose ".<sup>(1)</sup> Furthermore, in his room following his uncle's funeral, Wilfred reflects that he experiences no sense of guilt after his sexual escapades, considering that this aspect of his life could in no way undermine his faith. While this thought is occupying his mind, he decides to remove the crucifix from the wall, feeling freer and less hypocritical as a consequence. Then, about to leave his room, he finds Max waiting at the head of the stairs, imploring his hospitality.<sup>(2)</sup>

Having succeeded in introducing himself into Wilfred's room, Max at once notices that the cross is missing from the wall and associates Wilfred's refusal to take communion with his removal of the crucifix : " Dans les deux cas, je vois là une marque de respect, un effacement... enfin quelque chose de plus religieux que certains gestes que nous faisons sans y croire ".<sup>(3)</sup> Again, Wilfred is angered by this near-stranger's words, but Max goes on to make a kind of confession, recounting that he is damned and repeatedly makes sacrilegious communions.<sup>(4)</sup> When Wilfred retorts that a priest alone is capable of grappling with these problems, Max can only reply - like Horace - that he is unable to speak to a priest, only to Wilfred, and he explains something of the nature of his beliefs and doubts, of his difficulties concerning the host and the eucharistic presence : " A certains moments, je ne peux pas me figurer que tout cela soit vrai. Surtout ça. Vous comprenez ce que je veux dire. L'hostie. A d'autres moments, ça me paraît d'une vérité évidente, comme le soleil au milieu du ciel ".<sup>(5)</sup> But this is

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(1) CH O.C. III, p. 508. Green's italics.

(2) Ibid., p. 513.

(3) Ibid., p. 515.

(4) Ibid., pp. 515 - 516.

(5) Ibid., p. 516. And compare with the passage in L'Autre, O.C. III, pp. 983 - 985, where Karin passes from incredulity to acceptance and belief.

by no means the end of Max's confession : the words that follow lay bare a chronically disordered personality.

Like Graham Greene's Father Rivas - though for very different reasons - Max pities God : "... j'ai pitié de Dieu.... quand je le vois livré à n'importe qui, à moi, absolument sans défense, absolument comme sur le Calvaire, livré au démon, alors oui, cela me fait peur et en même temps j'ai pitié ".<sup>(1)</sup> Max's concern with the theme of sacrilegious communion is clearly obsessive and the tortuous complexity of his beliefs and feelings is further highlighted by his avowal of the suffering he experiences in the presence of the host or when confronted by someone who possesses true faith. " Cependant j'ai besoin de cette souffrance, " he continues, " J'ai besoin de Lui, comprenez-vous, et cette souffrance est ce qui ressemble le plus au bonheur que je n'ai jamais connu ".<sup>(2)</sup> The need for Christ persists even in the depths of sin, and notwithstanding his distaste, Wilfred listens intently to Max's account of his distress and of his long line of sacrilegious communions that had begun in his schooldays. Following his early sins and his lying at confession, the adolescent, still a firm believer, felt sure God would exact retribution, but when nothing of the sort happened, Max went on as before with the difference that everything was now sacrilegious.<sup>(3)</sup> Max's words precipitate in Wilfred a desire to help his unbalanced acquaintance but Max appears calmly to accept damnation as a fact.<sup>(4)</sup> Whether from curiosity, affected by something in Max's speech and manner, or out of genuine concern for the man - he is too bewildered to explain his conduct rationally <sup>(5)</sup> - Wilfred notes

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(1) CH O.C. III, p. 516.

(2) Ibid., p. 517.

(3) Ibid., pp. 517 - 518.

(4) Ibid., p. 518.

(5) Ibid., pp. 519 - 520.

his name and address, reddening when Max adds that his office, as he calls it, is for Wilfred a long way off.<sup>(1)</sup>

Wilfred had already blushed in James Knight's presence,<sup>(2)</sup> and it is plain that he has remained essentially innocent. His peccadilloes are shown as largely confined to the sexual domain, invariably taking the form of a free exchange of favours between free and equal partners. The hero of Chaque homme dans sa nuit represents an advance on his counterpart in Moira in that whereas for Joseph Day sexuality was " Evil incarnate ", Wilfred Ingram has been able to accept sexuality and to integrate it into his life. Nevertheless, this statement of fact requires considerable qualification : Wilfred does lead a life that includes, indeed is dominated by, sensuality, but at great cost; for the tension between his sensual nature and activity and his religious faith and aspirations inescapably results in anguish and distress. The blank incompatibility between the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church and his own attitude to sexuality precludes any hope of a compromise solution. The sensualist will always remain in flagrant contradiction with the basic precepts of his Church. Since he appears to have kept his belief intact and yet cannot envisage giving up his bodily pleasures, a divided, schizoid existence seems the inevitable outcome for Wilfred. The Church will hear his confession, will pardon his individual " sins ", but there can be no acceptance of the sensual life as such. As a Catholic, Wilfred will persistently be at loggerheads with his conscience, with his inmost convictions.

After his conversation with Max, Wilfred feels anger and disgust at what he considers to be his own hypocrisy.<sup>(3)</sup> However, a chance encounter

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(1) Ibid., p. 518. " C'est au diable, l'avenue Sherman, vous savez, Wilfred. " Max's choice of expression is surely not fortuitous.

(2) Ibid., p. 486. " C'est déjà quelque chose que de pouvoir rougir, remarqua Mr. Knight ".

(3) Ibid., p. 520.

with an old school-friend, Tommy, who works in a Catholic bookshop and has remained genuinely pious - and who assumes that Wilfred has remained so too - shows us another Wilfred and indeed shows Wilfred another facet of his own character. Following an initial period of banal exchange and light teasing,<sup>(1)</sup> his tone alters and he rapidly tells Tommy the truth (or part of it at least) about the life he is leading : " Tommy, j'aime mieux te dire que je ne suis pas du tout l'homme que tu crois. Je prends mon plaisir avec les femmes. Je le prends souvent, je vais de l'une à l'autre parce que je n'en aime aucune. Ce que j'aime c'est leur corps ".<sup>(2)</sup> This candour startles Wilfred as much as his companion; both " heureux et horrifié " <sup>(3)</sup> he pursues his revelations : " Moi, j'ai un corps et je ne suis pas un saint.... Je suis un cochon, Tommy.... Je regrette de t'avoir scandalisé, mais je ne veux pas faire l'hypocrite ".<sup>(4)</sup> The fact that, despite his excesses, Wilfred claims to have kept his faith is beyond Tommy's comprehension, and the shocked young virgin leaves him with the suggestion that a priest he knows might be of help.<sup>(5)</sup> Great will be Wilfred's surprise some six weeks later when one night he comes across Tommy in one of the city's pleasure-spots, a Tommy transformed into a carefree young man about town.<sup>(6)</sup> The words Wilfred had used on the occasion of their previous meeting had marked Tommy - " Tu m'as dit des choses énormes, mon vieux. Sur l'amour..."<sup>(7)</sup> - with the result that the young man has lost his faith.<sup>(8)</sup>

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(1) Ibid., pp. 521 - 523.

(2) Ibid., pp. 523 - 524.

(3) Ibid., p. 524.

(4) Ibid., pp. 524 - 525.

(5) Ibid., p. 525.

(6) Ibid., pp. 662 - 663.

(7) Ibid., p. 663.

(8) Ibid., pp. 664 - 665.

It is this fact that horrifies Wilfred, leading him unexpectedly to a declaration of his own faith : " On nous a baptisés, toi et moi. Il y a des millions d'hommes qui ne savent pas, mais nous, nous savons ce qui est vrai. Tout cela, nous l'avons dans le sang. Ce n'est pas avec la tête qu'on croit ces choses. Les preuves sont inutiles ".<sup>(1)</sup> Again, Tommy takes his leave of Wilfred, but despite his new-found confidence doubtless as consternated inwardly as he had been following the earlier meeting. Again too, we may consider that Wilfred's words have not been without effect, for at the end of the novel Tommy, who is present at Wilfred's funeral, is unable to restrain his grief during the mass<sup>(2)</sup> - and remains in the church afterwards when everyone else has left.<sup>(3)</sup>

In the course of the six weeks between the two meetings with Tommy and Wilfred's " rediscovery " of his Catholic faith an unwonted intensity enters his life to which Angus, James Knight, Max and Phobé - and several minor characters - contribute in varying degrees. Wilfred does not have to wait long to learn the meaning of the interest Angus Howard had shown in him; this becomes crystal clear in the letter Angus sends to his cousin and which is ironically, as Wilfred himself notes, the first love-letter he has ever received.<sup>(4)</sup>

Wilfred is annoyed because Angus' love is blind; he too persists in seeing him as one of the elect : " Tu es de ceux qui s'effacent devant le mal - ou ce que tu appelles ainsi ".<sup>(5)</sup> But Angus' letter is interesting for what it reveals of the feelings of the " good " homosexual. Gone is the superficial veneer of snobbery; there is a genuine sincerity in

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(1) Ibid., p. 666.

(2) Ibid., p. 704.

(3) Ibid., p. 706.

(4) Ibid., p. 529.

(5) Ibid., p. 527.

his wish to explain himself, and reading the lines of this letter one perceives the inimitable tone of Green himself. From the knowledge we have of the author in the autobiographical writings, the twenty-seven year old Angus would seem very close to the young novelist. Angus freely acknowledges his weaknesses, yet he claims to be no real "homme de plaisir" and to know days when he finds carnal lust and pleasure utterly abhorrent; the evocation of heredity to explain this situation corresponds to a further autobiographical trait noted earlier, as does the passionate desire for perfection and the strength of the early faith in God, all this spoiled and destroyed by the ravages of sexuality : " La découverte du plaisir a eu raison de tout cela ".<sup>(1)</sup> Once more, we meet the notion of the pernicious and destructive nature of sexual pleasure,<sup>(2)</sup> which is further developed in the pages that follow when Wilfred makes the acquaintance of a young farmer who has come on his first visit to the big city to buy some shirts for his wedding celebrations. Joe Lovejoy<sup>(3)</sup> is portrayed as the archetypal country boy, the embodiment of freshness and innocence.<sup>(4)</sup> The spontaneity and directness of his manner unsettle Wilfred; he contrasts his own conduct with Lovejoy's, only to experience a deep feeling of dissatisfaction with himself : " Cela paraissait ridicule à dire, mais Joe Lovejoy l'aimait.

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(1) Ibid., p. 528. And cf. Green's " Pour moi, la sexualité est ce qui a tout gâté " O.C. III, p. 1517, (From an interview with Stanislas Fumet in 1963) and his " La sexualité gâte beaucoup de choses, et en premier lieu l'amour, même l'amour humain " in his interview with Jean-Louis Ezine, Les Nouvelles Littéraires, July 29, 1974, p. 3.

(2) See above, Chapter IV, p. 156.

(3) In CH particularly the reader is struck by the symbolism and overtones, occasionally somewhat exaggerated, attached to the names; M.G. Rose has commented on the meaning of a number of names in Green's works (See Julian Green Gallic-American Novelist, passim). A certain comic element in the names chosen for minor characters is evident : e.g. Mrs. Splitpenny, the cashier (CH, p. 590), Mr. Starkweather, the notary (ibid., p. 675) and Mr. Schoenhals, the shop-walker (p. 533). In this respect, Dickens springs to mind (Green has always been an assiduous reader of Dickens as the diaries testify) and Pecksniff, Sweedlepipe, Spottletoe and the like have surely not been without influence here.

(4) CH O.C. III, pp. 534 - 536.



Il l'aimait à sa manière, sans se rendre compte de ce que cela signifiait. Pour sa part, Wilfred était incapable d'un tel amour et pourtant il voulait aimer.... Le plaisir tuait en lui la faculté d'aimer".<sup>(1)</sup> Both Wilfred and Angus acknowledge the negative, deleterious effect of sexuality on their lives, but like Jean in Le Malfaiteur they are seemingly impotent to retaliate and to alter the course of events.

We have seen that Wilfred's abuses of his sexuality are persistently accompanied by anguish arising from the conflict with his Catholic faith, yet his apprehensions are not only of a metaphysical order; there is also his very concrete fear of disease<sup>(2)</sup> which constitutes a sub-theme in the novel - the "syphilophobia" that Green knew as a young man<sup>(3)</sup> - a fear that Wilfred imparts to another young salesman, the sex-obsessed Freddie.<sup>(4)</sup> Paradoxically, if by inducing in Freddie a dread of venereal disease Wilfred is in some measure responsible for his suicide attempt, he is directly responsible for converting the young agnostic to the Catholic faith and for his baptism in extremis.<sup>(5)</sup>

The complexity and dual aspirations of Wilfred's personality are well illustrated in the middle section of the novel. It takes little to set his sensibility, whether religious or carnal, in motion. Thus, while he is able to read avidly the opening chapters of the Imitation that Max had sent him<sup>(6)</sup> - "Le livre était magique"<sup>(7)</sup> - and yearn after sainthood,<sup>(8)</sup>

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(1) Ibid., p. 537. Our italics. And see ibid., p. 669 for the sequel to Lovejoy's visit.

(2) Ibid., p. 541.

(3) See Les Années Faciles, p. 440, Oct. 28, 1933, and O.C. III, pp. 1674 - 1675, n. See also Jeunesse, p. 297 : "Une autre barrière tout aussi forte était la terreur des maladies qui domina toute ma jeunesse".

(4) CH O.C. III, pp. 549 - 552.

(5) Ibid., pp. 611 - 613.

(6) Ibid., p. 538.

(7) Ibid., p. 545.

(8) Ibid., p. 546.

then following confession and absolution feel the joy of a conscience at peace with itself,<sup>(1)</sup> the sight of Phoebé in the solicitor's office barely two days later swiftly sets his thoughts moving in the direction of carnal lust : " Il désirait cette femme de toutes ses forces. Après avoir lutté un peu, il céda brusquement, la gorge sèche, et donna libre cours à sa convoitise. Toute sa religion s'en allait lui semblait-il ".<sup>(2)</sup> In words from the Imitation that had so moved him : " First there cometh to mind a simple thought, after that a strong imagination and then a delectation and a shrewd moving - and assenting ".<sup>(3)</sup> Wilfred has gone from extreme to extreme; remembering his visit to the church and his confession, " Il en éprouva une sorte de stupeur : on pouvait très bien être deux personnes ".<sup>(4)</sup> The Devil's work is done, so to speak, and when he has taken his leave of Phoebé, Wilfred finds himself mouthing to her in his imagination words both " tendre et obscène " that resemble a " prière diabolique ".<sup>(5)</sup>

Coming upon Max in the suspect dock area of the town gives Wilfred an excuse to discuss his problems.<sup>(6)</sup> An intense desire for a married woman, the prospect of adultery, is a new issue for Wilfred. He already feels he loves Phoebé<sup>(7)</sup> yet stubbornly refuses to face the implications of this love. It is Max who drives home to him that there is no way of reconciling his Catholic faith with this passion. His recommendation is

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(1) Ibid., pp. 547 - 548.

(2) Ibid., p. 556.

(3) The Imitation of Christ, Everyman edn., Dent, London, 1910 (repr. 1925), p. 21.

(4) CH O.C. III, p. 560.

(5) Ibid., p. 561. It is hardly necessary to comment on the similarity with Pierre in L'Ennemi.

(6) It enables him also to grasp something of Max's sexual nature, even if he is too engrossed in his own difficulties to reflect on this consciously at the time. CH O.C. III, pp. 564 - 566.

(7) Ibid., p. 566.

that Wilfred follow his natural instincts.<sup>(1)</sup> For Max, in the face of sexual passion religion will not, cannot, prevail : "... ça ne tient pas devant une passion. Cette morale qui fait de notre corps un ennemi alors que c'est avec lui que nous aimons... L'Imitation de Jésus Christ !"<sup>(2)</sup> Max's blasphemous manner arouses only disgust in Wilfred, yet there remains a fundamental ambiguity in their relationship. Whereas Max is plainly attracted to his young friend (and as the reader becomes aware of his homosexuality a part at least of the nature of the attraction is not difficult to see), Wilfred is both attracted and repulsed. The repugnance he feels for the blasphemer in Max is counterbalanced by the fact that only with this strange individual is religious discussion of any real depth possible.<sup>(3)</sup>

The interest of the scenes involving the Knights lies particularly in the ramifications of Wilfred and Phoebé's nascent love and in James Knight's personal and spiritual evolution. Something of this emerges when Wilfred accepts the Knights' invitation to lunch; absorbed as he is by his feelings for Phoebé, it is with surprise that he notices the change in James Knight following his illness.<sup>(4)</sup> Indeed, it would be more accurate to speak of a transformation both in his appearance and attitude.<sup>(5)</sup> The tone of the occasion is set by James Knight's welcoming smile, the first smile Wilfred has seen on his older cousin's face; the chill demeanour of Wormsloe is a thing of the past, his look and features now revealing "quelque chose de bon et de blessé, et au fond

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(1) Ibid., pp. 566 - 567.

(2) Ibid., p. 567.

(3) J. Petit, JG " Les écrivains devant Dieu ", p. 76. Petit remarks that with the Knights there is little genuine, fruitful discussion : owing to Wilfred's love for Phoebé the exchanges with the young woman are distorted, while with James Knight it is the Protestant / Catholic dichotomy that predominates.

(4) CH O.C. III, pp. 572 - 573.

(5) Ibid., p. 573.

de ses grandes prunelles noires, mêlé à une immense tristesse, une sorte d'étonnement ".<sup>(1)</sup> James is now careful to point out to the young man that he is no fanatic, that they both have in common, even though their beliefs may differ, the essential fact that they take their religion seriously.<sup>(2)</sup> Occasionally, in varying degrees, we are afforded glimpses of the basic solidity of Wilfred's faith, as here when he reflects to himself, prompted by Knight's remark, that " il aurait manqué la plus belle aventure du monde plutôt que de ne pas se trouver un dimanche matin à l'église ".<sup>(3)</sup> In comparison, James Knight's faith had begun to waver during his illness, and he has emerged somewhat diminished and hesitant.<sup>(4)</sup> Certainly, he has modified his opinion of his young cousin, and during their meal Wilfred's natural gaucherie does not fail to charm both Phoebé and her husband who now appears quite disarmed.<sup>(5)</sup> Afterwards, the short while Wilfred and Phoebé spend in the garden as James Knight rests, convinces him that she does share his love, however unaware she may be at a conscious level.<sup>(6)</sup>

Later, alone with James Knight, Wilfred finds to his discomfort that the conversation is again taking a metaphysical turn. Obsessed with the problem of mortality, Knight reflects that the brevity of human life on earth must necessarily entail a continuation elsewhere; the assurance of this phrase, however, is not matched by what follows, as he goes on to admit his doubts.<sup>(7)</sup> In the ensuing fragmented exchanges we are shown a rather limited and inhibited Wilfred ever reluctant to

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(1) Ibid., p. 573.

(2) Ibid., p. 574.

(3) Ibid., p. 574.

(4) Ibid., pp. 574 - 575.

(5) Ibid., pp. 577 - 579.

(6) Ibid., p. 579 - 580. And cf. ibid., p. 653 and p. 655; and below, the present chapter.

(7) Ibid., p. 582.

engage discussion about religion, " surtout avec un protestant ", and a new questing James Knight, groping for faith and anxious to underscore the common ground between them, the bed-rock of the Christian religion, belief in God and the divinity of Christ : " C'est l'essentiel. Après cela, nous nous séparons, catholiques et protestants, mais c'est l'essentiel qui compte et c'est l'essentiel qui sauve ".<sup>(1)</sup> In this meeting between the two men, the rôles played out at Wormsloe are in part reversed, and while it is James Knight who stresses the points of contact, the unity of belief regarding the essential Gospel teaching, it is the Roman Catholic fanatic in Wilfred who " bien malgré lui " suddenly stirs, seeking points of difference, and his " Ce serait trop facile " echoes James Knight's identical phrase at Wormsloe.<sup>(2)</sup> However, if there has been a transformation in Knight's manner (and if doubts have troubled his tranquillity), the essence of his credo remains untouched, since a man "... s'il a la foi, (il) vit comme un élu. Et s'il vit comme un réprouvé, c'est qu'il n'a pas la foi, même s'il croit l'avoir ".<sup>(3)</sup> James Knight's fundamental conviction is that the life one leads exemplifies the quality of one's faith; thus, in the case of Horace, his life of debauchery would constitute proof of his basic lack of faith.

The concept is schematic, as Wilfred's case demonstrates : in the eyes of the Church, he lives the life of a réprouvé, but it is difficult to deny that he has faith. His limitations in argument and education (in addition to his inability to discuss religion with a Protestant) prevent him from going on to expose the complex case of homo duplex and the saving power of Grace, and the conversation peters out with a totally disconcerted Wilfred abruptly taking his leave.<sup>(4)</sup> The seemingly

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(1) Ibid., p. 583.

(2) Ibid., p. 583 and p. 484.

(3) Ibid., p. 583, and compare with p. 484 : " La foi sauve, et c'est la vie qu'on a menée qui porte témoignage de la foi ".

(4) Ibid., pp. 583 - 584.

mellowed James Knight has made it clear that he had no wish to unsettle Wilfred, but nonetheless the sombre conception of his belief is contained in some of his parting words to the young man : " Gardez votre foi et vivez dans la crainte de Dieu ".<sup>(1)</sup> The Calvinist's stress on the fear of God is not without significance; despite the more charitable exterior the core remains unchanged, and the essentially loving God of the Gospels still seems lacking. Yet, partly thanks to Wilfred, there will be a further development in James Knight's religious outlook and belief, as a later meeting and the end of the novel testify.<sup>(2)</sup>

Inevitably, in his trouble and confusion, Wilfred will seek out Max, and on this first of two visits to the latter's " office " he notices for the first time " qu'il était beau et il en éprouva une gêne inexplicable ".<sup>(3)</sup> The hint of physical attraction on Wilfred's part, however slight, is in any case not followed up, and the two young men begin another strange conversation, interspersed with music and alcohol. In this exchange, apparently insignificant at the outset, largely consisting of Wilfred's lamentations over his blocked love for Phoebé and Max's oblique references to his relationship with the mysterious friend he calls " l'Ange "<sup>(4)</sup> - at this stage Wilfred appears to understand the nature of Max's " friendships "<sup>(5)</sup> - the spiritual dimension and the problem of the two realities is never wholly absent for long. Max's solution to this conflict is to live as though there were no hereafter and forget the supernatural; in words that make Wilfred think of the crucifix he had hidden away, Max explains : " Quand vous avez un objet qui vous gêne dans votre chambre, vous le mettez au fond d'un

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(1) Ibid., p. 583. Our italics.

