Travels with My Aunt, Graham Greene

Travels with My Aunt is a metamorphosis story of a retired, somewhat staid banker who meets his quirky, demanding and lawbreaking aunt at his mother's funeral. Henry Pulling is the narrator and story teller, but Aunt Augusta is the heart and driver of the story that spans multiple continents. Henry is uptight and distanced from the world while Augusta is, at the age of 74, still squeezing out every drop of excitement and drama from life. Through their travels, which go in an ever-widening circle (Brighton, Paris, Istanbul, Paraguay), Henry joins a shiftless, twilight society: mixing with hippies, war criminals and CIA men; smoking pot, breaking currency regulations and eventually coming alive after a dull suburban lifetime.

The book was made into a film in 1972, with Maggie Smith (who was nominated for an Oscar) as Augusta, Lou Gossett Jr. as Wordsworth, and Cindy Williams (of Laverne & Shirley) as Tooley. George Cukor directed.

About the author

Henry Graham Greene (October 2, 1904-April 3, 1991) was an English novelist, short story writer, playwright, screenwriter, travel writer and critic whose works explore the ambivalent moral and political issues of the modern world. Greene combined serious literary acclaim with wide popularity.

1. As his travels progress it becomes clear to Henry that the woman he had been raised to believe was his mother was in fact his aunt. His real mother is Augusta, and her reconnection with him at her sister's funeral was her beginning the process of reclaiming her child. At what point in the novel did you begin to suspect Henry's true relation to Aunt Augusta? At what point does he begin to suspect her real identity?

2. What did you think of Augusta's relationships with and treatment of Wordsworth, Mr. Dambreuse, and Mr. Visconti, as well as how she is treated by them?

3. Greene converted to the Catholicism in 1926, a year before marrying his wife, who was also a Catholic convert. Although he objected strongly to being described as a Catholic novelist rather than as a novelist who happened to be Catholic, Catholic religious themes are at the root of much of his writing, particularly his novels *Brighton Rock*, *The Heart of the Matter*, *The End of the Affair*, and *The Power and the Glory*. In *Travels With My Aunt*, the more upright main character, Henry Pulling, is Protestant, while it is eccentric Aunt Augusta who professes to be a Catholic (and is also a convert). What is Greene saying about his own religion and the religious mores of people in general?

4. Some of Greene's other works, such as *The Quiet American*, *Our Man in Havana* and *The Human Factor*, show an avid interest in the workings of international politics and espionage. He himself was recruited into MI6 (Britain's Secret Intelligence Service) by his sister, Elisabeth, who worked for the organization, and he was posted to Sierra Leone during World War II. What did you think of his presentation of international politics and intelligence in *Travels With My Aunt*?

5. Greene suffered from bipolar disorder, which had a profound effect on his writing, and drove him to excess in his personal life (including numerous affairs; he left his wife and two children in 1948 but the couple remained married until his death in accordance with Catholic doctrine). In a letter to his wife Vivien he told her that he had "a character profoundly antagonistic to ordinary domestic life", and that "unfortunately, the disease is also one's material." While she is not portrayed as suffering from a clinical mental illness, Aunt Augusta exhibits many excesses and eccentric behavior.

6. What is the role of Tooley, the young woman Henry meets on the Orient Express? On the one hand he acts as a father figure, listening to her story and wanting to help her; at the same time, she plays a role in his "awakening" by introducing him to marijuana.

7. Would Henry and Miss Keane have been a good match before his transformation and adventures with his aunt? Afterwards? What did you think of his marriage to a much younger woman at the end of the novel? His decision to lead a dangerous and criminal life in South America rather than returning to England, where he had a good life but so "so bored"?

Next month's book:

We typically post a poll of five books on the web site and ask members to vote on what they'd like to read next month. Please email me your suggestions. Obviously I can't list everyone's, so don't be upset if yours isn't on the list this time. Try to be sure it isn't too long (400 to 500 pages maximum, and that's on the long end) and is fairly easy to find in the library and bookstores. I'll put the poll up Saturday or Sunday.

My email: karenblossom@yahoo.com

Searching for: **travels with my aunt**

1971

Travels with my aunt
by Greene, Graham, 1904-1991.

... Travels with my aunt / Graham Greene. ...

Publisher, Date: London : Penguin Books in association with the Bodley Head, 1971.

Description: 264 p. ; 20 cm.

Number of Items Available: 2 (of 2)
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Author Notes

Born in 1904, Graham Greene was the son of a headmaster and the fourth of six children. Preferring to stay home and read rather than endure the teasing at school that was a by-product of his father's occupation, Greene attempted suicide several times and eventually dropped out of school at the age of 15. His parents sent him to an analyst in London who recommended he try writing as therapy. He completed his first novel by the time he graduated from college in 1925. <P> Greene wrote both entertainments and serious novels. Catholicism was a recurring theme in his work, notable examples being The Power and the Glory (1940) and The End of the Affair (1951). Popular suspense novels include: The Heart of the Matter, Our Man in Havana and The Quiet American. Greene was also a world traveler and he used his experiences as the basis for many books. One popular example, Journey Without Maps (1936), was based on a trip through the jungles of Liberia. <P> Greene also wrote and adapted screenplays, including that of the 1949 film, The Third Man, which starred Orson Welles. He died in Vevey, Switzerland in 1991. <P> (Bowker Author Biography)

Graham Greene, *Travels with my Aunt*, 1969

This novel takes the reader on a journey round the world with an odd couple, a retired short-sighted bank manager and his temperamental Aunt Augusta.

I met my Aunt Augusta for the first time in more than half a century at my mother's funeral. My mother was approaching eighty-six when she died, and my aunt was some eleven or twelve years younger. I had retired from the bank two years before with an adequate pension and a silver handshake. There had been a take-over by the Westminster and my branch was considered redundant. Everyone thought me lucky, but I found it difficult to occupy my time. I have never married, I have always lived quietly, and, apart from my interest in dahlias, I have no hobby. For those reasons I found myself agreeably excited by my mother's funeral.

[My father had been dead for more than forty years. He was a building contractor of a lethargic disposition who used to take afternoon naps in all sorts of curious places. This irritated my mother, who was an energetic woman, and she used to seek him out to disturb him. As a child I remember going to the bathroom – we lived in Highgate then – and finding my father asleep in the bath in his clothes. I am rather short-sighted and I thought that my mother had been cleaning an overcoat, until I heard my father whisper, "Bolt the door on the inside when you go out". He was too lazy to get out of the bath and too sleepy, I suppose, to realize that his order was quite impossible to carry out. At another time, when he was responsible for a new block of flats in Lewisham, he would take his catnap in the cabin of the giant crane, and construction would be halted until he woke.] My mother, who had a good head for heights, would climb ladders to the highest scaffolding in the hope of discovering him, when as like as not he would have found a corner in what was to be the underground garage. I had always thought of them as reasonably happy together: their twin roles of the hunter and the hunted probably suited them, for my mother by the time I first remembered her had developed an alert poise of the head and a wary trotting pace which reminded me of a gun-dog. I must be forgiven these memories of the past: at a funeral they are apt to come unbidden, there is so much waiting about.

Not many people attended the service, which took place at a famous crematorium, but there was that slight stirring of excited expectation which is never experienced at a graveside. Will the oven doors open? Will the coffin stick on the way to the flames? I heard a voice behind me saying in very clear old accents, "I was present once at a premature cremation".

It was, as I recognized, with some difficulty, from a photograph in the family album, my Aunt Augusta, who had arrived late, dressed rather as the late Queen Mary of beloved memory might have dressed if she had still been with us and had adapted herself a little bit towards the present mode. I was surprised by her brilliant red hair, monumentally piled, and her two big front teeth which gave her a vital Neanderthal air. Somebody said, "Hush", and a clergyman began a prayer which I believe he must have composed himself. I had never heard it at any other funeral service, and I have attended a great number in my time. A bank manager is expected to pay his last respects to every old client who is not as we say "in the red", and in any case I have a weakness for funerals. People are generally seen at their best on these occasions, serious and sober, and optimistic on the subject of personal immortality.

I. VERSION : Traduire le passage entre crochets.

II. QUESTIONS :

1. Study the way in which the two characters – the narrator and his aunt – are introduced and described.
2. How does the writer manage to arouse the reader's interest and expectation?

I. VERSION : traduction commentée

My father had been dead for more than forty years.
Mon père était mort depuis plus de quarante ans/Cela faisait plus de quarante ans que mon père était mort.

Attention au temps : « had been » + for → imparfait (et non plus-que-parfait)

He was a building contractor of a lethargic disposition who used to take afternoon naps in all sorts of curious places.
Il était entrepreneur dans le bâtiment et, d'un naturel léthargique, il avait l'habitude, en début d'après-midi, de faire des sommes/siestes dans les endroits les plus insolites.

This irritated my mother, who was an energetic woman, and she used to seek him out to disturb him.
Cela irritait/agaçait ma mère, qui était une femme énergique/dynamique, et elle partait toujours à sa recherche, dans le but de troubler son repos.

As a child I remember going to the bathroom – we lived in Highgate then – and finding my father asleep in the bath in his clothes.
Petit/Enfant, je me souviens d'être allé à la salle de bains (nous habitions Highgate à cette/l'époque) et d'y avoir trouvé mon père endormi dans la baignoire, tout habillé.

Rappel / ponctuation : ne pas conserver le tiret. Il s'agit là d'une précision qui n'est pas de première importance, d'où l'utilisation de parenthèses.

I am rather short-sighted and I thought that my mother had been cleaning an overcoat,
Je suis assez myope, et je croyais que ma mère avait lavé un pardessus,

until I heard my father whisper, "Bolt the door on the inside when you go out".
quand/jusqu'au moment où j'entendis mon père murmurer : « Donne-moi un tour de clé à l'intérieur quand tu sortiras. »

He was too lazy to get out of the bath and too sleepy, I suppose, to realize that his order was quite impossible to carry out.
Il était trop paresseux pour sortir/s'extirper de la baignoire, et trop endormi/assoupi/ ensommeillé/pas assez réveillé, je suppose, pour se rendre compte qu'il m'était impossible de lui obéir.

At another time, when he was responsible for a new block of flats in Lewisham, he would take his catnap in the cabin of the giant crane, and construction would be halted until he woke.
Une autre fois, alors qu'on l'avait chargé de construire un nouveau pâté de maisons à Lewisham, il avait pris l'habitude de faire/faisait son petit somme/sa petite sieste dans la cabine de la grue la plus haute, et les travaux s'interrompaient/étaient interrompus jusqu'à ce qu'il se réveille/son réveil.

Ici, « would » n'est pas un conditionnel, mais une forme fréquentative, que l'on traduit par l'imparfait. L'utilisation de « used to » dans une phrase précédente vous éclaire sur le sens de « would », car il est fréquent, dans une évocation nostalgique du passé, de trouver comme

formes verbales d'abord « used to », puis « would » (moins accentué que « used to »), et enfin, simplement, des verbes au prétérit.
La différence entre « used to » et « would » réside dans la rupture avec le présent : « used to » indique une habitude ou un état passé qui n'est plus de mise (ex. they used to have a dog = le chien est mort) ; « would », en revanche, n'insiste pas sur le fait que ce n'est plus le cas dans le présent.

II. QUESTIONS : suggestions pour les réponses

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Graham Greene was born in Hertfordshire in 1904. He went to Balliol College, Oxford. After working as a journalist, he became a freelance writer and critic. In 1926, he converted to Roman Catholicism but he did not like being labelled a Roman Catholic writer. Throughout his life, Greene was obsessed with travelling far from England, to what he called the "wild and remote" places of the world. He went to Mexico, to West Africa and to Indochina.

He was a prolific writer, and his large production can be divided into two groups of novels. The first, which he called "entertainments", is made up of literary thrillers (including such works as *Stamboul Train* (1932) and *The Third Man* (1950)) which deal with spying and betrayal. The second group of works is inspired by Greene's Catholicism and explores moral dilemmas, good and evil. *The Power and the Glory* is the story of a priest who, though a drunkard and a sinner eventually acquires a heroic dimension.

