CHRISTIAN ORTHODOXY IN THE ENGLISH NOVEL
1930-1950

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CHAPTER I

RELIGION AND THE INTELLECTUALS

The Current Religious Revival

The past two decades have seen a renewed interest in religion on the part of the whole English-speaking world. The motion picture industry, for example, reflects the widespread appeal of religion today. Recently many popular religious films have been made, the culmination of which was Cecil B. DeMille's two hundred and ten minute story of The Ten Commandments, produced at an outlay of over thirteen million dollars. The efforts of popular evangelists have fostered a "wake up or blow up" attitude toward religion. One result of this revival is that church buildings throughout the nation are becoming as crowded as football stadia and grammar schools. National and international church councils have proclaimed that man cannot save himself by political action but must turn to God. High on the bestseller lists are books telling how to use God as a steppingstone to success and happiness. Norman Vincent Peale's humanistic texts on a happy life and Fulton Oursler's three "greatest" books retelling Biblical stories have had enormous commercial success. C. S. Lewis and Dorothy Sayers have popularized theology for the common man. The popular novel with an
admittedly religious nature has not been left behind. Lloyd Douglas's work has found its way from the bookstall to the cinema screen; Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited* was a bestseller.

Some critics feel that this general increase in religiosity has not been limited to the popular mind nor to primarily religious and commercial means of communication.\(^1\) Chad Walsh, for example, maintains that since 1940, religion has been gaining a position of intellectual respect in the academic world that it has not held for the past half-century.\(^2\) Concerning the intellectual climate of the 1940's, the editors of *The Partisan Review* state:

> One of the most significant tendencies of our time, especially in this decade, has been the new turn toward religion among intellectuals and the growing disfavor with which secular attitudes and perspectives are now regarded in not a few circles that lay claim to the leadership of culture.\(^3\)

One such circle is that consisting of several well-known English novelists.

A study of this circle of English novelists is undertaken in this thesis, in order to provide tentative answers to some of the many questions corollary to an assumption that

\(^1\)Chad Walsh, *C. S. Lewis: Apostle to the Skeptics* (New York, 1949), p. 166.

\(^2\)Ibid.

such an intellectual revival in religion is indeed a fact. A few of these questions are: What evidence is there for this movement? What are its causes? What is its significance? How does this movement resemble the Oxford Movement of the last century? What is the rationale of the revival?

Evidence of and explanations for this revival began as early as 1940. In November of that year, Bernard Bell, an Episcopal clergyman well-known in educational and literary circles, published an article in which he commented on the turning of a large number of intellectuals to religion. He stated:

Alfred Noyes, Middleton Murry, T. S. Eliot, Dorothy Sayers, Elliott Coleman, Ross Hoffman, Arnold Lunn, Aldous Huxley, Gilbert Chesterton, Jacques Maritain, Ralph Adams Cram, William Orton, Shelia Kaye-Smith, (to name only a few) . . . all possess good minds, are educated and "modern," and have come from something that has varied between indifference and a scornful skepticism to a thoughtful and sincere religious devotion.4

In addition to this imposing list of names, he refers indirectly to certain educators at prominent colleges and universities as similarly inclined. In attempting to explain this group's new orientation, he lists several major reasons for the escape to religion—an escape not from, but into reality.5 The forces leading to an increased interest in religion are fundamentally interior stresses—desires to

5 Ibid.
escape a present "inner damnation." The striving for a purpose, a sense of direction, leads them to "cry aloud for a God who can reveal to them what they must know but cannot ascertain." The wish to rise above a life dominated by material things, possessions, and the "revolt against the tyranny of force"—the chaos of everyone's seeking to place himself above his neighbors—are further imperatives to flee to a haven in religion.

Just a decade after Bell presented his findings, The Partisan Review conducted an extensive symposium seeking evidence of and an explanation for the revival. In all, twenty-eight persons—such as Sidney Hook, John Dewey, Allen Tate, Paul Tillich, J. T. Farrell, and Jacques Maritain—contributed their ideas on the questions proposed by the editors. The resulting comments did not suggest so simple an explanation as Bell's. One modern author, James Agee, gave a lengthy list of ideas "ripening" intellectuals for conversion. This explanation includes age as one factor. People are more susceptible to religious conversion in middle age than in skeptical youth. Furthermore, this particular generation has been unexposed to an "Age of Faith" where

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6Ibid., p. 587.  7Ibid., p. 588.  8Ibid., p. 589.


10Ibid.

religion is "like air to be breathed." Agee continues by listing Individualism, Science, Reason, Fear of "the Bomb," Evil, Guilt, and several other things as playing parts in conversion to religion: "a conscious collaboration of Reason with Faith." Finally, the conclusion must be drawn that religious conversion is in a large degree a purely subjective matter, and though many objective factors are involved, "all the revivals of religion and religiosity since the Eighteenth Century are attempts to restore the validity of the data of feeling," the "hidden mysteries of which are unexplainable."

What of the above statement that today's generation of intellectuals has not been exposed to religion? A general survey of the novels during the first part of the twentieth century should either support or derogate Agee's claim. Despite the novels of revolt in the 1890's, most novels published before the First World War continued to reflect the confidence in the progress of science and man that was so prevalent in the latter half of the nineteenth century. A few skeptics and radicals spoke out against the "materialism

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12Ibid.
and cock-sureness of Bennett and Wells."\(^{17}\) However, there
was not immediate widespread change. "The greatest shift in
the intellectual climate from the nineteenth to the twentieth
century is probably the slow and gradual loss of the once
passionate hope in human possibilities."\(^{18}\) "Not until D. H.
Lawrence proclaimed the 'dark gods' was the radical rejection
of reason considered seriously, or the solid achievements of
technological advance counted as dust in the balance over
against the eternal savagery of man's unconscious drives."\(^{19}\)
The "intellectual fascism"\(^{20}\) of Lawrence and his coterie left
the 1920's a disillusioned decade of nihilism and despair. A
positive belief in anything at all was rejected by the literary
leaders of the age. However, the novels which did nothing
but mock everything lacked depth.\(^{21}\) When fundamental purposes
and meanings were destroyed, life, even existence itself,
became disorganized, chaotic, and inconclusive.\(^{22}\) But this
literature of despair is a contradiction, for it is an attempt
to save something out of an abyss of what it declares to be

\(^{17}\) K. M. Hamilton, "Theological Bearings in Modern Literature," *Dalhousie Review*, XXXII (Summer, 1952), 121.  
\(^{19}\) Ibid.  
unsavable. By the late 1920's and early 1930's, the excitement and freshness of "naturalism" began to lose some of its appeal. Taking its place was a less cynical "realism" that reaffirmed the values of the individual and of humanism. Such "realistic idealism" expressed an awareness of the future in which the author began to place more of his trust. The selectivity of the realistic writer was exercised in expressing this hopeful future, whereas the naturalistic writers showed none, but recorded everything in a "deification of truth telling." Therefore, literary evidence shows that Agee's claim that today's generation has been relatively unexposed to religion is valid.

The 1930's saw "the pendulum start back." Although there was a definite decline in "debunking satire," there remained a reflection of fear in the descriptive elements of fiction which was yet more visible than the prophetic.

23Harlan Hatcher, "Reaction from Despair," The English Journal, VIII (October, 1930), 609.
24Ibid., p. 605.
25E. M. Sickels, "Farewell to Cynicism," College English, III (October, 1941), 34.
26Ibid., p. 605. 27Frierson, p. 235.
30Ibid.
interests were sought by the writers of the 1930's. "Art went into politics and was busy campaigning for a brave new world when World War II came along." Realism, coupled with increasing international unrest in Europe, led to dependence on two basic foundations: Marxism and religion. Writers attempting to interpret something for their readers needed some beliefs from which to work. They went from disillusioned debunking to serious groping and finally came to rest on one of these two opposing, yet often similar, answers to life. Disappointment for the group seeking a new social order came with the end of the Second World War as hope in the future of Russia died out under increasing totalitarian oppression. Many of the writers of this group such as Celine, Sartre, and Camus have become mired in a "new Hamletism": an inability to react positively to anything, which leaves them in much the same position as authors of the late 1920's. With the Marxist and humanist writers no longer looking for their new world, but more often falling back into the negation of the past, the outlook for a hopeful future seems to be monopolized by the religious writers.

31 Walsh, p. 167.
33 Walsh, p. 169.
Thus it may be seen that though the evidence for such a revival is clear, the explanations offered for its cause are varied, often contradictory, and support the conclusion of Agee that subjective experiences are not completely explainable by scientific means.35

Few agree exactly about the importance or significance of this movement. Irving Howe, in answer to the series of questions proposed by The Partisan Review, sees nothing lasting nor significant in it at all.36 Another writer admits only "that a contemporary turn to religion has been rendered plausible if not inevitable by the events of recent history and their impact upon the consciousness of intellectuals."37 A third, viewing the dissonance of the contributors to the symposium, feels that a few intellectuals "thinking themselves back into religion will not give an age of faith untempered by rational criticism."38 C. I. Glicksberg says that "the return to religion represents a significant and vital movement in our time."39 Despite the dissension of most of the above critics, the majority of the opinions of The Partisan Review's contributors, and others, seems to be that

this revival is the most notable philosophic trend in recent years. But a more definite statement as to its significance must remain to be made by historians viewing the phenomenon with the advantage of retrospective vision.

Thus far, consideration has been given to the fact of the movement, its causes, and its significance. Among other important questions about it are: Has there heretofore been anything comparable? What are some of its results? What are some of the common concepts of its members? Because of the limited scope of this study, it will be necessary to select a particular group of intellectuals, a microcosm, and study it, rather than to try to deal with the whole movement.

Since W. H. Auden has noted "that at present it seems to be literary folk who form the majority of those intellectual who have been converted to some supernatural religion,"\(^4\) perhaps "literary folk" would be a representative group reflecting the answers to the above questions. Further suggestion for choosing the field of literature is found in persuasion that "the artist's sensitivity functions as a seismograph, recording the underground disturbances which lead to cultural disintegration or renewal."\(^4\) The following idea of Walsh's indicates another boundary that may be imposed


\(^4\)Hamilton, "Theological Bearings in Modern Literature," p. 121.
in seeking to isolate a representative, but not overly large, intellectual group. Speaking of writers, creative artists, he terms them "one-half mirror and one-half crystal ball."\(^{42}\) T. S. Eliot, writing on the relationship between literature and religion, claims that "the novel is the form in which literature affects the greatest number of readers."\(^{43}\) He goes on to divide the novel, the religious novel, into two categories. The first is known as religious propaganda.\(^{44}\) It is that body of literature written by people such as A. J. Cronin and Bruce Marshall, whose intentions are divided between producing literature and preaching their faith, with a greater emphasis on the latter.

Eliot does not name his other group, but Walsh's term "oblique literature"\(^{45}\) describes it adequately. It is written from a basically Christian, or religious, viewpoint. But it is more than mere propaganda. Dorothy Sayers well pictures this fiction as she speaks of the gospel and her presentation of it in *The Man Born to Be King*.

My object was to tell the story to the best of my ability, within the medium at my disposal—in short to make as good a work of art as I could. For a work of art that is not good and true in art is not good

\(^{42}\) Walsh, p. 166.