(2) Ibid., pp. 657 - 659 and pp. 707 - 708. And see below, the present chapter.

(3) Ibid., p. 600.

(4) Ibid., pp. 601 - 604.

(5) Ibid., p. 605. " Vous me dégoûtez, répéta Wilfred. Avec vos sales histoires... Si vous croyez que je ne comprends pas... "

placard et vous n'y songez plus. C'est ça. Mais vous, vous ouvrez sans cesse le placard pour jeter un coup d'oeil dedans. Moi aussi, du reste. Mais c'est une erreur ".<sup>(1)</sup> In the light of his inability to ignore or forget the spiritual, Max bears it with him through all his excesses : as Jacques Petit points out, while Wilfred artificially if not hypocritically seeks to dissociate his religion from his sensuality, Max consciously mingles both.<sup>(2)</sup>

Wilfred is regarded by Max as an ordinary, commonplace sinner who unquestionably needs and loves Christ, though he Max also loves Christ - in his way :

" A ma façon, je l'aime aussi. Autrement je ne le forcerais pas à descendre dans la boue, malgré lui.... C'est sa passion qui recommence, qui continue dans le sacrilège : les insultes, les crachats, les coups des soldats. D'une gifle, on le fait vaciller et d'une autre on le redresse, et il ne dit rien, il ne me dit rien, à moi, mais j'ai besoin de lui. Je n'ai jamais dit ça qu'à vous Wilfred....".<sup>(3)</sup>

That Max is unbalanced is now only too apparent, yet the fanatic in Wilfred is so appalled at his friend's sacrilegious outburst that he reacts with violence, repeatedly striking Max about the head and face. Strangely significant here is Max's carrying out of the Gospel precept : offering no resistance, he docilely turns the other cheek, meekly accepting Wilfred's blows.<sup>(4)</sup>

But Max will now be relegated to the background for a short while and before he finally settles his earthly account with Wilfred, most

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(1) Ibid., p. 602.

(2) O.C. III, p. 1680, n.

(3) CH O.C. III, pp. 605 - 606.

(4) Ibid., p. 606.

of the important elements of the latter's experience will be centred on his relations with the Knights and Angus. Much of the interest of the homosexual theme revolves around Angus, apart from the minor though interesting rôle played by Wilfred's superior, M. Schoenhals, who reserves for his young employee an attention that is seen to go beyond mere professional considerations.<sup>(1)</sup> Belying his name, Schoenhals is presented to us as a fat and dignified man of fifty.<sup>(2)</sup> It is the visit he pays Wilfred following the death of Freddie that removes any remaining ambiguity from his attitude to the young man, their conversation showing to what lengths he is prepared to go to keep Wilfred in the store.<sup>(3)</sup> The themes of death, religion and sensuality are again intermingled in this scene : the words exchanged concerning Freddie's death lead to reflections of a religious nature, then to Schoenhals' personal feelings. His position as a double outsider on account of his homosexuality and his Jewishness clearly emerges here. Furthermore, he appears as a man doubly frustrated : both as a homosexual in love with Wilfred and without any hope or possibility of reciprocation, and as a man who has lost his Jewish faith and found no other.<sup>(4)</sup> His telling phrase - " Nous autres, nous pouvons toujours compter sur le pire "<sup>(5)</sup> - well sums up his sense of loss and deprivation.

Yet, as we have said, it is on Angus that the homosexual theme now focuses, on the Angus revealed to Wilfred by letter and through conversation. Jean's " Confession " in Le Malfaiteur has already made us familiar with a number of the elements treated in these passages, particularly the tyranny of sexual craving unaccompanied by any deep ,

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(1) See, for example, ibid., p. 534, pp. 536 - 537, p. 587, p. 589, p. 609.

(2) Ibid., p. 533.

(3) Ibid., pp. 617 - 620.

(4) Ibid., p. 618.

(5) Ibid., p. 620.



lasting love and the loss of a religious faith that had been strong and vigorous in childhood.<sup>(1)</sup> The special place of Angus' confession and the importance of the "aveu" in Green's work, together with the autobiographical resonances, have been brought out by Jacques Petit in his general study.<sup>(2)</sup> Doubtless, the publication of the complete version of Le Malfaiteur does somewhat reduce the impact of the episodes concerning Angus, and in particular the epistolary sections. Green has certainly thoroughly exploited the rich vein of inspiration provided by this "péché privilégié",<sup>(3)</sup> and L'Autre will be virtually free of the homosexual theme.

Angus' visit to Wilfred's home is, however, a scene which finely portrays the drama of the young homosexual who, having already committed his feelings for Wilfred to writing, now frankly comes to the point of oral confession.<sup>(4)</sup> As with Max, though without the blasphemy, it is not long before a spiritual turn enters the conversation.<sup>(5)</sup> Far from displaying "une nonchalance du salut" the agnostic Angus appears to be gripped by a deeply-felt anxiety, as Wilfred will note from the contents of the letter his cousin writes to him after their meeting.<sup>(6)</sup> Angus has perfectly well understood the reality of Wilfred's sensual nature but sees just as clearly that his faith remains intact.<sup>(7)</sup> Impressed by this quality of faith, Angus is able to pose those basic

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(1) See, for example, ibid., pp. 637 - 638, and cf. Malf. O.C. III, p. 336, for the resemblance between the closing lines of Angus' letter and those that conclude Jean's "Confession".

(2) J. Petit, JG l'homme qui venait d'ailleurs, pp. 30 - 31 and pp. 288 - 289.

(3) J. Sémolué, op. cit., p. 95.

(4) CH O.C. III, pp. 629 - 630. Jacques Petit is right to point out that in a sense this is the conversation Ian Wiczewski would wish to have had with Erik Mac Clure in Sud. See O.C. III, p. 1682, n.

(5) CH O.C. III, pp. 630 - 632.

(6) Ibid., p. 638.

(7) Ibid., p. 633. "Tu es dévoré de passions, mais tu as malgré tout gardé la foi.... En toi, la foi est plus forte que le reste".

questions that more than simply intrigue him, namely whether the Roman Church allows any hope of salvation for the practising homosexual and on the reasons why God should permit such a condition.<sup>(1)</sup> In response to Angus' first question Wilfred can state little more than his conviction that God is all-forgiving, while faced with the second he is even more laconic, again pleading his inability to discuss religion.<sup>(2)</sup> Clearly agitated and dissatisfied with Wilfred's silence, Angus goes on to evoke his disgust with his own sexual conduct, his dread of solitude and his abortive attempt at prayer.<sup>(3)</sup>

Very occasionally, in the face of incredulity, of lack of faith nonetheless accompanied by the will to believe, as in Horace's case, or confronted by the imperious demand of the dying Freddie, Wilfred is somehow able to plumb the depths of his being and to summon up a degree of faith that he did not feel he could conceivably possess, a faith and strength that he perceives as coming from outside himself.<sup>(4)</sup> Here, however, no supernatural agency will intervene to support Wilfred; indeed, the situation is different, less extreme, less fraught with eschatological significance. Although patently genuine, Angus' distress is not of the same order as that of Horace and Freddie who had been so close to death. This anguish is a compound of metaphysical but also highly concrete elements, for like Jean Rollet he is in thrall to a sensuality that will enmesh him in the sordid world of homosexual blackmail with the risk of an unsavoury and irreparably damaging lawsuit.<sup>(5)</sup>

At the end of the novel, Angus tells James Knight that it is events

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(1) Ibid., pp. 630 - 631.

(2) Ibid., p. 631. " Je ne peux pas parler de religion, Angus. Je n'ai jamais pu ".

(3) Ibid., pp. 631 - 632.

(4) Ibid., pp. 464 - 465 and pp. 612 - 613.

(5) Ibid., pp. 669 - 670.

such as Wilfred's murder that prevent him from believing in God,<sup>(1)</sup> but this before Knight recounts Wilfred's last moments and the extraordinary presence he had witnessed at his death.<sup>(2)</sup> Angus' sorrowful reaction, his " Ne dites plus rien "<sup>(3)</sup> lends a final ambiguity to a character whose name plainly signifies " one choice " and who had previously written to Wilfred that " Il (Christ) ne viendra pas et l'autre (Satan / sensuality) m'attend ".<sup>(4)</sup>

In his double portrayal of homosexuality in Chaque homme dans sa nuit, Julien Green could hardly have created two inverts more dissimilar than Angus and Max. Yet both are strongly attracted by Wilfred, physically and morally, discerning in him a quality, a purity, of faith, that is singularly lacking in Angus, but also in Max, whose religion, constantly expressing itself in sacrilege, is anything but pure. The contrast between Angus and Max is heightened in the last part of the novel by Green's introducing Wilfred's casual street encounter with Max immediately after he has read the letter in which his cousin's genuine distress and Godless solitude has been so sincerely and movingly conveyed.<sup>(5)</sup> Notwithstanding his strong sensuality, Angus remains essentially the reasoning and reasonable agnostic, whereas Max for his part is all instinct and intuition, convinced of the truth of the Roman Catholic religion yet at the same time haunted by the demon of an irrepressible, frenetic sexuality. Angus and Max never meet in the novel (how, one wonders, would they, could they, react to each other ? ), but both exert an influence on Wilfred, though it is the demented Max who by the very paradoxes and excesses of his language forces his attention

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(1) Ibid., p. 707.

(2) Ibid., pp. 707 - 708.

(3) Ibid., p. 708.

(4) Ibid., p. 638.

(5) Ibid., pp. 637 - 638.

bringing him face to face with certain essential issues.<sup>(1)</sup>

No sooner has Max accosted Wilfred than the words " religion " and " sexualité " escape his lips, and even the few steps that lead to the bus-stop resound with religious considerations.<sup>(2)</sup> The most characteristic feature of his conversation is the constant intermingling of the sensual - " Laissez-moi m'amuser. Je veux aller caresser ce corps que je désire...."<sup>(3)</sup> - elements of Catholic lore and superstition - ".... un chapelet à grains noirs.... Est-il indulgencié ? Le mien est indulgencié "<sup>(4)</sup> - with the occasional flash of ardent perception in which his diseased mind expresses thoughts that have a particular relevance for Wilfred :

" Jusque dans la moelle des os, je suis sûr que l'Eglise dit vrai. Mais cela n'empêche pas que la nuit dernière, je me suis soulé de plaisir comme une bête, tu entends, comme une bête. Je me suis abruti de volupté.... J'ai eu l'impression de quitter mon corps, de flotter au-dessus de mon corps, dans l'espace. C'est le démon qui fait cela.... Il tourne autour de toi, mais il n'est pas encore dans ton coeur. Ça prend tout de même du temps à démolir, une âme chrétienne. " (5)

These are words to which Wilfred cannot remain indifferent, words that intimately concern him, too intimately, and he leaves Max abruptly. Is

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(1) Ibid., p. 640. " 'Tout le monde est bon,' " says Max " 'mais toi et moi, nous aurions dû être des saints, des vrais. Nous avons ce qu'il faut pour ça.' Un peu malgré lui, Wilfred écoutait ".

(2) Ibid., pp. 639 - 640.

(3) Ibid., p. 641.

(4) Ibid., p. 642.

(5) Ibid., p. 643.

he not on his way to dine with the Knights, passionately in love with Phoebé, yet still hypocritically prepared to sit around a table in the presence of the sick James ?

To his surprise, Wilfred had received his invitation consequent on his sending two letters to Phoebé : one a simple letter of thanks for the portrait of Uncle Horace, the other a confession of his feelings and desires for the young woman. The paper and envelopes used are identical and when sealed quite indistinguishable, Wilfred's intention being to post one of the letters at random thus letting chance decide his " fate " for him.<sup>(1)</sup> However, having slipped one of his letters into the box, little time has elapsed before the second joins the first.<sup>(2)</sup> Phoebé will ineluctably know the whole truth, or so it seems... In his preface to the 1973 edition of the novel, Julien Green interestingly commented on this incident, comparing Wilfred's two letters to the two versions of his diary :

" Nul besoin d'un détective pour lire en clair dans l'épisode des deux lettres adressées par Wilfred à la même personne, l'une devant partir et l'autre non, l'une disant tout et l'autre non, et finalement toutes deux jetées à la boîte. De quoi s'agissait-il si ce n'est de mon journal, longue lettre à un inconnu, mais partagée en deux. La mort, avec son sac de facteur, distribuera dans le courrier d'après-demain l'enveloppe que je n'ai pas encore postée. "<sup>(3)</sup>

Although the analogy is revealing, it would plainly be an error to push it too far. The published diaries already throw much light on their author, whatever fresh insights may be afforded by the full, unexpurgated text.

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(1) Ibid., p. 624.

(2) Ibid., p. 625.

(3) O.C. III, p. 1635.

As far as Wilfred's letter of avowal is concerned - " cette déclaration d'amour éhontée, presque obscène dans sa simplicité "<sup>(1)</sup> - on his arrival at the Knights' home, the young man soon learns to his consternation that Phoebé has not received this frank confession, only the letter of thanks, that it is James Knight who, in accord with his wife's wishes, opens all her mail before handing it to her.<sup>(2)</sup> Knight had thus held back the incriminating document and is forcibly aware of the truth about his young cousin; in the circumstances, the invitation seems to Wilfred quite inexplicable, unless to punish him in some peculiarly unpleasant fashion.<sup>(3)</sup>

Again in this scene where Green has successfully built up an atmosphere of suspense, the subject of religion is almost immediately broached by Phoebé. Troubled by a change in her husband's attitude - since his illness he no longer speaks of his faith to Phoebé - she tries to encourage Wilfred to open a religious discussion with James.<sup>(4)</sup> Later, at Wormsloe, the property the Knights have inherited yet which retains its aura of death, the plot takes on an almost melodramatic turn when Wilfred and James find themselves alone in the latter's future study.<sup>(5)</sup> Up to this point Knight has given no intimation whatever of his knowledge of the contents of Wilfred's love-letter; then quite abruptly, after obtaining from his embarrassed young cousin an admission of his continuing piety and faith, he unlocks the drawer of his table which is seen to contain a revolver.<sup>(6)</sup> Without offering any further explanation, he sends the panic-stricken Wilfred off to rejoin his wife. In his attempt

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(1) CH O.C. III, p. 646.

(2) Ibid., p. 645.

(3) Ibid., p. 646. "... il (J. Knight) était allé le voir au magasin, l'avait invité à déjeuner [sic]. 'Quel piège horrible et compliqué cela cache-t-il ?' se demanda le jeune homme ".

(4) Ibid., pp. 646 - 647.

(5) Ibid., p. 649.

(6) Ibid., p. 650.

to understand the meaning of Knight's gesture, after rejecting the hypothesis that Phoebé's husband intends to kill him, Wilfred concludes that having lost his faith Knight is thinking of suicide.<sup>(1)</sup> It is of course just as feasible to explain Knight's action as a simple warning to Wilfred to keep off Phoebé and indeed this interpretation is borne out by James Knight's own words a short while later.<sup>(2)</sup> Nevertheless, as J. Petit points out, the essential element here is the presence of death preceding the love scene.<sup>(3)</sup>

The scene we have just described, weighed down as it is by the menace of death, is followed by one of Green's most successful scenes of reciprocated love, albeit a blocked love, impossible to justify in Catholic terms. The house of Wormsloe with its strong associations of base sensuality and death knows at least a few precious moments of a human love that is both passionate and seemingly profound. The lovers' embrace has more of tenderness than of sensuality, but even this moment is not free of menace; Wilfred's happiness is "un bonheur mêlé d'épouvante".<sup>(4)</sup> For Phoebé the night is one of self-revelation: "C'est la première fois que je suis amoureuse. Je ne savais pas. Hier encore, je ne savais pas bien. Cela me faisait plaisir de penser à toi, mais je ne savais pas que je t'aimais. Cette nuit seulement, j'ai compris".<sup>(5)</sup> But if she did not consciously realize that her feelings for Wilfred were feelings of love, now with hindsight she knows that she had in fact loved him from the first brief meeting - yet another example of the "coup de foudre" in Green's work: "Je t'ai aimé dès la première minute, quand je me suis agenouillée derrière toi. J'allais vers toi de toutes mes forces.... Avec lui, j'étais trop malheureuse.... Souvent

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(1) Ibid., p. 650.

(2) Ibid., pp. 657 - 658. And see below.

(3) O.C. III, p. 1684, n.

(4) CH O.C. III, p. 652.

(5) Ibid., p. 653.

je me demande s'il ne m'a pas épousée pour que je n'appartienne pas à un autre, pour que je ne sois à personne... Il a des idées terribles sur le bien et le mal ".<sup>(1)</sup> Indeed, for James Knight all manifestations of sexuality are synonymous with evil; in marrying Phoebé the warped logic motivated by his puritanical beliefs told him that he was protecting her from " le mal ". Knight's war against sensuality is total : much earlier Wilfred had reflected on the notion that their marriage remained unconsummated,<sup>(2)</sup> and various details furnished by James and Phoebé subsequently appear to confirm his intuition.<sup>(3)</sup>

We have already observed that proximity to death through illness has softened James Knight's fanaticism, although leaving his basic beliefs unmodified. When Wilfred has left Phoebé in the verandah to go and find her husband, their earlier conversation resumes, and it becomes more and more clear that James is familiar with the mutual attraction between Wilfred and his wife. He emphasizes her innocence and the perils of " sin " for such a pure being : " Il y a en elle quelque chose d'intact. Elle est pure. Sa foi est pure. Le péché la lui ferait perdre, mais elle est étrangère au péché ".<sup>(4)</sup> The significance of this particular evening in Wilfred's life and experience is underlined by Knight when he tells his young relation : " Cette nuit vous restera dans la mémoire, Wilfred. Cela fera comme un avant et un après dans votre vie. Avant cette nuit et après cette nuit ".<sup>(5)</sup> And he goes on to clarify the revolver incident, the unloaded weapon being intended to frighten, but just a little and only when strictly necessary.<sup>(6)</sup>

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(1) Ibid., p. 655.

(2) Ibid., p. 559 : " Wilfred essaya sans y parvenir de se figurer son mari la prenant dans ses bras. 'C'est inimaginable, se dit-il. Par conséquent, il ne doit pas le faire.' "; and p. 577 : "... la pensée lui traversa l'esprit qu'entre elle et son mari il n'y avait pas de rapports charnels ".

(3) Ibid., p. 649 : " Ici, ce sera ma chambre.... Phoebé couchera au premier étage "; and p. 672 : " James dort dans une autre partie de la maison, comme il l'a toujours fait depuis notre mariage ".

(4) Ibid., p. 657.

(5) Ibid., p. 657.

(6) Ibid., pp. 657 - 658.



Looking closely at the character of James Knight, we do perceive at this stage a definite development in his general religious outlook. Wilfred, for his part, had attributed this new, calmer and more tolerant disposition to the physical effects of his cousin's heart-attack,<sup>(1)</sup> but it seems plain that this is an over-simplification. Mentally, the enforced personal confrontation with death and the pained realization of the transience of human existence have deeply marked Knight. The changed outlook is most noticeable in his attitude to Catholicism and of course in his relations with Wilfred. Never referring directly to the intercepted letter, Knight's methods of dissuading his young cousin are more subtle, if somewhat dramatic, as in the case of the revolver episode, or striking and unexpected, as in the passage that follows.

Briefly mentioning the Catholic - Protestant dichotomy, Knight then cites the common source of their faith, the Gospel that binds and unites : " Or, vous et moi, nous ne croyons pas les mêmes choses, mais nous nous sommes nourris du même Evangile ".<sup>(2)</sup> And he reads out to Wilfred the lines from Matthew's Gospel listing the twelve apostles, but replacing the final name first with his own, then with Wilfred's. The latter is too startled to react verbally with any degree of conviction, but Knight, while clearly raising the issue of Wilfred's betrayal of trust, makes it equally plain that all men are potentially Judas. What is important, however, is that Christ loved Judas and notwithstanding his betrayal would have forgiven him.<sup>(3)</sup> The apostle's great error was his failure to ask for this forgiveness and instead to commit his last despairing act. Knight visualizes the story as it might have been, with Judas imploring Christ's pardon : " Il y a eu dans la Passion une minute où seul Judas pouvait consoler Jésus en lui demandant pardon. Le

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(1) Ibid., p. 575. " Le cerveau est atteint ".

(2) Ibid., p. 658.

(3) Ibid., pp. 658 - 659.

scandale est que cette minute ait passé sans que Judas se soit trouvé là ".<sup>(1)</sup> What, one might reasonably ask, really does lie behind this ? Certainly, Knight is deeply worried about his own salvation, the wavering of his faith (the presence of the revolver has provided at least a hint of thoughts of suicide) and his own possible betrayal of Christ. Perhaps also he feels guilt on account of his treatment of his wife, regretting the rôle of " protector " he had taken upon himself when the fanatic was in the ascendant. Yet if he has come to see his marriage to Phoebé - this " mariage blanc " of total sexual deprivation - as a grave error of judgment, he does remain her husband and Wilfred's conduct has been obviously reprehensible in its abuse of Knight's trust.

We observe, then, that whatever his doubts James Knight's faith is now utterly centred on the person of Christ where the notions of love and forgiveness are paramount. As we follow him in his relations with Phoebé and Wilfred to the end of the novel this fact becomes more pronounced. When Wilfred overhears James and Phoebé Knight's conversation in their garden<sup>(2)</sup> (he will not see Phoebé again), James' voice is described as " basse et douce ", and the young man picks out the words " Je n'ai jamais voulu autre chose que le bonheur de Phoebé ",<sup>(3)</sup> although perhaps Knight's conception of what constitutes Phoebé's happiness has

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(1) Ibid., p. 659. Julien Green's personal interest in Judas is shown in two diary passages dating from the fifties prior to the composition of the novel. Cf. J., p. 944, Feb. 5, 1951 : " Beaucoup pensé à la mort de Judas. Un petit garçon belge à qui on racontait l'histoire du traître et son geste de désespoir, eut cette parole étrangement belle et profonde : 'A la place de Dieu, j'aurais attendu qu'il me demande pardon.' On dira que c'est là une théologie d'enfant, mais elle a le mérite d'aller au coeur de la question sans perdre de temps en route, et elle a ceci de particulier que sans éclaircir le mystère de cette mort impie elle le rend un peu plus troublant ". And ibid., pp. 1108 - 1109, April 2, 1955 : "... Il avait été choisi entre les disciples (Luc, VI, 13). Electus. Il y a de quoi trembler ". Green's italics.

