A THESIS ON GRAHAM GREENE

MASTER IN THE FICTIONAL STUDY OF EVIL

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this thesis, Graham Greene Master in the Fictional Study of Evil, is to uphold that Mr. Greene ranks with the first of contemporary novelists, and that his chief aim in fiction writing is, to unmask and to heal contemporary evil.

With the aid of data acquired through prolonged research and consultation, and on the support of due documentation from outstanding literary reviews, the above statement will be developed under six headings: life experiences, religion in fiction, technique of writing, interpretation of his world, principal works, and attitude to evil.

By accumulating data on Mr. Greene's work, and by signalling his status as artist and as philosopher, this study hopes to show that the Catholic novel is actually in the van of contemporary fiction, and that it possesses a unique power of intellectual and moral quickening.

The ultimate purpose of this study is to stimulate interest in the contemporary Catholic novel, and thus, to list its services with the Church in her stand against demoralizing literature.

CHAPTER I

BIOGRAPHY

Outstanding among the many Catholic litterateurs who have taken up the challenge of analysing contemporary evils and suggesting wholesome life principles, is Graham Greene.

He was born October 2, 1904, at Berkhamstead, Hertfordshire, of Charles Henry Greene and Marion Raymond Greene. One of Graham's brothers is a well known surgeon and mountain climber, another, a foreign correspondent. Graham is also a cousin of the eminent writer, Louis Robert Stevenson. He resembles Stevenson in several traits--his lure of the road and his gift for writing. His father, the nephew of Sir W. Graham Greene, K.C.B., permanent secretary of the Admiralty during the greater part of World War I, was headmaster at Berkhamstead school, the place of Graham's elementary training. His early years do not appear to have been happy, for a biographical sketch in Saturday Review of Literature states that:

> To Graham Greene at thirteen, Good and Evil were cleft by the green baize door which opened from home onto hated Berkhamstead school, where his father was headmaster.... At seventeen, bored, he taunted death by occasionally firing a revolver into his temple--presumably unaware that the sporting-spun chamber's lone bullet was blank[1].

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1 Henry Morton Robinson, A God Smitten Man, Heart of the Matter Reviewed by Morton Robinson, in Saturday Review of Literature, New York, vol. 31, nº 28, July 10, 1948, p. 8.

He continued his education at Balliol College and Oxford. While at Balliol he contributed prose, fantasies and verse to the Saturday Westminster, which were edited by Naomi Royde-Smith. At Oxford he edited The Oxford Outlook, founded by Beverly Nichols, and had his verse published in Oxford Poetry. His first publication was a volume of verse called Babbling April, 1925.

After leaving Oxford, young Greene gave vent to his inborn love of the country road. He spent many enjoyable lazy weeks hiking through the British Isles. With a friend he barrel-organed through Hertfordshire, enjoying the relaxation and the inspiration of the English countryside. Some time later, during a spell of political agitation when de Valera was causing trouble to England, Greene walked from Dublin to Waterford to get first-hand information and to enjoy the tang of a tense situation. To his travelling experiences may be added his visits to America, and his temporary residence in Mexico. While on the staff of the British-American Tobacco Company he was named for a trip to China, but the orders were countermanded, much to his regret. In the thirties he travelled through Sweden, and later, through Africa. Very recently he has sailed from England

on a cruise to the Near East; he has visited Athens, Troy, Delos and the ruins of Knosso's in Crete.

Mr. Greene's travelling experiences have formed the back drop for many of his subsequent works: The Man Within with its beautiful descriptions of the English country and its vagabond life of smugglers, distinctly points to boyhood tramps through England. England Made Me has a Swedish setting, Journey Without Maps reports a dark continental walk from Sierre Leone through Liberian forests to the coast of Africa. His confidential war mission in West Africa provided the jungle, heat-drenched atmosphere for The Heart of the Matter. His experiences in Mexico, doubtlessly inspired and furnished local colouring for The Power and the Glory.

He was married to Vivien Dayrell-Browning in 1927, and they have a son and daughter.

Subsequently he has had many valuable experiences for the preparation of a novelist's career: from 1926 to 1930 he was sub-editor of the London Times; 1935 to 1939 film critic for the Spectator; 1941 to 1944 on staff of Department of Foreign Office; 1942 to 1943 charged with special duties in Africa. He is presently director of London Publishers, Eyre and Spottiswoode, but submits his own publications to Heinemann.

These constitute some of the exterior events and circumstances that have fashioned the mind and field of upon which he has drawn for his writings. His inner life, however, is of greater importance and interest because it has infused a deep spiritual implication into all his work.

As a result of his quest for truth he was converted to Catholicism at the age of twenty-two. Religion, as will be seen in the study of his books and newspaper articles, has always been a subject of much preoccupation with him. Moreover, he is deeply concerned with people's psychological and moral complexes. Material factors are not of interest to him; he is always concerned with the "heart of the matter", as he says, i.e., the relation of man's existence to his eternal destiny.

Friends describe Mr. Greene as tall and spare. He has bleak, blue eyes, greying hair, and a worn, serious face that doesn't resemble any one else's. In his early years Mr. Greene was described as complex, shy, sardonic, sensitive, misanthropic, disdainful of the common man, who he believed should strive to become uncommon, unaverage, unsensual. But more than anything else, Mr. Greene is profoundly Christian, and his later life has tempered his acerbity to a genial friendliness.

Robert Ostermann, a fellow veteran of World War II, relates an interview with him in 1948. He had had considerable difficulty in making an appointment with Mr. Greene at his suite near St. James Park, in London -- so much so, that he had felt depressed and ashamed at ever having begun to look for him. It seemed, for a time, as though his efforts were just another "run-around for a man whose reputation had become too great". Mr. Greene, at that time was extremely busy. He explained that he and Basil Dean were writing a play, and that they were facing a deadline, working night and day in order to get the play off to New York the following week. When Robert Ostermann finally did have a five-hour interview with him, he found him genial and profoundly Christian. He says: "I would remember this night in terms of gentleness and courtesy and a spontaneous Christian regard. Even in those centuries which we like to call the ages of faith, it must have been like a miracle to find Christianity at work in even one human soul". Further bringing out Greene's characteristics, he says, the latter has a way of making you feel at home with him in an instant by comfortably hooking his leg onto his chair and engaging in affable conversation. Of interest in the literary world, Mr. Greene

finds: Yeats, Kafka, and the two Americans, Hemingway and Faulkner.

However, Mr. Ostermann continues, Greene's true world of interest is that of life:

> ...."where man is restless and unhappy for heaven, where the greatest reality he knows is the hell he makes for himself, the hell he anticipates". These are the things that count with him; the casual, the superficial, the conversational all fade into unimportance in his world of religious interests, his Catholic world. "....love and fear of God, sin and redemption, and the ruined world into which Christ came. They are our realities too, armed as we are with the blood of God against the seductiveness of earth, its talons, the realities with which we must grapple if Christianity isn't to be meaningless.
>
> We are dust, moistened into slime, quickened by God's breath, and ever since Eve we have tended to return to that primeval guilt: The criminal slipping back to the scene of his crime. We can't evade this without denying the cross and our salvation."[2]

Such deep, religious conversation is unusual in the mouth of a secular, modern, man of letters; it goes to prove that with Mr. Greene, religion is not merely material for novel writing, but the very constitution of his fibre and being.

Another characteristic of Mr. Greene is an unselfish disinterestedness in contributing to the world of letters.

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2 Robert Ostermann, An Interview With Graham Greene, in The Catholic World, New York, vol. 170, nº 1019, February 1950, p. 356.

He had intended to write a complete biography of his cousin, Robert Louis Stevenson, but upon hearing that an American Author was preparing one, he humbly decided to wait and see if the latter would make a complete study of it; if so, he was willing to withdraw his claim to that honour. He is both merchant of talents, and the artist, but definitely no snob.

One day in 1947, when in New York City, a charged-water party for famous British authors was being held, Mr. Greene quietly slipped into the gathering. He had come on a fortnight's business as a representative of the British publishing house of Eyre and Spottiswoode. The reporter of the New York Times, welcomed the opportunity of a talk with this well known, highly respected author. He described him as looking like a young, forty-year-old, dispassionate Scotland Yardman. In talking about his most common type of book, the thriller, Mr. Greene affirmed that his chief concern in writing is not what happens to the Yardman or any one, it's character; and because in the thriller there is just barely enough character to carry the story along, he prefers his The Heart of the Matter, a more serious study, and he thinks it's good. On that occasion, also, in suggesting the writing of a hilarious book, the point was

made clear that Mr. Greene is not a humorist nor a dabbler in frivolities. The reporter defined him as "all work no play".

Mr. Greene's biography proves that his life philosophy is most profoundly religious.

Principal Works.

The Man Within, 1929; The Name of Action, 1930; Rumour at Nightfall, 1932; Stamboul Train (in America: Orient Express) 1932; It's a Battlefield, 1934; The Bear Fell Free, 1935; England Made Me (non-fiction) 1935; The Basement Room (Short Stories) 1936; Journey Without Maps (non-fiction) 1936; A Gun For Sale (in America: This Gun For Hire) 1936; Brighton Rock, 1938; The Lawless Roads: A Mexican Journey (in America: Another Mexico) 1939; The Confidential Agent, 1939; The Power and the Glory (U. S. title: The Labyrinthine Ways) 1940; Dramatists, 1942; The Ministry of Fear, 1943; Nineteen Stories, 1947; The Heart of the Matter, 1948; The Third Man, 1949.

CHAPTER II

CATHOLIC PHILOSOPHY IN FICTION

Mr. Greene, an artist and a Catholic philosopher, has devised a new form of fiction for the study of his contemporary world. It ranks in technical excellence, with the best contemporary realists, Somerset Maugham and Aldous Huxley, but it surpasses any of their work in spiritual insight. Mr. Greene writes as a Catholic, i.e., he interprets life in terms of Catholic teaching and follows up the responsibilities of life to their eternal destiny. Since man is a moral being, Mr. Greene weighs his actions in the balance of a rational moral being. He challenges our materialistic world whose only recognized values are utilitarian, pragmatic, and biologic. He gives a new significance to its uneasiness, distrust, and frustration by stressing the spiritual goal of all human endeavour and bringing into fiction a new code of life-norms. He reveals a supernatural world over and above the natural, and thus lifts the Catholic novel into spheres of spiritual significance that the realistic can never hope to attain. Mr. Greene has found the means of conveying religion through the medium of fiction.

He interprets life in the light of its divine origin, and sees in every act and incident a channel of grace linking that life to its Creator, or an abyss leading it to perdition.

In holding up man's biologic emotions and acts to the censure and sanction of an all merciful and all just Lawgiver, he makes the novel an exceptionally powerful means of sounding and re-integrating moral consciousness. In Brighton Rock, Rose, the little waitress, is irresistibly drawn towards Pinkie, the gangster, but although lured on by her biologic attraction she is withheld by the saving power of her resisting conscience. The play of grace in her life renders her infinitely more dramatic than would be a mere mousy little girl falling to a suitor's advances without any qualms of conscience. Mr. Greene is not afraid to affirm, in the face of our anti-religious world, that a complete character must have a moral basis. Man must not be denied the greatest of all natural gifts, his free choice, his freedom of will. It is in the exercise of his free will that he provides the essence of drama; his free will may be either a burden, or a priceless privilege, and is able to strike from his earthly body a divine fire that makes him infinitely capable of noble emotion, and infinitely great in capacity for suffering. "Noblesse oblige", and in the light of their divine nature, Greene's characters become tensely dramatic in paying the price of this great privilege. According to the acceptance or the abuse of their

responsibilities they either grow to the full stature of heirs to Heaven, or degenerate into reprobates of Hell.

Mr. Greene has proved that even a fictional character can be given coherence and dignity only when treated in the capacity of a child of God. This view shows how sin, like slush and slime may engulf his soul at every fall; it shows also that by overcoming sin he is capable of good, even sanctity. He can struggle with his passions and become their victor, or he can fall to their tyranny and become their slave. As a child of God he is capable of redemption and heroic reaction. To the moral or God-fearing character, sin constitutes a form of suffering, a form of spiritual agony, but at the same time, a form of spiritual growth. The sinner may retrieve himself by having recourse to prayer, penance and sacrifice, i.e., he may regain his moral status; he need not remain grovelling in the pit of disgrace. This is one feature that escapes the realist. He may signal or bewail moral ills, but he cannot point out a remedy for them. Mr. Greene's Major Scobie is unquestionably dramatic, when torn between natural and moral forces, his damnable sense of pity for the young widow withstands the cries of his conscience against adultery. The motivating of his acts through a supernatural force gives him coherence and dignity.

Physical suffering and malaise, too, are transmuted by Mr. Greene's spiritual motivation into a new vein of invaluable novelistic material. He draws the elements of human suffering from their depths and exposes them to the light of spiritual significance. By exploring this new vein he drives a deep shaft into the heart of humanity, and sounds its limitless capacity for sorrow, strife, and pain, and brings to the surface a healing balm, the bitter-sweet heritage leagued to man by his dying Redeemer. This healing-balm of suffering puts a meaning into man's toils, and a purpose into his endeavours. It ministers to the anguish of his soul bleeding under the strokes of existence; brings to it solace, hope, and spiritual grandeur, and makes it worthy of an eternal reward.

