

THE RELIGIOUS MISSION OF WOMAN
IN THE NOVELS OF GRAHAM GREENE

By

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	page
INTRODUCTION	v
PART I	
I. - THE INTELLECTUAL ATMOSPHERE OF OUR TIMES	1
1. Introductory	1
2. The Flight From God	2
3. The Crisis of Human Existence	13
4. Summary	26
II.- INTELLECTUAL ATMOSPHERE OF GRAHAM GREENE'S NOVELS	28
1. Introductory	28
2. The General Framework	29
3. Some Existential Themes	32
4. Conclusion	45
PART II	
I. - THE RELIGIOUS MISSION OF WOMAN	50
1. Introductory	50
2. The Religious Mission of Woman	52
3. A General Application to Graham Greene	72
4. Conclusion	76
II.- THE RELIGIOUS MISSION OF WOMAN IN THE NOVELS OF GRAHAM GREENE	78
1. The Man Within	
a. Introductory	78
b. An Analysis of the Novel	80
c. Summary	95
2. Brighton Rock	
a. Introductory	97
b. An Analysis of the Novel	99
c. Summary	114
3. The Power and the Glory	
a. Introductory	117
b. An Analysis of the Novel	118
c. Summary	124
4. The End of the Affair	
a. Introductory	127
b. An Analysis of the Novel	129
c. Summary	147
CONCLUSION	150

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this thesis is to analyze the religious mission of woman in the novels of Graham Greene.

It is hardly necessary to point out that it does not pretend to be exhaustive. The general field which it covers is too vast and the literature on the themes that come under consideration is too varied to admit of definitive analysis in this thesis. Its aim is rather to indicate how a leading literary figure of the 20th century makes some contribution towards the solution of what may be termed the "modern problem." Thus the thesis falls naturally into two parts: the problem and the solution.

The first part of the thesis deals with the problem in two chapters. Some clarification of what has been termed the "modern problem" is necessary here. In a general way, this problem is most aptly summarized by the word "subjectivism." By that is understood a mental attitude in virtue of which man endeavors to explain the world and human destiny in relation to the relative norms of his own consciousness. Subjectivism denies an objective standard, test or measure of truth.

Chapter One is an effort to estimate the present intellectual condition of man via a broad historical analy-

sis. It will also call attention to man's spiritual condition. By pointing out the important steps in the intellectual evolution of the past four centuries it will be shown how each new doctrine has been another contribution to the subjectivism of the modern mentality. The result of this evolution is the modern crisis of human existence in atheistic existentialism. Professor Gilson, in a lecture at the University of Notre Dame, has pointed out that the human mind can go no further in this direction. In atheistic existentialism a limit has been reached. Chapter Two then illustrates how this crisis is evidenced in the novels of Graham Greene. Whatever disadvantages this method may have, it has the great advantage of stating the problem before attempting a solution.

Part II of the thesis deals with woman insofar as her religious mission is a solution to this subjectivism of the modern mind. In the past 50 years a great body of literature has been written on woman's religious mission. Much of it has been related to the specific modern problem that has been mentioned above. Whereas subjectivism has isolated man, cut him off from traditional and transcendental truths of a spiritual nature and entrapped him in a wasteland without ultimate values, woman's religious mission provides a means of transcendence, communication and integrity. In the exercise of this mission, woman can

contribute to the restoration of those authentically human and religious values that have been progressively excluded from the various Zeitgeists of the past four centuries.

The French literary critics, Paul Rostenne and Jacques Madaule, have called attention to the significance of the religious mission of woman in the novels of Graham Greene. What they have had to say, however, has been brief and restricted to remarks of a general nature. This thesis proposes to go beyond what they have said in two ways. First of all by fuller examination of woman's religious mission in relation to modern man. And, secondly, by a more concrete, detailed examination of how this mission is carried out by the woman characters in Greene's novels. Thus Part II of this thesis is divided into two chapters. In the first, the religious mission of woman is examined and it is shown how her fidelity to this mission provides an effective incentive towards restoring respect for and adherence to religious values. Following this exposition, a final chapter will determine to what extent this ideal is to be found in Greene's novels.

It should be pointed out that only certain women in Graham Greene's novels exemplify this mission. Others fail to do so. The original plan for this thesis included a chapter entitled "A Negative Approach to the Religious Mission of Woman." Here it was to be shown that, refusing their femininity, women also betray those values that they

are placed in contact. In this respect the relationship of Milly and Conrad Drover in It's a Battlefield was to be analyzed, as well as the relationships of Kate and Erik Krogh (and her brother, Anthony) in England Made Me and Louise and Scobie in The Heart of the Matter. Woman's failure can also be an indication of her religious mission.

This negative examination has been omitted in the thesis for reasons of space. It was considered more important to conduct a positive analysis in which woman's fidelity to her religious vocation is shown forth through her influence on others. Four relationships are considered: Elizabeth and Andrews in The Man Within, Rose and Pinkie in Brighton Rock, Coral and the priest in The Power and The Glory and, finally, Sarah and Bendrix in The End of The Affair. The Quiet American, a minor Greene novel, is thus the only one that does not, either negatively, or positively, deal with woman's religious mission. Except for a few general references, Mr. Greene's entertainments, short stories, travelogues, essays and plays have been intentionally excluded from this study.

This thesis has a practical, apostolic aim as well as an intellectual one. In this manner it bears witness to the truth that knowledge is to be put at the service of man's ultimate destiny. The problem of modern man is not merely a theoretical issue. It is a vitally concrete one closely bound up with the painful drama in which man

and women of our times are involved.

Many brilliant critics of the modern scene who have offered penetrating and incisive insights have neglected a fundamental truth attested to by the first chapter of Genesis: "Male and female He created them." This duality conditions the whole scope of human history and never more so than today. A proper understanding of how the two segments of humanity fit together in the broad perspective of human destiny is essential to man today. It is hoped that this thesis will make some contribution towards that understanding.

PART I

I. - THE INTELLECTUAL ATMOSPHERE OF OUR TIMES

1. Introductory

We are bound to the past in the intellectual order as in any other. The great crises of the past have contributed to our crisis. The great intellectual victories of the past which have enlightened man's destiny can enlighten our destiny.

This solidarity of one age with another is important. Any consideration of modern man must begin, as Carl Jung has pointed out,¹ with the admission that the man we call modern is rarely met with. For modern in this sense implies a complete estrangement from the influence of other ages and "the common unconsciousness which claims the bulk of mankind almost entirely."² The modern mentality is the end product of an intellectual evolution. And here it might be pointed out that the word "intellectual" is taken in a broad sense to include the spiritual and moral status of modern man. Any movement of the intellect must have a corresponding influence on the soul whose faculty it is. Actually what is called "the intellectual atmosphere of

1. Jung, C.G., Modern Man in Search of a Soul, New York, Harcourt, Brace, 1933, ix-244 p.

2. Ibid., p. 197

our times," or "the intellectual crisis of modern man" is in reality a "spiritual atmosphere" and a "moral crisis."

This plight of modern man was well expressed by General Douglas MacArthur in 1945, in a radio address delivered after the fall of Japan. "The problem," he said, "is basically theological, because it involves the spiritual improvement of human character, an improvement that must synchronize with our advance in science, arts, literature, and all our material and cultural development of the past 2000 years. It is of the spirit and the spirit alone that the flesh can be healed."

This chapter shall attempt to determine the nature of modern man's intellectual and moral condition.

2. The Flight From God

In returning to the past to search for the roots and first formative principles of the ideas which rule the world today, the Lutheran Reformation, as Maritain has pointed out,³ might be taken as a starting point. Without denying that there were earlier seeds of the modern revolt it can be said that this was the first important step in a long chain of connected steps leading to the 20th century.

What first impresses us in Luther's character is egocentrism: something much subtler, much deeper, as much

3. Maritain, J., Three Reformers, New York, Sheed & Ward, p. 234.

more serious, than egoism; a metaphysical egoism. Luther's self becomes practically the center of gravity of everything, especially in the spiritual order.... 'Luther's self,' wrote Moehler, 'was in his opinion the centre round which all humanity should gravitate; he made himself the universal man in whom all should find their model. Let us make no bones about it, he put himself in the place of Jesus Christ,' (4)

Since this initial revolution, Western civilization has known many revolutions. But each revolution has been a variation on the fundamental theme of individualism or subjectivism introduced by Luther. Luther, writes Maritain,

did not free human personality, he led it astray. What he did free was the material individuality which we have just defined, the animal man. Can we not see it in his own life? As he gets older, his energy becomes less and less a soul's energy, and more and more the energy of temperament. Driven by great desires and vehement longings which fed on instinct and feeling, not on intelligence; possessed by the passions, loosing the tempest around him, breaking every obstacle and all "external" discipline; but having within him a heart full of contradictions and discordant cries; seeing life, before Nietzsche, as essentially tragic, Luther is the very type of modern individualism (the prototype of modern times, Fichte calls him). (5)

Maritain's analysis of the modern mentality in terms of the principles that are to be found in Luther's subjectivism is lengthy and profound, ranging over such concepts

4. Ibid., p. 14-15

5. Ibid., p. 26-27

as individuality and personality, the will and the intelligence, reason and faith. ("What is the Lutheran dogma of the certainty of salvation but the transference to the human individual and his subjective state of that absolute assurance in the divine promises which was formerly the privilege of the Church and her mission," he writes.) He sees Luther as the source of modern voluntarism, a kind of "anti-intellectualist pessimism," and the originator of two great ideas in modern philosophy: the idea of radical evil and the idea of the primacy of the will. He also sees him as the first Romantic in whom the ideas of liberty, inwardness and spirit were prised loose from their relation to external reality. This he calls the "immanentist error." And he comments: "So, for modern Protestant individualism, the Church and the sacraments separate us from God; so, for modern philosophic subjectivism, sensation and ideas separate us from reality."

This analysis would be incomplete without reference to the other two reformers Maritain discusses in his important study of the origins of modern thought: Descartes and Rousseau. In both can be found a development of that radical subjectivism that is clear in Luther. Descartes, the reformer in philosophy, and Rousseau, the reformer of morality, complete the trinity which "dominates the modern world." Descartes broke away from the traditional moulds of thought and, rather arbitrarily, attributed angelic qualities to the human intellect. He made knowledge independent of

external reality and thus enhanced the powers of man's mind.

Of Rousseau, Maritain observes:

It was Rousseau who completed that amazing performance which Luther began, of inventing a Christianity separate from the Church of Christ; it was he who completed the naturalization of the Gospel. It was to him that we owe that corpse of Christian ideas whose immense putrefaction poisons the universe today. Rousseauism is a "Christian heresy of mystical type," says M. Selliere. A heresy, fundamentally and radically, I grant; a complete realization of the Pelagian heresy through the mysticism of sensation; let us say more exactly that Rousseauism is a radical naturalistic corruption of Christian feeling. (6)

Luther's basic problem was religious. But it is important to note that as the principle of subjectivism increased and multiplied it tended more and more towards a de-emphasis of spiritual values and emphasis upon man's self sufficiency. Modern thought is a process of secularization and deification of man.

Luther held that man was intrinsically corrupt, "a lost lump," to whom the merits of Christ were extrinsically imputed. There was no such thing as an internal renovation and regeneration of man.... The next step in the thought process was to argue that if the supernatural does not intrinsically regenerate man, then it is not natural to man. If it is not natural to man, then it ought to be eliminated. The Aufklärung movement in Germany, Pietism in France, Deism in England completely eliminated the supernatural with the explanation

that it was a perversion of the natural man. (7)

Man's gradual elimination of God from his thought logically led to an outright denial of God in Life. It is impossible here to do more than indicate the broad streams of thought in which subjectivism manifested itself. Bearing in mind that the evolution of modern thought, the influence of one system on another and the sometimes obscure threads that link one Zeitgeist to another, or complicated matters, three general directions may be indicated.

One is Rationalist in which men like Descartes, Spinoza, Kant, Leibnitz and Hegel stressed the predominant role of reason (and underplayed the external world of reality) in the construction of a system of knowledge and supported the extreme claim that reason and systematic thinking. (This is sometimes known as Idealism.) Another is empiricist in nature with thinkers like Locke, Berkeley, Hume, Comte and Mill appealing to scientifically determinable facts as the origin of ideas. (This is sometimes known as the positivist school and included a large number of scientists.) A final manifestation of subjectivism is the Romantic school (in reality, a form of idealism) in which such outstanding figures as Schelling, Fichte, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche and Emerson endeavored to construct a system of immanentism in which feeling, appetite and

intuition were emphasized. The English and French schools of romantic poetry are tributaries of this stream.⁸

What is common to all of these trends is their attempt to depreciate, directly or indirectly, the claims of the supernatural and deify man through "the exaltation of the limited, contingent existence into an absolute."⁹ Like Corneille's hero, the man of the 18th and 19th century began to say, "Je suis maître de moi comme de l'univers!" More and more, the Western mind, in searching for its basic convictions about the nature of man, the structure of state and society, the meaning of human existence and human civilization drifted away from the norms of philosophy and theology as they had been understood by Christian tradition. In the optimistic spirit that was encouraged by progress in science, discovery and technology, man wished to work out his destiny by an application of the same rules used to govern matter. Here again can be detected the predominance of man's "material individuality" which Maritain perceived in Luther's revolt.

Special mention must be made here of Nietzsche and his master, Feuerbach, in whom the principle of subjectivism reached a degree of militant atheism. They have been rightly

8. Collins, J.D., A History of Modern European Philosophy, Milwaukee, Bruce, 1954, x-857 p. This volume contains an excellent analysis of 19 modern philosophers, pointing out what is specific in each and common to all.

9. Sheen, F.J., Op. Cit., p. 346

called "the theologians of our contemporary atheistic philosophies." Feuerbach set himself to the task of banishing God by formulating an explicit philosophy of atheism. He developed his famous "alienation theory" in which he taught that everything that is attributed to God is nothing other than a projection of what is best in man.¹⁰ What should at all costs be kept as a human treasure is given to a mythical, imaginative figure called God. Hence man's nature is enriched by an appropriation of divine attributes. As Nietzsche saw so clearly, man becomes God. There remains only the formality of chanting a Requiem over His dead memory. This was done in Nietzsche's ardent "death of God" procession.¹¹

Feuerbach and Nietzsche carried out their execution of God with an almost religious exultation to the accompaniment of lyrical promises of man's deliverance. The preceding generations of subjectivism in philosophy, and a spiritual decline had already set the scene for the atheistic redemption of the two Germans. A kind of ferment was in the air that was contagious. Men of noble character and excellent minds became enthusiastic about the new atheism. Thus Dietrich Heinrich Kerler declared: "Even if it could be proved by mathematics that God exists, I do not want him to exist because he would set a limit to my greatness."

10. De Lubac, Henri, The Drama of Atheist Humanism, New York, Sheed & Ward, 1949, p. 9

11. Ibid., p. 22

Nicolai Hartmann held that if there were a God it would be the end of man "as an ethical essence, as a person." Emil Bergmann proclaimed that "it is possible to breed not only animals but the man-God." Many believed with Nietzsche that "man would rise higher and higher from the moment when he ceased to flow into God." The modern Prometheus, who had been gestating in the womb of history from the time of Luther and even before, was now born. And a fine healthy baby it was!

The death of God was destined to have fatal repercussions. It led to what Nicholas Berdyaev, the Russian philosopher recently deceased, has called "the self-destruction of humanism." "Where there is no God," he said, "there is no man, either." As the spirit of subjectivism became more and more intense, finally expressing itself in a militant form of philosophical atheism, a crisis was reached. The devaluation process that had been going on in other domains now culminated in the dissolution of man himself.

What has become of man as conceived by this atheist humanism? A being that can still hardly be called a "being"--a thing which has no content, a cell completely merged in a mass which is in process of becoming.... There is no stability or depth left in him.... There is nothing to prevent his being used as material or as a tool either for the preparation of some future society or for ensuring, here and now, the dominance of one privileged group. There is not even anything to prevent his being cast aside

as useless.... For this man has literally been dissolved. Whether in the name of myth or in the name of dialectic, losing truth, he has lost himself. In reality there is no longer any man because there is no longer anything that is greater than man.... Atheist humanism was bound to end in bankruptcy. Man is himself only because his face is illumined by a divine ray. (12)

Nietzsche gloated long and loudly over his victory and earth promised to be a fair mother to Promethean man. "This is what your beauty means to us now: that there is no heaven above you to keep us under the yoke, no everlasting precept to clip our wings!" Nietzsche boasted. He had realized his dream but he did not foresee the bitter fruit that his kingdom of man was soon to yield.

The German theologian, Karl Adam, assesses the dissolution of man in these words:

The sixteenth century revolt from the Church led inevitably to the revolt from Christ in the eighteenth century, and thence to the revolt from God in the nineteenth. And thus the modern spirit has been torn loose from the deepest and strongest supports of its life, from its foundations in the absolute, in the self-existent Being, in the value of all values. Life has lost its great meaning, its vital strength and high purpose, its strong pervading love, that can be enkindled only by the divine. Instead of the man who is rooted in the absolute, hidden in God, strong and rich, we have the man who rests

upon himself, the autonomous man. (13)

Two important books that grew out of the 19th century spirit bear witness to this transition of values. The first, Darwin's Origin of Species, published on November 24, 1859, testifies to the spirit of optimism that resulted from man's belief in his own self-sufficiency. Darwin suggested that man was nothing more than a natural creature (having evolved from the animal kingdom) and implied that he was capable of forging his own destiny. The theory of "the survival of the fittest" was in harmony with the aggressive independence of the 19th century man. In 1855, the German Darwinist, Karl Vogt, had published a somewhat witty essay in which he attempted to dispense with the problem of the human soul. Thought was here described as a "secretion" of the brain just as digestive juices are a secretion of the stomach, bile a secretion of the liver, and urine a secretion of the kidneys. The tone of Darwin's volume was naturalistic and confident.

A second important work was Oswald Spengler's Decline of the West published, in two volumes, in 1917 and 1922. Over fifty years separate the two works. But the basic outlook, on the surface at least, is the same. There is, however, this important difference: Darwin's

13. Adam, Karl, The Spirit of Catholicism, London, Sheed & Ward, 1952, p. 9

work was the expression of the high hopes and apparently incurable optimism of the heyday of science and reason. Spengler expresses the disillusionment of an age that had promised progress, peace, security, and liberation from all illusions and superstitions. There is no dimension of the spiritual in Spengler. But there is no hope either. History, culture and destiny, in his mind, are determined biologically. His analysis of the breakdown which by then was quite universally manifest, can be summed in this sentence: "The modern crisis was caused by a biological exhaustion of the organism of Western culture - indicative of an impending finale." (1)

Events had come to a ironic climax. Man's autonomy, which had promised to invest him with exalted dignity, tended to strip him of his life. The 16th and 17th centuries moved away from God; the 18th and 19th centuries either ignored or denied God; and in the 20th century man himself feels the weight of centuries of oppressive subjectivism. He is isolated in a world that is largely unrelated to meaningful values. The drama has been played in three acts which are, according to Hiscox Sheen, the religious man, the natural man, and finally, the frustrated man.

1/1. Reinhardt, Kurt, The Existentialist Revolt, Milwaukee, Bruce, 1952, p.6

3. The Crisis of Human Existence

It is the third act, that of the final paradox, with which this thesis now concerns itself. The plight is at once a result of previous centuries of the Ideal and a reaction against it. In either case, it is yet another manifestation of the spirit of subjectivism that conditions the intellectual atmosphere of our times. Lutheranism, individualism was one such manifestation. Rationalism, Empiricism and romanticism were others. Today, it is atheistic existentialism which sets the intellectual and spiritual "mood." Atheistic existentialism is of the same tradition with which we have discussed the pages above. And it represents a specific crisis of modern man.

This crisis, as we can see, has its roots in the past. Indeed it was already predicted by the German poet Goethe, who wrote: "For all become more aware of their fate, but will not be able to escape it. I see the day approaching when God will no longer be pleased with man, when he will have to smash him apart to pieces in order to rejuvenate it." In the 19th century the impending crisis became more and more apparent. It was seen, for example, by Cardinal Newman who perceived deep in the soul of his time and found evidence for what he called the "original sin." It was also seen by the Russian novelist, Fyodor Dostoevsky, whose prophetic insight into the terrible and formidable crisis of which Nietzsche was to write has been well known.

But it was seen perhaps most clearly of all by the Danish thinker, Søren Kierkegaard. No man did more to swing his age away from a traditional and impersonal paganism. Yet, paradoxically, no man did more to intensify the very spirit he fought against. For Kierkegaard has come down in history as the founder of 20th century existentialism which, in its atheistic form, is extreme subjectivism. In his Journals, Kierkegaard wrote: "There must be a later Reformation, and this time, it will be a horrible reformation. Compared with it that of Luther will appear a child's jest."

Kierkegaard began by asserting that the deadly disease of the modern age was the divorce of life and thought. He charged that philosophy had become highly abstract and artificial (and criticized the idealistic system of Hegel severely), that life had been so emptied of meaning that people no longer knew what it meant to "exist," and that Christianity had become a diluted, enervated sentimentality, and a refined nihilism. What Kierkegaard meant by 'existential truth' was a translation of abstract truth into the concrete, an ethical and religious appropriation of truth, an active practice and realization rather than a doctrinal knowledge. The key to the significance of his thought is the supreme importance he placed upon the individual. Even as his thought retains strong ties with that of Luther.

"I want honesty," Kierkegaard wrote in a political pamphlet, shortly before his death. "If that is what this race and generation wants, if it will admittedly, honestly, frankly, openly, directly rebel against Christianity, and say to God, 'We can but we will not submit ourselves to this authority'--but remember that it is to be done honestly, frankly, directly--well then, struggle as it may soon, I am for it; for honesty is what I want...." (15)

In his writings Kierkegaard touched upon all the important themes--and especially that of man's abandonment and isolation--that are to be found in the modern-day existentialism of such men as Sartre, Heidegger, Jaspers, and Marcel as well as in the "crisis theology" of such men as Karl Barth, Emil Brunner and Reinhold Niebuhr. These themes are also predominant in much of the literature, both poetry and prose, of the 20th century, and can be found in other forms of art such as music and painting. It is man's individualism, his "being-by-himself" that Kierkegaard stressed and which retains such a grip on our age. Writes Father De Lubac of Kierkegaard:

He is...the theologian of inwardness, that is to say of personal appropriation. The problem which he handles...is a subjective problem: it is the question of determining the relation of the subject to the truth of Christianity.... Anyone who, thinking to follow the footsteps, untroubled himself forthwith in Kierkegaard's positions, would run the risk of cutting himself off from all rational life...

perhaps from all culture.... (16)

It is to be noted that existentialism began as a frankly Christian, although highly subjective, mode of thinking. Today it is predominantly atheistic. But whether Christian or atheistic, the positive contributions of existentialism ought to be recognized.

