

FROM BERKHAMSTED TO SALAMANCA

Graham Greene's Quixotic Journey



By Willem von Erpecom

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Department of English, University of Bergen

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Introduction

On the one hand, the popular success of the British author Graham Greene (1904–91) has been very considerable. One indication of the continuing interest in Greene’s work is the two fine films based on his work that have appeared recently, Neil Jordan’s *The End of the Affair* (1999) and Philip Noyce’s *The Quiet American* (2002). On the other hand, critical interest in Greene’s fiction has been variable, David Lodge’s brief work *Graham Greene* (1960) remaining one of the best on the subject. In the introduction to his book *Graham Greene* (1999), Robert Hoskins provides a useful survey of some of the more important critical works that have appeared. Works on Greene’s late fiction, such as *The Human Factor* (1978), *Doctor Fischer of Geneva* (1980), and *Monsignor Quixote* (1982), are notably quite scarce. Some critics may perhaps be repelled by Greene’s popular success, and even by the fact that he is not considered a post-modern writer, while another explanation is that it may simply take some time to achieve the necessary critical distance to the subject. It may also be that Greene’s late fiction tends to disrupt some of the patterns and phases that critics had already identified, by returning more explicitly to religious and philosophical themes. To some they may even seem somehow less weighty than the author’s earlier work; Grahame Smith, for instance, dismisses *Doctor Fischer of Geneva* and *Monsignor Quixote* as ‘chamber works compared with *The Honorary Consul* and *The Human Factor*’ (195), and consequently does not feel any need to discuss them. This thesis, however, aims to show *The Human Factor*, *Doctor Fischer of Geneva*, and *Monsignor Quixote* in a rather different light, as works that complement each other, both returning to earlier themes in Greene’s fiction and developing these into new insights, particularly in the light of the work of the Basque philosopher, professor of Greek, and rector-for-life of the University of Salamanca, Miguel de Unamuno (1864–1936).

The year 2004 marks the centenary of the birth of Graham Greene. The author's long life from 1904 to 1991 spans the greater part of the 20th century and his fiction arguably provides some of the most vivid literary reflections of those troubled years. Like many authors of his generation, Greene had a conventional middle-class background. He was educated at Berkhamsted School, a venerable but minor public school in Northamptonshire where his father became the headmaster, and at Balliol College, Oxford, where he took a second in Modern History. While at Oxford Greene met and fell in love with his future wife, Vivien, who was a Roman Catholic convert. Graham Greene was himself received into the Roman Catholic Church in 1926, before their marriage and before seriously embarking on his career as an author. The couple separated after the Second World War, but the marriage was never dissolved. Vivien Greene died in 2003.

An indefatigable, indeed compulsive traveller, Greene witnessed numerous wars and conflicts in person, as well as the great social and political upheavals of his time, something which certainly had a major impact on his fiction. Most notable for his novels, Greene's large literary output spans six decades: his first novel was published in 1929 and his last in 1988. Greene's life until 1955 is described in great detail by Norman Sherry, his official biographer, in two volumes; it has been announced that a long-expected third volume will be published this year to coincide with the centenary. A more immediate insight into Greene's life and thinking can be gained from his essays, and from his two slim volumes of autobiography, *A Sort of Life* (1971) and *Ways of Escape* (1980). Greene never received the Nobel Prize for Literature, something which does not seem to have upset him greatly.

One of the most striking characteristics of Graham Greene's fiction is its compelling physical and religious landscape. Greene's travels are reflected in his fiction to such an extent that Mark Lawson thinks 'His novels can be seen as the most brilliant postcards ever written' (5). This element in Greene's fiction can be expected to have a continued appeal to readers for

many years to come. Greene also took a lifelong interest in philosophy and theology, and many of his novels deal with religious themes which in some cases are central to the plot. For instance, as Lawson points out, 'The question of whether Scobie in *The Heart of the Matter* killed himself only matters because the novel assumes that he has gone to God's judgment' (4). Yet, with the apparent decline of organised religion in recent decades, at least in much of Europe, Greene's novels may come to be seen as increasingly dated, and some of the concepts involved may seem increasingly hard to grasp.

Even so, it is important to remember that until very recently, a symbiotic relationship existed between art and religion, as can be seen in innumerable works of architecture, literature, music, painting, and sculpture, great and small, on all continents and in every religious tradition. This, it seems, represents a fundamental aspect of human experience. The study of the relationship between art and religion, then, may well afford important insights into both the world of art and the world of religion.

In light of all this, what is the place of Catholicism, as the religion Greene personally preferred, in *The Human Factor* (1978), *Doctor Fischer of Geneva or the Bomb Party* (1980), and *Monsignor Quixote* (1982)? What, if anything, binds these novels together, despite their very considerable differences in form? How do they relate to the large corpus of Greene's earlier fiction and to the philosophy of Unamuno? And what *kind* of Catholicism is represented in Greene's novels? While each of Greene's novels contains an autonomous world of fiction that establishes and obeys its own distinctive laws, at the same time the novels clearly reflect the overarching concerns and interests of the author. Greene's art cannot be seen as isolated from history, philosophy, politics, or religion, but rather engages with them in a broad, catholic dialogue. The critical approach of this thesis, perhaps not unlike the approach taken by the *Journal of Literature and Theology*, is therefore to be equally inclusive, in particular with regard to the fields of philosophy and theology.

Chapter One: Greene and Unamuno

1.

I say, from the nature of the case, if Literature is to be made a study of human nature, you cannot have a Christian Literature. It is a contradiction in terms to attempt a sinless Literature of sinful man. You may gather together something very great and high, something higher than any Literature ever was; and when you have done so, you will find that it is not Literature at all. (Newman 195)

It has been quite common in discussions of the fiction of Graham Greene to attempt to identify certain phases of his development as an author. This is hardly surprising, considering the great span of Greene's literary career, and given the natural tendency of literary critics towards dividing literature into periods and phases. But this division into phases also seems to reflect critics' changing perceptions of Greene's fiction, as may be seen from a brief survey of some of Greene's works. In the early 1930s Greene was seen mainly as a writer of thrillers and entertainments, such as *Stamboul Train* (1932) and *A Gun for Sale* (1936). This perception changed with the publication of *Brighton Rock* (1938), which, while retaining the structure and atmosphere of the thriller, dealt explicitly with serious issues of Catholic morality. Greene's exploration of Catholic themes continues and intensifies in *The Power and the Glory* (1940), *The Heart of the Matter* (1948), and *The End of the Affair* (1951), quickly leading to a notion of Greene as a so-called Catholic novelist. Yet novels such as *The Quiet American* (1955), *Our Man in Havana* (1958), and *The Comedians* (1966) undermined this critical perception, as Greene seemed to abandon explicitly Catholic themes for the morality of international politics, as seen in his treatment in these three novels of the French colonial war and early American involvement in Indochina, the brutality of Batista's Cuba, and the horror of 'Papa Doc' Duvalier's Haiti, respectively. In view of this change, Greene was

increasingly seen as a humanist rather than as a Catholic novelist. In between these political novels, Greene also wrote *A Burnt-out Case* (1960), set in the Belgian Congo on the verge of independence, yet dealing with the highly existential, personal problems of Querry, an architect who feels misrepresented and misunderstood by those who would see him as essentially a Christian artist. *The Honorary Consul* (1973) juxtaposes politics and religion, dealing with a renegade Catholic priest who unsuccessfully attempts to kidnap the U.S. Ambassador to Argentina in protest against Stroessner's dictatorship in neighbouring Paraguay. *The Human Factor* (1978), though ostensibly a return to the spy-thriller genre, deals mainly with the themes of personal loyalty and responsibility in relation to – and in conflict with – individual happiness. The short novel *Doctor Fischer of Geneva or the Bomb Party* (1980) stands out as a chilling study of apparently unmotivated evil. Finally, Greene's Manchegan novel, *Monsignor Quixote* (1982), chronicles the remarkable growth of friendship and love between two disparate travelling companions, the humble parish priest and the communist ex-Mayor of El Toboso. This work, an extraordinary dialogue between Catholicism and communism, self-consciously draws both on Miguel de Cervantes' early 17th-century account of the adventures of Don Quixote and Sancho, and on the works of Miguel de Unamuno.

Graham Holderness disagrees with the received critical perception – 'the dominant critical problematic' – that would identify a specifically Catholic period in Greene's fiction. This approach he summarises as follows:

Greene underwent conversion to Catholicism through a combination of ulterior motive and intellectual curiosity. His conversion introduced him to a dogmatic and sectarian religious faith which produced some stridently 'Catholic' novels; but Catholicism only temporarily arrested his eventual assumption into a non-sectarian universal humanism. As he drifted away from any specifically doctrinal loyalty, so his fiction ceased to dwell on Catholic themes and adopted as its

moral territory a wider, more inclusive world: the secular and existential world of alienated 20th-century man. (261)

Indeed, a considerable problem with this approach is the fact that throughout his career as a novelist Greene remained committed – at least intellectually – to Catholicism, so that there is hardly a single novel by Greene that is not somehow permeated by Catholic faith and morals. How, then, are the notions of the Catholic novelist and Catholic fiction best to be understood with regard to Greene? As Frank Kermode has pointed out in his critical essay ‘Mr Greene’s Eggs and Crosses’ (1961), the bedside tale of the misunderstood jeweller in *A Burnt-out Case* not only fits Querry the architect, but also Greene the novelist. Certainly Greene objected to being classified as a Catholic novelist, saying that ‘Many times since *Brighton Rock* I have been forced to declare myself not a Catholic writer but a writer who happens to be a Catholic’ (qtd in Couto 32). Yet Greene’s objection to this label does not diminish the centrality of Catholicism to a reading of his fiction. Greene approves of Cardinal Newman’s observation that the notion of a Christian – or Catholic – literature, ‘a sinless Literature of sinful man’, is a ‘contradiction in terms’, in fact ‘that it is not Literature at all’ (195). According to Cardinal Newman, literature ‘is the Life and Remains of natural man, innocent or guilty’ (194), and this surely is what Greene’s fiction represents throughout, as manifested in such diverse characters as Raven, Pinkie, the ‘whisky priest’, Scobie, Querry, and a great many more. It is possible that what truly characterises Greene’s fiction is neither Catholicism nor humanism as such, but a form of Catholic realism – or Catholic engagement with the human factor – that is as serious about the moral and religious dimension of life as it is about the social and political one. To Greene, no diagnosis of the human condition in the 20th century can be wholly realistic without taking into account the experience of faith.

Greene emphasises the formative influence of childhood on later life, and in particular the lasting impact made by books read in childhood. In an important essay, ‘The Lost

Childhood' (1947), Greene reflects on the effect of Marjorie Bowen's *The Viper of Milan*, an historical novel about Gian Galeazzo Visconti, Duke of Milan, which he had read at the age of about fourteen:

I think it was Miss Bowen's apparent zest that made me want to write. One could not read her without believing that to write was to live and to enjoy, and before one had discovered one's mistake it was too late – the first book one does enjoy. Anyway she had given me my pattern – religion might later explain it to me in other terms, but the pattern was already there – perfect evil walking the world where perfect good can never walk again, and only the pendulum ensures that after all in the end justice is done. (17)

What Greene here suggests is that his fundamental view of life and literature was shaped while he was still a schoolboy at Berkhamsted, and that this produced a determining pattern for his later work. Religion does not alter or modify this original pattern, but may be seen as a framework which helps to make sense of – and express – lived experience. It is not a system that arbitrarily imposes itself contrary to earlier experience, but one that recognises and builds on that experience. As David Lodge perceptively points out:

There is a good deal of evidence, internal and external, that in Greene's fiction Catholicism is not a body of belief requiring exposition and demanding categorical assent or dissent, but a system of concepts, a source of situations, and a reservoir of symbols with which he can order and dramatize certain intuitions about the nature of human experience – intuitions which were gained prior to and independently of his formal adoption of the Catholic faith. Regarded in this light, Greene's Catholicism may be seen not as a crippling burden on his artistic freedom, but as a positive artistic asset. (6)

Greene's Catholicism, however, is more than a series of empty symbols to be filled with secular meanings, as Lodge seems to suggest; it is rather something that permeates his fiction at a moral level right from the start.

Thus, there is a sense of evolution rather than of discontinuity in Greene's conversion to Catholicism. Too much emphasis on distinct phases will tend to obscure this insight. There is really no room for a distinctively Catholic phase in Greene's fiction since Catholicism may be better perceived, in Lodge's words, as an overarching 'system of concepts, a source of situations, and a reservoir of symbols' (6). Greene himself indirectly supports this interpretation when he says that 'What I disliked in some Catholic criticism of my work [...] is the confusion between the functions of a novelist and the functions of a moral teacher or a theologian' (*Ways of Escape* 256). Greene's fiction, then, is Catholic in the sense that it is informed by Catholic concepts and symbols, thus turning Catholicism into what Lodge calls 'a positive artistic asset' (6); his fiction is not moral theology in disguise, in which case it might possibly be, as Cardinal Newman says, 'something very great and high,' yet ultimately 'not Literature at all' (195).

Another critical approach has been the attempt to identify recurring themes in Greene's fiction, sometimes in the form of certain major obsessions. Though both valid and valuable, this, however, hardly constitutes the kind of overall pattern already mentioned, a pattern that would seem to be more in the nature of a philosophical system than one of literary tropes. Such tropes merely serve to express in literary form the overall philosophy, the pattern that might be explained in other terms by religion. Thus, with the apophthegmatic expression 'perfect evil walking the world where perfect good can never walk again' ('The Lost Childhood' 17), Greene seems to be referring quite specifically to Satan ('perfect evil') and Jesus ('perfect good') as understood in traditional Catholic dogma. The birth of Jesus is an event that has taken place once and for all, whereas Satan seems to be continuously reappearing in ever new forms and guises. Somewhat more obscurely, Greene suggests in the same passage that 'only the pendulum ensures that after all in the end justice is done'. The image of the pendulum seems to imply that in the end justice must prevail, in a way that is

both mechanical and subject to the forces of nature. Yet this should not be seen as a final statement of the pattern of Greene's fiction, rather as one of many attempts at expressing it.

The terms in which this is done may be seen as characteristic of Greene's writing, particularly the sparse, metaphorical, apophthegmatic style. Having once been lured into believing that life as an author would be enjoyable and fulfilling, writing apparently became something of a necessity and a passion to Greene: 'before one had discovered one's mistake it was too late' ('The Lost Childhood' 17). To him, writing was therapeutic, so that he would sometimes 'wonder how all those who do not write, compose or paint can manage to escape the madness, the melancholia, the panic fear which is inherent in the human situation' (*Ways of Escape* 275). Greene's fiction, then, is the result of the author's life-long search for new ways of escape, which frequently takes both author and reader into strange new territory. There is nothing static about this search; it continuously takes on fascinating new forms, yet it remains the same search, the same 'pattern'.

Frank Kermode notes in 'Mr Greene's Eggs and Crosses' that some of Greene's work has been criticised for being 'sometimes flawed by the author's inability to stand clear of his hero or victim' (180). Indeed, the critic attempting to write about Greene's fiction may also from time to time run the risk of confusing the author with some of his characters. Certainly, for the critic attempting to describe something of the evolving pattern of Greene's fiction there may be even more of a temptation to read the fiction as spiritual autobiography in disguise. Yet Greene suggests that to yield to this temptation would be a mistake: 'Undoubtedly if there is any realism in the character it must come from the author experiencing some of the same moods as Querry, but surely not with the same intensity' (*Ways of Escape* 256). The fiction may be distilled from the author's experience, but it is still fiction, not autobiography.

If one accepts that Greene's fiction is more than elaborate allegories of moral theology, more than a system of recurring authorial obsessions, and more than thinly veiled fragments of autobiography, what, then, is it? If Cardinal Newman is right in saying that 'you cannot have a Christian Literature' and that 'It is a contradiction in terms to attempt a sinless Literature of sinful man' (195), it is nevertheless also true to say with Lodge that Greene's Catholicism may be seen as 'a positive artistic asset' that provides the author with 'a system of concepts, a source of situations, and a reservoir of symbols' (6).

In fact, Lodge's criticism from 1966 seems no less true in the light of Greene's later fiction, including the thoughtful spy-thriller *The Human Factor* (1978), the menacing short novel *Doctor Fischer of Geneva* (1980), and the Manchegan novel *Monsignor Quixote* (1982). In a way, these three works can be seen as the culmination of Greene's literary career, each in its way expressing different facets of the author's artistic concerns. As such, they pursue a number of themes that have been of great importance in Greene's earlier fiction, but not without some new and unexpected relocations. Thus, even though Maurice and Sarah Castle in *The Human Factor* share an African past, the novel is firmly set in Maurice's London office and his suburban home in Berkhamsted; Jones and Anna-Luise's marriage, though tragically brief, is a very happy one; and in the Manchegan novel there is a wonderful sense of comedy and an emerging optimism about the possibility of love, hope, and even faith – the three last things in Christian theology.