Another point of vital importance in the realm of the novelist is that of sex. Greene treats of sex as the hub of human relationships, because of its responsibility for the continuation and the survival of the human race, and not because of its physical gratification. His characters with but a few exceptions, have an open revulsion for the flesh. Mr. Greene implies the right use and acceptance of the responsibilities of sex. He emphasizes the futility and the culpability of making the sexual relationship an end in itself.

He presents the moral anguish of conscience protesting against the pollution of its life sources. Andrews in The Man Within, is disgusted with himself and hates the woman who dragged him into sin. Mr. Greene's treatment of sex conveys that man, a moral being, will either discharge his function of custodian of life, or in betraying it, pay the cost.

Marriage, divorce, and infidelity our novelist faces, not in the light of romance but in the light of responsibility towards the human race. He conveys, that unless marriage has the human race in view, it ends in boredom and disaster. Anthony and Kate Farrant in England Made Me, by their wasteful lives illustrate Mr. Greene's views on marriage. He flogs the cynical, neo-pagan attitude towards planned parenthood. His wholesome astringent view on marriage is definitely in conflict with the present-day carnal approach, and is one of the chief sources of controversy with his readers. It is indeed a chafing remedy applied to the sorest social bruise of our times. The re-education to the sacredness of marriage is one of our dying civilization's most urgent needs. Greene's novels are very widely read, and penetrate the masses with this healing gall; they probe minds and consciences, that purely dogmatic books could never attain.

It required courage and moral potentiality on the part of Mr. Greene to hold his own against the storm of controversy raised by introducing religion into fiction. His own cynical reply to an accusation in regard to The Heart of the Matter will reveal one of his difficulties:

> I was a Catholic before beginning to write novels, and no one seemed to care particularly.... The critics, especially the Catholic ones are a little confused.

Then he proceeded to tell a story about The Tablet, a British weekly Catholic review, which had commissioned a moral theologian to criticize the novel. The review had been hard and unsparing but had given rise to a very interesting phenomenon; it had unleashed a shower of comment from clergy and laymen, defending the novel, and bringing into evidence the difficulties that a novelist actually encounters. Again Mr. Greene's own words will show the nature of the storms he has had to weather:

> It's quite impossible that a novelist ought to be acquainted with moral theology; I'll concede that he ought to know a decent amount of general theology. But he isn't writing a moral treatise, that isn't his purpose. If it were he wouldn't write a novel, and he wouldn't be a novelist. But he is a novelist. That's what most critics forget. They are enthusiastic about the faith but they mix the jobs too easily.
>
> Ethics and other subjects like it, are concerned with what ought to be, and the only material

> the novelist has is what is human material. What he sees in it, how deeply de sees are something else again; you can't prescribe for them without imitating Moscow"[1].

Credit is due Mr. Greene for having overcome the counteraction of critics, and made it possible to communicate his religious message to his readers through fiction. Harry Sylvester speaks of him as "the first major English novelist who is a Catholic". Although Mr. Sylvester's statement may be gainsaid, the fact nevertheless remains that no contemporary English novelist combines such great talent with such outspoken Catholic point of view.

Having established that Mr. Greene writes as a Catholic, that is, he treats of Catholic themes in the light of Catholic philosophy, and is himself a member of the Church, we will next consider his status as a novelist.

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1 Robert Ostermann, An Interview With Graham Greene, in The Catholic World, vol. 170, nº 1019, February 1950, p. 356.

CHAPTER III

WRITING TECHNIQUE

Mr. Greene is an unusually frank story teller, who sets a swift narrative pace, without apologizing to his reader for culling here and there, thoughts and facts for his story. Few surpass him as a discerner of spiritual subtleties. With an ingenious use of cinema technique, he picks up his characters at random, as it were, yet, each shot or picture reveals not only what he sees but how it mingles with the thoughts ticking through these characters' minds. Mr. Greene has an inborn tuition for cutting and timing. Although there is a danger in this method of breaking his subject and people into their minute component parts and tickings of thought, and a tendency towards a too easy inducement to the creation of character, the fact remains that Mr. Greene's integrity as a writer, his deep humanity, his subtle moral sense and his supple, surprising intuition of human character, constitute a strong framework for story telling with deep philosophic implications.

His style of writing is grim and determined, pursuing its aims without stopping at literary conventionalities, or apologizing for making heavy demands on his readers' attention. His words, functional, devoid of sensuous appeal, are used as mathematic symbols for the conveyance of thought. Again, Mr.

Greene makes no apology to his reader for not establishing any friendly relation with him, and just carrying him along in a gust of thought and picture. There is no observer within the structure of the story, explaining, or accounting for fads or emotions. The reader must move determinedly on to keep apace with the author. He must be on the alert to extract from the swift movement of events the sequence of thought. As from an infinite length of film strip, from the camera's eye, a sequence of sound deduction is cut. But only the reader who is grimly determined to follow Mr. Greene, will fathom the depths of his philosophical implications. This may be illustrated by The Power And The Glory. For the underaverage reader it is but the story of a man hunt; for the average reader, it is a fine study of satire on Liberalism trying to effect a new order by banning the Church; but only the closest reader sees the deep down implication of the indefectibility of the Church.

Mr. Greene uses the objective method of keeping himself out of the picture, but his ingenuity and versatility make his presence felt as we cut through and examine the heart of life. His pictures are graphic and uncanny; they are intensified as by a powerful microscopic procedure.

No stone remains unturned, no dark corner overlooked; slums, private chambers, public thoroughfares, churches, business apartments, gangster dens, all unfold their secrets to his probing search.

Depicting and registering thought is a most clever device with Mr. Greene. By means of alternating layers or pictures of places, dialogue, action and interior monologue, he probes into the quick of life and explores its basic malaise in clinic depth and compassion. This device applied to the study of life with the discernment of a brilliant intellect, imparts to his work an inner depth and an unmistakable basic philosophy.

He is a master of suspense and reality. His Ministry of Fear is a good example of how certain situations that would not seem plausible in life are made to appear so, through process of fiction. His mystery stories more than any other, reveal his skill in bringing about the complete withholding of the reader's powers of disbelief. Through the use of suspenses, carefully spaced and planned, or through deft insertion of small, homely, realistic details, he brings the unreal down to earth, dispels the reader's incredulity and wins his wholehearted acceptance, to a point of identifying himself with the man who is fleeing from fear

in a fantastic world. The reader first sees the hero, Arthur Rowe, at a fete in Bloomsbury Square, which is described so naturally and so graphically as to appear almost commonplace. The people say platitudes, that other authors would avoid in the interest of originality, but which Mr. Greene employs to make his fantastical world appear real and familiar. In this humble little affair given for the support of "Free Mothers", the Nazi ring has laid its snares and schemes. Arthur is drawn irresistibly by the blare of the band and the "knock-knock" of wooden balls against cocoanuts. In one of the features of the fete, which is to guess the weight of a cake--a rarity in war time, the hero, by mistake, is given the exact weight and becomes involved in a series of humorously strange and compelling events. He sinks deeper and deeper into a gulf of sinister mystery and suspense until the truth is eventually revealed. He flies from place to place, like a haunted shadow, foiling fear. After escaping death from the explosion of a bomb which he unknowingly had carried in a suitcase, he is confined in a mental hospital. There he tastes to the full the "ministry of fear". The suspense is so carefully planned, and the events, which in the hands of a

less skillful writer would appear annoyingly childish, take on an intense reality, under the spell of Mr. Greene's artistic touch. The keynote to this touch of realism in entirely fantastic situations, is the deft placing of a homely detail here and there, and the occasional glimpse into the hero's consciousness. By some irresistible charm, the reader gives himself over to the situation wholeheartedly; he permits himself to be enthralled in the suspense, and follows every fantastical event, until the last complication of the mystery is solved. Mr. Greene is one of the few writers able to command the attention of the present-day reading public whose neurotic tendency seems to be to avoid all mental strain. This ability to command attention, to hold in suspense, and to touch with realism, adds another craft to Mr. Greene's already long list of skills.

Two of his books, The Man Within, and The Heart of the Matter although fictional, at times take on the deep dramatic tone of Greek tragedy. Henry Scobie, his hero, is a man of flawless character, who, because of a warped attitude to religion, descends step by step, from the height of his perfection, by breaking one after another, the Tables of the Law, and degrading the religion he has

held in reverence for years. He becomes a downright sinner; first a pilferer, then an adulterer, then a defamer of all that he holds most sacred. He makes a sacrilegious communion, and finally, commits suicide. In breaking the canon against self slaughter, Scobie condemns his soul to everlasting perdition. His unfolding ordeal is sinister and painful, overshadowed by the fatal gloom of inevitable immolation and destruction. Scobie's attitude to religion provides the forces of fate and of the gods in the usual Greek drama. Scobie is doomed to fail in his battle against the complexities of life, but contrary to the chilling hopeless denouement of a pagan drama, which strikes despondency into the heart of the audience, the destruction of Mr. Greene's hero is but a symbolism with depth and radiant power to come "to the heart of the matter". This, the showing forth of God's infinite mercy towards man's propensity to sin, is Mr. Greene's haunting concern. Tenseness of inner struggle, fine tracery of character, and magnificent symbolism, make his book both dramatic and poetic. The dramatic touch adds much to his stature as philosopher in the fictional study of evil.

Mr. Greene's diction, as has been previously stated, is simple and incisive; short, terse, colloquial sentences,

phrases or even single words will cut a thought or situation to the quick. He is no dabbler in unnecessary linguo. The poesy in his style does not consist in the use of poetically polished form, but in rugged, crusty expressions of telling symbolism. His style is unusually compact and graphic.

He has a unique method of procedure in the study of life. He takes the framework or skeleton of a conventional "thriller", clothes it with life and character, and elevates the whole to a symbolic purpose; seeing what is psychologically archetypical in such a literary theme as that of the hunted man, he dramatizes it with all the vigour and consciousness of serious art. Moreover, having learnt from popular literature the way of stripping the action of woolliness, his opening chapters are invariably arresting, and his narratives move with a breath-taking pace and an irresistible suspense. His first chapter in Brighton Rock cannot be equalled for its swift opening, and plunging into disaster.

His characters are mostly all given to evil, because he is deeply concerned with the study of evil in relation to eternity. He brings us up against people either in isolation or in a group, who are without belief or principle of conduct,

or with warped, distorted principles; they are uprooted, drifting and dispossessed, like so much flotsam on the tide of time. They are mostly tragic characters, who have never known the responsibilities of a moral code. Mr. Greene's range of character study is particularly wide. In The Power and the Glory, an outstanding example of his penetrating powers and his preoccupation with man's moral responsibilities, his protagonist is a priest, a tragic character, drawn with wonderful daring. This priest's sole glory is that of carrying God to the humble and the forcefully disinherited. Setting off the priest is his well depicted opposite, the army lieutenant, the enforcer of false order; who, as he watches the children of the little Mexico town, believes that he is really fighting for these by banning God from their lives. From the wastelands and jungles of a Communist Mexico, we are taken to the heat-drenched coast of Africa, for a study of character in a different setting. Henry Scobie, the just, the incorruptible, the impervious to bribes, the faithful, the tender hearted, is broken and analyzed. The other characters in The Heart of the Matter are not detailed studies, but are graphically done in a few thumbnail strokes, with each an outstanding trait: Louise, Scobie's wife is unhappy,

unattractive, and ambitious; Wilson, in the service of Intelligence, is a natural sneak, nourishing a sneaky passion for Louise; Helen, Scobie's stringy mistress, is a clinging vine; Yusuf, the Gargantuan, is a diamond smuggler and downright bloodsucker; the Portugese ship captain, who finds the first chink in Scobie's moral armour, is a scoundrel with a sentimental core; a typical old boy from third-rate public school is shown as an unscrupulous, aimless victim of sex abuse, nursing shoddy memories; to complete the climatic study of character there are mildewed Sahibs tippling at the club, exchanging toothy kisses with their colleagues' wives.

England too, is probed for character analysis: there we find a febrile unhappy people of smugglers, gangsters, pilferers, prostitutes, and disintegrating shreds of nobility, all showing some trace of interior decay and lack of moral responsibility.

One is naturally intrigued as to why Mr. Greene should select mostly unlovely, unattractive characters for his novels; but he is writing with clinical intentions, therefore he seeks humanity's outcasts to study their sorry involvements in evil.

His own words will testify to the truth of this deep-down interest in mankind by his reverential attitude to his own fictional characters:

> These characters are not my creation but God's. They have an eternal destiny. They are not merely playing a part for the reader's amusement, they are souls for whom Christ died to save.....
>
> Their tiny relative advantages of intelligence, taste, good looks and manners are quite insignificant in the balance of eternal values [1].