In all its forms, however, existentialism should be of compelling interest to the Christian thinker today. For it protests against those intellectual and social forces which are destroying freedom. It calls men away from stifling abstractions and automatic conformity. It drives us back to the most basic, inner problems: what it means to be a self, how we ought to use our freedom, and how we can find and keep the courage to face death. And even more important, it bids each individual thinker wrestle with these problems until he has grown into personal authenticity, instead of simply taking his answers from someone else. (17)

For all existentialists truth has an individualistic flavor, involving a profound kind of self-examination. That is why so many existentialist writers express themselves in plays, novels, journals and personal essays or meditations. The most significant thing, they feel, is a change in man--his motives, his feelings, and his hopes--rather than an increase in knowledge. They protest vigor-

16. De Lubac, Henri, Op.Cit., p. 52-53

17.. Roberts, David L., Existentialism and Religious Belief, New York, Oxford University Press, 1957, p. 11

ously against traditional philosophies by insisting that the personal commitments of the thinker be incorporated into his definition of truth. They plunge ardently into problems which concern such human polarities as freedom-destiny, anxiety-courage, isolation-society, guilt-forgiveness. They recognize that these tensions must always remain at the center of vital thinking.

The remainder of this chapter will be concerned principally with the effects of atheistic existentialism. These determine the intellectual and moral atmosphere of our times. And it is within this framework that the principal theme of this thesis is situated.

Yet even where existentialism leads to atheistic conclusions, it is of great importance that we understand it, for it offers a particularly poignant exposition of the predicament of modern man. Here we see individuals facing tragedy without any hope of salvation. We see them standing in utter loneliness and staring at bleak emptiness. And as Christians we need to understand these atheists because, unlike more complacent thinkers, they are honest enough to voice that sense of despair which is so widespread in our world. They speak, in fact, for millions of our contemporaries for whom God is dead. They tear away the masks of optimism, self-confidence, and indifference. (18)

To understand how Kierkegaard's Christian existentialism (what Emmanuel Mounier has called his "tragic op-

18. Ibid., p. 5

tinism of Christianity") becomes in our day largely atheistic it is necessary to insist on the importance of Friedrich Nietzsche's contribution to the struggle against it. Kierkegaard died in 1855. Nietzsche was born in 1844. The two thinkers had much in common. Both have had what Nietzsche has called "a spearable impoverishment and exhaustion of human existence." Both protested against the views of positivism and naturalism. Both searched relentlessly for a philosophy that would direct man to a transformation of existence decisively. But while Kierkegaard called for a deeper re-interpretation of Christianity, Nietzsche proclaimed that Christianity was "lying on its death-bed" and demanded that man be de-Christianized. There is a parallel will for self-affirmation in both thinkers, but in Nietzsche this affirmation is rooted in man's self-sufficiency. Thus he arrived at the concept of the Superman.

Nietzsche's continuing with modern thought as well as his influence upon contemporary thought is well pointed out in this passage:

Nietzsche's philosophy represents the most extreme and perhaps also the most consistent form of the branch of western thought which is usually referred to as idealism. It began with Descartes and proceeded through several stages of speculation or Soliloquy, through the work of Leibniz, to achieve its most systematic formulation in the works of Kant, Fichte, and Hegel. In the nineteenth-century the idealist man is conceived as a "philosophical center of the world" who is supposed to

as the mere product or artifact of the innate faculties of the human mind. This kind of idealism imprisons man in the fortress of his own thought, and man in turn imposes the structure of his mind on whatever there is admitted as extramental reality. Man is no longer confidently opened toward Being and Reality, but he is filled with distrust and doubt as to anything which is not in the mind, of the mind or the mind itself. (19)

Today the existentialist thinkers are facing the crisis predicted by Dostoevsky who spoke of "the self-affirming of man who ends in self-destruction."²⁰ To indicate the intensely personal, subjective, and atheistic quality of existential philosophy the following cross section of quotations from representative figures of that school may help. Thus Karl Jaspers:

The content of our truth depends upon our appropriating the historical foundation. Our own power of generation lies in the rebirth of what has been handed down to us. If we do not wish to slip back, nothing must be forgotten; but if philosophizing is to be genuine our thoughts must arise from our own source. (21)

And Martin Heidegger:

Thus everything depends on this: that our thinking should become more thoughtful in its season. This is achieved when our thinking, instead of implementing a higher degree of exertion, is

19. Cf. Reinhardt, Kurt F., Op. Cit., p. 107-108

20. Cf. Sheen, F.J., Op. Cit., p. 347-359. A broad look at the existential pervasion of modern thought can be found in these pages.

21. Kaufmann, Walter, Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre, New York, Meridian Books, p. 133

directed toward a different point of origin. The thinking which is posited by beings as such, and therefore representational and illuminating in that way, must be supplemented by a different kind of thinking which is brought to pass by Being itself and, therefore, responsive to Being... The only thing at stake here is to get men to think about the involvement of Being in human nature and thus, from our point of view, to present first of all an experience of human nature which may prove sufficient to direct our inquiry. (22)

The position of atheistic existentialism is stated clearly by Jean Paul Sartre in his essay, Existentialism is a

Humanism:

The first effect of existentialism is that it puts every man in possession of himself as he is, and places the entire responsibility for his existence squarely upon his own shoulders.... Man is nothing else but what he purposes, he exists only in so far as he realizes himself, he is therefore nothing else but the sum of his action, nothing else but what his life is.... What man needs is to find himself again and to understand that nothing can save him from himself, not even a valid proof of the existence of God. (23)

Albert Camus stresses the commitment of the existentialist:

At this meridian of thought, the rebel thus rejects divinity in order to share in the struggles and destiny of all men. We shall

22. Ibid., p. 212-213

23. Ibid., p. 291, 300, 311

choose Ithaca, the faithful land, frugal and audacious thought, lucid action, and the generosity of the man who understands. In the light the earth remains our first and last love. Our brothers are breathing under the same sky as we; justice is a living thing. Now is born that strange joy which helps one live and die, and which we shall never again postpone to a later time. (24)

This chapter is not concerned primarily with philosophical existentialism.²⁵ It is rather concerned with the influence of this system of thought has had upon the modern mentality. The principal themes of existentialism may be resumed as follows.²⁶

1. Insistence upon Existence. Existential thinkers have an outspoken horror of abstractions and theoretical principles. In this system of thought the weight of life hangs heavily on the individual and on the contingent aspects of his existence or his "being-in-the-world." All existentialists begin thinking by asking such practical questions as: Why was I born? What is the meaning of life with all of its checks and limitations? How can I best realize my potentialities. Their thinking is inspired by

24. Camus, Albert, The Rebel, New York, Vintage Books, 1948, p. 306

25. Cf. Maritain, J., Existence and the Existent, New York, Image Books, 1956, 153 p. In this book professor Maritain discusses the philosophical tenets of existentialism and shows how they have pervaded the modern mentality.

26. This thematic structure of existentialism is adapted from Kurt Reinhardt, Op. Cit., p. 226-243.

the fear and insecurity of our times. While traditional thought was primarily concerned with "human nature," modern existentialism concentrates on the "human condition." Existentialists are obsessed with the tragic condition of human destiny; they harp incessantly on man's limits. They wrestle with the obstacles and difficulties of life without any hope of success or real achievement. Albert Camus has compared man's destiny to the myth of Sisyphus. We are condemned to roll the stone of life up a steep incline only to have it roll back as we near the top. Since each person has different problems and is faced with a different contingency, he must act accordingly. Each must forge his own values. All sense in life must be imposed by the subject. Each man is his own prophet.

2. Subjectivism. This relative, subjective character is one of the most significant aspects of existentialism. Once contingency and finiteness become the sole frame of reference in life, man's interests center more and more upon his personal predicaments and uncertainties. Existentialists insist upon independent thinking. Thought is not important in itself, but only insofar as it has some meaning for the thinking subject. This independence and subjectivity is typical of Sartre, although by no means of him alone. In this passage a French literary critic and theologian underlines the subjective aspect of his thinking:

S'il n'y a pas de Dieu, il n'y a pas non plus d'essence, de valeurs objectives inscrites dans un ciel intelligible;

L'homme doit créer des valeurs. Son 'projet' les fait être; il est donc entièrement responsable, parce qu'il abandonné à lui-même; il ne peut se reposer sur rien d'objectif; s'il le faisait, il serait de mauvaise foi, il ne serait plus libre. L'athéisme est donc, selon Sartre, la base de la dignité humaine et de la liberté. On reconnaît ici des accents nietzschéens.... (27)

In the same vein, Roger Troisfontaines says, commenting on Kierkegaard's dictum: "Truth is subjectivity":

La domaine qui m'intéresse le plus échappe à toute définition conceptuelle, à toute construction, à tout système; la réalité la plus profonde, je ne puis la décrire, la contempler ou la rêver. Elle n'est jamais objet: impossible d'en imaginer une science communicable. Pour l'atteindre je dois vivre, moi, l'approcher personnellement dans une expérience originale. (28)

3. The Sense of Nothingness. This is an acute consciousness of negation whence arise boredom, melancholy, anguish and absurdity. All existentialists stress the importance of nothingness or "the nothing." It is, in fact, at the very center of existentialist thinking. Nietzsche, in his prophetic Will to Power, made this statement: "I shall describe what will of necessity come about, the advent of nihilism." Kierkegaard also elaborated upon the themes of nothingness and anguish and fear. His book, The

27. Moeller, Charles, Littérature du XX^e siècle et christianisme, Vol. II, Paris, Gaston, 1953, p. 67

28. Troisfontaines, Roger, Existentialisme et pensée Chrétienne, Paris, J. Vrin, 1948, p. 16

Concept of Dread, was a particularly keen analysis of the sickness of his age and, more especially, of our age. Never before in the history of human thought, had the idea of nothingness come so univrsally close to taking, on the aspects of a positive reality. Such sentiment vitiates purpose in life and denies any transcendence. Man is cut off from those values that might form a basis or a point of reference for his thinking. He is separated from society because he is, by definition, trapped wit in his own self. He then becomes, in Sartre's bitter phrase, "une passion inutile." Despair and solitude are intrinsic to existentialism. And death assumes great importance. For death is "being-no-more"--the measuring rod of all absurdity.

4. Estrangement. A sense of "aloneness" or "aloness" and the need to transcend oneself through communication are perhaps the concepts which best express this aspect of existentialism and indicate its profound grip on the contemporary mentality. Man feels himself isolated, walled in and oppressed by a mysterious and cruel environment. The limits of his human condition put him at the mercy of strange forces that work against him. Suffering, guilt, death and even something so simple as day to day living, all have their sadistic colors intent upon making the individual's existence a thing of torture. Thus oppressed, the individual thinks of himself as a mass of imperfections and finally becomes conscious of his fineness

loneliness and the fact that he is being pursued.

Two novels and two poets might be taken as examples of this existential phenomenon of isolation. Franz Kafka's The Castle (The Trial is also a good illustration) is a kind of allegory depicting man's helplessness before some mysterious and superior power that works against him. Man is thrown into the world but he cannot penetrate the mystery of life any more than the protagonist of this novel can gain access to the castle. A second novel, Albert Camus' The Stranger, portrays the life of an uprooted man living in Algiers. He has no strong attachments. His mother's death leaves him unmoved. He feels no love for the girl he is going to marry. He moves about in society unrelated to other people. Finally, he commits a pointless murder which serves to accentuate his isolation. And thus he dies a martyr to his own peculiar individuality.

This motive of "estrangement" recurs frequently in the work of Rainer Maria Rilke. In the poem, The Great Night, even inanimate objects are strange, foreign and remote. A big city is described as "inaccessible." The poet finds himself walled in and overpowered by "angry towers" and "inscrutable mountains." In one striking line, he writes, "The street drew oppressively near, and I found myself a stranger to it."

Much of the work of T.S. Eliot can be interpreted in this perspective. Prufrock, for example, might have been a character conceived by Jean Paul Sartre--a character

who grows old, impotent, afraid to formulate any definite questions about the purpose of his existence, overwhelmed by a "tas de petits miseres," longing for peace, utterly bored and thirsting for happiness. In The Wasteland modern man appears as an existential "heap of broken images"-- chaotic, lacking insight, spiritual moorings and meaning. In The Cocktail Party, Eliot states the existential problem most clearly. For here he faces the ultimate issue of loneliness and isolation and the meaning that can be discovered only through communication. The problem at hand for the people in The Cocktail Party is to find out who they really are. That is the problem our excellent of modern man.

4. Summary

This chapter has been an attempt to achieve perspective. It has sought, in a broad outline, to determine the intellectual and moral crisis of our day by an historical analysis. Taking the Lutheran Reformation as a starting point in coming down to modern day Existentialism, an effort was made to bring out the trend to subjectivism in the past four centuries. The principle of subjectivism was introduced in a radical way by Luther and became more and more dominant by virtue of the contributions of various thinkers until it reached, in a logical way, the extreme and atheistic individualism of existentialism.

For a complete study the works of many more thinkers would have to be studied. And the interplay of thought, with the influence of one system on another and the subtle variations on the theme of subjectivism, would have to be examined in much more detail. Specifically, Communism and Freudianism would have to be investigated in this perspective.

But in view of the fact that this chapter serves a functional purpose it was judged best to make a brief study. The atmosphere of Graham Greene's novels will now be studied in this framework of modern existentialism.. This will complete Part One which is intended to establish the first pole of the thesis, namely, the insufficiency of modern man.

II. - INTELLECTUAL ATMOSPHERE OF GRAHAM GREENE'S NOVELS

1. Introductory

This chapter will attempt to bring out only those aspects of Greene's novels which express the existential mentality established in the preceding chapter. In other words, it endeavors to determine a common ground between Graham Greene and his atheistic contemporaries.

There is an obvious morbidity and terror of life (taken in the sense of a deep perception into the soul of our times) in Greene that favor such a comparison. "The two great popular statements of our time are: 'What a small world it is' and 'I am a stranger here myself,'" he wrote in The Ministry of Fear. The existential overtones are not hard to detect in this statement. And, in a sense, Greene's entire literary output is a commentary upon it. That "ennui de vie" so characteristic of existentialism thrives in Greene's novels. One could compose an entire volume simply by assembling passages from his books which express a rank tedium vitae. A typical instance would be Scobie's reflection in The Heart of the Matter: "It seemed that life was immeasurably long. Couldn't the test of man have been carried out in fewer years? Couldn't we have committed our first major sin at seven, have ruined our-

selves for love or hate at ten, have clutched at redemption on a fifteen-year-old deathbed?"

The positive quality of Greene's work will be reserved for treatment in the last chapter of the thesis.

2. The General Framework

A number of critics have pointed out the existential qualities of Graham Greene's work. As A. Laurens says:

Tous ses livres sont dominés par l'angoisse de l'homme devant l'étendue de sa liberté, la faiblesse de sa volonté et son écrasante responsabilité dans ce monde absurde et veule qu'il laisse, par sa démission, monter autour de lui comme une prison. (2)

Another critic writes:

A terror of life, a terror of what experience can do to the individual, a terror of a predetermined corruption, is the motive force that drives Greene as a novelist. With different degrees of plausibility, in his various books Greene is continually saying that happiness is unusual and anxious routine is nearer the disappointing "natural" state of man, that experience sadens, that we must bear rather than rejoice.... Failure, ugliness and the primitive are in some sense truer than success, beauty and civilization with their seductive gloss. (3)

Paul Rostenne, in a perceptive essay on Greene, notes

29. Cf. Rostenne, Paul, Graham Greene: Témoin des temps tragiques, Paris, Julliard, 1949, p. 63

30. Allen W., and Farris, M., The Art of Graham Greene, London, Hamish-Hamilton, 1951, p. 1-16

another important existential trait:

Le mal essentiel qui ronge l'humanité contemporaine et vicie toutes ses entreprises, c'est la peur. Et la peur est justement une emanation de cette solitude qui vient d'être évoquée. Elle naît de l'impossibilité ou se sent l'homme de communiquer avec ses semblables, de les comprendre et d'être compris d'eux. (31)

And again:

Il a peur de ses semblables dans la mesure où il a peur de lui-même. C'est pourquoi si la vie intérieure paraît aujourd'hui terriblement menacée d'étouffement, c'est parce que l'homme prive de tout recours contre ses monstres personnels, abandonné lui-même, sans soutien et sans guide, a choisi la solution la plus rapide et la plus facile qui était de se fuir. (32)

³³
Mario-Beatrice Mesnet notes the obsessions and themes of Greeneland; pursuit, betrayal, escape, childhood, fear, sin and loneliness. Greene's characters inhabit a world of relative and contingent values. They have come from nowhere, do not assign any purpose or movement to their lives and feel inferior to the challenge of life. They are hunted by the police and haunted by memories of peace and innocence from childhood. The sub-

31. Rostanne, Paul, Op. Cit., p. 114

32. Ibid., p. 115

33. Mesnet, Mario-Beatrice, Graham Greene and the Heart of the Matter, London, The Cuenot Press, 1957, vii-116 p.

jective and introspective character of existentialism in virtue of which man is the sum total of his miseries appeals very deeply to Greene's genius. Miss Mesnot observes the novelist's technique in identifying the quality of sin in man with murky imagery from the physical world:

This awareness of the worst, of the underside of all things that seem good or beautiful, of sin, of poverty, brings us to the drab quarters of the big cities with the smell, the dirt and the smoke from the steel factory buildings, the streets where torn pieces of waste paper are whirled by the wind, the queues for cheap seats at cinemas, the fish-and-chip shops, the "filthiness of trams and second-hand clothes shops and public lavatories and evening institutes", to the gaudy shore of Brighton, Tabasco, the hot coast of Sierra Leone. This is what man has "made out of his primitive, what he has made out of childhood", the world where murderers are born, where fathers are sent to prison or mothers cut their throats with a carving knife.... (34)

This propensity to immerse his characters in the nausea of existence, to describe them in terms of their concrete here-and-now-ness not only gives Greene's novels great intensity but also serves to accentuate their complete alienation from peace and communication and tranquility. "There is no peace anywhere where there is human life," he wrote in The Lawless Roads. Men are not so much persons as individuals isolated in a limited world and barred entrance into the "territories" of others. Like

Harry, in T.S. Eliot's The Family Reunion, they are all wide awake to the nightmare of life.

These scattered comments can be understood better by marshalling them into a more ordered sequence through a consideration of the principal and general themes of all Greene's works.

It has been said that Greene is always repeating himself. That is true in the sense that all artists of serious intention are "possessed of a vision or an obsession" which they must bring forth in their medium. Robert Hugh Benson in The History of Richard Raynal, Solitary wrote of a recluse with one "single, vital message." Greene, like Raynal, is a victim of his message. His reputation is a testimony to that difficulty. In any case, Greene is a writer of repeated and limited themes. The trends of thought and method in his work that are existential in the sense already ascribed to that term will now be considered.

3. Some Existential Themes

One basic theme in Greene's novels is that of pursuit. With the single exception of England Made Me, the police figure essentially in all his works. Thus the French refer to the Greene character as 'un homme traque' --a hunted man. Father Gardiner³⁵ has called Greene a "Catholic

³⁵. Gardiner, Harold, "Graham Greene: Catholic Shocker," in *Renascence*, Vol. I, No. 2. 1949, p. 12-20

shocker." Greene's literary style is (structured) upon that of the detective story, the thriller. That is why, for many years, he was not taken seriously as a novelist.

In The Man Within, his first novel, the first paragraph is an evocative portrayal of a man in flight. It is true that these novels have the ingredients of excellent detective stories. But with Greene this manner of writing is more than a mere method. It is a philosophy.³⁶ For through the technique of the thriller, he is able to describe in an unparalleled manner all the anarchy, revolt and loneliness of modern, existential man. Through this medium, Greene focuses attention upon the tragic condition of humanity and sets "the terrible drama of freedom" and "the appalling mysteries of love" in bold relief. The existential writers in France frequently use the police as a symbol of a world that oppresses individuals. By running afoul of the police, they assert their freedom and creativity. Because they are alone in a hostile world--always a prey to betrayal, pursuit and ultimate despair--they must live in revolt and anarchy. The meaning of their life is derived from their success or failure to oppose the inert hostility of everything that is outside of themselves. In Greene the symbolism goes further (for he uses the thriller as the locus or meeting ground of good

36. Cf. Rostenne, Paul, Op. Cit., p. 57-65

and evil) but his preoccupation with the tragic is not less intense.

This is the key to an understanding of such novels as The Power and the Glory (where the priest's flight from the police is symbolical of his flight from God and his capture by the police is symbolical of his return to God) and Brighton Rock (in which Pinkie's meaning is measured negatively, as it were by ricochet, through his relations to the police and the wider symbol of organized society). In The Heart of the Matter the police-hunted symbol is concentrated in the one person of Scobie. It may be said that he is a policeman who arrests himself. In The End of the Affair the detective is an almost purely allegorical figure used as a foil to contrast the Divine Detective and the torture of Sarah and Bendrix in the role of the pursued.

Thus in Greene the thriller technique is seen to be something bordering on the sacred. For the relationship between the sacred and the tragic is a close one. Francis Thompson illustrated this truth in his poem, The Hound of Heaven. Chesterton lauded the thriller as perhaps the only remaining literary technique capable of describing the full measure of evil, the intensity of warfare in man's soul and of offering us a reminder that there is in man a "passionate love for evil as well as for good, a constitutional need for disorder, death and nothingness as well as

for life."

In the final analysis, this technique is but a literary expression of the reality of the Crucifixion in which God became a *traqué*. By insisting upon the tragic condition of humanity, by entering within themselves and suffering in their insecurity and anxiety, existentialists have made a veritable contribution to modern thought. Existential despair is perhaps closer to humility than anything that can be found in all the other philosophies of atheism. These considerations, incidentally, pinpoint the deep meaning of Bloy's saying--quoted by Greene in *exergue* to The End of the Affair--"Man has places in his heart which do not yet exist, and into them enters suffering in order that they may have existence."