Before looking more closely at *The Human Factor*, *Doctor Fischer of Geneva*, and *Monsignor Quixote*, however, it will be useful to introduce some elements of the philosophy of Unamuno. While it may perhaps be wrong to suggest that Unamuno influenced Greene directly, this thesis aims to show that there is a great deal of philosophical affinity between the two men, and that reading Greene in the light of Unamuno can provide valuable critical insights. In particular, Unamuno's discussion of the relationship between doubt and faith, and

his notion of 'the tragic sense of life', will be of great value for a reading of Greene's late fiction. As a critical practice, this parallel reading will allow the critic to see Greene's novels not just as isolated works, but as contributions to a wider philosophical and religious dialogue.

2.

If you desire faith – then you've faith enough.

(Browning, 'Bishop Blougram's Apology' 634)

Just as Graham Greene may be said to have expressed something of the human condition in the 20th century in his works of fiction, so may Miguel de Unamuno (1864–1936) be said to have done, in other terms, in his main philosophical work, *The Tragic Sense of Life in Men and Nations* (1913). According to *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, Unamuno's 'aim was to capture life in its complex emotional and intellectual dimensions rather than to describe the world scientifically. Thus he favored fiction as a medium for his ideas and may be considered a precursor of existentialism'. Furthermore,

Unamuno perceived a *tragic sense* permeating human life, a sense arising from the certainty of death. In this predicament man must abandon all pretense of rationalism and embrace faith. Faith characterizes the *authentic life*, while reason leads to despair, but faith can never completely displace reason. Torn between the two, we can find hope only in faith; for reason deals only with abstractions, while we are 'flesh and bones' and can find fulfillment only through commitment to an ideal. (938)

Unamuno does not reject reason, but rather insists on the limitation of reason and the separation of faith and scientific rationality. He therefore distances himself from Augustine's *dicta fides praecedat rationem* ('faith precedes reason') and *credo ut intelligam* ('I believe in order to understand') which, while indicating the priority of faith over reason, seem to portray faith as primarily a means of achieving understanding. Instead, Unamuno embraces the paradoxical view expressed by Tertullian in his sayings *et sepultus resurrexit, certum est, quia*

impossibile est ('he was buried and rose again, it is certain because it is impossible') and *credo quia absurdum* ('I believe because it is absurd') (4: 82). Believing, not in order to understand, but because it is absurd, then, is the key to Unamuno's metaphysics, and he warns against the 'terrible danger' inherent in 'attempting to believe with one's reason rather than with one's life' (4: 86). Attempting to believe with one's reason constitutes not simply a philosophical error but a practical impossibility, and those who do attempt it are eventually driven to despair and even to atheism: according to Unamuno 'those who deny God deny Him out of despair at not finding Him' (4: 202). Similarly, Unamuno dismisses the 'classic supposed proofs of God', which he claims 'all refer to this God-Idea, to this logical God, this God by elimination, and hence they really prove nothing, or rather, they prove no more than the existence of this idea of God' (4: 176). This leaves only blind faith in the invisible God, and so Unamuno repeatedly stresses that 'To believe in God is, in the first place [...], to wish for God to exist and to be unable to live without Him' (4: 185).

Unamuno sees faith as a basic existential need arising from 'the longing not to die, the hunger for personal immortality, the striving to persevere indefinitely in our own being' (4: 42), which he identifies within himself; he cannot and will not believe that physical death is the end to his own conscious existence as a human being. Yet reason does not support the notion of a life beyond physical death. On the contrary, reason alone, according to Unamuno, leads inevitably to 'vital negation', the denial of eternal life. Reason thus clashes with the existential need for immortality, and from this clash between reason and desire arises 'vital scepticism', which questions the validity of the rational denial of immortality. This in turn leads to doubt or uncertainty, which to Unamuno is 'the supreme consolation' (4: 131). Unamuno cannot prove the existence of life after death, but his own longing for immortality leads him for the moment to disregard rationality and assert that 'We attain to the living God, the human God, not through reason, but only through love and suffering. Reason rather

separates us from Him' (4: 184). Unamuno disarmingly describes himself as leading his readers 'on into a region of phantasy, but phantasy not devoid of reason – for nothing subsists without reason – phantasy founded on sensibility. And as regards the truth of it all, true truth, truth independent of ourselves, beyond our logical and cardiacal truth, as regards that truth – ¿quién sabe?' (4: 145). This final question – 'who knows?' – is fundamental to an understanding of Unamuno's thought. What he proposes may or may not be true; Unamuno quite simply wishes – that is, believes – it to be true. He illustrates his point (4: 133) with the words of the father of the epileptic or possessed boy in the Gospel according to Mark: 'Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief' (9.24). Unamuno is clearly attracted to the paradoxical nature of this exclamation, which elsewhere he paraphrases as 'Lord, I believe; give me the something to believe in!' (4: 219). To Unamuno, then, faith is the offspring of doubt. Yet Unamuno explicitly distances himself from Descartes' methodical or theoretical doubt: 'The doubt I mean is a passionate doubt, the eternal conflict between reason and feeling, between science and life, between the logical and the biotic' (4: 120). The only thing Unamuno does not doubt is his own existence, the existence of his aggressively insistent *yo* ('I'), as Salvador de Madariaga points out in his introductory essay to *The Tragic Sense of Life*, 'Unamuno Re-read'; and all Unamuno's efforts in that volume are driven by his desire for the immortality of this *yo*, a desire that must lead him to doubt any argument against his own immortality. Doubt or uncertainty, then, is not only inherent in the human condition; it is a necessity for human life: 'How, without this uncertainty, could we ever live?' (4: 131).

As Anthony Kerrigan points out in the Translator's Foreword to *The Tragic Sense of Life*, Unamuno writes in a letter to the novelist Leopoldo Alas: 'My faith in an intimate, organic Catholicism, wellspring of reflex actions, is precisely what turns me against it when it is concretized in formulas and concepts' (4: ix). This seems to be a product of Unamuno's insistence on the separation of faith and reason. He prefers faith expressed in action to faith

expressed in writing. Yet it is a curious paradox that Unamuno's life was primarily intellectual. As Madariaga puts it, his 'life was all within' (Unamuno 4: xxxvii), and much of the content of his philosophical works borders on theological speculation. Yet what Unamuno opposes is not theology as such, but rather a particular kind of theology that sets out neat definitions and formulae in paragraphs, sections, and subsections, contained perhaps in pocket-size handbooks of moral theology. Unamuno prefers paradox to definition, and equally resists the encroachment of scientific rationalism on the domain of theology, as exemplified by those so-called theologians who would like nothing better than to reduce the figure of Jesus to a rather nice but minor political figure in a remote part of the Roman Empire, some of whose ideas on social justice they may still be prepared to offer a cursory glance.

The human desire for knowledge and truth clashes with the obstinate persistence of doubt, just as rationality clashes with the human desire for eternal life. Unamuno's philosophy may seem to represent a curious sort of 'half-belief' (*Monsignor Quixote* 111), an unworthy resignation in the face of doubt which perhaps could be conquered by an even stronger faith. Nothing could be further from the truth; instead there is a dogged stubbornness that characterises Unamuno's faith – a faith which is the product of doubt and persists in the face of doubt. Faith, to Unamuno, is not a muddled feeling or a vague sensation, but a conscious act of will against every resistance. Nor is faith simply limited to a mental state, but is also a call to action: Unamuno insists that to 'believe in God is to long for His existence, and furthermore, to act as if God did exist' (4: 203). To some, this may smack of hypocrisy: how can one 'act as if God did exist' if one does not 'really' believe, that is, if one does not believe without a doubt? Yet it is not hypocritical to acknowledge one's doubts; rather it may be unnecessary scruples that keep modern human beings from embracing faith in eternal life, as they feel their own faith to be insufficient in the face of scientific rationality. In his stubbornness, however, Unamuno is a true heir of the Spanish mystical tradition of the *noche*

obscura experienced by John of the Cross, the dark night of faith where God seems to be absent and only the will to believe remains. Thus, according to Unamuno, ‘perhaps the sin against the Holy Ghost, for which, according to the Gospel, there is no remission, is none other than that of not desiring God, that of not longing to be made eternal’ (4: 270–1); in other words the unpardonable sin is not to lack faith, but to lack the desire for faith, which to Unamuno is truly inhuman.

In Unamuno’s thought there appears to be a fundamental, metaphysical assumption that faith cannot exist without doubt. His ontology seems to be based on binary oppositions: the divine and the human, faith and doubt, orthodoxy and heresy, happiness and suffering all exist in contrast or opposition one to the other. Yet having acknowledged these dichotomies, Unamuno immediately sets about blurring them again, to the extent that he can say, almost in one and the same breath, that God creates man, that man creates God, and that God creates Himself in and through man. His discussion of faith and doubt, for instance, suggests a symbiosis rather than an irreconcilable opposition. What he proposes may not exactly be that faith cannot exist without doubt – or God without man, orthodoxy without heresy, happiness without suffering – but rather that neither would have any meaning without the other.

Unamuno’s reading was truly catholic, encompassing poetry and fiction as well as ancient and modern philosophy, perused mostly in the original languages. Above all, however, he was captivated by Miguel de Cervantes’ great novel *Don Quixote* (1605; 1615), in which he finds the perfect illustration of his own views on faith and uncertainty, doubt and reason. To Unamuno, ‘Don Quixote is the prototype of the vitalist whose faith is founded on uncertainty, and Sancho is the prototype of the rationalist who doubts his own reason’ (4: 133). Unamuno goes on to explain that ‘rationalists seek definition and believe in the concept, while vitalists seek inspiration and believe in the person’ (4: 208). Unamuno thus emphasises once more what he sees as the equal uncertainty of rationalism and faith. Elsewhere (4: 125)

he quotes approvingly from Robert Browning's poem 'Bishop Blougram's Apology': 'All we have gained, then, by our unbelief / Is a life of doubt diversified by faith / For one of faith diversified by doubt' (209–211). That Unamuno should choose to quote these lines demonstrates not only the scope of his reading but also his liberal attitudes, as will become apparent. As will also be seen, this poem provides an interesting link between Greene and Unamuno, and for that reason too merits closer inspection.

When 'Bishop Blougram's Apology' appeared following the restoration of the Catholic hierarchy in England and Wales in 1850, it was widely regarded as a personal attack on Cardinal Nicholas Wiseman, the first Archbishop of Westminster. Blougram's 'apology' – or defence – may be seen as scandalous for two reasons. The first is that 'Sylvester Blougram, styled *in partibus / Episcopus*' (972–3) privately reveals his rich enjoyment of the material comforts and social privileges of high ecclesiastical office; the second that he freely admits his own doubts. Combined, this gives the impression of cynicism or hypocrisy; if Blougram does not fully believe, how can he justify his luxurious life at the expense of the faithful? But Blougram, like Unamuno, argues that doubt is inseparable from faith: 'I show you doubt, to prove that faith exists. / The more of doubt, the stronger faith, I say' (602–3). In this, there is no particular reason to doubt Blougram's conviction and sincerity, for *in vino veritas* – the 'truth that peeps / Over the glasses' edge when dinner's done' (17–18). Blougram even injects a note of almost Unamunian fervour into his discourse when he describes himself as someone who not only wants, but is 'made for, and must have a God' (846) if life is to have any meaning at all. And the unbelief to which he refers is a hypothetical or methodical unbelief, designed to show that the unbeliever is no better off than the believer, and equally prone to uncertainty. Blougram, then, perhaps does not quite resemble the ideal or typical image of a good priest, but he has much of the vitalist in him, just as his counterpart, the ludicrously named Mr Gigadibs, comes out as something of a rationalist, though not, apparently, one who

he is ready to doubt his own reason: in disgust he emigrates to Australia. Blougram's strength, however, lies in his intellectual openness and patent sincerity, and it is not difficult to see why he should appeal strongly to both Greene and Unamuno.

Though Spanish Catholicism – like its British counterpart – has been closely associated with political conservatism, Unamuno is described as 'seeking a synthesis of liberalism and religious faith' (4: xlvi). He was undeterred by any anti-Catholic associations with regard to 'Bishop Blougram's Apology'; instead he was interested in Blougram's philosophical arguments in their own right. Unamuno's attitude seems to be that he will search for the truth everywhere, and he himself will be the judge of the standard of truth. A liberal individualist and a fervent, yet troubled believer, Unamuno strove for a rebirth of spiritual forces against rationalistic atheism. If anyone sees a contradiction in his project, Unamuno replies with Walt Whitman: 'Do I contradict myself? Very well then, I contradict myself' (4: xlv). Indeed, Unamuno is afraid neither of contradicting nor of repeating himself, and his work is as 'organic' as his Catholicism, a religion which he believes 'oscillates between mysticism and rationalism' (4: 85).

3.

Graham Greene explains that 'I had not known Unamuno's *A Tragic Sense of Life* when I wrote 'A Visit to Morin' or later *A Burnt-out Case*' (*Ways of Escape* 258) in 1959 and 1960 respectively. In *Travels with My Aunt* (1969) there are clear signs of Greene's growing interest in Unamuno, and finally in *Monsignor Quixote* (1982) Unamuno's philosophy definitely emerges as an element of major importance, as will be discussed in a later chapter. Other chapters will discuss the two novels immediately preceding the Manchegan novel, *The Human Factor* (1978) and *Doctor Fischer of Geneva* (1980), with a particular view to identifying points of contact between Greene's fiction and Unamuno's philosophy. Before coming to this, however, it may be useful to investigate further Greene's role as what he

termed a writer who happens to be a Catholic, to explore in more detail the apparent affinity between Greene and Unamuno, and to discuss the difficult but necessary task of separating between Greene's fiction and the author's biography.

Greene came to resent being stereotyped either as a Catholic writer or as any other kind of writer. In a dinner conversation published in the French Catholic journal *Dieu Vivant*, however, he states that 'Quand on est catholique, il ne faut pas chercher à faire du "catholicisme". Tout ce que l'on dit ou écrit respire inévitablement le catholicisme'* ('Propos de table avec Graham Greene' 136). As these lines so clearly demonstrate, Greene was also very much interested in the place of Catholicism in both life and literature. In the case of the short novel *Loser Takes All* (1955), for instance, Greene says he hoped to produce 'something which neither my friends nor my enemies would expect. [...] A reputation is like a death mask. I wanted to smash the mask' (*Ways of Escape* 216). While it is true that Greene's retrospective interpretation of his own actions and motives may be questioned, this still provides a valuable insight into the author's thinking. In particular, it strengthens the impression of Greene's unwillingness to conform to the expectations of others. Like many of his characters, such as Castle in *The Human Factor*, he seems to have an intense wish to define himself rather than to be defined by others.

Tracing the various so-called periods of Greene's work may be nothing more than a chronology of Greene's attempts to break out of the stereotypes imposed on him by the critics. While this may be interesting enough in its own way, it fails to say anything about the world behind 'the mask'. For behind the shifting forms of Greene's fiction one may discern a remarkable continuity of techniques and themes. Greene himself refers to one simple technique, 'isolating two characters – hiding in a railway shed in *Stamboul Train*, in an empty house in *A Gun for Sale*' (*Ways of Escape* 29), which can also be seen at work in his later

* 'When you are a Catholic you must not strive to perform "Catholicism". Everything that you say or write will inevitably breathe Catholicism.'

fiction; a steadily recurrent theme is escape or flight; and these two, escape and the isolation of two characters, appear in ever new combinations. Examples include the ‘whisky priest’ and the police lieutenant in *The Power and the Glory*; Castle and old Halliday on their way to the airport in *The Human Factor*; and the adventures of Monsignor Quixote and Sancho. What this technique provides is above all a privileged place for dialogue.

Greene points out that, in fact, all his published work (except one immature book of poetry) was written after his conversion to the Roman Catholic Church – hence all his work is by a writer who happens to be a Catholic. To single out certain works as more or less ‘Catholic’ is beside the point: Catholicism is the moral and philosophical paradigm that permeates all Greene’s fiction, however obliquely. A living and breathing Catholicism that permeates the fiction, then, is apparently Greene’s ideal. This is ‘faith’ as opposed to ‘belief’, as Greene’s friend and travelling companion, Father Leopoldo Durán, explains:

Immediately after we had first met each other, he [Greene] told me on different occasions that each day he found he had less ‘belief’ but more ‘faith’. By ‘belief’ he meant the kind of faith that is based on reason, or better still, on the reasons that support one’s faith – in other words, to use the language of theology, faith assisted by ‘motivation for credibility’. (98)

This describes the same man who decades earlier had written about his conversion to the Catholic Church: ‘I had not been converted to a religious faith. I had been convinced by specific arguments in the probability of its creed’ (*Ways of Escape* 54). Greene’s own religious development seems to follow a pattern which can perhaps be summed up in the words *ratio praecedit fidem* – an inversion of Augustine’s dictum very much in the spirit of Unamuno. Reason, or ‘belief’, precedes faith and is apparently superseded by it.