TRAVELS WITH MY AUNT

Travels with my Aunt (1969) belongs to Greene's first category of novels. The writer once said: "*Travels with my Aunt* is the only book I have written for the fun of it". The novel follows the travels of a retired bank manager, and his septuagenarian aunt, as they go across Europe and over continents.

Summary

Henry Pulling meets his Aunt Augusta at his mother's funeral after many years without seeing her. Though they have little in common, he finds himself drawn into her world. The book is the account of how she inexorably takes him into her strange, hedonistic lifestyle. In her company, he travels to Brighton and Paris, then from Paris to Istanbul on the Orient Express, becoming involved with drugs and currency smugglers and, as the journey unfolds, so do the stories of Aunt Augusta and her many past lives, made of adventures and romance.

In Aunt Augusta, Greene has created one of the great eccentric characters of modern British fiction.

1. Study the way in which the two characters – the narrator and his aunt – are introduced and described

This passage represents the opening chapter of the book. It gives us an account of the meeting of two characters – the narrator and his aunt – who are about to embark on a series of adventures. The occasion of this peculiar encounter is the narrator's mother's funeral, and it is obvious that this event has not been chosen at random.

The narrator appears as a discreet, reserved, unassuming man. He is presented in negative terms ("never married", "no hobby"). Like his father, he seems to be of a "lethargic

disposition", little used to meeting people. He is "rather short-sighted", only interested "in dahlias", and apparently very harmless. He seems to be leading a very ordinary life ("always lived quietly"). This is the reason why he feels so "excited" by her mother's funeral. Yet, although the occasion can be considered as a break in his daily routine, this surprising taste ("a weakness for funerals") makes him rather odd. We also learn that he is well off ("an adequate pension"), with nothing much to do ("I found it difficult to occupy my time"). We may thus conclude that he is free and ready for whatever opportunity might arise.

Aunt Augusta stands in sharp contrast with her nephew. What strikes us first is her association with emperors and queens. She is qualified by her imperial name ("Augusta"). She is then compared to "the late Queen Mary of beloved memory", thus acquiring a royal dimension. Her majestic appearance is enhanced by her "monumentally piled" hair. She is full of energy and vitality, as shown by her "two big front teeth" and "vital Neanderthal air" which turn her into some sort of antique monster. Contrary to her indolent, routine - minded nephew, everything about her is unconventional (she "had arrived late"), unusual ("I was present once at a premature cremation") and eccentric ("brilliant red hair").

Even her speech is extraordinary with its "clear old accents". We immediately guess that the meeting of these two individuals – an exceptional old lady and an insignificant yet strange middle-aged man – on an occasion when people "are generally seen at their best", is going to be of interest.

2. How does the writer manage to arouse the reader's interest and expectation?

Throughout the text we are given indications which help the author to create and maintain an element of suspense : "for the first time", "I had never heard it". We have a feeling that we are going to witness something unusual, puzzling. The fact that the narrator finds himself "agreeably excited", the "slight stirring of excited expectation" – all these emotions are shared by the reader. Even the mention of the character's parents ("I had always thought of them as reasonably happy together"), by implying that this may not have been so, creates some pleasurable anticipation.

The tempo of the passage is very important, too. The first paragraph is informative: with much economy Greene gives us a clue about the narrator's age (over fifty) and the occasion of the meeting. The following paragraph, however, is more diffuse. It is a long flashback, evoking the "memories of the past", conjuring up anecdotes and places ("Highgate", "Lewisham") that belong to the narrator's childhood, in a subdued tone. Now we are ready for the last part, which begins in a more sustained of key and concludes on the climactic description of Aunt Augusta. With the final "hush" – a sort of humorous turning-point – the tone quietens down again.

This passage clearly shows Graham Greene's narrative technique. He brilliantly introduces and delineates the characters, while keeping some mystery in his narrative, thus paving the way for what is to follow with humour and consummate art.

Not What You Meant? There are 47 definitions for *Greene*. Also try, *Graham* or *I Spy*.

Graham Greene

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Place of Death: Vevey, Switzerland
Nationality: English
Gender: Male
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In the following excerpt, Kelly examines Greene's early short stories, written during his years as a student, stating that in these works Greene worked out the "terrors and frustrations" of his youth. Kelly then discusses The Last Word, a work he feels "conveys a synoptic view of the stages of [Greene's life as a writer."]

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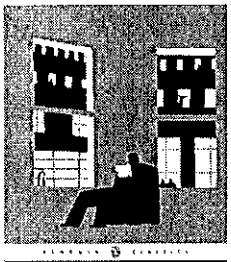

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Graham Greene Biography

About 3 pages (862 words)

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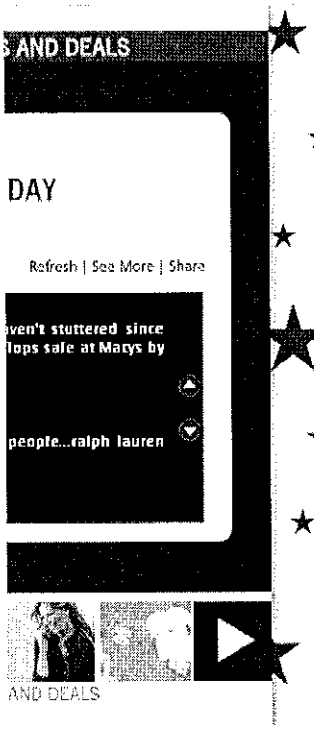
Name:	Graham Greene
Birth Date:	October 2, 1904
Death Date:	April 3, 1991
Place of Birth:	Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire, England
Place of Death:	Vevey, Switzerland
Nationality:	English
Gender:	Male
Occupations:	author, novelist, dramatist

Encyclopedia of World Biography on Graham Greene

The works of the English novelist and dramatist Graham Greene (1904-1991) explore different permutations of morality and amorality in modern society, and often feature exotic settings in different parts of the world. A storyteller with a spare and elegant style, he divided his literary output into two categories. The first identified his long, serious works as "novels," while the second, which he called "entertainments," were shorter, taut-paced political thrillers with boldly-defined characters designed to satisfy the reader whose main concern is plot rather than theme. He also wrote screenplays and dramas, but they have not stood the test of time as steadfastly as his fiction, which has been translated into 27 languages.



Graham Greene was born on October 2, 1904, in Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire, in England. He was one of six children born to Charles Henry Greene, headmaster of Berkhamsted School, and Marion R. Greene. He did not enjoy his childhood, often preferring to skip classes rather than endure the baiting of his fellow students. When Greene sent him to London for nt of the famous Sigmund came a voracious reader and Gertrude Stein he returned to high

on to Oxford University's 1924, he contacted the ome pro-German articles assy official accepted his paid trip to the Rhineland, for superiority in the mised, Greene returned ring Germany in the

Works by Author
- The Power and the Glory
- The End of the Affair
- The Captain and the Enemy
- The Destructors
- The Quiet American
- Our Man in Havana
- The Comedians (novel)

His next attempt to enliven his studies brought him to a flirtation with the Communist party, which he abandoned after a mere six weeks, though he later wrote sympathetic profiles of Fidel Castro and Ho Chi Minh. Otherwise, Greene spent his vacations at Oxford roaming the English countryside. Despite all these efforts to distract himself from his studies, he graduated from Oxford in 1925 with a second-class pass in history, and a slender, badly-received volume of poetry with the effusive title *Babbling April*.

The following year Greene decided to convert from Anglicanism to Roman Catholicism, the religion of his fiancee. The shift brought him a new perspective in his search for the origins of human morality and amorality.

The same year he began his professional writing career as an unpaid apprentice for the *Nottingham Journal,* moving on later to become a subeditor for the *London Times.* The experience was a positive one for him, and he held this position until the publication of his first novel, *The Man Within* (1929). Here he began to develop the characteristic themes he later pursued so effectively: betrayal, pursuit, and the yearning for death.

His next works, *Name of Action* (1931) and *Rumour at Nightfall* (1931), were not well-received by critics, but Greene regained their respect with the first book he classed as an entertainment. Called *Stamboul Train* in England, it was published in 1932 in the United States as *Orient Express.* The story revolves around a group of travelers on the Orient Express, a setting mysterious enough to permit a large helping of melodrama and grotesque character-building. *Journey without Maps,* published in 1936, was a travelogue, detailing Greene's fascination with the lush and decadent outposts of colonization.

Major Themes

Twelve years after his conversion, Greene published *Brighton Rock* (1938), a novel with a highly melodramatic plot full of sexual and violent imagery that explored the interplay between abnormal behavior and morality.

The entertainment *The Confidential Agent* was published in 1939, as was the work *The Lawless Roads,* a journal of Greene's travels in Mexico in 1938. Here he had seen widespread persecution of Catholic priests, which he documented in his journal along with a description of a drunken priest's execution. The incident made such an impression upon him that this victim became the hero of *The Power and the Glory*, the novel considered by Greene to be his best.

Later Life

During the years of World War II Greene slipped out of England and went to West Africa to do some clandestine intelligence work for the British Government. The result, a novel called *The Heart of the Matter* appeared in 1948, and greatly appealed to American readers.

Steadily, Greene produced a succession of works that received both praise and crtiticism. He was considered for the Nobel Prize but failed to become a candidate. Still, many other honors were bestowed upon him, including a 1966 accolade from Queen Elizabeth as a Companion of Honor, and the Order of Merit, a much higher honor, in 1986.

In 1979 Greene underwent surgery for intestinal cancer, but had no lasting ill-effects. However, in 1990, he was stricken with an unspecified blood disease so debilitating that he decided to move from his home in Antibes, the South of France, to Vevey, Switzerland, so that he could be closer to his daughter. He lingered until the beginning of spring, then died on April 3, 1991, in La Povidence Hospital.

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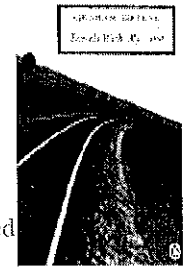
Graham Greene on *Travels with My Aunt*:



If *A Burnt-Out Case* in 1961 represented the depressive side of a manic-depressive writer, *Travels with My Aunt* eight years later surely represented the manic at its height—or depth.

... *Travels with My Aunt* is the only book I have written for the fun of it. Although the subject is old age and death – a suitable subject to tackle at the age of sixty-five – and though an excellent Swedish critic described the novel justly as "laughter in the shadows of the gallows," I experienced more of the laughter and little of the shadow in writing it. When I began with the scene of the cremation of Henry Pulling's supposed mother and his encounter with Aunt Augusta I didn't believe for a moment that I would continue the novel for more than a few days. I didn't even know what the next scene was likely to be – I didn't know that Augusta was Henry's mother. Every day when I sat down before the blank sheets of foolscap (for as symbol of my new freedom I had abandoned the single lined variety where the lines seemed to me now like the bars on a prison window) I had no idea what was going to happen to Henry or Augusta next. I felt like a rider who has dropped the reins and left the direction to his horse or like a dreamer who watches his dream unfold without power to alter its course. I felt above all that I had broken for good or ill with the past.

I was even irresponsible enough to include some private jokes which no reader would understand. Why not? I didn't expect to have any readers. So I christened "Detective-Sergeant Sparrow, John" after that elegant scholar the ex-Warden of All Souls, Augusta's black lover "Wordsworth" after a villainous District Commissioner whom I had met more than thirty years before in Liberia, Mr. Viscouti's son "Mario" after my friend Mario Soldati who once greeted me and gave me lunch in Milan station with similar flamboyance on my way to Istanbul. I remember I even found room for Kingsley Amis's surname which I gave to a character on whom I can't at the moment lay my finger. The name Viscouti for Aunt Augusta's lover was adapted from my favourite character in Marjorie Bowen's *The Viper of Milan* which I had loved as a boy, and it gave me an innocent amusement when I heard Detective Sparrow describing him as a viper. Some critics have found in the book a kind of resume of my literary career—a scene in Brighton, the journey on the Orient Express, and perhaps a hint of this did come to my mind by the time Aunt Augusta arrived at the Pera Palace, but what struck me with some uneasiness, when I reread the book the other day, were the suggestions I found in it of where the future was going to take me. The boat which carried Henry Pulling from Buenos Aires to Asuncion stopped for half an hour during the night in the little river harbour of Corrientes in northern Argentina, but I had no idea that I would be landing there from a plane some years later in search of the right setting for *The Honorary Consul*.

from *Ways of Escape*, pp.246-248

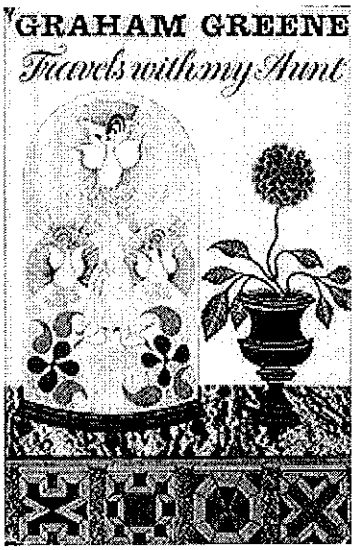
Travels with My Aunt

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Travels with My Aunt (1969) is a novel written by British author Graham Greene.

