

TENSION IN GRAHAM GREENE

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis will involve a study of tension as it is found in Graham Greene's major novels, The Power and the Glory, The Heart of the Matter, and The End of the Affair. To explain Greene's general outlook on life, his The Lost Childhood and Other Essays, The Lawless Roads and Journey without Maps will be employed.

The introductory chapter will include a brief justification of the thesis topic as one suitable for literary research, a list of books and articles that have dealt with the topic in a related fashion, a comment on how the tense condition of the modern world is reflected generally in modern literature and in Graham Greene.

In the study of Greene's life that follows particular emphasis will be put on those facts which seem to explain the existence of tension in his life and in his outlook.

Tension in the novels will be studied insofar as it is caused by a "terror of life" and by the "divided mind" condition of the characters found in the works under discussion. This will be followed by an examination of how tension arises in the novels from man's social relationships.

Having completed this study of the sources of tension in the novels, an examination will be made of the different ways that relief is brought to these tensions. This study will

involve a study of how the following means bring relief to tension: drink, sex, escape, dreams, humor, communication, pity, love, performance of duty, and grace.

In the final chapter tension as it is reflected in Greene's style will be the subject of a brief study. This study will involve an examination of Greene's use of images, his functional use of language, his dramatization of the commonplace, and his narrative technique.

A summary of the main ideas contained in the thesis with a few concluding remarks will follow.

Unfortunately, the English editions of Journey without Maps and The Lawless Roads were unavailable in Ottawa libraries. Accordingly, the writer has translated passages from the French editions of these two travel books by Marcelle Sibon. It will be noticed in the foot-notes and in the bibliography that Sibon's edition of these two books has been employed.

CHAPTER I

PREPARING THE WAY

The purpose of this chapter is to place the thesis topic within a proper framework. The chapter will include a brief justification of the topic Tension in Graham Greene as a subject for literary examination with a brief summary of books and articles that have treated of this topic in a related way, a workable definition of the term "tension" as it is employed within the thesis, a description of the tense condition of the modern world which may have conditioned Greene's writings, and, finally, a statement on how this tense condition of the modern world is reflected generally in modern literature.

1. Justification of topic-

At first glance, such a topic as Tension in Graham Greene seems out of the area for literary criticism. It is hardly a purely aesthetic subject. The study will evidently involve more of an emphasis on literary content than on significant form. In short, the study is not a "pure" literature study, but rather an application of cognate fields such as psychology to literature. Nathan A. Scott in his Rehearsals of Discomposure gives a telling argument in favour of the examination of such "non-aesthetic" subjects for literary analysis.

We continue to feel the necessity of dealing, through literature, with certain subjects which are larger than and extend beyond the order of purely aesthetic questions which is, presumably, the domain of literary criticism ... it (literature) may have a certain rightness that derives from the legitimacy of our seeking a deeper understanding of our world and of ourselves through a careful reading of the representative literature of our time. And let me rush on to say that we are enabled to do this because literature is not merely 'significant form'. It is, of course, that too, among other things, but it is something more: it is fundamentally a response to experience¹.

It will be noticed that Scott is challenging a narrow conception of literature as being simply something aesthetic, and that he is underlining the fundamental theory that literature is essentially a response to human living and experience. Thus the topic of this thesis Tension in Graham Greene is recognized as a legitimate subject for literary research insofar as Greene's work reflects the tensions of both the author and of the stresses experienced by modern man living in a twentieth century world.

Before proceeding, it would be pertinent to note what has been written on the topic Tension in Graham Greene whether it be directly on the topic or on related matter. To date, no book or article has been written dealing with the topic exclusively. In their book on The Art of Graham Greene², Kenneth Allott and Miriam Farris examine in some detail the

¹ Nathan A. Scott, Rehearsals of Discomposure, London, John Lehmann, 1952, p. vii.

² Kenneth Allott and Miriam Farris, The Art of Graham Greene, London, Hamish Hamilton, 1951, 253 p.

obsessional themes of Graham Greene. Chapter 111 in this thesis "Sources of Tension (I)" shows the writer's indebtedness to Allott and Farris. Victor de Pange has written a book in French on Graham Greene³ in which he stresses that Greene represents our times of tension, that he makes use of dreams as an escape mechanism from tension, and that the conflict in man is given an added dimension by being one of grace versus nature. Douglas Jerrold in an article entitled "Graham Greene, the Pleasure-Hater"⁴ notes that Greene has a revulsion to human life. Finally, K. Loph in an article entitled "Graham Greene and the Problem of Evil"⁵ notes that Greene's Catholicism is colored by tension and that he is most delicately sensitive to the unending, cyclical pattern of human existence.

2. Definition of tension-

In this thesis the term "tension" will be employed in its most extended meaning. Viewed narrowly, "tension" signifies 'conflict', 'stress', 'pull'. In its broadest meaning, it may be made to mean 'anxiety', 'frustration',

³ Victor de Pange, Graham Greene, Paris, Classiques du XX^e Siècle, Editions Universitaires, 1953, 129 p.

⁴ Douglas Jerrold, "Graham Greene: Pleasure-Hater", Harper's Magazine, Vol. 205, No. 1227, issue of August, 1952, p. 50-52.

⁵ K. Loph, "Graham Greene and the Problem of Evil", The Catholic World, Vol. 173, No. 1035, issue of June, 1951, p. 196-9.

'disillusionment', 'suffering', and 'pain'. Accordingly, since this thesis deals with tension in its extended meaning, it is really a study of the human predicament not only as it applies to our times but insofar as it applies to Universal Man.

Man, of course, is the subject of tension -- it is he who is the battlefield in which tension wreaks its havoc. Paul is not alone in crying out that he has a division in his nature; Augustine is not alone in crying out that he has a restless heart, not to be satisfied here below. Msgr. John A. Ryan gives a theological explanation on the source of tension in man by stating that it was only because of the preternatural gifts that Adam and Eve were preserved from the tensions of concupiscence and suffering⁶. A description of man bordering on the poetic, with the elements of tension and conflict included, is given by Father Jean Mouroux in his The Meaning of Man.

Man is a mystery first because he is a kind of limit or horizon between two worlds. He is immersed in the flesh, but constituted by the spirit; occupied with matter but drawn toward God; growing in time, but already breathing the air of eternity; a being of nature and the world, but also transcending the universe in virtue of his liberty and capacity for union with God⁷.

It is with such a Christian view of man as an ambivalent creature that Greene is interested. In the predominant rôle of sex,

⁶ Msgr. John A. Ryan, Original Sin and Human Misery, (pamphlet), New York, The Paulist Press, 1942, p. 15.

⁷ Jean Mouroux, The Meaning of Man, quoted in Harold Gardner Fifty Years of the American Novel, A Christian Appraisal, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951, p. 3.

Greene's characters are "immersed in the flesh"; in their awareness of responsibility, and in the fact that they have souls to save or lose, Greene's characters are "constituted by the spirit". Thus Greene's characters must be judged within a Christian frame of reference. It is a view blessed by Christianity to regard man as a creature of tensions -- tension experienced in his haunting awareness of the incompleteness of his being; tension experienced in the yearning of his heart for perfect happiness and love; tension experienced in his struggle against the triple foes of his soul, the World, the Flesh, and the Devil. This is the world of tension pictured by Greene. What is particularly noticeable about Graham Greene is that he is not primarily interested in the social and economic tensions of our time: rather his interest lies in the tensions experienced by the individual man whether they be emotional, intellectual, moral, or spiritual. Before closing this discussion on the meaning of tension and its origin in man, it might be well to emphasize that this thesis is not based on the theory that all tensions are evil and to be avoided. It is tension too acutely felt and too consciously entertained with which this thesis will deal.

3. Tension in the modern world-

Great literature can hardly escape being influenced by the times in which it is created. It is an inescapable fact that modern man lives in times of extraordinary tensions.

Undoubtedly, man through the ages has experienced the pull of tension. The fact about our modern times is that the tensions are so widely spread among men, that they are so painfully acute in degree, and that the modern consciousness is so fully aware of their presence. This is the world that T.S. Eliot has described as "The Wasteland", that Auden has described as "The Age of Anxiety". Greene himself in The Lost Childhood and Other Essays has described the modern world as "confused, uncertain"⁸. J. Isaacs presents the following argument to justify a description of the modern world as one of tension.

An epoch is known by the catchwords it bandies about, whether they represent a real epitome of the time, or only a fancied malady. The seventeenth century was concerned with "reason", the eighteenth century with "nature" and our concern is with "the human predicament". Our own preoccupations are shown by the frequency with which we talk of frustration, bewilderment, maladjustment and disintegration, the intensity with which we discuss and are aware of cruelty, violence, and sadism, the all-pervading sense of anxiety, and in the background a feeling of guilt, sin, humiliation and despair. Never faith, hope, or charity⁹.

Except for the "Never faith, hope, or charity" this is a fitting description of the Greenian fictional world.

Edwin Burgum stresses that tension is a singularly descriptive characteristic of the modern world and that the modern

⁸ Graham Greene, The Lost Childhood and Other Essays, London, Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1951, p. 114.

⁹ J. Isaacs, An Assessment of Twentieth Century Literature, London, Secker and Warburg, 1951, p. 45-46.

man is a seat for conflicting interests.

What Arnold said of his age is even more true today. We are caught between two worlds, one dying, the other seeking to be born ... Most commonly the western man tends to be ambivalent, erratic, swayed by conflicting intentions, incapable of consistency¹⁰.

It is to be remarked the particular stress that Burgum places on the ambivalent quality of western man.

P.H. Newby gives an analysis of the modern scene with the T.S. Eliot philosophy of "The Wasteland" as his guide. He says that the modern writer cannot escape being influenced by this condition of the modern world.

Destruction, civilisation in ruins, man's moral degradation and spiritual poverty -- this is the theme which forces itself on the novelist's attention these days¹¹.

Using this as a criterion, it may be said that Greene in his reporting of the spiritual and moral degradation of our times is definitely a contemporary writer; it is in the solutions that he offers for the modern predicament that Greene differs from many of his fellow literary artists.

4. Tension in modern literature-

It is not surprising that modern literature renders a faithful picture of the anguished times in which modern man finds

¹⁰ Edwin Burgum, The Novel and the World's Dilemma, New York, Oxford University Press, 1947, p. 7.

¹¹ P.H. Newby, The Novel, 1945-1950, London, Longmans Green & Co., 1951, p. 24.

himself. Fortunately or unfortunately, what the modern novel frequently does is to give the reader a second dose of the contemporary maladies through the vehicle of artistic expression.

Nowadays the novel is produced in an atmosphere of insecurity, for the further mortification of those who wish their agonies of insecurity to be perpetuated. Instead of being an entertainment, the serious novel is a continual rubbing of salt in the wound¹².

Greene's novels do not escape this stricture of "rubbing salt in the wound" of an already disillusioned reader. But Greene does differ from the materialist novelist of the twentieth century in that he offers a door through which the tortured soul can escape the repressive confines of its own ego. No need in stressing that modern philosophy has found itself impotent to deal with the present human predicament. And what has been the result?

Nathan A. Scott says that because of this modern philosophy is dealing but with the periphery of life, it is ignoring the central issues.

And the result has been that the urgency of the human predicament, as it revealed itself in the existential terms of contingency and anxiety, guilt and suffering, isolation and death, has been ignored¹³.

This criticism certainly has no application whatsoever to Graham Greene. The contingency of man, the ever-present reality

¹² J. Isaacs, op. cit., p. 54.

¹³ Nathan A. Scott, op. cit., p. ix.

of guilt, the oppressive awareness of isolation, all these form the very texture of Greene's novels.

To summarize what has been said in this chapter it may be repeated that non-aesthetic subjects are valid for literary research since they involve a study of the response to human living and experience; that no article or book has been written dealing exclusively with the topic "Tension in Graham Greene"; that the term "tension" is being employed in this thesis in its widest application, and that the state of tension is explainable in terms of a Christian theology; that the modern world is particularly characterized by a state of abnormal tensions; that modern literature and Graham Greene mirror the tensions found in the modern world; and, finally, that Greene is primarily interested in the moral and spiritual rather than in the social and economic causes of tension within the individual.

CHAPTER II

GREENE, THE MAN

This chapter will include a detailed biographical study of Graham Greene in which special emphasis will be placed on those facts which explain the tension found in the man and in his work. The biographical study will be followed by an account of his literary career, and by an examination of Greene's outlook where, whether explicitly or implicitly, it explains the existence of tension in his work.

1. Biographical study-

Graham Greene was born in Berkhamsted, twenty-six miles north-west of London in 1904. His early education was at the Berkhamsted Public School where his father was headmaster. This period of early education and childhood, as Greene so vividly testifies, was a time of great unhappiness. The institutional life of the school ran counter to Greene's rebellious spirit. Greene describes the school as the "terrible living world of the stone stairs and the never quiet dormitory"¹. He further describes the school as a place where "one met

¹ Graham Greene, The Lost Childhood and Other Essays, p. 16.

for the first time adults and adolescents who carried around with them the essence of evil"². In his The Lost Childhood and Other Essays Greene shows to what extent this discontented childhood affected his youthful life.