Graham Greene was a Catholic for most of his life and a member of the Communist Party for only four weeks at the age of nineteen; paradoxically, Greene’s Catholicism also meant a lifelong interest in communism, which he saw as a ‘faith’ and not just an ideology: ‘A writer who is a Catholic cannot help having a certain sympathy for any faith which is sincerely held’

(*Ways of Escape* 91). In *The Power and the Glory* there is a brief, tentative dialogue between a Catholic and a militant atheist; forty years later, in *Monsignor Quixote*, where circumstances are more favourable, there is a genuine dialogue and a growing understanding between a Catholic and a Marxist. Greene's emphasis on 'faith' rather than 'belief' bears a close resemblance to Unamuno's 'faith in an intimate, organic Catholicism, wellspring of reflex actions' and antagonism towards one that 'is concretized in formulas and concepts' (4: ix). Furthermore, Greene's search for a dialogue between the two great 'faiths' of the 20th century, Catholicism and communism, can be compared with Unamuno's search for a synthesis of Catholicism and liberalism, which has been referred to earlier. It comes as no surprise, then, that Greene and Unamuno shared a love of Browning's poem 'Bishop Blougram's Apology', which has already been discussed in some detail. Greene writes that 'if I were to choose an epigraph for all the novels I have written, it would be from "Bishop Blougram's Apology"' (*A Sort of Life* 85):

Our interest's on the dangerous edge of things.
The honest thief, the tender murderer,
The superstitious atheist, demirep
That loves and saves her soul in new French books –
We watch while these in equilibrium keep
The giddy line midway.

(395–400)

Surely Greene chose these lines for their emphasis on contrasts and paradoxes? Not a few of his characters, after all, find themselves precariously balanced on 'the dangerous edge of things' because of the paradoxes they embody. Such paradoxes are central to Christianity and should not be seen as merely a fringe concern of Browning's, Greene's, and Unamuno's. Indeed, nowhere in Greene's fiction is there anything to match the paradox of 'the honest

thief' who is crucified with Jesus and, in response to his prayer, receives the astonishing pledge: 'Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise' (Luke 23.43).

There is no denying the theoretical difficulty accompanying a discussion of philosophy and religion in Greene's fiction. One must, as always, be careful to distinguish between the views of the characters or narrator and those of the author. The voices in a novel do not represent the author, either singly or collectively. No coherent philosophy or creed can be derived from Greene's fiction, and even if it could, there would be no way of knowing whether it would be Greene's own. The relationship between author and fiction takes a more subtle form. The fiction is the product of the author's life and imagination. The motivation may be – among others – to earn money, to tell a good story, to escape boredom or madness. Indeed, Greene experimented with Russian roulette, alcohol, drugs, women, dentists, and dangerous travel as ways of escape. All of this filters through into Greene's fiction, and helps produce that state of mind which critics have named 'Greeneland', but which Greene himself insists is part of the real world as experienced by himself. Greene's lifelong struggle with faith and belief, his appetite for theology and philosophy, his extensive reading and retentive memory, his interest in communism, his individualism and distrust of authority, his experience of life in the 20th century – including the Second World War, the cold war, and colonial wars of independence – all this and much else contribute to Greene's fiction.

Most of Greene's work contains significant elements of autobiography, yet it is not one particular voice in a novel, but the whole of the novel that represents, obliquely, the author's mind or mood, his interests and preoccupations, at a certain point in time. Greene writes in a letter to his friend and fellow Catholic, the novelist Evelyn Waugh:

With a writer of your genius and insight I certainly would not attempt to hide behind the time-old gag that an author can never be identified with his characters. Of course in some of Querry's reactions [in *A Burnt-out Case*] there are reactions of mine, just as in some of Fowler's reactions in *The Quiet American* there are reactions of mine. I suppose the points where an author is in

agreement with his character lend what force or warmth there is to the expression. At the same time I think that a parallel must not be drawn all down the line and not necessarily to the conclusion of the line. (*Ways of Escape* 255)

The fiction, in Greene's case, is distilled in various ways and to various degrees from the author's experience. Different characters in the novel may represent different aspects of this experience combined with more obviously fictional elements.

As will be seen later, Unamuno considers fiction to be more real than history because it is more generalised and hence more applicable to a variety of situations. A work of fiction, because it is ideally the story of no one in particular, can be the story of anyone and everyone. Applicability, however, is not to be confused with moral prescriptivism, as Greene particularly warns against confusing 'the functions of a novelist and the functions of a moral teacher or theologian' (*Ways of Escape* 256). Perhaps the greatest difference is that fiction allows many different possible applications or interpretations, while a gospel parable, for instance, usually has an authoritative, revealed explanation. Furthermore, fiction is free to explore heresy and apostasy without the author necessarily identifying with them; a theologian would traditionally feel bound to argue explicitly against them.

This, then, suggests a reading of Greene's work that sees a link rather than a bond between life and fiction, the latter being shaped in many ways by the former, but without any single authoritative interpretation being imposed. For instance, much of Greene's fiction is in some way amusing or entertaining; some of his novels are thrillers dealing with crime or espionage, some are set in exotic locations, almost all are exciting, and for many readers, these may be their main attractions. Others may discern a troubled and restless mind behind the fiction, as did Pope Pius XII (1939–58) who, after reading *The End of the Affair*, reportedly told the future Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster, John Carmel Heenan: 'I think this man [Greene] is in trouble. If he ever comes to you, you must help him' (*Ways of Escape*

139). And finally it is possible to see Greene's fiction as a vehicle for philosophical and theological exploration.

A sensible piece of advice Graham Greene once received was: 'You must never when you write a novel include something which has happened to you without in some way changing it' (*Ways of Escape* 295). This is, perhaps, the most basic distinction between fiction on the one hand and autobiography or reportage on the other. Nevertheless, some knowledge of Greene's biography can be useful for a reading of his work. Greene himself sometimes suggests the real-life 'origins' of certain characters or episodes in his fiction. But, more importantly, Greene's fiction can be seen as a reflection of many of his own constant concerns and preoccupations. Thus, this thesis will, as far as possible, lay aside specific details of Greene's biography and concentrate instead on what shapes his fiction.

Rather than tracing this through all Greene's fiction chronologically with equal emphasis on each work, the emphasis here will be on three late novels, *The Human Factor* (1978), *Doctor Fischer of Geneva* (1980), and *Monsignor Quixote* (1982), with reference to earlier works where appropriate. Except for *The Captain and the Enemy* (1988), these are in fact Greene's last novels, because *The Tenth Man* (1985) was finished some forty years prior to publication. The three novels stand out as a group of quite diverse books published within the relatively short period of time from 1978 to 1982, though it should perhaps be noted that *The Human Factor* was begun more than ten years before it was published and at one point temporarily abandoned by the author (*Ways of Escape* 298). The three novels are quite different in genre and tone, but the central theme of all is political, social, or religious dislocation in one form or another. When a person feels dislocated in this way, it may prompt different sorts of reaction, which may be more or less rational. But, in the end, such dislocation may lead to a questioning of the very political, social, or religious categories that have caused the dislocation in the first case.

Chapter Two: The Terrible Danger

Maurice Castle, the protagonist of *The Human Factor* (1978), is quite an unlikely traitor. Doctor Percival warns against ‘people who believe. They aren’t reliable players’ (163). Colonel Daintry thinks that ‘it’s generally the brilliant and ambitious who are dangerous’ (32). Castle, however, fits neither description. Instead, he claims to be a ‘half believer’ who has ‘left God behind in the school chapel’ and who does not ‘have any trust in Marx or Lenin any more than [...] in Saint Paul’ (107). He is academically undistinguished, having taken ‘a very poor third’ (12) in Modern History at Christ Church, Oxford; his main ambition is to lead a quiet life in Berkhamsted with his wife, Sarah, and her son, Sam. Yet Castle is, by his own admission, ‘what’s generally called a traitor’ (187). At the end of the novel he finds himself in exile in Moscow, involuntarily separated from Sarah and Sam. Why, for no personal gain and contrary to every expectation, does Maurice Castle become a traitor? What, moreover, is the moral and religious significance of *The Human Factor*, and how does the novel relate to Graham Greene’s other works of fiction, especially in the context of Unamuno’s philosophy?

The reasons for Castle’s behaviour must be sought in his own personality and in his attitude to private life. The name ‘Castle’ itself characterises the man. It recalls not only Berkhamsted’s ruined medieval castle but also the saying that ‘an Englishman’s home is his castle’. It signals a defensive attitude, a fortress mentality, and even an unwillingness to engage with the outside world. Castle is described as ‘a creature of habit’ (19) who above all seeks a ‘sense of security’ (21). In the words of Grahame Smith, Castle has ‘a longing for the minimal, yet all-important, joy of a private life in a world riven by abstractions and violence: the creation of a world within a world’ (192). While the example of Unamuno shows that a quiet, domestic life is compatible with great intellectual curiosity, Castle shows absolutely no sign of this. He has ‘no politics’ and has not even ‘voted once since the war’ (13). The novel

initially leads one to believe that Castle has some literary interests, as he pretends to read *Clarissa Harlowe* (9) and Tolstoy's *War and Peace* (44). Yet it emerges that he only uses the novels as a means of communicating with the KGB in book code. Furthermore, he has no religious or social life, spending nearly all his time either at home or at work in an unchanging routine. He successfully hides his quiet, unobtrusive alcoholism from everyone except his wife, who does not seem to mind. Castle's presence, one feels, is terribly unobtrusive and self-denying, quite the opposite of Unamuno's insistent and self-centred *yo*.

Castle suffers from a feeling of inferiority aggravated by his infertility. Sam is Sarah's son by another man, yet Castle claims he is content to be childless himself, telling his wife: 'You want to look under stones too much, Sarah. I love Sam because he's yours. Because he's not mine. Because I don't have to see anything of myself there when I look at him. I see only something of you. I don't want to go on for ever. I want the buck to stop here' (24). To Castle, a child is simply 'a responsibility' (23), not a source of joy or pride; just as the ineffectual watchdog, Buller, is 'only one more responsibility' (58). Castle's attitude is instinctively defensive and evasive, displaying the deep insecurity of a man who does not believe anything of himself to be of permanent value. In Castle, then, Greene has created a character who directly contradicts what Unamuno sees as an innate human desire for immortality, the continuation for ever of one's own personal consciousness. Castle only desires his own annihilation or destruction, thereby committing 'the sin against the Holy Ghost, for which, according to the Gospel, there is no remission,' which Unamuno believes 'is none other than that of not desiring God, that of not longing to be made eternal' (4: 270–1). Castle's attitude is nothing less than irreligious, for 'religion is not the longing for self-annihilation, but for completion, a longing for life and not for death' (4: 239).

While Unamuno's philosophy springs from his own experience – as a father – of the death of his sick child, Castle's outlook stems from his inability to father a child at all.

Unamuno furiously rebels against reason and embraces faith; Castle meekly accepts his sterility as proof of his own inferiority. In Unamunian terms, Castle is a rationalist who does not have the wisdom to doubt his own reason, who is unable to see the flaws in his own reasoning – unlike Sancho in *Don Quixote* or the Mayor in *Monsignor Quixote*. Castle has perversely convinced himself that it is best for all concerned that he should be sterile. This conviction comes at a grave cost to his own self-image, since it leads him to radically reject his own self-worth. The novel strongly suggests that Castle's insecurity has its origin in his childhood. His mother, Mrs Castle, tells him: 'You always had an exaggerated sense of gratitude for the least kindness. It was a sort of insecurity, though why you should have felt insecure with me and your father ...' (111). Mrs Castle accurately identifies her son's problem, but she instinctively shrinks from any kind of self-criticism. Ultimately, the cause of Castle's downfall is precisely his inordinate sense of gratitude, stemming in all probability from his sense of insecurity. Tragically, it is his gratitude to Carson for rescuing Sarah from the BOSS, the South African secret police, that prompts Castle to commit acts that result in the disintegration of his home and his own separation from Sarah and Sam.

On the religious plane, the novel shows two main concerns. One is the contrasts and similarities between a religious faith, Catholicism, and a political faith, communism, and Castle's inability to commit himself to either. The other concern revolves around the conflict between Castle's desire for both confession and secrecy. On the moral plane, the novel presents an example of a completely individualistic ethical system, where the 'players' are free to assign any or no moral value to their activities, but are still bound by the consequences. Catholicism and communism are the two major faiths that present themselves to Castle; he rejects both, apparently because of the inadequacy of their representatives and the atrocities committed in their name. That Castle sees communism in this way becomes clear when he tells Boris, his KGB control, that 'I've never pretended that I share your faith – I'll never be a

Communist' (121). Christianity appeals more to Castle than communism, but is still beyond his reach. To Castle, 'Christ' remains 'that legendary figure whom he would have liked to believe in' (147), which is interesting because it actually signals a desire for faith. This desire, however, is so deeply repressed as to be almost extinct in Castle.

Castle's rejection of Catholicism and communism is expressed in personified terms: 'I don't have any trust in Marx or Lenin any more than I have in Saint Paul' (107). To Castle these are simply proponents of different ideologies, and he chooses not to differentiate between them, which can only be seen as a gross oversimplification. Castle is unable or unwilling to commit himself to abstractions, seeing instead only human faces:

I was never a religious man – I left God behind in the school chapel, but there were priests I sometimes met in Africa who made me believe again – for a moment – over a drink. If all priests had been like they were and I had seen them often enough, perhaps I would have swallowed the Resurrection, the Virgin birth, Lazarus, the whole works. (107).

Here, in biblical terms, Castle is demanding a sign: if only all priests were as he would want them to be, or if only all communists were like his idol Carson, then perhaps he could believe. But they are not, as Castle knows perfectly well; it sounds more like an excuse than a reason for not believing. Indeed, it is clear that Castle has no real desire for faith, probably because he does not long, as Unamuno does, for personal immortality; on the contrary, he explicitly states that he does not 'want to go on for ever' (24). Unlike Unamuno, Castle has no use for God as a guarantee of his own continued existence after death; he does not feel the need to struggle with doubt and faith and reason. To Castle, faith does not mean a 'vital belief' (Unamuno 4: 64) and a 'hunger for immortality' (4: 65), but only giving his consent to a set of theological propositions, such as the Resurrection and the Virgin birth. Yet as Unamuno points out repeatedly, religion is not an intellectual game: it is a vital need.

'The terrible danger', in the words of Unamuno, 'lies in [...] attempting to believe with one's reason rather than with one's life' (4: 86). Unamuno insists on the limitations of

theology which, to him, represents an attempt ‘to rationalize faith’ (4: 64); whereas faith lies outside the limits of rationality, in ‘Tertullian’s absurdity, the impossibility of the *certum est, quia impossibile est*’ (4: 116). A rationalised faith, according to Unamuno, satisfies neither faith nor reason – it certainly does not appeal to Castle; of ‘vital belief’ he has no conception at all, nor could he have embraced it without a radical change of heart. To share Unamuno’s ‘vital belief’, one must, unlike Castle, believe in oneself enough to long for one’s own immortality. This is precluded by Castle’s feeling of inadequacy and inferiority.

As for the doctrine of communism as such, it can hold little attraction for Castle; in its Soviet form it offers very little room for the kind of suburban privacy and seclusion that he clearly craves. In Moscow, Castle is quite lost in his state-provided flat. Castle’s loyalty is to Carson, not to communism. Indeed, Castle is perfectly well aware of the horrors of Soviet communism, such as the practice of imprisoning political opponents in psychiatric institutions – a point he makes to silence old Halliday, who is a desperately uncritical believer in communism (221). Hegelian dialectics, an important part of the philosophical foundations of Marxism, Castle dismisses as ‘all jargon’ (221). One can thus safely believe Castle when he says he will ‘never be a Communist’ (121), which makes the sad irony of his defection to Moscow all the greater.

While Castle cannot embrace faith, there is one aspect of Catholicism that attracts him: the sacrament of confession; or, more precisely, the secrecy of the confessional. Castle ‘harbors deep guilt that stems [...] from the heavy burden of secrecy and duplicity’ (Hoskins 236) surrounding his activities as a double agent. In particular, the environment of secrecy and guilty tension tends to erode the trust between Castle and Sarah: ‘Don’t you trust me?’ he asks, and she can only answer, ‘Of course I trust you, but ...’ (171). This ‘but ...’ is what torments Castle more than anything, representing the professional lack of trust that surrounds him at all times. Sarah senses his tension and is herself affected by it, all the more so because

she is unaware of its cause: she knows that he is a spy, but not that he is a double agent. She cannot help resenting the secrecy surrounding Castle's job: 'A department of the Foreign Office. Everyone knows what that means, but you have to go around with your mouth shut like a criminal. If you told me – me, your wife – what you'd done today, they'd sack you. I wish they would sack you. What *have* you done today?' (22–23). The continuing secrecy is a considerable source of disappointment and disillusionment:

Sarah said, 'I sometimes wish I was still your agent. You tell me so much less than you did then.'

'I never told you much – perhaps you thought I did, but I told you as little as I could, for your own safety, and then it was often lies. Like the book I intended to write on apartheid.'

'I thought things would be different,' Sarah said, 'in England. I thought there would be no more secrets.' (153)

This passage reveals the motivation for Castle's secrecy: for Sarah's own safety, so as not to be implicated in her husband's acts of treason, she must not know that he is a double agent. Only when it becomes clear that he is about to be discovered can he tell her, warning her to stay away from him.