A second existential theme in Greene's works is that of childhood. The nostalgia for childhood, in the context of his novels, is a form of escapism. It indicates the inability of man without values to face the complexities of life; it is an expression of man's consciousness of the burden of existence. (Childhood is also symbolical of peace, simplicity and communication. In the spiritual perspective, childhood is the expression of dependence, rebirth and sanctity. Although in Greene's novels this sense of childhood symbolizes more a desire than an achievement of his characters.)

The desire to escape responsibility is, in essence, childishness. Every man born into this world is limited and individualized by destiny and it is only by accepting

these limitations that freedom can be exercised and personality matured. Freedom lies in the power to respond to the situation in which one is placed. Man's attitude, as Gabriel Marcel has frequently pointed out,³⁷ must be one of commitment, by which he accepts to face the present, assume his past and prepare for the future.

The predominance of the childhood theme in Greene's works is undoubtedly largely autobiographical. His own childhood was a stormy one--in the existential sense of that word. He went through phases of hatred, despair, and attempted suicide. He has built up a conviction (substantiated to some extent by recent developments of psychology) that we are influenced in our childhood, either for good or for evil, in a permanent manner. Greene revolts against the unfairness of this fact, for a child cannot be expected to survive. He expressed his conviction in *Germinal's* poem that ended with the lines: "...in the lost boyhood of Judas, Christ was betrayed."

This brings out another meaning of the childhood theme. While childhood often means peace and simplicity, it can also symbolize a kind of fatalism in virtue of which children are doomed to be what we are. They get entangled with the depths of good and evil too early in life and are twisted into caricatures of their true personalities.

37. Cf. Marcel, G., The Philosophy of Existence, London, Harvill Press, 1948, p. 67-76

Children are too sensitive and vulnerable; they cannot carry the load imposed upon them; thus they harden into indifference or the irresponsibility of hatred or revolt.

Pinkie in Brighten Rock is a strong illustration of this obsession. In this novel a "lost childhood" becomes the principal theme. Pinkie's warped personality appears as an extension of his childhood experience of poverty, hate and animality. Andrews in The Man Within is represented as a house divided against itself because he was as a child pulled between the twin forces of a father who was ruthless and a mother who was too angelic. Anthony Farrant in England Made Me never outgrows the dreams and irresponsibility of his childhood and his life never adds up. The priest's daughter in The Power and the Glory is a bitter, lonely reflection of the priest's sin. She has been fated, by any number of circumstances beyond her, to expiate the priest's moral transgression. Raven, in A Gun for Sale, reflects: "This isn't a world I'd bring children into.... It was like you carry a load around you; you are born with some of it because of what your father and mother were and their fathers...; Then when you are a kid the load gets bigger, all the things you need to do and can't; and then all the things you do."

The childhood theme in Greene, whether it be a nostalgia for the peace and innocence of that age or a complaint against the cruelty and absurdity of life, always

has the symbolical value of helplessness and the need for protection. It is the image of loneliness. It was in his childhood that Graham Greene himself formed his fixed sense of the tragic in life. His art is a reflection of his childhood. It was from Miss Bowen's Viper of Milan that his "sense of doom that lies over success" grew. As he wrote in The Lost Childhood:

That too made sense; one looked around and saw the doom'd everywhere--the champion runner who one day would sag over the tape; the head of school who would atone, poor devil, during forty undistinguished years; the scholar.... and when success began to touch oneself too, however mildly, one could pray that failure would not be held off for long. (38)

A third fundamental trait of Greeneland is the repulsion many of his characters manifest towards sex. Indeed the whole theme of sex in Greene's novels--even as it is seen in those characters who show no particular repulsion to it--is quite emptied of meaning. This notion fits well into the existential context. For the existential is alone. "L'enfer, c'est les autres," says Sartre. Sex as an expression of love is a pitfall for them because it gets them tangled up with people. Hence it is something

35. Greene, G., The Lost Childhood, New York, The Viking Press, 1952, p. 16

that can only be avoided with a kind of ascetic resoluteness or indulged in as an act of despair. Greene's characters alternately do both.

There is something praiseworthy about this treatment of love and sex. For it pierces the pretense that sex has an unrelated and independent meaning. It states a truth in pointing out that if sex becomes something to inflate the ego or a means of selfish pleasure, it can only end in despair. There is a element of courage in those who take this stand. As Fulton Sheen has written:

The principal reason for sex deification is loss of belief in God. Once men lose God, they lose the purpose of life; and when the purpose of living is forgotten, the universe becomes meaningless. Man then tries to forget his emptiness in the intensity of a momentary experience. This effort sometimes goes so far that he makes someone else's flesh a god; there are idolatry and adoration, which eventually end in disillusionment when the so-called 'angel' is discovered to be only a fallen angel and one of no great attraction. (39)

The isolation of sex from its purpose in the modern world is an indication of the greater isolation of man from his purpose. A crisis in values is accompanied by a misunderstanding of the nature of sex. The Judeo-Christian tradition has always seen in sex something deeply spiritual. The union of man and woman reflects the higher union of

39. Sheen, F., Peace of Soul, New York, McGraw Hill, 1949, p. 153

humanity with God, the espousals of Christ with His Church. And just as union with God supposes totalitv and self-dispossession, so too, the sexual union must be selfless. Sex is a means of communication; a means of escaping isolation and entering the great community of mankind; it is also a means of dedication and service, for it is the expression of love. E.I. Watkin has given a clear précis of this notion:

Rationalism has robbed modern man of faith in God and the spiritual love-life of union with Him. Being men, not calculating machines or vegetables, they must have life, concrete, intense, passionate. They therefore turn to sex, the biological source of spiritual life, its passion and union--not for what it really can give and has given in all ages, but for the contact of that other and supreme love-life which it reflects. They are, of course, disappointed and will continue to be disappointed.... In its (sex's) belly, Jack and confined, he learns, like the prophet, the impotence of his natural powers to satisfy the demands of his spirit, his need of divine illumination and grace. Thus the judgment of sex in its modern idolatry becomes a testimony to man's need of the life and love which God alone can bestow, a witness to the reality it prefigures and reflects. (10)

A fourth characteristic of Greene's novels is the strong existential tone of his settings. The whole power of the author's genius contrives to emphasize man in his human situation--concrete, unbearable, inescapable! By

40. Watkin, E., The Now in the Clouds, New York, Sheen & Ward, 1954, p. 112-113

establishing an intimate bond between man and his physical surroundings, Greene affirms much about the nature of his characters. To make more intense the interior states he is trying to convey, he creates an intense physical environment. "Man is made by the places in which he lives," Greene has written.

Thus Pinkie, the whisky-briest and Scobie, as well as most of Greene's characters, are trapped in a closed world and suffocating atmosphere. They cannot break out to take an objective view of their environment. They need a mantle of images and sensations to give them reality, to compensate, as it were, for their failure as persons. And in this way (and his cine-camera technique is most effective in this respect) Greene indicates that modern man is reduced to an inability to arise above his "situation" in the world.

Africa is intensely hot and dry. In Greene's Journey Without Maps Africa has a "quality of darkness" and a "sense of despair." Africa is an image of "not a particular place, but a shape, a strangeness, a wanting to know." It is a land of uncertainty, of confusion--the very heart of darkness. It is a reflection of the state of Scobie's soul. The locale of Brighton is also presented with impressive geographical detail. It is described through the impressions of the characters and takes on an inner meaning corresponding to the intensity of reality in the

viewer. There is the bright, tinkling world of Ida and Colleoni; the dark, lustful world of Nelson Place and gang warfare; the holiday world of tourists with crowds, races and the gaudy trimmings of a summer resort. And as a backdrop to these worlds there is the omnipresence of the sea washing "round the piles at the end of the pier, dark poison-green."

Tabasco, in The Power and the Glory, receives its full share of local geographical symbolism. The heat, desolate wilderness, swamps and vultures represent the image of violence, godlessness and anarchy. In The End of the Affair war-torn London is the scene of the great interior drama that develops in the novel. Significantly, Greene's latest work, The Quiet American, is set in Oriental, corrupt, mysterious Saigon.

Similar observations could be made of all of Greene's novels. The atmosphere is foreign, intense and dark. It frequently rains, in his novels; the sun is described as too hot; scenery is seen as hostile, something apparently plotting against man. (Another indication of this trait is the physical appearances of many of Greene's characters. Raven has a hare-lip; Bendrix limps; Pinkie is too thin.) Greene's settings always imply a value affirmation.

Perhaps the strongest manifestation of Greene's existential technique is his use of similes. The moods and depths of his characters are constantly expressed in

the tangible--something that can be seen, touched, heard or tasted. This is a common trait among existential writers. F.X. Connolly has observed of Greene:

No writer in our time is more dependent on his immediate observations and experiences or less dependent upon traditional literary influence than is Graham Greene.... Something seen, something heard, something touched, something tasted, the click of wheels, the fall of rain noted, recorded, remembered with the acute sensibilities of a born reporter--these are unmistakable traits in all of Graham Greene's works. (41)

Greene furthermore tries to portray the supernatural within the framework of concrete expression. Much in the manner of the Old Testament style, Greene's God and spiritual world are extremely incarnate--almost anthropomorphic. He feels with the French writer Julian Green that the "real web of our life, the spiritual web, may be seen when we look carefully through the more or less intricate pattern of the temporal." Two vivid illustrations of this technique may be recalled here. In Brighton Rock Pinkie's thinking of Hell is crystallized as a result of a bitter razor fight with the race track gang:

....his heart weakened with a faint nostalgia for the dark confessional box, the priest's voice, and the peo-

41. Connolly, F.X., "Inside Modern Man: The Spiritual Adventures of Graham Greene," in Renaissance, Op. Cit., p. 16-49

ple waiting under the statue, before the bright lights burnin' down in the pink glasses, to be made safe from eternal pain. Eternal pain had not meant much to him; now it meant the clash of razor blades infinitely prolonged. (42)

In The Power and the Glory, God's love is expressed in the vulgar, but penetrating, symbol of ditch-water. The priest reflects:

God is love. I don't say the heart doesn't feel a taste of it but what a taste. The smallest glass of love mixed with a pint pot of ditch-water. He wouldn't recognize that love. It might even look like hate.... (43)

This method accounts for a certain obscurity in Greene's work. Dogma and religious truths, say some critics of Greene, demand a conceptual and objective presentation if clarity is to be had. But Greene shies away from abstractions. Yet it is not entirely accurate to pretend that the spiritual order can be expressed only with the architecture of philosophy. The God and truth that are revealed to us in the Bible are not philosophic. The Old Testament, particularly, makes use of mind-body relationships, subconscious symbolism, poetic imagery and imaginative logic in the manner of the greatest poets. Newman argued strongly that religion was not only a matter

42. Greene, G., Brighton Rock, p. 110

43. Greene, G., The Power and the Glory, p. 269

of the mind--not even principally, of the mind. The psychological plane is equally involved. Faith is by nature obscure and the implications of dogma can be expressed effectively through an artist's sensibility. In this respect F.X. Connolly writes of Greene:

He is trying to say some things which are, after all, abstract truths, and he is saying them by means of a technique which was first fashioned to exploit concrete actions. Like most artists he is shy of abstractions.... His problem then is the difficult and dangerous task (which only a giant can accomplish and only a great man will attempt) of finding the concrete universal, the single, particular thing which is at the same time an adequate representation of universal truth. (44)

It would not do to deny a priori that there can be such a thing as a concrete universal--even in the philosophical sense. God is certainly concrete and universal. Any religious truth is also. It would seem that one fault existential writers have rectified in their approach to basic human issues is the tendency to emphasize the theoretical aspect. As Newman put it: "Men do not die for ideas but only for convictions."

4. Conclusion

The import of Graham Greene's novels can be understood only by starting from an existentialist viewpoint

It is this existentialist vision which enables him to grasp the problem of modern man, and consequently to set in relief those basic tensions of freedom-destiny, anxiety-courage, isolation-society, guilt-forgiveness, man-god. Greene has grasped the shocking absurdity which conditions man's life in this world. These words of Gabriel Marcel partially explain his outlook:

I need hardly insist on the stifling impression of sadness produced by this functionalized world....besides the sadness felt by the onlooker, there is the full, intolerable unease of the actor himself who is reduced to living as though he were in fact submerged by his functions. This uneasiness is enough to show that there is in all this some appalling mistake, some ghastly misinterpretation, implanted in defenceless minds by an increasingly inhuman social order and an equally inhuman philosophy. (45)

In the same context Marcel argues that "the distinction between the full and the empty seems to me more fundamental than that between the one and the many." In Greene's work it undoubtedly is. His genius is preoccupied with the emptiness of life in our world today, the exhaustion of human existence, the inability for man to realize fulfillment. He has come face to face with the problem of the totality of man's existence to himself. The question he asks is: "How must man live his life?"

To further clarify Greene's solidarity with the existential mind, it will be helpful to parallel the dominant themes of his work with the four characteristics of existentialism sketched in chapter one.

1. Insistence upon Existence. Greene is concerned with the man in the here-and-now: a limited man, hemmed in by contingent events and suffering the tragic burden of life. In Greene's novels this quality is brought out by the thriller-technique and the themes of pursuit and fear.

2. Subjectivism. Greene's characters have the appearance of moving around in independence of the reality around them. Each plays out his own solitary drama. Their thoughts and actions are less dictated by a relatedness to the broad framework of God or society than by relative and egoistic norms of conduct. Their attitude towards sex is one indication of this.

3. The Sense of Nothingness. Greene's characters yearn for emptiness, obliteration, a Nirvana-like peace that is symbolized by death and childhood. Thus Greene says of Pinkie: "A dim desire for annihilation stretched in him, the vast superiority of vacancy." At all times, there is an underlying desire to escape from reality. Whence the boredom, melancholy, anguish and despair that characterize almost every page of Greene's work.

4. Alienation. Loneliness seems to be an in-

evitable consequence of life in Greene's novels. Life is like a Morse code, "a series of dots and dashes, never forming a complete paragraph." Loneliness was "only too easily attained; it was the air one breathed." Greene uses physical settings effectively to separate his characters from value patterns. The world is too much with them.

Perhaps the idea which best summarizes all of these traits--both in atheistic existentialism and the novels of Graham Greene--is that of communication. Karl Jaspers raises this fundamental problem of modern man:

No urge seemed stronger in me than that for communication with others. If the never-completed movement of communication succeeds with but a single human being, everything is achieved. It is a criterion of this success that there be a readiness to communicate with every human being encountered and that grief is felt whenever communication fails... Communication is the path to truth in all its forms.... How man as an existent, as spirit, as Existenz, is or can be in communication--that is what allows all other truth to appear. (46)

Greene's characters desire to communicate; they desire to know and love as a rational nature should; they desire to transcend themselves, to break through the limits of contingency. The basic dynamism of Greene's fiction is this tension between subjectivity and openness. The question "How can man live his life?" therefore resolves itself to "How can man communicate?"

One answer Greene offers will not be considered
in Part II of this thesis.

PART II

I. THE RELIGIOUS QUESTION OF WOMAN

1. Introductory

Nicholas Berdyaev, in his book The New Middle Ages, speaks of the "extremely significant role of woman" and her "important part in the religious awakening of our times." This growing significance of woman has nothing to do with what is commonly (known) as the feminist movement (or the emancipation of woman) which seeks to place woman on an equal basis with man and ultimately defend the feminine ideal. Rather it is a question of woman's place in the "re-establishment of a totality of being," and the "restoring of the mystery of charity as a divine order would have it." Berdyaev casts woman in a spiritual role (he speaks of the "eternal womanly") and in this role she is to combat the general disintegration of values in our time and become instrumental in effecting an integral presence of man to himself.

Graham Greene has exemplified this ideal. He has portrayed man in his modern condition, without values and in need of communication and transcendence. Opposite this man he has placed woman as a symbol of completeness, the instrument of spiritual regeneration. Greene introduces his existential man as authentically human and transcendent

values through the religious instrumentalit, or certain of his women characters.

There is no positive clue that might explain Greene's preoccupation with this theme. In his critical writings, for example, there is not in any way like a direct statement on his attitudes concerning the religious mission of woman. There are, at best, certain vague indications which may be taken as conjectural reasons. In the first place, his deep conviction of the religious values connected with the dogma and the person the Virgin Mary, have led him to generalize somewhat for all women.⁴⁷

Again, Greene's susceptibility to the influence of Henry James may have led him to this conception of woman. James frequently linked questions of destiny, evil and the supernatural with his woman characters. Thus Mary Temple and Milly Theale in The Wings of the Dove or Isabel Archer in The Portrait of a Lady. Perhaps, too, the fact that one of the profoundest literary influences of Greene's formative years was the woman novelist, Elizabeth Bowen, may have had some influence on the attitude he manifests towards women in his own novels. It is also conceivable that his introduction to Catholicism through the instrumentality of his wife determined in some way his association

47. Greene, Graham, Essais Catholiques, Paris, Editions du Seuil, 1963, p. 81-101

of religious values with women. In any event, a textual analysis of Greene's work reveals certain patterns in this respect which shall be studied in the following chapter.

For a better understanding of the full impact of this approach to religious values, this chapter will view woman's religious mission in the broad context of what some writers have had to say on the subject. In the rich thinking that contemporary problems have stimulated among scholars, much has been written on the religious mission of woman. It may even be said that only in the 20th century have the far-reaching consequences of the distinction of the sexes been worked out in any completeness of detail. It is a tribute to Greene's insight as a novelist that he has given literary expression to a theme that is at once the concern of thinkers and so vitally important to balanced human relationships and an energizing faith.

2. The Religious Mission of Woman

In the Sistine Chapel in Rome Michaelangelo's two frescos of creation give some indication of the fundamental religious mystery of the sexes. Critics illustrate the differences between the two paintings in these terms. Adam is represented as bold and fearless. He is represented in a thrusting gesture, reaching out to touch the very finger of God. It is an attitude that expresses de-

termination and ambition. It hints mysteriously at some Promethean revolt. Eve, on the other hand, is portrayed in an attitude of submission. Her head is bowed before the Creator; her hands are folded and pointing inwards; her lips are parted in prayer. Her expression is wholly one of thankfulness and love, of reverence and adoration. The Creator looks upon this woman He has made with respect and complacence. But what is yet more significant, there is in the Creator's eyes a look of hope--almost of anxiety--as if in her presence He were suspended between the expectation of marvellous success and the fear of lamentable failure. God had put His trust in Eve.

The significance of what is implied in Michelangelo's frescos is not immediately obvious. For the distinction he predicates of the sexes runs deep. From time immemorial thinkers have sought to explain the riddle of the Universe in terms of opposites. The most elementary and at the same time most fundamental fact to be noticed about reality is that opposition and contradictions give rise to the basic tensions of life. Duality is everywhere observable. On the physical level it is expressed in the double movement of centrifugal force (by which matter is directed away from its center) and centripetal force (by which matter is directed towards its center). On an historical level Aristotle has noted two distinct categories: a tendency to Novelty, which is a tendency

toward progress and is often represented by a straight line; and a tendency toward Stability, which is a tendency of conservation and is often represented by a circle. (In his Metaphysics, Aristotle dresses a table of opposites which consists of the limit and the unlimited, the odd and even, the one and the many, right and left, male and female, resting and moving, the straight and the curved, light and darkness, the good and the bad, the square and the oblong.)⁴⁸ At the human level this fundamental duality is given intelligible expression in man and woman.

Woman's specific religious mission grows out of this duality and the tensions created by it. In order to understand better her supernatural role it is necessary to view briefly those natural qualities which predispose her to a better expression of religious values.

1. Interiority. Man's personality corresponds largely to a centrifugal movement and tends to expand in a line of progress. He is characterized especially by qualities of intelligence: clarity, logic, judgment, decision. He is orientated towards conquest and action. Woman, on the other hand, is more given to a role which corresponds to a centripetal movement. Her interests are in the stability that underlies all progress. Not primarily involved in the erection of the super-structures of society, she is

⁴⁸. D'Arcy, M.C., The Mind and Heart of Love, London, Faber and Faber, 1945, p. 182-202. Detailed development of the themes of duality can be found in these pages.

more directed by nature towards the interior, towards intimacy, security and the things of the heart'. While man adventures in ideas, in scientific discovery and in invention, while he is the builder, the legislator and concerned more with the immediate needs of life, she remains the conserver "keeping and pondering in her heart the words, the experiences, which life brings, looking beyond the immediate to the ultimate and thus gradually acquiring a rich store of intuitive wisdom."⁴⁹ These differences are well expressed by the French philosopher, Jean Guilton:

As analyst, dissector, calculator, arbitrator, justiciary, man is mind. He has the necessary capacity for domination, whether in the city or in the home; but here, as has often been remarked, though man governs, woman reigns. Woman craves support, control, a master; nevertheless it is from her that stimulus, clan, foresight, dismissal of the past and courage to confront the risks of life most often come. (5)

Another way of putting this is to say that woman lives more as a whole. Her powers of soul and intellect are much more bound together. There is greater synthesis and unity in her life for it is much more rooted in those things which provide stability.

⁴⁹ Vann, Gerald, "The Role of Woman," in Integrity Vol. 7, No. 2, issue of September 1953, p. 4

⁵⁰ Guilton, J., Essay on Human Love, London, Rockliff, 1951, p. 97

2. Otherness and Dependence. Guittou notes woman's need of a "support, control, a master." This brings out the feminine characteristic of altruism. Gina Lombroso, in a classic study on woman, explains this quality:

L'égoïsme est l'épine dorsale de la vie des hommes. L'homme n'a pas besoin de personne pour arriver au but qu'il s'est fixé...il n'a pas besoin d'aide, il peut aller tout seul. La femme ne le peut pas. Elle est altérocentriste et a besoin d'autres...la femme est privée de cette épine dorsale que l'égoïsme fournit à l'homme. (51)

Man is naturally more inclined to self-centeredness and self-sufficiency. This explains why the mind of man has directed the intellectual and spiritual trends of the past four centuries into the state of individualism and atheism already described. This explains, too, why a woman's interest must be primarily in people rather than things, in life rather in nature, in dedication rather than abstract thought. It is woman's nature to exist for another: for her child, her husband, God.