The novel follows the travels of Henry Pulling, a retired bank manager, and his eccentric Aunt Augusta as they find their way across Europe, and eventually even further afield. Aunt Augusta pulls Henry away from his quiet suburban existence into a world of adventure, crime and the highly-unconventional details of her past.

Travels with My Aunt



Author	Graham Greene
Country	England
Language	English
Genre(s)	Novel
Publisher	The Bodley Head
Publication date	1969
Media type	print (hardcover)
Pages	319 pp (First Edition)
ISBN	0140185011
Preceded by	*The Comedians*
Followed by	*The Honorary Consul*

Plot summary

The novel begins when Henry Pulling, a conventional and uncharming bank manager who has taken early retirement, meets his septuagenarian Aunt Augusta for the first time in over fifty years at his mother's funeral. Despite having little in common, they form a bond.

Henry finds himself drawn into Aunt Augusta's world of travel, adventure, romance and absence of bigotry.

He travels first with her to Brighton, where he meets one of his aunt's old acquaintances, and gains an insight into one of her many past lives. Here a psychic foreshadows that he will have many travels in the near future. This prediction inevitably becomes true as Henry is pulled further and further into his aunt's lifestyle, and delves deeper into her past.

Their voyages take them from Paris to Istanbul on the Orient Express, and as the journey unfolds, so do the stories of Aunt Augusta, painting the picture of a woman for whom love has been the defining feature of her life.

Henry returns to his quiet retirement, but tending his garden no longer holds the same allure, and with a letter from his aunt, he finally gives up his old life to join his aunt and the love of her life in South America and to marry a girl decades younger than him.

As his travels progress it becomes clear to Henry that the woman he had been raised to believe was his mother was in fact his aunt. His real mother is Augusta, and her reconnection with him at her sister's funeral was her beginning the process of reclaiming her child.

Adaptations

The novel was adapted for film in 1972 by Jay Presson Allen and Hugh Wheeler, and directed by George Cukor starring Maggie Smith and Alec McCowen. Scottish playwright and actor, Giles Havergal wrote a version for stage, first present at the Citizens Theatre in Glasgow on 10 November 1989.

There is also a BBC radio dramatization by René Basilico with Charles Key and Dame Hilda Bracket in the leading roles.

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- Richard Boston (25 January 1970). "Travels With My Aunt". *The New York Times*. http://www.nytimes.com/1970/01/25/books/greene70-aunt.html. Retrieved on 2009-02-19.

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Travels with my aunt
by Greene, Graham, 1904-1991.

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Publisher, Date: London : Penguin Books in association with the Bodley Head, 1971.

Description: 264 p. ; 20 cm.

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Lippe, Richard. "Travels with my aunt: romanticism and aging." CineAction. 50 (Annual 1999): 16-19. Literature Resource Center. Gale. FARMINGTON COMMUNITY LIBRARY. 9 May 2009 <http://go.galegroup.com/ps/start.do?p=LitRC&u=lom_metronetmnfc>.

Title: Travels with my aunt: romanticism and aging

Author(s): Richard Lippe

Source: *CineAction.* .50 (Annual 1999): p16-19. From *Literature Resource Center.*

Document Type: Article

As anyone knows who is familiar with Cukor's career, Travels With My Aunt was intended to be a vehicle for Katharine Hepburn, who left the project at a late date. Hepburn was dismissed when she refused to agree to the production date the studio imposed on the project but, according to Patrick McGilligan, the real issue surrounding the firing is to be found in Jay Presson Allen's claim that Hepburn didn't want to do the film in the first place. McGilligan quotes Allen, who with Hugh Wheeler receives script credit for the film, as saying that Hepburn, after the critical and commercial disaster of The Madwoman of Chaillot (1969), didn't want to play another eccentric old woman and that the actor, perhaps unconsciously, began to find fault with the script as a means to reject the project. Allen also says that Hepburn, at her suggestion, began rewriting the script and the final version owes much to Hepburn's input. Allen goes as far as claiming that Hepburn is primarily responsible for the script but says the actor couldn't receive credit because she didn't belong to the writers' union. Whether or not Allen's story regarding Hepburn's resistance to playing Aunt Augusta is as relevant as McGilligan suggests, there is a general consensus among Cukor critics who have looked into the facts surrounding the film's preproduction that Hepburn made a substantial contribution to the script.

Cukor, threatening to abandon the project when Hepburn was dismissed, stayed on at her insistence and quickly decided on Maggie Smith as a replacement. Hence, Travels With My Aunt had a crucial casting change which has affected its reception by the critics and possibly the public. As for the critics, the responses to Smith's casting tended to be a) the film needs Hepburn's presence if it is to fully succeed or b) the actress does irrevocable damage to the film. Smith has been criticized for being too young to play the role and resorting to heavy make-up to look the part of a seventy year old and/or for overacting, relying on `technical tricks' to create her characterization. The dissatisfaction with Smith's casting has caused an ongoing controversy regarding the success of the film. This controversy includes a third position--the film is one of Cukor's most accomplished works and Smith's performance deserves the Academy Award nomination it received. The last is the position that 1 hold. Cukor's decision to cast Smith was a daring choice. According to Emanuel Levy, Angela Lansbury was briefly considered; she is a more likely candidate for the role, but perhaps she was rejected because of her association with the stage version of Mame. Cukor has stated that he didn't want Travels With My Aunt to be taken as a reworking of Mame. Also, Lansbury had recently appeared in Something for Everyone (1970) a black comedy in which she played an aging, impoverished aristocrat. While that film's subject matter has no direct connection to Travels With My Aunt, it may have seemed at the time that the critics would accuse Lansbury of reprising her Something for Everyone performance. In any case, there are several reasons why Smith is a good choice. Smith, because of her youth, was able to play the character as a young woman in the flashbacks. These

sequences are crucial to the film's presentation of Augusta, her attitude towards her lover, Visconti/Robert Stephens, and the other men in her life who are given representative presentation through the character of Dambreuse/Jose Luis Lopez Vazquez. (The casting of Hepburn or Lansbury would have necessitated a young actress playing Augusta in the flashbacks. This would have disrupted the emotional continuity the film builds in the telling of Augusta's story which involves the relation between past and present, youth and age.) Smith, like Hepburn and Lansbury, is accomplished as both a comedienne and a dramatic actress. In regard to the comic mode, Smith's performance relates to the tradition of the British comedienne as a farceur. The tradition includes Beatrice Lillie and Kay Kendall and it is possible to detect a trace of Kendall's drunken escapades from Les Girls in Smith's more animated moments in Travels With My Aunt; but, like Kendall,Smith is capable of humanizing her characterization. Smith's Aunt Augusta isn't simply a caricature. If Travels With My Aunt is to be effective as a statement on human relations, it depends in great part on Augusta's range,and Smith is extremely successful in making Augusta a woman who is a vibrant human being. Her vibrancy and its possible extinction are what is at stake in the last third of the film, and it is her regeneration that contributes to the film's upbeat conclusion. And, from another perspective, Smith, with the help of Cukor's delicate handling of emotional tonal changes, manages to go directly from playing broad comedy to a tender, intimate love scene. This occurs in the bordello sequence, which begins as a comic episode but abruptly shifts, when Augusta discovers Visconti's presence, into a sensual, romantic encounter.

Maggie Smith's performance is highly theatrical,but then so is the character she plays. Augusta's theatricality is conveyed through her gestures, responses and attitude. Clearly, Cukor was sensitive of the degree to which Smith's performance is pitched to a flamboyant level; the character's theatrical presence is reinforced by her visual appearance--the shockingly red hair and the array of colourful and highly individualized outfits, the most spectacular being a wonderfully brilliant scarlet red coat and hat. (The color red is used throughout. Its usage ranges from Augusta's clothes to an exterior long shot--an image of the Orient Express travelling through a grim-looking countryside is beautified by a field of red poppies in the foreground.) In interior shots set in London and Paris, Cukor often fills a part of the screen with splashes of colour or patterns and textures which place Augusta in an environment that is visually heightened and functions to reflect and enhance her identity. These images are highly composed and elegant. They speak of a woman who has a love of excess but who is imaginative and creative. The association of the theatrical with Augusta is introduced in her first appearance in the film and systematically developed through her quest to save Visconti's life. The quest becomes a journey which leads to a series of adventures that take unexpected twists and turns and culminate in a complete reversal of expectations regarding Visconti and his situation. Visconti, himself a theatrical character, has staged his own kidnapping. He provides an additional melodramatic flourish by having himself wheeled out by his henchmen with his head and fingers bandaged, only to reveal to Augusta that his story of being kidnapped and tortured for ransom was a pretense.

Like the stylized images associated with Augusta in the present, each of the three flashbacks is designed in a different visual manner which works to illustrate Augusta's emotional memory and suggests her creative interpretation of the experience. In the first flashback, which takes place in the Gate de Lyon, Augusta recalls her initial meeting with Visconti and the impact it had on her life. The sequence is preceded by Augusta pointing out to her nephew Henry/Alec McCowen the beauty of the train station's interior and its ability to inspire the imagination. Those comments lead to her recollection of Visconti who, inside the station at a window, beckons her, a teenaged schoolgirl travelling under supervision with other young women her age, to join him. Visconti is jokingly offering the invitation but, to his surprise, Augusta suddenly appears in the room and he sweeps her into his arms and they begin to dance. The romantic connotations of the encounter are heightened as Visconti begins serenading Augusta singing the words to the love song that is being played. In Augusta's memory, the event is purely a romantic moment with Visconti as a kind of Prince Charming who rescues her from the regimentation and repression of her middle-class schoolgirl existence. But, as Augusta's introductory comments to the flashback indicate, Visconti also introduces her to the sensual aspects of the world. The first flashback is constructed as a storybook romance with Augusta as its heroine, and Cukor's visuals reflect a lush, delicate experience. In the second flashback, Augusta, now an adult woman working in a bordello, projects assurance

and sophistication. The mise-en-scene conveys the change in Augusta's life and identity: the colours are no longer pastel and Augusta's movements within the frame are somewhat mechanical. The flashback's tone drastically changes when Visconti makes an unexpected appearance--when Augusta and Visconti are reunited, the mood is erotic and sensual as he splashes water on her face, washing off the make-up and showering her now naked face with kisses. The scene's low-key lighting reinforces the fact that innocence and romance have been replaced by passion and sexual hunger. In the second flashback, Augusta's memory produces an environment that is worldly and, when she is with Visconti, tender and erotically charged.

In contrast, the third flashback, which is centred on her role as a mistress to the wealthy diplomat Dambreuse, while implying a strong sexual charge, lacks the seductive, romantic intensity of the first two flashbacks. In this segment, Cukor suggests a comedy of errors between the lovers. The languor of the second flashback is replaced by a hectic pacing which leads to a comic disaster when Dambreuse is exposed as having, in addition to a wife and six children, another mistress. In the Visconti flashbacks, Augusta envisions a love affair; with Dambreuse, she remembers affectionately pleasurable moments of playfulness and a friendship.