\(^{44}\) Eliot, p. 346.

\(^{45}\) Walsh, p. 171.
and true in any other respect, and is useless for any purpose whatsoever— even for edification— because it is a lie.\textsuperscript{46}

The author of such fiction is one whose vision is informed by definite beliefs. He has behind him a system which regards the individual as a soul to be saved or lost and which attaches immense importance to his least actions.\textsuperscript{47}

The value of such a novel "depends on a very delicate balance between the man who believes and the man who writes."\textsuperscript{48}

Oblique literature may be further subdivided. The first division may be called academic. Academic-oblique novels are those written by scholars such as C. S. Lewis and Charles Williams who are known primarily for their literary scholarship and informal theological works. In contrast is the popular, journalistic novel that is not too intellectual to be a Book-of-the-Month Club selection. This group is best represented by Graham Greene and Evelyn Waugh.

As the works of these four authors are examined and described, some of the basic concepts of the movement and its resulting influence on the British novel will be brought out. For the purpose of comparison with an earlier, similar revival, the nineteenth-century Oxford Movement, though much

\textsuperscript{46}Dorothy L. Sayers, \textit{The Man Born to Be King} (New York, 1943), p. 4.

\textsuperscript{47}Martin Turnell, "The Religious Novel," \textit{Commonweal}, LV (October 26, 1951), 55.

\textsuperscript{48}Ibid.
narrower and less literary, will be used. It will be shown that the present movement is more profound spiritually, theoretically, and practically, than the earlier one.

Literature and the Oxford Movement

Slightly over a century ago, on July 9, 1833, John Keble, Professor of Poetry at Oriel College, Oxford, preached a sermon entitled "The National Apostasy." According to Cardinal J. H. Newman and other, more recent scholars, that sermon was the catalyst precipitation the Oxford Movement. There are two primary schools of thought about why this revival occurred. Both are true in part, but neither is a complete explanation of the phenomenon. One theory labels the Movement, alternately known as Tractarianism or Puseyism, as mostly reactionary. This all-encompassing definition includes reactions from such actions as the French Revolution, Evangelicalism, and the dominance of the Church of England by Parliament. The other explanation, looking from the


vantage point of literature rather than history, considers Tractarianism as an integral part of the Romantic Revival.52

The religious revivers at Oxford, trained in a traditional Christian outlook, saw a major flaw in the spirit of revolution that had become so prevalent in the closing years of the eighteenth century. The ideas of liberty, equality, and fraternity were compatible with Christian philosophy, though not as they were being expounded, for they had been "conceived in terms of human self-sufficiency, in terms of rebellion to divine authority."53 As a result, nearly all of the Anglican Clergy "regarded the Chartists with horror."54 The members of the Tractarians were especially determined in opposing "all those who taught the people 'to rail against their rulers and superiors.'"55 Such secularism and materialism was the beginning of the "loss of man's spiritual identity."56 The Calvinistic and Methodist emphasis on emotionalism and individuality tended to undermine the authority of the Catholic Church. The revival of Anglicanism was an attempt to establish and strengthen a via media between the extremes of Romanism and


53 Harrold, p. 38.


55 Ibid.

56 Harrold, p. 38.
Protestantism. The leaders of the movement "hoped to retrieve the seventeenth century conception of the church and state as organically one," and to stifle the growing idea that the church was a mere human and state institution. The occasion of Keble's sermon was the Reform Bill in Parliament that further strengthened the power of the state over the church.

For at least ten years, the Oxford Movement was confined primarily to the University and several professors of literature. This is reflected by the Protestant George Borrow. When queried as to how the Oxford Movement reached the University, Borrow replied simply, "Why from Scott's novels." Many similarities have been noted between the Romantics and the Tractarians. Drummond further quotes Borrow as pointing out that whole sections of Keble's Assize sermon had been copied from Scott. This novelist shared a deep reverence for the past with antiquarians such as Pusey. However, one important difference between the Tractarian and Romantic movements was that the latter group built their "revolt from the negations of the French Revolution" on reason, while

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58 Harrold, p. 43.
60 W. H. Hutton, p. 282.
the former built on authority: of the church, the early church fathers, and seventeenth-century divines.\textsuperscript{62}

The above reasons provide only a partial explanation of the causes precipitating Tractarianism. However, in searching for reasons behind religious revivals in any century, it is well to remember that

To account for the Movement solely in terms of historical cause and effect is to fall into the very secular fallacy which they saw overtaking their contemporaries. It is to judge an absolute standpoint from a relativist point of view: valid only to a certain degree, but fatally missing the essence of the thing judged.\textsuperscript{63}

Though best known in England under the title of "The Oxford Movement," this Revival was no mere insular activity. Rather it was a part of a "general recoil of the conservative spirit against revolutionary liberalism"\textsuperscript{64} that was reflected in each country of Europe. Perhaps an excerpt from \textit{Tracts for the Times} best sets forth the purposes behind the initial work at Oxford.

We are all concurred most heartily in the necessity of impressing on people that the Church was more than a merely human institution; that it had privilege, sacraments, a ministry ordained by Christ; that it was a matter of the highest obligation to remain united to the Church.\textsuperscript{65}

This statement indicates the campaign for the authority of the institution, the struggle against liberalism, and the

\textsuperscript{62}\textit{Ibid.} \hfill \textsuperscript{63}Harrold, p. 42.
\textsuperscript{64}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 37.
\textsuperscript{65}Cited in W. H. Hutton, p. 283.
stress on the sacramental system with which the Puseyites were concerned. Harrold defines the Tractarians as trying "..., boldly to realize the primitive 'apostolic' conception of Christianity, and to apply it uncompromisingly to modern conditions." 66

From 1833 until 1841 the major voice of the movement was Tracts for the Times. Their purpose was the education of people who were merely mistaken in their beliefs, not conscious heretics. 67 This series of pamphlets, ninety in all, was mainly the work of J. H. Newman, fellow of Oriel and vicar of St. Mary's. 68 Among the other contributors to these publications were Keble; Edward B. Pusey, antiquarian and professor of Hebrew (from whom the Movement received its name); Isaac Williams, author and fellow of Trinity; and Richard H. Proude, novelist and disciple of Keble and Newman. The list of scholars affected by or directly involved in the revival is lengthy, but perhaps one other person deserves special mention. Martin Joseph Routh, scholar, theologian, and Tory stood behind the younger men as president of Magdalen College. 69 Indeed, such friends were needed, for at Convocation in February, 1845, the degree of a Tractarian novelist,

66 Harrold, p. 35.
69 Ibid., p. 288.
William G. Ward, who leaned far toward Romanism, was revoked. This was shortly after Isaac Williams had been defeated in his standing for a professorship of poetry. Newman had retired three years previously after the Bishop of Oxford had censured Tract XC "On Certain Passages in the XXXIX Articles." This tract pointing out the close relation of the theology of the Thirty-Nine Articles and that of Roman Catholicism had been condemned by the heads of the various colleges the preceding year.70

Harrold traces the general effects of such an anti-liberal movement as Tractarianism on the political and philosophical theories of the Victorian Age,71 but to just what extent the Oxford Movement flourished outside the walls of the University as a popular revival is difficult to assess. Scholars concerned with the nineteenth century are even in disagreement as to what extent the ideas of the Tractarians found favor with other theologians and intellectuals at Oxford. In fact, some have even questioned the scholarly ability of the leaders of the Movement. For example, the journalist and novelist George Borrow perhaps viewed the revival from a biased, Protestant point of view, but at the same time that he accused Keble of pilfering passages from Scott, he spoke of the sermon "preached by a divine of weak

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70 Ibid., p. 289.
71 Harrold, p. 48-54.
and confused intellect."72 One present-day historian con-
ccludes that Newman was a very narrowly educated person73 (as
indeed his inability to read German and his ignorance of
contemporary German theology might seem to indicate74), and
that Tractarianism did not reach the "higher levels of
thought."75

Nevertheless, after the Movement had grown and matured
for over ten years within the academic atmosphere of the
University, the conversion of Newman and the furor caused by
Tract XC caused the spread of the Movement into the world.76

Soon after the Tracts stopped being published, the
Puseyites turned to fiction as a means of propaganda. "Im-
portant as fiction was in the 1840's for purposes of contro-
versy, it is not surprising that meanwhile the Tractarians
had begun to preach their doctrines by means of novels."77

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72 Cited in Drummond, p. 42.
73 Fawkes, p. 710.
74 However, a lack of training in modern languages does
not necessarily indicate that an Oxford don is relatively
"uneducated." As late as 1939, the Oxford Handbook (Oxford,
1939), p. 327, lists the three groups of subjects covered on
Responses: "I--Latin, Greek; II--Holy Scripture, English,
French, German, Italian, Spanish; III--Mathematics, Natural
Science." It then states that "in order to pass Responses
candidates are required to satisfy the examiners either in
at least one subject from each group and in four subjects in
all, or in both subjects of Group I and in both subjects of
Group III. All candidates must satisfy the examiners in two
of the languages (of which one must be either Latin or Greek)
..."
75 Fawkes, p. 710.
77 Ibid.
Needless to report, the Evangelical forces immediately began answering with novels of their own.\textsuperscript{78} This exchange produced the "dreary succession of religious novels"\textsuperscript{79} that marks the nineteenth century. "Early Tractarian novels" were "belligerent in tone" and consisted of "very poor stories subordinated to sermonizing, characters constructed to argue, and situations devised to illustrate a theory."\textsuperscript{80} Few classics can be found among the works emanating directly from the Oxford Movement. William Gresley and Francis Paget combined the social reform of Dickens with the Tractarian doctrines during the 1840's. The 1850's saw domestic novels such as \textit{Vanity Fair} adapted to the use of religious propaganda.\textsuperscript{81}

One reason for the noticeable lack of lasting novels is the fact that their purpose was completely didactic rather than for entertainment. For instance, the majority of them completely omitted any love interest.

This departure, together with an interest primarily in theology rather than literature, and indeed, a sad lack of artistic skill, produced a type of fiction which at first was little more than exposition and dialogue in the loosest narrative frame.\textsuperscript{82}

The novels of the 1850's showed an increasing tolerance and a gradual attempt at combining a sermon with a story which more

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{78}Drummond, p. 45.
\item \textsuperscript{79}W. H. Hutton, p. 306.
\item \textsuperscript{80}Drummond, p. 44.
\item \textsuperscript{81}Baker, \textit{The Novel}, p. 10.
\item \textsuperscript{82}Ibid.
\end{itemize}
often than not developed into melodrama. Thus, it is true that "the Oxford Movement was both the background and material for much Victorian prose and poetry, yet none of the greater poets [nor novelists] of the nineteenth century yielded themselves to its spell."84

The revival's greatest results seem to be not in the field of creative literature, but in history and theology. Routh considered the two inseparable and urged the younger scholars to greater accuracy in their writings.85 No doubt the greatest Tractarian writer as well as preacher was Newman. In 1845 his defection to Rome dealt a serious blow to the energy of the Movement. Pusey and most of the others continued with their original purposes, but with less vigor than while the group was united. Reverberations of the movement were felt generally: the clergy became more responsible and zealous86 after Tractarian fiction began naming Dissenters schismatics to, rather than competitors in, the Kingdom of God.87

In disagreement with Fawkes, who considers the revival "retrograde and temporary" and that "the sturdy Protestantism of England was in little danger from the solicitations either

83Ibid., pp. 71-72.  84Harrold, pp. 54-55.
86Ibid., p. 306.
87Drummond, p. 48.
of Oxford or of Rome,"\textsuperscript{88} is Harrold, who feels that

The Oxford Movement was not merely the work of what someone has called "a band of Oxford parsons," but an event—a continuing event—which has significance for anyone contemplating the fateful years of 1789, 1830, 1848, 1870, 1914, and 1939.\textsuperscript{89}

It is well to consider what relationship the Oxford Movement has to the current intellectual revival of religion. The main relationship is the similarity of a group that arose in the late 1930's with many of the same goals in mind. Such academicians as C. S. Lewis, Dorothy Sayers, and Charles Williams are not merely scholars; they are interested in revitalizing the Anglican Church. The following statement made about Charles Williams is equally true for Lewis, Sayers, and even T. S. Eliot, whose sympathies are with the others, though he is not connected so closely with the University.