La femme est altérocentriste en ce sens qu'elle place le centre de son plaisir, de son ambition non en elle-même mais en une autre personne qu'elle aime et de qui elle veut être aimée." (52)

3. I-Thou Relationship. This notion explains

51. Lombroso, Gina, L'âme de la femme, Payot, Paris 1937, p. 42

52. Ibid., p. 22

more fully the feminine qualities of otherness and dependence and sets in clearer relief woman's alliance with the sacred values of the "personal." The Jewish philosopher, Martin Buber, has constructed his personalist philosophy upon the basis of this relationship. In the meditation I and Thou, he explains:

To man the world is twofold, in accordance with his twofold attitude. The attitude of man is twofold, in accordance with the twofold nature of the primary words which he speaks. The primary words are not isolated words, but combined words. The one primary word is the combination I-Thou. The other primary word is the combination I-It... And in all the seriousness of truth, hear this: without It man cannot live. But he who lives with It alone is not a man. (53)

The importance of this kind of philosophy in our mechanistic age cannot be emphasized too much. The "I-It" relationship is the world of thought, history, and nature. It is the impersonal relationship between man and things. The "I-Thou" relationship is situated within the intimacy of the person and things spiritual. And it is in this relationship that woman excels. Her tendency towards the personal is concerned with the living "Thou." She turns towards the "other" from the fullness of her own person. As Pope Pius XII has said, in his address on "The Role of

53. Buber, Martin, I and Thou, Edinburgh, T & T Clark, 1937, p. 3-37

the Young Woman":

To give, to dedicate yourself...is one of the most beautiful aspirations of your sex and your youth. Here is woman's psychological mission to the world. To dedicate herself to God and her neighbor--her husband, her children, her relatives, her friends, even distant people she has never met--this is woman's life. Man's regard for his fellow men may be governed by a distant, impersonal philanthropy. Woman's care of her neighbor has a warm, human touch, including sometimes even generous personal sacrifice. (54)

"Man leaves the imprint of his personality," an American writer, Janet Kalven, points out, "in the creations of his mind--works of science and art, monumental buildings and commercial empires. But woman's masterpiece is life itself. She is not interested in abstract or technical achievements but in persons, and in bringing persons to God."⁵⁵

4. Capacity for Suffering. Any notion of religion supposes suffering, sacrifice, obedience, a certain "aneantissement" before a higher power. Such modern writers as Andre Malraux, Albert Camus, Simone Weil (as well as Graham Greene) have also pointed out the necessity of compassion, a sharing in the agony of the world, as a means

54. Faherty, W.B., The Destiny of Modern Woman, Westminster, Newman, 1950, p. 124

55. Kalven, Janet, The Task of Woman in the Modern World, Des Moines, National Catholic Rural Life Conference, 1946, p. 3

of attaining authentic values even at the human level. This is sometimes referred to as the human value of suffering. Suffering is the measure of love and in woman the two qualities go hand-in-hand.

C'est là une caractéristique qui différencie nettement l'homme de la femme. Dans aucun pays, aucune race, aucune condition humaine la femme n'a cette frénésie de plaisirs que vous trouverez chez les hommes. Nul part la femme a ce souci d'éviter les douleurs, les embarras, les complications, les ennuis que vous trouverez chez l'homme... Il y'a plus: la femme qui en souffre beaucoup plus que l'homme a une espèce d'attraction pour celui qui souffre... Les hommes n'ont pas la plus lointaine idée des trésors de patience, d'abnégation, poussés parfois jusqu'à la folie, que la femme dispense pour atteindre l'idéal qu'elle a en vue. (56)

Woman is undoubtedly capable of great sacrifices.

Is it not man who is the great hero of the world's literature of adventure? Yet the quality of love in man and in woman must be distinguished. Man is capable of heroism and suffering for a cause. He is much less likely to lay down his life in the thousand small sacrifices that are demanded by the laws of everyday living. Woman's love has this characteristic of the commonplace. It involves not only her soul or mind but, in a very marked way, her body. Woman comes closer to death than man whenever she brings forth a child. Thus she is physically disposed to share

effectively in the work of Redemption.

Women's capacity for enduring severe suffering is undoubtedly greater than that of men. It is not only in pregnancy and childbirth that they endure as a matter of course pain and suffering to an extent rarely demanded of men, but they "stick out" other illnesses more patiently than men... Women certainly possess a greater power of resistance to pain, and whether this is biologically or morally determined is of no immediate importance: enough that it is a fact. (57)

5. Capacity for Love. Woman's nature reveals itself as a "meeting of love." Man is called to love, which is, indeed, the fundamental law of the redeemed world. And woman in particular, being so close to life, and so ready to turn towards others, cannot disregard it. Love necessarily holds a greater place in her life. She necessarily has a more integral and deeper understanding of love.

L'amour, est pour l'homme un sentiment éminemment égoïste. Il y cherche un plaisir, une aide, une consolation, parce qu'il doit réserver le peu d'altruisme que lui concède la nature pour la mission extérieure que celle-ci lui a confiée... la femme peut oublier le monde entier pour son bien-aimé, elle peut concentrer en lui tout son âme, parce que sa mission dans le monde est d'aimer. (58)

57. Allers, Rudolf, The Psychology of Character, London, Sheed & Ward, 1913, p. 231

58. Lombroso, Gina, Op. Cit., p. 81

The religious implications of love, or what comes to the same thing, the solidarity of human love and divine love, is expressed in these words:

The specially religious form of love shows the same psychological characteristics as love for a human being. For the lover says Yes to another, whose individuality attracts him particularly and whose worth he recognizes intuitively. Love radiates between persons, and God is a person of inexhaustible individuality and infinite worth. To be religiously alive needs precisely those qualities with which woman is so richly endowed: the gift of personal relationship, instinct for vital values and the capacity for giving oneself completely to another. (59)

Love, of course, is the very essence of Christianity.

Analyzing woman's place in religion according to the capacity for love, Rudolf Allers writes:

Of the two commandments dealing with the love of God and the love of one's neighbor, "the second is like unto the first" and thus both are binding without distinction of sex on all mankind. However, it is tempting to adopt the notion of the division of the commandments between the two sexes, not in the sense of obedience, but, if the expression is admissible, in the sense of their "incorporation"; for the man's calling to the priestly office makes him competent in a specific manner for the "service of God" and the calling of woman to the function of motherhood makes her the exemplar of the love of one's neighbor. Inasmuch as all women are called to motherhood, but only a

59. Firkel, Eva, Woman in the Modern World, London, Burns & Oates, 1956, p. 25

few men are chosen for the priesthood, it might well be thought that, generally speaking, the woman fills her place in the plan of creation and the scheme of salvation better than man. (60)

From this profound sense of love in woman flows her propensity to sympathy, compassion and dedication. All of these qualities are necessarily inter-related. All of them are based upon the feminine nature. All of them point to a specific religious mission.

It is this religious mission which is the proper concern of this chapter. Peter Wust places the natural distinction of the sexes at a theological level and extends the feminine characteristics pointed out above to their fullest spiritual sense when he writes:

Du fait qu'il est, avant tout, voué à l'esprit, l'homme est aussi condamné à l'éternelle inquiétude que donne la soif incessante du nouveau. Il est, et ceci constitue une grosse infériorité, le vagabond de l'existence, celui qui n'est nulle part chez lui, le sans patrie, toujours rejeté dans l'inconnu; malgré sa soif de clarté et de logique, malgré la puissance de sa volonté, il ne pourra jamais demeurer en repos dans l'élément métaphysique de l'intime, du familier, du confiant, de tout ce qui se centre en soi-même. (61)

These words are of great significance in an assessment of modern man. For it is precisely the "soif incessante du

60. Allers, Rudolf, Op. Cit., p. 246

61. Wust, Peter, "Mission Métaphysique de la Femme", in Problemes de la Sexualité, Paris, Librairie Plon, 1937 p. 227-228

nouveau" and the "éternelle inquiétude" of which he speaks that have driven man into the existential situation examined in the preceding chapter. It is this situation which stands in marked contrast to woman's mission. "Elle est, de par sa nature, plus presquue l'homme de toutes les valeurs qui appartiennent au domaine religieux, ainsi que l'amour qu'on procede." (62)

Gertrud von le Fort, in what is perhaps the best study of woman's religious mission yet written, puts it this way:

The faith in self-redemption as man's belief in his own creative powers is the specifically masculine madness of our secularized age and is at the same time the explanation of all its failures. . . . Creative power can only be received, and the man also must conceive the creative spirit in the sign of Mary, in humility and surrender, or he will not receive it at all. . . . for the world may indeed be moved by the strength of man, but blessed, in the true sense of the word, it will be only with the sign of the woman. (63)

Charles Moeller makes a specific application, in a criticism of Jean Paul Sartre, to atheistic existentialism:

L'existentialisme athée véhicule un bon nombre d'erreurs modernes. La principale est, en se limitant à l'immédiat, de refuser la dépendance humaine en face des forces qui donnent la vie: aussi bien sur le plan des

62. Wust, Peter, Op. Cit., p. 230

63. Von le Fort, Gertrud, The Eternal Woman, Milwaukee, Bruce, 1954, p. 13-14

forces vitales profanes, que sur celui des énergies spirituelles, la carence est la même... Sartre a voulu nier qu'il soit "enfant, fils," fils des hommes, fils de Dieu. La foi qui est la nouvelle naissance d'en haut, dans le Christ qui nous a engendrés à la grâce, est le seul salut de l'homme contemporain. (64)

Moeller notes the absence of any comprehension of femininity in the writings of atheistic existentialism (and what he says is equally true of most modern writers) and evokes the religious instrumentality of woman as a first step towards transcendence:

Le corps de la femme révèle bien par sa structure, qu'il est fait pour s'ouvrir, être visité, fécondé, et que, alors seulement...comme corps, donner l'amour et la vie; ce même, le fond de l'âme est réalité féminine parce qu'il est ouverture au don de la vie divine. (65)

Speaking of the spiritual value of this attitude of passivity, another author writes:

Cette réalité est au fond de la vocation de toute femme (quel que soit l'engagement de sa vie); elle a un rapport étroit avec l'attitude religieuse.... Tout le drame de l'histoire humaine est dans ce noeud: dire "oui" à Dieu ou le refuser. C'est le retournement du vieil homme, la nouvelle naissance, l'entrée dans le Royaume de l'Amour. Le passage du Monde de "l'avoir" au Monde de "l'être", la dépossession du moi instinctif pour trouver le

64. Moeller, Charles, Op. Cit., p. 105

65. Moeller, Charles, Op. Cit., p. 100

moi spirituel: celui de la Personne
 dans son achèvement. Avoir faim et
 soif, être besogneux, réceptif,
 c'est la condition pour que Dieu
 donne en plénitude et nous fasse
 passer de l'esclavage à la liberté. (66)

This evocation of woman as the instrument of grace and supernatural values (and the explicit foundation this has in woman's physical and psychological constitution) resumes, in essence, what modern thinkers mean when they speak of woman's religious nature.

In effect, woman occupies two worlds that are quite foreign to man: one above him and one below him. From one point of view she is closer to nature; from another, she is more sensitive to spiritual realities. Because of woman's functional role in generating and nourishing life, she participates in the great rhythm of creation. She is spontaneously in accord with all the mysteries of fruitfulness in nature. Human tradition has always been aware of this because the great religious rites and myths associate the cult of women with that of nature, with the earth, with Cybele. This intimate participation in the cosmos is something man does not share. The universe is, for him, an object of science and action. His relation to nature is more an intellectual and objective one and demands a certain exteriority in relation to the object.

The other pole of woman's personality is mystical.

66. Houbion, Suzanne, "Féminité et religion," in Conscience de la Féminité, Paris, Editions Familiales de France, 1954, p. 73

That is to say, she is more spontaneously aware of values that cannot be calculated in immediate results. She perceives in the world and in herself undercurrents, presences, symbols and voices. As P. Parrain observes in this connection:

At the extreme point of this mystical vocation of woman, we find her specific religious role: quicker than man, woman interprets the will of God; quicker than he, she responds to it with her whole being. (67)

In her relations with man, woman can make him more conscious of his qualities and can be instrumental in bringing these to fruition. She can give man a deeper vision of the world, a surer grasp of reality and a better understanding of himself. And while this influence can be had in any relationship--in casual, social and friendship relations--it is particularly true in conjugal relations. As wife, woman is offering and abandon; as mother, she welcomes the gift of man and renders it fruitful. By studying the woman (particularly in her capacity as wife and mother) in her relations to man, we gain a deeper understanding of the relations between humanity and God. P. Parrain also elucidates this point:

Woman's relationship to man is an exact parallel of humanity's relationship to God. For what is sanctity but giving ourselves to God and fruc-

67. Parrain, P., "The Personality of Woman," in Marriage is Holy, Chicago, Fides, 1957, p. 69

tifying the talents he has given us? This explains why in the Bible the themes of marriage and love are charged with such tremendous religious symbolism. The chosen people of Israel were considered as the bride of God by the inspired writer. God, Himself, is always presented as a husband, sometimes loved, sometimes betrayed, but always loving. When St. Paul used the marriage symbol to describe the relations between Christ and His Church, he was but re-echoing the profound religious meaning of woman's relationship to the man she loves.... Woman not only represents humanity before God but each soul before God.... Thus woman is more at home in the sphere of religious values; she is more naturally religious." (68)

And he concludes:

The mystery of woman illumines history --and particularly the religious history of mankind. The Bible indicates this when it recounts the roles of Eve and Mary. Woman is not called upon to act, to be seen or to give orders. It suffices that, in the penumbra, she attract and inspire. She is given to man as the earth that nourishes him, as the air he breathes, as the distant light that is perhaps a dawn.... Thus woman stands both in and above history as the great sign of perdition or redemption. In the manner that she sees herself, and that man sees her, we can judge whether God is present or absent from the world." (69)

Other studies on this theme arrive at similar conclusions. Paul Touvignon, for example, in an excellent study of woman, concludes: "Les sentiments de crainte, de piété, d'amour, de compassion sont plus communs chez la femme donc elle se

68. Ibid., p. 77

69. Ibid., p. 82-83

trouve plus inclinée tout naturellement à la pratique religieuse."⁷⁰ In another study, completed in 1950, we read:

Par sa nature profonde de réceptivité, de docilité, de possédée, la femme est une image de la créature qui se livre à Dieu pour en recevoir la vie, pour lui obéir pour se laisser prendre et mouvoir par lui. Cette attitude de créature trouve dans les aptitudes de la femme comme un pli naturel, une pente spontanée.... (71)

An excellent short study on woman's religious mission comes from the pen of the French theologian, Father A-M Henry O.P.⁷² Man and woman are, he argues, mysteries; in some sense sacraments. They are "une Parole de Dieu, une révélation." That is, each sex expresses a specific religious meaning. "Chaque vie chrétienne est l'objet d'un mystère qui s'exprime à la fois par un terme masculin et par un terme féminin."⁷³ In woman he sees

Cet être destiné à un autre qui se sent violemment son indigence individuelle, son incomplétude naturelle. Elle est l'image de la

70. Thouvenon, P., L'Âme Féminine, Paris, Lethielloux, 1930, p. 149

71. Lebel, G., "La Direction Spirituelle des Femmes," in Vie Spirituelle, Supplement (1950), p. 32

72. Henry, A.M., "Le Mystère de l'homme et la femme," in Vie Spirituelle, LXXX, No. 340 (May 1949), p. 463-491

73. Ibid., p. 464

créature spirituelle vis-à-vis de
son Createur. (74)

He continues:

Étant naturellement destinée à être
épouse, non seulement la femme
représente la vocation religieuse
de l'humanité vis-à-vis Dieu, mais
elle a, au service de la grâce en
elle tout son tempérament, ses in-
clinations, son indigence fonda-
mentale. Elle est le sexe religieux. (75)

Not so man:

L'homme est religieusement dans une
situation moins privilégiée. La ton-
dante autonomiste de son tempérament
ne le porte pas à se renoncer, à se
démettre de lui-même, à se remettre
totalement à un autre. Et cependant
il n'y a de perfection spirituelle
que s'il consent lui aussi à ce total
désistement, s'il accepte que sa salut
vienne totalement d'un autre. (76)

It is important to stress at this point that,
before God, man and woman are equal. This must be insisted
upon. Both have the same vocation to sanctify before God.
It cannot be argued that one receives more grace than
another. This chapter is an attempt to demonstrate the dif-
ferent manner--a different mission--in which these respec-
tive vocations are worked out. Woman represents a different
approach to spiritual values. She carries out a different

74. Ibid., p. 484

75. Ibid., p. 485

76. Ibid., p. 486

spiritual mission. She reacts to grace differently and her responsibilities in this domain are different. In a letter to the author of this thesis, Father, Henry, O.P. states explicitly that it is a question of a mission and not of a state when woman's religious role is spoken of.

Le plan intermédiaire dont je parle est le plan des missions, des fonctions, des rôles. Or les missions, les fonctions, ou le rôles se définissent par les actions auxquelles ils sont ordonnées. Je crois donc qu'il faut distinguer très formellement ces différentes actions qui sont dévolues à l'homme est à la femme dans le dessein de Dieu. (77)

Thus it is not a question of which is more holy, but a question of how each sex functions from a religious point of view. In the Church "l'homme gouverne, devient pretre, enseigne...mais la femme apporte dans l'Eglise un autre service dont on ne saurait dire qu'il soit inférieur."⁷⁸ And it is precisely in this sense that a specific religious mission is attributed to woman.

L'homme doit apprendre de la femme cette indigence nécessaire de la créature en face de Dieu. C'est le rôle providentiel de la femme de le lui apprendre. (79)

Peter Must also underlines this redemptive aspect of woman's mission:

77. Letter dated Paris, le 25 Mai, 1954

78. Ibid.

79. Henry, A.M., Op. Cit., p. 482

C'est en vertu de son essence propre que la femme a reçu dans l'histoire, la mission d'arracher l'homme à "l'éternel inconnu" dans lequel le facteur de l'esprit le repousse sans trêve. Elle a été mise auprès de lui pour le ramener au foyer, à l'autel sacré de la vie, pour le sauver de sa tendance volontaire et intellectuelle qui est centrifuge. (30)

Gertrud von le Fort has written most profoundly on this theme. It is fitting, therefore, that this section be concluded with a quotation from The Eternal Woman:

In the humble fiat of her (Mary's) answer to the angel lies the mystery of redemption insofar as it depends upon the creature. For his redemption man has nothing to contribute to God other than the readiness of unconditional surrender. The passive acceptance inherent in woman...appears in the Christian order of grace as the positively decisive factor.... The hour of God's help is always mankind's religious hour, the hour of woman, the hour of the creature's co-operation with the Creator. God grant that woman may not miss her approaching hour! ... The renewal of the eternal image through the Marian mission of the woman completes itself in the vicarious role of her who represents the creature. Mary stands for her daughters, but her daughters must also stand for her. (31)

Women's native alterocentrism (which has been noted

30. Wust, P., Op. Cit., p. 230

31. Von le Fort, Gertrud, Op. Cit., p. 4, 6^e, 110

on page fifty-six) is splendidly fulfilled in the religious domain. As Father Vann points out, if woman is true to her essential nature she will "imitate God and search for man in his squalors, then she will fulfill her own vocation in all its glory: she will do more for man than inspire him with dreams of greatness: she will redeem him!"⁸² This thought was put poetically by Paul Claudel (and it might be pointed out that the rich symbolism of woman's religious mission runs through all his works) in these words: "Woman promises man only God can give."

3. A General Application to Graham Greene

Before an attempt is made to delineate the religious mission of woman in the novels of Graham Greene, two reservations ought to be pointed out. First, this mission must be determined within the concrete development of plot. Greene is not writing with the objective clarity of a theologian or a critic. Nowhere does he state explicitly the religious mission of any of his women characters. He is too keenly conscious of the ambiguity of the world and, it might be added, the mysterious nature of grace to present a pat thesis. This theme, therefore, can be disengaged only by thorough textual analysis. It can then be assessed more precisely against a theoretical background.

⁸². Vann, Gerald, Op. Cit., p. 11

Secondly, not all the women characters in Greene's novels express this religious mission. In fiction as in life, some women fail in their specific mission. They refuse their femininity. They are *capax peccati*--and frequently never more so than in some of Greene's novels. Yet they still exercise great power of influence over man. It is not true to say that sin weakens feminine charms. A woman in sin can still determine the destiny of man. But then she drags him downwards instead of leading him upwards. (Louise, in The Heart of the Matter, is a good example of this negative influence.) Such a woman does not contribute to the world or to those about her those values of goodness, piety and warmth of heart without which there can be no real human relations or foundation for spiritual values. She then fails to express the revelation and rich symbolism of a humanity that is open and receptive to the gift of God.

With these reservations in mind some general remarks may be made concerning the religious mission of woman in Greene's novels. The French literary critic, Jacques Madaule, observes:

L'univers de Greene est un univers matriarcal. La femme est l'axe et ferme. L'homme tourne autour d'elle comme un papillon autour de la flamme. Mais c'est finalement, par elle seule qu'il accède à la communauté, qu'il sort de sa propre solitude... Il ne suffit pas à la femme pour être bonne, de n'être point mauvaise. Il faut qu'elle soit marquée d'un signe positif,

ce signe que rien, quoi qu'elle fasse
(Rose, pour prendre un exemple), ne
pourra effacer de son front. C'est la
reconnaissance de ce signe mystérieux
qui attire vers elle l'amour. (83)

A broad consideration of Greene's novels bears this observation out. For consistently Greene's existential man encounters a woman whose influence negates the action of what Peter Must has called the "Satanic element of mind in him." His destiny becomes allied to hers--accidentally, perhaps, but nevertheless very deeply and implacably. Whether it be Rose in Brighton Rock, Elizabeth in The Man Within or Sarah in The End of the Affair, it is always the same redemptive mission of woman that is more or less explicitly manifested. (It might be mentioned that this mission can also be found in some of Greene's entertainments. For example, Anne in A Gun for Sale or Anna Hilfe in The Ministry of Fear.) However the artist contrives to bring them into contact with his male characters, they soon end by consenting to their mission and assuming responsibility for another. Greene's art always gives full play to the element of freedom in these encounters. Nothing is ever forced. Yet, as if by a kind of predestination, these "vestals" are committed to reviving the living spark of God's image in man.

This religious mission of woman responds at once

83. Madault, Jacques, Graham Greene, Paris, Gallimard, 1943, p. 327

to her psychological predisposition and to the de-spiritualized conditions of the modern world. Nicholas Berdyaev has remarked: "Within the sphere of humanity in the natural world there had to be a pure and spotless being capable of receiving the divine element, a feminine principle of enlightenment by grace." He refers to the Mother of God. By analogy, his remark is valid for all women (and, consequently, for all mankind.) This principle, *mutatis mutandis*, appears to be at work in the moral wasteland Greene creates in his novels.