Travels With My Aunt is one of Cukor's most beautifully designed, visually rich and sensual films and, as such, recalls the Hoyningen-Huene collaborations. Cukor and his production designer, John Box, seamlessly integrate the interior and exterior footage to bring a high degree of stylization to the film. On the other hand, Travels With My Aunt, which could have been conceived along the lines of a fairytale or fable and given a fey quality, is presented as a reflection of an actual lived experience. In having the film move beyond the sentimental and reassuring, Cukor challenges easy generic classification. In fact, Travels With My Aunt allows for various identifications--it can be labelled a black or romantic comedy. I would also suggest it belongs to the tradition of the screwball comedy having a thematic that is similar to Hawks's Bringing Up Baby. In both films a conservative thinking, physically inhibited and emotionally repressed man is, through an unexpected encounter, thrown into a journey situation with a woman who is his opposite; and, in the course of their travels/adventures, the two learn to enjoy each other and gain from the experience. Just as the liberation of Cary Grant's David is a central aspect of Bringing Up Baby, the broadening of Henry's identity and imagination is a project of Travels With My Aunt. The two films are interesting to compare in regard to how they respectively relate this issue of identity and change to gender concerns. In Hawks's film, David is initally aligned with masculinist thinking through his commitment to the world of science, academia and capitalism--the latter providing the means to sustain his career interests. In Cukor's film, Henry's profession, banking, connects him with a male-dominated institution, but he is also, and significantly, aligned to a female arena--the home, gardening and flowers. In Bringing Up Baby, Katharine Hepburn's Susan is primarily defined by her playfulness, irrationality and indifference to authority, bourgeois convention and capitalist values. Like Hawks's heroine, Aunt Augusta represents a kind of life-force rejecting the social constraints imposed on women by the dominant ideology, but she has, like Henry, contradictory traits. Early on in the film, Augusta tells Henry that one of men's best qualities is that they are a 'bit of the hound'. For Augusta, being a 'bit of the hound' is defying conventions and transgressing--it also seems to include an acceptance of dishonest, self-serving and irresponsible behaviour from her lover(s). As Augusta recollects her relationship with Visconti, it becomes clear that he has from early on exploited her and doesn't deserve the commitment she has made to him. Yet she continues to maintain that, despite his insensitivity to and abandonment of her, he is worthy of her love and devotion. On a less personally meaningful level, she treats Dambreuse's dishonesty--the fact that he hasn't told her about his other mistress--as a joke. While her refusal to take his deception seriously may be prompted by her amusement that he was deceiving both his wife and herself, it also bespeaks the masculinist attitude she has internalized and directed towards herself and others. Augusta doesn't see that what she in part admires in men is, in fact, behaviour based on male privilege. In Bringing Up Baby, the Grant and Hepburn characters, as Andrew Britton argues in `Cary Grant: Comedy and Male Desire', move towards equality in the relationship; Grant, during his time with Susan, sheds his masculinist identity and learns to appreciate Susan's persona and what it offers. Additionally, the two fall in love and construct a heterosexual couple that can be read as an alternative to the conventional male-female filmic couple whose function is to reinforce clearly defined gender-role definitions. In contrast, Aunt Augusta and her nephew (or possibly son), Henry, aren't bound to the conventions found in Hawks's film; as a consequence, Cukor's

characters function somewhat differently. Yet they too are conceived to challenge, unsettle and problematize genderrole expectations. While it is obvious that Augusta's function is to liberate Henry from his dull and conservative existence, she is, as I have suggested, geared to masculinist thinking. For instance, when Dambreuse's abrupt death seemingly cuts off Augusta's last chance to raise the ransom money needed to rescue Visconti, she justifies stealing a Modigliani painting in his wife's possession by claiming that she posed for the work. Significantly, it is Augusta's theft of the painting that precipitates her confrontation with Henry. The argument isn't about the theft itself: Henry's refusal to condone stealing isn't simply an instance of middle class morality. Rather, it is prompted by his recognition that he can no longer be complicit with Augusta's opportunistic and obsessive behaviour. Instead, he is demanding that Augusta look beyond her needs and single-minded commitment to Visconti and acknowledge that she has responsibilities to others including himself. He wants her to fully recognize that they have a relationship, which entails her consideration of his values and presence in the mission they have undertaken together. Henry's demand for recognition and respect isn't prompted by gender concerns--a desire to be the dominant partner. Yet, given the film's play with gender and behaviour, his demand can be read as a rejection of a masculine identity role if the image is defined by what Augusta currently represents. Travels With My Aunt isn't Bringing Up Baby in that it reinvents the heterosexual couple in terms of a radical rejection of gender norms. Nevertheless, Cukor's film offers a strong critique of masculinist thinking and behaviour; the aftermath of the confrontation results in a greater equality between the two, with each gaining a better understanding of the other's strengths and weaknesses.

As the film's title indicates, Travels With My Aunt is a story about Henry Pulling's experiences. The title suggests that a boy or young man is telling the story but, in actuality, Henry is a middle-aged bachelor who has sheltered himself from the world that exists beyond his daily routines. Henry's encounter with Augusta initiates an education which expands his experience and perception. An aspect of Henry's growth is his relationship with Tooley/Cindy Williams, the young hippie-like American woman touring Europe. She introduces Henry to marijuana but, more significantly, Tooley seduces him--and, the film implies, he is a virgin. Cukor doesn't depict Henry and Tooley having sex; arguably, he doesn't because the film isn't primarily about Henry's sex life and because the experience is only an aspect of Henry's evolution. The sexual encounter with Tooley is as much an instance of Henry's emerging ability to give himself to others as it is an establishing of an adult sexual identity. Henry is in the processing of becoming a more confident person, who gradually begins to assert himself with Augusta and her attempts to direct his life.

From the outset, Travels With My Aunt is narratively shaped by Augusta's goal to deliver the ransom money. When Visconti reveals that his kidnapping was a hoax, Augusta is confronted by his betrayal and the realization devastates her. Augusta begins to despair about herself and whatever future she has believing that Visconti, in addition to lying to her, has abscounded with the money she delivered. It is at this point that Henry reveals that he, like his possible father, Visconti, is also capable of bringing off a deception; he informs Augusta that most of the money is still in their possession--what Visconti took with him was mainly telephone pages cut to the size of dollar bills. The revelation not only illustrates Henry's newly gained willingness to be `flexible' about life's experiences, it also indicates his genuine commitment to Augusta. In turn, this leads to the question of whether they have a future together and, if so, who or what will shape it? Henry suggests the toss of a coin--their future will depend on chance. Of course, Henry, in making the suggestion, is acknowledging implicitly that they will have a future together and that it will be open-ended, an adventure. Hence, the film ends happily. In the Hollywood cinema, the `happy ending' is often aligned with a return to stability and `normality' with the hero saying to the heroine `let's go home'. Here, as so frequently happens in Cukor's films, Holiday, Heller in Pink Tights, Rich and Famous among others, the `couple' are starting anew but there is no prescription for their future. Again, Cukor's work relates to Hawks's Bringing Up Baby where there is a refusal to place the couple at the film's conclusion within the confines of societal regulation. Cukor's work is also similar to Hawks's in that both directors tend to place more emphasis on their actors and the interaction between the actors/characters than they do on the primacy of the thematic. These directors, in contrast to such filmmakers as Ford and Capra who construct their films around a very specific set of thematic concerns, are less concerned with the `overt' statement their films are making. This isn't to say that Hawks and Cukor don't communicate a personal vision of

human experience. As numerous critics have discussed, Hawks's films are often concerned with male bonding and the importance of living a life that is based on self-respect, integrity and a personal morality; Cukor's films are also very consistent in their approach to living--his characters are invariably strong, resilient and willing to explore their own potential, taking a chance on what the future will bring. Cukor isn't a simple optimist--in many of the films, the characters confront emotionally painful experiences and suffer significant losses in their lives. Yet, his characters manage to survive these setbacks and, in part, do so because of their innate intelligence, creativity and sense of adventure. Many critics have noted that Cukor's film departs from the Graham Greene book, particularly in its ending; Greene's narrative resolution is much bleaker and more grotesque. Cukor, in contrast, rejects the downbeat ending; instead,he gives his characters a chance to further develop their identities and a potential to enjoy living their lives.

Travels With My Aunt is centrally concerned with Augusta as a romantic. On the one hand, she seems to want to deny her romanticism, presenting herself as a `realist' who faces life head-on. Yet her commitment to Visconti and the image she has created of him is very romantic. Augusta's romanticism has kept her from becoming a totally cynical and manipulative person; one of the cruelties depicted in Augusta's confrontation with Visconti is that he has exploited that romanticism and, more so, that he doesn't mind destroying it. In Travels With My Aunt, Cukor isn't suggesting that Augusta's romanticism is self-destructive--so much of what makes her appealing is based on her identity as a romantic. Augusta is one of the numerous romantics found in Cukor's films. These characters are diverse, ranging from Katharine Hepburn's idealization of her sister in Holiday to Jacqueline Bisset's romantic image of what constitutes a serious writer in Rich and Famous. The films don't reject their characters' romanticism, but they illustrate how a romanticizing of a person or a concept can be self-denying and potentially disastrous. Arguably, Cukor doesn't reject his romantics because he himself is a romantic when it comes to believing in oneself and having ideals and a vision; in the films, an important aspect of these characters is a willingness to fight for what they care about regardless of the consequence. Cukor's films are populated with characters who take risks and being a romantic can be risk-taking; but it is also a part of being open and responsive to the human experience.

In the Cukor cannon, Augusta relates directly to such seemingly diverse female characters as Angie/Sophia Loren in Heller in Pink Tights and Ruth/Jean Simmons in The Actress. Like these women, Augusta is willing to forfeit public and personal acceptance if it demands a relinquishing of what she wants. And, as with Angie and Ruth, Augusta is a theatrical personage who lives her life as if the world around her is a part of a stage on which she exists; on the other hand, these women aren't unaware of the `reality' around them. Significantly, Cukor's women never lose their humanity. In Travels With My Aunt, for instance, Augusta's immediate rapport with Tooley quickly leads to an almost protective concern for the young woman. There are at least two levels on which the women connect. Firstly, Tooley is what Augusta would have been if she had been a young adult in the 1970s; and secondly, Tooley, like Augusta, is involved, as becomes clear through her conversations with Henry, with a man who treats her unfairly but to whom she is committed nonetheless. From another perspective, it is not without interest that Augusta is comfortable with Tooley and Henry spending time together. In effect, by encouraging Henry to get to know Tooley, Augusta is providing him with an opportunity to know what she was like as a young woman.

*****

Travels With My Aunt is one of Cukor's late theatrical films and it was made at a time when the director was in a vulnerable position. In addition to having lost his star only weeks before filming began, Cukor, according to his biographers, received minimal support from MGM, who provided him with only a small budget for what was a big-scale production. Cukor's career had been at a stand still in part because he was attempting to set up his own production company, and a series of projects that were proposed never materialized. But, more crucially, Cukor, like his contemporaries, was considered an anachronism in the Hollywood cinema of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Cukor belonged to the studio-star-genre system that had collapsed by the mid-1960s which was, ironically, the moment when he finally received Academy recognition for his work. While Cukor was attempting to

sustain his career, MGM itself was fighting for survival. The studio, once the most prestigious and wealthy, became the most shocking example of the changes that had been taking place in the industry. It was no longer possible for the studios to function as they did during the classical period because of the economic, social and cultural changes that had been instituted in the immediate post-WWII period.

During the 1960s, Hollywood was not only drastically altering its production practices but also the style and content of its product. The full impact of the European cinema began to be felt in the Hollywood of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Suffice it to say, Hollywood needed to prove that it could compete with the changes occurring at large, and an emphasis was placed on new talent. Filmmakers like Cukor were suddenly seen as practitioners of an old-fashioned and no longer vital cinema. At best, Cukor was expected to be making a summation statement and, at the time of its release, Travels With My Aunt, was read by many critics as his meditation on aging. But, as I have suggested, Cukor's preoccupations in Travels With My Aunt are consistent with his earlier works--in this film, Cukor deals with aging but he isn't interested in making it the film's primary thematic. Unlike Capra and Ford, directors whose thematics were greatly affected by the post-WWII environment, Cukor wasn't in a position that either immobilized him (Capra and his populist cinema) or in need of reevaluating what constituted his ideological position and, by extension, his subjective self (Ford and the West).