I think the boredom was far deeper than the love. It had always been a feature of childhood: it would set in on the second day of the school holidays. The first day was all happiness, and, after the horrible confinement and publicity of school, seemed to consist of light, space and silence. But a prison conditions its inhabitants. I never wanted to return to it (and finally expressed my rebellion by the simple act of running away), but yet I was so conditioned that freedom bored me unutterably³.

In this yearning for freedom and the inability to adjust to it at a time when freedom was his, is found in germinal form the "divided mind" theme of Greene's novels.

Greene's act of rebellion in running away from school led to his being psychoanalyzed in London; the months at the analyst's house he describes in the following way.

I emerged from those delightful months in London spent at my analyst's house -- perhaps the happiest months of my life -- correctly orientated, able to take a proper extrovert interest in my friends (the jargon rises to the lips) but wrung dry⁴.

² Graham Greene, The Lawless Roads, (Routes sans Lois), translated by Marcelle Sibon, Paris, La Table Ronde, 1949, p. 10. (The English edition was not available).

³ Graham Greene, The Lost Childhood and Other Essays, p. 174.

⁴ Graham Greene, The Lost Childhood and Other Essays, p. 174.

In this passage is seen Greene's interest in psychoanalysis and in the workings of the human mind: this will be reflected in the psychological insights into human nature expressed in the novels.

Suicide seemed to be the solution to these maladjustments -- this 'destroyer of life' was invited by the young rebel's drinking of photographic developing fluid, which he thought poisonous, by his taking of twenty aspirins and jumping into the school pool, and by his attempts at Russian roulette. Greene's childhood experiences have caused him to give to childhood the rôle that P.H. Newby assigns it in artistic experience.

Childhood has become an artistic end in itself. The result has been to make childhood a symbol of existence at large ... The theme is the collision of innocence and experience and no matter how much we may pretend otherwise this is a collision most of us never cease to be involved in⁵.

Greene himself has written on the influence that childhood plays in the work of the literary artist. In The Lost Childhood and Other Essays, he states with a weak provisional "if" that

the creative writer perceives his world once and for all in childhood and adolescence, and his whole career is an effort to illustrate his private world in terms of the great public world we all share⁶.

⁵ P.H. Newby, The Novel, 1945-1950, p. 24.

⁶ Graham Greene, The Lost Childhood and Other Essays, p. 54.

After this unhappy childhood and early scholastic career, Greene continued higher studies at Oxford University. The most significant fact about his stay at Oxford was his meeting with Vivian Dayrell-Browning, a Roman Catholic. This meeting led to marriage and to Greene's conversion to Roman Catholicism in 1926. Greene's relations with his wife have been described as friendly but not close⁷. This fact may help to explain the number of maladjusted marital relations in Greene's novels. As for his adopted religion, Roman Catholicism has deeply influenced both his life and his literary work. For the purpose of this thesis, it is of some interest to add that K.A. Loph believes that "Graham Greene came to his faith through a feeling for violence and evil, through a restlessness, a tension"⁸. In his Journey without Maps Greene gives his attitude towards Catholicism.

I am a Catholic, and my faith in Catholic dogma is intellectual, if not emotional: I know that I can, intellectually, accept the idea that in missing Sunday mass we are guilty of a mortal sin. However, "I solemnly swear" these contradictions in matters of human psychology appear to me of singular interest⁹.

This will be one of the main themes in Greene's novels, the meeting-place between psychology and religion. Also this

⁷ Time Magazine, a review of "The End of the Affair", Vol. 58, No. 18, issue of October 29, 1951, p. 67.

⁸ K.A. Loph, "Graham Greene and the Problem of Evil", The Catholic World, Vol. 173, No. 1035, issue of June, 1951, p. 197.

⁹ Graham Greene, Journey without Maps, (Voyages sans Cartes), translated by Marcelle Sibon, Paris, Edition du Seuil, 1951, p. 14. (The English edition was not available).

statement contains a suggestion of Greene's 'divided mind' in the face of the Church. In fact, Greene holds ideas about Catholicism that are colored by his 'tense' view of life.

R. McLaughlin evaluates one of these Greenian attitudes in the following passages.

It is a romantic but dangerous idea that he harbours when he expresses hope that all good Roman Catholics, if they have to choose between the United States and Russia, will choose Russia so that the Catholic Church will be driven underground and there survive as a fighting spiritual force¹⁰.

This view explains Greene's antagonistic attitude towards pious people and complacent clergy as found in the novels. To Catholicism, Greene has brought his detestation of institutional life. As W. Fowlie points out: "He is at least one Christian who believes more in the subterranean life of grace than in the façade of the visible Church"¹¹. Victor de Pange sees Greene's Catholicism as essentially that of one of a convert belonging to a minority.

Le catholicisme de Greene est une religion de converti, comme celle de Scobie. C'est aussi une foi de catholique anglais qui a le sentiment aigu d'appartenir à une minorité¹².

¹⁰ Richard McLaughlin, a review of "The End of the Affair", Theatre Arts, Vol. 35, No. 12, issue of December, 1951, p. 371.

¹¹ Wallace Fowlie, "The Quest of a Writer Obsessed", The New York Times Book Review, Section 7, issue of February 17, 1952, p.

¹² Victor de Pange, Graham Greene, p. 59.

Besides his literary career, which will be treated later in this chapter, there is one other fact of significance in a biographical sketch of Greene. It is his journalistic career on The London Times and his term as film critic on The Spectator in 1935. It will be shown in the chapter on tension in Greene's style that he has adeptly made use of his journalistic experience in transmuting commonplace material into situations of dramatic tension.

Before closing this discussion on Greene's life, it would be relevant to this thesis to give in summary form the impressions made by Greene on those who have had the opportunity to see him in the flesh. This should further underline the peculiar temperament and personality of the man. R. McLaughlin gives this picture of Greene from their meeting in the lobby of the Algonquin Hotel in New York.

He appeared at once so shy and tense and remote against a modern New York hotel setting. Close up, the burning eyes, the long ascetic face, read like a battleground, where the conflict between the flesh and the spirit, reason and faith had left their ineradicable marks¹³.

In the novels this will be seen as a conflict between carnal love and divine love. H. Robinson singles out the "complex" quality of Greene for special notice¹⁴. This complexity will be

¹³ Richard McLaughlin, a review of "The End of the Affair", Theatre Arts, Vol. 35, No. 12, issue of December, 1951, p. 370.

¹⁴ Henry Robinson, "A God-Smitten Man", The Saturday Review, Vol. 31, No. 28, issue of July 10, 1948, p. 9.

evidenced in the subtlety of the themes treated in The Heart of the Matter and in The End of the Affair. R. Ostermann confirms that tension is the dominant note of Greene's personality: "a thin man with greying hair and a warm, strained serious face that didn't resemble anyone else"¹⁵.

In summary, the significant facts in Greene's life to understand the tension in his work are found in his particular aversion to school life and his unhappy childhood, his adolescent suicidal tendencies which explain 'the life versus death' theme of the novels, his conversion to Roman Catholicism with his peculiar sectarian view of his adopted religion and his interest in bridging the gulf between psychology and religion, his journalistic experience which enables him to turn the commonplace into the dramatic.

Greene himself admits that a knowledge of the biography of a writer is important in order to understand his work.

The novelist depends preponderantly on his personal experience, the philosopher on correlating the experience of others, and the novelist's philosophy will always be a little lop-sided¹⁶.

¹⁵ Robert Ostermann, "Interview with Graham Greene", The Catholic World, Vol. 170, No. 1019, issue of February, 1950, p. 358.

¹⁶ Graham Greene, The Lost Childhood and Other Essays, p. 38-39.

Greene's admission that the novelist's personal experience can cause him to have a "lop-sided" philosophy is of some significance, for it seems applicable to his own case. There is clearly in Greene a "lop-sidedness" in the direction of pessimism.

Victor de Pange's opinion on the close connection between Greene's life and his work makes an appropriate conclusion to this discussion.

L'oeuvre de Greene peut se lire comme une autobiographie à peine transposée. Elle révèle l'enfance inquiète, le journaliste toujours à l'affût de la nouvelle qui va faire sensation, le romancier méthodique, le chrétien tourmenté, l'homme enfin à la recherche de soi-même¹⁷.

2. Literary career-

In a certain sense, Greene's literary career may be said to have had its beginning with his reading of Marjorie Bowen's The Viper of Milan, for it was from this book that Greene got his pattern for his future literary compositions. Greene acknowledges this indebtedness.

Anyway she had given me my pattern -- religion might later explain it to me in other terms, but the pattern was already there -- perfect evil walking the world where perfect good can never walk again, and only the pendulum ensures that after all in the end justice is done¹⁸.

¹⁷ Victor de Pange, Graham Greene, p. 15.

¹⁸ Graham Greene, The Lost Childhood and Other Essays, p. 16-17.

In the expression "perfect evil" it is seen how dangerously Manichaeian Greene's position is. Consolation is to be found only in the fact that the pendulum will eventually "swing".

Greene's first excursion into the field of literature as such began with his term as editor of the literary Oxford Outlook. In 1925 he wrote his first poem "Babbling April". His poetic career continued with "Caesar's Ghost" in 1927, and finally "Behind the Tight Pupils" in 1949. Of course, this poetic execution only interests the reader of today because it was written by the same Greene who wrote the entertainments and the novels.

In 1929, with his entertainment The Man Within Greene set out on the line of development that was to progressively lead to his masterpiece novels of the last fifteen years. Arranged chronologically, his other entertainments and novels up to the present include¹⁹: The Name of Action (1930); Rumor at Nightfall (1931); Stamboul Train (1932); It's a Battlefield (1934); England Made Me (1935); A Gun for Sale (1936); Brighton Rock (1938); The Confidential Agent (1939); The Power and the Glory (1940); The Ministry of Fear (1943); The Heart of the Matter (1948); and, The End of the Affair (1951).

¹⁹ Victor de Pange, Graham Greene, p. 125-127.

The novels since 1940 differ from the entertainments in that less stress is put upon the melodramatic elements and in that there has been a gradual abandonment of violence as a central theme. Evelyn Waugh makes this comment about Greene's entertainments.

Hitherto Mr. Greene's characteristic achievement has been to take the contemporary form of melodrama and to transfuse it with spiritual life. His books have been tense, fast stories with a minimum of comment and the maximum of incident, his characters unreflective, un-aesthetic, unintelligent, his villains have been vile and his heroines subhuman; all have inhabited a violent social no man's land²⁰.

In the later novels this melodramatic element of the entertainments has been more or less ignored. The stories are still fast and tense, but the heroes are definitely not subhuman: they are painfully aware of the real problem involved in human living.

Two travel books, Journey without Maps (1936), and The Lawless Roads (1939) and one book of collected essays The Lost Childhood and Other Essays (1951) are of great importance in arriving at an understanding of Greene's personality and his outlook. N. Braybrooke notes the interdependence of

²⁰ Evelyn Waugh, "The Heart's Own Reasons", The Commonweal, Vol. 54, issue of August 17, 1951, p. 458.

Greene's fiction and his criticism: "So it is that one finds in Greene's criticism some of the main themes of his novels with the veil of fiction off"²¹.

Before closing this discussion on Greene's literary career, it would be enlightening to discover which writers have most influenced the man. From the point of view of content, Marjorie Bowen's The Viper of Milan has already been noted as giving him his "pattern". Henry James and François Mauriac have also deeply affected him. N. Braybrooke says of James's influence.

His (Greene's) attraction to Henry James was because he found another writer whose vision was after his own heart. Evil was overwhelmingly part of his (James) visible universe²².

Greene has acknowledged that Mauriac has influenced him in the choice of Catholic themes for his novels²³. Charles Brady gives in summary form what he considers are the main influences working on Greene the writer in both content and style.

But only Graham Greene, among contemporary melodramatists, fights the battle of Augustine in the mantle of Buchan and Conrad and Dostoievski²⁴.

²¹ Neville Braybrooke, "Graham Greene as Critic", The Commonweal, Vol. 54, issue of July 6, 1951, p. 312.

²² Ibid., p. 313.

²³ Kenneth Allott and Miriam Farris, The Art of Graham Greene, p. 25.

²⁴ Charles Brady, "A Melodramatic Cousin of R.L.S.", America, Vol. 64, No. 16, issue of January 25, 1941, p. 439.

It may be said to summarize that Greene's work has undergone an evolution from 'the entertainment' where his main purpose is to please to the novel where his main purpose is to instruct. Marjorie Bowen, Henry James, and François Mauriac have been the writers who have influenced Greene the most. For the purpose of this thesis it is to be noticed that these writers are preoccupied with the problem of evil and with man's struggle against this ever-present reality.

