THE CATHOLIC TREATMENT OF SIN AND REDEMPTION IN THE NOVELS OF GRAHAM GREENE

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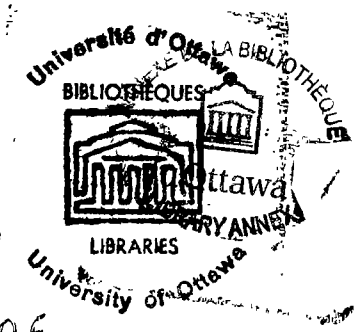

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INTRODUCTION

When the importance of Catholic writers in contemporary literature is considered, it is found that they are, quantitatively and qualitatively, in the first rank. They are there because they have a powerful literature; their power comes from an understanding of perfect Love as it was exemplified in the Incarnation and Redemption. With this Love as the keynote, modern Catholic writers are more and more concerning themselves with man's relationship with God.

Graham Greene, one of England's foremost Catholic writers, is primarily concerned with the great conflict between the supernatural forces of Good and Evil - God and Satan. The main characters of his novels are beings involved in the struggle between God and Satan fighting for their souls. The primary purpose of this thesis will be to examine Greene's obsessions with the twin ideas of sin and redemption and the existence of Good and Evil as they are presented in the light of a Catholic conscience. Graham Greene has been rightly accused of presenting unusual and unorthodox Catholic problems and because of his presentations he has been falsely accused of violating Catholic beliefs. The secondary purpose of this thesis will be to show that Greene's ideas are in keeping with the

tenets of Catholic dogma.

His four Catholic novels, stating clearly defined Catholic problems in Catholic terms, will be examined to show how Greene reconciles the pervasive evil of man with the Infinite Love of God. Though told in terms of stark realism, each of these novels touches on profound spiritual truths in a way that only a Catholic seems able to understand.

In Greene's works one is brought face to face with the great issues of sin and damnation - Greene writes always in terms of heaven and hell. In Brighton Rock, evil in its most vicious form is presented - a Catholic knowingly and willingly damning his soul; in The Power and The Glory, Greene depicts the power and the glory of the Catholic church despite the drunkenness and cowardice of a priest; in The Heart of The Matter, a pity that drives a Catholic to suicide yet offers him the means of salvation is presented; and in The End of The Affair, the Hound of Heaven is depicted in pursuit of the soul of a twentieth century Mary Magdalen.

It is fatally easy to impose order on Greene's four novels for the sake of finding consistency in his development. Yet each of his novels is a positive book. There is nothing ambiguous about them, either in the values they uphold or in the deep and valid sympathy they

evoke. Greene's moral fervor, and his peculiar concern with man as beset by evil and yearning to reach God through a maze of despair and anguish, pervades each of his novels. Greene is not a technically trained theologian, he is not interested particularly in solving theological problems and questions, but he is interested in delineating the terrific impact of theology on human souls.

The renewed interest in Catholic literature makes a study of Graham Greene appropriate at this time for he is one of the writers responsible for lifting Catholic literature out of its ghetto existence and into the front rank. His novels paint no wishful picture of human existence - its struggles, its defeats, its triumphs. He mirrors reality; recognizes the power of evil in the world, but above all is aware of the Love of God for "poor, sinful man". His works are useful in the same way that St. Augustine's works are useful; both writers attempt to help men realize the existence of evil in the world. Greene's novels, as St. Augustine's works, show how sin may sometimes contribute towards the growth of sanctity - if not sanctity, then salvation.

What appears from Greene's writing to be his conception of man raises a very interesting point of Catholic theology. Both the common and orthodox points of view are that man is indeed born in sin; that man has his

desires and the control of them is often difficult, but with the help of Grace not impossible. In Greene's world the point of view is that man is indeed born in sin; that man gives in to his desires and makes no effort to control them, but in the few seconds between living and dying man reaches for God's helping hand. In this Greene is a controversial Catholic writer and it is not altogether too surprising that some critics should have claimed that with his apparent view of the utter depravity of man his theology is more Protestant than Catholic.

Yet there is only one character in Greene's books who, because he would not reach out for God's helping hand, is finally damned. He is Pinkie in Brighton Rock, who, while a sadist himself, has a horror of physical pain. The rest of Greene's characters are divided into three classes. There are those, who, whatever their weakness, have fought manfully for something other than and above themselves. There are those who, even in betrayal, recognize the moral law which they flout; and finally there are those who have never known the terms of the problem. For all these there is hope, provided that they suffer. For all of these the problem of pain must never be far away; pain is the common factor for all of Greene's characters. Only Pinkie is damned, not only because of the suffering he causes but more so because he refuses

to suffer himself.

Gathering material for this thesis has been quite difficult for dependence has had to be almost exclusively on short articles and essays;[1] no complete or exhaustive work on Greene's treatment of sin and damnation has ever been done. Since the purpose of this thesis is to examine in the light of Catholic dogma the treatment of sin and damnation in Greene's four major novels the main source of material is from Catholic periodicals and journals. However, since some Catholic critics and teachers are inclined to bias, sources in secular publications were also used. In most instances, the non-Catholic critics were more interested in Greene's literary skill than they were in his "role" as interpreter of Catholic belief. Even though his novels are directed to non-Catholics as well as to Catholics there is something so inextricably bound up in belief that critics and readers were missing crucial theological points. In the secular reviews, for instance, no one attached any significance to Scobie's sacrilege in The Heart of The Matter. Time magazine headlined their review of The End of The Affair as the story of "sanctity

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1 Many of the footnotes and references will be incomplete as to author, source, or date. Mr. P. B. Lysaght of London, England sent his collection of Greene clippings that he had gathered over the years. Unfortunately, not all of his clippings contained the necessary information; however, a photostat copy of each clipping is on file.

through adultery"; an article in The Partisan Review called the whiskey-priest's attitude toward the permanence of his priestly powers "exaggerated sentiment".

In order to better understand Greene's role as a Catholic novelist it is necessary to trace the growth of the Catholic novel from its former ghetto existence to its present stature as a record of man's eternal fight with the power of evil. Not too many years ago the Catholic novel when it existed was little more than a poorly done, restricted outlook on life in which the teachings of the Catholic Church were propagandized and upheld and in which only Catholic priests appeared as the main characters. Reading Catholic fiction was "duty" reading in which the outcome was certain - the Church triumphant. In the early 1900's a Catholic novel with a portrayal of a Pinkie or a Scobie as the main character would be wholly unthinkable. The first chapter of this thesis will attempt to give the minor role played and but a sketch of the slow growth and history of Catholic literature from Cardinal Newman's day to the present. Because the chapter will deal with religious literature the references to D. H. Lawrence and T. S. Eliot are merely to show a parallel growth between Protestant and Catholic writers. Despite the quarrel some may have with D. H. Lawrence's inclusion with religious writers his name and works are included if for no other

reason than his attempt to lift sexual relations onto a religious plane acceptable to Christians.

Traditions die hard and because they do there are still many Catholics who think of Catholic literature with a 1905 conscience. These Catholics, critics and readers, seem to have heard of strong emotion, failure, and sin; but have felt no emotions, admit to no failures or sin, and regard human pain as prose fiction rather than excruciating reality. Because there is still such thinking the problems involved in writing a novel, especially when the writer is a Catholic, are of such magnitude that no answers have ever been found. (Pope Pius XII promised to give his official view on the role of the Catholic writer but his death prevented his doing so.)

The second chapter will point out some of these problems, some personal ideas, and how the challenge was met by Catholic writers, especially Graham Greene. The inclusion of D. H. Lawrence in the first chapter will become relevant when the question of acceptable presentation of sex and sexual relations is considered as one of the major problems confronting the Catholic writer.

Greene's early years, his growth, and his conversion to the Catholic Church will be considered in some detail because these facts present essentials that give added meaning to his novels. His major obsessions - sin,

death, failure, hatred - are displayed in his novels and are more meaningful when correlated with his own life and development as a novelist. Especially will the third chapter point out the change between Greene the novelist and Greene the Catholic novelist for it will trace the growth of his new religious feelings as they manifest themselves in his life and works.

Then each of his four novels will be studied to show how his ideas are in conformity with Catholic thought and teaching. Each of the chapters will contain a definition of a particular point of Catholic doctrine, the Church's official reaction, and Greene's interpretation. In Brighton Rock it is the Justice of God; in The Power and The Glory, the Glory of God; The Heart of The Matter, Mercy; and The End of The Affair, Love. If in the analyses these novels are summarized it is because certain factors are crucial to a full understanding of the novels' implications. In referring to the characters in the novels the reference is to Greene for the analysis of his treatment of sin and redemption is in his characters and the reference to them is a reference to Greene.

The last chapter, the conclusion, will attempt to show that the love that Greene has for sinners as displayed in his four major novels resembles the Divine Love and that it is therefore the highest love on earth.

CHAPTER I

THE CATHOLIC NOVEL - TRADITION AND DIRECTION

Popular interest in Catholic literature is greater today than in any other period during the past several centuries. One of the reasons is the number of major Catholic writers producing readable works. They do so, writes Frank O'Malley, because ". . . beneath our civilization of surface and superficial progress alien to the spirit, a spiritual underworld has developed and strengthened itself and Catholic writers of the modern world are alive and powerful within it".[1] A second reason for the renewed interest is that Catholic literature is now considered to be a valuable record of man's human experience and is no longer thought of as narrow, cozy, or moralistic. Catholic literature is now being read by more Catholics and non-Catholics than ever before - the former do so out of a sense of desire rather than a sense of duty. A third reason, and the most important, is the role the Catholic authors have given man's sins and sufferings. The chief significance of the renascence of the Catholic novels is the renewal of the sense of spiritual suffering and the

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1 Frank O'Malley, "The Catholic World View", Catholic Renascence, ed. by Norman Weyand, Chicago, Loyola University Press, 1951, p. 84.

meaning and mystery of suffering and sin.[2] The role suffering and sin play in the Catholic novel is its most striking feature. The modern protagonist, in the role of a sinner suffering in a purgatorial sense the torments of mind and soul and deciding between good and evil, opposes the Christian who is often portrayed as a smug, pharisaic boor. This last aspect of contemporary Catholic literature applies especially to the novels of Léon Bloy, Georges Bernanos, and François Mauriac in France and to Evelyn Waugh and Graham Greene in England. The power of these contemporary writers stems from a full understanding of the meaning of the Church and her relation to the fundamental forces of human existence - Nature and Civilization.

The contemporary Catholic novel cannot be studied in isolation. It is the fruit of a period of evolution that began with the Catholic literary revival of the 1850's with John Henry Newman as the leader. He, along with Coventry Patmore, wrote in protest against the course being followed by European society. Newman's conversion to Catholicism came after he abandoned the Oxford Movement because he felt ". . . man is not enough" and ". . . the

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2 Ibid., p. 85.

terrible aboriginal calamity that is man's",[3] needed a firm foundation for salvation that could only be gotten in the Catholic faith. He gave the Victorian man a Catholic philosophy that was rejected because it opposed the scientific naturalism that was then in vogue. Coventry Patmore, on the other hand, achieved immense success and popularity with his Angel In The House (an epic of married love) but he turned his back on this popularity to write against what he referred to as a mechanical science. Still a third Catholic name that belongs to the age of Newman and Patmore is Gerard Manly Hopkins. Newman had preached the doctrine of purifying the source; Hopkins put it into practice, when, in 1868, he left Oxford and entered the Society of Jesus. He was not particularly interested in or annoyed by the political and economic problems of the times, but wrote of his spiritual suffering, of ". . . the dark night of the soul".[4] His writings, however, were neither recognized nor published until after World War I. Catholic literature of the Newman-Hopkins period was dwarfed into insignificance by the towering prosperity and confidence of the bourgeois world against which it

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3 Neville Braybrooke, "The Catholic Novel", Books on Trial, Vol. II, May, 1953, p. 274.

4 Calvert Alexander, The Catholic Literary Revival, Milwaukee, The Bruce Publishing Comlany, 1935, p. 26.

rebelled.[5]

Following Hopkins, Catholic authors such as Alice Meynell and Francis Thompson were accorded a small amount of recognition as they gained a measure of leadership. Alice Meynell, credited with being responsible for giving the Catholic literary revival its form and solidarity and oneness of purpose, led those who were working for the return to English literature of the Catholic spirit. She was the central figure of the Catholic Revival but Francis Thompson was its most famous voice. He was the first major English writer to treat of sin, despair, and repentance. His addiction to opium and his days of wandering about London's underworld, knowing the sins and corruption man was capable of, gave him a keen insight into the problems of man. The faith and prayers of his childhood gave him the sense of assurance that Christ was present to those who suffered and were repentant.

With the death of Thompson in 1907 the second stage of the Catholic Literary revival came to a close. The next stage was led by such men as Hilaire Belloc, G. K. Chesterton, and Maurice Baring. Theirs was an age of hope that all the manifestations of World War I were temporary, that the new ideologies would pass, and man

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5 Ibid., p. 83.

would return to the buoyant and confident days before the war. That this hope never materialized is evident in the choice the modern men of letters have had to make - the choice between Catholicism and Communism. A militant Catholicism or militant atheism was the choice as seen by the Russian philosopher, Nicolas Berdaev.[6] Evelyn Waugh also saw the modern artist as one who must make the decision between Rome and Moscow.[7] For Irving Babbit, the choice seemed to be between the decadence of materialism and the civilization of Catholicism and that, if so,

> . . . there does not seem to be much room for hesitation. In fact, the Catholic Church may perhaps be the only institution left in the Occident that can be counted upon to uphold civilized standards.[8]

In this phase of the Catholic literary revival the Catholic Church was established as one of the alternatives which many artists have chosen. Catholicism in the Nineteenth Century was not a recognized choice for the artist; rather, it was considered the choice of the weak. Today, however, many authors not only profess Catholicism but write under the spirit of the Church.

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6 Ibid., pp. 5-8.

7 Ibid., pp. 5-8.

8 Ibid., p. 7.

The Twentieth Century Catholic novelist has been handicapped, in the first place, by having had no previous Catholic novels to go to for guidance. The novel was a new form for showing the progress of man through his sins to Redemption. And the writers who shared with the poets and essayists the conviction that Catholic literature must embody truths were pioneers and experimentalists. A second handicap the novel had to overcome was the attitude the Catholics themselves had. They had come to look upon bad art as one of the characteristics of the Church by which man might know that She was of Christ - a kingdom not of this world. The Church was for centuries on the defensive and in a state of siege and its main efforts had to be simply to hold its own and its main counterattack had to be apologetic and didactic. Further, the Church was peopled by peasants who had to battle against poverty, social inferiority, and prejudice. Culture, letters, patronage, and the arts - these were luxuries She could ill afford.

Still another handicap the Catholic novel had to overcome was the conception of art for art's sake. This doctrine that flourished during the Nineteenth Century implied the autonomy of art and artists, the rejection of didactic aim, and the refusal to subject art to moral

or social judgements.[9] The Catholic writers felt that there was continuity between religious experiences and everyday experiences, but they had not learned that "art" and "religion" must go together; they had the mistaken notion that a "belief" could substitute for literary values. Art for art's sake was not enough, remarked Martin Turnell, there had to be a balance between the man who believed and the man who wrote.[10] When the balance was achieved the artist's talents were enhanced; but it is also true that a belief will not make an artist. Quite the contrary in some instances, for novelists have left the Catholic Church and have written excellent books about their defection, such as James Joyce's Portrait of The Artist.

The days of the schism between the Catholic novelist and Catholicism are almost non-existent. Today there are new developments in the contemporary novel; the search for a formula of greatness and the attempt to give a general meaning to man's story. Man has been forced ". . . through suffering to grow and extend himself, to deepen his whole nature, to take part in breaking down the wall that separates man from man, to cooperate with the whole

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9 William Tindall, Forces in Modern British Literature, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1947, p. 5.

10 Martin Turnell, "The Religious Novel", The Commonweal, Vol. 35, October 26, 1951, p. 55.

redemptive process".[11] The new novels urge man to transcend, to change the structure of his personality, and to prepare himself to live in eternity.[12]

This enlarged conception of man's dignity has its bearings on the novel, especially on the means that are used to give stature to the protagonist and, to a lesser degree, to all the characters in fiction. The importance of this problem is indicated by the fact that there are two conflicting theories of greatness trying to win over the man in the street and his brothers in fiction. The first is communism with its bent for greatness in revolutionary acts and liberation through a new social order. The second is Christianity in which man's moral endeavor cooperates with Sanctifying Grace. These two theories have characteristics in common. They aim at satisfying man's desire to do his part in redeeming the world. Their strength is in the emphasis they place on action. They desire to keep man in the fight of the issues of the day which began in the two decades between World Wars I and II, when the lower and middle classes, and many of the intellectuals, had great hope in the value of education and cherished the belief that science would remake the world.

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11 N. Elizabeth Monroe, "The New Man in Fiction", Renascence, Vol. 7, Autumn, 1953, p. 14.

12 Ibid., pp. 13-15.

Together with this belief in salvation through progress was a general acceptance of the theory of evolution. History, literature, morals, and religion were no longer regarded as having fixed principles but were seen as changing phases of a changing world. While accepting many Victorian ideas, people of the Twentieth Century were critical of its standards of life and art. They charged the Victorians with sentimentality, with failure to discern truth because of excessive emotion. They objected to the previous generation's tendency to moralize and its failure to call things by their common names. They accused their predecessors of timidity and compromise. The Victorians had believed in democracy, but they had accepted it with reservations. Many among them who still held to Christianity failed to see that it offered a solution to the problems of their age. They maintained many of the Christian traditions without faith in Christian teachings.

In contrast, people of the twentieth century threw off pretense in both social conventions and art. The dwindling respect for Christian morality was approaching the point where men no longer believed in it. They demanded a sharper evaluation of life which caused men to take sides in one camp or another. Many turned to Catholicism, others to Socialism. The latter led to a denial of the existence of the soul and a more general

decline of ethical standards.

The year 1914 marked the beginning of the great wars. After World War I the intellectuals were beginning to doubt the triumph of science. In its place pessimism resulted when men began to see that the war-to-end-wars had not succeeded in producing anything but further chaos in international relations. With the disillusionment that followed came an increase of moral laxity and a denial of the existence of ethical standards in moral laws. Writers such as Freud, Adler, and Jung claimed to find the reason for human behavior in man's subconscious and seemed to weaken popular belief in free will. In 1925 the unemployment trouble expanded into the world depression of the thirties. In politics men were swinging further and further to the left. They tended to accept the Communist brand of Socialism and to compose their works in accordance with Marxian doctrine.

Communism forces man to look at reality - a reality predetermined by party dogma. Communistic man has what he sees and the way he sees it prescribed to him. Christianity offers men free will, the right of a moral choice - the right to act so long as he is responsible for the consequences; the right to serve or not to serve God - to cooperate with God in the Divine Plan by which the World is to be saved. Furthermore, Christians on all sides are

being encouraged to aid in the salvation of all men - a general movement toward a more powerful lay apostolate.

A group of contemporary novelists has carried the lay apostolate program to its limit, not hesitating to people their novels with drunkards, prostitutes, neurotics, men and women whose apparent viciousness cloaks a core of spirituality, characters who can never achieve any good by themselves but through whose lives the Hand of God can be traced. Even though the authors have dug deep into the mire of mankind, their work has been to show that even under these conditions the Image of God can be seen. They have conveyed the religious message:

> . . . not by turning characters into abstractions . . . not by putting up a pretense of allegorical significance where no allegory exists, not by interrupting the narrative for comment or explanation; but by maintaining some sort of correspondence between what is observed and what is created, in other words, between the world of reality and the world of art.[13]

The realization that art and religion are compatible has brought about two new trends in contemporary Catholic literature. The first, circumstance ethics, is inspired by an antipathy for mediocre and conventional Catholics whose approach to the commandments of God is the same as their approach to the dictates of society. They are not "live" Catholics; they differ in no way from

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13 Ibid., p. 14.

non-believers in their attitudes unless a strict moral commandment intervenes. They have lost even a faint awareness of the words of Christ:[14]

> If you were of the world, the world would love what is its own. But, because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore, the world hates you.[15]

Cardinal Newman wrote to them:

> Your sole idea of sin is, the sinning in act and in deed; sins of habit . . . You are selfish, and obstinate, and worldly . . . you scarcely ever think of God from day to day.[16]

The more powerful and advanced writing in the message carried is done by those who rely on what is sometimes referred to as sin mysticism. It reminds man of his weakness and of his dependence upon God for help. Sin mysticism presents the sinner as a tragic figure and yet as a true Christian who puts all his hopes in God's mercy, in contrast to virtuous pharisees who attribute to their own justice the merit of their moral perfection. The tragic sinner appeals to God's mercy because he hates sin but is too weak to overcome his weaknesses; he knows he must rely on God's mercy for forgiveness of his sins and

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14 Dietrich Von Hildebrand, True Morality and Its Counterfeits, New York, David McKay Company, Inc., 1955.

15 John 15:18-20.

16 Dietrich Von Hildebrand, op. cit., p. 6.

must remain an unworthy servant. The writers of the cult of sin mysticism clarify and point up St. Augustine's words, "Make neither of your own righteousness a safe conduct to heaven, nor of God's mercy a safe conduct to sin". Such a task is no easy matter for any attempt to clarify the relationship between sin and Grace can easily lead to confusion. The writers make obvious that the achievement of a Catholic literature is a Christian literature in the fullest meaning and it can only issue from Christian persons.

The religious renascence has not been confined to Catholic writers alone; other religious groups have contributed. The two recent non-Catholics most often mentioned as Christian members are D. H. Lawrence and T. S. Eliot.

Lawrence (referred to by one Catholic critic as "the pagan Lawrence"),[17] sometimes considered the novelist of Freudianism,[18] had as his theme a crusade against Puritanism, and in his own words, ". . . to make the sex relation valid and precious, instead of shameful". He spoke against the Puritan reaction to sex when he wrote

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17 Ibid., p. 91.

18 Donald W. Heiney, Essential of Contemporary Literature, New York, Barron's Educational Series, Inc., 1954, p. 196.

that sex to him meant the whole of the relationship between men and women. In a defense against the criticism that his Lady Chatterly's Lovers was immoral he said, "It is a novel of the phallic consciousness . . . versus the mutual spiritual consciousness . . . the versus is not my fault. There should be no versus". His constant harping on the sex act according to Sigrid Undset meant "To his sensitive soul, communion, holy matrimony, the blood contact between men and women".[19] He made himself the prophet of an altogether mystical sexual religion. His religion was a rebirth for man through the sex act, Sigrid Undset wrote, adding that

> . . . he dreamed of a sexual act in which the individuals die from their old ego and are reborn to a new life, each as a master of his own soul, but united with his mate in profound tenderness, saved from all lust of power involved in sexual feeling, cleansed of all the elements of petty vanity which are a part of all erotics, but with their manly or womanly self-consciousness intensified.[20]

His characters though, are in everlasting revolt against his new religion. They are incapable of abandoning themselves to another human being without regretting it and immediately trying to recover themselves.

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19 Sigrid Undset, Men, Women and Places, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1939, p. 41.

20 Ibid., p. 41.

Reacting against rationalism, Lawrence tried to formulate a "new dialectic of the unconscious" and to reestablish spiritual and religious knowledge by means of the blood, by a kind of animal intuition.[21] On this he wrote,

> My great religion is a belief in the blood, the flesh, as being wiser than the intellect. We can go wrong in our minds. But what our blood feels and believes and says is always true. . .[22]

His religious problem was not whether God exists or does not exist, but how was man to find God. The real problem as he put it,

> . . . isn't whether God exists or not. God always is, and we all know it. But the problem is, how to get at Him. The theologians try to find out; How shall man put himself into relation to God, into a living relation: Which is: How shall Man find God? That's the real problem.[23]

Lawrence found his God in the Old Testament - a God mixed with pagan religions and Christianity. "He had an awareness", writes T. S. Eliot, "of something very important. He was aware that religion is not and can never survive as simply a code of morals".[24]

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21 Ibid., pp. 38-43.

22 William Tiverton, D. H. Lawrence and Human Existence, London, W. Taylor and Company, 1951, p. 21.

23 Ibid., p. 114.

24 Ibid., p. 115.

What ultimately mattered to Lawrence was the God of Life, points out Father Tiverton, an Almighty God instead of a Moral God; a God of "strength and Glory and might and wisdom".[25] But there were inconsistencies in Lawrence, Father Tiverton writes,

> . . . the 'pantheist' element of his writings can not really be made to square with the 'transcendent' elements in his conception of the 'mighty, living God'.[26]

But even hostile critics are agreed that Lawrence's supreme achievement was to find expression for states of being hitherto almost unexplored, or at any rate unexpressed and "that the human unconscious can meet the conscious mind and so the self becomes aware of the self".[27] Lawrence's importance is to have diagnosed, and not merely diagnosed but lived, the spiritual crises through which man is passing.[28]

A tone quite foreign to D. H. Lawrence's type of Spirituality is that of T. S. Eliot. His is the distinctly religious mentality of a man who has regretted the decay of religion in today's society and in today's world. His approach is symbolized in "The Wasteland" through the

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25 Ibid., pp. 118-121.

26 Ibid., p. 126.

27 Ibid., pp. 123-126.

28 Turnell, op. cit., p. 56.

decline of moral culture as a result of spiritual drought. The image of the poem points up the confusion in today's world and the sterility and confusion in contemporary civilization.

> What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow
> Out of this stony rubbish? Son of man
> You cannot say, or guess, for you know only
> A heap of broken images, where the sun beats
> And the dead tree gives no shelter, the cricket no relief,
> And the dry stone no sound of water.[29]

In this same poem Eliot speaks of "the empty chapel" and "the arid plain". Once men find that Christianity is the salvaging element, he contends, they will discover a way to revitalize a dead world. In "The Rock" he indicts the irreligious mind:

> Knowledge of speech, but not of silence,
> Knowledge of words, and ignorance of the word.
> All our knowledge brings us nearer to our ignorance.
> All our ignorance brings us nearer to death
> But nearness to death no nearer to God.
> Where is the Life we have lost in living?
> Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?
> Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?
> The cycles of Heaven in twenty centuries
> Bring us farther from God and nearer to the Dust.[30]

Not only does Eliot indict the irreligious mind, but he also criticized contemporary literature by stating that the clues to the understanding of it are to be found

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29 T. S. Eliot, Collected Poems, London, Faber and Faber, 1934, p. 65.

30 T. S. Eliot, Four quartets, New York, Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1943, P. 28.

in the writer's rejection of Christianity. He felt that ". . . nothing could be much drearier than vague hymn-singing which does not provide any firm principles".[31] He suggests that with the disappearance of the idea of intense moral struggle the figures in contemporary literature are not real. In fact, he argues, it is in moments of moral and spiritual struggle that men come nearest to being real.

The achievements of T. S. Eliot and D. H. Lawrence show that there is a serious Protestant contribution to the religious renascence in modern literature. They make their contribution by awakening people to the spiritual as a very grave responsibility; it is only when people are awakened that they are capable of real good.

The restoration of religious belief produced quite different effects in England and in France. In England there had been a mass inertia and it remained the task of the Catholic writers to demonstrate that dwindling belief could easily be revived. In France the renewal of belief involved a denunciation of the mediocre and conventional Catholics for their materialism.[32] What Newman

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31 T. S. Eliot, After Strange Gods, New York, Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1934, p. 42.

32 Henri Peyre, The Contemporary French Novel, New York, Oxford University Press, 1955, pp. 113-117.

and Hopkins were to England, Péguy and Bloy were to France. They, together with Mauriac and Bernanos, are the dominant Catholic writers of France.

