CHAPTER X.

GREENE'S TECHNIQUE.
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Greene has been consistently praised for his technique. When we read Greene's fiction we get an impression that we have acquired a vast amount of information about the lives and background, not only of the principal characters, but even of those who make only a fleeting appearance in the action. Greene achieves this effect, to a great extent, by his use of interior monologues.

For instance, the technique of the interior monologue in IT'S A BATTLEFIELD keeps us informed of the Commissioner's thoughts and of his journey at one and the same time: "By the time he reached the courtyard he had decided that he did not care for politics. In Northumberland-Avenue he said to himself that justice was not his business." ¹ The inward comment provides us with the knowledge of the Commissioner's constant attempts to shelve his conscience-stricken pre-occupation with justice by the idea of loyalty to the system which he serves: "I've nothing to do with justice, he thought ... .........One left justice to magistrates, to judges

¹ IT'S A BATTLEFIELD, p. 1.
and juries, to members of Parliament, to the Home Secretary." 2.

In ENGLAND MADE ME, Greene reveals the capitalist Krogh's obsessions and anxieties by following his thoughts and activities through an afternoon and evening: "He did not believe in God, but he believed implicitly in the lines on his hand...........If the company failed he would never hesitate to kill himself. A man of his credit did not go to prison.............He questioned his courage for the final act as little as he questioned his honesty." 3. We are given many facts about Krogh's life through these interior monologues -- the penurious childhood in Chicago, the struggles of his youth in Barcelona, the new cutter which brought him his fortune, and also his implicit belief in fate.

The past is not reproduced. What we need to know of the past is revealed in talk between the characters, or in their musings and dreams. For instance, in THE MAN WITHIN, Carlyon, the most important character in the novel after Andrews and Elizabeth, only appears twice, but he is continually present to Andrews's consciousness.

2. IT'S A BATTLEFIELD, p.2.  
3. ENGLAND MADE ME, p.41.
In *THE MINISTRY OF FEAR*, Rowe's character is gradually revealed to the reader in the thoughts and dreams of the past provoked in Rowe by the circumstances of the present. Life has become a nightmare to him after the mercy-killing of his wife. There were times when he felt that the criminality of the whole world was his. There were other times when he was aware only of the stupidity of his act. "A voice would whisper, 'You say you killed for pity; why don't you have pity on yourself?' Why not indeed? except that it is easier to kill someone you love than to kill yourself." Greene thus reveals the conflict that goes on in Rowe's mind by using the technique of the interior monologue.

Later on, Rowe is frightened that he may be attacked for his investigations of the cake mystery. In fact, just before the seance in Mr. Bellairs's house, he is warned by Anna that his enemies would try to get him in the dark. But he knows that it will be impossible for him to escape from the seance without making a scene. Rowe thinks that sometimes it is more difficult to make a scene than to die, and, immediately, his thoughts go back to his dead wife. "A memory came back to him of some one else who wasn't certain, wouldn't make a scene, gave herself sadly up and took the milk." This detail

adds enormously to the horror of the seance-scenes when the voice of the medium in a trance calls out, "Arthur, why did you kill?", before the lights are switched on and one of the company is found apparently murdered by Rowe's own pocket knife.

In BRIGHTON ROCK, we are able to reconstruct Pinkie's past, from his own thoughts and dreams. We know about the role played by Kite in his destiny and how he became a reckless criminal with the inordinate ambition to outplace Colleoni, by following his own thoughts and reveries. "This was the place he had come to after Kite had picked him up," Pinkie thinks while he is waiting for a call from Johnnie. "He had been coughing on the Palace pier in the bitter cold..............Kite had given him a cup of hot coffee and brought him here............Kite had opened the door of No. 63 and the first thing he had seen was Dallow embracing Judy on the stairs........Kite had died, but he had prolonged Kite's existence." 6.

As in the case of Pinkie, we can reconstruct the whisky priest's past from his dreams and memories. On

6. BRIGHTON ROCK, p.293.
his way to Carmen, while he is resting at night in a little hut in the company of the mestizos, the memories of his childhood cross the priest’s mind. His childhood had been happy in Carmen, where his father had been a store-keeper. But the misery of the peons had bred fear in his heart. He had looked for an easier way to security than the calculations and risks of a business career. To the child there seemed no easier way than the priesthood. He became a successful priest in Conception. He was, however, ambitious. "He was not content to remain all his life the priest of a not very large parish. His ambitions came back to him now as something faintly comic, and he gave a little gulp of astonished laughter in the candle-light." 7