Cukor and Hepburn planned Travels With My Aunt together; the fact that Cukor was involved in a film about a mature adult person was predicated on Hepburn's participation. The same can be said for their two television projects--these works, like Travels With My Aunt, deal with the process of aging and its effects. But, arguably, these three films aren't meant to be read as 1) the experience of being old in an ageist society; 2) the insights or lack of them that aging imparts. On the other hand, the works aren't attempts on the director's part to be `modernist' in content or style. The films are traditionally made when compared to the work being done in Hollywood during this period by younger and more self-conscious filmmakers.

Travels With My Aunt, in an off-hand and playful manner, deals with marijuana and inter-racial sex. Cukor, having a long history of challenging the Production Code, once again offers a more mature and realistic presentation of adult behaviour onscreen. Travels With My Aunt wasn't an attempt on Cukor's part to prove that he was `current'. It is, instead, a film that illustrates that Cukor was as fresh and creative as he had always been.

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Author(s): Andrew Macdonald (Loyola University in New Orleans) Gina Macdonald (Loyola University in New Orleans)

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BIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY:

Novelist, short-story writer, dramatist, screenwriter, film critic, news correspondent, editor, essayist, biographer, and writer of children's books, Graham Greene is a recognized master of his craft, a prolific entertainer (self-proclaimed in many of his subtitles) who tells a good tale while challenging values, perceptions, and worldviews. He has been called "the first major English-writing novelist who is also a Catholic" (Harry Sylvester); "one of the really significant novelists now writing in any language" (Sean O'Faolain); and "a searching, irresistible talent and a true magician ... in the descent of the modern masters" (Morton D. Zabel). In his work Greene has encompassed both the theological and the secular and has combined comedy and tragedy in mixtures labeled "heretical," "Catholic," "sordid" and "wry." Zabel argues that he raised the thriller "to a skill and artistry few other writers of the period, and none in English, had arrived at." Arthur Calder-Marshall finds Greene constructing "an atmosphere of horror, disgust, evil, terror, and loneliness" out of what O'Faolain calls "the broken lives of the

betrayed ones of the earth." What sets Greene's mystery fiction apart is his ambition (stated in his introduction to the collected edition of *The Confidential Agent*, 1939) "to create something legendary out of a contemporary thriller." The result has been thrillers that investigate the human condition, the psychology and the heart of man, amid conditions in which the seemingly familiar and benign prove strange and dangerous, and the exotic and uncivilized prove familiar extensions of the ordinary. His urban setting, labeled "Greenland" by critics, is the seedy underworld of the thief, the spy, and the murderer, a land of universal menace. Greene's most common themes include betrayal and guilt; the complexity of living; the impossibility of finding clear cut answers; man's psychology when on the run; and man's alienation from himself, his environment, and his fellowman. The movement of his work has been from initial melodramatic excess to more classic directness, with character dominating plot more and more, sinners proving saintly, and idealists dangerous.

Graham Henry Greene was born in Berkhampsted, Herefordshire, England, on 2 October 1904, the fourth of six children of Marion Raymond Greene (a distant cousin of Robert Louis Stevenson) and Charles Henry Greene, the headmaster of Berkhampsted School, where the young Greene was educated. Of his school days, his short stories and essays (such as those in *The Lost Childhood, and Other Essays*, 1951) record games of Russian roulette, conflicts between family and school, attempted escapes of various sorts, and the love-hate relationship with school that has long been the mainstay of the memoirs of upper-middle-class Englishmen. He used his few months of parentally enforced psychoanalysis as the imaginative basis for his negative portraits of mental asylums (as in *The Ministry of Fear: An Entertainment*, 1943). Nonetheless, in general, his childhood was sheltered, and his heritage was a Victorian world order whose values he has questioned ever since. His formative reading included Anthony Hope , H. Rider Haggard , and Marjorie Bowen (Gabrielle Campbell), with the latter providing patterns and concepts for exercise-book imitations. Later it was Ford Madox Ford , Joseph Conrad , and Henry James who provided his models and inspiration. Greene studied modern history at Balliol College, Oxford, and while there edited *the Oxford Outlook*, published a book of verse (*Babbling April*, 1925), and in a spirit of rebellion joined the Communist party for six weeks.In 1926 he became a member of the Roman Catholic Church, an act which has led to his being called a Catholic writer and which has produced a critical search for affirmations of Catholic theology in all his works. After graduation he had a brief unpaid apprenticeship with the *Nottingham Journal*. Greene worked as a subeditor in the *London Times* letters department until 1929, when, inspired by Heinemann and Doubleday's guarantee of six hundred pounds a year on the strength of *The Man Within* (1929), which he had written while recovering from appendicitis, he turned to a full-time writing career.

While with the *London Times* Greene had married Vivien Dayrell Browning, by whom he had two children, but the failure of his second and third novels left his family impoverished and Greene himself frustrated and depressed and ready to give up writing. Nonetheless, he persisted, testing out his method through trial and error, until he developed a style and a form that successfully merged his double interests: serious concerns and melodrama. The success of *Stamboul Train* (1932) gave him the impetus to continue his career as a writer. Greene wrote film reviews for *Night and Day* for two years; in 1935 he became film critic for the *Spectator* and in 1940 its literary editor. His film criticism from this period has been described as brilliant. Then he worked for the British Foreign Office on a confidential mission to Sierra Leone from 1941 to 1943. After the war Greene served as editor and director of the publishing houses Eyre and Spottiswoode (1944-1948) and Bodley Head (1958-1968). Early in 1952 Greene applied through the American consul in Saigon for a visa to enter the United States but was denied on the basis of the McCarran Act. He was only able to visit for brief periods until the restraint against him was lifted during the presidency of John F. Kennedy.

Greene's autobiography begins in *Journey without Maps* (1936-his early African years) and *In Search of a Character: Two African Journals* (1961-his later African years) and continues in *A Sort of Life* (1971-his life to his twenties) and *Ways of Escape* (1980-his life from 1929 to 1978. In his African autobiographies Greene describes journeys to that continent as metaphors for his own spiritual search, and he explains why he came to reject utopian visions. In *A Sort of Life* and *Ways of Escape* he traces his Georgian childhood among the British intellectual middle class, his attraction to drugs, sex, and danger, his fear of boredom, his deep depressions, and

his lifetime of travel, evasion, and escape. He discusses libeling Shirley Temple (he called her "dimpled depravity"); experiencing anticolonial uprisings in Malaysia, Kenya, and Vietnam; being deported from Puerto Rico as a onetime Communist; reveling in Havana; seeking beer and opium to give him "the energy to meet Ho Chi Minh at tea"; and contending with "the Other"-an imposter Graham Greene who creates trouble everywhere for him. He also provides instruction on his craft, but the style of these books overall does not say much about Greene. His personality is much more evident in his work, in what critics call "Greenland," a landscape of the mind and of the heart--a place of injustice, suffering, guilt and fear. His is a world under seige, in which the safe and familiar are transformed so that the innocent or idealized become the corrupt, the flawed, the annihilated.

William Soskin, in the *Weekly Book Review* (30 May 1943), describes Greene as "an expert in the art" of whetting the "jaded appetites of readers of mystery thrillers" and argues, in effect, that Greene enlivens the genre:

> He has the ability to glamorize the thriller intellectually, give it an upswept hair-do of psychological interest, arch its eyebrows so that its ordinary features seem to involve social questionings, and rouge its lips into a semblance of earnest passion that lifts it out of the boy-meets-girl category.

In other words, Greene's thrillers partake of the same themes, concerns, and approaches as his other work. Both forms are dominated by a search for identity among events that are both devastatingly real, yet somehow of a quality with the unreal. In both there are searches and pursuits and violence.

Greene's protagonists are incapable of remaining detached, despite their initial wish to do so, and once involved are carried along by forces beyond their control--sometimes to the solutions of their puzzles, sometimes to their greater mystification or embarrassment, but always to a revelation of personal character that ultimately outweighs any final denouement. For Greene evil lies not in an individual or an act but in circumstances and mind-sets and is a blurred gray area where the right deed for the wrong motive or the worst of deeds with good cause blend together, and one must reassess one's own absolutes and learn that labels are too easy a game--even in politics. The truly evil man has a childlike egotism-unable to experience empathy, he is self-convinced. "Human nature is not black and white but black and grey," Greene argues, and hence one must be able to write "from the point of view of the black square as well as of the white" if one is to have the "extra dimension of understanding" requisite for meaningful writing. D. in *The Confidential Agent* works faithfully for what he knows is a hopeless cause; Pyle in *The Quiet American* (1955) is blindly committed to a cause which will ultimately destroy those he seeks to help; and the police lieutenant in *The Power and the Glory* (1940) relentlessly tracks down the priest in obedience to the law of his land and his own egalitarian principles. In *The Ministry of Fear: An Entertainment* Arthur Rowe, a man who cannot forgive himself for the mercy killing of his wife and who cannot accept the court's judgment of mercy, eventually races to prevent secret documents from leaving the country, even as he admires the courage of his opponent. In *Our Man in Havana* (1958) Wormold's wish to provide for his daughter Milly leads him to accept funds to spy on Cuba, his adopted land. Then guilt at receiving money without providing some return makes him produce a fictitious network of spies and plots, one that the real spies take all too seriously. Soon innocent lives are lost, others are threatened, and the fabric of Wormold's peaceful life is rent apart.

Greene's central characters are always flawed, but it is this flaw that makes them human and likable and more capable of self-understanding and sacrifice. Having been stripped of illusions, having contemplated self-destruction and lost their most important human connections, they have nothing left to lose and can more realistically confront the world which closes in on them. They are able to smile ironically at themselves and to see through the pretensions and hypocrisies of those around them to recognize their common humanity. Greene's protagonists include a remittance man (Minty in *England Made Me*, 1935), a hired killer (Raven in *A Gun for Sale*, 1936), an adolescent gang leader (Pinkie in *Brighton Rock*, 1938), an alcoholic priest (in *The Power and the Glory*), a mercy killer and amnesiac (Rowe in *The Ministry of Fear*), a fallen Catholic (Scobie in *The Heart of the Matter*, 1948), a failed writer and adulterer (Bendrix in *The End of the Affair*, 1951), an

incompetent idealist (Pyle in *The Quiet American*), a jaded journalist gone native (Fowler in *The Quiet American*), an unsuccessful vacuum-cleaner salesman whose wife has left him (Wormold in *Our Man in Havana*), a drunken diplomat (Brown in *The Comedians*, 1966), and an odd priest and his Communist friend (Quixote and Sancho in *Monsignor Quixote*, 1982). In other words, Greene is interested in social outcasts who potentially share his own romantic and anarchistic spirit; he is sympathetic to the poor and oppressed while distrustful of authority. His heroes, despite superficial affiliation with one side or another, doubt, and it is their doubt that makes them seem humane and decent. Humanistic values beneath opposing philosophies dominate his work, and add a depth of perception beyond the norms of the genre.

For all its excesses, Greene's first novel, *The Man Within* (with its title from Sir Thomas Browne 's epigraph, "There's another man within me that's angry with me"), includes flashes of brilliance: poetic but tightly controlled imagery, memorable scenes and physical settings, and sharp, if overdone, insights into the psychology of character. It is a paradigm for his work and has all the elements of Greene's later thrillers. Francis Andrews, an orphan taken from school by a smuggler and brought up as a sort of mascot to his crew, is not sure where his allegiance lies. Ultimately, he rejects the romantic but depraved life of the smugglers for the love of his Elizabeth, but only after she has killed herself. What is important to him is that he satisfies the "stern unrelenting critic" within himself; as he discovers, "I am that critic."