The French Catholic novel was initiated by Léon Bloy. He wrote what Jacques Maritain called the finest prose since Bossuet. His theme was stated in the first pages of Le Désespéré when Cain Marchenoir states in a letter, "I am writing to you because a soul given over to its own nothingness is without other recourse than to the futile literary gymnastic feat of formulating that nothingness".[33] Bloy found no mystery in understanding that which is most lovable in a debased human being for he saw others as he saw himself. "I am a man who is very poor, very unhappy, very weak, very ill, very forsaken. I am the least among the destitute, a being who is trampled, a man dying of thirst for love".[34] He used love in its most meaningful sense as his theme. He found cause for wonder in the love that God displayed for the men who sought to deny Him by seeking earthly happiness. The fundamental appeal of Christianity was the vastness of Christ's sorrows, "the magnificent, the transcendent horror

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33 Frank O'Malley, "The Catholic Novelist: The Tangled Web", Catholic Renascence, ed. by Norman Weyand, Chicago, Loyola University Press, 1959, p. 84.

34 Ibid., pp. 47-49.

of His Passion". In Le Désespéré Father Athanase ponders the distress of one of the penitents,

> . . . . tears came to him at the thought that he had before him a man marching to his death, whom nothing could save, a witness for Love and for Justice.[35]

Bloy is clearly such a witness for few in Truth could love as impatiently, as furiously. The love of Bloy has to be, in the phrase of Bernanos ". . . a love which watches day and night".

The love of Georges Bernanos is also a transcendent and consuming love, flowing out of the Charity and Grace of Christ. His works picture a gloomy drama of the inner life and death, the holiness and evil of man against the background of civilization. He had the capacity to re-create vividly the tragic struggle of the soul against evil; he could portray the stench of actual evil and actual sin. In The Open Mind the priest in his sermon at the funeral of the murdered child tells his parishioners how much he needs them and they need him; how much God's Love and Mercy meant:

> I love you. Just as you are! I love your wretchedness. Sometimes I think I love your sins even, which I know so well, your poor sins with no joy in them. Indeed I suffer for you and pray for you with my whole strength. . . . Oh, may God give me the words to tell you. How shall I ever make you understand. There are

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35 Ibid., p. 48.

> sinners among you, grievous sinners - that doesn't matter in the least. . . . For God's mercy . . . rises like the sap in a tree.[36]

Man's sins and suffering are the obsession of François Mauriac too. He observes in God and Mammon (an autobiographical essay in which he meditates on the problem affecting him as a Catholic novelist) that no one can escape the cross.

> We are born the prisoner of our cross. Nothing can tear us from it. But it is peculiar to the Christians of my country to believe that they can come down from their cross. And in fact they do come down from it . . . they go on . . . until . . . once again they are mercifully hurled against the wood. As by instinct they stretch out their arms and offer their hands and feet, already pierced from childhood.[37]

Catholicism for Mauriac was not a theoretical system, but a passion and a theology of life. In his novels he cannot help loving his sinners. In them, he has made known to Catholics the proper attitude to take toward the action of men. He has shown just how wrong he thought Christians to be in declining their necessary compliance with an important element of Christ's teaching: ". . . faith in the equal value of all souls, of all races, before the

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36 Georges Bernanos, The Open Mind, translated by Geoffrey Dunlop, London, John Lane Co., 1945, p. 151.

37 François Mauriac, God and Mammon, New York, Sheed and Ward, 1936, pp. 39-40.

Father who is in heaven".

Like Mauriac, both Graham Greene and Evelyn Waugh are intensely preoccupied with man and his relationship with God. Of the two, Greene is the more controversial writer because of the unorthodox methods he uses to convey his theme. A critical treatment of modern materialism and the decline of faith are themes in Waugh's novels. He has shocked many readers, especially with his Brideshead Revisited. They were shocked because they were not presented as exceptions in a dreadful world. Yet, one critic called Brideshead Revisited, ". . . the first novel by a Catholic devoted to Catholics and Catholicism in England sufficiently serious to be considered as a work of art".[38] Waugh's main concern has been the decline of faith,

> The deterioration of morals so characteristic of the twenties is another of his favorite subjects. His early novels treated this subject descriptively and objectively but in recent years he has tended to become more critical of modern materialism and more concerned with the return to faith which he feels is the sole recourse of civilization.[39]

Waugh, Greene, and their French contemporaries stand out as modern Catholic novelists because they portray and picture a world in which salvation and damnation,

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38 Thomas J. Beary, "The Christian Tradition and Contemporary Creation", Renascence, Vol. IV, p. 127.

39 Heiney, op. cit., p. 333.

good and evil, sin and temptation are treated as realities. They have a heavier burden to carry than their contemporaries for it is expected of them that their religion will provide a background of order, enabling them to see good and evil in their true perspectives. They must treat sin as sin, to be charitable, yet objective, in their treatment of the sinner. The first duty of a Catholic writer of fiction, lies in representing life as it is, that is to say, in the way his observation dictates and his faith reveals to him.[40]

The role of the Church as a force in the lives of men is becoming stronger and has resulted in a more important religious literature. Within the Catholic Church the leaders, Bloy, Bernanos, Mauriac, Waugh, and Greene have mixed the depiction of evil and sin with love and charity. They have written on the bond between sinners and saints. They understand and write their own interpretations of what Péguy said about Good and Evil,

> No one is more competent than a sinner in matters of Christianity. No one unless it be a saint. And, in principle, it is the selfsame man. . . . The sinner, together with the saint, enters into the system, is of the system of Christianity.[41]

Because of their competence in matters of

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40 Alexander, op. cit., p. 337.

41 Peyre, op. cit., p. 119.

Christianity, the modern Catholic novelists reveal an extraordinary capability in the treatment of sin and evil and suffering, but they reveal, in addition, an extraordinary efficiency in the treatment of charity. They do not shudder in the sight of evil and the sinful. Rather, they show a moving love and sympathy in the fact of the mystery of sin and the inexplicability of the actions of men. These writers know that they are themselves of the race of sinners - and they cannot be less charitable, less loving, than the Church in acknowledging man's weakness and error, in grasping and depicting the sometimes appalling plight of the soul. These Catholic writers feel themselves competent to treat of sin in their novels. They move with ease through the minds of men, the mystery of sin, and the greater mystery of the movements of the Grace of God.

Catholic literature no longer leads a ghetto existence. Its center is man, his personal life, his relations to his fellow men, to the world, and not least to God. It paints no wishful picture of human existence, its struggles, defeats and triumphs - no sentimentalized, primitive, and unreal picture. Men and sin are the themes repeatedly used. Right names are used and the power of evil is recognized. These books that disquiet passivity, that show so many people do not really know the world in

which they live are useful books just as the Confessions of St. Augustine. To realize the evil in today's world without settling for a mere diagnosis is one of the major problems in Catholic literature. This is done, write German bishops in a pastoral letter, by a literature that contributes to the cure,

> We find that a large section of our Catholic literature prefers the darker side of life. . . . its desire is to set a wholesome diagnosis. We should go so far as to speak of the duty of giving such a diagnosis; and there is no need for our writers to feel that their freedom is limited by bourgeois prejudices. . . . We do not speak for a literature of false pieties, but we do speak for a literature which, in addition to making a diagnosis of our times, contributes to their cure.[42]

The German bishops add that the writers are contributing by helping in the cause of God:

> Thanks are due to our Catholic writers for their work in the service of the word that ultimately points to God. We feel ourselves through our own divine mission united with them and ask their help in the present tasks of the church.[43]

One of the tasks of the Church is performed by Catholic novelists whose work "sounds like an alarm bell to the ears of those who think that they are living in a world

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42 "Pastoral Letter of The German Bishops Concerning Catholic Literature, Dated October 21, 1955", Books on Trial, January-February, 1956, p. 229.

43 Ibid., p. 268.

substantially Christian".[44]

44 Harold C. Gardiner, "The Catholic Novel: Two Important Statements", America, Vol. 44, December 17, 1955, p. 333.

CHAPTER II

THE CATHOLIC NOVELIST - HIS PROBLEMS

The renewed interest in Catholic fiction has brought with it a perplexing question for the Catholic novelist that is not faced by the non-Catholic writer - how to effectively portray the evil in today's world without settling for a simple portrayal. The question takes on added meaning when a definition is sought for the Catholic artist's work.

What is a Catholic novel? The definition of the ideal Catholic novel is as elusive as the definition of beauty. Whatever its definition, it is a strong voice in modern literature that more and more brings Catholicism before a greater number of people than has been done by any other means of communication throughout the Church's history. Because of its new place in today's literature, it is important that the novel be truly representative of the Catholic Church and its members. Anyone concerned with the Catholic novel, its responsibility, its potentiality for great good, the dangers it faces, knows that the major problem is to make real the effect that the milieu, the doctrines of the day, the customs, and the political and economic regime exercise on souls. The Catholic novel is concerned with questions that arise

from the Catholic religion and presents in concrete terms the different temptations that rise for all men. The Catholic novel is one that sometimes shocks (Graham Greene's and François Mauriac's) because the Catholic novelist attempts to disquiet man's passivity, to show that so many do not really know the world in which they live.

Not everyone, however, will concede that there is such a thing as a Catholic novel. Some prefer to call it a phase of literature rather than a category of literature. All agree though that the Catholic novel or that phase of fiction which is Catholic must be the presentation of Catholic doctrine and life in all of its aspects; it must tell of the tremendous mystery of the Incarnation of the Divine Word and His Redemption of mankind.[1] It must face the facts of its own time; yet it may picture virtue or vice without ever mentioning the word "Catholic". It must be the expression of genuine Catholic thought and being.

The Catholic novel should not propagandize if the term has for its meaning the present day use, the phenomena of mass psychology in seeking acceptance of a position. The Catholic novel should seek to tell the truth,

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1 "Pastoral Letter of the German Bishops concerning Catholic literature, dated October 21, 1955", Books on Trial, January-February, 1956, pp. 229-232.

and truth needs no propaganda. The Catholic novel is a magnificent tool for the dissemination of the Word "that ultimately points to God"[2] if the proper methods are used.

The methods used by Catholic writers vary. Mauriac said that he tries to make "perceptible, tangible, and odorous"[3] the universe of evil. Graham Greene attempts to make plausible in fictional form the mystery of God's infinite distance from sin and yet His intimacy with the sinner. Such tasks set for themselves by Mauriac and Greene extend to the utmost the power of their creative human imagination.

Greene, Mauriac, and the other contemporary Catholic novelists are beset with the dilemma of disquieting passivity, presenting the supernatural, and portraying man as he is in such a way so that on the one hand the squeamish do not charge them with "dirty" or "pornographic" while on the other hand the realists do not cry out "pious platitudes"!

In a review of Graham Greene's The Heart of The Matter, Evelyn Waugh said that Greene's reputation has

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2 "Some Questions and Answers on Literature and the Other Arts", An Interview with Samuel Cardinal Stritch, Books on Trial, April-May, 1957, pp. 365-366, 431-432.

3 Martin Turnell, "The Religious Novel", The Commonweal, Vol. 35, October 26, 1951, p. 55.

grown huge because of the gravity and intensity which underlie the modern surface of his novels,

> The artist, however aloof he holds himself, is always and specially the creature of the zeitgeist;[4] however formally antique his tastes he is in spite of himself in the advance guard. Men of affairs stumble far behind.[5]

If what Waugh says of Greene is true, that he is ahead of his times, then it is important for all Catholic novelists not to be self-conscious in an age which is not so much skeptical or agnostic as it is anti-supernatural. Many people today are embarrassed by religion; it makes them feel uncomfortable. This self-consciousness, this feeling of being cut off from the main stream is a very severe handicap. It is especially severe for a novelist, since the novel is, above all, an attempt to communicate common experiences to another human being. This feeling probably accounts for the awkwardness of presentation of the supernatural in many modern Catholic pieces. In addition to his problem of self-consciousness the Catholic novelist is faced with a second problem. He cannot revert to the simple presentation of a character in terms of

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4 Zeitgeist: The spirit of the time; the general intellectual and moral state or the trend of culture and taste characteristic of an era.

5 Evelyn Waugh, "Felix Culpa", The Tablet, June 5, 1948, p. 352.

normal and conscious desires. The Catholic artist's true world of interest must be that of life, all of life,

> . . . where man is restless and unhappy for heaven, where the great 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 interest, 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.
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> We are dust, moistened into slime, quickened by God's breath, and ever since Eve we have tended to return to this primeval guilt; the criminal slipping back to the scene of his crime. We can't evade this without denying the cross and our salvation.[6]

When literature has passed through its present phase of self-consciousness; it may be recognized again that there can and should be no limitation on characterization. The Catholic writer has advantages over non-Catholic writers - he does not have to make up his "values" as he moves through the labyrinth of the human mind and since there is no formation of character that life does not provide examples of, the solution of a human's situation is the moralist's task, not the artist's.

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6 Robert Ostermann, "An Interview with Graham Greene", The Catholic World, Vol. 70, February, 1950, p. 356.

> 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 he sees are something else again; you can't prescribe for them without imitating Moscow.[7]

Graham Greene as a profoundly reflective Catholic incorporates in his novels a factor of the highest importance which does not so directly effect either the moral theologian or the confessor. As a Catholic, Greene always gives pride of place to God Himself, to God's actions in man's soul, to God's grace as it flows from His Compassion and Pity. The moral theologian excludes these factors because he is dealing with only the good and evil without any direct references to any particular soul with whom God is in personal contact. The confessor leaves it to God Who pardons to make the final judgment. Graham Greene, however, as a Catholic artist sees that it is necessary imaginatively to construct God's all-important role from Catholic theology and his own insight into God's workings if he is to give a true picture.

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7 Ibid.

When the Catholic artist is aware of his own self-consciousness and the view he must take of life then his task as novelist is simple. "He is", writes Martin Turnell, "simply a writer whose vision is formed by definite beliefs".[8] The problems involved in performing this simple task, however, are far from that, they are quite complex. The artist must ask himself where does this activity called "art" fit into his Catholic life. Andre Gide answered the question and referred to it as the "antagonism between aesthetics and morality".[9] What degree, if any, of correlation exists between the artist and the Catholic when both are one? This dilemma was faced by Claudel in his own conversion. Entering the Church of Notre Dame on Christmas Day as an atheist, he suddenly believed in God. All doubts were swept away and since that time "nothing has been able to shake my faith". Yet his philosophical opinions remained; "God had left and the Catholic religion still seemed to be the same treasure house of fairy stories". In the end he found that everything that had been most repugnant to his opinions and tastes had turned out to be true and as a Catholic he had to adapt himself to them while as

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8 Turnell, op. cit., p. 55.

9 Martin Turnell, The Novel in France, New York, New Directions, 1951, p. 156.

an artist he rebelled against them.[10]

This very delicate balance between the man who writes and the man who believes is a balance achieved only when it is remembered that the value of a novel is determined by the writer's literary talent and that belief can never be substituted for it.[11] The Catholic artist must not, therefore, confine his work to the moral aspects of his problem but must take in the scientific, the literary, and the artistic qualities as well, all presented under truth.

In a broadcast discussion with Elizabeth Bowen and V. S. Pritchett called "The Artist in Society" (July, 1948) Graham Greene declared that he considered certain human duties - supporting his family, dying for his country - he owed in common with others. He added one duty, however, which he considered peculiar to the artist; to tell the truth as he sees it.

Truth must be in a Catholic novel but it does not make it a novel (Catholics do not have a monopoly on truth). It is essential but artistically secondary, subordinate to, and presupposed by the fact that one of the aims of art is to please. But it is important that

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10 Antonia White, "Problems of a Christian Novelist", The Critic, August-September, 1958, pp. 13-15.

11 Turnell, "The Religious Novel", op.cit., p. 55.

if falsehood or untruth is approved in the novel, it fails as art, no matter what the specious pleasure derived, for though the end of art be to please, it must please legitimately and rationally and its philosophy must be sound.

The novel as a part of literature is not philosophy in the sense that philosophy is a science concerned with the first and last causes of all reality. However, literature does reflect a philosophy in the sense that it gives man a universal view of the world and man's place in it. With a few notable exceptions, such as the lyric poem and certain personal essays, every significant literary work is usually a criticism of life, an evaluation of character and action. The greater the work, the more it will reflect penetrating moral, psychological, and religious truths, the more it will embody the totality of view, a power of "seeing life steadily and seeing it whole".[12] To speak of the philosophy of literature is to speak of its significance and its relationship to truth and to life itself.

A Catholic novel embodying sound philosophy, moral truth, artistic qualities, and literary skill is rightly expected. If the Catholic artist is able to achieve such a novel it not only strengthens his worth but contributes

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12 Stritch, op. cit., pp. 365-366.

a praiseworthy addition to culture in line with the perennial tradition of the Church.[13] The heights or the depths reached by Catholic literature, especially that of the present day, depends largely on the clear judgment, the moral integrity, and the intellectual strength of the artist.

These three - clear judgment, moral integrity, and intellectual strength - are effective only if one finds in the readers a disposition of spirit to accept these observations and judgments. Every effort of the novelist is useless with people who of set purpose refuse to admit the writer's knowledge and competence, and who, consequently, have no confidence in him or his judgments. They are what Donat O'Donnell has called,

> . . . the modern Philistine who applies such principles as he possesses in a rigid, mechanical and linear fashion, the man for whom imagination is always irrelevant to reason, the man, who when he thinks he has spoken most reasonably, has spoken foolishly.[14]

These are the readers with whom the novelist has no success because they rely on their own appraisals of life to the exclusion of all others. Francois Mauriac writes of them,

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13 Harold C. Gardiner, "Pius XII Talks to Critics", America, Vol. 44, April 14, 1956, pp. 59-60.

14 Donat O'Donnell, Maria Cross, London, Chatto & Windus, 1954, p. 233.

> What is most repugnant is that they possess nothing . . . Christianity attracts those who believe that the Gospels authorize them to glory in their nothingness.[15]

These people expect from the writers only the confirmation of their own judgments. With readers of good disposition the writer will work much more efficaciously because their minds are open to suggestion.

With the former group the novelist need not concern himself for this group by such rejection reflect their psychological deficiencies. For the latter group the task of approaching them is made easier because of their openness of mind. But, Pope Pius XII cautions, for this the writer must have broadmindedness himself, versatility, the ability to see and comprehend, the ability to consider both good and evil. Mere intellectual understanding is not sufficient. The writer must be able to form judgments based on his own cultural milieu tempered by the wisdom of tradition.[16]

But His Holiness did not tell the Catholic artist where he might go for guidance. The novelist is handicapped by having no previous Catholic tradition to go to for help. The Gospels give advice to those engaged in

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15 François Mauriac, Great Men, trans. Elsie Pell, London, Rockliff Publishing Corporation Ltd., 1952, p. 2.

16 Gardiner, op. cit., p. 60.

other occupations; to the shepherds in the field and to the wives of the senators, to the lawyers and to the scribes, but never mention the artist.

Yet every Catholic artist is aware that his faith not only imposes strict laws on him but demands an accounting of his adherence to these laws in his religious practices and in his works.

> The strength of a man appears truly in the balance he creates between these two lives. Often what we see allows us to risk conjecture touching the inner life and what has reference to its relationship with God, and the rule of conduct. Invisible resistance, victories and defeats are vividly inscribed on the destiny.[17]

These religious-literary laws appear to have nothing to do with moral behaviour, yet their transgression induces a guilt in the artist who transgresses them. So strong is this sense that art is autonomous that St. Thomas speaks of a crime being perpetrated against art by an artist when he intends to make a good work and produces a bad one.[18]

How then can the Catholic artist produce an acceptable work of art without transgression and still appeal to the readers of good disposition. The problem is there for faith is not the cozy comforter the non-believer assumes. As Pere de Lubac so profoundly says in his

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17 Mauriac, op. cit., p. 19.

18 White, op. cit., p. 14.

preface to The Drama of Atheistic Humanism:

> Faith disturbs us and continually upsets the beautiful balance of our mental conceptions and our social structures. Bursting into a world that perpetually tends to close in upon itself, God brings it the possibility of a harmony which is certainly superior but is to be attained only at the cost of a series of cleavages and struggles co-extensive with time itself.[19]

The problem is one that affects all Catholic writers who feel that their Catholicism is not something to be brought out on Sundays only, but rather constitutes a vital and often disturbing factor in their work. For it is not only a matter of how much of their religion Catholic writers should display, it is also a question of how far their Catholicism is to influence the presentation of their art. The novels of Graham Greene are written largely for a non-Catholic public. How far, then, and by what means can Catholic teaching be woven into his stories? Without propagandizing and without preaching Greene attempts to point out to his non-Catholic readers that the Catholic Church is made up not only of those who believe and obey the commandments of God but also of those who believe but do not obey; those who fall into sin seventy times seven. Apart from this non-Catholic reading public there are Catholics who deprecate the direct treatment of a plot

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19 Ibid.

along such Catholic lines. Waugh writes of them,

> The Heart of The Matter is a book which only a Catholic could write and only a Catholic can understand. I mean that only a Catholic can understand the nature of the problem. Many Catholics, I am sure, will gravely misunderstand it. . . . There are loyal Catholics who think it is the function of the Catholic writer to produce only advertising brochures setting out in attractive terms the advantages of Church membership. To them The Heart of The Matter will seem a scandal. For it not only portrays Catholics as unlikable human beings but shows them as tortured by their faith. It will be the object of controversy and condemnation.[20]

Obviously the Catholicism of a book will not make it automatically a work of art. But where Catholicism and art can be skillfully blended this is an age which cannot afford to do without the product of such a fusion.

It would be a simple task to place all sins into one of the moralist's absolutes. Unfortunately, not all the failings of human nature fit into one of these absolutes and for this reason it is easy to realize the difficulties facing a Catholic novelist to whom human nature is never black or white, but always sins and virtues, or varying shades of grey. It is difficult to present as grey a character which appears black to the moralist's eye. This is not to say that the writer's difficulty is to paint a black character as less black than he is, which would amount to an extenuation of his wickedness, or to

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20 Waugh, op. cit., p. 353.

an excuse for an evil done. For Graham Greene black is not always black, and although he is well aware that Judas's background might go far to explain his betrayal of Christ, yet he hardly ever falls back upon the background of his characters to tone down the blacks, or the whites, or the greys. A little self-restraint and a little courage would have made the whiskey-priest a saint, even in the midst of all the hardships, dangers, and temptations of the life of a hunted priest. "To be a human being one had to drink the cup", is all Scobie has to say about the evil breeding atmosphere of the African colony. But the point which Mr. Greene makes with so much passion is that blackness is not the whole man; man is mostly grey and so, in fairness to his characters, Greene is ever on the alert to draw attention to any white there is to offset the black.

Greene knows, however, that as a creative writer he is damned to sympathy with his own creations. And he is alive to the fact that this sympathy with his wicked characters will be interpreted as condonation of evil and as a lack of appreciation of those who are just and good. But this sympathy with sinful man does not imply disloyalty towards what is good. If, however, there are those who cannot see this, then Mr. Greene claims the right to be disloyal and considers such disloyalty the

novelist's privilege,

> Loyalty confines us to accept opinions; loyalty forbids us to comprehend sympathetically our dissident fellows; but disloyalty encourages us to roam experimentally through any human mind.[21]

To clarify his meaning Greene adds,

> It was an act of justice to trace the true source of action in Macbeth, the murderer of his king, and Shakespeare's play has for all time altered our conception of the usurper.[22]

Graham Greene makes full use of the novelist's privilege and to some disconcertingly so. He writes, as he says, from the point of view of the black as well as the white.

In this question of black and white, Greene does not solve a problem, he presents one. The objection that virtue placed side by side with sin makes a man illogical is a truism but "one cannot always be logical" as Scobie says, and because Catholics know the truth they are liable to be far more illogical than others, and consequently they have a greater capacity for evil. Pinkie Brown in Brighton Rock knows that a Catholic is more capable of evil because he "knows what's what". Scobie in The Heart of The Matter complains that ". . . we Catholics are damned by our knowledge". Hence the dread to know and face the truth, as is shown when Rose in The Living Room

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21 Osterman, op. cit., p. 357.

22 Ibid.

almost frantically implores her priest-uncle not to make her think.

The Catholic novelist who wears his faith as a garment seven days a week is faced with two other problems. The first is the dichotomy between the way he sees his subject as an artist and the way he must see it as a Catholic. The same problem that both Gide and Claudel found. The second problem is the manner in which he presents his subject.

The first problem projects the author onto "dangerous ground". Since he is dealing with the raw stuff of human behavior he is, if he is a competent artist, obliged to judge and evaluate, to apply wisely his general culture and specialized knowledge to the subject he has chosen. When, as a Catholic artist, he observes the very raw stuff of human life it is not surprising if he sometimes wonders if he can achieve salvation only by plucking out his right eye.[23] It is with this the novelist must deal.

Since the Catholic writer is influenced by his own will, by his own sensibility, and by his own character, he must have a firmness of character when he writes, Pope Pius XII cautions, for he must write without fear of his own judgment, and he must then defend his judgment by

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23 White, op. cit., p. 14.

keeping always to strict justice.[24] The Catholic writer must hate sinful acts. However carefully he picks his words when describing sin, his tone will reveal that he is not an impartial witness. One of the charges against the "Catholic Mauriac" was that his tone, and the images he evoked, suggested a secret sympathy, a connivance with sin instead of the uncompromising detestation of sin which some Catholic critics felt they had a right to expect from a Catholic novelist. Mauriac said himself that he "depicted evil with a secret collusion, because he was describing actions which he felt".[25] Greene says of the people in his novels that they are God's creations, not his; and their sins are theirs for they are souls for whom Christ died to save.

The writers must stand firm even under charges of "pornographic" or "dirty" when levelled against them by incompetent or overly pious teachers and critics. Graham Greene's The End of The Affair deals with adultery. It sees illicit sexual activities as they actually are, attractive and destructive. Charges of pornographic have been aimed at The End of The Affair because some critics

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24 "Pope Pius XII on The Duty and Responsibility of the Literary Critic", Trans. Joseph M. O'Leary, Books on Trial, April-May, 1956, p. 339.

25 Mauriac, op. cit., p. 7.

feel that the attractive aspects of sin are stressed in such a way that the book is probably an incentive to evil. This is the "dangerous ground". Yet if literature is to fulfill its obligation of portraying and interpreting life, it must interpret and portray all of life, not one side of it; life as it is, not life as the people of set purpose would like to have it. And as Hawthorne says in his House of Seven Gables "Life is made up of marble and mud, not just marble".

Literature proceeds from a skilled writer who has "seen something". Pascal had this seeing something in mind when he wrote,

> Clarity of mind causes clarity of vision also. That is why a great, clear mind loves with ardour and sees distinctly what it loves.[26]

A Catholic cannot regard human behavior with a purely aesthetic interest, yet as a skilled writer this is what he wants to do. (Mauriac refers to this as "aesthetic Catholicism".)[27] Things that shock the writer's religious belief often stimulate him artistically.

The true literary artist, and the skilled Catholic novelist is that, responds with all that is within him to what exists around him. "Man must find within himself

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26 Ibid., p. 4.

27 Ibid., p. 4.

the model of that beauty for which he is searching outside". The artist expresses this total vision in language whose meanings and sounds and tensions reflect the mysterious totality of view. The artist does not aim to express a scientific reality, but to express the vision of reality.

These visions are drawn from the reality of which all men are part, and from the unique reality which exists inside the artist. In a sinful world such visions will include sinful people and sinful acts. The End of The Affair looks deeply into the human mind and heart. It challenges the reader with a vision of complex, tortured, and sinful reality, of human beings loving God, or rebelling against God, or complacent in ignoring God. But the purpose behind the expression of the vision is not to move the reader either to hatred of evil or to the desire for evil. It is merely to reveal perfectly the artist's total vision, the reality the artist sees as it exists in him. The artist is interested in nature with all its flaws, inconsistencies, and weaknesses.

The second major problem facing the Catholic artist - that of presentation - is as complex as the first. Whether it is a part of his plan or not the writer is dealing with human behavior, human conflicts, human motives and he is bound to give some interpretation to these

things.

A maxim given by Pope Pius XII in one of his many addresses is somewhat difficult in theory and in practice: "Verbum oris est verbum mentis", which means that man says or writes what he thinks.[28] The more obvious meaning is that speech gets its meaning and content from the inner thought. The maxim is a warning to the writer that he is to be judged according to his words, which faithfully reflect his ideas and his feelings and his faith.