(2) CH O.C. III, pp. 679 - 680.

(3) Ibid., p. 680.

evolved. In Phoebé and Wilfred, James Knight has clearly perceived an affinity in the quality of their faith,<sup>(1)</sup> and he surely sees with equal clarity how appropriate their mutual attraction and love would be in changed circumstances.

Wilfred's brutal death at the hands of Max, however bluntly and unsatisfactorily it resolves the problem of his love for Phoebé, does provide James Knight with the experience that brings about the strengthening and deepening of his Christ-centred faith of love and forgiveness. It also shows up a new attitude to Catholicism on Knight's part : in the hospital where Wilfred lies dying, seated at the young man's bedside, he several times examines Wilfred's rosary, no longer experiencing hostility but rather a secret desire and temptation to put the object of devotion into his own pocket.<sup>(2)</sup> Then, in his explanations to Angus in the concluding pages of the novel, he makes the point that he is not opposed to Catholic rites, recounting his somewhat sceptical but inquiring and respectful attitude to the sacrament of extreme unction.<sup>(3)</sup> Finally, this Puritan who had always been so suspicious of human emotions - " je ne suis pas un homme à céder trop vite à mes émotions. Je me méfie des émotions "<sup>(4)</sup> - is profoundly affected by the expression of sheer joy on his dead cousin's face : " Je n'ai pas encore vu sur le visage d'un être humain une expression de bonheur comparable à celle qui éclairait les traits de Wilfred. Appliqué à lui, le mot de mort n'avait aucun sens. Il vivait, il vivait ! "<sup>(5)</sup> It is of course not without significance

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(1) Cf. ibid., p. 657, where Knight says to Wilfred of Phoebé : " Sa foi est pure. Le péché la lui ferait perdre "; and p. 673, where Phoebé records her husband's words concerning Wilfred : " Toucher à sa foi, ce serait le détruire ".

(2) Ibid., p. 703.

(3) Ibid., pp. 707 - 708. And compare with Knight's initial reflections on such rites, ibid., p. 472.

(4) Ibid., p. 708.

(5) Ibid., p. 708.

that it is the Catholic priest who invites and leads James Knight into the sick-room to witness Wilfred's transfiguration.

In a curious way, the last letter that Phoebé had written to Wilfred conveys a note of acceptance and resignation that helps prepare the dénouement, as well as illustrating the nature of the beliefs of this essentially pure and simple character : " Mon amour, il faut garder la foi. Pendant quelque temps nous ne nous verrons pas et Dieu oubliera peut-être ce que nous avons fait. Il n'y aura pas le mal. Je déteste le mal, enfin ce que les gens appellent le mal. Il faut laisser le corps tranquille... ".<sup>(1)</sup> These last words deeply move Wilfred, who is at heart strongly in agreement with them. He reflects : " Laisser le corps tranquille... C'était cela qu'il voulait, lui aussi, malgré tout. Ce qu'il désirait le plus follement lui faisait horreur ".<sup>(2)</sup> The realization that follows, that the old and wrinkled Mrs. Beauchamp is in fact the Alicia of the photograph induces in Wilfred a fundamental change of outlook<sup>(3)</sup> that markedly colours his conduct at this point in the novel. Indeed, in an effort to live out his faith in a concrete fashion, he resolves to give the part of his legacy he had withdrawn from the bank to the poor, and he makes his way to the Franciscan Church where the destitute gather for the distribution of food.<sup>(4)</sup> But unable to pray and unable to imagine himself confessing and above all renouncing the " sin " of his relationship with Phoebé,<sup>(5)</sup> he is just as incapable of communicating in any meaningful way with the bedraggled group of down-and-outs who wait for food.<sup>(6)</sup> Discouraged and humiliated by his failure

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(1) Ibid., p. 673.

(2) Ibid., p. 673.

(3) See above, p. 192.

(4) CH O.C. III, pp. 681 - 682. We have already seen something of the importance of St. Francis for Julien Green, see above, p. 178.

(5) CH O.C. III, pp. 682 - 685.

(6) Ibid., pp. 686 - 688.

to give the money, he tries to analyse his motives and it seems to him that he has been ignobly and stupidly attempting a transaction with God - as though distributing his bank-notes to the destitute would enable him to receive the divine assent to continue his relationship with Phoebé.<sup>(1)</sup>

In his disarray, Wilfred is drawn to the only human being whom he feels has something to say to his condition : " Max était la seule personne à qui il pouvait dire certaines choses. Avec tous ses vices et toutes ses folies, Max en savait plus long que les autres. Il était à la fois répugnant et effrayant, mais Wilfred pensait à lui avec une pitié qu'il n'avait jamais éprouvée pour personne, même pour Angus ".<sup>(2)</sup> As he walks towards Max's address in the disreputable Sherman Avenue, Wilfred reflects that he will tell his strange friend everything : ".... il allait raconter cette fois tout ce qui le torturait depuis des semaines ".<sup>(3)</sup> But when he comes to think that on this occasion Max would serve as priest - " Cette nuit, le prêtre, ce serait Max "<sup>(4)</sup> - he is frightened, alarmed at the sacrilegious nature of this thought.

That Wilfred has badly erred in his choice of time to visit Max is obvious from the first moments of conversation on his arrival at the

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(1) Ibid., p. 688.

(2) Ibid., p. 689. In his portrait of Max, one cannot help thinking (following the publication of Jeunesse), that Félicien of the autobiography had a certain influence on Green's characterization, as examination of the relevant passage (pp. 283 - 285) reveals. Among points of resemblance we would content ourselves here to point out that Félicien was a young homosexual of similar age, " un peu inquiétant, sinistre même " (p. 283), for whom Green felt pity; he had an ability to cry as and when he wished (p. 284) - cf. CH, p. 513, for this trait in Max. At the same time, Green writes of Félicien that this " demi-fou " aroused in him " une violente répulsion en même temps qu'il me retenait par le vice.... Si étrange que cela puisse sembler à certains, il avait la foi ". (Jeunesse, p. 285).

(3) Ibid., p. 690.

(4) Ibid., p. 690.

house.<sup>(1)</sup> He is dealing with a very different Max, on one of his "mauvais jours", doubtless his worst day in fact; at first merely unpleasant, after alluding to the months he had spent interned in what appears to be an extremely primitive mental hospital,<sup>(2)</sup> his irritation and aggressiveness become more and more pronounced. When Wilfred makes his apologies for having struck Max, chill disdain marks his friend's reaction,<sup>(3)</sup> and minutes later he returns to this incident, accusing Wilfred of having transgressed the Gospel precept by his action : " Ne jugez pas. C'est dans l'Evangile. Or, toi, tu m'as jugé en me frappant, l'autre soir ".<sup>(4)</sup> Max can evoke the Gospels even in his satanic phase, and his sinister intention becomes clearer when he questions Wilfred as to whether he has been to confession<sup>(5)</sup> and when he alludes ominously to " un certain objet " that he constantly carries with him.<sup>(6)</sup>

Now aware of Max's very real derangement, Wilfred seeks to mask his own equally real fear, a difficult task, as Max describes how tempted he had been to fire at him after the blows of the earlier evening.<sup>(7)</sup> What had spared Wilfred was his looks, his bearing : " Tu marchais si bien.... Tu étais si beau que je n'ai pas pu tirer. Je n'ai pas pu arrêter la vie, trancher la vie, ce soir-là ".<sup>(8)</sup> That particular occasion, however, has

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(1) Ibid., pp. 690 - 691.

(2) Ibid., p. 692.

(3) Ibid., p. 693.

(4) Ibid., p. 694.

(5) Ibid., pp. 693 - 694.

(6) Ibid., p. 695.

(7) Ibid., pp. 694 - 695.

(8) Ibid., pp. 695 - 696.

passed, and Max's attitude has changed to one of open menace. Forced out of Max's room on to the landing, Wilfred's ordeal in the stairway,<sup>(1)</sup> representative of an earthly purgatory, brings him to a conscious understanding of the reasons for Max's hatred : " Rien n'était plus facile à lire dans le regard de l'étranger que cette imploration muette qui tournait si vite à la colère parce que le regard de Wilfred répondait invariablement non.... Max voulait et Wilfred ne voulait pas. Pour cette raison, Max désirait tuer Wilfred ".<sup>(2)</sup> But it is too late to alter the course of Max's frenzy - " Ce soir, il n'y a pas de douceur "<sup>(3)</sup> - and in the rage provoked by his blocked desire and sick mind he fires the bullet that fatally injures Wilfred, only to implore a pardon that Wilfred accords with his " Oui.... un mot qui effaçait tout, qui rachetait tout, parce que seul parlait le plus grand amour ",<sup>(4)</sup> before sinking into a coma and before Max plunges into total insanity. The reader's thoughts return to James Knight's " sermon " on Judas Iscariot and the " regard d'amour ", the forgiveness that Jesus would have reserved for his erring apostle.

Angus' grief and James Knight's strengthened, rejuvenated faith mark the end of the novel. As we have seen above, Phoebe's last letter to Wilfred showed that she was prepared for a temporary earthly separation, and we can imagine the luminous testimony of her husband subsequently guiding her into acceptance of the divine will. Whether a similar effect could be envisaged on the agnostic Angus is matter for speculation : for

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(1) On the significance of the staircase in Green's work, see, for example, J.M. Dunaway, op. cit., pp. 157, 159, and Mircea Eliade, Mythes, rêves et mystères, Gallimard, 1957, pp. 146 - 147 : " L'escalier est par excellence le symbole du passage d'un monde à un autre.... l'imagination de l'écrivain retrouvait spontanément la même image exemplaire de l'escalier chaque fois qu'un de ses personnages affrontait une expérience décisive, par laquelle il devenait 'autre' ".

(2) CH O.C. III, p. 698.

(3) Ibid., p. 697.

(4) Ibid., p. 702.

Jacques Petit, Angus' words which close the novel constitute a final movement of revolt which he compares to Edouard Broderick's scandalized reaction when confronted by Ian's dead body in Sud.<sup>(1)</sup> Yet it is perhaps not gratuitous to imagine him progressively returning to faith in the way Julien Green himself did in the thirties.

When we have considered the various characters who hold our attention in Chaque homme dans sa nuit we inevitably return to Max and Wilfred. Green's hero, whose death is seen by the author as a disaster in purely human terms, is nonetheless regarded as being saved.<sup>(2)</sup> In an interview dating from the year of his novel's publication, Green makes it clear that from a religious point of view he considers the shot fired by Max that kills Wilfred not as a retributive measure, " mais comme une sorte d'intervention providentielle ".<sup>(3)</sup> He concludes this particular interview with the reflection that Chaque homme dans sa nuit is doubtless the first optimistic novel he has written in that it affords at least a presentiment of another world - " un peu, si vous voulez, comme des rayons de lumière qui passent sous une porte noire ". If black predominates in the scenes between Max and Wilfred, as in the case of this image, we have seen above that there is also present the occasional ray of light or flash of intuition that illuminates a basic truth.

That the name of a writer like Dostoyevsky should spring to mind in such a context is hardly surprising. This " dualité fondamentale "<sup>(4)</sup> that so characterizes Green and his creations - and with such power in

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(1) J. Petit, JG l'homme qui venait d'ailleurs, p. 292.

(2) See Green's comments in Saint Jean, JG par lui-même, pp. 126 - 127, and p. 119 : " Wilfred sera sauvé ".

(3) O.C. III, p. 1515. [Guy Dupré, " Green : 'Mon premier roman optimiste' ", Arts, April 27, 1960 ].

(4) Saint Jean, JG par lui-même, p. 156.



Chaque homme dans sa nuit - is strongly present in the great Russian, and it is expressed with particular force by Dmitri in The Brothers Karamazov :

" It makes me mad to think that a man of great heart and high intelligence should begin with the ideal of Madonna and end with the ideal of Sodom. What is more terrible is that a man with the ideal of Sodom already in his soul does not renounce the ideal of Madonna, and it sets his heart ablaze, and it is truly, truly ablaze, as in the days of his youth and innocence.... Is there beauty in Sodom ? Believe me, for the great majority of people it is in Sodom and nowhere else - did you know that secret or not ? The awful thing is that beauty is not only a terrible, but also a mysterious, thing. There God and the devil are fighting for mastery, and the battlefield is the heart of man. "(1)

These words of Dmitri's could almost have been uttered by Max, and one feels that Dostoyevsky's singular perception of these twin ideals has marked Julien Green.

If we look to the Journal for Green's own comments, we find some interesting and instructive entries. In 1949, for example, the author tells us that he bought a copy of Crime and Punishment regarding this as perhaps an unwise gesture, having always thought it better not to read Dostoyevsky, " crainte d'être à tout jamais découragé d'écrire ".(2) Then, in 1950, Green records that for thirty years he hesitated to read the

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(1) F. Dostoyevsky, The Brothers Karamazov, I, trans. D. Magarshack, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1958, pp. 123 - 124.

(2) J, p. 865, Sept. 29, 1949. He does not seem to have read the novel until May, 1950 (see below), and thus after the completion of Moïra.

Russian novelist : " Je me méfiais de lui et j'avais raison. Si je l'avais lu plus tôt, toute une partie de mon oeuvre eût été différente ".<sup>(1)</sup>

The new decade sees Green making amends for this yawning gap in his reading, and a number of diary notations refer to the impressions made on him by Dostoyevsky's great sequence of novels.<sup>(2)</sup> Nowhere, however, does he appear to recapture the hallucinatory, spell-binding effect produced on him by Crime and Punishment, and particularly by the character of Raskolnikov, as he devours Dostoyevsky's pages on the shores of the Wolfgangsee near Salzburg in 1950 : " Quand Raskolnikoff fend le crâne de la prêteuse sur gages, " we read in the Pléiade edition, " j'ai poussé un cri, le seul qu'un livre m'ait jamais arraché.... et je ne pouvais faire que la haute silhouette noire de Raskolnikoff ne se promênât partout : dans ma tête, sur la route, au milieu du ciel qu'elle obscurcissait ".<sup>(3)</sup>

In the summer of 1957 - he has already begun the composition of Chaque homme dans sa nuit - Green is avidly reading A Raw Youth;<sup>(4)</sup> in this novel the young hero, Dolgoruky, records that he has " marvelled a thousand times at that faculty in man.... of cherishing in his soul his loftiest ideal side by side with the most abject baseness, and all quite sincerely ".<sup>(5)</sup>

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- (1) J, p. 908, May 27, 1950. In the Pléiade edition of the Journal, 1926-1955 - Vol. IV of the OEuvres complètes, published at the end of 1975 - it is noteworthy that this passage has been emended and expanded, Green being less discreet about his previous ignorance of Dostoyevsky : " Oserai-je le dire ? J'avoue que j'hésite un peu. Enfin, allons-y ! Je viens de lire pour la première fois un roman de Dostofevski ". O.C. IV, p. 1154. (At the same date of May 27, 1950).
- (2) See, for example, J, p. 916, Aug. 27, 1950 : " Lecture des Karamazoff. Très profondément touché par la figure d'Aliocha "; and pp. 954-955, May 18, 1951 : " L'Idiot.... Je n'y retrouve pas cette invasion de la vérité de Crime et châtiement où le lecteur n'est pas en état de refuser l'histoire qu'on lui raconte ".
- (3) O.C. IV, p. 1155. It is perhaps not without interest to note here that Raskolnikov's name implies a personality divided against itself : " raskol " - schism, division; " raskolot' " - to split. See Richard Peace, Dostoyevsky, Cambridge, 1971, p. 34 and p. 45.
- (4) J, p. 1291, Aug. 13, 1957 : " Dans Un Adolescent que je dévore, il y a des pages d'un incroyable masochisme ".
- (5) F. Dostoyevsky, A Raw Youth, trans. Constance Garnett, William Heinemann Ltd., London, n.d., p. 376.

These notions of man's basic dualism, so remarkably embodied in characters like Raskolnikov, the Christ-like Myshkin or the profligate Dmitri plainly had a deep and lasting influence on Green's work of the period. In Chaque homme dans sa nuit, we have observed the obsessive presence in Wilfred and Max<sup>(1)</sup> of yearning for " the ideal of Madonna " ("un désir de monter en grade") coupled with craving for " the ideal of Sodom " ("une joie de descendre"). This dualism will continue in L'Autre, although as we shall see, there is greater unity and concentration of theme.

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(1) Conferring on Max Slav origins (CH O.C. III, p. 503) is surely no coincidence.

L'AUTRE OR A PARTIAL RECONCILIATION

Writing in the mid-sixties, the critic Philippe Sénart voiced his doubts concerning Julien Green's future as a novelist with the query : " Si M. Green avait encore envie d'écrire des romans, le pourrait-il, alors que Chaque homme dans sa nuit proclame la victoire de l'Ange sur les puissances du Mal en déroute et que l'innocence est, enfin, triomphante ? " <sup>(1)</sup> Just five years later, L'Autre was to provide M. Sénart with a perhaps unexpected reply to his question. It is certainly doubtful whether Green would consider that the restrained optimism of his 1960 novel could indicate such a victory, definitive or otherwise; indeed the demons of sensuality so memorably invoked in Chaque homme dans sa nuit continue to haunt the pages of the later journal, autobiographical writings and most notably L'Autre. In the very month of publication of the latter novel, after noting his belief " que les changements survenus dans ma vie ne me sont pas attribuables, je les vois dus simplement à une intervention providentielle ", he adds succinctly, " La faim demeure, insatisfaite. C'est tout ce que je puis dire ". <sup>(2)</sup> Firmness of faith and a more pronounced adhesion to conservative Catholic doctrine in no way dispel or even attenuate his power of evocation of the lure of sensuality.

L'Autre has been said to mark something of a new departure in Green's writing. <sup>(3)</sup> While the sexual obsession clearly remains, perhaps even

(1) Philippe Sénart, Chemins critiques, d'Abellio à Sartre, Plon, 1966, p. 131.

(2) Ce qui reste de jour, p. 286, Feb. 3, 1971.

(3) See J. Petit, JG l'homme qui venait d'ailleurs, p. 288. Although L'Autre was still in the process of being written at the time, thanks to his close collaboration with Green, already in 1969 Petit was able to announce that following Angus' avowal of his love in CH (Jean's " Confession " was yet to be published), the sense of release afforded by the confession would make itself felt in the new novel : " D'une certaine manière, le roman qu'il écrit aujourd'hui (L'Autre) portera la trace de cette libération, traduite déjà par l'autobiographie; il sera différent de tous les autres ".

more powerful and hallucinatory than in the previous works, the homosexual theme as such has all but disappeared.<sup>(1)</sup> The central human relationship explored is that of the heterosexual couple, a relationship involving a physical love that is both consummated and reciprocated - a rare feature in Green's fiction<sup>(2)</sup> - albeit briefly in time. But the world of the senses that Green conjures up in L'Autre is still very much a personal world, and Karin and Roger reflect Julien Green to an extent that surprised their creator : " En relisant mon livre, je suis un peu étonné de voir à quel point je ressemble à Karin.... Karin et Roger forment un seul personnage. Si on réunit les deux, on a l'auteur - à peu près... ".<sup>(3)</sup> During the composition of his novel, Green had noted in a number of diary extracts the importance of autobiography in the book; in fact, he speaks frankly of the " immense apport autobiographique ".<sup>(4)</sup> Referring to the feelings of sexual intoxication and rapture that had so overwhelmed him in youth and that he is re-creating for his novel, he confesses to moments of simultaneous fascination and displeasure.<sup>(5)</sup> These dual reactions continue, as Green works on at his book " avec la même joie, mais aussi avec une certaine inquiétude, car c'est une descente dans le royaume des ténèbres. Et puis, il est à la première personne. On ne peut écrire 'je', sans faire de l'autobiographie ".<sup>(6)</sup> Yet it would

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(1) The exception being the lesbianism of the minor character Mlle Ott.

(2) In Varouna we have the example of the marital love between Jeanne and Louis, and in the drama, of course, we have observed in L'Ennemi Pierre and Elisabeth's reciprocal love.

(3) Ce qui reste, p. 269, Nov. 28, 1970.

(4) Ibid., p. 79, March 2, 1968.

(5) Ibid., pp. 83 - 84, March 17, 1968.

(6) Ibid., p. 86, April 6, 1968. And see O.C. III, p. 1691 (L'Autre, " Notice " ), where J. Petit draws out these autobiographical details. See also, Ce qui reste, p. 195, Nov. 2, 1969; in this extract, after noting his resemblance to Karin, Green adds : " Du reste, quand j'écris des romans, de qui parlé-je sinon de moi ? Il me semble que je n'arriverai jamais à sortir de l'autobiographie ".

obviously be an over-simplification to see L'Autre in purely autobiographical terms, and one facet of his protagonist's experience that Green found difficult to create was his phase of atheism; for, as he explained : " Une des difficultés de mon roman est que je ne puis entrer dans l'état d'esprit d'un athée, ni seulement l'imaginer ".<sup>(1)</sup> Be that as it may, Roger's total unbelief in the early part of L'Autre - his " horreur instinctive "<sup>(2)</sup> of religion - is, as we shall see, strongly conveyed.