The Human Factor, then, revolves around the themes of confession and secrecy. An ingenious comparison is made between priests and spies, for instance when Castle reflects on his relationship with Boris: 'A control was a bit like a priest must be to a Catholic – a man who received one's confession whatever it might be without emotion' (117). The comparison is given a slightly absurd twist during a strange conversation in the bar at White's Club between Colonel Daintry and a group of young clubmen. One of them explains to his companions that 'the Colonel belongs to the hush-hush boys, and so in a way does a clergyman, when you come to think of it ... You know, the secrets of the confessional and all that, they are in the hush-hush business too' (167). Colonel Daintry's father was an Anglican clergyman, but he 'had never approved of confession nor of the confessional box set up by a

High Church celibate in the next parish' (169). The emphasis in the novel, however, is very much on the Roman Catholic sacrament of confession; with Roman Catholics, Castle observes, 'customs seemed to survive longer' (182).

Believing himself abandoned by Boris, and still unable to confide in Sarah, Castle – drawn by loneliness to enter a 'hideous', new Roman Catholic church – turns in desperation to the confessional, only to discover that he has 'fallen by a grim coincidence on another victim of loneliness and silence like himself' (184), the antithesis of the sympathetic priests he had known in Africa. The priest quickly discovers that Castle is neither a Catholic nor a potential convert, tells him to go and see a doctor instead, and slams the shutter in his face. The priest's behaviour is insensitive to say the least, but Castle really has come to the wrong place with the wrong motive. Confession is a sacrament in Roman Catholicism, not just 'a therapeutic act' (183), and Castle cynically intends to exploit the secrecy of the confessional, thinking: 'I want to talk; why don't I talk? A priest like that has to keep my secret' (183). He wants the secrecy of the confessional without the sacrament, but can have neither.

Maurice Castle's ethical system, it emerges, is completely individualistic. He explicitly rejects both Catholicism and communism, the two major faiths that would provide him with both community and guidance. The pillars of Castle's ethical system are twofold: loyalty to his own private world, consisting of Sarah, Sam, and himself; and gratitude to Carson, without whose assistance this private world would not have existed. Castle does have deeply moral instincts, as illustrated by his commitment to Sarah, Sam, and Carson. This commitment, however, is tainted by egoism. Thus, Castle's gratitude to Carson is not just for rescuing Sarah from danger, but for rescuing Sarah for him. And as much as Castle loves his wife, he is pleased that, because of the age difference between them, he can confidently expect to be spared the loneliness of old age as a widower. Yet these are perfectly understandable, human flaws. The more serious problem is that Castle's fundamental moral

instincts apparently have not been formed into a coherent, principled whole. He lacks a sense of direction and proportion which might have been provided by an external point of reference such as Catholicism or communism, which are the two alternatives suggested in the novel. While he assiduously avoids any political or religious influence on his life, Castle is easily touched – even manipulated – by ‘the human factor’: ‘He could seldom resist a call of distress’ (127). Even this he casts in carefully non-religious terms: ‘Perhaps he had merely wanted her [Sarah] to feel that she was loved by someone and so he began to love her himself. It wasn’t pity, any more than it had been pity when he fell in love with Sarah pregnant by another man. He was there to right the balance. That was all’ (147). Clearly the term ‘pity’ is too overtly religious for Castle. But while ‘pity’ may seem both obnoxious and patronising, at least it is a human emotion, whereas ‘righting the balance’ sounds both impersonal and mechanical. The notion of ‘the right balance’ (147) is closely connected with Castle’s life as a double agent. It is his way of seeking to be even-handed in the spy-game, avoiding a definite commitment to one side only. Wanting to live on his own individualistic terms, he desires ‘a permanent home, in a city where he could be accepted as a citizen, as a citizen without any pledge of faith, not the City of God or Marx, but the city called Peace of Mind’ (107). Yet the novel demonstrates that there is no peace of mind to be had by Castle’s ostrich-like evasion.

Castle thinks that he is doing no harm by his activities as a double agent, since he is only passing on fairly unimportant bits of information to the KGB; in fact he causes serious harm both to himself and to others. Yet his incompetence as a spy, though ‘first-class, of course, with files’ (32), mostly serves to create sympathy for Castle. Indeed, it is a recurring feature of Greene’s fiction to place an ordinary person – like Castle – in an extraordinary position, as if to see what will happen. Indeed, Davis’ death does turn out to be a major test for Castle. His murder is a callous and stupid mistake on the part of Doctor Percival and Sir John Hargreaves, but Castle is at least indirectly to blame. Castle attempts to repress the event,

even forgetting about Davis' funeral. His excuse is that he has both 'an official diary and a private diary' and that he is 'always forgetting to compare the two' (155), which is another example of how Castle attempts to compartmentalise his life, keeping the private strictly separate from the official. But a more plausible reason, which Castle himself hints at to Muller of the BOSS, is that he wants to forget. Davis' death is too disturbing for Castle to confront directly and honestly. Castle displays an unpleasant, calculating side when Muller asks him: 'This man Davis – perhaps he didn't mean very much to you?' Castle answers: 'Well, not as much as Carson. Whom your people killed' (155). To Castle, every human life is not of equal, intrinsic value. The value of a person's life varies, depending on what that person means to Castle. On the practical level, however, Davis' death is potentially convenient to Castle: it provides him with the perfect opportunity to end his career as a double agent without any fear of discovery. On the other hand, it makes it 'suicide' (186) for Castle to go on as before. This is a crucial moment in the plot of the novel. Castle is offered a real choice: he is not driven to self-destruction solely by outside forces over which he has no control; he chooses to risk everything 'to right the balance' (147) and, as he claims, to 'save a lot of lives' (187).

It is the enormity of Operation Uncle Remus that apparently compels Castle to compromise himself, trying to foil the plan by revealing it to the KGB. Castle's moral confusion is again apparent. Why are the lives of 'a lot' of strangers so important, when Davis' apparently is not? Is Castle trying to make Davis' death meaningful as part of the struggle against apartheid? And what about Castle's responsibility for Sarah and Sam? Sarah certainly is not persuaded: 'Don't talk to me of my people. I have no people any longer. You are "my people"' (187). In the end, Castle's sacrifice is in vain, as his integrity is compromised by association with Soviet propaganda. The revelation of Operation Uncle Remus is inevitably overshadowed by Castle's defection. Even his mother can only see, with 'dry and merciless' eyes, that her son is a 'traitor' (262).

In *The Human Factor*, childhood and children form a counterweight to the individualistic and relativistic moral system espoused not only by Castle but also by Doctor Percival and Sir John Hargreaves. Indeed, children can be said to truly represent ‘the human factor’. Castle is the only character who is in direct, regular contact with a child, Sam, but without great success. Castle is nostalgic about his own childhood fantasies about knights and a dragon, but these fantasies are not shared by Sam who, ironically, is much more interested in spies and tanks. Interestingly, the most sympathetic character in the novel, Davis, is also a great success with Sam. Davis is the person who has been most resistant to the secretive and repressive environment of the Secret Service. Involuntary childlessness is clearly one of the worst things that can happen to a couple. Children very much represent the continuation of life and happiness, but they are also fragile and vulnerable. The image of Mary with the child Jesus and the image of the mother with her dead son – the *Pietà* – are perhaps the strongest and most human in Christian iconography. Castle, however, is physically unable to have children, and, indeed, has turned this into a conviction that he is somehow unworthy of existence. His colleague Davis is an unhappy bachelor who is very good with children, as demonstrated by Sam’s affection for him. Colonel Daintry is divorced and has practically no contact with his daughter. Sir John Hargreaves and his American wife are deliberately childless. The sinister Doctor Percival is unmarried. These are all, in one way or another, thwarted or warped individuals. Children can be seen as a lifeline to both humanity and immortality, yet these characters are in varying degrees and ways cut off from contact with children. Children also endow the future with special importance, because parents naturally wish to make the world the best possible place for their offspring.

Lack of contact with children, then, represents estrangement from life, which can be treated as a ‘game’, also indicating a failure to grow up emotionally. Colonel Daintry, even with his very limited contact with his grown daughter, is more human, if less imaginative,

than Sir John Hargreaves and Doctor Percival. These two men have deliberately cut themselves off from humanity. Only someone who has been utterly dehumanised can say, like Hargreaves, that human beings are ‘the best target’ (53) for shooting. As for Doctor Percival, Sharrock feels that he has a ‘vision of life as an amoral pattern of abstract squares’ (59), as represented by a modern painting by Ben Nicholson (1894–1982). To him, Davis’ death is but a medical experiment and the Secret Service is but a ‘game we’re all playing’ (163). Thus, Grahame Smith can describe Doctor Percival as ‘Greene’s most persuasive portrait of an evil which is as absolute as it is unmelodramatic’ (190).

To Doctor Percival and Hargreaves, the gentlemen’s clubs of London provide a haven free from women and children. A man’s choice of club also characterises his personality, as he can be expected to join one where he can meet men like himself. Thus, Hargreaves, who has been a British colonial administrator in West Africa, is naturally a member of the Travellers Club, whereas Doctor Percival is, rather incongruously, a member of the Reform Club next door in Pall Mall. Indeed, Doctor Percival takes a perverse pleasure in his membership of a club founded in support of the liberal Reform Act of 1832, which he denounces for having ‘opened the gates to the pernicious doctrine of one man one vote’ (79). This reinforces the notion of Doctor Percival’s amorality: it is all a game. In contrast, Colonel Daintry ‘never liked clubs’ (84), preferring to lunch on half a tin of sardines in the solitude of his bachelor’s flat in St James’s. Castle, who commutes to Berkhamsted and is perfectly happy with suburban family life, has no interest in joining a club. Indeed, club membership, like membership in a political or religious organisation, seems quite incompatible with Castle’s clear preference for the private life.

How, then, does *The Human Factor* relate to Graham Greene’s other fiction? First of all, the novel contains much material that is in one way or another autobiographical. This is characteristic of much of Greene’s fiction, as he draws on his own experience of life,

transforming it into literature. Secondly, by this late stage in his writing career, Greene is able to make implicit references, not only to his own extensive knowledge of world literature, but also to his own earlier novels. Thirdly, *The Human Factor* marks both a culmination and a transformation of the author's own distinctive genre, the thriller-entertainment, turning it into a vehicle for philosophical and religious themes. Greene himself wanted *The Human Factor* to be a realistic portrayal of life in the British Secret Service. Having personally experienced this life in West Africa and London during the Second World War, the author had a specific project in mind when he started work on *The Human Factor*, described by Sharrock as 'humanizing the thriller form' (254). In Greene's own words: 'I wanted to present the Service unromantically as a way of life, men going daily to their office to earn their pensions, the background much like that of any other profession – whether the bank clerk or the business director – an undangerous routine, and within each character the more important private life' (*Ways of Escape* 296). In this scheme, Castle is a spy who apparently leads the life of any other civil servant. He is, moreover, a happily married man, which is quite unusual in Greene's fiction. An important function of Castle's domestic happiness is to set him radically apart from the characters of traditional spy fiction.

There are some clear similarities between Castle and Greene, as in *The Human Factor* the author makes imaginative use of autobiographical elements. For instance, Castle and Greene share a sense of nostalgia for their childhood in Berkhamsted, particularly of the castle, the church, and the common. Castle's childhood memories also include an imaginary dragon which is a relation of the one that inhabited Greene's own childhood fantasies. Like Greene, Castle has served as an intelligence agent in Africa. But while Greene was stationed in Sierra Leone during the war, Castle's mission took him to South Africa during the years of apartheid. The main difference, however, between the author and Castle is that the latter has made a career in the Secret Service, whereas Greene saw temporary service during the Second World

War. None of this makes Castle a copy of Greene, but shows that, in the words of H. C. Andersen, which serve as an epigram for *The Human Factor*, ‘out of reality are our tales of imagination fashioned’ (7).

There are, indeed, important differences between Castle and Greene. Hoskins goes too far when he suggests that Castle is Greene’s ‘double’ (232), but his suggestion is perhaps understandable given the close link between autobiography and fiction in Greene’s work which creates some interesting theoretical difficulties. Yet to see Castle as Greene’s ‘double’ would imply an unusually high degree of identification between the author and his character. Instead it seems that Greene, no doubt with the recent defection of his friend, Kim Philby, in painful memory, is exploring how a man with a background not dissimilar to his own can become a defector. It is often fascinating to ponder alternative courses to one’s own life; in this sense, Castle can perhaps be seen as an imaginary alternative version rather than the ‘double’ of his author.

In *The Human Factor*, Greene draws not only on his own autobiography, but also on his earlier fiction. The names Maurice and Sarah evoke those of Maurice Bendrix and Sarah Miles, the ill-fated lovers in Greene’s earlier novel, *The End of the Affair* (1951). Thus, as Hoskins observes, ‘not just the writer’s own history but also his earlier works become part of his subject’ (235). The rather obvious reference to the earlier love story invites a comparison between the two novels and a search for similarities, yet one could argue that the differences are just as significant. For instance, as a civil servant and a man of routine, Maurice Castle has more in common with Sarah Miles’ sedate husband than with her jealous lover, the author Maurice Bendrix.

The references to *The End of the Affair* and other literary love stories contrast with the ostensible spy thriller form of the novel. Thus, perhaps the main function of the parallel names – apart from keeping critics busy – is to focus attention on the love story within the spy

thriller. Furthermore, Castle's first name serves as a private code in his and Sarah's love life: 'The use of his name was a sign of love – when they were together it was an invitation to love. Endearments – dear and darling – were everyday currency to be employed in company, but a name was strictly private, never to be betrayed to a stranger outside the tribe. At the height of love she would cry aloud his secret tribal name' (69). Castle the double agent uses book code to communicate with the KGB. In the above passage, Maurice and Sarah Castle's own secret code is revealed. At the same time one can discern in the names Maurice and Sarah another 'book code' that evokes the affair of Maurice Bendrix and Sarah Miles. The coded reference to the earlier novel helps to make a more explicit description of Maurice and Sarah Castle's passion superfluous. The monotony and privacy of the Castles' life, then, does not signal an unhappy marriage. On the contrary, they welcome the secrecy: 'The depth of their love was as secret as the quadruple measure of whisky. To speak of it to others would invite danger. Love was a total risk. Literature had always so proclaimed it. Tristan, Anna Karenina, even the lust of Lovelace – he had glanced at the last volume of *Clarissa*' (20). This indicates that literature in general, not just Greene's 'earlier works' have 'become part of his subject'. In addition to the implicit allusion to *The End of the Affair*, the explicit reference to Tristan, Anna Karenina and *Clarissa* self-consciously locates *The Human Factor* more within the tradition of the literary love story than that of the spy thriller.

The use of last names and assumed names signals isolation and estrangement, whereas the use of the name 'Maurice' signals intimacy, loyalty and love. The importance of first names in the novel is further emphasised by Castle: 'Strange, he thought, that Sarah and Boris were the only people in the world who ever called him Maurice. To his mother he was simply "dear" in moments of affection, and at the office he lived among surnames and initials' (116). Thus, by the use of 'his secret tribal name', both Boris and Sarah put in their competing claims for Castle's loyalty. There is, however, a significant imbalance in Castle's relationship

with Boris: ‘He [Castle] thought, with a sense of revulsion: “The situation’s impossible, there’s no one in the world with whom I can talk of everything, except this man Boris whose real name even is unknown to me”’ (117). Castle has made himself dependent on Boris, just as Sarah is dependent on Castle. This creates a hierarchy of secrecy and deception. Boris keeps secrets from Castle, who finds himself having to keep secrets from Sarah. Thus, despite the apparent happiness of Castle’s domestic arrangements, he cannot ultimately be trusted. A wish to ‘right the balance’, however sincerely held, is not a sufficient foundation for either married life or for an ethical system. The fact that Castle in the end chooses a path that separates him from Sarah shows that either his commitment or his judgement is impaired, or both. Sarah, one feels, has become more a means to ‘a sense of security’ rather than an end in herself.

While it lasts, however, Maurice and Sarah Castle are another example of a protective relationship between an older man and a younger woman common in Greene’s fiction. Indeed, Castle is unusual as the protagonist of a spy story also in that he is quite old – ‘over retirement age’ (118) – which makes one wonder why he does not simply escape his troubles by retiring after Davis’ death. A suspicion therefore lingers that Castle himself, like Doctor Percival, has been caught up in the game and is unable to quit. Yet if the novel were to be as truly unromantic as Greene originally intended, what better end could possibly be devised than the secret agent quietly retiring from his job, perhaps with a minor honour ‘for services to export’ or the like? Such an ending, however, Greene had already made use of in his earlier spy-story, *Our Man in Havana* (1958).

According to some critics, *The Human Factor* represents a secularisation of concerns in his earlier work. Thus, in Maria Couto’s opinion, *The Human Factor* ‘encapsulates in its title the concerns and questionings of Greene’s fiction but places them in a “secular context”’ (190). Hoskins, more specifically, believes that the novel, ‘in its treatment of love, can be read

as a rewriting – a secularizing – of *The End of the Affair*' (238). This chapter, however, has attempted to place *The Human Factor* within a larger religious and philosophical context, drawing in particular on the thought of Unamuno. The 'secular context' of Castle's existence is challenged by the intrusion of religious concerns. Religion may be marginalised, God may be 'left [...] behind in the school chapel' (107), but religion is still the true context of the novel, no matter how secular Castle's life may seem. If, as Unamuno believes, 'those who deny God deny Him out of despair at not finding Him' (4: 202), then it is precisely Castle's rejection of faith that marks *The Human Factor* as a theological novel, and as such an important preparation for both *Doctor Fischer of Geneva* and *Monsignor Quixote*.