The Catholic novelist cannot avoid his faith. It is not a question of "dragging" religion into his work - it is simply there, a part of his vision. Consciously or unconsciously his own inner life is projected in his work; to an extent he is bound to project his own conflicts and fixations into his work. The theme he chooses, the characters he uses to illustrate the theme will reflect his innermost preoccupation. He involves, consequently, the reader in that drama, forces him in imagination to act in it without the least idea what effect this will have on him.

It is this question of influence that brings the Catholic novelist to the question - what effect does his

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28 "Pope Pius XII on The Duty and Responsibility of the Literary Critic", op. cit., p. 340.

work have on the mind of his reader? There are many Catholics, clergy and lay, who judge a novel entirely on the question of whether or not it could conceivably "give scandal" and entirely ignoring any other standards of criticism.

As a very broad principle the Catholic novelist must remember that it is not what a book contains - either vice or virtue - that makes that book good or bad; it is what that book arouses or inspires the reader to do or avoid that makes it good or bad. If this were not true the Holy Bible with God for its author would have to be condemned since it contains examples, often in vivid terms, of every sin known to man. The danger is ever that temptation too vivid is poisonous, but temptation too dull is innocuous.

The problem of how much of a temptation can or should be dramatized must be answered differently for different times and individuals. What constitutes an overpowering stimulus to sin in one generation can be an effective and even necessary deterent against sinning in another.

Throughout Greek and Roman drama murder was not enacted on the stage; it was merely reported. When the dramatists proscribed murder on the stage they did not have a perverted sense of drama. They were writing for

an age when people were so prone to murder that they carried their daggers openly in their belts so that to enact murder on the stage would have inflamed the lust to kill. Today, however, murder is dramatized in such a harmless comedy as Arsenic and Old Lace.

Today murder is dramatized as a matter of course in all advanced Christian countries. But the dramatization of sex temptations is still an uncharted debate. Those who would have sex banned from literature would reduce literature to pious mouthings. The novelist cannot take the time to go into a long explanation of what he is going to do much less why. He often must resort to shock tactics and as a result he is often charged as being "over-aggressive" or "over-apologetic" whenever he deals with the problem of sex in his works. The "Coarse" "crude" unaesthetic love of Bendrix and Sarah on a hardwood floor in The End of The Affair is treated as an adult love. It has discarded the notions of love as a romance, as a morality, or as a psychological phenomenon. Those who called this love "coarse" and "crude" think of love in the same way they think of everything else - they apply rational rules. They cry out that love is beautiful; it is the world of sweetness and light; this, and nothing more. What they forget is that "love" is both good and evil and that it is both beautiful and ugly.

Puritanism has so conditioned man's attitude to sex that he is still largely incapable of treating it naturally. Few modern writers have managed to write convincingly of the sexual relations. When they have had the ability they have had to conceal it beneath verbal bushes - a behind-closed-door-technique. In The End of The Affair Greene shows a mature grasp of sexual relations. He moved from the romantic treatment in The Man Within to the realistic treatment in The End of The Affair. The latter has been branded as "nasty" and "dirty" in both theme and treatment.

Shock tactics are also used by a writer whenever he wants to deal with a moral problem of his religion without going into an explanation of what he is going to do much less why. When Scobie in The Heart of The Matter writes to Helen asserting that he loved her more then he loved himself, more than he loved his wife, more than he loved God, Greene is resorting to shock tactics in a deliberate attempt to excite the reader. However, he must be prepared to defend his judgment in the light of strict justice. Did Scobie's declaration of a love for Helen that exceeded a love for God serve a useful purpose? It evidently did, for Scobie is nothing more than human and is simply saying what adulterers have always been saying - the preference is for the created rather

than for the creator.

Literature for any time or group is significant and powerful, if it takes the gravest sin to which most people are most strongly tempted and makes it, as Greene does in The End of The Affair, both attractive and destructive. In Queen Elizabeth's time the gravest temptation was to murder and Shakespeare dramatized murder in all his plays as a most horrible crime. By the time of the Restoration, adultery had come to be the gravest of crimes, and the literature of the period was a steady stream of satires about it. And in the modern period where the temptation is to overthrow Christianity for Communism the writers of the period are confronted with the problem of making the readers realize the evil in today's Communism. They do this by dramatizing and without settling for a mere diagnosis. In writing about Greene's The Power and The Glory François Mauriac points up this modern problem,

> That state which you describe, which tracks down the last priest and assassinates him, is indeed the very one we see arising under our eyes. It is the hour of the prince of this world but you paint him without hatred. Even the executioners, even your chief of police are marked by you with a sign of mercy; they search for truth; they believe, like our communists, they have found it and are serving it - that truth which demands the sacrifice of consecrated creatures. . . . Whatever happens we know we must not be afraid; you remind us

> that the inexplicable will be explained and that there is still a screen to be put up against their absurd world.[29]

In attempting to dramatize the evil in today's world the two principal pitfalls that the modern Catholic novelist must avoid are those that have to do with treatment and purpose. The first is the often-found feeling that because a book treats a thing it encourages it. Because Hawthorne's Scarlet Letter revolved around adultery some critics called it immoral. Sin or temptation of any kind does not necessarily make a book immoral any more than the mention of these things makes the Bible immoral or murder makes Shakespeare's Macbeth immoral.

A second pitfall is the confusion that exists between purpose of a treatment and the effect of a treatment. The moral problem of The Heart of The Matter was that Scobie, a Catholic, had ceased to love his wife and had fallen in love with another woman. This forced him to face up to his problems; he was faced with the alternative of rejecting his mistress and staying with his wife; or he could leave his wife and live with his mistress; he could stay with his wife and keep his mistress, pray for a miracle, or he could commit suicide. The one Greene selects as the solution to Scobie's problem is

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29 Mauriac, op. cit., p. 120.

suicide. Under any circumstances, however, so "pure" is the thinking of many Catholics that each or any of the possible solutions would be heartily condemned by one school or another.

Thackery was praised for describing temptation without making the description a new temptation. Doing that is the chief problem of a writer, and deciding whether he succeeded is the chief stumbling block for most readers.

Much of the opposition to new themes, new approaches and new treatments that the serious Catholic authors have met are not from those outside the household of the faith but from members of the immediate family. Not a few French Catholic novelists, whose personal Catholic life and intellectual grasp of philosophy and theology have been judged as sound, have found to their dismay that their work is something of a scandal not only to English and American readers, but to their own countrymen as well. Some of the new Catholic novelists, such as Powers and O'Connor, have been accused of writing "anti-religious" if not "anti-Catholic" stories.

When a Catholic writer assumes his role it is expected of his work that his religion provide a proper perspective, enabling him to see good and evil in their true lights. He must have charity, detachment, and balance in the portrayal of sin. He must not indulge in the

release of private feelings for their sake alone and he must treat erring human nature for what it is and not allow his work to become religious propaganda; he must produce aesthetic Catholicism. Mauriac described the Catholic writer's role when he described his own,

> I am a metaphysician who works in the concrete. Thanks to a certain gift of atmosphere, I try to make sensible and tangible, I try to give the smell of the Catholic universe of evil. I make incarnate that sinner of whom the theologians give us an abstract idea. . . .
>
> Often, impressed by my critics, I have dreamt of writing the story of a saintly little girl, a sister of Therese Martin . . . but as soon as I set to work, everything takes on the color which is my eternal color. My finest characters become enveloped in a sulphurous light which is proper to me, which I do not defend and which is simply mine.[30]

A great novel is art that is enduring and universal; it must be a thing of beauty, something the world will not willingly let die. It must have enduring and universal cultural values. Relatively speaking it is not for an age but for all time. To be cultural it must collectively and culturally and individually help to make right reason and the Will of God prevail. It must help man in the eternal struggle between the flesh and the spirit, but bring order and decency into the jungle of man's urges and emotions. Its theme, its structure, its style and diction, must deal the reader an emotional and

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30 Turnell, "The Religious Novel", op.cit., p. 55.

spiritual impact that leaves him wiser and better.

CHAPTER III

GRAHAM GREENE - BIOGRAPHY AND BACKGROUND

Graham Greene, in his essay on François Mauriac, said that with the death of Henry James the religious sense was lost to the English novel.[1] He went on to add that Mauriac's importance as a novelist rests upon his revival of this sense, for Mauriac's characters ". . . have the importance of men with souls to save or lose".[2] The notions of Greene about Mauriac are significant because his own development as a novelist reveals an attempt to restore two qualities to the English novel - the religious sense and the importance of the human act.[3] This deep interest in mankind stems from Greene's knowledge that

> . . . 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.[4]

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1 Graham Greene, "François Mauriac", The Lost Childhood and Other Essays, London, Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1954, p. 69.

2 Ibid., p. 70.

3 Francis Wyndham, Graham Greene, Writers and Their Work: No. 67, London, Longmanns, Green and Co., 1955, p. 7.

4 Evelyn Waugh, "Felix Culpa?", The Tablet, June 5, 1948, p. 352.

Greene's novels have been given that extra dimension which places characters against the background of being seen through the eyes of God. Although his characters may seem unimportant - alcoholics, murderers, adulterers, those who fall and will fall again; those who will weep to the end; even those who revel in their evil - their souls have a grave importance in the world of Good and Evil.

Graham Greene is intensely preoccupied in his novels with the world of Good and Evil and with the resultant question of the relationship between man and God. He poses this question in Brighton Rock, The Power and The Glory, The Heart of The Matter, and The End of The Affair. These novels have been described as constituting a quartet of hell as allegories of Grace, Mercy, and Love.[5] They represent but a portion of the works of Greene, whom Father John S. Kennedy has called ". . .

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5 Marie-Béatrice Mesnet, in the introduction to her book, Graham Greene and The Heart of the Matter, London, The Cresset Press, 1954, pp. 2-5, brings out the idea of "trilogy" - "quartet" is mine. She says that these novels (her trilogy, Brighton Rock, The Power and The Glory, and The Heart of The Matter) pose the same problem of man's destiny. Certainly the end result of The End of The Affair is the same thing. Alexander Boyle in his article, "The Symbolism of Graham Greene", Irish Monthly, p. 98, says that the important novels of Greene deal with a special problem, a problem of such a nature that it must be worked out against a Catholic background. Each, he adds, is a study in love, a love of God shown working through human emotions.

the greatest of living novelists writing in English".[6]

Greene's writing career began when he was twenty-one with his book of poems, Babbling April. This volume of poems, dedicated to his parents, gives hints of what is to come for in it he spoke knowingly of death. The title came from a poem by Edna St. Vincent Millay -

> It is not enough that yearly, down this hill,
> April
> Comes like an idiot, babbling and strewing flowers -[7]

The first and last poem in the collection refer to occasions when Greene actually contemplated suicide and went some way to meet it. The first is called "Sensations".

> How we make our timorous advances to death, by
> pulling the trigger of a revolver, which we
> already know to be empty
> Even as I do now.
> And how horrified I should be, I who love Death in
> my verse, if I had forgotten
> To unload.[8]

It takes on added meaning when his essay, "The Revolver in the Corner Cupboard" is read. In this essay he describes how, at the age of seventeen, he found a revolver belonging to his brother. His brother was away on

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6 John S. Kennedy, "Graham Greene", Hibernia, Dublin, May, 1949, p. 18.

7 John Atkins, Graham Greene, London, John Calder Ltd., 1957, p. 11.

8 Graham Greene, The Lost Childhood and Other Essays, London, Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1951, p. 47.

holidays. The first day of Graham's holiday "was all happiness". Afterwards there was too much freedom - and "freedom bored me unutterably". He stole across Berkhamstead common, slipped one bullet into the chamber of the revolver, and spun the barrel. This was a gamble - Russian roulette served as a drug against boredom and he played it six times.

Without the information supplied in the essay the poem merely appears to be an exercise in sensationalism. But referring to the essay it is apparent that this poem was written to be left on his desk so that if he lost his gamble there would be evidence of an accident, and his parents would at least not suffer from the knowledge of the truth.

The last poem in the collection concerns itself with death too, but it is an inferior piece of writing that ends with,

> Will it be mist and death
> At the bend of this sunset road,
> Or life reinforced
> By the propinquity of death?
> Either is gain.
> It is a gamble which I cannot lose.[9]

This death obsession in his poetry is followed throughout his career. From the age of eleven or twelve

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9 Ibid., p. 137.

he had repeatedly played a game with death. (In one of his short stories, "The End of The Party", a little boy had been half-convinced that death was the gateway to much more delightful conditions of existence). Even at that early age Greene says he was overcome by boredom. He drank hypo, he tried a hay-fever lotion, he ate a bunch of deadly nightshade (a poisonous herb), and he swallowed twenty aspirins. These risks of death seemed to have enriched Greene's spirit in a way that could not be affected by other means. Graham Greene used his revolver, his hypo, and his aspirins as Huxley used mescalin to induce dimensions of spiritual experience which would be otherwise acquired only through the accidents of life. Just how much effect these experiences did have cannot be measured but some kind of emotional experience did result. These experiences reflect themselves time and time again with his obsession with death. In all his works, especially in his novels, his protagonists die - Pinkie in Brighton Rock, Scobie in The Heart of The Matter, the whiskey-priest in The Power and The Glory, and Sarah in The End of The Affair.

In the light of his later prose his poem called "1930" gives glimpses of another of Greene's obsessions - failure.

Eating a Lyons' chop in nineteen thirty
And staring through the heavy-lidded pane,
Wondering why they keep their plates so dirty,
Any why there's dust in a London April rain,
I shall see out of the sick swim of faces,
Huddled beneath umbrellas in the Strand,
Dim reminiscence of those better places,
Where my rich cargo drove upon the sand.

Then through the crumbling of some bread I'll ponder,
I'll ponder through the scraping of a plate
How love which should have been a blaze of wonder,
Has been a dusty and untended grate, . . .[10]

The world was a cheat and his life was not worth living. His elders, tradition, poetry, all told him that life was enjoyable but his youth mocked him. He wanted the secrets of maturity -

Oh damn you, bird, what do you want up there?
I'm dirty, and I know it, and I'm tired,
But need you speak,
You in your old grey wisdom of the years,
Of fires that flicker in an open hearth,
And little sparks that like a troop of horse,
Charge on to die upon the chimney back?
I tramp because I like it, you damned owl,
You pedagouge, you crazy-hug-the-hearth.
Why should I let you whisper in my ear,
When I tired, but young, and cold, but very young,
That age is best, that age is always best?[11]

Graham Greene's stature as a novelist had a slow beginning. In 1929 his first novel, The Man Within, was mediocre and won but little recognition for him. In this book he uses the theme of pursuit, to be used in later

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10 Atkins, op. cit., p. 12.

11 Ibid., p. 13.

works, when Andrews, fleeing from his fellow smugglers, felt ". . . a sense of overwhelming desolation sweep over him, a wonder whether he would ever know peace from pursuit".[12] In this novel is the first hint of Greene's major preoccupation in later works, the sense of sin. The word "sin" is first mentioned in connection with Andrew's seduction by Merriman's mistress. Lust and its natural consequence, adultery, are the embodiments of sin in The Man Within. Greene is puritanical in his attitude. He had been brought up in the English Protestant tradition and the sexual impulse had always borne the mark of impurity. He tended to equate shame with impurity. "How could he ever keep clean if the sense of shame was so short lived"? was Andrew's question.

The Man Within was followed by two unpublished novels. Greene has left strict orders in his will that these should never be published. "One", according to Greene, "dealt with the birth of a black child to white parents - a throw back to some forgotten great-grandparent"![13] And the second concerns the "Carlist activities of Spanish exiles living around Leicester Square in

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12 Graham Greene, The Man Within, London, William Heinemann Ltd., 1929, p. 20.

13 Atkins, op. cit., p. 15.

London at the time when Carlyle wrote his life of John Sterling".[14]

During the time that he was writing his first books he was also sub-editor of the letters department of the London Times. Prior to his job on The Times he worked ". . . without pay just for the experience" on the Nottingham Journal. His journalist training is evident in all his works but it especially marks his earlier pieces. "He is given to over-dramatization . . . the camera eye technique and sensationalism", wrote one of his early critics.[15]

In the same year that The Man Within was published there appeared several short stories. One of these, "The Second Death", gives evidence of Greene's religious feelings at work for it is the story of a man who recovers from death in the course of which he meets God. A second story, "The End of The Party", is the story of childhood fears. Twin brothers go to a birthday party, where they play hide-and-seek in the dark. Francis is of a nervous disposition and Peter tries to protect and comfort him - yet the unexpected touch of Peter's hand in the dark kills Francis with shock. There is a hint of what was to be

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14 Ibid.

15 The Times (London)

developed more fully in The End of The Affair - that too much loving can kill as effectively as too much hating. In the novel Sarah dies of a disease but there is a strong suggestion throughout that the love between her and Bendrix will certainly overpower one or the other of them eventually. The short story ends with Peter clutching his brother's dead fingers in puzzled grief,

> His brain, too young to realize the full paradox, yet wondered with an obscure self-pity why it was that the pulse of his brother's fear went on and on, when Francis was now where he had always been told that there was no more terror and no more darkness.[16]

There is neither passion nor conviction in the story, merely a small boy's fear worked up to indicate, at least, the two obsessions of Greene - death and failure. Francis is dead and Peter wonders where he had failed his sensitive brother.

The enormous gap that Greene felt existed between childhood and adulthood ("Oh damn you, bird, . . .") was brought out in his "I Spy" for in it is the story of a child who only half-understands what is happening and has no understanding at all of the reasons. In this example of the genre a boy creeps downstairs at night to his father's tobacco shop, to smoke his first cigarette.

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16 Graham Greene, "The End of The Party", Nineteen Stories, New York, The Viking Press, 1949, p. 137.

While there he is surprised by his father and two men. He overhears their conversation from his hiding place. It is clear that his father is leaving, and that the men have some power over him. The boy can understand nothing in his innocence. The reader knows little more than the boy but the great difference between the reader and the boy lies in the knowledge that adults do know that such things do happen. For the boy it might be an exercise in magic for all the meaning it has for him.

Another short story from those early years, "Proof Positive", is one in which a speaker tries to supply "proof positive" that the spirit outlives the body, but for the most part he utters nonsense. He falls back dead during the course of his speech and upon examination it is discovered that he had been dead for a week and that the spirit had been activating the body which had no life of its own. The story gives The Heart of The Matter significance. Greene had become filled with wonder at the Holy Eucharist; he held It with a sense of awed Grace at the privilege of taking God's body in his mouth. At the height of Scobie's crises he dreamt he was drifting in a boat down an underground river, accompanied by a dead body. "The smell of decay was already in his nostrils". Then, sitting there guiding the boat down the stream he realized that it was not the dead body that

smelt but his own living one. "He woke up and his wife told him that it was time to go to Mass and Communion". Scobie took the wafer in his mouth and knew that his dream had given him "proof positive" of his own corruption.

The Name of Action published and then suppressed by Greene takes its title from Hamlet. There are occasional references to the Catholic faith. The novel that followed, Rumour at Nightfall, (also suppressed by Greene) is worth noting because Chase, one of the main characters, who works for an English newspaper says, "My position is in No-man's land, I want news, that's all", while Crane says, "One must always take sides". These attitudes anticipate The Quiet American for in it Greene presents two opposing powers - Communism and Catholicism - for these are the terms in which he sees the major conflict in the world.

In 1932 Greene wrote Stamboul Train (sometimes referred to as Orient Express). He labeled it an entertainment to distinguish it from his more serious works, a practice he has since followed. It was with this book that his reputation began to grow; it made him a popular writer and Hollywood turned it into a movie. Stamboul Train has elements in it to appeal to the film-goer but Greene manages to introduce enough originality into his treatment of character and situation to raise the book

above the level of a Class C novel.[17]

Greene followed Stamboul Train with It's a Battlefield, another entertainment dealing with political unrest; a story filled with ironical twists and carefully planned happenings of a Communist sentenced to death for murdering a policeman. Conrad and Milly, two characters from the book, have an affair, ". . . not out of lust but out of pity". This is the first indication that pity is to play a role in the characters Greene recreates. Even at this early stage in Greene's development as a novelist, Elizabeth Bowen wrote ". . . he is among the few, the very few, great living novelists".[18]

It's a Battlefield also leads to The End of The Affair for in both is Greene's notion that to overcome shame by surrendering to its cause is the same as eliminating hate by indulging in it. At the end of It's a Battlefield the chaplain says, "I can't stand human justice any longer. Its arbitrariness, Its incomprehensibility". The assistant commissioner replies that this makes it sound like Divine Justice. The chaplain replies, "Perhaps, but one can't hand in a resignation to God".

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17 Kenneth Allott and Miriam Farris, The Art of Graham Greene, London, Hamish Hamilton, 1951, p. 79.

18 Elizabeth Bowen in Tatler (London)

In The End of The Affair Sarah attempts to hand in a resignation to God when she pleads, "Dear God, I'm no use. I'm still the same bitch and fake. Clear me out of the way".

The works which followed, England Made Me and A Gun for Sale, were gaining for Greene more popularity. "But the critics", says Time magazine, "didn't take him seriously. He was too readable; whether he called them entertainments or not, his stories were read for sheer pleasure by people who ignored his terrifying glimpses of sin and despair".[19] England Made Me has been placed by Greene himself third, after The Heart of The Matter and The Power and The Glory in order of achievement among his novels. It is concerned with high finance, the kind of finance that involves nations and empires. Although Greene ranks England Made Me third, Francis Wyndham finds that artistically the book is a failure, since Greene loses control which, in turn, results in a final effect of dissatisfaction.[20]

A Gun for Sale, as England Made Me, is also the story of finance and the way men of power and money used

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19 "Shocker: Adultery can lead to sainthood", Time, October 29, 1951, p. 103.

20 Wyndham, op. cit., p. 12.

human lives as means of gaining financial security. Greene portrays Raven as a man with a grudge against life because of a hare-lip. Taking advantage of Raven's deformity, and resultant hate complex, Sir Marcus, an armaments manufacturer, hires him to murder a Middle-European Minister of War in order to create a war scare. Marcus takes further advantage of Raven by paying him in stolen bank notes. Raven kidnaps Anne, the fiancee of the police sergeant assigned to track him, and uses her as a hostage. While a hostage, Anne develops a deep pity for Raven because he has had so little "chance" in this world. Pity here is used in a more meaningful sense than in It's a Battlefield. It is an echo of Cardinal Newman's observation, ". . . the terrible calamity that is man's . . . manifesting itself in a physical deformity" that evokes pity. It is the pity of a grotesque figure arguing that the maimed and the warped are better off dead because they can never rise above their own ugliness or seediness.[21]

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21 Graham Greene has Raven in This Gun for Hire, New York, Bantam Books, 1955, p. 55, tell his plight ". . . he wasn't used to any taste that wasn't bitter on the tongue. He had been made by hatred; it had constructed him into this thin, smoky, murderous figure. . . ."

Because of Raven's hare-lip he is despised by women and hated by men. He is possibly a reincarnation of the black child of white parents. Raven is affected by events in his childhood (his father had been hanged and he had seen his mother after she had cut her throat). He anticipates, in this respect, Pinkie of Brighton Rock whose hatred of sex derived from his parent's "Saturday night exercises". Greene's idea of following up the careers of those children who witness events or suffer from the consequences of events was much more worth his talents than the people who had no background. When Raven threatened Buddy, the medical student, with a revolver, Buddy was affected. There is something about this irrevocability of certain acts that fascinated Greene. They parallel theological beliefs such as the irrevocability of marriage in The Heart of The Matter. It never occured to Scobie that a divorce would be a way out of his dilemma - Scobie was a Catholic and he knew that the Catholic Church was opposed to divorce. At the time of his writing A Gun for Sale Greene was moving toward one of the major theses in his career - that the Catholic Church imposes and demands adherence to strict rules and in that the Church resembles life.

Raven said that the ugly had no chance. "They have a good time and what do they mind if someone's born

ugly"? All of Greene's characters are weighed down with some obsession. For Andrews in The Man Within it was his own cowardice and the same obsession struck Fowler in The Quiet American. Czinner in Stamboul Train could not escape failure. Conrad Drover, It's Battlefield, was branded by his own awkwardness, convinced of his own guilt, and he proclaimed loudly that there was no justice. Minty and Anthony of England Made Me saw everything they touched go bad; they had no chance for everything is settled from the beginning. And Raven was made by hatred; "it had constructed him into this thin smoky murderous figure in the rain, haunted and ugly". Raven bears an interesting relationship towards Bendrix in The End of The Affair for Bendrix had all the benefits of love and yet settled down to write a book about hatred.

Mixed with Greene's pity is his concern for the story. He knows that the man who believes and the man who writes must, as an artist, coexist in the one individual. When Greene started writing he kept the Brett touch, ". . . a touch acquired as a young boy who had read of the exploits of a private detective named Dixon Brett, . . . spies, gunmen . . . all flitted ceaselessly through Greene's novels. . . . "To them he added the sharp

storytelling talent of a born writer".[22] His concern for the story won for Greene a vast audience and wealth, estimated at a quarter of a million pounds.

Finally, as best seller followed best seller, Greene mixed in larger helpings of his deeply held religious view which culminated in his conversion to Catholicism in 1926 by Father Trollope. Like the travelers in his short story, "The Hint of An Explanation", he commuted to the Nottingham Journal office with Father Trollope as his fellow passenger. For several months he argued his uncertainties with himself and with Father Trollope and in an essay he writes of the gradual change that came over him,

> Riding in trams in winter past the Gothic hotel, the super-cinema, the sooty newspaper office where one worked at night, passing the single prostitute . . . one began slowly, painfully, reluctantly to populate heaven.[23]

The first major book to follow his conversion was a travel book, Journey Without Maps, published in 1936. It is important because it was in Africa that he found the raw material for his book, The Heart of The Matter. Journey Without Maps is a study of a strange and ". . .

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22 Robert Pitman, "What, Graham Greene in Red Warsaw!"

23 Time, op. cit., p. 102.

terrifying journey" through areas where white men had never been before. It is interesting too for what it tells about the author's fascination for the seediness of the place and the people.

The first positive indication of Greene's conversion to the Roman Catholic Church was in Brighton Rock, published in 1938. Raven, of A Gun for Sale, foreshadowed Pinkie, the boy gangster of Brighton Rock. Pinkie is fully aware of the nature of his own wickedness and of the place religion should have in his life, but Raven was a man without morals who regarded the whole structure of religion as so much trivia. Brighton Rock was the turning point for Greene, for in it he discovered that a Catholic is more capable of evil than anyone.

In 1939 two more of Greene's books were published. The Lawless Roads was Greene's observations, as he travelled through Mexico, of the religious persecution. It was on this journey that he found the material for his novel, The Power and The Glory. The Lawless Roads is not an ordinary travel book for it is actually about the

"power and the glory" of the Catholic Church.[24] Greene was amazed that, though the Church had been unmercifully persecuted and the religious services forbidden, people continued to honor the God they were not allowed to publicly worship. The way the peons squeezed one more drop of mortification out of their already hard lives impressed and convinced Greene of the need these peasants felt for their religion. His experiences in Mexico have been compared to D. H. Lawrence's.

> Greene gives, with something like genius, the impression of a deeper and further combat between Darkness and Light, Sin and Forgiveness, which lies behind the decay of Mexico. . . . Reminds me on page after page of the account of the country given in D. H. Lawrence . . .[25]

The second book published in 1939, after his conversion, was The Confidential Agent. It is divided into sections labeled: "The Hunter", "The Hunted", again signifying the pursuit theme that was now such a part of his works as to be identified synonomously with him.

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24 Greene wrote, "God didn't cease to exist when men lost their faith in Him; there were always catacombs where the secret rite could be kept alive till the bad times passed. . . . God had lain in radio cabinets, behind bookshelves. He had been carried in a small boy's pocket into prisons; He had been consumed in drawing rooms and in garages. . . ." The Lawless Roads, London, Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1950, p. 38.