3. Greene's outlook-

To complete this chapter a study of Greene's outlook insofar as it may have affected his fictional work and insofar as it explains the tension within it, will be made.

Greene's view of life is central to an understanding of his outlook. In Journey without Maps Greene's tension before the fact of human existence is evident.

I find myself always torn between two convictions: the conviction that life ought to be better than it is, and that when life does seem better, it is in reality worse²⁵.

As will be seen later Greene has a preoccupation with this fundamental problem of having to live: his preoccupation is describable as a 'complex' in the face of the reality and the

²⁵ Graham Greene, Journey without Maps, (Voyages sans Cartes), translated by Marcelle Sibon, p. 21.

concept of living. As far as life is concerned Greene is struck by its flux, its changing patterns. This explains his view of the universe.

Primarily Graham Greene possesses a poet's sensitivity toward the cyclical unending pattern of man's existence, the peacefulness of humanity and the loneliness of the individual. This faculty has broadened his mind, and it fosters no rose-colored view of the universe²⁶.

Closely connected with this view of life is Greene's view of time: he sees the past, present, and future as lying together, inextricably bound together. Greene is preoccupied with the notion that life means a "pendulum about to swing".

I was not on the Classical side or I would have discovered, I suppose, in Greek literature instead of in Miss Bowen's novel the sense of doom that lies over success -- the feeling that the pendulum is about to swing. That too made sense; one looked around and saw the doomed everywhere -- the champion runner who one day would sag over the tape; the head of the school who atones, poor devil, during forty dreary undistinguished years; the scholar ... and when success began to touch oneself too, however mildly, one could only pray that failure would not be held off for too long²⁷.

What original sin has done to human nature is a persistent concern of Greene and his conclusions on its influence help to explain the tension in his work. N. Braybrooke says this of Greene's attitude towards original sin:

²⁶ K.A. Loph, "Graham Greene and the Problem of Evil", The Catholic World, Vol. 173, No. 1035, issue of June, 1951, p. 198.

²⁷ Graham Greene, The Lost Childhood and Other Essays, p. 16.

It was his recognition of original sin, of the fact that (left to their own devices and without supernatural aid) men naturally err towards what is evil. It was his boyhood discovery of this truth from watching the natural world which led him to accept Catholicism²⁸.

For Greene, evil has a certain fascination. As was pointed out, he believes that there is such a reality as "perfect evil". In The Lost Childhood and Other Essays Greene talks of the omnipresence of evil: "Goodness has only once found a perfect incarnation in a human body and never will again, but evil can always find a home there"²⁹.

Allied with Greene's viewpoint on original sin and evil is his idea on violence. In fact he believes that violence has such a grip on the modern mind that men would like to live "below the cerebral"³⁰. From the predominant rôle that evil plays in Greene's outlook results his interest in the 'seedy' hero, in the maladjusted rather than in the successful man.

Holding such a view of reality, of life, original sin, evil, and violence, it is not surprising that Greene regards pain and suffering as the normal climate for human life. In

²⁸ Neville Braybrooke, "Graham Greene as Critic", The Commonweal, Vol. 54, issue of July 6, 1951, p. 313.

²⁹ Graham Greene, The Lost Childhood and Other Essays, p. 16.

³⁰ Graham Greene, Journey without Maps, (Voyages sans Cartes), translated by Marcelle Sibon, p. 198-199.

his Journey without Maps Greene admits

I thought of physical pain as a thing, which far from being fearsome, was to the contrary desirable. I believe that I then discovered that the way to enjoy life is to know the price of sorrow³¹.

Evelyn Waugh also notes that Greene has a "dark and tender acceptance of the inevitability of suffering"³².

It is particularly in their sexual relationship that Greene believes men and women are continually either reforming or corrupting each other. The ambivalence of Greene's mind is seen in both the attraction and the revulsion that he experiences at the idea of sex³³.

Greene also has a great concern with the notions of responsibility and pity. That his view on these two concepts is vital to an understanding of his work will be made clear at even a superficial glance at his fictional work. In The Lost Childhood and Other Essays, Greene quotes approvingly T.S. Eliot's view of responsibility.

Most people are only a very little alive; and to awaken them to the spiritual is a very great responsibility: it is only when they are so awakened that they are capable of real Good, but at the same time they become first capable of evil³⁴.

³¹ Graham Greene, Journey without Maps, (Voyages sans Cartes), translated by Marcelle Sibon, p. 40.

³² Evelyn Waugh, "The Heart's Own Reasons", The Commonweal, Vol. 54, issue of August 17, 1951, p. 458.

³³ Graham Greene, Journey without Maps, translated by Marcelle Sibon, p. 39.

³⁴ Graham Greene, The Lost Childhood and Other Essays, p. 97.

As for pity, E. Sackville West observes that Greene considers it the "characteristically adult emotion"³⁵. In the discussion in the later chapters, Greene's use of responsibility and pity will be examined.

And what solution does Greene offer to this pessimistic view of the universe and human life? Is there no door opening to fairer regions? The solution seems to be that man will find salvation from his tensions by establishing a relationship with an ideal transcending self. It will be shown that in the later novels this ideal is God Himself.

To conclude this chapter, Greene himself has made an important statement on the obsessional hold of certain themes on a creative writer's mind that helps to explain the dramatic tension found within his own work. In The Lost Childhood and Other Essays Greene says he believes that

Every creative writer worth our consideration who can be called in the wide eighteenth century use of the term a poet is a victim: a man given over to an obsession³⁶.

Such a view of the creative writer implies a rigid unity in the type of work he produces, but it also implies a struggle and a conflict to reduce reality to his particular obsession.

³⁵ Edward Sackville West, "The Electric Hare", The Month, Vol. 6, No. 3, issue of September, 1951, p. 144.

³⁶ Graham Greene, The Lost Childhood and Other Essays, p. 79.

In summary form what has been said in this chapter on Greene's outlook is as follows: that to him life has within it the cause of dissatisfaction; that he is impressed by the loneliness of the individual before the cyclical, unending pattern of human existence; that he sees human acts in terms of their endless progression and consequences, the present act is inextricably bound with the past and future; that he sees man as deeply affected by original sin; that he believes that evil and violence hold a particular fascination for man; that he has an ambivalent attitude towards sex; and, finally, that he regards responsibility and pity as two adult attitudes towards life. As for the writer, Greene believes that he will be successful insofar as he is a victim of an obsession. Need it be said that such a view of life and of the creative writer implies a tense view of reality?

CHAPTER III

SOURCES OF TENSION (I)

The next two chapters will involve a study of the different ways that tension is manifested in Greene's major novels, The Power and the Glory, The Heart of the Matter, and The End of the Affair. In this chapter tension will be studied as it has its source in the "terror of life" and in the "divided mind" experiences and attitudes of Greene's characters.

1. Terror of life-

The tension in Greene's novels is as basic as this -- a tension experienced at the very idea of having to live. Even the word "life" is capable of producing feelings of apprehension. The scene in The Power and the Glory in which Captain Fellows seeks consolation from his wife Trexy illustrates this point.

He put his heavy, cheery needing-to-be-reassured hand on the shape under the sheet and said, "It's not such a bad life, Trexy. Is it now? Not a bad life?" But he could feel her stiffen: the word 'life' was taboo: it reminded you of death¹.

In this passage is found the life versus death theme that

¹ Graham Greene, The Power and the Glory, London, William Heinemann Ltd., 1949, p. 44.

pervades the novels.

Life is further regarded as being too prolonged. The narrator of The Heart of the Matter says of Scobie after his investigation of the Portuguese ship that

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 moral sin at seven, have ruined ourselves for love or hate at ten, have clutched at redemption on a fifteen year old death-bed²?

This same interminable quality of life is lamented by Bendrix in The End of the Affair when he says "nothing now in life seems to end"³.

Life in its changing character, in its flux, is a further source of anxiety. In The End of the Affair Bendrix after reading in Sarah's Journal of a musical recitation of twenty years previous comments that he hated a "life that so alters us for the worse"⁴. The world of childhood as represented by Coral in The Power and the Glory is but a time of false complacency: the narrator remarks: "Life hadn't got at her yet; she had a false air of impregnability"⁵.

² Graham Greene, The Heart of the Matter, London, William Heinemann Ltd., 1950, p. 19.

³ Graham Greene, The End of the Affair, New York, The Viking Press, 1951, p. 183.

⁴ Graham Greene, The End of the Affair, p. 216.

⁵ Graham Greene, The Power and the Glory, p. 37.

To live is thus to have reality strip man of his self-complacency. Life teaches man that failure is of its very texture. Scobie in The Heart of the Matter discovers this truth just before his death: "It isn't beauty that we love, he thought, it's failure -- the failure to stay young for ever, the failure of nerves, the failure of the body"⁶.

Life is not only interminable and characterized by flux, it is a time of evasion, of putting off till tomorrow. Scobie's thought on trying to assure Louise that he will find some means to send her on her desired trip is represented thus: "If only I could postpone the misery, he thought, until daylight"⁷. A much more striking example of this escape attitude towards life is found in the narrator's comments on Scobie and Louise preparing to discuss why he is being passed over as the new commissione

He gave her a bright fake smile; so much of life was a putting off of unhappiness for another time. Nothing was ever lost by delay. He had a dim idea that perhaps if one delayed long enough, things were taken out of one's hands altogether by death⁸.

Death is thus to be welcomed as the cessation of the responsibility of having to live. Bendrix in The End of the Affair confesses

⁶ Graham Greene, The Heart of the Matter, p. 287.

⁷ Ibid., p. 56.

⁸ Ibid., p. 15.

that he has even prayed for death, "the shattering annihilation that would prevent forever the getting up, the putting on of clothes"⁹.

Life is misery. Pain, suffering, loneliness, these are its ingredients. Scobie thinks on seeing the results of the shipwreck at Pende: "What an absurd thing it was to expect happiness in a world so full of misery"¹⁰. Scobie was naive enough to believe that he was spared some of the sorrow at his daughter's death by being away at the time in sheltered Africa: the narrator reassures the reader that Scobie missed nothing.

It seemed after all that one never really missed a thing. To be a human being one had to drink the cup. If one were lucky on one day, or cowardly on another, it was presented on a third occasion¹¹.

Life is routine -- a routine that eats into the very fibre of man's being, draining him of the energy to go on living. The narrator in The Heart of the Matter comments on Scobie's going to inform his paramour Helen Rolt of Louise's return.

Life always repeated the same pattern: there was always, sooner or later bad news to be broken, comforting lies to be uttered, pink gins to be consumed to keep misery away¹².

9 Graham Greene, The End of the Affair, p. 83.

10 Graham Greene, The Heart of the Matter, p. 125.

11 Ibid., p. 126.

12 Ibid., p. 204.

A final statement on the view expressed towards life in Greene's novels which, in a certain sense, summarizes what has been said so far is found in this revealing confession in The Heart of the Matter: "We are all of us resigned to death -- it's life we aren't resigned to"¹³. Interestingly enough, the heroes of the three novels under discussion escape life through death in the conclusion of the story.

It has been shown that Greene is preoccupied with the fact of human life. Life is described as being interminable, as altering man for the worse, as destroying the false impregnability of youth, as evasion and putting off till tomorrow, as a source of misery and unhappiness, and as a draining routine. Death is what man is naturally resigned to.

It is not claimed that these views expressed on life are necessarily those of Greene himself. The question is not whether Greene is speaking in propria persona on all these occasions and through the mouths of such a variety of characters who bemoan the fact of human existence. What has been established, though, is the extent of the deep-seated tension towards life which pervades Greene's fictional world. Judging by the references to life given so far, is Greene to be described as a

¹³ Graham Greene, The Heart of the Matter, p. 282.

"life-hater", a born pessimist, a man of excessively morbid imagination? The clue to this question lies in Greene's upbringing, in his intellectual bent, in his natural hypersensitivity to the lot of man in an imperfect world. In Journey without Maps Greene shows by the following confession that the germ of this revulsion to life was already laid in his childhood.

I never became accustomed to the mice running in the wainscoting; I was afraid of night butterflies. It was with an hereditary terror: I shared with my mother a horror of birds, the impossibility of touching them, the repugnance I felt in the beating of their heart in the palm of my hand¹⁴.

Before arriving at any final conclusion as to whether Greene is a "life-hater" it might be well if the adult reader would check carefully both his conscious and sub-conscious reactions to this business called living, if he would probe deep into his own psyche to discover in the hidden recesses of his own mind his real attitude towards life. Pessimism in the face of life is an adult reaction, made particularly painful on being analysed by the sensitive intellectual mind with an introspective bent. Keats in his "The Ode to the Nightingale" describes this condition as follows: "Where but to think is to

¹⁴ Graham Greene, Journey without Maps, (Voyages sans Cartes), translated by Marcelle Sibon, p. 113.

be full of sorrow". That the answer to this question whether Greene is a "life-hater" is important in forming a judgment on his work is undeniable. W. Gore Allen emphasizes that this is the central question in judging Greene's work.