Charles Williams was a devout member of that "odd" body, the Anglican Church, and as far removed as possible from that point of view which would cure the disunity of Christendom by denying the importance of church dogma.\textsuperscript{90}

Perhaps the greatest difference is the more profound ideals of the modern group. Though concerned with the Church of England, they are more deeply aware of the strong enemy facing Christianity in the form of modern, liberal, scientific humanism. They and others see the reality of the supernatural and the need for a strong inner life conforming to the doctrines of orthodox Christianity.

\textsuperscript{88}Fawkes, p. 711. \textsuperscript{89}Harrold, p. 33. \textsuperscript{90}W. H. Auden, "Charles Williams," The Christian Century, LXXIII (May 2, 1956), 552.
CHAPTER II

THE ACADEMIC RELIGIOUS NOVEL

The abbreviated history of the nineteenth century revival called the Oxford Movement in the last chapter is for the purpose of comparing it with the recent revival. Realization of the shortcomings of illustration by analogy demands that several major differences be pointed out between the two. The most important is that Newman, Pusey, and Keble were conscious leaders of a formal movement that was recognized in their own day and known as Tractarianism. This group had a definite set of well-defined goals which they set about to accomplish. Tractarian literature—expository and oblique—attempted to further these goals and spoke at length of the movement. In contrast, the modern revival is less conscious of itself and consists of merely a religious awakening among individuals and the resulting announcements and presentation of their newfound views. The nineteenth-century group was concerned more with history and apologetics than with creative literature. Whereas no significant works of fiction came from the pens of the earlier scholars and their successors, the skillful popular novel is well represented by the works of Graham Greene and Evelyn Waugh while Charles Williams and C. S. Lewis have turned out quite creditable scholarly works of fiction.
that are not so much in the modern tradition. So far, the stress of these contemporary novelists has been on the basic orthodox tenets of traditional Christianity—Catholic and Anglican—without the emphasis that was given to ritualism and sacramentalism in the later years of Tractarianism. The Puseyites were concerned at first with the Anglican Church and were mostly Oxford dons, whereas the contemporary revival has concerned Roman Catholics and non-Oxonians from the start.

Similarities between these two movements are also numerous. Both are basically reactions to the liberalism and humanism that were so prevalent in immediately preceding social, political, and religious thought. Both have been academic and scholarly with great emphasis placed on returning to traditional methods of thought. This traditionalism, often neo-scholasticism, of each has been a major point upon which liberal opponents have centered their attacks. From the humanist point of view, the dogmatism advocated by both seems to be outmoded, unscientific, and an appeal to false authority. The concern of both for the Church of England, though the latter has been much broader, is a further point in common.

Thus, it may be seen that there are definite points of similarity as well as difference between the two groups. In order to illustrate further the shape and content of modern Tractarianism, the four authors already mentioned must be considered. For the sake of convenience, Williams and Lewis
will take the role of the originators of the movement at Oxford, while Greene and Waugh, on the basis of their physical separation from Oxford, though Roman Catholic, will represent the later novelists of the 1840's and 1850's.

C. S. Lewis, with his clear literary style and public appeal, might possibly be compared with Newman and his place in the earlier movement. Williams, on the other hand would seem to reflect more of a combination of the spirit of Pusey, who wrote "with a deep devotion" and saw the religious elements of all parts of life,¹ and the professor of poetry, John Keble. One major distinction to be kept in mind is that the members of the earlier movement were clergymen but that Lewis, Williams, and the others are laymen.

C. S. Lewis

Until his recent defection to Cambridge, Clive Staples Lewis was an Oxford don in the Honor School of English Language and Literature and a fellow at Magdalen College,² until the late 1930's known only to other scholars.³ Throughout the Second World War he conducted a series of twenty-nine radiobroadcasts on Christianity for the British Broadcasting Corporation in addition to making lecture tours to various

¹W. H. Hutton, p. 291.
²"Don v. Devil," Time, L (September 8, 1947), 65.
³Wayne Shumaker, "The Cosmic Trilogy of C. S. Lewis," The Hudson Review, VIII (Summer, 1955), 240.
Royal Air Force bases for the same purposes. The latter assignment was accepted out of a sense of duty rather than for pleasure. Not only did this cultured professor find the task of answering inane questions proposed by Royal airmen distasteful, but he commented about the task: "I certainly never intended being a hot gospeler. If I had only known this when I became a Christian!"4 *Time* said of his radio talks that his voice became as familiar as the chiming of Big Ben and that to his listeners, his name was as synonymous with religion as that of the Archbishop of Canterbury.5 George Anderson, writing in *The Christian Century*, says,

\[\ldots\] others have roused the religious thinking of England's people—Newman, Pusey, and Wesley; but they were clergymen, and the audiences of the three together did not equal that which hangs on the words of this quiet, young Oxford don.6

There are two fields in which Lewis has done most of his writing: literary scholarship and popular theology. Most of his colleagues at Oxford disapproved of his "theological pamphleteering as a kind of academic heresy."7 One of his severest critics there expressed the opinion that Lewis's scholarship is far beyond that of any other English literary critic, but that "his Christian propaganda is cheap

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4Quoted in Walsh, C. S. Lewis, p. 9.


sophism."8 Indeed, his scholarship in the literature of early England was so highly thought of that he was chosen to contribute a volume entitled *Literature of the Sixteenth Century* to the *Oxford History of English Literature* series. Lewis's books on popular theology consist of allegories, apologetics, and a combination of the two in his novels, or "science-fiction romances."9 It is this latter group, his imaginative works, primarily his science fiction trilogy--*Out of the Silent Planet* (1938), *Perelandra* (1943), and *That Hideous Strength* (1945)--that is of concern here.

Lewis seems to have had a two-fold purpose in writing these three "cosmic myths."10 By his own admission he has had to write the kind of books that he would read if he could get them. "People won't write the books I want, so I have to do it for myself."11 The types of books that he likes are evidently quite acceptable to many intellectuals, for they have been termed "a scholar's holiday" by one reviewer.12

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8Ibid.


11Quoted in Walsh, p. 2.

"Probably not since fairy tale days has the mature reader been able to abandon himself so readily and so completely to sheer fantasy."\textsuperscript{13} The literary and mythical allusions are refreshing to the learned reader, although the author never becomes pedantic in his use of them.\textsuperscript{14}

What is gained by re-readings is not qualitatively different, but a denser and technically more exciting version of the same thing. Unlike many recent novelists, Lewis does not demand that his readers be clever, but if they are clever he rewards them.\textsuperscript{15}

The second purpose of the trilogy is to render traditional, orthodox Christian doctrine both "intellectually and emotionally attractive"\textsuperscript{16} to scholars and skeptics. He attempts to present metaphorically the basic tenets of Christianity "without references to the usual Christian symbols."\textsuperscript{17}

For what he wanted to say in his novels, Lewis did not work out a new theology. Rather he took the ideas of Augustine and Aquinas which had been extended poetically by Dante, Chaucer, and Milton,\textsuperscript{18} and rephrased them by extensive use of symbolism and imagery. Yet he did it not allegorically as in \textit{Pilgrim's Regress} (1933) nor in a dream-fantasy like \textit{The Great Divorce} (1946), but so realistically that the reader's

\textsuperscript{13}\textit{Ibid.} \hspace{1cm} \textsuperscript{14}\textit{Ibid.}, 339.

\textsuperscript{15}Shumaker, "The Cosmic Trilogy of C. S. Lewis," p. 251.

\textsuperscript{16}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 240.

\textsuperscript{17}Moorman, "Space Ship and Grail," p. 402.

\textsuperscript{18}Shumaker, "The Cosmic Trilogy of C. S. Lewis," p. 241.
belief is willingly suspended long enough for Lewis to present his richly inhabited universe. When looking at "our silent planet" from his point of view, the reader is enabled to see it from a new perspective, no doubt much like the perspective gained by the serious eighteenth-century reader of Gulliver's Travels, to whose adventures those of Ransom bear strong resemblance. Another most noticeable technical resemblance of the trilogy is to the fantasies of H. G. Wells. Further influences that have been noted are the science fiction of Jules Verne; the fantastic adventure novels of Rider Haggard; the philosophical speculations of Plato, the Kabbala, and the Rosicrucians; the myths of Greece and the Orient; and especially the poets Shelley, Keats, Blake, Dante, and Milton. Lewis has fused these elements, and more, into a "terrifying and beautiful description of the universe," in an "attempt to make the spiritual visible." In so doing, he accomplished an unusual thing. He

... shows rather than explains ... presents meanings without a rational explanation. By embodying the

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20 Hightet, p. 134.
22 Victor Hamm, "Mr. Lewis in Perelandra," Thought, XX (June, 1945), 273.
23 Hightet, p. 134.
24 Hamm, "Mr. Lewis in Perelandra," p. 275.
doctrines in meaningful situations which coalesce as myth, he has contrived to transpose his opinions into images and thus to resist a temptation to which many propaganda novelists succumb, the urge to drive every perception home by logical assertion.25

The author takes the clear, uncompromising ethical stand of traditional Christian thought and by his skillful "psychological handling of characters, . . . insistent acknowledgement of evil, . . . and original approach,"26 presents a "memorable and dramatic picture of the struggle between good and evil."27

The first of the trilogy, Out of the Silent Planet, begins with a realistic Wellsian scene28 and traces the invasion of Mars by two greedy scientists, Weston and Devine.29 Life on Mars, or Malacandra as it is called in "Old Solar," is regular and harmonious with each distinct and separate species of hmau, man, fulfilling its assigned task in the operation of the world. The planet is ruled by an Oyarsa, a representative of Mæleldil, the Very God Himself. The hero Ransom, a Lewis-like Cambridge philologist, wanders around the planet engaging in philosophic discussions with the unearthly hmau. He finds that earth, Thulcandra, is the

27Walsh, p. 46.
29Hight, p. 135.
only planet ruled by a "bent" or wicked Oyarsa (Satan), and that the others all live in love, peace, and cooperation in accordance with Maleldil's plan for the universe. He then returns to earth with Weston and Devine, who had been captured and exiled before they caused much damage.\textsuperscript{30}