25 The Tablet (London)

The Power and The Glory was published in 1940 followed by the Ministry of Fear in 1943. The latter, a Dixon Brett private detective story mixed with pity, has Arthur Rowe, confined to a nursing home as a result of a bomb explosion, being told about Nazism and Fifth Columns as a way of life. Arthur Rowe is made the object of Greene's pity, for he, like Scobie, had committed acts out of pity.

The Heart of The Matter and The End of The Affair, published in 1948 and 1951, raised Greene to the stature of a novelist worthy of serious study. Between these two novels he published an entertainment, The Third Man.

Fear, violence, pity, and pursuit are the recurring themes of Greene's entertainments and novels. These themes have been interpreted with the use of a strange cast of characters, but these people, in turn, have been drawn with a good measure of technical ability. Greene's style is characterized by his acute sense of observation which maintains a high level of interest. He has a keen sense of creating atmosphere, and is at his best in the quietly deliberate brutality of some of his descriptions.

The development of Greene as a writer was slow. His serious view of life emphasized his writing credo, which has brought him to the place where he is now regarded

as one of England's leading artists. It was his credo that only by looking beyond and into the supernatural can the natural be understood. He wrote,

> In all writers there occurs a moment of crystallization when the dominant theme is plainly expressed, when the private universe becomes visible even to the least sensitive reader.[26]

Greene's aim is to bring man face to face with the realities of life and eternity in order to rescue him 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 always one of pleasure, often it is a storming protest, stirring up arguments and speculation about the truths to which Greene wishes to point. 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.[27]

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26 Wyndham, op. cit., p. 8.

27 W. Gore Allen, "Another View of Graham Greene", Irish Ecclesiastical Records, Vol. 169, No. 1009, p. 69.

Greene's dominant theme was stated in his first novel and appeared again and again in his later works - the obsession with evil in man and his sympathy with the sinner. He is incapable of making an artificial separation between man's evil action and the man himself.[28] However detestable an evil action may be, there is always left a chance to sympathize with the sinner if one but trace the reasons for the sins. As Scobie says to his wife, who will never forgive Pemberton for causing inconveniences, "Don't talk nonsense, dear. We'd forgive most things if we knew the facts".[29] For Greene, man's sins are not the true reflection of man's relations with God - there is always Grace. This then, is Greene's theme - have pity on the sinner for the Grace of God is offered to all alike - sinners and saints.[30]

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28 W. Peters, "The Concern of Graham Greene", The Month, p. 283.

29 Graham Greene, The Heart of The Matter, London, William Heinemann Ltd., 1954, p. 57.

30 Illtud Evans, O.P., Blackfriars, July, 1948, p. 344. See also Paul Dinkins, "Graham Greene, The Incomplete Version", Catholic World, Spring, 1953, p. 102. "The basic problem in Greene is the world in struggle . . . and Greene has emerged as one committed . . . to a given interpretation of the meaning of life . . . the Grace of God to all is given freely".

Through his character's weaknesses and sense of failure Greene's theme developed; the conflict that goes on in the soul of man. The conflict within his characters had been a general one in The Man Within and became increasingly poignant as Greene progressed from one novel to another. He presents the drab, seedy, and unsuccessful as "heroes". He has a penchant for the seedy; he wrote in Journey Without Maps, ". . . seediness has a very deep appeal". The people in his novels are not edifying. His novels portray man and his sins and God and His Love racing pell-mell through the labyrinthine ways. They picture the mysterious patterns of Grace as it unfolds from the Hands of God. They picture the seemingly incongruous coexistence of sin and Grace in the soul of man. They offer a tragic vision of man's predicament, the fatality of evil, the power of Grace - both forces at war within man.[31] Man's soul being fought over by the Fallen Angel and God Himself. Greene's attitude may be summed up as François Mauriac sums up his own,

> It is a mark of our slavery and your wretchedness that we can, without lying, paint a faithful portrait only of the passions.[32]

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31 Richard McLaughlin, "Graham Greene, Saint or Cynic", America, Vol. 79, July 24, 1948, pp. 370-371.

32 Alexander Boyle, "The Symbolism of Graham Greene", Irish Monthly, p. 101.

When man's passions replace man's reason there is left the laws of the jungle; eat or be eaten; hunt and betray or be hunted and betrayed. This is Greeneland and there is very little gaiety in Greeneland. His world is a world of hates and fears. It is the evil in man that makes it so, and thus,

> It is not surprising that Greene's landscapes are never elegant - the pervasive evil of man extends into his surroundings - all enhance the heroic struggle with the diseased element in his nature. The burdensome weight of evil engenders in Greene's characters a near hatred of life.[33]

Greene's world is peopled by rational human beings that know only the survival of the strongest and the fittest. It is a battlefield. In the arena are the people pitted against the forces of their own vices, weaknesses, and infidelities. Adam's sin changed the Garden of Eden into a jungle that can be conquered by the individuals in it only through pain and suffering.

Greene's pessimistic view of life had its inception at Berkhampstead, his boyhood home. At Berkhampstead school, young Greene met men who bore about them the genuine quality of evil; one, Califax, a member of the faculty, practiced torments with dividers. Another was Parlow whose desk was filled with advertisements of art

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33 Kenneth A. Labf, "Graham Greene and the Problem of Evil", Catholic World, Vol. 73, June, 1951, pp. 196-199.

photos.[34] To the young boy, ". . . hell lay about him in his infancy", and his first encounter with cruelty came to him

> . . . like a revelation, when I was fourteen, I realized the pleasure of cruelty; I wasn't interested any longer in walks on commons. There was a girl lodging close by I wanted to do things to; I loitered outside the door hoping to see her. I didn't do anything. I wasn't old enough. I could think about pain as something desirable and not as something dreaded. It was as if I had discovered that the way to enjoy life was to appreciate pain.[35]

Three years later the boy who had learned to appreciate pain now found he was terribly in love with his sister's governess. For him it had none of the "trappings" of love. At that age, he felt, one may fall

> . . . irrevocably in love with failure, and success of any kind loses half its savour before it is experienced.[36]

He sought excitement, anything to alleviate a terrible boredom, and even after six attempts at Russian Roulete he was still bored,

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34 Graham Greene, The Lawless Roads, London, Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1950, p. 4.

35 Graham Greene, Journey Without Maps, London, William Heinemann, Ltd., 1953, p. 31.

36 Graham Greene, "The Revolver in the Corner Cupboard", The Lost Childhood and Other Essays, London, Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1954, p. 173.

> . . . my mind was busy with other plans. One campaign was over, but the war against boredom had got to go on.[37]

The pattern had been set; his philosophy of life had begun to take shape. The young Greene, conditioned by experience and environment, looked about him and saw that evil was everywhere and that with it came pain and suffering. He explains what an odd world he saw,

> There are things one never gets used to because they don't connect; sanctity and fidelity and the courage of human beings abandoned to free will; virtues like these belong with old college buildings . . . violence comes to us more easily because it was so long expected - not only by the political sense but by the moral sense. The world we lived in could not have ended any other way.[38]

In his views of this world and its susceptibility to brutality he wonders at what point the people went astray. He cites Cardinal Newman and concedes that he, too, follows the same view,

> To consider the world in its length and breadth . . . the disappointments of life, the defeat of good, the success of evil, physical pain, mental anguish, the prevalance and intensity of sin . . . inflicts upon the mind the sense of a profound mystery.
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> . . . . . .

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37 Ibid., p. 176.

38 Graham Greene, "At Home", The Lost Childhood and Other Essays, London, Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1954, p. 189.

> What shall be said to this heart piercing reason bewildering fact? I can only answer that either there is no Creator, or this living society of men is in a true sense discarded from his presence . . . if there be a God, since there is a God, the human race is implicated in some terrible aboriginal calamity.[39]

The success of evil and the Love of God, seem at first glance to be diametrically opposed to each other. However, the crux of the philosophy of Greene is in the juxtaposition of these opposites. Since Greene has been given the pattern by Marjorie Bowen's Viper of Milan when he saw that ". . . evil walked where good could not", he also saw that "the devil - and God too - have always used the comic people, little suburban natures and the maimed and the warped to serve His purposes".[40]

Greene used the maimed and the warped in order to give a picture of human nature. His characters are acutely conscious of suffering and sin and of the one redeeming feature that man is heir to - the love of God for all mankind. Although all of Greene's characters are not consciously aware of the manifestations of the Grace of God, it, nevertheless, is there working for the salvation of every soul, for without it man is unable

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39 Greene, The Lawless Roads, op. cit., p. frontpiece.

40 Greene, "The Lost Childhood", The Lost Childhood and Other Essays, op. cit., p. 16.

to extricate himself from the "terrible aboriginal calamity", that implicates the human race. Pinkie's lawyer says that he has sunk so deep that ". . . I carry the secrets of the sewers".[41] And in an earlier passage Pinkie listens as the lawyer sums up the view of the world,

> You know what Mephistopheles said to Faustus when he asked where Hell was? He said: "Why, this is Hell, nor are we out of it".[42]

The hell that is man's is not confined to the immortal; the "calamities" manifest themselves in plagues, pestilences, and wars. Pinkie of Brighton Rock is at war with Colleoni over mastery of gangland at Brighton; the whiskey-priest is a fugitive because of the Communist's government waging war on Catholicism. War confines Scobie and his wife to Africa; and Sarah Miles is caught on the battlefield of World War II. The war between Good and Evil, symbolized by the war between men is Greene's way of bringing man to salvation,

> The world is a prison where we are held captive. War is the inevitable end called for by this corruption . . . But only through violence and Hell are we brought to Faith and Heaven.[43]

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41 Graham Greene, Brighton Rock, London, Penguin Books, 1954, p. 213.

42 Ibid., p. 212.

43 Marie-Béatrice Mesnet, op. cit., p. 13.

Man's eternal destiny is another of the obsessions of Greene. He, as a Catholic novelist, investigates in his works the evil in man, not as a judge but as one whose sympathy goes out to the man who is guilty of sin.[44] He probes religious, philosophical, and theological problems in his works; he uses comic and warped people for his purposes. As the main characters in his major novels, Greene introduces a seventeen year boy-leader of a mob of gangsters and several times a murderer; a wife having an adulterous affair; a whiskey-priest whose moral laxity makes him a coward; a police official whose pity urges him to suicide. These are the chief characters in the works of England's most controversial Catholic author. At first glance they seem to be strange bedfellows for a Catholic novelist. Some critics believe that he should

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44 Francis Feytton, "Graham Greene: Catholicism and Controversy", Catholic World, December, 1954, p. 1075. "Greene asks for pity and sympathy - he does not ask reader to condone sin". See also, Harold C. Gardiner, "Second Thoughts on Greene's Latest", America, December 15, 1951, p. 313. "Greene's most moving characteristic is a deep compassion and understanding".

have picked better companions for his journeys.[45] Others, however, believe as Father Harold C. Gardiner does, that ". . . the portrayal of sin with its drives, its glories and its agonies, has been a legitimate and fruitful field for investigations into human nature since literature began".[46] Too, they believe with Cardinal Newman that ". . . it is a contradiction in terms to attempt a sinless literature of sinful men".[47]

Greene believes that what has always been true about man is true today, with the exception that modern man has simply added a little more to his already long list of evils. Greene's view on the mental and moral condition of the present time is one that perplexes him,

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45 W. Gore Allen, "Another View of Graham Greene", Catholic World, April, 1949, pp. 69-70. "Greene portrays marriage as though those lived within it were too depraved for the sacrament to give them grace. . . . Greene does this and falsifies the facts to do it". Braybrooke says, "One of the chief objections of Greene's Catholic critics is that moral laxity is generally found in his Catholic characters". Neville Braybrooke, "Graham Greene and the Double Man", Dublin Review, Vol. 226, No. 5, p. 456. Another critic, Jane Howes, points out, "Greene's characters are indifferent to morals and guilty of the sin of presumption . . . both ideas dangerous. . . ." Jane Howes, "Out of the Pit", Catholic World, April, 1950, pp. 36-40.

46 Harold C. Gardiner, S.J., Norms for the Novel, New York, The America Press, 1953, p. 53.

47 Paul Dinkins, "Graham Greene: The Incomplete Version", Catholic World, November, 1952, p. 100.

> Today our world seems particularly susceptible to brutality. There is a touch of nostalgia in the pleasure we take in gangster movies, in characters who have so agreeably simplified their emotions that they have begun living again at a level below that of the cerebral.
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> . . . 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.[48]

Greene's interest in man's sins and their effect on his eternal damnation or salvation is a serious attempt to better understand man and the meaning of life. Greene is concerned with the sins that are diabolical, as exemplified by Blacker in the short story, "The Hint of An Explanation". His greatest concern, however, is with the subtle type of evil that is malignant and which man must fear and despise. The kind of evil that makes Rose want to damn herself because of her love for Pinkie Brown. Greene is also deeply concerned with the kind of evil that distorts the sane mind into believing that one's own damnation can be offered to God in reparation for another's failings as Scobie in The Heart of The Matter does for his wife and his mistress and the whiskey-priest in The Power and The Glory does for his daughter. Greene's obsession with evil in the world, or more accurately the

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48 Graham Greene, The Time, London, Vol. 52, No. 4, July-December, 1948, p. 47.

evil in the individual is defined as,

> The relation that exists between Mr. Greene's obsession with evil in man and his sympathy with the sinner calls for a close inspection. Mr. Greene is incapable of making an artificial separation between man's evil action and the man himself. He can never consider the evil by itself, but only in so far as it proceeds from the individual.[49]

He has a preoccupation with sin that sometimes looks like a preoccupation with evil. His desire is to awaken in readers a sense of sin in a world that attempts to deny the existence of such a condition. In short, Graham Greene is underlining the terrible power of man's free will. Greene's aim manifests itself in a

> . . . peculiar concern with man as beset by evil and yearning to reach God through a maze of despair and anguish.[50]

Evelyn Waugh in his article "Felix Culpa?" says that Greene uses Peguy's theory, the theme of which is that the Catholic Church is a chain of saints and sinners with clasped fingers pulling one another up to heaven.[51]

Greene not only is concerned with the sins of men but he also is concerned with the Grace of God. Greene is saying in his novels that every prayer directed to Heaven with the right intention is heard by God.

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49 Peters, op. cit., p. 283.

50 McLaughlin, op. cit., p. 370.

51 Waugh, op.cit., p. 354.

Prayer can be a plea, an act of love, or an act of reparation. The prayer can come from the heart of one schooled in the ways of prayer or from a 20th Century Mary Magdalen. It matters not - God's Grace will come at the right time. Greene explained his attitude toward the Grace of God when he wrote,

> I write about situations that are common - universal might be more correct - in which my characters are involved and from which only faith can redeem them . . . they sin but there is no limit to God's mercy and because of this it is important . . . they have all understood in the end.[52]

Greene's sympathies are with sinful men. Even though it is Scobie's adulteries and suicide, the whiskey-priest's greed, Pinkie's "Credo in Unum Satanum", and Sarah Miles' elimination of God from her love affair that are the sins, Greene's sympathy goes out to them; not because of the sins, but because of their having sinned. Even more than charity and pity, it is humility that redeems so much blackness in Mr. Greene's sinners. They never judge or condemn others; they do not excuse themselves; they know themselves to be sinners and know God to be Just. Sarah Miles, "I am a bitch and a fake"; the whiskey-priest's "I am a proud, lustful, greedy man.

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52 J. Maddux, "With Crooked Lines", America, March 6, 1954, p. 601.

O God, forgive me", and Scobie's honesty in regarding himself merely as a man in the ranks who had no opportunity to break the more serious rules, all bear traces of genuine humility. Mr. Greene is man's mentor on the love of God as it comes forth among the weak, the sinful, the humble, and the perverted.

The philosopher, the theologian, the moralist, all see things in definite blacks and whites. They say that under these conditions and with these known facts, such-and-so is obvious and condemns a man to hell or gains for him Heaven. As a Catholic novelist, Graham Greene attempts to evaluate the theological, the philosophical, and moral problem of man in the same light that the Omniscient God must look at His creatures.[53] For Greene there is a profound mystery in the Mercy of God. Scobie and Pinkie both die in mortal sin as defined by moral theologians, yet the conclusions of the books imply that no one knows the human heart or the nature of the

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53 Father Rank echoes Greene's thoughts on the relationship between the man and the Omniscient God when he tells Mrs. Scobie, "I know the Church says. The Church knows all the rules. But it doesn't know what goes on in a single human heart". Graham Greene, The Heart of The Matter, loc. cit., p. 333.

mercy of God.[54]

Greene's God does not easily fit in with the common conception of what God is. Greene is often outspoken. There is something of a blasphemous nature in Scobie's bewilderment when he fails to reconcile a child's suffering with God's mercy, a repetition of which is in both The End of The Affair, when Sarah Miles rejects the existence of God, "because you cannot have a merciful God and this despair", and in his play, The Living Room where belief in a God Who allows Rose's suicide is bitterly opposed. Greene's treatment of God is undoubtedly meant to shock. And the reason that Greene uses shock tactics is that he hates to see God reduced to comprehensible and manageable proportions. He wants man to realize that he does not know a thing about the Mercy of God, which is of an appalling strangeness; and something similar holds good for all of God's qualities - Justice, Love, Charity. Any shaping of God after man's own ideas, or worse, after man's wishes, is a most detestable thing, a futile and silly annihilation of a tremendous mystery. Any trifling with the idea that God should act thus and

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54 "A Manhattan ship news reporter (so the story goes) put the heart of the matter to Waugh: 'Mr. Waugh, where's Scobie'? Said Waugh: 'In hell, of course'". Time, Loc. cit., p. 103.

should do this, and should not let His sun rise except on the good, which is so often implied in the arrogance and self-complacency of Catholics, is scourged and cast out by Greene. Here is the source of all Greene's hatred of all smugness, and pious platitudes, and dead goodness that sits and talks piously and decays all the time, complacent safety and all the rest, which is so well portrayed in the smug woman of The Power and The Glory and Louise in The Heart of The Matter.

In Graham Greene's novels God is not just a very kind father, a sort of human super-father. God is the unfathomable, before Whom a man in his right senses can only tremble, crushed by His terrible greatness, and reduced to nothingness in the realization of his own utter dependence and weakness. God is man's Lord and Master and Lawgiver, and sinful man, if he is not a complete idiot, shudders at the thought of his own wickedness in the sight of such a God - and this calls forth sympathy, because man suffers agonies in this dread of God. But Greene never stops here; it would prove a one-sidedness of vision, and therefore a half-truth, if he did; and a half-truth can be more dangerous than an untruth. This same God is also a God of infinite Love, a God, "Who loves desperately". Greene means precisely this. There is no reduction of God's love to sweet affections and

false sentimentality. Just as His Mercy so often looks like punishment, His Love often looks like hate, enough to scare a man,

> . . . it set fire to a bush in the desert, didn't it, and smashed open graves and set the dead walking in the dark. Oh, a man like me would run a mile to get away if he felt that love around.[55]

Indeed, the whiskey-priest, as any serious man, instinctively feels the nearness to God will wither him, and it is understandable that in this dread of such a loving God he keeps God a comfortable distance away. Once a man admits God's desperate love, nothing will be left for him; for where God loves desperately, the only answer can be loving God desperately. And this sometimes means losing one's own life. Sarah Miles' conversion does not pivot upon her vow. She feels God's love about; she then discovers that keeping her vow for six weeks is not enough; nor for six months; she has to stop seeing Bendrix, she has to give up drinking too, and then comes the first intimations that she has to eliminate everything with its terrible conclusions, "If I eliminate everything, how will I exist . . . where would I be all the time"? She fights this love till there is no fight left.

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55 Graham Greene, The Power and The Glory, London, William Heinemann, 1951, p. 250.

Similarly it is not hatred of God that almost consumes Bendrix and makes him so bitter; he is a man tortured by fear. To bow his head before God is no simple matter; it is to be a saint;

> For if this God exists, I thought, and even if you with your lusts and your adulteries and the timid lies you used to tell - can change like this, we could all be saints by leaping as you leapt, by shutting the eyes and leaping once and for all.[56]

and later he re-echoes his mistress's words when he writes:

> If ever I loved like that, it would be the end of everything . . . loving Him there'd be no pleasure left in anything at all with Him away. I'd even lose my work, I'd cease to be Bendrix. Sarah, I'm afraid.[57]

Indeed, there is the misery of losing God, but there is also the terrible pain of finding God Whose name is Love. The alternative, Greene observes, before sinful man is not between a ghastly devil and a smiling God, between suffering and joy, between darkness and light but rather for the man who knows God knows there is no alternative for there is only darkness, suffering, and sorrow.

His description of Catholicism and Catholics in the world today may in part be due to the fact that his background is solidly English Protestant. He is a cousin

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56 Graham Greene, The End of The Affair, London, William Heinemann, 1951, p. 235.

57 Ibid., p. 225.

of Robert Louis Stevenson. His father was headmaster of Berkhampstead School in Hertfordshire, England, where Greene was born October 2, 1904. He attended Berkhampstead and Balliol College, Oxford. After leaving school he turned to newspaper writing, first on the Nottingham Journal and then, from 1926 to 1930, on the staff of the London Times. From 1935 to 1939 he was film critic for The Spectator. His travels have taken him through Europe, Mexico, and during the war his work for the British Foreign Office included a year of duty in Freetown on the west coast of Africa.

He first became interested in writing after he had read Marjorie Bowen's The Viper of Milan. After reading this he became aware of

> perfect evil walking the world where perfect good can never walk again and only the pendulum ensures that after all, in the end, justice is done.[58]

He knew that only once had Goodness found a perfect incarnation in a human body but that evil could always find a home ". . . he looked around and saw that it was so".[59] Marjorie Bowen had given him a pattern - religion might later explain it to him in other terms, but the

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58 Greene, "The Lost Childhood", The Lost Childhood and Other Essays, op. cit., p. 17.

59 Ibid., p. 16.

pattern was there - perfect evil walking in the world. The clarification and explanation came, when, in 1926, Greene became a Roman Catholic. This explanation was the seemingly complex movement of the Grace of God. He could no longer see perfect evil on this redeemed earth; it does not exist.

His characters are "Roman" and they ". . . know what's what". They grow as moral beings in the knowledge that God is Justice, that God is Love, and that God is Mercy. His characters know these things because Greene has been taught them by his adopted Church.

He now has a religion to give his writing form and meaning, and as a Catholic he has an advantage over his contemporaries because his work has a definite religious framework into which it can be fitted. The roots of his characters are spiritual and therefore eternal. His characters were not his creations "but God's. They have an eternal destiny. . . . They are souls whom Christ died to save".[60] They have been according to Evelyn Waugh ". . . baptized, held deep under in the waters of life".[61] Having been baptized, his characters are heirs to the love of God. Because of this love his characters

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60 Mesnet, Op. cit., p. 113.

61 Waugh, op. cit., p. 54.

progress from captivity to freedom, from the constant turmoil of the mind of man torn by the war between himself as a Christian and himself as a man. Greene sees in his characters a need for pity and a hope for mercy. He is concerned with salvation from evil and the Divine Grace which makes that possible. Divine Grace manifests itself in a world of shabbiness and ". . . even the blackest sins", writes Léon Bloy, "are but accidents that in no way alter the substance", that even the most horrible scoundrels, ". . . have the souls of saints, having all been called . . . and having been bought at the same price".[62] The price Bloy refers to is the Crucifixion - Christ's supreme act of Love. Christ's supreme act is for everyone, even Pinkie who is lost because he wills it so. The whiskey-priest, a victim of the appalling strangeness of the Mercy of God, fulfills his vocation and becomes like Christ, a sacrifice. Of Scobie, Waugh says, "I believe that Mr. Greene thinks him a saint".[63] And Sarah Miles, an adulteress, shows how God works even

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62 Léon Bloy, Pilgrim of the Absolute translated by John Coleman and Harry Lorin Binnse, New York, Pantheon Books, 1947, p. 223, quoted by Frank O'Malley, "The Catholic Novelist: The Tangled Web", The Catholic Renascence ed. by Norman Weyland, S.J., Chicago, Loyola University Press, 1951, p. 57.

63 Waugh, op. cit., p. 353.

in the depths of corruption.

What relationship can man establish with God? This question occupies Greene's interest in his novels and he poses it in four different ways.

The core of Brighton Rock is Pinkie Brown's knowledge of his own evil. "She was good", Pinkie says of the innocent Rose, "and he was damned". Ida Arnold knows only right and wrong; good and evil, grace and original sin, these things have spiritual values and Ida's philosophy was without eternal significance. Greene makes no attempt to treat Pinkie sympathetically. Pinkie has deliberately damned his own soul and will have nothing to do with the Grace of God. Pinkie established no relationship with God, only with his own pride.

In The Power and The Glory, the theme is lodged in a foolish looking man with bulging eyes, a silly giggle, bad breath, and pants that did not fit, who goes from one Mexican village to another carrying God with him, hearing confessions, and granting absolutions. This priest, whose only desire is to seek safety in the States, stays on in Mexico to die a martyr. Greene asks, what is the priest's vocation, why does he stay on and he answers:

> It was from him . . . they took God - in their mouths. When he was gone it would be as if God . . . ceased to exist.[64]

The whiskey-priest sees his ignoble ecclesiastical ambitions end in the humanly imperfect contrition of his last prayer during which he feels ". . . an immense disappointment because he had to go to God empty-handed, with nothing done at all". Greene leaves little doubt that the whiskey-priest does offer more to God than his empty hands - he offers God the power and the glory of the Church triumphant.

In The Heart of The Matter, Scobie, a weak man who knows himself to be weak, is tempted by pity for others into lying and finally into adultery. Scobie can neither live as a Christian nor cover up his guilty conscience. He can not stand up to the demands of his Catholic faith, but he can open the way for others. He tastes, in the minute span between life and death, the Pity of God Who will haggle to the last breath for a soul.

Sarah Miles moves from lust to love, from love to God in The End of The Affair. In this novel, Sarah establishes her relationship with God through the corruption and evil of adultery. Greene is saying that in this affair, in every sin, in every passion the door is

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64 Greene, The Power and The Glory, op.cit., p. 89.

open for the Hound of Heaven. He says that when everything else fails to detach man from the created, sin may separate man until he succumbs to the good temptation of the Creator, but ". . . to bow before God is no simple matter, it is to be a saint".

CHAPTER IV

BRIGHTON ROCK - THE JUSTICE OF GOD

> In ancient shadows and twilight
> Where childhood had strayed,
> The world's great sorrows were born
> And its heroes were made.
> In the lost boyhood of Judas
> Christ was betrayed.
>
> "Germinal"

Throughout Graham Greene's novels runs the constant theme of the problem of evil. He sees evil as the frightful calamity resulting from man's refusal to accept love. Greene subscribes to the Augustinian position,

> . . . evil is not so much an absence of being, a deprivation of good, but rather the very basis of human nature. The battle against it is a life-long struggle that charges consciousness with a significance and meaning.[1]

Greene further believes that life without evil is inconceivable, ". . . a perfectible human being leading an ideal existence is something Greene can not conceive".[2] Only through stress, tensions, and pain can life be lived according to its essential purpose. Greene's views are not new for as early as A.D. 520 the Council of Orange declared that ". . . man has nothing of himself but

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1 Kenneth A. Labf, "Graham Greene and the Problem of Evil", Catholic World, Vol. 73, June, 1951, p. 198.

2 Ibid., p. 199.

mendacity and sin". Later, in 1546, the Council of Trent reaffirmed this doctrine by declaring, ". . . by Adam's sin man was changed for the worse in body and soul" and "even holy men fall into daily sins".

To Greene there are two groups that need a spiritual awakening. The first group is composed of men who think very little, if at all, about the purpose of their existence. They are moral zeroes. They are the Ida Arnolds of Brighton Rock, the Harrisses of The Heart of The Matter, and the Parkises of The End of The Affair, and the mestizos of The Power and The Glory. The other group knows there is a Supreme Being, yet ignores the truth that only in the possession of God is human happiness and perfection to be found. It is to both of these groups that Greene directs his novels; as a Catholic he knows that God is the end and purpose of human life.