An interesting departure in L'Autre is the change of décor. Green leaves his original Anglo-Saxon world and his adopted France for Denmark and the city of Copenhagen in the months preceding, and four years after, the Second World War. One can easily read a two-fold symbolic value in the choice : this is the country of sexual freedom and enjoyment par excellence, but it is also the homeland of Søren Kierkegaard, and we have seen in earlier chapters both the force of attraction that Nordic beauty exercised over Green and the influence of the " univers doloriste " of this Northern Pascal.<sup>(3)</sup>

Yet the link with Green's own Parisian background and experience is provided by his young French hero, Roger, who, like Wilfred Ingram, is a twenty-four year old " homme à femmes ".<sup>(4)</sup> Here, however, the resemblance with Wilfred ends, and affinities with Angus Howard can be noted : Roger too is a man of means, sophistication and culture, though everything pales before the prospect of sensual distraction and pleasure : ".... m'amuser était la plus grande affaire de ma vie ".<sup>(5)</sup> Naturally

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(1) Ce qui reste, p. 85, March 24, 1968.

(2) L'Autre O.C. III, p. 739.

(3) M. Lobet, op. cit., pp. 102 - 103.

(4) L'Autre O.C. III, p. 727.

(5) Ibid., p. 715.

enough, he shares his creator's predilection for Scandinavian beauty : " Le pouvoir de la beauté scandinave aurait pu justifier à lui seul ma présence au Danemark ".<sup>(1)</sup> In addition, his sensual frenzy is heightened by the overhanging cloud of impending conflict, and for Roger, as for many others, the remaining weeks are incalculably precious : " Je voulais vivre. La feuille de mobilisation viendrait assez tôt ".<sup>(2)</sup> But for him, sadly, living is almost wholly confined to the pursuit of sexual pleasure and conquest. There is little place for sentiment in these escapades, as Roger systematically seeks out the haunts he judges " les plus giboyeuses " in order to indulge his taste for " le plaisir immédiat ".<sup>(3)</sup>

The reader is soon informed by the narrator that he is writing this confession - for the revelatory tone of the " Récit de Roger " bears similarities to the " Confession de Jean " - many years after the events he describes : " Pour moi, en ces années lointaines," he writes of this period of his life, continuing his sentence with a general declaration of his attitude towards sensuality, " il me paraissait impossible d'admettre aucune distinction entre le bien et le mal lorsqu'il s'agissait de la chair. J'obéissais à la nature tout en regrettant que le sentiment du péché ne s'y mêlât pas tant soit peu pour pimenter tout cela qui risquait de devenir banal par le simple fait de la répétition. De plus en plus, je ressentais comme une tyrannie le besoin du nouveau ".<sup>(4)</sup> The constant urge and need for fresh conquests that characterizes Roger is a feature we noted and commented on with regard to Wilfred in the preceding chapter. As for the inability to envisage sexuality as wrong or sinful, this was a trait in earlier years shared by Julien Green, who recorded in his diary after the war that he had never experienced a feeling of sinfulness - " le sentiment du péché " - following sexual

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(1) Ibid., p. 728. And cf. above, Chapter IV, p. 151.

(2) L'Autre O.C. III, p. 728.

(3) Ibid., p. 734.

(4) Ibid., p. 735.

activity and believed the sex act outside marriage to be a sin solely on the authority of the Church : " Je le crois sur la foi de l'Eglise. Je le crois parce que le Christ l'a dit ".<sup>(1)</sup> Roger will eventually follow the path trodden by Green, but in these final months of peace it was not just the Catholic or Christian religion but all manifestations of faith in God that aroused the young Frenchman's anger and indignation : " Je n'admettais pas qu'un être humain nourrit en lui la terreur d'un fantôme qu'il appelait Dieu ".<sup>(2)</sup>

Yet although consciously unrestrained by any scruples of a religious order, Roger does somewhat curiously admit to certain moments of revulsion that he himself is unable to explain : " J'aimais le vice, mais il y avait en moi certains refus subits qui échappaient à toute analyse".<sup>(3)</sup> Of course, it is not difficult to read into his abhorrence of religion, and into the " malaise " occasioned by the proximity of a church,<sup>(4)</sup> if not a spiritual aspiration then at least a certain degree of nostalgia for a long-lost childhood faith. Later in the novel Roger does in fact allude to " les élans mystiques de ma prime jeunesse ",<sup>(5)</sup> sentiments we have observed particularly in Jean Rollet and Angus Howard. And after his conversion the mature Roger will eventually confide to Karin that : " Même quand je vous parlais jadis contre la foi, il y avait en moi quelque chose qui luttait pour écarter mes arguments ".<sup>(6)</sup>

In the frenetic, gloom-laden atmosphere of July and August 1939, however, the Roger who occupies our attention is an immature young voluptuary whose fear and panic at the idea of death finds temporary

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(1) O.C. IV, p. 866, Oct. 27, 1945. This interesting extract, in the form of a conversation with a British officer, had been omitted from J, 1928 - 1949.

(2) L'Autre O.C. III, p. 797.

(3) Ibid., p. 736.

(4) Ibid., p. 739.

(5) Ibid., p. 801.

(6) Ibid., p. 862.



relief solely in the pursuit of erotic pleasure : " La peur, chez moi, ne s'abolissait que dans l'érotisme, mais l'assouvissement était rapide et l'effroi renaissait dans la solitude qui suivait....".<sup>(1)</sup> In his quest for the erotic ideal he seeks a partner who, in addition to possessing beauty of form, will be capable of gratifying his desire for " le bavardage érotique "<sup>(2)</sup> in his native tongue. To facilitate this task, he makes use of his introduction to the discreet and respectable Mlle Ott, who nonetheless serves as go-between for certain favoured clients. During a reception organized by Mlle Ott, Roger makes the acquaintance of an inordinately wealthy Englishman, Mr. Gore, both men taking an immediate and violent dislike to each other : " La haine a ses coups de foudre comme l'amour " writes Roger, " La nôtre, en tout cas, fut immédiate et réciproque ".<sup>(3)</sup> Yet it is this thick-set and ugly man, physically so vastly different from the handsome Frenchman and whose " vieillesse luxurieuse "<sup>(4)</sup> disgusts Roger, who through his money and " savoir-faire " is able to obtain all that the young man craves.<sup>(5)</sup>

Gore plainly symbolizes the evils of concupiscence,<sup>(6)</sup> producing on the reader an impression of peculiar unpleasantness - not that Roger's aversion carries much conviction, one hastens to add. For despite his criticism of the ageing libertine, he is willing to pay almost any price for an evening with Ilse, " le bonheur de Mr. Gore.... la magnifique créature dont il faisait apparemment son esclave ".<sup>(7)</sup> The so-called love Roger claims to feel for Ilse, if it does include an element of aesthetic

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(1) Ibid., p. 751.

(2) Ibid., p. 739.

(3) Ibid., p. 752.

(4) Ibid., p. 753.

(5) Ibid., p. 755.

(6) See José Cabanis' interesting comments on this character and his name ("goret" - little pig, dirty pig of a man) in his preface to O.C. I, pp. XXII - XXIII, and J. Petit's note, O.C. III, p. 1701.

(7) L'Autre O.C. III, pp. 755 - 756.

appreciation analogous to the kind of reaction he would experience before a statue,<sup>(1)</sup> is at heart no more than cheap lust : "...je luttai pour bannir de ma mémoire le visage et les formes d'Ilse, et quand je dis les formes, je fais un louable effort pour rester convenable ".<sup>(2)</sup> One can readily sympathize with Pierre-Henri Simon's verdict on Roger's amorous escapades : " Les déboires de celui-ci dans la poursuite des femmes qui lui échappaient parce qu'il ne parlait pas leur langue ou qui le décevaient parce qu'il n'en voulait qu'à leur sexe étaient assez dérisoires ".<sup>(3)</sup> In a way, Roger's erotic upsets and encounters are laughable, but more than this - surely a part of the author's intention - they arouse in the reader a strong feeling of distaste verging on revulsion. This is not ascribable to the exaltation of sensuality as such, but rather to the climate of outright cynical hedonism in which women are regarded as no more than objects of pleasure, " lovely sexual instruments ", as Green notes in his diary quoting his English Catholic namesake.<sup>(4)</sup> In the same extract, Julien Green adds : " L'homme de plaisir fait des êtres des instruments sexuels, les réduit à une fonction, les simplifie à l'extrême. Ce ne sont plus des âmes unies à des corps mais tout bonnement des corps, et souvent des parties de corps ". This is to describe and anticipate with considerable accuracy the mentality of the young narrator of the " Récit de Roger " a decade later.

Already in Jeunesse, Le Malfaiteur and Chaque homme dans sa nuit, we have observed Julien Green's gift for conjuring up and portraying the lure and horror of the world of vice, and again in L'Autre this feature recurs. It is clearly present in the " Récit de Roger " and we shall notice it later in Karin's own narrative. A number of details that

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(1) Ibid., p. 754.

(2) Ibid., p. 761.

(3) P-H. Simon, Parier pour l'homme, Editions du Seuil, 1973, p. 271.

(4) J., p. 1422, Aug. 26, 1960. And see Graham Greene, The Lawless Roads, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1947 (reissued 1971), p. 76.  
" Lovely sexual instruments, wearing little gold crosses, lolled on the sofas ".

Green employs in his depiction of prostitution and casual homosexual encounters recur obsessively in description after description. We read, for example, in L'Autre in Roger's delineation of the prostitute's room that he found himself " dans une chambre sinistrement éclairée par une seule ampoule au-dessus du lit.... Il y avait aussi la sordide cuvette et le pot à eau ébréché....".<sup>(1)</sup> Similar descriptions are to be found in Jeunesse and Le Malfaiteur, always with the same insistence on the nondescript, mean and squalid aspects of the room, the favoured adjectives being " banal ", " sordide " and " sinistre ".<sup>(2)</sup> Nevertheless, despite the revulsion at the squalor, there remains the overwhelming power of the sexual instinct and the lust it provokes, the sheer animal joy of bodily gratification and, in particular for Roger, the memory, hallucinatory in its force, of " la chair splendide qui s'était offerte à ma gloutonnerie ".<sup>(3)</sup> The pleasure Roger derives from recalling the sexual act with the prostitute is admirably described by Green : " Et maintenant, seul, je me repaissais par la mémoire de cette joie brutale, panique, mal savourée d'abord dans la précipitation du désir - et c'était maintenant sans doute le meilleur moment ".<sup>(4)</sup> It is not without significance that the greatest pleasure seems to be provided by mental recall of the

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(1) L'Autre O.C. III, p. 799.

(2) See, for example, Jeunesse, p. 149. For Green the cheap hotel room at the porte Saint-Denis " parut une vraie chambre de crime avec son lit défait et la très faible ampoule électrique qui luisait au-dessus de nos têtes ". And see ibid., p. 133 : " Dans un décor d'une banalité presque sordide, je retrouvai la joie panique de la veille, mais anéantissante "; and p. 284 : " Entre ces quatre murs ne se voyaient qu'un lit, une table et une chaise, pauvre et banal décor où flottaient le désespoir et le vice ". See also Malf. O.C. III, pp. 301-302, where Green's Jean Rollet describes M. Pâris' squalid lodgings and the effect produced on him by the meanness of these surroundings : " En entrant chez lui, je fus saisi par la terrible tristesse qui régnait entre ces murs, il me sembla presque la voir, tant elle existait avec force, pareille à une colonne de fumée lourde et opaque, venue des profondeurs du monde, empoisonnant tout ".

(3) L'Autre O.C. III, p. 799.

(4) Ibid., p. 800.

act; here as is customary in Green's work, the act of love itself is described as a joy mixed with anguish : Roger's " joie panique " is paralleled by the young Green's own " joie panique.... anéantissante "(1) and one's mind goes back to the scene between Manuel and the Viscountess in Le Visionnaire, to that first hallucinatory sexual act Green explicitly described in his fiction where Manuel's stifled cry expresses joy but also anguish.(2)

In the fictional works, as in the autobiography, feelings of repugnance follow the sexual rapture, and Roger, just like the young Julien, resorts to a frantic session of bathing, as though obeying some arcane rite, " comme pour laver mon corps de toutes les caresses qu'il avait reçues. Pas un pouce carré de ma peau qui ne fût ensuite savonné à outrance, des oreilles aux orteils, avec une sorte de dégoût frénétique.... J'aurais voulu faire disparaître ainsi trois pains de savon dans cette fureur purificatrice dont le sens ne m'apparut que longtemps après ".(3) If sexuality and eroticism are able to provide a certain " joie panique ", the pleasure remains necessarily transitory and imperfect. For both Roger before his liaison with Karin and for the young Julien Green of Jeunesse, sensuality remained independent of love, indispensable to their mental balance yet never wholeheartedly accepted.

Roger's feelings for Karin, however, take him beyond the bounds of a

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(1) Jeunesse, p. 133.

(2) Le Visionnaire, O.C. II, pp. 377 - 378. " J'étouffai dans la lourde chevelure le cri de joie et d'angoisse qui s'échappait de ma poitrine.... " (p. 378). Of course, this scene in Le Visionnaire specifically unites sexual love with the anguish of death. See S. Stokes, op. cit. pp. 44 - 45.

(3) L'Autre O.C. III, p. 800. And cf. Julien Green's own admission : " La répulsion suivait la volupté, je fuyais, n'ayant de cesse que je me fusse lavé, frotté, savonné, non pas une fois, mais dix.... comme si j'avais voulu effacer jusqu'au souvenir des mains inconnues, étrangères, qui m'avaient touché et rêvant d'une impossible purification qui m'eût débarrassé de tout cela ". Jeunesse, p. 144.

narrow, egoistic sensuality to a love that certainly encompasses a strong carnal passion yet at the same time is compounded of a deeply-felt tenderness and affection. Interestingly, in the " Récit de Roger " the habitual " coup de foudre " of Green's work has given way to a concept of love that develops gradually, although it is not long before Roger becomes aware of the direction in which his feelings are moving. Initially, in this voluptuary's paradise of Copenhagen, the young Frenchman can only describe his rendez-vous with the eighteen-year old local girl as " quelconque " : if he allows Karin grace and charm together with an attractive bearing, in fact " une physionomie intéressante ", nonetheless something is missing.<sup>(1)</sup>

Exasperation is perhaps the word that best sums up the effect of their early meetings, as in the welter of trivial banter and chit-chat irritation and delight rapidly succeed each other.<sup>(2)</sup> Karin's innocence - we learn later that in spite of the fascination that sensuality exercises over her and notwithstanding her nocturnal strolls at Tivoli, she has remained a virgin<sup>(3)</sup> - and the Lutheran faith that still sustains her<sup>(4)</sup> stand in stark contrast to Roger's unbelief and extensive experience of the life of the flesh. Nevertheless, the young man's thoughts soon stray back to this Danish girl who has so impressed him with her impeccable

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(1) L'Autre O.C. III, p. 715. It is noteworthy that Green has bestowed on Karin the beguiling smile (ibid., p. 716 and p. 725) that he had previously accorded Wilfred (CH O.C. III, p. 479 and p. 487).

(2) L'Autre O.C. III, pp. 716 - 717 and pp. 722 - 727.

(3) Ibid., pp. 790 - 791.

(4) Ibid., p. 803. When Roger glimpses Karin leaving the church, " Son visage d'ordinaire soucieux ou narquois, était empreint d'une sérénité que je ne lui avais jamais vue et d'une sorte de joie tranquille qui faisait d'elle une inconnue ".

command of his language,<sup>(1)</sup> and his mind ranges over their very first meeting when, trying to find his way and beset with a tourist's linguistic difficulties, he had accosted Karin and implored her help outside the Town Hall.<sup>(2)</sup> He recalls that he had immediately felt drawn to the girl, but adds of the attraction that it was " d'autant plus entière que le désir ne me troublait pas ".<sup>(3)</sup> The fact is, however, that he soon has to admit to himself that he has been thinking about the girl a great deal : " La vérité m'obligeait à convenir que depuis des heures je pensais beaucoup à cette fille.... j'eus la sensation qu'un piège se refermait sur moi. Il était inutile de me cacher à moi-même que j'allais tomber amoureux de Karin.... A l'origine de mon amour, il y avait ce sentiment dangereux entre tous et qui va parfois jusqu'à la passion : la pitié, une pitié qui s'était insensiblement muée en tendresse avec toutes les fureuses exigences du coeur ".<sup>(4)</sup> Roger fears being lured into a love that he sees as a trap, for what he wants, what he is seeking, is simply pleasure, the delight of the senses - " la volupté " -<sup>(5)</sup> unmixed with anything so complicated as love.

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(1) This raises an interesting point, for Mlle Ott's reply to Roger's query about Karin's knowledge of French - " Son père le lui a appris. Il était polyglotte comme tous les garçons de café " (*ibid.*, p. 774) - is obviously far from explaining the distinction and elegance of her speech and manner. See, for example, Henri Clouard's comment : " Karin est d'origine populaire, quoiqu'elle s'invente un père diplomate, orpheline dès le plus jeune âge, artiste certes, puisqu'elle gagne sa vie à inventer des dessins.... mais vraisemblablement privée de bagage culturel : où a-t-elle pu apprendre à s'exprimer avec tant d'aisance, d'élégance, d'esprit ? " "Julien Green : *L'Autre*", *La Revue des Deux Mondes*, March 1971, p. 663. See also Jean Blot, *NRF*, April 1971, p. 100, who enlarges this debate to include other Greenian characters.

(2) *L'Autre* O.C. III, pp. 736 - 737.

(3) *Ibid.*, p. 737.

(4) *Ibid.*, pp. 737 - 738.

(5) *Ibid.*, p. 738.

Yet at Tivoli he again encounters Karin, and he cannot remain indifferent : ".... j'eus vers elle l'élan que je redoutais. Il ne s'agissait pas du désir, mais de tendresse.... Si elle n'avait eu ce profil d'enfant qui m'émouvait bien malgré moi, je serais parti et ma vie aurait changé, mais mon destin se jouait là ".<sup>(1)</sup> There follows the walk along the beach and in the forest, during which a certain quality of strangeness in Karin clearly emerges. In particular, there is her mysterious lapse into Danish in the " forêt aventureuse ",<sup>(2)</sup> her sole explanation to Roger at the time being that her words are in fact a kind of poem - " le poème de la solitude et de la faim "<sup>(3)</sup> - words that will be variously interpreted later in the novel. At their next chance meeting the evening before their drive into the country, for example, Karin confesses to Roger : " Quand j'ai parlé en danois, dans la forêt aventureuse, j'ai dit les choses qu'on ne dit jamais. J'ai faim et soif. J'ai faim et soif d'amour. Je suis perdue, Roger ".<sup>(4)</sup> Such an avowal of sensual longing is for Karin incompatible with her religious beliefs and scruples, hence the phrase that Phoebé too had uttered when faced with the reality of human passion.<sup>(5)</sup> Another reference to her Danish monologue in her own narrative makes it plain that not only sensuality but also the world of vice holds a strong attraction for Karin : " Il y avait en moi de quoi faire une prostituée. Je l'avais dit à Roger dans la forêt aventureuse ".<sup>(6)</sup> There is, however, a further aspect to this monologue that is revealed in the final part of the " Récit de Karin " : this is her declaration of love for Roger : ".... je lui avais dit, dans ma

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(1) Ibid., p. 762.

(2) Ibid., p. 769.

(3) Ibid., p.770.

(4) Ibid., p. 790.

(5) CH O.C. III, p. 653.

(6) L'Autre O.C. III, p. 831.

langue et sans aucune retenue, que j'étais amoureuse de lui, certaine qu'il ne comprendrait pas un mot ".<sup>(1)</sup> Characteristically, even this nascent love is not accepted with lightness of heart, for, despite the attraction it offers, in estranging Karin from the refuge provided by her Lutheran faith, it is still regarded as essentially negative and destructive. In reply to Roger's statement that Karin is strongly drawn to love - " L'amour vous attire, Karin " - the young Dane replies significantly : " J'aime ce qui me détruit ".<sup>(2)</sup> Lucidly aware of this " joie de descendre ", Karin obviously fears the consequences of surrender to what she knows, despite her total lack of experience, to be an imperious and all-pervading sensuality. Roger's drama and responsibility is to have striven to undermine and destroy her Christian faith and to have opened the flood-gates of an uncontrollable sexual passion. As he says to himself before their first night of love : " Sauve-la de l'erreur ! Arrache-la à l'inutile tragédie de la foi... Tu as la lumière. Donne-la-lui ".<sup>(3)</sup> Unhappily, this somewhat simplistic brand of atheism seems to reduce itself to the cynical and egotistical pursuit of pleasure we have observed above and to be subsequently transmitted in full measure to the Karin of the occupation. Yet in this last summer of peace, for the short weeks that remain to them both Roger and Karin will experience physical love at its most intense. The young Frenchman has seduced his Dane, but not just physically; Karin has been swayed too by his declaration of total unbelief, after which she has given herself to him,<sup>(4)</sup> to a Roger who has already admitted to himself that he feels a violent desire for the young woman.<sup>(5)</sup>

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(1) Ibid., p. 953.

(2) Ibid., p. 791.

(3) Ibid., p. 810.

(4) Ibid., pp. 809 - 811.

(5) Ibid., p. 798. "... je la désirai avec violence. C'était peut-être sa façon de marcher, si naturellement gracieuse ". The reference to Karin's gait (see also, ibid., p. 715) recalls Max's comment on Wilfred : " Tu marchais si bien... Est-ce qu'on ne t'a jamais dit que tu avais une démarche curieuse, légère, un peu timide.... ". CH O.C.III, p. 695.



Although it is evident that the circumstances of this love, at so crucial a moment in time, confer on the relationship a heightened awareness and an inevitable apprehension, a certain choice in the expressions used to describe Roger and Karin's love-making is surely not wholly ascribable to the political contingencies of the moment. In their sexual union, Roger speaks of Karin's " violence panique ",<sup>(1)</sup> informing the reader that " La joie sexuelle la jetait dans une sorte de délire plus inquiétant que tout le reste. Elle présentait alors certains aspects de la démente.... ".<sup>(2)</sup> We have already remarked upon the recurrence of an adjective like " panique " and of the expression " joie panique ", and here the use of " violence panique " together with the nouns " délire " and " démente " to characterize Karin's mental and physical state adds a dimension bordering on the pathological and the abnormal. It is revealing that in Karin's narrative, the young woman will describe aspects of Roger's behaviour in their brief sexual union at the end of his post-war visit in the spring of 1949 in terms similar to those used by Roger; indeed she writes of him as a " demi-fou dont le délire me fit peur " and as a " pauvre malade ".<sup>(3)</sup> The association of the sexual act with sickness and derangement appears as a constant feature of Green's work, and as the sexual and amorous relationships portrayed in the novels and plays we have studied take place outside the framework of marriage (the union blessed by the Church would alone confer legitimacy on such liaisons), this of course fits into the author's scheme of things. For Julien Green the ideal of human love has come to mean a love independent of sexual desire and expression, and he aired his thoughts on this question

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(1) L'Autre O.C. III, p. 811.