\textit{Perelandra} is a myth of Paradise retained.\textsuperscript{31} Ransom is summoned to Venus to aid the newly created Eve of that planet in resisting the temptations of Satan,\textsuperscript{32} embodied in Weston rather than a serpent. The "concrete descriptions" of the Paradise are, if possible, more vivid and realistic than those of \textit{Paradise Lost}. Eve's temptation is a "superb achievement of psychological drama."\textsuperscript{33} Ransom eventually subdues Weston, after prolonged mental and spiritual combats, and leaves the Paradise, which is populated with the real embodiment of the images seen in the myths of earth.\textsuperscript{34}

\textit{That Hideous Strength} is the last and most imperfect of the three novels.\textsuperscript{35} It is more dramatic and more realistic, but not less fanciful than the others. The author moves from a presentation of the problem of good and evil in the macrocosm to a study of the microcosm. The conflict of the present time

\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{30}]Walsh, pp. 39-42.
\item[\textsuperscript{31}]Hamm, "Mr. Lewis in Perelandra," p. 271.
\item[\textsuperscript{32}]Walsh, p. 43.
\item[\textsuperscript{33}]Hamm, "Mr. Lewis in Perelandra," p. 279.
\item[\textsuperscript{34}]\textit{Ibid.}
\item[\textsuperscript{35}]Hight, p. 137.
\end{itemize}
is drawn: between the forces that will realize and cultivate human nature and those that wish to destroy it.\textsuperscript{36} The powers of Satan masquerade under the names of science and progress in their attempt to establish hell on earth. Ransom—with the aid of good \textit{eldila} from other planets; the visions of Jane Studdock, wife to Mark Studdock, who has been lured to the enemy's side; and the magic of a revived Merlin—defeats the forces of darkness in a vivid "dress rehearsal for Armageddon."\textsuperscript{37} It is in this novel that Lewis comes closest to the spirit of the Oxford Movement, for it is a story of the old, traditional, informal, individualistic elements of the \textit{Tao}\textsuperscript{38} as opposed to the modern functional, impersonal, pragmatic dictators of pseudo-science (or Real Falsity).\textsuperscript{39}

As a Christian apologist, Lewis concentrates on the "main Christian tradition": the points of agreement between Catholicism and Evangelicalism.\textsuperscript{40} Thus, he is both praised and corrected for his refusal to be made a spokesman for any particular sect. However, he is quite outspoken in his denunciation of modern humanism as a heresy. In an interview with George Anderson, he remarked that "humanistic teaching


\textsuperscript{37}Walsh, pp. 44–47.

\textsuperscript{38}The \textit{Tao} is Lewis's name for the Real Truth, reflected by the myths, images, and philosophies through the ages.


\textsuperscript{40}Walsh, p. 159.
is anti-Christian and the man who accepts this philosophy should not be in the Christian church." The difference was noted to be similar to that of two rival political parties. "From the standpoint of intellectual honesty Christian teachers who preach humanism must renounce their claim to be Christians." Understandably, this attitude has brought some protests from the people whom he calls intellectually dishonest. On the whole "Lewis's adversaries have largely confined themselves to sniping." Kathleen Nott has done some rather extensive sniping. In her book *The Emperor's Clothes*, this humanist-novelist-poet undertook "a discussion of the philosophical validity of the revived scholasticism which is being used to provide an intellectual structure for much contemporary literature." This discussion includes a chapter designed not particularly to refute the orthodox message of Lewis, but rather to raise doubts about his prerogative to preach it. Her general opinion seems to be that he is a not-too-scholarly, illogical don who should have contented himself with lecturing about scholasticism to his students of medieval literature rather than publishing and airing over the British Broadcasting Corporation such inane ideas. She flails at his tract called *Miracles*, a defense

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42 Walsh, p. 176.
of the validity of miracles, taking twenty-five pages to
dissect and invalidate what *Time* termed "a tightly-constructed
theological argument."

The anti-humanism of which Anderson speaks and against
which Nott complains is not limited to *Miracles* and other of
Lewis's theological tracts. Each novel of the science fiction
trilogy presents not only the affirmative elements of Chris-
tian dogma and a possible extension of them to cosmic realms,
but also includes an attack on Christianity's archenemy,
humanism. One scene in which this is vividly shown is the
climax of *Out of the Silent Planet*. Weston represents that
system of thought which the author is here debunking. The
scientist, using Ransom as interpreter, bombastically brags
to the Oyarsa of the humanitarian purpose in his intent to
destroy the inhabitants of Malacandra. Much of the caustic
satire is embodied in Ransom's inability to translate parts
of the address into Old Solar in a way that makes any sense
at all. With all the elaborate decoration reduced to simple
language, the absurdities of Weston's position are revealed
in full.

Lewis's significance then for the revival of religion.
is that he is one of its most popular spokesmen in England.
Not only is he a popular theologian, but his scholarly emi-
nence in the field of English literature is similar to that

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of members of the Oxford Movement of a century ago. The scholasticism and dogmatism of the traditional Christianity which he preaches emphasize in part his dislike of liberalism and humanism. Many of the same comments may be made for his fellow don, Charles Williams.

Charles Williams

One of the most prolific and at once diverse writers in the group of authors representing the intellectual revival was Charles Williams. The number of volumes he turned out is amazing for a person who worked full time for a publishing house, lectured, and tutored because of continual financial need. In thirty-three years of writing he published thirty-seven complete volumes in addition to the many anthologies which he edited for the Oxford University Press. A few of these were, as Eliot says, "frankly pot-boilers; but he always boiled an honest pot." His novels are the best known but the least successful of his works. Slightly less widely read are his works of literary criticism. "Perhaps never have the essentials of the Christian faith been stated with so much

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imagination and wit, as in his religious volumes."\(^{48}\) In speaking of his plays, one critic laments the lack of a comparable body of dramatic literature in the United States.\(^{49}\) But it is in the medium of poetry that Charles Williams's greatest contribution to English literature has been made.\(^{50}\)

Williams's education was as diverse as his writing. Though he was an honorary M. A. and lecturer at Oxford for the last five years of his life, his formal education consisted of two years of work at London University and some night courses at London Workingmen's College.\(^{51}\) However, as an editor of the Oxford University Press for almost forty years, he had ample opportunity to expand his store of knowledge widely. C. S. Lewis writes that he was "well-informed in all fields, especially history, theology, legend, comparative religion, and English literature."\(^ {52}\) Though he wrote several books in most of these fields, it is true that his learning was "too erratically acquired and applied" for

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\(^{49}\) Marvin Halverson, "Modern Morality," The Christian Century, LXXIV (March 6, 1957), 300.


\(^{51}\) "Theological Thriller," p. 88.

him to be accurately called a scholar, although he was one of Britain's most learned authors of recent years.53

A biographical sketch of Williams reports that he was the center of a group consisting of T. S. Eliot, C. S. Lewis, D. L. Sayers, and W. H. Auden.54 The initial contact for the latter member of this nucleus (of a much larger group) was strictly a business one.55 T. S. Eliot, then editor of The Criterion,56 was introduced to Williams at a tea given by a mutual friend in the late 1920's.57 Thereafter, many common interests, such as their drama presented at the annual Canterbury Festivals, brought them together quite often.58

Lewis became a close companion of Williams in 1939 when the offices of the Oxford University Press were moved from London to the less strategic target area of Oxford.59 Dorothy Sayers probably made, or deepened, her acquaintance with him during the aforementioned Canterbury Festival to which she contributed a play, Zeal of Thy House. These are some of the


57Eliot, All Hallow's Eve, p. ix.

58Ibid. 59Lewis, Essays, p. viii.
most outstanding, or at least the best known, of a large
following by which "he was loved, almost revered, as a sort
of a prophet."\textsuperscript{60} This following all testify to the person-
ality of this leader of the "small circle of Christian
Oxonians who met informally each week or so to drink and
talk."\textsuperscript{61} Auden says that he "gave himself to company" to
such an extent that he made one feel far more intelligent
and important than one ordinarily did.\textsuperscript{62} He seemed to throw
"down all his own barriers without even implying that you
should lower yours."\textsuperscript{63} "The whole man was given to the
circle," whenever he was engaged in conversation.\textsuperscript{64} "This
total offer of himself made his friendship the least exacting
in the world, and explains the surprising width of his con-
tacts."\textsuperscript{65} Dorothy Sayers credited him with introducing her
to Dante,\textsuperscript{66} upon whom she spent fifteen years of study. She
further commented that he was "the figure who reaffirmed for
intellectuals the truth that all created things are vehicles
for the glory and reality of God."\textsuperscript{67} Eliot's opinion of

\begin{footnotes}
\item[60] Parsons, "The Spirit of Charles Williams," p. 77.
\item[61] "Don v. Devil," p. 68.
\item[63] Lewis, \textit{Essays}, p. x.
\item[64] Ibid. \item[65] Ibid.
\item[66] Dorothy Sayers, \textit{Essays Presented to Charles Williams},
p. 2.
\item[67] Quoted in "Theological Thriller," \textit{Time}, p. 88.
\end{footnotes}
Charles Williams was that

One retained the impression that he was pleased and
grateful for the opportunity of meeting the company,
and yet that it was he who had conferred a favor--
more than a favor, a kind of benediction, by coming.68

The message of all of Charles Williams's work, in a
sense, defies definition. Eliot says, "It was not simply
a philosophy, a theology, or a set of ideas: it was pri-
marily something imaginative."69 This "something imaginative"
consisted of a deep realization of the reality of the super-
natural and its relationship to the natural. This realization
gave him an unusually vivid understanding of the problem of
Good and Evil.70 With such an understanding and a famili-
arity with the supernatural and occult, he was enabled to
cause spiritual ideas to come alive in fiction and to "tell
a rattling good story."71 C. S. Lewis termed Williams a
"romantic theologian": that is, "one who considers the theo-
logical implications of those experiences which are called
romantic."72 As such, he had the outlook that the act of
falling in love was in reality a religious experience.73 His
was quite the reverse of the Freudian concept, as he identified

68Eliot, All Hallow's Eve, p. x.  69Ibid., p. xiii.
70Ibid., p. xiv.
71William Gresham, "The Nature of Reality," Saturday
Review of Literature, XXXIV (March 24, 1951), 14.
72Lewis, Essays, p. vi.
73Heath-Stubbs, p. 20.
"sexual love with Divine Charity."74 His retort to the modern psychological theory of religious experience being merely sublimated sexual desire might well be that sex is only a sublimation of the desire for God.75 To him, "every lover is, in some degree . . . a religious mystic."76 Time adds that he was not only a theologian of romantic love, but he preached an "affirmative way to God;"77 that is, all types and experiences of life bear some trace of the divine image and mirror the goodness of God.78 Auden writes that Williams's basic theme was very closely integrated with his personality—that element of giving himself. The doctrine of exchange and substitution conforming to the law that we must bear one another's burdens is the heart of his fiction, poetry, and to some extent his other work.79

Most critics of Williams's work agree that his poetry is by far his greatest accomplishment. Even Robert Conquest, who is not in sympathy with the goals of propagandists of "totalitarian thought," such as Williams and C. S. Lewis, who see the particular as illustrations of their general point of view, admits that Williams has an "admirable talent in poetry." He further admits that this author is a "significant

75Ibid. 76Heath-Stubbs, p. 21.
77"Theological Thriller," p. 88.
literary figure" on the grounds that he is such a pure repre-
sentative of "a genuine writer who has fully accepted a
closed and monopolistic system of ideas and feelings, and
puts it forthrightly with its libidinal component scarcely
disguised."\(^{80}\) Conquest feels that these two writers are
interested only in forcing both humanity and events into
their preconceived pattern of thought.\(^{81}\) Winfred Garrison,
writing for the Christian Century, adds Dorothy Sayers to
this list. He claims that her Creed or Chaos is a "cham-
pioning of an old and irrational idea in a sophisticated
style."\(^{82}\) One critic, Deborah Webster, praises such purposes
in these writers, which from her Catholic viewpoint is quite
a worthy endeavor as it contributes, she feels, to the
Catholicization of those capable of being converted.\(^{83}\) Lewis
states that the criticism and novels of Williams are his best-
known works, but that "the fullest and most brilliant ex-
pression of his outlook is to be found in his mature poetry."\(^{84}\)
John Heath-Stubbs notes that this poetry is quite as modern
as that of T. S. Eliot,\(^{85}\) and it has been further claimed


\(^{81}\) Ibid., p. 55.