The Catholic view of evil can best be understood in terms of the destiny of the individual soul. God created man for Himself and man's immortal soul can find satisfaction only in the possession of God - face to face. The one great evil in human life and the cause of all man's unhappiness is sin, for sin estranges man from God, his Creator and Father, and frustrates the attainment

of his goal, the Beatific Vision. Sin,[3] as the only moral evil, deprives the soul of this vision and leaves it empty and desolate. If man were to pause and reflect on the effects of mortal sin he would understand why it is the greatest evil in the world,

> First, it puts an end to the supernatural life of our soul, desolating and desecrating the Temple of God. That is, it drives the indwelling God from our souls and terminates our participation in the supernatural . . . Secondly, mortal sin entails the loss of all the supernatural merits which the soul has acquired. The untiring work of Grace of the indwelling Guest is frustrated. Next, it renders the soul incapable of sharing in the satisfying merits of the members of the Mystical

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3 Sin as used by Greene is mortal sin. Mortal sin, as defined by Henry Davis, S.J., Moral and Pastoral Theology, Vol. I, London, Sheed and Ward, 1935, p. 204, is that sin which destroys divine friendship, robs man of sanctifying grace and the right to eternal happiness, and so kills the spiritual life of the soul. Walter Farrell, O.P., and Martin J. Healy, My Way of Life, Brooklyn, Confraternity of the Precious Blood, 1952, p. 263, say that St. Augustine defines sin as a thought, word, or deed contrary to the eternal law. There are two elements in every sin. First there is the act itself, which may be a thought, word, or deed, or an external action. Secondly, the thought, word, or deed is contrary to the eternal law of God. It is this second element which makes the act formally sinful. St. Augustine speaks of the 'eternal law' rather than the law of right reason.

> Body.[4] Fourth, it entails the eternal loss of all good actions performed in the state of mortal sin by rendering them fruitless of supernatural merit. Lastly, it deprives the soul of the right to see and possess God for all eternity in the happiness of heaven and it merits instead an eternity of everlasting punishment in hell.[5]

Man must not do anything that will separate him from God. Sin is the only thing that can keep him from possessing God. Simply put, sin is an offense against God. Even though the sin is an offense against God, the sinner cannot hurt the Immutable God; he hurts only himself by turning away from his Creator to things created. Sin, then, is the supreme evil which impoverishes a human soul by averting it from God. However, no human being, not even the greatest sinner, directly or explicitly turns away from God. Such an act would be impossible, for the human will seeks its own highest good. The human being sins by turning toward something forbidden by the law of

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4 Clarence E. Elwell, The Ark and The Dove, Chicago, Mentzer, Bush and Company, 1953, p. 193: The term, 'Mystical Body', used by Monsignor Elwell has been defined by Pope Leo XIII in his encyclical on the Unity of the Church as follows: "'The Son of God decreed that the Church should be His Mystical Body, with which He should be united as the Head, after the manner of the human body which He assumed, to which the natural head is physiologically united. As He took to Himself a mortal body which he gave to suffering and death in order to pay the price of man's redemption, so also He has one Mystical Body in which and through which he renders men partakers of holiness and eternal salvation'".

5 Ibid., p. 381.

God, and sin becomes the willful preference for some finite pleasure rather than for the Infinite Good which is God. "All sins", writes Monsignor Elwell, "spring from pride and they . . . resolve into the service of self and a refusal of service to God".[6] The sins of Greene's characters are, for the most part, sins of pride. Sins of pride are defined as being committed under the stress of passion, strong emotion, or the force of habit. Too, their sins are sins of weakness which are committed under the same stresses.

Greene's characters, as Catholics, "know what's what". They know when they have violated the laws of God. Pinkie is guilty of the sin of murder; Sarah Miles, adultery; Scobie, despair; and the whiskey-priest, pride and cowardice. They have knowingly sinned and, therefore, their souls belong to the damned.

Greene's characters' sinful acts are voluntary acts. They are acts of the will against the laws of God. Man's will can be influenced by his reason, by his sense of appetite, by man, and by God; but, since God is supremely Good, and not at all evil, it follows that God is never the direct cause of sin. "As the cause of all being and all action", writes Father Walter Farrell, "God

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6 Ibid., p. 378.

is the cause of the being in the act of sin". But the lack of order in the sinful act, ". . . comes only from the defective or sinful will of the sinner".[7] The basic cause of sin is within man himself. The strength of the passions can distract man's reason and lead him to judge that something can be done which is really sinful. Sarah Miles knew that sexual intercourse with any other than her husband was sinful but she excused it in her case on the plea that she had a passionate love for Bendrix. The strength of her passion did not excuse her but it hindered her reason from making a proper judgment of her acts. Scobie's pity for his fellow-men caused his suicide; it did not excuse his act, but it did hinder his making a proper judgment. The whiskey-priest's love of self, his craving for approval, led him to stay in the Godless State long after all other priests had fled; he failed to take into consideration his fundamental weakness and fear of pain. Sarah, Scobie, the whiskey-priest, and Pinkie are victims of Adam's sin, for when Adam sinned God took away from Adam and the whole human race the gift of integrity. Lacking integrity man lacks the necessary harmony and balance between body and soul:

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7 Walter Farrell and Martin J. Healy, My Way of Life, Brooklyn, Confraternity of the Precious Blood, 1952, p. 274.

> There should be in us a hierarchy of delicate control: senses and passions subject to reason and will, and reason and will subject to God. We can, with the help of God's graces, win back that harmony . . . But it costs a real and a continual struggle. . . .[8]

Right thinking man can never condone sin, but he can, along with Graham Greene, sympathize with the sinner. Pinkie Brown is guilty of the sin of murder, but Greene has compassion in his heart for Pinkie. Pinkie's sins of passion are due to an excessive love of self. He commits sins because of a desire to glorify himself. He is bartering God for temporary goods of this world. Opposed to Pinkie in Brighton Rock is Ida Arnold. Ida Arnold does not really know Good and Evil. "She lives in a state of gross and rotten innocence - in a state where the land has no slope and everything is mixed up. The minimum of order for her is purely exterior and formal".[9]

Brighton Rock is the first of Greene's novels with a specifically Catholic theme. Not only are Pinkie and Rose Catholics, but there is also a clear cut problem stated in Catholic terms between good and evil on the one hand and right and wrong on the other. Pinkie and Rose

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8 Elwell, op. cit., p. 389.

9 Bernard Theall, "The End of The Affair: Greene's New Novel", Books on Trial, November, 1951, p. 134.

represent good and evil because they see their actions leading either to heaven or hell; salvation or damnation. They know that even if they escape the police they cannot escape God. Ida, on the other hand, typifies right and wrong. She is untroubled by sin, but is interested in the "straight deal" and justice. She represents law and order - the law and order of the police. "Brighton Rock", Alexander Boyle points out, "brings one face to face with the great Christian issues of sin and damnation in a manner that no novelist except a Catholic seems to be able to employ today".[10]

Brighton Rock is the study of hate, love, and indifference. Pinkie is hate and immoral; Rose, Pinkie's girl-wife, is love and moral; Ida Arnold is indifference and amoral. Greene's handling of Pinkie makes the reader feel that Pinkie is damned long before he plunges to his death screaming and clawing at his vitriol ravaged face. Rose's love and feeling for her place in the scheme of God's plan make one feel she may be saved. Only God can judge Ida.

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10 Alexander Boyle, "Graham Greene", Irish Monthly, p. 519.

> Death shocked her, life was so important. She wasn't religious. She didn't believe in heaven or hell, only in ghosts, ouija boards, tables that rapped . . . only in right and wrong.[11]

Rose and Pinkie, however, know and appreciate what is good and what is evil.

> 'You a Catholic?' the Boy said,
> 'Yes,' Rose said.
> 'I'm one too', the Boy said.
> . . . . . .
> 'Do you go to Mass?' he said.
> 'Sometimes,' Rose said. 'It depends on work. . . .'
> 'I don't care what you do,' the Boy said sharply.
> 'I don't go to Mass.'
> 'But you believe, don't you,' Rose implored him.
> 'You think it's true?'
> 'Of course it's true,' the Boy said.
> 'What else could there be?' he went scornfully on . . .
> 'Why,' he said, 'It's the only thing that fits. These atheists, they don't know nothing. Of course, there's Hell . . .'
> 'And Heaven too,' Rose said with anxiety.[12]

Pinkie is fascinated by the thoughts of the reality of Hell and gets a sort of diabolical pleasure in realizing that he is consciously and deliberately putting himself in danger of damnation. He is truly a horrifying character mainly because the "hell he carries around within himself is horrifying".[13]

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11 Graham Greene, Brighton Rock, London, Penguin Books, 1954, p. 36.

12 Ibid., p. 53.

13 Harold C. Gardiner, "Graham Greene, Catholic Shocker", Renascence, Spring, 1949, p. 13.

Pinkie belongs to the ones who "know what's what". Whatever crime Pinkie commits he never doubts the truths of his religion. Like Lucifer himself he has faith. . . he is too good a theologian to be able to forget that God permits man liberty and lets him triumph over Him, content to punish in eternity. On this certitude, Pinkie has developed an unusual pride. He takes more risks than all the others; they recognize only human justice which Pinkie does not recognize and which he defies.

As a bad man Pinkie's attempts at self-glorification are his downfall, for basically

> Pride is his motive; he must wield power and creates his own world to do so. (Pinkie is the absolute democrat.) Pinkie simply is a fallen angel, like the devil himself, a perverted soul. The Father of Darkness was the Son of the Morning and like Lucifer, whose pride exiled him from God . . .[14]

Pride gnaws at Pinkie, for example, when he and Dallow had gone to exact a payment from a reluctant member of the "Bookmakers Protection". When he had been told that Colleoni was running the business in a big way, he asked, "'You think I'm finished?'" and again, when the police inspector told him he was too young and inexperienced to run a racket,

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14 W. J. Igoe, "Graham Greene's Bad Men", Herald (London), November 17, 1950.

> He grinned. . . . There was poison in his veins, . . . He was going to show the world. They thought because he was only seventeen . . . he'd killed his man, and these bogies who thought they were clever weren't clever enough to discover that. He trailed the clouds of his own glory after him; hell lay about him in his infancy. He was ready for more deaths.[15]

From a Catholic point of view Brighton Rock is a fine book for it pictures Pinkie as an adolescent gangster and murderer who slays callously and almost blissfully but does not sin thoughtlessly. Pinkie has a clear conception that he is jeopardizing his soul; he knows that in the Eyes of God he matters, that he is playing for supreme stakes - an eternity of heaven or hell. He takes no active part in any struggle against evil ". . . he is the battleground of awe-ful forces".[16] It is only Pinkie among all Greene's evil men who is sufficiently religious to say "Credo in Unum Satanum". It is that religious consciousness which makes him so much more important than the others who parade the boardwalks of Brighton. Ironically Pinkie's "Credo in Unum Satanum" was remembered from his boyhood choir days,

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15 Greene, op. cit., p. 69.

16 Harold C. Gardiner, Norms for the Novel, New York, The America Press, 1953, p. 103.

> 'Why, I was in a choir once,' the Boy confided, and suddenly he began to sing softly in his spoilt boy's voice: 'Agnus Dei qui tollis peccata mundi, dona nobis pacem.' In his voice a whole lost world moved, the lighter corner below the organ, the smell of incense, and laundered surplices, and the music . . . 'Agnus Dei, . . . credo in unum Deum' . . .[17]

Second in importance in the novel is Ida. Ida Arnold is a worldly woman, a thoroughly harmless person who revels in physical pleasures - a glass of stout, a ribald song, a harlot's bed. Greene treats Ida as a human only one step removed from animal life. Greene loathes Ida for being a moral zero and he portrays her as a woman of the world who knows no higher values than a justice based on an eye for an eye. Ida's devotion to fair play is of far less worth than Pinkie's devotion to evil and Rose's devotion to Pinkie.

Rose, the third character in order of importance in Brighton Rock is a helpless, pathetic waitress at Snow's restaurant, who accidentally becomes involved with Pinkie because she recognizes one of the members of his gang. She, along with Pinkie, is a product of Nelson Place - with its lavatory smells, parents with a "mood on", and the "Saturday night ritual".

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17 Greene, op. cit., p. 53.

> 'You're young. That's what it is,' Ida said, 'Romantic. I was like you once. You'll grow out of it. All you need is a bit of experience.' The Nelson Place eyes stared back at her without understanding; driven to her hole the small animal peered out at the bright and breezy world; in the hole were murder, copulation, extreme poverty. . . . but the small animal had not the knowledge to deny that only in the glare and open world outside was something which people called experience.[18]

The symbolism of the three characters, Alexander Boyle contends, is based on their religion. They are not merely, clearly portrayed persons; they are also symbols. It is because Pinkie hates the highest where he sees it that it is felt he is damned long before he plunges to his death. As a character Rose is almost a non-entity. Yet because of her love for Pinkie and her unborn child, she is presented as one for whom life has a meaning and unity. Pinkie's hate and Rose's love are both based on Catholicism. Ida's sense of natural justice ultimately derives from the God she has little interest in.[19]

Greene plays Pinkie's "Credo" against Ida's superficiality to point up the contrast between immorality and amorality. Between these two, between these two levels, Greene is saying that anything on the higher or

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18 Ibid., p. 124.

19 Alexander Boyle, "The Symbolism of Graham Greene", Irish Monthly, pp. 98-99.

moral level is superior to anything on the amoral level even when the person on the higher is more diabolically evil than the creature on the lower. Ida represents the complete absence of faith. She is,

> . . . the full blown, life loving tart . . . unregenerate, a specimen of the natural man, coarsely, bestially kind, the most dangerous enemy . . .[20]

who sees nothing of the real truth

> . . . 'Listen I'm human. You can take my word I've loved a boy or two in my time. . . . He's wicked. I'm not a Puritan mind. I've done a thing or two in my time - that's natural. . . . But I've always been on the side of Right.[21]

Pinkie, on the other hand, knows more than rights and wrongs, he knows his faith, knows it well. He knows that every evil he commits is a sin damning his soul further into hell. His life is a series of moral acts, but Ida is one of the devil's most subtle successes for she is "vacancy clothed in good will", and sees life as no more than acting for the best.

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20 Morton D. Zabel, "Graham Greene", Critiques and Essays on Modern Fiction, ed. John W. Aldridge, New York's Roland Press, 1952, p. 521.

21 Greene, op. cit., p. 123.

> But it did no one any harm, it was just human nature, no one could really call her bad - a bit free and easy perhaps, a bit Bohemian; it wasn't as if she got anything out of it, as if like some people she sucked a man dry and cast him aside like a cast-off. She knew what was Right and what was Wrong. God didn't mind a bit of human nature . . . what he minded . . . to seeing that the evil suffered.[22]

Caught in the middle between Pinkie's immorality and Ida's amorality is the confused Rose. She knows in an intuitive way that Pinkie's friendship will drag her down to his baseness, this will happen she knows because she is weak-willed. She is confused. She thinks it better to be damned than ignorant. She knows that despite Ida's ignorance of moral values, that a life similar to Ida's would produce less agony. Yet she is intolerant of the older woman's surface knowledge of truth and understanding. The one thing Rose knows is the difference between evil and wrong:

> 'Right and wrong. That's what she talks about. I've heard her at the table. Right and wrong. As if she knew. . . . Oh, she won't burn. She couldn't if she tried . . . I'd rather burn with you than be like her . . . she's ignorant'.[23]

Greene develops the relationship between Rose, Pinkie, and Ida in order to stress this difference between good and evil and right and wrong. He uses Rose and Ida

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22 Ibid., p. 153.

23 Ibid., Pp. 114-115.

to point up the evil that is Pinkie. Greene's preoccupation with man's wickedness goes side by side with an undisguised sympathy with sinful man, with all sinful men, even with such an unpleasant character as Pinkie.

The Christian issues of sin and damnation in Brighton Rock are the most important facts about the novel. Catholicism in Greene is seen in relation to a universe of pain and brutality. Pain and violence for Greene are partly symbolic of the struggle going on all the time within men's souls; partly, it is the expression of the brutality and violence of the world.

The same brutal world that formed Pinkie's mind into a belief in one Satan also fashioned Raven's harelip and turned him into an ugly, murderous figure. Brighton Rock is intentionally and thematically a continuation of A Gun For Sale. There are frequent references in Brighton Rock to Kite, who had preceded Pinkie as leader of the gang. Kite had been killed by razors too. In A Gun For Sale it is told that it was Raven who killed Kite. When Raven was hiding in the shed with Anne he told her how they met Kite at the station, cut his throat, and propped him up between them as they passed through the crowded gateway. Then they dropped him by a bookstall and fled. The murder of Kite parallels exactly the murder of Hale. In addition to this similarity, Pinkie and

Raven had much in common. Each is damned to the evil life he leads. Each is convinced that everyone betrays. But each is persuaded that there is one particular woman who does not conform to the general pattern and it is only then that they are betrayed, each by the one person he has come to trust. But neither betrayal is of the heartless, meaningless kind that both Pinkie and Raven had originally believed in; Anne betrays Raven because she discovers that he is more evil than she had imagined, and Rose betrays Pinkie because she is frightened and bewildered and believes she is doing the right thing. It is ironical that it is Rose that betrays Pinkie because she is the only person who has any feeling for him. But Rose would not let herself believe what she knew - Pinkie was pervasively evil. She thought that there might be some redeeming feature in him, he might love her. The shock that is going to come to her when she hears his voice on the record and knows that Pinkie could never love anyone will be greater than any shock she has ever had before.

> She went out into the street - the pain was still there; you couldn't shake it off with a word; but her worst horror, she thought, was over - the horror of the complete circle. . . . There was something to be salvaged from that house and room, something else they wouldn't be able to get over - his voice speaking a message to her; if there was a child, speaking to the child, 'If he loved you,' the priest had said, 'that shows . . .' She walked rapidly in the thin June sunlight towards the worst horror of all.[24]

Rose is a victim of Pinkie's tragedy. She will never know earthly happiness or human triumphs, Pinkie's memory, or possibly more horrible, Pinkie's voice will haunt her the rest of her days. Yet she is possibly near to God for she had been willing to make a sacrifice. She was willing to give up a secure future; more, she was willing to sacrifice the hope of salvation in heaven for the sake of love. It is quite doubtful that God would accept her offerings, but the fact that she was willing to make sacrifices in the name of love shows her goodness. When Rose hears Pinkie's voice whatever love she had had for Pinkie will be gone and she will no longer believe that there was any good in Pinkie, or hope for that matter, despite the observations of her confessor about Pinkie's possible salvation.

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24 Greene, Brighton Rock, op. cit., p. 250.

> 'We must hope and pray,' he said, 'hope and pray. The Church does not demand that we believe any soul is cut off from mercy.' She said with sad conviction, 'He's damned. He knew what he was about. He was a Catholic too.'
> He said gently: 'Corruptio optimi est pessima.'
> 'Yes, Father?'
> 'I mean - A Catholic is more capable of evil than anyone. I think perhaps - because we believe in him - we are more in touch with the devil than other people. But we must hope, hope and pray.'[25]

In writing about Brighton Rock, Evelyn Waugh says that Greene ingenuously gave life to a theological abstraction. "We are often told: The Church does not teach that any man is damned. We only know that hell exists for those who deserve it. Perhaps it is now empty and will remain so for all eternity".[26]

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Brighton Rock is set in the town of Brighton, England. A holiday crowd is there for the fun and the races. Vying for control in the protection of the bookmakers are the Brown gang and the Colleoni gang. Pinkie is dominant in his four man gang. Spicer, Cubitt, and Dallow watch him and do his bidding even to the killing of Hale, who had exposed Kite, the former leader of the gang. Pinkie encounters Rose when he goes to Snow's

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25 Ibid., p. 249.

26 Evelyn Waugh, "Felix Culpa?" The Tablet, June 5, 1948, p. 353.

Restaurant to check on Spicer's work. He flies into a rage when he finds that Spicer had been careless and allowed Rose to get a good look at him. He feels that Spicer's actions can now lead the "bogies" directly to his gang and punish all of them for the murder. He rages at Spicer but he, too, is careless and makes his biggest mistake in disregarding Ida Arnold. "She's just a buer. She don't matter". He does not reckon with Ida's ouija board as it spells out 'FRESUICILLEYE'. 'Fre' for Fred (Hale), 'Suici' for suicide, and 'eye' - 'that's what I always say - an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth'.[27] Ida is doggedly persistent in dealing with Rose and staying on Pinkie's footsteps. The more she intrudes on Pinkie's life, the closer he is pushed into a marriage with Rose. A marriage of convenience - for a wife cannot testify against her husband. But, on the other hand, a marriage that will mean for Pinkie ". . . a renewal of the Saturday night movements from the other bed", an act distasteful to his Puritanical tastes. In this sense Brighton Rock is a commentary on the possible effects of Puritanism on an adolescent's attitude toward sex and in it there is a kind of chastity, warped and misinformed, whose effect can be worse than any lust. Pinkie's sense of

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27 Greene, Brighton Rock, op. cit., p. 44.

Puritanism in his inheritance from which he is trying to escape, but is constantly being called back to Nelson Place. Ida, on the other hand, has a mind that works with the "simplicity and regularity of a sky sign", she is ". . . carnality and sensual warmth of the body".[28] Ida can never be a mature person for she sees life as no more than a bit of fun now and then. Rose knows life is more than fun. She is good but she knows the nature of her sin when she marries Pinkie. She will risk damnation for him, out of love and a blind trust in the Mercy of God. Pinkie's relations with Rose are for his own security. She is good for his ego and he realizes that she complements him,

> She was good, he'd discovered that, and he was damned: they were made for each other. You and me . . . we suit each other down to the ground.[29]

That Pinkie knows he is damned: that he knows what he is doing is morally evil is made clear. He knows that sin, in order to be sin, must have the full consent of his will. He knows the moral wrongness of his acts. These things he knows because he is a 'Roman and knows

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28 Marie-Béatrice Mesnet, Graham Greene and The Heart of The Matter, London, The Cresset Press, 1954, p. 14.

29 Greene, Brighton Rock, op. cit., p. 128.

what's what'.

> He wept as he ran, lame in one leg from the kick; he even tried to pray. You could be saved between the stirrup and the ground, but you couldn't be saved if you didn't repent, and he hadn't time, . . .
> . . . . . .
> Now of course was the time, while darkness drained into the bottom, for him to make his peace. Between the stirrup and the ground there's not time; you couldn't break in a moment the habit of thought; habit held you closely while you died, . . .
> . . . . . .
> One confession when he was safe to wipe out everything. . . . I'll give a statue.[30]

His boyhood years in the Catholic Church plus his knowledge and belief in the power of the priest in the confessional fill his heart with longing for the peace of soul that could be his by the simple act of confession:

> . . . his heart weakened with a faint nostalgia for the tiny dark confessional box, the priest's voice. . . . to be made safe from eternal pain. . . . One day, one day . . .[31]

That 'one day' never came for Pinkie. Instead each new day brought another evil to be added to his list and separated him a little more from his Creator. But Pinkie is not content to destroy his soul alone - it is his nature to want other souls to be damned too - in this case the naive Rose. Greene wrote in the London Times

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30 Ibid., pp. 108-110.

31 Ibid., p. 110.

about the type of mentality that makes heroes of gangsters; his Rose has a distorted sense of value for she too has made a hero of a gangster and is willing to commit her soul to Hell's fire for him. Pinkie and Rose know that they commit a mortal sin by having their marriage performed by a Justice of the Peace rather than by a priest,

> 'Do you want to be married in a church?'
> 'Of course I don't,' the Boy said. 'This won't be a real marriage.'
> 'Real enough.'
> 'Not real like when the priest says it.'[32]

Though Rose is naive she does realize that what she is about to do is evil - just how evil she does not fully realize - just evil enough that her conscience bothers her. When she arrives at the Registry Office she tells Pinkie that she had wanted to go to Confession because she wanted to be in a state of Grace when she married him.

> 'And did you?' the Boy said.
> 'No. I went and rang the bell and asked for Father James. But then I remembered it wasn't any good confessing. I went away.' She said with a mixture of fear and pride: 'We're going to do a mortal sin.'[33]

Pinkie laughs at her innocence but nevertheless Rose dreams of a Church wedding where she could mount the

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32 Ibid., p. 119.

33 Ibid., pp. 168-169.

sanctuary steps and "kneel down within the sanctuary rails with the priest and the Host". Rose knows she sins and wishes she had the moral strength not to; Pinkie knows he sins and revels in it:

> 'It'll be no good going to confession ever again - as long as we're both alive.' He had graduated in pain; first the school dividers had been left behind, next the razor. He had a sense now that the murders of Hale and Spicer were trivial acts, a boy's game, and he had put away childish things. Murder had only led to this - this corruption. He was filled with awe at his own powers.[34]

Pinkie and Rose are capable of mortal sins, writes Jacques Madaule, because they are Catholics and only the Christian seems to be able to sin mortally, for only he knows what he does.[35] Ida could not sin for she is non-Christian and commits transgressions in a sort of innocence, while the Catholic especially seems to have eaten a second time from the tree of the cross of the fruit of good and evil.

The terribly pure, ascetic quality of Pinkie's devotion to evil and his "Credo in Unum Satanum" come when he gives his wife of only a few hours a wedding gift - a record of his hate: "God damn you, you little bitch, why can't you go back home forever and let me be".

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34 Ibid., p. 169.

35 Madaule, op. cit., pp. 341-344.

Pinkie's record of hate is the spoken word; Maurice Bendrix's record of hate in The End of The Affair will be the written word. Bendrix shows an aversion to God, but there is no good in Pinkie for as a Catholic sinner he attains the stature of a fallen angel. He knows. Heaven casts regretful echoes into his heart. Like Marlowe's Mephistopheles' melancholy observation, "Why this is Hell, nor am I out of it",[36] might come from his mouth. Yet he possessed the kernel of faith hidden within the outer husk of wickedness and corruption; it is for this reason that the tragedy of Pinkie has some meaning. And this is important for an understanding of Greene and his treatment of Good and Evil in this particular novel. Greene portrays Pinkie as morally corrupt, as pervasively evil, as sadistically rotten. No one could have any favorable feelings for Pinkie - Pinkie himself could not tolerate himself - all the feelings are against Pinkie. But, Greene says, and this is his basic theme, God has not ceased to love Pinkie.

Through Pinkie comes Greene's theological argument. Greene has already declared himself a Catholic and he models the beliefs expressed in Brighton Rock on his own. He suggests that the Catholic Church gives

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36 Igoe, op. eit.

its members something that is priceless and which cannot be obtained from other religions. A bad Catholic though not morally better than a bad Protestant, lives always with the knowledge that the Grace of God is as strong as the Justice of God.

> Moral maxims dressed in pedantic priestly tones remembered from old sermons, instructions, confession - 'You can plead at the throne of Grace' - . . .[37]

Pinkie had won; the State could not get Rose to testify against him. He had won his battle against the "bogies". His most important battle he had lost. Pinkie knew he had lost; he had tried to get "at" God. His pride had demanded a service of self and a refusal to serve God. Pinkie's damnation is within himself for he has an excessive love of self, he glories in his own infamy. He exchanged God for his own pride and he was going to ride it down to the jaws of hell.

> He heard a whisper, looked sharply around. In an alley between two shops, an old woman sat upon the ground; he could just see the rotting and discoloured face; it was like the sight of damnation. Then he heard the whisper: 'Blessed art thou among women,' saw the grey fingers fumbling at the beads. This was not one of the damned; he watched with horrified fascination; this was one of the saved.[38]

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37 Greene, Brighton Rock, op. cit., p. 244.