Stamboul Train, a cosmopolitan "entertainment" and his fourth novel, published in America as *Orient Express* (1933), reestablished Greene's career after two weak efforts, *The Name of Action* (1930) and *Rumour at Nightfall* (1931), which Greene has chosen to exclude from the collected edition of his works. *Stamboul Train* proved his first really popular success. It is a story of international intrigue involving a motley group of characters: Czinner, a mysterious doctor who is a disguised Communist revolutionary; Carleton Myatt, a rich Jewish merchant obsessed with the current market and racial slurs; Coral Musker, a shy, good-hearted English chorus girl; Mable Warren, a lesbian journalist, with Janet Pardoe, her pretty but stupid companion; Josef Grünlich, a murderous burglar; and so on. The novel takes as its setting a train, the Orient Express, hurtling across Europe from Ostend, Belgium, to Istanbul, Turkey, an image Greene transforms into a metaphor for the thin shell of civilization, a shell as vulnerable as the walls and windows of the train. The distorted view of the cities through which the train passes heightens the sense of drama and of dislocation ("the great blast furnaces of Liege ... like ancient castles burning in a border raid," Belgrade a maze like Czinner's battle plan for a coup). The action, segmented into five parts according to the major stops along the route, grows organically from character, as Greene plausibly and realistically provides glimpses into the lives and motives of his creations. As Peter Wolfe has noted, there is "a business merger, an engagement, the deflowering of a virgin, an insurgence, a court martial, two murders, and three arrests" over a three-day period during the Easter season. Czinner is a doomed idealist, a revolutionary who arrives too late for a failed revolution. Lonely chorus girl Coral Musker rightly suspects the motives of men who are good to her. Currant merchant Myatt comes to care for her, and she for him. The other major characters are generally greedy and self-concerned, obsessed with possessions, success, and personal gratification at others' expense. At the heart of the novel is Czinner's court-martial: a debate involving Petkovitch, the army major concerned that proper procedures be followed; the doomed but idealistic Czinner, the "weary and hunted," who seeks a more just world; and the strong-arm Fascist, Colonel Hartep, for whom justice is subservient to state security. Published the year before Hitler took absolute power, Greene's portraits of the conscientious officer, the bureaucrat Hartep, and the self-serving murderer Grünlich ("a man of destiny"-a true menace to society who is ignored in the effort to silence Czinner) sum up what was proving to be the Nazi mentality with its sense of destiny, its approval of violence, and its Teutonic emotionalism. But the central concern of the novel is what happens to the flawed protagonists Czinner, Musker, and Myatt as they learn-or fail to learn-bitter truths about themselves and life. Stylistically, Greene's incorporation, with each train stop, of new sets of characters who are worked into the progressing action makes *Stamboul Train* more modern and more artistic than his preceding works and paves the way for patterns that characterize his canon thereafter.

It's a Battlefield (1934), inspired by Joseph Conrad 's *The Secret Agent* (1907), is a grim suspense story that transforms London into a battlefield of ideologies as it depicts how the death sentence of a London bus driver,

Jim Drover, an avowed Communist accused of murdering a policeman, affects the lives of various individuals. The murder occurs at a political rally in Hyde Park when Drover strikes out defensively, fearful that the policeman is going to injure his wife; it is a typical Greene incident in which an injurious act is perpetrated by the innocent at heart. A reprieve would signal government weakness to striking laborers, but an execution would arouse their ire and produce a retaliation that could unseat the Minister in the next election. The Minister puts his dilemma into the hands of the Assistant Commissioner, a policeman who does not understand the realities of state policy. The hatred and guilt unleashed by this controversy lead, among other things, to a supposed assassination attempt on the Assistant Commissioner by Drover's brother Conrad. In the end the Minister arranges the reprieve independently of the Assistant Commissioner, whom he does not bother to inform. Drover, who was content to die and who now fears he will lose his beloved wife, tries suicide without success. Meanwhile, Conrad Drover dies as a result of being struck by a car while shooting at the Assistant Commissioner with a rusty gun loaded with blanks.

As Greene notes in the introduction to the collected edition, *England Made Me* was praised by Ezra Pound and V. S. Pritchett , but little read. His next novel, *A Gun for Sale* , which was eventually filmed by Frank Tuttle, builds on the cinematic techniques Greene absorbed as film critic for the *Spectator* in the late 1930s. It also builds on the thrillers of John Buchan . Certainly its plot is as fantastic as anything Buchan ever wrote. Raven, a man with a harelip and a mutual hatred for everyone and everything but a kitten, is hired to kill a certain old man on the Continent by the obese and supercilious Mr. Cholmondeley. Raven kills the man and his secretary, but when he returns to London, Cholmondeley pays him in marked stolen money. Because the police are soon after Raven (for murder he thinks, but they only want to question him about the money), he has to abandon the only security he has: the kitten, his terrible apartment, and his abused and abusive mistress. He decides that he will track down Cholmondeley and kill him. Meanwhile, chorus girl Anne Crowder, the fiancee of the Scotland Yard man (Jimmy Mather) in charge of tracking Raven, by chance travels on the same train to Nottwich with Cholmondeley and the pursuing Raven. Raven takes her hostage, and she eventually begins to take his side. Escaping from Raven, she investigates Cholmondeley (who is known as Davis in Nottwich, where he is a backer of the show she is in), who almost kills her. Raven rescues her. A little later she helps Raven escape from the police stakeout-an act which alienates Mather from her. Ultimately, Raven kills Cholmondeley-Davis and the mastermind of the plot, a steel magnate who had hoped to start a world war with the murder of the old man; Mather's assistant Sanders kills Raven; and Mather and Anne Crowder are reconciled.

Brighton Rock , the 1938 novel which established Greene's reputation as a leading British novelist, is his first detective novel in that there is an investigator, and the exact cause of the first murder in the book only gradually comes out. *Brighton Rock* was ahead of its time in portraying grim urban realities and in delineating the fallen world of the despairing poor, gangsters, and juvenile delinquents. As such it has evoked much critical commentary and both theological and anti-theological interpretations. Greene's Brighton, though a superficially beautiful seaside resort, is beneath its gleaming facade as grimy and ugly as any decaying urban environment. Its slums are run-down, battered refuse heaps of humanity with broken windows and broken spirits-a sterile wasteland. Its residents, rough social outcasts (bookmakers, carnival people, lower-class workers, the unemployed, Jews, foreigners, Catholics), engage in gang competition, corruption, violence, and even murder. Theirs is a "man's world," wherein razor blade, vitriol, and knife become extensions of that manhood.

The story plunges immediately into the action: "Hale knew, before he had been in Brighton three hours, that they meant to murder him." What follows are two murders, an attempted suicide, and slashings. Hale, a newspaperman, had betrayed Kite, the former leader of a protection racket, to his rival Colleoni and fears the consequences from Kite's gang--as well he should. But the focus of the novel is on the seventeen-year-old leader, the Boy (Pinkie), who replaces Kite and who goes after Hale, a youth embittered by brutality and an impoverished childhood and desperate to lash out cruelly and sadistically before being squashed himself. Pinkie is a typical product of this British netherworld: a young man compelled to prove his manhood by violence, desperate to win loyalty but to avoid personal involvement, an amoral being willing to do whatever it takes to survive-"murder a world" if necessary. His marriage to Rose, a naive tea shop waitress, to stop her testifying

against him for Hale's murder, helps lead a headstrong, determined, big-busted, motherly figure, Ida Arnold, to step in, make up for the ineptitude or indifference of the police, and hound Pinkie to his death. Ida, though certainly an unconventional detective, shares characteristics common to most fictional male detectives: curiosity, close observation of details, specialized knowledge appropriate to her case, and standard techniques of checking witnesses and cryptic clues to ferret out the truth. But she is also street-tough and street-wise, with a sense of fair play and loyalty, and compelled by simple notions of right and wrong. Her common refrain is "I want Justice." Her values are old-fashioned and conservative: "an eye for an eye, law and order, capital punishment, a bit of fun now and then, nothing nasty, nothing shady, nothing mysterious." Her investigation forces Pinkie to cover his tracks by killing one of his gang members, and by planning Rose's suicide, and contemplating murdering all who get in his way. What could have been a simple tale of detection and vindication is fraught with ambiguity and conflict. Pinkie's youth and inexperience, his devastated childhood, and his conflict with older males-and even his hatred of music and joy-make him pitiable. Ida's stereotypical working-class ways, her savoring of sensual pleasures, her bouts of sentimentality, and her unquestioning self-assurance make it difficult for readers to identify with her cause as they might in a traditional mystery. On the other hand, Pinkie is truly a menace to life, and ultimately readers can be satisfied in his destruction.

The Confidential Agent, written in six weeks in 1938, has been called a paradigm for the espionage novel. In *Ways of Escape* Greene says the Spanish civil war furnished the background and the Munich Agreement "provided the urgency." John Mair of the *New Statesman* (23 September 1939) called *The Confidential Agent* "the best highbrow thriller" he had read in a long time, while Katherine Woods of the *New York Times* (1 October 1939) praised Greene's ingenuity and the fact that the mystery ranges "from the macabre to the apparently trivial." England on the eve of World War II is the setting; it is a place nominally peaceful, polite, and somewhat decadent but in fact the arena for a bitter struggle between competing confidential agents of an unidentified European country in the throes of a civil war. D. (readers are given only his initial) is a former professor of Romance languages who has been sent by his leftist government to buy coal in England in order to continue the war effort against the right-wing forces. He is opposed by L., an aristocrat who is trying to make his own deal for coal while wrecking D.'s chances of success. In Dover D. meets Rose Cullen, the spoiled young daughter of one of the coal magnates with whom he hopes to do business, befriends her, and forms an uneasy alliance with her. D.'s mission is soon subverted: his contacts in London try to withdraw his authority; he is suspected of the murder of a chambermaid in his hotel; he is shot at; and finally his identification papers, on which the coal deal depended, are stolen just before his meeting with the coal magnates. D., on the run from the police, L.'s agents, and even his own people, decides that he will be the "hunter." He comes to realize that he has no heart to be a killer, and, with Rose's help, he travels to her father's company's coal town in a futile attempt to dissuade the miners from supplying L. with coal; but he is captured by the police. He ultimately escapes legal charges and his enemies, with Rose at his side, but their future is uncertain.

The characters of D. and Rose are very well realized and have larger implications. Ever since his wife was shot by the enemy years earlier, D. has lived an emotionless life, cut off from love and hope. He gradually develops feelings for Rose, and she for him, in spite of their differences in age and background. Greene's psychological portraits of them are deft and convincing. Their story allows Greene to comment forcefully on fascism, social injustice, British upper-class frivolity, public blindness about the holocaust forming in Europe, the Spanish civil war, and a multiplicity of other issues of concern in 1939, and to imply that, even if there are no easy answers, questions must be asked.

The Ministry of Fear, which captures the nightmare quality of a bomb-torn London during the early part of World War II, has been called Greene's best thriller and a first-class psychological novel. Arthur Rowe, a middle-aged man, a mercy killer haunted by guilt, stumbles accidentally into the machinations of a group of fifth columnists, who pursue him to his home, attempt to murder him, bomb him, and then confine him in a mental institute after he has become an amnesiac. Amid the madness of not realizing what motivates the malevolence against him he finds love and, for a brief while, escapes from both the horrors of the war and the horrors of his own conscience. By seeing himself objectively, as an outside observer, and only gradually regaining a knowledge of his true

identity, he learns to come to terms with his past, accept love and the sacrifices it imposes, and publicly redeem his honor by recovering secrets the police and secret service think lost forever.

Greene agrees with his critics that his 1940 novel, *The Power and the Glory*, is his masterpiece. Set in Mexico during the religious persecutions of 1937 and 1938, it is the story of the pursuit and capture of a priest who buries his fear of his pursuers in alcoholism and the comforts of a sexual relationship but who cannot escape his calling, his beliefs, nor his shame and guilt. The book pits Church against State and soldier against priest and explores the nature of man, the psychology of religion, and the ironies of commitment. It captures the squalor and heat of Mexico, and the venality, sloth, violence, and piteousness of mankind in vivid portraits: a gringo dentist gone to seed, a brutal police lieutenant, a dark and stinking prison hole, and a yellow-faced informer. The action moves from the priest celebrating mass for grateful villagers in an out-of-the-way place, to his confinement for drunkenness, and finally to his Christ-like response to a request which he knows will lead to his capture: to hear the confession of a dying man.