\(^{82}\) Winfred Garrison, "Beautiful Dynamite," Christian
Century, LXVI (April 14, 1949), 466.

\(^{83}\) Deborah Webster, "Books for Convertibles," Catholic
World, CLXXII (October, 1950), 39.

\(^{84}\) Lewis, Essays, p. vi.  
\(^{85}\) Heath-Stubbs, p. 10.
that Williams is presently one of the strongest influences on Britain's young poets.\textsuperscript{86} (Rayner Heppenstall disagrees, stating that the only influence that Williams's poetry would have would be to encourage people to read Dante for the "wrong reasons, or to tolerate the worst of Blake."\textsuperscript{87})

Although Williams's novels are the most important aspect of his work for this study, they have been criticized for various shortcomings and have been widely declared unsuccessful. One critic writes that his work may be best compared to the entertainments of Graham Greene, for in reality, they are of the same type: sensational thrillers used as a vehicle for theological ideas.\textsuperscript{88} The difference between these two authors is that Greene is a novelist while Williams is primarily a poet. "Greene has a technical accomplishment as a fiction writer that Williams could not command; though Greene's religious thought exhibits a relative poverty beside the richness and subtlety of Williams's."\textsuperscript{89} Stewart attributes this notable inferiority of Williams, in part, to his delight in describing details instead of in organizing them. Each novel has gaps of unassimilated, often foolish material that serves no especial purpose.\textsuperscript{90} Parsons echoes this

\textsuperscript{86}George Winship, "This Rough Magic," \textit{Yale Review}, XL (December, 1950), 288.


\textsuperscript{88}Heath-Stubbs, p. 28. \textsuperscript{89}\textit{Ibid.}

difficulty as he catalogues such imperfections as "weak endings . . . flaws of plot . . . and poor characterization."\textsuperscript{91} The novels "gained greatly in form . . . but throughout there is the sense of uncontrolled power, as of a spring that cannot but overflow in all directions."\textsuperscript{92} The rhetoric, particularly in the earlier novels, often consists of an "outmoded poetic diction." This ornate language may present a barrier to some readers. It renders what Williams is saying the primary concern for reading his novels, whereas the prose of Lewis, for example, is often read delightfully for its own sake.\textsuperscript{93} An interesting sidelight on the Oxford clique is that \textit{All Hallow's Eve} and \textit{Perelandra}, widely acknowledged as the best novels of Williams and Lewis, were both read aloud and mercilessly criticized by the group.\textsuperscript{94}

Another shortcoming which is noted by W. H. Auden is that, like Blake, Williams was more interested in states of being than in individuals. This presented a difficulty because the novel is not an ideal method for such presentations. There is little doubt as to the characters who are saved and those who are not (which cannot be said of the novels of Greene) but in nearly each case, the damned are presented

\textsuperscript{91}Parsons, "The Spirit of Charles Williams," p. 78.
\textsuperscript{92}\textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{93}Winship, "This Rough Magic," p. 288.
\textsuperscript{94}Lewis, \textit{Essays}, p. v.
most convincingly and terrifyingly while those in a state of grace are rather thin.\textsuperscript{95} This seems not to be an overly gross failing when it is considered that the early morality plays as well as \textit{Paradise Lost} suffer from much the same difficulty.

Since there seems to be so much wrong in the technical execution of these novels, is there anything to be said in praise of them? In an introduction to \textit{The Greater Trumps}, William Gresham calls Williams an "adept and grand master" of "the conscious use of primordial images."\textsuperscript{96} C. S. Lewis, who seems to consider his former friend one of the great poets of the century, points out a few difficulties in Williams's style, but then praises his "imagination and spiritual insight,"\textsuperscript{97} as exhibited in the novels. Auden, after admitting the impossibility of adequately portraying the saved in fiction, claimed that Williams had perhaps succeeded where even Dante had failed in showing that people are not sent to Hell, but make their choice to go there.\textsuperscript{98} Furthermore, the novels seem to indicate an acceptance and enjoyment of all of life, not just parts of it. As opposed to Chesterton, for example, Williams shows no strain in praising both "wonder and wine."\textsuperscript{99}

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\textsuperscript{95}Auden, "Charles Williams," p. 553.
\textsuperscript{96}William Gresham, Introduction to \textit{The Greater Trumps}, by Charles Williams (New York, 1950), p. i.
\textsuperscript{97}Lewis, \textit{Essays}, p. vii.
\textsuperscript{98}Auden, "Charles Williams," p. 553.
\textsuperscript{99}\textit{Ibid}.
\end{flushleft}
Winship points out an unusual aspect of Williams's success in his escaping from the "shadow of Fielding": that psychological view of mingling good and evil in all of the characters. In Williams's works a person is either on God's side or Satan's, while the actual conflict is between the absolutes of Good and Evil.\textsuperscript{100}

Though Williams wrote of supernatural and theological events, he was not a propagandist in the strictest sense of the word. He was concerned with good and evil in the same way that the Gospels are, yet he pictured morality as a struggle between men and women who are instruments of higher powers which they have chosen of their own volition.\textsuperscript{101} In presenting this struggle, he attempted not to prove certain theses, but, accepting the existence of the supernatural and orthodox Anglican theology, he set out to present "a kind of an experience that he had had"--an experience in other-worldliness--and to urge his readers to share in it.\textsuperscript{102} This is done with such a credibility that the reader is made to understand that the unusual goings-on in his stories are always happening. These are not fantasies, but realistic stories of essences rather than surfaces.\textsuperscript{103} Although the

\textsuperscript{100}Winship, "This Rough Magic," p. 291.

\textsuperscript{101}Eliot, \textit{All Hallow's Eve}, p. xvi.

\textsuperscript{102}\textit{Ibid.}, p. xiv.

first five novels were turned out during a rather busy four years, the group as a whole contains "some of the most noble and moving pages of English literature." There has been much comment on his artificiality of characters and use of a set formula. Eliot contends that there is a reality differentiating his characters from puppets, but that "only as much of the reality of each character is given as is relevant." Williams centered his attention on the effects of supernatural forces working upon ordinary human beings.

His Poesque technique has been variously compared to that of Algernon Blackwood, Arthur Machen, Walter de la Mare, and Stevenson's Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. It is not employed, however, merely to give the reader a thrill and cold shudder. Rather it may be traced to the author's desire to share an experience. Eliot pictures him as being as at home with the supernatural as with the natural: "He could have joked with the devil and turned the joke against

106 Eliot, All Hallow's Eve, p. xvii.
108 Heath-Stubbs, p. 7.
109 Eliot, All Hallow's Eve, p. xv.
110 Ibid.
him." To such a personality, the presentation of the supernatural is done naturally, not for exploitation.

Of Williams's seven novels—War in Heaven (1930), Many Dimensions (1931), The Place of the Lion (1931), The Greater Trumps (1932), Shadows of Ecstasy (1933), Descent into Hell (1937), and All Hallow's Eve (1945)—the last two are his best. Williams's concept of reality and his disregard of the boundary between natural and supernatural, living and dead, are best discerned among the early volumes in The Place of the Lion. It is the "most profoundly metaphysical" of them all. The story is credible and has realistic characters despite some of the fantastic occurrences, such as the haunting of Damaris Tighe by a pterodactyl. She is one of the "frivolously academic who 'do research' into archetypal ideas without suspecting that they were ever anything more than raw material for doctorate theses." The struggle for power by the forces of evil precipitates the embodiment of ideas and images.

At a spot in the English countryside, the Universals suddenly manifest themselves to the not surprising terror of the nominalists. The action of the book centers about the appearance of these

111Ibid., p. xiv.
113Lewis, Essays, p. viii.
114Winship, "This Rough Magic," p. 289.
Platonic ideas and their effects on people. The hero, Anthony Durrant, is finally successful in restoring order to the metaphysical world\textsuperscript{115} (with supernatural help). By the use of such a device as this realization of images, the novel ... conveys powerfully a sense that when the Universal, or what we generally consider the abstract, is put side by side with the particular, it is the particular which seems vague.\textsuperscript{116}

One important result of this book was that it was one of the first of Williams's novels read by both C. S. Lewis and T. S. Eliot, and led them to anticipate a meeting with the author.

Descent into Hell is the work which Auden feels illustrates the process of self-damnation better than Dante.\textsuperscript{117} It reflects the deep understanding which the author had of the nature of Evil as the antithesis of Good.\textsuperscript{118} Contrary to the criticism leveled against Greene, here evil is not presented attractively.

He is concerned, not with the Evil of conventional morality and the ordinary manifestations by which we recognize it, but with the essence of Evil; it is therefore Evil which has no power to attract us, for we see it as the repulsive thing it is, and as the despair of the damned from which we recoil.\textsuperscript{119}

\textsuperscript{115}Heath-Stubbs, p. 30.
\textsuperscript{116}Winship, "This Rough Magic," p. 289.
\textsuperscript{117}Auden, "Charles Williams," p. 552.
\textsuperscript{118}Eliot, All Hallow's Eve, p. xvi.
\textsuperscript{119}Ibid.
In reference to the technical art of the book, C. S. Lewis says its "sobriety and strength present a remarkable witness to his continually growing, self-correcting art." The parallel stories of the salvation and the damnation of Pauline Anstruther and Lawrence Wentworth present an interesting contrast, and serve to point out the main theme of the book. This theme is the most recognizably Christian doctrine used by Williams: that of exchange or substituted love. This, as explained by Peter Stanhope, is "the logical application of the injunction to 'bear one another's burdens,'" which the Church of England terms the communion of saints. In describing the necessity of the doctrine to Pauline, Peter explains:

If you want to disobey and refuse the laws that are common to us all, if you want to live in pride and division and anger, you can. But if you will be part of the rest of us, live and laugh and be ashamed with us, then you must be content to be helped. You must give your burden up to someone else, and you must carry someone else's burden. I haven't made the universe and it isn't my fault. But I'm sure that this is a law of the universe, and not to give up your parcel is as much to rebel as not to carry another's. You'll find it quite easy if you let yourself do it.