Sinful charmless characters symbolize the fathomless depths of misery towards which the Word Incarnate descended to lavish His compassion and love.

The fleeting mechanical succession of thrills, chases, coincidences, exploding surprises, his demented catastrophes, are all cleverly devised drivers of his ideas. These with his great gifts in dialogue, characterization, marginal commentary, hallucinated scenery, grim symbolic diction, concise camera-shot ideas, suspense, dramatic and poetic depth, whetted with a deep-down religious symbolism, constitute Mr. Greene an outstanding craftsman in the art of novel writing.

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1 Evelyn Waugh, Felix Culpa, Waugh Reviews Greene, in Commonweal, New York, vol. 48, nº 14, July 1948, p. 322.

These skills he applies to the interpretation of our times. With penetration, scope, and vision, he depicts what he sees, in a literature that is both of the artist and of the healer.

CHAPTER IV

INTERPRETATION OF OUR TIMES

In the July/December 1948 issue of The Time is a personal statement of Mr. Greene's views on the mental and moral condition of present times. Written shortly before World War II, it gives the keynote to his interpretation of the world about him:

> To-day, our world seems particularly susceptible to brutality. There is a touch of nostalgia in the pleasure we take in gangster novels, in characters who have so agreeably simplified their emotions that they have begun living again at a level below the cerebral.
> ....When one sees to what unhappiness, to what peril of extinction centuries of cerebration have brought us, one sometimes has a curiosity to discover, if one can, from what we have come, to recall at what point we went astray [1].

These words will answer the question that comes to the mind of most readers and critics: why should Mr. Greene, who is ranked as one of our best contemporary Catholic writers, interpret his world in misanthropic tones of crime and horror?

Mr. Greene with a deep Christian bias on life sees to what extent we have drifted away from Christianity's standards, and to what dangers we are exposed since we have

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1 Graham Greene, The Time, London, vol. 52, nº 4, July/December 1948, p. 47.

discarded its saving code. His aim is to bring us face to face with the great realities of life and eternity in order to rescue us from the inevitable disaster that needs must come to a people living without religion. His clinical probing is by no means romantic or sensual; it is a salutary process, extracting from evil the bitter gall that humanity must re-absorb to be healed of its inner decay. The reaction of readers is not one of pleasure, but one of storming protest, stirring up argumentation and speculation on the truths to which Mr. Greene wishes to re-educate.

Mr. W. Gore Allen voices this reaction in:

> There are certain authors whose challenge is so sharp and so insistent that to criticize their work primarily as literature would be a sign of moral cowardice. They are craftsmen only because some craft is necessary for the propagation of ideas; and they not infrequently develop a new and personal medium through which their own ideas can be most easily conveyed. This is precisely what Graham Greene has done. To read one of his books is to discover a fresh form; but to read a second is merely to find out what superficial changes he has rung upon it..... The characters are always hares pursued by grace, and the scene is invariably the wasteland on which we watch their cursing [2].

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2 W. Gore Allen, in Another View of Graham Greene, from The Irish Ecclesiastical Records, Dublin, The Catholic World, New York, vol. 169, nº 1009, p. 69.

Continuing with a paraphrase of Mr. Allen, we see how the mind reacts in trying to solve the philosophical implication of Mr. Greene's protagonists benighted in the back alleys of sin. This speculation is a wholesome form of mental activity that brings to the fore, saving truths and realities. Mr. Allen's reaction is but a normal outcome of Mr. Greene's ascetic: it is hard to determine, he says, from reading Mr. Greene to what extent his apparent apathy to life is directed towards certain transient attitudes of mind or to the permanent laws of human life, but he does grip his world as though he were trying to direct its neo-pagan thoughts to the contemplation of the realities of Heaven, Hell, Death and Judgment; and because that pagan world has put between itself and such truths or realities many layers of sensual padding, he, in order to wake it up, prods deeply, so deeply as to bring about shocking sanguinary results.

No other author, continues Mr. Allen, has so outspokenly described our Gothic culture as decadent.Mr. Greene cannot mean to convey the idea that man's time on earth is ebbing to a close, because he is a Catholic and knows that the Church will stand to the end of time, through, and in spite of every form of culture. Then why describe our times

as a virtual wasteland? In all his books from Sweden to Africa he depicts our culture as though every vestige of decency and moral sense had spent itself generations back. How does Mr. Greene pretend to measure his opinion of our depraved times in the same balance with the Gospel and with the theological virtue of hope? How can he believe the Church indefectible and holy when he believes the annihilation of our culture such that man must perforce do evil? This speculation has brought out such realities as: Our world has become paganized; free fill and grace; our culture is in a decadent state; moral sense has spent itself; the Church is indefectible; the Church is holy.

Mr. Allen concludes his questioning speculation on Greene's life interpretation with a whole-hearted approving comment: "And yet, through veils of negation and sterility, there leaps the sense of power. While you are reading Greene you are forced to accept his world and the people in it". [3] This comment goes to prove that Greene's treatment of our decadent world, although not flattering, is provocative to wholesome reaction.

The last statement "While you are reading Greene you are forced to accept his world and the people in it", is

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3 Ibid.

illustrated in his symbolic treatment of a fantastic world in The Ministry of Fear. He describes the haunted England of between wars, the European nightmare of corruption and sin; he flashes upon our mind, pictures of a chaos of disaster, taut with apprehensive fears, awaiting its inevitable doom from the threatening presence of "The Thing". The effect is marvellously well achieved and has won for him the title of the Auden of the modern thriller.

His hero, Arthur Rowe, is shown as irresistibly attracted to a fete in Bloomsbury Square. His eyes fill with tears as the band plays a song of the first World War. . . ."What e'er befall, I'll oft recall that sunlit mountain-side. . .". The whole scene is pervaded by a nostalgia, a longing for some irretrievably lost world, a world of peace and innocence. Greene flashes glimpses of that lost, happy world through the present chaos, like a silver lining on a black war cloud. Rowe goes to the fete and becomes involved in the scheme of a Nazi party; he is pursued, and out of a droning sky falls a bomb that explodes the house where he is momentarily enjoying his cake and tea. As if by magic, we are carried into a world of horrors: man-hunt, espionage, sabotage, amnesia, murder and suicide, a cosmos of fabulous realities, a catastrophe in the present moment of our lives.

In a series of thrills we see the "arch brutality" to which Mr. Greene refers at the opening of this chapter. Guilt pervades all life; we are standing aghast, with every sense of incredulity supressed; we live in, and accept Mr. Greene's phantasmagorial world; we feel convinced that the chaos is a part of our lives, and a part of us.

Implied in this phantasmagoria is a deep reaching symbolism. Rowe calls upon a mother who is dead:

> "Mother, please listen to me. I've killed my wife and the police want me"...and his sub-conscious mind re-echoes the words of that all trusting mother for the little boy she had known, "My little boy couldn't kill anyone"...His mother smiled in a scared way but let him talk: he was master of the dream now. "I'm wanted for murder, I didn't do it. People want to kill me because I know too much...I'm hiding under ground, and up above the Germans are methodically smashing London to bits all around me. You remember St. Clements...they've smashed that..."
>
> "It sounds like a thriller, doesn't it? but the thrills are like life...it's what we've made the world since you died. I'm your little Arthur who wouldn't hurt a beetle and I'm a murderer too. The world has been remade" [4].

Reading between lines we find reference to the astounding stride our world has made in criminality. Within one generation we have become estranged to our forebears..."that all trusting mother of the little boy she had known". We have plunged from a world of Victorian priggishness into one of

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4 Graham Greene, in The Ministry of Fear, New York, The Viking Press, 1943, 316 pages, p. 63.

Hitlerian brutality. For those who have eyes and see, Mr. Greene's implication stands out in bold letters. A soulless world, that is, a world without Christian principles cannot survive. Victorian prudery which was no more than a form of exteriorized propriety, (wouldn't kill a beetle), has engendered: first, a disabused distrust of decency; second, a cynical attitude towards Christianity, and third, our present-day nightmare of open fire on every form of faith and convention. "I'm hiding under-ground and up above the Germans are methodically smashing London to bits all around me". We have made our world a place of horror by selling our spiritual birthright to materialism. We have betrayed our sacred patrimony of Christianity, and with it, order and security. "The world has been remade" and we must now "hide underground" and wait till the "smashing up" of our mechanized world has subsided. Arthur Rowe, the half-crazed coward, is none other than the twentieth-century materialist, frantically searching for some form of security in his mechanized world.

It is this world that has put "between itself and such truths (heaven, hell, death, judgment) many layers of sensual padding" that Mr. Greene is trying to save; and because it is

so securely on guard against any form of preachment or missionizing, that he must "prod deeply, so deeply, as to bring about sanguinary results"[5]. To achieve this he employs the ascetic especially created for the neurotic temper of our times.

Our world is in the grip of a "gut-and-gat" craving for thrills and sensations and has lost its appetite for the wholesome things of the spirit. Our call for crime stories and gangster films is greater today than at any time in the history of man. The greater a criminal's defiance of authority and convention, the greater his popularity; the greater the test he imposes on his fellow humans, the more worthy he is of admiration; the thrill and capacity for admiration according to our warped standards is measured directly in proportion to the criminal's capacity for breaking the Tables of the Law. Crime is glory, crime is smart. So, in order to reach our population and to satisfy its sickened appetite the thriller must heap upon the altar holocausts of scandal and crime in their most shocking aspects. The movie audience, which represents the greater percent of our population, sits, through an alarmingly increasing part of the time, fidgeting

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5 Ibid.

restlessly through hours of hectic suspense, battening and bilging on crimes from films, novels, or newsreels, and doping its nerves with gin and tobacco. The greater part of our population has become morally numb or immune, with a veritable distaste for virtue.

It is obvious that Mr. Greene has a task on his hands in trying to re-educate this morally soporific, and apathetic world, to a higher sense of values. His ascetic of alternating layers of thrills and deep philosophic implications meets a twofold challenge: he satisfies the world's craving for sensations, and at the same time administers the cauterizing remedy that it stands in need of. He has taken as his cue, the admonition of one writer who was fully aware of the fascination of crime stories drawn from the immediate present:

> I'm not sure I enter into such matters best when they are very archaic or remote from our familiarities, for then the testimony to manners and morals is rather blurred for me by the whole barbarism...The thrilling in the comparatively modern much appeals to me--for there, the special manners and morals become queerly disclosed...Then do go back to the dear old human and sociable murders and adulteries and forgeries in which we are so agreeably at home [6].

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6 Morton D. Zabel, Books and the Arts, in The Nation, New York, vol. 157, nº 1, July 3, 1943, p. 18.

Mr. Greene draws his material from his immediate world, from criminalities of every walk in life, in order to minister to every form of evil familiar to the twentieth-century man. It has been rightly said that few English novelists of to-day derive more material from the daily newspaper than Mr. Greene. As if by clinical procedure, he extracts the toxins from society's diseases, treats them with astringent theological healing powers, and returns them into the bloodstream with a healing mission.

The protagonist in each of his novels symbolizes some form of present day evil: Pinkie Browne in Brighton Rock is the incarnation of malevolence; Ida Arnold is the fleshpot type, or the present-day specimen of the natural man, who with bestial kindness and warped notions of right and wrong, constitutes religion's most dangerous enemy. Krogh, in England Made Me symbolizes the capitalist, exploiting his employees at the price of human blood and bone; in the same book, Anthony Farrant is the typical lazy, irresponsible, youth produced by twentieth century culture.

These typical characters in actual present-day settings are engaged in conflict in a basic dualism between the Spirit and the Flesh. As this interior struggle between

man's physical and moral nature is the conflict of every human being, Mr. Greene's plots, of a necessity repeat themselves. May it be said in his defense, however, that if his plots do circle around the same point (grace hunting vice over a wasteland of desolation) his repetition is infinetly less blameable than that of novelists who completely ignore the things of the spirit, who interpret life in terms of sex, and invariably conclude in its gratification, as an end in itself. Both treat of life, of material that repeats itself, therefore allowance must be made for plot uniformity, but preference should be given to the writer who uplifts his reader, by pointing to higher standards; not to the one who preconizes vice.

To the objection that Mr. Greene in his novel, Brighton Rock, betrays a misanthropic, almost Jansenistic contempt for the virtues that do not spring from grace, one may answer that it is definitely Mr. Greene's purpose to interpret life in terms of grace and eternity. Ida Arnold's so called, natural virtues are treated with contempt because they are deserving of contempt. Her virtues are but the battalions that lead the rosy way to hell. Her physical attractions are snares, and her ideas of right and wrong, but incentives to excitement. We are made to feel the

the wastefulness of such an existence, and its drastic influence on humanity in general. Ida contributes nothing towards man's spiritual welfare; she is but a stumbling stone on his way to eternity.

Mr. Greene uses grace as a periscope for the sounding of human endeavour, to fix and objectify evil, to extricate it from the relativity of abstraction. This hounding of vice with grace, this relentless pursual of evil in every form, from Africa to the jungle of Communist Mexico, to the very heart of London; this unearthing of the perfidious secrets of every climate, is Mr. Greene's major purpose in writing.