Chapter Three: Ultimate Despair

Very often, deceived by the Evil One, men have become vain in their reasonings, and have exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and served the creature rather than the Creator. Or else, living and dying in this world without God, they are exposed to ultimate despair. (*Lumen Gentium* 16; qtd in *Catechism* 844)

The central theme of Graham Greene's short novel *Doctor Fischer of Geneva or the Bomb Party* (1980) is despair in the face of life and death without God, or 'ultimate despair'. This is what Jones, the first-person narrator of the story, feels when in the end he surrenders any hope of immortality for himself and Anna-Luise: 'why', he asks, contemplating the death of Doctor Fischer, 'should goodness have more immortality than evil?' (142). In Jones' mind, goodness is associated with Anna-Luise and evil with Doctor Fischer, and it is the latter's suicide that impresses upon him the finality of death. According to the philosophy of Unamuno, the tragic sense of life arises from the certainty of death, and the choice facing each person is between faith, leading to the authentic life, and reason, leading to despair. Accordingly, this chapter will discuss *Doctor Fischer of Geneva* not just as a moralist attack on the disgusting way of life of such *nouveaux riches* as Doctor Fischer, but as a study of human beings 'living and dying in this world without God,' and consequently, in the words of the Second Vatican Council, being 'exposed to ultimate despair' (*Lumen Gentium* 16; qtd in *Catechism* 844). Within this context it is also possible to discuss such themes as greed, love, happiness, power, and tyranny. *Doctor Fischer of Geneva* develops the theme of despair and rejection of religion found in *The Human Factor*, at the same time introducing by means of Doctor Fischer certain explicitly theological speculations about the nature of evil. *Doctor Fischer of Geneva* thus provides an important contrast to its immediate successor, *Monsignor Quixote*, which in the end is more concerned with the nature of good than of evil.

Doctor Fischer, the reclusive toothpaste millionaire, inhabits ‘a great white mansion in the classical style by the lakeside at Versoix outside Geneva’ (9). As Jones climbs the marble stairs to see his future father-in-law for the first time, he is confronted with ‘a painting of a woman in flowing robes holding, with an expression of great tenderness, a skull’ (27). The description of the painting is very economical, almost like an heraldic blazon, and affords a good example of Greene’s sparse, yet effective, style of writing. The skull is an unmistakable symbol of death, and the painting symbolically links femininity and mortality. Jones’ first wife was killed years earlier in the London blitz; Doctor Fischer’s wife Anna, the victim of her husband’s hate, has died ‘like an African who can just will herself to die’ (41); and Anna-Luise, Doctor Fischer’s daughter who marries Jones, will later be killed in a freak skiing accident. As survivors, both Doctor Fischer and Jones are forced to contemplate the meaning of death and life. Unable or unwilling to embrace faith and attain what Unamuno sees as the authentic life, Doctor Fischer commits suicide, and Jones, after a failed suicide attempt, goes on living, hopelessly, with his bitterness and his fading memory of love.

Doctor Fischer of Geneva was published at a time when Graham Greene, living at Antibes in the south of France, was deeply involved in a legal and moral struggle on behalf of Martine, the daughter of his ‘close friend’ (Durán 15), Yvonne Cloetta. Martine was terrorised by her husband, Daniel Guy, a local gangster. Her plight eventually led Greene to write a short pamphlet, *J’accuse: The Dark Side of Nice* (1982), published in French and English, denouncing not only the local mafia but also the widespread corruption of the legal and political system of Nice. At the centre of Martine’s problems was her husband’s extreme jealousy and possessiveness, which meant that Martine’s apparently innocent friendship with a male colleague was intolerable to him. As Hoskins points out, ‘Greene’s description, in *J’accuse*, of Daniel Guy’s jealousy and its effects sounds rather like Doctor Fischer’s jealousy of his wife’s friendship with Steiner’ (250). Daniel Guy reportedly said of his wife and her

colleague: 'At all events they were friends, and so far as I'm concerned friendship is the same as adultery' (*J'accuse* 13). Similarly, Doctor Fischer finds it intolerable that his wife 'preferred his [Steiner's] company to mine. A clerk of Mr Kips earning a minimum wage' (107), revealing beneath his studied indifference a deep sense of insecurity and vulnerability. Doctor Fischer's entire self-image is founded on his financial success. He tells Jones that 'Some people even die for money [...]. They don't die for love except in novels' (107); yet his wife has indeed died for love – or for the lack thereof. Doctor Fischer, then, is a man who has 'exchanged the truth of God for a lie', worshipping money and power instead of 'the Creator'. Doctor Fischer's life, in the end, must become intolerable to him because of its intrinsic emptiness and falseness.

While the title of the short novel suggests that the story is centred on Doctor Fischer, Jones' role as the first-person narrator makes him the character whose point of view prevails. Jones himself is the writer of the story, while disparaging his own personality: 'The fact that I have written this narrative tells well enough that, unlike Doctor Fischer, I never found the courage necessary to kill myself' (142). Thus, Jones has something in common with another bitter, thwarted first-person narrator, Maurice Bendrix in Greene's *The End of the Affair*. Because Jones is the narrator, his bitterness and disillusionment is directly apparent in the text. Mrs Montgomery, for instance, is bitingly described as 'satisfactorily widowed' (10). Before he met Anna-Luise, Jones did not lack feminine company, for he 'could always buy a copulation, even in Switzerland' (13). Jones' contempt for the rich is also apparent in the scathing observation that 'Any millionaire gets an obituary in Switzerland' (72). As usual in Greene's fiction, the setting adds a particular flavour to the story, as Switzerland is presented, rather unflatteringly, as the perfect environment for Doctor Fischer.

There are some other revealing points of contact in *Doctor Fischer of Geneva* with Greene's earlier fiction. The three male characters Bendrix, Castle, and Jones are bound

together by having, like their author, survived the London blitz. During the war in real life, as in so much of Greene's fiction, ordinary people were confronted with the most extraordinary circumstances, and indeed what makes both Castle and Jones interesting is their very mediocrity and ordinariness. They are not war heroes: they are casualties, and their stories would not ordinarily make it into the history books. In fiction, however, they can find their true place as representatives of their generation. Furthermore, Jones, the son of a minor British diplomat, grew up in France, Turkey, and Paraguay, which are precisely the countries visited by Henry Pulling in *Travels with My Aunt*, one of the first of Greene's novels set in the 'tragicomic region of La Mancha' (*Ways of Escape* 259) and in many ways a precursor to *Monsignor Quixote*.

Jones lost his first wife in the blitz, and like Castle in *The Human Factor* he craves the false security of a much younger wife who might be expected to outlive him. Indeed, Jones is old enough to be Anna-Luise's father, and it comforts him to think that 'A father dies first' (80). Thus, normal family relationships are displaced. Anna-Luise, like Sarah in *The Human Factor*, is passionately attached to her older husband. Having effectively repudiated her natural father, she clings to Jones as a surrogate, telling him: 'You're my lover and my father, my child and my mother, you're the whole family – the only family I want' (17). In trying to explain the nature of their unlikely relationship, Jones reaches the psychological insight that 'Perhaps she [Anna-Luise] was seeking a father more sympathetic than Doctor Fischer, just as I may have been engaged on a parallel pursuit, of a daughter rather than a wife' (12). If Jones' analysis here is correct, the marriage is not based on unselfish love that seeks to make the other person in the marriage happy, but rather on a selfish desire to make oneself happy by means of the other person. This may seem a harsh judgement, but it helps to explain the terrible emptiness that Jones experiences after Anna-Luise's death. True love, as the Mayor in

Monsignor Quixote will discover, continues to grow after death, but selfish desire dies when there is no longer any chance of gratification.

Doctor Fischer arrogantly tells his widowed son-in-law that ‘You are not a man of great intelligence, Jones, or you wouldn’t at your age be translating letters about chocolates for a living’ (106), whereas Castle is described as a ‘Dullish man, first-class, of course, with files’ (*The Human Factor* 32). It is typical of Greene to take an interest in the unsuccessful lives of ordinary people. It is also, in a way, easier to sympathize with such people than with the great and the brilliant. Yet *The Human Factor* and *Doctor Fischer of Geneva* illustrate that even in such ordinary, suburban environments as Berkhamsted and Vevey life is just as unpredictable as in *The End of the Affair*, which is set in the middle of the London blitz. Indeed, Jones himself at one point observes that it may be unhealthy to create an artificial, escapist world of one’s own that attempts to ignore the fluctuations and insecurities of life: ‘Perhaps we had escaped a little too far into a world where only the two of us existed’ (68).

The world that Jones creates for himself and Anna-Luise tries to ignore death: in particular he does not expect to outlive Anna-Luise. In general terms, it appears that death, during the past century, has increasingly come to be seen as unnatural and as something that may be eliminated, or at least postponed almost indefinitely, by medical and scientific advances; thus, at the hospital following Anna-Luise’s skiing accident, Jones notes that ‘The Swiss *are* very efficient. Think of the complex watches and precision instruments they make. I had the impression that Anna-Luise would be repaired as skilfully as they would repair a watch’ (92–93). Indeed, Jones admits that ‘Death was not a serious subject for either of us’ (66). Thus, when Jones is confronted with the unexpected death of Anna-Luise, the effect on him is understandably, yet predictably, devastating. This is not intended to suggest that the mind can – or ought to be – prepared for the sudden death of a young, healthy woman like Anna-Luise, which can only come as a great shock. Rather, *Doctor Fischer of Geneva*

illustrates the fundamentally unpredictable nature of life. Only death, the source of the tragic sense of life in Unamuno's philosophy, is certain and inescapable, and therefore deserves to be taken seriously by those who would live their lives to the full. Anna-Luise, who has experienced in childhood the death of her mother, perhaps understands this better than most, but her voice is only indirectly and indistinctly heard through Jones' narrative.

Probably the most explicit point of contact between *Doctor Fischer of Geneva* and the philosophy of Unamuno is to be found in a remark made by Anna-Luise during Christmas midnight mass at the great Swiss Abbey of St Maurice: 'I don't believe in all this Christmas business, only I *want* to believe' (81). This, of course, echoes the line in Browning's 'Bishop Blougram's Apology' where the bishop exclaims: 'If you desire faith – then you've faith enough' (634). Similarly, Unamuno insists that 'To believe in God is, in the first place [...], to wish for God to exist and to be unable to live without Him' (4: 185). In wanting to believe, then, Anna-Luise is already a believer by Unamuno's definition, even though she may not recognise herself as such. Nor does Jones, for when he buries her in the Anglican cemetery, he does so explicitly because 'nobody so far as I know has established agnostic cemeteries' and because 'the Anglican Church, with all its contradictory beliefs, seemed closer to our agnostic views' (97). Given Anna-Luise's earlier remark, however, one hesitates to call Anna-Luise a true agnostic. Instead, it seems that Jones is projecting his own agnosticism and even his lack of interest in religion onto his wife. Jones does not know 'in what church Anna-Luise had been baptized – we had not had sufficient time together to learn such unimportant details about one another' (97). This seems to be characteristic of Jones' approach to religion, in the sense that whatever 'half-belief' (132) he has is private and non-denominational.

Perhaps the most basic insight of Jones' 'half-belief', however, is that 'If you have a soul you can't be satisfied' (83). Suffering and unhappiness are signs of what Jones calls a developed soul. Complacency, or satisfaction with oneself, on the other hand, is a definite

sign of soullessness or an underdeveloped soul. This sense of dissatisfaction is the closest that Jones comes to articulating something of the tragic sense of life, which includes a realisation that the soul aspires to something more than the finite world can offer.

It is the direct confrontation with the dead body of Doctor Fischer that leads Jones to conclude that physical death is the end of personal consciousness: 'I looked at the body [of Doctor Fischer] and it had no more significance than a dead dog' (141). After Anna-Luise has died, the doctor asks if Jones would 'like to see her' (95), but he refuses, and even wishes to finish all the paperwork at once to avoid having to return to the hospital the next day. Thus, Jones never confronts the death of his wife in the same physical way as he does that of his father-in-law. Instead, the image of Doctor Fischer lying dead in the snow comes to monopolize the representation of death in Jones' eyes. Jones has been romanticising his image of Anna-Luise after her death; the dead Doctor Fischer shatters this image, leaving Jones feeling quite empty.

The painting of the woman with the skull, which may be associated with Anna-Luise's mother, is a romantic representation of death, the opposite of the prosaic image of the body of Doctor Fischer in the snow. Jones at first clings to the romantic representation, believing that his own death will somehow reunite him with Anna-Luise; the prosaic image, however, kills his dream of life after death: 'Only if I had believed in a God could I have dreamt that the two of us would ever have that *jour le plus long*. It was as though my small half-belief had somehow shrivelled with the sight of Doctor Fischer's body [...]. There was no longer any reason to follow Anna-Luise if it was only into nothingness' (142). This is perfectly in keeping with Unamuno's notion that only God can guarantee personal immortality; without belief in God there is nothing. Yet there is an important difference between Jones and Unamuno. Like Castle, Jones does not believe in himself sufficiently to long for eternal life. Jones does not want immortality for himself, but only as a means of being reunited with

Anna-Luise. Unamuno, on the other hand, has a passionate belief in his own emphatic *yo* and an unconquerable desire for his own immortality. When reason tells him that there is no life after death, Unamuno rebels against reason to embrace faith. Jones, on the other hand, is not cut out for the role of the passionate rebel. His craving for a sense of security leaves no room for either doubt or faith.

Just as normal family relationships are displaced when Jones becomes Anna-Luise's 'lover and [...] father' (17), religion is also displaced as Doctor Fischer is compared in Jones' mind 'with Jehovah and Satan' (141). The comparison starts out as a joke about Anna-Luise's fears of her father's power and influence: 'You make him sound like Our Father in Heaven – his will be done on earth as it is in Heaven'. Anna-Luise confirms this impression: 'That about describes him' (24). Hints and rumours about his father-in-law raise Jones' expectations to the point that when he actually meets Doctor Fischer, he is 'surprised to see a man much like other men' (27). When Jones at first does not receive an invitation to one of Doctor Fischer's notorious dinner parties, Anna-Luise exclaims: 'Thank God for that.' Jones jokingly corrects her: 'Thank Doctor Fischer, [...] or is it the same thing?' (29). Steiner, whose life has been ruined by Doctor Fischer because of his friendship with Anna-Luise's mother, feels the same way: 'he [Doctor Fischer] was a bit like God Almighty [...]. Now I want to get near enough to him to spit in God Almighty's face [...]. It's never too late to spit at God Almighty. He lasts for ever and ever, amen. And he made us what we are' (137). At the same time, Doctor Fischer is compared with Satan: he is said to have 'a devilish dignity' (63) and an 'infernal pride' (39). According to Anna-Luise, he is more than dangerous: 'He's hell' (18). At times the comparison becomes both melodramatic and somewhat strained, such as when Anna-Luise accuses Jones:

'So you'll let him [Doctor Fischer] take you into a high place and show you all the kingdoms of the world.'

‘I’m not Christ, and he’s not Satan, and I thought we’d agreed he was God Almighty, although I suppose to the damned God Almighty looks very like Satan.’

‘Oh, all right,’ she said, ‘go and be damned.’ (33)

It may be pointed out that Anna-Luise’s reference to Jesus being tempted in the desert (Matt. 4.8; Luke 4.5) shows her to be quite familiar with at least some elements of Christianity. Yet Jones never inquires more deeply in to the particulars of her beliefs.

It should be impossible to confuse or compare Doctor Fischer with God. Initially what is meant is merely to indicate that Doctor Fischer is very powerful, but increasingly the comparison takes on a life and logic of its own, until only his death can finally disprove it. That the comparison is possible at all, however, is an indication of a kind of power vacuum: as belief in God declines, powerful men and aptly named ‘idols’ are worshipped instead. Doctor Fischer, however, neither sees himself as a God nor believes in one, but cynically admits to finding ‘theology an amusing intellectual game’ (61). Doctor Fischer toys with the idea of a God made in his own image, greedy for the humiliation of his creatures – a bottomless, inexhaustible greed. Such a God would, he feels, provide an explanation for the humiliations that human beings suffer: ‘A cancer of the rectum, a streaming cold, incontinence’ (62). The idea has also occurred to Unamuno, who, in one of his darker fantasies, writes: ‘Still, from a religious point of view and within the domain of mystery, why should there not be an eternity of suffering – even though the idea violates our sentiments? Why should there not be a God who battens on our sufferings? Is our happiness, perchance, the end-purpose of the Universe?’ (4: 268). The vision of ‘a God who battens on our sufferings’ is truly horrifying, and one that cannot easily be dismissed or exorcised. Yet surely the question posed by Unamuno and repeated by Doctor Fischer is fundamentally irrational, and can thus only be answered by irrational faith in an irrational God? This, indeed, is the larger question that will also confront the Mayor and Father Quixote, the two main characters in *Monsignor Quixote*.

