

T H E I M A G E O F C O N T R A D I C T I O N :
A N A P P R O A C H T O T H E N O V E L S
O F H E N R Y G R E E N

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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own work, that it has been composed by myself, and that no portion of it has been submitted for any other degree or qualification

O Holmesland

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Declaration	ii
Acknowledgements	iv
Abstract	v
Chapter One: Introduction	1
Chapter Two: <u>Living</u>	74
Chapter Three: <u>Caught</u> and <u>Back</u>	129
Chapter Four: <u>Loving</u>	201
Chapter Five: <u>Concluding</u>	270
Chapter Six: <u>Party Going</u> , <u>Nothing</u> , <u>Doting</u>	353
Chapter Seven: Conclusion	396
Appendix	417
Bibliography	425

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ABSTRACT

The novels of Henry Green (pseudonym of Henry Vincent Yorke) represent successive experiments in creating a visual artistic form, through authorial 'disengagement'. Green's method has gained him a reputation as one of the most elusive and enigmatic novelists in contemporary literature, whose moral purpose is extremely difficult to detect. This study proposes to overcome the critical impasse encountered by a conventional approach to his fiction. It opposes the critical assumption that Green merely presents a picture of amorphous reality. It challenges the critical view that Green's images possess specific symbolic qualities that contain the novels' meaning. Rather, Green's images can only be analyzed as components of a self-contained artistic form with 'an everlasting life of its own'. As will be argued, Green's intention that this 'life' is to 'create life in the reader', entails a careful arrangement of visual images for the communication of certain values. The analysis of principles by which Green creates and juxtaposes images to produce 'tone' (i.e. attitude towards the scenes depicted) is paramount in this thesis. The introductory chapter reveals Green's affinity with Lawrence - both celebrate sensual commitment to the living present. It denies claims that Green's Modernist apprehension of flux and fragmentation -

reflected in analogies between the scenic design of his novels and abstract art, and in his progressive authorial 'disengagement' (comparable to T S Eliot's idea of 'impersonality') - discourages sensual participation, aligning his method with Eliot's compensatory contemplation of static perfection by the creation of an abstract, aesthetic pattern. The problem of tone is shown to be clarified by a critical model based on Sergei Eisenstein's theory of filmic montage, which incorporates principles of poetry and painting. Montage creates tone by accenting the incongruity of juxtaposed images, thereby evoking the appropriate emotive and intellectual response in the reader. Several chapters are devoted to the examination of tone in Green's novels. They demonstrate that only a montage-based approach can provide the key to understanding Green's fiction. The Conclusion synthesizes the main issues of the argument and expands on previous comparisons drawn between Green and various critics and writers (contemporary and non-contemporary). It places Green's method within the perspective of Modernism and New Criticism. It furthermore argues that Green, despite his Modernist conception of a fragmentary world, is basically a Romantic. Like Coleridge and Keats, Green employs montage to integrate subject and object into a poetic, perceptual unity. Those of Green's novels possessing close thematic affinities are grouped together irrespective of the chronology of publication.

Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

The truth is, these times are an absolute gift to the writer. Everything is breaking up. A seed can lodge or sprout in any crack or fissure.

Henry Green, letter to Rosamond Lehmann, quoted in Lehmann, 'An Absolute Gift', Times Literary Supplement (6 August 1954)

Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

In 1949, Mark Schorer wrote that as far as Britain is concerned, 'we must confess that, in the past fifty years, the distinguished novels have been written in the prose that risks'. Naming established writers - Conrad, Joyce, Lawrence, E M Forster, Virginia Woolf, and Elizabeth Bowen - 'for whom there are no American counterparts', he concludes that 'to these we may now probably add the name of Henry Green'.¹

Despite Henry Green's reputation as one of the most original and fascinating novelists of our time, he remains in the shadow of his contemporaries. He is probably one of the most neglected writers of our century.

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1. Mark Schorer, 'Introduction to Henry Green's World', New York Times Book Review, 9 October 1949, p.1. Henry Green has been lavishly praised by a number of contemporary writers and critics. W H Auden has described him as 'the best English novelist alive'; Robert Phelps considers him 'easily the best English novelist of his generation' (quoted by Edward Stokes, The Novels of Henry Green (London 1959) p.7.) Walter Allen calls Living 'the best English novel of factory life' and awards Green a unique position in English literature in the 1930s: 'for any writer of the thirties to have been non-political, to have aimed at pure art, is in a way suspect; and Henry Green is very possibly the only pure artist of the thirties' (Tradition and Dream: The English and American Novel from the Twenties to Our Time (London 1964) p.214, and 'An Artist of the Thirties', Folios of New Writing 3 (1941) p.143.

James Hall, in trying to answer why no one writes articles about Green, attributes this anonymity to a general 'modern embarrassment in writing about comedy'.¹ Green's style is, in Hall's words, 'witty, personal, symbolic, specific'. This observation seems to account for most of the interpretative difficulties which a student of Green's work confronts. As Hall says, the critic may find himself trying to explain 'the how of comedy'.

Critics commonly agree that Green's novels are too amorphous to define a moral preoccupation clearly. Each of Green's novels offers a wealth of percepts and phenomena with no apparent attachment to a coherent whole. Any conception of plot is disturbed by shifting points of view; alternations between past and present; triviality receiving disproportionate emphasis so as to look absurdly important; private obsessions gaining dominance over collective ones; unpredictable incidents, symbols and imagery chopping up the structure of the novels, apparently without authorial control. Edward Stokes echoes the dominant critical attitude to Green when he says that he is 'one of the most elusive, tantalizing and enigmatic of novelists, whose work is extremely difficult to define or categorize'.²

1. James Hall, 'The Fiction of Henry Green: Paradoxes of Pleasure-and-Pain', Kenyon Review 19 (1957) p.76.

2. Edward Stokes, The Novels of Henry Green (London 1959) p.7.

To see Green's art as comic must not lead us into the fallacy of seeing it as merely amusing and inessential. Such an interpretation contradicts Green's belief that through an 'acute sense of the ridiculous', we are surprised into an awareness of ourselves and others; through this sense of surprise we 'learn the little we know about human nature'.¹ Green's belief points to his refusal to remain within the bounds of a traditional narrative structure. This refusal, however, does not prevent him from dealing seriously with life's complexities.

Green has never been inclined to explain his 'serious' themes. However, in 'A Novelist to his Readers', he presents some basic ideas of human life that account for his experimentation with style.² He attacks the 'know-all' novelist and the narrative technique whereby 'the writer, who has no business with the story he is writing, intrudes like a Greek chorus to underline his meaning'. That Green is not only thinking of the Thackerayan manner of stepping in front of the 'curtain' to speak directly to the reader, is clear when he goes on to ask: 'And do we know, in life, what other people are really like? I very much doubt it. We certainly do not know what other people are thinking and feeling. How then can the novelist be so sure?'

1. 'A fire, a Flood, and the Price of Meat', Listener 23 August 1951, p.294.

2. 'A Novelist to his Readers' - I, Listener 9 November 1950, p.506.

Green's preoccupation with literary form reflects what he sees as basic facts about the world: the inability to communicate effectively and the impossibility of knowing the truth.

For how do we, each one of us, find out anything in the lives we each lead? Very little by reading, still less by what we are told. We get experience, which is as much knowledge as we shall ever have, by watching the way people around us behave, after they have spoken. As to other people telling us about what they have found in life, about what they have said themselves upon occasion, it may be personal prejudice, but whenever I can check up, I find they are only giving their own version of whatever it might be.

The world Green describes here is one in which reality is determined by point of view, and truth depends on how we see. Green's recognition of the subjective nature of all experience sets limitations for the author. Explanation is unreliable, because it is liable to perceptual distortions and incomprehension bred by the author's subjectivity. Correspondingly, it is inadequate to deal with an evasive reality in a rational and philosophical manner.

Most people remember very little of when they were small and what small part of this time there is that stays is ... coloured and readjusted until the picture which was there, what does come back, has been over-painted and retouched enough to make it an unreliable account of what used to be.¹

1. Henry Green, Pack My Bag (London 1952) pp.7-8.

Life, according to Green, cannot be apprehended through a dependence on memory or recollections. The pictures to which Green refers imply static, one-dimensional qualities which are incompatible with real life. Green's primary aim is to create a life which is convincing. He wishes to create 'pictures' that can absorb the flux to which the continuous present is subject. Green believes that only through direct confrontation with life's vicissitudes can one (in this case, the author) achieve an inclusive, yet ever-changing command of life's complexity.

Green's narrative method strives to grasp the multiplicity of existence. An artist, he says, must create that which is 'alive ... with an everlasting life of its own'.¹ This effect can only be achieved through the conveyance of vivid 'pictures'. Green stipulates that these pictures should be 'as diffuse and variously interpretable as life itself'.² Autonomy in art, according to Green, is attained through minimal narrative intervention lest the author's subjectivity should 'colour', 'over-paint' or 'retouch' the presented reality: 'The writer must be disengaged or else he is writing politics'.³ Authorial disengagement enables the reader to reassemble the narrative fragments and thus construct or determine

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1. Writers at Work: The Paris Review Interviews 5, (Harmondsworth 1981), p.104.
 2. 'The English Novel of the Future', Contact 1 No.2 (1950), p.22
 3. Writers at Work, p.109.

meaning. According to Green, this technique 'induce[s] the reader to make an act of conscious imagination to fuse the narrative'.¹

Green's theorizing about the indeterminate nature of his art raises a central problem: does Green's fiction produce any value statement beyond a mere portrayal of the multiplicity and complexity of life? John Unterecker suggests that Green is primarily interested in apprehending 'the mysterious thing itself': 'a shifting, endlessly surprising, interpenetrating world of possibility in which, observing well, we are constantly pierced by the flickering discoveries of life's nonsense correlations'.² Donald S Taylor, in reference to Nothing and Doting, claims that Green's 'characters come to us without even the suggestion of moral labels because, as in life, we are the judges'. Green's abstracting technique of merely presenting 'provocative outlines of people and situations', he says, 'suggests species rather than defining individuals'.³ Philip Toynbee concludes that Green 'has neither tried to achieve nor accidentally achieved a moral effect'.⁴

This study takes the view that Green, in selecting

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1. 'The English Novel of the Future', p.23.
 2. John Unterecker, 'Fiction at the Edge of Poetry: Durrell, Beckett, Green', in Forms of Modern British Fiction, edited by Alan Warren Friedman (London 1975) pp.174,198.
 3. Donald S Taylor, 'Catalytic Rhetoric: Henry Green's Theory of the Modern Novel', Criticism 7 (1968), pp.82,86.
 4. Philip Toynbee, 'The Novels of Henry Green', Partisan Review 16 (1949), p.495.

the separate details of his fiction, subtly directs the imaginative participation of the reader. 'Even the most nearly neutral comment will reveal some sort of commitment', says Wayne Booth in The Rhetoric of Fiction. The author, he says, 'cannot choose whether or not to affect his readers' evaluation by his choice of narrative manner'.¹ Applied to Green, this argument is echoed by Frederick Karl: 'Characters have no substance and narratives no meaning without the novelist. Green theorizes as if the novel springs into being through a spontaneous creation and then lives on its own terms'.² There is an ambivalence in Green's view of art and the world which can only be resolved through systematic analysis of his novels. Green's aspiration to convey a realistic impression of life's contradictory quality indicates movement towards artistic objectivity and authorial detachment. On the other hand, Green's theory of 'non-representational' art cannot be fully interpreted in terms of Flaubert's idea of dispassionate description and his repudiation of thematic purpose. In 'A Novelist to his Readers', Green explains that 'I have tried to show that the purpose of the novelist is to create, in the mind of the reader, life which is not, and which is non-representational.

1. Wayne Booth, The Rhetoric of Fiction (Chicago 1961), pp.76,149.

2. Frederick R Karl, A Reader's Guide to the Contemporary English Novel (London 1963), p.186.

This has nothing to do with the theme of his work. We are all individuals and each writer has something of his own to communicate. It is with communication that I have been dealing here'.¹ Green allows that 'the writer cannot dictate to himself the theme of his novel ... he has to write from his innermost beliefs'.² Green's temperamental affinity to certain themes seems to prevent him from writing a truly objective novel.

With regard to technique, Green's novels represent successive experiments in creating art which is oblique and visual in quality. If art is to be 'all things to all men', as is Green's stated objective, a certain degree of intentional ambiguity is required. 'What, after all, is one to do with oneself in print? Does the reader feel a dread of anything? Do they all feel a dread for different things? Do they all love differently? Surely the only way to cover all these readers is to use what is called symbolism'.³ Narrative must be oblique, says Green, 'for how can one, as a novelist, cater for those estimable men who only admire girls with black hair and pale blue eyes? The answer is, of course, by not describing them'.⁴ By avoiding specification, Green enables

1. 'A Novelist to his Readers' - I, p.506.

2. 'The English Novel of the Future', p.23.

3. Writers at Work, p.110.

4. 'A Novelist to his Readers' - II, Listener 15 March 1951, p.425.

the reader to project his privately cherished images into the text. Essentially, Green's concern with the actual technique of communication does not preclude the implicit suggestion of thematic values. All his novels are non-representational, he says, in that they 'represent a selection of material', and so can appeal to the imaginations of varying kinds of readers.¹ Hence, also dialogue should be non-representational, that is, not a direct record of the way people talk. Green's justification for this is: 'To create life in the reader, it will be necessary for the dialogue to mean different things to different readers at one and the same time'.² For the same reason, Green's use of humour does not necessarily imply lack of value commitment. Humour functions as a device to enliven 'all men'; 'And if you can make the reader laugh, he is apt to get careless and go on reading. So you as the writer get a chance to get something into him'.³ The mark of the true artist, for Green, is the degree to which he is able to create a 'life which does not eat, procreate, or drink, but which can live in people who are alive'.⁴

In 'The English Novel of the Future', Green writes that the reading public are only interested in the 'theme of people falling in and out of love', and that he is concerned with 'the way in which this theme can be

1. Writers at Work, p.103.

2. 'A Novelist to his Readers' - I, p.506.

3. Writers at Work, p.104.

4. 'A Novelist to his Readers' - I, p.505.

presented'.¹ That love is Green's declared theme may be seen as indicative of a private value system. In order to be 'alive', this theme's manner of presentation cannot depart from the immediate present. This indicates that love, in Green's characters, can only live in the present, not through reliance on a sentimental past or rosy future. Green's statements, so far, suggest certain commitments that deflate the possibility of an objective novel. Themes, characters, and technique are to form an artistic whole which can 'create life in the reader'. A major task of this study will be to find a method by which to interpret the degree and manner of Green's commitment to the characters and events he portrays.

A close investigation of some 'pictures' that compose Green's novels is required to elucidate the relationship between his narrative technique and certain thematic values. To render a realistic impression of the variety and complexity of life, as is one of Green's objectives, it is necessary for him to describe reality from various angles and as perceived by the individual sensibility.

1. 'The English Novel of the Future', p.21. In 'Green, with Envy: Critical Reflections and an Interview', London Magazine 6, No.4 (1959), p.22, Green also states that his central theme is love.

Since each character is a separate individual, each perceives reality differently. But Green's beliefs that the work of art should be 'all things to all men' and that the novelist should be 'disengaged', imply that direct description of his characters' feelings must be regarded as authorial intervention. In order to create the proper ambiguity and universality of expression, Green often tries to visualize the subjective realities of his characters. Two passages from Concluding illustrate Green's technique. In the first, Green metamorphoses Mr Rock's sense impressions into imagery:

he saw the beeches like frozen milk,
and frozen swimming-bath blue water,
already motionless in a cascade,
soundless from a height, not sixty
yards in front.

(p.249)

The next passage describes Merode's knee, seen through Sebastian's eyes:

he looked down on a girl stretched out
.... A knee which, brilliantly polished
over bone beneath, shone in this sort
of pool she had made for herself in the
fallen world of birds, burned there like
a piece of tusk burnished by shifting
sands, or else a wheel revolving at such
speed that it had no edges and was white,
thus communicating life to ivory, a heart
to the still and the sensation of a crash.
to this girl who lay quiet, reposed ...
she had mud on the white of leg below the
knee, with enamelled toes in sandals
caked with mud. Sun, through the bright
leaves, lit all of this in violent dots,
spotting the cotton with drips as of wet
paint, and making small candle lamps of
flesh.

(p.56)

Interpretation of the passages is made difficult because of the surreal quality of the imagery. 'Beeches like frozen milk', 'tusk burnished by shifting sands', 'candle lamps of flesh', or the image of a revolving wheel, are not intellectual symbols in the sense that they are in one-to-one correspondence with ulterior elements, and thus help define more precisely what those ulterior elements represent. Taken from our common fund of experience - from nature, from daily life - their original meaning is informed with an abstract quality by being placed in a context where they do not naturally belong. The effect is what Green calls non-representational. It is similar to that of a painting, Green suggests: 'one tone or shade of colour lead[s] to another until this evolves into a harmonious whole which may have little direct relation to nature. Thereby painters produce something which isn't, that is to say, the result is non-representational, and yet if and when the painting is successful, it has a life of its own. This is also true of a good novel'.¹

Relationships between the author and the scenes he portrays in the preceding quotations are deliberately obscure. The effects produced by Green's use of visual imagery are discussed by Myron Turner. Turner suggests Green's imagery serves the function of 'defining a state

1. 'The English Novel of the Future', p.21.

of consciousness'. Therefore, the emphasis is not on a correspondence between imagery and reality. Green's description of Merode's knee 'emphasizes the process of thinking which takes place, the presence of an intelligence seeking the appropriate set of images to convey the impression left on the mind by the "strictly visual form"'. Turner stresses the connotative potentiality of Green's imagery. Exactly this quality, he believes, connects Green's description with Wallace Stevens's 'Sea Surface Full of Clouds' and his repeated use of the line: 'And made one think of':

And in the morning summer hued the deck

And made one think of rosy chocolate
And gilt umbrellas ...

... a pale silver patterned on the deck
And made one think of porcelain chocolate
And pied umbrellas. An uncertain green,
Piano polished, held the tranced machine

Of ocean,¹

Turner concentrates on the expressions sought by a symbol-making 'intelligence'. This 'intelligence' is sufficiently distanced from the emotional experience itself to be able to re-present it in 'appropriate' metaphors. Turner's approach would perhaps elucidate Mr Rock's impressions of the beeches, but it does not explain the vitality of Merode's knee. Turner's

1. Myron Turner, 'The Imagery of Wallace Stevens and Henry Green', Wisconsin Studies in Contemporary Literature 8 (1967), pp.60-63.

concentration on the connotative meaning of the imagery has the effect that Green's projection of tone into the presented reality is largely overlooked.

A sensitive reading of the passages just referred to reveals a difference in their composition. In the first passage, the images are 'frozen', 'motionless', 'soundless', indicative of distance from the scene which is observed 'sixty yards in front'. The reader's impression is of authorial neutrality and a scenery coloured by Mr Rock's subjective mind. The poetic intensity of the second passage, on the other hand, far exceeds its presentational function. Lifelessness and coldness, symbolized by 'white tusk', collide and merge with the dazzling sun, which is reflected like a revolving wheel, and so communicates 'life to ivory' and 'a heart to the still' of this 'fallen world'. The image imprinted on the reader's mind is one of powerful contrasts, between life and lifelessness, an intense merging of opposites, time stopped, and distance between scene, author, and reader dissolved.

Beneath Green's attempt to objectify our subjective world, there is an underlying commitment to forces that inform that world with life. The dynamic depiction of Merode's knee 'creates life in the reader' because it has 'a life of its own'. Like dots of colour in a painting, Green's visual images fulfil their function only as parts of a larger context. Full meaning only

arises out of a special arrangement of words and visual images in juxtaposition. Both the quoted passages from Concluding represent an attempt to render a sense of the moment, of time stopped. But Green uses different classes of words and different methods of juxtaposition for this purpose. In the first example, the beeches, the objects of perception, are described by similes, which again are modified by adjectives. This particular syntax places the emphasis on a pictorial description of the objects, and not on the sensory quality of the impression. However, the surreal nature of the images nevertheless indicates that they are not directly observed, but created by an active, symbol-making mind. As a result of this inner tension, the whole passage is veiled with a sense of unreality, by a vague symbolism that gives the immediacy of impression an air of detached contemplation.

A similar effect of emotional distance may be found in Virginia Woolf's work. Her novels seem a series of attempts to fix the moment of vision on paper, to hold still fleeting impressions in the 'incessant shower of innumerable atoms' which is life. These contexts of images are not so much objectifications of the actual process of sensory interaction; the emphasis is on some latently meaningful pattern. Thus it is that in The Voyage Out, Rachel saw

hot, red, quick sights which passed incessantly before her eyes. She knew that it was of enormous importance that she should attend to these sights and grasp their meaning, but she was always being just too late to hear or see something which would explain it all.¹

Virginia Woolf's great concern is with the nature of reality, but mainly in terms of a purely aesthetic visual pattern:

Whatever the light touched became dowered with a fanatical existence. A plate was like a white lake. A knife looked like a dagger of ice. Suddenly tumblers revealed themselves upheld by streaks of light. Tables and chairs rose to the surface as if they had been sunk under water and rose, filmed with red, orange purple like the bloom on the skin of ripe fruit.²

This visual moment resembles Mr Rock's impression of the beeches under the effect of moonlight. Both seem the visual embodiment of a mood in the observer's mind, but rather as an expression of the unconscious, separate from objective reality. One does not get a strong impression of images directly inspired by an external reality, or of sensual participation in that reality.

In Green's description of Merode's knee, on the other hand, 'tusk burnished by shifting sands' and 'candle lamps of flesh', in themselves abstract, are placed in a context of swirling lines and light where

1. Virginia Woolf, The Voyage Out (London 1933), p.416.

2. Virginia Woolf, The Waves (London 1933), p.119.

the images lose their substantiality and become pure motion; the piece of 'tusk' is not 'burnished', it burns. Green here is more concerned to render a sense of the scene's total presence than to describe and analyze its constituent parts. His stress is not, as is Virginia Woolf's, on the aesthetic beauty of the scene, but on a natural dynamism that is beauty. Its apprehension calls for sensual involvement. It is not a straightforward celebration of natural order, but a visualization of the affective and experiential interchange between observer (whether reader or author) and scene.

One also finds visual passages of deeper involvement in Virginia Woolf's novels. Sometimes the very act of aesthetic contemplation evokes associations so vivid that the reader reaches a sensuous level of identification with both the character and his experience. From an initial attempt to determine the special quality of sound impressions, Septimus Warren Smith loses himself in the physical movement of the trees and clouds:

Happily Rezia put her hand with a tremendous weight on his knee so that he was weighted down, transfixed, or the excitement of the elm trees rising and falling, rising and falling with all their leaves alight and the colour thinning and thickening ... would have sent him mad ... they beckoned; leaves were alive; trees were alive. And the leaves being connected by millions of fibres with his own body, there on the seat, fanned it up and down; when

the branch stretched he, too, made
that statement.¹

These selected passages from Virginia Woolf's novels indicate that she is interested in two aspects of man's relationship with nature. On one level, she strives consciously to assimilate fleeting impressions into some meaningful, aesthetic pattern. On a different plane, she reveals the strong impulse of characters towards sensual reconciliation with the natural world. Whether these two concerns are conflicting in Green's fiction is a central question in this thesis. In Virginia Woolf's novels, they can hardly be distinguished as opposites, for the sensuousness intermingles with, even grows out of, a character's search for aesthetic coherence. Green's characters, however, are not introspective, intellectual people as are Virginia Woolf's. They are ordinary characters, occupied with more earthy problems, such as finding some measure of happiness which can make their days more fulfilling. Thus Lily, in Living, wants a child she can love and to whom she can devote her life.

What these quoted passages from Henry Green's and Virginia Woolf's fiction do have in common is technique. The attempt to define a state of consciousness is rendered in a language that is rather abstract, symbolic,

1. Virginia Woolf, Mrs Dalloway (London 1933), pp.35-36.

and statically descriptive. Sensual communion with life, on the other hand, they reveal by the opposite technique. Language no longer becomes an obstacle between object and reader; the sensuous characteristics of the scene arise before him; in their own purity they make a dynamic appeal to which the creative artist must respond. If one were to use terms from cinematography, one might say that the description gives the sense of a sudden zoom-lens close-up which makes identification with projected values acute.

I have tried to demonstrate ways in which Green modulates his language in order to vary the sensuous immediacy between scene and reader. Green's choice of different techniques indicates certain values, but it is necessary to look more deeply into the nature of his value commitments. John Russell argues that 'Green cannot make Lawrence's unswerving commitment to the moment', for though the two novelists show some 'latent' kinship', Green is also concerned with 'slag heap and solid earth'. Since Green is so acutely aware of the transience of everything living, Russell suggests, Green's deepest longing is for an aesthetic pattern that approximates 'static perfection'. These values involve 'a shift from individuals to things', which may be seen in the 'symmetric' structure of Living with its 'promise of patterned renewal'. Russell quotes T S Eliot in order to clarify Green's 'method and vision':

Only by the form, the pattern,
 Can words or music reach
 The stillness, as a Chinese jar still
 Moves perpetually in its stillness ...
 The detail of the pattern is movement.

Russell emphasizes 'Green's simultaneous wish for "static perfection" and his distrust of the possibilities of attaining it in life'. This is illustrated in Living, he says, by the 'turning lathe', a symbol of the 'satisfying beauty' of a 'recurrent pattern'.¹

The circular movement of Green's images does not have such a consistent connotation as Russell implies. Although rotation or repetition may sometimes appear beautiful, such a pattern is not necessarily a substitute for lack of human pattern. What Russell sees as the 'symmetric' structure of Living, therefore, does not necessarily link with Eliot's 'method and vision'. Eliot, says Russell, 'enjoins the abstract contemplation that leads to the disclosure of form, which in turn approximates the absolute'.² This attitude makes Eliot the direct opposite of Lawrence. Lawrence disparages abstract contemplation and celebrates the sense of fulfillment derived from sensual and physical submission in the natural rhythms of life. He writes in his preface to the American edition of his New Poems (1920):

1. John Russell, Henry Green: Nine Novels and an Unpacked Bag (New Brunswick, New Jersey 1960), pp.89,91-92.

2. Russell, p.95.

Let me feel the mud and the heavens
 in my lotus.
 Let me feel the heavy, silting, sucking
 mud, the spinning of sky winds.¹

Lawrence's vision, in fact, is similar to Green's as Green portrays, in sensual terms, the reclining Merode who has mud on her white leg and sandals 'caked with mud'. Lawrence's 'spinning of sky winds' corresponds to Green's 'revolving wheel' of reflected light. This is not to say that Green's and Lawrence's visions are altogether identical. Green is acutely aware of the irreversible march of time towards decay. Hence, he cannot make the same confident commitment to the continuum of nature as does Lawrence. They nevertheless reveal their kinship. Both writers strive to unite heaven and earth through sensual experience of the moment.

The analysis and comparison of selected passages indicate that the nature of Green's attitude towards the moment is quite complex and must be treated with subtlety. To Green, the value of sensual communion with natural rhythms comprises the value of love. Commitment to the moment represents a way to channel the constructive impulses of the heart. 'Moons' - circles of reflected light - are visualizations of Jim Dale's love for Lily. He sits watching her on one occasion as she

1. Quoted from Giorgio Melchiori, The Tightrope Walkers: Studies of Mannerism in Modern English Literature (London 1956), p.96. My discussion of Lawrence in relation to T S Eliot is indebted to Melchiori.

swilled water over the plates and electric light caught in shining waves of water which rushed off plates as she held them, and then light caught on wet plates in moons. She dried these. One by one then she put them up into the rack on wall above her, and as she stretched up so her movements pulled all ways at his heart, so beautiful she seemed to him.

(Living, p.311)

Similarly, if we return once more to the sensual presentation of Merode, the forces that make 'candle lamps of flesh' at the same time communicate 'a heart to the still'. This suggests that love, in Green's work, is a value which cannot easily be distinguished from sensuality. They both demand involvement and commitment to the living present.

The comparison of T S Eliot's preoccupation with abstract contemplation and Lawrence's insistence on dynamic participation provides a framework in which to analyze Green's attitudes. I have indicated how the circling motion in passages from Lawrence and Green are bound up with sensual involvement with life. Depending on the context, therefore, rotation in Green may express hope in the human potential and not 'a shift from individuals to things'. This aspect of Green's technique is highly significant for a full understanding of his novels. Living contains recurrent images of movement in circles and spirals. The lathes and wheels in the factory form a monotonous pattern of repetition approaching stasis. But as a counteracting organic

force, there is the more irregular motion of the sparrows which distract the factory workers by circling among the belts and the lathes. At one moment, fluttering pigeons gather around a baby's pram; in the next they soar in ascending circles above a gardener who is digging in barren soil. They are constantly on their wings, their free flight transcending the circular stasis and the symmetric pattern of the machinery. Only when life itself has become stagnant do the birds stop flying, as in Hannah Glossop's sentimental, escapist dreams of the tropics: 'And always the boat was circling round that land. Then ... tropical birds came out and rested on this ship' (Living, p.316). Circles do not always represent a consolatory promise of 'patterned renewal'. The turning of the world leads nowhere but towards death, of which Dick Dupret in Living is only too aware. 'He thought you made a little circle and yours reflects other circles. Death, death, sackcloth and ashes' (p.256). Dick Dupret reminds one of T S Eliot's 'detached observer'; he is unable to find hope in the message given by a fluttering bird.

It is not only in the nature of their commitment to the present moment that Eliot and Lawrence are opposites; they also differ in their response to the time before and after. 'There is no rhythm which returns upon itself', says Lawrence, 'no serpent of eternity with its tail in its own mouth. There is no static perfection, none of

that finality which we find so satisfying because we are so frightened'. For Lawrence, 'it is obvious that the poetry of the instant present cannot have the same body or the same motion as the poetry of the before and after'. In contrast to Lawrence's accepting attitude, Eliot's rather uniform metre, as well as his frequent literary allusions to the ordered experience of ancient times, reveal his fear of the temporal; he finds 'Ridiculous the waste sad time/ Stretching before and after'. Like Green's prose, the free form of Lawrence's writing is devised to capture the birds' flight at each single moment.

The bird is on the wing in the winds,
flexible to every breath, a living
spark in the storm, its very flickering
depending upon its supreme mutability
and power of change. Whence such a
bird came: whither it goes: from what
solid earth it rose up, and upon what
solid earth it will close its wings and
settle, this is not the question. This
is a question of before and after. Now,
now, the bird is on the wing in the winds.

Lawrence has confidence in the time after, for the spirit of the instant moment may be infinitely recaptured.

Green, perhaps, cannot share the same strength of convictions that makes Lawrence's poetry, like Whitman's, 'a wind that is for ever in passage and unchainable' and which is thus 'without beginning and without end'.¹ Green's

1. The lines from Lawrence and Eliot are quoted from Melchiori, pp.97-99. The references are to the American edition of Lawrence's New Poems (1920) and to the ending of 'Burnt Norton'.

tragic conception of life makes the sheer appreciation of the present moment vulnerable to time. However, Green's epigraph to Living implies confidence that the better moments will recur: 'As these birds would go where so where would this child go?'. The line suggests an acceptance of life's transience, as does the optimistic inconclusiveness of Green's plots.

Despite Green's strong awareness of life's inherent emptiness and separateness, the sensuous appreciation of the instant moment - the fluttering of birds - has a unifying impact on the intent observer. That experience does not imply 'a shift from individuals to things'. It is a source of joy as well as of reconciliation in the time after - among individuals. The following scene from Concluding is a particularly good example of this. Mr Rock and his granddaughter, Liz, are out walking one night, and both are worrying. Mr Rock is anticipating his loneliness if Liz marries Sebastian, whom he mistrusts, and Liz is thinking of the insecurity of the future for them all.

Then, as they came to where the trees ended, and blackbirds, before roosting, began to give the alarm in earnest, some first starlings flew out of the sky. Over against the old man and his granddaughter the vast mansion reflected a vast red; sky above paled while to the left it outshone the house, and more starlings crossed. After which these birds came in hundreds, then suddenly by legion, black and blunt against faint rose. They swarmed above the lonely elm, they circled a hundred feet above, until the leader, followed by ever

greater numbers, in one broad spiral led the way down and so, as they descended through falling dusk in a soft roar, they made, as they had at dawn, a huge sea shell that stood proud to a moon which, flat sovereign red gold, was already poised full faced to a dying world.

Once the starlings had settled in that tree they one and all burst out singing.

Then there were more, even higher, dots against paler pink, and these, in their turn, began to circle up above, scything the air, and to swoop down through a thickening curve, in the enormous echo of blood, or of the sea, until all was black about that black elm, as the first mass of starlings left while these others settled, and there was a huge volume of singing.

(pp.176-77)

The entire scene is filled up with starlings. First a few, then hundreds, and finally by legion they swarm and circle around the lonely black elm which is suggestive of man's separateness. 'The old man wondered, as often before, if this were not the greatest sound on earth'.

When it is all over, it has had a healing effect on the two spectators. '"I'm glad I had that once more", Mr Rock said aloud'. For Liz, there is new hope of reintegration:

'We're to have the most lovely night', Elizabeth told her grandfather ...
'I want you to know!', she said, from the heart, 'in spite of everything, whatever happens, absolutely, if Seb asks me to marry him even, there'd be nothing could alter the way I love you, Gapa. I wouldn't let it'.
'Don't allow yourself to grow sentimental, child', he answered.
She gave a soft laugh.

(pp.177-78)

Green's method for communicating the conciliatory quality of the previous scene is essentially what I will call 'montage'. Montage is the French term for editing shots in film: a shot A is placed next to shot B, etc. I am using it here in the sense defined by the Russian film director, Sergei Eisenstein. This means that the relation of shot A to shot B is characterized by dynamism and conflict so that the two shots collide to generate a synthesis C. Eisenstein explains that the combination of two separate representations 'is to be regarded not as their sum, but as their product, i.e. as a value of another dimension, another degree; each separately, corresponds to an object, to a fact, but their combination corresponds to a concept ... by the consideration of two "depictables" is achieved the representation of something that is graphically undepictable'.¹

The dynamic conflict of depictable images in Green's sunset scene is basically composed of contrasting colours. 'Black and blunt' the starlings appear against 'faint rose' in an 'enormous echo of blood'. What symbolic message the blackness of the starlings might otherwise carry - the tendency to associate black with death - is de-emphasized through the montage trope. It is in the graphic totality of the picture, in the basic clash of

1. Sergei Eisenstein, Film Form: Essays in Film Theory, edited and translated by Jay Leyda (New York 1968), p.30.

opposites, and in the increasing domination of swarming birds that lies the meaning.¹ The fluctuation of the starlings, reflected in the very structure of the sentences, transcends the clash of opposites and visualizes emotions too subjective and too profound to be expressed in a straightforward narrative. Out of the depicted scene arises a new 'concept', as it were, a value of a different dimension, a diffuse sense of reconciliation. The effectiveness of Green's technique depends on his ability to make the reader refrain from interpretation while the scene moves on. What is demanded of the reader if he is to grasp its depths is not an intellectual identification with particular characters or images and what they may seem to represent, but rather imaginative participation in the life which is portrayed. Green accounts for this process in Pack My Bag: 'Prose is not to be read aloud to oneself alone at night, and it is not quick as poetry but rather a gathering web of insinuations'. Prose, according to this idea, should be a 'long intimacy between strangers' and should 'in the

1. Green's images escape classification by general literary or cultural conventions. Culler suggests that 'What is made intelligible by the conventions of genre is often less interesting than that which resists or escapes generic understanding, and so it should be no surprise that there arises, over and against the vraisemblance of genre, another level of vraisemblance whose fundamental device is to expose the artifice of generic conventions and expectations'. Due to the poetic form of Green's sunset scene, the reader 'must allow the dialectical opposition which the text presents to result in a synthesis at a higher level where the grounds of intelligibility are different', Jonathan Culler, Structuralist Poetics: Structuralism, Linguistics and the Study of Literature (London 1975), pp.148,151.
For a definition of 'vraisemblance', see p.32, fn 2.

end draw tears out of the stone'.¹

Eisenstein formulates what Green has just dramatized: montage of images is to stir the spectator so that he is 'being drawn into the process as it occurs'.² A characteristic feature of Green's method is the manner in which he suffuses separate forms and antagonistic colours with a dynamic force that draws the spectator into the 'life' of things. Thus, the expanding fluctuation of starlings in Green's sunset scene has, on one plane, the same function as the dynamics of colour in his portrayal of Merode's knee: the sun covers the entire scene with 'violent dots ... as of wet paint' and so merges contradictory forces into an artistic harmony.

The visual impression of the sunset scene is 'non-representational'. This is a term closely connected with the effect of film, the reason why Eisenstein's ideas apply to Green's dynamic visualization. Consequently, the analysis of Green's method in relation to film form will clarify his artistic vision and intent. With regard to technique, Green's presentations subserve the immediate present. Impressions stored in memory, says Green, are 'inaccurate and so can no longer be called a movie, or a set of stills'.³ The technique of the cinema captures the visual vividness and perceptual

1. Pack My Bag, p.88.

2. Sergei Eisenstein, The Film Sense, edited and translated by Jay Leyda (London 1968), p.24..

3. Pack My Bag, p.8.

immediacy Green seeks in fiction. Richard Roe, in Caught, attempts to apprehend the reality of the London blitz:

'The extraordinary thing is', he said, 'that one's imagination is so literary. What will go on up there to-night in London, every night, is more like a film, or that's what it seems like at the time. Then afterwards, when you go over it, everything seems unreal'.

(Caught, p.174)

It is significant that the accuracy and immediacy Green attributes to movies (as in the preceding scene) do not depend on the movies' transcription of actuality. Richard Roe's experience is formed of images imprinted in his subjective mind. Green states that his non-representational method 'was meant to represent a picture which was not a photograph, nor a painting on a photograph, nor, in dialogue, a tape recording'.¹ Consequently, it should not be the object of the critic to discover correspondences between Green's language and empirical reality. The positivist schools of criticism are inapplicable. According to Roland Barthes, 'critical activity must take two kinds of relationships into account: the relationship between the critical language and the language of the author under consideration and the relationship between the latter (language-as-object) and the world'. 'Criticism', Barthes argues, 'is defined by the interaction of

1. Writers at Work, p.102.

these two languages'. Since Green himself stresses the point that his fiction is an artifact, his concept of non-representational art is clarified by Barthes's ideas of criticism. Language is a system of relationships that does not represent reality directly, but is a form, 'a very special semantic system, the aim of which is to put "meaning" into the world, but not "a meaning"'.¹

The work of literature presents itself to the reader 'as a declared system of significance, but as a signified object it eludes his grasp'. Consequently, 'the critic is not called upon to reconstitute the message [i.e. the definite meaning] of the work, but only its system'; 'meaning' is contained within the system of 'signs'.¹

Thus, the cinema does not equip Green with a model of mimetic representation, but with principles for creating verisimilitude of expression, or what Structuralists would term 'vraisemblance'.² Green's visual images

1. Roland Barthes, 'Criticism as Language', 20th Century Literary Criticism, edited by David Lodge (London 1972), pp.249-50.

2. One definition of vraisemblance given by Tzvetan Todorov is that 'one can speak of the vraisemblance of a work in so far as it attempts to make us believe that it conforms to reality and not to its own laws. In other words, the vraisemblable is the mask which conceals the text's own laws and which we are supposed to take for a relation with reality' (quoted by Jonathan Culler, Structuralist Poetics, p.139). Culler suggests that the movement away from 'novelistic necessity' requires that generic terms of intelligibility 'are taken up in a higher vraisemblance or level of intelligibility, which is that of writing itself. The text finds its coherence by being interpreted as a narrator's exercise of language and production of meaning. To naturalize it at this level is to read it as a statement about the writing of novels, a critique of mimetic fiction, an illustration of the production of a world by language' (pp.149-50).

function as metaphor to create meaning and a semblance of reality. Green explains that his aim is to awaken the reader 'to a new reality beyond his experience, thereby creating something which, however abstract, has a life of its own, if it succeeds in being what is called "convincing"'.¹ For this reason, the cinema serves as an important model precisely because it is not 'real'.

Green's conception of 'vraisemblance' denies objectivity in the novel; it implies a value commitment. He compares the role of fiction to that of the plastic arts, stating that 'the function ... of a good painting or piece of sculpture is to appeal by or through the eye to the memory of things seen ... which is after all appreciation'.² Far from merely presenting fleeting impressions of a non-coherent world, Green's art appeals to vital human sensibilities. The following scene in the cinema reinforces the distinction between mimetic realism and Green's idea of vraisemblance.

Later they got in and found seats.
 Light rain had been falling, so when
 these two acting on screen walked by
 summer night down leafy lane, hair
 over her ears left wet on his cheek as
 she leant head, when they on screen
 stopped and looked at each other.
 Boys at school had been singing outside
 schoolroom on screen, had been singing
 at stars, and these two heard them and
 kissed in boskage deep low in this lane
 and band played softly, women in audience
 crooning. Lily Gates sank lower over
 arm of her seat. Mr Dale did not move.
 (Living, p.216)

1. 'The English Novel of the Future', p.21.

2. 'The English Novel of the Future', p.21.

Life on screen is not a recognizable transcription of the life of individuals among the audience. The film is 'all things to all men' in the sense that it represents 'a selection of material' with which all the spectators can identify in their individual ways. The film serves as a metaphorical reflection of the spectators' emotional needs. Green's alternate focusing on Lily and Bert, the lovers on the screen, the audience, and then again on Lily and Bert, unites subjects and objects into an evocative sense of emotional reciprocity. These juxtapositions together with the dynamic rhythm of the sentences give the scene 'a life of its own'. It is an impetus to the reader to participate in the kind of 'life' created in the juxtaposition of images.