(2) Ibid., p. 812.

(3) Ibid., p. 901. Again, the circumstances of the union - just as Karin had been a virgin experiencing her first sexual adventure, Roger has admitted to several years of sexual privation - are not sufficient to explain the excessive, pathological nature of the relations.

in an interview with Jean Chalon at the time of publication of Jeunesse, stressing his belief that people too readily confuse " l'amour et la volupté, l'amour et le désir. Ils croient aimer quand ils se contentent de désirer. On peut imaginer un amour qui ne s'expliquerait pas par les sens, qui s'exprimerait autrement que par la volupté. Ou alors qui transcenderait la volupté. Je sais que personne ne sera de mon avis. Je pose la question : 'Est-ce que l'amour le plus profond ne dépasse pas la passion sexuelle ?' N'est-ce pas là, au fond, ce que l'on nomme tout simplement l'amour platonique ? "(1)

One is tempted to interpret these words as the ageing writer's nostalgia for an inaccessible ideal recalling the youthful angelism on which we commented in Chapter I of this study. Yet the gulf between this ideal and the human reality is recognized by Green to be all but unbridgeable, as is so aptly illustrated by his protagonists in L'Autre. Their sensual passion is as intense and violent in character as it is brief in time, and Roger admits to a passion for Karin as ardent as the young woman's love for him : " J'aimais Karin avec une fureur qui anéantissait dans mon esprit les raisonnements que je me faisais naguère alors que mon coeur hésitait encore. A présent je ne m'appartenais pas plus qu'elle ne s'appartenait elle-même ".(2)

Far longer than Roger's narrative, the " Récit de Karin " seems also to contain far more of Julien Green. In dealing with Karin who has lost her Christian faith as had been the case of the author for much of the twenties and thirties, Green's problems are not of the same order as his admitted difficulties in treating the overweening atheism of the

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(1) Jean Chalon, " Julien Green : 'Il n'y a que la vérité qui m'intéresse...' ", Le Figaro (Le Littéraire), June 8, 1974, p. 15 (III).

(2) L'Autre O.C. III, pp. 812 - 813.

young Roger. Furthermore, facets of Karin's personality, such as her sense of mystery and her sensitivity, as well as her outlook on human love and her strong sensuality, correspond in high degree to similar qualities in the author, as we shall see in the present chapter. At the same time, aspects of Roger's experience that are incorporated into Karin's narrative, such as the details of his conversion, have about them an authentic autobiographical ring.

It is four years after the cessation of hostilities that Karin hears from her former lover, the convert to Catholicism who believes that he is responsible for her loss of faith and for her conduct during the occupation. The question why the young man, a prisoner-of-war in a German camp for the duration of the conflict, had not attempted at an earlier date to contact the woman he claims to love so deeply is never satisfactorily answered.<sup>(1)</sup> As for Karin, following the German invasion and Roger's capture, without news of her lover and believing him dead,<sup>(2)</sup> she comes under the spell of the handsome young invaders, giving herself to Hitler's emissaries<sup>(3)</sup> until the liberation and the four years of ostracism that followed.<sup>(4)</sup> At one point, Karin goes so far as to blame Roger for her misconduct when she writes : " Peut-être, si je ne l'avais pas rencontré, serais-je restée la demoiselle un peu naïve, malgré son effronterie, pieuse à ses heures, et l'occupation allemande m'eût laissée intacte, au lieu de faire de moi une fille haletante d'admiration devant les jeunes hommes de la Reichswehr. Roger m'avait livrée entre leurs mains ".<sup>(5)</sup> It is a mark of Green's artistry that despite Karin's years of collaboration during the period of Nazi domination and oppression with the ugly connotations implicit in this activity for

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(1) See below, the present chapter.

(2) L'Autre O.C. III, p. 818. Precisely when Karin came to this conclusion is not made clear.

(3) Ibid., p. 831 and p. 917.

(4) Ibid., p. 816 and 827. (Copenhagen was of course occupied by German troops for five complete years from the spring of 1940 to the spring of 1945).

(5) Ibid., p. 849.

most readers, he succeeds in creating a character who rapidly engages our understanding and sympathy.

As she waits for Roger's first visit, after receiving the short letter that seemed to her to come from another, unreal world,<sup>(1)</sup> the young woman tries to analyse her true feelings for the Frenchman : " L'avais-je aimé vraiment ? Peut-être, mais le chagrin des adieux avait été court. Dans le désir de le revoir aujourd'hui, je ne discernais rien que de charnel. J'étais trop lucide pour faire du sentiment avec la faim des sens ".<sup>(2)</sup> Physically, Karin is shown to have changed little, and at twenty-seven has retained her youthful looks and figure, whereas in Roger she notices a considerable change; seemingly much closer to middle-age than his thirty-four years would justify, she observes of her former lover : " Sans doute il restait beau, mais l'enfant sensuel de jadis était mort et j'eus l'impression de voir son père ".<sup>(3)</sup> Their physical appearance reflects to a large extent their desires and purposes : for Karin virtually unchanged, there remains an imperious physical need, a yearning for the affection and tenderness of which she had been deprived over a period of years, and if for the new ascetic Roger the same is true at the deeper levels of consciousness, consciously at least he likes to believe that his life is completely orientated towards religion. Indeed, he makes it clear to Karin that he has not journeyed to Denmark for sentimental reasons,<sup>(4)</sup> but in an attempt to restore the Christian faith he had so effectively destroyed.<sup>(5)</sup> Swiftly adjusting herself to Roger's changed physical appearance, she is unable to accept so readily the

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(1) Ibid., p. 819.

(2) Ibid., p. 821.

(3) Ibid., p. 823.

(4) Ibid., p. 824. " Je voudrais dissiper dans votre esprit un soupçon qui pourrait s'y être glissé. Quelle que soit l'affection que je vous garde, Karin, le motif de mon voyage et de cette visite n'est pas d'ordre sentimental ".

(5) Ibid., pp. 839 - 840.

mental transformation in his character : " Ce qui me gênait le plus dans ce nouveau Roger était un je ne sais quoi d'intellectuel - et je n'aimais pas les intellectuels.... ".<sup>(1)</sup> Yet the change is a profound one, and religion and the Church have come to occupy as large a place in Roger's life in 1949 as sensuality had a decade earlier. It is not long before he learns that for Karin the opposite is true, that mention of religion and the churches serves only to arouse feelings of revulsion in her.<sup>(2)</sup>

What is particularly striking in Karin's narrative, what comes across to the reader with especial force is the admission and illustration of the strength of her sensuality. Green has perhaps never conveyed with such insistence and intensity " this tyranny of the senses ", while he does not fail to confer on his heroine a certain ironic detachment : " Il y a toujours une partie de mon être qui se moque de l'autre, le cerveau s'égayant des fureurs du sexe, mais il est des heures où l'on est presque tout sexe ".<sup>(3)</sup> This admission is followed by others, in a page that illustrates so well that the author was certainly not guilty of exaggeration when he wrote of " le flot de l'autobiographie "<sup>(4)</sup> that permeated his novel. These lines read like a summing-up of Green's thinking on human love, and when Karin writes that her sensuality " n'était au fond qu'une soif de douceur ", that she was held back from treating a man as " un instrument de volupté " on account of the exigencies of the soul,<sup>(5)</sup> there is a profound correspondance between such notions and ideas that we have observed and remarked upon above, ideas that mark

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(1) Ibid., p. 825. Roger had already made a similar remark, in Mlle Ott's company, ibid., p. 740 : " J'abomine les intellectuels ". In Le Malfaiteur we have noted Jean's " L'intellectuel me fait horreur " (Malf. O.C. III, p. 325).

(2) L'Autre O.C. III, p. 826. " Ne me parlez pas de cela. Il y a des mots que je ne peux plus entendre ".

(3) Ibid., p. 833. And cf. Jean Rollet's remarks in Malf. O.C. III, pp. 324 - 325.

(4) Ce qui reste, p. 76, Feb. 23, 1968.

(5) L'Autre O.C. III, p. 834.

equally the imaginative and the more strictly autobiographical work. Through the morass of human passion and sensuality, there remains the yearning that is expressed by Phobé and re-echoed by Wilfred in Chaque homme dans sa nuit - " Il faut laisser le corps tranquille....Laisser le corps tranquille....C'était cela qu'il voulait, lui aussi, malgré tout "<sup>(1)</sup> - since men and women who love carnally invariably love imperfectly : " Elles aiment et ils aiment, mais seuls les corps se joignent. Il y a, je le sais, des exceptions sublimes dont on parle en vers ".<sup>(2)</sup> We can be confident that when he entrusted these words to Karin, one of the sublime exceptions Green had in mind was Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet, in that he regards the love-scenes from this play as " parmi les seules qui soient croyables dans toute la littérature.... Ici, c'est l'amour qui parle avec son lyrisme, qui est vrai; c'est vraiment l'effusion du coeur, la fraîcheur inimitable de la jeunesse et ses balbutiements émerveillés ".<sup>(3)</sup>

Yet for Karin, between the end of the war and the end of her ostracism which coincides with Roger's stay - " Le Français a passé l'éponge, alors nous la passons aussi " <sup>(4)</sup> - human warmth and love of all kinds is almost totally lacking, apart from the kindness shown her by Marie Jensen, the baker's wife, and the attentions of Marie's nephew, Emil, with whom she has a brief affair in the course of 1946.<sup>(5)</sup> As far as her feelings for Roger are concerned, when he calls on her for the second time, any doubts she has previously entertained about her love for him are dissipated; " je n'avais jamais cessé de l'aimer ",<sup>(6)</sup> she records.

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(1) CH O.C. III, p. 673. And see above, Chapter V, p. 220.

(2) L'Autre O.C. III, p. 834.

(3) J, pp. 661 - 662, Aug. 14, 1945. See also, ibid., p. 1572, June 13, 1966 and Ce qui reste, p. 134, Dec. 20, 1968.

(4) L'Autre O.C. III, p. 930. And see Ce qui reste, p. 114, Aug. 21, 1968.

(5) L'Autre O.C. III, pp. 834 - 836.

(6) Ibid., p. 838.

This acknowledgement cannot, however, alter the harsh fact that an abyss separates Karin, emancipated from all religious scruples and beliefs, from Roger, so earnestly engaged in his new-found faith and mission - whatever sensual undercurrents are lurking in the depths of his personality. Her experiences of the immediate pre-war period, of the occupation and its aftermath, far from making Karin a penitent, have turned her into a cynic who will make use of all the ruses she knows to prevent Roger from leaving her. Clearly, in the light of her love-affair with the Frenchman, his departure and what followed, her cynicism - especially in his regard - is in some measure justified : " M'ayant enseigné l'incroyance en 39, il voulait sans doute tenter maintenant l'opération inverse, me reconvertir dans l'autre sens, remporter une de ces victoires spirituelles qui flattent aussi la vanité masculine. J'en ris tout haut sous mes draps ".<sup>(1)</sup> As we shall now see, this cynical outlook, compounded with a frank scepticism, embraces both the religious institution to which Karin once adhered, but also - and in particular - Roger's Church and its doctrines.

Although the Lutheran confession afforded her no help or encouragement after the war, this fact has by no means softened her traditional Danish hostility to Roman Catholicism<sup>(2)</sup> and if her indifference to all organized religion appears to have taken firm root, she reserves her strongest terms of abuse for the Roman rite, " ce dégradant catholicisme où l'idolâtrie le disputait à la candeur ! "<sup>(3)</sup> But the truth of the

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(1) Ibid., p. 843.

(2) That this is a constant in the Danish national character is illustrated by the reported declarations of the Danish Minister for Culture, Mr. Niels Matthiasen. See The Times, Sept. 6, 1976, p. 14. " He made a scathing criticism of the Catholic Church in 1973.... Mr. Matthiasen said that the Catholic Church had stupefied and repressed the people for centuries and had been an enormous reactionary force throughout history.... His sweeping attack credited the Catholic Church with creating General Franco, being the tool of military juntas, and helping to repress the people of Latin America ".

(3) L'Autre O.C. III, p. 843.

matter is that she does love " ce doux fanatique "<sup>(1)</sup> of the Catholic persuasion and is compelled to act in accordance with this new situation. At the same time, in her lucidity, Karin is perfectly aware of the changes she has undergone since her eve-of-war passion : "....l'occupation avait fait de moi une autre personne....Mes jeunes officiers en gris-vert ne m'avaient pas enseigné la douceur et l'ostracisme dont je souffrais depuis leur départ n'arrangeait rien dans mon caractère. Aujourd'hui, j'étais une sauvage....Morte l'élève. A sa place, une ménade ".<sup>(2)</sup> Similarly, she perceives in Roger and particularly in the letter he writes her from his sick-bed the shameless egoism of " le fêtarde converti qui se roule dans les délices de sa culpabilité ",<sup>(3)</sup> and as Jacques Petit points out,<sup>(4)</sup> Green was concerned at the possibility of his hero turning into " un personnage édifiant "; indeed, Roger's often sanctimonious tone in the " Récit de Karin " appears in a scarcely more favourable light than the sensualist's manner adopted in his own narrative. Nevertheless, as the novel progresses, and Roger gradually comes to recount the life he has led over the previous decade, the character takes on a less antipathetic complexion, assuming a certain nobility in the struggle and suffering induced by the demands of his Catholicism.

Despite " la veulerie et la misère " of Green's protagonists, Grace is at work in the lives of Roger and Karin.<sup>(5)</sup> Roger has already been touched by the divine favour, and though the young woman will resist his initial attempts to draw her back to a broadly religious outlook by prayer and reflection, a seed has been sown. Karin - like Angus and Jean

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(1) Ibid., p. 846.

(2) Ibid., pp. 847 - 848.

(3) Ibid., p. 844.

(4) O.C. III, p. 1707, n.

(5) Ce qui reste, p. 115, Aug. 24, 1968.



before her - thinks of Christ and notes :

" Avec toutes les contradictions violentes dont j'étais pleine, ceci me restait des jours anciens : j'aimais la personne du Christ.... Je me persuadais qu'il m'eût comprise, seul entre tous les hommes, et qu'il n'eût pas été méchant avec moi comme les autres. A sa façon même, il m'eût aimée. Alors je voulais bien réciter sa prière, je la réciterais en souvenir de lui et comme s'il pouvait m'entendre, comme s'il était possible qu'à dix-neuf siècles de distance il pût saisir des paroles danoises dites par une incroyante. "(1)

And like Julien Green, she endeavours to recite the Lord's Prayer, only to halt at "Notre Père..." unable to go any further.<sup>(2)</sup> For author and heroine the time was not yet ripe.

Unbelief continues to hold sway in Karin's life, as she reflects :  
" Je n'étais plus de celles qui se dupent et se figurent que dans leur chambre il y a Dieu qui les écoute ".<sup>(3)</sup> Her estrangement from the Christian religion and her sexual emancipation, together with her whole unfortunate youthful experience, have brought her to a candid if not especially flattering conclusion about herself as a woman : " Je n'étais pas faite pour le mariage, j'étais plutôt faite pour une forme atténuée de la galanterie ".<sup>(4)</sup> In her tribulation, Karin's work has been her one

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(1) L'Autre O.C. III, p. 848.

(2) Ibid., p. 849. The link with Green's own diary entry - see Les Années Faciles, p. 570, Nov. 24, 1934 - has been made by J. Petit in his note, O.C. III, p. 1707. The extract, omitted from J, 1928-1949, has been re-inserted in the Pléiade edition of the journal, O.C. IV, p. 347.

(3) L'Autre O.C. III, p. 854.

(4) Ibid., p. 850.

refuge, and seated behind her table she knows security and a certain measure of peace : " C'est là que je travaille, et quand je suis derrière cette table, j'ai l'impression que rien ne peut jamais m'atteindre ".<sup>(1)</sup> Naturally, Roger's arrival in Copenhagen has turned Karin's circumscribed world upside down, opening a new and final chapter in her existence.

On the third occasion Roger visits Karin, it is to recount his sensual and spiritual odyssey. The war over, he had taken up his former life of work and pleasure, particularly sensual pleasure - " Après quatre années de privations, je ne songeais qu'à ça, recherchant les femmes les plus faciles "<sup>(2)</sup> - until one day venturing into a little country church where two old women were praying, he satisfies his architect's curiosity and emerges into the bright sunlight, only to find himself recalling the two women motionless in prayer. Re-entering the church, he observes them still at their pew in the same attitude of devotion :

"....elles regardaient....Je me dis ce que vous vous seriez dit vous-même, Karin, à savoir qu'elles ne regardaient rien. C'était cela qui m'avait frappé. Je pensai que la religion les avait rendues idiotes.... Rien ne se lisait sur leurs traits couturés par l'âge, mais l'idée me vint tout à coup qu'elles regardaient quelque chose - ou quelqu'un. Ce fut comme un éclair déchirant la nuit. Pendant quelques minutes, je restai dans un coin de l'église, ne sachant plus bien où j'étais. Une chose me parut certaine : il y avait entre ces murs, sous ces voûtes, une présence qui n'était pas sensible à ma vue. " (3)

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(1) Ibid., p. 818. Cf. Green's own impressions when he is seated at his table writing his books. See, for example, J, p. 338, Jan. 29, 1939 : " Travaillé à mon livre. C'est mon refuge ".

(2) L'Autre O.C. III, p. 859.

(3) Ibid., p. 860.

Karin resists the implication in Roger's words with his own 1939 retort that this notion of a supernatural presence is a figment of the imagination. However, she is unable to face the prospect of a theological discussion with her former lover and instead tells Roger that before the war he had convinced her that there was no God, that the way of truth and light lay in atheism. If Roger's response that Karin forget all this seems somewhat facile, it nonetheless emphasizes the transformation in his character; he now speaks not of his love for Karin, but of the desire he had known : " Karin, oubliez ce que je vous ai dit en 39, fit-il d'une voix surexcitée. Je me trompais, je voulais vous avoir à moi seul, c'était le désir qui parlait ".<sup>(1)</sup> He sees his emergence from the little church as the watershed in his life : " Quand je sortis de cette église, j'étais converti sans bien m'en rendre compte. Le reste suivit tout naturellement....c'est-à-dire la découverte de l'Evangile et le retour à l'Eglise ".<sup>(2)</sup> At this stage, Roger's account of his conversion barely holds a modicum of interest for Karin; but what she is striving to rekindle is his pre-war passion for her and to this end she displays an interest that she knows only too well to be dissimulation.<sup>(3)</sup> Momentarily gaining Roger's confidence, then embarrassing him with questions on his chastity - and in the event learning that like herself he has abstained from sexual relations for some three years<sup>(4)</sup> - she soon loses all the advantage she has gained. Roger has immediately seen through her ruse, her attempt to show that she leads a normal life : " Il savait. C'était clair. J'étais sans doute la seule femme de toute la ville à ne pas mener une vie normale ".<sup>(5)</sup> Suspecting that Roger's informant might well have been Mlle Ott, it is an aggressive and vengeful Karin who succeeds in forcing an entry into this equivocal

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(1) Ibid., p. 860.

(2) Ibid., pp. 861 - 862.

(3) Ibid., p. 862.

(4) Ibid., p. 864.

(5) Ibid., p. 865.

character's flat, intent on learning the truth and inflicting on her former admirer a lesson she will not forget.<sup>(1)</sup> For Karin will have no tears to shed for Mlle Ott, not even after her death from a heart attack doubtless brought on by the shock of Karin's visit and threats; Ott remains the woman who had callously destroyed her youth.<sup>(2)</sup>

The interest of the scene lies for us in the light it throws on the personage of Ott and her past relations with Karin. We learn that Karin had been invited to Ott's apartment before the war, and the young woman's remarks upon seeing certain features of this décor once again are revealing : in particular, the tiny salon with its photographs, one of " cette jolie femme, une cousine m'avait dit Ott, morte avant la guerre, ravissante " and two others " du même genre, encore des cousines sans doute ! ".<sup>(3)</sup> If any doubt persisted concerning Ott's nature following her pre-war conversations with Roger in which she combined a wish to shield Karin from the Frenchman's attentions with a compulsive need to talk to him about her,<sup>(4)</sup> the present scene clears up this ambiguity. Karin remarks, for instance, that when she teases Ott about the photographs of " ces jolies personnes ", her understanding is immediate.<sup>(5)</sup> It is disclosed that before the war, in addition to inviting Karin to her home, Ott had written a number of letters to the girl - " de si jolies lettres ! "<sup>(6)</sup> - and Karin remembers her manner at the time, " quand elle me parlait d'une voix si humble et si caressante, et que je feignais de ne pas comprendre ".<sup>(7)</sup> Here, the most obvious and telling parallel is

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(1) Ibid., p. 867 et seq. Later Karin learns that Mlle Ott had corresponded with Roger and that Ott had indeed informed the Frenchman of her conduct during the years of occupation, ibid., p. 881 and p. 895.

(2) Ibid., p. 879. " Elle avait tué ma jeunesse ".

(3) Ibid., p. 868.

(4) See, for example, ibid., p. 742, pp. 773 - 774 and pp. 785 - 786.

(5) Ibid., p. 870.

(6) Ibid., p. 871.

