The Unique Use of Evil and the Supernatural in Graham Greene

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For Graham Greene, the inevitable human tragedy occurs from the gap between what man wants and what he is able to attain. Man's capacity, because of personal limitations, cannot satisfy all his desires. Caught between the two, man must inevitably fail unless he has a vision of something beyond himself. However, if he recognizes a transcendental outside force, the individual is caught by a phenomenon more powerful than himself, and he reacts.

In the God-ruled world of Greene's major novels, the typical figure is the sinner, crippled by his human state and rebelling against God's law. Struggling hopelessly, the sinner recognizes the transcendental outside force; he is caught by God. In his major novels, to demonstrate that the ways of God under Roman Catholicism must remain inexplicable, Greene suggests the ways of God indirectly through the supernatural phenomena.

Greene's major novels assume a relationship between God and humanity, and specifically, they assume the truth of the Christian claim that Christ is God who became man, that the word became flesh, thus manifesting in a material way a personal connection between man and God, between the

natural and supernatural. Greene is naturalistic in technique,[1] supernaturalistic in theme, and it is a tribute to his mastery of the novel form that he can produce a twentieth-century novel about sin and salvation. This essay is concerned with examining the supernatural and the religious elements in Greene's major novels, as well as the relationship between Greene's view of life and Catholic dogma.

Greene presents persons whose spirits become battlefields between God and the devil. *The Power and the Glory* (1940), a story of the Whiskey Priest in Mexico during the religious persecution (1926–38), is the most satisfying one of Greene's religious novels which pursue this theme. We meet the Whiskey Priest in the first chapter through the eyes of Mr. Tench, a forgetful dentist, who is walking along the harbour. The priest is very shabbily dressed and carries a breviary disguised under a profane cover. Both men return to the dentist's office to drink some of the priest's liquor, and when a young boy comes looking for a doctor to attend his dying mother, the priest decides to miss the boat that would carry him to safety and to go to the woman. Later we learn that the woman died before he could hear her confession. This is the first stop on his irregular trek over the country that is pursued by the police, haunted, and humiliated by a feeling of impotence.

The selection and handling of characters of this novel may allude to the Passion story. Instead of a trial there is a chase, and the police lieutenant is an analogue of Pilate, who condemned Christ to death, although, unlike Pilate, he does not wash his hands of the matter. The American gangster, also pursued by the police, reminds the reader of the choice given to the Jews between Christ and Barabbas. The lieutenant, who thinks he knows what is good for people, favours Barabbas

(although Pilate favoured Christ). "'He is a man at any rate,' the lieutenant said, with approval." "'A man like that,' the lieutenant said, 'does no real harm.'" Greene also compares the lieutenant with the priest. "There was something of a priest in his intent observant walk."[2] Throughout the novel the two men act for the salvation of their people, so both in a sense are priests. The lieutenant has the advantage of self-discipline and official authority, but he is limited by the apathy of his followers. He symbolizes the leaders of the modern newly-risen religions who would reform society and make a heaven on earth with or without the consent of the people. The priest's only advantage is his dependence on God, and the hope that good men of the world will come to realize what he feels is the most important truth about life: that man by himself is unable to provide for his own salvation. Towards the end of the novel, where the lieutenant has finally captured the priest, the former's ideology is challenged.

The lieutenant, of course, wins the immediate argument. He has the power. But the priest has his power from God, and although he does not know it, he wins the ultimate victory. After the priest is shot, the lieutenant and his entire world are left with nothing to do. His reason for existence has vanished. He will not even be able to make his utopia of the world. The little peasant boy, for whose affection and affiliation he vied against the priest, spits on his revolver and a few moments later helps a new priest who is willing to bear his cross and, ironically, to give the lieutenant a reason for living.

Symbols that bring the supernatural into the world remind the reader that Greene's method in one way is similar to Christ's one: God became visible in the flesh and blood of an individual man. God became Man,

and brought the supernatural directly into the lives of men. Greene avoids preaching about the supernatural. He makes the power and the glory palpable and mute.