The capacity of film form to incite life in the spectator, and reader, is compellingly dramatized in the following scene:

She hummed tune band was now playing
 whey widdle o...
 'Why they're playin' it again' she
 said. She looked at screen. She saw
 heroine's knickers again were coming
 down, now in young man's bedroom.
 ooooo she screamed.
 EEEEE the audience.
 The band played that tune. Tum tum ti
 tumpy tum. Dum dum di dumpy dum. She
 jumped her knees to time. Da da DID DEE
 - (it wasn't her knickers after all) - did
 dee dee tum ta.

(Living, pp.224-25)

The passage enacts Barthes's distinction between language as object and language as referential instrument. It

produces 'meaning' but not 'a meaning' (not a transcription of Lily's experience in the cinema). 'Meaning' is created through a cinematic editing of visual and auditory images. Rapid transitions between succinct, disconnected phrases (analogous to shifts in focus between disparate glimpses in film) combined with the preponderance of active verbs within the sentences (similar in function to the verbal force effected by the depiction of actual movement and action in film)¹ create a kinetic unit stimulating the reader's response.

The animating medley of filmic flashes and enticing tunes, resounding in Green's cinematic narrative style, contains an implicit value statement. Green's manner of conveying to the reader the impact of the movie on Lily and the audience resembles the film director's technique of channelling the audience's emotional participation.

A great number were in cinema, many standing, battalions were in cinemas over all the country, young Mr Dupret was in a cinema, over above up into the sky their feeling panted up supported by each other's feeling, away away, Europe and America, mass on mass their feeling united supporting, renewed their sky.

(Living, p.245)

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1. Robert Richardson, Literature and Film (Bloomington, Indiana 1969), p.67. Richardson writes that 'verbs are only one part of speech, to be sure, but they are crucial and one of the reasons why nearly everyone will concede the potential, if not the actual, power of the film may be its rich and varied range of ways to express action as verbs express it in writing'.

Audiences everywhere experience a sense of 'renewal' and spiritual community in the cinema. The principle of the cinema's appeal resides in the camera's ability to fuse disparate fragments in space and time into a sense of simultaneity.¹ Concentrated units of visual impulses possess a potential to stimulate the spectator's projection of private needs and longings into a contrived semblance of life. By selecting and arranging his visual images according to cinematographic principles, Green applies the film maker's technique in inciting the reader's commitment to latent human values:

Later her head was leaning on his shoulder again, like hanging clouds against hills every head in this theatre tumbled without hats against another, leaning everywhere.

Eight o'clock of morning. Thousands came up the road to work and few turned in to Mr Dupret's factory. Sirens were sounded, very sad.

(Living, p.217)

Green's juxtaposition of two contrasting realities, both experienced by the same masses of people, produces meaning on two levels. From the point of view of social realism, the Friday night cinema offers little but

1. In 'The English Novel of the Future', p.22, Green reveals his awareness of film's capacity to contract disparate elements of the narrative, to carry the novelist 'from one moment of action to another'. 'And while the cinema has had its influence, it is more than likely that in five years' time television will have a profound effect on novelists, and that narrative already split up into small scenes, will be split still further'.

illusions to the working people of Birmingham. Lily finds nourishment for her dreams about warm, tropical countries, ironically incompatible with her reality. However, two different realities are juxtaposed on the level of 'language-as-object'. Pressing human needs and longings are enacted against mechanical routines presided over by the machine. In the conflict of images there is an appeal for sympathetic understanding and an awareness of organic human values.

As a form of art, the cinema serves the same purpose that Green ascribes to literature: to 'create life, of a kind, in the reader', 'to quicken [his] unconscious imagination into life while reading'.¹ For the same effect, Sergei Eisenstein bases his work on the montage principle. He stresses the unique capacity of filmic montage to instigate 'that great power of inner creative excitement in the spectator'. Eisenstein realizes that 'a work of art, understood dynamically, is just this process of arranging images in the feelings and mind of the spectator'.²

There is sufficient biographical information about Green's career to affirm his strong interest in this kind of visual effect. At Eton, Green and other members of the Society of Arts set up a play, 'a strange amalgam

1. 'A Novelist to his Readers' - I, pp.505-06.

2. The Film Sense, pp.24,37.

based on the story of Hansel and Gretel, put into verse by Alan Clutton-Brock, the scenery designed and created by myself, the actors created by Mark Ogilvie-Grant, the music by Tchaikovsky (The Nutcracker Suite) and electric lighting effects by Henry Yorke'.¹ Film form also has great attraction for Green. In his first term at Oxford, he recalls: 'I felt extremely ill and every day went alone to a cinema after which I tried to write'. It seems that in the cinema Green found inspiration to write. The nature of the cinema's influence on Green's writing is not difficult to discern. Film, although an illusion, creates a semblance of truth due to its potential for arousing response in the spectator. Green recalls occasions of strong emotional impact, 'as when on the news films one sees any scene of parting between strangers and however much one may not want to, is caught into an inevitable experience'.²

Previous examples have indicated that Green uses filmic devices to stress the emotive quality of a context. This method requires an adequate critical approach to its significance. The precise quality of the cinema's evocative power is not translatable. Green's experience

1. Sir Colin Anderson, in Brian Howard: Portrait of a Failure, edited by Marie-Jacqueline Lancaster, p.121. Quoted from Rod Mengham, The Idiom of the Time: The Writings of Henry Green (Cambridge 1982), p.15.

2. Pack My Bag, pp.198,201.

of it is transmitted in the undefined communication between text and reader, in the 'life' created through the juxtaposition of diverse images.

For me the darkness, that is the light subdued, the snivelling and soft laughs, those heads more intent on each other's breath as in the oldest gesture they inclined one to the other against the lighted screen the orchestra played low to, here was the place in which to work out the sense of guilt, to conquer that nausea of lunch after the night before's drinking.¹

The images in the scene - such as the 'darkness' of the cinema - possess no precise denotative qualities. Consequently, meaning will have to be sought through isolated images' interaction within a larger context. The Russian film producer Pudovkin contends that 'To the poet or writer separate words are as raw material. They have the widest and most variable meanings which only begin to become precise through their position in the composed phrase, to that extent is its effect and meaning variable until it is fixed in position, in the arranged artistic form To the film director each shot of the finished film subserves the same purpose as the word to the poet'.² From this point of view, the making of film and poetry involves the transmutation of fragments of reality into a non-representational artistic form. Accordingly, meaning must be determined only through

1. Pack My Bag, p.211.

2. Quoted in Robert Richardson, p.38.

comprehension or recognition of form.

Meaning varies with genre: there is a distinction between the meaning of prose and the suggestion, through nuance, of poetry. Jonathan Culler stresses the importance of this kind of context. He argues that a text achieves different meanings when read as prose and as poetry, 'because we approach the poem with different expectations and interpretative operations'. Read as poetry, Green's passage no longer serves as a record of particular visits to the cinema; it 'takes on a different force' by creating a tension between past and present. According to Culler, 'this is due to our conventions about the relationship of poems to the moment of utterance'. 'Secondly', Culler says, 'we expect the lyric to capture a moment of some significance, to be thematically viable' and 'thirdly, we expect a poem to be a unified whole'. Thus, 'the conventions of the lyric create the possibility of new and supplementary meanings'.¹ This idea corresponds with Green's desire to awaken the reader 'to a new reality beyond his experience'.

Culler's statement pertains to the arbitrary nature of language in Green's account of his experience in the cinema. Green defines the 'darkness' in the cinema as 'the light subdued'. His specification lacks expressive

1. Jonathan Culler, 'Structuralism and Literature' in Contemporary Approaches to English Studies, edited by Hilda Schiff (London 1977), p.63.

power; there is no frame of reference as to whether it is to be read as a dispassionate description of factual conditions, or as an element in a scene of poetic evocation. Only within a context of other images does the darkness become meaningful. Not only the light is 'subdued', but also sounds ('soft laughs' and 'snivelling', the 'soft' music from the orchestra) and gestures (heads inclining towards each other's 'breath'). All these low-toned impressions are given dynamic force through contrast with the 'lighted screen' and the 'intent' audience in a poetic visual moment, the experience of which Green finds highly cathartic.

The preceding examination of Green's term 'non-representational' reveals crucial aspects of his artistic vision and technique. It suggests that assessment of the manner of Green's commitment to the characters and events he portrays is best approached through analysis of 'tone'. Green himself makes a statement to this effect: 'The fascination in words is that by themselves they can mean almost anything; dictionaries get longer every day. It is the context in which they lie that alone gives them life. They should be used as painters use colour, to give tone'.¹ Tone is an ambiguous

1. 'A Novelist to his Readers' - I, p.506.

literary term, which implies the writer's sense of the particular situation he portrays. Wayne Booth defines 'tone' in literature as 'the implicit evaluation which the author manages to convey behind his explicit presentation'.¹ For I A Richards, tone denotes 'the perfect recognition of the writer's relation to the reader in view of what is being said and their joint feelings about it'.² Together, these two definitions serve to identify one major concern of this thesis. The term, tone, suggests a tendency to think of a literary work as a mode of speech. In an indirect manner, the author expresses his attitudes towards the characters and events within his work, as well as towards the audience to whom the work is addressed. Clearly, no direct narrative technique fully reveals Green's attitudes. Furthermore, the determination of tone is made difficult by the fact that no single model of interpretation can disclose this elusive element in diverse narrative forms. According to M H Abrams, most critical uses of tone relate the term to 'the narrative or lyric persona himself, as he tells his story, or talks to himself, or to a nightingale, or directly to the reader'.³ Such an approach is insufficient when applied to a writer who sacrifices an 'implied

1. Wayne Booth, p.74.

2. I A Richards, Practical Criticism: A Study of Literary Judgment (London 1954), p.207.

3. M H Abrams, A Glossary of Literary Terms, third edition (New York 1957), p.125.

author' and a traditional narrative line for the principle of a shifting point of view. Tone, in Green's work, can be discerned only through recognition of form or style.

It is the comprehension of form, however, that represents the greatest obstacle to the analysis of tone. Green's susceptibility to some general values needs to be seen alongside his Modernist conception of the world. There is all the time an underlying sense that true communication and order are beyond the realm of social intercourse. This impression is strengthened by Green's progressive attempts to view life and characters from without. Similarities between Green and T S Eliot can be found in their art, as well as in their theories about art. Just as Green tries to create a 'life which does not eat, procreate or drink', so Eliot argues in 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' that the artist's task is to create universality of experience through depersonalization, by abstracting reality from the larger world outside the work of art itself. The work of art must, in return, be recreated in the creative imagination of the reader. Mario Praz argues that 'the very atmosphere of Green's novels, the substitution of a much subtler arabesque of conversations and inconclusive episodes ... for a plot in the current sense of the word, the flattening of personal traits in the characters, so that they may be molded upon the arabesque and become almost

indistinguishable from the pattern itself, the placing of the story almost outside a definite time and space (as in Concluding, and in some cases, in Nothing, for instance) the nearly total absence of descriptive passages - all these features contribute to the impression of abstract art'.¹

Praz's view implies various obstacles to the determination of tone in Green's fiction. It has already been suggested that the poetic order characterizing many of Green's passages does not correspond directly with ulterior reality; it is created. As a writer of 'non-representational' works of art, Green nonetheless seeks to depict a representative landscape of characters, as well as presenting the points of view of the different characters. This duality makes it difficult for the reader to know the author's attitude to the individual characters. If one tries to make sense of the relation between the total structure of a Green novel and its shifting realities and points of view, one easily ends up relating Green to the abstract painters. This Mario Praz does not only with Green, but also with T S Eliot, James Joyce, and Ezra Pound. Praz refers to 'quotations which seem to float like alien bodies in the sentences of Ezra Pound's Cantos and Eliot's The Waste Land; collage in the paintings of Braque, Max Ernst, and others'. Similarly,

1. Mario Praz, Mnemosyne: The Parallel between Literature and the Visual Arts (London 1970), p.214.

Joyce 'attempted ... the elaboration of a new language through the fusion of unreconcilable manners'. Praz says that their work gives the sense of a careful balancing act, 'with the constant danger of losing one's balance and falling from the flying trapeze into the void, or merely into the sawdust of the arena. There lurks behind all [their] experiments the suspicion that the artist is just "shoring fragments against his ruins"'.¹ In other words, Praz thinks that futurists and cubists share with these writers a simultaneity and juxtaposition of impressions instead of a chronological succession. Their aim is to achieve an artistic reconciliation of the fragmentary pieces that make up the real world.

The problem of determining tone in modern literature is presented by René Wellek in his book, A History of Modern Criticism. Irony, he says, is the authorial 'recognition of the fact that the world in its essence ' is paradoxical and that an ambivalent attitude alone can grasp its contradictory totality'.² However, this ambivalent attitude, D C Muecke contends in The Compass of Irony, is characterized by artistic objectivity: the author 'knows where he is, knows, that is to say, that there are two sides and that he cannot take either side

1. Praz, p.194.

2. René Wellek, A History of Modern Criticism: 1750-1950: The Romantic Age (London 1955) p.14.

or bring them into accord. What he can do is to recognize them and, by presenting them ironically, transcend them - though not absolutely'.¹ If the 'ambivalence' characterizing Green's statements about the world really dominates his fiction, the possibilities of an evaluative interpretation of individual characters and events would be strictly limited. Donald S Taylor's claim that the form of Nothing and Doting suggests 'species rather than defining individuals' would probably apply to all of Green's novels. This, again, would suggest an 'abdication of the determining, evaluating authorial role' which Taylor says is the mark of 'Green's major break with the traditions of

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1. D C Muecke, The Compass of Irony (London 1969), p.130. Wellek's and Muecke's statements are quoted from James Allen Pearse, 'Montage in Modern Fiction: A Cinematographic Approach to the Analysis of Ironic Tone in Joyce Cary's The Horse's Mouth' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Arizona 1973). Part of my work centres on basic montage principles also applied by Pearse to expose the irony of man's (notably Gulley Jimson's) struggle to impose form on an amorphous existence. However, whereas Pearse comments on the ironic irreconcilability of man and reality, Green is able to unify the two into images of sensual reciprocity. Green's comparison of 'tone' with the effect produced by colour in painting suggests that Green employs montage to give his fictional world 'a life of its own'. If a montage approach is to uncover expressive nuances in Green's three-dimensional world, the term must be applied and adapted to the examination of its multiform conflicts and values. It must identify that conceptual operation in which symbols and images, wonder and mysticism, become meaningful.

the English novel'.¹

Taylor's statement does not apply, for a closer scrutiny reveals that Green's portrayals are sufficiently intricate to suggest individuality rather than 'species'. A comparison of two passages from Living will indicate ways in which Green incorporates a moral tone in his depiction of individuals. At the same time, Green reflects D C Muecke's attitude towards a paradoxical world: the attempt by someone to bring the 'two sides' into 'accord' is undermined through ironic detachment. Young Mr Dupret, the callow, new factory manager, stands in the foundry shop contemplating the ornamental beauty of the hand-made iron castings, reaching out his fingers to touch their reality. He pompously 'declaimed to himself that this was the life to lead, making useful things which were beautiful, and the gladness to make them, which you could touch' (p.211). What Dick is prophesying is a fusion of the poetic and the prosaic, beauty and drabness. The statement produced by this interaction is deeply ironic. Green juxtaposes the 'incidental beauty' which Dick finds in the castings with his idea that these would 'last and would be working in great factories' (p.211). Dick postulates an external order where beauty and material necessity are in a permanent state of harmony. Despite his desire to 'touch' the idealized castings, he is, ironically,

1. Taylor, p.82.

out of touch with their reality. His alienation is revealed by the fact that the order he experiences can only be found in a detached state of contemplation. Green emphasizes this point by focusing on Dick and his ideas rather than on a scene which generates a sense of identification. The inefficacy of the intellect as a guide to man on his way through life, is ironically present in Dick's sudden realization that it had all been said before: 'Ruskin built a road which went nowhere with the help of undergraduates and in so doing said the last word on that' (p.211). Standing in the dirty factory in his fine clothes, Dick Dupret senses the incongruity of his own position. Green lets the works manager add the final ironic comment as he leads young Dupret out of the iron foundry: 'It's all beautiful work we do Mr Dupret, beautiful work. And we turn it out' (p.211, emphasis added).

In contrast to the irony surrounding Dick Dupret, the next passage reveals the author's sincere commitment to a poignant moment in the factory:

Then, one morning in iron foundry, Arthur Jones began singing. He did not often sing. When he began the men looked up from work and at each other and stayed quiet. In machine shop, which was next iron foundry, they said it was Arthur singing and stayed quiet also. He sang all morning.

He was Welsh and sang in Welsh. His voice had a great soft yell in it. It rose and rose and fell then rose again and, when the crane was quiet for a moment, then his voice came out from behind noise of the crane in passionate singing. Everything in iron foundries is black with the burnt sand and here was his silver voice yelling like bells. The black grimed men bent over their black boxes.

When he came to end of a song or something in his work kept him from singing, men would call out to him with names of English songs but he would not sing these ...

Every one looked forward to Arthur's singing, each one was glad when he sang, only, this morning, Jim Dale had bitterness inside him like girders and when Arthur began singing his music was like acid to that man and it was like that girder was being melted and bitterness and anger crystallized, up rising up in him till he was full and would have broken out - when he put on coat and walked out and went into town and drank. Mr Craigan did not know he was gone till he saw he did not come back.

Still Arthur sang and it might be months before he sang again ... That night son had been born to him.

(pp.265-66)

Arthur Jones's voice rings like silver bells in the midst of noise and blackness, and makes the 'grimed men' forget the drabness and monotony of the factory. In this scene there is no contemplation of an ideal order, separated from reality. Almost like the fluctuating birds in the sunset scene, the voice rises and falls, circulates around the lathes, filling the whole foundry. Arthur Jones's singing is a spontaneous outlet for the joy he feels for having been given a son. The sense of natural

fulfilment conquers the darkness around him, makes him free from the mechanized order of the factory; when he sings, he is his own master, he declines to sing the songs the other men suggest to him. No obvious criticism characterizes the contrasting portrayal of Jim Dale, although he appears, throughout the novel, as an unimaginative and moody fellow. By juxtaposition, however, Green's emphasis is on his life-denying attitude which makes him unresponsive to the serenity of the present moment, and an outsider.

These two passages from Living give some indication of the manner in which Green reveals his attitude to various characters, even though he attaches no moral labels. His stated intention - to create art which can 'live in people who are alive' - involves not only his non-representational technique whereby the reader must participate actively to recreate the meaning of the work. Green's statement must be seen against the background of existential barrenness that marks his fiction. To revitalize man through his art seems to be Green's underlying concern. Consequently, tone can only be detected if Green's art is approached like a poem, as a medium for direct communication with the reader. The reader confronts a fragmented, contradictory world contrived in accordance with a Modernist conception of reality. However, to the poetic sensibility, a sense of unification and purpose can be found in the midst of

darkness and fragmentation. As Green points out, 'The truth is, these times are an absolute gift to the writer. Everything is breaking up. A seed can lodge or sprout in any crack or fissure'.¹ Green's convictions 'lodge' and 'sprout' in his arrangement of scenes and images. They are not fully transmitted in terms of a traditional narrative line or plot. Meaning arises through the reader's response to the 'life' of the entire novel.

By observing the world from different angles, Green juxtaposes scenes and images so as to expose the contrasts and conflicts of life. I have indicated that it is primarily by this method of juxtaposing incongruous elements that one is able to discern an evaluative authorial tone. I will try to show that the conflicts that operate in Green's fiction - between social classes; between generations; between men and women - are conflicts of individual attitudes rather than of social or biological determinants. There seems to be little justification for D S Taylor's view that the 'abstracting impulse' of Green's form 'suggests species rather than defining individuals'. The large world of 'living' is continually brought down to the microcosmic personal level. In this way, Green not only transmits the multiplicity of reality into a formal order of abstracted

1. Henry Green, letter to Rosamond Lehmann, quoted in Lehmann, 'An Absolute Gift', Times Literary Supplement 6 August 1954, p.xli.



scenes; by juxtaposing different attitudes to life in relation to changing scenes, he tests their viability. Green's own statements encourage this approach: 'just as the composition of a painting gives it meaning, so the way in which the writer places his characters in the shifting scenes of his book will give the work significance'.¹

One could say that the authorial 'ambivalence' identified by Wellek and Muecke as characterizing modern irony, is the cognitive principle by which Green reveals his perspective on man's predicament in an irreconcilable world. But a certain 'awed wonder', suggestive of commitment to a particular value system, is discernible behind his authorial 'disengagement'. Somewhere along the intersecting lines of wonder and irony Green's attitudes to characters and events may be revealed.

I have indicated that tone is a highly elusive term which derives, not from separate images, but from a wider context. Green compares tone to the effect achieved by the composition of colour in a painting. Consequently, tone can be explored only through recognition of his method of juxtaposing different elements. I have attempted to show how the dynamic quality of Green's fiction is closely

1. 'A Novelist to his Readers' - II, p.425.

connected with the visual impact of film. Green himself states that as the 'composition of a painting gives it meaning', 'the superimposing of one scene on another, or the telescoping of two scenes into one', gives the novel 'substance and depth'.¹ It is interesting that Green uses terms taken from film production to suggest analogies between his own narrative method and painting, as well as filmic art. This statement is comparable to Eisenstein's idea that the juxtaposition of two filmic images creates a third image which is qualitatively different from the content of either independent image or their sum. In order to be incorporated into a useful methodology for the examination of Green's fiction, however, Eisenstein's ideas require further investigation.

Eisenstein founds his theory of film on the premise that all art forms have basic principles in common. Firstly, 'photo-fragments of nature are recorded'. 'The musician uses a scale of sounds; the painter, a scale of tones; the writer, a row of sounds and words - and these are all taken to an equal degree from nature'. But as previously argued, Green's method is not basically an arrangement of naturalistic 'shots' or denotative words. Eisenstein goes on to explain that these 'reproductions' may be combined in various

1. 'A Novelist to his Readers' - II, p.425.

ways to form 'montage'. 'Both as reflections and in the manner of their combination, they permit any degree of distortion - either technically unavoidable or deliberately calculated. The results fluctuate from exact naturalistic combinations of visual, interrelated experiences to complete alterations, arrangements unforeseen by nature, and even to abstract formalism, with remnants of reality'.¹ Such arrangements of words and visual images explain how Praz and Melchiori can find in Green's work elements of Mannerism, Futurism, Cubism, and Funambulism.²

Since Green, however, is a novelist and not a painter, the idea of comparing the structure and style of his work with particular schools of painting has its natural limitations. To seek for correspondence based on what Praz calls 'air de famille ... between the expressions of the arts in any given epoch of the past' seems a dubious approach.³ René Wellek argues that 'most methods for the comparisons of the arts 'are based either on vague similarities of emotional effects or on a community of intentions, theories, and slogans which may not be very concretely related to the actual works of arts'.⁴ Jean Hagstrum writes that if a description

1. Film Form, pp.3-4.

2. Praz, pp.214-15, and Melchiori, pp.204-06.

3. Praz, p.29.

4. René Wellek, 'The Parellelism between Literature and Art', English Institute Annual 1941 (New York 1942) p.62.

or image is to be called 'pictorial', 'its leading details and their manner and order of presentation must be imaginable as a painting or sculpture'. In other words, visual detail is not necessarily pictorial.

'Such detail must be ordered in a picturable way'.¹

Much of Green's abstract imagery cannot be directly translated into painting. Also, Green often renders a sense of process - the rhythm of visual perception - which is essentially not pictorial.

This study builds on the premise that comparisons of Green's novels with Cubism, Futurism etc. tend to overemphasize what I have already referred to as Green's 'cognitive' perspective on man's predicament. The affective aspect, the author's attitude towards characters and events, can only be fully analyzed if Green's fiction is approached on a more microcosmic level. It is necessary to investigate the ways in which descriptions and individual images are composed, as well as how they interact.

My reservations concerning the comparison of different art forms also apply to the relationship between literature and film. The analysis of Green's fiction, then, needs a unifying approach that can clarify abstract, pictorial, and dynamic aspects. For dealing

1. Jean Hagstrum, The Sister Arts: The Tradition of Literary Pictorialism and English Poetry from Dryden to Gray (Chicago 1958), p.xxii.

with such complexities, Eisenstein's principles prove extremely useful. Discussing how a synthesis may arise from the interaction of two contradictory elements, Eisenstein claims that 'a dynamic comprehension of things is ... basic ... for a correct understanding of art and of all art-forms. In the realm of art this dialectic principle of dynamics is embodied in

CONFLICT

as the fundamental principle for the existence of every art-work and every art-form'.¹ Applied to the relationship between the visual arts and literature, one may ask why artistic creation need necessarily be based on conflict.

Eisenstein explains that the 'fundamental principle' of art is always conflict:

1. according to its social mission,
2. according to its nature,
3. according to its methodology.²

Art is conflict according to its social mission(1), says Eisenstein, because 'It is art's task to make manifest the contradictions of Being'. Eisenstein's intention is to confront the spectator with life in all its complexity, to create a 'dynamic clash of opposing passions' in his mind, and thereby stir him to form 'equitable views' (what Eisenstein calls 'intellectual concepts'). Green's

1. Film Form, p.46.

2. Film Form, p.46.

preference is for a novel which can induce the reader to fuse presented fragments of life in his own imagination. However, Green points out, 'this is not to say that the depersonalization ... has anything to do with a writer keeping himself out of his novel. He has, of course, to be extremely personal in narrative. He has to create or inspire a conscious act of imagination in the reader'.¹ Similarly, Eisenstein's emphasis is on the way in which the spectator's creative participation enters into a 'process of fusion with the author's intention'. The artist, he says, has before his perception 'a given image, emotionally embodying his theme'.

The task that confronts him is to transform this image into a few basic partial representations which, in their combination and juxtaposition, shall evoke in the consciousness and feelings of the spectator, reader, or auditor, that same initial general image which originally hovered before the creative artist.²

The similarities between the theories and practice of Eisenstein and Green point to a method by which to detect tone. Eisenstein's work on his montage theories was motivated by a desire to resolve 'one of the most difficult problems in constructing works of art: the problem of portraying an attitude toward the thing portrayed'. What Eisenstein calls 'attitude' in film

1. 'The English Novel of the Future', p.23.

2. The Film Sense, pp.19,33,35.

resembles I A Richards's definition of tone in literature;
the attempt to answer

with what methods and means must the
filmically portrayed fact be handled
so that it simultaneously shows not
only what the fact is, and the charac-
ter's attitude towards it, but also
how the author relates to it, and how
the author wishes the spectator to
receive, sense, and react to the
portrayed fact.¹

Eisenstein actually suggests that the cinematographic
concept of montage may provide a discriminative method
for the interpretation of tone in literature. He
argues that 'Literature per se has as many means and
circuitous expositions as there are ways of perception.
But without our premises these mingled forms remain
closed to us'.²

Art, for Eisenstein, is also conflict according to
its 'nature'(2) because: 'Its nature is a conflict be-
tween natural existence and creative tendency'. This
statement can best be understood as meaning a conflict
between form (or art as an artifact) and the formless-
ness of organic life, of Being. 'The interaction of
the two', Eisenstein argues, 'produces and determines
Dynamism'. As an underlying principle of every art
form, this tension between form and formlessness also

1. Film Form, pp.150-51. The analogy ~~between~~ Eisenstein's
and I A Richard's statements is suggested by Pearse.

2. Sergei Eisenstein, Film Essays with a Lecture,
edited by Jay Leyda (London 1968), p.83.

extends into the relations between 'customary conception and particular representation as dynamic - as a dynamization of the inertia of perception - as dynamization of the "traditional view" into a new one'.¹

This consideration justifies my intention of examining the interaction between particular images in Green's fiction rather than relating them to the traditional concepts of various schools of painting. Out of this conflict, new viewpoints and values are seen to arise. Eisenstein's ideas link him with the modernist developments in literary criticism, especially with Cleanth Brooks's view of poetic language as the language of 'paradox'. 'The poet', Brooks says, 'must work by analogies, but the metaphors do not lie in the same plane or fit neatly edge to edge. There is a continual tilting of the planes; necessary overlappings, discrepancies, contradictions'. In this way, 'the terms are continually modifying each other, and thus violating their dictionary meanings'.²

The interaction of form and formlessness takes place not only between juxtaposed concepts and images, but also between words that compose individual images and descriptions. It can therefore be studied through a common approach in painting, in poetry and prose, as

1. Film Form, p.47.

2. Cleanth Brooks, 'The Language of Paradox', in 20th Century Literary Criticism, p.296.

well as in music. 'The quantity of interval determines the pressure of the tension', Eisenstein explains.

'There can be cases where the distance of separation [notably distortion in rhythm or metre] is so wide that it leads to a break - to a collapse of the homogeneous concept of art'. Due to the formal tension that is created, one may be able to discern some attendant thematic conflict to which the author invites the reader's or spectator's response. Or perhaps the values are found precisely in the intersection of form and formlessness, as in speech where, according to Eisenstein, 'all its sap, vitality, and dynamism arise from the irregularity of the part in relation to the laws of the system as a whole'.¹

The creation of tension and of tonal qualities, due to a change in rhythm, can be studied in Living:

Evening. Was spring. Heavy blue clouds stayed over above. In small back garden of villa small tree with yellow buds. On table in back room daffodils, faded, were between ferns in a vase. Later she spoke of these saying she must buy new ones and how nice were first spring flowers.

(pp.213-14)

Melchiori compares this passage with an Impressionist painting and the way in which the Impressionist painters heighten 'the emotional quality of the picture by concentrating on the really significant features'. But in

1. Film Form, p.47.

this case, he thinks, Green's 'Impressionism' is 'cheap', lacking a 'genuine lyrical ... power'.¹ Melchiori's interpretation shows how traditional concepts of artistic intention (notably Impressionist) can obscure more than clarify. Green's aim here is not to create a poignant moment of lyrical intensity. The passage must be seen in context, for it occurs immediately after the works manager, in front of his wife, has poured out all his frustration over conditions in the factory. It depicts a natural beauty which cannot be thoroughly appreciated because of an intervening mood. This condition accounts for the pictorial rather than dynamic quality of the passage. Still, the omission of articles together with short, broken sentences give most words a heavy stress, like filmic close-ups, thereby intensifying the vitality of spring and the values of the moment. In contrast, the last sentence runs on monotonously. It suggests the fading away of sense impressions and the inability of the spectator to respond emotionally.

This sentence structure of short, broken phrases and the elimination of articles dramatizes an aspect of the term 'tone' which has been touched on briefly: the tendency to think of 'tone' as a mode of speech. Eisenstein broadens this connection when he argues that 'the very principle of montage, as is the entire individuality of its formation, is the substance of an exact copy

1. Melchiori, p.193.

of the language of excited emotional speech'. His citation from Joseph Vendryes's book, Language, has direct relevance to Green's fiction. Tone is dealt with as an objectified quality, not produced by an interfering author, but arising out of the compositional structure.

The main difference between affective and logical language lies in the construction of the sentence. This difference stands out clearly when we compare the written with the spoken tongue ... The elements that the written tongue endeavours to combine into a coherent whole seem to be divided up and disjointed in the spoken tongue: even the order is entirely different. It is no longer the logical order of present-day grammar. It has its logic, but this logic is primarily affective, and the ideas are arranged in accordance with the subjective importance the speaker gives to them or wishes to suggest to his listener, rather than with the objective rules of an orthodox process of reasoning.

According to Vendryes, spoken language 'is cut up into short sections whose number and intensity correspond to the speaker's impressions, or to the necessity he feels for vividly communicating them to others'. Whereas spoken language may have the sensory impact of filmic close-ups, Eisenstein associates the typical 'written' language with a 'long shot'.¹

By alternating between intense and less intense images and descriptions, or between 'spoken' and 'written' language, Green invites the reader to confront and to

1. Film Form, pp.249-50.

watch constructively. His idea that a situation should enact itself dramatically on the reader's mind implies that there is no basic break in method between scenes of dialogue and of description. Eisenstein lists a series of filmic montage conflicts that will be dealt with throughout the following chapters. Of dynamic conflicts both within and between shots, applicable to Green's fiction, can be mentioned: conflict of graphic directions; conflict of scales; conflict of volumes; conflict of masses; conflict of depths; conflict of planes; close shots and long shots; conflict between matter and viewpoint; conflict between an event and its duration; audio-visual counterpoint.¹ These visual conflicts can be either temporally conceived (the second shot acts as an 'impulse of intensification'), or they arise spatially as in a painting. 'What comprises the dynamic effect of a painting?', Eisenstein asks. As far as conflict of graphic directions is concerned, he suggests, 'the eye follows the direction of an element in the painting. It retains a visual impression, which then collides with the impression derived from following the direction of a second element. The conflict of these directions forms the dynamic effect in apprehending the whole'.²

1. All of Eisenstein's montage conflicts introduced in this study are defined in the Appendix. They are listed in Film Form, pp.39,54-55.

2. Film Form, p.50.

The dynamic interaction of elements in a painting, as Eisenstein sees it, can be translated into prose, as in Concluding:

The panelling was remarkable in that it boasted a dado designed to continue the black and white tiled floor in perspective, as though to lower the ceiling. But Miss Edge had found marble tiles too cold to her toes, had had the stone covered in parquet blocks, on which were spread State imitation Chinese Kidderminster rugs. As a result, this receding vista of white and black lozenges set from the rugs to four feet up the walls, in precise and radiating perspective, seemed altogether out of place next British dragons in green and yellow; while the gay panelling above, shallow carved, was genuine, the work of a master, giving Cupid over and over in a thousand poses, a shock, a sad surprise in such a room.

(pp.11-12)

This description demonstrates how Green, by juxtaposing contradictory details, is able to objectify an unfavourable attitude towards Miss Edge, the straitlaced headmistress of a girls' boarding-school. The onward progress of the 'precise' black and white pattern is opposed by a tasteless collision of green and yellow dragons. Only in the 'gay' panelling is there a 'genuine' artistic quality, a lively flexibility of Cupid in 'a thousand poses'. It is significant that whereas the Cupids are described in what Eisenstein refers to as 'excited emotional speech', the rest of the scene is rendered in a sober 'written' style. The overall impression of the room is of discord. In its right context, the passage serves as an indirect comment on how

Miss Edge, by her rigorous ways, subdues a harmonious rhythm.

The 'dramatic' principle underlying the 'methodology of art'(3) is accounted for in Eisenstein's discussion of the montage cell:

The shot is by no means an element of montage. The shot is a montage cell.

Just as cells in their division form a phenomenon of another order, the organism or embryo, so, on the other side of the dialectic leap from the shot, there is montage.

Eisenstein goes on to explain that:

Conflict within the shot is potential montage, in the development of its intensity shattering the quadrilateral cage of the shot and exploding its conflict into montage impulses between the montage pieces.¹

Montage and 'potential' montage have much in common with Imagism. Ezra Pound's idea of an image is that it 'presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time'. Eisenstein actually suggests such a connection himself when he says that the idea of art as conflict is 'an "imagist" transformation of the dialectical principle'.² Characteristic of Imagist poems is their rendering of the writer's response to a visual object or scene, often by means of metaphor or juxtaposition of very concrete details. Images together with an essentially irregular rhythm form a highly

1. Film Form, pp.37-38.

2. Film Form, p.38.

energetic unit intended to stimulate the reader's imaginative involvement. A telling example is Ezra Pound's celebrated

IN A STATION OF THE METRO
The apparition of these faces in
the crowd,
Petals on a wet, black bough.

Naturally, descriptions in prose cannot reach the same degree of concentration as in poetry. Green, therefore, relies on energizing the connections between images by active, verbal phrases and by creating an energetic rhythm. Among several other obvious examples, the previously cited cinema scenes illustrate these qualities.

Two important conclusions may be drawn from Eisenstein's ideas, and applied to the pursuit of tone in Green's fiction. Firstly, Eisenstein believes that tone arises through the juxtaposition of images and events that act against one another in a spatial framework. The depicted scenes are not elements along a traditional story line, so that their meaning may be inferred through a logical development of the plot. Secondly, the 'montage of attractions' stresses that the position of the separate representations in a frame becomes more important than the specific denotations of the separate representations. Eisenstein states that montage in film achieves its effect by 'combining shots that are depictive, single in meaning, neutral in content'.¹

1. Film Form, p.30.

Whether this principle of filmic montage is directly translatable to literature is more uncertain. Eisenstein realizes that 'the frame is much less independently workable than the word or sound' and that 'the shot's tendency toward complete factual immutability is rooted in its nature'.¹ Due to the more connotative or symbolic quality of words, one can hardly speak of singleness of meaning or neutrality of content in a strict sense. However, Eisenstein's principles are useful, for Green does not embody tone in the separate images that form the montage trope. As in an Imagist poem, various shades of meaning are attached to a metaphor, but real meaning is produced only when the metaphor is juxtaposed with other elements. Thus, Green chooses a bouquet of tulips as the proper image to express Bert's and Lily's celebration of their love, for *the sake of which* they undertake their runaway trip (Living). At the railway station, however, the metaphorical meaning changes quality. By an arrangement similar to what Eisenstein calls association montage,² Lily's and Bert's situation becomes deeply ironic.

Trembling, breathing deeply, she
 peered round his shoulder at those
 who were to travel with them. She
 stood by shoulder of the arm below
 which hung the tulips, his head bent

1. Film Form, p.5.

2. 'Association montage' is also defined in the Appendix.

over hers as she peered round and
 this movement repeated in her knee
 which was bent over heads of the
 tulips as they hung. She had on
 silk stockings today.

(p.345)

The irony is achieved by a careful closing in of juxtaposed details. First, we follow the direction of Lily's eyes as she turns around to peer at the other travellers. Her movement draws attention to her prospective role as traveller, seen from her own point of view. A sudden shift of focus brings Lily's and Bert's predicament into perspective before the reader; a conflict of matter and viewpoint is created, because what Lily sees differs from what the reader sees from his angle. Lily's and Bert's heads are identified with the drooping heads of the tulips, suggesting the tragic outcome of their love relationship (the tulips have been bought at the cemetery). The repetition of this movement in Lily's knee suggests her inability to carry out her plan of escape. It is significant that all the details taken in by the second shot are tightly knit together in one long sentence without natural breaks. Its structure renders a sense of contraction, enhances the simultaneity of the impressions, and produces a sense of latent conflict. Tension is increased by the succinctness of the last line. Lily's silk stockings point to the ironic delusion of her dream, because they are worn for this special occasion, she having worn woollen stockings for a long time to save money for the

trip. The fact that Lily takes her eyes away from the travellers and fixes them on the drooping flowers, confirms the meaning just laid out. 'She gave up looking at the travellers. She looked now at the tulips'. Their confusion over where to put the flowers - 'Where'll you put them?' 'Where will I put them?' - reveals the hopelessness of their dream of settling down in the 'Promised Land'. 'He raised them up till they were upright as they grew. "Do not!" she said and snatched at his wrist and turned them upside down'.

In the final analysis, the whole idea of montage builds on a view that takes life's contradictory nature into account. Eisenstein rejects a 'dualistic picture of the world' in which two 'lines' of conflict run 'towards some hypothetical "reconciliation" where ... the parallel lines would cross, that is, in that infinity, just as inaccessible as that "reconciliation"'. Eisenstein claims that 'the microcosm of montage' should 'be' understood as a unity, which in the inner stress of contradictions is halved, in order to be re-assembled in a new unity on a new plane, qualitatively higher, its imagery newly perceived'.¹ Although Eisenstein's outlook is coloured by Marxist dialectics, it suggests interesting similarities with Green's. It corresponds basically with Green's view that it is through perception,

1. Film Form, pp.235-36.

not ratiocination, that we come to know life's meaning. The montage trope accommodates the fusion of conflicting images and events. Selected examples have shown how the situations of Green's characters are marked by contrasts and conflicts. By a conventional reading, the depicted complexity of life may seem to be merely presentational. This study proposes that the concept of montage will aid the identification of conflicts that give rise to the tone of Green's fiction.

BLINDNESS (1926) AND PACK MY BAG (1940)

Blindness and Pack My Bag will receive only cursory attention. They are mainly autobiographical accounts of adolescent impressions and experiences.¹ Blindness is an introspective portrait of the growth of an artistic consciousness. Green's interest in the protagonist's consciousness rather than in a reality viewed from shifting angles reduces the value of a critical montage

1. In Writers at Work, Green confirms that Blindness and Pack My Bag 'are mostly autobiographical. But where they are about myself, they are not necessarily accurate as a portrait; they aren't photographs. After all, no one knows what he is like, he just tries to give some sort of picture of his time. Not like a cat to fight its image in the mirror' (p.102).

approach. Although the author of Pack My Bag adopts a more disengaged point of view, the book still attains the quality of a narrated story rather than of a dramatized reality.

Despite Green's minimal use of montage in Blindness and Pack My Bag, these works evince important themes that illuminate the vision behind Green's montage technique in other novels. John Haye, a schoolboy at Noat, encounters tragedy when blinded by a stone thrown through a train window. The accident is a confrontation with utter darkness and isolation. John Haye's blindness has its symbolic counterpart in the darkness and confinement of the factory in Living, in the impenetrable fog in Party Going, and in the threat of impending war and death in Caught and Pack My Bag. Pack My Bag opens with forebodings of catastrophe due to 'the war which seems to be coming upon us now and that is the reason to put down what comes to mind before one is killed, and surely it would be asking much to pretend one had a chance to live'.

However, the poetry of the visual moment counteracts death: 'there must be a threat to one's skin to wake what is left of things remembered into things to die with. The crime is to forget'. Green recreates vivid images in his mind: 'we might as well turn back to when we stumbled home through the dark, our faces still burning with the day's sun'. These images, Green says, we should 'take with us like a bar of gold' (Pack My Bag, p.54). The polarity of

sunlight and dark is an essential component in Green's montage of reality's contradictory facets. The image of contradiction enhances the acute vitality of perception.