(7) Ibid., p. 874.

with Elisabeth's piano teacher Mlle Bergère in Minuit, where, as Jean-Claude Joye has pointed out, the sapphist's passion is most clearly revealed.<sup>(1)</sup>

Roger's fourth visit to Karin, which he vainly resolves to be his last,<sup>(2)</sup> is intended to help bring spiritual happiness to the young woman. He writes : " C'est votre bonheur que je veux, Karin, celui que le monde ne donne pas. Je voudrais que votre âme s'ouvre à la joie, celle que j'ai dans mon coeur en vous écrivant ces mots ".<sup>(3)</sup> But when he actually tries to talk to her about her spiritual self, about her soul, Karin switches off, unable to listen further : " Quelque chose en moi se révoltait contre l'usage de certains mots ".<sup>(4)</sup> It is only during this particular conversation that she learns something of Roger's correspondence with Ott and the fact that it was the latter's information concerning her wartime activities and their consequences that had shaped his resolve to make the journey to Denmark.<sup>(5)</sup> Acknowledging his own guilt and the responsibility he feels for Karin's actions - " C'est moi qui vous ai engagée dans la voie que vous avez suivie. J'ai éveillé en vous une sensualité dormante. Si vous ne m'aviez pas connu, vous n'auriez peut-être pas agi comme vous l'avez fait ".<sup>(6)</sup> - Roger has lived in the hope that Karin's return to faith would bring pardon and salvation for both of them. In the young woman, however, feelings of bitterness and revolt for the wasted years are uppermost, Roger's references to God and prayer being as yet meaningless. Although he prays in silence for both of them, in his distress he has let slip a significant little phrase that presages part of his future behaviour; not only is he uncertain of

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(1) Jean-Claude Joye, Julien Green et le monde de la fatalité, Arnaud Druck, Berne, 1964, pp. 76 - 77.

(2) L'Autre O.C. III, p. 879.

(3) Ibid., p. 878.

(4) Ibid., p. 880.

(5) L'Autre O.C. III, p. 881.

(6) Ibid., pp. 881 - 882.

God's forgiveness, but furthermore : " je ne suis plus sûr de rien ".<sup>(1)</sup>  
The suffering that Karin reads in his face as he leaves her, ostensibly for the last time, and with her somewhat theatrical threat of suicide on his mind, etches itself indelibly in her memory.<sup>(2)</sup>

Unable to sleep without the aid of a soporific and incapable of sustained effort in her work, she finally makes an attempt at a simple prayer, no orthodox prayer, but the despairing plea of a woman who suffers for the one thing she wants in the world - the continuing presence of the man she loves : " Ecoute-moi. Fais revenir cet homme ici.... Je te demande de faire revenir ici cet homme qui m'a quittée hier soir. Je ne te demande rien d'autre....".<sup>(3)</sup> The manner of Karin's " prayer ", of her blunt plea that Roger return, is not without recalling the manner of Elisabeth's entreaty in L'Ennemi.<sup>(4)</sup> Yet Karin's realism is a far cry from the mystic rapture of Elisabeth and she is still a long way from belief, seeing her plea as a last resort : "...j'avais recours à une pratique superstitieuse pour agir sur le destin, puisque tout avait raté ".<sup>(5)</sup> Surprisingly for Karin, her prayer is answered albeit in an ominous way, when Roger who has prowled the district almost every evening, anguished at the thought that a woman who has drowned herself in the waters of the harbour might in fact be Karin, rushes distraught to her door. And on this occasion it is the real Roger who explains that at the time of his conversion : " En examinant ma vie entière.... Dans ce regard attentif posé sur toutes les heures de mon passé, comment ne vous aurais-je pas vue, Karin, alors que c'était vous, vous seule

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(1) Ibid., p. 882.

(2) Ibid., p. 883.

(3) Ibid., p. 886.

(4) L'Ennemi O.C. III, p. 1145. And see above, Chapter III, p. 121.

(5) L'Autre O.C. III, p. 886.

que je cherchais ?.... J'étais en pleine crise religieuse, mais je ne vous avais pas oubliée, bien au contraire, et j'avais bien des choses à me reprocher : je vous avais entraînée dans le mal....J'étais fasciné par l'amour, par l'amour charnel, même au plus fort de mes élans vers Dieu ".<sup>(1)</sup> Thus Roger, homo duplex, clearly emerges, the state he speaks of at the end of this passage again strongly recalling observations made by Green in his diaries and particularly his evocation of St. John of the Cross's words concerning the rising flood of carnal desire that accompanies the yearning for God - since nature forms a whole, it is no easy task to restrain one part of it in order to enable the other part to live : " Cela explique que les tentations puissent être si fortes au moment des plus grands élans vers Dieu ".<sup>(2)</sup> This tension has continued to oppress Roger who only now reveals his true self, his sensual craving in addition to his aspiration for God. Only now with his defences down does he - for a short while - really engage our sympathies. While he states explicitly that it was indeed his aim to help Karin recover the faith of which he had deprived her, he goes further than this, admitting a truth that it plainly distresses him to enunciate : " Oh, j'étais sincère et en même temps, sans vouloir me le dire, je trichais, Karin, je trichais ".<sup>(3)</sup>

After their night of love and Roger's seemingly perverse decision to leave, Karin's sole concern is to prevent this happening : " Après avoir offert mon corps, j'allais maintenant offrir mon âme avec la même impudeur. C'était très bas, ce que je faisais là, mais j'étais amoureuse ".<sup>(4)</sup>

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(1) Ibid., p. 900.

(2) J, pp. 409 - 410, Feb. 13, 1941. And cf. Saint John of the Cross, Obras Completas (Colección Laberinto), Editorial Seneca, Mexico, D.F., 1942, p. 430 : "....porque muchas veces acaece que en los mismos ejercicios espirituales, sin ser en mano de ellos, se levantan y acaecen en la sensualidad movimientos y actos torpes.... ". (Noche oscura). See also, J, p. 1411, June 15, 1960. And cf. above, Chapter II, p. 71.

(3) L'Autre O.C. III, p. 901.

(4) Ibid., p. 903.

For his part, Roger, despite his love for Karin, feels - or wishes to feel - that Karin no longer really needs him, that God will help them both. He tries to sum up, to explain his return and his conduct : " Je suis revenu par faiblesse, fit-il d'une voix qui s'exaltait, et Dieu s'est servi de ma faiblesse. Je suis venu de la part de Dieu pour te sauver, Karin. C'est cela, le sens de mon voyage.... Si je restais, nous souffririons trop. Je ne m'appartiens plus ".<sup>(1)</sup> Later, in the letter he writes her, Roger tells Karin that, while doubtless keeping his faith, he has abandoned his plan to enter Holy Orders and decided to accept the offer of a career in Brazil. While stressing the importance of Karin in his life - " Je t'aimais, Karin, et je t'aime encore. Tu as été dans ma nuit comme une apparition et c'est le souvenir que j'avais de toi qui m'a soutenu pendant le long chemin de la captivité " - in human terms what follows again appears perverse and defeatist : " L'espoir m'a manqué tout à coup de reconquérir le bonheur avec toi, non par ta faute, mais par la mienne....Je n'ai pu refaire ma jeunesse. J'ai honte et je fuis ".<sup>(2)</sup> This letter raises a number of problems, one of which we alluded to earlier in this chapter and which Roger brings to the fore when he writes of the memories of Karin that had sustained him as a prisoner-of-war. In these circumstances, given the feelings he claims to have entertained for her throughout this period of time, it seems inexplicable that he should have waited some four years before contacting Karin. Again, in this spring of 1949, having realized that his wish to embrace the monastic life was misplaced, the lucid refusal to continue and deepen his relationship with Karin remains perplexing.

Interestingly enough, Roger, like Graham Greene's protagonist, Querry, is an architect and already, relatively early in life, he is depicted as emotionally burnt-out. A strong masochistic streak is seen to pervade Roger who now seems averse to all manifestations of sensual pleasure,

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(1) Ibid., p. 906.

(2) Ibid., p. 980.



even within the framework of marriage. Roger's conversion has led him to an austere and rigorous Catholicism reminiscent of the Jansenism we discussed earlier in relation to Green.<sup>(1)</sup> The author's wish to darken the novel and to pave the way for his sombre dénouement has gained the upper hand,<sup>(2)</sup> perhaps at the expense of a degree of psychological verisimilitude. There certainly appears to be on Green's part - and this would fit in with his various comments and declarations on the subject - a will to dissociate the carnal from love. Roger and Karin will continue to love each other - " d'un amour désincarné " - succoured by Grace acting as the instrument of their moral and spiritual renewal and eventual salvation.

After Roger's final departure, left to her own devices, Karin does seek out the Catholic church and the priest recommended by her lover, if in the first instance it is in an attempt to obtain Roger's address.<sup>(3)</sup> But before taking this step, inescapably her mind ranges over her relationship with Roger and her thoughts dwell on the sense of loss and emptiness she now experiences. Although she is still far from believing at this stage, her hostility to religion generally is markedly decreasing, to the extent that she can ask herself : " Se pouvait-il malgré tout que dans cette obscurité il y eût quelqu'un qui me tînt compagnie à sa manière ? "<sup>(4)</sup> Of course, when she considers the Roman Catholic religion as such, she continues to react instinctively : " L'horreur qu'inspire le catholicisme à tant de nous Scandinaves, je la ressentis avec force.... ".<sup>(5)</sup> And in the little church, her inward debate resumes,

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(1) See above, Chapter III.

(2) On Green's penchant for sombre endings (at least in purely human, earthly terms), see his friend Father Couturier's somewhat light-hearted recollection in his posthumously published journal : " Vers le moment où il terminait Moïra, je lui dis un jour : 'Cela finira certainement très mal. - Ah ! vous pouvez compter sur lui pour cela', me répond gaiement Robert de Saint Jean ". Se garder libre, Ed. du Cerf, 1962, p. 99.

(3) L'Autre O.C. III, p. 911.

(4) Ibid., p. 909.

(5) Ibid., pp. 910 - 911.

as she vacillates between a feeling of peace and security and her Lutheran distaste for the plaster of Paris saints and other trappings.<sup>(1)</sup> Her initial encounter with the unnamed priest is similarly equivocal : again repelled by externals, in this case the soutane,<sup>(2)</sup> Karin is nonetheless swiftly won over by the pleasing appearance and attitude of this plainly good and discreet man.<sup>(3)</sup> Thus, although disconcerted at the outset by the fact that the priest had been expecting her and was seen to be treating her as a loveable human being, Karin soon finds herself confiding in him : " Pour la première fois de ma vie, je goûtai l'étrange plaisir de me mettre en accusation pour me délivrer d'un poids intolérable....Avais-je eu conscience de mal agir ? Cette question, la seule qui me fut posée par l'homme noir, je l'entendis avec un tressaillement et ne répondis pas. En vérité j'aurais pu dire oui ".<sup>(4)</sup>

Once more alone in her room, it is not long before Karin is contrasting the peace she had known in the church and the qualities of the priest with her ingrained hostility for the Church of Rome, sensing the trap into which she is in danger of falling.<sup>(5)</sup> Yet Grace is working in the inner regions of Karin's heart and she will be irresistibly drawn

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(1) Ibid., pp. 912 - 913.

(2) Ibid., p. 914. " La présence du prêtre en soutane désenchantait l'église qui me parut tout ordinaire à cause de cet absurde vêtement noir ". And cf. Karin's reaction to Roger's black suit and hooded cloak, ibid., p. 823.

(3) Ibid., p. 915. Not without interest are Green's descriptions of his characters' teeth and how they often correspond to the personage's essential nature. Here, for example, the priest is given " des dents irrégulières, mais blanches "; Karin's teeth are " d'une blancheur de riz " (ibid., p. 725), while Mr. Gore's are " d'une blancheur suspecte " (ibid., p. 753) and those of one of Karin's aggressors at the end of the novel are yellow : " L'inconnu la considérait avec un grand sourire qui découvrait des dents jaunes " (ibid., p. 989).

(4) Ibid., p. 917.

(5) Ibid., p. 921.

to the little church and its " man in black " like a moth to the flame. If for a time she hovers around the source of light, still torn between revulsion and the fascinated longing that will eventually prevail, she is in a way already " entrapped ". For although scarcely able to envisage a return to the Danish Lutheranism of her childhood and adolescence in the wake of her experience during and after the war, she remains, as we have already seen, deeply attached to the figure of Christ. Roger has left her an earnest of his Roman faith and this, coupled with the priest's sensitive and understanding disposition, will exert a strong and determining influence over her.

We have seen that Green was anxious lest Roger develop into " un personnage édifiant "; likewise, there would be a danger of the convinced Roman Catholic artist rendering Karin's " conversion " too facile. Green was equally aware of this risk, and Karin's eventual acceptance of Catholicism will not be free of moments of doubt and revolt. The author interestingly comments on his heroine's inner debate : "...Karin lutte contre la foi parce qu'elle sait que cela va tout bousculer dans sa vie, détruire son ordre à elle. La foi qui ne fait pas cela est morte ".<sup>(1)</sup> The very night of her return from the church and her meeting with the priest, fearful of her solitude and in her quest for consolation she cannot refrain from dialling the priest's number. It is the latter's simple, heart-felt words of help and encouragement that prompt Karin's " J'ai la foi quand je vous écoute "<sup>(2)</sup> and she goes so far as to carry out his instructions on prayer, almost child-like in their simplicity; at first she finds herself addressing her lover, then abruptly her thoughts are elsewhere : " Tout à coup je pensai non à Roger, mais à quelqu'un d'autre....Si vraiment il était là, non pas du tout comme un fantôme, mais

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(1) Ce qui reste, p. 206, Dec. 14, 1969. And cf. the early Pamphlet, O.C. I, particularly p. 906 (183) : " Tout catholicisme est suspect s'il ne dérange pas la vie de celui qui le pratique.... ".

(2) L'Autre O.C. III, p. 922.

dans son corps, tel qu'il a paru en Judée ? Cet Autre-là, je l'aurais aimé et suivi....".<sup>(1)</sup> And her sense of a presence in the room becomes a certainty : " A trois pas de moi, dans les ténèbres, quelqu'un se tenait debout....C'est ici qu'on pourrait parler d'illusion et je me sens bien incapable de raisonner sur ce point, mais on ne peut rien changer à une certitude intérieure. Je ne croyais pas : j'étais sûre ".<sup>(2)</sup> Despite the initial effect of this incident which sends Karin scurrying to her new-found refuge eager to be received into the Roman Church,<sup>(3)</sup> the fervour is rapidly dissipated, her sceptical Danish " bon sens " regaining control.<sup>(4)</sup> As in Green's case,<sup>(5)</sup> the real change in Karin is far from immediate; in fact, she comes to look upon her burst of spiritual ardour as an attempt to be in some way reunited with the absent Roger.<sup>(6)</sup>

Following her night with Roger, Karin's sexuality has been thoroughly aroused once again, and she admits to a need for more than affection : " Ce n'était plus seulement la tendresse que je désirais, c'était l'étreinte dans ce qu'elle pouvait avoir de plus animal ".<sup>(7)</sup> At this stage of the narrative, her natural desires and longings would seem assured of a

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(1) Ibid., p. 923.

(2) Ibid., p. 923. The autobiographical content of these lines has been noted by J. Petit, O.C. III, p. 1710, who refers the reader to the relevant diary passage, dated Nov. 24, 1934. See Les Années Faciles, p. 570 : " J'étais seul dans la maison. Quelqu'un pourtant s'est tenu derrière moi pendant près d'une minute. Il n'y a pas dans ma vie d'événement dont la réalité me paraisse plus certaine ".

(3) L'Autre O.C. III, pp. 924 - 925.

(4) Ibid., p. 926.

(5) Les Années Faciles, p. 571, n.

(6) L'Autre O.C. III, p. 926. " J'avais cherché à rejoindre Roger et puis, cela étant difficile, le Dieu de Roger, enfin Dieu tout court qui prenait la place de Roger - mais j'aimais Roger, et qui pouvait prendre sa place ? ".

(7) Ibid., pp. 928 - 929.

fair chance of success, as new horizons for a fresh start in her life open before her : with the advent of spring and her twenty-eighth birthday, though she has lost Roger, she has gained re-admittance to society<sup>(1)</sup> she has been "cleared"<sup>(2)</sup> - and along with this measure of reconciliation have come material advantages as well as an offer of marriage.<sup>(3)</sup>

In her new freedom, Karin ventures as far as Klampenborg where, on a hotel terrace overlooking the beach, as she gazes fascinated at the bodies of the sun-worshippers, still young and attractive she reflects on the possibilities open to her.<sup>(4)</sup> From absorption in her sensual rêverie, she goes on to wonder how she could have all but succumbed to the emissaries of Rome, enabling Green to introduce into her musings his own worries about writing a so-called Christian novel :

" Dans les affreux ouvrages qu'on appelle des romans chrétiens, on voit, en effet, le personnage principal revenir à la morale avec une docilité mécanique. A l'aide de roueries plus ou moins camouflées, l'auteur

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(1) Ibid., p. 929 et seq.

(2) Ce qui reste, p. 114, Aug. 21, 1968. " C'est Roger qui va 'dédouaner' Karin, sans le savoir ".

(3) L'Autre O.C. III, p. 890 and p. 939.

(4) Ibid., pp. 954-955. Although Green accords his bathers a skin " d'un hâle encore indécis " (p. 954), the Danish beach-scene he has conjured up in these pages seems more appropriate to July-August rather than early spring, when mean temperatures vary between 3 and 6° C. The author has doubtless re-created his own experience of Klampenborg in high summer, this being the season of a number of his visits to Denmark - see J, pp. 291-293, Aug.-Sept. 1937; pp. 317-319, 330-331, July-Sept. 1938; pp. 857-861, Aug.-Sept. 1949; and also ibid., pp. 892-894, Feb. 1950, and p. 1000, May 1952. Of his stay in Denmark during March-April 1951 - see O.C. III, p. X (Chronologie) - there is no mention in the diary. See also the recollections of these Danish sojourns that mark the point of departure and development of the novel recorded in Ce qui reste, pp. 74-76, Feb. 1968, and p. 207, Dec. 15, 1969 : " Dans mon roman, le démon fait voir à Karin la plage de Klampenborg offerte à toutes ses faims. Je n'ai qu'à me souvenir... La mémoire est là, toute prête, hallucinante ".

prépare le triomphe de la religion dans les pages de la fin où paraît un pasteur... ou un prêtre dans un confessionnal comme l'araignée au centre de sa toile."(1)

Karin would not be such a victim, she thinks to herself, and yet her overtly sensual appreciation of the flower of Danish youth is not unmixed with feelings of apprehension. It would be vain to seek fixity of purpose in Karin's outlook at this time; her mind is a prey to successive fluctuations, and her desire for the crudest sexual embrace has been replaced by what she terms " l'horreur - oui, l'horreur de la chose. L'horreur ? Quelle horreur ? Soudain je me sentis reprise d'anciens dégoûts. Peut-on être attiré par cela même qui répugne ? "(2) While Max or Dmitri Karamazov would have little difficulty in replying affirmatively to this question, Karin cannot or will not answer. Coupled with the needs of her sensuality, however, there remains the ardent desire for warmth and affection.

The young woman has clearly been too easily swayed by human beauty, as is well illustrated by the episode with the engaging and seductive M. Louis.<sup>(3)</sup> Yet despite her curt note to the priest informing him that she had been deluding herself in seeking consolation for the loss of Roger in the Catholic religion,<sup>(4)</sup> after her déconvenue with the above-mentioned Louis, Karin makes a further and this time apologetic and imploring telephone call to the ever-attentive " homme noir ". Profoundly affected by the priest's demand that she pray to obtain contrition - " Un regret tel qu'il vous brise le coeur. Il faut que le coeur humain se brise pour que Dieu y entre "<sup>(5)</sup> - and recognizing her need for "cette

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(1) L'Autre O.C. III, p. 955.

(2) Ibid., p. 955. Green's italics.

(3) Ibid., pp. 956 - 958.

(4) Ibid., p. 927.

(5) Ibid., p. 978.

sévérité divine ", from this moment on, until her untimely death on the water-front, Karin's attention will hardly stray (with the notable exception we refer to below) from the spiritual domain. Indeed, there is a strong mystical element in her behaviour.

Alone in her room, she strives in vain to recapture the presence she had so recently experienced with such force and conviction. In the intensity produced by her longing and prayer, however, Karin suddenly senses a voice addressing her : " *Etait-ce la mienne, la voix de ma pensée un peu délirante ? Non. Elle disait ceci qu'elle répéta doucement, sans aucun bruit de paroles : 'Pourquoi me cherches-tu au-dehors alors que je suis dans ton coeur ?'....'Seigneur, murmurai-je. Jésus !' "*<sup>(1)</sup> Faced with the difficulty of wishing to write a novel consonant with his conception of truth and at the same time anxious to avoid any charge of composing a " roman édifiant ", each time his heroine advances in the direction of faith and the Roman Church, we have remarked that Green has been quick to counter her movements of assent not simply with reservations but with definite feelings of revulsion. Nevertheless, at this point in the novel Karin has passed an invisible frontier, as Green undoubtedly did in his own life, despite the fact that one hurdle remains to be cleared. If belief in the existence of God and the example of Christ have

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(1) Ibid., pp. 979 - 980. This scene, so important in Karin's conversion, carries resonances of George Herbert's poem " The Collar " - see The Metaphysical Poets, ed. Helen Gardner, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1957 (repr. 1968), p. 135; for its importance to Green, see J, p.673, Oct. 16, 1945 - the last stanza of which reads : " But as I rav'd and grew more fierce and wilde / At every word, / Me thoughts I heard one calling, Child ! / And I reply'd, My Lord ". The parallelism between the religious crisis expressed in this poem and that of Green and his heroine is indeed striking, the initial spurning of the Grace offered and the subsequent phase of revolt being followed by the final loving acceptance of the inner voice. Green's strong interest in the metaphysical poets is attested by the diaries and it is not inappropriate to single out Thomas Traherne, whose Centuries of Meditations have had a marked influence on the author. See, for example, J, p. 948, March 10, 1951 : " Ce livre exceptionnel entre tous les livres, il me semble que je m'en suis nourri toute ma vie avant de l'avoir ouvert ! ".

been wholeheartedly accepted, for the Protestant drawn towards the Roman Catholic Church a certain repugnance mingled with curiosity - we remember James Knight's observations at the end of Chaque homme dans sa nuit in the preceding chapter - is still apparent, as in Karin's attitude to the monstrance : " A quel genre d'idolâtrie cela pouvait-il servir ? Ce fut la question que je me posai, non sans une ombre de pitié pour les catholiques et leurs bizarreries ".<sup>(1)</sup> A certain scepticism and ironic detachment persist; then, for the last time, the sensual element too intrudes in Karin's thoughts when she notices a beautiful young girl enter the church kneeling before the monstrance to pray. Reacting in a way not dissimilar to Wilfred at such moments, Karin is perturbed by the physical presence of the girl :

" Qu'elle était plaisante à voir, l'idolâtre ! Jusqu'à un certain point, mais jusqu'à un certain point seulement, je comprenais les toquades de Mlle Ott. Et dire qu'un jour un homme, un amant peut-être, promènerait la main sur cette nuque d'une blancheur de marbre, sur ces bras, sur toute cette chair aujourd'hui intacte... D'étranges pensées me vinrent à l'esprit, certaines impures et pour moi toutes nouvelles dans leur soudaineté. "(2)

More important here than the passing thoughts of crude sensuality is the notion that sexual activity will one day destroy the wholeness and integrity of this flesh " aujourd'hui intacte ". There is plainly an unwholesome factor here; this is very much the vision of sexuality as the force that estranges man from the Good and as a consequence from his God. In removing Roger and the sensual force he represented even after his conversion, Green seems to have been acting in obedience to an inner necessity. It is as though an authentic conversion is possible only with

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(1) L'Autre O.C. III, p. 982.