C'est dans cette perspective que trouvent leur raison d'être ces personnages...que l'on rencontre dans la plupart des romans de Greene et dont la vocation semble être l'explorer les péchés d'un monde où elles se trouvent comme égarées et qui finit par les broyer. Il y a un thème greenien de l'adolescente mystérieusement marquée par la souffrance ou par la mort au moment où la femme naît en elle. Et ce thème ne s'éclaire qu'à la lumière de la mission métaphysique de la femme. (84)

Between woman and God's saving mercy there is an alliance which Greene sets in relief. It is normal that woman come between God and her rebel child and that she seek to suffer for both. If Scobie was impelled to commit suicide it is very possibly because neither of the two women with whom his destiny had become allied consented to

intercede for him. If Pinkie is saved Rose's role as an instrument of God's grace is undeniable. It is to be remarked that in the four relationships studied in the following chapter are all clearly anchored on eternal issues. Greene does not simply deal with a kind of "human" salvation. With Elizabeth and Andrews, Rose and Pinkie, Sarah and Bendrix as well as with Coral and the priest it is ultimately a question of spiritual values.

4. Conclusion

The religious mission of woman is aptly summed up in this remark of Paul Claudel: "Le malin est prêtre mais il n'est pas défendu à la femme d'être victime." Looking back over an intellectual and moral tradition of 400 years it is not difficult to associate the trend towards relative subjectivism with a progressive denial of feminine values. As the spirit of paganism became more and more prevalent, men developed two different attitudes towards woman. Either he saw in her only femininity. That is to say he reduced woman to a sexual dimension. Or he saw her only as a kind of "machine à enfant," and instrument to increase the population. This view held sway in Nazi Germany. In either case, woman is denied the status of a person, the dignity of an individual. To this order the modern feminist movement has responded only inadequately.

To deny woman's influence in the formation of human

values is to reduce these to a "masculine sterility." A civilization characterized by such values inspires either the Promethean literature of a Hemingway, a Steinbeck, a Malraux or the searching, despairing literature of a Joyce, a Lawrence, a Sartre. It evokes a society of scientific prowess, laden with political and social plans, with Manhattan projects, with organization philosophies, but deaf to the plaintive voice of the interior man.

A return to balance implies an understanding of woman's contribution to life and destiny. This is what St. Augustine meant when he said: "To the female sex belongs the entire honor of being the beginning of salvation." To the masculine values of self-affirmation respond the feminine values of self-immolation and submission. The most fundamental of human situations, those which engage man in the deepest roots of his spiritual personality such as the mystery of love, of death or of God, demand an attitude of receptivity, of ascent. What is needed is the introduction of the feminine quality of "acceptance" into the drama of modern man. Such a quality is revealed in those novels of Graham Greene that will be examined in the following chapter.

II. THE RELIGIOUS MISSION OF ROMAN IN THE NOVELS OF GREENE OR THE

THE MAN WITHIN

1. Introductory

The Man Within, which bears the epigraph "There's another man within me that's angry with me" of Thomas Browne, is the first of Greene's novels. (Two previous novels have been suppressed at the author's request.) Already, we are confronted with the basic Greenian problem: the problem of an individual in a strange world, unhappy and suffering, who is acutely aware of the division within him or, as the existentialists might phrase it, "the dissociation of his being."

This novel is important in the Greenian hierarchy because it adumbrates the great questions of sin, grace and salvation that will be developed in later works and thus supplies us with a basis for study of all his later characters. Its relevance to the thesis cannot be underestimated; for in The Man Within woman's role in leading man to a state of harmony with himself and an awareness of and communication with spiritual values is clearly defined. In The Man Within this conversion is effected skillfully, methodically, indeed almost mathematically. Elizabeth

is a prototype of a later Rose or Sarah, just as Andrews is a prototype of a later Pinkie or Benedrix. The objection may be raised here that Elizabeth's influence on Andrews is less pointed or less obvious than that of Rose on Pinkie or of Sarah on Benedrix. This objection holds only to a degree.

Religious values are always closely related to natural values. When Elizabeth gives Andrews "pence" or "sympathy" or any natural comfort, these contributions must be understood in light of the religious convictions she will ultimately import to him. Although the religious drama may be less intense, it is not less real. Here it might be well to recall the traditional axiom of theology: "Grace builds on nature." Woman's religious mission in Greene's novels frequently includes inspiring the deeper natural convictions that are necessary to faith.

The central problem of the novel is adequately posed in Andrews' own reflections about himself, early in the book:

I know I am a coward and altogether despicable.... I know I haven't an ounce of courage...but all I want is a little sympathy. I could be made into a hero if anyone chooses to be interested--if someone believed in me. But here his other self took a hand. He was, he knew, encumbered, made up of two persons, the sentimental, bullying, desiring child and another more stern critic. If someone believed in me--but did he believe in himself? Always while one part spoke, another part stood on one

side and wondered: "Is this I who am speaking? Can I really exist like this? (85)

At this point Andrews is conscious of little more than the warring tendencies within him. His problem is the peculiarly modern problem of finding out who he is. Let us note that Greene's vision of man as expressed in the above quotation is not unlike that propounded by the existentialists--and particularly such Christian existentialists as Louis Lavelle and Gabriel Marcel.

Finding oneself is a gradual process; our personalities are given to us only in the form of potentialities.. A strong effort of the will is necessary to maintain those qualities of courage and sincerity that are required to actualize the potentialities we carry within us. In Andrews' case the inspiration for such an undertaking comes from Elizabeth. He did not really exist until he saw in her "a promise of his two selves as one, the peace which he had discovered sometimes in music."⁸⁶ The essential drama of The Man Within is the religious relationship that develops between Elizabeth and Andrews.

2. An Analysis of the Novel

As the book begins, Andrews is pursued. He is cold,

85. Greene, Graham, The Man Within, London, Heinemann, 1929, p. 17

86. Ibid., p. 78

bothered by a pain in his side; his senses are confused and tired. His mind was a confusion of scents and sounds. There was a haunted look about him. He was in danger and longed for some place to fling himself down to rest. His "tired, tired, tired" body cried out and only a few sensuous images of where he might have been and a few stray memories of his childhood broke his miserable suffering. He tried "to pull himself together and remember exactly where he was."⁸⁷ This is the fundamental problem. He must find out where he is and especially who he is. Although Greene refers here primarily to a geographical location, our knowledge that he frequently uses natural images to evoke states of mind and soul, justifies us in thinking that the reference is equally applicable to Andrew's spiritual status.

Standing in the evening darkness, staring at a light that seemed as distant and as inaccessible as a star, Andrews dramatized his own actions. He pin-points his own plight with exactitude: "Out of the night, a hunted man." He was hunted by murderers. He knew he was in serious danger and the situation reflected the spiritual anarchy that ruled within him: "Pursued by worse than death."⁸⁸ This remark adds a spiritual dimension to his condition and has the symbolical effect of Thompson's Hound of Heaven. He

87. Ibid., p. 2

88. Ibid., p. 5

was a divided man, an evader, submerged by his existent condition, helpless to cope with the obstacles that drove him relentlessly down the dark night. In the first few pages of this novel Greene portrays the ultimate travesty of modern man: alone, without purpose, without love, the hors-la-loi in perpetual flight.

In this state Andrews encounters Elizabeth. "There was nothing in him but sentiment and fear and cowardice, nothing in him but negatives. How could anyone believe in him if he did not even exist?"⁸⁹ From the onset we are given the impression that the accident was no mere chance. Nor can it be interpreted as entirely accidental that almost immediately Elizabeth should make some reference to God: "The peace of God is in his face,"⁹⁰ she says referring to the corpse of her guardian. (The symbolism of death at the beginning of the novel is important for a full understanding of mood and value effect. It also prepares us for a better understanding of the novel's ending.) Andrews feels instantly that the peace of God is in her more than in the dead man. The supernatural world has already been introduced and two destinies intertwine. Viewed in the context of the whole novel, this first mention of God must be associated not only with the person of Elizabeth but with her religious mission as well.

89. Ibid., p. 18

90. Ibid., p. 19

As the novel develops Andrews' loneliness and chaos of soul are emphasized:

He had a sense of time rushing past him, rushing like Gadarene swine to destruction. Time squeaked at him as it passed at an increasing pace down a steep slope. Poets had told him over and over again that life was short. Now for the first time he knew it as a vital fact. He longed for peace and beauty, and the minutes were flying by, and he was still a fugitive, with mind addled, obscured by fear of death. (91)

Bitter memories of his childhood flood his mind. He desires peace. It was a sanity which he could not remember.

Meanwhile Elizabeth's influence on him becomes progressively noticeable. In conversation Elizabeth makes a reference to the resurrection of the dead:

"Do you believe in all that?" he asked, not in mockery but in a curiosity tinged with longing.
"Of course; you can read it in the Bible." (92)

When Andrews pleads innocence of his state by blaming his childhood ("It's not a man's fault whether he's brave or cowardly. It's all the way he's born. My father and my mother made me. I didn't make myself."),⁹³ Elizabeth again injects a supernatural note: "But you always seem to

91. Ibid., p. 27

92. Ibid., p. 49-50

93. Ibid., p. 50

leave out God."⁹⁴ Although Andrews does not believe in "that stuff," he begins to believe more and more in Elizabeth. With her he knew that for a few seconds he had been happy,"⁹⁵ with a sense of intimacy such as he had never known before:

He had a sudden wish to tell her everything, from what he was fleeing and for what cause.... He wished to forget it himself and cling only to this growing sense of intimacy, of two minds loving side by side... (96)

His relationship with Elizabeth at this point has already taken on the symbolic value of "peace and security." This intimacy is reciprocated by Elizabeth:

"But why, why," she asked, "did you ever come to live like this?"; and with a small gesture of her hand she seemed to enclose his fear, his misery, his fugitive body and mind. (97)

Elizabeth's mission to help Andrews find himself becomes more explicit when Carlyon, whom Andrews has been fleeing, enters her home. Her role takes on a definitely religious and sacrificial aspect when she drinks from Andrews' cup to save him. (Even the language is redemptive; one thinks of Christ's act of drinking the cup of salvation at the Last Supper). Certainly this act stirs

94. Ibid., p. 50

95. Ibid., p. 54

96. Ibid., p. 55

97. Ibid., p. 56

the inner man, the real self of Andrews. A sense of reality seems to touch him:

A strange loving cup, he thought bitterly, but his bitterness vanished before a wave of humility which for one moment even cleared his mind of the consciousness of fear.... She is a saint, he thought. The charity and courage with which she hid him from his enemy he had taken for granted; but to his addled unstraight mind the act of drinking from the same cup came with surprising nobility. It touched him where he was most open to impression; it struck straight at his awareness of cowardice. (98)

Greene further emphasizes Elizabeth's role by showing her influence on Carlyon. He is the pursuer. Andrews is the pursued. Both are really suffering from the same malady of not being themselves, of not knowing who they really are. In conversation with Elizabeth, Carlyon is made aware of the emptiness of his pirating life of "adventure, courage and high stakes." It suddenly occurs to him: "What a dull dirty game it makes it all appear."⁹⁹ Carlyon admits a superiority of women when he says:

You women are all so sane. A dream is often all there is to a man. I think that you are lovely, good and full of pity.... You'll never find a man who will love you for anything but a bare, unfilled-in-outline of yourself. A man will even forget his own details when he can, until he appears an epic hero, and it

98. Ibid., p. 61

99. Ibid., p. 66

needs his woman to see that he's a fool. (100)

Shortly he adds: "If I could take you with me, I should have with me peace and charity."¹⁰¹ Elizabeth knows that Carlyon is "in danger of something worse than the law."¹⁰² His person is in danger of disintegration. When Carlyon expresses his desire for peace, he sets up a false and idealistic distinction: "You don't belong to our world, noise, hate. Stay with peace."¹⁰³ Elizabeth's sense of reality refuses to accept that the two should be separate. Eventually Carlyon will become convinced of it.

Andrews, at this point, is completely at the mercy of Elizabeth's influence. She is "wise and understanding;" she doesn't belong "to any age;" with her he feels in "the presence of a mystery;" frequently he reflects "she is a saint."¹⁰⁴ Elizabeth, presently, is the reality Andrews aspires towards. She knows, however, that in herself she can never satisfy the infinite aspirations of a personality. She can only be an instrument. It is significant, too, that Elizabeth's religious role is further accentuated by an almost total absence of physical temptation to Andrews.

100. Ibid., p. 66

101. Ibid., p. 65

102. Ibid., p. 67

103. Ibid., p. 69

104. Cr. p. 70 ff.

In a passage where even Andrews' appetites are stirred, he feels almost irresistibly that "this is not his old lust. There is something new here."¹⁰⁵

The plot of The Hot Chickin moves into another phase when, under Elizabeth's silent, passive insistence, Andrews decides to confess to the law. He realized that it was the only way to escape from his uncool world. This long, dramatic part of the novel involving Andrews' trial is important for a understanding of the transformation that is being effected in him and Elizabeth's role of instrumentality. It is not necessary to analyze it in detail. Suffice it to indicate that, throughout, Andrews is borne up, given hope and courage, by the memory of Elizabeth and by the thought that he was doing through it all "for her sake." "This is what Elizabeth would have me do," he reflects.¹⁰⁶ Such sentiments occur in his reflections frequently in this part of the novel.

Elizabeth appears as a symbol of his better self especially in the closing section of this episode when Andrews becomes involved with Lucy. Lucy represents the woman who has refused her femininity. She is also identified with complete chaos of values and frustration. It is quite normal that Andrews should suffer remorse and discouragement after his relations with her. She repre-

105. Ibid., p. 27

106. Ibid., p. 133

sented the defeat of everything Elizabeth had accomplished.

He reflects:

He was disgusted with himself and her.
He had been treading, he felt, during
the last few days on the border of a
new life, in which he would learn
courage and even self-forgetfulness,
but now he had fallen back into the
slime from which he had emerged. (107)

Andrews' struggle to attain the values he can now
clearly visualize and desperately desire, is set in strong
relief by the loss of the "old man" but rises in him
as a result of his encounter with Lucy. "He felt a terror
of life, of going on soiling himself and repeating and
soiling himself again. There was, he felt, no escape."¹⁰⁸

His need for Elizabeth as solace is contrasted by
his shame and self-loathing:

If only he had not fallen to this woman,
he thought, he would have been clean,
exultant, confident of the future, con-
fident that he had risen once and for
all from his past. He returned now
defeated by his body, dispirited, hope-
less.... Why not abandon this attempt
to be better than I am--I'm only begin-
ning over again this weary, hopeless
business of attempting to rise. I shall
be disappointed again. Why not save
myself this bitter mess? (109)

At this point he is moved to prayer: "O God, help
me."¹¹⁰ It is pertinent to call attention to the deep sense

107. Ibid., p. 182

108. Ibid., p. 184

109. Ibid., p. 194

110. Ibid., p. 196

of sin Andrews experiences. For in Greene's metaphysical world, an awareness of sin is the basis of sanctity. One discovers hell before one discovers heaven: the vision of perfect evil walking a world where perfect good can never walk again. In reducing his characters to stark consciousness of their misery, he thereby purifies them and renders them apt, as it were, for the operation of grace. In Andrews' case, this operation works for the most part through Elizabeth's instrumentality.

In his "twisted" turn of mind, Andrews returns to the "terrible sanity" of Elizabeth. She is not like Lucy. She belongs to a "different world." To Elizabeth Andrews says: "I can't see you body for you." She competed with the saints "in beauty and a sense of peace." In Andrews are "six different people. The all were different things. I don't know which is myself." But gradually, Elizabeth was dissembling: "she began filling her life with herself, with her courage, her peace, her holiness."¹¹¹ In the last action-whipped pages of the book, the dimension of the supernatural breaks explicitly into the dull violent world of confusion and doubt. Greene's climax has the precision of a syllogism: Andrews loves Elizabeth, Elizabeth loves God, therefore....

Andrews proclaims his love with school-boy ardor:

For years I've longed for a peace, a
completeness, a unity. I don't know if I could

111. Ibid., p. 197-207

get it perhaps in music, weariness, a number of things. I love it now. You are all of that. You must possess me, go on possessing me, never leave me to myself. (112)

At the same time Elizabeth affirms her belief in God and eternity with such disconcerting resoluteness and proscribes such orthodox terms of marriage that Andrews is amazed. Explaining herself, Elizabeth says: "It's a belief in God. I can't alter that for you. I'd leave you first."¹¹³

Andrews is becoming more and more aware that what attracts him to Elizabeth is her holiness. "Be patient," he says, "and try to teach me your holiness."¹¹⁴ Her life had given a "meaning and a possibility to holiness and divinity."¹¹⁵ Elizabeth does indeed teach him that through a lesson calculated to bring Andrews to his true self in a definitive way: she commits suicide.

The most probable explanation of Elizabeth's suicide (which, artistically speaking, is a little abrupt) is within the context of her relationship, her mission to Andrews. Andrews' false self went back to a childhood father-complex. He had never been able to throw this complex off and emerge as an autonomous person. It was Elizabeth's

112. Ibid., p. 212

113. Ibid., p. 216

114. Ibid., p. 218

115. Ibid., p. 238

ultimate mission to assume all of those childhood frustrations, to assume the persistent haunting image of Andrew's father and obliterate them forever in a sacrificial death. Andrews will feel responsible for Elizabeth's death because he is aware that his "other self" (the father complex that haunts him) is responsible. In this way will he find the "courage" he lacks.

Greene may be accused of contriving the plot at this point. If that be true he at least contrives it in the sense of this thesis. It is difficult to see how there can be any other explanation for Elizabeth's death. This is indicated in Andrews' reflections over Elizabeth's body:

There had been no struggle with Carlyon but only with his father. His father had made him a betrayer and his father had slain Elizabeth.... His father's was not a roaming spirit. It had housed itself in the son he created, am my father, he thought, and I have killed her. (116)

Andrews' acceptance of religious values now becomes clearer. He is a new person, a converted man. His despair and misgivings about himself as a result of Elizabeth's death are far outweighed by the immense hope and belief her death inspired in him. Her death was a redeeming act in Andrews' respect. Her death was the key to his life. He had tasted something of real love and met God for the first time in her. This conversion is symbolized by the

fact that the old hatred and artificial barriers (caused by an unreal world) that existed between Andrews and Carlyon now break down. As they clasped hands over the table in their new friendship, Andrews exclaims: "It's extraordinary; we've been sleeping; she's woken us." They both realize that theirs was "a stupid business," that "she was finer than any of us."¹¹⁷

Note: A comparison of the general slant of this textual interpretation of The Man Within with that of another critic may serve as a confirmation here. The following quotation is taken from Marie-Beatrice Mesnet's study.

Lost in a strange world, unhappy, suffering from his plight, man questions his destiny, and in doing so becomes conscious of an inner division. He is existence and essence, a thinking and an empiric self. The working of his consciousness is felt as a dissociation of his being. This is the main theme of The Man Within.

Andrews is conscious of his failure to "exist", of his lack of personality... He cannot get below the surface of himself; his sincerity goes no further than a simple awareness of all the tendencies warring in his mind, his secret impulses, the best and the worst.... True sincerity is a dynamic factor which enables us to discover in our "flickering personalities" an inner active self. And, in this process of discovering what we really are, we at the same time create ourselves; choosing to be what we really are, beyond the passing impulse of the moment, we realize our potentialities, which until then had no positive value. Thus, by constant attention to the inner call and with the courage to answer it, even the coward may be turned into a hero, as Andrews suddenly perceived.

117. Ibid., p. 240

Now the man within Andrews emerges:

The two musics had fought for final mastery--one alluring, unreal, touched with thin romance and poetry; the other clear-cut, ringing, sane, a voice carved out of white-marble. One had gone out from him into a vague world, the other was silent in death, but silence had conquered. (118)

The Andrews of the last pages of the book is a person full of hope and confidence and purpose. He felt "at last clear and certain about himself, happy in his decision."¹¹⁹ He realized that he was made for happiness:

To his own surprise he felt happy and at peace, for his father was now slain and yet a self remained, a self which knew neither lust, blasphemy nor cowardice, but only peace and curiosity for the dark which deepened around him. His father's had been a stubborn ghost, but it was laid at last, and he need no longer be torn in two between the spirit and the stern unresting critic which was wont to speak. I am that critic, he said with a sense of discovery and exhilaration. (120)

118. Ibid., p. 240

119. Ibid., p. 244

120. Ibid., p. 245

There can be little doubt that Andrews' conversation was not only on a plane of human values but that it involved religious values as well. After Elizabeth's death he says: "If I had lived with her a little longer, I might have come to believe in an immortality, and a resurrection..."¹²¹ One senses he already believes that. In Elizabeth's body there is a reminder of the supernatural:

For a second time he raised his eyes to Elizabeth's face. The vacant eyes no longer horrified him. He saw them as a hope, a faint hope that might be a stirring of belief. Something had gone out of them to leave them thus, and how could a tangible knife have struck so intangible a something. (120)

There is in this passage a symbolism that recalls a scene in the Gospel in which "power goes out of the Lord" to heal a sick woman. Andrews was healed. "It was no longer despair but a whimsical reproach with which he thought-- if you had waited one month more, one week more, I might have believed. Now I hope."¹²² There can be no doubt now he came by his 'oop. The closing lines of the novel are: "Between the two candles there was a white face that re-

121. Ibid., p. 241

122. Ibid., p. 242

123. Ibid., p. 244

garded him without pity and without disapproval, with wisdom and with sanity."¹²⁴

3. Summary

In this chapter the relationship between Andrews and Elizabeth--the principal personages of Graham Greene's novel, The Man Within--has been analyzed. The title of the novel is already an indication of the problem with which it deals: a personality in search of realization, communication and transcendence. Andrews finally sloughs off his existential anguish through the instrumentality of Elizabeth and reaches a level of communication that is ultimately religious.

Elizabeth's role can be summarized in four points.

1. Her initial encounter with Andrews in which she protects him from his pursuers. 2. Her symbolical gesture of drinking from his cup--again to protect him--through which Andrews is made to feel that his destiny has somehow become allied to hers. 3. Her efforts to get him to go to the law, to exercise an act of courage, to do something positive to get away from his fears. Andrews later told her that "this was the only right thing he ever did."¹²⁵ 4. Her ultimate sacrifice on his behalf through death.

It is at least probable that, had she lived,

124. Ibid., p. 246

125. Ibid., p. 222

Andrews would never have got past the stage of good intentions. He would have depended too much on her presence. Her death provided Andrews with an enduring incentive and resolution. Furthermore, and this point is important, in her death Andrews becomes aware of the death of his father's image (which haunted him and which was really the basis of his problem).