Like Back, Blindness records the protagonist's struggle towards a sensuous reintegration with reality. 'There were so many things to do, all the senses to develop, old acquaintances of childhood to make friends with again. To sit still and be stifled by the blackness was wrong' (Blindness, p.442). The acquaintance with childhood does not imply escape to memory, but the development of a childlike sensibility: 'they looked back into a past that lived only in their memories, they did not see the present, the birth of a new life, of a new art' (Blindness, p.375). Above all, Haye recognizes the necessity of accepting fate: 'I cannot understand how you endure your life if you don't see the fineness in its being as it is' (Blindness, p.470).

Haye sees that 'the man who chased tulips on a bicycle was silly as well as being an idiot, but the piano-tuner might make a story' (Blindness, p.443). Communion with Life is crucial in order to conquer alienation in Green's world. Green believes that 'we grow up by sharing situations, what we share of another person's increases us' (Pack My Bag, p.67). Nevertheless, the vitalness of these values due to a contradictory world is not pervasively explored in Blindness and Pack My Bag. The narrators' reflections and evaluations are more central than

the objectification of life's complexity. Consequently, the use of montage is not as essential here as in other works of Green. Most of *his* fiction contains an intricate fabric of disparate scenes and points of view. Montage, as will be shown, highlights values and tone in relation to characters' interaction with a contradictory reality.

Chapter Two

LIVING (1929)

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LIVING (1929)

As pointed out in the introduction, Green's idea of 'non-representational' fiction entails the conveyance of life's complexity. This effect is achieved through authorial 'disengagement' (although not consistently maintained in Green's early novels), through visualization and the use of metaphor. Hence, it is natural that an examination of tone in Green's second novel, Living, should begin with a discussion of its most central motif: birds. The pervasive prominence of the birds obviously attaches more to them than mere literal significance. Suggesting freedom and escape, they serve as metaphorical objectification of the characters' subjective feelings. In some symbolic way, they also are connected with the main conflict in the novel, that between freedom and confinement. Prior to an examination of montage conflicts, therefore, one should try to determine to what extent birds symbolize the tone of Living's plot.

Green makes extensive use of a scenic method in Living in order to depict the lives of the Birmingham foundry workers and their families. Disparate, fragmented, and rapidly shifting scenes reveal different

aspects of the predominant monotony, blackness, and petty foundry rivalries. The communal aspiration among the workers towards illumination and freedom is suggested by the invasion of sunbeams and birds through the stained factory windows. 'We pay them [the workers] while they bet on these sparrows', Mr Bridges, the works manager, complains to the new director, Dick Dupret, 'and you can't stop it. You can't keep the sparrows out. I've had a man on the roof three weeks now patching holes they come in by. But they find a way' (p.208).

In a similar manner, pigeons provide a symbolic equivalent for Lily's flight from home. Lily is a young woman who keeps house for Mr Craigan, a taciturn, aging moulder who governs his domicile with authority. Joe Gates, the irascible, discontented father of Lily, and the young Jim Dale, Craigan's assistant, also inhabit the house. For Mr Craigan, the maintenance of domestic order is paramount. 'In this 'ouse', he tells Lily, 'the wage earners must 'ave hot meals every night bar Fridays, if they don't come back midday for it. And on Saturdays, there is to be two 'ot meals, and one on Sunday' (pp.342-43). In order to secure the continuity of the household, Mr Craigan has even picked a potential husband for Lily, the dependable Jim Dale, to whom Lily is indifferent. The basic conflict between Lily and the other members of the Craigan household emanates from her anxiety to escape her domestic entrapment towards

some kind of freedom she has difficulties defining. Conflicting with Lily's need for freedom are the obstacles to self-assertion represented by the attractions of security and her attachment to old Craigan. The complex symbolic quality of the pigeons is analysed by Keith Odom in his observation of their connection with Lily: 'The principal objects that she assimilates with her obsessions are pigeons, symbolic of escape and freedom as well as of home and security'.¹ Like the pigeons, Lily travels far away but eventually returns home. Green comments upon the direction of Lily's flight: 'For as racing pigeons fly in the sky, always they go round above house which provides for them ... so her thoughts would not point away long from house which had provided for her' (p.348).

A central question is whether Green's symbolic equation of Lily and the pigeons signals the tone of the plot. The correlation between Lily's movement and that of the pigeons suggests Lily as the central character of Living. It is her movement that holds the central focus in the second half of the novel. Like the pigeons, Lily returns to Craigan's house after disappointment in love. This fact might suggest a reconciliation with her former role as housekeeper, and a submission to Mr Craigan's mandates. Such an interpretation is offered by Bruce

1. Keith C Odom, Henry Green (Boston 1978), p.49.

Johnson, who believes that the images of homing birds symbolize 'Lily's change of heart', upon the realization that 'old Craigan and Jim Dale will offer Lily the fulfillment she is now ready to accept'.¹ Edward Stokes finds that 'the pigeons are pressed into service for Lily and Mr Craigan', and that 'by the end of the novel they have attained a "precise" and "consistent" reference'.²

Although the pigeons are representative in many ways of characters, they are, finally, insufficient for the clarity and consistency necessary if symbols are to define the tone of intricate conflicts. Green's correlation of Lily and the pigeons represents his cognitive perspective on man's predicament in an irreconcilable world. It expresses a sense of generic inevitability: 'With us it is not only food, as possibly it is for pigeon, but if we are for any length of time among those who love us and whom we love too, then those people become part of ourselves' (p.348). By equating Lily's dependence with that of the pigeons, Green relates Lily to all the other characters in the novel, most of whom dream of freedom but are unable to escape. A sense of destiny hovers over Lily's instinctual return home, suggesting man's need for attachment.

The pigeons' inevitable return places the characters'

1. Bruce Johnson, 'Loving: A Study of Henry Green' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Northwestern University 1959), pp.33-34.

2. Stokes, pp.141,143.

escapist dreams in an ironic perspective. However, since Lily's escape is merely a symptom of her lack of fulfilment, the same pigeon symbolism does not evaluate deeper personal needs and motives. Accordingly, the pigeons' symbolic homeward flight cannot, as Bruce Johnson claims, affirm the resolution of conflict for Lily. Continuing conflict, rather, seems to be Lily's subjective experience. This view finds support in the image of the cinema, a reflection of Lily's emotional needs. Prior to her elopement, Lily regularly goes to the cinema to seek vicarious fulfilment in tropical settings. After her return home, Lily still goes to the movies, as if little has changed. Significantly, standing by the kitchen window, 'she thought in feeling of that band, which was playing now in her heart, in the cinema, and even without a pang now she thought of band in that railway train. And at the cinema last night, what a good band that was' (p.379). Suddenly, at the cry of her neighbour's baby, she runs out of Mr Craigan's house and round to Mrs Eames's. The last scene in the novel shows Lily in a moment of bliss, pushing Mrs Eames's baby in the pram. Pigeons are fluttering above her head.

The meaning of the fluttering pigeons in the last scene is a complex one. There is no evidence that the scene symbolizes Lily's 'change of heart' and her submission to Craigan's values. It depicts a moment of delight, which is applauded by the pigeons. The pigeons'

celebration of the poetic moment points to their related function in other contexts: birds' freedom and vivacity under the sky, or as they flutter among the machinery in the factory, contrast positively with the unfulfilled lives of most of the characters. Lily's joy gives the novel a hopeful ending, but her still unfulfilled needs are revealed by her preoccupation with the Eames's baby. The window, by which Lily stands dreaming before the final scene, is a recurrent motif in Living. It suggests a sense of disparity between Craigan's kitchen and an envisaged world outside, filled with pigeon flocks. In the same mode, it is important that the Eameses live next door to Mr Craigan. In several contexts, shifts of focus between the adjoining houses produce contrasts that objectify Lily's unfulfilled needs. It is crucial to note that this opposition induces a central value statement in Living. Accordingly, only a montage approach can fully reveal Green's message. In the following passage, different montage conflicts combine to accentuate this discordance, and thereby convey the appropriate tone. The first shot provides a glimpse into the Craigan household:

Weather was hot. They lived back of a street and kitchen which they ate in was on to their garden. Range made kitchen hotter. A man next door to them kept racing pigeon and these were in slow air. They ate in shirt sleeves. Plump she was. They did not say much.

Baby howled till mother there lifted him from bed to breast and sighed most parts asleep in darkness. Gluttonously baby sucked ...

Later woke Mr Eames. Sun shone in room
and Mrs woke.

'Oh dear' he cried. He sneezed.

'What makes you always sneeze at the sun
I don't know' she said most parts asleep
and he said 'another day'. She now was
not quite woke up and said you wouldn't
believe, she was so happy now.

'Dear me' he murmured sliding back into
sleep. They slept.

Later alarm clock sounded next door.
They woke.

(p.215)

Green's picture of racing pigeons under the sky heightens, through a conflict of scales, the sense of a stuffy, narrow 'range' in Craigan's kitchen. The montage serves to accent its subdued atmosphere. A sudden audio-visual counterpoint, produced by the Eames's baby, collides with the subdued silence in the Craigan household, enhancing the conflict of planes between the two houses. In this context, moreover, the baby, through association montage, points directly to Lily's unfulfilled needs. The contrasting image of the Eameses, lying in bed, half asleep, happily greeting the sun coming in through the window, 'represents the kind of fulfilling relationship for which Lily is yearning. This idyllic picture is soon distorted, through an audio-visual counterpoint, by Craigan's alarm clock next door. Mrs Eames emphasizes the tone of the passage and its allusion to Lily's situation: 'She said was one thing to these houses with narrow walls it saved buying alarm clocks Rod of iron he [Mr Craigan] ruled with in that house she said ... "or more likely a huge great poker. That poor girl" she said, "and not even his

daughter but 'e won't let 'er go out to work, nor out of the House Hardly''' (pp.215-16). As demonstrated in this scene, montage enhances the sensory immediacy of the content. Thus, montage produces tone by intensifying the emotive quality of the opposition.

A discussion of how the montage of incongruous images fashions the tone of Living demands a close consideration of the Eameses. The minor role played by the Eameses in the active formation of the plot, and their less prominent existences as compared with the Craigan household, might imply that the essential balance is too unequal to connote a major conflict. However, almost like the spirit of Mrs Ramsay in To the Lighthouse, the example of the Eameses suffuses the novel and brings characters and events into relief. Various episodes in Living develop depth through comparison and association with the Eames's values. Edward Stokes calls the Eameses 'a thoroughly ordinary and average pair'.¹ Nothing could be further from the truth, although they, like most others, are connected with the factory, comply with its routines, and lead an outwardly unadventurous life. The Eameses appear as the only thoroughly satisfied couple in the whole of Green's canon. Seen against the sordid background Green depicts, this is a consideration of great importance. They also seem to be the

1. Stokes, p.137.

only characters in Living who do not dream of escape. This aspect adds to the almost unreal quality of their existence, and sets them up as an ideal which others can only approximate.

Some characters suffer from a sense of futility at the limited opportunities for escape. In the mind of Dick Dupret, the flux of time is felt as a continuous, disintegrating force.

And what was in all this, he said as he was feeling now, or in any walk of life - you were born, you went to school, you worked, you married, you worked harder, you had children, you went on working, with a good deal of trouble your children grew up, then they married. What had you before you died? Grand-children? The satisfaction of breeding the glorious Anglo-Saxon breed?

(p.328)

Mrs Eames's words to her child stand in sharp contrast to Dick's:

Why do we bring kids into the world, they leave you so soon as they're grown, eh? But you don't know one of these things yet. But sure as anything you'll leave us when you're a man, and who'll we 'ave then, eh cruel? Sons and daughters, why do we bring them into the world? She was laughing. Because, because she said laughing and then lay smiling and then yawned.

(pp.222-23)

Mrs Eames's laughter stems from the pleasure she finds in breeding the 'Anglo-Saxon breed'. John Russell, however, is not entirely right when suggesting that her contentment at knowing that her son will become a turner like his father signifies 'her allegiance to the continuum, that

promises fruition'.¹ Green deals with more than one level of reality. It seems that her acceptance of the monotony which most of the characters want to escape, has to do with her recognition of the material necessity represented by the factory. 'Yes', she says, 'and so long as 'is lathe goes round he'll be there, earning 'is money like 'is dad ... We shan't be up to much work not when you've been a man for long so you'll look to our comfort' (p.222). The thought of her son becoming a factory worker like all the others is burdensome to Mrs Eames: 'She sighed. She fed him. She felt cold but he was warm' (p.222). And Mr Eames, listening to his wife's monologue, then remarks that 'it always did rain in this town though garden would benefit' (p.222). The Eameses have a private world (i.e. garden) not envisaged as drab and monotonous. Despite the blackness of the surroundings, they are able to perceive and cultivate organic values. Mr Eames stresses the positive aspect of bad weather; the rain is a prerequisite for growth in the garden.

Rather than committing themselves to the 'continuum', the Eameses are divided between the need to find some compatibility with life in the factory and in the private world where the garden is seen as a vital force. Mr Eames is a conscientious and industrious working man, a turner at the factory and a gardener at home. But his

1. Russell, p.81.

devotion to the values associated with the garden is enhanced by the fact that one never sees him at the factory. The following scene effectively accentuates basic conflicts, lending tonal affirmation to Mr Eames's attitude to life. Mr Eames is working in his garden when Mr Bentley, a fellow worker, comes up to him and starts to criticize conditions in the factory. However, Mr Eames refuses to let intrigues interfere with his gardening. When Mr Bentley tells Mr Eames that he had seen Bert Jones back at work that morning, after having been dismissed for some offence against the management, Eames answers rather casually that he had not noticed. Bert's leaving without a fight annoys Bentley, while Mr Eames is diplomatic: ' 'E didn't 'ave any choice'. When Bentley goes on to denounce the unfairness of it all, Mr Eames is just as impartial: 'Well they 'aven't trespassed against the law'. Bentley's resentment for their treatment of another worker, Alfred Parker, cannot arouse Eames's indignation: 'I ain't got nothing to say for that'. Another fellow, Whitacre, had, according to himself and Bentley, been unfairly dismissed, but Eames cannot accept one-sided criticism: 'Well I don't know anything about what you just said there - it ain't anything but 'is story is it?'. Mr Eames's reasons for attempting to avoid conversation about negative experience are similar to Bentley's reasons for not telling his wife about his problems: 'she 'as 'ardships enough keeping her and

me alive on our money without me telling 'er the pinpricks you get all the time at our place' (pp.238-39).

A shift of focus suddenly interrupts Bentley's tirade of abuse, as if thinking of his wife has put him in a more appreciative mood. The reader's attention is drawn to the smoke from Bentley's pipe which 'went slowly up through bars of sunlight here and there which came between leaves of apple tree' (p.239). The smoke, in its association with the factory and with Bentley's discontentment, merges with the life-giving sun and the apple tree of Mr Eames's garden. Bentley's obsession with injustice, with working conditions he considers 'contrary to nature', has diverted him from natural values. However, the smoke's movement is a metaphorical visualization of the way in which his mind is suddenly transported towards the sun: '"Ah it's a fine crop" Mr Bentley said, changing tone, "and it's a good thing for a man to get away in the evenings out into the air"' (p.239). Significantly, the fusion of disparate images provides the appropriate tone of the passage. Smoke and sunlight merge in a conflict of masses to create a moment of natural beauty. The juxtaposition of different intensities of light deepens the conflict between the smoke and the sunlight. By their contiguity, however, the former also heightens the value of the latter. The resultant image is an intensification of Mr Eames's garden and of Mr Eames's attitude to life.

It should be pointed out that Mr Eames's reluctance to criticize or take sides does not mean that he is out of touch with actuality, or that his domestic contentment is the result of his inability to penetrate the orderings of his illusions. That the problems in the factory are just as real to Mr Eames as to Bentley, is clear from the way Mr Eames speaks to his wife when he comes into the house.

'I'm not saying a lot of what 'e touched on 'e wasn't justified in saying. To my way of thinking they didn't ought to keep the tackle in the way they do. The crane in our shop ain't safe now and Aaron Connolly driving it don't make it safer'.

The lathes he said were all anyhow and any time now he said glass roof might fall in if gale of wind came.

'You'll give me fits' she said.

'And the government inspector's meant to look to all that but there's a woman comes to our place mostly and what can she know about it. And there ain't a girl in the whole factory. Old Bentley didn't mention that nor did I for I thought 'e might never stop if I went on suggesting things to 'im'.

'That's right' she said 'don't get into argument with that sort ...

It ain't going to do no good to your wife or child'.

(p.248)

The Eames's self-sufficiency is a conscious attitude which they adopt to make possible the growth of the garden.

Even if the Eames's values answer to the ideal communicated in Living, this does not imply that Green advocates escape into private seclusion and avoidance of social responsibility. It suggests first of all that Green's preoccupation is with the importance of cultivating

the human spirit as a prerequisite to growth. The fact that the Eameses are not actively involved in political issues or with the concerns of society does not distinguish them from most of Green's other characters. Their largely apolitical attitude reflects Green's statement that his novels are about love, and his belief that people are not interested in 'political, religious, or sociological' ideas.¹ The values communicated through the Eameses do not so much enjoin the extrusion of society at large as the necessity of filtering out negative influence which may infect the creative powers associated with the garden. It is significant, for example, that Mrs Eames thinks it unreasonable that Craigan denies Lily the right to go out to work. For the same reason, it is not from the factory itself that Mrs Eames wants to dissociate herself when, referring to Bentley, she asks her husband not to 'get into argument with that sort'. Nor does she express opinions against improvement of conditions for the factory workers. She is primarily anxious about the contagious influence that may spread from people (Bentley is a member of a revolutionary group) who are generally dissatisfied with their lot.

Green's message is that against the disintegrating forces in society, man must try to respond with the best in himself: love. Mrs Eames resembles Mrs Ramsay in

1. 'Green, with Envy: Critical Reflections and an Interview', London Magazine 6, no.4 (1959), p.22.

To the Lighthouse, who knits, tends her garden, mediates and creates in face of disorder. Mrs Eames's convictions point to some sort of existentialist value system in the author. Obsession with injustice is self-denying, and therefore life-denying, because disorder is permanent, and the attempt to abolish it can only bring bitterness and frustration. This is the wisdom behind the Eames's struggle to build love and meaning upon flux: 'love', Mrs Eames says to her baby, 'they might come in the night and steal you away. And what would we do then, and what would we do then?' (pp.248-49).

The values insisted upon by the Eameses are recurrently contrasted with less reverent attitudes. Mr Bridges and Mr Walters are complaining about the workers and how they escape from work all the time by going into the latrines. 'Then I go into the latrines, what do I run into, more trouble, two robbers sitting on the seat, without even their trousers off, smoking. I said to them "You might as well go straight to the chief's back pocket and take the money from it"' (p.231). Problems are redoubled by the fact that old Mr Dupret, the elderly owner of the factory, has become bed-ridden and has handed over the management to his son, Dick, who is a disturbing influence in the foundry. Problems and intrigues are paramount in the consciousnesses of Bridges and Walters.

'And I've served 'im faithfully for
fifteen years. It's a nightmare.
Where am I, eh? Where do I stand then,

tell me that'.

Mrs Eames put cold new potato into her mouth.

'Ain't they good' said she.

'They are' he said.

'Better'n what you could get up the road or if you took a tram up into town'.

'There's none like your own'.

(pp.231-32)

A sudden shift of focus from the factory to the placid domesticity of the Eameses, who are savouring crops from their garden, creates a conflict of planes. The incongruity of atmosphere accentuates the life-denying quality of Bridges's and Walters's states of mind. This conflict of planes draws attention to other montage conflicts. In context, they serve to exalt the Eames's attempt to build a microcosm of private serenity by eschewing the disturbing forces around them.

So for a time they ate supper. She sat on then looking out of window. When she turned and put hands on table to get up and clear away supper she noticed those flowers.

The window, through which Mrs Eames sits in her kitchen, observing the macrocosm of the distant town, fashions a conflict of scales between two spatial dimensions, suggesting her separation from what she sees. A conflict between close and long shots intensifies this impression. It is created when Mrs Eames shifts her attention from the outer world to the inner. There is a shift of focus from what can be observed to what can be touched, connoting closeness and concord. The moment she puts her hands on the

table, she notices the flowers.

'Why look' said she 'you brought 'em
back from the garden only yesterday
and I put them in that pot, and now
all their faces've turned to the sun.'
(p.232)

The bright infinity of the sun creates a conflict of masses and scales in contrast with the pot which, by juxtaposition, connotes a sense of confinement.

Green's personification of the flowers in the pot indicates his symbolic equation of the pot and the finiteness of the Eames's world. However, the fruition of the Eames's attitude to life is affirmed by the fact that the flowers' 'faces' have turned to the life-giving sun.

Significantly, the values of the previous scenes are communicated by the series of montage conflicts just referred to; montage accents vital aspects of the context. Green intensifies the tone of the preceding passage by a conflict of planes, through which impressions from the Eames's household collide with impressions from the Craigan household.

Water dripped from tap on wall into
basin and into water there. Sun.
Water drops made rings in clear col-
oured water. Sun in there shook on
the walls and ceiling. As rings
went out round trembling over the
water shadows of light from sun in
these trembled on walls. On the
ceiling.

They came back from work. Mr Joe
Gates was speaking.

'Ah and didn't I tell that foreman
only a month or two back it would go,
silly cow keeping on using it till it
went'.

(p.232)

Due to their central role in related contexts, the basin in Craigan's kitchen and the pot in the Eames's form symbolic counterparts. The idea that the basin symbolizes the Craigan household is affirmed by Green's equation of the trembling water rings and the sun which 'shakes' on Craigan's walls and ceiling. This image, however, does not suggest hope or fruition, but repression of life-giving forces. The collision (conflict of graphic directions) of the trembling sun with the walls and ceiling effects a sense of entrapment. It serves as an ironic comment upon the life-denying atmosphere in Craigan's house.

Green adds precision to his use of the montage technique by immediately focusing on Joe Gates who, together with Craigan, has just come home from work. Gates is vehemently blaming the foreman at the foundry for an accident in which a wire rope parted and missed Craigan by inches. Green, however, is not primarily concerned with social or institutional amendment. As previously suggested, the lack of a consistent point of view in his novels hinders effective satire or criticism of society. The central issue in this scene is Gates's obsession with injustice and his readiness to blame his surroundings for any ill fortune. This interpretation is supported by certain systematic parallels between the two patriarchs in Living, Craigan and Dupret.¹ The most

1. Russell comments on structural parallels between Craigan and Dupret, p.79.

significant parallel in this connection is the way in which both are finally faced with life's capriciousness. Whereas Craigan is nearly killed by the whip of a wire rope, Dupret is bed-ridden after slipping on excrement in the street. These two accidents, if viewed together, reflect the incidental nature of life which no one is really able to control.

Montage of visual images is the most important device by which Green deepens the meaning of the scene in Craigan's kitchen. By varying the distance between the 'camera' and the object, and by focusing on different details, Green manipulates the point of view of the narrative so that meaning is put in an unexpected perspective. Gates is raging over the stupidity of the foreman and over all the injustice he encounters in the factory. Suddenly, his tirade of abuse is interrupted by other details:

Mr Craigan washed first in basin.
Lily Gates came in then.

(p.232)

Green's association of the basin with a sense of conflict and confinement has already been suggested in the preceding scene. Here he links the basin with the disturbing effects of Gates's resentment. They are all burdened by notions of life's precariousness in the factory, reinforced by Gates.

Green uses various grammatical devices to stress the function and significance of the basin image. His

omission of the definite article to modify 'basin' accents the noun, increasing thereby the immediacy of its visual impact.¹ Craigan's and Lily's movement, described in two brief, succinct statements, collide with the sentence structure of Gates's colloquial flow of words. These features contribute to the dynamic quality of the two shots in that they generate a sudden visual close-up. The effect is intensified by recurrent repetitions of the basin image, interrupting Gates's continuing monologue:

Lily Gates went to basin and stood
there by Mr Craigan ...
Joe Gates put head under water in
basin.

(pp.232-33)

The fact that Gates puts his head into the basin stresses his separation from the Eameses whose flowers (symbolic of their 'faces') in the pot stretch towards the sun. Gates's act suggests his mental confinement, and his alienation from the sun.

Such connected images as the basin, the pot, and the sink, possess referential qualities only when viewed in relation to other images, such as the sun. Their indefinable meaning in isolation probably explains why

1. In Writers at Work, p.108, Green states that the omission of the article in Living is a device 'to make that book as taut and spare as possible, to fit the proletarian life I was then leading'. Besides, Green says, 'I suppose the more you leave out, the more you highlight what you leave in'.

critics seem to have completely overlooked them. Even more recognizable images - pigeons and sparrows - lack the 'precision of reference and consistency' that Melchiori claims characterize symbols. Like many other critics, Melchiori finds no structure in Green's visual technique: 'Visual images without an abstract counterpart in the realm of thought or a definite reference to known facts or persons are the expression only of a mood, of a condition of the author's mind, so individual that it can be communicated only through this visual embodiment'.¹

Melchiori's claim that Green's arrangement of images does not correspond to themes of the intellect requires elucidation. It is correct that most of Green's images are not of the kind which W B Yeats names 'intellectual symbols', as opposed to 'emotional symbols'. Yeats gives examples of these two categories of symbols: 'If I say "white" or "purple" in an ordinary line of poetry, they evoke emotions so exclusively that I cannot say why they move me; but if I bring them into the same sentence with such obvious intellectual symbols as a cross or a crown of thorns, I think of purity and sovereignty'.² The tone of the scenes in which these symbols

1. Melchiori, p.194.

2. W B Yeats, 'The Symbolism of Poetry', in 20th Century Literary Criticism, p.33.

combine is immediately clear; one knows how the author relates to them, because 'purity' and 'sovereignty' are commonly associated with these symbols through cultural conditioning. Images of birds, on the other hand, have no fixed symbolic meaning, even when combined with colours such as blood-red, red-gold, and black, as in the sunset scene in Concluding. Still, Green's birds - whether pigeons, sparrows, or starlings - do not completely lack an intellectual content; they are not a strictly subjective expression. Birds, as cultural phenomena, are generally associated with values of freedom and vivacity, and so they are in Green's work. What makes their metaphorical value difficult to determine is that Green's fiction can be read on different levels of meaning; the reader must try to discriminate between the birds' purely presentational functions and their significance in the creation of tone. The latter function, as has been suggested, is discernible through Green's intensification of the dynamic quality of his narrative, notably by rapid transitions from one visual detail to another, by a distortion of sentence rhythm, or by a spatial collision of lines, forms, and colours. Melchiori believes that instead of being symbols, Green's 'are rather those sudden images recurring in the works of poets and marking the high points at which the strength of their feeling finds release in visual terms'.¹

1. Melchiori, pp.193-94.

Melchiori does not seem to recognize that exactly this poetic quality is an essential principle of montage, as defined by Eisenstein.

Phrases that are primarily descriptive or presentational, tend to lack the particular dynamism characteristic of montage. Keith Odom comments on Green's use of birds in 'literal descriptive phrases': 'In Living, when the children go in to eat, the streets are left empty; and Green, needing a swift and evocative description, writes that there "were only sparrows now in the streets"'. Sometimes, Odom says, Green 'enlivens' and makes 'expressive a rather drab managerial type' by letting 'the wings of sparrows, blackbirds, woodcocks, doves, gulls, and pigeons beat ... in the characters' speech. Mr Bridges in particular says ambitious people act like "crows after sheep's eyes" and are hypocritically "cooing like a dove"'.¹ When images of home-turning pigeons are occasionally used more symbolically to suggest the pattern of man's life, they still have a primarily descriptive function. However, the pigeons' flight itself, when viewed spatially against a concrete situation, frequently connotes vivacity, or 'living'.

Melchiori's point that Green's images lack meaning because lacking 'a definite reference to known facts or persons' also requires attention. The 'cross' and the

1. Odom, p.49.

'crown of thorns' in Yeats's example, combined with 'white' and 'purple', gain symbolic power in light of events that link these images to one specific person. It is difficult to see how the pot, the sun, or the birds, combined with certain colours, can express personal qualities in a similar way. Green; however, has no intention of evaluating characters' motives or integrity through their representation by definable symbols. Green's images contribute to the creation of tone in concrete situations, and their function depends on the particular context. This technique implies that the same image used in different scenes does not necessarily give identical tonal qualities to these scenes. Tone is created by the 'camera-angle', the distance of the camera from the photographed object, the scope of the screen, or the special sequence of shots. In this manner, the image of the pot or the basin may be used with different tonal effect in situations involving the Eameses, Joe Gates, or Mr Craigan.

Sometimes montage of several images and scenes is required to evolve the tone of one particular situation. An illustrative example is provided by the scene in which Lily expresses her desire to have a job. The job represents a certain measure of freedom to Lily. Most of the time, Lily is isolated from normal contact with people her own age. As she tells Bert Jones: 'Oh yes, and how would you like to stay in all day by yourself and

keep a place tidy ... and then when they give you the 'ouse-keeping money Friday night to have nothing but black looks' (p.257). Lily's father compounds the difficulties of her situation through indifference and insult. Jim Dale increases Lily's sense of confinement by sulking whenever he feels rejected. His role is to conform to Craigan's orderings: 'Lil ... we ought to be going 'ome or the old man won't like it' (p.236). When Lily asks permission to have a job, Craigan denies her this right on the grounds that 'None o' the womenfolk go to work from the house I inhabit' (p.215). Lily 'carried dirty plates to the sink then'.

In isolation, Lily's act and the close-up of the sink convey no precise meaning, except that the sink is suggestive of Lily's sense of confinement. However, Green's use of the time adverbial, 'then', combined with the sudden determination of Lily's action, suggest that the 'shot' is, on one level, meant as an objectification of Lily's private emotional response to Craigan's rigidity. It is impossible to determine the nature of the author's response on the basis of this single 'shot' alone. Previous examples have shown, however, how clues to the determination of tone may be found in the choice of words and syntax, as well as in the selection of visual details. In the passage immediately preceding the clash between Lily and Craigan, Green looks into Craigan's kitchen at dinner time:

Craigan sat at head of table in his house.
 His mate Mr Gates sat with him to supper
 and his mate's daughter brought over
 shepherd's pie from range and the young
 fellow also was at table who worked with
 him also in the foundry, Jim Dale.

She laid dish on the table. She
 wiped red, wet hands on dishcloth.

(pp.214-15)

The different members of the group are focused on consecutively. However, by means of various syntactic devices, Green brings them all (except Craigan) together in one single photographed frame. This effect is achieved by an elision of commas, which makes the different clauses (which are linked with 'and') run into one another, and which increases the flow and speed of reading. A distortion of a normal syntax is also noticeable in his presentation of Jim Dale. By this device, Green avoids interjectional clauses to introduce Jim Dale, and concentrates first on placing him as a member of the group. The summary impression of Green's technique creates a sense of detachment or distance from the people around the table; a group of people who as separate individuals do not deserve special focus. The relevance of this analysis becomes clear in the next 'shot': a close-up of Lily's hands as she puts the dish on the table. Eisenstein's definition of a close-up has direct applicability here. The term close-up, he says, is actually American and is by the American film producer, Griffith, attached to 'viewpoint', to what is 'near'. Eisenstein, on the other hand, associates the term with 'large scale',

because what is important is the 'qualitative side of the phenomenon', 'the value of what is seen'. The 'principal function of the close-up', therefore, is 'not only and not so much to show or to present, as to signify, to give meaning, to designate'.¹ The curt, paratactic style of the two sentences centring on Lily (both begin with 'She', and all connectives are omitted) sets them off from the smooth flow of the preceding sentence. By giving each word in 'red, wet hands' heavy stress, Green creates a 'large scale' moment of intensified perception. The associations of hard labour and servitude evoked by Lily's 'red, wet hands' signal the author's warm support for her needs.

In order to further heighten the tone of the previous scene, Green shifts his focus from the conversation in the kitchen to the racing pigeons in the background. The pigeons are mainly a device used by Green to enhance the sense of confinement in the kitchen, by juxtaposing the kitchen with the freedom of the sky. This incongruity between foreground and background provides a detached, ironic comment on Craigan's life-negating insistence on domestic discipline.

Birds are commonly used for the purpose of commenting on various events, rather than for representing tone in relation to individual characters' motives. They serve this latter function, however, in the scene in which a bird is caught between the window frames in Craigan's

1. Film Form, pp.237-38.

kitchen. After unsuccessful attempts by Craigan, Dale, and Gates to free it, they fetch Mrs Eames next door, who, with a gentle manoeuvre, releases the bird. 'She said, "Where's Lily then?"' (p.220). The bird, which throughout Living has been linked with freedom and the organic, is here associated with Lily, due to the sudden juxtaposition of the two. Just like the bird, Lily is trapped in Craigan's kitchen, and none of the men in the house can give her what she needs. Joe Gates, who does not recognize the symbolic reference between Lily and the bird, has been put into a jocular mood by the incident and starts telling coarse stories (in fact, he has just been telling dirty jokes about 'tarts and birds'). When Mrs Eames leaves, offended, Gates explains to the others that 'he wanted to wake her up'. The discrepancy between Gates's remark and Mrs Eames's previously revealed attitudes produces tone through irony. Mrs Eames certainly is wide awake to the less innocent sides of life, as well as to the lack of reverence for life as exhibited by some people.

Green's attitude towards the conflict between Craigan and Lily is amplified through a conflict of close and long shots. The focus shifts from the group of people to Craigan, who has suddenly left the small, stuffy kitchen: 'He sat outside in the last light of sun which had shone all day' (p.220). Due to the ambiguous relation between image and context, this 'shot' offers two possible

interpretations. However, this deliberately cultivated ambiguity only heightens the richness of the passage in that the two possible meanings together contribute towards the creation of a basic tone. When Mrs Eames, after freeing the bird, asks for Lily, her question is addressed to Craigan, 'but Craigan was saying no more'. Craigan's muteness indicates his recognition of the symbolic connection between Lily and the trapped bird. He seems to feel guilt because of his restrictive treatment of her, for while sitting outside, he 'looked troubled in his mind'. The fact that he is sitting under a fading sun may thus be read as a reflection of his troubled conscience. Craigan's sudden impulse to seek the last rays of sun also emphasizes another possible interpretation: namely that he wants to dissociate himself from Gates and his lack of respect for Mrs Eames, and indirectly for Lily. Either interpretation puts the happening in the kitchen in perspective before the reader. Green praises Mrs Eames's reverence for life and disapproves of the conditions which make Lily's situation burdensome: Gates's lack of sensitivity to fellow beings, and Craigan's restraining domination. At the same time, there is some suggestion that Craigan attempts to eschew the cynicism which radiates from Gates, and which Lily finds so intolerable.

Craigan's deprecation of ill feeling in his surroundings is drawn attention to several times throughout

Living. When Gates loses his temper with the foreman who stands watching him and Craigan in the foundry and mutters 'Dirty bleeder', Craigan cuts him off: '"You talk more'n is natural in a man" ... and then no word was said between them' (p.228). When another time one of the boys in the foundry denigrates Gates, Craigan snaps at him: 'Clear off my lad and don't tell tales' (p.222). One night in the pub Gates begins making derogatory remarks about Mr Bridges in a most humiliating way. 'And Joe was about to draw attention of all the world to Mr Bridges, and bartender was already saying with appeal Joe, Joe when Craigan got up and butted him in the stomach with his head' (p.376). Although Craigan's desire to avoid intrigue and ill-feeling takes a cruder and more authoritarian form than does Mr Eames's, their basic motives are similar. Both, in their individual ways, recognize that resentment is infectious and may degrade life.

Craigan may in some respects, then, be said to share attitudes with the Eameses, attitudes which represent basic values in Living. However, Craigan's situation is different and more complicated, for whereas the Eames's home is an oasis in a world of conflict, it is in his own home that Craigan's mediatory powers are tried. He has to contend with crossing ambitions and needs that exist on a larger scale in the factory and in society at large. The question Green indirectly asks is how Life is best

served in such a situation. It is on this level that a consistent pattern of visual devices emerges, contributing to the revelation of tone.

Craigan's basic humanism notwithstanding, he distrusts the deeper motives behind Lily's romantic longings. He especially questions Lily's unwillingness to settle down with Jim Dale. Seeing that Lily is really indifferent to Jim Dale's courtship, Craigan believes it is only because she wants to 'fly higher':

Suddenly he broke out into loud voice:
'I wouldn't educate my son above the
station 'e was born in', he said and then
whispering 'what is there in it, old
Dupret 'ad to work twelve hours a day to
keep 'is money I'll be bound 'e did ...
An' a motor-car, aint we better on the
feet our mothers bore us'.

(p.312)

In an attempt to discourage Lily from ever leaving the household, Craigan tells her about her Aunt Ellie who, as a young woman, had married a drover. But, he says, Ellie had not found him good enough and had run away, for which she had bitterly learnt her lesson. 'Her [Lily] blubbered when I told 'er of her Aunt Ellie', Craigan chuckles to himself. '"Ah" he said "but as the tree leans so the branches is inclined"' (p.311). Craigan interprets Lily's restless yearning to be only a wish for self-betterment and a sign of vain pretentiousness. At times, he thinks 'it was selfishness that was all of Miss Gates' (p.311). Craigan emphasizes the painful limitations of his own adolescent dream of making his way up

in the world: "'But I'm no more'n a moulder, a sand rat, and will be till they think I'm too old for work ... No that sort never do" he said, and smoked pipe and did not watch her crying'. His own lack of fulfilment in his present situation is stressed by the fact that he then 'got up and went inside and listened to the wireless' (pp.269-70). The wireless is the habitual means by which Craigan finds escape.

Craigan's admonition to Lily foreshadows the failure of her attempted escape. However, with his dominant awareness of life's limitations, Craigan is himself a victim of self-deception. He fails to see Lily's human potential for what it is, and misjudges the force behind its need for realization. Green makes sure that the reader sees a more complete picture of Lily than what can be attributed to mere selfishness and vanity. Lily's bewildered cry in bed is the expression of her fundamental need to serve and to fulfil her female nature:

Why may I not have children, feed
them with my milk. Why may I not kiss
their eyes, lick their skin, softness
to softness, why not I? I have no man,
my work is for others, not for mine.

Why may I not work for mine?

Why mayn't they laugh at my coming in
to them. Why is there nothing that
lives by me. And I would do everything
by my child in the morning and at evening,
why haven't I one? I would work for him
who made child with me, oh day and night
I'd be working for them, and get up in the
night to feed him and in the morning to
get father's tea. I would be his mother,
he his father, why have I no child?

(p.278)

What Lily wants most is to live in the kind of fulfilling relationship that Mr and Mrs Eames have created. Green's sympathy for Lily's motives suffuses his dramatization of the conflict between Lily and Craigan. Even though Lily's dreams of escape are, to a large extent, based on romantic illusions, there is no inconsistency in tone, whether Green is dealing with the Eameses or with the relationship between Lily and Craigan. If life's natural limitations prevent her from finding absolute fulfilment, Green does not treat ironically her need to be 'I, I am I'. Returning pigeons may symbolize man's inability to break out of a predestined pattern or circle, but Lily is also identified with the bird entrapped in Craigan's window, which only Mrs Eames is able to set free. Mrs Eames is the only one to appreciate that Lily's efforts are directed towards the sun. She is the only one that sees how unfair it is to restrict Lily's freedom, and her opportunity to find the man she likes. Furthermore, by the image of the trapped bird, Lily is also linked with the birds that are impossible to keep out of the factory, and thus with the needs of the thousands of people who are streaming in and out of Dupret's factory every day. The suggestion that their needs are natural and indomitable gives them universal validity. Craigan's effort to pin Lily down is against nature, and his desire to make the order of his house permanent is therefore doomed to failure.

Green's manner of selecting and emphasizing details

of his narrative delineates two clashing sets of values in the Craigan household. Whereas Lily is reaching out for the sun, Craigan's preoccupation is with material necessity, including his own security and comfort, which he thinks only Lily can provide: 'Love's all right for them that 'as Rolls Royces', he says to Lily, 'but for the wives of working men it's the money that comes in regular at the end of the week that tells' (p.320). Green's attitude towards the conflicts connected with these two attitudes is stressed by montage throughout the novel.

The predominance of work, in Living, bears witness to the necessity of material concerns. Lily admits that 'where we'd've been without 'im I don't know at all. We all live by Mr Craigan' (p.235). Security, however, is not an alternative to 'loving' and 'living'. The confinement of Craigan's domicile has its counterpart in the staleness of the factory. In the iron foundry, 'Black sand made the floor. Men knelt in it' (p.208). Human values, in these surroundings, can only be sustained by a symbolic feeding of the sparrows. The precise meaning of this motif is not clarified by Green, because it concerns attitudes that are strictly subjective. However, it broadly refers to the imaginative capacity to turn plain existence into 'living'. Green demonstrates man's potential to perceive a poetic beauty in the midst of drabness. For a moment, the motion of Bert Jones's

lathe takes on a beautiful stillness:

Now the job, revolving so many turns a second, now it had a stillness more beautiful than when actually it had been still. On the small surface of it was sheen of light still and quiet And pace of events bearing on his life quickened so that for two moments their speed had appearance of stillness.

(p.334)

Or joy may occur through a sense of togetherness:

They talked. John and Mr Bridges's faces grew red with companionship and Bridges waved cigar and John got smoke once in lungs and coughed; - they shouted together and held each other by the arm.

(p.218)

The factory workers can only find meaning by nourishing their own human selves in face of the drabness that threatens to mould them into stereotypes.

Living begins with a passage of visual montage that anticipates the tone of the whole novel.

Bridesley, Birmingham.

Two o'clock. Thousands came back from dinner along streets.

'What we want is go, push', said works manager to son of Mr Dupret. 'What I say to them is - let's get on with it, let's get the stuff out'.