(2) Ibid., p. 982. One wonders to what extent the first part of this quotation reflects Julien Green's own attitude to the female sex.



the disappearance of the sexual dimension. As long as sexuality remains a vital, active force in the individual's make-up, any advance on the spiritual plane is retarded or impaired. If Green has said that sexuality is a God-given activity and should be accepted as such, it does not alter the fact that there is virtually ever present an invincible repugnance for an act that fascinates but can never be wholly approved.

The young Catholic's simple explanation to Karin concerning the host - " Là où est l'hostie se trouve le Seigneur "<sup>(1)</sup> - sets in motion a train of thought that passes from instinctive mistrust for " l'orgueil romain " symbolized in the monstrance, by way of the wish to believe to open assent. This part of the final scene in the " Récit de Karin " is expressed with extreme simplicity yet at the same time there is an authentic and profound ring of truth about it, as Karin asks the priest : " Vous croyez que là où se trouve l'hostie dans le soleil d'or, là est vraiment le Seigneur qui a parlé aux hommes ? - Oui, Karin. - Moi aussi, je le crois, fis-je tout à coup ".<sup>(2)</sup> It appears to have been important for Green to establish Karin's acceptance of the presence of Christ in the exposed host, and the assent she gives to such a Roman devotional practice of this nature presupposes wholehearted acceptance of the Real Presence in the Mass. Having embraced the central sacrament in Romanism, the break with Lutheranism and consubstantiation is complete : despite the fact that she has not been baptized a Catholic, now she is indeed " catholique d'intention ".<sup>(3)</sup>

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(1) Ibid., p. 984.

(2) Ibid., p. 985.

(3) Ibid., p. 925. For Julien Green himself a thorough-going acceptance of the traditional view of the Eucharist is essential, his attachment to the Real Presence being profound and unchanging. In 1969, for example, he could write in his diary ( the notation is concerned with the prospect of changes in the liturgy ) : " La Présence Réelle n'est plus affirmée, dit-on. Si cela était vrai, je me rangerais du côté de l'Eglise qui continue d'enseigner la Présence Réelle, car ma foi sur ce point ne peut changer ". Ce qui reste, p. 194, dated Oct. 31. In the term Eucharist, it is of interest to note the elements of the name Karin; it was apparently a friend of the author who pointed out to him that " dans Karin, il y a grâce en grec (charis, charin) ". Ibid., p. 269, Nov. 28, 1970.

Green is still haunted by his fear of writing an edifying novel, and he enables his heroine to break what she describes as " l'édifiant silence " with the observation that in coming to Catholicism she has in fact been lured into a trap;<sup>(1)</sup> then, on the very next page of the novel (Part IV " 20 avril 1949 ") the omniscient narrator of Part I returns to show his heroine putting away the last page of her manuscript, desperately anxious to finish with her present way of life : " Sortir. 'Sortir de ce roman', pensa-t-elle, non sans l'ironie qui lui permettait de supporter les épreuves. 'Eviter la fin édifiante' ".<sup>(2)</sup> In the later stages of the novel the adjective " édifiant " doubtless appears somewhat overworked, perhaps indicating an over-zealous concern on Green's part to demonstrate that " Tout chez Karin est une protestation contre ce qui est édifiant ".<sup>(3)</sup> And of course Karin's death in the waters of the harbour, shortly after her above reflections, trying to escape the attentions of two hoodlums, is certainly not edifying in any orthodox acceptation of the word. In addition, the device allows Green to avoid further confrontation between Karin and the priest, when it would be no easy task to evade the pitfalls of edification.

Karin dies having achieved " the baptism of desire "; however brutal her forced exit from this world, she has experienced the action of infused Grace : before her fatal walk along the quayside, in the stillness of her room there has come over her " une grande douceur....une douceur étrange qui ressemblait à une brûlure. Cette chaleur, Karin la sentit dans sa poitrine pendant l'espace d'une minute, et elle resta immobile et les yeux fermés pour garder en elle l'inexprimable joie ".<sup>(4)</sup> This token

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(1) L'Autre O.C. III, p. 986.

(2) Ibid., p. 987.

(3) O.C. III, p. 1527. [Pierre Kyria, " Entretien avec Julien Green ", Le Magazine littéraire, n° 50, March 1971 ].

(4) L'Autre O.C. III, p. 988. In previous chapters we have observed similar experiences in Moïra and L'Ennemi. Julien Green comments thus on Karin's ravissement : " Elle meurt d'une façon terrible, mais peu de temps avant de mourir elle a malgré tout un gage de l'amour de Dieu, ce phénomène de brûlure intérieure que connaissent les mystiques et elle n'y comprend rien. Elle est heureuse ". O.C. III, p. 1527. [Lucien Guissard, " Entretien avec Julien Green ", La Croix, March 30, 1971 ].

of God's love following close on her hallucinatory and frightening vision of the crucified Christ sustains her as she walks contentedly along the seemingly deserted quayside imbued with the gift of love she has so recently received.<sup>(1)</sup> It is noteworthy that the author envisages Karin's faith as being in some way transferred to her from Roger :  
"....on dirait que la foi de Roger lui est ôtée pour être donnée à Karin, au-delà de ce qu'elle veut consciemment ".<sup>(2)</sup> Had his heroine lived, Green sees her probably coming to grief in similar predicaments.<sup>(3)</sup>

Set against the possible loss of spiritual life, the death of the body is for Green correspondingly less dreadful to contemplate.<sup>(4)</sup> In this connection his choice of quotation from Matthew's Gospel to preface the final part of L'Autre is instructive : " Ne craignez point ceux qui tuent le corps et qui ne peuvent tuer l'âme... ".<sup>(5)</sup> Karin's aggressors will indeed bear the responsibility for snuffing out her bodily existence, but the essential Karin, her soul, is inviolate. Having succeeded in avoiding the perils of edification referred to above, Green has nevertheless finely pointed his Christian message and expressed with equal force his own thought on sexuality and its relationship to the Christian religion.

The outlook that Green has come to adopt with advancing years in this latter regard, and which is afforded practical illustration in the pages

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- (1) L'Autre O.C. III, p. 989. "....l'amour reflueait malgré elle dans son coeur ". For Green, his heroine's salvation is assured, see Ce qui reste, p. 258, Sept. 17, 1970. "....elle est sauvée....".
- (2) O.C. III, p. 1528. (Interview with Pierre Kyria).
- (3) Ibid., p. 1527.
- (4) This is not to diminish the considerable import of any human being's death for the author, as we shall see in our concluding chapter.
- (5) Continuing this text in the Authorized Version we read " but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell ". (Matthew 10, 28).

of L'Autre, has been given a more theoretical summing-up in the diary just before the novel's publication :

" Je ne suis pas loin de voir la sexualité sous l'aspect d'une religion immémoriale avec ses rites sans nombre, ses martyrs, son langage souvent démentiel, ses chants, sa multitude d'idoles que saint Paul est rageusement et courageusement venu combattre. Il a cherché à discipliner cette puissance aveugle, mais comment venir à bout d'un instinct aussi fort que la vie ? Le Christ, avec plus de mansuétude, nous offre le royaume qui est au-delà du tumulte des sens. " (1)

This is the realm to which first Roger, then Karin, aspire; the path has been a stony one, littered with obstacles, but it has been a necessary journey, for in Søren Kierkegaard's words, " It belongs to the imperfection of everything human that man can only attain his desire by passing through its opposite ".<sup>(2)</sup>

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(1) Ce qui reste, p. 284, Jan. 31, 1971.

(2) Søren Kierkegaard, The Journals, p. 90.

## IN CONCLUSION

".... nothing but Felicity is  
worthy of our Labor, becaus all  
other things are the Means only  
which conduce unto it. "

Thomas Traherne.

## 1. The Wider Context

As an epigraph to his novel The Honorary Consul, Graham Greene cites Thomas Hardy : " All things merge in one another - good into evil, generosity into justice, religion into politics... " - and, we might add of the penultimate, into sensuality, our thoughts focusing on Julien Green's conversation in the early sixties with a specialist in psycho-analysis for whom somewhat predictably " Tout est sexualité. La religion comme le reste ".<sup>(1)</sup> The dialogue with this acquaintance reconstructed by Green in his diary contains some of his most pertinent and enlightening comments on contemporary attitudes both to sensuality and to religion and politics : " La culpabilité déménage. De nos jours, elle quitte la région sexuelle pour s'installer sur le plan dit social. L'écrivain qui, aujourd'hui, ne prend pas parti et délaisse le social est en état de péché mortel aux yeux de ses contemporains. Et comme le social touche de fort près la politique, la politique prend la place de la religion ".<sup>(2)</sup> With the passing years and advancing age, while the imaginative work has revealed a continuing obsession with the body-soul relationship, the journal - at the same time as it treats this conflict - has become increasingly concerned with spirituality as such but also, inevitably in the wake of the Second Vatican Council, with the Church's position in a largely non-Christian world.

In a society where sexuality has been freed of its burden of guilt,

(1) J, p. 1491, Sept. 4, 1962.

(2) Ibid., p. 1491. And cf. Ce qui reste, p. 49, Nov. 16, 1967 : " En France, ne pas se mêler du tout de politique est un péché mortel ".

secular religions such as Marxism have come to lay blame on the socially and politically uncommitted. Even cosseted Parisian artists and intellectuals, steeped in a traditional Catholic view of the world, have been forced by the events of World War II, rapid social change and the era of decolonization to sit up, take stock and respond. " On ne peut s'écarter du monde, aujourd'hui " Green has admitted, stressing that " La position de l'écrivain qui se désintéresse des événements est intenable....Jamais ils ne se sont installés dans la vie de chacun de nous comme maintenant. L'intéressante tour d'ivoire de jadis a dû disparaître au cours d'un bombardement ".<sup>(1)</sup>

The reader will recall that the world crisis in the late thirties was the cause of Green's abandoning Le Malfaiteur; in such troubled circumstances, perseverance at a lengthy and profound consideration of the homosexual's plight was beyond the author's capabilities. His return to the Roman Church shortly before the outbreak of hostilities necessarily marked a break with the life of the senses he had known earlier, and to this essentially inward transformation was added the outward change brought about by the disruption of war and subsequent service in the American forces. For a man so manifestly out of sympathy with many aspects of his century, the Roman Catholic Church was the one timeless solace : " L'Eglise offre un refuge hors du temps ".<sup>(2)</sup> The reverence for life in all its forms together with the intense hatred of conflict and killing that is a mark of the journal and autobiography might seem to have prompted Green to opt for the status of conscientious objector and alternative service, although he did in fact accept his call-up, marvelling

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(1) O.C. III, p. 1522. [Interview with Pierre Mazars, " Julien Green : 'Mon Journal est un témoignage et... une récréation' ", Le Figaro Littéraire, Oct. 30, 1967 ].

(2) J, p. 396, Nov. 11, 1940.

at the government that could provide such a statute.<sup>(1)</sup> Interestingly at this time Green comments on his reading of the second chapter of John's Gospel<sup>(2)</sup> where in Christ's violent attack on the money-changers he possibly found a measure of support and justification for his involvement in the war effort. In Green's mind, " dans l'ordre spirituel, cette guerre n'a aucun sens si elle n'aide pas une partie de l'humanité à devenir meilleure....Dès qu'on essaie de trouver les véritables causes de la guerre ailleurs qu'au plus profond de soi-même, on s'égare dans le chaos des raisonnements humains, car la guerre est avant tout un drame spirituel ".<sup>(3)</sup> That Julien Green was highly conscious of his relatively privileged situation during the war is clear from the continuation of the above extract.<sup>(4)</sup> A degree of criticism concerning the author's position has been voiced, as for example in J. Uijterwaal's monograph.<sup>(5)</sup> While acknowledging that " Affectivement il a participé à la guerre avec une intensité soutenue ", Uijterwaal claims that Green was unable to turn his participation into really effective and whole-hearted commitment, adding significantly : " Aussi le problème de cette

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(1) Ibid., p. 489, April 16, 1942. And see ibid., pp. 509 - 510, July 25, 1942, and p. 513, Aug. 10, 1942. Green's becoming a regular soldier with the inherent implication that if called upon to do so he would kill is certainly in contradiction with both his youthful vow never to take a human life even in self-defence - see above, Chapter I and MCO, p. 37 - and with later declarations on the incompatibility of violence and the Gospel message that we note below. In fact, demobilized at the end of 1942, Green entered the O.W.I. (Office of War Information) - see, for example, J, pp. 538 - 539, Jan. 19 and 20, 1943 - and was thus spared any dilemma of conscience.

(2) J, p. 498, June 1, 1942.

(3) Ibid., pp. 508 - 509, July 22, 1942.

(4) And see O.C. IV, p. 755, Nov. 14, 1943, for a similar reflection not included in J, 1928 - 1949.

(5) Green has parried carping criticism of his war-time record in an interview given to Le Monde, Nov. 29, 1967. See O.C. III, p. 1523.

époque de sa vie est-il moins le problème mondial et objectif de la guerre que son problème personnel - celui de la lutte entre bonheur visible et bonheur invisible - qui, avec la quarantaine et la conversion, prend une intensité particulièrement dramatique ".<sup>(1)</sup> This apposite comment remains broadly valid for the post-war period in that, despite the abundance of notes and reflections the journal affords us on political and social issues in France and the world at large, it is the life of the individual, Green's own life, and particularly his inner experience, that is most directly and intimately evoked in the diary pages.

For Green the invincible repugnance that he feels for the world of politics excludes all possibility of political action as part of his total spiritual consciousness and experience. In an age when many Catholics have come to recognize the pressing need for radical political and social change - and we earlier cited the example of his fellow-writers Graham Greene and François Mauriac, Julien Green's politicophobia has been a constant feature of his life from early manhood to the present day. In an interview dating from 1932, when in his own words the young author believed in literature as in a religion - " Je crois à la littérature comme à quelque chose qui porte en soi son existence et sa valeur. Je dirais : comme à une religion " - the aversion is already marked : " Ce qui compte dans la vie, c'est d'abord la sincérité....je constate, et je suis bien obligé de voir....qu'un homme politique ne peut vivre dans la sincérité ".<sup>(2)</sup> At the end of World War II, he could note laconically : " Je ne puis me résoudre à parler de politique. La vérité est que je la hais ".<sup>(3)</sup> And early in the sixties, in a conversation with his Dominican friend, Father Cagnet, he noted - the discussion had turned on the subject of prostitution - that as a young man he had felt only sympathy

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(1) Uijterwaal, op. cit., p. 90.

(2) O.C. II, p. 1281. [ Pierre Bost, " Les écrivains et la politique : Julien Green ", Les Annales politiques et littéraires, May 1, 1932 ].

(3) J, p. 705, Feb. 20, 1946.



for this activity, " parce qu'on voyait chez elle infiniment moins d'hypocrisie et de pharisaïsme que chez les gens réputés 'bien', à cause de quoi je la plaçais, et la place encore, nettement au-dessus du monde des banquiers, hommes politiques, etc. ".<sup>(1)</sup> Albeit somewhat excessive, such remarks betray a profound mistrust on Green's part for the whole gamut of political action,<sup>(2)</sup> which for him can have no place whatever in his conception of religion and its rôle in society.

Secular religions such as Marxism have never elicited a positive response in Green who at no time has been tempted to glimpse in socialist or communist ideals a possible source of liberation and a solution to his problems. André Gide's conversion to Communism and his embracing of the Marxist-Leninist cause in the Soviet Union, however brief - and it might well be argued that for much of the inter-war period the prospect of genuine personal liberation promised by Communism acted as a source of hope for a good many sexually anomalous men and women stifled and oppressed by narrow, puritanical religious upbringings - served only to arouse in his young friend first a puzzled curiosity, then a definite scepticism and regret.<sup>(3)</sup>

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(1) Ibid., p. 1456, Oct. 15, 1961.

(2) As an American living in France, despite a largely French education and almost a life-time spent in Paris, Green does not feel entitled to give his opinion on political matters : "...je me retiens de faire de la politique, parce que je n'ai pas voix au chapitre étant donné que je ne suis pas français; il y a des choses que je ne peux pas dire ". O.C. III, p. 1526. (Lucien Guissard, " Entretien avec Julien Green ", La Croix, March 30, 1971). At the same time, according to M.G. Rose, Green has never voted in an American election (though able to cast his ballot in Paris). Rose, Julian Green Gallic-American Novelist, p. 11.

(3) See, for example, J, p. 70, March 15, 1932; p. 181, May 17, 1934; p. 234, July 10, 1935, where Gide is shown insisting that Green will have to choose between Communism and Fascism; p. 259, Sept. 25, 1936, when Green laments " un Gide entouré de nouveaux camarades "; p. 266, Dec. 15, 1936, on which occasion the wheel appears to have come full circle, a thoroughly disabused Gide now congratulating Green on remaining steadfastly " apolitique ".

A thorough-going individualist of Green's stamp, so imbued with notions of transcendence and immortality, could not for a moment abandon himself to doctrines which denounced revealed religion as superstition and illusion. And despite his individualism, as we have observed earlier, like many other inverts feeling a deep inner need for a refuge in authority, few years were to elapse before Green returned to Romanism, to this haven " hors du temps ".

The Roman Church of Ambrogio Ratti and Eugenio Pacelli for which Green had opted, spiritually arrogant and almost universally upholder of the status quo, was seemingly little concerned with radically changing the material conditions of the downtrodden majority of its members. When Gide told his friend that he would be compelled to choose his camp, despite his incredulity at the time, in committing himself to Rome in 1939 surely Green did make a choice in part political if it was manifestly and predominantly spiritual and theological.<sup>(1)</sup> This becomes all the more clear in the post-war years when, following the reign of Pius XII, he is soon deploring various aspects of the Renewal in the Church, later expressing an opinion about Pope John XXIII, not hostile in itself, but which well sums up his reservations when compared to his

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(1) In this connection it is of particular interest to take note of the comments of Roger Garaudy, a man deeply committed to Socialism and at the same time close to the precepts of primitive Christianity : " Lorsque l'Encyclique Quadragesimo anno (1931) affirme que 'le système capitaliste n'est pas intrinsèquement mauvais' et lorsque aussitôt après l'Encyclique Divini Redemptoris (1937) proclame que 'le communisme est intrinsèquement pervers', parle-t-on au nom de la théologie, de la foi, ou s'agit-il d'une option politique, d'une option de classe ?.... Les moindres erreurs des communistes sont dénoncées avec force. Les pires crimes du monde du capital.... sont passés sous silence. La véritable 'Eglise du silence' est celle qui se tait devant le crime ". Marxisme du XXe siècle, 10/18, Union générale d'éditions, 1966, pp. 231 - 232.

positive enthusiasm for Pius XII and Paul VI.<sup>(1)</sup> It is only fair to add, however, that Julien Green's admiration for Pius XII is shared by a Catholic writer of a different spiritual and political complexion : for Graham Greene, Eugenio Pacelli is perceived as " the servant of the servants of God, and not impossibly, one feels, a saint "<sup>(2)</sup>; but the admiration for Pacelli is paralleled by esteem for Angelo Roncalli " the old man we learned to love.... the saint we knew, with his genius for simplicity ",<sup>(3)</sup> who, Julien Green does concede despite his initial surprise, had become " un des hommes les plus illustres et les plus aimés de ce monde ".<sup>(4)</sup>

The real parting of the ways for these two converts lies in their appreciation of the value of Pope John's aggiornamento, Julien Green's constant apprehension in the face of the slightest change standing in sharp contrast to the English writer's broad assent, his acceptance of the need for change and for a stronger stand in the struggle for social justice. Graham Greene's politico-religious outlook with its emphasis on dialogue is prompt to seize upon what he deems the positive aspects of Communism wherever variants of this secular religion manifest themselves;<sup>(5)</sup> for as Greene's Dr. Magiot wrote to Brown, the narrator, in The Comedians : " But Communism, my friend, is more than Marxism, just as Catholicism.... is more than the Roman Curia. There is a mystique as well as a politique ".<sup>(6)</sup> Another who freely acknowledges the Christian

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(1) Cf. J, p. 1505, June 5, 1963 with ibid., p. 1320, Sept. 29, 1958, and pp. 1507, 1508, June 23 and July 4, 1963. In an interesting note Antonio Mor makes a similar point in his Julien Green, témoin de l'invisible, p. 97.

(2) Graham Greene, Collected Essays, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1970, p. 297. ("The Paradox of a Pope").

(3) Ibid., p. 298. ("Eighty years on the Barrack Square").

(4) J, p. 1505.

(5) See, for example, the essays on Ho Chi Minh ("The Man as Pure as Lucifer") and Fidel Castro ("The Marxist Heretic") in the above-mentioned collection.