But why all this sin? Why not good people as well as sinners? Why only the psychology of sin and not the psychology of virtue? In order to write Catholic novels why should Greene probe only into the soul of the sinner? Why does he terminate his characters' struggle in defeat? Why do they nearly all wear their religion as an uncomfortable chafing coat of armour and not as a well-fitting soft garment? Why not stop at the sunny spots in life and enjoy their gladness? These are so many questions that will come to the mind of the reader as he follows Mr. Greene across his wasteland of crime and horror.

First, Mr. Greene uses horror and crime for what it signifies and what it has always signified in the past: he uses it as a medium to explore the lack of moral responsibilities and the retrogradations that beset us and threaten to engulf all in a sea of infantilism and brutality. The grotesque unveiling of crime brings us face to face with the facts and realities of our degenerate century; he uses crime to show when and where and how we have descended to a subcerebral level, and have betrayed our Christian heritage. His own words quoted at the beginning of this chapter: ". . . to discover, if one can, from what we have come, to recall at what point we went astray", will prove his earnest endeavour to save us from the curse of dehumanization, and impending destruction.

Second, why the destruction of his protagonists in defeatism? They are symbols of outstanding moral evils, and pursue the selfhood of a conscience implicated in the full mystery and terror of their natures; they are shown as hapless creatures, engulfed in brutality, crime, and final perdition because they are struggling against the Divine Maker's unalterable law of man's spiritual destiny. Mr. Greene's salutary implication is that as long as man with-

stands the divine call to the perfection of Christian charity, he is opposing his resistance to an unconquerable force, and thus engaging in a struggle that of necessity must end in the destruction of the weaker vessel.

Mr. Greene's portrayal of the world is grim and unsparing, because his field of research is the relation of evil to social security and to eternity. In describing the horrors of war, the "smashing up" of long existing institutions, the insignificance of human life in a mechanical setting, he is but tracing the effects of evil to their ultimate goal.

Mr. Greene, as has been shown in the preceding chapter, is a realist in the true sense of the term, but he is moreover, a philosopher, weighing present-day decadence in its relation to future generations and to eternity. He is harassed with the vision of the floodgates of hell, opening their sea of destructive barbarism onto our morally irresponsible world.

CHAPTER V

THE MAN WITHIN

The remaining chapters of this study will follow out, or specify the facts heretofore laid down, by direct application to Mr. Greene's books.

His first novel, The Man Within, appeared in 1929, and won him widespread acclaim:

> Probably the most original and possibly the strongest new talent of the year in English fiction is Graham Greene's...In the purity, fluency and discipline of his style, in the originality of his conception and in his sense of fictional values, Graham Greene sets with his first novel a high standard for future work[1].

The Man Within is a book of exquisite workmanship, showing in unusual rhythm and pulsation the tragic struggle of the human soul benighted in the darkness of the immoral human animal. Mr. Greene has created within the framework of a modern thriller of physical excitements, a lyric phantasm of emotions, with dramatic depth and poetical symbolism approaching Shakespearian tragedy. A succession of hairbreadth escapes holds the reader's interest to the very end so that he must imbibe the moralizing elixir distilled from

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1 Frances Lamont Robbins, Lesser Arts, in Outlook and Dependents, New York, December 1929, p. 670.

alternating surges of cold-blooded horror and implications of mystical beauty.

The book is given plausibility by its account of smuggling in an artistic setting of the Sussex countryside.

The protagonist is Andrews, a born coward, twisted by a psychic complex inherited from a timid, romantic mother, and an overpowering, bullying father. His whole life is torn by the struggle between hate and fear against love and hope.

His romantic bent of hero worship has enslaved him to Carlyon, the leader of a smuggling gang, but his life is a veritable nightmare, torn between fear, love, hope, and hate. When the dilemma becomes unbearable, he denounces his gang to the government and runs away.

He then becomes the doubly hunted man, at the mercy of his betrayed fellow-gangsters and of government officials. In his coursing, and his interior struggles he typifies the human animal beset with harrowing fears because unfortified by an ethical code.

While on the run he meets Elizabeth, a good unspoiled girl, who through no other motive than Christian kindness helps him to evade his pursuers.

By setting in parallel Elizabeth's life and that of Andrews, Mr. Greene brings out strongly the infinite advantages of morality over naturalism. Her sense of security, of peace, and hopefulness, sets off his pandemonium of fear, distrust and hate. Andrews has no moral code. He says, "I was not taught to live". The ensuing relationships between the two, further show forth the nihilism of an immoral existence that has not "a hope beyond the dark".

Through Elizabeth Andrews gets a first taste of peace and hopefulness. His soul warms to the spell of her irresistible influence for good, and he confides to her his inner struggles with despondency and fear. Elizabeth suggests that he give himself up to justice, pay the odds, and recommence life anew. The idea haunts him like a passion, and he is torn more fiercely than ever between the forces of his instincts and his "inner critic".

Finally, unable to resist "the critic" any longer, he throws himself into the arms of the law. The vision of the virtuous woman who first impelled him to good, leads him on like a star; it inspires him with courage, hope, and fortitude and brings him to the verge of reform and peace.

Unfortunately, after his first unsteady steps on the climb to amendment he is again overpowered by lust, and falls headlong into his former hell of hate and despondency. By his unhappiness in sin we hear the cries of conscience urging to righteousness.

Despite his defeat he returns to Elizabeth to tell her that he has attended the assizes at Lewes. On the way to her cabin he is again torn between fear and hope, but he prays (in an unusual sort of way), that the humble avowal of his defeat may somehow strengthen him, and restore to him the peace of mind that he had so briefly enjoyed when on his way to Lewes to renounce his vagabond ways.

However, before he reaches her cabin, Carlyon and his gangsters have tracked and preceded him there. He finds that Elizabeth has taken her life to escape the gangsters' lustful assaults.

This part of the story is intensely dramatic: Andrews is no longer the coward flying from justice, he is the hero. We follow him with interest, and we wonder at his fantastic victory in defeat. He meets Carlyon and faces him unflinchingly, for in the presence of the dead girl their hatred has vanished. They who had sworn one

another's death, clasp hands in a deeper friendship, and see for the first time the tragedy of their hate-bedraggled lives. Andrews' soul is suddenly pervaded with a fierce triumphant gladness, and when he follows the revenue officer, he finds to his surprise that he is happy and at peace. His father is slain, and yet a self remains, "a self which knows neither lust, blasphemy, nor cowardice, but only peace and a curiosity for the dark..."

There are sublime moments of suspense and mystery as the two, Carlyon and Andrews, stand facing one another across the table in the presence of the dead girl, and see as in a vision the futility of their ill-spent lives, and fall to the spell of a nostalgia for a world of peace. Again, as Andrews walks through the moonlight along the white road, at the heels of the revenue officers, his soul seems to swim in an atmosphere of mystical triumph and he says to Elizabeth, "You were always right...the fourth time has brought peace".

His father's ghost (his complex) has been stubborn but he has been laid low, and Andrews is no longer torn in two between the ghost and "the man within"; he is now himself "the Critic".

Just what does Mr. Greene wish to imply by this mystical transformation? Is it not the sense of satisfaction that every human being experiences when conscience approves his use of free will to avoid evil and to do good? Andrews has temporarily conquered his propensity to evil and has been momentarily admitted into the sanctum of spiritual consolation.

But, the knife that bears his name and that has stilled the life of a beloved "white set face", glints like a star before him on the head officer's belt. When, "slowly his hand steals out unnoticed on an errand of supreme importance, in answer to a hope beyond the dark..."

The mystery of this last up-stroke, sweeps the reader off into the realms of the hereafter, and he needs must meditate on the truth of life beyond the bournes of time.

Such is the story element revolving around the theme, "The inner man is angry with me", and engaging in tense conflict the human soul with a depraved human animal. It is most interesting, and brings out the salutary influence of personal moral discipline.

Beside an enlightening approach to life this book has also much descriptive beauty in the form of terse, clear-cut symbolism: "The undertaker's man shut the coffin lid, casually as a man shuts a book"[1], is strongly suggestive of the finality of the old man's earthly career.

"...jealousy, spilt like a bitter wine into the unhoused spirit"[2]. The old man's soul had left his body and was still capable of feeling. This suggests the immortality of the soul.

"The voice was tipped always with the cool, pure poetry which it loved"[3]. Carlyon's musical voice held an irresistible charm for the romantic Andrews.

"Then the clouds parted for a moment to allow the passage of a proud orange moon"[4]. The whole universe seems to be animated and attentive to the furtive momements of the cowering Andrews.

The Man Within is dramatic and compelling, touching on human fibres of rare spiritual beauty, and on bestial instincts of revulsive crudity. Its lyric phantasm gives

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1, 2, 3, 4, Graham Greene, in The Man Within, Garden City, New York, Doubleday, Doran & Company, inc., Printed in the United States at the County Life Press, 1939, 316 pages. pp. 40, 128, 73, 295.

full play to the whole gamut of passions that sway the human heart and aids the story element to stress the advantages of morality over naturalism. Francis Andrews is twisted between implacable hatred, shrinking cowardliness, and a haunting romantic attraction for beauty:

> You can't understand what life was like with these men. I could do nothing which was not weighed up with my father and found wanting.
>
> "He broke my mother's heart" -- at these words Andrews' face grew white as though from the blinding heat of an inner fire..."I loved my mother...She was a pale woman who loved flowers. We used to go for walks together in the holidays and collect them... he came and crumpled them in his fists, great unwieldy fists. My mother married him because she was incurably romantic.
>
> When my father died, I was glad...it appeared to me to mean the end of fear. My father used to beat me unmercifully, because he said it would put courage into me."[5]

All this from the lips of Andrews accounts for the depth of hatred for his father, for his fellow smugglers, and finally for Elizabeth whom he loved: "I'd hate you if I didn't love you".

This same man who is stigmatized with a lifelong hatred, who is a lawbreaker, a traitor to his dearest friend, and to the woman he loves, can talk in such poetic terms as: "When music plays one does not see or think; one

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5 Id., ibid., p. 94

one only hears. A bowl -- and the music is poured in until there is no 'I', I am the music".

The book makes a definite contribution towards the analysing and healing of social evils: Andrews' tragic career and ultimate defeat, provide the medium for the exploring of the origin of immorality, and tracing it to the door of parents and schools: "I was not taught to live", or again: "What was the use of teaching me Greek if I was to live like this"? His life unaided by any form of spiritual discipline, or "hope beyond the dark", was foredoomed to defeat in passion, hate and sin. Moreover, brutality in the home is shown to breed delinquency.

Andrews' relationships with Elizabeth and Lucy suggest very strongly that the responsibility for present-day sex madness rests upon the shoulders of woman, because she is shown as possessing the necessary moral potentiality for the maintenance or disruption of respectable human relationships: Lucy employs her physical charms to seduce Andrews, and to bend him to her carnality: he is completely mesmerized by her allurements, and having no saving moral discipline, succumbs, despite his recent promises to Elizabeth to retrieve his respectability.

Elizabeth, on the contrary, pervades his life with peace and hope, and kindles in his heart a love conducive to sacrifice, spiritual elevation, and a humble resolution to reform. When his inner critic again mocks him with disheartening taunts, he is prepared to triumph over his wonted weakness: "It's just the old lusts...Would you sacrifice yourself for her? You know you wouldn't. You love yourself too dearly. You want to possess her that's all..." He answers half in triumph, half in fear, "You are wrong, I am a coward. You cannot expect me to change my spots so soon. But this is not the old lust. There is something holy here", and as though exorcised the critic falls into silence [6].

His meeting with this "something holy" brings back a long obscured trail of reminiscences..."He found in the crevices of his mind, where childhood harboured, the faint memory of a pictured saint, a girl with pale set face, around whose head a flock of doves turned and twisted"[7]. As by instinct he associates this remembered vestige of goodness with Elizabeth who appeals to his better self.

6, 7, Id., ibid., pp.110, 127

Mr. Greene's study of human passion makes another telling point, strong in fustigating the modern neo-pagan attitude to marriage: Elizabeth has very frankly told Andrews that she loves him, but that she will not live with him until they are duly married. "How wise you are," he said in anger less against her than against his inability to value those things in which she had such faith. "Must I make a settlement also? You can't love me if you have to wait till a form of words is mumbled over us. Or are you afraid that I shall desert you to-morrow and you'll lose that precious respectability?" Elizabeth answers, "You don't understand...It's not what you call respectability. It's a belief in God. I can't alter that for you. I'd leave you first...I love you, but if you can't take my terms you must go"[8]. Elizabeth's view on marriage is a bulwark against the pollution of human life sources. She has ever been ready to defend what Andrews in contempt calls "that precious respectability", but what to her is a profound moral conviction about Christian purity: when a young helpless orphan in the keeping of an old bachelor, she bravely held her own against his solicitings, and later when ruthlessly overpowered by Carlyon and his gangsters,

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8, Id., ibid., p.88

she took her life to elude their assaults.