Thousands came back to factories they worked in from their dinners.

'I'm always at them but they know me. They know I'm a father and mother to them. If they're in trouble they've but to come to me. And they turn out beautiful work, beautiful work. I'd do anything for 'em and they know it'.

Noise of lathes working began again in this factory. Hundreds went along road outside, men and girls. Some turned in to Dupret factory.

(p.207)

Green repeatedly widens and narrows the range in front of

the 'camera' so that various details interpenetrate in the mind of the reader. The dynamic effects produced by this technique give rise to tone. Green's survey of the scene is recurrently interrupted by sudden acoustic close-ups of Bridges's resounding voice. The tension between visual and acoustic experiences created by these audio-visual counterpoints sensitizes the reader to underlying thematic conflicts, which are more fully conveyed in terms of a conflict of matter and viewpoint. Crowds of men and women returning to work are pictured in repeated glimpses from the point of view of the author. The monotony of his style mimes the collective movement of workers, which suggests the stifling, mechanical pattern of factory routine. Viewed against this impersonal background, Bridges's reassuring remark, that all human needs are being looked after, becomes deeply ironic. Green, instead, stresses the incompatibility of the management's ambition to 'go, push' and man's need for beauty and human understanding. At times, Green's sympathy for the individual worker is revealed through exposure of their subjective feelings:

That day Mr Bert Jones had one of his spells on him. Were days when he could not work, his mind was not in it. It was not that he couldn't concentrate because he was thinking of something else, but rather as if his mind was satiated by the trade he worked at, as if he had reached saturation point as day by day, year by year he did very much the same things with almost identical movements of arms and legs.
(p.304)

It is against this background of satiety and frustration that Green presents Dick Dupret's ambition to rationalize the factory. Part of his plan is to suspend those workers who cannot keep up production. 'What we want in the place is some go and push', he tells his mother, echoing Bridges, and betraying thereby a similar lack of understanding for the human aspect (p.230). Dick Dupret's character is exposed in the scene where old Tupe stops Dick and Bridges during their excursion round the foundry. When Tupe, appealing for attention and sympathy, wants to tell Bridges how he fell that morning, Dick Dupret is deaf to his needs. Instead, he focuses his attention on a person signalling in the distance, and interrupts old Tupe: 'Mr Bridges I think there's someone wants to see you ... that man behind that thing over there' (p.211). Dick's use of demonstratives, 'that' and 'there' (at the expense of 'this' and 'here') indicates his mental aloofness; and his inability to name 'that thing' (i.e: a machined cylinder) by its proper name is a symptom of his detachment from his immediate surroundings. The fact that Green also stresses each word in that demonstrative clause heightens the active insistence of Dick's utterance, and increases the tension between the close and the long shot. Green's montage technique highlights meanings which might otherwise have escaped the reader as merely minor details in a larger context.

Bridges's attempts to engage Dick's interest in the life of the foundry are futile. On entering the foundry,

Dick fails to notice the grimed men who are kneeling in black sand on the floor. What catches his attention is the fleeting image of a young man passing by: 'What a beautiful face' (p.208). Dick's preoccupation with beauty, however, is merely an abstracted aestheticism devoid of deeper values. His fascination with his girlfriend, Hannah Glossop, is nourished by her good looks. '"It was because, all of it, because she was so beautiful", he repeated to himself, "so beautiful"' (p.245). Montage effectively sharpens the emotional aloofness of the two, and their lack of commitment to the living present. Leaning on his arm, Dick thinks it is because of him that Hannah looks so happy. In fact, she is thinking of somebody else. The dance band is singing:

Your eyes are my eyes
My heart looks through ...

'Oh' she whispered, 'Oh' and he
felt quite transported.

Just then, Mr Dupret in sleep,
died, in sleep.

(pp.287-88)

Green treats ironically the lack of communication between the two superficial lovers. The sudden juxtaposition of Mr Dupret who dies in 'sleep' ('sleep' is emphasized through repetition) reflects their sleep-like illusion. This juxtaposition furthermore ties in with the immediately preceding exposé of Hannah who is so afraid of death. She had cried bitterly when a doctor's chauffeur, a man she barely knew, got caught in a flywheel and was killed. The

image of the turning wheel again symbolizes the mechanical rotation of life towards death. Hannah's, as well as Dick's, sense of futility accounts for their lack of response to the present moment. Instead, they go to London to be 'distracted' from it. As Hannah thinks to herself, 'but for that useless feeling she would not have cried when chauffeur was killed' (p.286). Isolated and bored, Dick resorts to contemplation of a satisfying order severed from the world human beings inhabit. When real human beings interfere with his polished visions, he defies those people. 'How horrible they all were and everyone too for that matter, loathsome the people in buses, worse in trams, of course' (p.247).

Many critics have noted the contrast there is in Living between the busy, down-to-earth lives of the workers and the idleness and boredom of the upper classes. In various contexts, the latter are ironically portrayed through a conflict of planes. Against the picture of 'Craigian and his work mates, toiling towards the end of a hard working day, is set that of Mrs Dupret complaining about the boredom of discussing engagements and how tiring and uncomfortable are trains (p.229). Her lack of involvement with her surroundings is revealed by her pre-occupation with trivialities. When Dick attempts to tell his mother about how he would like to manage the family business and even reveals some little enthusiasm about his plans, she is not listening. Instead, she is

worrying about what has happened to James, the footman, who has been sent upstairs to fetch her handkerchief. The repeated elision of articles in the following passage, combined with its heavy, staccato rhythm, functions as filmic close-ups of cold stone and metal - a reflection of Mrs Dupret's personality (this connection is suggested through association montage).

She pushed button of bell; this was in onyx. She laid hand by it on table and diamonds on her rings glittered together with white metal round onyx button under the electric light. Electric light was like stone. He was cut short by her. He was hurt at it. He kept silence then.
(p.230)

This scene between Dick and Mrs Dupret highlights other aspects than those indicative of a major structural conflict between the idle rich and the workers. The fact that Green emphasizes the way in which Dick is offended by his mother's interruption, indicates conflicts within the Dupret family. Dick's need for self-realization is suggested by the interest he shows for the **management** of the factory. However, what little enthusiasm he expresses about his plans is quenched by the metallic coldness of his mother's preoccupations. The mechanical rituals and routines which determine Mrs Dupret's life petrify vital human needs.

The thematic conflicts in Living extend beyond class barriers. They are revealed mainly in terms of montage, not primarily along the structural dividing

line between the workers and the upper classes. Human needs suffer under the pressure of factory routines and greater productivity. Repression of human needs, however, also takes place in the Craigan and Dupret households under the enforcement of the established order. Mrs Dupret has been dominated all her life by her husband, to such an extent that she has lost all power to influence her own life. Like a train that must follow its predestined track, she can but feel the boredom and monotony of being possessed by security and institutionalized purpose. Only when her husband falls ill and becomes entirely dependent on her care, does Mrs Dupret recover from her emotional lethargy. 'Mrs Dupret though she had never been very fond of him, was now thinking how very fond of him she was' (p.268). Similarly, Dick's freedom to mature and develop is restrained by his father's dominance. As a result, aggression and hate have suppressed what might have been love and understanding. 'Young Mr Dupret sat in their country house picking his nose. "Why", he said in his mind, "why could not the old man die? Of course was gratitude and all that of sons to fathers but, old mummy, why couldn't he die"' (pp.278-79).

The conflict between Dick Dupret and his father cannot be reduced to a mere generational conflict. Edward Stokes finds that Living 'reflects the breakdown of the old paternalistic industrial organization and the

substitution of a system less human and personal'.¹

This may be so, except that Green does not contrast these two systems to suggest improvements in the actual organization of the factory. He reveals his sympathy for the factory workers, but he does not question the necessity of keeping the lathes and wheels going in the way they do. By his montage technique, however, Green brings the conflicts down to the level of personal intercourse. His portrayals centre on the vital human needs that suffer due to some people's lack of understanding and tolerance. The tone of Living is in praise of individuals who defend their human qualities and are guided by an openness before life's possibilities. Lily follows her heart despite attempts to mould her into conformity. As Mrs Eames says, 'what I like about Lily is she's got the spirit to do what's in 'er mind' (p.323). Whereas Lily fervently reaches out to life, Dick Dupret is reduced to an impotent contemplator, driven by his obsession with life's limitations and lack of possibilities for fulfilment.

Green pictures the pathetic figure of Dick Dupret sitting in a garden by the River Thames. Autumn leaves fall into the river, and as the river carries the dead leaves away towards the sea, Dick drifts into sleep.

Sunshine was pale. So drifted into
sleep. Yet came party from Maidenhead

1. Stokes, p.135.

in launch up the river, men and women,
 a silver launch. Laughter came like
 birds from women in it. It came on
 slowly and he opened eyes and it went
 by, this laughter reaching ... back to
 him and then in wide circle launch
 turned leisurely and came back past him
 and he thought why did they turn it
 there. Why did they turn it there he
 thought and then men on launch played
 dance tune from the wireless they had
 on it and it went on down with stream
 till he could see them no more but
 still hear them, then he could not hear
 them any more ...

Still flowed river Thames and still the
 leaves were disturbed, then were loosed,
 and came down on to water and went by
 London where he was going, by there and
 out into the sea.

(pp.281-82)

Green's river scene in Living, says Melchiori, is taken
 from T S Eliot's 'The Waste Land'.¹ The following lines
 are an excerpt from 'The Fire Sermon':

The river's tent is broken: the last fingers
 of leaf
 Clutch and sink into the wet bank. The wind
 Crosses the brown land, unheard. The nymphs
 are departed,
 Sweet Thames, run softly, till I end my song ...
 The river bears no empty bottles, sandwich papers,
 Silk handkerchiefs, cardboard boxes, cigarette
 ends
 Or other testimony of summer nights. The nymphs
 are departed ...
 By the waters of Leman I sat down and wept ...
 Sweet Thames, run softly till I end my song.

Like Green, Eliot makes extensive use of incongruous
 juxtaposed images in order to convey his message. The
 repeated line, 'Sweet Thames, run softly till I end my
 song', alludes to the refrain of Spenser's 'bridal song'

1. Melchiori, p.194.

in 'Prothalamion', a poem of unsurpassed innocence, depicting a wedding party of nymphs on the Thames. In 'The Waste Land', these literary allusions are placed in an inconsonant context producing an atmosphere of vulgarity and desolation. The nymphs have been replaced by rubbish. The Thames itself symbolizes the life of humanity, drifting helplessly towards death and entropy, the sea. The mechanical sound of a gramophone and the image of pleasure barges increase the sense of spiritual cheapness.

The river sweats
Oil and tar
The barges drift
With the turning tide

Melchiori argues that images from 'The Waste Land' also fuse in Green's river scene to form a picture of 'lassitude and emptiness'. This statement needs amplification. In view of Melchiori's definition of symbols (notably, that they are characterized by 'precision of reference and consistency'), one might argue that Eliot's images attain these qualities. Through consistent allusions to an idyllic and innocent past, Eliot informs his river images with a clear referential meaning. The result is the creation of a cultural landscape which the spectator, through ironic detachment, defies altogether. In terms of graphic conflicts in the picture, the main dividing line is between the solitary contemplator on the one hand, and the entire river scene on the other.

It is interesting to see how Green avoids giving his

images a specific intellectual, referential quality, and thereby freely manipulates the lines of conflict in his river scene. Green does not pass value judgment on the scene itself, but instead deprecates Dick's lack of an affirmative response to life. The lonely figure of Dick Dupret is fused with the dead autumn leaves and the floating river as he drifts into sleep, lulled by the flowing river. Even the sunshine fades away and drifts into sleep. A shining silver launch suddenly appears and creates a conflict of masses. Simultaneously, a conflict of graphic directions is produced as the launch is moving against the single direction of the river, thereby placing itself in opposition to the river, the dead leaves, the faded sun, and to Dick Dupret. (It is significant that the barges in Eliot's poem are drifting passively along the river towards the sea.) Laughter from the women creates an audio-visual counterpoint and breaks up a visually depicted stillness. The fact that the laughter is associated with birds strengthens its symbolic value as a substitute for the absent sun. Green also presents a more immutable reality in a picture of the river itself: 'Still flowed river Thames'. It stresses the temporal nature of the intermezzo on the river. The fact that the launch turns in a circle and goes downstream again may suggest the direction of flux, but the launch still does not represent an image of 'lassitude and emptiness'. Green holds the focus on Dick's subjective

experience of the happening, his puzzlement over 'why ... they turn it there', and the gradual fading away of the launch out of his range of vision and hearing. There is finally no opposition of values between the launch on the river and Dick's experience of it; in fact, the interest which Dick takes in this event signals that he would have liked to hold on to it. The main significance of the scene is stressed by the series of montage conflicts. Montage animates the picture, intensifies its sensory immediacy, creating a tension between dynamism and stagnation. It is essentially Dick's detachment from the vividness created by juxtaposed images that produces the irony.

Meaning and fulfilment, Green suggests, can only be created in the process of opposing the downward stream of the 'river' and of imposing oneself positively on life. This is Green's indirect message to the reader as he lets the experience by the river have a regenerative, though short-lived, influence on Dick's reticent personality. He would seek the company of women, he says to himself, 'like on that silver launch' (p.282). And he would bring his mother with him to London; 'Also mother needed rest'. Besides, he would go back to work and not mind all the conflicts; 'he thought was no use in struggling against that one defeat with Bridges' (notably his humiliation at his father's and Bridges's countermand of his order to remove the guard controlling workers at

the lavatories). For a short moment, Dick thinks thoughts that might have resulted in a more fulfilling involvement with life, and with his own human potential for sympathy and tolerance.

Living encourages an affirmative participation in present reality. Failure at this means **letting** life be undermined by the predestined flow of the 'river' towards the 'sea'. Green's ideal entails 'living', from moment to moment, in the flow of one's creative response to natural human impulses. What is more, Green sees hope in the human potential to love and care for other people. Lily makes a mistake when, in her eagerness to commit herself to an ideal love union with Bert Jones, she fails to realize that she is suppressing other vital commitments, such as her love and sense of responsibility for the care of old Craigan. Lily's attachment to home, therefore, is one major reason why her romantic ideals prove an illusion. She cannot escape from her own self, and her own self eventually turns out the stronger and healthier.

Lily's and Bert's abortive runaway trip to Liverpool involves incidents that stress the delusion of the couple. Their elopement is charged with irony through Green's creation of montage conflicts. The following passage depicts the moment before Lily's flight from home:

Lily stood in hat and coat by kitchen window quickly cutting stairs of bread. When she had stack of these by her she reached to tin of beef that was by the

loaf and in stretching she raised head and saw man in garden next theirs digging in his garden. Behind him was line of chimney pots, for next street to theirs in that direction was beneath, hidden by swell of gardens back of their street. This man, then, leant on his spade and was like another chimney pot, dark against dark low clouds in the sky. There pigeon quickly turned rising in spirals, grey, when clock in the church tower struck the quarter and away, away the pigeon fell from this noise in a diagonal from where church was built and that man who leant on his spade. Like hatchets they came towards Lily, down at her till when they were close to window they stopped, each clapped his wings then flew away slowly all of them, to the left. She had drawn back at full height. Then again she looked at that man and he also had been watching the pigeon. He again began to dig but the clock striking had told her she had time yet and she wondered at him digging in that unfruitful earth and that he was out of work and most likely would be for most of the rest of his days. There he was digging land which was worn out.

(p.336)

It is significant that whenever flying pigeons are observed by one of the characters in Living (except in the last scene) they are seen through a window. The window is a favoured technical device used by Green for creating a sense of distance and separation from the observed object. The scene just quoted is like a painting or photo in which 'grey' pigeons and the man in the garden, the chimney pots, and the 'dark low clouds in the sky' are arranged behind one another in the background. Between these elements there is no conflict of depths; to Lily they can hardly be distinguished from one another in their

greyness. The main graphic conflict is thus between Lily in the foreground and the complete depicted scene which constitutes the background. This graphic conflict is filled with dynamic intensity by the quickly circling pigeons and the toll of the church clock (audio-visual counterpoint). When the pigeons suddenly dash towards Lily and turn short but inches from her window, they create a conflict of graphic directions which deepens Lily's withdrawal from the scene she is observing. At the same time, the pigeons draw an imaginary link between the man in the garden and Lily, giving the conflict between them a precise reference.

The main conflict in the scene is linked with basic human values. Both Lily and the man in the garden have been intently watching the sloping flight of the pigeons which, combined with the sound of the church clock, produce some never fully revealed meaning. Green, however, stresses the fact that Lily and the man in the garden interpret the symbolic meaning of the pigeons differently, and that they respond differently to the sight of them. The man, after watching the pigeons' flight, goes on imposing his creative powers on the unfruitful land; Lily only sees the futility of his activity, and becomes even more intent on escape. When viewed in relation to significant contexts of montage and visual imagery in Living (the gardener is obviously Mr Eames), Lily's decision is put into an ironic perspective.

The window image attracts great attention during Lily's and Bert's escapist train journey to Liverpool. When Bert detrains for a moment at Derby station, Lily leans out of the compartment window as if to reach for him. Her act suggests that initially their journey is directed towards oneness and harmony. 'So their heads inclined one to the other, so their breathing fell in one with the other, so they took breath together in one breath' (p.350). Later, however, the window signals a conflict of scales which heightens the sense of confinement within their compartment, and their separation from the outside world. This montage conflict mirrors Lily's increasing scepticism of their undertaking, and her growing self-awareness. 'Now she had drawn back from him'. Bert 'let down the window to let country air in onto air they had brought with them from Birmingham, but Lily asked him to close it' (p.352). When a band of musicians board the train and start playing their instruments in the next carriage, Bert 'opened window to listen better to them and hung head out. "Bert" screamed Miss Gates. She jumped up and pulled at his shoulders ... "a bridge might 'ave come and cut your head off and where would I be then?"' (p.354). Lily's fears show her growing distrust of the distant music (of sunbathed tropical countries) which has for so long tingled in her ears. Her exclamation, 'and where would I be then', echoes Mrs Eames's words to her child, and her fear that someone

might come and steal it away (p.249). Mrs Eames recognizes that some measure of security in life is necessary as a condition for growth. Lily's reorientation signals that love does not exist as a permanent state of being; it must be continuously struggled for.

Even if Lily's abortive escape confirms Craigan's warnings that life has its limitations, Green never questions the rightness of Lily's wilful assertion of her own personality against Craigan's restrictions. This is a crucial point in understanding Living. Craigan should have known Lily well enough to realize that her attachments would bring her home to him. He should have been more tolerant and given her the freedom she needed. Craigan seems to have learnt his lesson by the end of the story; 'his old authority was gone', and he has become more attentive to Lily's needs. 'Mr Craigan mumbled she didn't want to sit moping indoors, nor nobody wanted her to' (pp.369,379). Lily herself, though dejected after her return, does not question the basic rightness of her motives, only her singlemindedness: '"that's what it was", she said, "yes, I 'ad too much heart"' (p.363).

The basic conflict between Craigan's and Lily's attitudes to life is still the central issue at the novel's end. Craigan believes that Lily has learnt the same lesson about life that he has been experiencing for years. '"Nothin' dain't ever come of dreams, I

could 'ave told yer but that wouldn't be of no use, you 'ad to find out of yourselves and so you 'ave", he said' (p.366). If Lily has learnt about life's limitations, she does not allow material necessity to determine the future course of her life. Here lies the difference between Craigan and Lily. 'He thought what had he got out of fifty-seven years' work? Nothing ... He thought what was there now for him? Nothing, nothing. He lay. But Miss Gates was not that way inclined. Everything, so she felt, was beginning for her again' (p.380).

Sitting at window-sill of her grandad's window she overlooked Birmingham and the sky over it. This was filled with pigeon flocks. Thousands of pigeons wavered there in the sky, and that baby's raucous cry would come to her now and again.

(p.377)

This picture resembles the scene that anticipates Lily's flight, where she stands by the window observing the man digging in the garden, below the circling pigeons. Like the toll of the church clock in the previous scene, the audio-visual counterpoint created by the baby's cry, heightens dynamic tension. Here, however, the counterpoint serves to dramatize the strength of Lily's longings, which are unchanged. Tension is also created by the conflict of scales between the kitchen and the sky of Birmingham. This montage technique emphasizes the basic thematic conflict in Living. It expresses Lily's urge towards reconciliation with the world she perceives outside the window. That world does not

represent an objective 'continuum'. The world of Lily's perception - thousands of swarming pigeons in the sky, and the baby's cry - is a metaphorical reflection of Lily's needs. Characters' attribution of metaphorical meaning to different images reflects subjective values. Prior to her escape, Lily, through the kitchen window, only sees the 'unfruitful' picture of the gardener and the circling pigeons. In the final scene, Lily affirms her affinity with Mrs Eames to whom the baby, the pigeons, and the garden signify fruition.

In Living, juxtapositions of incongruous images and scenes stress disparities in the characters' lives. The emotive quality of these contexts are intensified through the visual immediacy of the montage trope. By this technique, tone is not determined by individual symbols; images function as elements in a larger context. This is the reason why Johnson's equation of the predictable pattern of the pigeons' flight and a resolution of conflict in the novel is an inadequate approach. Birds may serve a symbolic function, but just as often they are metaphors for characters' subjective feelings, or they deepen conflicts in the novel through their contrast with the plight of certain characters. Montage enhances vital aspects of different contexts. The image of contradiction heightens the vividness of a scene and the immediacy of perception. For this reason, only a montage approach can fully convey the tone of Living. The tone

of various scenes gains depth in relation to the Eames's world of 'loving'. By his montage technique, Green applauds Lily's natural capacity for 'living'.

Pushing Mrs Eames's baby in the pram at the end of the book, Lily has pigeons fluttering directly above her head, out in the open, for the first time. The image exudes fertility, procreation, and fulfilment. The pigeon fancier is present and puts a grain onto the apron of the pram in front of the baby. 'Soon all were laughing at way this one pigeon, which alone dared to come onto apron dodged the baby which laughed and crowed and grabbed at it' (p.382). Lily stands fascinated at the sight of this one pigeon which, like herself, possesses the spirit to go its own way, and at the sight of Mrs Eames's baby which confidently reaches out for the pigeon. 'Suddenly with loud raucous cry ... she rushed at baby to kiss it' (p.382). Lily's human integrity is as strong as ever. She can still dream, because her longings are unchanged, but she is wiser; fecund tropical settings no longer pull her away from herself. 'She cruised across that well charted ocean towards that land from which birds landed on her decks', but 'that land round which she steamed was every inch of it her own, her case still enchanted her as she kept watch on it' (p.373).

Chapter Three

CAUGHT (1943) and BACK (1946)

Chapter Three

CAUGHT (1943)

Caught is composed of a variety of scenes, shifts in location, juxtapositions of present and past, and shifting points of view. Not all these transitions produce tonal effects and not all may be labelled montage as utilized by Eisenstein, a basic technique for the creation of tone in Caught. Rather, they are often what Eisenstein calls 'parallel montage' (a technique extensively used by the American film director, Griffith), invoked primarily for the purpose of realistic representation. Green's use of 'parallel montage' in Caught may be accounted for by citing Eisenstein's comment on Griffith's achievement: 'His close-ups create atmosphere, outline traits of the characters, alternate in dialogues of the leading characters But Griffith at all times remains on a level of representation and objectivity and nowhere does he try through juxtaposition of shots to shape import and image'.¹ This technique pertains to Green's stated aim in his foreword to Caught: to recreate the London of 1940 and to construct his characters 'on the reality of that time'.

1. Film Form, p.240.

From the point of view of 'representation and objectivity', Green's scenic method serves two purposes. Glimpses into the various characters' private worlds, or flashbacks into a character's past, suggest hopes, fears, ambitions, and experiences that are and have been determinants in the shaping of a character's life. Green also observes these different personalities, shaped by different circumstances, as they are 'caught' in wartime London. At a time of chaotic disruption of conventional standards and ways of life, separation from families, and uncertainty about the future, these characters confront the challenge of filling the empty gaps in their existences. Being 'caught' by the war thus becomes for them the test of coping with life's new exigencies. Green's twofold objective, to suggest the nature of conditioning circumstances and to examine his characters' behaviour in these trials of life, induces a scenic structure.

Albert Pye, a sub-officer in the London fire-brigade, and Richard Roe, an auxiliary, are the two principal characters in Caught. The suggestive meanings of their names (Weatherhead notes that, in combination, they produce 'pyro', the Greek term for fire)¹ indicate analogies in their situations. Both are 'caught' by the impending war, and by the past. Roe, a widower, is nostalgically entrapped in memories of an idealized garden. Pye is neurotically preoccupied with memories involving his

1. A Kingsley Weatherhead, A Reading of Henry Green (Seattle 1961), p.66.

mentally deranged sister. Furthermore, their non-descript names (John Doe and Richard Roe is a term for 'Mr Anybody') link them with the commonalty, suggesting Green's intention to portray a representative reality.

Pye is primarily presented as an unhappy victim of circumstances that are beyond his control. He gradually loses his ability to withstand external as well as internal pressures and finally seeks escape in suicide. Since Green does not really clarify what Pye should have done differently in order to avoid failure, his life does not clearly specify a moral to the reader. However, all the montage conflicts and themes in Caught are in some way directly or indirectly related to Roe's and Pye's lives. For this reason, their stories need close attention. They constitute the essential background which indicates Green's major concerns and so delineates the tone.

Pye's tragedy is bound up with his sister's abduction of Richard's five-year-old son from a London toy shop, for which she is detained in an asylum. Pye finds abhorrent the injustice done to his sister by her imprisonment, and Richard's presence in his brigade becomes a constant reminder of her plight. Pye is also obsessed by the possibility that he may have committed incest with his own sister 'in the blind moonlight' several years ago, and if so may be responsible for her mental derangement. 'Caught' by his past, his command of the present gradually

deteriorates, his ego compulsively subordinated by the haunting shadow of fate. He is ultimately pictured one moonlit night as he prowls the streets 'to try once more to find how much he could recognize by this light in the bright river of the street' (p.162).

Another important aspect of Pye's tragedy is the extent to which his needs are misunderstood and his motives deprecated, a factor which makes him an outsider and a loser. Having been an ordinary fireman, Pye suddenly finds himself promoted to the position of sub-officer without having the qualifications of a leader. Anxious to meet the demands for efficiency from his superiors without sacrificing the favour of his subordinates, Pye fluctuates nervously between authoritarian discipline and effusive paternalism. 'With remarkable tenderness', knowing that it may 'cost him his pension', Pye tells one of the cooks, Mary Howells, that he is willing to cover up her absence for a few days to help her solve family problems, but she misunderstands his intentions and declines his offer. 'Pye was discouraged. He knew now, for the first time, the sense of impotence which goes with authority, the feeling that those he commanded did not care' (p.82). Pye's strong sense of being misunderstood promotes his insecurity and his feeling of inferiority, which in turn causes aggression and so increases his subordinates' resentment and dislike of him. Due to some very bad decisions as a result of

his inadequacy as a leader, Pye also arouses his superiors' disapproval. His most humiliating mistake occurs when the firemen, under his direction, enter a house adjacent to the house where the fire actually is. After that incident, 'Pye was never the same' (p.80). Walking the dark streets alone shortly before his suicide, Pye makes one last gesture that will later be misunderstood. He finds a little boy in the dark, takes him to the Fire station, although visitors are not allowed, feeds him and gives him a bed. Pye justifies himself: 'You could not send him away hungry. After all, there was a war on' (pp.170-71).

Pye's disastrous failure to cope with life is fomented by the atmosphere of disruption prevalent in phoney war London. The mood is one of suspended boredom, of people 'caught' in routine and petty triviality which appears all the more trivial since overshadowed by the urgency and enormity of the war. 'We come here ready ' for at least death', Richard complains, 'and then we get into trouble for not doing under our beds' (p.94). Excitement, romance, and self-abandonment are self-consciously sought by people who become submerged in the desperation of the times. Richard observes the women

hungrily seeking another man, oh they
were sorry for men and they pitied
themselves, for yet another man with
whom they could spend last hours, to
whom they could murmur darling, dar-
ling, darling it will be you always;
the phrase till death do us part being,
for them, the short ride next morning

to a railway station; the active death, for them, to be left alone on a platform; the I-have-given-all-before-we-die, their dying breath.

(p.63)

Pye becomes a victim of the new conditions effected by the war. When Prudence, with whom Pye has had 'nothing but bed in common', soon gets bored, Pye loses more than he had cynically bargained for. 'I realize I owe more than life to you, my dear, all the trouble I've been through these last few weeks, yes more than life' (p.152). Prudence, however, thinks 'this is awful, I shall never manage to get rid of him'. She refuses to see him, 'no, not till she felt quite different about firemen' (pp.151-52).

Despite analogies in their situations, Pye and Roe also serve distinctly different functions in the novel's plot. Richard, partly because of the tragic example of Pye, emerges as a wiser man, and reveals inchoate emotional growth. However, precisely in what way his experiences converge into a new revelation about life Richard can only partially explain. It is only in retrospect one learns that the war has had such a profound effect on him. At the end of the novel, Dy, Richard's sister-in-law, tries to comprehend the story Richard has been telling her:

'I wonder what's the meaning of it all?' she asked.
He felt a flash of anger. It spread.
'I know this', he announced in what, to him, was direct answer, 'you've always

been most unfair to Pye'.
 She was astounded.
 'Pye?' she asked.
 'Yes, to Pye', he said. He
 stopped, turned away from her.
 'That's the tragedy'.

(p.194)

In some obscure way, Richard's new sympathy for Pye is linked with the recognition of his own essential loneliness in comparison to the meaningful experience of belonging to a group of men, fighting together against immense fires. However, Richard's own story fails to convey the real emotional impact of the war. "'I don't know", he said, "only the point about a blitz is this, there's always something you can't describe, and it's not the blitz alone that's true of. Ever since it happened I feel I've been trying to express all sorts of things"'. Dy thinks she understands. "'No", he said, exasperated suddenly, "there's an old fault of yours, you're always trying to explain difficult things prosaically"' (pp.179-80).

The inability of ordinary narrative prose to convey the emotional impact of an experience is the motivation behind Green's extensive use of visual montage in Caught. Green's, and Richard's, desire to explain personal feelings stresses a crucial aspect of Caught: Green's recreation of the London of 1940 is not limited to the objective presentation of a representative atmosphere. Like Coleridge, Green emphasizes the process of authorship as counterpointed to objectivity. Richard's experience

of the blitz is more fabulous than what he can express. Green's attempt to recreate its vivid personal significance thus implies a synthesis between objective details and the artist's projected emotional response.

It is typical of Green's narrative technique that tone is communicated not so much in terms of a character's or narrator's personal account, but is presented directly to the reader by visual devices. It arises in the interaction of juxtaposed scenes and images. Similarly, tonal qualities are not confined to a protagonist's direct experience or point of view (the subjective views of a protagonist are unreliable and may differ from the tone arising from the overall montage structure in the novel), but may be derived from all the different aspects of reality presented in the novel. Montage enhances the affective interchange between text and reader and is thus an appropriate technique for creating tone. It stimulates the reader's active participation in the life of the novel. In accordance with Green's use of montage in Caught, his thematic concerns and the tone of the novel are defined by the consistency with which he stresses certain emotive aspects of selected scenes.

Richard's new sympathy for Pye is awakened by the total atmosphere of wartime London. Consequently, Green wants to evoke the whole situation in scenic glimpses in order to incite the reader's own capacity for understanding.

and sympathy. The nature of basic emotional needs becomes more obvious in the disruptive conditions under which the characters in Caught live. It is precisely the many confrontations between basic human needs and conditions or attitudes obstructing their fulfilment that shape the tone of the novel. 'Human' values are recurrently emphasized by the way in which montage enhances the affective impact of certain scenes. The inhumanity of the war is echoed in the sterility of the local saloon bar, in itself a naked appeal for a human response.

Those who would have a part to play,
 who were to have fires to put out,
 could strike attitudes in this saloon
 bar into which no outside air penetrated,
 so that ferns, hanging stiff in wire
 baskets from false beams, seemed carved
 out of painted iron plate. And the
 stray women, who looked older, with hats
 tilted this way and that, black and brown,
 their lips sealing wax, the skin of their
 faces the stop press, were unnaturally
 quiet, murmuring oh dear to the beer.

'It brings everyone together, there's
 that much to a war', Richard said to
 Chopper.

'It does, Dick', he said.

With great subtlety, Green shifts the focus from the suffocating room and the abandoned women whose only friend is the beer, to Richard's incongruous statement about human companionship.

One of these women spoke.

'When it doesn't put blue water
 between', she said, but Richard did
 not notice. He had begun to eat
 again.

(p.48)

Green's careful juxtaposition of details (similar to the kind of juxtaposition Eisenstein terms 'cross-montage')¹ ironically accentuates Richard's disengagement. At the same time, the nature of the juxtaposition suggests a close connection between lack of sympathy and self-centred preoccupation with private concerns.

In pre-blitz London, while death still seems unreal to the firemen, personal advancement is a stronger motivation than solidarity. Those auxiliaries who can afford it compete to buy the Regulars beer in the hope that it may win them special advantages. 'Those Auxiliaries so inclined, who could not afford to buy the Regulars beer, sought favour in doing more work than the rest'. Piper, the oldest member of the squad, considered a trouble maker with a glib tongue, seeks personal advancement by offering to redecorate District Officer Trant's house, for whom he serves as an informer on his colleagues in the Fire station. Despite his similarity to his egocentric mates, Piper is never admitted as an individual worth respect. For one thing, he cannot afford to bribe the Regulars by buying them beer.

As he came out with the others, and
they were calling to each other,
'Will you have one before you go?'
he left, crying his goodnights, which
were seldom answered. He could not
afford a round. The others, so much
younger, were not sorry to see his
back. Those Firemen Instructors,
more of his age, and who went with
the rest because they were going to be
treated without having to buy a drink
themselves, ignored him as a broken

1. This montage conflict is also defined in the Appendix.

old man. He called, 'Goodnight Mr Jones, good-night Mr Pye, good-night all'. He was forgotten before they turned in to that light, sweet smell of mild and bitter which spread out over the lighted street.
(pp.51-52)

The mood Green creates is one of self-absorbed separation from fellow individuals and a lack of identification with other human beings who share the predicament of being human in a fragmentary world. On the last page of Caught, as Richard seems to be progressing towards a fuller consciousness of life, he is still unable to sympathize with Piper. 'He was a snake that man', is Roe's last comment on Piper. However, Green is anxious to evoke the reader's sympathy and tolerance for the various characters in Caught by providing glimpses from their private worlds. Thus, after Piper has been spurned by the other Firemen, Green focuses on this old soldier, hungry, tramping home to his spartan two-roomed flat only to be thrown out on the street again by Mrs Piper who, 'bitter by nature', refuses to give him supper. Dismayed, but with no anger, Piper must find supper elsewhere. By means of a montage arrangement of visual details, Green asserts the emotive image of Piper as a solitary figure, cared for by no one, and for whom Green therefore tries to awaken the reader's sympathy.

Outside, street lighting, shop displays, electric signs made Piper's heavens dull pink, the houses brown, only their upper floors and gables were shrouded in that half dark which is night over a town in times of peace.

As he went under a street lamp with its yellow pride of light there stood a guardsman, by the coffee stall painted the same colour as his scarlet coat. Many smells were about Piper at this cross roads, from the fishmonger's, closed now, but with a stack of boxes piled outside drenched in kipper, from the local each time someone came in or out of the swing doors fanned a sickly waft outside, from the fish and chip round a corner that, when frying, as now, spread high over this street, and, last of all, boiling water in the urns extruded steam on to the laden air, creating a comfort in which these various smells were marshalled, and so damped down that they could not be lifted on the warmth a little way toward the high, chill, faint stars.

(p.53)

Colour, light, and darkness in this passage are used by Green not primarily for their descriptive value, but mainly as a means of conveying a mood and of generating an emotional response in the reader. Bruce Bassoff attempts to determine the precise symbolic meaning of some colours recurring in Caught. Yellow and red, he suggests, are negative symbols. Yellow seems to be 'associated with a kind of death wish' whereas red is among 'the most disturbing colours in the book' and is 'associated with both war and sex'.¹ Many expressionist artists have based their art on the assumption that particular colours effect certain sensations on the spectator or reader, and Green seems to seek this kind of perceptual result. However, attempts to schematize

1. Bruce Bassoff, Toward Loving: The Poetics of the Novel and the Practice of Henry Green (Columbia, SC 1975), pp.82-83.

Green's use of colour in Caught in accordance with what Bassoff calls 'affective principles' do not disclose the full meaning of Green's narrative. There may be passages in the novel where a particular colour is so intimately connected with definable content that it seems to take on a definite meaning. However, as in the previous novels examined, individual colours in Caught, if they are abstracted from their particular context, do not have independent symbolic meanings. The sun is consistently seen as a vitalizing symbol, but this does not attach a specific meaning to the colour yellow.

For Green, the symbolic implications of certain colours do not act as the sole constituent of meaning, but as components which, only in a wider context, combine to manifest Green's true intent. . Their meaning, as Stokes argues, 'may be compared to a vague resonance, an undertone which gives the description a note of mysterious depth, but defies definition'.¹ In accordance with this idea, sensations and associations produced by specific colours serve to enrich a certain created atmosphere and to magnify the affective impact of a passage. Thus, a conflict of scales determines the basic tone of Green's passage. The image of the coffee stall surrounded by a cone of lamp light against a dark and 'dull' background produces a sense of enclosure, of confinement, enhanced

1. Stokes, p.157.

by the 'laden air' of steam which is 'damped down' under the 'high, chill, faint stars'. In this 'sickly' 'warmth' Piper seeks a little consolation in a cold world, but it is a comfort inadequate to his need. Green's broadening of the perspective increases the magnitude of the scene, placing Piper in a position of cosmic loneliness by the contrast with the void around the 'high, chill, faint stars'; to Green a position capable of inspiring empathy.

In this context, it is difficult to identify a specific independent 'meaning' in the occurrence of the 'yellow pride of light' and the scarlet coffee stall and coat. In a general sense, red is a highly dramatic colour, sometimes alarming colour, often used by Green in connection with war and sex, but it may also be used more generally to amplify any experience of strong affective quality. It is this latter function that red serves in the above passage. The tone of the scene emerges from a series of montage conflicts which together produce a precise meaning. Green's description of how Piper enters the yellow light from a street lamp and then confronts a scarlet coffee stall and a man dressed in a scarlet coat, is intended to express disparity and conflict because, in visual terms, scarlet collides with yellow, creating an uncomfortable tension through the harsh contrast. Furthermore, shop displays and electric signs and lights create a 'dull pink' which merges with

brown houses and a 'shroud' of half-dark surrounding the upper floors and gables, producing a saturated atmosphere of oppressiveness, which then, in a conflict of masses, contrasts with the bright 'yellow pride' of the street lamp and with the scarlet. A strong sense of discord ensues.

Green's technique is essentially representative of montage as defined by Eisenstein. Eisenstein does believe that certain colours elicit specific sensations in a spectator, but that actual meaning is determined by 'those arbitrary relationships within a system of images dictated by the particular work of art'. In other words, combinations of colours and images will achieve greater expressiveness and specificity than individual colours presented independently. In accordance with this idea, Eisenstein suggests, for example, that 'many characteristics we ascribe to the colour yellow derive from its immediate neighbour in the spectrum - 'green'. Furthermore, Eisenstein cites an artist named Allen who describes a certain painting, an example of montage of colours that correlates with the way in which Green has arranged individual colours and combinations of colours in the preceding scene. Eisenstein suggests how a 'terrifying' image is created when the '"fateful" tone' of a combination of dark and dull colours of which yellow is the central one is accentuated through collision with intense red:

the colours are all dark and dull, lightened only in the centre. This centre is a combination of dirty green and yellowed grey, mixed with faded brown; the rest is almost black ...

This yellow scale, melting into dirty greens and a faded brown, is emphasized by contrast with the lower portion of the canvas:

... only below some reddish tones can be seen; muffled and overlaid upon each other, but, more or less aided by thickness and their comparatively great colour intensity, they create a clearly expressed contrast to the rest of the painting.¹

In order to emphasize the issue of cosmic loneliness, Green switches the focus from Piper on to another lonely figure seeking consolation.

Standing up against the counter, and she was so frail in dark clothes she seemed part of the shadow, he saw Mary Howells, the old friend, a char.

(p.53)

Green's portrayal of Mary Howells's plight emphasizes, through montage, another aspect of life that calls for sympathy and understanding. Throughout Caught, this strong concern is opposed by human relations based on superficial, romantic self-gratification. The widow, Mrs Howells, has managed to get a job with the Fire service, thanks to Piper. She enjoys work in the kitchen, is in fact content with her modest lot in life, were it not for her daughter, Brid, who causes her constant worries. Brid, unhappily married, with a baby she

1. The Film Sense, pp.100,120.

barely knows how to take care of, turns up at her mother's one morning, mentally overwrought, having left her husband. Mary Howells, gravely concerned, sets off to Doncaster to speak some sense to Brid's husband. But as she tells Arthur Piper after her return:

'Sometimes I feel me head goin' round and round. For she can't go h'out to work, not in the state she's in. The expense. An' I've got to see about 'er allotment, or whatever they call it in the army these days. She can't do nothin' for 'erself. Some mornin's I'm afraid to leave 'er with the baby. If it wasn't for the neighbours I wouldn't, honest'.

She came to a stop.

'So there you are then', Piper said gloomy.

At that instant, in great haste, on leave, and for only the second time, Richard tumbled into bed with Hilly. The relief he experienced when their bodies met was like the crack, on a snow silent day, of a branch that breaks to fall under a weight of snow, as his hands went like two owls in daylight over the hills, moors, and wooded valleys, over the fat white winter of her body.