In forming a judgment of Greene's work, the hardest problem which we have to solve is to what extent the impulse inspiring it was dislike of certain transient attitudes of mind and to what extent that impulse was a deeper hatred, directed at the permanent laws of human life¹⁵.

Associated with this preoccupation with life is the Greenian attitude towards time and setting -- the background in which life is worked out. Greene sees the past, the present, and the future in a simultaneous vision; he sees them yoked together in an inseparable alliance. This moment's sin is the next moment's guilt. Today's careless promise is tomorrow's demand. In The Heart of the Matter the sanitary inspector Fellowes tells Helen Rolt that Scobie is fearful of her. Scobie's vision of Helen is colored by the Greenian "time" view given above.

"He's scared of you, Mrs. Rolt. All we married men are". At the phrase "married men" Scobie could see that tired exhausted figure on the stretcher turn away from them both as from strong sunlight¹⁶.

¹⁵ W. Gore Allen, "Another View of Graham Greene", The Catholic World, Vol. 169, No. 1009, issue of April, 1949, p. 69-70.

¹⁶ Graham Greene, The Heart of the Matter, p. 205.

The Helen Rolt at the party is seen simultaneously with the shipwrecked girl at Pende: time no longer separates.

This unified way of viewing time is a typical Greenian way of regarding reality. It does create tension: for every human act is seen in the here-and-now lying alongside acts of the past and those of the future. The narrator in The Heart of the Matter comments on the impression made by Helen Rolt on Scobie as he speaks to her for the first time after the shipwreck.

He stood a minute looking down at her face. Like a fortune teller's cards it showed unmistakably the past -- a voyage, a loss, a sickness. In the next deal perhaps it would be possible to see the future¹⁷.

This same telescoping of time is found in The Power and the Glory. The fugitive priest, temporarily safe from the police, in Maria's room, reflects on his present condition and on his illegitimate child.

He thought of the immeasurable distance a man travels -- from the first whipping-top to this bed, on which he lay clasping the brandy. And to God it was only a moment. The child's snigger and the first mortal sin lay together more closely than two blinks of the eye¹⁸.

¹⁷ Graham Greene, The Heart of the Matter, p. 134.

¹⁸ Graham Greene, The Power and the Glory, p. 83.

After his release from prison with the chase about to resume, the narrator of The Power and the Glory describes time for the fugitive priest as stretching "to snapping point". All these time references in the novels serve to build up an atmosphere of tension. In The End of the Affair the emphasis on the reality "time" leads Greene into a philosophical analysis of its origin. Father Crompton speaks to Bendrix in Henry Miles' house after Sarah's death.

St. Augustine asked where time came from. He said it came out of the future which didn't exist yet, into the present that had no duration, and went into the past which had ceased to exist¹⁹.

This interest in time is, of course, of more than philosophical interest. It explains the importance of the human act as something that man never escapes from.

But man works out his life not only in time; space is of equal importance for the background of human living. The settings of Greene's novels in general reflect the general tone of tension found in his work. In The Power and the Glory, a primitive semi-tropical background is the setting for the story. Man is a victim not only of himself, but also of the elements. The setting is one of squalor and of violence. It is a setting

¹⁹ Graham Greene, The End of the Affair, p. 225.

in which man and animal fight over a piece of meat, in which a bleaching heat drains the energy out of men. It is a setting which reflects the moral degradation of the characters.

The Heart of the Matter is peopled with vultures and rats. In fact, a rat is Scobie's companion in those moments he escapes from Louise. The African background for this story is one of omnipresent corruption.

Nobody here could ever talk about a heaven on earth. Heaven remained rigidly in its proper place on the other side of death. And on this side flourished the injustices, the cruelties, the meannesses that elsewhere people so cleverly hushed up²⁰.

This is the Greenian philosophy that it takes a hell to make man appreciate the meaning of heaven.

The setting of The End of the Affair does not reflect so clearly the tone of the novel. It is war-time London. The elements do not condition the life of man as they do in The Power and the Glory and in The Heart of the Matter. In this latest novel Greene has become so preoccupied with the struggle within the human soul that he has not troubled to paint the setting at any length. This struggle within the souls of men and women is so graphically portrayed that it requires no reinforcing reflection in the exterior world.

²⁰ Graham Greene, The Heart of the Matter, p. 30.

It has been shown that the settings of Greene's novels reflect and emphasize the tensions within the human characters. Whether the setting be in Africa, Mexico or London it is not one of peace and normal civilization -- it is a setting in which man finds himself in combat against the primitive or the violent. One critic has this to say of the settings of Greene's novels.

If he (Greene) seeks out physical squalor for his settings, ... it is but to place men where he knows they belong, while they carry with them the awful knowledge that they love evil and do it²¹.

2. Divided mind-

The most striking characteristic of the mental conflict within Greene's novels is found in the ambivalence experienced by the characters. The fugitive priest in The Power and the Glory illustrates this "divided mind" quality of Greenian heroes. Just before his first prison term the priest finds himself in such an ambivalent state of mind in thinking about his illegitimate child Brigitta: "He tried to think of his child with shame, but he could only think of her with a kind of famished love"²². Even the physical movements of the priest reflect the ambivalence of his mind. The priest drinking with the dentist Tench is described as wanting to go, wanting to stay: "He sat there like a black question mark, ready to go, ready to stay, poised on his chair"²³.

²¹ The Tablet, March 16, 1940, p. 257. (The name of critic was not given).

²² Graham Greene, The Power and the Glory, p. 152.

²³ Ibid., p. 12.

This ambivalent quality pervades The Power and the Glory: whether it be the priest desirous of final escape and yet forced by duty to go to the dying gringo; whether it be the priest caught between his love of Brigitta and his dread of sin; whether it be Padre José tempted to say a prayer over the dead child in the cemetery and yet fearful of being discovered; whether it be the police lieutenant promising the fugitive priest the occasion to confess and yet tempted not to fulfill this promise.

This same "divided mind" theme is present in The End of the Affair. Sarah's attitude towards her husband Henry as revealed in this account taken from her Journal brings out the ambivalent note.

But I love Henry; I want him to be happy. I only hate him today because he is happy, and I am not and Maurice is not²⁴.

The "divided mind" theme has become a love-hate clash. In her attitude to Maurice Bendrix, Sarah experiences this same ambivalent reaction. She says this of Maurice after her prayer to see him again.

And then he came in at the door, and he was alone, and I thought now the agony of being without him starts and I wished he was safely back dead again under the door²⁵.

²⁴ Graham Greene, The End of the Affair, p. 114.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 117.

One of the strongest expressions of this "divided mind" theme, in which the mental conflict is translated into physical pain as an outlet, is found in the passage after Sarah's death when Maurice Bendrix is alone in Henry's room.

I couldn't sleep. I pressed my nails into my palms as she had done hers so that the pain might prevent my brain from working, and the pendulum of my desire swung tiringly to and fro, the desire to forget and to remember, to be dead and to keep alive a while longer²⁶.

In Sarah this "divided mind" quality results from the conflict between her carnal love for Maurice and her newly discovered divine love. Even her "divine" promise did not extinguish this carnal love. L. Beirnaert remarks this about the love conflict in Sarah: "The conversion has not deeply affected her psyche -- she still yearns for Maurice"²⁷.

In The Heart of the Matter the "divided mind" quality lies particularly in the mental unrest and indecision of the characters. When Louise tries to get Scobie to admit that she won't be able to take her much desired trip Scobie's mental reaction is so painful that it was as though "a ligament tightened in his brain with the suspense"²⁸. Scobie debates within himself

²⁶ Graham Greene, The End of the Affair, p. 173.

²⁷ Louis Beirnaert, "La Fin d'une Liaison par Graham Greene", Etudes, Vol. 272, issue of March, 1952, p. 371.

²⁸ Graham Greene, The Heart of the Matter, p. 56.

later as to why he should not take Helen at her word, stop going to see her at the Nissen hut, go to confession, and write Louise. This the crucial scene in the book. And the decision made will affect the lives of all the characters involved. His decision to continue going to the Nissen hut seals his doom.

To summarize this discussion on the ambivalence experienced by Greene's characters, it may be said that the characters experience the effects of a mind torn against itself. Greene's own attitude on the "divided mind" is particularly revealing. He claims that the "divided mind" is one of the principal characteristics of a Christian civilization, distinguishing it from the pagan one. In a lecture given at a Catholic conference in Brussels, Greene says

But if we surrender all idea of perfection -- what marks do we expect to find that separates the Christian from one of the pagan civilizations? Perhaps all we can really demand is the divided mind, the uneasy conscience, the sense of personal failure²⁹.

According to this principle, it is not surprising that the three novels under examination should have this element of the "divided mind" as a characteristic feature: for the three novels deal with a simple priest in a country with an anti-Christian

²⁹ Kenneth Allott and Miriam Farris, The Art of Graham Greene, p. 51.

persecution; a convert police officer, of lukewarm faith in a corrupting society; and a pagan novelist and a heroine, Catholic only because of Baptism, both astray in an industrial "wasteland".

Besides the ambivalence in the characters, the "divided mind" expresses itself in the notions of responsibility and guilt. Responsibility in Greene is associated with the idea of a burden, a load on man's shoulders. Coral is described as carrying "her responsibilities carefully like crockery across the hot yard"³⁰. In The Heart of the Matter Scobie feels that "the less he needed Louise the more conscious he became of his responsibility for her happiness"³¹. In fact, it may be asked whether Greene's characters have not accepted too literally Péguy's statement that he was willing to accept his own damnation in order to save another soul³². To such lengths will responsibility carry a man, even though he should know that no human being is worth such a high price. The priest in The Power and the Glory is an example of such a man. He prays, "O God, give me any kind of death -- without contrition, in a state of sin -- only save this child"³³.

³⁰ Graham Greene, The Power and the Glory, p. 64.

³¹ Graham Greene, The Heart of the Matter, p. 13.

³² Graham Greene, The Lost Childhood and Other Essays, p. 77

³³ Graham Greene, The Power and the Glory, p. 103.

With responsibility, guilt may be considered an expression of the "divided mind". Greene's fictional world is one in which guilt reigns. The guilt the fugitive priest experiences from his illicit relationship is pictured as "a wound".

To her (Maria) it was just an incident, a scratch which heals completely in the healthy flesh; she was even proud of having been the priest's woman. He alone carried a wound, as though a whole world had died³⁴.

In this passage guilt is pictured in the metaphorical language of disease, injury.

The guilt experienced by Greene's characters is frequently not moral in origin: it is frequently a result of the insecure and anxious relationships between the characters. Scobie experiences this type of guilt on thinking that he will have to tell Louise that he has been passed over for the new commissionership.

I've landed her here, he thought, with the old premonitory sense of guilt he always felt as though he were responsible for something in the future he couldn't even foresee³⁵.

Guilt in The End of the Affair is the result of sex without marital love. Maurice Bendrix reflects on his proposed

³⁴ Graham Greene, The Power and the Glory, p. 85.

³⁵ Graham Greene, The Heart of the Matter, p. 8.

sexual relationship with Sylvia Black as an outlet after Sarah's death.

Hate lay like boredom over the evening ahead. I had committed myself. Without love I should have to go through the gestures of love. I felt the guilt before I had committed the crime, the crime of drawing the innocent into my own maze³⁶.

It may be added here that in an age in which moral standards are loose, based on a theory of relative morality, that the novelist reflects this condition of the world about him by having his characters experience guilt where no moral offence is really present -- this is one of the fruits of an age which determines its standards by a subjective morality. This may explain why Greene's characters experience feelings of guilt when objectively speaking there seems to be no moral offence. It should be further remarked that in a novel such as The Heart of the Matter that the obsessive guilt experienced by Scobie about receiving Communion in the state of mortal sin would be appreciated by a Catholic audience in particular: the non-Catholic audience might very well believe that such obsessive guilt on religious matters is within the realm of psychiatry rather than that of the novelist.

³⁶ Graham Greene, The End of the Affair, p. 199.

Thus it has been seen that the "divided mind" theme in Greene's novels is particularly reflected in the ambivalence experienced by the characters, in their oppressive sense of responsibility, and in their painful awareness of guilt. As for the "divided mind" it has been shown that Greene believes that it is the distinctive mark of a Christian civilization. Ambivalence is seen not only in the mental conflict of the characters; it is further translated into physical tension. As for responsibility, Greene's characters seem to be moved by Péguy's statement that he was willing to accept his own damnation in order to save another soul. The guilt experienced in the characters is primarily a result of moral offence. However, Greene does show that guilt can arise from unsatisfactory human relationships when no moral offence is involved.

CHAPTER IV

SOURCES OF TENSION (II)

This chapter will involve a study of human relations insofar as they create tension in the novels. The relation between child and adult, adult and adult, and man and God, will be the basis of this examination.