Elizabeth who symbolizes faith, charity, and peace in virtue, brings to the heart and mind of Carlyon and Andrews the world of goodness they have sacrificed to evil. Carlyon, after first eyeing her suspiciously murmurs: "If I could take you with me, I should have with me peace, charity."...On another occasion..."You cannot be mixed up in this. You don't belong to our world, noise, hate. Stay with peace"[9].

Goodness as portrayed by Elizabeth, is not priggish; it creates a nostalgia for the world of virtue. The Man Within is planned along a definite line of Catholic theology: Man is composed of body and soul, (Andrews' dual struggle); The soul is immortal, (the old man's unhoused spirit, and Andrews' hope beyond the dark); man with animal instincts and spiritual aspirations, is in a continual state of conflict to attain his spiritual destiny, and needs the support of a moral code to overcome his propensity to sin, (Elizabeth's "respectability" and Andrews' lament "I was not taught to live"); there is security in following the dictates of conscience.

9, Id., ibid., p. 88.

CHAPTER VI

LESSER WORKS

In Mr. Greene's non-fictional composition, England Made Me, we find an unusually interesting analysis of life problems and cultural flaws. He brings out, in clever selection of detail and flashbulb description, the shreds and fibres that constitute the life of an individual, and then fits them into the Babylonian structure that such individuals make. The structure studied in this book is that of English culture. In it Mr. Greene finds three distinct marks of disintegration: Capitalism, Devoted loyalties, and a damaging School System. These threaten to undermine the whole nation by laming her proletariat, by stemming her population, and by sapping her human stamina.

Anthony Farrant, with his "Made in England" trademark stamped upon him, is sent abroad, where his culture is measured against that of other countries. Although it is not Mr. Greene's intention to convey that all Englishmen are like Anthony (that would be pure fallacy), he does mean to convey that Anthony is a fair, cross-section specimen of the English School product of to-day. For this dissecting study Anthony is set into the framework of a foreign business firm.

The scene is Stockholm, Sweden, and the action is centered around Erick Krogh, an international financier, whose business operations are always alarmingly dubious, and whose gigantic plants and industries absorb him and his men to a point of dehumanization. Krogh has lost the touch of human relationships and exists as some source of mechanical power operating the wheels and levers of an immense international money-grinding machine. On more than one occasion Krogh, the business magnate, the financial King, bewails his inability to live with people: he is shy, he has no taste for clothes, art, or opera, and outside the realm of figures (with which he could do anything) he is handicapped and dependent. His own words at the beginning of the book:

> "One couldn't plan a human relationship like a graph of production...This is good for me, I have been too taken up with finance, I must enlarge my scope -- the human side...There must have been a time when I was at ease with other men," and he tried to remember. Even the old pals who had started at the bottom of the ladder with him, and had shared the hardships of his early exploits, have become estranged, and superior to him in the art of living [1].

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1 Graham Greene in England Made Me, London & Toronto, William Heinemann, Ltd., 1935, 314 pages, p. 67.

The fabulously wealthy Krogh has not only lost the touch of human relationships in his private life, he has become enslaved to the burden of financial operations and to the fear of losing prestige and security. His every move is flashed by report and radio across the globe and has its repercussion there. Each step mus t be meticulously guarded against a false move, lest he lose footing in his money kingdom. He is suspicious and fearful of all who approach him. He moves in a world of jealousy, and is closely guarded night and day. His business firm is a sumptuous metallic structure, with every modern device and comfort that money can buy, but it is a prison, and outside its walls Krogh is ill at ease; he is afraid.

Mr. Greene does not preach, but the implication is strong: Krogh, the modern Capitalist, is laboring under the curse of the rich man; his money brings him neither securi ty nor happiness.

In his service, men are but so many parasites, a degenerate species of humanity. They must repeat a maximum number of mechanical operations with a maximum of accuracy and speed, in return for a minimum of salary and a minimum

of human comfort and consideration. Their life is "like a Morse Code only dots and dashes, never forming a paragraph"[2]. A soulless existence void of idealism and humaneness.

This abuse has been the sorry lot of generations of white slaves. The Capitalist's gristmill, grinding philanthropy and brotherly love into money, has benumbed the consciences of nations with the infernal opiate, "It pays".

Mr. Greene pictures in telling terms the sorry plight of the labourer in the person of Anderson: he has come to plead for his father who has been discharged because of endangering Krogh's finances by participating in a strike. He is not allowed a hearing. Krogh but says, "Send him away," and Hall, a "tight-skinned jealous dog", hits the unhappy man with a pair of knuckle-dusters that he always carries in his pocket, and leaves him, "at the door on his knees, face down dripping blood at the mouth"[3]. This prostrate figure of the abused labourer, bleeding

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2 Graham Greene, in England Made Me, p. 68.

3 Id., ibid.

under the strokes of a cruel master, brings to mind the prostrate figure of the Divine Labourer, Who carried our burdens and Who once said: "Amen I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these my brethren, you did it to me"[4].

This picture may be taxed with overstatement, but it nevertheless, points a warning finger to abuses that are rampant among our proletariat, and that cry to heaven for vengeance. God's justice must ultimately strike a people that accumulates its wealth at the cost of the rights of millions of its unfortunate. When Christian charity and brotherly love have been banished from a nation's heart, divine Justice will come back into its own by the agency of destructive forces. We are to-day reaping the diseased fruits of a godless civilization, because we have strayed far from the saving code of the Divine Lawgiver.

The second sign of weakening in the moral bulwark of England, is her free practice of devoted loyalties, an egoistic, wasteful approach to marriage, and a peril to the survival of the entire nation.

Kate Farrant, Krogh's secretary, is also his mistress and adviser. Krogh's helplessness in human relationships

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4 St. Mathew, 25, 40.

holds him under her spell; he needs her ready knowledge of dealing with people. She, needs Krogh, because of his mighty financial status; the two, although not romantically in love with one another, live in a sort of marital companionship. It is only later on when business transactions are severely threatened, and Krogh sees some sort of financial security in marrying Kate, that they announce a marriage. It is understood, of course, that there will be no children. Kate hates children, and science will be called to aid in freeing her from them. A most ironical situation arises when her brother Tony, a scapegrace, whose life has been but a round of seductions, suddenly finds his conventionalized, long-dormant conscience, and warns her against the dangers of entering into a loveless marriage. One cannot miss the thrust at the present-day attitude to love and marriage, when Anthony pleads with her not to engage herself in such a "wasteful state of life."

Kate dotes on Anthony as on a passionate lover, and feels a twinge of jealousy every time he tells her of another of his romances; they are many and debasing, and his unscrupulous profanation of human decency is disgusting.

Mr. Greene in disinterring Anthony's immoralities, exposes to broad daylight his nihilistic attitude to life, the drastic result of the present day system of "laissez-faire" in school and home. These, under pretence of Liberalism, have ended by ignoring moral training completely, and creating a generation of unscrupulous sinners. Mr. Greene's portrait of Anthony Farrant, shows in concrete terms his indictment against England's School System. Anthony is clever in the ways of the world, but hopelessly shiftless. He is moreover, an unpleasant specimen of conventionality: the wearer of a school tie to which he is not entitled, and a smile which is a perpetual warning that he is not to be trusted. He disguises behind a firm handshake and a ready joke, a downright deep nihilism. He is irresponsible, incontinent and slothful. Notwithstanding his sister Kate's efforts to keep him in work, he loses job after job, and despite his hollow-sounding protests of love and decency, he abandons her, and indulges his unruly passion for a tawdry foreign girl. Anthony, with a smooth captivating appearance, prating morality to Kate while his personal behaviour gives the lie to every word symbolizes England's decadent civilization, diseased with interior

decay, but still striving to save appearances by putting on a brave front and talking of principles.

The credit given to "England Made Me" is due not so much to its story element, or plot structure, which merely revolves about the relationship of a brother and sister, and around a financier with his strange entourage of journalists, desparadoes, and men of affairs, but to its introspective ingenuity, its vividness of description, its excellent character portrayal and above all its for its poetical ability to show the individual in action, in his own native environment and abroad. It points a warning finger to a looming catastrophe that must eventually strike an unscrupulous, irresponsible culture.

It's A Battlefield was written in 1934.

In this book Mr. Greene puts to use in an ingenious way his talent for cinemmatic writing. He flits about London, snapping her physiognomy in different moods and poses in order to reveal the different aspects and phases of her civilization, foremost among which is her system of Justice. Justice, does not bear its name truthfully; it is shown by Mr. Greene to be rather a flitting shadow than a form of security and protection. His study of justice, like that of John Galsworthy in The Silver Box tends to show that

there is one set of laws for the rich and another for the poor. Mr. Greene lays bare its flaws without apology. His theme is skilfully woven through London life, showing how Justice in its distorted form affects the destiny of different individuals. This study adds another interesting link to Mr. Greene's long chain of survey on contemporary evil.

A unique feature about It's A Battlefield is, that London is treated as a personality and not as the literary traditional London of other novelists. It is one of the characters seen by the passing eye, dismissed, thought about, forgotten, and then again picked up in a continued series of pictorial study of community life. Place and time are merely fluid in the minds of the characters, they do not constitute the traditional factors of unity.

The story is that of Justice applied to a bus driver who has murdered a policeman for striking at the former's wife in a Communist upheaval. As the book opens, the driver is seen awaiting execution. This situation involves the Commissioner of Police, the key piece. As he stands for Justice, he is isolated from his fellow Londoners; he realizes that his role in life is nothing better than that of a watch dog. The driver has been sentenced in defence

of the rights of private property ownership, but when the public shows no interest in its own defence, the driver's death sentence is commuted to life imprisonment. His wife, Milly, is helpless and stupefied in realizing the futility on her part of trying to save her husband; she is defeated in advance. She is left to her desperation, with the knowledge that her life will be spent by the time her husband dies. She symbolizes the weakness of the individual in the face of Justice.

One other person interested in the truck driver's life is his brother, but he is the object of a strange dilemma: he is in love with Milly, and her husband's death would favor his chances of winning her. His half hope and half dread in regard to his brother's safety constitute a very interesting situation. We are interested in the brother because he symbolizes the product of a modern community juggling with passional inclination and Justice.

The different, well defined characters symbolize typical individuals without moral responsibility. They are enmeshed in a network of community life and Justice. The whole book constitutes a cinematographic study of mis-shapen justice in action against an unprincipled people.

The Spectator says of this book: "...it has something serious to say without being pretentious, and it has something to teach other novelists"[5].

Short Stories

One other form of writing in which Mr. Greene proves himself capable of excitement and interest is the short story. Mr. Ray Redmond says of him, he is "...genuine and unusual...the sinews and proof of a distinct personality"[6].

The chief themes and subjects found among Mr. Greene's best short stories are: fear, failure, and awe-inspiring isolation of the human animal who would live without religion. The ironies of fate, and the world of childhood are most skilfully portrayed in such of his stories as The Basement Room, The End of the Party, and I Spy. One is struck with the re-iterated fear of children dreading to cross the threshold of adolescence; they do not wish to leave their childhood world, and when they do grow

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5 The Spectator, n° 5511, February 9, 1934, p. 206.

6 Ray Redmond, Nineteen Stories by Graham Greene, New York, The Viking Press, 1949, 247 pages, in Saturday Review of Literature, New York, April 1949, p. 23.

up they mourn the loss of their happy innocence. It seems natural for Mr. Greene, for whom life has no secrets, to associate this reluctance towards the heavy responsibilities of adult life with the innocence of childhood.

An excellent comment on these stories is given by one critic in Catholic Readers' Club:

> Masterly achievements. They show Mr. Greene's ability to cut the quick of a personality, a life, a situation...to put himself into the character's place and explore it from within. Human nature, in any of its aspects, has no secrets from him. Technically, these stories are superb...the attack is direct and sure. Mr. Greene addresses himself to the "heart of the matter" and never veers from the point. The style is taut and transparent, without ornamentation. The dialogue is pared and piercing...economical construction and uncommonly effective narration [7].

Although these stories deal with the world of childhood they are for mature readers only, and of a nature to inspire them with a deep sense of responsibility to adult life.

Entertainments

This Gun for Hire, Orient Express, Confidential Agent, The Ministry of Fear, and The Third Man, are five

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7 John S. Kennedy, Stories by Graham Greene, in Catholic Readers' Club, Toronto, vol. 3, nº 13, February, 1949.

works of a lighter vein, that have been filmed and welcomed as miracles of invention, pace and suspense. As has been previously stated in this study, they are highly adapted to the screen; although they are not novels in the full sense, they all have a deep, philosophical significance of the sorry plight of man in the civilization he has distorted to the point of breaking.

The Ministry of Fear, 1943, is a thriller portraying Europe in a state of nightmare corruption and doom, awaiting the fatal blow of "The Thing" just before World War II.

> ....taut with apprehensive dreads
> The sleepless guests of Europe lay
> Wishing the centuries away [8].