'But I told 'im, Arthur, you should've been there to 'ear. I said to 'im, I says', she went on, imagining every word, 'You're no good to no-one, and I got a daughter, I 'ave, 'oo you took, an' when you'd used what you wanted you sent 'er back, I says, more shame to yer, call yerself a man, I said, 'E went white, Arthur, even if 'e didn't say nothink. But I wouldn't spare 'im. Yus, I said, yus, you 'as your pleasure of a gel, and then what, I says, why, you want another dish'.

(pp.116-17)

The conflict of planes produced by the insertion of Richard's and Hilly's love-making, makes this scene basically ironic. Stokes argues that 'His [Richard's]

achievement of identity, his re-integration with life is presented obliquely and unemphatically - through his involvement, against his will, in the life of the station and his affair with Hilly, Pye's driver. ("The relief he experienced when their bodies met was like the crack, on a snow silent day, of a branch that breaks to fall under a weight of snow")'.¹ However, the pleasure Richard, subjectively, finds in the episode does not determine the tone of the scene. This passage is a valuable example of the way in which tone is produced by montage, not on the basis of an independent scene within the montage trope, even if this scene in itself may have positive or negative value to the character or characters involved. Through immediate juxtaposition, Mary Howells's concern and care for Brid and her criticism of sexual self-gratification maintain direct reference to the scene between Richard and Hilly. Richard, it will appear, is at this stage, emotionally insulated from his fellow beings. Later, one finds that 'secretly, and he had not even put it to himself, he was irritated, mainly because she had gone to bed with him. He found it made her of no account' (p.130).

The argument that the tone of the preceding passage is determined by the montage context is supported by other scenes involving Richard and Hilly as well as by

1. Stokes, p.60.

Green's return to the first 'love' scene. In the glimpse Green provides of them immediately preceding this 'love' scene, they are presented together in a night club. When the lights go out for a moment, Richard,

To have what little he that minute
had ... leaned over, in pitch dark,
and kissed Hilly on the mouth. Her
lips' answer, he felt, was of opened
figs, wet at dead of night in a
hothouse.

'Oh darling', he said, low and
false, 'the months I've waited to do
that'.

'Sweet', she said.

(p.111)

After the lady on the stage has finished singing and people are applauding, Richard kisses Hilly once more.

She was empty, she was nothing. It
was such ages since she had felt like
it. She thought she made her mouth
a sort of loving cup. She said to
herself, 'If you go on like this, my
girl, in a minute you'll actually snore'.

(p.112)

Green accentuates the quality of shallowness and deceit in Richard's and Hilly's relationship through conflicts of masses. Richard can only commit himself half-heartedly to Hilly, for he is also interested in having an affair with Prudence who, Hilly tells him, has started seeing Pye.

So Pye saw her every night. He felt
excited and jealous.

At this moment all the lights went
out. A blue lime was turned on,
sizzling, on to the small stage.

(p.111)

The conflict of masses between the audience and the coloured

singer bathed in 'intense blue light' is intended to deepen the sense of disparity between Richard and Hilly in the dark and what is spotlighted on the stage: the lady's song which awakens dreams of love and beauty in the audience that Richard 'could see only as the less dark below her and whose clouded heads, each one, drew nearer to a companion's in this forced communion, this hyacinthine, grape dark fellowship of longing'. The lady becomes a symbol of Truth: 'The music floated her, the beat was even more of all she had to say, the colour became a part, alive and deep, making what they told each other, with her but in silence, simply repeatedly plain, the truth, over and over again' (p.112, emphasis added). Ironically, the two 'lovers' in the dark cannot surrender to the music. To Hilly, 'the stage grew impossibly brilliant. She shut her eyes and settled down, not, as she told herself, for long, to love Dickie' (p.112). In fact, the whole performance is just play-acting with no sincerity. Thus, when the conflict of masses has ceased, the lack of Truth is revealed:

When she had done, and the lights went up, the singer stood revealed as what she was not, a negress with too wide a smile. The same with Hilly. As he looked at her he thought it wild that the touch of the unseen inside of her arm should have been so, and saw her not as she was.

(p.112, emphasis added)

Green immediately draws a close connection between Richard's failure to appreciate Hilly as a human being

and his selfish detachment from all but his own physical needs: 'Richard found it natural to put this next question immediately, and had no pang of jealousy when he asked: "Then has Pye slept with Prudence?"'. When Hilly, in the most natural manner, affirms Richard's assumption, 'he was suddenly sure this must mean that Hilly, who had not yet been asked, would go to bed with him that night' (pp.112-13).

Several scenes, involving new montage arrangements, support the argument that the tone surrounding Hilly's and Richard's relationship is mainly ironic. A parallel scene involving Pye who has taken Prudence to the same night club Richard took Hilly, is immediately juxtaposed with the preceding bed scene, and so imbues the two scenes with similar tonal qualities. Pye

wondered impatiently how soon he could suggest that they should go back to her flat. His small, questioning eyes did not leave what he could see of her face and that darkness, with the deep stains the infrequent lamp shades cast, irritated him, gave him no feeling, as Richard had, of the shared, woman-hunting cause.

(p.118)

Secretly, Pye thinks of Prudence as a 'silky bitch'. Prudence, on her part, is indifferent to Pye, but he makes her think of another man, a war pilot, whom she is 'tolerably miserable about' and who is to be marrying someone else. 'War, she thought, was sex'. Pye feels 'an utter lack of interest that she shared, for bed was all they had, and were not to have much longer, in common'.

A new glimpse of Hilly's and Richard's love-making brings their relation into an ironic perspective through a conflict of planes. Green juxtaposes the couple with Pye who is speaking with 'an utter lack of interest' about Mary Howells's and her daughter's position:

'There's Howells. Her snivelling daughter's got into trouble with her husband, she's gone up north to see him, now we're short of a cook and I'm expected to say nothing. She thinks I'm going to pretend she's still cooking for us. I know that sort. It pays her not to see my position. I daren't do it. Besides I don't know where she is, she might be in Russia for all I know, it was too much trouble on her part to tell'.

'Darling', said Richard, 'I thought it would kill me', while she thought well anyway I never snored or did I, it was such heaven I shan't know unless he tells; or would he have noticed, but it certainly didn't seem as if he could. She said, 'Oh it was worth the candle'.
(pp.119-20)

Pye feels hurt and misunderstood after Mary Howells, doubting his motives, declines his offer to cover up her absence. Disappointed at the way in which he is misunderstood, Pye reacts with indifference and defiance. The counterpointed love scene which pretends a contrasting intimate idyll is in reality a picture of two isolated individuals with unfulfilled needs, who fail to communicate. Self-consciously anxious that she may have snored, Hilly tries to convince herself that their experience together was 'heaven' while anxiously trying to read the thoughts of her detached lover. In this way,

the first scene which through the conflict of planes initially appears negative when contrasted with the contented bodies of Hilly and Richard, actually deepens the emotional hollowness of their relationship. Both scenes are depictions of individuals estranged from their own needs, and unable to understand the needs of their fellow beings.

Once again montage involving Hilly and Richard stresses the disparity between the reality of their lives and basic emotional needs, unfulfilled as a result of their disengagement.

They lay now on a sofa, naked, a pleasant brutal picture by the light of his coal fire from which rose petals showered on them as the flames played, deepening the flush spread over contented bodies. She wiggled over on top, held his dark face and drank it with her eyes. She had never been to Venice. She murmured to herself, 'This man's my gondola'.

Brid at that instant was crying. She missed her Ted, so feckless in everything except when he loved her ... he was everything to her who had had to come back she wouldn't know why exactly, something to do with mum, and of course there was baby.

(p.120)

The picture of the miserable Brid yearning for the lover on whom she depends, is contrasted through a conflict of planes with a deceptively romanticized picture of the two love-makers, a 'pleasant' but 'brutal picture'. Richard's and Hilly's lack of love is suggested and intensified by this stark contrast. Besides, a conflict of masses is created as the romantic flush of light from

the coal fire, showering on their bodies like rose petals, contrasts with Richard's 'dark face'. The montage conflict deepens an underlying thematic conflict. Ironically, when Hilly drinks his dark face with her eyes, she finds not love, but escape. She is transported to Venice; he is her vehicle, her 'gondola'.

Green has again provided an elucidating example of the way in which tone is created by montage and not by single images or symbols. Stokes claims that 'rose and pink are for Green, as they were for Keats and for Meredith, the colours of love'.¹ As an example, Stokes quotes the scene between Hilly and Richard just referred to, with rose petals showering over their bodies. Roses often have connotations of love, but depending on the particular context, this colour or image may be used ironically by Green. This is clearly demonstrated in another example. When Brid, dejected, enters her mother's kitchen after running away from her husband, Mrs Howells, bewildered, astonished,

with shaking fingers, put down the china teapot covered with pink roses her sister, Aggie, had given as a wedding present; which had reflected Brid's conception by that liquid rose flower light of a dying coal fire twenty-one years back; which now witnessed Brid's return, deflowered, but married, and with the fruit, a child.

'If I didn't nearly drop the pot.

Oh me girl ...'

(p.78)

The change of focus from the wretched Brid who has

1. Stokes, p.158.

indifferently put her baby down and stands with her suitcase, 'holding it with both hands in front of her knees', to the teapot covered with pink roses, nearly dropped by Mrs Howells, deepens thematic conflicts through association montage. Despite Green's sympathy for Brid, the sense of disparity inherent in the juxtaposition of pink roses and Brid's present position serves as an ironic comment on the fragility of romantic dreams. The parallel between this scene and the one involving Hilly and Richard is clear. 'Brid's conception by that liquid rose flower light of a dying coal fire', symbolized by the rose-covered teapot, relates to the rose-showered picture of Hilly and Richard 'by the light of his coal fire', a beautiful image which only enhances, by contrast with her thoughts of Richard as a means for escape, the hollowness of their liaison.

On the basis of the preceding montage conflicts, it may be argued that Karl is not quite correct when he says that

In Green's world, sex perhaps seems natural because it is rarely intertwined with the sentimentality of love. In a comic writer, love and sex do not have to go together, although in the tragic author they of course must. Green allows sex when love is not involved, and in so doing he eliminates a great deal of hypocrisy. His naturalness with the sexual relationship is part of his over-all avoidance of the sentimental: people fall into bed because they like each other; they need not love or even feel attached to one another. The irony of this attitude, however, works two ways: first, the

natural processes are triumphant, but, second, the tensions implicit in a love relationship are lost to the novelist.¹

Green is not as casual about sex and human relationships as is suggested by Karl. Throughout his fiction, sexual impulses are seen as natural and vital, because they are the very source of a creative and viable response to life. For Green as for Lawrence, however, sensual and spiritual fulfilment implies a self-expanding communion with the natural flow of 'living'. In his portrayals of the relationship between man and woman, Green repeatedly draws attention to deeper, underlying needs. These may find fulfilment through sex, but just as often, sex only magnifies the lack of contact which may exist between human beings as well as the lack of an affirmative response to 'living' in general. It is lack of emotional fulfilment and of mutual understanding due to the characters' egocentric detachment that is ironically focused in Caught. Green is not a purely comic writer as Karl implies; to suggest that Green seeks to avoid 'the sentimentality of love' is to underrate his acute awareness of the tragic aspect of life. Green's concerns involve the need for full commitment to vital human feelings in a world threatened by disorder and estrangement.

As in Back, the cause of human isolation (that is, to the extent that the individual is responsible for his own

1. Karl, p.194.

isolation and is not primarily a victim of a reality which cannot be amended) lies in man's inability to recognize a palpable reality outside his own private sphere.

Richard's inadequacy in human relationships is mockingly conveyed through association montage in Richard's conversation with a Scandinavian girl, Ilse:

He tried to explain to Ilse. He felt awkward. She was distant. He wished he had been next Prudence, who was deep in with Pye, laughing and sparkling. His old friends had left London. This meeting with a new girl made it necessary to share past experience, to exchange he did not know what. And with any female, it seemed, but this, whose cold country could have given her, so he thought, no such memories as his own.

In white paint over the black, life-sized skeletons had been drawn on the showroom windows.

'Ach', she said, breaking into his laboured description of the library that she had not understood, 'So you remember. You are like my country. Yes, with your skeletons that you have painted'. She meant they did not mind remembering they were to die. He fell for this.

(pp.69-70)

Green's sudden focusing on the 'life-sized' skeletons on the wall, a 'mirror' in which the two strangers may see themselves, is Green's sardonic comment on their lack of interest in and ability to communicate with other human beings. Ilse unwittingly touches the truth which Richard at this stage fails to realize: the fact that 'they were to die'. This, for Green, is the primary impetus for his insistence on love and understanding. The message communicated by this montage arrangement pertains to the overall thematic pattern in Caught and to Richard's final

recognition of Pye as a fellow human being, who dies because he does not find sympathy and understanding.

Richard's lack of warmth is largely the result of 'his ever present loss', his preoccupation with an idealized dead wife, with whose inaccurate memory the living cannot compete. In a conflict of planes, Green stresses the irony of Richard's position as he rejects reality in favour of the romanticized memory of his wife's first visit to his parents' country place.

The roses, when they came to the rose garden, were full out, climbing along brick walls, some, overpowered by their heavy flowers, in obeisance before brick paths, petals loose here and there on the earth but, on each bush and tree of roses, rose after rose after rose of every shade stared like oxen, and came forward to meet them with a sweet, heavy, luxuriant breath.

Sitting as he was on the back step of a heavy unit pump, with a mangy kitten swiping at flies attracted by a cod's head in the gutter at his feet, the nine years that had passed, the position he was now in, all this lifted him as though in a balloon made lighter than air by the scent of roses.

(p.64) '

Again, images of roses are used to enhance the romanticized beauty of Richard's fantasy, its unreal, dreamlike nature expressed by the surreal quality of the entire scene. The brutally realistic glimpse of a cod's head in the gutter, surrounded by flies, surpasses mere objective description. The coarseness of reality is aggravated as a result of Richard's biased outlook. It collides with Richard's dreamworld to produce a grim tone of escapism.

Richard's inability to commit himself to the immediate

reality centred around human beings is more specifically exemplified in the following conflict of planes. Still imagining himself to be with his wife in the garden of his past, he sees that

Roses had come above her bare knees under the fluted skirt she wore, and the swallows flying so low made her, in his recollection, much taller than she had ever been.

Back in his present, he heard a tap of high heels. Looking up, he saw Prudence, dressed in green as of dark olives like to the colour of that cod's head. She smiled, but did not stop. Still under the influence of his memories, he thought how sharp she appeared against the black wall with **AMBULANCE** painted in grey letters three foot high.

(pp.64-65, emphasis added)

Richard's image of Prudence, when compared with the saturated luxuriance of his wife, becomes too unbearably dull and crude, and he lapses back into his dreamworld. In yet another montage conflict, in which the concrete image of Prudence interrupts Richard's absorption in his past, Green incorporates values and ironies that elucidate the central themes of the novel.

Here, as Prudence drifted quickly off, infinitely young, so much the opposite of his heavy serge in the lightness of her dress that he broke violently out swearing, here, where he had seen Prudence lit up from under her frock by a blaze of the mid-day sun directed through her window, and he broke out sweating, he poured with sweat, here again he thought he broke the spell of what had been and, accepting his new life for the first time, he momentarily determined to join in the delights he imagined men and girls were sharing out to each other in the desperation of the times.

(p.65)

In order to make sense of the various qualities of tone inherent in this last scene, it is necessary to bear in mind that montage juxtaposes incongruous aspects of life, thereby testing the validity of contradictory attitudes, but only with reference to the concrete situation presented. Tone basically is a function of the 'camera' angle and is defined by the special sequence of interacting aspects of life that are presented in the specific context. This principle enables Green to give different impressions of the same character depending on the 'camera' angle, context, and the particular values he wants emphasized. Thus, in the preceding passage, Prudence whose attitude to life is repeatedly seen as shallow, appears as an image of vitality. However, that scene does not incorporate any evaluation of Prudence's attitude to life. Prudence appears as a symbol of vitality primarily from the point of view of Richard's life-excluding self-absorption in the memory of his wife. Prudence suddenly penetrates Richard's abstract fantasy world with her youth and freshness, necessitating his commitment to all that can be derived from the palpable present moment. It is in this manner Green stresses the values which represent the truly vital constituents of human existence.

To Richard, Prudence, then, becomes a symbol of vitality, challenging his benumbing submergence in the past. The sight of her in the street immediately evokes another image in Richard's mind: his first meeting with

Prudence, 'lit up from under her frock by a blaze of the midday sun directed through her window'. The scene from Richard's first meeting with Prudence is worth citing for the light it sheds on Green's montage technique, and also for the way in which it provides insight into the relation between technique and vision. Richard is accompanied by Ilse whom he has just met in the street:

She went inside a white room. An acetylene lamp triangle of sunlight cut into the floor. At the apex stood another girl, dark. This light, reflected up the bell of her skirt, made her translucent to the waist. She said, 'Oh a fireman'. He turned his eyes away, burned. He chanced on a rectangular table set back against the wall. It had a black glass top on which, in a scarlet bowl, was a cactus, painted white.

At once he noted that he had passed a glass tank in the lobby, filled with cut daffodils. This made him uneasy.

(p.50, emphasis added)

A sterile and lifeless atmosphere is created in the room by the starkly contrasting pattern of white and black. Sunlight, used throughout Green's fiction as a life-giving symbol, lights up Prudence's skirt with a vitality Richard finds hard to confront. He turns away, and escapes to a table by the wall. Significantly, Richard's withdrawal from the sun, and from Prudence, assumes an ironic tone expressed in visual conflicts of colours and forms. The table to which he turns has a 'black glass top', and on it, a 'cactus, painted white'; the 'scarlet bowl' not only enhances the stark, sterile contrast between those two colours but collides with them by its

alarming intensity. Furthermore, turning away from the 'triangle of sunlight', directly associated with the 'bell' of her skirt, he retreats to a 'rectangular' table, the asymmetry of the two forms accentuating the conflict of values caused by his reaction.¹ Richard's uneasiness in the moment of withdrawal at the thought of the daffodils he has just passed in the lobby further suggests the irony of his attitude. The connection between Richard's withdrawal from the sun and his discomfort, for the same reason, at the thought of the daffodils forms a dissonant link with the impression of nurturing life surrounding Mrs Eames's act of placing her flowers so that they turn their faces to the sun (Living, p.232).

Back in his present, filled with his vivid associations of Prudence, Richard decides 'again' to emerge from the influence of his past and accept his present life. Green, however, informs the reader of the delusion of Richard's determination by noting that it is not the first time he makes this decision. Furthermore, Richard's orientation towards new values, Green suggests,

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1. Hans Kreidler & Shulamidit Kreidler, Psychology of the Arts (Durham, NC 1972), pp.94-101. Kreidler & Kreidler have studied the ways in which modern abstract painters create tension or conflict by juxtaposition of 'two or more dissimilar forms'. They discuss how triangles in different positions may in themselves be tension-laden. For example, 'A triangle with its apex down is experienced as less stable than a triangle with its apex up'. The image of Prudence standing at the apex of a vibrant triangle is likely to produce formal tension. On the other hand, a square or rectangle is a 'good gestalt'. Seen from the point of view of abstract art, Richard's withdrawal from the vibrant triangle towards a static rectangular form may suggest, ironically, his attempted escape from what disturbs the stasis of his dream-world.

implies no real recovery from his self-centredness.

Green points out that Richard now wants to take part in the joys he 'imagines' men and women are desperately 'sharing out to each other'. In the harsh reality Green creates, there is no 'sharing'. Richard's misguided efforts to commit himself to 'his new life' are exposed in a couple of montage conflicts following his new decision. The first indication of the shallowness of the life-style to which Richard now consciously aspires, occurs at the party for firemen and girls.

Prudence is cheerfully flirting with the firemen. 'Pye was laughing gargantually into her face. His sly pig's eyes assessed his chances' (p.71). In this callous atmosphere, Richard, talking to Hilly, thinks to himself that he has discovered her as a human being:

He felt he regarded her now as a real person, not just the girl for a drink when the evening's training was done. By this time both of them had had a few drinks. Then another crash of laughter dragged his eyes away.

Prudence was being a success. She liked firemen ... She felt firemen must be very brave, but particularly the professionals, which was where Pye had the advantage. They had those funny hats.
(p.73)

Green stresses his great concern with the need for love and understanding between people by repeatedly devoting scenes towards the elaboration of this theme. Richard's misconception that he now recognizes Hilly as a real human being, 'not just the girl for a drink', is immediately undercut by Green's comment that they by this time

'had had a few drinks'. The audio-visual counterpoint produced by a crash of laughter from Prudence and a group of firemen interrupts Richard's thoughts, thereby heightening the irony of his position. By focusing on Prudence whose admiration for professional firemen revolves around their 'funny hats', Green highlights Prudence's ridiculous superficiality and, furthermore, suggests a lack of sincerity common to them all.

Another scene involving audio-visual counterpoint reveals equally clearly the stress Green places on the inequality between the need for sympathy and understanding and people's (e.g. Prudence's) mindlessness. Richard is thinking how little appreciation these girls show for the seriousness of the auxiliaries' situation. 'At first he supposed they took this line to still his fears. But whenever he bothered to be honest he had to admit they were a long way from paying attention to what might be his final bit of trouble'. Ilse (who is invariably portrayed as a resigned, joyless character, is by no means a moral spokesman, but is in accordance with the pattern of Green's montage technique, someone whose function acquires definition in juxtaposition with other elements) who seems to be the only person concerned with the precariousness of their position, implores Richard not to be so mindless about life:

'Prudence, she is English like you, she does not agree with me, she thinks all this is good fun and I ...'

What she went on to say was cut off from him by a roar of laughter.

(p.71)

Prudence is glimpsed erupting with laughter among thirty pairs of conspiring eyes. The estranged artificiality Green detects in the attitudes of the 'party goers' ironically refers directly back to Richard's thoughts about the girls' casual indifference towards his true feelings. However, Richard himself does not care to listen to Ilse's private worries, just as little as she really cares about his: 'he was so bored with Ilse he was almost rude to her. She did not notice' (p.74).

Man's essential isolation is the central issue Green tries to explore in Caught. To highlight individuals' separation from each other and to reveal their deeper, unrealized needs is the main function of this party. Just prior to its commencement, 'Richard stood lonely by the door to bring both girls in when they arrived, they were so very late, under the high brilliant stars, he wondered if they would ever come' (pp.67-68, emphasis added). The conflict of scales accentuates Richard's isolation and his need for contact. Adopting the point of view of the detached observer, Green includes all the 'party goers' in an atmosphere of isolation. As in a modern play, Green confines a group of people in one room for close scrutiny in order to disclose the truth about them. Green's picture is oppressive. The room in which they are gathered, overheated and completely without ventilation, has its windows

coated with black paint ... The room was painted yellow orange. The floor was

done out with flags of artificial stone which, whatever the scrubbing, gave off a thick grey dust. All, as they sat in this bare room, had purple shadows hacked out beneath their eyebrows, chins and noses by the naked, hot spotlights in the orange ceiling.

(p.69)

Rigid, unyielding colours combine with the 'naked, hot spotlights' and stuffy air to create an atmosphere of conflict and of menacing barrenness and separateness. It is a scene where self-seeking individuals do not seem to comprehend the extent of their own isolation and are therefore precluded from extending fellow feeling to one another. Only active participation in the inhumanity of the war will alleviate this condition, and the confrontation with war becomes the significant turning point in Caught.

Only in retrospect, when the threat has passed and Richard, with his sister-in-law, is walking peacefully in his parents' garden, far away from London, does he try to convey the profound significance of his experience in the night raids. In response to Dy's queries about Hilly, Richard, with a shrug, minimizes the significance of their relationship. "'Hilly? She's about still. Yes", he went on rather fast, "the great idea is to be on your own"' (p.176). It is his profound recognition of human community that Richard now feels has made him a new person. He explains to Dy: 'In some fantastic way I'm sure you only get in war, we were suddenly alone and

forced to rely on one another entirely. And that after twelve months' bickering. Each crew was thrown upon itself, on its own resources. The only thing to do was to keep together' (pp.182-83). To Richard, the experience of the blitz becomes 'almost like an explanation of the whole of our life in the war, waiting in the substation for just this. I do so want you to get the whole thing' (p.180). Richard attempts to recount, but the vividness of it all fails to be transmitted. Significantly, Richard's compelling experience of the dynamic beauty that life contains has been as important as the discovery of his own isolation and his new sense of the value of solidarity. Green, as author, tries to communicate the emotive quality of Richard's experience through visualization. Richard begins:

'The first night', he said, 'we were ordered to the docks. As we came over Westminster Bridge it was fantastic, the whole of the left side of London seemed to be alight'.

(It had not been like that at all. As they went, not hurrying, but steadily towards the river, the sky in that quarter, which happened to be the east, beginning at the bottom of the streets until it spread over the nearest houses, was flooded in a second sunset, orange and rose, turning the pavement pink. Civilians hastened by twos or threes, hushed below the stupendous pall of defeat until, in the business quarter, the streets were deserted.)

(These firemen at last drove out on to the bridge. Here two men and a girl, like grey cartridge paper under this light which stretched with the spread of a fan up the vertical sky, were creeping off, drunkenly, defiantly singing.)

(p.176)

Green intrudes to animate Richard's visual impressions which have already been readjusted in his mind and become memory, into an inaccurate account of his real experience. This intrusion does not serve as an explanation of Richard's ordeal, but as a dramatization of his true experience. The meaning Green wishes to communicate is deepened by the conflict of perspectives. It is a meaning that cannot be defined, because it deviates from an authentic transcription of actuality. The significance of the author's depiction is contained in its striking vividness, in contrast to Richard's more one-dimensional recollections. Dy, like Green, is aware that Richard's memory has altered reality into something abstract: 'there was nothing in what he had spoken to catch her imagination'. It is eventually a metaphor that does catch Dy's attention: Richard describes their taxi as 'a pink beetle drawing a pepper corn', a picture to which Dy responds 'because she thought it vivid'. She wonders, 'the real thing ... the real thing is the picture you carry in your eye afterwards, surely? It can't be what you can't remember, can it' (p.179). The image of the beetle is important in that it surpasses a conventional, 'prosaic' apprehension of reality. Similarly, Green's re-creation of the scene Richard describes as 'fantastic', attains a poetic vividness and intensity that exceeds the function of prose. Green seeks to give this world of disintegration a fabulous, poetic quality

rather than describe or explain that reality. The composition of vivid colours, 'a second sunset', attains a poetic dynamism of its own, a projection of an artistic sensibility that perceives Life despite a pall of destruction. This reading is elucidated by Green's statement in Pack My Bag: 'there must be a threat to one's skin to wake what is left of things remembered into things to die with'; vivid images we should 'take with us like a bar of gold' (p.54). Green's striking re-creation of Richard's actual perceptions is motivated by his conviction of the necessity of constant commitment to the poetic visual moment. As Green says in Pack My Bag, 'the crime is to forget'. Vividness belonging to the past cannot effect vital experience.

On a prosaic level, Green's visualization of the war scene creates difficulties in interpretation. The scene cannot be explained in terms of colours and their possible symbolic meanings. There seems to be no justification for defining, as does Bassoff, pink as an invariably negative colour 'associated with both war and sex'. Bassoff mentions that 'the reflected light on the sidewalks, which transforms London during the bombardment, is pink', thereby suggesting that pink is primarily used for creating a threatening atmosphere of war.¹ Nor can the scene be explained by strictly defining rose and

1. Bassoff, p.82.

pink as 'the colours of love', as does Stokes. Still, this latter interpretation comes closer to the intent behind Green's utilization of these colours. Pink, rose, and orange, in this context, are vigorous, sparkling colours as opposed to grey or black. From this point of view, the blitz scene may be approached to advantage in terms of montage, notably as a conflict of masses. An examination of several related scenes will support such an approach.

In the scene depicting Richard's first night as a fireman, the vibrant orange, rose, and pink as from a 'second sunset' contrast with three lonely drunken figures, grey like 'cartridge paper under this light' surrounded by 'deserted' streets. In purely visual terms, it is a stark contrast between vivacity and 'death'. Significantly, it is the sudden recognition of this close competition between 'living' and death that brings about Richard's change of heart, and which shapes the thematic structure of Caught.

A previously presented scene (the only eye witnessed war scene included before Richard's retrospection) provides insight into the real significance of Green's use of colour. The montage structure is employed again as a means towards achieving the same goal, but through a different process. What is important to Green is the optimal evocation of the parallel existence of Life and Death, each achieving the greatest impact when portrayed

side by side so that the antithesis is emphasized through the contrast. In the previous scene, the contrast between the colours has the same effect as a different kind of montage, the conflict of masses apparent in the following passage.

He found the driver had brought them to a statue, which still looked blindly on, in the centre of a London square ... Two thirty-foot high sprays or fans of flame lit the face of ornate hotel buildings, or what may have been the east and west sides of a vast block of flats ... and illuminated them so well that, at the distance, he was able to pick out details of brickwork and stone facings more easily, and in colours more natural, than would have been possible on a spring morning, in early sunlight.

Against this livid incandescence stood the old war horse, pitch black, his bronze rider up, pitch black, both, as always, facing south.

(p.95, emphasis added)

The play of flames, illuminating buildings as if 'on a spring morning, in early sunlight' (a regenerative image) opposes the 'pitch black' war horse, 'old' and 'blind'. Green seems intensely alert to the poetic quality of this antithesis, to the image of Life despite death. In terms of montage, the bright light accentuates the blackness of the horse, its 'blind' age, its isolation where it is situated 'as always, facing south', setting the mood of static loneliness and death and, furthermore, establishing a close thematic link with the central theme of the immediately succeeding scenes, reflecting Richard's own isolation.

Lighting his torch, Richard at once hears 'a cry

that was lost, "Put it out, put that light out" (p.96, emphasis added). Richard is left in dark isolation by 'the bronze horse, black on one flank, rose coloured on the other towards the now spreading fire'. Again, as the vivid rose colour collides with the pitch black, thereby increasing its intensity, it heightens the sense of Richard's loneliness. Green immediately clarifies the connection with the preceding excerpt by demonstrating that his concern lies with human loneliness. When Richard turns away from the black horse to seek shelter, he finds that there is no 'escape':

in the near corner a girl stood between a soldier's legs. He had been kissing her mouth, so that it was now a blotch of red ... Man and girl were motionless, forgotten, as though they had been drugged in order to forget, as though he had turned over a stone and climbed down stairs revealed in the echoing desert, these two were so alone.

(pp.96-97, emphasis added)

The sight of this couple, lonely and motionless like the war horse, arouses associations of death in Richard's mind. He thinks of Pye who has committed suicide, who has taken cover 'willy nilly, in his coffin, eaten by worms six foot underground'. Richard's thoughts are interrupted:

At that moment two ambulance men carried a stretcher up. They laid it down. The twisted creature under a blanket coughed a last gushing, gout of blood.

Two police brought past a looter, most of his clothes torn off, heels dragging, drooling blood at the mouth, out on his feet from the bashing he had been given.

Then, alone, carrying a music case, handkerchief to her mouth, her thin body made angular in the glare, sharp as a saw, an old lady came slowly by, on her own, looking to the ground, ignoring it all.

And then that soldier tottered out. He was drunk.

(pp.97-98)

Confronting the ultimate existential void, there is only one solution for Richard: participation in Life. In the same way that Green has used light and vivid colours in montage conflicts as contrasts in order to heighten a sense of human isolation, and of death, he also juxtaposes these darker aspects of reality with the most vivid play of colours to intensify the vital essence of Life. Green re-creates Richard's experience that first night:

(The firemen saw each other's faces. They saw the water below a dirty yellow towards the fire; the wharves on that far side low and black, those on the bank they were leaving a pretty rose. They saw the whole fury of that conflagration in which they had to play a part. They sat very still, beneath the immensity. For, against it, warehouses, small towers, puny steeples seemed alive with sparks from the mile high pandemonium of flame reflected in the quaking sky. This fan, a roaring red gold, pulsed rose at the outside edge, the perimeter round which the heavens, set with stars before fading into utter blackness, were for a space a trembling green.)

(pp.176-77, emphasis added)

Richard can only recollect the immensity of the flames' destructive power, 'like a huge wood fire on a flat hearth, only a thousand times bigger' (p.180). Green's

correction heightens the poetic quality of the scene; the roaring fire is transformed in Green's imagination into 'red gold', a correlative of Green's vital image, in Pack My Bag, of 'a bar of gold'. The reality he presents is filled with vividly interacting details of visual beauty. Green creates a vibrant moment of vivacity counterpointing the darker aspects of death. A 'pretty rose' together with 'a roaring gold' and a 'trembling green' over towers and steeples that 'seemed alive with sparks' under a 'quaking sky' 'set with stars', play against the 'low and black' wharves before 'fading into utter blackness'. No colour symbolism can explain the meaning of this scene; it is not a representation of actuality, but an impassioned artistic vision. The vivid mosaic of colours evokes Life in all its immediacy as a counterpoint to the dark undertones of physical as well as spiritual death. Green can imagine joy in the destructive fires: blazing flames and a glow of 'rose' that 'toyed joyfully' with 'black stacks' of timber in the 'pink of that night' (p.180). It is the commitment to Life, in all its perceivable immediacy, that Green finally offers to the reader, before it 'fades' into 'utter blackness'.

Green's vision of life in Caught may be further illuminated by the close similarity of the preceding scene with one from Joseph Conrad's Youth. The young Marlow and the crew on board the barque 'Judea' are

fighting desperately to keep the doomed ship afloat.

Marlow reports:

It was our fate to pump in that ship, to pump out of her, to pump into her; and after keeping water out of her to save ourselves from being drowned, we frantically poured water into her to save ourselves from being burnt.

And she crawled on, do or die, in the serene weather. The sky was a miracle of purity, a miracle of azure. The sea was polished, was blue, was pellucid, was sparkling like a precious stone, extending on all sides, all round to the horizon - as if the whole terrestrial globe had been one jewel, one colossal sapphire, a single gem fashioned into a planet. And on the lustre of the great calm waters the Judea glided imperceptibly, enveloped in languid and unclean vapours, in a lazy cloud that drifted to leeward, light and slow; a pestiferous cloud defiling the splendour of sea and sky.

Like Richard Roe in his moment of revelation, Marlow's exhilaration at the beauty and vitality of sea and sky makes him insusceptible to the destructive force of the fire. By their contrast rather, the 'pestiferous cloud' enhances the splendour of the 'terrestrial jewel'. Richard embraces Life when confronted with undeniable destructiveness and loneliness; Marlow rejoices in the vitality of youth, acutely aware of the surrounding dark forces and that Life can only continue as long as man continually recreates for himself the living present moment.

Oh, the glamour of youth! Oh, the fire of it, more dazzling than the flames of the burning ship, throwing a magic light on the wide earth, leaping audaciously to the sky, presently to be quenched by time, more cruel, more pitiless, more bitter than the sea - and like the flames of the burning ship surrounded by an impenetrable night.¹

1. Joseph Conrad, Youth: A Narrative (London 1967), pp.20,30.

As for Richard, Marlow's active participation in the fire-fighting becomes 'the endeavour, the test, the trial of life' on a voyage towards self-discovery. Significantly, in recounting the ordeals of their protagonists, both Conrad and Green are trying to isolate the essence of this vital response to the test of life. Marlow wonders at the crew's courage after the explosion. They 'had in them the right stuff', given to them, he thinks, by the vastness of the sea, 'the loneliness surrounding their dark stolid souls'.¹ Green's critical scrutiny of the group 'caught' by the war ends with a sign of faith in the human potential. The firemen, faced with destruction, experience the value of co-operation. The bravest of them is Shiner Wright. Richard remembers him attacking the fire, 'right up in it, mouth wide open, snarling, drooling at the flames'. '(He had said, "Hi, cock. Boy, am I enjoying this")' (p.185). Richard also looks strengthened. Dy 'decided his face was thinner,' while his neck had thickened. His shoulders were broader' (p.179).

Tantamount to the men's positive assertiveness when threatened by the war's destruction, is Green's underlying awareness of his characters' capacity for sympathy and understanding. Pye reveals his benevolent tendencies on several occasions. Superintendent Dodge, Green's chief personification of officialdom, shows unexpected tolerance

1. Joseph Conrad, Youth, p.25.

when Mary Howells, threatened with dismissal for having run away from work, appeals to him as a human being. At one point, Richard seems close to breaking through his self-constructed emotional barricades to a more fulfilling assertiveness. There is 'beginning warmth', perhaps potential love:

As with the return of summer, a beginning warmth ran in their limbs where they lay together, on leave, in naked bed. Richard fetched a great sigh. What he had now, and had only held before when drunk, was so much to his contentment that he wanted nothing more.
(p.118)

In the final analysis, Green does not condemn his characters for lacking the actual potential to demonstrate benignity. Their problem is that they are 'caught' in some way, their vital feelings restrained by outer and inner circumstances. Accordingly, Green never presents his characters as completely cynical and superficial, but always probes, often ironically, their deeper, unfulfilled needs and longings. These yearnings ultimately reflect what is human in man, which can only be released by confrontation with a palpable reality.

Most of the characters in Caught act with misdirected responses to their natural instincts. 'It was danger Prudence sought in this lull of living, before the enemy went into Norway', Green remarks (p.122). Prudence haphazardly seeks the same kind of 'joy' that Richard eventually discovers during the blitz. Hilly is convinced that 'this war's been a tremendous release for most', but Green

discloses how his characters, in reality, become more 'caught' in their desperate efforts to really live (p.99). What finally binds all the characters together is Green's conviction that humans share a common fund of basic needs and longings, a common potential. The central themes of Caught (i.e. Green's insistence on the value of 'living' and his underlying faith in the potential for vitality of his characters) converge in the affinity of perception revealed by Richard and his son, Christopher. The nature of Richard's revitalization clearly corresponds with Christopher's liveliness demonstrated at the beginning of the novel, a parallel which strongly suggests common, healthy instincts. Christopher's natural sprightliness, unthwarted by the forces of socialization or by the stasis caused by too much introspection, reflects Richard's younger self. 'Christopher was like any other child of his age, not very interested or interesting, strident with health. He enjoyed teasing and was careful no-one should know what he felt' (p.5). Christopher's youthfulness springs from the same fervent need for 'living' that is Richard's underlying inducement for joining the Auxiliary Fire Service. Significantly, it is Christopher's perceptual sensitivity Richard regains in the fire scenes. It becomes a vital stimulus in the development of Richard's more reflective consciousness. Passing by the shop where his son had been abducted, Richard is struck by the toy display which had so mesmerized Christopher:

Fire engines attracted the father, but deer, then sailboats, had bewitched the son. For both it was the deep colour spilled over these objects that, by evoking memories they would not name, and which they could not place, held them, and then led both to a loch-deep unconsciousness of all else.

The joyful play of colours in the shop window as well as in the fire scenes reflects Christopher's and Richard's acute artistic sensibilities. It does not contain an objective symbolic meaning. Rather, it represents a reality created by the subjective consciousnesses of the spectators. The toy display functions as a piece of art. Green accounts for this artistic process: 'The function ... of a good painting or piece of sculpture is to appeal by or through the eye to the memory of things seen. This does not mean to say that the appeal is by any means to the ideal, but the result is probably to carry the viewer's ability to see, which is after all appreciation, to a new reality beyond his experience, thereby creating something which, however abstract, has a life of its own'.¹

The body of the shop was inundated with colour, brimming, and this colour, as the sea was a predominant part of each window, was a permanence of sapphire in shopping hours. Pink neon lights and the high ceiling wore down this blue to some extent, made customers' faces less aggressively steeped in the body of the store, but enhanced, or deepened that fire brigade scarlet to carmine, and, in so doing, drugged Richard's consciousness.

(pp.12-13, emphasis added)

This evocative visualization differs from the surreal,

1. 'The English Novel of the Future', p.21.

dreamlike quality inherent in the descriptions of Richard's withdrawal to a consoling past. Green again provides an example that discounts Bassoff's limiting identification of pink and of red (the colour of 'women's nails as well as toy fire engines') as sinister, disturbing colours which, in combination with other sinister hues, are intended to create a corresponding atmosphere. It is for this purpose, Bassoff suggests, that 'inside the store where Christopher is kidnapped by Pye's frustrated sister, neon lights shed a pink glow that mixes with the other colour tones'.¹ There is no evidence for arguing that this is simply a threatening scene. Rather, its dramatic intensity is a mystical projection of the spectator's 'losh-deep' subconsciousness. As Green says, the appeal is not principally to the 'ideal', but to man's natural need for sensuous exploration, 'which is after all appreciation'.

The meaning of Green's narrative technique is much richer than Bassoff seems to realize. Bassoff's interpretation, that the entire scene expresses a mood of foreboding, bears no meaningful relation to Green's central thematic concerns in Caught. Pye's sister may be seen as a threat to Christopher's security, but like Pye, she is primarily an unhappy victim of circumstances beyond her control. For this reason, her abduction of Christopher, or the threat she may represent to him, do not influence the novel's tone. To cite Eisenstein's description of Griffith's

1. Bassoff, p.82.

technique, Bassoff's interpretation pertains to Green's creation of 'atmosphere', to 'a level of representation and objectivity'; it does not attempt to 'shape import and image'. Considering the emphasis Green places on the play of colours in the shop window as well as in the thematically related fire scenes, it is clear that these passages have a more profound significance than what merely derives from their 'atmosphere'.