1. Child-adult relationship-

Greene's own unhappy childhood has clearly influenced his characterization of children in the novels. The Power and the Glory contains the clearest statement on the tension that is created in the child-adult relationship. The priest is literally scared of his daughter Brigitta.

He caught the look in the child's eyes which frightened him -- it was again as if a grown woman was there before her time, making her plans, aware of far too much¹.

The relationship between the Fellows and their daughter Coral is also tension-producing. When Coral asked her father to see him alone in order to inform him that the priest is hidden in their barn, he becomes fearful of the child.

¹ Graham Greene, The Power and the Glory, p. 82-83.

A child is said to draw parents together, and certainly he felt an immense unwillingness to entrust himself to this child. Her answers might carry him anywhere. He felt through the net for his wife's hand secretively: they were adults together. This was the stranger in their house. He said boisterously "You're frightening us"².

It is a strange world indeed in which adults feel maladjusted in the presence of children, in which children are prematurely grown old. It is a Greenian viewpoint that from a psychological standpoint tension may have its origin in childhood. This tracing of tension to childhood is well exemplified in the following words of Harris to Scobie on schooling.

"To start off happy", Harris said. "It must make an awful difference afterwards. Why, it might become a habit, mightn't it"³?

The autobiographical flavour of these lines is evident.

This is the voice of Greene himself.

Childhood in Greene is thus recognized as a determinant of the mental health of adults. The narrator of The Power and the Glory comments on this in showing the dangers that lie around a person in childhood.

We should be thankful we cannot see the horrors and degradations lying around our childhood, in cupboards and bookshelves, everywhere⁴.

² Graham Greene, The Power and the Glory, p. 38-39.

³ Graham Greene, The Heart of the Matter, p. 154.

⁴ Graham Greene, The Power and the Glory, p. 8.

Whether it be Wilson in The Heart of the Matter "condemned in childhood to complexity"⁵, or Coral in The Power and the Glory who "had never been really conscious of childhood"⁶ the same pattern is there -- an unhappy childhood giving birth to a maladjusted adult.

It has been shown that in Greene's novels the child-adult relationship is an occasion for tension. It has also been shown how preoccupied Greene is with the fact of unhappy childhood as conditioning adult unhappiness. That Greene's own childhood and his interests in psychoanalysis⁷ help to explain this peculiar attitude can hardly be questioned.

2. The adult-adult relationship-

The study of the tension in the child-adult relationship introduces the study of the adult-adult relationship. The key to tension in human relationships is given in the following passage from The Heart of the Matter in which Scobie goes through mental agony in thinking how he will arrange Louise's happiness.

If I could just arrange for her happiness first, he thought, and in the confusing night he forgot for the while what experience had taught him -- that no human being can really understand another, and that no one can arrange another's happiness⁸.

⁵ Graham Greene, The Heart of the Matter, p. 177.

⁶ Graham Greene, The Power and the Glory, p. 65.

⁷ Graham Greene, Journey without Maps, (Voyages sans Cartes), translated by Marcelle Sibon, p. 18.

⁸ Graham Greene, The Heart of the Matter, p. 83.

This passage is very significant for an understanding of tension in Greene's characters, for it is based on the theory and the truth that man is essentially a lonely "unknowable" creature.

A very good example of Greene's interest in the psychological implications in human relations is found in the following passage in which Maurice Bendrix comments on one of the peculiar mental quirks of Henry Miles.

"I paid for the drinks, and that again was a symptom of Henry's disturbance -- he never took other people's hospitality easily. He was always the one in a taxi to have the money ready in the palm of his hand, while we others fumbled"⁹.

Sex is one of the greatest sources of tension in the man-woman relationship. One of the most striking statements on this is made in The End of the Affair by Maurice Bendrix about his proposed affair with Sylvia Black.

The act of sex may be nothing, but when you reach my age you learn that at any time it may prove to be everything. I was safe, but who could tell to what neurosis in this child I might appeal? At the end of the evening I would make love clumsily and my very clumsiness, even my impotence if I proved impotent, might do the trick¹⁰.

That sex is not the answer to man's desire for happiness is strongly stated by Sarah in her Journal on her relationship

⁹ Graham Greene, The End of the Affair, p. 11.
¹⁰ Ibid., p. 199.

with Bendrix.

But even the first time, in the hotel near Poddington, we spent all we had. You were teaching us to squander, like You taught the rich man, so that one day we might have nothing left except this love of you¹¹.

The carnal love of Sarah and Maurice is now involved in the wider scheme of divine love.

By means of a striking comparison, Greene brings out the tension that sex creates. The passage is from The Heart of the Matter and refers to Wilson who has now given in to the temptation to go to the local brothel.

Some time or another if one lived in a place one must try the local product. It was like having a bar of chocolate shut in a bedroom drawer. Until the box was empty it occupied the mind too much¹².

The marital relationship is closely associated with the sex relationship as a source of tension. Marriage in Greene does not produce peace. Whether it be Padre José and his wife; or the fugitive priest and Maria in The Power and the Glory; whether it be Scobie and Louise in The Heart of the Matter; whether it be Henry Miles and Sarah in The End of the Affair -- the marriage relationship is a source of tension between man and woman. The fugitive priest has discovered in his

¹¹ Graham Greene, The End of the Affair, p. 151.

¹² Graham Greene, The Heart of the Matter, p. 184.

relationship with Maria that marriage does not bring a human being "ease".

He watched her covertly. Was this all there was in marriage, this evasion and suspicion, and lack of ease? When people confess to him of passion was this all they meant -- the hard bed and the busy woman and the not talking about the past¹³ ... ?

In The Heart of the Matter the scene in which Scobie on the liner welcomes Louise back from her trip has in it the tensions of a maladjusted couple.

When once he was within the cabin there was nothing to do but kiss. He avoided her mouth -- the mouth revealed so much, but she wouldn't be content until she pulled his face round and left the seal of her return on his lips¹⁴.

Thus it has been shown that sex and marriage do not solve man's problems.

Language as used between human beings is another source of the tension found in the adult relationship. Even a word can cause perturbation within a person. Sarah has but to call Bendrix "Maurice" to cause distress in her lover; Louise has but to call Scobie "Ticki" to produce a like response. Greenian characters are most sensitive to language.

¹³ Graham Greene, The Power and the Glory, p. 79.

¹⁴ Graham Greene, The Heart of the Matter, p. 219.

That language has this power to evoke tension is well illustrated in the scene from The Heart of the Matter where Helen Rolt scolds Scobie for considering his work more important than herself.

"Your work is much more important to you than I am", Helen said, and the banality of the phrase read in how many books, wrung his heart like the too mature remark of a child¹⁵.

In this interest of how words and language affect human beings Greene shows that he is aware of the importance of semantics as something practical in daily relationships; he is interested in words insofar as they condition human behaviour and in their effect on the human mind.

3. Man-God relationship-

A relationship which gives an added dimension to Greene's novels is found in the man-God relationship. In The Lost Childhood and Other Essays Greene quotes approvingly Pascal's statement on God: "Dieu est la bonne tentation à laquelle beaucoup d'hommes succombent à la fin"¹⁶. It is noticeable that there has been a development in the rôle that God plays in Greene's novels. In such a novel as The Power and

¹⁵ Graham Greene, The Heart of the Matter, p. 187.

¹⁶ Graham Greene, The Lost Childhood and Other Essays, p. 72.

the Glory God is noticeable only by His negative presence. In The Heart of the Matter God is there as a real source of conflict in the soul of Scobie. In The End of the Affair it is even felt as though God had a physical presence in the novel.

Victor de Pange notes that God through grace has become so involved in Greene's later work that man not only has to fight self and his environment but also this positive presence of God.

L'homme n'est pas seulement traqué par les autres hommes. Il l'est encore par Dieu, où plutôt par la grâce¹⁷.

That God is at times a source of tension in Greene's novels made be seen in this passage from The Heart of the Matter where Scobie is preparing to end his life by suicide.

No one can speak a monologue for long alone; another voice will always make itself heard: every monologue sooner or later becomes a discussion. So now he couldn't keep the other voice silent: it spoke from the cave of his body: it was as if the sacrament which had lodged there for his damnation gave tongue. You say you love me and yet you'll do this to me -- rob me of you forever. I am not Thou but simply you when you speak to me¹⁸.

God's presence is so close to men in this passage that it seems that He is protesting their treatment of Him, and yearning

¹⁷ Victor de Pange, Graham Greene, p. 49.

¹⁸ Graham Greene, The Heart of the Matter, p. 281.

for their friendship. The "I am not Thou but simply you when you speak to me" suggests the almost physical reality of God in this novel. Thus it may be said that the conflict in Greene's characters has become one with God Himself. The prayer of Sarah in the following passage again indicates this.

"I knelt and put my head on the bed and wished I could believe. Dear God, I said, -- why dear, why dear? make me believe. I can't believe. I can't do anything of myself. 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 the pain, and I said, I will believe"¹⁹.

This is real conflict in this passage; the conflict of a soul against its God. The conflict becomes so tense that it is split¹⁹ over into physical pain as an outlet.

The extent of God's presence in Greene's latest work The End of the Affair is revealed in the famished mind of Bendrix at the end of the novel.

"O God, You've done enough, You've robbed me of enough. I am too tired and old to learn to love. Leave me alone forever"²⁰.

Even this protestation of wanting to be without God sounds insincere and hollow: it is clear enough that the hatred of God by Maurice has made him aware that there must be a God,

¹⁹ Graham Greene, The End of the Affair, p. 116.

²⁰ Graham Greene, The End of the Affair, p. 240.

and ironically Maurice finds himself praying to the object of his hatred.

To summarize what has been said in this chapter on human relations as a source of tension, it may be repeated that Greene believes that childhood determines adult tensions and that a "world" separates the child from the adult; that the human individual is essentially "alone" in the face of life's problems, (for no one really understands his neighbor); that sex and marriage and language frequently serve to heighten the tensions in human relationships. In the later novels, man finds himself in conflict with God Himself. It is by the introduction of this last struggle of "nature versus grace" that Greene has lent an added dimension to his work, given it a reality which surpasses that of the so called "realistic" novels of the twentieth century.

CHAPTER V

RELIEF OF TENSION

This chapter is a study of some of the different ways that Greene's characters generally receive relief from the tensions they experience. For the sake of convenience these tension "relievers" will be studied in the following groups: drink and sex; escape and dreams; humor and communication; pity and love and, finally performance of duty and grace.

1. Drink and sex-

In all three novels under discussion, alcohol is used by the leading characters to lessen their tensions. Young Coral remarks to the fugitive priest that he does not seem fearful of being caught. The priest replies: "A little drink", he said, "will work wonders in a cowardly man. With a little brandy, why I'd defy -- the devil"¹. The priest has this same attitude towards the police lieutenant: drink, of course, gives him this air of bravado. As the effect of the alcohol wears off, the priest prays that he be caught soon.

¹ Graham Greene, The Power and the Glory, p. 49.

The relationship between Scobie and Louise is also relieved of its tensions by means of "pink gins".

There was a tacit understanding between them that "liquor helped": growing more miserable with every glass one hoped for the moment of relief².

Drink hardly brings any permanent type of relief. The success of drink as a source of relief is brought out in this account taken from Sarah's Journal: "Had a couple of drinks by myself. It was a mistake. Have I got to give up drinking too?"³ The ennui and the tensions of human living are not to be relieved by such a thing as alcohol: the relief is strictly temporary.

The use of sex to relieve tension proves equally frustrating. Sarah with her "divine" promise curbing her carnal love tries desperately to get relief in sexual excitement with a Chief Warden.

I stopped the Warden, touching his arm and asking him a question about the steel bunks, something stupid about why there weren't double bunks for the married. I meant him to want to kiss me. He twisted me against the bunk, so that the metal made a line of pain against my back, and kissed me. Then he looked so astonished that I laughed and kissed him back. But nothing worked⁴.

² Graham Greene, The Heart of the Matter, p. 55.

³ Graham Greene, The End of the Affair, p. 125.

⁴ Ibid., p. 121.

The expression "but nothing worked" shows that sex is not the solution. Sex rather than relieving tension in the three novels becomes rather an occasion for a clash between carnal and divine love. The fugitive priest with Maria, Scobie with Helen, and Maurice with Sarah, these three relationships of carnal love are the basis for the appearance of a divine love that will brook no rivals. R. McLaughlin comments on this carnal love versus divine love aspect of The Heart of the Matter and The End of the Affair.

... Both novels are very much alike insofar as they deal with the conflict between the spirit and the flesh; there is the unmistakable 'hound of heaven' chasing at the heels of his protagonists, and also the same descent into hell before his lovers succumb to God⁵.

Evelyn Waugh adds this on the sexual relationship in Greene's novels: "Human beings, especially men and women in their sexual relationship, are ceaselessly working on one another, reforming and corrupting"⁶. Greene's own attitude to sex is revealed in this passage taken from Journey without Maps in which he describes from a Paris hotel room a man and woman making love.