This type of book is a specially devised ascetic of crime and horror to give form to the neurotic state of our war crazed times. Crime has reached an alarming crisis, and it requires a special literary form to clarion and arouse our populations to the awareness of the imminent dangers looming overhead. ("The Thing", is not only Hitlerism but the ultimate collapse of all that decency and security stand for). Guilt pervades all life; the world is trying

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8 Morton Dauwen Zabel, Books and the Arts, in The Nation, New York, vol. 157 nº 1, July 3, 1943, p. 18.

to remember, where and when it flew off at a tangent from the rotund course of Christian decency. Where and when it has been betrayed into this nightmare of howling storms and archaic brutality.

Graham Greene who has fully grasped the portent of horrors threatening our generation, at the risk of being taxed with Jansenism and grotesque overstatement, shows forth our world in its ugly colours. Arthur Rowe, his protagonist, in a sort of nostalgia for the peaceful life he once knew tells his deceased mother:

"It sounds like a thriller, doesn't it? but the thrillers are like life...it's what we've made the world since you died"[9].

Greene's entertainments gratify our thrill-craving world and shock its doped morality with the horrors of its own contrivance, in order to wake it from its stupefying psychotic coma. The settings are taken from present-time actualities such as the Nazi underground and fifth column in The Confidential Agent, The Ministry of Fear; organized Marxism and its betrayals in It's a Battlefield, and, as aforesaid, the horrors of our own making are set down for

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9 Graham Greene, in The Ministry of Fear, page 63.

just what they signify. Mr. Greene's thriller entertainments are the skilfully devised literary instruments needed to probe the tragedy and temper of our age, the deep down decay that undermines it. They constitute a collaboration between realism and spirituality heretofore unknown in the field of fiction.

In This Gun for Hire, 1936, Mr. Greene gives a vivid picture of the tempo of English life. And although written in a light vein it has a deep moral implication. Like the other entertainments, it has been filmed and has created a very favorable impression, especially here in America. It deals with the gangster underworld like Brighton Rock. One of the gangsters is hired to commit a political murder; he is pursued by the law, and while on the run is saved from justice by a girl, who attaches herself to him, but finally betrays him. Contrary to the usual blood-curdling circumstances associated with the hunted man, there are no machine guns rattling and no G-men brought into the story. The thrill in the story does not lie in the safety of the murderer but in the moral suspense brought about by the girl's attitude towards him. The question is, "can he trust his life to her?" He does, and is temporarily safe, but upon further revelation

of his character to her, she is shocked into betraying him. The reader is satisfied to see him receive his fully deserved measure of justice.

The Third Man, 1950, the last of Mr. Greene's books, is a mystery thriller, with its setting in Vienna, during the Allied occupation. The story, about a hack writer exploring the rubble in search of his dead friend, Harry Lime, is one of suspense and interest. As Mr. Greene has explained in his foreword, the book was "never written to be read, only to be seen", and, the only reason for publishing it was to admit the movie goers into his working world. As a film script it is very good, though as a book it does not add to Mr. Greene's stature as novelist. It is to be hoped that Mr. Greene does not give up novel writing for the cinema. Mr. Greene's creative art expresses eternal verities through contemporary symbols. One literary critic after having seen the film says this of its symbolism:

> I thought it a profound expression of the truth of the Mystical Body. (There is a third man involved in every sin, in every act, and that man is each one of us)[9].

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9 Robert Ostermann, An Interview With Graham Greene, in The Catholic World, New York, vol. 170, nº 1019, February 1950, p. 356.

CHAPTER VII

A TRILOGY

Evelyn Waugh, while on a lecturing tour in America, spoke of Graham Greene as one of the automatic members of the English School of Catholic intellectuals. Passing in review his books Brighton Rock, The Power and the Glory, and The Heart of the Matter, he said: "They are as parts of a trilogy about the four last things, death, judgment, heaven and hell"[1].

Brighton Rock is a book about hell; its protagonist is a veritable demon. The Power and the Glory is about heaven; its protagonist is a priest with human weaknesses and repeated falls, but who gives his life for his flock and grows to heroism in accepting martyrdom. But The Heart of the Matter, said Mr. Waugh, is not so easy to define: the question as to what happened to Scobie, is argued by Americans the continent over, even by those who believe neither in heaven nor hell. This suggestion lends itself to an interesting study of the three books.

In Brighton Rock, 1938, Mr. Greene gives us the most sordid aspects of life in Brighton, a smart summer

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1 Evelyn Waugh, Waugh Lectures, in Books on Trial, Chicago, Thomas More Association, vol. 7, n° 8, April 1949, p. 277.

resort. His graphic precision and clever accumulation of telling detail, show forth his quick and sensitive observation, his selective perception and intuitive understanding. He cannot, however, be called a connaisseur of squalor, because he depicts these bare crudities in the world of gangsters and prostitutes. His purpose is that of the artist and psychiatrist; as artist he is acutely aware of the repulsiveness of the lack of taste, order, and morality; as psychiatrist he does not simply wish to draw our attention to that which is sordid and wicked but to explore the confused motives, good or bad, that activate the squalor. As has been previously stated in this study, Mr. Greene is ever haunted by a deep-down desire to analyse every phase of religious feeling, and in this particular case to make a study of a candidate for hell.

His protagonist, Pinkie Browne, is a boy murderer, raised in a squalid Brighton slum; he is a fallen-away Catholic, steeped in delinquency. He is not a smoker and not a drinker, but his "grey ancient eyes" denote diseased morality, "soured virginity", loathsome sadism, and cold-blooded cruelty. He is a singular monster of calloused and distorted conscience. His unbending will-power and

fiendish brutality have made him the leader of a murderous race-course gang. Pinkie is only seventeen years of age but his prematured cruelty, stops at nothing, not even the use of razor blades and vitriol against his victims. However, due to some psychic traum he shows an unbounded loathing for matters of sex. These deep-rooted opposing forces in the heart of Greene's chief character make his book not only a murder story, nor only a sociological study, but a real psychological speculation.

Like Macbeth, "the Boy" (as Greene calls him) finds it necessary to cover one killing with another, "Carving 'em", as he says. But there comes a cricis in his criminal ascension and he finds himself in imminent danger of being denounced by an unripe young waitress of sixteen. To get her out of the way as a potentially dangerous witness, he proposes to marry her. Rose, the waitress, who has never known anyone to be interested in her, not even her parents, falls dotingly in love, and accepts his proposal. She is an inexperienced young creature, and although mentally weak, knows that in contracting an invalid marriage with Pinkie, will compromise her salvation. Nevertheless, she is so pathetically loyal to this only person who has ever displayed any interest in

her, that her conscience is completely smothered in the tumult of her new found passion. She finds nothing but admiration for his crimes, and would be ready to follow him, even to the gates of Hell.

Pinkie and Rose represent one world, the world of Good and Evil, the world that believes in ultimate salvation and damnation. Be it said, however, that their faith has never been fully alive. Another world is represented in the person of Ida Arnold, a prostitute. She is described in glowing colors as she makes her first appearance, singing a love ballad in a bar room. She is the personification of the everyday world with its distorted standards of right and wrong, its laxity of moral, its craving for pleasure, and its anti-clericalism. Ida smells of soap and wine, comfort and physical well-being. She believes that the world is a good place if you don't weaken. Her sense of justice, however keen, is not a moral sense, but merely one other avenue of physical gratification.

She becomes involved in the plot of the story by picking up Hale, one of Pinkie's victims, on the day he is killed, at Brighton. She suspects, in spite of the inquest, that there is something wrong, and pursues the trail because she believes in Justice; because too, it involves enough

excitement and fun to quicken her sense of life. Before long she has forgotten even what the murdered man had looked like and is kept going, only by the thrill of the chase, and the desire to save the little waitress from the monstrous Boy. But, the waitress does not want to be saved; she is enamoured of Pinkie and, finds nothing but admiration for his sordidness. Despite the cries of her poor, warped conscience Rose says defiantly that if he is damned they will be damned together.

These three forces set up the framework of a strange religious melodrama. The psychology thereof is not always convincing; it is distorted and farfetched; the boy's horror of the physical aspects of sex is not credible, neither is his leadership of a gang of men much older and more experienced than himself. But what is credible and plausible is the struggle between a triangle of forces: Rose's milk-and-water Catholicism, diluted to the last vestige of actual grace; Pinkie's perverted Catholicism, cast as "pearls before swine", and Ida's "flesh-pot" bias on life called by one reviewer, "a sturdy roast-beef Protestantism". Rose and Pinkie struggle against a weakened faith; Ida is too much taken up with her physical life to have any qualms about the hereafter.

For those who have "eyes and see not", this book is no more than an exciting murder and detective story of breathtaking excitement and blood-curdling horror, but for those whose eyes are open to the influences of good and evil there lurks at the bottom of its material disorder a whole world of spiritual disaster. Mr. Greene sinks a shaft into the twilight regions of Faith and Conscience, and shows that if a good Catholic has infinitely greater chances of salvation a perverted Catholic, in abusing faith, grace and conscience has a greater capacity for guilt than a non-Catholic. We are more shocked at Rose's marrying Pinkie than at Ida's unblushing carnality, not because Ida's acts are less wicked, but because she is sinning without the sting of conscience. She says..."Ah that...does no one any harm"... Whereas Rose is profaning her body and moreover a God-fearing conscience. Ida is definitely a dangerous enemy to religion, she takes the broad rosy path through life and does not care where it leads; Rose, a Catholic, has moral obligations and when she falls there is a greater moral disaster. Ida is already anchored in vice when we first meet her, but the poor simple-minded, inexperienced Rose, excites our sympathy when she throws herself into Pinkie's snare. We are jarred at the melodramatic futility of her efforts at confession and prayer

on the day of her marriage;

> I wanted to be in the state of grace when I married you...I went and rang the bell and asked for Father James. But then I remembered. It wasn't any good confessing...We're going to do a mortal sin [2].

The Boy answers with bitter and unhappy relish:

> "It'll be no good going to confession ever again as long as we're both alive." He had graduated in pain... he was repulsed beyond measure at the thought of marriage [3].

Then follows an inferno of crime: hatred, murder, theft, sadism, blasphemy and homosexuality, until Pinkie, like a veritable fiend plunges into the hell of vitriol, fire and blood that he had planned for his final triumph over his pursuers. He disappears with a last blasphemous imprecation, as a demon into hell. One remains with the impression that hell has come upon earth to claim its own.

Mr. Greene's treatment of vice, here again, is a clinical one: the world's taste for crime is overgorged to nauseation as from the effects of a skilfully administered emetic.

Rose is dragged through Pinkie's hell of criminality, her unrequited, doting love crying for gratification, and her

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2 Graham Greene, in Brighton Rock, Kinswood, Surrey, Windmill Press, 1938, p. 242.

3 Id., ibid., p. 243.

outraged conscience echoing night and day with its wails of remorse. She follows Pinkie blindly to his gruesome death, and after he is gone she returns to her loveless home, stunned but impenitent.

She is last seen defiant and tearless in the confessional:

> "I wish I'd killed myself. I'm not asking for Absolution...I want to be like him, damned"...To her rebellion against God's pardon, the priest answers, "We must hope and pray. The Church does not demand that we believe any soul is cut off from mercy,... you can't conceive... the...appalling...strangeness of the mercy of God"[4].

These psychological complications are provocative to thought. What is their impact upon the mind of the reader? Why should the feeble ebbing faith of an ignorant inexperienced girl be pitted against an inferno of gangster criminality and open prostitution? Mr. Greene's aim is to show that Faith in its feeblest form can by its accessibility to the infinite merits of the Redemption, overpower the forces of hell.

Mr. Greene's theological speculation may be taxed with positivism; his depicting of every form of crime, with gross overstatement; and his exploiting of God's mercy, with remorseless daring; yet his book makes a definite contribution

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4 Id., ibid., p. 358.

towards the eradicating of evil: it shocks the reader into a wholesome revulsion for the ugliness of sin; (Mr. Greene's sinners are mostly all unattractive and unhappy in their sin); it re-educates to the truth that hell is a reality. There is no escaping from the fact that, impenitent, wilful sinners are deserving of hell. Pinkie Browne, is the concrete flesh and bone exponent of the abstract theological facts about damnation: grievous matter, sufficient reflection, full consent of the will, and then impenitent death, in full knowledge of being in the state of mortal sin and deliberately defying God's mercy. Pinkie deliberately, and in cold blooded determination chooses hell. "I want to be damned". The reader's lax conscience cannot but tighten under the lash of the truth about sin and eternal damnation.

In the guise of a thriller, Brighton Rock carries beyond the pales of the church the traditional fire-and-brimstone hell sermon, and gains admittance into consciences closely on guard against any form of religious preaching. From the lips of the contemptible young gangster and the simple waitress they imbibe truths of which they stand in need: marriage outside the Church is sinful--"We are going to do a mortal sin". Marriage is a sacrament to be received in the state of grace--"I wanted to be in the state of grace

when I married you." God's pardon can be gained in Confession if the penitent is sincere and has a firm purpose of amendment. "It'll be no good going to Confession ever again as long as we are both alive." He means as long as they continue together in their sinful state of marriage. There is, above all, the abiding truth of God's enduring mercy for the sinner. When Rose is defiant and tearless, in confession the priest does not condemn her, but gives her the "seventy-time-seventh" chance of amendment when he says: "We must hope and pray. You can't conceive...the... appalling...strangeness of the mercy of God".