Thus from the beginning of the novel the essential thing about it is the relationship between Andrews and Elizabeth. It is hardly necessary to point out here Greene's power of symbolical evocation. But Elizabeth is more than a symbol. Or rather she is a symbol in the sacramental sense of the word insofar as she effects what she signifies. She is at once a promise and an instrument of the supernatural. She is the type of that woman who, in Coventry Patmore's phrase, "is the sun and complex of all nature, and the visible glory of God."

BRIGHTON ROCK

1. Introductory

Pinkie is one of Greene's most perfect anarchists. He reflects an abuse of masculine traits and his pride has literally pushed him into what Wust has referred to as an "unfini imparfait." He needs no support, feels no indigence, rejects all notion of submission. He is his own god and rules supreme in his small universe. He fashions his own values and walks alone in a wasteland of violence and greed.

Already at seventeen "he looked old; in his short years he had gained experience of the horrors of eternity. The slaty eyes were touched with the annihilating eternity from which he came and to which he went,"¹²⁶ Life was hell and there was no escape anywhere for anyone. "He trailed the clouds of his own glory after him; hell lay about him in his infancy."¹²⁷ He was cut off from real communication. All his life he had walked in "the hideous loneliness of his innocence."¹²⁸ And his innocence was pride. He had never been understood, or made any effort to understand. His experience at the dance club, after the death of one of

126. Greene, Graham, Brighton Rock, Harmondsworth-Middleset, Penguin Books, 1943, p. 21

127. Ibid., p. 69

128. Ibid., p. 151

his gang members, gives a perfect summary of his life:

"His nerves were frozen with repulsion: to be touched, to give oneself away, to lay oneself open--he had held intimacy back as long as he could at the end of a razor blade."¹²⁹ Wust's words apply well to him: "...condamné à l'éternelle inquiétude, le vagabond de l'existence, celui qui est nulle part chez lui, le sans patrie, toujours rejeté dans l'inconnu."

There is a good deal in Pinkie's character which suggests the "refus existentiel." There is nothing that seems even remotely allied to the order of grace or that might form a basis for the operation of grace. As Father Danielou has pointed out:

Notre religion n'est pas une religion de conquête et de force, mais d'accueil de la grâce. Tout se résout à dire "oui" à l'action de Dieu en nous et dans le Monde. Cette passivité n'est pas inertie, cette faiblesse apparente est force divine, cette acceptation liberté totale, cette collaboration suprême initiative." (130)

Pinkie understands nothing of this. Yet within him he feels the pull of the supernatural. His baptism was, as it were, something he never quite succeeded in getting away from. This then is the character Rose meets. The stage is set for a powerful religious drama. And in perhaps no other novel has Greene evoked the supernatural with

129. Ibid., p. 135

130. Quoted by Nouvion, Suzanne, Op. Cit., p. 73

such force as he has done in some instances in Brighton Rock. Rose's religious mission is strongly delineated. Her final influence on Pinkie is written in clear theological terms. As compared to The Man within, Brighton Rock is a much clearer illustration of woman's religious mission as well as modern man's need (represented by Pinkie) for contact with the wellsprings of transcendence.

2. An Analysis of the Novel

From the very first encounter between Rose and Pinkie, the reader is made to feel there is more than ordinary purpose involved. With a few strokes of the pen, Greene strips Pinkie's character bare before our eyes. Grey contempt broods in his eyes which had never been young. He has "a face of starved intensity, a kind of hideous and unnatural pride." He fingers a vitriol bottle in his pocket and "a little venom of anger and hatred" came out on his lips--almost like a taste. And "he was shaken by a sense of loneliness, an awful lack of understanding." It is worthwhile pointing out here that the peculiar existential characteristic of nihilism is especially noticeable in Pinkie--more so, perhaps than in any of Greene's other major characters. Greene writes of him: "A dim desire for annihilation stalked in him, the vast superiority of vacancy." He felt an "appalling emptiness." And again, "He was filled with hatred, disgust, loneliness; he was completely abandoned." Death was "easier than life." Life was "a series

of complicated tactical exercises" and Pinkie was aware that "relief never lasted long; and that anxiety always began again."

When Pinkie meets Rose he is on a dangerous and desperate mission. Then, abruptly, in the striking facility for contrast Greene frequently displays, a religious dimension is introduced. Pinkie spies Rose's beads.

"You a Catholic?" the Boy said.

"Yes" said Rose.

"I'm one too," the Boy said...

"Why I was in the choir once," the Boy confided, and suddenly he began to sing softly in his spoilt boy's voice: 'Agnus Dei qui tollis peccata mundi, dona nobis pacem.' In his voice a whole lost world moved... "Do you go to Mass?" he said.

"Sometimes," Rose said. "It depends on work. Most weeks I wouldn't get much sleep if I went to Mass."

"I don't care what you do," the Boy said sharply, "I don't go to Mass."

"But you believe don't you," Rose implored him, "you think it's true?"

"Of course it's true," the Boy said. "What else could there be?" He went on scornfully. "Why," he said, "it's the old thing that fits. These atheists, they don't know nothing. Of course there's Hell. Flames and damnation," he said..."torments."

"And heaven too," Rose said with anxiety...

"Oh, maybe," the Boy said, maybe." (131)

Rose is by no means perfect. But already she appears as a girl with a mission. First of all she reminds Pinkie of his Catholic past, "a whole lost world." Secondly, her belief stands out against his partial, if not total, disbelief. Pinkie doesn't practice; he scoffs at religion.

At best, he believes in hell. But Rose believes in heaven. She believes "anxiously" in it. Thus there is already a hint of her religious role.

Upon their second encounter, the religious question comes up again (through Rose) and this time the issue is much clearer.

"You're a Roman too. We were all Romans in Nelson place. You believe in things. Like Hell. But you can see she doesn't believe in a thing." She said bitterly: "You can tell the world's dandy with her." (The reference is to Ida Irnold.)

He defended himself from any connection with Nelson Place. "I don't take any stock in religion. Hell--it's just there. You don't need to think of it--not before you die."

"You might die sudden."

"He closed his eyes under the bright empty arch, and memory floated up imperfectly into speech. "You know what they say: between the stirrup and the ground, he something sought and something found."

"Mercy."

"That's right: Mercy."

"It would be awful though," she said slowly, "If they didn't give you time.... That's what I always pray. That I don't die sudden. What do you pray?"

"I don't," he said, but he was praying even while he spoke to someone or something: that he wouldn't need to carry on any further with her, get mixed up again with that drab dynamited plot of ground they both called home. (132)

There are four important points to be noted in this passage.

First: Pinkie's irreligion. He doesn't go to Mass; he doesn't pray. Hell is not a belief, it's just something that is there. Pinkie asserts his disbelief later when he says: "Perhaps when they christened me, the holy water didn't take. I never howled the devil out."¹³³ And, again, he says to Rose: "You don't want to listen too much to priests. They don't know the world like I do. Ideas change. The world moves on...."¹³⁴ In the passage quoted above, he makes an effort to escape his past, to flee from the drab place of his childhood. But there was religion there. Thus Rose, by reminding him of his past, recalls his faith to him. He wants to flee this also. He wanted it to be part of a dim past, a chapter of his life that he would never have to live again.

Second: Rose's religion. She reasserts her belief; she believes in mercy; she realized the importance of a good death. She is profoundly cognizant that she is worlds away from Ida. It is significant to note that this religious digression was introduced in the first place by Rose's memory of Ida's visit. Throughout the novel, Greene uses Ida as a symbol of the irreligious woman, thus drawing

133. Ibid., p. 128

134. Ibid., p. 141

Rose's character that much more forcefully. Rose's sense of values contrasts violently with Ida's. For Ida

...wasn't religious. She didn't believe in heaven and hell, only in ghosts, ouija boards, tables that rapped and little inept voices speaking plaintively of flowers. Let Papists treat death with flippancy; life wasn't so important perhaps to them as what came after; but to her death was the end of everything.... She took life with a deadly seriousness: she was prepared to cause any amount of unhappiness to anyone in order to defend the only thing she believed in. (135)

Third: the possibility of Pinkie's salvation:

"Between the stirrup and the ground he something lost and something found."

Fourth: Rose's role in his salvation. She suggests the ultimate realities Pinkie must face if he is to be saved. She stresses their urgency. "You might die sudden." She believes that, in the worst of cases, Pinkie would snatch that last saving grace "between the stirrup and the ground." This rhyme, introduced here, recurs constantly throughout the remainder of the novel. And it is one of the keys to the enigma of Pinkie's final lot. In a round-table discussion with a group of French critics, Greene was asked whether he had intended Pinkie to be damned or not. He replied that his constant reference to the axiom about mercy should answer the question. In Greene's mind

there was no doubt that Pinkie was saved. Henceforward in the novel, Rose's religious mission becomes symbolically allied to this proverb about mercy.

As yet Pinkie does not realize the significance of Rose in his life. Her religious influence is not yet perceptible to him. But when he returns to her after his mishap at the race track, he begins to sense something of her devotedness. "He was speechless; and some knowledge of the astuteness of her simplicity, the long experience of her sixteen years, the possible depths of her fidelity, touched him like cheap music..."¹³⁶ And in the dark cave, as Rose binds his wound, theology comes up again. Rose speaks, again contrasted with Ida:

"'Right and wrong!' That's what she talks about. I've heard her at the table. Right and wrong. As if she knew." She whispered with contempt: "Oh, she won't burn. She couldn't burn if she tried." She might have been discussing a damp Catherine wheel. "Molly Carthew burnt. She was lovely. She killed herself. Despair. That's a mortal sin. Its unforgivable. Unless--what is it you said about the stirrup?"

He told her unwillingly: "The stirrup and the ground. That doesn't work."

What you did, she persisted, did you confess it?

"I don't care," she repeated, "I'd rather burn with you than be like her." Her immature voice stumbled

136. Ibid., p. 114.

on the word: "She's ignorant." (137)

Two remarks might be made here. First, Rose's growing identity with Pinkie. "I'd rather burn with you..." Two destinies are mysteriously becoming one. She is assuming responsibility for the salvation of another. One thinks of St. Therese of Lisieux offering her life as a holocaust for the sins of the world.¹³⁸ Secondly, the depth of Rose's religious awareness as signified by the distinction of right-wrong and good-evil. Paul Rostenne has pointed out the implications of this distinction:

"Le couple good-evil évoque des notions qui se rattachent au fondements même de la morale, aux racines métaphysiques de la conduite humaine, tandis que le couple right-wrong s'applique plutôt aux superstructures particulières et variables des civilisations qui n'engagent pas les ultimes profondeurs de l'être, l'essentiel de la destinée humaine." (139)

There is a difference between the spiritual man and the purely social man. One looks to the other world; the other is concerned more with the temporal order. Good-evil refers to the transcendental values that govern humanity: belief in the last things. Right-wrong refers to the juridical notions of what is permitted and what is prohibited.

137. Ibid., p. 114-115

138. Cf. The Autobiography of St. Therese: The Story of a Soul, New York, Image Books, 1957, pp. 159

139. Rostenne, Paul, Op. Cit., p. 30

When transcendental values are abolished in a society, the inferior values of right-wrong substitute for them. The two notions express two distinct worlds and Rose has no doubt that she and Pinkie belong to the superior one. Even Molly Carthew qualifies. She gets credit for a real sin. She at least has the privilege of burning. Pinkie soon realized that he too belongs to this superior world. He becomes conscious, with a positive belief, that he is worthy of damnation. This marks a new step of religious maturity in him.

She was good, he'd discovered that, and he was damned; they were made for each other.
 "You leave her alone" the woman (Ida) said. "I know all about you."
 It was as if she were in a strange country. The typical Englishwoman abroad. She hadn't even got a phrase book. She was as far from either of them as she was from Hell--or Heaven. Good and evil lived in the same country, spoke the same language, came together like old friends, feeling the same completion, touching hands beside the iron bedstead." (140)

Pinkie realized for the first time that his little drama was playing out on a colossal scale. From the narrow confines of the race track game, the dirty room, the world of violence and despair he opens upon wider horizons. But it wasn't the broader country of society. It was nothing less than the world of ultimate realities: religion, good, and evil. Pinkie realized that Rose's world was his world.

This is her first triumph. Her goodness was the other pole of his badness. They complemented each other. "I'll never let you down," Rose says, "never, never, never."¹⁴¹ Pinkie was aware that "she belonged to his life, like a room or a chair: she was something which completed him.... What was most evil in him needed her: It couldn't get along without goodness."¹⁴² Henceforth he will feel "boundaried by her goodness."¹⁴³ This is the first ray of hope--and it is a religious hope--in Pinkie's life. He had now entered his proper world--"the ravaged and disputed territory between the two eternities."¹⁴⁴

Pinkie's belief--in the possibility of his own damnation--is a rankly negative conviction of religious values. Hardly sufficient, to use theological terms, for salvation. Rose's role is now to bring Pinkie to a positive belief--in hope, heaven, grace. This is the process that now begins and continues to the end of the novel. Her first effort is on their wedding day. Rose is late. While waiting, Pinkie, in a conversation with Dallow, has turned up his creed: "Credo in unum Satanum."¹⁴⁵ As Rose approaches he asks:

141. Ibid., p. 130

142. Ibid., p. 130

143. Ibid., p. 139

144. Ibid., p. 141

145. Ibid., p. 168

"Where've you been? Don't you know you're late?"

"I'm sorry Pinkie, you see"--she brought the fact out with shame, as if she were admitting conversation with his enemy--"I went to Church."

"What for?" he said.

"I don't know, Pinkie. I got confused. I thought I'd go to confession."

He grinned at her. "Confession? That's rich."

"You see, I wanted--I thought..."

"For Christ's sake what?"

"I wanted to be in a state of grace when I married you." She took no notice of Dallow. The theological term lay oddly and pedantically on her tongue. They were two Romans together in the grey street. They understood each other.. She used terms common to Heaven and Hell. (146)

Rose was a stranger in the country of mortal sin. She was aware that she was about "to do a mortal sin." The Boy said: "It'll be no good going to confession ever again --as long as we're both alive."¹⁴⁷ They were both doomed. It appears, at this point, that the Boy is making a convert. Rose's fidelity stretches to a desire for damnation with Pinkie. Yet her desire is really a gamble, like that of a lifeguard who takes a chance on the rapids to save the victim.

Even her agreement to the suicide pact is basically

146. *Ibid.*, p. 169

147. *Ibid.*, p. 169

a stall, an effort to trick Pinkie into salvation. This sequence of the novel is important because it throws Rose's redemptive mission into bold relief. Elizabeth's suicide in the religious interests of Andrews might be recalled. (Later Sarah will also effect her greatest influence through death. Greene attaches high redemptive value to death. One finds little difficulty in making a theological connection with Calvary.) As Rose and Pinkie drive through the rain to the secluded country place they had set for their act of suicide, Pinkie's memory carries him back once again to childhood.

He began to intone softly: "Dona nobis pacem."

"He won't."

"What do you mean?"

"Give us peace."

He thought: there'll be time enough in the years ahead--sixty years--to repent of this. Go to a priest. Say: "Father, I've committed murder twice. And there was a girl--she killed herself." Even if death came suddenly, driving home tonight, the smash on the lamp-post--there was still: "between the stirrup and the ground." (145)

The drama now nears its end and Pinkie's thoughts revert to his second encounter with Rose. He realized better the implications of the rhyme. His thoughts turn briefly positive. He reckons his chances for salvation.

Although he is quite convinced that he is damned he is, for the first time, stirred by a faint nostalgia for heaven.

...he wasn't made for peace, he couldn't believe in it. Heaven was a word; Hell was something he could trust.... An awful resentment stirred in him--why shouldn't he have had his chance like all the rest, seen his glimpse of Heaven if it was only a crack between the Brighton walls? He turned as they went down to Tarringdean and took a long look at her as if she might be it. (149)

Pinkie could not quite conceive Rose as his vision of Heaven. But it was as close as he had ever come. One thinks of Patmore's line about the religious mission of woman, "In her beauty no man unfit for heaven could hope to merit her, so he forthwith examines his conscience, strives in becoming worthy of her to become worthy of God."

Rose meanwhile realizes that a climax is being reached. Moreover, she knows the issue: "This road leads nowhere. It is said to be the worst act of all, the act of despair, the sin without forgiveness...."¹⁵⁰ Her sense of identity with him again moves her to a desire for some ultimate sacrifice. "He was going to damn himself, but she was going to show Thea that They couldn't damn him without damning her too...she wouldn't let him go into that

149. Ibid., p. 230

150. Ibid., p. 231

darkness alone."¹⁵¹ Pinkie is familiar with despair. But Rose cannot play the act out. For her there could be no dead-end road. There is always hope. Her desire to be damned with Pinkie is a measure of her fidelity, but not an accurate expression of her deepest instincts.

He couldn't make her kill herself; life wasn't as bad as that. It came as a revelation, as if someone had whispered to her that she was someone, a separate creature--not just one flesh with him. She could always escape, if he didn't change his mind. Nothing was decided. They could go in the car wherever he wanted them to go; she could take the gun from his hand, and even then--at the last moment of all--she needn't shoot. Nothing was decided--there was always hope. (152)

Rose is now becoming conscious of her independent mission. Something over and above mere damnation with Pinkie. Her hope prevails against his despair. She knows that even if she did go over to Herod's side, even if she did choose damnation, it couldn't be for long. "You could win to the evil side suddenly, in a moment of despair or passion, but through a long life the guardian drove you remorseless towards the crib, the 'happy death'."¹⁵³ Positive religious values predominate in Rose.

Pinkie makes a final attempt at denial and indepen-

151. Ibid., p. 231

152. Ibid., p. 241

153. Ibid., p. 243

dence:

"You a good Catholic, Piker? Do you go to Mass on Sundays like they tell you?"

Piker said with weak defiance: "Why not, Pinkie?"

"You're afraid," the Boy said. "You're afraid of burnin'."

"He wouldn't be?"

"I'm not." He looked with loathing into the past--a cracked bell ringing, a child weeping under the cane--and repeated: "I'm not afraid." (154)

Pinkie denied Piker's past; but he could not deny the presence of Rose. Secretly she was plotting his salvation.

Outside in the rain the self-starter wouldn't work; he stood with his coat collar turned up and pulled the handle. She wanted to tell him that he mustn't stand there, getting wet, because she'd changed her mind--they were going to live, by hook or by crook, but she daren't. She pushed back none to the last possible moment. When they drove off she said: "Last night...the night before....you didn't hate me, did you, for what we did?"

He said: "No I didn't hate you."

"Even though it was a mortal sin?" (155)

This is Rose's last effort to recall Piker to his religious responsibilities. And it is largely successful.

It was quite true--he hadn't hated her; he hadn't even hated the act. There had been a kind of pleasure, a kind of

154. Ibid., p. 241

155. Ibid., p. 242

pride, a kind of something else....
 An enormous emotion beat on him; it
 was like something tryin' to get in,
 the pressure of gigantic wings against
 the glass. Dona nobis pacem.... He
 had a sense of huge havoc--the con-
 fession, the penance, and the sacra-
 ment--an awful distraction, and he
 drove blind into the rain. (156)

These are the last sentiments Pinkie expresses be-
 fore he commits suicide. He had come a long way. He had
 begun to see (or at least react to) Rose's role in his life.
 Against the background of their life together, he was
 stirred by a desire for heaven, to abandon his wasteland,
 to begin to live, to be free. This last quoted passage
 is a portrayal of Rose's religious mission. Here Greene
 explicitly joins Rose's presence with Pinkie's only positive
 act of hope. One may assume that had they lived together
 a little longer, Pinkie would have come to believe. For
 at least he now believes in Rose. "He hadn't hated her..."
 His suicide may well pose a doubt as far as his salvation
 is concerned; but none as far as Rose's responsibility
 towards him is concerned.

Rather the contrary is true. The circumstances of
 Pinkie's death serve to bring out better his religious mis-
 sion. Her mission now takes on the deeper aspect of expia-
 tion ("We must hope and pray. The Church does not demand
 that we believe any soul is cut off from mercy,"¹⁵⁷ the

156. Ibid., p. 242

157. Ibid., p. 249

confessor tells Rose). Brighton Rock does not end with Pinkie's death. Rose now dedicates her life in supplication of the mercy she had tried to teach Pinkie about in the course of the novel. "You can't conceive my child, nor can I or anyone, the....appalling...strangeness of the mercy of God."¹⁵⁸

Rose believes that. And although Greene makes rather an important issue of the record--Pinkie's testimonial of hatred--this must be examined in context. Pinkie had made the recording before his final state of mind had evolved. Before he confessed that "he hadn't hated her..." Before he began to understand the mercy of God or felt any desire for heaven. Rose's religious mission appears to be clear as she resolves to expiate for Pinkie's sins. Greene writes, "A sudden feeling of immense gratitude broke through her pain--it was as if she had been given the sight a long way off of life going on again."¹⁵⁹

Rose would redeem Pinkie!

3. Summary

Brighton Rock offers substantially the same situation as in The Man Within: a man-woman inter-relationship and the religious influence of the woman on the man. In Brighton Rock the lines are much more clearly drawn. The

158. Ibid., p. 249

159. Ibid., p. 249

religious issue is much more intense. From the first encounter between Pinkie and Rose a dimension of eternity is introduced and it remains the profound theme of the novel throughout.

Pinkie is a type of Greene's existential man. He experiences keenly sentiments of nihilism, anguish, absurd violence and loneliness. He stands desperately in need of values of transcendence and communication. Through Rose's instrumentality he comes to some understanding of these. Rose's mission revolves about the issue of Divine mercy. Pinkie stands in need of this but he does not understand it. She understands it, desires it and yields to it. She expresses, in violent contrast to Pinkie, the necessary indigence of a creature before God.

It is significant that there is seldom question of this mercy for Rose herself. She consistently desires it for Pinkie. Ineluctably their destinies have become one. Rose makes Pinkie aware of this in various ways: by reminding him of their common childhood background, their common faith and their common citizenship in the ultimate world of good and evil, of heaven and hell. Her concepts of heaven, grace, hope and salvation conflict with Pinkie's negative attitudes of hell, isolation, despair and damnation. She is closer to the wellsprings of Divine gifts. She, in contrast to Ida, inhabits the depths.

Gradually Rose's influence on Pinkie is made manifest. She touches him. He first stops hating her, then

begins to believe in her and finally, indicates at least a modicum of belief in her values.