⁵ Richard McLaughlin, "The End of the Affair" (a review), Theatre Arts, Vol. 35, No. 12, issue of December, 1951, p. 35.

⁶ Evelyn Waugh, "The Heart's Own Reasons", The Commonweal, Vol. 54, issue of August 17, 1951, p. 458.

That night, from the window of my hotel, I saw a man and woman making love standing against a street-lamp; they were clinging to each other -- two persons who support and comfort each other in the agony of some sickness⁷.

The association of sex with sickness shows that in it Greene's characters do not win peace.

2. Escape and dreams-

Greene's characters are "hunted men". It is therefore not surprising that what they yearn for is "escape". Perhaps this explains Greene's popularity with such a wide class of readers. Charles A. Brady comments on this "huntedness" in Greene.

Why, we say with pleasure, it's the same old chase we loved as boys. But it is not quite the same, for there are two other things mixed up with it, both of them allegories of sorts: the first a local allegory of our times, where rival political theories play hare and hounds across the page: the other a more universal allegory, with the hound of Heaven in pursuit, and the quarry the soul of man⁸.

The desire to escape as a solution to human problems takes even the most radical length of wanting to escape the human body and its limitations. This is Sarah's desire-

⁷ Graham Greene, Journey without Maps, (Voyages sans Cartes), translated by Marcelle Sibon, p. 39.

⁸ Charles A. Brady, "A Melodramatic Cousin of R.L.S.", America, Vol. 64, No. 16, issue of January 25, 1941, p. 440.

I was trying to escape from the human body and all it needed. I thought I could believe in some kind of a god that bore no relation to ourselves, something vague, amorphous, cosmic, to which I had promised something and which had given me something to return -- a Thing that stretched out of the vague into concrete human life, like a powerful vapor among the chairs and walls. One day I too would become part of that vapor: I would escape myself forever⁹.

In this wish of Sarah's there are at least two remedies proposed as a solution for the human predicament -- escape of oneself, and absorption into some Power. The implication is in order to get peace the individual must transcend self.

The escape mechanism is further seen in the prevalence of dreams in the novels -- these dreams invariably represent conflicts that the characters have experienced in their waking hours. Here we have another example of the effect of psychoanalysis on Greene's thinking. Victor de Pange comments on this use of the dream as an escape mechanism.

Le rêve est la seule évacion possible pour l'homme quand il atteint le comble de la détresse physique et morale. A la réalité présente, qu'il est incapable de soutenir plus longtemps, s'en superpose une autre qui n'est en fait qu'une fusion d'éléments tirés de la vie¹⁰.

⁹ Graham Greene, The End of the Affair, p. 133.

¹⁰ Victor de Pange, Graham Greene, p. 52.

The dream of the priest during the time of his first stay in prison has in it the conscious conflicts he had been experiencing prior to this time.

His eyes closed and immediately he began to dream. He was being pursued: he stood outside a door banging on it, begging for admission, but nobody answered -- there was a word, a password which would save him but he had forgotten it¹¹.

In this dream it is to be noted that the priest is being pursued and also that he yearns for escape, but finds himself frustrated.

Scobie is the one the most in need of dreams in The Heart of the Matter. His suicidal tendency is symbolized in his dream in the following passage.

But when he (Scobie) slept the unhappy dreams returned. Upstairs Louise was crying, and he sat at a table writing his last letter, "It's a rotten business for you, but it can't be helped. Your loving husband, Dickie", and then as he turned to look for a weapon or a rope, it suddenly occurred to him that this was an act he could never do¹².

The contents of this dream reveal two of the conscious pre-occupations of Scobie: his desire to please Louise, and his urge to commit suicide. Both of these unconscious drives receive

¹¹ Graham Greene, The Power and the Glory, p. 170.

¹² Graham Greene, The Heart of the Matter, p. 94.

expression, not being suppressed by any conscious censor.

Sarah's dream about Maurice best illustrates this use of the dream as an outlet for conflict in The End of the Affair.

I dreamed I was walking a long staircase to meet Maurice at the top. I was still happy because when I reached the top of the staircase we were going to make love. I called to him that I was coming, but it wasn't Maurice's voice that answered; it was a stranger's that boomed like a foghorn warning lost ships and scared me¹³.

In the contents of this dream Sarah's carnal love for Maurice is checked by another force -- the symbols employed at least suggest that this other force might be God.

In the three dreams examined are found the central issues of the novels: the priest's pursuit and desire to escape; Scobie's desire to please Louise and his temptation to end his own life; Sarah's carnal love for Maurice and the challenge of an unseen Presence which made her afraid.

In this stress on dreams as an escape mechanism Greene shows his interest in the workings of the human mind and in its attempts at escaping from harsh realities. This use of dreams also serves to re-emphasize the themes of the novels.

¹³ Graham Greene, The End of the Affair, p. 207.

3. Humor and communication-

Most of Greene's characters do not possess much of a sense of humor: they take themselves much too seriously. Perhaps the reason why The Power and the Glory has received such high praise may be found in the fact that the hero holds on to a sense of humor even in times of great trials. In such a depressing moment as his betrayal by the mestizo for the award money, the priest still manages to see the humorous in his situation.

He giggled again; he could never take the complications of destiny quite seriously, and it was just possible, he thought, that a year without anxiety might save this man's soul. You only have to turn up the underside of any situation and out came scuttling the small absurd contradictory situations¹⁴.

The humor and optimism in this passage is a rather rare occurrence in Greene's characters. The Heart of the Matter and The End of the Affair are singularly devoid of characters who can see life in the vision given by humor.

Communication with fellow man is another way that tensions are relieved. Man is a social animal: alone he becomes fearful of his situation. In the cell with his fellow

¹⁴ Graham Greene, The Power and the Glory, p. 127-128.

prisoners, the priest at first experienced a feeling of estrangement. In answering the old man inquiring about his daughter Catarina, the priest felt an immediate relief in just being able to communicate by speech with a fellow human. "The sound of his own voice, the sense of communication with a neighbor, calmed him"¹⁵.

In general it may be said that communication and humor in Greene are not too important as a means for the relief of tension. As was explained in Chapter IV on tension arising from human relations, most of Greene's characters are ill at ease in their social intercourse.

4. Pity and Love-

Pity is a word that continually recurs in Greene's novels. It is closely associated with the burden called "responsibility". Pity brings relief insofar as it is an outlet for the oppressive sense of responsibility experienced by the characters. Victor de Pange shows how difficult it is to make clear-cut distinctions between pity, compassion and charity.

¹⁵ Graham Greene, The Power and the Glory, p. 159.

Il y a une gradation difficile à définir entre la pitié, la compassion et la charité. C'est pourtant là une distinction fondamentale qui est à la base de l'erreur commise par Scobie dans le Fond du Problème ... La pitié est ainsi une réaction de défense devant la souffrance d'autrui¹⁶.

In Scobie, his sense of pity is definitely such a defence reaction before the suffering of others. W. Birmingham's comment on pity in Greene's novels is especially applicable to such a character as Scobie: "Neurotic or prideful, pity is accurately described as an assumption of God's prerogative"¹⁷.

One of the most striking statements made on the rôle of pity in lessening friction in human relations is made by the narrator of The Power and the Glory.

When you visualized a man or a woman carefully, you could always begin to feel pity ... that was a quality God's image carried with it ... when you saw the lines at the corners of the eyes, the shape of the mouth, how the hair grew, it was impossible to hate. Hate was just a failure of the imagination¹⁸.

A concluding statement on the rôle of pity is taken from The Heart of the Matter: "If one knew he (Scobie) wondered, the facts, would one have to feel pity even for the planets? If one reached what they call the heart of the matter?"¹⁹

¹⁶ Victor de Pange, Graham Greene, p. 66.

¹⁷ William Birmingham, "Graham Greene Criticism, a Bibliographical Study", Thought, Vol. 27, No. 104, Spring, 1952, p. 91

¹⁸ Graham Greene, The Power and the Glory, p. 170.

¹⁹ Graham Greene, The Heart of the Matter, p. 125.

Perhaps in a world of corruption and moral degradation as found in a Greenian novel, it is the rôle of pity to give man an outlet for his ideals - at least until love sets in.

As to love, it is more and more occupying a key position in Greene's novels. It seems his view that all forms of love are forms of grace. By love, man escapes the confines of self and establishes communication with the world. Victor de Pange comments on the evolution of Greene's attitude towards love.

Il semble qu'il y ait eu une progression dans la pensée au sujet de l'amour. Il en avait perçu dès l'origine la nature salvatrice, mais l'amour divin était exclu de ses premières oeuvres. Cette notion de l'interaction de Dieu et sa créature s'est fait sentir peu à peu²⁰.

To what extent the love of God is occupying a central rôle in Greene's fiction may be judged by the clash between it and carnal love in his latest novel The End of the Affair. Sarah's words to Maurice before their parting are representative of this outlook.

You needn't be so scared. Love doesn't end. Just because we don't see each other ... People, go on loving God, don't they all their lives without seeing Him?²¹

²⁰ Victor de Pange, Graham Greene, p. 95.

²¹ Graham Greene, The End of the Affair, p. 82.

5. Duty and grace-

The performance of duty is the basis for bringing man a more permanent kind of peace. The fugitive priest's salvation in large measure depends on his response to the call of duty -- a sense of responsibility to his vocation. The priest's answer to the police lieutenant, who was surprised that the priest should return to the dying gringo, reveals his attachment to duty: "O well, lieutenant, you know how it is. Even a coward has a sense of duty"²². Humility and this sense of duty will bring about the salvation of this sinner priest. H.C. Gardner makes this comment on the priest's sense of duty.

the little priest is not a saint, he has been a weak and sinning man, but his office, the sacred character that he bears so unworthily, bursts at long last like a sunrise through all his fogs of unfaithfulness and urges no, rather goads him to an act of priestly duty and charity which he knows will lead him to his martyrdom ... he is not merely pursued and executed; he chooses his death, with reluctance, timorously, unheroically, but at the same time in a spirit of reparation, with the knowledge "now at the end there was only one thing that counted -- to be a saint"²³.

Scobie experiences this same sense of relief on arranging for Louise's trip: "The sadness was peeling off his mind, leaving him contentment. He had done his duty: Louise was happy"²⁴. Psychologically, the performance of duty

²² Graham Greene, The Power and the Glory, p. 246.

²³ Harold C. Gardner, "Taste and Worth", America, Vol. 75, No. 3, issue of April 20, 1946, p. 53.

²⁴ Graham Greene, The Heart of the Matter, p. 104.

brings a sense of repose and peace to the characters.

It should be observed here that "peace" is one word that recurs in Greene's novels. Sarah's salvation in The End of the Affair is also based on her sense of duty -- her sense that she must obey her "divine" promise no matter at what cost.

But the great source of peace for man is to be found in grace which leads to glory. God's grace is the outlet which helps man not give in to despair. Man is "hounded" by grace in Greene's novels. By his use of grace what Greene has really done is to give an "extra layer to his characteristic description of huntedness and failure and squalor -- the layer of supernatural grace which alone makes anything makes sense"²⁵. Grace is to lead to a glory which will mean the cessation of all conflicts. Perhaps in changing the title of The Labyrinthine Ways to The Power and the Glory Greene gives the reader some indication as to where the emphasis is to be put in studying his work. The Labyrinthine Ways suggests the hell through which unsupported man travels; The Power and the Glory suggests that a final solution to the human predicament is to be found in the performance of duty which will be crowned by

²⁵ Barbara Wall, "London Letter", America, Vol. 77, No. 19, issue of August 9, 1947, p. 522.

the grace of God, and will give birth to a glory that brings an imperishable peace to the soul.

Perhaps the best reconciliation of the "earthly" hell with the state of glory in Greene's novels is found in the priest's sermon to his fearful audience in The Power and the Glory.

Pain is a part of joy. We are hungry and then think how we enjoy our food at last ... we deny ourselves so that we can enjoy²⁶.

The argument really is that perhaps if we did not go through a period of suffering in this life we would not be able to appreciate the happiness of heaven in the next.

To summarize what has been said on the different ways that tension is relieved in the novels, it may be said that both alcohol and sex give but a temporary relief; that escape is a continual yearning of the characters; that dreams give an outlet for their anguished minds, and that these dreams in their content represent the conscious struggles the characters have been undergoing; that humor and communication do not play too great a part in tension relief because most Greenian characters are maladjusted in their social relationships; that pity makes man go out in understanding to the whole universe; that love and the performance of duty are the basis for reception of God's grace; and, finally, that pain and joy are reconciled in glory.

²⁶ Graham Greene, The Power and the Glory, p. 86.