The dynamism of colours reflects Richard's and Christopher's innermost needs and their spontaneous enjoyment of the toys' vividness. The tone of the scene does not derive from the colours' symbolic meanings, but from their purely visual qualities. The scene may be more fruitfully approached in terms of a montage conflict of colours in which 'pink neon lights' impinge on the sapphire blue only to 'enhance' and 'deepen' the effect of that 'fire brigade scarlet' to which Richard is most attracted. The intensification of a scene's visual impact due to the juxtaposition of two or more colours, or of different intensities of light, represents precisely the central principle of montage. Green, in the preceding scene, employs montage in order to heighten the evocative kinesis that penetrates Richard's senses. In addition, the effect of Green's technique surpasses the merely descriptive creation of atmosphere by highlighting Green's central concern with the need for full 'living'. Richard, inspired by his vision, empathizes with his son's

needs, no different from his own: '"I want, I want"'. He said to himself, it is not for us to measure the dark cupidity, the need'. Prosaic explanations cannot account for 'the spell which held his [Christopher's] eyes. Words were no means of communication now' (p.14). Just as Richard, after the fire raids, fails in his attempts to convey the vividness of his revelation, so here can Christopher's exhilaration only be transmitted through the natural vigour of prismatic colours. From this point of view, the use of pink or of red, in this context (acknowledging that the same colours do not have a defined meaning and that they may serve different functions in other contexts) reflects their natural 'cupidity'. The following scene stresses not only Christopher's longings, but those of 'Pye's frustrated sister', thus suggesting the common source of their personalities:

He [Christopher] became dazzled by the pink neon lights beyond her features. Caught in another patch of colour, some of her chin was pillar-box red, also a part of the silver fox she wore ... when, to make him do as she wanted, she caught full at him with her eyes that, by the ocean in which they were steeped, were so much a part of the world his need had made, and so much more a part of it by being alive, then he felt anything must be natural.
(p.14, emphasis added)

Green's characteristic focusing on the nature of his characters' needs prevents Christopher's and Richard's respective perception of the toy display and of the colourful

fire scenes from producing a mere aesthetic effect.

Green, unlike Joyce, does not seek an abstract aesthetic pattern which, says Stephen Dedalus, 'awakens, or ought to awaken, or induces, or ought to induce, an aesthetic stasis, an ideal pity or an ideal terror, a stasis called forth, prolonged, and at last dissolved by what I call the rhythm of beauty'.¹ To Green, beauty does not lie in an abstract, patterned harmony inducing stasis, but in a natural, living dynamism which counteracts pattern. Dedalus argues that 'Beauty expressed by the artist cannot awaken in us an emotion which is kinetic or a sensation which is purely physical'. However, it is precisely such a response to beauty Green seeks, for Green designates beauty, not as an object for aesthetic contemplation, but as a kinetic projection of vigorous, human needs. In this way, Green's evocation of beauty and vitality does not abstract itself from the plane of human suffering and imperfection. With the aid of montage, Green integrates these aspects of life into a vision based on sympathetic communion with things 'living'.

Richard's revelation of the firefighting scenes, as 'almost like an explanation of the whole of our life in the war', has certain affinities with Lily Briscoe's epiphanic vision in To the Lighthouse, but differs in its essential dynamically inspired quality. Lily Briscoe's completion of her painting is prompted by a sudden

1. James Joyce, A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man (London 1950), p.234.

compassion for mankind, based on her intuitive recognition of man's loneliness, 'the truth about things'. Lily shares old Mr Carmichael's thoughts: 'He stood there spreading his hands over all the weakness and suffering of mankind; she thought he was surveying, tolerantly, compassionately, their final destiny'. Filled with renewed inspiration, she turns to her canvas: 'There it was - her picture. Yes, with all its green and blues, its lines running up and across'.¹ Like Lily's, Green's artistic vision arises from his intuitive, sympathetic appraisal of life and humanity. Lily's canvas of variegated colours and crossing lines reflects the amorphous nature of life. When Lily adds the final stroke, however, a line in the centre which unites the elements, she reveals her underlying allegiance to a static, contemplated order. Virginia Woolf's vision is essentially tragic, an artistic ordering of her characters' subjective realities for the purpose of counteracting flux; an artistic order based on compassion and understanding for individuals because they share the same tragic destiny. Green's vision, however, surpasses tragedy and evolves into a comic affirmation of reality by advocating community with the essence of 'living'. Commitment to living brings hope of reintegration through human sympathies.

Green's appeal for humanism extends to criticism of

1. Virginia Woolf, To the Lighthouse (London 1927), pp.311,319-20.

certain attitudes conditioned by an institutionalized society. In a dream, Pye sees himself going to visit his sister in hospital. He is refused the opportunity to speak to her in private by 'dry, striped men' inside a hall of bars.

Then, from above, he heard her cry low, 'Bert'. Looking up, he could see Amy on the third floor of the cage, hanging to bars like they do in pictures, dressed all in yellow ... 'Amy', he called, 'but we can't speak like this'. 'Excuse me', he said to the one expressionless man who now remained, 'we can't speak like this, in public, shouting top and bottom to each other. This lady's my sister'. 'Them's the regulations, Mr Pye'. 'But man, it's not human'. 'Sorry, there it is'. 'But, by God, this ain't right'. 'You know what they are, you're in a service, Mr Pye, an' they won't have it'.

(p.85)

No doubt the impersonal treatment Pye receives from officials is one of the factors that contribute to his victimization. Pye is convinced that 'any system that can send an unfortunate woman into what is jail really, is vile, a filthy system'. As Pye tells Richard, 'they told me I must sign her away like a bit of furniture or they would prosecute' (p.38). In light of Green's great concern with the nature of his characters' private needs and yearnings, Pye's discontent signals criticisms shared by the author. Still, there is hardly justification for Russell's categorical claim that Richard's expressed support of Pye at the novel's end is equivalent to 'indicting in effect the whole British social system for the suicide

of the sub-officer'.¹ There is no consistent examination or criticism of social or political institutions in Caught. What criticism exists applies primarily to the attitudes of individuals in relation to other individuals 'caught' within a 'system'. In accordance with the central themes of Caught, individual responsibilities and sympathies should not suffer in deference to conformity to regulations. As Richard realizes when surrounded by the inhumanity of the war: 'you have to disobey if you're any good' (p.182). Green's stress is not on social or political principles; he is concerned with human relationships in terms of the individual's confirmation of his own humanism.

Accordingly, Caught ends as it began, with scenes from Richard's private garden. Richard's estranged relationship with his son shows signs of improvement. Still overwhelmed by his war experiences, Richard dismisses Christopher, but only until after tea. The garden of his past, which has separated him from reality, has lost its firm hold on him. He is even ready to begin forgetting the war raids. Soon, 'it had come to seem out of date' (p.178).

Richard, at the novel's end, is but beginning to emerge from his own preoccupations towards the recognition of a 'living' reality. 'He warmed to her [Dy] for a moment, then turned back to himself again' (p.189).

1. Russell, p.146.

Inconclusive, the implications of Richard's revelation only intimated, Caught compels the reader to derive his own meaning, his own judgment. A specified, resolved conclusion would conflict with Green's primary objective, that of making fiction an effective medium for communication between the 'life' of the whole novel and the reader. In order to understand the ending, the reader must view it as a consequence of the novel's total 'life'. Richard's war experience is the climax of the novel, offering 'an explanation of the whole of our life in the war'. Significantly, that life is the life most vividly portrayed in Caught through a network of juxtaposed scenes. It cannot be fully explained by the intrusions of an author or by Richard's subjective recordings; it must speak for itself. On the level of realistic representation, the reticulation of scenes (see Griffith's film device) creates atmosphere and exposes different aspects of reality in the London of 1940. However, objectivity of presentation is counterpointed by the author's subjective sensibilities. Montage arrangements in Caught accentuate Green's central concerns, provoking the reader's affective response to vital themes. Accordingly, the 'meaning' of Richard's moral and emotional development echoes the tone created in different contexts throughout the novel. It is essentially montage that elucidates the full significance and implications of Richard's revelation about life.

BACK (1946)

Thematically, Back possesses close affinities with Caught. It will therefore be examined, rather briefly, in connection with the other. As in Caught, the central character of Back is haunted by a dead woman. Charley Summers only recovers from this debilitating state of mind when he rejects the idealized memory of his late mistress, Rose, and accepts a 'living' reality. A repatriated prisoner just back from the war, he is initially unable to distinguish the real from the unreal. When he meets Rose's half-sister, Nancy Whitmore, Charley is convinced that she is, in fact, Rose and that the story of her death has been fabricated. However, aided by Nancy's patient understanding, Charley becomes increasingly aware that Nancy is not Rose. He gradually becomes conscious of his own needs and, finally denying his dead mistress, realizes that he loves Nancy.

As in Caught, the protagonist can only be reintegrated with Life through confrontation with death, from which he has tried to insulate himself in a fantasy world. Charley is visiting old Mr Grant, Rose's and Nancy's father, when Grant dies of a stroke in the middle of the night. Downstairs, Charley 'bounced once, then twice, yes thrice, as he lay there ... He smoked a third

cigarette'. The mood is one of utter loneliness and desolation, with faint religious undertones suggesting Peter's threefold denial of Christ, and also relating to Christ's feeling of separation from God in Gethsemane. Charley hears Mrs Grant crying upstairs: "'Gerald". "Gerald" ... "D'you hear me?" "Oh d'you hear me, do speak" ... "Gerald darling, Father, where are you?"; then, in a sort of torn bellow, "Father", then, finally, "Come back"'. Charley is about to despair, overwhelmed by reactivated memories of the war. 'But he won free. He mastered it. And, when he took his streaming hands away, everything was dead quiet'. To Charley, the experience represents a spiritual and sensuous resurrection, a point which Green emphasizes in a conflict of masses; for when Charley suddenly hears Nancy coming,

instinct made him switch out the lamp.
He waited in darkness.

When she got to the door, she turned every light on in this room. He sat up. 'He's gone', she said, in a great voice. 'It's over'. She stood there proud, grave, and lovely ... she came over in her red dressing-gown ... It was when he saw her as she was looking at that moment, when, finally, she brought him peace, that he knew he really loved her.

(pp.184-86, emphasis added)

Darkness and light do not merely serve as descriptive, symbolic elements intended to indicate Charley's and Nancy's passage, chronologically, from a 'dead' past to a future full of hope. Charley deliberately switches off the light moments before Nancy appears only to switch it on again, for its affective, perceptual impact on the

reader. The suddenness of the shift from darkness to light produces a montage effect by which the two elements are apprehended in spatial relation to one another. To the reader, the emotional import of Charley's and Nancy's love is enhanced by the dynamic polarity of masses, and further intensified by Nancy's red dressing-gown which heightens the grandeur of her entrance. (The tonal quality of the intense red, in other words, is determined by the montage context and not by inherent symbolic signification.)

The montage approach has important thematic implications. It emphasizes, not light as a successor to darkness in a symbolic, chronological sense (although such an interpretation is also implied by their juxtaposition); more significantly, the montage inspires a vital response to Life, to the instant present, the dynamic reality of which is composed of contradictory impulses of light and dark, of Life and death. It is composed of 'those contradictory impulses which Charley perceives 'at that moment'!

Green's extensive use of this kind of montage technique is symptomatic of a deeper thematic concern with life's paradoxical quality. The preceding scene presents Charley's love as a creative, newly-won responsiveness to a 'living' reality surrounded by a dark void. This interpretation is supported by Charley's apprehensions just before Mr Grant's death. He is yearning for his

woman to come to his bed. At the same time, he has doubts: 'But how could she come, he asked himself, with all that dying in bed going on above?' (p.184). Instead of despairing, or escaping to his insular fantasy world, Charley discovers the Grants's cat which, like most animals in Green's novels, is unperturbed by disintegrating forces. 'It didn't even raise its ears'. Charley finds it incredible 'that this animal could ignore crude animal cries above, which he had shut out with his wet palms' (p.186). The image of the cat's instinctual self-sufficiency precipitates Charley's final recognition of his own natural needs. A sign of this is that seconds before Nancy enters Charley's room, 'instinct' makes him switch off the light. The cat, with its careful pregnancy and motherhood, seems to reflect Nancy's and Charley's need to fulfil their natures. Nancy will marry a man only on the condition that he accept the cat and her kittens with her (p.206). By means of his montage technique, Green stresses his belief in the 'comic' possibility for human fulfilment despite an underlying tragic vision.

The close interaction between Green's vision and technique is apparent in the following scenes. Charley and Nancy face a physical wasteland:

Autumn was the season, most roses were dead. Petals that had dropped some months back and rotted, traces of a summer now gone, were covered by the brown leaves which even in this still air rocked down to lie deep on the ground as they walked, so that their feet rustled. Where a flying

bomb had dropped recently, the drift of leaves was still green underfoot, the trees bare as deep winter. Then, just as they were passing this spot, the syrens set up a broken wailing.

'Come on', he said, turning off the road into the garden of a house in ruins.
(p.176)

The audio-visual counterpoint at once signals the irreconcilability between the withered wasteland and the garden, and is a warning to the two lovers to escape the former and to seek the growth of the latter. It is significant that both of the gardens in Back and in Caught are places to which are attached the treasured memories of a bygone past. However, those 'briars that had borne gay rose, after rose, after wild rose' are now dead, 'brown' and 'leafless'. There is new life:

as they turned again to themselves in the garden, the briars wreathed from one black cypress to another were aflame, as alive as live filaments in an electric light bulb, against the night's quick agony of the sun.

In visual terms, the juxtaposition of light and dark generates a sense of polarity within a spatial framework. A perceptual synthesis is produced whereby the darker aspects, through contrast, intensify the import of Charley's and Nancy's present commitment. It creates the sense of a life-giving instant separated from the diurnal processes.

The night, on its way fast, was chill, and now he had again that undreamed of sharp warmth moving and living on his own, her breath an attar of roses on his deep sun-red cheek, her hair an animal over his eyes and alive, for he could see each rose glowing separate strand, then her dark body thrusting heavy at him, and her blood dark eel fingers that fumbled at his neck.

She cruelly spoiled it. She took
her sweet lips off his.
(p.177, emphasis added)

Russell finds this scene complicated and ambiguous. It is certainly ambiguous if, like him, one insists on attaching a consistent symbolic meaning to the colour, red. 'In Back', says Russell, 'the colour red, even when it apparently revitalizes, is insidious'. Russell finds this sinister tone embodied especially in the way in which Nancy kisses Charley: 'her breath an attar of roses on his deep sun-red cheek ... her blood dark eel fingers (fumbling) at his neck'.¹ However, all these elements may be incorporated in a montage analysis of the scene, in which the colour, red, serves to heighten the dramatic intensity of Charley's and Nancy's experience. Green's evocation of this vibrant moment causes the lovers to merge into a sensuous and spiritual unity. The image of Nancy's 'blood dark eel fingers', therefore, must not be seen as an 'insidious' reflection of Nancy's motives. It is a metaphorical expression which together with the darker aspects of the external world, enhances the mystic sensuality of their embrace. It is significant that the tone of the passage does not derive from a referential meaning belonging to individual images within the montage structure. It springs from the scene's total sensory impact. Like the Grants's cat in the moment of death, Charley at this

1. Russell, p.173.

instant has a strong, 'warm' sense of instinctually 'moving and living on his own'; Nancy is associated with an 'animal', 'alive'.

Differences between the first and last scene of the novel reveal the inconsistency of colour symbolism; the meaning of colours is largely determined by context. The initial picture - a road which is 'asphalted blue' and a church of 'blood coloured brick' - enhances a dominant atmosphere of emotional conflict. In the final love scene, these colours form a much happier scheme of contrasts. Now the darkness outside is a 'marvellous deep blue'. Roses do not 'stare', they 'spill a light ... over her [Nancy] in all their summer colours, her hands that lay along her legs were red, her stomach gold, her breasts the colour of cream roses, and her neck white roses for the bride'. Red here is not an 'insidious' colour; it intensifies the vivid beauty of the moment.

Russell suggests that the contradictory aspect of 'life and death in Back 'thrusters men into some unreal region between life and death'.¹ Russell's statement needs amplification. What makes life in Back unreal is Green's characters' inability to respond creatively to life's contradictory quality, the possibility for life despite the immanent presence of death. There are distinct differences between the perceptual immediacy produced by Green's montage technique in the preceding scene and the

1. Russell, p.174.

dreamlike, surreal atmosphere surrounding Charley's regressive search for his dear Rose. As he enters the cemetery where Rose is buried, Charley

had his cheek brushed by a rose, and began awkwardly to search for Rose, through roses, in what seemed to him should be the sunniest places on a fine day, the warmest when the sun came out at twelve o'clock for she had been so warm, and amongst the newer memorials in local stone because she had died in time of war, when, or so he imagined, James could never have found marble for her, of whom, at no time before this moment, had he ever thought as cold beneath a slab, food for worms, her great red hair, still growing, a sort of moist bower for worms.

(pp.7-8)

The juxtaposition of sunlight and fragrant roses with cold gravestones and other images of death might have evoked sensory polarity. However, Green's style creates no perceptual immediacy which may make the reader's impressions visually 'real'. Instead, the objects of contemplation recede into intangibility. The juxtaposed images do not collide in a montage manner, but intertwine grotesquely in 'some unreal region between life and death'. Green's use of one long run-on sentence without natural pauses creates a stream-of-consciousness effect, as in a Joyce novel. The style becomes a mimetic projection of Charley's fumbling attempt to separate between dream and reality.

Two interesting aspects of Green's technique have been examined in the previous discussion. Montage is used in order to produce a sense of sensuous or affective

immediacy between scene and reader. For the completely opposite effect, juxtaposed images suggesting either 'reality' or hallucination are inextricably entangled in an uneasy borderland between life and death. This close connection between technique and content explains why Green makes use of montage, in Back, almost exclusively in the introduction and conclusion. The function of the introduction is to set the tone of the rest of the novel through the construction of an atmosphere and to present the reader with the central themes. The ending, as has been demonstrated, conveys the central character's re-integration with reality and his revitalized inter-relationship with Life. Throughout the bulk of the novel, the reader sees the world of Back as warped by Charley's hallucinatory vision. Stokes says that 'Green's method fully creates Charley - inarticulate, bemused, unable to feel anything except as it is distorted by his self-pitying obsession. Back, in fact, is the nearest that Green has ever come to a novel in which the viewpoint is that of a single character, of, to use James's term, "the fool". It is perhaps the most remarkable of Green's many tours de force, because although so much of the novel consists of scene, the reader sees always through the eyes of Charley, and ... the reader's "vision is distorted by Charley's faulty spectacles"'.¹ Compared with Caught,

1. Stokes, p.90.

with its multiple points of view and intricate flashback technique, Back is far more conventionally constructed along a chronological narrative line. Since the author, for the most part, tends to keep close to the protagonist's consciousness, there is insufficient objective detachment for the central ironies (because the novel is basically ironic) to spring from occasional montage effects. The irony is implied in the overall structural duplicity of the novel. 'One common device of this sort', states M H Abrams of a feature which applies to Back, 'is the invention of a naive hero, or else a naive narrator or spokesman, whose invincible simplicity leads him to persist in putting an interpretation on affairs which the knowing reader - who penetrates to, and shares, the implicit point of view of the authorial presence behind the naive persona - just as persistently is able to alter and correct'.¹

Irony as a quality arising from the compositional structure of a concrete context occurs mainly in the novel's introduction. By means of a few montage arrangements, Green sets the tone which conditions the interpretation of the ensuing narrative. Charley is introduced on the opening page as a young man who lost his leg in the war 'for not noticing the gun beneath a rose'. This image has a broader symbolic meaning than its literal signification. In terms of the novel's central theme, the rose refers to

1. Abrams, p.81.

Charley's dead girlfriend, Rose, who, in Charley's mind, is idealized and associated with fragrant roses. The gun suggests the destructive quality of Charley's obsession with the past. His search for Rose is a lethal trap. This meaning is first clarified in a montage conflict involving audio-visual counterpoint. Making his way through the cemetery, Charley is surrounded by 'trees of mourning', and by 'rose after rose after rose' (p.5). The atmosphere reinforces the unreality of his dream. Its abstraction finds expression in Gertrude Stein's famous poem, 'A rose is a rose is a rose is a rose'.¹ Reality, however, intrudes to rouse Charley. His progress is interrupted by

a sudden upthrusting cackle of geese
in panic, the sound of which brought
home to him a stack of faggots he had
seen blown high by a grenade So,
while the geese quietened, he felt
what he had seen until the silence which
followed, when he at once forgot.

But there was left him an idea that
he had been warned.

(p.6)

Two incongruous pictures collide in a montage fashion generating a third image, a new concept. The incident is a warning to Charley not to pursue his quest. This passage is an interesting one since the author himself explains the effect intended by the audio-visual counterpoint. He thereby reveals the ideas underlying his scenic technique which apply to the basic principles of montage, a factor

1. Praz notes a 'faint echo' of Gertrude Stein in Green's work, p.214.

which encourages a montage approach to his fiction. Furthermore, the preceding passage parallels similar scenes in Loving and Concluding. Peacocks' shrieks warn the lovers, Edith and Raunce, against lurking dangers; the cries of Rock's goose during his nocturnal walk through the woods are directed against his life-denying irreconcilability. These parallels indicate that montage offers a valid interpretation of central themes in these novels.

Charley's disregarding of the first warning necessitates a reminder, which increases the irony of his pursuit. When again he heads for the graves, he is disturbed by a

bicycle bell, ringing closer and closer
by the church, clustering spray upon
spray of sound which wreathed the air
much as those roses grew around the
headstones, whence, so he felt, they
narrowly regarded him.

(p.6)

Charley's feeling of being 'narrowly regarded' corresponds with the sense of warning given by the bicycle bell. It 'caused him to stop dead'.

A new montage conflict immediately draws attention to other aspects of Charley's delusions involving Rose. A boy of about six comes on a tricycle past the porch then, 'as the machine got up speed, he stood to one side, in spite of the gate still closed between the two of them'. The conflict of planes emphasizes the separation between Charley and the boy who turns out to be Rose's son, whom

Charley later mistakes to be his own. Rose and her son belong to a world from which Charley is excluded. The conflict is heightened through a combined conflict of graphic direction and audio-visual counterpoint. When Charley enters this secluded world through the gate, the boy comes in the opposite direction: he 'shrilly rang the bell as he dashed past'. Charley is 'irritated' by the noise which, like the cackle of geese, serves as a warning, a signal intended to awaken him and make him face reality. Ironically, Charley disregards this sign as he did the warning given by the geese: 'he forgot the boy who was gone, who spelled nothing to him'.

Green's characterization of the geese in the introductory chapter as warning messengers illuminates the meaning of the following incident. It starts raining, and Charley seeks shelter.

Misery kept his mind blank until he turned the porch. Then he had a bad shock when he found who was sheltering before him. For of all people, of all imaginable men, and fat as those geese, was James. They stared at each other.

(pp.9-10)

The suddenness of the two men's confrontation renders the impact of a conflict of graphic direction. Unwittingly, Charley is confronting the boy's real father. The irony of Charley's position is heightened when Charley associates James with the geese without recognizing that their underlying function is to awaken him to reality.

Having acquainted the reader with the dominant tone and central themes of Back, Green seems to turn his interest more towards an involved recounting of Charley's slow, incredulous progress towards an acceptance of reality than towards evoking Charley's ironic position before the reader by dynamic visualization. The lack of dramatic intent (and hence the lack of tone derived from the compositional structure) is also evident in the various characters' verbal interactions. Stokes observes that 'a great deal of the novel (more than of any preceding novel except Loving) consists of scene' - and he goes on to mention a network of characters involved in dialogue - 'But all of these conversations Green keeps firmly on the prosaic level'.¹ One might argue that since reality in the middle part of the novel is largely modified by Charley's subjective vision, the lack of dynamic counterpoint mirrors Charley's abstraction and lack of vigour. Green manifests a close connection between form and content in Back. From this point of view, the novel's overall structure consisting of a prosaic narrative section introduced by objectified compositional ironies and succeeded by a dynamic reintegration of life's contradictory impulses, fulfils its most important function.

1. Stokes, p.167.

Chapter Four

LOVING (1945)

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Compared to the previously examined novels, Loving is more consistently committed to Green's theory of 'non-representational' art. Stokes observes in a statistical survey of Green's various techniques that in Loving, Nothing, and Doting there is no 'formal character exposition' nor 'informal character revelation'. This means that Green does not interpret or record his characters' thoughts and impressions. In contrast, the latter method is used in his other novels in percentages between 15 and 21.¹ In Loving, then, Green has largely abandoned the 'inner' view and presents his characters through the disengagement of a mere observer. A greater degree of objectivity is sought through the de-emphasizing of description in favour of dialogue. Non-representational dialogue implies, to Green, a kind of communication which provides the oblique and elusive quality he experiences in real life. Rosamond Lehmann captures the essential nature of the dialogue in Loving; there is

on the Servants' Hall's side the class language of circumlocution, ambiguity, rhetorical flourish, of devious sly approach to the end in view; all the verbal taboos and traditional tags and

1. Stokes, p.75.

saws; on the drawing-room side the habit of incoherence, tentativeness, over-emphasis, the obsessive modish portmanteau words. Rarely do any of them speak out with certainty and clarity, even to their own.¹

Characteristic speech patterns intimate the nature of various characters' temperaments, feelings, thoughts, and social interaction. The suggestive power of Loving also encompasses the more abstract, intangible dimensions of human existence. Imagery and symbolism serve as objectification of the characters' inner worlds.

Green's imagery and symbolism have central thematic significance. Different aspects of reality are consciously arranged according to the subjective evaluations of the author. The reticulation of metaphors is employed to enrich the expressiveness and suggestiveness of the different facets of life. Since Green writes 'from his innermost beliefs', symbolism and imagery will also reflect the author's private visions, needs, and longings. In the final analysis, Green's use of metaphors will indirectly relate to his attitudes towards characters and events within his work. To a greater extent than Green's other works, Loving is a symbolic novel. However, since Green endows his motifs with various shades of meaning, tone may be traced mainly in the structural interaction of metaphors and contexts. This analytical approach is necessitated by previous critics' inability to detect a consistent moral

1. Lehmann, p.xli.

consciousness in Loving. A major objective in the analysis of Loving is the attempt to distinguish the meanings of the various elements in the novel, to examine their function in relation to one another, and to the novel as a whole. This method is based on the view that despite the divergent levels of reality contained in Loving (objective, subjective, metaphorical etc.), it is possible to discern an underlying compositional pattern that produces a statement about experience as well as a dominant tone.

The assumption that Green injects an overall moral tone into the composition of Loving is strengthened in light of the novel's fully intentioned fairy-tale structure. It begins with, 'Once upon a day an old butler called Eldon lay dying in his room', and ends with the two lovers, Raunce and Edith, having left the old Irish castle, the setting of the novel's plot: 'Over in England they were married and lived happily ever after'. If Loving is modelled on the established fairy-tale tradition, its content construes an artistic pattern which suggests Green's interest in moral or ethical edification.

The central plot of Loving concerns the love relationship of Charley Raunce and Edith, both servants at Kinalty Castle. This English-staffed castle, situated in neutral Ireland, is unaffected by the war which ravages England. It seems to have some obscure symbolic implication, pervaded, as it is, with a sense of unreality and functionless remoteness. An archaic remnant of the past, the castle is

a monument of conformity to customs and fashions that merely mimic natural vitality. It is a museum of false pretensions which, in its attempt to preserve a dead past, has become an empty shell of artful decoration. Its form pretends to be genuine gothic, but is really composed of several faked details - a facade with a pseudo Greek temple and a deliberately ruined wall to give the appearance of authenticity. Several rooms are unused, covered with dust and cobweb. Stokes remarks that 'though there are few lengthy descriptive passages, the constant reference to this background of obsolete, functionless, prodigal splendour is of great importance in the total effect of the book'.¹

Stokes, however, does not account for the specific ways in which the castle, as a compositional motif, interacts structurally with other motifs, with the novel's network of symbolism, and so with its plot. In terms of plot, Loving begins with the death of Eldon, the old, dishonest, but reliable butler, and Charley Raunce's succession to his post. The continuance of the old hierarchy and its effete traditions seems to have been secured. However, Raunce and Edith, after falling in love, unexpectedly escape the old order and finally return to England. Despite the novel's sense of resolution, the ending has confused many critics. Immediately prior to Raunce's

1. Stokes, p.95.

and Edith's departure, there is a poetic scene in which Edith is feeding the peacocks and the doves. Raunce calls her name, using 'exactly that tone Mr Eldon had employed at the last when calling his Ellen. "Edie", he moaned' (p.204). It may seem that the novel ends where it began, that Raunce throughout the novel has merely completed a circle and has finally been equated, by Green, with the dying, old butler. The implication of such an interpretation would be that Raunce is not escaping to a better life in England, but is instead going to an early death. Earle Labor holds this opinion. 'Raunce, the "hero"', he argues, 'does not escape: we must not overlook the cold, deliberate irony of Green's fairy-tale ending'. Labor's scepticism is based on the view that Raunce's and Edith's 'loving' is an 'insidious mechanism'; 'Raunce is lured away from his sense of duty and patriotism by the lethal force of loving', by 'the thing which flourishes malignantly in the stale air of the rotting castle'.¹

It is questionable that the structure which Labor detects is indeed a function of Green's actual method and intent. However, his analysis is interesting, for it reveals crucial weaknesses that suggest the relevance and necessity of a montage approach. Labor ascribes to the different elements of Loving a dubious symbolic meaning. The entire structure of the novel, he argues, revolves around Edith, and is symbolically patterned on 'the spider

1. Earle Labor, 'Henry Green's Web of Loving', Critique 4 (Autumn-Winter 1960-61), pp.34-35,38-39.

analogy'. Towards Edith at the novel's centre, 'the thematic filaments lead with increasing concentration as the plot unfolds'. Among these filaments, Labor believes, are the peacocks and the doves, which participate in the 'bestiality' of loving.¹

It is too categorical to suggest that recurrent images and elements, including the peacocks and the doves, are invariably symbolic aspects of the spider-web woven by Edith's destructive eroticism. Stokes comments on the dubious validity of a method by which meaning is determined on the basis of the recurrence of certain elements, a method he names 'statistical analysis'. He notes that 'many of the scenes and tableaux in these settings ... are poetic in their perfection of design and vividness of imagery. This suggests an obvious and undeniable limitation of statistical analysis - it is purely quantitative, not qualitative. It can define the proportions of the various elements, but it cannot indicate for what purposes and with what effects they are used'.² Verification of the various elements' different effects can only be satisfactorily approximated if symbols and images are examined in relation to their contexts (for example, in terms of montage) and not as vehicles with pre-defined meanings that cannot be altered or modified

1. Labor, p.34.

2. Stokes, p.95.

according to their structural function.

In the vivid montage that terminates the novel, Green includes the major characters and images.

She [Edith] began to feed the peacocks. They came forward until they had her surrounded. Then a company of doves flew down on the seat to be fed. They settled all over her. And their fluttering disturbed Raunce who reopened his eyes. What he saw then he watched so that it could be guessed that he was in pain with his great delight. For what with the peacocks bowing at her purple skirts, the white doves nodding on her shoulders round her brilliant cheeks and her great eyes that blinked tears of happiness, it made a picture.

'Edie', he appealed soft, probably not daring to move or speak too sharp for fear he might disturb it all. Yet he used exactly that tone Mr Eldon had employed at the last when calling his Ellen. 'Edie', he moaned.

(pp.203-04)

Labor attributes the meaning of this passage to the symbolism of a few major images. He is implying that the gathering of peacocks and doves, destructive agents in complicity with Edith, serves 'to confirm our darkest suspicions' about the symbolic meaning of the novel; 'And with his fairy-tale ending, Green flings the last shovel-ful of dirt from "Lucky" Charley's waiting grave'. The dovecote in itself, Labor suggests, provides 'a premonition of Raunce's fate'. Furthermore, Labor claims that Raunce's moaning stems from a 'cancerous affliction', a symbolic symptom of his 'malignant' state of loving.¹

1. Labor, pp.36, 38.

There is no evidence that these images possess this kind of symbolic meaning. Green indicates that Raunce's fits of dyspepsia after falling in love with Edith, have no sinister thematic implications: 'In this particular case, not unusually, the husband had been made ill - his stomach had been upset - by being in love'. In fact, Green himself was unaware of any 'deliberately ironic' ending at the time he wrote Loving. 'I have often been asked how soon after they got to England the husband died ... my answer invariably is "Whenever you think", although when writing the book I had no idea but that they were to have anything but a long and happy life thereafter'.¹

The possibility of a 'happy ending' is strengthened in view of Loving's design. The beginning, 'Once upon a day', repeated in Nanny Swift's symbolic story of life in the dovecote - 'Once upon a time' - suggests a parallel with Elizabethan comedy as well as the fairy-tale tradition. This structural cliché envelopes the story in an unreal atmosphere of timeless present which makes past and future irrelevant. Northrop Frye says of Cymbeline that 'the only phrase that will date such a play is "once upon a time"'. Comedy is also suggested by Edith's anticipation of Loving's optimistic concluding statement: 'all's well that ends well' (p.187) (this prediction is repeatedly stressed in Concluding). Frye claims that '"all's well

1. 'The English Novel of the Future', p.23.

that ends well" is a statement about the structure of comedy, and is not intended to apply to actual life'.¹ In the same manner, the structure of Concluding does not represent life after the book.

One may argue that since Green stresses the equivocal nature of his characters' destiny, an attempt to determine a logical outcome is not essential to the comprehension of the novel's central issue. Ambiguity and uncertainty are inherent in various scenes and images. When viewed in juxtaposition with contrary elements, these images contribute to making a statement about present experience. They cannot symbolize events or the outcome of events.

The difficulty Stokes sees in applying 'statistical analysis' to Green's poetic scenes stems from the fact that they are not primarily intended to function as symbolic mirrors of reality. Images which may, separately, contain certain general symbolic meanings, produce a unity whose visual totality determines the functions of its parts. In a world of disintegration and uncertainty, Green seeks to evoke life rather than describe it. Meaning is not a quality which resides within the linguistic medium itself, but in a region beyond, where language is conceived anew in the poetry of vision. Beauty achieves its impact by the power of words to produce contrary images that converge in a different dimension. The poetry

1. Frye, A Natural Perspective: The Development of Shakespearean Comedy and Romance (London 1965), pp.48, 57.

of vision does not explain reality but is embodied with a life of its own. It eludes the systems of cognition, destroys the classification of conventional language, and reassembles the pieces into a dynamic whole.

Still, the final scene depicting Edith with the doves and the peacocks is imbued with important thematic implications. It portrays Raunce, whose mind has formerly been imprisoned by the conventions and systems laid down by the old traditions of the castle, now able to perceive the radiant beauty of the moment. There is good reason to believe that Raunce's experience in this scene coincides with a greater sensibility, effected by his love for Edith. The revitalization of Raunce's mind refers back to his statement in the middle of the novel: 'Just lately I been wonderin' if my life weren't just starting' (p.104). Raunce's utterance concerns his feelings about life; it does not stress the question of a prolonged life as a crucial factor in Loving. Green, in reference to Loving, supports this view: 'It may be that the reader, in a hangover from Elizabethan days, expects all his heroes to be killed, but it certainly is extremely difficult to leave in his imagination a life continuing beyond the book, and the future of novels must surely be to leave characters alive enough to go on living the life they have led in the book; failing which you cannot have a book which has a life of its own. It follows, therefore, that catharsis, the purging through

pity, sudden death and the rest, is not a theme with much future'.¹ Green's themes are committed to the Life of the present moment. If viewed on this poetic level, Green's final association of Raunce and Eldon does not symbolize identical fates; it links their ultimate humanness. Raunce's soft moaning expresses his love, for which also Eldon is yearning when moaning Ellen's name on his deathbed.

Admittedly, Labor does label the concluding scene as an instance of montage, but on false premises. He postulates Raunce's premature death because of the coalescence of major images. A fundamental objective of montage, as defined by Eisenstein, is 'emotional dynamization' or 'emotional intensification'. The montage conflict produced by the shift of focus heightens the intense beauty surrounding Edith in various ways. It is intensified by the audio-visual counterpoint deriving from Raunce's soft appeal, 'Edie'. Moreover, whatever sombre associations Raunce's position may awaken do not affect the essential reverential tone of the passage. Rather, one's suspicions about Raunce's health and the uncertainty as to their future, enhance the preciousness of the present moment. What Green actually presents is a blissful moment in which various elements mingle into a beautiful harmony. Green's technique springs from his realization about life which

1. 'The English Novel of the Future', p.23.

can best be explained in terms of Dorothy Van Ghent's characterization of Sterne's vision in Tristram Shandy:

It is because of Sterne's acute awareness of time passage and of the conundrums of the time sense, that he is also so acutely aware of the concrete moment; or, conversely, we could say that it is because of his awareness of the preciousness of the concrete moment, that he is so acutely aware of time, which destroys the moment.¹

Loving is not a tragic novel in which man's incorrigible sensual nature represents a serious threat to his own existence. Nor is it altogether comic, although Hall suggests this as the main reason for critics' puzzlement over Green's work.² There is much humour in Loving, but not of the comic strip type. Green's use of humour places reality within an artistic structure where man's instinctual nature as well as the darker, threatening, imperfect aspects of life appear in a redeeming light. Green is a realistic writer who recognizes the imperfection of both life and man. Life is contradictory, and so is man; the good is interspersed with the bad. Green deals with both the comic and the tragic sides of reality. At times, he is critical of characters and events, sometimes accepting, or he may portray them with a combination of humour and cutting irony. Green's mixture of criticism and approval, grimness and comedy, prose and poetry, shapes

1. Dorothy Van Ghent, The English Novel: Form and Function (London 1953), p.93.

2. Hall, p.76.

the contradictory appearance of Loving. However, by means of a montage approach, these divergent aspects can be weighed in central contexts, and consistent theme and tone deduced. Whichever technique Green chooses, each seems to be utilized in defiance of forces which restrain the development of human qualities and retard an affirmative participation in the living present.

In connection with Green's creation of humour, a comparison of Sterne's and Green's techniques is useful in its elucidation of Green's central themes. Both authors use similar means to undermine life-restraining pre-occupations by the invocation of humorous montage. A valuable clue in the understanding of the thematic concerns of the two writers is provided by Coleridge's discussion of 'one humorific point common to all that can be called humorous', a common point he believes to reside in

a certain reference to the general and the universal, by which the finite great is brought into identity with the little, or the little with the finite great, so as to make both nothing in comparison with the infinite. The little is made great, and the great little in order to destroy both; because all is equal in contrast with the infinite.

As Dorothy Van Ghent says with reference to Coleridge's definition, 'our understanding of the "seriousness" of Sterne's humour can prepare us for a larger understanding of those authors nearer our time, who are concerned seriously with the problems of our time, but who are sensitive also to the sources of laughter'. Tristram Shandy, like

Loving, ridicules man's preoccupation with abstract ideas that preclude his participation in the immediate present. Phutatorius, in the course of making a pompous speech, is disconcerted by the presence of a hot chestnut in his britches. A comparable incident, Tristram's encounter with Maria illustrates Sterne's intent, in turn elucidating one important aspect of Green's montage technique. Tristram, on his way to Moulins, is charmed by flute tunes. Poor, innocent Maria, who has been distraught ever since her banns were forbidden by the intrigues of the parish curate, is sitting on a bank with her little goat beside her. Maria, in all her piety, is now playing the vespers to the Virgin Maria. For three years she has been playing her pipe, the postillion tells Tristram, 'it seems her only consolation - she has never once had the pipe out of her hand, but plays that service upon it almost night and day'. The spell terminates when Tristram, attracted by Maria's melancholic tunes, leaps out of his chaise and positions himself between Maria and the goat.

Maria look'd wistfully for some time
at me, and then at her goat - and then
at me - and then at her goat again, and
so on, alternately -
- Well, Maria, said I softly - What
resemblance do you find?

Van Ghent states that 'What we shall look for here is the equating of "great" and trivial, which resonates in humour because of the strange balance contrived between these 'incommensurables'. The tragic picture of Maria's

innocence is relieved by the 'goatishness' with which Tristram confuses Maria in her solemnity; the 'goatishness', according to Van Ghent, exemplifies 'that term of the humorous equation which is the "finite little", the trivial, the whimsical; and which, capping off the full-blowing cumulus of Maria's pathos, asks finite judgment to suspend its intoxicated action for a moment in a healthy smile at its own potency for exaggeration, hysteria and error'.¹

The following passage from Loving demonstrates how Green, in a similar manner, greets regression and life-negating, exaggerated scepticism with a 'healthy smile'. It is a passage crucial to the understanding of Green's vision. As Labor notes, the dovecote, where the scene is enacted, represents an encapsulation of the entire novel. As in Green's story about life in Loving, Nanny Swift begins hers about life in the dovecote with 'Once upon a time'. Nanny's fairytale-like account of the two doves is an indirect analogy of the two lovers in the novel. Labor argues that 'at this point the meaning of "loving" is manifested in prismatic sharpness; the whole cycle of death, birth, lust, and murder is enacted with graphic clarity. It is very much like a play within a play. Just as Green has framed his story of loving within the structure of the fairy-tale, so the events

1. Van Ghent, pp.94-95,97.

within the dovecote are framed within Nanny Swift's "story of the two white doves that didn't agree".¹ However, the structural parallel between the two 'fairy-tales' does not necessarily emphasize the destructive implications of the characters' inclinations and involvements. Again, one must distinguish between the reality which Green objectively describes and the reality he creates. It is from the latter that the tone of the passage derives. In fact, the way in which Miss Swift's innocent, moralistic story is repeatedly interrupted, through cross-montage, by unexpected, bizarre events, heightens the humour of the entire passage.

'Once upon a time there were six little doves lived in a nest', she began ...

Miss Evelyn and Miss Moira each put a finger to their mouths as they went on bowing to each other ... Miss Swift continued,

'Because they were so poor and hungry and cold in their thin feathers out there in the rain'. She opened her eyes.

'Children', she said, 'stop those silly tricks' and the girls obeyed. 'But the sun came out to warm them', she intoned.