Coral, the young girl who hides the pursued priest, is like Veronica, who wiped the face of Jesus on his way to Calvary. The priest is betrayed by a Judas for pesos instead of pieces of silver, and Padre José, the despairing priest, denies any relationship to him, like the Apostle Peter who denied Christ thrice before the cock crowed. The jail where the priest is held prisoner is like an inferno.

In the essay "The Lost Childhood" Greene writes: "Goodness has only once found a perfect incarnation in a human body and never will again, but evil can always find a home there."[3] We should not forget that the priest in *The Power and the Glory* is no Christ in spite of the similarity. He is addicted to alcohol and remains so to the end. He is powerless. Christ changed water into wine, but the Whiskey Priest has to bootleg his wine and even then the chief of police drinks it while he watches. He is powerless to do anything without proving his identity that he is a priest. He has an illegitimate daughter to remind him constantly of his weakness and sin.

As Kenneth Allott and Miriam Farris have pointed out in *The Art of Graham Greene*, it is by means of his illegitimate child that the priest overcomes his sin.[4] Her presence makes him accept himself as a sinner, while at the same time he cannot help loving the child, the result of his sin. He knows himself as a sinner. As a human being he cannot help but be one, but unlike most men he has no way of hiding the fact from himself, nor does he have a willingness to do so. By admitting to himself his sin he attains true humility and he becomes capable of

selflessly loving the daughter whom he is unable to care for and protect from sin.

In another novel of a sinner, *The Heart of the Matter* (1948), Scobie, although he has pity for the entire human race, is incapable of love because he is unable to attain the state of human perfection—humility—as the Whiskey Priest was able to do. He is unable to accept his humanity and the existence given to him by God, and in the end he defies God: not being humble enough to accept this life, he commits suicide.

Scobie is a deputy-commissioner of police in Sierra Leone on the coast of Africa. When the story begins he is noted for his trustworthiness. He is a good man. As the story unfolds he becomes an adulterer, and a smuggler; he is implicated in the murder of his trusting servant, he commits sacrilege by receiving Holy Communion while in a state of mortal sin, and finally he commits the unpardonable sin, the final despair, suicide. "Lying back on the pillow he stared sleeplessly out towards the grey early morning tide. Somewhere on the face of those obscure waters moved the sense of yet another wrong and another victim, not Louise, nor Helen."[5] The sense of the supernatural as a present reality is maintained throughout the novel. The following account of Scobie's death illustrates the mixture of religion and realism found throughout Greene's work:

> 'No,' Scobie said aloud, 'no.' He pushed the tablets in his mouth six at a time, and drank them down in two draughts. Then he opened his diary and wrote against November 12, *Called on H. R., out; temperature at 2 p. m.* and broke abruptly off as though at that moment he had been gripped by the final pain.[6]

Here, as in Greene's works in general, the juxtapostion of the realistic and the religious is apparent. Scobie's professional concern for precision in observing material facts when he is on the verge of death, and Scobie's religious attitude towards death, all the more, are striking.

> Afterwards he sat bolt upright and waited what seemed a long while for any indication at all of approaching death; he had no idea how it would come to him. He tried to pray, but the Hail Mary evaded his memory, and he was aware of his heart-beats like a clock striking the hour. He tried out an act of contrition, but when he reached, 'I am sorry and beg pardon', a cloud formed over the door and drifted down over the whole room and he couldn't remember what it was that he had to be sorry for. He had to hold himself upright with both hands, but he had forgotten the reason why he so held himself.[7]

For Scobie death is a religious experience. Life, too, for him is a religious experience, and he is having the same difficulty with dying as he had with living: when he tries to concentrate on what he should be doing, he becomes confused. Because of pity for the Portuguese Captain trying to smuggle a letter addressed to his daughter, Scobie failed to report the incident; he confused the Captain's relationship with his daughter with his own to his dead girl, and the sadness of the situation overwhelmed him. Partly because Helen Rolt reminded him of his daughter he tried to comfort her by taking her as his mistress. And because he knew his wife would suffer if she suspected him, he made a sacrilegious communion to hide his affair from her. Christian love and pity could not be separated in his mind. Now, facing death, his prayer and contrition escape his lips. Scobie's great sense of pity had

always led him to consider others when he should have been concentrating on his own actions, and on his death he is unable to attend to his own business. Scobie lived badly and died badly, but in both experiences he felt there was a supernatural dimension that was ultimately important.