CHAPTER VI

A TENSE STYLE

This final chapter will involve a brief study of how tension seems to be manifested in Greene's manner of writing. An examination will be made of the following aspects of Greene's style which seem to indicate the effect of his tense personality: his use of imagery and symbols; his functional use of language; his dramatization of the commonplace; and, finally, his narrative technique.

1. Imagery and symbols-

Greene himself in writing about the fact that every creative writer is given over to an obsession says that the "obsession is perhaps most easily detected in the symbols an author uses"¹. The images in Greene are expressive of conflict, stress and friction. Padre José in answering the call to come to bed by his wife is depicted as follows; "He lifted little pink eyes like those of a pig conscious of the slaughter room"². Bendrix Maurice confronted by the strawberry mark on Symthe, the

¹ Graham Greene, The Lost Childhood and Other Essays, p. 79.

² Graham Greene, The Power and the Glory, p. 33.

atheist outdoor speaker, comments on the effect this mark made upon him.

And I stared at the strawberry mark on his cheek and thought, there is no safety anywhere -- a humpback, a cripple, they all have the trigger that sets love off³.

This "trigger" image reflects the general tension found in Greene. Scobie in The Heart of the Matter on entering Louise's bedroom is described as being "like a spy in foreign territory"⁴. This image suggests the tension found in human relations in the novels.

A selective list of images taken from the three novels will show to what extent the general tension experienced in the face of human living is present in the three books under consideration. In The Heart of the Matter Wilson absorbed poetry "like a drug"⁵; the police in searching the Portuguese ship take a drink to ease down "the bitter pill of search"⁶; the conversation of Louise and Scobie is described as reaching "the quiet centre of the storm"⁷; Father Rank in his laugh is "like a leper proclaiming his misery"⁸.

³ Graham Greene, The End of the Affair, p. 98.

⁴ Graham Greene, The Heart of the Matter, p. 13.

⁵ Ibid., p. 2.

⁶ Ibid., p. 43.

⁷ Ibid., p. 57.

⁸ Ibid., p. 71.

In The End of the Affair, Sarah wants to escape from this life, "this desert if only for half an hour"⁹; at Sarah's death Maurice's memories drop off "like gangrened limbs"¹⁰; as a result of his quarrel with Henry Miles over Sarah, Maurice begins to feel that "the poison was beginning to work in me again"¹¹.

In The Power and the Glory, the lieutenant "stood there like a little dark menacing question mark"¹²; the priest with the mestizo is described as feeling that "uneasiness was lodged in his brain"¹³.

It is remarkable to what extent the idea of tension, whether explicit or implicit, is found in the imagery. The "terror of life" theme and the friction in human relations is conveyed through the figurative language. It is also noticeable to what extent life is regarded as disease, and to what extent antidotes are found in the images.

2. Functional use of language-

Another way that tension is found in Greene's novels is in his functional use of language. J.S. Kennedy comments on Greene's economic awareness in the use of language; he notes

9 Graham Greene, The End of the Affair, p. 120.

10 Ibid., p. 171.

11 Ibid., p. 79.

12 Graham Greene, The Power and the Glory, p. 40.

13 Ibid., p. 108.

that every word in Greene serves a particular function.

Economy of means would seem to be his paramount rule. He does not waste a word; no word slips unsummoned into one of his sentences; every word has an assigned function and performs it precisely under his masterly ordering¹⁴.

It may be said that Greene is not in the slightest inclined towards the use of the decorative word: the circumlocutory expression has no place in his work. His writings because of the peculiar use he makes of language is taut, strained, dramatic. This gives to Greene's writing an economic quality upon which Ezra Pound has thus commented.

What counts and what makes for good writing ... is economic awareness. Graham Greene without any propagandizing, has gauged to a milligramme the exact amount of monetary pressure on each of his characters¹⁵.

Passages like the following suggest this taut quality of Greene's style.

The mosquitoes jabbed at his (the priest's in The Power and the Glory) wrists; they were like little surgical syringes filled with poison and aimed at the blood stream. Sometimes a firefly held its lighted glow close to the half-cast's face, turning it on and off like a torch¹⁶.

Words here are not used decoratively; they are used functionally.

¹⁴ J.S. Kennedy, "Nonpareil Novelist", The Sign, Vol. 28, No. 7, issue of February, 1949, p. 58.

¹⁵ Ezra Pound, quoted in Harry Sylvester, "Graham Greene", The Commonweal, Vol. 33, No. 1, issue of October 25, 1940, p. 11.

¹⁶ Graham Greene, The Power and the Glory, p. 112.

Even such a prosaic sight as a mosquito attack against man has been transmuted by Greene's highly wrought language into one of dramatic tension. Two further examples of Greene's use of words may help to suggest his functional use of language. In The Power and the Glory the fugitive priest's reaction on hearing that Pedro Montez was executed at Concepcion is described thus: "He gave a little yapping cry like a dog's--the absurd shorthand of grief"¹⁷. Such language conjures up a clear-cut image in the reader's mind. And it is to be noted that the impatient author seems to be quarreling with a "man-made" way of externalizing grief. It is when reading such descriptions and comments as these that the reader wonders whether Greene resents the fact of "Man Existential". In the following passage from The End of the Affair the short snappy sentences and the sharp concluding image reveal this same tautness of style: "She (Sarah) doubled up in the doorway and coughed and coughed. Her eyes were red with it. In her coat, she looked like a small animal cornered"¹⁸.

The following passage from The Heart of the Matter further reveals the nervous quality of Greene's style: the effect is once again achieved by such a distinctly purposeful

¹⁷ Graham Greene, The Power and the Glory, p. 78.

¹⁸ Graham Greene, The End of the Affair, p. 37.

use of language.

The phrases went to and fro like shuttlecocks. Someone laughed (it was Fellowes or Wilson) and said, "You're right there", and Doctor Sykes' spectacles made a dot dash dot on the ceiling. He (Scobie) couldn't watch the car move off without disturbing the blackout: he listened to a starter retching and retching, the racing of the engine, and then the slow decline to silence¹⁹.

This is not ornamental writing. The simile "like shuttlecocks", the off-hand parenthetical remark, the colloquial "dot dash dot", the onomatopoeic "retching and retching", all these bring out, as a cumulative effect, the strained quality of the style.

In this passage from The Heart of the Matter the "coiled watch-spring" image captures the tension existing in the relations between Scobie and Louise.

The smart of his wound woke Scobie at two in the morning. He lay coiled like a watch-spring on the outside of the bed, trying to keep his body away from Louise's: wherever they touched -- if it were only a finger lying against a finger -- sweat started²⁰.

Technically, the colon and the dash have been used with the climactic closing "sweat started" to secure the compression and tension of this passage. A staccato rhythm combines with these to give the passage its tense quality.

Evelyn Waugh has written a pointed explanation on how Greene achieves his peculiar effect through such a distinctive use of language.

¹⁹ Graham Greene, The Heart of the Matter, New York, The Viking Press, p. 215. All remaining references are to this edition.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 39.

The style of writing is grim. It is not a specifically literary style at all. The words are functional, devoid of sensuous attraction, of ancestry, and of independent life ... a polyglot could read Mr. Greene, lay him aside, retain a sharp memory of all he said and yet, I think, entirely forget what language he was using. The words are simply mathematical signs for his thought²¹.

Waugh could have added that the words are stamped with the very tension found in their creator.

Greene himself has explained what his attitude and outlook on language is: he says that the principal duty of a writer is to tell the truth.

I don't mean anything flamboyant by the phrase 'telling the truth': I don't mean exposing anything. By truth, I mean accuracy -- it is largely a matter of style. It is my duty to society not to write: 'I stood above a bottomless gulf' or 'going upstairs, I got into a taxi', because these statements are not true. My characters must not go white in the face or tremble like leaves, not because these phrases are clichés, but because they are untrue. This is not only a matter of the artistic conscience but of the social conscience too. We already see the effect of the popular novel on popular thought. Every time a phrase like one of these passes into the mind uncriticized, it muddies the stream of thought²².

It is clear that such a preoccupation with accuracy means the rigid elimination of all non-functional words from a writer's work. Greene the practitioner has obeyed the prescriptions of Greene the theorist.

²¹ Evelyn Waugh, quoted in H.C. Gardner, "Heart of the Matter: Greene's greatest?", America, Vol. 79, No. 15, issue of July 17, 1948, p. 351.

²² Graham Greene, Why Do I Write, quoted in K. Allott and M. Farris, The Art of Graham Greene, p. 32.

It has been shown in this discussion on Greene's use of language that economic awareness is a distinguishing characteristic of his style, that words are not used decoratively but functionally, that as a result, the style has a certain nervous, strained quality about it.

3. Dramatizing the commonplace-

Greene the master craftsman has perfected the art of dramatizing the commonplace. To a considerable extent this helps to explain why the reader is caught in the suspense of the novels. That Greene seemingly deliberately tried to achieve this effect is suggested in his praise of J. Buchan as being "the first to realize the enormous dramatic value of adventure in familiar surroundings"²³. The following passage from The Power and the Glory in which a fight between a man and a dog over a piece of meat becomes electric in tension illustrates Greene's ability to dramatize the commonplace.

The priest put out his hand towards the bone and the flies buzzed upwards; the animal became silent, watching. "There, there", the priest said cajolingly; he made little enticing movements in the air and the animal stared back. Then the priest turned and moved away as if he were abandoning the bone; he droned gently to himself a phrase from the Mass, elaborately paying no attention. Then he switched quickly around again: it hadn't worked: the bitch watched him, screwing round her neck to follow his ingenious movements²⁴.

²³ L. Bogan, "Good Beyond Evil", New Republic, Vol. 125, issue of December 10, 1951, p. 29.

How is the dramatic effect achieved in this passage to be explained? Clearly, the result is achieved at least partially by the expert placing of details and words. And, of course, the very desperation of the priest's situation -- that he should be in a contest for survival with a mongrel bitch over a piece of meat -- in itself creates a dramatic effect.

Greene has even the magic ability to make a "cockroach" fight take on a dramatic quality. In The Heart of the Matter after the old Downhamians' quarrel over the rules of their new pastime, Wilson is described leaving Harris' room his heart beating "with rage and the hot night"²⁵. And it must be confessed that this reader also found himself emotionally upset after the quarrel over a dead cockroach. Such is Greene's power!

Greene's dramatic ability is further seen in his masterful handling of climax. The scene in The Power and the Glory in which the "Governor's cousin", the Chief of Police, and the beggar drink the last drops of the priest's precious wine, is one which touches the reader with its dramatic irony. And then the climactic remark of the "Governor's cousin" to the priest, "Why, man, you're crying"²⁶ hits the reader with great emotional impact, and gives him a new insight into the priest's character.

²⁵ Graham Greene, The Heart of the Matter, p. 75.

²⁶ Graham Greene, The Power and the Glory, p. 145.

The examples given suggest Greene's ability to dramatize the commonplace and to elicit the greatest possible emotional reactions by his skilful placing of climactic words.

4. Narrative technique-

Greene is unquestionably a master story-teller. Is it possible to explain how he creates the suspenseful atmosphere which pervades his novels? The typical Greenian plot offers some solution to explain his success. The plot ingredients are those of pursuit, escape and betrayal. In The Power and the Glory, these elements are more to the "fore" than in the other novels under discussion. The lieutenant's "desire to catch the sleek respected guest of the first communion party"²⁷ gives the plot its momentum. From the very beginning of this novel, the reader is introduced into a world of exterior tension -- the priest with the Dentist Tench yearning to escape to Vera Cruz; the police lieutenant on the trail of the priest at the Fellows' plantation; the priest's constant prayer that he be caught soon; his narrow escape from the lieutenant during his short stay with Maria and Brigitta; his capture and temporary escape from prison, and finally, his betrayal by the

²⁷ Graham Greene, The Power and the Glory, p. 23.

half-caste and his reluctant martyrdom. This externalization of the pursuit, escape, betrayal elements of the plot gives to this novel an atmosphere of outward tension. Need it be said that an added dimension is given to the pursuit theme by the continued activity of The Hound of Heaven in His chase after the priest's soul?

Even in The Heart of the Matter and The End of the Affair, these pursuit, escape, betrayal elements in the story are still present, but they are under the surface, subdued. There is an "underground" activity in both novels. Wilson spies on Scobie in The Heart of the Matter; Parkis spies on Sarah in The End of the Affair. But these detective and spying elements are but fossilized remains of the conventional thriller -- the pursuit, escape, and betrayal have been raised to a new level in these novels -- that of the soul in its relationship with its God.

H. Reed has written on what Greene has done to the conventional thriller.

His (Greene's) approach to the novel is like that of no novelist in English before him, though he is not without his successors. It is as if he had taken the bones of the conventional thriller, clothed them with life and character, and elevated them to a symbolic purpose; he has in fact seen what is psychologically archetypal in such popular literary themes as that of the hunted man and has dramatised them with all the vigour and consciousness of serious art²⁸.

²⁸ H. Reed, The Novel Since 1939, p. 16.