Published in 1948, *The Heart of the Matter* challenges the traditional Roman Catholic attitude toward suicide by implying the potential for salvation in the time that death takes hold. Roman Catholic Major Scobie, for fifteen years a British colonial officer of unquestionable integrity on the coast of Sierra Leone, West Africa, is corrupted by pity for his unattractive wife, Louise, and borrows from a malevolent, disreputable Syrian, Yusef, to send her home to England. Scobie falls in love with Helen, a childlike widow of nineteen, and finds that his love for her turns to pity also. He then indiscreetly exposes his affair with the widow to Yusef. As a result, Yusef blackmails Scobie into smuggling diamonds, an act that leads to dishonor and deceit, the murder of Scobie's houseboy, and finally Scobie's suicide. Greene's use of an omniscient point of view that gives readers the introspections of the other characters, despite the clear focus on Scobie, has the effect of drama, an opposition of perspectives that allows for irony, balance, and ambiguity.

The End of the Affair depicts a heroine, Sarah Miles, who opts for divine love over the purely human although no one believes her. She utters a prayer for life for her lover Maurice Bendrix, whom she thinks is dead, as he is trapped by a V-2 explosion outside their house. When he recovers she takes seriously the commitment she made. Her frigid husband, Henry Miles, and Bendrix are both jealous of her mysterious new lover, not realizing it is God. The novel is another of Greene's odd genre mixes, combining a detective story (false clues leading to false conclusions and detectives emptying wastepaper baskets) with the appearance of a moral tale as Bendrix comes reluctantly to belief in God.

A Burnt-Out Case (1961), set in a leprosarium in the Congo run by priests, nuns, and an atheist doctor, has been called by Charles J. Rolo "strange and haunting ..., artfully charged with psychological suspense" and "certainly one of Greene's most memorable works," though the critic in the *Catholic World* (April 1961) was put off by the "various types of belief, half-belief and non-belief" within the book. Querry, fleeing his reputation, his past sins, and to some extent himself (he is "the famous Catholic architect"), buries himself alive in a hopeless, depressing labor of self-abnegation. *A Burnt-Out Case* suggests that traditional Christianity is as powerless to aid the spiritual leper as the dedicated doctor is powerless to help end the physical destruction of leprosy until the disease has run its course. Querry learns to care again but ironically dies meaninglessly, the victim of misunderstanding.

Travels with My Aunt (1969) is a Greene self-parody, a metaphor for his work, which details the hilarious adventures of an eccentric aunt (in her late seventies) introducing her highly conventional nephew to a wilder, more carefree side of life. From London to Paris to Istanbul to Asuncion, Paraguay, stodgy Henry Pulling, a retired bank manager, must face the unthinkable at the hands of his Aunt Augusta. He must deal with her disreputable black lover, Wordsworth, with the police who confiscate his mother's ashes believing they are marijuana, with his aunt's illegal exportation of pound notes, with her reminiscences of past lovers, and even with her belly dancing. Forced to hobnob with hippie girls, detective sergeants, and members of the CIA, Pulling begins to awaken to a new life and changed attitudes, to try out marijuana, and to enjoy the con games and the

"wickedness."

Our Man in Havana is a comic espionage novel which is also serious because, like all of Greene's books, it questions the nature of belief and its power. Wormold, an English vacuum cleaner salesman in Havana, is trying to raise his daughter Milly in the Catholic faith in keeping with a promise made to his wife, who deserted both long before; but the daughter uses his devotion to her to manipulate him into fulfilling her every whim. To earn some extra money for her future (and her horse, her stables, and her expensive clothing), he lets himself be talked into working for the British Secret Service and then embarks on an elaborate charade, inventing imaginary agents, concocting intelligence reports, and sending off sketches of vacuum-cleaner parts drawn out of scale as evidence of mysterious military installations in the mountains. When provided extra funds to hire an aviator to photograph the installations and support in the form of Beatrice, a secretary, and Rudy, a radio operator, his charade begins to have unpredictable consequences. The imaginary agents have their counterparts in real life, and innocents die or are pursued as enemy targets. Finally, Wormold feels he must avenge the death of his friend, Dr. Hasselbacher. Yet hilarious scenes occur throughout the book: Wormold engages in a series of comic evasions and inventions to disguise the nonexistence of his spy network; Wormold sticks with a boorish fellow tradesman and goes to comic extremes to avoid being poisoned; and Wormold plays chess with Captain Segura, the chief of police, using miniature liquor bottles for pieces and consuming each piece taken until one or the other is drunk. Wormold is ultimately recalled at the request of Captain Segura, but because the head office simply cannot face the embarrassment of their mistake, he is given an O.B.E. and made staff lecturer on how to run a station abroad. It also looks very much like he will marry Beatrice. Greene mocks the genuine agents' failure to consult experts and to check sources and their mindless competition with an equally mindless opposite. Walter Allen in the *New Statesman* (11 October 1958) feels that the "scenes at the secret service headquarters in London" are "too farcical to be convincing," but that "nothing could be more convincing, in the concreteness of its detail as well as in the beautifully rendered atmosphere of corrupt and seedy luxury, than Mr. Greene's Cuba."

An expert in Victorian and Edwardian crime fiction, Greene, in his play *The Return of A.J. Raffles* (published and produced in 1975), revives the famous Victorian amateur cracksman (safecracker) and cricketer, the creation of E. W. Hornung , in a tongue-in-cheek parody that sets the Victorian against the modern and allows readers to laugh at both. The frothy plot, which follows the conventions of melodrama and mystery, takes second place to character. Supposedly dead, Raffles agrees to aid his associate Bunny's new friend, Lord Alfred Douglas, the notorious lover of Oscar Wilde . He does so by stealing money from Lord Alfred's father to avenge the father's narrow-mindedness and tightfistedness. The Prince of Wales and his mistress as well as an ambitious German cousin intent on blackmail also enter the plot, adding to the potential for disaster. The play contains homosexuality, adultery, and nudity and was originally produced as a Christmas play-a fact that provoked much outrage.

The novelette *The Third Man* (1950) represents an unfinished term of the story effectively rendered in the 1949 Carol Reed movie version. It is a mystery thriller set in postwar occupied Vienna. The action moves against the background of a "smashed" and "dreary" city "of undignified ruins," a city characterized by hunger, black-marketeering, and fear. Like Greene's other thrillers it offers, as Peter Wolfe points out, "a vivid social and political background, a limber journalistic style, adroit cinematic cutting between scenes, and that staple of the thriller, the chase." The story is told by Colonel Calloway, a reasonable and experienced Scotland Yard officer in charge of British military police in Vienna. He uses official files, notes, letters, interviews, and conversations to narrate events and to provide perspectives on the other characters. His story focuses on a hack writer of westerns, Rollo Martins (also known as Buck Dexter). Martins, offered a job by Harry Lime, arrives in town in time for Lime's funeral amid February snows in weather so cold electric drills must be used to dig the grave. When Lime's associates provide different versions of his death, Martins grows suspicious; later, upon hearing Calloway call his friend Lime "about the worst racketeer who ever made a dirty living in this city," he vows to find out the truth. Rollo, like Greene's other amateur detectives, is unconventional. He joins forces with Lime's former mistress, Anna Schmidt, and together they explore the ruins and rubble of Vienna, searching for evidence of the death of their much-admired mutual friend. After the murder of Koch, whose story of Lime's death differs from

the official version, they suspect Lime might still be alive, a suspicion that endangers Martins but also leads to his hilarious, impromptu lecture to the British Cultural Relations Society (he at first thinks he has been kidnapped). Thus, Martins and Anna get caught up in a search that leads to painful conclusions: in exchange for asylum Lime betrayed to the Russians the fact that Anna's passport was faked; he distributed diluted penicillin that causes the retardation and death of children; and he has expediently murdered those who would expose him. Convinced that betraying Lime is just, Martins cooperates with British police to set up Lime in a cafeé. Lime flees through Vienna sewers but is ultimately shot by Martins, and Martins exits with the girl.

Lime is another of Greene's amoral villains who has "never grown up." From atop the Great Wheel in Vienna's amusement park he looks down on the dots below and asks Rollo:

> Would you really feel any pity if one of those dots stopped moving-for ever? If I said you can have twenty thousand pounds for every dot that stops, would you really, old man, tell me to keep my money-without hesitation? Or would you calculate how many dots you could afford to spare? Free of income tax, old man. Free of income tax.

Lime is an overreacher, flashy and clever but unable to ever follow through, a qualified physician who has never practiced. He has denied friendship and love and human obligation, but goes to his death because he cannot give them up totally. It is ironic that the final scene plunges him from the heights at which he imagines himself to the depths that are his reality; the sewers of Vienna. Appropriately, his second burial is accomplished with ease.

The Quiet American , set in Saigon and its vicinity, is generally considered one of Greene's finest works. Alden Pyle, the quiet American of the title, an ideological innocent, is set off against Thomas Fowler, a cynical, sophisticated, and jaded English journalist, who has submerged himself in French and Vietnamese culture. The news of Pyle's death begins the novel. Pyle was puritanical; Fowler is a self-proclaimed hedonist whose attractive Vietnamese mistress, Phuong, went to Pyle on his promise to marry her. Pyle saw people as types and groups; Fowler perceives them as individuals. Pyle was Harvard-educated, enthusiastic, and dangerous in his innocence, his arrogance, and his self-righteousness. He assumed that his perceptions of reality were the same as everyone else's and acted accordingly, while Fowler knows that the Oriental mind does not function like the Western one and that it is almost impossible for a Westerner to understand the political machinations, philosophies, and motivations of the different Asian parties, much less predict their responses. Pyle was a self-convinced believer, headed toward his own destruction and bringing down others with him; Fowler is the atheist, treading carefully, preserving his own life and protecting others. As Greene builds an image of local intrigue, of beleaguered outposts and perilous ventures behind Communist lines, and finally of murder, he incorporates methods and conventions from both the spy and the detective story, but exposes a concern of more far-reaching significance than who killed or will kill whom: rash, unthinking political involvement in a complex culture, whatever the motives.

The Comedians begins on a ship bound for Haiti, with three passengers, Smith (an American do-gooder and vegetarian); Brown (a resident of Port-au-Prince and possibly a hotel-owner); and Jones (a mysterious major whose background as a war hero is dubious), who in time experience the poverty, exploitation, and terror of François (Papa Doc) Duvalier's regime. Brown, the protagonist, is in love with Martha Pineda, wife of the South American ambassador. In the spirit of the Greene crime story the novel contains revolutionary activity, suicide, pursuit, assassination, murder, and even miraculous rescue, all of which change Brown's self-image. A major theme of the novel is the difficulty of distinguishing between illusion and reality when people are disguised and project roles on those around them. Martha Pineda accurately accuses Brown of inventing his friends and acquaintances: "Darling, don't you see you are inventing us?. ... You won't listen if what we say is out of character--the character you've given us.... You've turned poor Jones into a seducer and me into a wanton mistress.... Perhaps it would not matter so much if your thoughts were not so dark...." Brown views God as "an authoritative practical joker," life as "a comedy" instead of the tragedy he anticipated, and the evil around him as no concern of his. Smith does not even recognize the evil at first, while Jones is ready to make a deal with its

representatives. Brown finds in the swimming pool of his hotel the body of a suicide, a member of the Duvalier cabinet, and then watches as one by one his companions are killed or executed or merely disappear mysteriously. The novel seems to say that contemporary life is a degradation. A measure of the novel's success is the fact that it was condemned in a pamphlet that the Haitian government sent to its embassies for distribution.