Her burden is the fear of meeting her own image. Often, when alone, she has seen this image, but always managed to flee before it spoke. Now, as Stanhope takes over her fear, her terror, she is able to converse with the image. Through

\[121\] Heath-Stubbs, p. 26.  
\[122\] Williams, *Descent into Hell*, p. 105.
a tricky bit of metaphysical juggling by the author, in which time is completely transcended, Pauline is in turn able to share someone else's burden. This burden of fear is that of an ancestor who died the death of a Christian martyr on the same Battle Hill that is the scene of the novel. Since his burden was borne by someone else, he was able to die victoriously, praising God. Wentworth, on the other hand, mired in self-love, attempts to exist apart from the rest of humanity,\textsuperscript{123} communing only with himself and the succubus in the image of a girl whom he desires. The fear of her doppelganger which Pauline allows Peter Stanhope (a poet resembling both Williams and Eliot)\textsuperscript{124} to share is based upon Shelley's \textit{Prometheus Unbound}.\textsuperscript{125} This theme as well as the main theme of exchange are used in Eliot's \textit{Cocktail Party} and show the close relationship between the works of these two men.\textsuperscript{126}

Thus these two novels best illustrate the eerie supernaturalism and the orthodox Christianity implicit in all of Charles Williams's work. As with C. S. Lewis, a familiarity with the theological works of the author is an asset in understanding the message concealed beneath the "outmoded

\textsuperscript{123}Moorman, "Myth in the Novels of Charles Williams," p. 323.

\textsuperscript{124}Evans, T. S. Eliot, "Charles Williams, and the Sense of the Occult," p. 150.

\textsuperscript{125}Heath-Stubbs, p. 11.  \textsuperscript{126}\textit{Ibid.}
poetic diction."¹²⁷ The works must first be read as novels, good for several hours of entertainment. For they are "first of all very good reading, say on a train journey or an air flight for which one buys a novel from a bookstall, perhaps without even noticing the name of the author."¹²⁸ That is how they should be considered at first reading. "The deeper things are there just because they belonged to the world he lived in."¹²⁹

To summarize the excellences and defects of Williams's novels, it may be noted that "in proportion as they become more serious, [they] tend to push their subject matter beyond the limits where the novelistic techniques can contain it."¹³⁰ Eliot echoes this difficulty: "What he had to say was beyond his resources, and probably beyond the resources of language, to say once for all through any medium of expression."¹³¹

The works of these two writers, Lewis and Williams, illustrate the academic-oblique type of novel. These men are primarily scholars and critics rather than novelists. But their interest in religion, their desire to make Christianity understandable to a wide number of readers, has led them to use the novel as a vehicle for their message of orthodoxy and

¹²⁷Winship, "This Rough Magic," p. 288.
¹²⁸Eliot, All Hallow's Eve, p. xviii. ¹²⁹Ibid.
¹³⁰Heath-Stubbs, p. 31.
¹³¹Eliot, All Hallow's Eve, p. xi.
anti-humanism. Though these books in one sense may be considered amateurish, they have been more successful novels than anything produced during the similar nineteenth-century Oxford Movement. Also, the Christian message and the realization of the supernatural are much more realistic and authoritative. The popular religious novel of this revival reflects many of the same features.
CHAPTER III

THE POPULAR RELIGIOUS NOVEL

Graham Greene

The choice of popular English novelists to illustrate the intellectual revival of religion lies among many. Aldous Huxley's preaching of oriental mysticism might qualify him as an example. Others might be Bruce Marshall or A. J. Cronin. However, since the movement under consideration consists primarily of intellectuals and artists who are reacting against liberal humanism in the direction of traditional Christianity, Graham Greene and Evelyn Waugh qualify much more readily. Both fit the description of a religious writer given by Martin Turnell:

... a writer whose vision is informed by definite beliefs. He has behind him a system which regards the individual as a soul to be saved or lost, and which attaches immense importance to his least actions.¹

Also, Greene is one of the most outstanding of contemporary English novelists. His writing is marked by a deep skill, and he has presented "novels of stature, judged by the highest standards, which continue to have very great influence."² In short, he is a much too subtle and artistic writer to be

¹Martin Turnell, "The Religious Novel," Commonweal, LV (October 26, 1951), 55.

merely written off as a religious propagandist. True, he is a Roman Catholic novelist, judging from his background and the general tone of his recent work. This is not to say that his writing is didactic and stems from a preconceived set of dogmas. Contrarily, he uses ecclesiastical words, images, and like paraphernalia as a type of literary shorthand much as Milton or any writer trained in the classics made use of classical references.

Graham Greene's artistic ability and relative standing in the field of English letters are highly controversial. However, this is a situation that has been true of many major literary figures. Critical opinion is divided as to whether Greene is an obscure, ambiguous, rather narrow author, reacting against the world from the citadel of Roman Catholicism, or whether he is an artist of universal appeal who is a master of characterization and of the English language.

Just who is this man, considered by many as the leading literary member of his generation? Graham Greene, born in 1904, entered the literary scene from journalism. Soon after taking a degree at Oxford, he became a sub-editor of The

3Alan De Hegedus, "Graham Greene and the Modern Novel," Tomorrow, VIII (October, 1948), 55.
4Ibid.
7Ibid., p. 54.
London Times. He later served The Spectator as film critic. From his position on The Times, Greene began traveling and writing extensively. With the exception of an early, unsuccessful volume of poetry, Babbling April, most of his work may be classed as travel, entertainments, or novels. The latter two are terms used by the author in distinguishing light fiction from serious. Of these, it is debatable as to which are his best works. Some critics feel that the entertainments, such as A Gun for Sale, are the most successful, as are the non-religious characters in the novels. Prescott says that the entertainments are the more successful, but the novels made him famous. However, most agree that both have a universal appeal to readers of all degrees of learning. This is to be explained for the most part by his modern style and his use of the technique of the "thriller." As a journalist, Greene was greatly affected by the sensational type of material with which he dealt. A result of this is that his vehicle of communication is the cheap, pulp

8 Matthew Hoehn, editor, Catholic Authors (Newark, 1948), p. 289.

9 Wyndham, p. 29.


11 Derek Traversi, "Graham Greene," Twentieth Century, CXLIX (April, 1951), 326.

12 Prescott, p. 106.

thriller which the imitators of Hemingway popularized. Yet Greene has taken the often overly melodramatic plot and improved it\(^{14}\) by adding a close psychological study or a message of love and pity for a cruel, fallen world.\(^{15}\) It should not be dishonoring to Shakespeare to point out the similarity of this improvement to the alchemy he performed on Plautus, Seneca, and Holinshed.

These serious thrillers offer more than mere entertainment. It is true that the serious element is presented in a journalistic manner, using the effects of selected details, rapid change of scene, an economical language,\(^{16}\) and other realistic devices in order to picture the outer world in which most people are interested. It may be generally stated that Greene's purpose is "to restore religious sense and a sense of the importance of the human act."\(^{17}\) In so doing, he makes use of the pursuit technique. The central figures of his tales are pursued either by man, God, or both.\(^{18}\) The stories are realistic in the sense that they center on the grim, shabby squalor of the outcast, who, as in the work of Carson McCullers, is isolated, alone. Needless to say, such concentration on the sordidness of life has drawn a great


\(^{17}\)Wyndham, p. 7.

\(^{18}\)Ibid., p. 8.
deal of adverse criticism. Many of Greene's fellow Catholics feel that he borders very near the brink of heresy in his mingling of good and evil. Martin Turnell writes that such "spiritual melodrama" is to be criticized for "its inartistic and unworthy use of religion to give a specious glamor to sin."¹⁹ Non-Catholic detractors consider the preoccupation with sin and the long, torturous struggles for salvation found in his novels to be far less attractive than the material of the entertainments. Robert Graves, a non-believer who defines Christianity as "selling all that you have to follow Jesus," comments that Greene has realized the "dramatic possibilities of the confessional and Christianity's strict stand on the Seventh Commandment," --especially in The Heart of the Matter-- but that the kind of novels he has turned out so far will not be enough to redeem him.²⁰ Evelyn Waugh, on the other hand, feels that Greene is merely pointing out the corrupt nature of man. He notes that "the compassion and condescension of the Word becoming flesh are glorified in the depths."²¹

Without lingering over Greene's rank in modern literature, it will suffice to conclude that he is one of the most

²¹Evelyn Waugh, "Felix Culpa?" Commonweal, XLVIII (July 16, 1948), 323.
prominent British novelists today. Greene's place in the intellectual revival may be fairly determined through a survey of his most important novels: The Power and the Glory, The Heart of the Matter, and The End of an Affair. These show that he has a message of supernaturalism that is opposed to the humanism of the age, and that this message is contained in first-class fiction.

The Power and the Glory (1940) was Greene's best contribution up to that time. It, like the earlier entertainments such as A Gun for Sale and Confidential Agent, is a story of pursuit. To the chase of the adulterous, alcoholic priest by the secular authorities of a police state is added the trailing of the Hound of Heaven. The superimposing of the inward struggle of the priest upon the physical coursing does much to heighten the dramatic effect as well as to add a significant message to the tale. This message is interpreted differently by various critics, but most seem to agree that it is basically a study of good and evil. Beary contends that this study is accomplished by concentration on the priest, his realization of his sinfulness, and attempt to be forgiven. Bruce Marshall, another Catholic novelist, praises the book highly. He says that not only does it show that God realizes what is happening within a man's heart, but to a

22 Wyndham, p. 17.

great extent, so does Greene. In any event, the author can tell what is not happening—particularly in the mind of a priest.\textsuperscript{24} This, incidentally, is something that no novelist has done successfully for years. Trollope's clergymen exhibit astoundingly vague perception while H. G. Wells's study in his *Soul of a Bishop* is merely the "soul of H. G. Wells in the body of a bishop."\textsuperscript{25} However, Derek Traversi complains that by concentrating on the priest, Greene "sidesteps the necessity of presenting character, emotion, and reactions in a normal setting."\textsuperscript{26} This comment seems to indicate that priests are something more or less than mere human beings. He dismisses *The Power and the Glory* as no more than a vivid, accurate piece of reporting somewhat inferior to Forster's *Passage to India* in its "effort to see the human in relation to inanimate reality and to integrate it into an intelligible picture with spiritual implications."\textsuperscript{27}

Briefly, it is the story of the sanctification of a saint. This process is accomplished through suffering on behalf of the people, and love for his illegitimate child. The background of isolation, fear, and loneliness intensifies the oppressive sense of sin and weakness which obsesses the

\textsuperscript{24} Marshall, "Greene and Waugh," p. 552.
\textsuperscript{25} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{26} Traversi, "Graham Greene," p. 321.
\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., p. 320.
priest. This sense of sin is the most "psychologically
destructive and socially debilitating knowledge possible."\textsuperscript{28}
Despite the strongly theological import of this novel, it is
not written dogmatically nor didactically. Rather, it is
presented "dramatically, artistically, and analytically."\textsuperscript{29}

Beary well describes the book in this short paragraph:

If Greene has a surprise for his readers it is this:
surface piety killeth, real piety is found in active
charity, and active charity makes saints of sinners.
Thus the priest, though sinful, emerges as a saint,
because active charity motivated his life and caused
his unselfish death.\textsuperscript{30}

If The Heart of the Matter is Greene's best novel,\textsuperscript{31}
it is also his most misunderstood. Some Catholics feel
that the book did not find more popularity because non-
Catholic readers could not understand the message: that
grace is not a cheap commodity; therefore Scobie could not
be saved by his dying statement concerning love.\textsuperscript{32} But even
though he committed the most heinous sins by "rejecting every
grace,"\textsuperscript{33} Scobie is one of the author's most successful
characters. He is a good man, who loves out of pity--a pity
which cannot bear to hurt those that he loves.\textsuperscript{34}

\textsuperscript{28}John Wansbrough, "The Detective in the Wasteland," The
Harvard Advocate, CXXXVII (December, 1952), 12.