Doctor Fischer's notorious parties – including the Porridge Party and the Bomb Party – take place within this context of a world without God, where there is ample room for the toothpaste millionaire to play Caesar to his guests, in the words of the novel's epigram from Herman Melville: 'Who has but once dined his friends, has tasted whatever it is to be Caesar' (7). Doctor Fischer's legendary wealth gives him the power to humiliate and tyrannise his invited guests while they perversely praise his 'generosity' (115) and his 'great sense of humour' (22), hoping to receive expensive gifts at the end of each party. The fact that all the guests – except Jones – are rich makes them no less eager to win their prizes. Doctor Fischer claims to be 'studying the greediness of the rich' (58–59), but actually his parties are a study in tyranny, and exposes the psychology of victims and tyrant. Doctor Fischer makes this quite explicit when he gives it as his opinion that one of the guests, 'Mr Kips, like Herr Krupp, would have sat down happily to eat with Hitler in expectation of favours, whatever was placed before him' (61). The workings of tyranny, it is suggested, are the same everywhere: the fact that Doctor Fischer operates on a much smaller scale than Hitler only makes the methods that are used more immediately apparent. Hitler, too, started his career as a dictator by dominating a few men, before gradually extending his sway through another kind of party.

Apart from their 'expectation of favours', Doctor Fischer's guests are flattered by the exclusivity of his parties. They see themselves as 'a select group' (11) and 'a kind of club' (54). Such exclusivity makes membership of the group seem desirable and valuable. The intrusion of an outsider such as Jones is resented. The suggestion that Jones' presence should have been put to a vote among the members of the 'club' is, however, brutally quashed by Doctor Fischer, who asserts his power to humiliate and ridicule his guests (54–55). This is meekly accepted; furthermore, Doctor Fischer's behaviour is consistently explained away as harmless good fun. Jones' intrusion into the group as an 'unfriendly audience' (63) may be an added humiliation to the guests, but by his lack of cooperation and by refusing to laugh at the

'Toads', as Anna-Luise calls her father's guests, Jones also poses a danger to Doctor Fischer himself, though the latter claims to despise the whole world and to care nothing about anyone's opinion of himself. Yet by attempting to humiliate others, Doctor Fischer only really succeeds in humiliating himself, turning himself into a monster. In the end, by some numinous inspiration, Jones hits upon Doctor Fischer's only vulnerable spot: "How you must despise yourself," I said to Doctor Fischer. I don't know what made me say those words. It was as though they had been whispered in my ear' (134). For the first time Doctor Fischer is asking the questions, not answering them: 'What do you mean, Jones?' (134) – and is ignored. Having discovered no end to 'the greediness of the rich' (58–59), and beginning to see that he has thoroughly humiliated himself in the process, Doctor Fischer goes away and kills himself. Jones, then, has proved himself an 'unfriendly audience' not just to the Toads, but to Doctor Fischer as well. This shows in some detail how Doctor Fischer's tyranny over others works. At the same time, it reveals the fundamental weakness of that tyranny. Tyranny uses deceit and illusion to build up a psychological domination over others; once the illusion is shattered, the domination fails. Such a malign, tyrannical domination is very different from Unamuno's ideal, which is to freely give oneself to others and to make oneself 'eternal through them insofar as possible' (4: 291). Seen in this way, Doctor Fischer is the direct opposite of Father Quixote. The best indication of this is that Doctor Fischer leaves behind him only emptiness, whereas Father Quixote leaves behind him a legacy of growing hope and love, as will be seen in the next chapter.

The extent of Doctor Fischer's corruption and corrupting influence can be seen in his manservant, Albert, who is both 'insolent' (26) and cringing with fear of his employer. Indeed, all the earlier servants left after Anna-Luise's mother died, so that Albert, a more recent employee, is entirely Doctor Fischer's creature. It is characteristic of Albert as of other victims of tyranny that he is incapable of exercising independent judgment, for fear of the

consequences should he inadvertently make a mistake. Doctor Fischer may think that this conveys his power, but in fact his servant's behaviour reflects very badly on himself. Anna-Luise perceptively points out that 'when a man tries to humiliate a waiter – he only humiliates himself' (48) by his misuse of power. Immediately after Anna-Luise's skiing accident, Jones himself actually feels the impulse, despite Anna-Luise's earlier warning, to humiliate an unpleasant waiter: 'I felt ashamed. But if it had been in my power I would have revenged myself for what had happened on all the world – like Doctor Fischer, I thought, just like Doctor Fischer' (91). Fortunately, Jones is saved by his relative powerlessness and unimportance from becoming like Doctor Fischer.

For a short time Jones appears to have been happy with Anna-Luise, but after her death he can only compare it to an uncharted island in the vast expanse of the Pacific Ocean whose existence is perhaps no more than a rumour, even though 'no navigator can be quite certain that it only existed in the imagination of some long-dead lookout' (44). The island of happiness is irretrievably lost, and Jones starts to doubt if it ever existed, since happiness seems to defy rational explanation. He keeps telling himself how happy he was with Anna-Luise, but cannot explain why. Unlike the causes of unhappiness, the causes of happiness are not so easily identified, and by trying to define them Jones is killing even the memory of his happiness.

While it does not end happily, *Doctor Fischer of Geneva* does, however, end on a certain note of dignity. Despite being inadequately prepared both intellectually and spiritually, Jones has faced Doctor Fischer and survived the encounter with his dignity largely intact. If there is an answer to the terrible nightmare of a God who batters on human misfortune, then Doctor Fischer's death provides it. Such a God would be unworthy of love or worship, and would be liable to end up like Doctor Fischer, despising himself and committing suicide. Indeed, Doctor Fischer embodies the perverse notion of a deity who only operates through

punishment and reward, like a police state. As soon as Doctor Fischer is dead, however, he and the false notion of a God created in his image cease to be important: 'Our enemy is dead and our hate has died with him' (143). No one fears a dead enemy; on the contrary one feels shame at having been deadly afraid of another mortal human being. But unlike hate, which dies with one's enemy, love does not have to end with death, as Greene's next book, *Monsignor Quixote*, will suggest.

Chapter Four: The Tragicomic Region of La Mancha

1.

Graham Greene's *Monsignor Quixote* (1982) is a thoroughly delightful and readable novel, as well as an extremely interesting one from a philosophical and theological point of view. Here, one feels, it all comes together at last: Greene's travels, his lifetime of reading and thinking about theology, philosophy, and literature, and voices from his own earlier fiction. It is not Greene's last novel, but it is his most serene, in startling contrast to its two immediate predecessors, *The Human Factor* and *Doctor Fischer of Geneva*. As if to underline the change, even the climate is different: the bright and sunny uplands of La Mancha are far removed from both the physical decay of Greene's tropical settings and the spiritual coldness of his earlier European settings.

This thesis has suggested that *The Human Factor* (1978) and *Doctor Fischer of Geneva* (1980) implicitly take part in a dialogue with the philosophical writings of Unamuno, and particularly with *The Tragic Sense of Life*. In *Monsignor Quixote*, as will be seen, this dialogue is made explicit, and is broadened to include elements of Unamuno's reading of Cervantes' *Don Quixote*. As in its great literary ancestor, the two key literary devices in *Monsignor Quixote* are travel and dialogue. On their journeys the two main characters in the novel are able to pursue a dialogue freely, and this dialogue provides the perfect opportunity for philosophical and theological inquiry.

Again like *Don Quixote*, Greene's novel is divided into two parts. While the two books of Cervantes' work were published separately in 1605 and 1615, *Monsignor Quixote* was published in its entirety in 1982 by Greene's usual publisher, The Bodley Head. The first two chapters of the novel, entitled 'How Father Quixote became a Monsignor' and 'How Monsignor Quixote set off on his travels', however, had already been published separately as

Christmas reading in the Catholic weekly *The Tablet* in 1978 and 1980 respectively, and a further episode entitled 'A visit from the Bishop' had similarly been published in *The Tablet* in December 1981 (Holderness 280). This means that the publication of parts of *Monsignor Quixote* was parallel to the publication of *The Human Factor* and *Doctor Fischer of Geneva*. Such details may appear trivial, but it does seem quite significant that here, at the same time and in three very different works, Catholicism, which in the view of most critics (cf. Holderness 259; Sharrock 126) had been absent from Greene's fiction since the publication of *The End of the Affair* (1951), is more explicitly reasserting itself.

Valuable insights into the sometimes difficult making of *Monsignor Quixote* are provided by Greene's friend and travelling companion, Father Leopoldo Durán, a Spanish priest and professor of literature. In his largely anecdotal book *Graham Greene: Friend and Brother* (1994), Father Durán records memories of the two men's developing friendship and their annual travels by car through Spain in the 1970s and 1980s. Many of their conversations and experiences found their way into *Monsignor Quixote*, but were always altered in some way or another. Thus, Father Durán cannot be identified with Father Quixote any more than Greene himself can be identified with the Mayor, or with any other character in the novel, but elements of both Greene's and Father Durán's personalities clearly assert themselves throughout the novel.

This chapter will start with a discussion of *Monsignor Quixote*'s relationship with Cervantes' *Don Quixote* and the question of the nature of fact and fiction, which features prominently in Greene's novel. From this the discussion will move to the notion of dialogue and its place in both *Monsignor Quixote* and some of Greene's earlier fiction, particularly *Travels with My Aunt* and *The Power and the Glory*. Dialogue, however, requires intellectual content, and so the chapter will go on to discuss some elements of the relationship between *Monsignor Quixote* and Unamuno's philosophy. Finally, as both Greene and Unamuno are

deeply concerned with Catholicism, it is necessary to identify the religious and sacramental framework of *Monsignor Quixote*, and to consider what impact this has on the character of Sancho, who represents atheist Marxism in the novel.

2.

Father Quixote may be only the humble pastor of the insignificant parish of El Toboso in La Mancha, but he is also a proud descendant of Don Quixote. For instance, he drives a small Seat 600 which he calls affectionately ‘in memory of his ancestor “my Rocinante”’ (11). The local bishop, however, is dismissive of Father Quixote’s ‘distinguished ancestry’, for ‘How can he be descended from a fictional character?’ (12). There is a certain irony in this question coming from one who is himself a fictional character, and it highlights the problem of distinguishing between fact and fiction, which is very much a central concern of the novel.

An unexpected guest, the Bishop of Motopo, sets Father Quixote off on his travels by means of the ambiguous gift of having him elevated to the purely honorary rank of monsignor. Father Quixote’s elevation has the same function as Don Quixote receiving the honour of knighthood, and the circumstances are similarly ludicrous. But while Don Quixote eagerly sought the adventures and dangers of knight-errantry, Father Quixote at first seems quite reluctant to accept the role of ‘priest errant’ (85). Yet the journey that is set before him is shown by the Bishop of Motopo to be a necessary quest for truth, for ‘It was only by tilting at windmills that Don Quixote found the truth on his deathbed’ (24).

Graham Holderness sees the Bishop of Motopo as a manifestation of ‘the stranger who rewards hospitality with a gift [...] that is potentially capable of both good and harm’ (278). Indeed, the local bishop uses Father Quixote’s promotion as a pretext for driving him away from El Toboso, just as the Bishop of Motopo seems to have intended: ‘A man of your ability is wasted in El Toboso’ (23). While the local bishop sees Father Quixote as an intolerable

nuisance, the Bishop of Motopo believes there is more to this humble country priest than meets the eye, and that he needs greater scope to make use of his talents.

The Bishop of Motopo's power of discernment clearly stems from his understanding of Cervantes' *Don Quixote*. Unamuno observes in his essay 'On the Reading and Interpretation of *Don Quixote*' that 'Spain remains one of the nations where the book is least read; moreover, it is without a doubt the country where it is worst read. I am sick and tired of listening to Spaniards who have not been able to read through our book, the book which should be a sort of national Bible' (3: 445). Indeed, while the visiting Italian bishop shows both appreciation for and understanding of this 'national Bible', the local Spanish bishop has 'never got beyond the first chapter' (13). By contrast, Father Quixote finds the Bishop of Motopo 'smiling over a page as his own bishop would certainly not have done', and insisting that Cervantes was truly 'a moral writer' (22). And while the Spanish bishop prosaically argues that Don Quixote 'was a fiction [...] in the mind of a writer', the Italian bishop paradoxically suggests that 'Perhaps we are all fictions [...] in the mind of God' (24). The Bishop of Motopo appreciates not only literature but also the nature of faith. This is demonstrated by his rhetorical question, 'Where would our faith be if there were no mysteries?' (20), which is practically a paraphrase of Unamuno's 'How, without this uncertainty, could we ever live? (4: 131). Possibly this suggests a link between literature and faith, but the Bishop of Motopo is careful to distinguish between the two, commenting laconically about his Spanish brother in the episcopate: 'Holiness and literary appreciation don't always go together' (15).

Some critics have commented on the highly 'artificial' (Hoskins 262) or 'fictive' (Holderness 277) form of Greene's later work, including *Monsignor Quixote*. From being fictions in the mind of the author, characters in a novel subsequently become fictions in the mind of the reader. Indeed, as the characters take hold of the reader's imagination he or she

will begin to regard them as increasingly real and may, in the case of *Monsignor Quixote*, be drawn into their debate about fact and fiction. The reader, then, is brought into the region of ontological ambiguity and speculation that appealed so much to Unamuno, who in his essay ‘Saint Quixote of La Mancha’ confesses his belief ‘that Don Quixote and Sancho have more historical reality than Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, and more than the author of these lines, and that far from Cervantes being their creator, it is they who created Cervantes’ (3: 430).

Whereas Cervantes is dead and buried, Don Quixote and Sancho live on in the minds and imaginations of countless readers, and it is because of them and through them that Cervantes too is remembered. Unamuno therefore playfully argues that Don Quixote – being in his opinion an historical person – should be canonised a saint by the Roman Catholic Church, an opinion which is implicitly endorsed by Father Quixote when he says that ‘I shall pray to my ancestor’ (202) for the alleged bank robber who causes Sancho and himself so much trouble.

Throughout *Monsignor Quixote* the distinction between fact and fiction is continually being blurred, in keeping with Unamuno’s ideas. Sancho reminds Father Quixote: ‘You know how he [Unamuno] loved your ancestor and studied his life. If he had lived in those days perhaps he would have followed the Don on the mule called Dapple instead of Sancho’ (111). Here the Mayor, the priest, Unamuno, and Don Quixote are all presented as existing on the same level: they live in the reader’s imagination. Yet it has already been pointed out that Unamuno considered Don Quixote to have more historical reality than both himself and Cervantes; this is because Don Quixote is actually more alive and present in the minds of more people than either the author or the philosopher.

The adventures of Don Quixote are an important source for events in *Monsignor Quixote*. Much of the dialogue in the novel is prompted by the sights and sounds and events of the journey itself, as the characters let their minds roam rather freely from the material to the abstract and back again. For instance, the car Rocinante nearly bumping into a sheep

brings to mind the great battle where Don Quixote mistakes two flocks of sheep for opposing armies and joins the fray on the side he deems more worthy of his support. And just as Don Quixote obstinately will mistake a country inn for a castle, and the vulgar women at the door for high-born ladies, so Father Quixote at first believes that the brothel to which Sancho takes him is a particularly friendly family hotel. Also, Father Quixote himself compares the episode with the alleged bank robber to the scene in which his ancestor releases the galley slaves (146–7), and while Don Quixote and Sancho are pursued by the Holy Brotherhood, Father Quixote and the Mayor are pursued by the *Guardia Civil*.

From all this it emerges that Cervantes' *Don Quixote* is the acknowledged literary ancestor of Greene's *Monsignor Quixote*. Furthermore, it is becoming clear that Greene is reading *Don Quixote* very much in light of Unamuno's thoughts about Cervantes' work and the central importance of *Don Quixote* as Spain's great and misread book.

3.

In *Monsignor Quixote* Greene follows the example of Cervantes in making use of a series of comic episodes that are bound together by the continuously evolving dialogue between the priest and Sancho as they travel through the Spanish countryside. Thus Greene avoids, in Sharrock's words, 'the risk of complete disintegration as in the old romances of chivalry' (261). Greene himself attributes his interest in Cervantes and the romance to an early reading of Unamuno's *Life of Don Quixote and Sancho*, which made no immediate impression, but which would gradually lead him to the 'tragicomic region of La Mancha' (*Ways of Escape* 259), especially in *Travels with My Aunt* and in *Monsignor Quixote*.

Indeed, *Travels with My Aunt* may be seen as a preliminary essay in the genre of the romance, and a precursor to *Monsignor Quixote*. Both novels are characterised by the dialogic and episodic form of the chivalric romance. Furthermore, in *Travels with My Aunt* Greene introduces elements that will be more fully developed in *Monsignor Quixote*. In particular,

Unamuno's paradoxical belief in the 'historical reality' of Don Quixote and Sancho, which has already been noted, is voiced in this passage from *Travels with My Aunt*:

Without breaking the silence I took a reverent glass of Chambertin to Uncle Jo's memory, whether he existed or not. The unaccustomed wine sang irresponsibly in my head. What did the truth matter? All characters once dead, if they continue to exist in memory at all, tend to become fictions. Hamlet is no less real now than Winston Churchill, and Jo Pulling no less historical than Don Quixote. (62)

In this passage fact and fiction again playfully merge. As the protagonist, Henry Pulling, during his travels with his Aunt Augusta, feels himself 'being dragged at her heels on an absurd knight-errantry, like Sancho Panza at the heels of Don Quixote, but in the cause of what she called fun instead of chivalry' (86), neither the protagonist nor the reader can be quite sure what the truth is in Aunt Augusta's extravagant universe. Indeed, the many stories that Aunt Augusta tells in the novel constitute an extra level of fiction within the fiction.