The Honorary Consul (1973), a hostage drama, builds on an epigraph from Thomas Hardy : "all things merge in one another-good into evil, generosity into justice, religion into politics." The novel is set in a nameless provincial town on the Parana River in Argentina, a backwater significant only because of its proximity to the military dictatorship of Paraguay. Eduardo Plarr is a medical doctor who has settled there, partly because his English emigre father disappeared in a Paraguayan political purge years earlier. Plarr's mother is Paraguayan, and his divided cultural loyalties lead him to be both a member of the three-man British community in the town and a casual sympathizer and helper of Paraguayan guerrilla groups operating across the border. One of the guerrillas is Rivas, a former schoolmate of Plarr's who is a former priest; Rivas's group bungles an attempt to kidnap the American ambassador to Argentina, instead capturing Charley Fortnum, the honorary (British) consul of the title. Fortnum is a sexagenarian alcoholic married to a young girl, a former prostitute and presently Plarr's mistress. When Plarr is brought in to check on Fortnum's physical condition after the kidnapping, the stage is set for a series of agonizing decisions of major moral significance: should harmless innocents like Fortnum (his position is merely honorary) be used as pawns to achieve worthy ends? What role should the Church, in the person of the former priest Rivas, play when confronted by the most appalling injustice? What obligations does Dr. Plarr have to Fortnum, to his mistress, to his profession, and to his mixed cultural heritage?

As usual with Greene, the setting is almost flawlessly rendered, with a strong sense of place, appropriate and accurate local allusions, and an elegant and economical summation of political and social milieus. According to Grahame Smith, several kidnappings actually took place while Greene was finishing the novel, one involving a mistaken identity somewhat similar to Greene's plot. Dr. Plarr and Rivas are classic Greene figures. Plarr is a man once hurt badly and now determined to remain an uninvolved observer but forced by circumstances to make the moral choice of commitment. Rivas is ethically several steps beyond Plarr, the institutional man turned man of action.Their clash and ultimate resolution in sacrifice show Greene adapting figures from much earlier works-Rose and D. in *The Confidential Agent* parallel Plarr and Rivas in commitment, for example-but making them current and timely. As a result of this book, Greene was approached in 1980 by the South African foreign service to aid in the release of the South African ambassador to El Salvador who had been kidnapped by guerrillas, but his efforts were unsuccessful, and the victim died in captivity.

Doctor Fischer of Geneva, or the Bomb Party (1980) focuses on Fischer, a wealthy, avaricious Swiss dogmatist, who has made millions by inventing a toothpaste but who despises people and takes pleasure in experimenting with toadying guests, exposing their greed, undermining their pretensions and self-respect. The story is an odd mixture of allegorical morality play (with the seven deadly sins marching across the pages), comic hokum, and tragic romance with an aging Romeo and a Juliet who remains little more than a daydream. Lurid party scenes are set off by clever repartee as Fischer defends his behavior to a middle-aged failure named Alfred Jones (the narrator of the novel), who falls in love with and marries Fischer's only daughter, Anna-Luise. There is a poignant scene with Jones waiting impatiently in a hotel restaurant for Anna-Luise's return from the ski slopes (where her father's bomb party occurs) before learning of her tragic death.

The Tenth Man (1985), written as a screenplay in 1944 but shelved and forgotten until rediscovered in 1983, examines the conscience of a man stricken with guilt after a single act of cowardice. In it Jean-Louis Chavel, a wealthy Parisian lawyer held along with thirty other prisoners in a Gestapo prison in occupied France, is one of three to be executed (his fate is decided in a drawing of lots). Whereas the working-class and shop-keeper prisoners accept their fate with resignation and bravado, Chavel panics and in desperation offers his fortune to anyone who will take his place. Janvier Mangeot, in exchange for a firm contract turning over Chavel's family estate and savings to his impoverished family, accepts the deal. After the war a poor, unemployed, and conscience-stricken Chavel returns to his family estate, now occupied by Mangeot's mother and sister,

introduces himself under a false name, and accepts a job as handyman and special guard on the lookout for the despised Chavel. With time he falls in love with Mangeot's sister, but he is still deeply ashamed of his betrayal of his birth-right and his acceptance of another man's sacrifice, and he must constantly be on guard not to betray his true identity. Then, one night, a man calling himself Jean-Louis Chavel appears at the estate. He is an unscrupulous actor, now pursued as a collaborator and in need of aid. He has already murdered once to protect himself, and now he invents a series of lies that undermine the real Chavel's position and prepares himself to take over the property under a decree rescinding all changes of property made during the German occupation. But Chavel, in an act of self-sacrifice, exposes his identity and outwits the murderer-at deadly cost. *The Tenth Man* is hallmark Greene, with its failed protagonist, its psychological study, its cinematic images, its economy, and its genre mix. It is not quite a novel, not exactly a thriller, not really a romance, nor a wartime tale of collaborators, but a little of each of these.

The Human Factor (1978) traces the end of the career of Castle, an aging intelligence officer, an old Africa hand returned to England who has made the mechanics of spying into a way of life. He has internalized the rules of security so perfectly that they have become a theology of self-protection, an insulation against fear, hate, and pain. Castle has broken his rules only once, to marry Sarah, a black African woman pregnant with another man's baby. He brings her and the child, Sam, back to England, where in gratitude to the Communist lawyer who helped Sarah escape, he begins to pass secret information about Africa to the Russians. Castle is only a minor official, but his leak triggers a wide investigation which mistakenly settles on Davis, his coworker, as the culprit. Davis is careless about details and reckless by the tight standards of the intelligence service, and one of the authorities, Dr. Percival, quickly "eliminates" him with a synthetic attack of cirrhosis of the liver.

Percival's hasty execution of Davis leads to a number of consequences: with Davis dead, Castle must end his leaks or he will be found out; Colonel Daintry, the security officer supposedly in charge, is racked with guilt because only circumstantial evidence can be found against Davis; and Muller, a South African security man assigned to work with Castle, learns of the leaks in the African section as he develops an intuitive suspicion of Castle, who is an old adversary from South Africa. As guilt and tension mount, the different characters find themselves isolated from their fellows, both physically and spiritually, clinging to whatever shreds of belief motivated them in the first place but without confidence in or assurance of their validity. Belief in any individual is too easily frustrated by realpolitik and even bureaucracy.Only Percival and Castle's mother retain their beliefs whole, and they can only because of cynicism and obsolescent simplicity, respectively. The ending is hardly satisfying in any emotional sense, but it follows inexorably from the premises of the secretive and isolated intelligence world and those of Greene himself in his earlier work.

The Human Factor makes explicit in its main metaphors a theme that Greene has long examined, that of the alienating effect of modern institutional and secular life. The more generalized metaphor may be termed the intelligence world itself; like John le Carré and so many other modern writers, Greene finds in espionage an elegant way of rendering multiple suspicions and betrayals, relativistic truths which refuse to remain stable, isolation, and the polar opposite of a sense of community, shallowness, despair, and corruption. Greene's spies in *The Human Factor* are very ordinary people living in a post-World War II England gone secular (Castle goes into a church on an impulse and listens to the "well-dressed, the middle-aged and the old" sing with "a kind of defiance" until interrupted by a sonic boom). Castle has no faith in any creed or belief, only in his patterned and controlled life with his wife Sarah and her child, in whiskey, in the sleep of oblivion: "This is my fun," he says, "A sense of security." He believes not in "the City of God or Marx, but [in] the city called Peace of Mind."

Greene's more specific metaphors exemplify life under these conditions of consuming despair. Percival introduces the main metaphor, that of boxes:

> "You haven't been a long time with us, have you, or you'd know how we all live in boxes--you know--boxes."

> "I still don't understand."
>
> "Yes, you said that before, didn't you? Understanding isn't all that necessary in our business ... Take a look at that [Ben] Nicholson [lithograph]. Such a clever balance. Squares of different color. And yet living so happily together. No clash...."
>
> Percival pointed at a yellow square.
>
> "There's your Section 6. That's your square from now on. You don't need to worry about the blue and the red. All you have to do is to pinpoint our man and then tell me. You've no responsibility for what happens in the blue or red squares. In fact not even in the yellow. You just report. No bad conscience. No guilt."
>
> "An action has nothing to do with its consequences. Is that what you're telling me?"

The boxes metaphor is repeated by Percival (with approval) and Castle (with anguish) throughout and aptly describes the dilemma of all the characters: how to make human contact in a profession in which no one can talk about his work. As the consequences of Davis's mistaken execution begin to reverberate, the metaphorical becomes literal: one by one the characters become trapped in rooms isolated from the ones they love. Castle is boxed in his house and then in a grim Moscow apartment, Sarah in his mother's house, and Daintry (readers assume) in retirement in his flat. Castle even remarks, referring to a funeral urn, that "Davis is in a box." The metaphor is evoked with particular irony in the confessional box scene of chapter 1 of part 5, where the priest tells Castle to see a doctor.

Few can thrive in a world of isolated boxes. Only Percival ends as cheerily as he began, and that because he is "not the Crusader type. Capitalism or Communism? Perhaps God is a Capitalist. I want to be on the side most likely to win during my lifetime." Percival has no commitment to ideas or ideology and counsels Hargreaves to "beware of people who believe. They aren't reliable players." It is the game that counts, and as the fly-fishing metaphors that Greene puts in Percival's mouth stress, the challenge of a worthy opponent means far more than the results. Percival is unperturbed by Davis's death. His only regret is that "one couldn't throw a man back into the river of life as one could throw a fish."

There are few new themes in *The Human Factor*, but the novel is vigorous and taut, in no way a reworking of Greene's earlier books. The emphasis on Africa and race is as timely and perhaps as prophetic as the focus on American involvement in Vietnam of *The Quiet American*. Castle is an arresting character as a spy manque, unmistakably a Greene creation from beginning to end. Percival, Sarah, Davis, and the whole panoply of minor characters are sharply and unforgettably drawn. Perhaps the best feature of *The Human Factor* is the relevance of the general metaphor to modern institutional life: Percival's amoral boxes can be found in the flowcharts of government offices, corporations, universities, and all other complex modern social structures that often deny by their very complexity man's obligation to his fellowman.

Of Greene's juvenile works, only one partakes of the thriller format: *The Little Steamroller: A Story of Adventure, Mystery and Detection* (1953). It is a farfetched tale of a London steamroller that foils the plot of a band of smugglers by crashing into the Black Hander's taxi, and it has little to do with the qualities that so intrigue in his adult works.

It is perhaps not surprising that Greene should have had such a successful literary career, for his sensibility is perfectly attuned to that of his time. If the twentieth century is a period of conflicting demands and uneasy alliances, Greene too is a master of contradiction and paradox. He is claimed by both leftists and conservative Catholics; he is an establishment figure (the friend of Omar Torrijos of Panama), who could converse with Ho

Chi Minh. He is a very private man who has written two main autobiographies which yet reveal very little. Many would call him a moralist, yet he has a self-confessed taste for drugs and sex. He is a figure from the 1930s, yet as modern as radical priests in Central America; he is solidly British, even disliking America, yet his outlook and sympathies are international and eclectic.

Greene's work is as paradoxical as the man. He is repeatedly ranked among the great serious novelists of the twentieth century, yet his books have had enormous success in the mass culture as well. He is one of the most successfully filmed twentieth-century novelists. Yet, in spite of its modern cinematic nature, his prose owes virtually nothing to the modern and the experimental, and in fact has more in common with the best nineteenth-century models. Greene more than any modern writer has mixed genres, so that his "entertainments" often seem relatively serious and his religious and political books sometimes look like spy or mystery stories.

Whatever his ultimate ranking as an artist, Greene will surely be remembered as the most articulate spokesman for his time. Any American in the distant future curious about attitudes that led to the Vietnam War should read *The Quiet American.* A Latin American living in the twenty-first century might find in *The Power and the Glory* and *The Honorary Consul* representations of emotion and motive lacking in history books. The romantic figure of our times is the international journalist, recording history as it happens. Greene has called his method journalistic, but he has been a journalist of political motive and religious doubt, of alienation and commitment, recording the lives of the underground agent and the teenage tough. His work, a history of our paradoxical and turbulent times, fathers the principle of moral uncertainty which underlies so much of modern spy and political fiction: the individual in conflict with himself.

Papers:

The Humanities Research Center, University of Texas at Austin, has manuscripts and typescripts of most of Greene's books, plus working drafts and final manuscripts of various short stories and articles, as well as much of the correspondence. There are Greene holdings at the Lilly Library, Indiana University; the Pennsylvania State University Library; the Library of Congress; and the British Museum Library.

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