> Somewhere far away he thought he heard the sounds of pain. 'A storm,' he said aloud, 'there's going to be a storm,' as the clouds grew, and he tried to get up to close the windows. 'Ali,' he called, 'Ali.' It seemed to him as though someone outside the room were seeking him, calling him, and he made a last effort to indicate that he was here. He got to his feet and heard the hammer of his heart beating out a reply. He had a message to convey, but the darkness and the storm drove it back within the case of his breast, and all the time outside the house, outside the world that drummed like hammer blows within his ear, someone wandered, seeking to get in, someone appealing for help, someone in need of him. And automatically at the call of need, at the cry of a victim, Scobie 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 . . .' but the effort was too great and he did not feel his body when it struck the floor or hear the small tinkle of the medal as it span like a coin under the ice-box—the saint whose name nobody could remember.[8]

Although the scene clearly assumes the existence and importance of the supernatural, it is presented reasonable, without pleading for Scobie's religious views. The sadness and absurdity of Scobie's death are not mitigated by his belief in a merciful God. It is the death of an ordinary sinner, painful, confusing, pointless, and uninspiring. There is no sentimentality involved in Greene's view that the supernatural is an essential

element of human existence. The realism, the lack of appeal to religious theory, and the dependence on appropriate sensual imagery, in this scene, and in much of Greene's works, help to make his supernatural assumptions believable. And in the same way Greene's acceptance of naturalist theories helps to point up the significance of the supernatural. Characters such as Scobie, the Whiskey Priest, the Lieutenant, and Padre José are determined by heredity and environment, are prisoners of biological appetites, unless they are freed. They are slaves of lust. But an appeal to the supernatural provides a possibility of freedom.

In *A Burnt-out Case* (1961), Graham Greene eliminates his allegorical hints, his allusions to the crucifixion and other events in the life of Christ, and allows his theme to depend essentially on setting, situation and metaphor. It is the story of Querry, a man who has answered all the metaphysical questions with a quiet no, although his name and his journey indicate that there may be possibly one more question.

Querry comes to a *léproserie* in the Congo jungle. Here he settles down to pass away the time by helping out at the mission where he is surprised to find priests and nuns instead of doctors and nurses. He had been a Catholic and an architect, a builder of churches; he had been married, but he has deliberately lost track of his wife and children, and of his mistresses. He has given up his religion and his profession. He hopes to find in the jungle a complement to his spiritual life; he hopes, that is, to find nothing of significance.

He finds what appears to be a metaphor. Deo Gratias (the final words of the Mass) is assigned to him as a servant, and follows him wherever he goes, as a walking objective correlative, a physical representation of Querry's soul. Deo Gratias is a burnt-out case, one whose leprosy is

cured only when it has destroyed the organs or member it has attacked; the victim is then left without the disease and without his feet or his hands as in this particular case. "The Congo is a region of the mind," [9] Greene confides to the reader in his dedication of the novel, and by the same token so is the *léproserie*. Querry has had leprosy of the soul, is a burnt-out case, and like his servant he is retained by the fathers to do for others and to keep himself busy with whatever is possible for a man in his condition.

A Burnt-out Case also presents a new kind of character, Doctor Colin, a scientist who is favoured by the author, and whose presence causes a modification of Greene's theme. He is an atheist who seems to be the only metaphysician in the colony, and the only one interested in theoretical Christianity.

> 'The fathers could tell you about Simon. He died in gaol nearly twenty years ago. They think he'll rise again. It's a strange Christianity we have here, but I wonder whether the Apostles would find it as difficult to understand as the collected works of Thomas Aquinas. If Peter could have understood those, it would have been a greater miracle than Pentecost, don't you think? Even the Nicaean Creed—it has the flavour of higher mathematics to me.' [10]

> 'Wouldn't you rather suffer than feel discomfort? Discomfort irritates our ego like a mosquito-bite. We become aware of ourselves, the more uncomfortable we are, but suffering is quite a different matter. Sometimes I think that the search for suffering and the remembrance of suffering are the only means we have to put ourselves in touch with the whole human condition. With suffering we become part of the Christian myth.'