(6) Graham Greene, The Comedians, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1967 (Repr. 1968), p. 286. And cf. the same author's reflection in his essay "The Man as Pure as Lucifer", Collected Essays, p. 303 : "There is something in Communism besides the politics ".

and Catholic debt to Marxism and its exponents is Peter Hebblethwaite : at the same time as he accepts the " politicization " of the Church since the mid-sixties, the former Jesuit makes it clear that Christians should have no qualms about recognizing their obligation to progressive influences insofar as " many Christians learned from Marxists a great deal about the analysis of society and how to move from abstract teaching towards practical involvement, from preaching to commitment. That could be done without swallowing the baited hook of ' dialectical materialism', or even nibbling at it. A Christian personalism, which refused to subordinate the human person to state or party, was the best safeguard against that kind of surrender ".<sup>(1)</sup> Such lines of argument, persuasive and reasonable yet quite free of dogmatic assertion, would nonetheless irk a man of Julien Green's disposition, for whom this very type of statement - despite the moderation and precautionary tone - represents the thin end of a particularly blunt and immovable wedge. Evidence of this is furnished by the ninth volume of the diary, Ce qui reste de jour, although it does need to be borne in mind that Green's outlook is neither quite so straightforward nor so fixed as might initially be supposed.

During the " événements " of May 1968, admittedly perturbed by the violent form of the contestation of the hour, he recorded not without a certain irony that " Les idées de l'opposition ne sont pas toutes suspectes, loin de là. Il y en a qu'on reconnaît pour les avoir vues, non dans Marx, mais dans les Béatitudes de saint Matthieu ".<sup>(2)</sup> The next month Green again notes the positive aspect, the rightness of certain ideas championed by the May revolutionaries, only to denounce categorically all use of violence to further these aims :

" Je crois à la non-violence, telle que le Christ l'a prêchée dans sa Passion et par sa Passion. Je crois que les idées les plus honorables - et il y en a dans

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(1) Peter Hebblethwaite, The Runaway Church, p. 193.

(2) Ce qui reste, p. 97, May 24, 1968.

ce mouvement révolutionnaire - se déshonorent par la violence et perdent leur force et leur sens.... Je regrette de voir l'Eglise, dans la personne de certains prêtres parisiens, embringuée dans la machine politique." (1)

Later, Green is able to note tersely, but with evident satisfaction, that " Le pape a parlé avec énergie au synode, a affirmé que l'Eglise n'était pas une démocratie ", (2) and in the pages that follow he continues to voice his protests and fears at the attitudes of the " catholiques contestataires " and the partisans of the new liturgy. (3)

The denunciation of violence and action likely to lead to violent confrontation is a recurring feature in Ce qui reste de jour. On this issue Julien Green is totally unyielding, considering violence to be the inevitable concomitant of all contestation. (4) It is naturally his interpretation of New Testament teaching that conditions his whole outlook, and in recent years, during the trial of the Spanish Basques late in 1970, this has even led the author to protest publicly - extremely rare for Green - by appending his signature to a joint telegram addressed to the Pope " demandant que le procès des Basques soit mené dans l'esprit conciliaire, c'est-à-dire que personne ne soit étranglé ". (5) Barely a week earlier Green had written, prompted by this trial and the death-sentences called for by the prosecution :

" Notre monde est le monde de la haine. La violence est la réponse à tout, alors que l'unique réponse possible

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(1) Ibid., p. 103, June 12, 1968. Green further confirmed his belief in the incompatibility of violence with the Gospel message, stressing that there could be no compromise, in conversation with the present writer in May 1969.

(2) Ce qui reste, p. 189, Oct. 11, 1969.

(3) See, for example, ibid., p. 190, Oct. 14, 1969; p. 194, Oct. 31 and Nov. 1, 1969; p. 199, Nov. 22, 1969.

(4) Ibid., p. 269, Dec. 3, 1970. " On me dit que Rome admet la contestation sans approuver la violence, mais l'une accompagne l'autre comme l'ombre suit le corps ".

(5) Ibid., p. 271, Dec. 15, 1970. The author has always been opposed to capital punishment, see, for example, ibid., p. 354, Jan. 22, 1972; J, p. 1305, April 5, 1958, and p. 1473, Feb. 23 and March 2, 1962.

est donnée par l'Evangile. Le refus total dans la douceur obtient les seuls résultats acceptables. Les barricades engendrent la rancune et appellent la guerre civile. L'attitude du Christ en face du pouvoir est la seule que je puisse admettre. Il ne s'est pas défendu - il l'aurait pu, et victorieusement - mais sa croix a fini par venir à bout de l'énorme puissance romaine. " (1)

This unequivocal profession of Christ-inspired pacifist faith seems closer to Quakerism and its peace testimony than to the doctrines of Rome,<sup>(2)</sup> marking an advance on the positions Green held in the years of World War II : " Le refus total dans la douceur " is hardly capable of misinterpretation. Yet almost at the same time the author expresses a vibrant homage to Charles de Gaulle,<sup>(3)</sup> lauding " cet individu prodigieux " in terms that demonstrate the nature of his " sincérités successives " and place him squarely back in his inherited tradition of a " christia-nisme musclé " not unfamiliar with the notion of the just war.

Having made it abundantly clear that he considers political and social agitation to lead to inadmissible violence, Green might appear to allow little scope for pressure in the field of social reform and progress. Already in 1962 he had noted an article " sur l'indifférence du Christ à l'égard de ce qu'on appelle le social. Il paie l'impôt avec un grand dédain de ces choses..... ".<sup>(4)</sup> How different is Green's outlook from that

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- (1) Ce qui reste, p. 271, Dec. 6, 1970. Lest it be supposed that Green had forgotten the kidnapped German hostage, the reader need only turn the page to encounter his indignation at the apparent lack of concern for the victim. Ibid., p. 273, Dec. 17, 1970.
- (2) Compare the above extract and that of June 12, 1968, with the relevant passages in Christian Faith and Practice in the Experience of the Society of Friends, London Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, London, 1960, extract numbers 605 - 624.
- (3) Ce qui reste, pp. 264 and 266, Nov. 10 and 13, 1970.
- (4) J, p. 1490, Aug. 23, 1962. Although Green has often voiced his own disdain for riches, some of his reflections on this subject betray a certain ambiguity. See, for example, J, pp. 864-865, Sept. 27, 1949, and p. 1038, Dec. 2, 1953.

of a Jean-Paul Sartre, for whom man's transformation will come with " la suppression de la rareté matérielle.... le fondement de tous les antagonismes passés et actuels entre les hommes ".<sup>(1)</sup> To this view-point in which man is left without transcendence to assure his own earthly salvation, Green opposes his personal faith in which the transcendent is the sine qua non for the slightest measure of authentic human advancement : " Je ne crois pas à la sainteté du progrès.... Je crois que rien ne changera jamais les relations entre Dieu et notre âme. Je crois à l'extension du royaume de Dieu par la charité. Le reste est sans intérêt ".<sup>(2)</sup> And to the hero of Communism he opposes the Christian saint : " When Saint Francis preached on the holiness of poverty, he was a far greater revolutionist than Lenin, but he had no blood on his hands except the blood of the stigmata ".<sup>(3)</sup> In the world today seen as a prey to atheism it is the Catholic who is considered to be the really committed one.<sup>(4)</sup>

If the least sign of erosion of the Catholic Church's authority is viewed by Green with considerable apprehension, he is equally perturbed by the undermining of individual liberties and personal freedom generally, crucial to a true flowering of the spiritual life as he understands it. One of his most recent works, Liberté, the pamphlet he published precisely half a century after the appearance of the " fretful jeremiad " that launched his literary career, underlines this passionate concern for the individual's freedom and for the defence of his innate difference and distinction; in these pages Green restates and summarizes a number of the thoughts and ideas that he has broached in the volumes of his

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(1) J-P Sartre, " Entretien avec Michel Contat ", Le Nouvel Observateur, June 23, 1975, p. 72.

(2) Ce qui reste, p. 129, Nov. 28, 1968. Our italics.

(3) In Charles Péguy, Basic Verities, trans. with Anne Green, Pantheon Books, New York, 1943, p. 38. (Introduction).

(4) O.C. III, p. 1522. [Interview with Pierre Mazars].

journal, yet they are ideas vital to his profoundly religious  
Weltanschauung :

" Tout homme est unique.... C'est ici qu'il faudrait rappeler en termes simples cette vérité fondamentale dont notre siècle ne veut pas, à savoir qu'il n'y a jamais eu deux âmes en tout point et parfaitement semblables. Si étroit que soit le lien qui nous unit les uns aux autres, c'est une rêverie de croire à un salut collectif. Chaque âme est sauvée comme si elle était seule au monde. Voilà qui donne au plus chétif d'entre nous une valeur singulière. Personne n'est insignifiant et la mort d'un homme, quel qu'il soit, est toujours un événement considérable. " (1)

When Green writes of the uniqueness of each individual human being and of the resistance of our twentieth century to this basic truth, the allusion to the evils of totalitarian societies is clear and legitimate. Nevertheless, it would seem equally clear that for millions of men and women the present century has afforded opportunities for release from economic and social enslavement and advance in material and moral well-being out of all proportion to the sacrifices demanded and largely consented - again Graham Greene has expressed this well in his essay " The Man as Pure as Lucifer ", when with regard to the poor of Communist Vietnam he remarks : " We talk so glibly of the threat to the individual, but the anonymous peasant has never been treated so like an individual before ".<sup>(2)</sup>

It is highly significant that Green often casts a nostalgic gaze back

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(1) Liberté, pp. 10 -11. For the origin of the last part of this quotation, see Ce qui reste, p. 345, Jan. 3, 1972 : " Le Père Carré a prononcé une courte allocution dont je détache cette phrase qui me paraît belle. 'La mort de n'importe quel homme est un événement considérable.'"

(2) Graham Greene, Collected Essays, p. 303.



to the Grand Siècle and is able to write that he considers himself " tant soit peu un homme du XVIIe siècle. Les idées religieuses de cette époque lointaine me paraissent justes pour tous les temps.... ".<sup>(1)</sup> One thinks of Mauriac's pithy comment we cited early in Chapter V and which bears repeating here : "...il y a dans ce style de vie religieuse je ne sais quoi de retranché, d'indifférent à la condition des autres hommes ". Doubtless for a man of Green's retiring disposition the somewhat rarefied atmosphere and environment of Passy and the rue de Varenne where the author has spent much of his life - in addition to studies which took him " au sortir de l'aristocratique Janson de Sailly "<sup>(2)</sup> via his war-service to the University of Virginia, " la première du Sud "<sup>(3)</sup> - have not helped to broaden his concern and sympathies for the social transformation he has witnessed.<sup>(4)</sup> The progressive elements in the post-conciliar Church are guilty of propagating " une philosophie politique agressive qu'on veut faire passer pour de la religion ",<sup>(5)</sup> and Green desires the removal of those socially and politically committed priests whom he castigates as " ces éléments troubles dans lesquels il est impossible de reconnaître le catholicisme ".<sup>(6)</sup> In Green's religious thought as expressed in his personal writings and interviews the baneful influence of radical politics with the menacing shadow of collectivism runs through his words in the manner of a leitmotiv, having no rightful place in the Catholic religion where true progress,

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(1) Ce qui reste, p. 99, May 27, 1968. The date of this notation is not without interest. See also, J, p. 396, Nov. 11, 1940.

(2) René Crevel's words from Le clavecin de Diderot quoted in Claude Courtot's René Crevel, Seghers, 1969, p. 184. Crevel had been a contemporary of Green's at Janson.

(3) MCO, p. 253.

(4) We have seen how remote Green appeared from his fellows and how ignorant of the world he remained throughout adolescence in the first chapter of this study.

(5) Ce qui reste, p. 156, March 30, 1969.

(6) Ibid., p. 366, March 6, 1972.

the only progress, is individual and spiritual<sup>(1)</sup> and authentic revolution in a man's heart.<sup>(2)</sup>

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## 2. The Hope beyond the Turmoil

Despite his ardent defence of traditional Romanism, of its authority and Latin rites,<sup>(3)</sup> Green has rallied to the post-conciliar Church. His criticisms and reservations have not led him to join the "intégristes",<sup>(4)</sup> however tempted he may be by certain aspects of their thought and belief,

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(1) J, p. 979, Nov. 5, 1951.

(2) Green's positions, albeit close to his great spiritual masters of the 17th century, share in our own century an affinity with those of the Anglo-Catholic T.S. Eliot. Cf., for example, Eliot's 1935 essay, "Religion and Literature" esp. p. 400, in Selected Essays, Faber, London, 1951, repr. 1969. Interestingly, in his essay on Baudelaire in the same collection, Eliot quotes the well-known lines from Mon Coeur mis à nu - "Théorie de la vraie civilisation. Elle n'est pas dans le gaz, ni dans la vapeur, ni dans les tables tournantes, elle est dans la diminution des traces du péché originel." [Journaux intimes, ed. Crépet & Blin, p. 87] - lines which show an obvious kinship with Green's own thought.

(3) We recall that the author had signed a petition to the Pope asking for the retention of the Latin mass. Ce qui reste, pp. 359 - 360, Feb. 1, 1972.

(4) Ibid., p. 265, Nov. 10, 1970. "Vu Jacques Petit qui me dit qu'on me prend pour un intégriste, ce qui est sommaire, donc inexact, mais les 'silencieux' m'intéressent".

and he has harboured fears at the risk of schism for a number of years.<sup>(1)</sup> It is for this reason that in one of the last entries in Ce qui reste de jour, while again conceding his "intégriste" sympathies, he makes plain his loyalty to the one Catholic Church and its rightful leader :

" Je ne puis me réclamer que d'une Eglise dont le chef visible est le pape, car c'est précisément ce que m'enseigne l'Eglise de mon adolescence. Mais si fort que demeure mon attachement au passé, je mets un grand espoir dans l'Eglise d'aujourd'hui, parce qu'elle est l'héritière des promesses du Christ. " (2)

Thus, Green endeavours to put a brave face on the demise of his beloved "vieille Eglise dont on ne parle même plus",<sup>(3)</sup> but the regret tinged with bitterness is present throughout this journal; the aggiornamento meets with little grace in Julien Green's eyes.

The trust that Green has continued to place in papal authority and judgment is seen to be total, as he endeavours to live out what he conceives to be the essentials of Roman Catholic belief. On sexual matters, he makes no exception; he has not sought to justify his homosexual nature and practices, but humbly accepts scriptural and Church teaching. In his diaries he has stressed the fact that Christ's alleged indulgence to sexual misdemeanour was not unconditional : " Le monde dit que le Christ a été indulgent aux fautes charnelles parce qu'il a pardonné à la femme adultère, mais on oublie qu'il l'a renvoyée en lui disant : 'Ne pèche plus' ".<sup>(4)</sup> Much more recently, he has returned to this question,

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(1) Ibid., p. 157, April 5, 1969.

(2) Ibid., p. 366, March 6, 1972.

(3) Ibid., p. 341, Dec. 17, 1971.

(4) J, p. 1274, May 6, 1957.

disputing the assertion that Christ never explicitly condemned sexual abuses : " C'est faire abstraction d'un verset très important qui se trouve dans saint Matthieu, XV, 19 : '... du coeur viennent les mauvaises pensées, les meurtres, les adultères, les fornications, les vols, les faux témoignages, les blasphèmes. Voilà ce qui souille l'homme.' Ce même verset tout paulinien, du reste, se retrouve dans saint Marc, VII, 21. On fait l'objection que c'est la seule fois que le Christ ait parlé aussi nettement de ces choses, mais il l'a fait d'une façon catégorique et qui ne laisse aucune échappatoire ".<sup>(1)</sup> Faced with this somewhat uncompromising attitude, with this apparent desire to extrapolate from these texts a blanket condemnation on Christ's part of sexuality outside marriage, Green would probably find little point of contention in the Vatican's latest declaration on sexual morals.<sup>(2)</sup>

During our exploration of Green's major works, we have clearly observed how seriously the author regards the sin of the flesh, so often termed " le mal ". His belief in the gravity of sexual sins has been reinforced and accorded direct papal approval by the publication of the above-mentioned document, which heavily relying on Pauline sources castigates all forms of sexuality outside marriage, exalting chastity and denouncing sensuality in these terms : " Chastity is included in that continence which Saint Paul numbers among the gifts of the Holy Spirit, while he condemns sensuality as a vice particularly unworthy of the Christian and one which precludes entry into the kingdom of heaven. (Cf. Gal. 5 : 19-23; 1 Cor. 6 : 9-11) ".<sup>(3)</sup> With regard to the invert's condition, whereas understanding and help to overcome personal difficulties are called for,

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(1) Ce qui reste, pp. 347 - 348, Jan. 9, 1972. The verse from Mark here alluded to by Green reads as follows in the Authorized Version : " For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders.... ".

(2) Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Declaration on certain questions concerning sexual ethics, Catholic Truth Society, London, n.d. [ Given in Rome, December, 1975 ].

(3) Sexual Ethics, p. 16.

homosexual acts are regarded as " intrinsically disordered and can in no case be approved of ".<sup>(1)</sup> The final part of the document contains a forceful reminder to artists and writers of their responsibility in the creation of a more wholesome moral climate.<sup>(2)</sup> Unhappily, such directives, if slavishly obeyed, would doubtless give rise to literature (if literature it could be called) of that edifying and moralizing variety that Green has been at such pains to avoid.

As we saw much earlier,<sup>(3)</sup> Green the Catholic had resolved his personal dilemma to the extent that he was determined to continue writing what he termed his truth, necessitating as it often did " a full look at the worst " and resulting in the fine series of works from Mofra to Jeunesse. Although he has found no solution to his spiritual and sensual conflicts, he has come to a measure of acceptance of his own condition as a man<sup>(4)</sup> and fully assumed his particular rôle and responsibility as a writer :

" Il n'y a pas de littérature passionnelle sans conflits, pas de conflits sans obsession. Cela est vrai de nous tous qui racontons notre histoire en racontant des histoires. Chez moi le conflit est extrême. La sérénité ne donne rien dans le domaine de la fiction et demeure stérile. Alors peut-on écrire ? En a-t-on le droit ? 'Purifier la source' est la parole d'un homme sans passions, les anges ne font point de romans. "<sup>(5)</sup>

This passage from the early 1970's re-echoes across the decades of the

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(1) Ibid., p. 11.

(2) Ibid., p. 20.

(3) See above, Chapter II. And see J. Petit, JG les écrivains devant Dieu, pp. 53 - 58.

(4) As he remarked to Jacques Chancel in an interview, " Radioscopie ", Radio France, July 2, 1974 : " Je crois qu'il faut accepter sa condition, la condition humaine. Ce sont des choses qui ne sont pas voulues, mais qui sont permises par Dieu ".

(5) Ce qui reste, p. 342, Dec. 23, 1971.

twentieth century to rejoin similar diary extracts, carrying resonances of other writers and old, well-worn debates.<sup>(1)</sup>

For homo duplex the insoluble contradiction persists : the Roman Catholic Church proffers the ideal to which Julien Green aspires, yet he cannot deny his nature and vocation which, in his quest for truth, have inescapably led him to plumb the depths of the human condition where what he has discovered about himself and others is often far from corresponding to the morally wholesome. The priceless possession of personal freedom which has enabled him to chart his course - and of which he can proudly say : " Ma liberté était entière et n'a jamais cessé de l'être "<sup>(2)</sup> - has been long accompanied by the dream of writing the book which would tell the whole truth, " un livre où l'on eût tout dit, le bien comme le mal ".<sup>(3)</sup> Green believes that the deity protects the sincere artist who writes in good faith,<sup>(4)</sup> and he has pursued his path relentlessly, all the while yearning for the religious certitudes of the Grand Siècle, yet at the same time seeking to understand this " Nouvelle Eglise " that appears so alien and remote to such a fervent admirer of Pascal and Surin. Even in the autumn of his life, the difficulties with which he has had to contend have not simply been of a spiritual order; the struggle to free himself from the bonds of sensuality has not ceased to be a painful one, which the author has described in frank, uncompromising tones :

" 'Que celui qui veut être mon disciple prenne sa croix et me suive.' Combien veulent-ils de la croix, cette croix

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(1) See O.C. IV, p. 823, Dec. 24, 1944, for Green's earlier reference to Mauriac's phrase. See also, J, pp. 650 - 651, Feb.1, 1945. For an interesting discussion on Catholicism and the novel with particular reference to Mauriac, see J.E. Flower's Intention and Achievement, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1969, pp. 9 - 30.

(2) Liberté, p. 51.

(3) Ibid., p. 29. We think of the unexpurgated version of the Journal frequently alluded to by Green and due to appear posthumously.

(4) Ce qui reste, p. 264, Nov. 10, 1970.

impossible à éliminer pour qui veut être le disciple du Christ ? Ai-je la mienne ? Il m'est arrivé de me le demander. La chasteté, la terrible renonciation, cette croix, je ne la porte pas vaillamment, je la traîne et souhaiterais parfois qu'il me fût permis de la laisser là, un jour, ou une heure. Il y a des années que je voulais dire cela. " (1)

Nevertheless, only in renunciation and belief in Christ and his Church is there hope of attaining the realm beyond the turmoil of the senses. Green pins his faith in his notion of God as love; for him, " Le dernier mot, le tout dernier mot de la religion, est l'amour, et il n'y en a pas d'autre, il englobe la foi et l'espérance, il est la seule réponse qu'on puisse faire au siècle incroyant ".<sup>(2)</sup> Armed with this simple but deeply-held article of faith, Julien Green strives onward to the Kingdom of which he has been afforded privileged glimpses in rare moments of illumination, when something of the meaning and reality of " Felicity in the Soul " has been entrusted him.

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(1) Ibid., p. 182, Aug. 28, 1969.

(2) Ibid., p. 323, Sept. 2, 1971.

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For an extensive bibliography of criticism on Julien Green, see Peter C. HOY, Essai de bibliographie des études en langue française consacrées à Julien Green (1923 - 1967), Vol. I, (Calepins de Bibliographie n° 3), Lettres Modernes, Minard, Paris, 1970. The series will eventually comprise a second volume devoted to criticism on Green in English and a third to criticism in other languages. A useful compendium of works by Green with details of their English translations and a check-list of Anglo-American criticism on Green is provided by Marilyn Gaddis ROSE in her " Julien Green and Anglo-American Critics, A Selected Bibliography ", Bulletin of Bibliography, Vol. 24, n° 1, May-August, 1963, pp. 17 - 19.

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