'Jesus', Albert muttered, 'look at that' ... Now that the birds had settled again they seemed to have taken up their affairs at the point where they had been interrupted. So that all these balconies were crowded with doves and a heavy murmur of cooing throbbed the air though at one spot there seemed to be trouble.

'You're very, very wicked boy', said Evelyn to Albert looking where she thought he looked. What she saw was one dove driving another along a ledge backwards. Each time it reached the end the driven one took flight and fluttered then settled back on that same ledge once more only to be driven back the other way to clatter into air again. This was being repeated tirelessly when from another balcony something

1. Labor, p.36.

fell.

'That's ripe that is', Albert said.

'I didn't see', Evelyn cried. 'I didn't really. What came about?'

'And then there was a time', the nanny said from behind closed eyes and the wall of deafness, 'oh my dears your old nanny hardly knows how to tell you but the naughty unloyal dove I told of'.

'It was a baby one', Albert said.

'A baby dove. Oh do let me see' ...

'It was a baby one', Albert said, 'and nude. That big bastard pushed it'.

'The big what?' Evelyn asked. 'Oh but I mean oughtn't we to rescue the poor?'

... a rustle made them turn about on either side of Miss Swift who sat facing that dovecote shuteyed and deaf. They saw Kate and Edith in long purple uniforms bow swaying towards them in soft sunlight through the white budding branches, fingers over lips. Even little Albert copied the gesture back this time. All five began soundlessly giggling in the face of beauty.

'Did you see Mr Raunce?' Kate asked at last.

'E went that way' ...

'And then they were in great peril every mortal one', Miss Swift continued.

(pp.58-59)

What constitutes the 'finite great' is the solemnity with which Miss Swift narrates her story in face of matters concerning life and death, before doves 'quarrelling, murdering and making love again'. Miss Swift's confusion at the many interruptions caused by the fascinated cries of the children (the diction also heightens the humour: Albert calls one of the doves a 'bastard' when it pushes a baby dove, a 'nude' one, which surprises Miss Evelyn, because she has never heard that word; 'e fell down right on 'is nut', Albert exclaims) while Miss Swift is sitting 'shuteyed and deaf', constitutes that part of the equation which is termed the 'finite little':

'And now where was I?'

'You were at that bit where the kind old father says he can marry her 'cause he's getting too old to know better'.

'Well now that's right', Miss Swift began once more ...

Then one more small mass fell without a thud, pink.

'There y'are', said Albert.

'Where? I didn't see. Oh I've missed again', Evelyn said. 'Did you?' to Moira.

'You're none of you listening you naughty children', the nanny said.

'Here's poor nanny wasting her breath and you don't pay attention'.

Since the dovecote must be seen as the major 'symbol' in Loving, the structural irony of the preceding scene has thematic implications important to the interpretation of the entire novel. Raunce's and Edith's intrusion gives the nanny's moralistic story a precise reference; for as soon as Raunce's whereabouts are mentioned, Miss Swift concludes that the white doves were 'in great peril every mortal one'. The symbolic connection between the doves of Miss Swift's fairy story and the characters is also suggested by the equal number of doves ('six little doves') and characters. That is, Raunce is the sixth 'dove', a connection which is intimated through direct association: 'All five began soundlessly giggling in the face of beauty. "Did you see Mr Raunce?"'.

Significantly, the humour and compositional irony marking the actual events in the dovecote suggest that the perils are exaggerated. Whatever grimness is inherent in the image of fighting doves is alleviated by other images reverently celebrating the instinctual

responses of both birds and humans. Ironically, Miss Swift's tale is abstracted and over-simplified; like its narrator, it is 'shuteyed and deaf' to the very essence of reality. The girls are not as innocent as the Nanny's 'white' doves, and the world not as bad as she seems to believe. The essence of life cannot be perceived by a closed, concept-ridden mind. It can only be intuited in a childlike, natural response to 'living', as demonstrated by Moira and Evelyn who, copying the doves bowing beak to beak, nod deeply to one another past Miss Swift. Watching Edith and Kate, who, imitating the doves' dance, 'bow swaying towards them in soft sunlight through the white budding branches, fingers over lips ... all five began soundlessly giggling in the face of beauty'. The final image of doves and peacocks bowing and nodding around Edith confirms Green's reverence for natural beauty.

Reality, if approached with an affirmative, child-like curiosity, is not as frightening and bizarre as it may appear if interpreted through a conceptual bias. Green emphasizes this comic conflict between healthy sensuality and Nanny Swift's stagnancy in his portrayal of Edith's and Kate's rapturous enjoyment of the doves' 'kissing'. Edith and Kate warn Miss Evelyn not to pay attention to the doves,

'Because they're very rum them
birds', Kate said also whispering ...
'Sssh', said Edith watching rapt ...
'And then there came a time when
this wicked tempting bird came to her

father to ask her hand', Miss Swift said, passing a dry tongue over dry lips, shuteyed ...

'Oh what are they doing then?' Miss Moira cried.

'They're kissing love', Kate answered low.

'Hush dear', said Edith.

(pp.59-60, emphasis added)

The humour, as well as the irony, is accentuated by the fact that the doves are just as rapturously enjoying their game which they have been 'tirelessly' pursuing. In fact, when the doves are suddenly disturbed by the children, they flee, 'apart', 'filling the air with sighing' (p.60). As in Sterne's Tristram Shandy, Green's healthy attitude towards the bizarre in Loving must be taken as 'one term of a structural irony, and a provision for keeping the sentimental and the emotional and the pathetic in the same human world with the obscene and the trivial and the absurd'.¹

From an ideological point of view, then, the centrality of the dovecote scene suggests Green's world, as a 'human' world in which the vital aspect of natural human impulses is recognized. Destructive effects of free, instinctual response are certainly also implied, but, again, montage alters tone by emotionally emphasizing specific aspects. Thus, the sensual vitality and fulfilment contained in the dovecote scene are enhanced despite contradictory forces. It is important to note that in this scene, the humour produced by the incongruity of

1. Van Ghent, p.98.

Nanny's moralistic fairy story and the children's excitement at the doves' behaviour does not really result, as Labor suggests, from Green's 'juxtaposition of the real against the unreal'. That is, Nanny Swift's innocent story is not meant to accentuate, through a sense of disparity, the 'horror' of the 'real' world which is portrayed with 'grotesque realism'.¹ The most important effect of Green's ironic montage of the 'finite great' and the 'finite little' is that the humorous incongruity transforms 'grotesque realism' into a positive statement about a world which is essentially comic as long as what is 'living' is approached through a healthy, instinctual perceptiveness.

One crucial theme in Green's work is his desire to encourage man's full response to vital human needs and impulses. Failure to perceive or respect the nature of man's essential humanness induces the complex combinations of farce and grim irony. Humour may draw attention to the joyful or merely amusing aspects of life. At other times, Green utilizes humour for the purpose of ridiculing unresponsiveness to human values. In the latter cases, Sterne's practice of equating the 'finite great' and the 'finite little' in order to produce a tone of merry absurdity is not as easily applicable. Green's merging of humour and tragic irony in the following scene may appear paradoxical. However, a closer examination

1. Labor, pp.35-36.

reveals that both tonal qualities serve the articulation of an overriding theme.

Once upon a day an old butler called Eldon lay dying in his room attended by the head housemaid, Miss Agatha Burch. From time to time the other servants separately or in chorus gave expression to proper sentiments and then went on with what they had been doing.

One name he uttered over and over, 'Ellen'.

The pointed windows of Mr Eldon's room were naked glass with no blinds or curtains ...

Came a man's laugh. Miss Burch jerked, then the voice broke out again. Charley Raunce, head footman, was talking outside to Bert his yellow pantry boy ...

'... on with what I was on with', he spoke, 'you should clean your teeth before ever you have anything to do with a woman. That's a matter of personal hygiene. Because I take an interest in you for which you should be thankful. I'm sayin' you want to take it easy my lad, or you'll be the death of yourself'.

The lad looked sick.

(p.18, emphasis added)

The 'finite little' is represented by Raunce's obsession with the necessity of cleaning one's teeth before having anything to do with a woman, and his ridiculously inappropriate assertion that if Bert does not observe this elementary rule, he may prepare his own death. Raunce's advice is decidedly funny, and the humour clearly an echo of Green's attempt to create ambiguity, since occurring in such a grave context. Nevertheless, Raunce's trivial concerns do not relieve or ridicule the solemnity or 'pathos' of death. Eldon's demise cannot be labelled under the denominations of the 'sentimental and the emotional and the pathetic', which

lose their seriousness by being matched 'in the same human world with the obscene and the trivial and the absurd'. The tragic image of Eldon, utterly lonely and dying, is emphasized by Green's attention to the 'pointed windows' of 'naked glass with no blinds or curtains'. Hence, Green's image of Eldon connotes not the 'finite great', but the 'infinite', in relation to which Raunce's idea of what is vitally important becomes 'nothing'; because, says Coleridge, 'all is equal in contrast with the infinite'. Because of Green's acute awareness of the close competition between Life and death, Coleridge's idea concerning the interrelation of the 'finite great', the 'finite little', and the infinite provides a useful frame of reference for determining whether Green stresses the comic aspects of a concrete context (that is, whether he accentuates the positive qualities of Life) or whether he asserts the dominance of tragic irony. These differences are subtly pronounced in the dovecote scene and in the impressions from Eldon's sick-room.

In the latter scene, then, Green focuses the routine indifference towards the dying displayed by Raunce and the other servants. Raunce rides his 'hobby-horse', his obsession with dental hygiene, which he has magnified to become a matter indeed more considerable than life or death. Russell argues, in reference to Green's characters, that having a hobby-horse 'helps these people over really formidable barriers'; hobby-horses are respected

'in their resistance to big things, birth, and copulation, and death'. 'Preoccupations or reflexive actions', Russell continues, 'enable his characters to get the best of "big things": birth, copulation, the vicissitudes of pain, loss, and sickness, death'. Russell concludes that

From his observation that they get by - accidentally but all the same capably - by refusing to remain concerned with peripheral threats, Green seems to have made an intellectual commitment in favour of such a response to life. This is why he does not get tormentedly involved in his characters' predicaments. Wallowing in quandaries, they do not distress him so long as they can and do act. The bumps they receive as they ride their hobby-horses into action are usually minor and funny; meanwhile Green 'ridicules reality', because his activists have no time to take it seriously.¹

Russell's statement needs both amplification and modification. The questions which Russell's interpretations arouse necessitate an examination of the examples employed by Russell to support his arguments, particularly in reference to their illumination of the essence of Green's themes. 'In Back', Russell suggests, 'Mrs Frazier's "hobby-horse", a place near the front of a queue, keeps her from grasping the horror with which poor Charley is struck upon first seeing Nancy, and Mrs Frazier remains invulnerable'. However, the view that Green advocates Mrs Frazier's disengagement as an important

1. Russell, pp.227-30.

attitude by which to bypass 'pain and death', runs counter to the major themes evolved in Back. Charley's reintegration with Life results from his recognition of love as the only 'hobby-horse' providing a viable defence against death. The love between Charley and Nancy is most significantly promoted by Nancy's sympathetic involvement with him. Russell also argues that Charley's great hobby-horse, his memories of Rose, helps him to ignore loss and sorrow: 'Notice that during Charley's period of alienation, for all his self-pity over Rose, he never takes notice of the fact that he's lost a leg. Then think how astonishingly mobile he is. His obsession is similar to the obsessions of people not stricken; he is similarly protected by it And when Charley does complete his readjustment, he acts like Green's other successful people'. The sort of protection Charley may gain from his preoccupation with Rose is not a value that corresponds with Green's main thematic concerns. True enough, Green wants his characters to oppose detrimental preoccupation with loss and sorrow, but those people leading the most meaningful lives are generally those who are acutely aware of the surrounding forces of darkness and who, with that knowledge, therefore consciously commit themselves to a life of love and growth. Green's best example is probably Mr and Mrs Eames in Living. The major point to make is that Green is not predominantly concerned with mere survival, with a regressive protection from death, but with 'living' and

fulfilment. Charley's hobby-horse inclines him towards an existence in which his experiences are perceived in terms of categories, as prescribed by his obsession. Imprisoned by his own perceptual 'systems', he is prevented from discovering the beauty of new realities and new dimensions. Charley is completely insulated from a living reality by his hobby-horse; he fails to recognize human beings for what they are, because his hobby-horse is a metaphor for his abstracted self-absorption. Other examples which, to Russell, are illustrative of a viable self-protection, is the image of 'Charley Summers covering his ears with "streaming" hands' to exclude noises on the night of Mr Grant's death, or of Joe Gates's attitude: he 'could never be sad'. One remembers Gates as a dominantly cynical, egoistic intriguer. As for Charley's reaction, just referred to, it has already been argued that Charley only recovers from his escapist orientation when he is made aware of the cat's ability to tolerate noises by mobilizing its own instinctual resources. In keeping with Green's thematic pattern, it is impossible to view, as does Russell, the following event as a positive assertion of Raunce's craving for life: 'Raunce, heir-apparent to Eldon's position, can get by death in two sentences, when he asks "When's the interment?" and then wonders what will be on for dinner'.¹

1. Russell, pp.228,231.

In conclusion, one may argue that only such hobby-horses as can be transcribed 'loving' or 'living' are acclaimed by Green. Raunce's hobby-horse, to climb in the hierarchy of the castle, is associated with stasis and death. It is typical that the servants are more interested in getting on with their routine chores than giving expression to 'proper sentiments' with concern to the dying Eldon. Raunce's and most of the servants' hobby-horses serve the prolonging of an outmoded, artificial order which, a hobby-horse in itself, restricts the free expansion of vital human sympathies. The fact that Raunce finally abandons his hobby-horse, therefore, supports the assumption that his love for Edith has stimulated a greater human sensitivity. Correspondingly, the epiphanic last scene incorporates sentiments that, in their affirmation of Life at that moment, would embrace Eldon as a fellow human being. In fact, Green does stress the importance of human sympathy as a central theme in Loving's plot. Miss Burch touches the truth subtly implied by Green: 'Mr Eldon he died of a broken heart Miss Swift. There was a lot he told nobody' (p.112). Green has Miss Swift predict that the characters may sooner or later disclaim routines and traditions and perhaps follow their private intuitions:

there's big changes under way. I
 shouldn't wonder if things were never
 the same say what you will. But don't
 mistake me. I wouldn't put myself
 above a doctor. Though we can all
 bear witness about Mr Eldon how that

poor man lay calling on a name and
 Doctor Connolly no more than paid him
 a call every so often, when we all
 know what we had under our very eyes
 with him growing weaker each day that
 passed, I don't say but someone might
 have taken matters into their own hands.

(p.113)

The 'big changes' predicted by Miss Swift - which she, in reality, fears - are, in accordance with Green's values, changes for the better. What she fears most is vigorous human instincts which, because natural, counter-act the false security of artificially imposed patterns. It is to the pattern of ancient traditions that Raunce has become heir. Raunce has remained indoors for so many years that he nearly faints when persuaded to go for a walk so as to breathe some fresh air. Like a spectre, Raunce's appearance merges with the decayed atmosphere of the old castle. In the post of butler, Raunce embodies the stagnant effeteness of the castle which restrains new life. One day Raunce is seen to move through 'sombre' doors in the 'white-wrapped dimness' of unused 'dust-sheeted rooms'. 'High windows muted by white blinds' witness relics of past life 'sheeted in white and to which he had never raised the cloths'. Raunce is part of this ghostly, 'shadowless castle of treasures', shrouded in lifeless white. He dips his fingers into a bowl and then sniffs at 'the dry bones of roses', an act, Green points out, which Raunce has made a ritual. A loud sound disturbs this context

of deathlike silence. 'The music came louder and louder as he progressed until at the white and gold ballroom doors it fairly thundered'. Raunce poses himself defiantly 'against the thrust of music'. Inside the room, he sees Edith and Kate

wheeling wheeling in each other's arms
 heedless at the far end where they had
 drawn up one of the white blinds. Above
 from a rather low ceiling five great
 chandeliers swept one after the other
 almost to the waxed parquet floor reflect-
 ing in their hundred thousand drops the
 single sparkle of distant day, again and
 again red velvet panelled walls, and two
 girls, minute in purple, dancing multiplied
 to eternity in these trembling pears of
 glass.

(pp.64-65)

The gyrating spell is abruptly terminated. Raunce switches off the music, making the needle grate. Edith sighs, 'It's over now'. Like the actions of doves in the dovecote scene at being disturbed, the two girls disappointedly disengage. Green introduces the audio-visual counterpoint in order to produce a sense of collision between the dead silence of the old castle and the thunderous music. As in Concluding in which the significance of the dancing scenes is far more elaborated, Green employs audio-visual counterpoint to intensify the dancing girls' animation. The trembling music and the centrifugal dynamism of the dancing echo 'hundred thousand drops' of sparkling daylight to create an instant impression of 'eternity', a momentary bliss which surmounts time and decay, and shatters the stagnant tranquility of history.

Barbara Davidson states, with reference to this and similar passages in Loving, that they are 'dreamlike' scenes that 'emerge out of the clickety-clack of everyday life and talk'. They suffuse 'symbols and action' in a complex, involved manner; 'these dream visions recede, less fantastic, less complex until a sort of truce or commingling of the everyday and the fantastic is formed'. These 'fantastic images', Davidson maintains, 'are perfections of realism that form integral parts of an abstract whole in much the same fashion as the illustrated manuscripts or the surrealist painting'. Davidson stresses, quite correctly, the 'curious tension between realism and fantasy' in Loving, resulting from a Modernist interweaving of an inner world and the everyday factual world. However, she omits an important aspect of Green's artistic vision when claiming that it is different in kind from 'Coleridge's intention to give the strange verisimilitude'.¹ Davidson reduces the function of Green's technique to a mere presentation of disparate facets of experience in an abstract artistic form. The qualities of the dancing scene which Davidson applies to her interpretation, resemble qualities which Coleridge attributes to 'fancy'. Coleridge explains that 'Fancy is indeed no other than a mode of Memory emancipated from the order of time and space'.² To Coleridge, 'fancy' is a mental or

1. Barbara Davidson, 'The World of Loving', Wisconsin Studies in Contemporary Literature 2 (Winter 1961), pp.65,67,74.

2. Quoted in Abrams, p.58.

artistic process by which bits of reality are reordered, mechanically, in the mind into new combinations. The whole becomes the sum of its parts.

However, both Green and Coleridge display a strong urge to capture the instant luminosity of love and beauty. The dancing scene represents, despite Davidson's suggestion to the contrary, precisely an attempt to create a poetic moment of Truth. Essentially romantic, it exemplifies 'imagination' (as defined by Coleridge) at work; it 'struggles to idealize and unify. It is essentially vital, even as all objects (as objects) are essentially fixed and dead'. The animation of all the antique treasures in the whirling dancing scene is intensified by its juxtaposition with the lifeless, dust-sheeted silence through which Raunce has just passed. These two incongruent worlds collide in a montage fashion to produce poetry of 'a higher order'. Coleridge's idea of the 'imagination' possesses precisely this 'synthetic' power which is revealed 'in the balance or reconciliation of opposite or discordant qualities'. In this manner, Green's modernist projection of a fantasy world into the everyday world not only objectifies mental pictures produced in a symbol-making mind. Death collides spatially with Life to create a transcendent unity, a synthesis which is glimpsed as the momentary experience of 'eternity'.¹

1. Abrams, p.59.

Other similar scenes in Loving support the view that Green's unreal or fantastic images do not only form integral parts of an abstract whole. Rather, the tension produced by the mingling of real and unreal may create the kind of dynamic unity which Coleridge would label 'vital'. One day Edith, Albert, and the children enter the castle's sham Greek temple, into 'another darker daylight, into a vast hall lit by rain and dark skylights and which was filled with marble bronze and plaster statuary in rows'. In this strange, time-worn sepulchre, past life has petrified. As they play blind man's buff, they are surrounded by 'witnesses in bronze in marble and plaster' which echo their excited shrieks 'from stone cold bosoms to damp streaming marble bellies, to and from huge oyster niches in the walls in which boys fought giant boas or idled with a flute, and which volleyed under green skylights empty in the ceiling' (pp.107-11). This imagery, together with Green's choice of words for sounds, Davidson suggests, is 'that of war and of love repelled'. Albert seeks Edith, but 'for answer he had a storm of giggles ... which went ricochetting ... and volleyed ... he could hear feet slither ... they shrieked ... in a tumult of these words'.¹ The imagery and sounds may suggest parallels between the lives and experiences of the youngsters playing blind man's buff and those mimed by the ancient statues - some fighting, one indulging in beautiful music, or others

1. Davidson, p.77.

'kneeling with heads and arms raised to heaven', or worshipping the 'half-dressed lady that held a wreath at the end of her two long arms'. The statues display the multiplicity of life, of man's conflicts, longings, and struggles. There is a parallel between the lives of the youngsters and the former lives depicted in the ancient statues, but also between the participants in the blind man's buff and the doves' mating and fighting. This game of blind man's buff is a love game. Edith has brought, as the most conspicuous symbol, her red I-love-you scarf which is used for blindfolding. Bert is the rejected beseecher whose courtship is countered by Edith's complete indifference, and the tumult of their contest is echoed in Green's use of war imagery. However, as particularly revealed by the parallel with the doves' quarrelling and love-making, conflicts are an integral part of life, and do not prevent the participants from deriving a rapturous moment from their game. This is the reason for the primarily humorous portrayal of the dovecote scene. Magical moments may be captured among the turbulence of life; their intensity is in fact enhanced by life's contradictory impulses. It is precisely this aspect that links Green's technique with Coleridge's idea of a 'vital', 'synthetic' combination of life's discordant qualities. From this point of view, Green's images are not just integral, symbolic components enriching the expressiveness and suggestiveness of

the passage. The statues, as inhabitants of the castle, represent past life now dead and cold as stone. The transfixed mimic real life. In contrast, Edith 'was brilliant, she glowed as she rang her curls like bells without a note'. And when Albert kisses Miss Moira, 'Her child's skin was electric hot under a film of water'. This mausoleum reverberates with new life at the excited shrieks of the children, and as they urge Albert to kiss Edith, 'Kiss her then ... kiss her'. He does, for a second, 'and in spite of being so short more brilliant more soft and warm perhaps than his thousand dreams'. Although darkness is surrounding them - 'it had become almost too dark to see his face' - Albert, in a conflict of masses, 'seemed absolutely dazzled' in a state of supreme bliss. The sense of a 'vital', unifying liveness is strengthened, through an audio-visual counterpoint, by the interruption of a discordant rusty hinge; then 'Raunce entered upon a scene which this noise and perhaps also his presence had instantly turned to more stone'. Edith is left 'blind as any statue', before Raunce walks back 'into grey dust-sheeted twilight'.

Green's reason for depicting Raunce as a stone cold intruder into the vividness of the game is immediately intimated by a conflict of planes. 'Back in his room Raunce unlocked the drawer in which he kept the red and black notebooks. He verified that they were there' (p.111). These books in which Eldon used to keep

meticulous account of debits and credits in the household, promise the perpetuation of the old order. As if in reaction to the 'frivolity' of the playing youngsters, Raunce wants to reassure himself that he is still in possession of the books upon which the security of his future relies. The value conflicts implied here are more conspicuously enacted in Dickens's Hard Times. The natural spontaneity and fulfilment of the circus people clash with Bounderby's calculating, materialistic ambition, and the lack of a vital imagination demonstrated by the square-minded Gradgrind, whose utilitarian abode is appropriately named Stone Lodge. Raunce's utilitarian bent, augmented by the butler's role as custodian of the old order, is revealed when he refuses to join in the blind man's buff on the grounds that 'I chucked this blind man's buff before I'd lived as many years as my lad here. In my time if we had nothing better to do than lark about on a half day we got on with our work' (p.110). Raunce discloses the same utilitarian attitude in the previously discussed dancing scene, when opposing the girls' rapturous enjoyment for fear they may damage the old treasures that are not to be used. '"They'll break it", he said aloud as though in explanation, presumably referring to the gramophone which was one of the first luxury clockwork models. "And in a war", he added as he turned back to these portals, "it would still fetch good money", talking to himself against the thrust of music' (p.65).

The following intricate combination of various images illuminates more specifically the nature of the conflicts which initially segregate Raunce from Green's main values. Eldon's fastidiously kept notebooks, ordered into two categories with starkly contrasting colours, seem to express the same life-restricting qualities as the rigorous black and white squares of the carpet across which Raunce walks on his way to steal Eldon's notebooks, the same exact black and white pattern of Miss Edge's tiled floor in Concluding, of the black and white farm where Miss Baker was brought up, and even Edge's regimentation of flowers into categories of red and white. Otherwise, flowers are invariably associated with growth and fruition in Green's fiction. Still on his way to Eldon's sick-room, Raunce stops abruptly. 'In one of the malachite vases, filled with daffodils, which stood on tall pedestals of gold naked male children without wings, he had seen a withered trumpet. He cut off the head with a pair of nail clippers' (p.23). As indicated by the context, Raunce's beheading of this single flower symbolizes his denial of the withering Eldon. Birds, in Green's fiction, also suggest freedom and vivacity. The lack of understanding for such qualities by the proprietors of the castle is indicated by the fact that the children's wings are broken.

In his role as butler, Raunce's violation of values of growth is suggested by the way in which 'he punted the

daffodil ahead like a rugger ball ... He was kicking this flower into his pantry not more than thirty inches at a time when Miss Burch with no warning opened and came out of Mr Eldon's death chamber. She was snuffling. He picked it up off the floor quick' (pp.23-24). The conflict of graphic directions between Raunce and Miss Burch who is trying to attend to Eldon's needs, defines one aspect of Raunce's estrangement from vital values: his lack of sympathy. His cynicism is evident when he asks 'When's the interment?' and in the next moment wonders what time is dinner. By a significant symbolic gesture, he dumps the daffodil in a bucket, then sneaks into Eldon's sick-room to annex those red and black notebooks, with his face averted from the mass of daffodils beside Eldon's bed. There is, in fact, no justification for arguing, as does Russell, that Raunce's world, at this stage, is a dominantly dynamic one (in the sense vital). Russell finds support for his statement by referring to 'the way in which Raunce 'punted the daffodil ahead like a rugger ball' past Eldon's death chamber.'¹ The scene dramatizes no viable self-protection, rather a denial of Life.

Another central symbolic scene requires explication in order to elucidate Raunce's function in the 'dynamic' world of Loving. One day Edith and Kate muster enough

1. Russell, p.131.

courage to enter Paddy O'Connor's lamp room.

It was a place from which light was almost excluded now by cobwebs across its two windows and into which, with the door ajar, the shafted sun lay in a lengthened arch of blazing sovereigns. Over a corn bin on which he had packed last autumn's ferns lay Paddy snoring between these windows, a web strung from one lock of hair back onto the sill above and, which rose and fell as he breathed. Caught in the reflection of spring sunlight this cobweb looked to be made of gold as did those others which by working long minutes spiders had drawn from spar to spar of the fern bedding on which his head rested. It might have been almost that O'Connor's dreams were held by hairs of gold binding his head beneath a vaulted roof on which the floor of cobbles reflected an old king's molten treasure from the bog ...

Now, through a veil of light ... Edith could dimly see, not hear, a number of peacocks driven into view by some disturbance on their side and hardly to be recognized in this sovereign light. For their eyes had changed to rubies, their plumage to orange as they bowed and scraped at each other against the equal danger.

(pp.56-57)

Russell argues that 'Metallic spiders' webs, ruby-eyed birds - what usually betokens organic force seems now converted to lifeless ornament, and the element of time is also distorted as the birds, as if "stuffed in a dusty case", show themselves from time to time "across the heavy days" as they come to look at Paddy'.¹

Raunce is soon to shatter this stasis, Russell asserts. However, the total visual impact of the scene is not of stasis. True, the peacocks are imprisoned by Paddy in

1. Russell, p.133.

this 'dusty case' where they 'sheltered in winter, nested in spring, and where they died of natural causes at the end'. Their uneventful lives seem to mirror the routine existences of the castle's inhabitants. However, in the immediate present moment evoked by Green, these dust-covered, 'heavy days' form the visual background from which the birds emerge, in a conflict of masses, with blazing ruby eyes and orange plumage. 'Now'! Green emphasizes, they catch the reflected 'sovereign' light. Similarly, the image of Paddy snoring, like an old Irish king, on 'last autumn's ferns' in the dim dark, shrouded by cobwebs, creates the inertia of a dead past. But Green points out how 'O'Connor's life was opened, as Kate let the sun in and Edith bent to look'. Before the girls enter Paddy's room, they are depicted in 'the great shaft of golden sun which lighted these girls through parted cloud'. The blazing shaft of sun affirms the girls' natural, vigorous sensuality. 'You aim to make him a bishop?', Kate says to Edith, 'Well if I 'ad my way I'd strip those rags off to give that pelt of his a good rub over'. 'Don't talk so. You couldn't'. Then they burst into excited giggles. The half-dark room is filled with a revitalizing 'spring sunlight' from the 'shafted sun' which 'lay in a lengthened arch of blazing sovereigns', and by 'movement in the sunset of that sidewall which reflected glare from the floor in its glass'.

Suddenly the peacocks, again,

were gone with a beat of wings and in their room stood Charley Raunce, the skin of his pale face altered by refraction to red morocco leather.

The girls stood transfixed as if by arrows between the Irishman dead motionless asleep and the other intent and quiet behind a division. Then dropping everything they turned, they also fled.

(pp.55-57)

The meaning of Raunce's intrusion is ambiguous. Again, Green juxtaposes dynamic and static qualities by the contrast between Paddy's lethargic figure and Raunce's intent appearance. However, Russell is not correct in arguing that Raunce, by his luminous face, opposes the entire scene which is static. It is contradictory to claim that Raunce's 'red morocco leather' face is dynamic and vigorous whereas the peacocks' eyes, because ruby red, are merely 'lifeless ornaments'. The peacocks' eyes and Raunce's always gaunt face alike derive their glow from the refraction of the blazing sunlight. This suggests that Raunce's intrusion by no means refutes the previous argument: Green's combination of discordant qualities, of masses and of stasis and dynamism, synthesizes the whole into a 'vital', poetic unity in the sense defined by Coleridge. Raunce's intent appearance may suggest the intrusion of his silent, repressed sexuality upon the enthralled girls, or his repressed need to participate in the displayed beauty. His entrance adds dramatic intensity to the magic scene, but there are also strong intimations that Raunce interrupts with the kind of purposefulness

that makes him insensitive to the moment of joy and beauty, and which thereby dissipates it. This interpretation is potentially accurate, because with his heightened sensibility at the novel's end, he watches Edith among the bowing peacocks, 'not daring to move or speak too sharp for fear he might disturb it all'.

What the scene in Paddy's lamp room really emphasizes is the values of an instinctual, intuitive responsiveness to the dynamic quality of life. Other scenes, similar in their composition, reveal how Green repeatedly juxtaposes masses as well as vividness and stasis, not to accentuate disparity between deceptive dream and reality, but to give 'verisimilitude' to a poetic, synthetic moment. Raunce and Edith, now in love, have found their way to the seat by the dovecote where Edith 'that first afternoon of spring' had watched 'the birds love-making'. The doves are now playing high in the air in 'declining light', 'wheeling' like the ecstatic girls in the dancing scene.

Edith laid her lovely head on Raunce's nearest shoulder and above them, above the great shadows laid by trees those white birds wheeled in a sky of eggshell blue and pink with a remote sound of applause as, circling, they clapped their stretched, starched wings in flight.

That side of Edith's face open to the reflection of the sky was a deep red.

'She passed my books all right this mornin'', he murmured.

'What books?' she asked low and sleepy.

'Me monthly accounts', he replied.

'Did she?' Edith sighed content. They fell silent. At some distance peacocks called to one another, shriek upon far shriek.

(p.170, emphasis added)

Edith's resting figure is animated by her 'deep red' face which, like the peacocks' ruby eyes and Raunce's 'red morocco leather' face, reflects the poetic dynamism of the context. The meaning of the peacocks' shrieks is not precise. On one level, their calls to one another may be interpreted as an analogue of Edith's and Raunce's unspoken communication, accentuating the poetic and the erotic in the scene. Thus, the intrusion of the distant shrieks into the idyll heightens the fragile preciousness of the moment, which is 'applauded' by the wheeling doves. However, the shrill shrieks may also seem to carry a note of warning, suggesting the presence of a world not quite as poetic. They occur just as Raunce mentions his red and black notebooks, his accounts and monthly savings, on which depend his plans of buying the old butler's house within the grounds of the castle. It is possible that the peacocks are warning against repressive forces which for so long have conditioned Raunce's life. At the end of the book, after the lovers' decision to escape the castle, both peacocks and doves 'applaud' the poetic moment.

The peacocks have a central although obscure symbolic function in the structure of Loving. Although their symbolism evades precise definition, the examination of their possible meanings as facets of concrete montage contexts is worthwhile. Determination of the peacocks' general symbolic functions is particularly important in

order to refute suspicions that their constant intrusions into the novel's poetic scenes may emphasize Edith's eroticism as an 'insidious mechanism'. Edith's natural impulses are healthy. In an interview with Alan Ross, Green is asked: 'Could you define the compulsion behind your writing?' Green's reply is, 'Sex'. Green remarks that 'I got the idea for Loving from a man I served with in the Fire Service during the war. He'd been a man-servant and he told me he'd once asked the elderly butler who ruled below stairs what he liked most in the world. The reply was: "Lying in bed with a woman on a summer morning, with the window open, eating buttered toast"'.¹ In light of Green's statements, the peacocks may in fact be seen to urge a deeper commitment to 'loving' and, therefore, escape from the stagnant castle. It is necessary to examine the peacocks' function in relation to different levels of meaning.

Bassoff argues that the cries of the peacocks 'provide a trombone accentuation of the erotic in the book'.² Russell suggests that 'the peacocks and all nature seem to be in arcane conspiracy with Edith'.³ Their statements stress an important aspect of the peacocks' function. However, in various contexts, the birds

1. 'Green, with Envy', pp.22-23.

2. Bassoff, p.148.

3. Russell, p.137.

seem to accentuate a more complex meaning. Both Bassoff and Russell, in order to support their arguments, refer to the scene in which Kate and Edith tease one another about what they would do if they found Raunce or 'Raunce's Albert' in their room, and the peacocks outside begin to parade. However, the peacocks' shrieks do also have a more alarming note.

Though they could not see them the
peacocks below were beginning to parade.

'And if it had've been Charley Edie?'

Edie gave a screech then slapped a
hand over her mouth. A peacock screamed
beneath but they were so used to this they
paid no notice.

(pp.45-46, emphasis added)

Like the cackling geese in Caught and Concluding, the peacocks seem to serve as warning heralds. Their shrieks seek to draw the girls' attention to some ambiguous threat which they, at this stage, disregard. Green may juxtapose images and scenes, not necessarily to pass ironic comment or value judgment on the attitudes or activities of the characters involved, but more as a catalytic device for warning them, or the reader, of the actual precariousness of reality. In other words, it is a warning to Edith and Kate that they should mobilize their resources to challenge a more threatening reality than their own little bedroom world. Mrs Tennant and Mrs Jack are addressed by the peacocks in the same manner. This time, however, the montage carries a strongly ironic note.

'Why, listen to those birds', Kate said.

Edith looked out. A great distance beneath she saw Mrs Tennant and her daughter-in-law starting for a walk. The dogs raced about on the terrace yapping which made the six peacocks present scream. The two women set off negligent and well dressed behind their bounding pets to get an appetite for tea.

(p.34, emphasis added)

Since the peacocks' warning signals are being ignored, they are insistently repeated. Green even stresses the peacock motif in a grotesque, violent manner. Mrs Welch's grand-son, Albert, an invader from the outside world, arrives and before long strangles a peacock. Still, Green's characters attempt to ignore the symbolic significance of the incident. 'Mrs Welch buried it away where none should see' (p.105). The greyhound, Badger, retrieves it and presents to Edith and Raunce 'a plucked carcass that stank'. Edith orders Badger away. 'On which the dog deposited this carcass at Raunce's feet'. Raunce hangs it in Mrs Welch's larder - Miss Burch tells Miss Swift, 'swarming with maggots' and 'infecting all our food'. Again the carcass disappears; Raunce's Albert reports that it has been incinerated by Mrs Welch in the boiler.

The peacocks' message and the nature of their complicity with Edith may be deduced in terms of the traditional concepts of conflicts and dénouement. At the story's end, as peacocks and doves cluster around

Edith in a moment of perfect bliss, there is no longer any opposition between values embodied by the peacocks and Edith's position. The resolution of conflict is obviously related to Edith's and Raunce's decision to leave the castle and to face the threat of war in England. Despite the insecurity of Edith's and Raunce's position, the novel ends on a happy note. In the interview with Alan Ross, Green answers a central question: 'Yet, all your books have, I think, happy endings. Would you agree that this is in essence because they are love stories, inspired by the belief that love is the most absorbing human experience of all, and therefore the most hopeful?' Green: 'Yes, indeed yes'.¹ Edith's and Raunce's escape implies freedom to meet a 'living' reality, freedom to confront the challenge of death, but also of 'loving'. In this outcome, the peacocks not only show their complicity with Edith; they function as a symbolic counterpart. Edith's and Raunce's release coincides with the peacocks', to some degree, new-won freedom: '"Come on out and feed the peacockth", she [Edith] proposed, for Paddy had at last consented to free these birds again' (p.192). The peacocks, now free, rally to partake in Raunce's celebration of Edith's fecund beauty.

'Why', he said, 'I love you more than I thought I was capable. I'm surprised at myself, honest I am. If my old mother could see her Charley now she'd never

1. 'Green, with Envy', p.22.

recognize 'im, he murmured ... He leant forward, gazed awkward into her face. 'I never seen anything like your eyes they're so 'uge not in all my experience', he announced soft. 'Yet for eighteen months I didn't so much as notice them. Can you explain that?' Then, perhaps to distract her attention, he invited her to witness what he saw, the peacocks that had been attracted.

(p.198)

The peacocks' imprisonment by Paddy in his room ('As though stuffed in a dusty case they showed themselves from time to time as one after another across the heavy days they came up to look at him') mirrors all the characters' captivity in the castle. What is more, there are suggestions that Paddy's motives for restricting the peacocks' freedom may correspond to Mrs Tennant's reasons for maintaining the stagnant, superficial order. Mrs Tennant would rather the peacocks be let out of their cages, not for their own sake, but because 'They're a part of the decoration of the place'. Paddy is reluctant, for as Raunce suggests, 'O'Connor was afraid of something or other' that is never explained (p.185). In the passage describing Paddy asleep in his room, he is depicted as a decayed, ancient Irish king shrouded in cobwebs. His attachment to the peacocks is motivated by his fear of such forces as may disturb the stasis effected by legend's rituals. 'It's priest-ridden love', Charley concludes before his escape (p.202). It is fear of human forces which may cause turmoil of the kind into which the castle is

thrown at the loss of the ring, another key motif in Loving. The artificiality of life in the castle is suggested by the way in which the peacocks are reduced, in Mrs Tennant's mind, to mere museum pieces. 'Having established there was no dust she rearranged the peacocks' feathers that for years had stood in a famille rose vase' (p.30). The peacocks' feathers are carefully arranged, surrounded by various animals that have been turned into what they are not. Mrs Tennant possesses an 'imitation pint measure also in gilded wood and in which peacocks' feathers were arranged. She lifted this off the white marble mantelpiece that was a triumph of sculptured reliefs depicting on small plaques various unlikely animals' (p.184). Mrs Tennant's formalism suggests her estrangement from natural human impulses, and also a lack of interest in human beings. 'My dear what do we know about the servants', she sighs, 'it's quite bad enough having them die on one' (p.36). The traditions on which the castle depends represent something inhuman and cold, like the marble statues. In Mrs Tennant's eyes 'there was something hard and glittering beyond the stone of age' (p.184).

If the peacocks' shrieks are viewed as warnings against forces that threaten natural, instinctual 'living', they constitute a clarifying leitmotif. The nature of the contexts in which the peacocks are heard strengthens the possibility of such a meaning. The montage conflicts

deepen the incompatibility between 'loving' and the lifestyle of the aristocracy in Ireland. In addition to the examples previously discussed, there is one scene in which Edith and Kate are lying on their bed in their room. The girls giggle about men. Edith is lying almost naked while Kate is stroking her till she begins to drowse. Suddenly there is a 'real outcry' from the peacocks, and in the drive below they discover Mrs Jack and Captain Davenport, with whom Mrs Tennant's daughter-in-law is having an adulterous affair. 'I do wish I could get you out of my system', she is heard to say (pp.47-48). The audio-visual counterpoint fashioned by the peacocks' 'real outcry' is decidedly a warning against some threat which is not immediately defined. However, Mrs Jack is not in a state of 'loving', which, to Green, implies an affirmative communion with 'living', and with what is alive. Her fears and guilt are overpowering. When Mrs Tennant recounts to her daughter-in-law Raunce's suspicion that O'Connor has locked up the peacocks because he is afraid of something, Mrs Jack's face 'appeared stiff with apprehension' (p.185). Her feelings are not warm, but impersonal passion - she wishes she could get the Captain out of her 'system'. Her preoccupations also cause her to neglect her children. Edith's first reaction at seeing the adulterous couple outside her window is: 'But won't the children be disappointed. I know they was counting on their mother taking them out the

little loves' (p.47). Mrs Jack's attempts to conceal her illicit desires behind a facade of decorum brings her no peace of mind. She is 'caught' in the 'system'. Mrs Jack's unfulfilled needs, her guilt-ridden conscience, and her compulsive defensiveness make her a victim of the castle's regressive atmosphere which the peacocks warn Edith and Kate to escape.

In a similar way, the peacock motif may also be read, in the following passage, as a warning against dehumanizing conditions. Raunce and Edith are talking about marriage.