'Then I wish you'd teach me how to suffer,' Querry said. 'I only know the mosquito-bites.'[11]

Doctor Colin is a secular man who works by the side of the priests in harmony. Their closeness seems to suggest a marriage of the secular-scientific and the religious. The novel begins with a parody on the words of Descartes, "I think, therefore I am." "I feel discomfort, therefore I am alive," the cabin-passenger wrote in his diary,[12] and in Part Five, Chapter One, Doctor Colin attempts to implicate the Christian myth and the modern scientific-philosophic revolution in the same "great ninth evolutionary wave," as he called it, a wave, perhaps, in which the secular and the religious will complement each other. Querry seems to belong to neither region in the wave.

Querry is a clear example of the modern man who has lost his religious faith and is without the scientific vocation of Doctor Colin which might successfully replace it. Paradoxically, it is Doctor Colin who comes closest to Querry's spiritual disease and he is the only one who suggests a cure.

'We always connect hope with youth,' Doctor Colin said, 'but sometimes it can be one of the disease of age. The cancerous growth you find unexpectedly in the dying after a deep operation. These people here are all dying—oh, I don't mean of leprosy, I mean of us. And their last disease is hope.'[13]

Hope for Querry, and hope for the world seem no longer to require the neglect of myth and religion in favour of science, or the defeat of the secular and material by religion, but rather an evolution of both and possibly an amalgamation. In the world, as in Greene's fiction, opposition

between the views of the naturalist and the supernaturalist may be more apparent than real. If there is an answer for Querry, and for the modern man, who realizes both the inadequacy of orthodox religion and the material limitations of science, it must be a new answer hinted at in Greene's novel as a future possibility.

Greene's novels are not necessarily conventional, but the religious assumptions supporting them give to the conflict in which his characters are involved the larger meaning of the conflict between Heaven and Hell, God and Satan. Greene seems to think that the modern age is represented in terms of redemption, grace, and salvation, or sin and damnation. It is no wonder, then, that Greene is significantly different from most modern novelists, who are often agnostic or secular. And it is no wonder that Greene has difficulty being understood in an age when even nominal Christians would be at a loss to give meaning to such terms as grace, redemption, or even sin.

In the epigraph to *The Heart of the Matter*, Greene quotes Péguy.[14] The epigraph gives the reader a clue to another characteristic which renders Greene's works distinctly different from most contemporary fiction: his acute and pervasive sense of evil. Every novelist is, of course, directly or indirectly, concerned with morality. Greene's characters, however, unlike most other novelists', are not concerned with the conventions of daily life.

The most distinctive point about evil in Greene's novels is the implication that the evil man in his evil act is personally related to God, so that he participates in the supernatural, and his activity is of infinite importance. The sinner is always at the very heart of Christianity because his activity as a sinner is significant, and he is in contact with

God. Greene insists on an infinite relevance for human actions, good or evil, and a human being is capable of infinite dignity. In order to qualify one for dignity, one must risk shame; that is, one must be involved in life as a moral being, not merely as a social being. The existence of evil as well as good is a sign of the true supernatural nature of human beings.

In Greene's novels, evil, according to the Christian view, becomes an important necessity of life, a terrifying and inescapable necessity in life that includes the supernatural as a real and effective element. In the same manner that Greek drama was based on a pagan mythology that was traditional and standard, so Greene's work is based on Christian mythology that remains the same no matter what the story is or who the characters are. The method often gives the novelist difficulty and sometimes there is a straining so that the story and the characters might fit with Greene's vision, but also it gives largeness and importance to his meaning. Associated with orthodox Christian teaching, evil takes on, therefore, an importantly different meaning for Greene.