In the final sequences of the novel Pinkie's attitudes turn positive. He begins to desire what Rose desires. He desires heaven and salvation. However superficial this desire may be it is unquestionably very real and very sincere. Furthermore, whether or not Pinkie is saved is somewhat beside the point as far as the object of this thesis is concerned. Rose's religious mission is clearly drawn in the drama of their relationship.

It is further emphasized by the role of expiation she continues to play after Pinkie's death. The religious themes of hope, mercy and salvation that were characteristic of her in the novel continue to be characteristic of her after the story ends. She is still committed to Pinkie. She is still responsible for him. This projection of the plot beyond the end of the story is an effective technique on Greene's part of underscoring the eternal dimension of his whole book.

Rose is the type of Goethe's woman who "loads over upward."

THE POWER AND THE GLORY

a. Introductory

Unlike the other novels of Graham Greene that are being examined in this thesis, The Power and the Glory offers no direct man-woman relationship. Therefore it is less apt for any explicit revelation of woman's religious mission. Furthermore the values which Greene's existential man is normally in search of do not, at first sight, appear to be an essential part of The Power and the Glory. The central character is a priest. Although he encounters severe moral difficulties, he is from the beginning a believer.

But while this novel is of a somewhat different tone it nevertheless presents the same essential drama: namely, that of a man in search of communication and transcendence. One can be quite as cut off from these values through mortal sin, Greene seems to be arguing, as one can be through disbelief. In this novel, as in his others the principal question is an understanding of love, mercy and sanctity. Since woman's religious mission centers about these values in many of Greene's novels, it may be asked whether or not that same mission is manifest in The Power and the Glory.

There is no manifestation of this mission in the

wealth of detail of the other novels under consideration in this thesis. But the episodes that concern Coral Fellows in The Power and the Glory are impregnated with religious symbolism. We might note that the priest's struggle, unlike that of Greene's other protagonists, is principally an interior one and not a social one. And it is in this perspective that Coral's role must be interpreted.

b. An Analysis of the Novel

The priest's interior struggle in The Power and the Glory is developed within the familiar Greeneian framework of pursuit. His pursuit from the police is symbolic of his deeper pursuit from his religious obligations or, more profoundly still, from the reality of salvation.¹⁶⁰ The priest is convinced of his damnation just as he is convinced of his ultimate capture by the lieutenant. From this state of mind flow the sentiments of doubt, agony and despair.

Into this context of pursuit and fear Coral is introduced as a token of salvation. She is presented as one with an awareness of the seriousness of life. This impression is conveyed by her desire to study and better herself; it is conveyed sketchily by the contrast of her stability and centeredness with the instability and confusion of her

160. For a profound analysis of the significance of the existentialist refusal of salvation see Marcel, G., Home Viator, Chicago, Regnery, 1951, p. 185-213

parents: her mother, sickly and selfishly unable to cope with her condition; her father, boisterous and irresolute --unable, like Eliot's Prufrock, to bring himself to the moment of decision. It is conveyed above all by Greene's portrayal of her character:

She stood in the doorway watching them with a look of immense responsibility. Before her serious gaze they became a boy you couldn't trust and a ghost you could almost puff away: a piece of frightened air. (161)

Coral is "responsible," "solemn," "deliberate," "trustworthy," "decisive," and "aware." All of these qualities are manifest in her when she executes her mission of mercy to the priest. In the first place she had given him refuge in her father's barn; secondly, she took him food and drink; thirdly, she manifested interest and solicitude in his plight; and, fourthly, her attachment to him contained an element of indissolubility, of total dedication, in her farewell words to him:

"Good-bye," she said. "I hope you'll escape. A faint sigh came out of the darkness: she said gently: "If they kill you I shan't forgive them--ever." She was ready to accept any responsibility, even that of vengeance, without a second thought. It was her life. (162)

Coral's sympathy opened up a channel of hope for the priest. "You can always come back here," she had told

161. Greene, Graham, The Power and the Glory, New York, Viking Press, 1946 (first published, 1940), p. 44.

162. Ibid., p. 56

him. Then she added. "I could look after you. My room is just opposite this door. You would just tap at my window. "Perhaps," she went seriously on, "it would be better to have a code."¹⁶³ She then explained to him the elements of Morse code and the priest perceived her goodness. "You are very good,"¹⁶⁴ he told her.

It may be argued that this is just a passing episode, without relevance to the theme of this thesis or to the plot of the novel. However, there is evidence to the contrary. In the first place, this scene of mercy is introduced early in the novel; secondly, reference is made to Coral from time to time afterwards; and, finally, the original scene assumes importance in light of the final moments of the drama. The Morse code becomes a kind of thematic symbol. Coral's gesture is related to the thread of hope that brightens the priest's life--and particularly his last days. Indeed, hope entered the plot through Coral's instrumentality and remained allied with it at the end. In view of these later developments, it would be unwise to underestimate Coral's symbolic importance. She, too, executes a religious mission.

Greene introduces another sequence concerning Coral a few pages later.¹⁶⁵ He seems to do this for no other

163. Ibid., p. 54

164. Ibid., p. 55

165. Ibid., p. 69 ff.

reason than to keep her in focus and to accentuate further her indomitable sense of responsibility and her mission of dedication towards her parents (which may be taken as a prototype of his mission towards the priest). Her "whole of life was adult."¹⁶⁶ The association of Coral and the priest is made again as she discovers his empty bottle in the barn and sees the crosses he had scribbled on the wall. "The child stood in pain and looked at them: a horrible novelty enclosed her whole morning: it was as if today everything was memorable."¹⁶⁷

The lines of association become clearer when, later, and again closely pursued, the priest returns to the Fellows plantation. It was the only refuge he knew. Here he tried "to remember what the child had told him--the Morse code, her window."¹⁶⁸ He "realized how much he had counted on this child."¹⁶⁹ Here "he remembered her readiness to swear enmity against anyone who hurt him...."¹⁷⁰ This time the plantation is abandoned and this serves to draw Coral's memory more closely to the priest. Looking over a piece of poetry she had been studying ("Come back! Come back! he cried in grief...."), the presence of Coral brought the

166. Ibid., p. 72

167. Ibid., p. 73

168. Ibid., p. 190

169. Ibid., p. 191

170. Ibid., p. 194

memory of his own daughter back to him and the symbolism of hope is cemented:

He felt in the foreign words the ring of genuine passion and repeated to himself on his hot and lonely porch the last line--"My daughter, O my daughter." The words seemed to contain all that he felt himself of repentance, longing, and unhappy love. (171)

The complicated symbolism here is not without value. Coral's sense of responsibility towards her parents held them together and stirred in them the desire to do better things. Coral's association with the priest had something of the same effect and, furthermore, brought the memory of his own daughter before him. Consequently he experienced something of the reality of repentance and hope. He felt the courage to carry on (and the symbolism of his own daughter recurs frequently thereafter). Thus from Coral, to the priest's daughter, to hope, to the priest's ultimate salvation runs a common thread. Coral's responsibility impressed the priest ("That poor child...what responsibilities she had perhaps been forced to undertake,"¹⁷² he reflects later) and reminded him of his responsibilities towards his daughter and, finally, of his responsibilities towards himself. Responsibility, of however weak a nature, was the condition of his salvation.

171. Ibid., p. 199

172. Ibid., p. 206

Further evidence of this is given us in the final scene of the priest's life. On the night before his death he has a dream. It is charged with two strains of symbolism: one religious, because the dream takes place in a cathedral (religious values, God, salvation are there); the other referring him back to Coral:

Then the glass by his plate began to fill with wine, and looking up he saw that the child from the banana station was serving him. She said:

"I got it from my father's room."

"You didn't steal it?"

"Not exactly," she said in her careful and precise voice.

He said: "It is very good of you. I had forgotten the code--what did you call it?"

"Morse."

"That was it, Morse. Three long taps and one short one," and immediately the taps began: the priest by the altar tapped, a whole invisible congregation tapped along the aisles--three long and one short. He said: "What is it?"

"News," the child said, watching him with a stern, responsible, and interested gaze. (173)

Knowing the functional roles dreams play in Greene's novels, it would be difficult not to attach great importance to this one. The interpretation that seems dictated by the logic of the plot is that, in the dream, the child becomes associated with religious values (in the cathedral). The

Morse code becomes a kind of key to salvation. There are three indications of this in the paragraph immediately following the above dialogue. First the priest awakens "with a huge feeling of hope." Secondly, he makes an act of contrition. And, thirdly, he reflects upon sanctity: "It seemed at the moment that it would have been quite easy to be a saint. It would only have needed a little self-restraint and a little courage.... He knew now that at the end there was only one thing that counted--to be a saint."

There is no good reason to doubt that the priest was saved. And, taking into consideration the construction of the plot, it is difficult not to attach great importance to Coral's instrumentality in bringing the priest to his ultimate convictions. It is difficult to know whether Coral herself became converted. But her redemptive mission--not only on a natural plane in her gesture of hospitality, but in a veritable supernatural sense--is further thrown into relief in the scene immediately following; the priest's reflections, when we learn that she had died. Death is always central to the religious mission of woman in Greene's novel. Our knowledge of Coral's death comes as a confirming piece of evidence of her religious instrumentality in regards to the condemned priest.

c. Summary

The circumstances in which the plot of The Power

and the Glory unfolds do not contain the man-woman relationship which normally manifests woman's religious mission. Indeed, at first sight, this mission seems to be absent from the novel. But a closer examination reveals that the presence of Coral Fellows must be interpreted in this sense.

The lines of symbolism are not as clearly drawn as in other novels but they appear nevertheless quite definite. Her original gesture of hospitality to the fleeing priest provides the context within which Coral brings the priest to a greater awareness of himself and his state. Coral's presence, supported by that of the priest's own daughter, develops from her original act of mercy to sympathy, responsibility, dedication and, finally, hope. The symbolism of the Morse code assumes the proportions of a key to salvation and, identified frequently throughout the novel with Coral, is greatly strengthened by our knowledge of Coral's death. The priest's early reflection ("She was ready to accept any responsibility, even that of vengeance, without a second thought. It was her life.") is literally fulfilled. We do not know the immediate circumstances or reasons of Coral's death. It is possible to assume that she offered it for the priest. But, barring this assumption, the evidence is sufficient in the closing scenes to attribute a veritable role of religious instrumentality to Coral.

The dream especially bears this out. In his final hour, when he stands greatly in need of divine mercy, the

priest remember's Coral's prayer. In the drama, she becomes identified with the religious ceremonies of the cathedral and is further supported by the immediate sentiments of the priest upon her death, (they are also the final sentiments): hope (albeit mutilated by a sense of uncertainty), contrition and a conviction of the reality of sanctity.

It can be concluded that Coral's early introduction into the drama is related to the ultimate graces of mercy and hope. There is an upward line of progress from her in the early pages to that transpired in the final pages of the book. It may be said, therefore, that Coral exercised in a very real sense a religious passion. It was her life: dedication, mercy, sympathy, commitment, and perhaps, even death were her religious qualities she manifested.

Fin... Gauthier

Le Tourment de Dieu

chez les amants de G. G.

Toulouse, Imp

Paradoxe 1953

a. Introductory

The End of the Affair confronts the reader with the familiar Greenian character in a world of violence. The existential mood hangs heavily over the novel. The dominant themes of hate, struggle and frustration are symbolically evoked in the background of war-torn London.

The mood of the novel is set in a early scene when Henry remarks: "Love is all that counts." 171 That follows is a probing record of distress, (jealousy), passion, crumbling security and, finally, loss and transcendence. The phenomenon of love and escape is sharply illustrated in the characters of Carr and Bendrix. The sense of futility and emptiness is conveyed with striking immediacy. Bendrix reaches the point of despair where the lines of distinction between love and hate, where love and hatred appear to be the same thing:

Hatred seems to operate in the same glands as love: it even produces the same actions. If we have not the right to interpret the character of Judas, or the character of Peter, we have been able to say that both actions alone, whether it was the jealous Judas or the cowardly Peter, to love.

174. Greene, Graham, The End of the Affair, London, Heinemann, 1951, p. 25

Christ? (175)

Bendrix's hopelessness is tinged with the characteristic tendencies towards sadistic cruelty and suicide. He seeks vengeance in bitter cruelty to Parkie, to Henry (in one memorable scene), to the unknown God and above all to himself. He is pulled by the "obstinancy" of non-existence."¹⁷⁶ Hue like Pinkie, he desired nihilism. "Death never mattered at those times, he reflects--in the early days I even used to pray for it: the shattering annihilation that would prevent forever the getting up, the putting on of clothes...."¹⁷⁷ He had "the security of possessing nothing,"¹⁷⁸ and felt that

"The sense of unhappiness is so much easier to convey than that of happiness. In misery we so aware of our own existence, even though it may be in the form of a monstrous egoism: this pain of mine is individual, this nerve that winces belongs to me and to no other." (179)

Thus Bendrix moves through a world of twilight--an unidentified territory between not-hoping, on the one hand, and despairing on the other. "It was as if the shutters were going up on the whole world; soon he would all

175. Ibid., p. 26-27

176. Ibid., p. 17

177. Ibid., p. 88

178. Ibid., p. 46

179. Ibid., p. 52

be abandoned to our own devices."¹⁸⁰ The heavy atmosphere of this novel recalls the weariness of the world as it is described by Bernanos:

The exhaustion, the dejection, the collection of disgust at the bottom of the soul, the impurity, the defilement. Weariness without and within, the immersion of weariness, the sin, the stigma, the curse of weariness (the weariness, the agony, the sharing of the universal shame of a wasted world, of man's betrayal of the world), a kind of poisoning of one's being. (181)

It is into this world that transcendence eventually penetrates. Liberty cuts a path through fatality. Love makes its force felt in circumstances of lust and consuality. It is about the love relationship of Bendrix and Sarah that the higher meaning of The End of the Affair crystallizes. It is an affair that finally bears fruit. The purpose of this chapter is to analyze this relationship in order to demonstrate the specific religious mission of Sarah.

The analysis will comport three steps: (1) Preparatory: an introduction to love and God; (2) The Diary: an illustration of Sarah's religious role; (3) Bendrix's struggle with God.

b. An Analysis of the Novel

180. Ibid., p. 77

181. Quoted by Mesnet, H-B., Op. Cit., p. 73

(1) Preparatory: an introduction to love and God.

The Bendrix met in the opening pages of The End of the Affair might well be taken as a symbol of the sterility and the waste of a human world in which nothing grows. He sets out to write a record of hate: the story of his misery. He sees in Henry "one of misery's graduates: he had passed in the same school, and for the first time I thought of him as an equal....We were fellow strangers."¹⁸² Suspicion and distrust dominate the opening scenes of the book and this world is readily symbolized by reference to the detective agency. "The pressure of the outside world weighs on us like a peine forte et dure."¹⁸³

This then is the man who meets and falls in love with Sarah. At first no detailed portrayal of Sarah's character is given. Yet already one glimpses something of her capacity for love. Bendrix remembers her words: "I have never loved anybody or anything as I love you."¹⁸⁴ There is even a hint of a religious dimension: Bendrix reflects: "...sitting there, my fingers on the quiet instrument, with something to look forward to, I thought to myself: I remember. This is what hope feels like."¹⁸⁵ A preview of Sarah's conversion is given in Mr. Parkis' report of her

182. Ibid., p. 10

183. Ibid., p. 24

184. Ibid., p. 57

185. Ibid., p. 30

going to a "Roman Church."

It is quite impossible here to do justice to the intensity of this love affair. It is described with depth, sympathy and great psychological and emotional subtlety. Suffice it to note that the first time their love is the first important development of the drama. So far as we know from the kind of love Sara is capable of giving him. It touched the deepest part of him. It is a love that is as physical love, its background symbols of cautions and near-
ing stairs. But it is a love that also bears some-
thing of the character of that true love which Francois Mauriac has said that always "is crucified."

Bendrix expresses something of the death of their love (in it is to be noted the record is written after the affair had ended) in the records:

The souls of men I have always seen
as if by the saints to describe their
vision of God: and so, I suppose, we
all, to use the terms of prayer, meditation,
contemplation to explain the intensity of
the love which I feel for a woman. We too
surrender memory, intellect, intelligence,
and we too experience the deprivation, the
nocturnal, and so, time is a reward a
kind of peace. (186)

This passage, too, in it has so it in the re-
ligious magnitude of this love affair eventually assumes.
Greene's method in The End of the Affair, however, is to
delineate the death (and the limits) of human love as a

kind of foundation for Divine Love. In several outstanding passages he does this. For example, he writes: "... and sometimes it seemed to me that her abandonment touched that strange mathematical point of endlessness, a point with no width, occupying no space.... She had so much more capacity for love than I had."¹⁰⁷ Already Sarah is drawing Bendrix out of himself and into the totality of her love--which, even on a human plane, is intensely liberating.

One measure of her influence on him is the sense of insecurity--the breaking down of the barriers of egoism--she raises in him. Bendrix realizes that his way of loving is not hers. He secretly wonders whether hers may not be a better way. Endless arguments mark this stage of development of their affair. "I only want you to be happy," Sarah tells him. And his appreciation of her love is indicated in this reflection:

Insecurity is the worst sense that lovers feel: sometimes the most humdrum desireless marriage seems better. Insecurity twists meanings and poisons trust. In a closely beleaguered city every soldier is a potential traitor.... Because I couldn't bear the thought of her so much as touching another man, I feared it all the time, and I saw intimacy in the most casual movement of the hand. (108)

And he adds shortly afterwards:

107. Ibid., p. 57

108. Ibid., p. 62

When I began to think I had this was a step of hatred, but I am not convinced. Perhaps my hatred is really as deficient as my love.... Looking at her (a step of talker) over my whiskey I thought how odd it was that I felt no grief for her at all.... If passion for Sarah had killed simple lust forever, never again could I be able to enjoy a woman without love. (189)

This may be considered Bendrix's first level of arrival: he has a new understanding of love.

At the next level Bendrix is introduced to God. He is recalling the end of the whole affair" and these words come to his mind:

She had said to me--and, were nearly the 1st words I heard from her... "You needn't be so scared. Love doesn't end. Just because we don't see each other...." She had already made her decision, though I didn't know it until next day, when the telephone pressed not for but the silent open mouth of somebody found dead. She said: "My dear, my dear. People go on loving God, don't they, all their lives without seeing Him?"

"That's not a kind of love."

"I sometimes don't believe there's an other kind." (190)

Bendrix expresses his awareness of the confusion in their affair with the words:

I suppose I should have recognized

189. Ibid., p. 66

190. Ibid., p. 79

that she was already under a stranger's influence--she had never spoken like that when we were first together. He had agreed so happily to eliminate God from our world." (191)

The above dialogue may be said to be the turning point of The End of the Affair. Human love had reached its limits. It did not satisfy fully.

At this point Sarah's religious mission emerges for the first time. The end of the affair had come about because Sarah had in some sense vowed herself to God if Bendrix survived an air raid in which their house had been struck. This transition is expressed in the following dialogue:

"What were you doing on the floor?" I asked.
 "Praying."
 "Who to?"
 "To anything that might exist."

...

"I knew for certain you were dead."
 "There wasn't much to pray for then, was there?" I teased her. "Except a miracle."
 "When you are hopeless enough," she said,
 "you can pray for miracles. They happen, don't they, to the poor, and I was poor." (192)

Thus the affair ended. Sarah walked out of Bendrix's life with the parting words of hope: "You needn't be so scared, love doesn't end...."

(2) The Diary: An Illustration of Sarah's Reli-

191. Ibid., p. 79

192. Ibid., p. 83-84

ous Role. The next important step in the Fall of the Affair is Sarah's diary--which Bendrix had procured through the services of the detective Parks. Once the time sequence in the novel shifts considerably it is not really until the diary is read that many previous allusions are made clear. The special importance of the diary in the novel is that it clarifies Sarah's religious mission. In it Greene proceeds to erect supernatural love upon the shambles of human love. A closing passage of the diary (which is quoted in the book many times in the novel) already gives us the scope of Sarah's religious mission:

I might have spent a lifetime spending a little love at a time, like it out here and there, on this and that. But even the first time,.... spent all the time. You were there, teaching us to surrender, like you taught the rich man, so that one day we might have nothing left except this love of You. But You are too good to us. When I ask You for pain, You give me peace. Give it him too. Give him my peace--he needs it more. (113)

In this passage two things might be remarked: first, Sarah's conversion to belief and, secondly, her desire to mediate the same faith for Bendrix.

The greatest portion of the diary is concerned with Sarah's awareness of the limitations of human love and her struggle to accede to some supernatural kind of love.

...I wonder if it isn't possible to come

to an end of sex, and I know he's wondering too and is afraid of that point where the desert begins. What do we do in the desert if we lose each other? How does one go on living after that?... If only I could make him feel secure, then we could love peacefully, happily, not savagely, inordinately, and the desert would recede out of sight. For a lifetime perhaps. If one could believe in God, would he fill the desert?... Dear God, what shall I do with this desire to love? (194)

In the diary, also, Sarah's motives for her action on the night she thought Bendrix was killed are explicitated. Her conversion was sudden and spontaneous. Perhaps it was not total. But was certainly quite real. And in this sequence there is again an orientation of her faith towards Bendrix. She is sacrificing what she wants for Bendrix's happiness. Her declaration of faith on this occasion is quite eloquent:

Make me believe. I shut my eyes tight, and I pressed my nails into the palms of my hands until I could feel nothing but pain, and I said, I will believe. Let him be alive and I will believe. Give him a chance. Let him have his happiness. Do this and I'll believe... I'll give him up forever, only let him be alive with a chance, and I pressed and pressed and I could feel the skin break, and I said, People can love without seeing each other, can't they, they love You all their lives without seeing You, and then he came in at the door, and he was alive, and I thought now the agony of being without him starts... (195)

194. Ibid., p. 107

195. Ibid., p. 112-113

What follows is principally an expression of the very real agony she experienced. Greene's grasp of the religious subtlety of conversion is profound throughout as is his understanding of attachment to ritual claims. After a spiritual dark night of pain and doubt and struggle (which lasted a number of years), Sarah makes another act of faith, this time more profound and more total. And again both her act of faith and her desire (an obsessive desire) to redeem is to be noticed.