In particular, there are two episodes in *Travels with My Aunt* that reappear in a different form in *Monsignor Quixote*. The first concerns the colour purple as a mark of rank in the Roman Catholic Church. Aunt Augusta tells the story of a minor Italian war criminal, a Mr Visconti, who escapes disguised as a monsignor. The name recalls Gian Galeazzo Visconti, the protagonist of Marjorie Bowen's novel *The Viper of Milan*, which made such a lasting impression on Greene as a teenager. The scene where Mr Visconti visits a clerical store in Rome, paying 'a fortune to be fitted out as a monsignor even to the purple socks' (118), prefigures Father Quixote's visit, at Sancho's insistence, to an exclusive ecclesiastical tailor's shop in Madrid to buy purple socks befitting his new rank. Both stories gently mock the absurdity of purple socks, yet these form part of a uniform, as the Mayor points out: 'Your ancestor had a proper respect for the uniform of a knight errant, even though he had to put up with a barber's basin for a helmet. You are a monsignor errant and must wear purple socks' (43). Indeed, when Father Quixote is about to confront a commercialised religious procession

which he sees as an ‘insult to Our Lady’ (227), he puts on his purple bib or *pechera*: ‘We are going into battle, Sancho, I need my armour. Even if it is as absurd as Mambrino’s helmet’ (225). Thus, a monsignor’s clerical garb is transformed into an important link between Father Quixote and his ancestor. Just as Don Quixote becomes a knight by putting on his armour, Father Quixote becomes a monsignor by wearing purple. In fiction, at least, clothes make the man. More to the point, Greene’s novel recognises the Catholic distinction between the person and the office, which means that the office may be validly performed even if the holder is unworthy. This, however, does not prevent Father Quixote from momentarily feeling ‘like an actor who is watched by friends in his dressing-room’ before ‘going into battle’ (225).

The second episode concerns the practice of sacramental confession. Aunt Augusta tells the amusing story of how Mr Visconti has to pretend to hear the confession of a prostitute, characteristically ‘enjoying the chance he had of learning a thing or two, even though his life was in danger’ (120). Father Quixote, on the other hand, is accosted by a distraught undertaker who has stolen a set of brass handles from a priest’s coffin. Father Quixote is quite perplexed by the undertaker’s curious confession and ends up feeling himself something of a failure: ‘He thought: I didn’t say the right words. Why do I never find the right words? The man needed help and I recited a formula’ (134). The undertaker’s predicament is quite amusing, but Father Quixote’s frustration at his own inadequacy is a serious matter, and it does perhaps put the ill-tempered priest who refuses to hear Castle’s confession in *The Human Factor* in a new perspective.

The dialogue and growing friendship between Father Quixote and Sancho are also central elements in *Monsignor Quixote*; a dialogue in which the priest clearly represents Catholicism, while the Mayor represents communism. This continues and develops a theme which Greene introduced as early as in *The Power and the Glory* (1940), where there is a tentative discussion between the captured ‘whisky priest’ and his captor, the lieutenant of

police. Though not explicitly a Marxist, the Mexican lieutenant of police is certainly both a materialist and a militant atheist. Following the lieutenant's capture of the 'whisky priest' and during their journey to the state capital where the priest is to be executed, the two men are able to engage in a somewhat strained dialogue. While the lieutenant insists that 'Nothing you say will make any difference' (193), it becomes clear that he is subtly affected by the conversation, grudgingly admitting that the priest is not 'a bad fellow' (201). The lieutenant justifies the dialogue to himself and the priest by conventional stereotypes such as 'It's just as well. To know an enemy, I mean' (196), and 'I am not afraid [...] of other people's ideas' (197). The priest, on the other hand, keeps repeating, rather nervously, that the lieutenant is really 'a good man' (193; 206).

The dialogue in *The Power and the Glory*, however, is severely hampered by the priest's fear, his hands shaking at the thought of his impending execution, and by the lieutenant's distrust: 'Sometimes I feel you're just trying to talk me round' (206). Despite this, the lieutenant briefly abandons his high principles and actually breaks the law by bringing the incarcerated priest a small flask of brandy the night before the execution. Under such circumstances the dialogue must necessarily be superficial, touching only very briefly on the nature of suffering and the appropriate response to human misery and unhappiness. Though the priest pathetically claims that 'We agree about a lot of things' (194), it is clear that the anticlerical climate of this damp and decaying southern Mexican state in the 1930s – modelled on the state of Tabasco – is not conducive either to real dialogue or real agreement.

Dialogue is made possible by two people showing consideration for each other's feelings. Father Quixote's relations with his own bishop and with his replacement, Father Herrera, represent the antithesis of dialogue, whereas his encounter with the Bishop of Motopo is the prototype of a free and respectful dialogue. Similarly, the beginning of friendship is based on 'the equality of a common interest' and the ability to be 'tactful with

each other' (26). Indeed, 'Father Quixote enjoyed the Mayor's company for a street-corner chat more than that of his parishioners' (25), and the latter, significantly, is the only other person in El Toboso who has read *Don Quixote* (15).

Dialogue and the episodic form of the romance clearly go very well together, as demonstrated by *Travels with My Aunt* and *Monsignor Quixote*. In both novels the dialogue is both comic and absurd. In *Travels with My Aunt*, on the one hand, there is an added element of tenderness as it gradually emerges that Aunt Augusta is Pulling's mother, not his aunt as he had previously thought. On the other hand, the dialogue between Father Quixote and the Mayor is founded on mutual consideration which leads to an increasingly close friendship. Their dialogue is infused with an element of seriousness stemming from its political, philosophical, and theological content, which can be traced to both Unamuno and to *The Power and the Glory*.

4.

As they set out on their first journey, Sancho and Father Quixote have both been effectively freed from their official positions: the Mayor has lost the election, and Father Quixote has been replaced – albeit temporarily – by Father Herrera. On setting out on the second journey, Father Quixote has in addition been summarily and unjustly suspended by his bishop from celebrating the sacraments. Both men are therefore quite free to speak openly to each other about their beliefs, doubts, and hopes for the future, and the long periods they spend together in the car Rocinante, as well as the picnics and meals that punctuate their journey, provide the best possible setting for an extended dialogue. Two of the main subjects of this dialogue are the theological and philosophical concepts of apocatastasis and doubt, which will be discussed and explained in some detail.

Prompted by the incident with the sheep in the road, Father Quixote and Sancho start discussing Jesus' parable of the sheep and the goats (Matt. 25.32–46), where the sheep on his

right hand are blessed and invited to ‘inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world’ (34), while the goats on the left are cursed and dismissed ‘into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels’ (41). This discussion deeply affects Father Quixote, haunting him during his final moments at Osera: ‘He whispered so softly that only the Mayor caught his words, “Lamb of God, but the goats, the goats”’ (249). The parable of the sheep and the goats provides some of the foundation for the doctrine of heaven and hell, of eternal bliss for the saved and eternal punishment for the damned. But Unamuno complains that traditionally ‘hell has been conceived as a police institution, to inspire fear in this world’, observing that in this capacity hell has become ineffectual, since ‘it no longer frightens anyone, and therefore it will have to be closed down’ (4: 268).

To the doctrine of heaven and hell Unamuno opposes the doctrine of apocatastasis or restitution, which Unamuno calls ‘a final triumph of the spirit’ (4: 262), and which allows one to hope ‘that all shall be saved, including Cain and Judas, and Satan himself, as Origen hoped’ (4: 266). Like the Alexandrine theologian Origen, the doctrine of apocatastasis has been highly controversial. Unamuno, however, links apocatastasis directly to the writings of Paul: ‘And when all things shall be subdued unto him [Jesus], then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all’ (1 Cor. 15.28).

Apocatastasis, to Unamuno, is ‘God’s coming to be all in all’ (4: 263), but in what way can God be said to be ‘all in all’ in the damned in hell? Indeed, Paul seems to suggest the possibility of a universal restitution or restoration, where ‘The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death’ (1 Cor. 15.26). Attempting to reconcile Jesus’ parable with Paul’s vision, Unamuno offers the possibility ‘that only those are saved who longed to be saved’ (4: 270) and that ‘perhaps the sin against the Holy Ghost, for which, according to the Gospel, there is no remission, is none other than that of not desiring God, that of not longing to be made eternal’ (4: 270–1). This, according to Unamuno, would be just, because ‘there is no injustice

in not giving a man something he does not know enough to desire' (4: 270), but it is too isolated, too individualistic an approach. 'No one', Unamuno says, 'who beholds his bother suffering in hell can rejoice in God, for the fault and the merit were common to both', so that apocatastasis is the 'grand dream of the final solidarity of mankind' (4: 277). It is in this context of apocatastasis and human solidarity that the Catholic concepts of purgatory and the communion of saints find their place, with a 'sense of the transmission of accumulated merits both to the living and to the dead' (4: 272) through the offering of prayers of intercession.

This, then, is the philosophical and religious setting for the discussion between the Father Quixote and Sancho about heaven, hell, and purgatory. Unreasonably dismissing purgatory as a 'convenient invention', the Mayor finds it more tempting to believe in hell than in heaven: "I wish I believed in damnation," the Mayor replied, "for I would certainly put him [Franco] – as I am sure Dante would have done – in the lowest depths" (57). Thus he is not unlike the Boy in Greene's *Brighton Rock* (1938), who believes in Hell but not in Heaven: 'These atheists, they don't know nothing. Of course there's Hell. Flames and damnation, [...] torments' (52). Hell seems easier to imagine than heaven, perhaps because it appears to correspond more closely to actual human experience, as Mr Prewitt, the Boy's solicitor, points out: '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"' (210). To Mephistopheles in Marlowe's play *Doctor Faustus* (1604), the torments of hell are increased by his having previously known the bliss of heaven; to the Boy, hell is quite simply 'the only thing that fits' (52). The Mayor's wish to believe in hell is motivated by hatred of an enemy, which really only proves Mephistopheles' point.

Father Quixote, on the other hand, not only suspects 'human judgement, even Dante's' (57), but also finds it difficult to believe in hell at all, admitting that he has been asking himself 'whether it is possible ... how can a merciful and loving God ...?' (58). In sentiment,

then, Father Quixote approaches Unamuno, whom he only knows by reputation, more closely than does Sancho, who has studied under him. Father Quixote desires not only his own personal salvation, but the salvation of all. The Mayor has difficulty accepting or understanding that anyone would want to pray at the tomb of the dead dictator, Franco, but Father Quixote quietly asks: ‘Why not? Even if it was the tomb of Judas – or Stalin – I’d say a prayer’ (86).

While Father Quixote has his doubts about Catholic theology, Sancho has his doubts about Marxist ideology. It is precisely a shared sense of doubt that unites the two men: ‘It’s odd, he [Father Quixote] thought, [...] how sharing a sense of doubt can bring men together perhaps even more than sharing a faith. The believer will fight another believer over a shade of difference: the doubter fights only with himself’ (59). According to Greene, the feeling of doubt is crucial. After having completed *Monsignor Quixote* he found, somewhat to his own surprise, that as early as in 1964 he had written the following marginalia in his edition of the *Carnets* of Camus: ‘Perhaps the most important historical point in the future will be when the Christian says “I do not always believe” and the Marxist agrees with him.’ This, according to Greene, is ‘what *Monsignor Quixote* is all about’ (qtd in Couto 214).

Greene’s emphasis on doubt harmonises well with Unamuno’s philosophy. It is therefore significant that following their visit to the tomb of Franco in the Valley of the Fallen, Sancho takes Father Quixote to Salamanca to visit the grave of Unamuno, who had been Sancho’s professor during his time as a student there. Unamuno was an enemy of both communism and Fascism, as Sancho acknowledges: ‘In a sense he was my enemy too for he kept me in the Church for several years with that half-belief of his which for a while I could share’ (111). This statement provokes ‘an unaccustomed anger’ (112) in Father Quixote, who mocks the Mayor: ‘And now you have complete belief, don’t you? In the prophet Marx. You don’t have to think for yourself any more’ (111). Father Quixote’s anger – ‘or was it, he

wondered, envy?’ (112) – represents his fear that without ‘sharing a sense of doubt’ (59) their friendship may be illusory. He is, however, reassured as Sancho questions himself:

‘Have I complete belief?’ Sancho asked. ‘Sometimes I wonder. The ghost of my professor [Unamuno] haunts me. I dream I am sitting in his lecture room and he is reading to us from one of his own books. I hear him saying, “There is a muffled voice, a voice of uncertainty which whispers in the ears of the believer. Who knows? Without this uncertainty how could we live?”’ (112)

Life without uncertainty, to Unamuno, is plainly unbearable, because with absolute certainty there can be no room for faith or hope. Sancho is synthesising the conclusion of a key passage from Unamuno’s major work, *The Tragic Sense of Life*. The whole paragraph may be worth quoting *in extenso* both to show Unamuno’s line of thought and his idiosyncratic style of writing, which at its best verges on poetry:

The absolute certainty that death is a complete and definitive and irrevocable annihilation of personal consciousness, a certainty of the same order as our certainty that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles, or, contrariwise, the absolute certainty that our personal consciousness continues beyond death in whatever condition (including in such a concept the strange and adventitious additional notion of eternal reward or punishment) – either of these certainties would make our life equally impossible. In the most secret recess of the spirit of the man who believes that death will put an end to his personal consciousness and even to his memory forever, in that inner recess, even without his knowing it perhaps, a shadow hovers, a vague shadow lurks, a shadow of the shadow of uncertainty, and while he tells himself: ‘There’s nothing for it but to live this passing life, for there is no other!’ at the same time he hears, in this most secret recess, his own doubt murmur: ‘Who knows? ...’ He is not sure he hears aright, but he hears. Likewise, in some recess of the soul of the true believer who has faith in a future life, a muffled voice, the voice of uncertainty, murmurs in his spirit’s ear: ‘Who knows? ...’ Perhaps these voices are no louder than the buzzing of mosquitoes when the wind roars through the trees in the woods; we scarcely make out the humming, and yet, mingled in the uproar of the storm, it can be heard. How, without this uncertainty, could we ever live? (4: 131)

A comparison between this passage and the Mayor's condensed version makes it readily apparent how much Unamuno's style of writing differs from Greene's. Yet this is Unamuno's way of relentlessly making his point, appealing as much to sentiment as to reason. Indeed, Unamuno's style is perfectly appropriate, because words fall short when it comes to describing the invisible God. Unamuno's question 'Who knows?' – '¿quién sabe?' (4: 145) – is therefore all the more insidious for its apparent simplicity. He knows – and makes full use of – the impossibility of proving a negative. Science operates by advancing hypotheses that may be disproved, and on this basis scientific theories are built. It follows that, apart from pure mathematics, there are few or no real absolutes in science. There is apparently no scientific evidence that any part of a person's individual consciousness survives death, but 'Who knows?' The absence of evidence is no evidence. Consequently, the ¿quién sabe? of Unamuno seems to be permanently irrefutable. Yet this would only be so much sophistry if it were not for the desire that all human beings, according to Unamuno, feel for eternal life. While reason denies a person's consciousness may survive his or her death, desire wills otherwise: 'And from this clash, from this embrace between despair and scepticism, is born uncertainty, holy, sweet, saving uncertainty, our supreme consolation' (4: 131).

To Unamuno, the human condition is summed up by 'those supremely meaningful, immortal words' (4: 133) of the father of the possessed boy in the Gospel according to Mark: 'Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief' (9.24): 'Such is human faith; such was the heroic faith which Sancho Panza had in his master, the knight Don Quijote de la Mancha, as I think I have shown in my *Life of Don Quixote and Sancho*, a faith based on uncertainty, on doubt.' And Unamuno goes on to state that 'Don Quixote is the prototype of the vitalist whose faith is founded on uncertainty, and Sancho is the prototype of the rationalist who doubts his own reason' (4: 133). Doubt and uncertainty, according to Unamuno's interpretation, unite Sancho and Don Quixote, just as they unite Father Quixote and the Mayor, their literary descendants.

5.

The sharing of a meal is the expression *par excellence* of human solidarity and unity. At the centre, therefore, both of the novel and of Father Quixote's life, is the Eucharist, which is also the church's great prayer of thanksgiving and of intercession wherein the merits of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross are applied to the living and the dead. The elements of the Eucharist are those of any ordinary meal in the Mediterranean world:

At the heart of the Eucharistic celebration are the bread and wine that, by the words of Christ and the invocation of the Holy Spirit, become Christ's Body and Blood. [...] The signs of bread and wine become, in a way surpassing understanding, the Body and Blood of Christ; they continue also to signify the goodness of creation. (*Catechism* 1333)

Thus bread and wine provide the link between creation and redemption. The etymological origin of 'Eucharist' is the Greek word for 'giving thanks', and in the Eucharist the Church gives thanks for the gifts of the Creator and Redeemer. The Greek word for 'sacrament' is 'mystery', and the richness of the Eucharistic mystery seems positively inexhaustible: 'The Eucharist is the heart and summit of the Church's life, for in it Christ associates his Church and all her members with his sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving offered once for all on the cross to his Father' (*Catechism* 1407).