The sense of evil in Greene's novels, as in Catholic doctrine, is rooted in his attitude towards the supernatural. Once a personal God with an ultimate standard of morality is accepted, then the immediate problem for every human being is how he is measured by that standard. According to Christian doctrine, a person can be morally good and the reward is Heaven, or bad and the consequence is Hell. Recent generations of Christians have played down the possibility of damnation, but Greene accepts the dogma according to its original statement. If moral good is a reality, so is moral evil. One cannot do good unless he avoids evil, otherwise he would do good inevitably. Paul Claudel in his "Letter

to Madame E," in *Ways and Crossways*, puts the notion of evil quite succinctly:

> *Original Sin and Hell are Fundamental Truths of the Catholic Faith.* They are not episodic details of the same kind as the problem which you brought to me the other day and which may continue to be a subject of doubt without serious inconvenience. If there was no Fall, there has been no Redemption. If there is nothing to save, there was no need of a Savior. If that Fall did not constitute an immense definite misfortune by separating us from God, the Incarnation and the Cross can have no reason. Besides, we see that on this point the Gospel and the Bible are absolutely clear and categoric. There is no possible way out. There is no point on which Our Lord insists more emphatically and more frequently. We must believe Him or we must absolutely give up believing in Him.[15]

The major point is that evil is not an "episodic detail." It is a horrible fact. And the major point to realize about Greene, if he is to be understood as different in a significant way from his fellow writres, is that he insists on moral good and evil, rather than on social right and wrong, in spite of the fact that he recognizes that there are many mitigating factors at work when we attempt a moral decision.

When the problem of evil, as Greene sees it, is understood, the reader will realize the reason why Greene's characters feel trapped by weakness and overcome by guilt. For Greene's anti-heroes,[16] in spite of their intellectual, emotional, and moral handicaps, enjoy an insight into the fundamental meaning of Christianity. It is the Christian sinner's knowledge that gives God pain. The Christian sinner knows that he is involved with a personal God who suffered for the sins that he has committed;

he knows that he is too weak to stop sinning. Greene emphasizes the awful nature of sin by insisting on its supernatural character, by insisting that a human being is not simply a sociological being but is involved with God, and, therefore, his good actions and bad actions are awesome.

> Greene forces modern man to face up to his fear. Greene exercises this fear by a kind of homeopathic catharsis. When fear is purged then faith in God may fill the vacuum, open the mind to the knowledge of hope and point to the distant vista of joy. To be conscious of evil as evil is to dispose the mind to good; to induce a retching hatred of pride and lust is to cleanse the reader from his secret and sentimental solicitations of evil. A literary pathologist like Greene is often falsely accused of loving the disease which he describes. One must remember therefore that only the virtuous man can really understand vice.[17]

Greene's insistence on the awfulness of human actions gives one importance and dignity which would be denied one in a merely political and sociological world. The slum dweller, the outcast, the unemployed, the sinner, and the common human beings are always in danger of being reduced to statistics by politicians and sociologists; they are, in any case, low on the scale by which the world measures value. But in Greene's fictional world there is a fundamental equality among all human beings. The meanest of creatures is capable of hurting God, and because he is capable of such defiance, he may also become a saint by an act of heroism.

Another characteristic of Greene's novels is a feeling of imminent catastrophe and horror which comes partly from the deterministic and pessimistic elements in his works and partly as a natural consequence

of the writer's unique use of evil and the supernatural. Greene's characters are sensitively aware of the existence of evil and its allembracing power. They are also aware that as human beings they are incapable of coping with Satan, who has the power of an Angel, unless they can avail themselves of the powers of grace. Unfortunately, many of them are not in a position to do so. The chief channels of grace are the sacraments, particularly of Penance and Holy Eucharist. Sarah Miles, in *The End of the Affair* (1951), is unaware that she had been baptized, and the sacraments are not available to her. Besides, submission to the sacraments would necessitate her being faithful to her husband, Henry Miles and giving up Maurice Bendrix. Scobie finds himself in much the same situation. He makes a sacrilegious communion while in mortal sin to deceive his wife into believing him faithful. If he would give up Helen, his mistress, he could make a good confession and be free to receive the sacraments and grace. But Scobie is unable to reform, not because he wants to be evil or even because he desires Helen so much. He is so full of pity, his great virtue and his great vice, that he cannot bring himself to hurt Helen by leaving her, or his wife by allowing her to know he is unfaithful. Pinkie, in *Brighton Rock* (1938), is so encompassed by evil that he feels that it is the only aspect of the supernatural that is real. His wife, Rose, is married to him outside the church, and therefore she lives in mortal sin. But Rose feels that to give up the evil is to give up the good, and she cannot give up Pinkie. The situations in which Greene's characters allow themselves to become involved are such that they can extricate themselves only with great difficulty. Sarah and the Whiskey Priest manage to do so. Pinkie and Scobie do not fare well.