Besides the use of these pursuit, escape, and betrayal themes in his novels, what are some of the other narrative techniques employed by Greene which create tension in his work? Greene's use of the shifting "camera eye" is one of these techniques. Evelyn Waugh has commented on Greene's use of the cinematographic medium.

It is as though, out of an infinite length of film, sequences had been cut ... the writer has become director and producer. Indeed the affinity to the film is everywhere apparent²⁹.

The best example of Greene's use of the cinematographic technique is found in the very first pages of The Heart of the Matter. The "camera eye" rapidly moves from Wilson in his loneliness on the hotel balcony, focusses on Scobie, follows him to his office, ranges round his room picking out the handcuffs on the wall, the broken rosary in the drawer, and other significant details³⁰.

In The Power and the Glory it is the "camera eye" that catches Mr. Tench searching in the blazing sun for his ether cylinder, then focusses on the vultures on the roof, then switches back to Mr. Tench to catch him in the act of wrenching up a piece of wood, then follows a vulture in its flight

²⁹ Evelyn Waugh, quoted in "What Price Pity", Time Magazine, Vol. 52, issue of August 9, 1948, p. 85.

³⁰ Graham Greene, The Heart of the Matter, p. 3-8.

over the bust of an ex-Mexican president, over two stills which sold mineral water, towards the river and the sea³¹. It cannot be doubted that the swift movement of the "camera eye" is a natural medium of expression for the tense Mr. Greene.

Another narrative technique employed by Greene is the interior monologue. It is through this device that Greene's characters frequently are portrayed -- and invariably it must be said the interior monologue reveals a mind divided against itself. An example of Greene's use of this narrative technique is found in The Heart of the Matter when Scobie learns too late that he could have been the new Commissioner after all.

He thought: So all this need not have happened. If Louise had stayed, I should never have loved Helen: I would never have been black-mailed by Jusef, never have committed the act of despair³².

In this passage the interior monologue is employed as a form of "flashback".

A further example of Greene's use of the interior monologue technique is found in The Power and the Glory -- the scene is the one in which the fugitive priest is conscience-

³¹ Graham Greene, The Power and the Glory, p. 1.

³² Graham Greene, The Heart of the Matter, p. 253.

stricken after his abandoning the Indian woman with her dead child to the wildness of the Mexican elements.

He thought: I shouldn't have left her alone like that. God forgive me. I have no responsibility: what can you expect of a whisky priest? and he struggled to his feet and began to climb back towards the plateau. He was tormented by ideas: it wasn't only the woman: he was responsible for the American as well: the two faces -- his own and the gunman's -- were hanging together on the police station wall, as if they were brothers in a family portrait gallery³³.

Greene has here used the interior monologue technique to foreshadow the priest's final conversion: his evident humility will win for the priest the grace of final repentance.

It may be added here that because of his use of the diary in The Heart of the Matter and the Journal in The End of Affair, Greene has had to rely less on the interior monologue technique to reveal the inner conflict the characters undergo in these two novels. To conclude, it has been shown that Greene employs the interior monologue technique to concretize the "divided mind" condition of the characters in his novels.

The dialogue in a Greenian novel also serves to build up the suspenseful atmosphere found in his work. During a conversation in his novels, it seems as though the characters have put a premium on the number of words they will employ.

³³ Graham Greene, The Power and the Glory, p. 203.

Dialogue in his novels may accurately be described as "bared". The following conversation taken from The Heart of the Matter between Mrs. Rolt, the Sanitary Inspector Fellowes, Dr. Sykes, and Scobie, will suggest this "stripped" quality of Greenian dialogue. Mrs. Rolt has just criticized the group for their "beastly talk" on the subject of suicide.

"Are you a Catholic, Mrs. Rolt?" Fellowes asked. "Of course they take very strong views."
"No, I'm not a Catholic."
"But they do, don't they, Scobie?"
"We are taught," Scobie said, "that it's the unforgivable sin."
"That you'll go to hell?"
"To hell."
"But do you really, seriously, Major Scobie," Dr. Sykes asked, "believe in hell?"
"Oh, yes, I do."
"In flames and torment?"
"Perhaps not quite that. They tell us that it may be a permanent sense of loss."
"That sort of hell wouldn't worry me," Fellowes said.
"Perhaps you've never lost anything of importance," Scobie said.³⁴

The rapid transition from speaker to speaker is clear. The remarks come "machine-gun" like. The theme of the conversation is sufficient to hold the reader's interest. And, then, Scobie's final remark comes as a fitting climax with another typical Greenian insight. It is to be noted that even in these brief interchanges Greene has faithfully and consistently portrayed the characters as they have appeared in the rest of the novel.

³⁴ Graham Greene, The Heart of the Matter, p. 212-213.

To conclude this discussion on tension as it is found in Greene's narrative technique, an examination will be made of the typical Greenian sentence structure. It is remarkable with what frequency Greene employs the following devices: the short sentence, the interrogatory sentence, the parenthetical remark, the colon, suspension marks, and the dash. Undoubtedly, the use of these devices gives a rapidity and nervousness to his style.

This paragraph from The Heart of the Matter will suggest how Greene employs these devices in his sentence structure. Louise has finally succeeded in getting Scobie to approach the Communion Table with her - in his state of mortal sin.

"We'll have to hurry". He felt as though he were being urged by a kindly and remorseless gaoler to dress for execution. Yet he still put off the saving lie: there was always the possibility of a miracle. Louise gave a final dab of powder (but the powder caked as it touched the skin) and said, "We'll be off now". Was there the faintest note of triumph in her voice? Years and years ago, in the other life of childhood, someone with his name Henry Scobie had acted in the school play, had acted Hotspur. He had been chosen for his seniority and his physique, but everyone said that it had been a good performance. Now had he to act again -- surely it was as easy as the simpler verbal lie?³⁵

A typical Greenian "flashback" accompanies these technical devices in this paragraph: Scobie's childhood becomes

³⁵ Graham Greene, The Heart of the Matter, p. 233.

intimately associated with the present scene.

The following passage from The Power and the Glory will further illuminate Greene's typical employment of the sentence. The fugitive priest has just told the "pious" woman in the prison cell that he is a "whisky priest".

The woman's voice said pleadingly, "A little drink, father ... it's not so important". He wondered why she was here -- probably for having a holy picture in her house. She had the tiresome intense note of a pious woman. They were extraordinarily foolish over pictures. Why not burn them? One didn't need a picture ... He said sternly, "Oh, I am not only a drunkard". He had always been worried by the fate of pious women: as much as politicians, they fed on illusion: he was frightened for them. They came to death so often in a state of invincible complacency, full of uncharity. It was one's duty, if one could, to rob them of their sentimental notions of what was good ... He said in hard accents, "I have a child"³⁶.

The "stream of consciousness" technique, the rapid transition between ideas, and the climactic ending, are employed with the typical technical features of the Greenian sentence to give the passage its heightened quality.

The two passages examined suggest accurately the construction of the typical Greene sentence. His frequent use of the short whiplash sentence, the off-hand parenthetical remark, the colon in its weak, sliding interruption of the general sentence movement, the dash and suspension marks with

³⁶ Graham Greene, The Power and the Glory, p. 164.

their rapid transitional effect between ideas, and finally, the interrogatory and climactic sentences with their immediate challenge to reader attention -- all these give a strained, taut quality to the style of writing.

In this chapter on tension in Greene's style, it has been shown - that Greene's images are expressive of friction and conflict; that the "terror of life" and "divided mind" themes are conveyed through the imagery; that disease and antidotes play an important rôle in his figurative language; that he makes a functional use of language, economic awareness being the key characteristic of his diction; that he has no patience with ornamental writing as such; that he has a masterly ability to dramatize the commonplace; that the characteristic elements in his plot structure are the pursuit, escape, betrayal themes; that the "camera eye" serves well his restless temperament; that the use of interior monologue reveals the "divided mind" condition of his characters; that the dialogue in the novels is essentially "bared" and "shorn"; and, finally, that the sentence structure equally reveals through the technical devices Greene employs the general heightened, strained, taut quality of his style.

SUMMARY & CONCLUSION

The tension in Graham Greene's fiction is explainable in terms of the man's personality and in terms of the tense age in which he lives. Greene's unhappy childhood is of paramount importance in coming to any understanding of the tension found in his work. His conversion to Roman Catholicism has sharpened the conflict between psychology and religion in his novels.

Greene's general outlook on reality explains the particular tone and attitudes expressed in his fiction. For him, original sin has so affected man that evil and violence hold a particular fascination for man the fallen creature. In his view of "perfect evil" Greene is dangerously close to a Manichaeian position.

The basic tension in Greene is a terror before the fact of human living. Greene is hypersensitive to the contingent state of man in a world characterized by a cyclical, unending pattern. This is his natural, spontaneous reaction to life, conditioned by his own peculiar temperament. It has been Greene's problem to reconcile this reaction before human life with his Catholic faith. Life in the novels is described as being interminable, as altering man for the worse, as destroying false complacencies, as evasion and escape, as

a source of misery and unhappiness, as a draining routine. It is death that man is naturally resigned to.

Greene is convinced that the "divided mind" is a distinguishing characteristic of a Christian civilization. This "divided mind" theme is experienced by the characters in their ambivalence, in their oppressive sense of responsibility and guilt. To such lengths do responsibility and guilt carry man that they even make him will his own damnation to save others. It is in such viewpoints as these that Greene expresses ideas that are dangerous in their subtlety.

Man the social being experiences tension in his relations with others. The origin of these tensions is traced to a discontented childhood. One of the key ideas expressed in Greene's novels that explains the origin of tension among adults is found in his belief that man is essentially alone and that no one really understands his neighbor. The tension in the adult world is best seen in the sex relationship, the marital union (or disunion), and in the effects of language on social intercourse. An added dimension is given to Greene's novels in the tension existing between God and men. God's presence in the novels has become almost physical. In His pursuit of man through grace, He becomes the cause of some of the most severe conflicts experienced by the pursued soul.

Drink, sex, escape and dreams are different ways that bring temporary relief to man from the tensions he experiences. Carnal love has found a place in the wider scheme of divine love.

But it is in the emotions of pity and love, accompanied by a performance of duty, that Greene's characters merit grace and eventual glory.

It is a Greenian viewpoint that his characters must go through hell before they are prepared for the peace of heaven. With him the sinner is at the very heart of Christianity. And, in fact, Greene's cult of the sanctified sinner leaves him open to a certain amount of legitimate criticism as to whether the final conversions of his heroes satisfy the requirements of probability.

Stylistically, this same revulsion to life and the frictions in human relationships is contained in the imagery of the novels. The functional use of language and the dramatizing of the commonplace are two meritorious qualities in Greene's style that may have their origin in the natural tenseness of the man.

To conclude, Greene's viewpoint is colored by the characteristically adult view of pessimism. Hope is held out to man in that he is continually pursued by a grace that will be crowned into an everlasting glory.

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AN ABSTRACT OF

TENSION IN GRAHAM GREENE

The tensions of the twentieth century and his own peculiar temperamental view of life have conditioned the writings of Graham Greene. From a biographical standpoint, the two facts that are vital to an understanding of the man are his unhappy childhood and his conversion to Roman Catholicism.

Greene's outlook on the world of reality is determined essentially by what he thinks original sin has done to man. He believes that evil has a certain fascination for men. In fact, he even speaks of such a thing as "perfect evil".

As for the source of tension in his work it is as basic as this -- a terror in the face of having to live. Greene is hypersensitive to the painful conditions of contingent man in a world of imperfection. Life in the novels is described as being interminable, as altering man for the worse, as destroying false complacencies, as evasion and escape, as a source of misery and unhappiness, as a draining routine.

Greene believes that the "divided mind" is what differentiates a Christian civilization from a pagan one. This "divided mind" theme is manifested in his novels in the ambivalence experienced by the characters and by the oppressive sense of responsibility and guilt they feel. The characters feel such a sense of responsibility that they are even willing

to risk their own damnation in order to save others. As for the guilt experienced by the characters, it not only results from moral offence but also arises from friction in social relations.

Human relations are productive of tensions among Greene's characters. Greene has a psychoanalytic interest in childhood as the breeding ground for adult tensions. By a strange inversion in his novels, adults experience uneasiness in the company of children. Man's essential "aloneness" makes him unknowable even to his neighbor; misunderstanding and friction frequently result because of this. Carnal love in Greene's work is more and more finding a place in the wider scheme of divine love. Greene has a semanticist's interest in the effect of language in human relationships: frequently it becomes a source of tension. The nature versus grace theme of these novels has added an extra dimension to the conflict the characters undergo.

Sex, drink, evasion and dreams are shown as bringing but temporary relief to man's tensions. It is in love and performance of duty that man will obtain the grace which leads to glory.

Stylistically, tension seems manifest in Greene in his use of imagery, in his functional use of language, in his dramatization of the commonplace, and in his narrative technique.