During the long ten years' ordeal, he found himself always dominated by fear. At last he realized that he was the only priest left in the State. He was glad to be free from the last man who could disapprove of him. He was now free from any rules but his own. But, ironically, he found himself taking the easy way, as he had in the choice of his vocation. Alone in the Godless State, the priest surrendered to temptations. Gradually this led to

7. THE POWER AND THE GLORY, pp. 120-121.
mortal sin and the complete disintegration of his being. The priest feels deep pain when he thinks of his downfall: "The years behind him were littered with... surrenders -- feast days and fast days and days of abstinence had been the first to go... then he had ceased to trouble... about his breviary... Then the altar stone went... Five years ago he had given way to despair -- the unfor-givable sin... One day they would choke up, he supposed, altogether the source of grace." Greene thus reconstructs the past events in the life of the whisky priest through the association of ideas and memories that cross his mind at various times during the course of the novel. He thus makes use of the technique of the psychological novel.

Neville Braybrooke considers Greene's particular method a contribution to the technique of the novel. "His technique is simple: it is the adaptation of the dramatic soliloquy to the confines of the novel; in the process histrionics are abandoned, so that one has the impression not of somebody declaiming his thoughts to the world at large, but of somebody whispering his immost doubts and

and conflicts to one by telephone." 9. The technique of dramatic soliloquy gives him freedom in the portrayal of conscience and the camera-eye point-of-view which he adopts enables him to shift rapidly from scene to scene.

Dreams play an important part in Greene's works. He repeatedly makes use of dreams to convey information as well as to probe into the inner life of his characters. The course of psycho-analytic treatment which he went through at the age of sixteen is probably responsible for his pre-occupation with dreams. Freud, to whom we owe most of our knowledge about dreams and dream technique, says in his book, THE INTERPRETATION OF DREAMS, that dreams reveal the sleeper's unconscious life. In dreams, the buried wishes strive for conscious expression. Such wishes can find expression now because the conscious mind which kept them at bay during waking hours is asleep and is not on the alert. Dreams supply important material for the comprehension of the deep inner life of the waking and the sleeping psyche alike. Freud has pointed out that the dream-script is a natural psychic language though it may not be readily intelligible to our conscious

intelligence trained in waking thought-language. He contends that dreams have a latent meaning and that they wear disguises and employ a great variety of symbolisms. The dreamer may reveal in dreams phases of his personality and motivation which he is unwilling, or unable to discover, by conscious intention. Greene has liberally made use of dreams to present to his readers the inner life of his characters.

In his very first novel, THE MAN WITHIN, we see Greene making use of dreams to convey information and deepen a sense of character. In the potting shed, where he sleeps at the beginning of his flight from Carlyon, Andrews dreams that the sailors are talking of his father's courage. This dream gives us some idea about Andrews's father and the reason why Andrews feels such a deep hatred of his father. Greene uses this device even more boldly in Raven's dreams in A GUN FOR SALE and Arthur Rowe's in THE MINISTRY OF FEAR.

In BRIGHTON ROCK, a dream reveals the effect on Pinkie of the sexual act which he has just committed and which he considers to be an act of mortal sin. On the night of his wedding, obsessed by the thought that
he has committed a mortal sin, Pinkie gets a nightmare in which he is overwhelmed by the fear of drowning. "He was upon the pier and he could see the piles breaking — a black cloud came racing up across the channel and the sea rose: the whole pier lurched and settled lower. He tried to scream: no death was so bad as drowning". Pinkie wakes to realize with horror that there is no end to what he has just done.

In THE HEART OF THE MATTER, Scobie feels after his repeated acts of adultery and sacrilegious communions that he is contaminated by evil and contaminates others by merely continuing to exist. A dream shows his condition very vividly. Scobie sees himself "drifting down.......an underground river.........he was alone, for you couldn't count the dead body on the stretcher as a companion. He felt a sense of urgency, for ..........the smell of decay was already in his nostrils. Then, sitting there guiding the boat down the mid-stream, he realized that it was not the dead body that smelt but his own living one."11

John Atkins remarks that Greene finds the dream atmosphere essential for his method of working. There are

10. BRIGHTON ROCK, p.249.
the greatest number of dreams in his best books. In THE HEART OF THE MATTER there are eight, in THE POWER AND THE GLORY there are six, and in THE END OF THE AFFAIR there are five. The frequent use of dreams by Greene seems to suggest that he is in more close and continual contact than many other writers with the subconscious of his characters. His use of the interior monologue, reveries, and dreams, is responsible to a great extent for the psychological subtlety that we notice in his characterisation. These devices help Greene to probe deep into the mind and lay before us in a vivid manner the inner life of his characters.