For a Catholic, mortal sin is not simply a matter of being naughty, or of being a victim of heredity and environment. Baptism makes him a member of the Mystical Body of Christ. Confirmation makes available to him a source of grace, and he has confession if he falls. To commit a mortal sin one must seriously break the moral law, one must be fully aware of what one is doing, and one must fully consent to one's act. It is not easy to commit a mortal sin, if one is a practicing Catholic, and there is little excuse for staying in the state of sin, since all that is required is a private act of contrition and confession as soon as conveniently possible.

When a Catholic finds himself in the position that Scobie occupied, there is room in his mind for horror of life and of death. To live is to deserve more punishment, more mental anguish, more suffering. To die is to be concemned to an eternity of suffering.

This dogma may seem rather naive and childish. Indeed, it is a fantastic belief. Greene has surmounted the problem of communicating his fantastic material by using the thriller style of presentation. In an age when the word, 'Hell,' is used only to express frustration and the word, 'Heaven,' is a synonym for a socialist utopia, a serious writer with an instinct for self-preservation would be at a loss to present such fairy tale material without an indirect artistic technique.

Greene uses a technique that is the chase, an effective method in realistic and naturalistic novels for rendering a sense of inevitability and despair. His 'entertainments' are the best illustration of this technique. Raven, in *A Gun for Sale* (1936), flees from police throughout England as does "D" in *The Confidential Agent* (1939). In the major novels, which I have treated in this paper, the chase takes on a larger

meaning. The Whiskey Priest, Scobie, Sarah, and Pinkie are in precisely the opposite to the people who flee from God. They, the Whiskey Priest, Scobie, Sarah and Pinkie, flee from Satan. In Greene's novels, because of the nature of his vision, it is evil that we are aware of first, and then through evil we come to good. We do good by avoiding evil, in Greene's view, and it is at the avoidance of evil that his characters are employed.

In *The Power and the Glory*, the lieutenant is the physical representative of spiritual evil. The American in this novel corresponds to Ida Arnold in *Brighton Rock*: an inhabitant of a non-moral world where there is no good and evil, only right and wrong according to the social and legal standard. When the lieutenant says that the gangster does no real harm, he not only gives an official opinion about the potential danger of the gangster and of the priest to the state: the American actually does no real harm. He is harmless. He is unaware of the real issues—of evil and of good. He is a nonentity in the real battle. The priest is feared by the lieutenant on a spiritual basis, because the lieutenant is a spiritual representative of evil. "There was something of a priest in his intent observant walk." [18]

By the combination of naturalistic and supernaturalistic elements Greene obtains the effect that he desires of catastrophe on the physical level, and, by the projection of horror and doom he obtains the effect of catastrophe on the spiritual level as well. On the physical level the feeling is heightened because of a sense of inevitability. The pursued is almost bound to be caught, particularly since he is usually on the wrong side of the law, which closes in on him with cunning superiority. On the spiritual level he is doomed. He can neither live nor die with-

out catastrophe. Evil is within and without and smothers him with supernatural efficiency.

It is possible to read Graham Greene's novels on a purely physical level. They would be ordinary thrillers involving the pursuer and the pursued, with all the suspense, melodrama and crashing realism of the best of the competent commercial writers of the genre. Greene adds another dimension to his stories, making them larger and more meaningful, and more a reflection of life as he sees it. By the use of the supernatural he turns his thrillers into permanent literature. And without sacrificing the methods used successfully by modern novelists, through his use of Catholic belief (free will is the essential foundation of human dignity, and Christian hope for eternal happiness is the *sine qua non* for life) and Catholic dogma (the appalling strangeness of the mercy of God), he adds to the realistic naturalistic novels a new dimension.