Jesus affirms the importance of the Eucharist, linking it also to eternal life: 'Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day' (John 6.54). These words speak directly to the fundamental desire for immortality that Unamuno identifies in himself, and which he believes is a truly human desire. There are at least five important encounters or episodes that affirm the centrality of the Eucharist in *Monsignor Quixote*. These include Father Quixote's encounter with the Bishop of Motopo, the picnics with Sancho, the suspension *a divinis*, Father Quixote and Sancho's encounter

with Señor Diego, and the final mass at Osera. Of these, the last is the culmination, for which the first four carefully and gradually prepare the ground.

Father Quixote's encounter with the Bishop of Motopo in the opening chapter of the novel immediately draws attention to the symbolic importance of food and wine.

Appropriately, Father Quixote is first seen on his way to the local collective to buy wine. Father Quixote apologetically explains that while it is 'a good little local wine', it is not an 'important' one; the Bishop of Motopo, however, corrects him: 'No wine can be regarded as unimportant [...] since the marriage at Cana' (14). At Cana, according to the New Testament, Jesus miraculously turns water into wine at the instigation of Mary, thus embarking on his public ministry. Furthermore, the miracle at Cana is seen as a prefiguration of the Last Supper where Jesus offers his disciples bread and wine as his own body and blood.

Significantly, the encounter with the Bishop of Motopo culminates in a meal. Teresa, the practical-minded housekeeper, provides the Bishop and Father Quixote with a simple lunch consisting of horsemeat and some local cheese and wine, followed by cognac. In the end, Father Quixote is left quite dazzled by 'the Italian bishop who had shown such kindness, such courtesy, such love of wine', so that 'it seemed to him that one of the pagan gods he had read about in his Latin studies had rested for an hour or two under his roof-tree' (24–5). This, then, is clearly no ordinary encounter, and no ordinary meal. The reference to paganism serves as a reminder that the ritual meal by far antedates Christianity. At the same time, the reference to Cana clearly locates this meal within the context of the Christian Eucharist. Incidentally, the Bishop of Motopo's love of wine and generally liberal attitude suggest that he is closely modelled on Browning's Bishop Blougram.

During their travels through La Mancha, in crisp air and sunshine, Father Quixote and the Mayor enjoy stopping off quiet country roads to have a picnic, typically in the shade of an ancient tree beside a little brook in which they can chill a few bottles of Manchegan wine.

These picnics very much resemble the ones that Greene himself enjoyed when travelling in Spain with his friend Father Leopoldo Durán, and they display a sense of peace and serenity that is new and a little surprising in Greene's fiction.

Roger Sharrock sees the picnic scenes 'as a code for harmony and increasing friendship', but also notes that they possess 'a ritual aspect': 'The repeated scenes do not just operate as a useful shorthand within the convention of realism: by creating an atmosphere suggesting ritual celebration they seem to point outside the limits of realism' (275). Sharrock does not mention the Eucharist, but arguably this is precisely the 'ritual celebration' to which the picnic scenes are pointing. This interpretation does not contradict, but rather supplements the idea that the picnic scenes demonstrate 'harmony and increasing friendship'. In general, the sharing of ordinary food and drink tends to create and maintain a sense of community between people, and the Eucharist, in particular, creates and maintains bonds of communion between those who participate in its celebration.

Because of the fundamental importance of the Eucharist in his life as a Catholic priest, it is with a sense of horror that Father Quixote later learns of his suspension *a divinis*, a metaphorical 'sentence of death' (207) which 'means I mustn't say Mass – not in public, not even in private. [...] I remain a priest, but a priest only to myself. A useless priest forbidden to serve others' (208). The local bishop considers Father Quixote's behaviour to be unworthy of the clerical state; Father Quixote, however, believes himself innocent, and feels deprived of his very *raison d'être*. The painful scene confirms that the Eucharist is indeed at the heart of Father Quixote's existence. In his final state of semi-delirium, Father Quixote's conscience utterly rejects the bishop's judgement: 'You condemn me, Excellency, not to say my Mass even in private. This is a shameful thing. For I am innocent' (247).

In the next important scene, Father Quixote and the Mayor encounter Señor Diego, an 'old man with great dignity' (217) who is the owner of a particularly fine vineyard. Seated

under a fig tree the three men converse about the disappearance of rural, non-industrial attitudes and values. 'A vine', to Señor Diego, 'is alive like a flower or a bird. It is not something made by man – man can only help it to live – or to die' (221). Father Durán explains that Señor Diego is based on a Señor Antonio who 'like Señor Diego in the novel, is first and foremost a poet, a man whose heart overflows with humanity and poetry' (322). Indeed, it is poetic language that gives human beings the imaginative power to see bread and wine as signs of a mystery or sacrament. The major significance of Señor Diego and his vineyard in the novel is therefore the organic connection between wine and the Eucharist: 'Thus in the Offertory we give thanks to the Creator for bread and wine, fruit of the "work of human hands", but above all as "fruit of the earth" and "of the vine" – gifts of the Creator' (*Catechism* 1333). Señor Diego represents all those whose work has gone into the making of wine for the Eucharist, and his attitude is truly one of acknowledging the vine as a gift of the Creator, 'not something made by man'.

The final and culminating event is Father Quixote's last Mass at the monastery of Osera, where he is brought, dying, after a violent encounter with the *Guardia Civil*. Rising from his bed in the middle of the night, Father Quixote proceeds 'slowly and carefully' (247), either dreaming or delirious, to the monastery church, followed by the Mayor, Father Leopoldo the guestmaster, and a Professor Pilbeam, an expert on Ignatian spirituality. Having found his way to the church, Father Quixote walks 'firmly' straight to the altar and celebrates an 'oddly truncated form' of Mass:

'Who the day before He suffered took bread ...' Father Quixote seemed totally unaware that there was no Host, no paten waiting on the altar. He raised empty hands, '*Hoc est enim corpus meum,*' and afterwards he went steadily on without hesitation to the consecration of the non-existent wine in the non-existent chalice.

Father Leopoldo and the professor had knelt from custom at the words of consecration: the Mayor remained standing. He wanted to be prepared if Father Quixote faltered.

'Hic est enim calix sanguinis mei.' The empty hands seemed to be fashioning a chalice out of the air. (248–9)

Father Quixote is not dissuaded by the absence of the elements of bread and wine, taking Communion himself and urging the Mayor to receive it as well: “*Compañero,*” the priest said, “you must kneel, *compañero*” (250). Thus the Mayor receives invisible Communion at the hands of Father Quixote: ‘Anything which will give him peace, he [the Mayor] thought, anything at all’ (250). The priest subsequently collapses and dies on the floor by the altar.

This strange celebration of the Eucharist precipitates a debate between the Mayor, Professor Pilbeam, and Father Leopoldo about whether they have just been witnessing a true celebration of the Mass. It does, however, seem quite clear from the way the scene is described that this is indeed Father Quixote’s last celebration of the Eucharist, in defiance of the bishop’s unjust prohibition. The Eucharistic elements of bread and wine are not really missed, because this final Mass in a sense consecrates all the meals that Father Quixote and Sancho have already shared together on their two journeys. The picnic scenes thus anticipate the moment when Father Quixote gives Sancho invisible communion. Seen not as a sequence of events, but as one spiritual moment, resolving all distinction between fact and fiction, the novel is itself a literary celebration of the Eucharist.

6.

It is important that despite his suspension from sacramental ministry, Father Quixote remains a priest and he remains at the service of others until the end. Like his ancestor who offered Sancho the governorship of an island, Father Quixote, shortly before his death, in his turn offers the Mayor a kingdom:

The voice that came from the bed however sounded strong and firm. ‘I don’t offer you a governorship, Sancho. I offer you a kingdom.’

‘Speak to him,’ Father Leopoldo urged.

‘A kingdom?’ Sancho repeated.

‘Come with me, and you will find the kingdom.’

‘I will never leave you, father. We have been on the road together too long for that.’ (246)

As a priest it is not for Father Quixote to offer anyone a kingdom of this world. What he has to offer the Mayor, on the contrary, is the kingdom of heaven, thus showing that even in his final dreamlike state he is aware of his priestly ministry.

Sancho’s life is profoundly changed by his friendship with Father Quixote. Even though he and the other survivors must go on searching, one suspects that Father Quixote has finally found ‘truth’ on his deathbed, as the Bishop of Motopo hoped. For the Mayor, nothing can be quite the same again following his travels with Father Quixote, a man he had come to love and respect. Indeed,

an idea quite strange to him had lodged in his brain. Why is it that the hate of man – even of a man like Franco – dies with his death, and yet love, the love which he had begun to feel for Father Quixote, seemed now to live and grow in spite of the final separation and the final silence – for how long, he wondered with a kind of fear, was it possible for that love of his to continue? And to what end? (256)

Thus it appears that the Mayor’s hate of Franco – the hate which had led him to the perverse wish that hell might exist for the purpose of the Generalissimo’s punishment – is now resolved through the workings of his love of Father Quixote. For while Father Quixote has had the company of his ‘books of chivalry’ and his love of Jesus, Mary, and the saints, the Mayor seems to have been a very lonely man, even to the extent of depending on a brothel for human contact, and finding as he grows older that such comfort as can be found there is by its very nature transient. He is not intimate with his party comrades, being instead concerned to conceal from them his own nagging doubts about Marxism. It seems that Father Quixote is his only real friend, and he naturally wonders, and worries, where that friendship and that love will lead him.

Father Quixote's death leaves the Mayor with both a sense of irreplaceable loss and unexpected hope. In his mind, at least, Father Quixote lives on indeed, in keeping with Unamuno's suggestion that 'We fight against death not only by longing for the irrational, but also by acting in such wise that we become irreplaceable, impressing our seal upon others, working upon our fellow men and dominating them, giving ourselves to them and making ourselves eternal through them insofar as possible' (4: 291).

Conclusion

This thesis has aimed to read Graham Greene's three late novels *The Human Factor* (1978), *Doctor Fischer of Geneva or the Bomb Party* (1980), and *Monsignor Quixote* (1982) in the light of Unamuno's philosophy of the tragic sense of life. This sense is well articulated by another Catholic writer, J. R. R. Tolkien, in his essay '*Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics*', where he says of the Geat hero that 'He is a man, and that for him and many is sufficient tragedy' (115). Greene's characters, unlike Beowulf, do not fight physical monsters or a physical dragon; they confront instead the monsters of despair, doubt, hopelessness, and uncertainty. The challenge, according to Unamuno, is to face these theological monsters and not be overcome by them, and to make oneself immortal as far as possible by making a difference in the lives of other people. For instance, Castle's wish 'to right the balance' (*The Human Factor* 147) may be interpreted as a vague desire to make a difference in this sense, but his efforts are negated by his own refusal 'to go on for ever' (24). Doctor Fischer, perversely, seeks to tyrannise the lives of others and thus only inspires hate, which dies with him. In the end it is Father Quixote who most closely approaches Unamuno's ideal. The three novels can thus be seen as explorations of the Unamunian struggle for immortality.

Looking back at the three novels, David Lodge's earlier observation about the place of Catholicism in Greene's fiction remains fundamentally valid: it does indeed provide 'a system of concepts, a source of situations, and a reservoir of symbols with which he can order and dramatize certain intuitions about the nature of human experience' (6). Yet it would be a serious mistake to see the religious symbols as entirely separate from their religious content. On the contrary, the assumption is that the 'the nature of human experience' is most accurately captured by the religious expression. Unamuno believes 'that there exists no more solid foundation for morality than the foundation provided by the Catholic ethic' (4: 288)

whose aim is eternal life with God. If human nature is created by God, then the human experience and the religious experience must correspond at some fundamental level. Thus, in each of the three novels, the religious life of the characters is important in some way. Castle in *The Human Factor* may have ‘left God behind in the school chapel’ (107), and Jones in *Doctor Fischer of Geneva* may feel that ‘the Anglican Church, with all its contradictory beliefs, seemed closer to our agnostic views’ (97), but neither character is allowed to ignore religion altogether. Indeed, in *The Human Factor*, an ingenious parallel is drawn between priestcraft and spycraft, between the secrecy of the confessional and the secrecy of Castle’s relationship with his KGB control, Boris. And Doctor Fischer’s studies of ‘the greediness of the rich’ (58–59) are given theological implications, as the toothpaste millionaire imagines a God in his own image, greedy for the humiliation of his creatures. Feeling revulsion for Doctor Fischer and incurable grief for the loss of his wife, Jones’ own ‘small half-belief’ (142) shrivels up and dies. These two novels thus successfully demonstrate both the difficulty of believing in God in an imperfect world and the terrible emptiness of ‘living and dying in this world without God’ (*Lumen Gentium* 16; qtd in *Catechism* 844).

In *Monsignor Quixote*, Greene takes a step further to introduce a character, Father Quixote, who, despite his own doubts and misgivings, and despite the obvious shortcomings of the Roman Catholic Church, clings firmly to the faith, and by his modest, yet powerful example causes a fundamental change in the Mayor’s world-view. Jones asks why goodness should ‘have more immortality than evil?’ (*The Human Factor* 142); the Mayor asks why love seems to ‘live and grow in spite of the final separation and the final silence’ (*Monsignor Quixote* 256). The Mayor does not answer Jones’ question, but he testifies to his own experience of the immortality of love, which is a fundamental insight of Christian theology: ‘And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity’ (1 Cor. 13.13). Whether they accept it or not, the environments in which the characters of all three

novels find themselves permeated with Catholicism. In other words, Catholic faith and morals are as integral to Greene's late fiction as they are to his earlier, so-called Catholic novels, such as *Brighton Rock*, *The Power and the Glory*, and *The End of the Affair*. But if Greene's late fiction is Christian literature, then it is not the kind of literature Cardinal Newman may have had in mind when he warned about the impossibility of producing 'sinless Literature of sinful man' (195). None of Greene's characters is flawless, model Christians; far from it. But the overall feeling that remains is that Greene's fiction takes Catholicism seriously, frequently forcing the characters to grapple with serious questions of faith and morals: in this sense, at least, it can be called Christian literature.

The Human Factor, *Doctor Fischer of Geneva*, and *Monsignor Quixote* are all enriched by references to Greene's earlier novels. The three novels show that Greene can return to earlier genres and put them to new uses. Though formally a thriller, *The Human Factor* is a more serious and thoughtful work than Greene's earlier works of the genre. Both *The Human Factor* and *Doctor Fischer of Geneva* are love stories, but even though they contain clear references to *The End of the Affair*, they are free of any kind of divine intervention or miracle, with the possible exception of Jones' moment of inspiration when he finally discovers Doctor Fischer's weak point: that the latter has come to despise himself as much as he does the whole world. And *Monsignor Quixote* continues the dialogue between Catholicism and communism that can be traced back to *The Power and the Glory*, within the new context of the romance which Greene had begun to explore with *Travels with My Aunt*.

The Catholicism that is represented in Greene's novels very much reflects the author. It is an intellectual and inquisitive form of Catholicism which is clearly unhappy with formulaic answers. For instance, the priest who rejects Castle is seen to be following the rules: he cannot hear Castle's confession. Yet, paradoxically, the priest's response is wrong: it would have been better if he could somehow have found a way to listen to Castle. And from

the perspective of the confessor, Father Quixote experiences the inadequacy of his own response to the undertaker's problems. But with some help from Unamuno, at least Father Quixote and the Mayor come to see doubt can be a valuable and integral part of faith, rather than as something shameful that must be conquered or repressed. This, then, is something of the paradoxical nature of the religious universe of Greene's fiction.

Looking to the future, Mark Lawson is probably right to suggest that 'With the intricacies of Catholic belief now more marginal even to some Catholics, these aspects of the stories will increasingly have to be taught and foot-noted as are the manners of society in Jane Austen's day' (4). Something else that would be most welcome is a new collection of essays on Greene's fiction. This might include, *inter alia*, essays on theology and philosophy, Unamuno, the Second World War in Greene's fiction, the relationship between literature and religion, Greene's narrative style, his relationship with Evelyn Waugh and other Catholic writers, Greene's influence on later fiction, Greene and film, to name but a few possible subjects, in no particular order.

Given that many of Greene's novels have colonial or post-colonial settings, post-colonial theory may also prove a useful tool for the student of Greene's fiction. A key issue might be whether Greene's non-European settings merely provide a dramatic background for the spiritual struggles of the European characters, or whether Greene's fiction has something to say about the use and abuse of colonial power, or about the relationships between the colonisers and the colonised. With an open mind there are many possibilities. Indeed, this thesis has argued that one of the chief characteristics of Greene's late fiction is intellectual curiosity and dialogue; in this spirit it is to be hoped that in the future the study of his work will take many new and interesting forms.

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