\textsuperscript{29}Beary, "Religion and the Modern Novel," p. 205.

\textsuperscript{30}Ibid. \textsuperscript{31}Wyndham, p. 13.

\textsuperscript{32}Jane Howes, "Out of the Pit," Catholic World, CLXXI
(April, 1950), 36.

\textsuperscript{33}Ibid., p. 38. \textsuperscript{34}Wyndham, p. 20.
that he cannot find an answer to is how a person can love God at the expense of one of His creatures.\textsuperscript{35} This question is the means of pursuit by which God chases Scobie to his doom, here damnation rather than the salvation of the whiskey priest.\textsuperscript{36} In one sense, this is the story of a "human predicament solved in purely human terms."\textsuperscript{37} But it is more. Scobie's isolation produced a need for human companionship and love. This in its turn was a barrier to his relationship to God. The situation did not destroy Scobie. Rather, he and his knowledge of good and evil did. His worst sin was not that of adultery, but of taking communion while in a state of unrepented sin. This he could not flee. This conscious choice of evil, while knowing the consequences, is the cause of his downfall, and, ironically, the suffering of those that he loves.\textsuperscript{38} On the surface the story is much like some of Maugham's work. It is set in the same type of surroundings, and the effect of the heat is artistically used to underline the isolation and boredom of each individual. De Hegedus feels that Greene's characterization is far better than Maugham's, for not only are the very real people alive and moving, but the reader is allowed to see inside of their

\textsuperscript{35} Wansbrough, "The Detective in the Wasteland," p. 29.

\textsuperscript{36} Traversi, "Graham Greene," p. 324.

\textsuperscript{37} Wansbrough, "The Detective in the Wasteland," p. 13.

\textsuperscript{38} Ibid.
minds and understand what motivates them to act as they do.

Prescott writes that the book is deeply Catholic and can be successfully understood only by readers initiated into the fine points and nuances of Catholic doctrine. This, then, is generally considered Greene's best novel, much on the same order as The Power and the Glory, yet with characters drawn more realistically and a negative, if more esoteric, theme.

Not all of Greene's attempts to combine Catholicism and literature have been so successful. Some of the adjectives applied by Prescott (and agreed upon by other critics) to The End of the Affair are "unsuccessful," "dull," "unconvincing." For the skill of the author he has praise: his ability to handle words, his earnestness. But the puppet characters and the miracles with which the book ends disappoint him. Wyndham says that the plot is anti-climactic, written in a hard-to-follow sequence, and unreal overall. Where the other two novels are stories of the isolation of Catholics, this tells of the isolation of an agnostic from his Catholic lover. Again the Church and the knowledge of good and evil come between human lovers. Father Rank's comment in The Heart of the Matter is especially applicable in describing the love affair of Maurice and Sarah: "I'm

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40 Prescott, p. 108. 41 Ibid. 42 Wyndham, p. 24.
sorry for anyone happy and ignorant who gets mixed up that way with one of us." This is not to say that Helen, of whom he spoke, nor Maurice were particularly happy in their state of unbelief, but their being involved with a Catholic brought them grief—in the latter case resulting in valuation. Maurice is sincere, sympathetic, and human, but serves mainly as a foil to Sarah. The difference between the two is their concept of time. He cannot enjoy the present knowing that it will pass into the future which he fears and the past which he hates; meanwhile she has no realization of time, only eternity. Although he is one of the non-believers who suffers by his contact with a Catholic, the end result of the failure of their human love is his salvation.

A perusal of these three novels shows that even when writing about his faith, Greene is a first-class storyteller. Although humorless, arid, and narrow, he is not cold, as Evelyn Waugh tends to be, yet graphically presents the grimness and degeneracy of the modern world in order to arouse an awareness for the need of pity and compassion. There are many points of similarity between these stories. All are tales

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44 Graham Greene, p. 327.
45 Wansbrough, "The Detective in the Wasteland," p. 29.
46 Ibid., p. 30.
of isolation and pursuit, and have some superfluous dramatic event at the end, such as Wilson's discovery of Scobie's suicide, which seems to be a carry over from the sensational dramatic technique of the entertainments. In each, non-believers suffer because of the main character's faith—his knowledge of good and evil. But this is the method of the author and of the Catholic Church: to destroy man's faith in himself, his humanism, then rebuild something greater.

In terms of eternity he attempts to resolve the conflicts which are set up within his characters; to show the significance of their complexity in a universal design.

Traversi feels that in attempting to do this, he fails to attain a sense of unity and evinces an "inability to give full realization to his artistic problem" of presenting a tragic situation. As a result, religion is presented as merely an appeasement of exterior forces, joyless, with little positive effect on the individual. Storm Jameson says that his "ironic sense of man's littleness in the face of terrible forces holds Greene back from greatness."

The relative position of Greene in the galaxy of English authors

51 Ibid., p. 12.
notwithstanding, it is significant to the problem at hand that such a major novelist has written successful novels combining a talent for composing sensational thrillers with "an attempt to restore religious sense and a sense of the importance of the human act."\(^56\)

Greene's anti-humanism is exhibited in the three novels discussed. In each, the main character is brought to realize that human efforts, human love, are weak and must make room for the divine. Knowledge of good and evil forces the whiskey priest to the realization of his sinfulness and to depend on God in His grace to minister to the people through him. Scobie, knowing the difference between good and evil, and the consequences of consciously doing the latter, chose to take the matter of Helen into his own hands instead of trusting God. Greene points out the impossibility of doing this successfully and the destructive end results of such an attempt. Maurice's love for Sarah is merely an end in itself.\(^57\) As Sarah, considering things in the light of eternity rather than merely the present, realizes that one of God's creatures cannot be loved at His expense, she is forced to break with Maurice. Thus, his purely self-centered love is destroyed, and it is only at the end of the story as he begins to understand Sarah's concepts that there seems to be a prospect of happiness for him.

\(^{56}\) Wyndham, p. 7.

\(^{57}\) Wansbrough, "The Detective in the Wasteland," p. 29.
On the affirmative side, each of these novels is a variation on the theme of Williams's concept of exchange or vicarious suffering. Reminiscent of Christ, the priest gave his life for his people; Scobie sacrificed his salvation for those he loved; and through the death of Sarah, Maurice began to understand her relationship to God.

Evelyn Waugh

Another popular novelist who illustrates the intellectual return to religion is Evelyn Waugh. Two years before his conversion to Roman Catholicism in 1930, he published his first novel, Decline and Fall, and ascended "to the leadership of London's young intelligentsia." Since the appearance of that initial novel, he has been praised by such people as Alexander Woolcott, who called him the "nearest thing to a genius among the young writers who have arisen in post-war England," and Edmund Wilson, who considered him the only English writer comparable to Fitzgerald or Hemingway and the first great comic genius since Shaw.

Like Greene, Waugh went from Oxford into journalism, and his experience in that field contributed to the material for

59Quoted in Matthew Hoehn, ed., Catholic Authors (Newark, 1948), p. 779.
his earlier books. Both, in becoming masters of the English language, owe much not only to their training at Oxford, but to their journalistic experience. From praising their linguistic ability, Marshall goes on to speak of the excellence of their art.

It is because of their knowledge of the language and because they are as good writers as the agnostics that they are read so eagerly by those who do not share their faith.61

A common religious belief and a somewhat didactic purpose in their novels are two obvious similarities between the works of these authors. Both see and understand the lack of faith found in the world of today, and they write realistically about this. Sharing a more realistic view of evil than other religious writers--Chesterton, for example--they write of the world with which they are most familiar: Greene chronicles the grimness and ugliness of a fallen world, Waugh, the grimness of gaiety and dull parties without grace. These practices have caused it to be charged that one is concerned too much with sin62 while the other is a snob for writing only of the upper classes.63 Waugh's satire exhibits a marked cleverness and humor; Greene's lack of humor is compensated for by the warmth of his message of pity.64 Contrary

62 Wyndham, p. 8.
to the critical reaction to Greene's work, prior to the publication of *Brideshead Revisited* (1945) there were few, if any, dissenting words uttered about the artistic ability of Waugh. Whether he was merely termed "at least one of the cleverest of contemporary writers,"65 or received the encomiums of Edmund Wilson, Waugh was well thought of as the "novelist of the Bright Young Things of the twenties."66 His work is divided into three periods by Christopher Hollis.67 *Decline and Fall* and *Vile Bodies*, the two novels published prior to his conversion, constitute the first group. The second consists of four more novels finished before 1945. These two groups of Huxley-like satire are the ones that established him as a caricaturist and "critic of modern materialism."68

As early as *Vile Bodies*, the technically incorrect figure of Father Rothschild, the Jewish Jesuit, indicates Waugh's realization that some people in the world had something to say that was worth considering.69 *Black Mischief* (1932), a result of the author's visit as a correspondent to Abyssinia,

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65 Hoehn, p. 779.
67 Ibid., pp. 10, 20.
69 Hollis, p. 10.
is an attack on insincerity and the modern world, accomplished
by the use of unreal characters and a mixture of the
credible and incredible. A Handful of Dust (1937) is a
masterpiece of bitter buffoonery ostensibly about the
savage barbarians of Brazil, but symbolically and satirically an attack on English immorality. Scoop (1938) is similar to Black Mischief in theme and setting with the difference that it flails the English exploitation of Africa and the evils of the large newspaper industry. Put Out More Flags (1942) is a wartime novel which caricatures certain British types and governmental offices by means of absurd characters in a horribly real situation.

These, then, are the novels that gave Waugh his reputation in the world of English letters. They have the humor of P. G. Wodehouse, but the seriousness of Everyman. Traceable in them is a spirit of morality, of purpose beneath the comedy.