I believe the legend. I believe you were born. I believe you died for us. I believe you are God. Teach me to love. I don't mind the pain. It's this pain I can't stand. Let my pain go on and on, but stop theirs. Dear God, if only you could come down from your cross for a while and let me sit up there instead. If I could suffer like you, I could heal like you. (196)

This passage points up explicitly the redemptive role in which Sarah is cast. (The importance of Sarah's relations with the agnostic, Richard Little, which are dwelt upon at some length in the diary, will be noted here in passing). She reiterates her act of faith to Synthe three days later: "I believe in God, I said, and all the rest. You've taught me too. You and Maurice." (197)

The character portrayed in the diary is intense. Sarah emerges in a clearly marked religious role. Her faith

196. Ibid., p. 144

197. Ibid., p. 146

has not yet reached a complete submission. But is is strong. And while the diary is primarily concerned with painting her struggle to attain to this faith, it also indicates (equally clearly) that she is driven to pass it on to others. The conditions under which she came to belief orientated it almost directly to others--and particularly to Bendrix. "But, dear God, what shall I do with this desire to love?" she asks. ¹⁹⁸

(3) One Consequence: Bendrix's struggle with God. Bendrix's first reaction to the diary (which, it must be pointed out, he understood only superficially at first) was one of relief from the years of not knowing, of anguish: "I was back in the territory of trust,"¹⁹⁹ he said. Love, as he understood it, was going to begin all over again. He could not understand the depths into which Sarah was drawing him. "...if there is to be a conflict between an image and a man, I know who will win,"²⁰⁰ he assured himself.

But Maurice's best laid plans soon begin to take a direction he could never have suspected. One catches a slight hint of a turning point, perhaps that unknown point where the divine meets the human on terms of intimacy, as

198. Ibid., p. 111

199. Ibid., p. 153

200. Ibid., p. 154

Maurice takes leave of Sarah at the Church:

"God bless you," she said...and it was an involuntary act when I repeated her blessing back to her, but turning as I left the church and seeing her huddled there at the edge of the candle-light, like a beggar come in for warmth, I could imagine a God blessing her: or a God loving her. (201)

This is a concession Bendrix has never before made--even in his own mind. Something greater than hate begins to grow within him:

When I began to write our story down, I thought I was writing a record of hate, but somehow the hate has got mislaid and all I know is that in spite of her mistakes and her unreliability, she was better than most. (202)

Another indication of an incipient conversion can be seen in Bendrix's reflections upon the book on General Gordon he has been assigned to do:

Why had I been invited to write this biography? I often wondered. They would have done better to have chosen an author who believed in Gordon's God Perhaps the publisher half hoped that my cynical treatment of Gordon's Christianity would cause a success de scandale. I had no intention of pleasing him: this God was also Sarah's God and I was going to throw no stones at any phantom she believed she loved. I hadn't during that period any hatred of her God, for hadn't I in the end proved the stronger? (203)

201. Ibid., p. 158

202. Ibid., p. 158

203. Ibid., p. 159

Upon Sarah's death Bendrix's struggle with God begins at a deeper level. It is a struggle in the garments of denial, that is true, but such denial supposes some positive conviction.

I thought of the stranger I had paid Parkie to track down; the stranger had certainly won in the end. No, I thought, I don't hate Henry. I hate You, if you exist.... I thought, why did You have to do this to us? If she hadn't believed in You she would be alive now, we should have been lovers still...my jealousy had not finished, like Henry's, with her death. It was as if she were still alive, in the company of a lover she had preferred to me. Now I wished I could send Parkie after her to interrupt their eternity. (204)

The struggle continues after Bendrix talks with Smythe.

Sarah had bequeathed Bendrix pain and suffering:

I looked at the hall, clear as a cell, hideous with green paint, and I thought, she wanted me to have a second chance, and here it is: the empty life, odourless, antiseptic, the life of a prison, and I accused her as though her prayers had really worked the change: what did I do to you that you had to condemn me to life. (205)

In the letter Bendrix receives from Sarah after her death, we find a unique testimony of Sarah proclaiming at once her love of Maurice and her love of God. This letter constitutes a beginning of faith for Bendrix for he was still loved by her and indeed he was partially respon-

204. Ibid., p. 164, 165, 166

205. Ibid., p. 176

sible for her greater love of God. The identity of the two loves at a religious level appears obvious. Sarah's final declaration of faith is total:

But what's the good Maurice? I believe there's a God--I believe the whole bag of tricks, there's nothing I don't believe, they could subdivide the Trinity into a dozen parts and I'd believe. They could dig up the records that proved Christ had been invented by Pilate to get himself promoted and I'd believe just the same. I've caught belief like a disease. I've fallen into belief like I fell in love. I've never loved before as I love you, and I've never believed in anything before as I believe now. (206)

Bendrix is now quite definitely implicated in Sarah's religious conversion. He feels himself being drawn still deeper when he learns from Sarah's mother, at the funeral, that Sarah had been baptized a Catholic:

Suddenly, inexplicably, I felt fear, like a man who has committed the all-but-perfect crime and watches the first unexpected crack in the wall of his deception. How deep does the crack go? Can it be plugged in time? (207)

Bendrix's vicious argument with God shortly afterwards bears the first signs of a prayer:

It wasn't You that 'took', I told the God I didn't believe in, that imaginary God whom Sarah thought had saved my life...and who had ruined even in his non-existence the only deep happiness

206. Ibid., p. 178

207. Ibid., p. 199

I had ever experienced: Oh no, it wasn't you that took, for I could have been made and I believe in me even less than I believe in you You didn't own me all those years. I owned you. You own in the end, You don't need to own me of that, for all those years he has mine. (200)

Bendrix is at odds with a person--lover or enemy--dearest that person. His dream that the bullet (the bullets falling to break the bottles) seems an indication of the futility of his dream as well as the futility of his disbelief.

Greene now begins to wrap the strands of his novel together and cut a direct line to a finish. There is good evidence that he has Bendrix's conversion in mind. This is to be the redemptive value of Sarah's death. It is to be the fruition of his lifelong mission. To be noticed, first of all, is Bendrix's prayer to Sarah at the funeral to deliver him from a girl (Sylvia) with whom he could not bear to get involved.²⁰⁹ That supplication was answered. Then Henry softens towards the priest's faith. "I have an open mind, Father." "Are you coming a believer too?" Bendrix queries.²¹⁰ There is no answer to Patrick's prayer in the rapid recovery of the son.²¹¹ Interiorly,

208. Ibid., p. 202

209. Ibid., p. 195

210. Ibid., p. 218

211. Ibid., p. 220

Bendrix feels his defenses weakening. The cumulative effect of these manifestations of Sarah's influence (and her mother must be included among these manifestations),²¹² is to drive Bendrix to another, and final, outburst of denial and hate. After the second conversation with Father Grompton (who symbolizes the religious question), he reflects:

Oh, I'm as capable of belief as the next man. I would only have to shut the eyes of my mind for a long enough time, and I could believe that you came to Parkis' boy in the night with your touch that brings peace. Last month in the crematorium I asked you to save the girl from me and you pushed your mother between us--or so they might say. But if I start believing that, I have to believe in your God. I'd have to love your God. (213)

Again, Bendrix is close to accepting a prayer. He then re-reads a part of the story and notices that his reaction to God follows closely that of Sarah's: love under the guise of hate, faith under the guise of denial. Bendrix is close to believing in those religious ideas:

I read about how Sarah had prayed to the God she didn't believe in, and now I spoke to the God I didn't believe in. I said: 'You sacrificed her of her own accord to bring me back to life, but what sort of life is this? This is a hell. It's all very well for you to love God. So she does. You have him. But I'm still with life,

212. Ibid., p. 224

213. Ibid., p. 223

I'm rotten with health. If I begin to love God, I can't just die. I've got to do something about it...Sarah, I'm afraid. (214)

Faith takes shape as Maurice admits the possibility of a God in the image of an obstinate character in a novel:

The saints, one would suppose, in a sense create themselves. They come alive. They are capable of the surprising act or word. They stand outside the plot, unconditioned by it. But we have to be pushed around. We have the obstinancy of non-existence. We are inextricably bound to the plot, and wearily God forces us, here and there, according to his intention, characters without poetry, without free-will, whose only importance is that somewhere, at some time, we help to furnish the scene in which a living character moves and speaks, providing perhaps the saints with the opportunities for their free will. (215)

The pattern of circumstances surrounding Sarah's person and death is wearing away the edges of Bendrix's disbelief. When Smythe reports the miraculous cure of his face, the breaking point is reached. This, it appears, is the primary significance of Smythe in the plot. He forms a backdrop to the religious drama being played out. His conversion (and it may be called that) is a small version of Bendrix's case. Sarah's redemptive gesture of kissing his scar earlier in the novel is a symbol of her larger redemptive role in mediating grace for Bendrix. Smythe

214. Ibid., p. 225

215. Ibid., p. 229

was, as it were, a trial run.

Bendrix has a ready explanation for the cure--a mixture of psychiatry and radium. He proclaims: "I'll never lose my faith in coincidence." But it is a weak boast. Almost immediately he doubts. "...And I thought with a sense of weariness, how many coincidences are there going to be?... Is this going to continue day by day? I feel like a swimmer who has overpassed his strength and knows that the tide is stronger than himself...."²¹⁶ In fear he destroys the diary and we are referred back to the original redemptive clue to Sarah's religious mission.

The last page lay upwards on the bed and I read again: 'You were there teaching me to squander, so that one day we might have nothing left except this love of You. But You are too good to me. When I ask You for pain, You give me peace. Give it to him too. Give him my peace. He needs it more. (217)

The last lines of The End of the Affair sum up the story of a soul. Bendrix admits the possibility of his own conversion:

For if this God exists, I thought, and if even you--with your lusts and your adulteries and the timid lies you used to tell me--can change like this, we could all be saints by leaping as you leapt, by shutting the eyes and leaping once and for all: if you are a saint, it's not so difficult to

216. Ibid., p. 234

217. Ibid., p. 235

be a saint. It's something he can demand of any of us, leap. (218)

Bendrix makes a final effort at denial but this time it comes out as an expression of belief; "I hate You, God, I hate You as though You existed!"²¹⁹

Sarah wins and Bendrix makes his declaration of faith in all that he had striven so desperately to deny. He did it because of Sarah, yet it was at the same time a personal act. Two destinies had met in the realm of sanctity:

I said to Sarah, all right, have it your way. I believe you live and that He exists, but it will take more than your prayers to turn this hatred of Him into love. He robbed me..and I'll rob Him of what He wants in me. Hatred is in my brain, not in my stomach or my skin. It can't be removed like a strawberry mark or an ache. (220)

The reference to two previous "miracles" implies, of course, that even hatred of the brain can be cured. Bendrix submits to forces that are above him and which he cannot understand in his final prayer:

"...I found the one prayer that seemed to serve the winter mood: O God, You've done enough. You've robbed me of enough, I'm too tired and old to learn to love, leave me alone forever." (221)

218. Ibid., p. 235

219. Ibid., p. 236

220. Ibid., p. 236

221. Ibid., p. 237

Bendrix has a long road ahead of him. But he had arrived.

c. Summary

In The End of the Affair Greene concentrates almost entirely on the love affair between Bendrix and Sarah. This is the matrix within which her religious mission develops. The relationship between Bendrix and Sarah is drawn against a backdrop of insecurity, pain and despair--with a good deal of Greene's customary symbolism. Bendrix is a type of the existential man. More than Andrews, more than Pinkie, more than the priest in The Power and the Glory his need (and capacity) for the supernatural is made clear.

When Sarah is introduced into his life she plays a functional role of fulfilling the immense desire he has for love. Her character is not delineated as is his. The story is told throughout in terms of what Sarah does to develop the personality of Bendrix.

She first draws Bendrix into the vortex of a full human experience of love. In the depths of her capacity for human love Bendrix senses a timeless quality. Sarah is always open to something infinite. Even in the beginning there is a hint of her propensity to the supernatural.

Consequently, and it is inherently logical to the plot, Sarah is the first to perceive the limits of human love. Her conversion at the time of the bombing introduces Bendrix--albeit sketchily and very superficially--to the world of religious values. While he scorns her action, his

thoughts are nevertheless stirred in a new direction.

Sarah's diary then portrays her conversion in more detail. And it is important to note that her acceptance of religious values is not merely an individual thing; not only one soul communing with God. It is radically orientated towards the salvation of Bendrix. This is not immediately clear, but as the plot progresses Sarah's redemptive mission is made clear in a series of "coincidences": the references in her diary, the circumstances of her death, the "miracles" for Parkis' son, Smythe and so forth.

In a third phase of this drama, Bendrix grows in spiritual awareness. Her conversion appears as a prototype of his. And always it must be noticed that Bendrix identifies his struggle against God with his love for Sarah. In the diary an important relationship of love on a religious plane (on Sarah's part) was established. Gradually Bendrix weakens "like a swimmer who has overpassed his strength." The reader is left with no doubt that, at the novel's end, Bendrix has become a believer. As Marcel More has commented (in regard to Bendrix's final "prayer"):

C'est le cri vers Dieu d'un homme
épuisé par les semaines de lutte
intérieure, comme on peut retrouver
chez les grands spirituels à des
heures de fatigue, en face du
dépouillement total que Dieu exige
de toute âme qui fait progrès dans l'amour." (222)

222. Quoted by Murchland, B.G., "La fin d'une Liaison: une étude critique," in Lectures, Vol. 9, No. 6, livraison de Février, Montreal, 1953, p. 257

The point to note, in respect to the theme of this thesis, is this: nowhere in the religious drama of Bendrix can we disassociate the influence of grace with the redemptive mission of Sarah. Bendrix's thinking of the supernatural are always grounded in the reality of Sarah's presence to him. "If she could be a saint so could he.... Let her have it her way." It would be an oversimplification to state that Bendrix believes in God because Sarah believed in God. But it remains true that he acceded to religious values through her instrumentality: because she taught him how to love in the fullest meaning of the word. And in this sense she was the motivation of his conversion.

It thus appears that Sarah is the type of a woman's mission of redemptive love: the enduring principle at the heart of life itself, present in the very Godhead. One thinks of Claudel's reference to Prouhenze: "It was good that she taught him longing."

CONCLUSION

Considering, however, Greene's religious mission within the problem-solution dynamic of his novels, there is place to point out, first of all, that the work characters from Greene's novels that were examined manifest essentially the same role as that outlined by the writers quoted in chapter two of Part II. In each relationship examined, the attempt was made to show how Greene's characters either resulted in a communication of religious values to man. A comparison could be made profitably, point by point, with those characteristics of man said to be 1. Interiority, 2. Otherness, 3. I-Thou Relationship, 4. Capacity for Suffering and 5. Capacity for Love.

Greene's work manifests a superior dependence upon spiritual values, an alterecentric, personal I-Thou relationship to others. The sentiments of fear, pity, and compassion are always so manifest in him. They are a presence of the eternal to man, so that he is enabled in communicating transcendent values. In this we realize the truth of the expression: "La foi est la vie, l'enthousiasme, la création dans la joie, l'espoir de toucher au divin."²²³ And in them, natural dispositions reach some

223. Touvingnon, P., Op.Cit., p. 90

measure of supernatural fulfillment. As Father Henry writes:

La femme est celle qui fonde toute sa vie sur une autre. La femme sainte est celle qui fonde toute sa vie sur le Christ et qui met au service de son don toutes les ressources de ses inclinations naturelles, de son coeur, en un mot, de sa fémininité. Son rôle social parmi les chrétiens est de faire apparaître paradoxalement cette profession de vie cachée avec le Christ ou Dieu qui est l'essentiel de notre religion. (224)

To be noted especially in Greene's women characters is both a capacity for suffering and a capacity for love. Indeed it seems that suffering, for Greene, is a fundamental religious attitude. "As long as one suffers one lives," says Bendrix.²²⁵ And the notion of suffering is closely associated with the notion of death and love. All of the women studied manifested a heroic capacity for love. In three cases (Elizabeth, Coral and Sarah) it is translated into death and in the case of Rose it becomes a lifetime of expiation. The interplay of suffering, death and love in Greene's women is the most convincing evidence of their religious mission he offers. As Daniel Rops writes:

Mais si la femme est pour l'homme une occasion unique de prise de conscience de soi, si elle permet, à chacun de nous, de savoir, par une expérience dramatique, ce que nous sommes, elle est davantage. Moyen de découverte de la personne, elle oblige l'homme à

224. Henry, A.-H., Op. Cit., p. 489

225. Greene, G., The End of the Affair, p. 168

comprendre qu'il n'est personne
humaine sans don, sans sacrifice,
sans communion. La femme est le
plus immédiat de nos prochains. (226)

Thus the redemptive mission of woman seems to be one solution Greene proposes as an artist for the man who moves about in a closed world, cut off from all veritable values--either human or religious. Through woman's instrumentality he will escape his solitude and enter into the common spiritual tradition of mankind. Furthermore, within the context of Greene's novels, it can be concluded that this solution is valid for the modern world itself.

Therefore a second concluding remark must call attention to this significance of Greene's work in relation to modern society. And here the redemptive mission of woman may be viewed in the perspective of the highest teaching authority of the Roman Catholic Church. Pius XII has spoken at great length and on many occasions of woman's role in the modern world. In a recent address (September 29, 1957) to 700 delegates of the 14th congress of the World Union of Catholic women's Organizations, he urged them to a three-fold apostolate of truth, love and action in order "to bring a gravely bewildered civilization back to the right road." The basis of this apostolate and of woman's positive role in modern society is her religious qualifications.

226. Rops, D., La Femme et Sa Mission, Paris, Plon, 1949, p. 255

Pius XII said:

The atmosphere of atheism, whether militant or latent, is a greater threat to woman than it is to man. It is a threat to her both in her personal life and in her social role: because...her innate inclination and the functions to which she is called by nature result in her being more in harmony with spiritual realities. She perceives spiritual realities more easily, is more conscious of them, interprets them and makes them felt by others, particularly by those entrusted to her care.... Her personal dignity and the respect due to her are motivated primarily by the need to safeguard that spiritual mission and therefore because of her proximity to God. (227)

In the introduction to this thesis it was said:

"This thesis has a practical, apostolic aim as well as an intellectual one. In this manner it bears witness to the truth that knowledge is to be put at the service of man's ultimate destiny." Relating the work of Graham Greene to the intellectual and moral atmosphere of our times and then viewing the spiritual significance he attaches to woman's role as one antidote to the special ills of our times was an attempt to show forth this practical aim. The above extract from Pius XII's recent address indicates that a close parallel exists between Graham Greene's creative endeavor and the spiritual aims of the Holy Father.

227. Pius XII, The Catholic Woman's Mission in the Modern World, reprinted in The Catholic Messenger of Davenport, Iowa, issue of November 21, 1957, p. 5-6

Greene's message of hope and the radically positive character of his work come out most clearly when related to his conception of woman's religious mission.

The pessimistic qualities of Greene's novels have already been noted. Victor de Pange notes the over-riding quality of hope in these words:

La vie se présente comme une forêt sombre où nous marchons à tâtons, en trebuchant à chaque pas. Les caillottes que nous croyons apercevoir sont autant d'illusions. Jamais nous ne voyons la lisière du bois... Pourtant le pessimisme de Greene est mitigé d'espoir. Le monde n'est pas absurde. Sa foi catholique lui inspire des sentiments de réconfort auxquels il se raccroche désespérément. Dans la vie rien ne termine jamais. Au delà du connu il y a l'inconnu où l'espoir peut toujours trouver un refuge. (228)

The introduction of religious values through woman therefore has the effect of holding forth hope for modern man. Secondly, it has the nature of a plea for understanding. Spiritual values must rest upon that sympathy of insight which is so absent from contemporary society and which Greene lets into his world through such women as Elizabeth, Rose, Coral and Sarah. This sympathy is the condition of man's crossing the truth that is within him and then of relating it to the truth he does not yet possess. All creativeness, communication and transcendence--values which modern man seeks--depend upon a free and intelligent

228. De Pange, Victor, Graham Greene, Paris, Editions Universitaires, 1953, p. 115-116

attitude of acceptance. They showed man's recognition of his finitude and the universe that surrounds him. It is perhaps Graham Greene's greatest contribution as an artist to have called man's attention to these truths.

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THESIS ABSTRACT

THE RELIGIOUS MISSION OF WOMAN IN THE NOVELS OF GRAHAM GREENE

By

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This thesis has as its purpose an analysis of the religious mission of woman in the novels of Graham Greene. It attempts to view this question in the broad perspective of a problem-solution approach.

Hence the thesis is divided into two parts. The first part deals with the problematic aspect of the question in two chapters: The Intellectual Atmosphere of Our Times and the Intellectual Atmosphere of Graham Greene's Novels. The purpose of the first chapter is to establish a brief historical, intellectual and spiritual assessment of the conditions in which the work of Greene is situated. A general line of intellectual and spiritual evolution is traced from the time of Luther to present day existentialism and the conclusion reached is that the principal characteristics of atheistic existentialism aptly describe man's spiritual condition in the 20th century. This condition is designated under two principal headings: The Flight from God and The Crisis of Human Existence. Chapter two draws a parallel between the existentialist mentality and the prevalent spirit of Greene's novels and concludes that Greene's artistic vision includes the principal characteristics of that mentality. The problem then resolves itself to this: Greene's characters desire to communicate. They desire to know and love in accordance with the deepest instincts of human nature. They feel, however blindly, a need of transcendence. This explains the basic dynamism of Greene's literary work.

Part II of the thesis considers the solution aspect of the thesis. This aspect is limited to the religious mission of woman in Greene's novels. This is held to be an important, if not the only, contribution of Greene's art. This

solution aspect is also considered in two chapters: The Religious Mission of Woman and The Religious Mission of Woman in the Novels of Graham Greene.

The first chapter of this part sketches a theoretical survey of woman's religious mission as it is understood by some modern thinkers. This effort is intended to provide a clear framework within which the literary analysis of Greene's novels might be considered. In this chapter something is said about woman's specifically religious nature; an attempt is then made to show how this implies a specifically religious role; finally, a general application of this is made to Greene's novels.

In the second chapter of this part, the final chapter of the thesis, the literary analysis is undertaken. This constitutes the longest, as well as the most relevant, part of the thesis. Four novels were chosen to illustrate the claim of the thesis: The Man Within, Brighton Rock, The Power and the Glory, and The End of the Affair. Greene's other works were excluded for reasons mentioned in the introduction to the thesis.

The conclusion to the thesis maintains that the religious mission of woman as it appears in these four novels is substantially the same as that outlined by modern thinkers (as explained in the first chapter of Part II).

A second conclusion calls attention to the significance of this aspect of Greene's work for modern society. This significance, it was said, not only corresponds to the religious mission of woman outlined by Pius XII but it also makes a plea for the fundamental human qualities of sympathy, creativeness, communication and transcendence. These conclusions, it was stated, are the fundamental meaning of the religious mission Greene attributes to his woman characters.