Other points brought out by the book are: lack of love and moral training in the home are largely responsible for juvenile delinquency; the slums, Capitalism, the diseased fruits of irreligion, are the breeding places of social evils; religious belief in good and evil is more efficacious in the preservation of the individual, and mankind in general than is mere natural belief in right and wrong. It points to Penance as the remedy of social and individual immorality.

The Power and the Glory

Francois Mauriac in his preface to The Power and the Glory says: "G. Greene has penetrated as by force into the realm of the unknown; into the realm of the nature of grace. His vision is untroubled by any bias"[1].

The book is superficially the story of an honest atheist hunting an outlawed priest. The set-up of the hunt is exciting and of a nature to captivate the interest of a wide range of readers; but Mr. Greene's purpose is not to amuse the public at the expense of a priest: his concern here, as in all his books is to unmask evil and to show it forth in full-dress ugliness. Just below the surface, runs an amusing stream of satire on Liberalism trying to free society from the burdens of Christianity, by the gentle means of blinking pistols. Deeper down, in the heart of the book lies a rare treasure of implication on the indefectibility of the Church.

Mr. Greene has gathered the material for this book during his temporary residence in Mexico. He depicts that country in the 1930's where a Socialist government is banning

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1 Francois Mauriac, in preface to Graham Greene's The Power and the Glory, Toronto & London, William Heinemann, Ltd., 1940, 288 pages.

the Church and her priests from where they have held sway for centuries. He says:

"Here is the abundant disorder that has followed government under the Liberal Fallacy in Mexico; this is the loathsome way people behave if they are given their heads"[2].

The Mexican atmosphere and detail of squalor, venality, laziness and cruelty make the book convincing and realistic.

The character portrayal is graphic and effective towards whetting Mr. Greene's point of satire on Liberalism: the lieutenant, the Soviet officer, is comely and dapper, and the priest is unattractive and unkempt. The lieutenant is never seen without a pistol blinking on his hip. His room is plain and clean as a monastic cell, and within its white walls he spends long hours meditating on the new order to be effected on the ruins of the old. The priest's threadbare clothes are dusty and torn, and instead of a pistol on his hip, he wears an old leather case; instead of a clean monastic cell, he has for shelter fetid barns and

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2 Anthony West, quoting Graham Greene, The Power and the Glory, in The Statesman and the Nation, vol. 19, nº 473, (New Series) March 16, 1940, page 371.

outhouses, where he huddles in fear praying for courage to remain faithful to his sacred wardenship. The other characters are yellow-toothed, unprogressive, denizens of a rocky, sun-baked desert. It is for these unlovely, decrepit creatures that the priest is risking his life.

Mr. Greene's peculiarity of depicting unlovely characters proves what has heretofore been stated in regard to his belief that advantages of looks and fortune are of little consequence in the balance of divine values, but it also exposes him to misinterpretation and to berating criticism.

Translating Mr. Bertrand: "The more miserable and belittled a man is in every sense of the term, the more God is glorified, so that it seems normal to see cowardice, shabbiness and sin marking those whom God has chosen"[3].

The comment affirms what has anteriorly been stated in this study: the material of Mr. Greene's choosing holds dangers for some readers, and his treatment, thereof, is subtle to the point of daring; yet his attack on evil has a salutary acerbity.

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3 Theophile Bertrand, La culture par la lecture, in Nos Cours, Montreal, vol. 12, n° 15, January 20, 1951, p. 3.

The framework of the story, as that of most of his books, rests upon the hunted man. It is fascinating to follow the paradoxical entanglements of a priest being hunted as a lawbreaker, by atheistic officials. The fantastical circumstances are rendered acceptible and plausible by the insertion of abundant selected local colour.

The priest's human weaknesses are all laid bare; he is almost every thing that a priest should not be, but in spite of these shortcomings his religion gives him a power to impart strength to others. He clings desperately to this strange spiritual possession that makes something in his faith and character more noble than the life through which he moves.

The drama of this hounded priest is tense and touching. It shows Greene's understanding of the inner conflict of responsibility in the priest's soul. He is anointed and he does not flee God; he flees his fears, all in praying desperately to persevere in loyalty to the greatest Thing he knows. With all mankind condemning his sinfulness, with Soviet officials upon his heels, and not a spot to rest his head, he remains obdurate in his determination to do brave things and to give God to the souls confided to him.

This is indeed a most daring study of the power of a priest to bring God down to earth into the lives of a people. Despite the hell of remorse that he carries with him night and day, he remains Christ's anointed one, the channel of the redeeming blood from the sacred fountains of Calvary to the sin seared hearts of his spiritual children, the dispenser of Eternal Life, the warden of the gates of heaven, and the conqueror of hell.

We see him arriving, under cover of night, in some lone jungle village, tired and hungry and more ragged than the poorest of his flock, and yet they kneel to him, kiss his hand and beg him to hear their confession. Then, although dying for need of rest and sleep, he spends the night hearing their humble avowals, absolving them from their "five years' burden of guilt", and imploring God to be merciful unto them. More and more numerous they come to him through the shadows of the dark....

> "It would be such a pity if the soldiers came before we had time...such a burden on poor souls, father", they pleaded [4].

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4 The Power and the Glory, page 51.

Then he, tired and exhausted to the point of tears:

"Let them all come...I am your servant"[5].

...and the silence of the night listens on to the long sad tale of their transgressions. One after another he gives them that peace of soul, from which he himself is banned.

When in the village of his housekeeper, the only place he could call home, he is harassed by remorse of conscience about giving scandal to the children, and drawing a death penalty on hostages taken because of his suspected presence there, the struggle in his soul becomes tense unto breaking. He considers the risks the villagers are taking for his paltry person, yet duty holds him there, for he embodies their sole spiritual support.

> He was the only priest the children could remember: it was from him they would take their ideas of the faith. But it was from him too they took God....When he was gone it would be as if God in all this space between the sea and the mountains ceased to exist. Wasn't it his duty to stay, even if they despised him, even if they were murdered for his sake?...He was shaken with the enormity of the problem. Yes he was unworthy-- but when he said mass in their midst and pronounced the words of consecration... He could hear the sigh of breaths released: God was here in the body for the first time in six years. When he raised the Host he could imagine the faces lifted like famished dogs [6].

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5 The Power and the Glory, page 53.

6 Id., ibid., pp. 80 - 88.

All of a sudden, the alarm of the approaching gestapo is whispered through the worshipping congregation; altar and cloth are hastily stowed away and the divine spell is broken. They are again brought down to earth, face to face with the burdens of life, and he, who but a moment ago had brought Almighty God into their midst, he whose command the heavens had obeyed, hurries away into the sheltering jungle. As he recedes, an indefinable wave of loneliness and vacancy surges back into the village. It was as if he had taken God with him.

He finally gives up his last chance of escape, by answering a sick-call at the moment he could have embarked on a boat for home. He is shortly after, betrayed into the hands of the police, and imprisoned. While preparing for death, he tells his fellow prisoners not to think that martyrs were like him.

The purport of the book is to show the importance of religion in the moral preservation of the individual and of society; and "to bring out the unlimited power for good that a priest has in society, and his glory in being the anointed one of Christ giving God to his people"[7].

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7 Anthony West, The Power and the Glory, in The New Statesman and Nation, London & New York, vol. 19, n° 473, (New Series), March 16, 1940, p. 371.

The book is fundamentally opposed to everything that Liberalism stands for, and is a study of its fallacious maximums set in parallel with Catholicism's divine power for the preservation of morality. It is the manifesto of Mr. Greene's unshaken faith in the ultimate victory of Christianity; through it pulses an undisturbed trust in the voice of the Master appeasing the tempests of time: "Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world"[8]. It is a daring study, and offers dangers, but its purport is of a nature to make it deserving of high appraisal.

As one of the books in the trilogy on the four last things, it teaches that a priest, even though subject to human frailties, possesses the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven for time and eternity.

The Heart of the Matter

The Heart of the Matter, 1948, is Mr. Greene's masterpiece. As the third in his trilogy it serves as a complement to Brighton Rock because its moral involvements are vastly more subtle. It maintains that although the Church knows the

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8 St. Mathew, 28, 20.

the answers concerning the character of sin and grace, man's final justification is in the mind of God alone, the reconciliation of perfect Justice with perfect Mercy. Only a Catholic writer could set up a similar theme and only a Catholic reader could comprehend that its complexities are unfathomable.

To get the full purport of the book it is necessary to consider, each in turn, the steps by which a man with a psychic complex descends, at middle age, from a state of virtue and justice into an abyss of sin and despair. The antecedents and circumstances of his death are such that conclusions as to his final justification remain a controversial mystery.

The Plot: Henry Scobie, called by his friends, Scobie the Just, because of his incorruptibility, is Deputy Commissioner of Police in a British colony, somewhere near Vichy, on the heat drugged coast of Africa. The place is an ugly one, washed by a tan-colored, sluggish river, and infested with vermin. The heat and moisture are stifling and unwholesome, turning into virulent green, the slightest scratch.

Not only is the place reeking with physical discomfort but with immorality of every kind: it is parasitic, cosmopolitan corrupt. There is poisonous gossip and tippling

at the club; there is intrigue for administrative posts, and for the monopoly of an illicit diamond trade; there is the disgusting brothel just across from the police-court, and for poor Scobie, there is moreover, the discomfiting atmosphere of a loveless home. His wife, Louise, is an unattractive, whining creature, with every taste in direct opposition to his. Their only child has died, and her picture on the dressing table, is to him a constant reminder of their loveless home.

However, Scobie is bound as by spell to the unattractive colony post; he even finds it beautiful (for the glad five minutes of mesmeric beauty at sunset, every day). He loves it for the sake of the Negroes, Indians, Syrians, and broken whites; all unwanted, lost beings, who hold him by an inexplicable sense of pity. His strange psychic complex of pity for the underdog, makes the unlovely irresistibly attractive to him; he has no sense of responsibility toward the beautiful and the intelligent, they can find their own way, but he would give his life in defence of society's disinherited.

His wife has her heart and face set away from him: she is ambitious and deplores the fact that her husband has

but a third-rate post, and that she is barred the society of the elite. For years she's been egging him on to promotion and has been whining to make a trip to some fashionable South African post.

After fifteen years of nagging and complaining she has worn Scobie's nerves to a shred, and he, through pity for her, arranges for her long-desired trip. He hopes that the trip will compensate her loveless existence, and win him temporal respite from his odious conjugal burden. Scobie's spirit has become completely lost "in the darkness of the flesh, the flesh of a man bound in promise, responsibility, theology, and belief, to the flesh of a woman he no longer loved"[1].

To effect this trip he borrows money from Yusef, the bloodsucking Syrian. Through him, Scobie becomes involved with the colony's chief law-breaker and with illicit smuggling. Scobie who had spent years of supervision to control the smuggling of diamonds becomes himself entangled in the hateful commerce. Pity for his wife, and pity for the fawning Portugese sea-captain whom he should have

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1 Thomas Sugrue, Story of Man's Deepest Spiritual Conflict, New York Herald Tribune, vol. 24, n° 47, July 11, 1948, p. 1.

denounced to the law, wrung from him his first fault, and scored its first victory over his conscience.

Pity scored a second victory shortly after, when it precipitated him into a quarrel with the Catholic priest at Bamba, over the sin of suicide of young Pemberton, who had hanged himself because of indebtedness. The predicament and moral suffering of the doomed young man blinded him to all sense of ethical values and caused him to cry out in a sort of revolt against theological authorities: "Even the Church can't teach me that God doesn't pity the young".

Some time later he goes to meet the survivors of a torpedoed ship. One, a bride of nineteen, whose husband had been drowned, lay there before him, still and helpless, clutching a stamp album in her childlike hands. At the sight of her helplessness, pity again surged to the fore and clasped her pain unto itself.

When she comes to live at the Nissen huts, Scobie fathers and protects her against the lewd advances of a young colonial official. Scobie does not love her for her feminine charms; he loves no woman. Yet he becomes ensnared in debasing adulterous relations with her. He sullies his conscience, and then commits himself by writing her a disastrous profession of love, on a letter that comes

to his wife, Louise. Here again, it is pity that impels him, not love; Helen in need of some form of security, wrung his guilty profession of love from him, and Scobie, to reassure her, let pity have its way.

Now Scobie is lost, by a faulty application of a warped theology. His very spirit loves all things that know hurt and need, and his moral obligations bind him to the fidelity of his lawfully wedded wife. He is face to face with a dilemma: How can a man give himself fairly for those he loves and pities? How can he love God, and ignore his helpless creatures weltering in injury and suffering? How can he love a woman taken in the sacrament of marriage but grown cold and far away in pride and worldly ambitions?