NOTES

1. Graham Greene is a naturalist in one sense of the word: he shares with the naturalists their unromantic, pessimistic view of man's life on earth. In Greene's world, life is usually miserable, and there is seldom any real hope for the future. His characters are often trapped by their environments, and seldom are they granted the privilege of making a free choice.
2. Graham Greene, *The Power and the Glory* (London: William Heinemann, 1957), pp. 22-23.
3. Graham Greene, *The Lost Childhood* (New York: The Viking Press, 1952), p. 16.
4. Allott and Farris state: "His child had been conceived then in a fit of misery and loneliness after half a bottle of whisky when he had given way to despair. To see her again revives intensely his pitiful sense of guilt and responsibility. He recognizes that he is powerless against the thronged world of terror and lust into which he has brought her. She

stands, small and blackly defiant, malicious and already corrupt, between him and God." Kenneth Allott and Miriam Farris, *The Art of Graham Greene* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1963), p. 180.

5. Graham Greene, *The Heart of the Matter* ("The Collected Edition of the Works of Graham Greene"; London: William Heinemann & the Bodley Head, 1971), p. 187.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 312.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 312–313.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 313.
9. Greene confides in his dedication of *A Burnt-out Case*, "To Docteur Michel Lechat": "This Congo is a region of the mind, and the reader will find no place called Luc on any map, nor did its Governor and Bishop exist in any regional capital." Graham Greene, *A Burnt-out Case* ("The Collected Edition of the Works of Graham Greene"; London: William Heinemann & the Bodley Head, 1974), p. vii.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 63.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 141.
12. Cf. "The cabin-passenger wrote in his diary a parody of Descartes: 'I feel discomfort, therefore I am alive,' then sat pen in hand with no more to record." *Ibid.*, p. 1.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 63.
14. Cf. "*The Heart of the Matter* has an epigraph from Péguy that repudiates conventional ideas of the meaning of Christianity. 'Le pécheur est au coeur même de chrétienté. . . . Nul n'est aussi compétent que le pécheur en matiére de chrétiente. Nul, si ce n'est le saint.' It is a hard saying—only a step from Luther's 'Pecca fortiter'—but the kind of truth the dramatic imagination *wants* to receive." Kenneth Allott and Miriam Farris, *The Art of Graham Greene*, p. 166.
15. Paul Claudel, *Ways and Crossways*, trans. John O'Conner (London: Sheed, 1933), pp. 47–48.
16. Greene's anti-heroes are Catholics, and are not aware of themselves as criminals, but only as sinners. By downgrading heroic roles in general and unthinking heroes in particular, Greene leaves room for the humility that is clearly part of a tragic vision. In *The Confidential Agent*, one of

his entertainments, Greene retells the *Song of Roland* to illustrate explicitly the false heroism that deceives men into thinking themselves gods. The Berne MS. of the *Song of Roland*, discovered and annotated by Agent D., a disillusioned 'hero' himself, destroys the romantic heroic picture of Roland and puts in his stead an Oilver who is realistic and who is the real hero simply because he avoids heroics of an obvious sort. Roland believing that he can conquer thinks he is God, while Oliver knows that he is not. Thus Roland plays God and becomes a proud fool, while Oliver, allowing God's intervention, retains the strength of the humble. This is a parable of Greene's claim that only through humbling oneself before God one can become truly heroic. If one disbelieves in one's own perfectibility, one then allows for the ingress of sin that makes one need God. The imperfect man, the one closest to the devil, is, for Greene, precisely the one who is in need of God, and although Agent D., in *The Confidential Agent*, is agnostic, he is surely close to God in his humble sense of failure. I see that what is true of Agent D. also holds for Scobie, the Whisky Priest, Bendrix (*The End of the Affair*), Minty (*England Made Me*, 1935), Francis Andrews (*The Man Within*, 1929), Querry and Pinkie, and they are anti-heroes. The anti-heroes are unconsciously approaching God; for in failure, not in success, they fathom their sins and recognize their faults.

17. Francis X. Connolly, "Inside Modern Man: The Spiritual Adventures of Graham Greene," *Renascence*, I (1949), 19.
18. Graham Greene, *The Power and the Glory*, p. 23.