38 Ibid., p. 190.

Rose too felt that she was one of the damned. She wonders whether she is a wife or a mistress. Out of habit she starts to mutter her quick Our Fathers and Hail Marys on her first day as Pinkie's wife, but remembers her choice and wonders what good prayers from the damned would do,

> She began to pray to herself 'Holy Mary, Mother of God,' but then she stopped - she was in mortal sin; it was no good praying. Her prayers stayed here below with the siphons and the statuettes; they had no wings.[39]

It is because Rose understands that she is in mortal sin that she is saved and this despite her choosing her side, 'if they'd damned him they'd have to damn her too.' Rose was drawn into Pinkie's world, this foreign world where one sinned on a bed and people were murdered. Pinkie's world had accepted her and she felt proud,

> She had joined the other side now for ever . . . she had Pinkie and damnation.[40]

Rose, accepted by Pinkie's world was now a part of that world, caught up in the web of evil that was in it but so unaware was she of her choice that she felt a happiness - a confused happiness. "What had she done

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39 Ibid., p. 233.

40 Ibid., p. 196.

to deserve to be happy? She'd committed a sin: that was the answer . . . she was having her cake in this world, not the next . . ."[41] It is Rose, however, whose memory of catechism learned and lessons remembered recalls the missing word "mercy" from the rhyme "Between the stirrup and the ground, he something sought and something found". Rose belonged to the world that sins, knows it sins, but does not realize the enormity of a single sin. And for this it does not take a God to have compassion and pity on her. Rose is saved by her inculpable ignorance. She knows she has committed mortal sins but for her they are transgressions rather than offenses. Pinkie on the other hand, knows full well the enormity of his sins. When he returns from his lawyer, he tells Dallow that Drewitt says he's in hell.

> Dallow laughed, 'Hell, that's good.'
> 'You're a fool, Dallow.'
> 'I don't believe in what my eyes don't see.'
> 'They don't see much then,' the Boy said.[42]

Even as he ponders the reality of hell he thinks about his own damnation as he analyses the condition of his own soul:

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41 Ibid., p. 197.

42 Ibid., p. 215.

> There'll be time enough in the years ahead - sixty years - to go to a priest, say, 'Father I've committed murder twice.' He really wasn't deceiving himself - he'd learned the other day that when time was short there were other things than contrition to think about. It didn't matter anyway, he wasn't made for peace; he couldn't believe in it. Heaven was a word; hell was something he could trust.[43]

In Brighton Rock every crude aspect of natural function, the grunts and the smells, the coarse, inviting shapelessness of female flesh, the insistence of lechery, the dirty jokes, the ribald sniggers of back alley sex, all coalesced together and forced themselves upon Pinkie in one hideous ball of filth; "it didn't matter what you were or who you were, at the back of you and in front of you and all around you lay the dirt and the evil".[44] Pinkie is a believing Catholic with the result that he knows hell is a reality and accepts his damnation. "Corruptio optimi est pessimi" is the last faith left him to live or die by. And even for Pinkie there was hope for man ". . . can't conceive . . . the . . . appalling . . . strangeness of the mercy of God".

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43 Ibid., p. 230.

44 Ibid., p. 249.

CHAPTER V

THE POWER AND THE GLORY - THE GLORY OF GOD

> But it doesn't matter so much my being a coward - and all the rest. I can put God into a man's mouth just the same - and I can give him God's pardon. It wouldn't make any difference to that if every priest in the church was like me.
>
> The Power and The Glory

In the spring of 1938 Graham Greene was commissioned to visit Mexico to write about the persecution of the Catholics by President Calles' Communist government. The Lawless Roads (1939), the result of that trip, is not an ordinary travel book, but specifically it records Greene's views on the power and the glory of God manifesting itself through His church.

The Catholic Church in many parts of Mexico had been persecuted and religious services forbidden, but everywhere people continued to honor the God they were not allowed publicly to worship. In lawless Mexico, Greene found the poor squeezing the last drop of mortification out of their already terribly hard lives, but like saints they sought the only happiness in their lives and squeezed out one more drop; ". . . they were the

population of heaven".[1] Their grim life was doubly hard because of the "seediness" of the landscape. Greene saw far more squalor in Mexico than he had ever seen in the West African bush. The countryside appalled him as he moved from city to city, ". . . it struck him that God was disappointed in his final creation".[2] The barren landscape of the countryside merged with the slums of the cities where human beings lived like mangy animals in a neglected zoo and obeyed the jungle laws, each for himself with tooth and nail. And always there was pain.

Greene's obsession with pain and suffering as a purifying force in man's life is brought to life quite forcibly in The Power and The Glory. In one of the villages the priest tells the peasants,

> . . . joy always depends on pain. Pain is part of joy. That is why I tell you that heaven is here; this is part of heaven just as pain is a part of pleasure. . . . pray that you will suffer more.[3]

Greene's preoccupation with pain and squalor has seemed overemphasized, yet his viewpoints and the working out of his themes have demanded such conclusions. To

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1 Graham Greene, The Lawless Roads, London, Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1939, p. 44.

2 Ibid., p. 69.

3 Graham Greene, The Power and The Glory, New York, The Viking Press, 1949, p. 85.

Greene, evil was synonymous with pain and corruption; evil was bred and nurtured on poverty and seediness - Rose and Pinkie of Brighton Rock could never escape from the heritage of Nelson Place; Scobie was caught in the corruption and evil of Freetown in The Heart of The Matter; and the boundless weakness of the whiskey-priest of The Power and The Glory was in a measure the result of the inhuman conditions under which he had to live in lawless Tabasco. The exception to Greeneland, to squalor, waste, and corruption and their effects on his characters, is The End of The Affair. Clapham Commons is a respectable area of London. Excluding Clapham Commons Greene's landscapes are never elegant - the pervasive evil of man extends into the surroundings. The ugliness and sordidness of their lives engender in Greene's characters a hatred of life and an aversion to tenderness. The police lieutenant of The Power and The Glory saw his own living quarters as being as comfortless and ugly as a prison or a monastic cell and he was aware of the ugliness everywhere and it infuriated him to think that despite the ugliness

> . . .there were still people in the state who believed in a loving and merciful God. . . . and what he had experienced was vacancy - a complete certainty in the existence of a dying, cooling world, of human beings who had evolved from animals for no purpose at all.[4]

There is very little light in The Power and The Glory. Though the Indians have no tenderness they have hope, for there is always God to be gotten through the Catholic Church - God is everywhere waiting for them:

> . . . God had lain in radio cabinets, behind bookshelves. He had been carried in a small boy's pocket into prison. . . . He had eternity on his side.[5]

The God President Calles could not suppress was the victim again through His church of the fiercest persecution of Catholicism anywhere since the reign of Elizabeth.[6] To administer the Sacraments was a serious offense, yet in July, 1926, Father Miquel Pro, S.J., landed at Vera Cruz to give absolution and Communion to thousands of the faithful. He was caught and executed as an enemy of the state. The execution had an effect which Calles had not forseen - Father Pro became a martyr and Mexico became more staunchly Catholic despite a disreputable

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4 Ibid., p. 26.

5 Greene, The Lawless Roads, op. cit., p. 38.

6 Ibid., p. 11.

Padre Rey, who lived with his wife and daughter;[7] and despite a whiskey-priest of Chiapas who finally fled across the border to sanctuary and was considered but little loss who said of himself, ". . . an awful sense of impotence - to live in constant danger and yet be able to do so little, it hardly seemed worth the horror".[8] Greene felt a compassion for him,

> . . . he was a kind of Padre Rey; but who can judge what terror and hardship and isolation may have excused him in the eyes of God.[9]

Whether the hunted whiskey-priest of Chiapas or Father Pro prompted Greene to write The Power and The Glory the novel grew out of the experiences he had in Mexico. The whiskey-priest is no Father Pro, but, on the contrary, a man of lax moral life, a drunkard, and a coward. Yet The Power and The Glory is not the story of a boundlessly weak man who commits sin, it is the story of a man torn between good and evil, between Satan and God. The case of the whiskey-priest is much simpler than the case of Pinkie in Brighton Rock - the priest is not tempted to the greater wrongs, the denials and

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7 Ibid., p. 147.

8 John Atkins, Graham Greene, London, John Calder ltd., 1957, p. 107.

9 Greene, The Lawless Roads, op. cit., p. 150.

the betrayals; and his own unshaken faith fights on God's side. It is just that his flesh is weak but his humility is tremendously strong.

The whiskey-priest is possibly a composite of both the priest of Chiapas and Father Pro, with access to the same grace that made Father Pro a martyr, but could not penetrate the outer shell of pride built up by the priest of Chiapas. Mauriac writes of the whiskey-priest,

> The power and the glory of the Father bursts forth in the whiskey-priest who loves alcohol too much - this priest, a drunkard, impure, and trembling before death, gives his life without for a single moment losing the consciousness of his baseness and his shame.[10]

Much of the hatred Greene felt for Mexico that appeared in The Lawless Roads appears in The Power and The Glory, but not with the same degree of bitterness. The view is Greene's particular and customary angle of vision. The one idea that appeared in the travel book that reappears with special force in The Power and The Glory is the sense of the huge abandonment of the fallen world.

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10 François Mauriac, Great Men, trans. Elsie Pell, London, Rockliff Publishing Corporation Ltd., 1952, p. 118.

The story of The Power and The Glory is set in a fallen world of ugliness, sordidness, squalor, and corruption of both the land and the people. The whiskey-priest saw "the world of treachery, violence, and lust", and he wondered if his own corruption was contagious. He knew that man was limited to his surroundings and that man had no ingenuity, not even to invent a new vice,

> It was for this world that Christ had died; the more evil you saw and heard about you, the greater glory lay around the death; . . . it needed a God to die for the half-hearted and the corrupt.[11]

What was typical of Mexico, Greene wrote, was typical of the whole human race - violence in the form of an ideal and then the ideal lost and the violence just going on;[12] people everywhere were involved - in the town of Brighton and in the state of Tabasco. There was violence and murder in Brighton and there was Communism and anti-Christ in Tabasco and for Ida Arnold and the police lieutenant the view was the same kind - Ida pursued Pinkie Brown and murder in much the same way that the police lieutenant did the whiskey-priest and Love. The difference though is that the police lieutenant is ". . . God's enemy . . . no longer a simple force of nature; he

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11 Greene, The Power and The Glory, op.cit., p.131

12 Greene, The Lawless Roads, op. cit., p. 48.

symbolizes the modern Prometheus".[13]

The lieutenant wished to eradicate as ruthlessly as he could anything that reminded him of his position. "He wanted to destroy everything; to be alone without any memories at all". He knew there was no merciful God, nothing; and everyone else ought to know this too. Yet he was so very close to the priest in many ways, as the priest knew, but he, himself, would have been horrified to hear it.

> 'I felt at once that you were a good man when you gave me money at the prison.'
> . . . . . .
> 'Well, we have ideas too,' the lieutenant said. 'No more money for saying prayers, no more money for building places to say prayers in. We'll give people food instead, teach them to read, give them books. We'll see they don't suffer.'
> 'And what happens afterwards?' the priest asked.
> 'Nothing, death's a fact. We don't try to alter facts.'
> 'We agree about a lot of things,' the priest said, . . .[14]

The police lieutenant knew that the priest was more dangerous than the American gangster because the whiskey-priest was possessed by a love - it never occurred to him that he too was possessed by love.

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13 Marie-Béatrice Mesnet, Graham Greene and The Heart of The Matter, London, The Cresset Press, 1954, pp. 248-9.

14 Greene, The Power and The Glory, op. cit., pp. 248-9.

The police lieutenant, the married priest, the whiskey-priest are all victims of the desolation and corruption of Mexico. They typify Greene's symbolism for Mexico in a state of mind, violence, and faith, and life ". . . under shadows of religion - of God or the devil".[15] The particular value of Greene's work lies in his throwing light on the character of contemporary violence long before its latest and most conspicuous outbursts. And in this land there was Communism and where Communism bred there was Satan. In Mexico, Greene is reminded of the "aboriginal calamity" perceived by Cardinal Newman. The Lawless Roads makes it clear that original sin "the aboriginal calamity", (Greene uses Newman's words) "by which the world has been made overcrowded with lust and crime and unhappy love", is never outside his horizon. For Greene, where there is sin and evil, there is Satan, and never is the mystery of sin grasped except in direct connection with original sin and its instigator, Satan. Greene felt that Mexico was not a country to live in at all with the heat and the desolation; it was a country to die in and leave only ruins behind. In all of Tabasco there were no churches remaining (where one could go for a few moments

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15 Mesnet, op. cit., p. 20.

of peace), there was nothing left but the heat, the swamps, the rains, and the sense of desertion. Only one place in the whole of Tabasco where corruption and seediness could not touch was the cemetery; "life here had withdrawn altogether".[16]

Elsewhere man was barred in by his own fears - the same kind of fear that came to Padre José as he argued against a prayer for the dead,

> . . . he stretched a sign of the cross in the air; then fear came back, like a drug.[17]

The married priest, an outcast, saw himself in the grip of the land but much more he saw himself in the deadly grip of the unforgivable sin, despair. When he married his housekeeper after forty years as a celibate priest, he became a part of the corruption of the land; he felt that his bishop had left him to the mercy of the Godless state. He saw himself as old, fat, and humiliated; seduced by a choir of unworthy angels,

> He sank hopelessly down on his knees . . . "Leave me alone." He said, "I am unworthy. Can't you see? I am a coward."
> "Go," José screeched at him, "go. I don't want martyrs here. I don't belong any more. Leave me alone . . . Go and die quickly. That's your job," . . .[18]

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16 Greene, The Power and The Glory, op.cit., p.63.

17 Ibid., p. 58.

18 Ibid., p. 146.

Yet, the whiskey-priest saw another Padre José,

> . . . perhaps Padre José was the better man. He was so humble that he was ready to accept any amount of mockery; at the best of time he had never considered himself worthy of the priesthood.[19]

The married priest and the whiskey-priest are alike in one respect - they are both cowards. Greene treats them both as cowards but for the whiskey-priest the Hand of God had not gone untouched for he knows he is a coward and refers to it often but in contrast to his loss of courage there is Padre José who has lost not only his courage but every semblance of manliness that he ever possessed - even down to the last shred of self-respect. Despite this people still went to him and begged him for a prayer, to pronounce the burial service over the graves of their children. He always refused them for he knew he was an absurd figure; for the "lifetime" of his married life he had been able to see himself as he was, an humbled coward. He is one of the defeated for he has forsaken God. Only God's Mercy can save him. He knew that he was guilty of the unforgivable sin, despair. The whiskey-priest never sank to such a level. The whiskey-priest had sinned grievously and often; broken his vows, known a woman, but he had

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19 Ibid., p. 127.

kept on taking the Mass and the Eucharist to people who needed and wanted Them. His virtue was that he had never neglected the Divine spark - the Divine Hand - as Padre José had done. When the whiskey-priest was thrown into prison some of his fellow prisoners mocked his cowardice and attributed it to his religion. He answered them by pointing out that if one believes in nothing there is nothing to be frightened of. He believed in God and had not served that God faithfully, now he was sorely afraid of the Justice of that God for he had not glorified the Power of that God.

The whiskey-priest saw himself as not humble, but proud, lustful, greedy, and one who loved authority too much. "Five years ago he had given away to despair - the unforgivable sin".[20] Despair for the whiskey-priest was the sin against hope - a sort of spiritual suicide. By an act of his will the priest turned away from God, not because he wanted to offend God, but because he looked upon God as being too impossible to reach or too difficult to be realized. He felt that God was a goal beyond his limited and frail spirituality. He despaired but never lost his faith. He had formed a judgment based on his weakness and passion and yet he knew he was too

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20 Ibid., p. 83.

weak to persevere. He is not guilty of unbelief but his judgment itself was wrong and one which he had no right to act on. The whiskey-priest is not guilty of despair even though in his heart he believes it so. He is a penitent suffering the blackness of spiritual depression. The saints often suffered spiritual depression but the difference between them and him is that they did not give way to "the sins of human frailty; the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and we do these things we would not do".

He was going back to the scene of that despair, to Marie the mother of his child. Brigitta, the result of his weakness, had a look in her eyes that frightened him ". . . it was like seeing his own mortal sin look back at him without contrition".[21] The priest's daughter, born in sin, according to Greene's philosophy, had no chance. She had been deprived of the Church's wisdom and God's graces and now she was mature to the point of being too knowing. "The World was in her heart already, like the small spot of decay in the fruit".[22] She was her father's sin.

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21 Ibid., p. 91.

22 Ibid., p. 85.

The police came to the village and he had to move on. He felt that the people deserved a saint and he was disappointed that God had not thought fit to send them one. Ever on the run, he followed the trail to safety and each time he stopped he surrendered a part of his past human dignity as a man of God. Feast days and fast days had been the first to go; then his breviary and altar stone. Yet for all his evils he could never forget that he was a priest of God. Time and time again he gave solace to the Indians - he gave them God.

> . . . everything in time became a routine but this - "Who the day before he suffered took Bread into his holy and venerable hands . . . "Hoc est enim Corpus Meum." He could hear the sigh of breaths released: God was here in the body for the first time in six years. . . . Heaven must contain just such for when he raised the Host he could imagine the faces lifted like famished dogs.[23]

A cracked cup was his chalice and it held Grace as surely as the whole ones. But over and over again he told his flock that he was a bad priest, but they knew intuitively that nothing could stop the flow of God's graces; that the miracle of the changing of bread and wine into Christ's Body and Blood went on despite the sinful hands and brandied tongue. The priest knew it too.

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23 Ibid., p. 88.

> But it doesn't matter so much my being a coward - and all the rest. I can put God into a man's mouth just the same - . . . It wouldn't make any difference to that if every priest in the Church was like me.[24]

The Indians had had no formal instructions but they had sucked faith with the milk at their mother's breasts and they, too, knew that it would not make any difference. They are the same people who commit all the ordinary human sins but die as hostages rather than betray a priest - even the whiskey-priest - for he brought them God.[25] When in the village of Concepcion, 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 became tense. He considers the risks the villagers are taking for a "bad priest" and yet duty holds him for he realizes that he is their only 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. . . . 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.[26]

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24 Ibid., p. 245.

25 Mesnet, op. cit., p. 25.

26 Greene, The Power and The Glory, op.cit., p.80.

The Indians are typical of Greene's characters for they are made by places and places are decayed and corrupt and sinful.[27] Sin follows the priest wherever he goes. He cannot avoid it. Even in the communal jail cell where he spent the night, he heard somewhere against the far wall a man and a woman sinning. He admonished the smug lady,[28] a fellow prisoner, not to judge them guilty for they saw beauty in what they did. Whether it is a mortal sin, or not, he explained,

> We don't know. It may be . . . I know, from experience - how much beauty Satan carried down with him when he fell.[29]

During the sleepless night the priest strikes a bargain with God, if he escapes from the prison he would escape from Mexico. When the chance for escape came he willingly refused it and returned to Tabasco to offer a dying convict the grace afforded by a final confession. His sense of duty urged him to return; love for his fellow

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27 Francis X. Connolly, "Inside Modern Man: The Spiritual Adventures of Graham Greene", Renascence, Spring, 1949, p. 19.

28 W. Peters, "The Concern of Graham Greene", The Month, pp. 287-288: Graham Greene is opposed to the idea that God should act thus, and should do this, and should let His sun rise only on the good. In the smug woman ". . . we have the source of Mr. Greene's hatred of all smugness and pious platitudes, dead goodness that sits and talks piously and decays all the time, . . ."

29 Greene, The Power and The Glory, op.cit., p.176

men and for God compelled him to return. It is this love for his fellow men which makes him return to face even certain death. "Everything else he had", Alexander Boyle writes, "has dissolved under the twin catalysts of persecution and alcohol and . . . he has literally nothing left but his capacity for love".[30] The love of God for him meant the Mercy of God. "What this book shows us", writes François Mauriac, "is the utilization of sin by Grace".[31] In The Power and The Glory the whiskey-priest is saved not by being a priest (indeed, as he is a bad priest, this is only a further count in the long list of his sins), but by his love for his fellow men. For as a priest he has nothing left but his love for God through his love for his fellow men and it leads him to his death. This notion of Greene's about love killing as quickly as hate is brought out in several of his works, The End of The Affair, The Heart of The Matter, and many of his short stories.

The whiskey-priest during the span of his priestly years had listened to all the evil man could spit at God, knew that the Mercy of God was a strange thing:

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30 Alexander Boyle, "The Symbolism of Graham Greene", Irish Monthly, p. 99.

31 Mauriac, op. cit., p. 118.

> I don't know a thing about the mercy of God: I don't know how awful the human heart looks to Him. But I do know this - that if there's ever been a single man in this state damned, then I'll be damned too.[32]

He trembled at his own weakness and human frailty, and complained that ". . . it was all very well . . . for a saint". Mauriac wrote, "He would think it a joke if he were told that he was a saint".[33] He had forgotten that God died for all men - even for a bad priest. He felt that a saint would know how to pray, but he sat on the floor of his jail cell and hugged an empty whiskey bottle in his lap and thought how useless he had been,

> . . . he felt like someone who had missed happiness by a second at an appointed place. He knew now that at the end there was only one thing that counted - to be a saint.[34]

"Le pecheur est au coeur meme de chretiente. . . . Nul n'est aussi, competent que le pecheur en matiere de chretiente. Nul, si ce n'est le saint",[35] is the quotation from Péguy which Greene uses to introduce The Heart of The Matter and in the phrase is Greene's idea

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32 Greene, The Power and The Glory, op.cit., p.269

33 Mauriac, op. cit., p. 118.

34 Greene, The Power and The Blory, op.cit., p.284

35 Graham Greene, The Heart of The Matter, London, William Heinemann Ltd., 1948, p. frontispiece.

that the individual is good and bad. Consequently when Greene is dealing with his characters sins and virtues are not at opposite ends. It is Greene's contention that the greatest souls have been men with more than a normal capacity for evil and the worst have sometimes narrowly evaded sanctity. With the whiskey-priest the yearning after sanctity breaks through his last thoughts,

> . . . that the world is unhappy whether you are rich or poor unless you are a saint, and there aren't many of those. . . . People had died for him, they had deserved a saint . . .36

What the whiskey-priest does not realize is how closely he resembled sanctity - how closely he resembles Christ. As he approaches his end, this mediocre sinner conforms slowly to Christ until he resembles Him, until he is identified with his Lord and his God. Mauriac says that the Passion begins again around this victim chosen from human derelicts, who repeats what Christ did, not at the altar, without it costing him anything, offering the Body and Blood under the guise of bread and wine, but giving up his own flesh and blood as on a cross. "In this false, bad priest it is not virtue that appears as the opposite of sin, it is his faith - faith in that sign he received on the day of his ordination, in the

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36 Greene, The Power and The Glory, op. cit., pp. 260-2.

trust that he alone still bears in his unworthy, but yet consecrated hands".[37] There is in The Power and The Glory corrupted nature and Omnipotent Grace and

> . . . there is poverty-stricken man who is nothing, even in evil, and there is mysterious love which lays hold upon him in the thick of his ridiculous misery and absurd shame to make a saint and martyr of him.[38]

The whiskey-priest goes to his martyrdom sacrificing himself, and attributing to God all that power and glory which triumph over what he considers the most miserable of men - himself. The martyr-priest had lived the Passion and Greene sees him as he saw the whiskey-priest of Chiapas and Father Pro of The Lawless Roads, symbols of the power and the glory of the Catholic Church. Greene knew that the laying on of the hands of the bishop during the sacrament of Holy Orders was to last all the days of a young deacon's life. "Thou art a priest for ever according to the order of Melchisedech".[39] Greene sees that though the agent be steeped in his own vile corruption he could still change bread and wine into God's Body and Blood; Greene was aware of the flowing of God's Grace that changed the whiskey-priest from a

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37 Mauriac, op. cit., p. 118-9.

38 Ibid.

39 Ps. 109:4.

coward into a martyr. It is a grace

> . . . which dazzles Graham Greene much more than the majestic facade which the temporal church still erects above the people. If there is a Christian whom the crumbling of the visible church would not disturb, it is, indeed Graham Greene. . . .[40]

For the Catholic Greene the Church is the strongest bulwark against Communistic ideology. Even as the execution squad lowered their rifles, a stranger landed on the shores of Tabasco, a priest of God. The new priest might succumb to the same temptations as the whiskey-priest, he might remain as firm and as staunch as Father Pro, or he might escape across the border into a free land, but whatever happened he would carry God to the Indians, grant them absolution for their sins, and bury their dead with proper dignity for as long as he remained in their midst. When his work was finished another would come to take his place. And another. No one, Greene asserts, not even the might of the State can stop the march of the power and the glory of the Catholic Church as She brings hope, peace, and solace to ravaged souls.

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40 Mauriac, op. cit., p. 119.

CHAPTER VI

THE HEART OF THE MATTER - THE MERCY OF GOD

Pity is cruel.
Pity destroys.
Love isn't safe when pity's prowling around.
The Ministry of Fear

Graham Greene is moved to compassion for all the displaced, the exiled of the world; for the most shabby, the most corrupt; yet in his compassion he realizes what many idealists forget, that pity can be an instrument of moral blindness. The Heart of The Matter depicts a man of good will but weak in character who is unable to face his responsibilities; a perplexed man whose sole motive is to bring happiness to others. The mainspring of his actions is a pity which extends to any suffering thing. Yet this pity leads Scobie into a life of moral blindness and deceit. He is a Catholic, not a very devout Catholic, but one whose faith shows him that his transgressions are not merely offenses against a personal moral code, or acts of injustices to his government, but deliberate insults to God.

> O God, he thought, the decisions you force on people; suddenly, with no time to consider. . . . The trouble is, he thought, we know the answers - we Catholics are damned by our knowledge . . . there is only one answer . . .[1]

In Greene's world there must be pity both human and divine because God's creatures are subject to human frailty. Graham Greene proposes to show in The Heart of The Matter that a man with pity in his heart for his fellow men is in love with God precisely because of the pity he has for God's creatures, thus manifesting a pure love, one of the divine attributes. One must have pity for human weakness, because of,

> . . . the sins of human frailty; the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and we do these things we would not do; and for these too, in others, we must have pity.[2]

The same kind of pity Jesus Christ had when He looked down from the Cross on the multitude who watched and jeered, and even when He saw sin in the hearts of all men He cried out to His Heavenly Father, "Forgive them for they know not what they do". Both the ignominious death on the cross and His plea for mercy were for the redemption of men - His pity was a redemptive pity.

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1 Graham Greene, The Heart of The Matter, London, William Heinemann Ltd., 1958, p. 290.

2 Gerald Vann, The Divine Pity, New York, Sheed and Ward, 1946, p. 142.

Greene's pity is one of compassion for he believes that the sinners know not the gravity of their acts.

Pity, a moral virtue man acquires for himself by his own exertions, is the inclination one has to an act of mercy relieving another's distresses. St. Thomas explains pity as a grief for another's distress in so far as one looks upon another's distress as one's own.[3] He said, ". . . pity springs from love of self but expands itself to include neighbor and self".[4] He holds that in man's dealings with man, justice is not enough, that mercy is the virtue which goes beyond the demands of justice. The virtue of generosity, St. Thomas points out, leads man to give freely to friends and others who are especially united to man, for in love it is giving which is itself the highest form of receiving.[5] Beyond mercy and justice as virtues is the gift itself because it considers the needs of others. It is a gift, and

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3 St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, New York, Benzinger Bros., Inc., Vol. I, p. 119.

4 Ibid., p. 138.

5 Ibid., pp. 136-143.

> . . .unless we have this gift we may have pity indeed, but not the pity which is the gift of the Spirit. For this pity you learn by learning to be reverent and docile towards God; it is a gift you receive; and when you hold it out in your hands to another you must remember whence it came, you must remember that only in abasement of spirit can you pass on a gift which is divine, you must remember and imitate the pity of Mary, the sinner when she anointed the feet of Christ, a pity which was divine precisely because in one and the same action she expressed her own abasement and sorrow, and her pity for the wayworn feet of God.[6]

Thus it is, that man's pity is both a moral virtue that he acquires for himself through his own exertions and a grace that he receives as a gift from God through the intercession of his own prayers, or as in Scobie's case, from the prayers of a saint ". . . whose name nobody could remember".