When Louise comes home, she learns through gossip, of his infidelity, and to put him to a test, sadistically tortures him. She suggests going to Holy Communion; this, she thinks, will disculpate him in her opinion. To cover his infidelity he yields to her persistent pressure, and makes a sacrilegious Communion. His moral anguish is unbearable, and convinced that this will involve his final perdition, he makes a final prayer: "O God I offer my

damnation to you. Take it dear Lord, use it for them"[2].

Eventually, driven to desperation by domestic, spiritual, social, and financial entanglements, Scobie, with every care to make his deed appear unintentional, commits suicide by taking an overdose of medicine.

The final scene is Scobie's bungalow, shortly after his death. Father Rank, the wise, tired, jaundiced priest is paying a visit of condolence to the widow. She, speaking from a Janenistical religious angle says:

> "...It's no good even praying...."
> Father Rank clapped the cover of the diary to, and said furiously, "For goodness' sake, Mrs. Scobie, don't imagine you--or I--know a thing about God's mercy".
> "The Church says...."
> "I know the Church says. The Church knows all the rules. But it doesn't know what goes on in a single human heart".
> "Oh why, why did he have to make such a mess of things?"
> Father Rank said, "It may be an odd thing to say when a man's as wrong as he was--but I think from what I saw of him, that he really loved God"[3].

Such is the psychological entanglement, related with a narrative genius, a depth of character insight and human understanding. With it Mr. Greene, has created, an excellent novel in every sense of novel craftsmanship, but above all he

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2 Graham Greene, in The Heart of the Matter.

3 Id., ibid.

he has made a skilful revelation of the inner, deeper, more compulsive life of the mind. The Heart of the Matter is made to be heard and seen with clarity, and felt with impact. As is his usual method Mr. Greene finishes his story without comment or explanation. He has told his story very objectively. Scobie has behaved in a certain way; Mr. Greene does not appraise his ethical status nor the morality of his behaviour; he lets the reader ruminate and draw whatever conclusion he will. Mr. Greene, assuming that neither he nor anyone knows what takes place in the inner soul of man, nor what transpires between that soul and its Maker at the particular judgment, does not commit himself. Yet in every one of his books that constitutes the point at issue - "the heart of the matter". He does not pretend to know what happened to Scobie, and it is because he does not take issues that his book is so highly controversial.

Mr. Greene's book has been brought by the "Book of the Month Club" to an extensive and disparate range of readers, and has become the means of a moral quickening and a wholesome controversy. So all in producing a variation of favorable and adverse reactions the book

makes its way, penetrating the masses and applying to them its bitter sweet gall: it shocks the smug, soporific, hard-hearted Catholic into a more alert faith; it brings to the agnostic the awareness of his unescapable moral responsibilities, and to the sinner, the knowledge of the astonishing accessibility of God's Mercy.

The Heart of the Matter, with the other books of the trilogy will be reconsidered in the following chapter in order to bring out more explicitly Mr. Greene's attitude to evil.

CHAPTER VIII

ATTITUDE TO EVIL

So far, in considering Mr. Greene's qualifications for mastership in the fictional study of evil, we have seen the influences that fashioned his mind, his concern for religion, his craftsmanship, his interpretation of the times, and the outstanding features of his best works. This chapter will try to show his attitude to evil.

His own words quoted at the beginning of chapter I, will testify to his profoundly religious purpose in the treatment of evil: "...love and fear of God, sin and redemption and the ruined world into which Christ came. They are our realities too, armed as we are with the blood of God against the seductiveness of earth, its talons, the realities with which we must grapple if Christianity isn't to be meaningless"[1]. With Christianity so strongly at work in his mind it is evident that he does not portray sin to make it glamorous or attractive, but to signal its malignity: the wreckage of the divine image of perfection to which man has been destined by his Maker; or again, the spurious fruit of hell, growing in proportion to man's revolt against divine love.

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1 Graham Greene, p. 6.

Throughout all his writings Mr. Greene deals with evil as a means to an end: to teach its significance in the balance of eternal values, to heal those whom it has scarred, and to save those whom it has seduced. He endeavours to show that the moral status of man either disrupts or upholds social security, and that the ultimate outcome of increasing immorality would be universal disintegration.

At the heart of his speculation on the temporary disasters of immorality is his deeper concern for the eternal destiny of fellow humans. He weighs their acts in the balance of divine law, penetrates their motivation, and fits them into the divine plan of predestination.

A most subtle dialectic on moral selfhood is found in his masterpiece, The Heart of the Matter. It is a grim unflinching study of the moral disintegration of an apparently just man. Scobie, the protagonist, is known among his colleagues as "the just", but he is blinded by a tragic complex of unenlightened pity. His conscience is first harassed by a sense of guilt for his wife's unhappiness, then lashed to madness by sinful involvements, and finally to despondency and suicide through moral cowardice. As he fights his way through the fogs of suicidal death he cries, "My God I love You". Scobie's disintegration is horrifying, but his last

cry of "My God I love You", is bewildering.

The circumstances of his death are so ambiguous as to defy any definite conclusion about his salvation. He is left suspended in the balance between divine justice and divine mercy. This guards against presumption and against despair, and implies that man must work at his salvation in fear and trembling.

It is a powerful study of actual grace struggling with the soul to incline it to the acceptance of divine law; but it is also the terrifying account of a man's personal responsibility for his damnation, by a persistent withstanding of grace. Scobie's life becomes one long chain of sin and misery because of his stubborn abuse of grace, by putting his own warped sense of pity in the way of the Church's moral standards and his conscience. His tragic defeat is used by Mr. Greene to show that the Church's theological norms are the wardens of man's temporal and eternal security, and that man in opposing his own warped standards to their saving action, engages in a foredoomed struggle. The description of evil in its horrifying aspects serves as a means to establishing the book's purport on the abuse of grace, and the Church's definition of morality.

Scobie's moral entanglements and the ambiguous circumstances of his death were necessary to make a concrete study of her theological teachings on the internal and the external form of conscience and law.

In The Power and the Glory, evil again serves as a means to exploring grace and the Church's power of moral preservation. The squalor and venality are depicted to show the depravity of life without the saving powers of the Church; the weakling priest is shown with faults and flaws, but his power and influence for good remain, through the efficacy of the sacramental grace of Holy Orders.

In Brighton Rock it would have been impossible to make such a vivid, incisive study of the reality of hell without the entailing crimes and horrors.

Mr. Greene's last book, The End of the Affair, is reviewed in The Ensign by the Rev. G. Emmett Carter, Ph.D., under the heading, Greene's Last Novel is Written for Sinners. He opens his review with:

> This is a terrible book. Terrible in the true sense of the word as when Jacob said on awakening from his dream "How terrible is this place, it is the anteroom of heaven"[2].

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2 Rev. G. Emmett Carter, Ph.D., Greene's Latest Novel is Written for Sinners, in The Ensign, Montreal, vol. 3, nº 51, October 13, 1951, p. 14, col. 1.

Then he continues to explain that it is terrible because it reaches down into the heart of man and brings out fears, needs, loves and aspirations so intimate that he himself dreads to admit them or to face them. Mr. Greene shows forth their significance in stark nakedness. Here again involvements in evil serve a purpose: they sound the passions of man, and show that the Divine Lover is unyielding and persistent in His struggle for supremacy in the human heart. It is a terrifying study of man's abuse of the sacred fire of human love, and of its fierce withstanding of rivalry. But, it is above all, a powerful revelation of the consuming fire of divine love, and its overpowering strength. The battlefield where the human lover tries to withstand the Divine Lover in fierce contention for the heart of a woman is littered with the wreckage of sin, but the implications that evolve from the turmoil, are sublime.

But here a question: has Mr. Greene the right to portray life in stark, shocking vividness? The Reverend Carter answers: "It is my opinion that he has not only the right, but the duty...I do not believe that he could

have written the book and eliminated these passages"[3].

As has been previously stated, Mr. Greene's books are not for children nor for the "sheltered-from-life", but for those who bear its scars and who bend under the full weight of its responsibilities. They are the concrete records of man's arduous struggle against the powers of darkness; they reek with sin but they hold a bittersweet healing gall for the wounded brothers of Christ.

> We are dust, moistened with slime, quickened by God's breath, and ever since Eve we have tended to return to that primeval guilt: The criminal slipping back to the scene of his crime. We can't evade this without denying the cross and our salvation[4].

These lines breathe Mr. Greene's deep concern for the sorry plight of the sinner, and his sense of responsibility towards him. They are an echo to the voice of the Divine Healer: "They that are well have no need of a physician, but they that are sick. I came not to call the just, but sinners"[5].

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3 Id., ibid.

4 Graham Greene, p. 6.

5 St. Mark, 2, 17.

Mr. Greene's attitude to evil is that of the healer: his prime purpose in writing is to castigate and to heal contemporary evil. To conclude a study on his writings without arriving at this deduction, would be to taste the husk and to leave the fruit.

CONCLUSION

Putting into concise form the data by which we have tried to prove Mr. Greene a master in the fictional study of evil, we find him to be an outstanding Catholic litterateur who has taken up the challenge of analyzing contemporary evils and advancing wholesome life standards.

His life experiences have been favorable towards fashioning the nerve and tissue of a capable novelist: he is a descendent of a cultured family and has inherited a talent for writing; his education has developed his literary talents to a high degree of perfection, and his experiences in journalism, travel, war, and lecturing, have proved invaluable preparations to his career in writing.

To these exterior advantages may be added his profoundly religious attitude to life, and his conversion to Catholicism through an intellectual quest for truth.

He has been shown as the first living major novelist to write so outspokenly as a Catholic: he stresses the spiritual end of all human endeavour, and by conveying religion through fiction has brought to it richer sources of life norms.

By a study of his technique of novel writing it has been shown that in craftsmanship as well as in philosophy

his books rank among the first of our century. His philosophic depth, and grim unflinching outspokenness, constitute a unique ascetic for the probing, depicting, and the healing of life. This with his masterful gift of commanding attention and holding in suspense, makes his books popular as well as wholesome.

He interprets our world as decadent, brutal and morally numb, and grips it as if its taste for decency had long since spent itself. He unmasks its crudities in unsparing starkness, and stirs up storms of protest and controversy. These storms give rise to a wholesome speculation on truths realities and principles to which our world needs to be re-educated, and which it needs must imbibe to be saved from universal moral disintegration. Mr. Greene's collaboration between spirituality and realism by paring his thrillers of a didactic sanctimony of religiosity, is a heretofore unheard of method of probing into the temper of life and ministering to its deep-down decay.

His books are captivating and very broadly read with the result that they carry their healing message to thousands. Moreover, they are readily adapted to the screen, and constitute a sound form of entertainment. They are not humorous, but breath-taking with excitement and suspense, and command

speculation along morally quickening themes.

Mr. Greene depicts evil in every imaginable form: temptation, sin, passion, frustration, and all the hardships that man must face, not to make them attractive, but to make them as loathsome as they are in the eyes of God; to provide the wisdom and the will for our decadent times to reconstruct a Christian attitude to life.

Mr. Greene is a novelist of undisputed merit; he plies his art in championing the Church's age-long stand for justice, and bringing about the rebirth of man in her terrible way. He is deservedly master in the fictional study of evil.

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APPENDIX

AN ABSTRACT OF

Graham Greene Master in the Fictional Study of Evil[1]

Graham Greene's Biography, Catholic Philosophy in Fiction, Writing Technique, Interpretation of Our Times, Principal Works, and Attitude to Evil, are the six main topics developed in this thesis to determine the status of Graham Greene in the fictional study of contemporary evil. It purports to show that Mr. Greene ranks among the first of contemporary novelists, and that he offers a masterful analysis of present-day evil.

Mr. Greene's life experiences and personality are studied in the first chapter as a preparation of the survey of his mastership to the fictional study of evil. Thereupon outstanding factors in the field of fictional and philosophical writing are considered.

Writing the thesis fills the entire bulk of this study, since one chapter is consecrated to each of the following: Catholic Philosophy in Fiction, Writing

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1 Sr. Sadie Hedwig Neumann, S.G.M., Graham Greene Master in the Fictional Study of Evil, Thesis presented to the University of Ottawa, St. Norbert, Man., 1951, IX-109 pages.

Technique, Interpretation of Our Times, Attitude to Evil, and a direct application of these, to his principal works.

Three chapters are devoted to the study of his books: his first novel, The Man Within, an artistic study of the dual nature of man; among his lesser works, England Made Me, an analysis of three outstanding flaws of English culture; It's A Battlefield, a portrayal of the administration of justice; his entertainments, The Ministry of Fear, This Gun For Hire, and The Third Man, studies of the horrors of modern warfare, with philosophical implications; Brighton Rock, The Power and the Glory, and The Heart of the Matter, a trilogy on the four last things. His last book, The End of the Affair, deals with human and divine love.

Mr. Greene is taken to be representative of the influence for moral reintegration of the contemporary Catholic novel.

Appended to the body of the thesis is:

An Abstract of Graham Greene Master in the Fictional Study of Evil

J.M.J.