In view of the earlier adulteration of the spirit, one may well be surprised at its extreme purity in Brideshead Revisited, but certainly one ought not to be surprised at the spirit itself. It has always

70Ibid. 71Wilson, p. 141.
72Ibid., p. 142. 73Prescott, In My Opinion, p. 25.
76Hollis, p. 14. 77Ibid.
been in greater or lesser concentration part of the novels of Evelyn Waugh; there was always at least an even chance that one day he would write a book like *Brideshead Revisited*.79

It was not until *Brideshead Revisited* and succeeding works that Waugh's Catholicism began to be visible in his novels. However, the first two groups were not merely amusing sketches of degenerate London aristocrats. In his article Richard Voorhees points out that Wilson's famous comparison of Waugh to Shaw should imply to people that there was a definite seriousness beneath his comedy.80 This seriousness is evident in various means and degrees in the six early novels. For instance, the most lamentable characters in *Vile Bodies* are those who lack a religious faith. Those that do exhibit a faith place it in such unsubstantials as materialism and progress.81 These satires are verbal attacks on the degeneration of the British aristocracy and ironic "dramas of modernization."82 They are, like Proust's work, concerned with a leisure class83 which from the author's point of view, must at one time have been on a height in order to have declined and fallen.84 It is his intention to attempt to restore this class to its height. The old houses and magnificent buildings

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79Ibid., p. 280.
81Ibid. 82Alexander, p. 291.
83Heiney, p. 333.
described by this one-time painter are obviously symbols of the once grand aristocracy \(^{85}\) with which the author identifies himself politically, philosophically, and to some extent religiously. \(^{86}\)

With *Brideshead Revisited* Waugh graduated from being merely "the greatest living satirist to a major novelist." \(^{87}\) Considering the conflicting opinions among critics aroused by Greene's *The End of An Affair*, it does not seem unusual that *Brideshead Revisited* met with similar treatment. There appears to be no easy division of the reviewers except to group them as those who liked the novel and those such as Diana Trilling who found it incoherent. \(^{88}\) Edmund Wilson was trapped by the book. After he had praised the author so highly for his earlier satire, he became "outraged at finding God in *Brideshead Revisited*." \(^{89}\) However, he overcame his Marxist opinions long enough to prophesy a popular success for the book and admit that one half of it was excellent, after having termed it a snobbish Catholic tract full of two dimensional figures with an absurd final conversion scene. \(^{90}\) Though the book is considered by most to be a tract, it is not,

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\(^{85}\) *Ibid.*  
\(^{86}\) Prescott, *In My Opinion*, p. 165.  
\(^{87}\) Anne Freemantel, "Who is Wise?" *Commonweal*, XLII (January 4, 1946), 311.  
\(^{88}\) Diana Trilling, "The Piety of Evelyn Waugh," *Nation*, CLXII (January 5, 1946), 19.  
\(^{89}\) Waugh, "Fanfare," p. 55.  
\(^{90}\) Wilson, p. 299.
strictly speaking, an apologetic. Rather it merely points out the power of the Church in hanging onto its straying members and leaves for someone else to explain why this is so.\textsuperscript{91} The Baptist-inclined \textit{Christian Century} considered \textit{Brideshead Revisited} a Catholic sermon with three main points: that a secular, self-centered life is futile; that Christianity offers the only escape from this futility; and that Christianity is Catholicism. W. E. Garrison concluded by commenting that the style had been somewhat overpraised and that

\begin{quote}
As a preacher, he [\textbf{Waugh}] is on the side of the angels and should be welcomed. Of the three heads of his sermon, the first is convincingly argued. The second would be stronger if he had not tried to prove the third.\textsuperscript{92}
\end{quote}

Most of the critics of the book would agree, though perhaps hesitatingly, with \textit{The Tablet} of London, which termed \textit{Brideshead Revisited} "the finest of all his works, a book for which it is safe to prophesy a lasting place among the major works of fiction."\textsuperscript{93}

The Catholicity of the book, as has been noted, is agreed on in fact, but is a point of controversy in degree. The

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{91}Hollis, p. 22.
\textsuperscript{93}Quoted in Hoehn, p. 780.
\end{quote}
Christian Century, the socialistic Nation, and the often ultra-conservative Saturday Review of Literature agree with the correspondent that asked the author if he had not given the "kiss of death" to Catholicism in Brideshead Revisited. Even The Catholic World's Joseph McSorley predicted opposition from devout, orthodox, if relatively unlearned, Catholics.

Persons who know Catholicism and Oxford may take Brideshead Revisited in their stride, undisturbed by its mockery of superstition masquerading as religion, its bitter scorn of pompous inefficiency, its lampooning of wealth and privilege. Others, however, may absorb poison from these pages.

Yet, the point that most critics have overlooked about the book is that the author has not suddenly decided to "love those at whom he earlier laughed," but, as McSorley's statement implies, that he has here written a typical Waugh theme: the decline and fall of an aristocratic family fused more strongly than before with a study of the

96 Eleanor C. Chilton, "The Struggle to Be 'Good','' Saturday Review of Literature, XXIX (January 5, 1946), 6.
99 Fremantle, "Who is Wise?" p. 311.
100 Heiney, p. 333.
relationship between man and God and the hold of the Church on the individual.

This book best illustrates Waugh's message of man's need of God. The Marchmains are a Roman Catholic family, each member of which has a different relationship to God. Lady Marchmain, Brideshead, and Cordelia realize the importance of eternity as compared to the humanistic pleasures of the moment. The author is realistic even in presenting his devout Catholics. He realizes that man is not virtuous even though he is at home in the City of God.\textsuperscript{101} Thus, belonging to the Church is no guarantee that a person will not often appear foolish, as does Bridey, or tyrannical like Lady Marchmain. Cordelia alone, of the three, is presented attractively. Lady Marchmain to some extent may symbolize the Church from which Julia, Sebastian, and Lord Marchmain all try to escape.\textsuperscript{102} She, like Mother Church (or even the Hound of Heaven), pursues Sebastian in trying to get him to mend his ways: to act and live as a Catholic of the Marchmain family should. He winds up becoming an alcoholic and finally working as a janitor in a North African monastery. Julia's outward sign of rebellion against God is her life of adultery with Charles. She too, after fleeing God's claims on her life, surrenders the last good thing to which she was

\textsuperscript{101}Hollis, p. 22.

holding—loving Charles—in favor of loving God. Just as Lord Marchmain breathes his last in the midst of luxury and makes a deathbed repentance, so the others are "suffocating in full lives" that are completely empty without God.\(^\text{103}\) Rex Mottram and Charles Ryder, the book's unbelievers, present an interesting comparison. Rex represents a life that consists only in the desire for political power. Incapable of faith, he will "believe" anything that the priest says about God just in order to become a Catholic, to marry Julia, and by such a liaison, further his position in public life. Charles, on the other hand, is more of a skeptical empiricist. Religion, he feels, is fine if it benefits a man in some way.\(^\text{104}\) But through his association with the Marchmains he finally comes to see that religion is for the glory of God, not man. Diana Trilling comments that there was nothing whatsoever to cause Ryder's conversion after the traditional arguments which he had presented against Christianity. Perhaps, though, the death-bed repentance and mere "will-to-believe" which she mentions,\(^\text{105}\) are as near to an explanation of such a subjective experience as is possible, considering that traditionally Christianity attributes such a phenomenon to the inexplicable work of the Holy Spirit. By the end of

\(^{103}\) Freemantle, "Who Is Wise?" p. 313.

\(^{104}\) Hollis, p. 22.

the book, there is no human relationship that offers any sense of comfort to anyone; such "toys" of each have been taken away as Sebastian's Teddy bear finally was.

This book also identifies the author with the spirit of the Oxford Movement. In his love for tradition and desire to see the good institutions of the past rebuilt to their original height and greatness while decrying the excesses of present-day "progress" and individualism, he repeats the attitude of the Tractarians. This conservative feeling as exhibited in Brideshead Revisited links him closely with Lewis and Williams.

Controversy notwithstanding, Brideshead Revisited was accepted by the Book-of-the-Month Club and made a best-seller. Also it was accepted, though at times begrudgingly, by some of America's leading critics and conservative publications as a work of art, a "serious and mature novel" written by a Catholic convert who is "an artist, not a propagandist."106 According to Hollis, Brideshead Revisited marks the beginning of the third period of Waugh's novels. It is the first of his consciously Catholic ones,107 of which the others are neither so artistic, nor so deep.108 Since 1945,

107Hollis, p. 20.
he has published *Helena* (1950), a pious legend of Constantine's mother,\textsuperscript{109} *Men at Arms* (1952), a study of chivalry\textsuperscript{110} and a satire of the British war effort strongly reminiscent of the earlier Waugh;\textsuperscript{111} two more Catholic-satirical novels, *Tactical Exercise* and *Officers and Gentlemen*; and an autobiographical conversation piece, *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold*.

These numerous recent novels are passed over hastily, not because they are insignificant, but because they are not the masterpieces that *Brideshead Revisited* is. Rather they are more like the earlier satires with a serious religious element interwoven. They have not received the praise and comment of earlier works, perhaps in realization of the author's prophecy in 1946 that his future work would not be in the manner of *Brideshead Revisited*, but would be more concerned with style and with man in his relationship to God.\textsuperscript{112} Not since 1945 has Waugh presented a "picture of an age" as in the story of the Marchmains.\textsuperscript{113}

Naturally such a widely read and discussed author has been compared to many others. The relationship to Graham Greene has been noted. Wilson likened Waugh to Fitzgerald,

\textsuperscript{109}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 173.


\textsuperscript{111}Hollis, p. 34.

\textsuperscript{112}Waugh, "Fanfare," p. 55.

\textsuperscript{113}Marshall, "Greene and Waugh," p. 553.
Hemingway, and Shaw. 114 Hugo notes similarity in his earlier works to Voltaire and Lewis Carroll; 115 P. G. Wodehouse and Aldous Huxley are two authors whose works are very much like those of Waugh. 116 Perhaps any writer who is like so many others at one time is truly an artist in his own right.

Thus Greene and Waugh, by their popular religious novels, illustrate the traditional, orthodox, anti-humanistic elements of the intellectual revival. To this extent, they exhibit similarities with the nineteenth-century Oxford Movement. The greatest difference lies in the quality of their art. Both of these authors are artists of superior skill. Contrasted to them are the historians and scholars of Tractarianism who, though sincere, seemed to represent a less profound and far reaching movement than the one herein discussed.

Conclusion

The present revival, so far as the English novel is concerned, is far more profound and widespread than was the Oxford Movement. One reason is that the persons involved are more aware of the reality of the supernatural as opposed to the natural. They are aware, too, of the dangers to be found in modern, liberal humanism masquerading as a religion

114 Wilson, p. 140.
116 Heiney, p. 333.
of science and progress. Their concern is with pointing out this foe and offering as an alternative orthodox Christianity. This desire to present on a practical level, valid for everyday life, general Christian Truths, as they comprehend them, is a decided contrast to the complicated debates over nuances of theology, sacramentalism, and ritualism of the Church of England which marked the Oxford Movement.

Despite the fact that this study has examined the English novel only, similar conclusions could be drawn from a consideration of other genres of modern English literature. Some poets and dramatists whose works have a similar character are T. S. Eliot, W. H. Auden, Dorothy Sayers, and Christopher Fry. Their works readily confirm the proposition that this movement is one of the most notable trends that may be discerned among intellectuals of the last two decades. Also, on the basis of the works, it seems safe to assume that religion will continue to have an important influence on serious fiction as well as other intellectual endeavors of the future.
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