Pity demands that it be given in full measure, first of all, to those nearest one - those one loves the most, and then to those most in need. To either, pity must be given freely, if it is not, it turns to condescension and pride. It must be given out of love. Were one to remove the element of love from Scobie's pity one would be left with a hybrid emotion that looked singularly like cruelty. Pity demands that an attempt be made to imitate the Divine Pity. As Christ did not

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6 Vann, op. cit., p. 137.

pity the sin, only the sinner, so, too, must man's pity be directed. This last conception of pity is the one that Greene sees as necessary in the world, for he insists that for mankind there had to be a Divine Pity for the sinner else there could be no salvation.

In The Heart of The Matter Greene succeeds in conveying his meaning and purpose of Scobie's actions through his terrible sense of pity. Scobie's pity leads him into evil that a seeming good may result and Greene succeeds in conveying the sense of despair as it gnaws at his protagonist. Scobie's pity and his sense of despair are manifestations of Greene's conception of the purgatorial sufferings of men. The concern of Greene is what will happen to Scobie at the end; whether Scobie's pity will lead him to Heaven or to hell.

This story of pity progresses through seven stages of evil, each one more serious than the one before. The first, a breach of government regulations, is minor and could be classified as nothing more than an indiscretion. The last, the supreme act of despair, is ". . . the unforgivable sin".

Scobie, as the whiskey-priest in The Power and The Glory, is a victim of his own vices caused, in a measure, by the land. The setting of The Heart of The Matter is the Freetown of Journey Without Maps. The

town, a port of call for warships during the war, is a place of corruption where even schoolboys in a refrain like a nursery rhyme lead seamen to brothels. Evelyn Waugh called the town, ". . . parasitic, . . . corrupt".[7] Everywhere in the town one can always detect the odor of human meanness and injustice. Yet Scobie loved Freetown because on the coast human nature had not time to hide itself. Nobody there could talk about a heaven on earth.

> Why do I love this place so much? . . . Heaven remained rigidly in its proper place . . . and on this side flourished the injustices, the cruelties, the meanness that elsewhere people so cleverly hushed up. Here you could love human beings nearly as God loved them, knowing the worst: . . .[8]

But this seemed to conflict with the insincerity that flourished everywhere. Scobie noticed, for instance, that when Wilson first arrived he sounded sincere. A few months would change that, and Wilson would be talking like the rest of them, saying one thing and meaning its opposite. How then was it possible to say that human nature could not disguise itself? Scobie knew that everyone was expected to set up the correct facade, to put on

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7 Evelyn Waugh, "Felix Culpa?", The Tablet, London, June 5, 1948, p. 352.

8 Greene, op. cit., p. 30.

the socially accepted mask. Scobie's fault was that he did not try to deceive. He did not believe that truth had any human values. His honesty was a habit. "In human relations kindness and lies are worth a thousand truths".[9] Pity demanded white lies. The truth too often hurt.

During Scobie's fifteen years as an obscure policeman in this colony of West Africa he lived austerely. He regarded himself merely as a man in the ranks who had no opportunity to break the more serious rules and when he prayed he always added an act of contrition,

> It was a formality not because he felt himself free from serious sin but because it had never occurred to him that his life was important enough one way or the other.[10]

He never regarded his absence of serious sin as a virtue and the only thing to blast through his integrity was pity. In his daily task of dealing with the natives his sense of pity had helped him mete out justice. In addition to his official duties as assistant police commissioner, Scobie had the personal task of pretending to be in love with his wife, Louise, and fulfilling his sense of duty-responsibility to her. The less he needed

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9 Ibid., p. 57.

10 Ibid., p. 115.

Louise the more conscious he became of his responsibility for her happiness. When he learns that he will not succeed the retiring police commissioner he is reluctant to tell Louise ". . . for she depended so much on happiness, . . . she depended so much on pride". These first scenes between Scobie and Louise set the note that will be maintained. "The reader is invited to add contempt to the pity Scobie feels for Louise, and to experience, for Scobie himself, a more exalted kind of pity, tenderness bordering on admiration".[11]

Greene's first instance of pity is found in Scobie's sense of his wife's ugliness as he sees her asleep.

> . . . her face had the yellow tinge of atabrine, her hair which had once been the color of bottled honey was dark and astringly with sweat. These were the times of ugliness when he loved her, when pity and responsibility reached the intensity of passion.
> . . . . . .
> . . . For a moment he had the impression of a joint under a meat cover. But pity trod on the heels of the cruel image and hustled it away.[12]

There is something wrong with Scobie's pity, Donat O'Donnell observes, for his comparison of the sleeping Louise to a joint of meat implies an obscure sympathy

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11 Donat O'Donnell, Maria Cross, London, Chatto and Windus, 1954, p. 63.

12 Greene, op. cit., p. 15.

with carrion creatures which is really disgust and not pity.[13] It was, however, Louise's ugliness at that precise moment that struck Scobie and caused the comparison; had she resembled an attractive human there would have been no need for his pity. Scobie could resist the beautiful, never the ugly. When Scobie was passed over for promotion it was not he who suffered but his wife. When the decision was reversed it was she who exulted in it and immediately recovered her desire to live, while he found himself hating her. She was so cheerful, so smug, one of the saved, and he was nauseated by her adult innocence. He told himself that even God was a failure - a useful rationalization for it enabled him to pity God and thus to love God. Just before he committed suicide he found himself loving Louise again. But this love for Louise was bounded on all sides by pity. She was no longer beautiful. "You can't love beauty for long". It was not beauty that he loved, it was failure - Louise's failure to stay young forever, her failure of nerves, the failure of her body. He now wanted to protect her, "he settled back into pity", and pity is a part of love. It is the Catholic Church's insistence on love prompting pity that places Scobie's comparison above disgust.

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13 O'Donnell, op. cit., p. 66.

Because of Scobie's weakness Louise cajoles him into a promise that he will arrange a passage to South Africa for her. His sense of pity compels him to make the promise even though he knows he could not raise the money. He would still have made the promise

> . . . even if he could have foreseen all that would come of it. He had always been prepared to accept the responsibility for his actions . . . despair is the price one pays for setting oneself an impossible aim. It is, one is told, the unforgivable sin, but it is a sin the corrupt or evil man never practices.[14]

Fundamentally Scobie's pity is a weakness, a weakness that can not endure the sufferings of another and thus forces him into rash promises. Scobie is led to the very edge of damnation every time his pity sways his reason for his promises cause him to sin mortally. "Scobie is a crucified man, he sees himself as he saw Pemberton, as Christ on the Cross. And the cross for him is female and sentiment - Louise (and later Helen) - and we have the equilibrium of pain inflicted and endured, the longing for death".[15] In one interesting particular, however, the pattern is different; it is not to a woman but to a child that Scobie's pity nails him.

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14 Greene, op. cit., p. 60.

15 Arthur Calder-Marshall, "The Works of Graham Greene", Horizon, Vol. 1, 1940, p. 370.

The first is the daughter of the ship's captain and the second is the survivor of the sinking ship.

One of Scobie's official duties is to search neutral shipping for smuggled goods and violations of naval regulations. While he was searching the Esperenca he discovers a contraband letter. The letter is from the Captain to his daughter in Leipzig; it is Scobie's duty to forward the letter to the censors for their action. But Scobie saw in the mirror the Captain, ". . . wiping his eyes with the back of his hand like a child, an unattractive child, the fat boy of the school". Against the beautiful and the clever and the successful ". . . one may wage a pitiless war, but not against the unattractive". Another complication comes for Scobie when he learns that the Captain is also a Catholic. "They had in common the plaster statue with the sword in the bleeding heart", the whispers behind the confessional curtains, the dark side chapels and intricate movements and somewhere behind it all "the love of God". The letter is touching and since Scobie himself had lost a daughter, he destroys the letter and sends no report. The turning point in Scobie's decision is the comparison between the Captain's daughter and his own. Now he feels in his heart at one with the policemen who had served under him who were broken for bribery for,

> . . . they had been corrupted by money, and he had been corrupted by sentiment. Sentiment was the more dangerous, because you couldn't name its price. A man open to bribes was to be relied upon below a certain figure; but sentiment might uncoil in the heart at a name, a photograph, even a smell remembered.[16]

When Scobie burns the uncensored letter he becomes a victim of his own compassion; he will not trust the censor to be as kind as he. This act, a minor breach of the law, is the first in a series. It sets the pattern - others will follow. This act prefigures the final important occasion when he will refuse to trust anybody, even God, with the responsibility for the happiness of his wife and his mistress.

Scobie's violations of his own moral code make him conscious of his ever increasing need for what he called peace. He dreamed of it by day and by night. Peace seemed to him the most beautiful word in the language. He always thought of peace synonymously with the prayers of the Mass.

> My peace I give you, my peace I leave you: O Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, grant us thy peace.[17]

But God's peace never comes to Scobie. His peace was further marred when he is compelled to journey to the

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16 Greene, op. cit., p. 54.

17 Ibid., p. 241.

province of Bamba and investigate Commissioner Pemberton's suicide. At Bamba, talking with Father Clay about the sin of young Pemberton, Scobie feels that it was no sin of despair, for Pemberton was not a Catholic, "if you or I did it, it would be despair".

> "The Church's teaching . . ."
> "Even the Church can't teach me that God doesn't pity the young. . ." Scobie broke abruptly off.[18]

The image of Pemberton's body will return to Scobie when he plans his own suicide, "Christ had killed himself; he had hung himself on the cross as surely as Pemberton from the picture rail". Scobie's contention that Pemberton's suicide would have been morally serious had he been a Catholic serves to point up Greene's theory that a Catholic is more capable of evil than any one else for a Catholic ". . . knows what's what", and ". . . we Catholics are damned - we know the answers".

When Scobie returns to Freetown he borrows two hundred pounds from Yusef, a smuggler and black marketeer, and buys a passage to South Africa for Louise. This is the second step in Scobie's downfall and this act is more serious than destroying the letter. Scobie as a police official under oath to uphold the law was now in the evil Yusef's hire and this puts him in the proximate

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18 Ibid., p. 88.

danger of mortal sin, and since no one can needlessly place himself in such a position, there is indicated a resistance to God's will and, therefore, it is an act offending Him. On the surface Scobie had compassion for Louise because she was in a deplorably nervous condition, but, more, he wants her out of Freetown for his own peace of mind.

Scobie had reached lower into the dregs of his own misery for he had compromised himself to Yusef, to the Captain, and he will soon compromise himself to the survivors of a torpedoed ship. A six-year old child, who survived forty days in an open boat is brought ashore and Scobie wonders how one could reconcile pain and suffering with the love of God. He could understand death but not the pain and suffering. When such a problem confronted Greene he often resorted to a short story for its elaboration as well as the novel. In The Heart of The Matter Greene asks how some things that do exist can be reconciled with God. Why do children die? Why do they suffer at all? How could one reconcile with the love of God the fact that a child had survived forty days and nights in an open boat and then died? A French officer said to Scobie, "Of course, they looked after her on the boat. They gave up their own share of the water often. It was foolish, of course, but one cannot always

be logical". And Scobie thought, "It was like the hint of an explanation - too faint to be grasped". "The Hint of An Explanation" was the title of Greene's short story published in 1948. In the short story the agnostic traveler on the train says to the Catholic (a priest who had been the little boy in the story), "When you think what God - if there is a God - allows. It's not merely the physical agonies, but think of the children". And the Catholic replies that now and again one catches hints - not scientific evidence - just hints. Scobie, however, does not catch any hints and is bewildered and confused and in his pity for the child he is betrayed into an intolerable position of questioning God's right to inflict pain and suffering.

Helen Rolt, another survivor, is a new responsibility to Scobie. All the survivors, he feels, are his concern. He had shed one responsibility, Louise, only to take on another, Helen. For him there is no comfort in the feeling that responsibility for suffering is shared with all human beings, for ". . . it seemed to him that he was the only one who recognized it". He felt so strongly about his role that at the bedside of the dying six-year old child his deep compassion forces from his heart a prayer,

> Father, look after her, give her peace . . . Father, he prayed, give her peace, take away my peace forever, but give her peace.[19]

Evelyn Waugh has questioned whether Scobie's prayer for peace could be considered a loving sacrifice. Greene himself answered Waugh's objection when he wrote:

> Obviously one did have in mind that when he offered up his peace for the child it was a genuine prayer and had the results that followed. I always believe that such prayer, though obviously God would not fulfill them to the limit of robbing him of a peace for ever, are answered up to a point as a kind of test of man's sincerity and to see whether in fact the offer was one merely based on emotions.[20]

Scobie's involvement with Helen Rolt and his subsequent adultery is brought on because he finds that Helen has the temporary ugliness of a child and for this he has pity.

> When she turned and the light fell on her face she looked ugly, with the temporary ugliness of a child. The ugliness was like handcuffs on his wrists. . . . the face which would soon be used to rebuffs and indifference that demanded his allegiance. The word "pity" is used as loosely as the word "love:" the terrible promiscuous passion which so few experience.[21]

Scobie saw in Helen an ugliness that he had seen once before on board the Esperenca,

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19 Ibid., p. 127.

20 Graham Greene, The London Times.

21 Greene, The Heart of The Matter, op. cit., p. 121.

> He had no sense of responsibility towards the beautiful and the graceful and the intelligent. . . . It was the face for which nobody would go out of his way . . . that demanded allegiance.[22]

His love affair with Helen draws him into new entanglements. Scobie's sins have grown from venial to mortal. He sinned because he was so much concerned with happiness, his own and others. Yet experience had taught him that no human being can really understand another and that no one can arrange another's happiness. Under the stress of self-inflicted circumstances of trying to fathom certain problems that rightly belonged to God, he often forgot this. As his depression becomes thicker he comes to the conclusion that only three kinds of people can possibly know happiness; the egoists, the evil, or the ignorant. It was absurd for an ordinary person to expect happiness in a world so full of misery. There was one moment when Scobie believed he had reached a state of happiness, that he could expect nothing more. He was alone in the dark and the rain, without love or pity. He was empty and featureless, and in that state one could approach happiness. Then came Helen and but a moment of happiness, which he was too bewildered to notice at the time and which he looked back upon afterwards

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22 Ibid., p. 51.

without really believing that it had happened. He told himself that it was a mistake to mix up the ideas of happiness and love. He had once told himself that an evil man could be happy. That was the prospect now dangled before him - commit a sin and be happy. He was a Catholic and did not believe it. Yet it was not entirely a matter of religious belief. He was not the forthright type of character who is prepared to snatch at happiness, to sin and be damned. He knew he had sinned and he could not and would not guarantee that he would not repeat his sin. That was his despair, for even if he did repent the sin he would not recapture the happiness he had once tasted. It would be a slow and painful process of selling oneself to the devil for nothing at all. In desperation he went to confession and the priest failed to produce the magic formula. When Scobie came out of the confessional it seemed to him that for the first time his footsteps had taken him out of sight of hope. There was no hope anywhere he turned his eyes: "The dead figure of God upon the cross, the plaster Virgin, . . ." It seemed to Scobie that he had only left for his exploration, the territory of despair.

His affair with Helen had degenerated to the point where she constantly nags him for his views about his religion and about his wife. Helen is now like Louise -

she gives pity a sudden flick of her claws,

> Pity smouldered like decay at his heart. He would never rid himself of it. He knew from experience how passion died away . . . there was only one person in the world who was unpitiable - himself.[23]

New complications rise in Scobie's life - Louise returns and Yusef steals Scobie's love letter to Helen and blackmails him into smuggling out a package of diamonds.

Another phase in Scobie's regression because of pity has been completed - corruption in office. There are three more sins left him; murder, sacrilege, and suicide. Sacrilege comes when Louise urges him to attend Mass and to receive Communion. She suspects his affair with Helen and this will be the test. He is in a dilemma for he cannot go to Communion without committing a sacrilege for he has made up his mind that he will not leave Helen and confession is no good ". . . if I don't intend to try". If he does not go to Communion then Louise's suspicions will be confirmed. He is driven to a sacrilegious betrayal of Christ like that of Judas. Scobie rejected every grace that was given him and went out of his way to do the worst things he could; he loved God, he loved his wife, he loved his faithful servant, and he loved Helen. One of these loves had to be first and

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23 Ibid., p. 211.

Scobie did not or could not make up his mind which it should be. As a Catholic he knew the answer but is confused in his thinking and feels there is no answer.

> "I've given up hope," he said.
> "What do you mean?"
> "I've given up the future. I've damned myself."
> "Don't be so melodramatic," she said.
> "I mean the real future - the future that goes on."
> She said, "If there's one thing I hate it's your Catholicism. I suppose it comes of having a pious wife. If you really believed you wouldn't be here."
> "But I do believe and I am here," he said with bewilderment, "I can't explain it, but there it is. My eyes are open. I know what I'm doing. . . ."[24]

He is willing to desecrate God because he loved Helen and Louise. The root cause of his downfall is a mistaken sense of pity which leads him to continue his liaison with Helen rather than abandon her to Bagster. He said,

> O God, I am the only guilty one because I've preferred to give you pain rather than give pain to Helen or my wife because I can't observe your suffering. I can only imagine it. . . . This was what human love had done to him - robbed him of eternity.[25]

With Louise at his side he knelt at the Communion rail and made one last attempt at prayer before the priest put the Body and the Blood of Jesus Christ on his tongue,

> O God, I offer up my damnation to you. Take it. Use it for them.[26]

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24 Ibid., p. 250.

25 Ibid., p. 280.

26 Ibid., p. 242.

"To me", writes Evelyn Waugh, "the idea of willing my own damnation for the love of God is either a very loose poetical expression or a mad blasphemy".[27] Francis Downing writes that Waugh is mistaken because it does not seem to him ". . . that Scobie willed his own damnation . . . but rather it was Scobie's unwillingness to give pain to another which accounts for his offer".[28] It is not probable that Greene intended any real value to be attached to this statement of Scobie's. One cannot do evil that good may come of it. Such an offering would have no worth with God and no one could be morally helped by such an act.

The sacrilege is over and with his lost sense of peace goes his sense of trust, and he now suspects his faithful servant of the past fifteen years, Ali, of spying on him. Later when Scobie sees Ali's dead body and realizes that he had had a part in the murder he sees Ali as one with God,

> God lay there under the petrol drums and Scobie felt the tears in his mouth . . . I loved him, . . .[29]

Whether Ali was betraying him is not known but had not

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27 Waugh, op. cit., p. 354.

28 Francis Downing, "Communications", The Commonweal, Vol. 98, August 6, 1948, p. 399.

29 Greene, The Heart of The Matter, op.cit., p.269.

Scobie been having an affair with Helen or conspiring with Yusef there would have been nothing for Ali to spy on. Evelyn Waugh feels that Ali's death emphasizes the culpability of Scobie's sins.[30] Donat O'Donnell objects to Greene's handling of Scobie's reactions to Ali's murder. O'Donnell contends that just as one is not likely to commit adultery without lust one is not likely to commit murder without including violence and this, he holds, creates a confusion in Scobie's character.[31]

All of Scobie's sins weigh heavily on his conscience,

> One can strike God once too often. After that does one care what happens? . . . all seemed as insubstantial as shadows . . . I am the man . . .[32]

and before he commits his greatest sin he makes one more attempt at prayer.

O God, if you love me as I know you do, help me.[33] Though Scobie was not a devout Catholic he knew that the only thing that really mattered was saving his soul. He knew he was damning his soul and the tragedy of his act lies in his inability to make an act of contrition. Peace

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30 Waugh, op. cit., pp. 352-354.

31 O'Donnell, op. cit., pp. 63-66.

32 Greene, The Heart of The Matter, op.cit., p.281.

33 Ibid., p. 287.

finally came as the effects of the drugs he had taken clouded his dreams. He tried to offer an act of contrition but he could not remember what it was that he had to be sorry for. In his last moments he thought he heard someone plead for help and,

> . . . he strung himself to act. He dredged his consciousness up from an infinite distance in order to make some reply. He said aloud, "Dear God, I love . . ."[34]

"My God, I love . . . is one of the most sublime moments in fiction", writes Nelson W. Logal.[35] Marie-Beatrice Mesnet contends that this prayer is all the more moving for the "imminence of death; it was undoubtedly a genuine act of love".[36] Greene himself wrote:

> My own intention was to make it completely vague as to whether he was expressing his love for the two women or his love for God. My own feeling about this character is that he was uncertain himself and that was why the thing broke off.[37]

It is suspected that Greene considers Scobie a saint. Whatever heppened to Scobie at the end, the one thing that can be said for him is that he retained his faith.

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34 Greene, The Heart of The Matter, op.cit., p.290.

35 Nelson W. Logal, "Catholic Novel in The True Sense", Books on Trial, July-August, 1948, p. 103.

36 Marie-Béatrice Mesnet, Graham Greene and The Heart of The Matter, London, The Cressett Press, 1954, p. 103.

37 Ibid., p. 103.

He lost hope; his first deliberate mortal sin forfeited charity - he intensified the forfeiture by piling sin on sin; and, by losing hope, he lost the will to repent.

Scobie's corruption came into existence through pity. Pity led him into untruths and into cowardice. Pity finally killed him, for there was a definite connection leading directly from his final act, his suicide, to his first surrender to pity, expended on the Captain of the Esperanca. W. H. Auden calls Scobie's pity:

> That corrupt parody of love and compassion which is so insidious and deadly for sensitive natures.[38]

He adds that to feel compassion for someone is to make oneself their equal; to pity them is to regard oneself as their superior and from that step to self pity is shorter than one thinks. What Auden seems to miss, however, is that Scobie's pity killed Scobie, not those to whom the pity was extended. Greene himself does not know whether Scobie's pity damned him or saved him. He pointed out,

> I wrote a book about a man who goes to hell - Brighton Rock - another about a man who goes to heaven - The Power and The Glory. Now I've simply written one about a man who goes to purgatory.[39]

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38 W. H. Auden, "The Heresy of Our Time", Renascence, Vol. 1, Spring 1949, p. 34.

39 Greene, The London Times, op. cit.

God alone knows what happens to Scobie for even in an invented case there are factors only God could judge. And that, it seems, is the heart of the matter - that only God knows the relationship that exists between Himself and Scobie.

CHAPTER VII

THE END OF THE AFFAIR - THE LOVE OF GOD

I fled Him, down the nights and down the days;
I fled Him, down the arches of the years;
I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways,
Of my own mind; and in the midst of tears
I hid from Him, and under running laughter,
Up vistaed hopes, I sped;
And shot, precipitated,
A-down Titanic glooms of chasmed fears;
From those strong Feet that followed, followed after.
But with unhurrying chase,
And unperturbed pace,
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
They beat - and a Voice beat
More instant than the feet -
"All things betray thee, who betrayest Me."
"The Hound of Heaven"

A sure indication that Graham Greene was well aware of Francis Thompson's ode is the fact that The Power and The Glory was first published under the title, The Labyrinthine Ways. From the poet, the novelist captured the keynote of the tragedy of human nature, "the inadequacy"[1] of creatures to cope with the power of evil without the help of God. The stanza quoted summarizes, as it

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1 "Inadequacy" here is intended to convey the idea of man's need for Grace to avoid sin. Even though man is capable of good, the lack of order in his reason and sense appetite will lead him into sin unless he is aided by the Grace of God. Walter Farrell, O.P., S.T.M., and Martin J. Healy, S.T.D., My Way of Life, Brooklyn, Confraternity of the Precious Blood, 1952, p. 301. Sarah Miles makes a plea to God for help because ". . . I can't do anything of myself". Graham Greene, The End of The Affair, London, William Heinemann Ltd., 1955, p. 112.

were, the whole story of man; a humanized account of a soul enticed by false promises, climbing the deceptive heights of earthly glory and worldly joy, only to be thrown into an abyss of gloom and despair. In this state the soul of man is aided by the Divine Comforter. In his novels, Graham Greene tells anew the same story. Scobie of The Heart of The Matter flees his God only to seek His comfort in the twilight between life and death. The whiskey-priest knows at his hour of death that God was more hungry for his soul than the police spy was for his destruction and that it would have taken so little self-restraint and but a little courage to have become a saint. Sarah Miles felt the love of the Divine Comforter when she confessed, ". . . You God are too good to me". Even Pinkie Brown who believed in only "one Satan" felt the nearness to God when he watched with "horrified fascination" as the grey fingers of an old woman fumbled at the beads of her rosary.

Both Francis Thompson and Graham Greene have chosen a theme that can never die. The story of a soul in its search for happiness is of universal appeal and the theme is the highest and holiest that the human mind can conceive - the love of God for man; the love of the Almighty God for poor, weak, sinful man. The kind of love He offered to Bendrix. Greene asks, how many

Bendrix's are there in the world who feel they have a reason for hating God? The peace and love He holds out to Bendrix is refused for hatred was in his brain,

> You're a devil, God, tempting us to leap. But I don't want your peace and I don't want your love . . . I hate you, God, I hate you . . .[2]

Both the Hound of Heaven and Greene's The End of The Affair portray souls that know the love of God yet flee it because they are led astray by false lights.

The plot pattern of God in pursuit of a soul in Thompson's poem is the same pattern of pursuit used in Greene's novels and entertainments. In the novels it symbolizes man's journey through life, and more important, it dramatizes the words of St. Augustine,

> "Thou madest us for Thyself, and our heart is restless, until it repose in Thee".[3]

The characters in Greene's novels know St. Augustine's prayer yet they are always bound by a dilemma - the dilemma of a man refusing perpetual happiness for temporary happiness. The tragedy of his characters is not that they could not find happiness, but that they looked for it in the wrong places; they had only to succumb to the Hunter. Sarah's fears prevented her from

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2 Graham Greene, The End of The Affair, William Heinemann Ltd., 1951, p. 236.

3 St. Augustine, Confessions, Chicago, Henry Regnery Co., p. 1.

accepting His love,

> I know I am only beginning to love, but already I want to abandon everything, everybody, but You: only fear and habit prevent me . . .[4]

The Hound of Heaven pursues his quarry relentlessly and in the end Sarah will have her fears and habits swept aside and will have made the leap that Bendrix feared. God pursues his creatures more assiduously than Ida Arnold pursues Rose. He tracked the whiskey-priest through the jungles, in and out of jail, more doggedly than did the police lieutenant; He "fled" Scobie down to the very last breath he took; he follows Sarah to her adulterous bed - these He followed, letting each know His love and above the tumult of the chase each heard His words, "All things betray thee, who betrayest Me" - Sarah, Rose, Scobie, hearing Him were fearful that in loving Him they would lose the love of their Bendrix, Pinkie, and Louise.

All of Greene's people are seeking to escape from the Hunter's love and to find other ways of peace. Hale, in Brighton Rock, when he first met Ida thought that she would make a good hiding place, a place of darkness and secrecy and peace. Scobie of The Heart of The Matter desires peace, but because of his weakness he is unable to grasp it. Had he loved both God and Louise he

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4 Greene, op. cit., p. 95.

would not have committed the supreme act of despair. As The Man Within shows Andrew's losing a fight with his own conscience, The Heart of The Matter depicts Scobie, tortured by his own lack of moral courage, offering his own suicide and his own damned soul as a loving sacrifice for others; this offer the Hound of Heaven could not accept. God wanted the souls of Helen, Louise, and the soul of Scobie. In The End of The Affair God pursues all. He is the jealous God so often mentioned in the Bible Who will tolerate no less than everything and everyone - Smythe, Parkis, Henry. Often man thinks he is feeling or acting from one set of motives while in actual fact feeling and acting from another set. For each creature is a person at war with himself - and none more so than Sarah and Bendrix. As, alternately, they pursue each other, so each of them is pursued inwardly; down the arches of the years and down the labyrinthine ways of their own minds; all Greene's characters are always hares pursued by Grace.

In the Hound of Heaven's quest for the souls of men, the hunted is fully aware of his complete and utter dependence on God's love.

> If I loved God, then I would believe in His love for me. It's not enough to need it. We have to love first, and I don't know how. But I need it, how I need it.[5]

God, Who is Justice, is also the one and the same God who is Love. He is a God "who loves desperately". It follows that if man were to succumb to this God who loves desperately the only answer is for man to love God desperately. This means "giving up" some phase of life which man holds dear. The desires of man always seek a good even though a higher emphasis may be placed on the "created" rather than on the Creator. Sarah Miles in a moment of professed dependence accepts the fate that goes with the desperate love of God. She learns that giving up her Maurice is not enough, she must go a step further and reject "everything" from her mind and heart. And in her confused thinking she wonders how she will "exist" if she eliminates "everything". She is neither ready nor willing to return God's love desperately even though she needed it desperately.

Greene is aware of the pain and the darkness that comes with loving God. Did not God the Son call out to His Heavenly Father from the depths of His Pain and His darkness, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me"?

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5 Ibid., p. 108.

Terrible, indeed are the demands made upon the human soul that subjects itself to the desperate love of God for there seemingly can be no worldly pleasures left,

> . . . I thought, God has more mercy . . . only its such an odd sort of mercy, it sometimes looks like punishment . . . I fought belief for longer than I fought love, but I haven't any fight left.[6]

It is this fear that causes Sarah to choose other pleasures; sex and wine.

Man needs a divinely guided wisdom when he attempts to fathom God's love in relation to his pain and suffering. Scobie found it hard to understand a child's suffering in an open boat for days only to have her life end in a Freetown hospital. He could understand death but not the suffering before death. There are two views that man can take in attempting to understand pain and suffering. The one is the determination to avoid pain at all costs. The man who takes such a view refuses to see that pain can have a positive value not only as an ascetic training of character but as a means to a deeper awareness and understanding of God. Bendrix, for instance, said that his story was a story of hate, a hate generated by the pain and suffering he experienced from the loss of Sarah.

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6 Ibid., p. 178.

> . . . She had lost all our memories for ever, and it was as though by dying she had robbed me of part of myself. I was losing my individuality. It was the first stage of my own death, the memories dropping off like gangrened limbs.[7]

The second view is finding evil in pain itself. Such a view likewise refuses to see in pain any redemptive values. Sarah asks, ". . . can one have a merciful God and this despair". Christ could have but thought of redeeming the world and it would have been, but He chose the ignominious death of the Cross with its physical and spiritual pain and suffering in order to redeem man. Greene says that man must accept pain and suffering as the effect of evil in the world and realize that only through pain can he be redeemed. Sarah realized that she must accept pain and agony,

> Dear God, I said - why? why? . . . I shut my eyes tight and I pressed my nails into the palms of my hands until I could feel nothing but the pain, and I said, I will believe. Let him be alive and I will believe . . . and then he came in at the door and he was alive, and I thought now the agony starts . . .[8]

Sarah needed only to remember that the Cross came after sin, not before. The thought of loving God created an agony in Sarah's mind. If he is love, should not she embrace Him? If not Him, who? Sarah could not solve her

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7 Ibid., p. 167.

8 Ibid., p. 112.

problem,

> But, dear God, what shall I do with this desire to love?[9]

God's love is such a strange thing to man that he is afraid to embrace Him; he is afraid that in giving God his finger He will seize the hand. Bendrix does not fear goodness, but rather the pain which is its price. He fears God's grasping his hand.

> If I ever loved like that, it would be the end of everything. Loving you I had no appetite for food, I felt no lust for any other woman, but loving Him there'd be no pleasure in anything at all with Him away. I'd even lose my work. I'd cease to be Bendrix.[10]

Bendrix dreaded spiritual goodness because it demanded a painful relinquishing of what is evil. Scobie preferred to hurt God because he could only imagine what his hurting God would do but he could see what hurting Louise or Helen would do. His love for God was second to his love for Louise or Helen. Yet God is the often unthought of but ever present finality of all lovers. Even illegitimate love is a blind, fumbling misdirected search for God. As the human lover wants his beloved perfect in all things so too the Hound of Heaven wants all souls perfect. At first glance God seems to be taking

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9 Ibid., p. 111.

10 Ibid., p. 225.

away man's happiness but in the moment of surrender, man discovers that He deceived him. He has merely taken away the dross to give man the gold of His eternity.[11]

One of the greatest dramas of life is the Hound of Heaven in pursuit of a soul; attempting to give man an eternity of happiness. When God pursues the soul he proves a relentless lover, who will never leave the soul alone until He has won it or been conclusively denied. The End of The Affair is such a story, the story of God in pursuit of the soul of Sarah Miles. The theme of this novel is the wrestling with the love and grace of God of a very ordinary man and an apparently completely pagan woman, but one with immense spiritual potentialities. It is not the story of sanctity through adultery, it is the story of a woman torn between two loves, and it is told in terms of Greene's view of reality.

At the head of the opening chapter of The Man Within appears a passage from Traherne which provides a clue to Greene, not only to The Heart of The Matter but especially to The End of The Affair for the quotation provides a concise synopsis of Greene's view of reality,

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11 Fulton J. Sheen, Lift Up Your Hearts, New York, Image Books, 1955, p. 24.

O ye that stand upon the brink
Whom I so near me through the chink,
With wonders see: what faces these,
Whose feet, whose bodies, do we wear?
I my companions see
In you, another me.
They seemed others, but are we:
Our second selves those shadows be.[12]

There is always the idea of the double man in Greene, "There's another man within me that's angry with me"; there is always this duality in man's nature that Greene is concerned with. With Sarah it is the duality of the known physical desire and the unknown spiritual love fighting for supremacy of her soul.

In two ways The End of The Affair departs from Greene's other novels. First, the place. Clapham Common, a respectable area of London, has been substituted for the steaming coastal town of Africa or the treacherous jungle of Mexico. Second, the characters. Sarah and Henry Miles and Maurice Bendrix are ordinary and have been substituted for a callous seventeen year old killer or a whiskey-priest.

The End of The Affair, however, reverts to "type" in its portrayal of Greene's obsession. Greene once wrote that every creative writer must have an obsession and up to Brighton Rock his has been with failure, but

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12 Graham Greene, The Man Within, London, William Heinemann Ltd., 1929, p. 1.

in The End of The Affair his obsession has changed to hatred. This novel is heavy with hatred and it is probable that it was a product of some personal crisis. Hatred is one of the escape valves through which Greene's intense emotional feelings escape. The Viper of Milan moved Greene, for in Marjorie Bowen's book there is hatred; Giannoti hated Visconti, who hated Scale, who hated Valentine.

Greene, through the medium of his novelist-character Bendrix, writes out of bitterness born of hatred. "What a dull lifeless quality this bitterness is. If I could write with love, but if I could write with love, I would be another man: I would never have lost love".[13] But not all of Bendrix's bitterness comes from hatred, some of it comes from frustrated love. There is, however, a display of unnecessary spite and cruelty which cannot be attributed to either hatred or frustrated love. The petty spite is inborn and is a failing in character. Bendrix behaves toward Parkis, the pathetic old detective, with consistent nastiness. Bendrix is a person with a considerable store of unpleasantness which has been nurtured by hatred and has been aggravated and stimulated by his frustrated love affair with Sarah,

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13 Greene, The End of The Affair, op.cit., p. 7.

> The sense of unhappiness is so much easier to convey than that of happiness. In misery we seem aware of our own existence, even though it may be in the form of a monstrous egotism; this pain of mine is individual, this . . . belongs to me and no other . . . as though I loved in fact what I hate.[14]

Bendrix knows he is hateful for he says so frequently, "Hate and suspicion and envy have driven me so far away . . ." But after Bendrix had gotten Sarah's note informing him she could no longer see him his hatred becomes a passion. He begins to treat Sarah like a prey. He follows her through London, exulting over her fear. When she dies and his hatred has lost its object he changes it and begins hating God. God had taken his Sarah and He should be hated as bitterly as Henry and Smythe had been. Bendrix's hatred has left him near insanity and at the end of the novel he is a near-man. After Bendrix's talk with Henry and the priest it becomes clear that Greene had intended it this way - Bendrix has been nearly destroyed with hatred and frustrated desire. He rationalizes his hatred by declaring it was just to defend himself and yet he knew "grief and disappointment are like hate! They make men ugly with self pity and bitterness".

Greene's use of Léon Bloy's epigraph gives some hint of an explanation into Bendrix's character. "Man

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14 Ibid., p. 52.

has places in his heart which do not yet exist; and into them enters suffering in order that they may have existence". Through Bendrix's suffering new ideas come to life. Intensity of suffering brought near-insanity but at the end there is more than a hint that a new and healing grace is beginning to creep into Bendrix's heart. Once the rage was over Bendrix was certainly a wiser man than he had been before it started.

> I said to Sarah, all right, have it your way. I believe you live and that He exists.[15]

This "record of hate" told in the first person, begins on a wet January night in 1946 as Henry Miles, a middle-aged civil servant in charge of Pensions meets Maurice Bendrix, a successful second-rate author, whose story of hatred it is. From 1946 the plot goes back to 1944 and then back to 1939. The novel is in three main parts; the story as Bendrix and Sarah lived it; and the second part, the story as told in Sarah's diary. The first part is only important because it lays the background for the second part, the struggle between Sarah's spiritual realization and her human lover - the duality of her nature. The third part is the empty lives of Henry and Maurice after Sarah's death and the nearness to which

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15 Ibid., p. 236.

both succumb to the same belief in God.

Bendrix tells his story, which is not always easy to follow chronologically, since the time range is rather long and the point of reference moves back and forth over a long period. Bendrix with the avowed purpose of doing research on Henry for a future novel about civil servants, falls in love with Sarah. This love leads to an affair which goes on despite Henry Miles, a trusting and not too bright husband, until a bomb strikes Bendrix's apartment house and injures him. Sarah, who was present, believing that Maurice has been killed, turns for the first time to God, and vows to surrender Bendrix if only his life is spared. He is not dead and so begins the process of her subjection to the Love of the Hound of Heaven.

"The End of The Affair", Evelyn Waugh wrote in a review, "is addressed to the Gentiles. It shows them the Church as something in their midst, mysterious and triumphant and working for their good". In the novel Greene attempts to tell profound spiritual truths in terms of stark realism, and to prove that God is the finality of all loves, even the illegitimate love of Sarah and Bendrix.

The End of The Affair creates mysterious depths of the relation between the God of love and fallen, sinful man. Greene almost brings God into the story as one

of the characters. Bendrix is openly at war with God in Whom he disbelieves, "This is a record of hate . . ." Greene asks, could Bendrix disbelieve in God if he hated Him?

God's love is often a "strange" kind of love. What kind of love was it for a woman which realized itself in more and more agony so that she had to pray for death since she felt herself too humanly weak to reject an "understandable" human love which grew and deepened as love itself and her love of God deepened, "For He gave me so much love . . ."

The love between Sarah and Bendrix required lust for love cannot reside in the mind alone; or minds cannot love without prior meeting of the flesh. All kinds of emotions and psychological states may exist before the bodies unite but they do not amount to love. "It was as if quite suddenly after all the promiscuous years I had grown up. My passion had killed simple lust for ever. Never again would I be able to enjoy a woman without love". It is simple lust that has gone from Bendrix life and in its place is love. Sarah tried to persuade herself and Bendrix that people can love without seeing each other. It is a desperate cry and Sarah convinces no one, not even herself.

She said, "My dear, my dear. People go on loving God, don't they, all their lives without seeing Him?"

"That's not our kind of love."

"I sometimes don't believe there's any other kind, . . . Everything must be all right, if we love enough," she said.[16]

She thought of a scar on Bendrix's body, but what was the use of a loved scar if she was to be "only the vapour of the spirit"? Later she wrote in her diary:

> We can love with our minds, but can we love only with our minds. Love extends itself all the time, so that we can even love with our senseless nails, . . .[17]

Sarah's diary contains her bout with the Hound of Heaven. God had permitted her to sin but took away the fruit of her sin - He permitted her to use her free will to keep or break her promise, but she had not the power to gain anything by breaking it.

> I said to God, So that's it. I begin to believe in You, and if I believe in You I shall hate You. I have free will to break my promise, haven't I, but I haven't the power to gain anything from breaking it . . . You let me sin, but you take away the fruits of my sin . . . You don't allow me to enjoy it. You make me drive love out, . . . What do You expect me to do now, God? Where do I go from here?[18]

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16 Ibid., p. 79.

17 Ibid., p. 131.

18 Ibid., p. 118.

This "bitch and fake" can not "hurt" God because she can not get any pleasure from it. She sought solace in wine and sex but it did not work for she was beginning to "feel" God's love. "In this bitch and fake where do You find anything to love". As she begins to feel God's love she also begins to believe in Him, though not fully - ". . . not yet, I don't believe in You yet".

In her despair at having lost Maurice she finds that she now does not love anyone. And God least of all. Seeking ways to escape from this God she does not believe in she goes to Richard Smythe, a rationalist street preacher and his doctrine of a Phantom God. Realizing that Smythe's Phantom God may be the result of suffering generated into hate by a disfigured face he had been branded with, she becomes disturbed and visits a "Roman" church with its plaster statues and bad art and "a material body on a material cross". She contemplates the cross and the words of Richard Smythe and thinks, "Oh God, if I could really hate You, what would that mean"? Sarah now, and Bendrix later, in their pursuits are driven to look into themselves and to recognize - if only for a moment - in Whose image they have been made. Sarah's search for another love leaves in her a terrible emptiness, which is a physical loneliness brought on by the loss of Bendrix. However, there is evident a vestige of spiritual emptiness

brought on by the dissatisfaction with the mediocrity of her life. Sarah's emptiness has no spiritual value for she feels an antipathy against the Hound of Heaven. Yet as she walks out of the church in "a flaming rage" she did what she had seen people do in other churches, she dipped her "finger in the so-called holy water and made a kind of cross on her forehead". God was at work but Sarah did not realize it.

Sarah is spiritually weak. She can do nothing of herself - she needs the help of God. She needs the same special assistance God gives men to work out their salvation. This the Catholic Church calls Actual Grace,[19] which is a supernatural help given by God for the special purpose of enabling man to perform some particular act which tends towards his salvation,

> . . . and wearily God forces us, here and there, according to His intention . . .[20]

This grace can best be understood in terms of man's two weaknesses. The first is original sin. Adam's sin began

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19 Clarence E. Elwell, The Ark and The Dove, Chicago, Mentzer, Bush and Company, 1953, p. 86: "Actual Grace is a free, supernatural gift, a passing aid, by which the Holy Ghost comes to man's assistance for the special purpose of enabling him to perform supernatural acts, either to avoid sin or to perform some particular action which tends toward his salvation."

20 Greene, op. cit., p. 229.

the constant strife going on in the hearts of all men - the sensuous against the spiritual.[21] It is ". . . only through the Grace of God by Jesus Christ our Lord", that man can compensate for this fallen nature that is his by the sin of Adam. The second weakness is man's inability to rise above the plane of the natural into the supernatural. Since God can only be seen face to face by a supernatural act, it follows that some outside help is needed and this too is Grace.[22]

God's grace came slowly to Sarah. In an entry in her diary she suspects that God might fill a void,

> . . . and it was for the first time as though I nearly loved You. I walked under Your window in the rain and I wanted to wait under them all night only to show that after all I might learn to love and I wasn't afraid of the desert any longer because You were there.[23]

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21 Farrell and Healy, loc. cit., p. 277: "The Gifts which Adam lost for himself and for all men are summed up in the name Original Justice . . . a condition of human nature in which all man's powers exist and act in perfect harmony with one another and in subjection to God."

22 Elwell, loc. cit., pp. 82-85: "This Grace, called Supernatural Grace, is the principle of supernatural life . . . which a supernatural gift imparts to the soul a . . . divine quality, which makes it participate in God's nature."

23 Greene, op. cit., p. 135.

The first of God's graces to Sarah came as a gift for she had done nothing to merit it of her own accord. Perhaps, she as Scobie before her, owed this gift to the prayers of a saint whose name nobody could remember. Is Sarah, a sinner, worthy of such Grace? This question is basic to all the works of Greene. The answer he uses is found in God's own words when He tells that He came ". . . not to call the just, but sinners". Even to the worst of sinners then God gives sufficient Grace to enable them to repent. In The Heart of The Matter Greene maintains that a man could die with the consciousness of a threefold sin of adultery, sacrilege, and suicide weighing on his soul and still go to heaven. In The End of The Affair he goes a step farther and says that a woman who repents all her sins before she dies is a saint worthy of formal honor.

Even though Sarah is only partly convinced that God is the answer to her problems there is still a great obstacle to be surmounted on her road to peace. That obstacle is self-discipline. God is putting Sarah through a Calvary before He will let her share in a Resurrection. She is tormented by her indecision. One day she writes,

> Dear God, I've tried to love and I've made such a hash out of it. If I could love you, I'd know how to love them . . . Teach me to love.[24]

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24 Ibid., pp. 143-144.

Two days later, however,

> Dear God, I'm no use. I'm still the same bitch and fake. Clear me out of the way.[25]

Sarah's realization that there is an ideal love for which she has been reaching blindly and mistakenly brings her, with God's graces, to the shattering knowledge that the love she has been adulterously enjoying is empty and degrading.[26]

> I believe you died for us. I believe you are God . . . Dear God, if only You could come down from your cross for a while and let me get up there instead. If I could suffer like You, I could heal like You.[27]

She feels that she is no use because she has not yet understood that love is what she desperately wants. When she does surrender, God gives her the assurance that none of her pain and suffering has been in vain.

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25 Ibid., p. 145.

26 Harold C. Gardiner, Norms for the Novel, New York, The America Press, 1953, p. 71.

27 Greene, The End of The Affair, op. cit., p. 144.

> For he gave me so much love, and I gave him so much love that soon there wasn't anything left, when we'd finished, but You for either of us. I might have taken a lifetime spending a little love at a time, ekeing it out here and there, on this man and that. But even the first time, in the hotel near Paddington, we spent all we had. You were there, teaching us to squander, like you taught the rich man, so that one day we might have nothing left except this love of You.[28]

Even after she has surrendered she has not fully acquired the taste for God. Sarah echoes the words of St. Augustine's human cry, "Oh God, give me continence, but not yet", when she pleads, "Dear God, you know I want to want your pain, but I don't want it now. Take it away for a while and give it me another time".[29]

Evelyn Waugh wrote of The End of The Affair,

> . . . is a singularly beautiful and moving story. It has a variety and precision of craftsmanship. The relationship of lover to husband with its crazy mutations of pity, hate, comradeship, jealousy, and contempt is superbly described. For the first time in Mr. Greene's work there is humor. The heroine is consistently lovable. Again and again Mr. Greene has entered fully into a scene of high emotion which anyone else would have shirked.[30]

In The End of The Affair is an account of a woman who gave God what He wanted, even though it killed her. Sarah's unhappiness, Father Martindale says, is like the unhappiness of thousands of others:

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28 Ibid., p. 105.

29 Ibid., p. 106.

30 Evelyn Waugh, The London Times.

> . . . in England like those described here, who are sure of nothing but that they are unhappy. But also, that in all these creedless and almost codeless people there is something that God's grace is trying to get hold of, that really wants to be got hold of, but does not understand this, and so thinks it hates what it both needs and fears.[31]

Sarah's fears and needs were swept aside in the one act of humility as she was swept away by the tremendous torrent of Divine Love.

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31 C. C. Martindale, "A Jesuit Looks at Three Novelists".

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The greatest tribute to the seriousness of Graham Greene is the controversy his novels have aroused. Though critics disagree over the finality with which he dispenses his characters to salvation or damnation, all of them agree, however, that his characters never lose their love for God, though never fully trusting Him. Scobie could never be sure that the Divine Pity exceeded his pity; the whiskey-priest would never have become a bad priest if he had trusted God to sustain him; and Sarah, at first, was afrad to love God for she could not be sure that His love would satisfy her.

All of Greene's characters have an inordinate fear of God's love. They fear Him because in loving Him they might experience pain and suffering. In that, Greene insists, they are like all mankind. No one can give a complete answer to why there is pain and suffering. Greene contends that even though all men forget that there is a sacrifice involved - through love of God, suffering becomes a sacrifice. The great mystery of the world is not what people suffer; it is what they miss when they suffer - the tragedy of wasted pain. Sarah Miles pleads with God to take away His pain and give it to her another time; the whiskey-priest feared exceedingly the pain that was part of his martyrdom; and Scobie,

who could understand death, could not understand pain and suffering. Greene says, through his characters, that somehow a cross fits into the plan and purpose of this sinful world; otherwise He would not have allowed His Divine Son to be crucified. If man only knew it, Greene further asserts, he is fearing the wrong things. The negative side of fear is dread, but the positive side is longing. Once an individual turns to God, his fear turns to yearning and he discovers peace.

The peace that God held out to Greene's characters was refused; they preferred a temporal peace to an infinity of love. Scobie, the whiskey-priest, and Sarah are as one in this weakness, yet they became victims of the wonderful Grace of God. Even Pinkie may be saved, for between the stirrup and the ground he may have found His peace.

Peace must always be in terms of love, for if it is not, it is but a veneer. The one true love in man's life is God's love, especially His love for sinful man. Heaven is populated by men and women like Scobie and Sarah, who had more than a little evil in their hearts, but had a greater capacity for love.

All of Greene's characters are caught in the conflict of opposing forces fighting for supremacy. Greene suggests that there is a personal God and a personal devil fighting for the affection and loyalty of man.

Greene's God is the Christian God who allows evil in the world. Since man has free will, he can give his affection to God or he can reject Him. If man rejects God, he shall, after death, know the truth - man is made for God, and his heart is restless until it rests in God. Whichever man chooses - God or Satan - his choice is his own and the exercise of his free will means salvation or damnation.

But eternal salvation can be stolen. The two thieves crucified with Christ were equally guilty, yet one stole paradise at the last moment of his life. It is an accepted fact by all Christians that the Good Thief (St. Dismas) was taken into Heaven on that first Good Friday because he made a public acknowledgment of the Divinity of Jesus Christ and thus expressed true love. His prayer, "Remember me when Thou comest into thy Kingdom", the perfect act of love, was answered, "I promise thee, this day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise". God had plucked another soul from the brink of hell. Graham Greene's characters, too, steal eternal salvation through a love that transcends the corruption that surrounds them. Sarah Miles was burdened with sensuality; Scobie fell seven times under the intolerable weight of his pity; the whiskey-priest, crushed by his own weaknesses, found strength to help others with their burdens; only Pinkie Brown refused pain and rode his own pride to the edge

of hell.

The end result of Greene is not a solution, only the problem. He feels that as a Catholic artist his task is to show that the Satan going about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour, is a very real Satan. Greene uses the weakest humans he can find for they are Satan's easiest prey. But since all men are weak, as a result of original sin, it is not surprising that Greene draws so close an analogy between life and fiction. In fiction, as in life, every man has a soul to save or lose and the final judgment is God's, Who is Justice. But the crux of Greene is found in the Divine Love that maintains one must love a man even in his sin for that is the semblance of Divine Love and is the highest love on earth.

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APPENDIX

ABSTRACT OF

The Catholic Treatment of Sin and Redemption In the Novels of Graham Greene[1]

Graham Greene in his four major novels is primarily concerned with the great conflict between the supernatural forces of Good and Evil - God and Satan. The main characters of his novels are beings involved in the struggle between God and Satan fighting for their souls. The primary purpose of this thesis is to examine Greene's obsessions with the twin ideas of sin and redemption and the existence of good and evil as they are presented in the light of a Catholic conscience. The secondary purpose is to show that Greene's ideas of sin and redemption are in keeping with Catholic dogma. His four Catholic novels, Brighton Rock, The Power and The Glory, The Heart of The Matter, and The End of The Affair, are individually examined to show how Greene reconciles the evil of man with the Infinite Love of God.

Because Greene has chosen to make his novels true he has not evaded the real problems of life. Evasion for him is not the equivalent of choosing the least vulgar

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1 Thomas M. Sheehan, doctoral thesis presented to the English Department, Faculty of Arts of the University of Ottawa, Ontario, January, 1960, XII-222.

or the most pleasing of several possible examples. To represent a man as immoral, his novels do not simply generalize and call his characters bad, nor do his novels evade the matter by stating ambiguously that he does not believe in the marriage vows or celibacy. He does try, however, to find the most pleasing, the least ugly of expressions that will convey the facts but he does not beautify the ugly deed to avoid the ugly word.

Greene's method of presentation has been the subject of much criticism. He has been praised on the one hand for presenting evil in its true light; while on the other hand he has been accused of writing pornography. Many critics feel that he has violated Catholic dogma because of the unorthodox people he uses and the unusual problems he presents. The third purpose of this thesis is to examine the morality of Greene's subject matter.

Chapter I gives a brief history of Catholic fiction from Cardinal Newman's day to the present. It stresses the importance of Catholic fiction as a record of man's eternal fight with the forces of evil. It gives three basic reasons for the emergence of Catholic literature as a force - the development and strengthening of the Catholic writers, the new view of human experience, and the role that sin and suffering play in the new novel. The Catholic writers as lay apostles are shown as

presenting the realities of sin in the world and as instigators in awakening all men to the responsibility of their spiritual lives.

In Chapter II an attempt is made to narrow the problem of presentation down to equal the facts of the times, yet present the facts as expressions of genuine Catholic thought and belief. The works of Greene are discussed in terms of the difference between the moralist and the novelist and between the man who writes and the man who believes. The problem exists for the Catholic writer who without propagandizing or without preaching must show that the Ten Commandments are something more than rules hewn into stone and that the world and the Catholic Church are made up of both those who obey and those who disobey the Commandments of God. The difficulty of presenting sex and sexual relations to a reading public not acclimated to accept the raw stuff of human behavior is brought out. And finally the differences that exist between ages as to what is morally acceptable or objectionable is discussed with reference to the dramas of Greece, the plays of Shakespeare, and the Stories of the Bible.

In Greene's life and background, the third chapter, an attempt is made to show how his early childhood had an effect on him that he carried with him through all

his life and that it found its way into his writings. The chapter also shows how certain obsessions of Greene - death, failure, pity - were the result of either environmental background or oddities of character. And of greatest importance to this thesis is the effect that Greene's conversion to Catholicism had on his writings. His Catholic religion gave him a different insight into the weaknesses of sinful man, but more, it gave Greene a new view of sinful man - seeing man in the same light which the Omniscient and Merciful God must see sinful man.

The four major novels are treated in detail in the last four chapters. Chapter IV discusses Brighton Rock as the story of a 17-year old killer who wills his own damnation by refusing to undergo the humiliating experience of a confession. It presents the main character as one with a pride so intense that it carried him to the brink of hell. Also presented is the clear cut problem stated in Catholic terms of the difference between good and evil on the one hand and right and wrong on the other.

Chapter V, The Power and The Glory, is presented as an example of the unfathomable mystery of the value of the sacraments of the Church despite the fallibility of the humans that administer them. The whiskey-priest, unworthy and fully conscious of that unworthiness,

administers the sacraments to the Indians of Mexico who know that the Sacraments are offered by an unworthy hand but know intuitively that they receive worthily.

Pity as an obsession of Greene's causes Scobie to commit suicide, adultery, and sacrilege. The story is told in The Heart of The Matter and examined in Chapter VI. Greene presents Scobie as one who commits the three sins because of his intense pity and yet as one who is saved from damnation by that same pity for it was a pity that was akin to the pity of Christ's.

The final chapter discusses The End of The Affair in terms of an adulterous affair between Sarah Miles and Maurice Bendrix and the substitution by Sarah of God for Bendrix. Greene presents Sarah as one who turns to God in a moment of desperate need, rejecting God's love because it deprived her of Maurice's, and her final and complete submission. Sarah becomes a 20th Century Mary Magdalen.

The conclusion points out that Greene does not offer a solution, only the problem. The crux of Greene is found in the Divine Love that maintains one must love a man even in his sin for that is the semblance of Divine Love and is therefore the highest love on earth.