'I mean after we're married', she whispered, her voice gone husky ...
'I'll make everything you want of me now so much more than you ever dreamed that you'll be quit imaginin' for the rest of your life'.

'Oh honey', he said in a sort of cry and kissed her passionately.
But a rustling noise interrupted them.

'What's that?' he asked violent.

'Hush dear', she said, 'it'th only the peacockth'.

And indeed a line of these birds one after the other and hardly visible in this dusk was making tracks back to the stables.

(p.173)

Again, the meaning of the peacocks' interruption is ambiguous. The glimpse of peacocks returning, in rigid formation, to their 'dusty case' suggests the peacocks' captivity in a 'system'. Their condition represents a counterpoint to fulfilment and 'loving'. This does not mean that the peacocks' interruption carries negative symbolic implications concerning Edith's and Raunce's marriage. Green's intent is obviously different,

considering his suggestion that his themes are committed to the Life within the novel; scenes do not symbolize the characters' destinies after the book. There is no evidence that the author attempts to discourage Edith's and Raunce's union. Edith is not a naive and innocent victim of Raunce's advances; she knows well how to attract him. Raunce does not seem to remain an aggressive character. Confused by Edith's beauty and confidence after his intrusion into the dancing scene and the blind man's buff, he apologizes and retreats, complaining about his neck to attract sympathy, and sighing because he misses Edith's company (p.110). Edith, by her maternal, feminine vitality, is able to soften and conquer him, to make him 'sick' with love. Hence, the peacocks' interruption may simply be read as a warning to Edith and Raunce to beware of repressive, dehumanizing forces that may condition their relationship. The peacocks are in 'conspiracy' with Edith; they accentuate the erotic in the novel; but they also bring notion of Life's fragility.

The various incidents with the weathervane unify all the motifs and layers of conflict in the novel. One day, Raunce is standing in front of a map of Ireland which has a pointer connected to a weathervane. He notices that the device is stuck in one position, 'with the arrow tip exactly on Clancarty, Clancarty which was indicated by two nude figures male and female recumbent in gold crowns. For the artist had been told the place was a home of the

old kings' (p.49). Mrs Jack, walking in and noticing how the arrow is indicating the scene of her adulterous affair, breaks the pointer in her agitated attempt to move it away from those 'disgusting people'. Clancarty, a monument over ancient kings, is a metaphor for the decadence of its inheritors who cultivate a dead past. At Clancarty, Captain Davenport 'digs after the old kings in his bog' (p.39). In some obscure way, Paddy is also involved with the ancient history of the place. Paddy 'knows Clancarty', Kate points out (p.40).¹ The connection between the episode with the weathervane and the shrieks of the peacocks is focused as Edith and Kate accompany Raunce to examine the works of the weathervane. Caught in the gear wheels, 'held by the leg was a live mouse'. Edith lets out a shriek, like those peacocks, and faints; the mouse responds in a 'paper-thin scream' (p.52).

The mouse does not echo Raunce's desperate predicament at being 'caught in the insidious mechanism of loving', as Labor maintains.² In fact, this incident takes place before Raunce has fallen in love with Edith. It signifies the 'living', the human, entrapped by the cold

1. Green indicates the central conflicts of Loving in Writers at Work, pp.110-11: 'The British servants in Eire while England is at war is Raunce's conflict, and one meant to be satirically funny. It is a crack at the absurd southern Irish and at the same time a swipe at the British servants, who yet remain human beings. But it is meant to torpedo that woman and her daughter-in-law, the employers'.

2. Labor, p.38.

machinery of artificiality, condemned by conformity to a petrified order which lovers must escape. Its symbolism is pertinent to all the inhabitants of the castle. As suggested by the map's two nude figures recumbent in gold crowns, Mrs Jack and the Captain's carnal affair implies a regressive search for old kings' treasures in Davenport's bog. 'Do they dig for it ... or pry long sticks into the ground or what?', Raunce muses, which makes Edith blush with embarrassment (p.40). She may be associating Raunce's remark with her unfortunate intrusion on the two nude figures in Mrs Jack's gold boat bed. The gold theme, Davidson points out, is used to 'suggest falseness or deception by covering or mimicking the real thing, carnality, by its association, and an entrapment, a transfixed helplessness that is quite Midas-like'. Thus, Mrs Jack and the Captain's relationship 'seems as cold, joyless and perilous as Mrs T's precious world wherein at the end she sits entrapped in a hammock of gold wire netting, forlorn, plumb in the centre of the dairy room'.¹ The image of the ensnared mouse obliquely alludes to the threat poised against Edith and Kate. Mrs Welch refers to them as a 'pair of two-legged mice' and Kate is worried there may be a mouse in Paddy's room (p.55). Raunce, before his falling in love with Edith, is not only a captive of the old machinery; he is the one trusted to operate it. When Edith goes to show him where to find the mechanism

1. Davidson, p.67.

holding the mouse, he 'came smoothly out, automatic'. When Raunce hears the gramophone in the previously discussed dancing scene, his real worry is that the girls may break the machine. Emotionally repressed, he follows the music 'like the most silent cat after two white mice' (p.65). At the beginning of the book, when Raunce, insensitive to Eldon's feelings, slinks into his sickroom to steal his whisky, Albert 'looked to listen as for a shriek' (p.18).

The shrieks of the peacocks, as well as other shrieks associated with the peacocks, form a meaningful pattern of warnings against dehumanizing forces. In addition, it is important to examine the peacock motifs with regard to their function in each particular context. They also recur outside montage arrangements as apt devices for enriching the suggestiveness of the narrative, and to create the desired degree of ambiguity. When Edith first appears in the novel, she is wearing 'a peacock's' feather above her lovely head, in her dark-folded hair' (p.19). She is carrying a gauntlet glove full of unbroken peacock's eggs which she is going to smear on her skin as a love charm. Rapturous shrieks from playing children or from Edith's and Kate's delighted giggling about men pervade the book. In such contexts, the peacock motif may, as Russell points out, seem to express the peacocks' 'complicity' with natural vitality.

Images and motifs associated with peacocks are

employed for their connotative, metaphorical potentials, to enrich the symbolic suggestiveness of the narrative. On a different level of meaning, they serve as structural elements. James Hall wonders, 'Does the novel have a structure obscured by the short, shifting scenes or is its apparently reckless picking up of everything its principle movement?' Hall believes that 'the basis of Green's skill is the free rolling interplay between his symbols and his characters' minds'. He attributes the obscurity of Loving's content to 'a multitude of symbols' which, he thinks, 'float so loosely in the novel that the key ones are lost. And every important symbol has at least two meanings - a general, often sexual one which reflects human nature, and a personal one which each character attaches to the object or experience'.¹ On the basis of the previous discussion, one may argue that the equivocal effect of Green's use of the peacocks stems mainly from their different functions in relation to different contexts. If this aspect of Green's technique is closely examined, one finds that the peacock motif does not exist in symbolic randomness, but accentuates the novel's structure and its value statement about experience.

Another key motif in Loving is Mrs Tennant's ring, a valuable antique. Previous critical assessments of its symbolic meanings require modification. James Hall's

1. Hall, pp.80-81.

view, shared by both Russell and Stokes, is that 'Mrs Tennant's loss of the ring implies loss of direction and loss of capacity for loving, while its passing to Edith, who has both in plenty, is the passing of a symbol of power'.¹ Hall, in other words, sees the ring as a symbol of love. However, there is no evidence that the ring possesses this kind of power. Raunce provides an important clue to the real significance of the ring when, in response to Edith's question as to whether they are going to leave the castle, he replies, 'No ... we're not. Not so long as we can find that ring And keep the house from bein' burned down over our heads. Or Mrs Jack from running off with the Captain so Mrs Tennant goes over for good to England' (p.149). Raunce and the other servants associate the ring with the preservation of status quo. Loss of the precious ring may entail losing their jobs, and in a symbolic sense, the breakdown of the old order. The ring belongs to the 'shadowless castle of 'treasures' which, Green points out, 'had yet to be burned down' (p.65). Labor notes how the circuit of disappearances made by the ring 'is remarkably similar to the rounds made by the tainted carcass of the dead peacock', which is first buried by Mrs Welch, then found by the dog Badger, returned to Mrs Welch by Raunce who hangs it in her larder, and finally obliterated by Mrs Welch who throws the carcass

1. Hall, p.82; Russell, p.127; Stokes, p.163.

in the boiler.¹ The constant reappearance of the dead peacock and the continual disappearance of the ring increase the feeling of insecurity among the castle's inhabitants. In the tumult that ensues, Mrs Welch anxiously removes all signs of disturbing forces, while the servants, either out of a dislike for change, or from a sense of duty, search for the lost ring which may restore stability to the household.

The appearance of the assurance company investigator, whose card is inscribed with the initials I.R.A. (Irish Regina Assurance) climaxes the servants' apprehensions. He is presumed to be a spy for the Irish Republican Army, and in conspiracy with Paddy. The I.R.A. will now probably attack the castle, the Jerries invade Ireland and, Miss Burch fears, rape all the women. Hall views the ring as 'an engagement ring in the existentialist sense' and notes how 'Edith finds it and becomes engaged to Raunce at almost the same time'.² If Hall by this means that the ring, as a symbol of love, possesses the power to unite, he is overrating its value. It is correct that Edith finds the ring at about the same time that she and Raunce become engaged, but their plans of marriage, at the time, coincide with their intention to remain servants in the moribund castle and with their effort to

1. Labor, p.31.

2. Hall, p.83.

establish themselves in a cottage formerly inhabited by Eldon's married predecessor. As Raunce says, if only they can find the ring, they are not going to leave. Edith, after discovering it, even wants to keep it as a dowry. However, the trial of having to cope with threats of disintegration, both from the inside and outside world, accompanying Mrs Tennant's long absence abroad and the loss of the ring, changes Raunce's mind. The sense of continuance provided by the castle proves an illusion. Raunce tells Edith that 'it wouldn't come as a surprise if places such as this weren't doomed to a natural death so to say' (p.195). Raunce's and Edith's escape, despite the final return of the ring, is motivated by this recognition.

It is the repeated loss of the ring, then, not its retrieval, that is important in an existentialist sense. Having been the petty-minded butler in the castle, content to preserve the status quo, Raunce gradually recognizes the immanent precariousness of existence. Raunce's love for Edith is strengthened by a new awareness of the preciousness of Life which is slowly being destroyed by the passage of time. 'I didn't realize I could love anyone the way I love you. I thought I'd lived too long ... Why I'm altogether changed ... but the years fly fast To think of Albert old enough to enlist' (p.149). Significantly, it is Albert's dangerous decision to join the Air Force as a tail gunner that finally prompts Raunce's

reevaluation of his position. Edith wonders why he has now changed his mind to leave the castle. "'It's Albert", he explained. "My Albert to want to do a thing like that. Why it's almost as if 'e was me own son"' (p.151). Raunce's great concern for the boy arises partly from the stirrings of his awakened humanness. 'He began to clear away the dinner things for his lad Albert. He surprised himself doing it' (p.150). (In keeping with the strong humorous element in the novel, Raunce's affection for his lad characteristically suffers whenever he thinks of him as a rival lover.)

However, an important thematic point is missed if Raunce's inchoate need to participate in life is not recognized at the same time. His adolescent anxiety has been evident in his regressive attachment to his mother to whom he has conscientiously been writing letters imploring her to come and stay with him in Ireland. His worries concerning the recovery of the lost ring have been aggravated by other fears. 'An' you went on that they'd clap you in the Army soon as ever you stepped off the boat over in Britain', Edith challenges him (p.151). What worries him now, on the other hand, is the feeling that his mother 'reckons we're 'iding ourselves away in this neutral country'. "'It's that bit about being afraid that gets me", he muttered' (p.197). Raunce's return to England despite the war may be partly the result of an awakened sense of duty to his country, as several critics have

suggested. However, his growth is more satisfactorily explained in terms of the existentialist theme that pervades all of Green's novels. Having experienced that security is actually an illusion and that dependence on the status quo is just an abstract bulwark inevitably undermined by the non-coherence of reality, Raunce senses the need to confront instability. The certainty of his material and social position is sacrificed for more fulfilling objectives - "'it's no manner of use hanging on in a place where you're not valued", he said' (p.195). Whether Raunce will eventually join the army over in England is uncertain, like everything else concerning their future. Green's major issue is Raunce's incipient willingness to accept uncertainty. Dependence upon precedent, precisely the idea against which Raunce is reacting, is lastly propounded by Edith who nourishes second thoughts about leaving. "'Stay in what you know, that's what I always maintain", Edith announced although she had never before expressed an opinion one way or the other' (p.196). The symptoms of Edith's conformity, however, are easily overrun by more attractive incitements. She is delighted once Raunce suggests that they elope together, which is far more romantically exciting than just leaving. "'Oh I can love you for this", she murmured' (p.200). Their determination to escape suggests hope for the future. Raunce's activated mental state, 'loving', provides hope that he will be able to participate in a more 'living'

reality.

Although Raunce shows signs of personal growth, it is Edith that represents the crucial values in Loving. Green's poetic characterization of Edith's 'glowing', 'brilliant', 'sparkling' beauty reflects her inner qualities. She adores Mrs Jack's children, who, in return, love Edith above anyone else. She handles Mrs Jack's garments with a delicacy and devotion radiating from her vigorous femininity. Edith's extraordinary capacity for joy derives from her devotion to life in a broad sense. She proceeds from girlish giggles with Kate to a womanly maturity that encompasses her whole being. She rejects Albert's regressive calf-love: 'A child like that? He wants his old mother, that's his trouble. But live an' let live is what I always say' (p.130). On another occasion she tells Raunce, 'I like a man that's a man and not a lad' (p.149). For Raunce, she wants to be both mother and mistress, bringing him comfort and joy. Whether the nervous, dyspeptic Raunce, on his part, can quite live up to Edith's idea of a man, is left uncertain. At the end, he still seems concerned with his duty towards his mother. However, Raunce's possible inadequacy does not alter the principal value statement of the novel, centring round Edith's maternal sensuality.

Besides creating a radiant moment of fecund beauty, the final scene clarifies the organizing principle of Loving. It brings Edith into the dovecote in both a

literal and a symbolic sense. Just as Lily, at the end of Living, is identified with the one pigeon which courageously responds to its instincts, so Edith is alternately associated with both peacocks and doves. Raunce may also attain certain characteristics of these birds. In Edith's darkened room, the two lovers embrace and become doves: 'Their two bodies flowed into one as he put his arms about her. The shape they made was crowned with his head, on top of a white sharp curved neck, dominating and cruel over the blur that was her mass of hair through which her lips sucked at him warm and heady' (p.180). Green's linking of the doves with Edith's and Raunce's sensual world of loving confirms the symbolic centrality of the previously examined dove-cote scene. Raunce's fervour, 'dominating and cruel', like that of the doves, reveals man's animal nature. As in the doves' rapturous 'kissing', however, Green perceives the vital aspect of natural impulses; animal instinct is an integral part of human love. Green's equation of Edith (and Raunce) with the doves suggests that the entire plot of the novel is modelled on the fairy-tale structure in order to crystallize basic truths in symbolic form. All events correlate (however indirectly) with values associated with the two key symbols in the novel, the dovecote (including the functions of the peacocks) and the ring, the former connoting vitality and instinctual 'living'

and the latter, automatic, life-excluding conformity.¹ Meaning is produced by the juxtapositions or intrusions of elements pertaining to these two incongruous poles of values in relation to particular contexts.

Hall suggests that 'Most of the characters in Loving are more easily worried by symbols than by events - they have established methods for dealing with events'.² Hall's perceptive observation aids the delineation of central themes in the novel, and the detection of an underlying montage structure. Most of the confusions and anxieties in Loving come because of someone's pre-occupation with events, objects, or duties that are related to the two main symbols. It is the constant juxtapositions of the characters' symbolically related pre-occupations and a contrary reality that produce both the humorous and the grim statements of the book. The servants

1. Although Green does not confirm the previously suggested correspondence of Loving with Elizabethan comedy, such a comparison shows interesting similarities. As in Loving, All's Well opens with a reference to a funeral. The comic drive towards a festive conclusion involves defiance of 'laws ... preoccupied with trying to regulate the sexual drive, and so work counter to the wishes of the hero and the heroine'. Moreover, the suggestion that love releases Raunce from a certain mechanical behaviour and tyrannical whims points to Elizabethan comedy. 'Love conquers all, in general: it also conquers certain enemies of its own in particular. Of these, one of the most important is lust. Love is a specific relation between two people which individualizes them both; lust is an unspecified drive which cares nothing for its object' (Frye, A Natural Perspective, pp.74,86).

2. Hall, p.81.

most resistant to change - Raunce, Miss Burch, Miss Swift, Mrs Welch - are repeatedly puzzled by absurd situations which deviate from their narrow conceptions about life, demanding readjustment. Green may caricature these characters so that their blindness as well as, to them, irrational events, lose their underlying seriousness and become hilarious. As Coleridge says, 'all is equal in contrast with the infinite'. The relevance of these words indicates that Loving, with all its humour, is an existentialist novel, and therefore basically serious. A scene like the one in which Raunce declares his 'big' love for Edith, whereupon the dog comes and deposits the stinking carcass of a plucked peacock at his feet, is decidedly comical. However, the humour only alleviates the sense of warning given by the dead peacock. All events in Loving are enacted against the imminent threat of death, either physical or spiritual. At the end, the dead peacock is symbolically resurrected in the hopeful image of live ones being fed by Edith. Structurally and thematically, the connection of the dead peacock and the ring centres on the question of life and death. The glimpse of the ring hidden under half an eggshell suggests lurking danger (p.135). In some symbolic way, the rotten, stinking peacock, buried by Mrs Welch, connects with the meaning of the ring, the important difference being that whereas Mrs Welch wants to bury the peacock, she needs to disinter the ring. She is intent on

opening the drains in which she thinks the ring is stuck, for, almost as if it came from the rotting peacock, she notices 'a terrible stench of drains' (p.161). Symbolically related to the theme of decay, Bassoff notes 'in connection with the underground that "Captain Davenport seeks after treasure in a bog"' (emphasis added).¹

In this secluded world of decay, Green does not overlook some characters' great capacity for spontaneous merriment. Burdened by sinister premonitions, the servants may all surrender to joyous giggling when imitating the I.R.A. man's lisp - because in such a grave context, his 'th's' really are funny. At the table, as the servants are discussing Edith's sensational discovery of Captain Devenport trying to hide under the silk sheets in Mrs Jack's bed, uneasiness and confusion yield to laughter. Even Paddy emerges from his usual lethargy:

a great braying laugh started out of the lampman. It swelled. It filled the room. Raunce said, 'Look what you've done', and in his turn began to laugh. Kate joined in. So at last did Edith. These two girls did not giggle this time, they both deeply laughed.

(p.81)

Green's description of the contagious laughter, the way in which it swells, fills the entire room, is remarkably similar to his technique for evoking the storming intensity of wheeling, dancing girls, both in Loving and Concluding, or, for example, the expanding swarm of starlings filling

1. Bassoff, p.153.

the air in a musical crescendo in Concluding's oft-referred-to sunset scene. The servants' joy relieves the gravity of daily anxieties and disagreements, presenting Mrs Jack's amorous misadventure with the redeeming touch of ludicrousness that it merits. It is characteristic that the servants do have a 'human' dimension to their personalities, in addition to the more mechanical square-mindedness conditioned by their positions. They do not copy the petrified decadence of Mrs Tennant. Everybody nourishes strong affections for someone. Eldon loves Ellen. Miss Burch, the spinsterish housekeeper, loves Eldon. Edith and Kate relax from their routine chores by indulging in intimate, feminine communion. Mrs Welch runs her domain, the kitchen, as an authoritarian guard of order and morality. Frivolity somehow taints the food. However, when reprimanding her obnoxious grand-son, 'her voice was thick with love' (p.54). And Miss Burch adores Edith, 'I love that girl of mine Edith, I love that child Miss Swift' (p.116). Even Raunce's Albert loves, in his adolescent way - he accepts the blame for the theft of the ring, which he has never seen, in order to shield Edith. In fact, the impersonal forces which they serve are countered by liberating human impulses. As Raunce remarks, "'Miss Swift is a difficult woman whilst she's up in her nursery. But she can be nice as you please outside'". "That's right", Miss Burch said, "and as I've often found, take someone out of their position in life and you find

a different person altogether, yes''' (p.42). The girls' giggling suggests that Miss Burch's remark is aimed at Raunce, another indication that he ought to escape his position as butler of the castle. When they all gather around their table, they seem human beings who agree, disagree, laugh, and love. Their humanness, in all its intrigue, displays traits reminiscent of the book's central symbolism, life in the dovecote; it is not a static conformity that is presented, but more like a living reality.

From a structural point of view, Loving is a novel in which healthy human impulses are in competition with a life-restraining dependence on status quo, either externally or personally imposed. The servants' capacity for joy is a sign of their humanity, but may at times be submerged in a mindless indifference towards vital human concerns, owing to their preoccupation with triviality and superficiality. Only a montage approach can indicate the tone intended in the interaction between certain attitudes and different contexts. The servants' contribution to the maintenance of the castle is, symbolically, a manifestation of their regressive folly. It is ultimately a metaphor for their private fears concerning 'living'. Despite their inherent capacity for loving, most of the characters suffer as a consequence of unfulfilled needs. And it is the fulfilment of vital human needs in an existentialist context that is Green's preoccupation.

It is the effect of the loving on Edith and Raunce that resolves the novel. Since, on a metaphorical level, the curious tension between realism and fantasy stems from Green's and his characters' projections of longings and fears (represented by symbols and images) into the everyday life, Edith's and Raunce's escape is not exclusively a physical escape from one place to another. It implies their symbolic rejection of a static order (associated with the ring) and Green's celebration of 'living' (his symbolic identification of Edith with the birds in the final scene). Similarly, in the intersection between symbolism and narrative structure in Loving, montage reveals disparities and contradictions that produce both the comic and the tragic statements of the novel.

Only a montage approach can fully illuminate Green's artistic order. Contradictory images act against one another to crystallize the importance of humanly sustaining values. The reader's perception of values is reinforced by the sense of life's uncertainty and fragility. In this manner, Green's montage method heightens the comic tone of the novel despite his recognition of tragedy and conflict. Moments of poetic significance reflect the author's creative commitment to his world. Accordingly, his utilization of montage stimulates the reader's affirmative participation in a living present, a present with a 'life of its own'.

Chapter Five

CONCLUDING (1948)

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Concluding is probably the most unresolved of Green's novels. It stresses the complexity of contradictory human impulses and conflicts. Edward Stokes finds that 'in Concluding ... Green has developed even further the poetic methods which enable him to present, at the same time, several different aspects or levels of reality - the contemporary and the timeless, the specific and the universal'.¹ The incorporation of many aspects of reality in the record of a day in the life of old Mr Rock reflects Green's recognition of man's entrapment in a fragmentary universe. The world of Concluding is one in which no fundamental questions are answered. We do not know whether Rock will lose his cottage; his fears of becoming homeless will continue. The disappearance of the two schoolgirls, Mary and Merode, remains a mystery; Merode is found in the forest, but explains nothing; Mary never reappears. Nor do we know who haunts the woods in the middle of the night, yelling Mary's name and playing tricks on both the Principals and on Rock. As Rock concludes at the end of the novel, 'We shall never know the truth' (p.253).

1. Stokes, p.170.

Green does not resolve the major conflicts in Concluding, or answer its central questions, because this is not his chief concern. On the contrary, Robert Ryf is correct when he suggests 'the possibility that ambiguity itself may be Green's central theme here'. The possibility of a clarified meaning which binds together the different aspects of a single day is ultimately obscured in the darkness of intangibility. Consequently, critics have been concerned to determine how the author's awareness of inexplicable forces of darkness affects the total vision of Concluding. Ryf finds tragic elements to be the novel's most dominant aspect: 'There seems to be, in this story of a day in the life of old Mr Rock, a heavy weariness that is more than his own'.¹ Edward Stokes argues that Concluding is Green's most pessimistic novel: it 'has the quality of a nightmare, not only in the way it constantly suggests the presence of evil forces, just outside our range of vision, always about to materialize, but never quite doing so, but also in its formless coherence'.²

Stokes's contention that Concluding is characterized by a 'formless coherence' which induces the novel's overall pessimism, requires elucidation. Stokes attributes Concluding's mood of disintegration to the book's 'poetic'

1. Robert S Ryf, Henry Green (Columbia Essays on Modern Writers 29) (New York 1967), pp.33,35.

2. Stokes, p.172.

effects, 'poetic ... in the highly charged, lyrical natural description, in the extraordinary profusion of its imagery ... in its whole structure and organization'.¹ Concluding abounds in visual expressions such as colour, light, darkness, circles, spirals, sea and water imagery. Within these groups of images there are subdivisions: images of light, for example, consist of sunlight, moonlight, torchlight, reflected light in rich prism colours - each with some individual but never fully revealed meaning. This technique is used to transmit emotional experience which, according to Green, may only be expressed through visual imagery and poetic metaphor. This imagery is important insofar as it expresses the more pervasive contradiction which formulates life itself.

Stokes nevertheless finds a strong element of 'coherence' in Concluding: he suggests that 'we go in and out of this novel in the way the mind goes in and out of a dream'.² Thus Stokes discovers a nightmarish pattern not only in Green's methods of letting various levels of 'poetic' expression continuously yield to a threatening objective reality: corresponding sinister elements also pervade Green's 'poetry'. John Russell deals more specifically with this idea. He claims that Green's imagery shows that the world of Concluding undergoes a

1. Stokes, p.172.

2. Stokes, p.172.

'sea change' or a 'transformation by water', suggesting dying or drowning.¹

However, a closer examination of Green's sea and water images reveals that they have by no means a clear, consistent denotative meaning, nor do they necessarily refer to a realistic, empirical representation. Very often, sea images are used to evoke the sensuous complexity of a subjective experience which is too rich to be expressed in clear descriptive statements. Thus the girls Mr Rock meets at breakfast invade his senses with sensual, 'flowing' vitality:

the sleep from which they had just come
a rosy moss upon the lips, the heavy tide
of dreams on each in a flow of her eight-
een summers, and which would ebb now only
with their first cup they were fetching,
as his tea made his old blood run again,
in this morning's second miracle for
Mr Rock.

(p.22, emphasis added)

At other times, water imagery serves as a connective tissue by which Green expresses a sense of unification. An illustrative example is provided in the scene in which Rock, courageously challenging the dark to mount the steps of the Institute, unites three 'alien, glistening, frozen-eyed, alone' people into 'one hydra-headed body' (pp.189-90). Green may employ water imagery to connote drowning, but the imagery is not a direct, objective representation of actuality:

1. Russell, pp.191,193.

'I haven't been quite well, I had a breakdown at work', Elizabeth told Miss Winstanley, as they set out along a great hill of rhododendron twelve foot high with flowers the colour of blood, and the colour of the flesh of bathers in open air in sunless country. Winstanley, as she bent her head to listen, took her companion's hand in hers as a sort of tribute to this woman's being drenched with love.

(p.98, emphasis added)

The two underlined words in this passage serve indefinable functions. The surreal quality of the scene suggests that it is principally a metaphorical projection of Liz's subjective feelings. Liz's reminiscence of her nervous breakdown, from which she has more or less recovered, evokes the picture of 'bathers ... in sunless country'. However, Liz's 'being drenched with love' is no symbolic testimony of the lethal quality of her relationship with Sebastian. Green does not reveal the cause of Liz's nervous breakdown. Moreover, there also are passages in the book which stress the beauty of the lovers' relationship. If the flowers in the previous scene are recognized as being different colours, it is possible that the red rhododendrons - 'the colour of blood' - express the intensity of Liz's love, and contradict the bloodless, colourless ones. The fact that Winstanley 'let go of that hot hand' supports this interpretation. Liz's 'hot' blood corresponds to the blood-red flowers. It is possible that the scene reflects Liz's subjective immersion in love rather than an objective representation of drowning. This possibility is strengthened by Miss

Winstanley's question, 'Would you like my mirror?'.¹

If Green's images were only seen as integral elements in the novel's ordained cyclic movement from morning till night, the dominant tone of Concluding would indeed be that of a tragic vision. The preceding examples indicate, however, that Green's images do not simply infiltrate the different levels of reality in the novel so as to give it a coherent pattern of general disintegration and dark, sinister mysticism. They do not primarily reflect a verifiable ulterior reality. Instead, they are technical devices which enrich the novel's style. In order to provide a precise meaning, they will consequently have to be examined as part of a larger context. This approach is validated by Green's previously cited statement that 'it is the context in which they [words] lie that alone gives them life. They should be used as painters use colour, to give tone'.¹ Green's remark contradicts Russell's approach, the implication of which is that a precise meaning is inherent in Green's images.

Other extreme views also require modification. A K Weatherhead sees a different side of Concluding and goes so far as to suggest that Green's words and images have an infinite variety of meanings. Even if individual visual images in Concluding generally lack a precise

1. 'A Novelist to his Readers' - I, p.506.

denotative meaning, Weatherhead overstates his point when he claims that 'the structure of Concluding ... so far from despoiling its members, the texture, of their "private and independent characters", virtually fails to govern at all' and that 'the texture enjoys not merely democracy but the complete anarchy of the Imagist poem where structure bows out entirely in favour of the autonomy of the texture'.¹ The following passage from Concluding illuminates what Weatherhead means by 'textural autonomy'. It bears an affinity with Wallace Stevens's previously quoted 'Sea Surface Full of Clouds'. When Moira appears at Mr Rock's cottage, her youth 'made him think of a ripe plum, on a hot day, against green leaves on a wall' (p.81). Here it is the purely aesthetic, or imagistic, quality of the images that produces the poetic effect. The lack of denotative constrictions increases the purely connotative potency of the passage so that it appeals directly to the reader's visual, aesthetic imagination.

However, metaphorical richness does not exclude a structure of meaning or tone. Visual imagery is rarely divorced from some determining context so as to attain complete autonomy of texture. It is important to bear in

1. Weatherhead, 'Structure and Texture in Henry Green's Latest Novels', Accent 19 (Spring 1959), p.112. The terms 'structure' and 'texture' are used as defined by John Crowe Ransom in The New Criticism (New York 1941).

mind Green's statement that 'the way in which the writer places his characters in the shifting scenes of his book will give the work significance'. Green's world contains contrasting and colliding elements, a dynamic juxtaposition of the 'contemporary and the timeless, the specific and the universal'. Montage structure plays a far greater role in this novel than most critics recognize. Metaphorical texture provides the flavour of the narrative, whereas montage highlights the significance of context in which sentence rhythm, juxtaposition of images, and filmic devices play an essential part. Montage illuminates basic values in Concluding by emphasizing certain aspects of central themes through conflict of images. When two scenes or images collide in the generative way characteristic of montage, they create an intensified perceptual awareness of and a deepened sense of disparity between those aspects of the narrative that are emphasized, thereby modifying the meaning of the surrounding context. In effect, the tone of the narrative becomes apparent.

Despite Green's recognition of tragedy, montage works as a counteracting, reintegrating force. Montage strives to crystallize meaning and significance. The montage effect in Concluding deepens the disparity between fragments in order to bring vital human values into relief. In this manner, Green strengthens the didactic aspect of the novel at the expense of purely realistic presentation. Stokes does not take into account the full import of Concluding's

structure when he says that 'it is paradoxical ... that Concluding is both Green's most pessimistic and his most poetic novel'.¹

Meaning as a function of montage is best approached by an examination of the imagery of darkness and light. Darkness and light are contradictory aspects of reality and are bound up with Concluding's cyclic movement. The thematic importance of these images' dynamic interaction may be discovered through a montage approach. A sense of heavy weariness, enhanced by a misty semi-darkness before sunrise, sets the mood at the opening of Concluding. Rock 'groaned a third time. - Early morning comes hard on a man my age, he told himself for comfort, comes hard. - How hard? Oh, heavy' (p.5). Rock's mood is in consonance with the silent treetops surrounded by mist, 'beneath which loomed colourlessly one mass of flowering rhododendron after another and then the azaleas, which, without scent, pale in the fresh of early morning, had not yet begun, as they would later, to sway their sweetness forwards, back, in silent church bells to the morning' (p.6). The two old men, Rock and Adams, are concerned with complaining and worrying about old age and the passage of time. 'Why I lost her [his wife], sir, the winter just gone', Adams says (p.6). 'I'm getting an old dodderer', Rock complains. '"You're a ripe age

1. Stokes, p.172.

now", George Adams agreed'. 'It's my legs', Rock goes on. '"Nothing anyone can do for the bends", Adams said at last, out of an empty head'. A conflict of masses, created by a dazzling sunlight, suddenly interrupts the old men's conversation:

At this instant, like a woman letting down her mass of hair from a white towel in which she had bound it, the sun came through for a moment, and lit the azaleas on either side before fog, redescending, blanketed these off again; as it might be white curtains, drawn by someone out of sight, over a palace bedroom window, to shut behind them a blonde princess undressing.

'It's not fair on one to grow old', Mr Rock said.

(pp.6-7)

These scenes from the opening pages of Concluding present a crucial problem for consideration: to what extent do the two characters' position reflect a tragic preoccupation on the part of the author, and to what extent is Green's arrangement of details intended to emphasize human values?

It is important to note in this connection that Green's attention in the opening pages of Concluding not only dwells on life's oppressive cyclic movement towards eternal darkness. On the contrary, he strikes an optimistic note by affirming that the bleak morning will later be chased by sun, birds, and flowers. In fact, this conviction is shared by Rock when getting out of bed that morning: 'It will be a fine day, a fine day in the end, he decided' (p.5). The truth of these optimistic

statements is finally reassuringly confirmed at the end of the novel. Rock, although surrounded by darkness, can then conclude that he is 'well satisfied with his day' (p.254). Liz has just echoed Rock's previous assertion that 'All's well that ends well' (p.252). Most significantly, this statement signals Concluding's similarity to the genre of Shakespearean comedy.

Northrop Frye suggests that 'the "all's well that ends well" formula is deeply involved with a structure in which redemption from death, or even revival from death, is a central element'.¹ Green seems to suggest that there is hope as long as one concentrates on the positive aspects contained in one single day at a time, without looking too far beyond into mute darkness.

Green's anticipation of a 'happy ending' deepens the incongruity between the positive aspects of life and Rock's and Adams's negativism and fears about life here and now. Montage emphasizes precisely this meaning, for when the sun suddenly breaks through the mist, Green makes sure that it does not go on shining. For only a moment it transforms the world around Rock before he goes on grumbling about the injustice of growing old. Thus the main function of this conflict of masses is to suddenly interrupt the flow of complaints by a glimpse of beauty. The resultant incongruity produces a sense of

1. Frye, A Natural Perspective, p.139.

irony which marks Rock's outlook.

Various similar devices are used by Green to draw the reader's attention to the tone of the novel. Rock's and Adams's attentions shift to Liz, Rock's granddaughter, with whom Rock lives alone in a small cottage. Liz has just recovered from a nervous breakdown, and Rock blames it all on Sebastian, Liz's lover, of whom Rock is irreconcilably jealous; 'she would never get well while she could meet that man, he knew' (p.7). To Adams's remark whether Rock does not find his granddaughter a blessing to have with him, Rock grunts to himself, 'a blessing and a curse ... then repented this last so violently that he could not be sure he had not spoken out loud' (p.7). This 'loud' rush of feeling that seizes Rock is intensified by a call heard by Adams. Its function is that of an audio-visual counterpoint (although one does not actually hear the call). As in the previous montage trope, this counterpoint is obviously intended to arrest and bring Rock's negating attitude into relief. Again, however, Rock fails to be profoundly affected. He does not hear the call; he does not comprehend its personal relevance: 'The sage looked blank at his companion. But it was too dark with sudden mist to read the expression on his face ... "I'm a mite deaf", Mr Rock answered' (p.7).

The call probably comes from someone searching in the woods for the lost Mary, the young woman who has disappeared without a trace from her boarding school. Some

indication of its symbolic meaning is given by the great importance Rock attaches to whether there is an echo or not. He tells Adams that 'if you ... call away from the place down this ride behind, you won't get a whisper in return' (p.8). The lack of reply seems to reflect man's entrapment in flux and uncertainty. The predicament of human existence accounts for the underlying tragic vision of Concluding. In this void, man can either commit himself to growth and beauty, or surrender to the dark forces which will transport him through the solitary journey from the semi-darkness of morning to the long sleep of dark night. Green's montage technique accents the precariousness of existence and the need to comprehend Life through love.

Green emphasizes the significance of the calls for the lost girl by making them an integral part of Concluding's structure. During Rock's and Adams's morning conversation, the call is repeated thrice. Significantly, Rock groans, not once, but thrice. Similarly, Rock has three animals which, at the end of the novel, each lets out a squeal to assert some obscure message. The recurrence of the number three, and the fact that the name shouted is Mary, indicate some biblical allusion. Simon Peter denies Christ thrice; Peter's name means 'Rock'; at the end of the novel, after Rock's vehement denial of the girls and Edge, he exclaims the word, 'Petra' (p.245). The possibility that some events relate to basic Christian

values or to man's (notably Rock's) denial of them is stressed in Pack My Bag. Green's citation of one of his childhood sermons reveals his concern with this theme.

Brethren you know the time Jesus told Peter that he would deny him thrice and then the cock would crow and I expect you remember how Peter did deny that he had been with Jesus and how after three times denying of having been with Jesus the cock crew and how he went out and wept.

Green offers Christ's love as a contrast to Peter's denial, 'his wonderful love for Peter not only for Peter but for the whole world'.¹ Concluding's biblical images or allusions do not possess a consistent, self-sufficient symbolic meaning. Whether they emphasize basic values or characters' affirmation or denial of these can only be determined in relation to each concrete context. It may be significant that after Rock has failed to respond to the appeal of the first call, Green describes Rock and Adams as moving like 'suiciding moles in the half light' (p.8).

The values to which Green points are specifically implied in connection with the following montage conflict. Adams hints at how hard Rock works carrying buckets full of swill. 'I do this for Elizabeth, Mr Rock told himself'. At that instant there is a conflict of masses: 'His glasses were misted, fog still hung about, but the sun coming through once more, made it for a second so that

1. Pack My Bag, pp.27-28.

he might have been inside a pearl strung next the skin of his beloved ... - Elizabeth, Eliza, Liz, Mr Rock thought'. The conflict of masses counterpoints values linked with the sun and the sense of confinement associated with mist. This conflict is further accentuated by the fact that Rock pronounces Liz's name three times, an act which intimates the religious significance of love. That there is a vital necessity for love in the midst of unfathomable darkness is again stressed after the second call, when Rock learns from Adams that there is no echo, just a void. Realizing this, he 'let his love for Elizabeth, and fear that he might lose the cottage, sap what ability was left him' (pp.8-9).

Rational obsession with empirical reality, with disorder and flux, is life-denying. Consequently, Green stresses the need to comprehend Life through love. This dichotomy provides a basic clue to the understanding of Concluding. Ways in which values of love apply to the relationship between the individual and Nature are expanded upon in connection with a new series of audio-visual counterpoints involving the attitudes of Miss Edge and Miss Baker, the spinsterish head-mistresses of the Institute that trains girls to become state servants. Human nature, to Miss Edge, represents a disintegrating force and must therefore be brought under the control of the state. For this reason, she fears individuals who will not bend to the interests of institutional life.

She distrusts Rock's strong individualism, and wants him evicted from his state-owned cottage which is situated in the grounds of the Institute. Around her mansion (the throne of regimentation), Edge has arranged a well-kept, symmetrical garden. It is a shield against the mystic forest beyond. Edge's rigidity is an implicit denial of Life. Montage makes the following scene deeply ironic. Miss Edge, standing by the window in her House,

could not at once leave the scene spread out afresh. Because, with the coming of light, the mist was rolling back, even below her third Terrace, all the way to her ring of beechwoods planted in line with the crescent of her House; although, off to the left, where beech trees and azaleas came down over water, her Lake still held its still fog folded in a shroud.

'I love this great Place', she announced ...

She was moved.

Then she thought she heard something.

'What was that?' she asked. Baker plucked a fishbone from her mouth.

(pp.15-16)

The call, serving the function of an audio-visual counterpoint, disturbs Edge in her admiration of her three rigidly arranged terraces. It ironically signals the presence of a reality which her uniform order is intended to exclude. Edge's confusion as to the meaning of the call elicits her companion's mute reply: the image of Baker plucking a fishbone from her mouth. The humorous incongruity between Edge's and Baker's reaction stresses the irony of the passage. Baker's trivial preoccupation with the fishbone suggests her lack of affirmative response

to the challenge of the call. It reflects the two ladies' denial of a vital commitment to reality.

Edge again directs her attention to the garden, this time revealing her repressed natural needs. She looks out on her big lawns

which, in the dew, over long grass, all down the three descending Terraces, had strings of brilliants garlanded now between the blades and which flashed prism colours at her from the sun, against a background of mist. 'I love it', she repeated ... She was about to move away, out of danger, when she was halted.

'There', she exclaimed. 'Did you not hear this time?'

(p.16, emphasis added)

An essential function of the call is obviously to 'halt' Edge's withdrawal from the 'danger' she perceives. Green uses various devices to heighten the dynamism of this passage. Effects similar to a conflict of graphic directions are produced as the three regularly arranged 'Terraces' (the fact that 'Terraces' is capitalized emphasizes and increases its visual impression) are counteracted by 'dazzling prism colours from the sun, which also create a conflict of masses against a background of mist. Enhanced by a rhythm which Eisenstein and Vendryes would term 'emotional speech', these conflicts accentuate a tone of disparity between natural vividness and formal order. Edge's attempted withdrawal from this vivid display of natural splendour is abruptly arrested by the second call for Mary. The call again functions as an audio-visual counterpoint, a warning that Edge's self-restraint is

life-denying.

To the pattern of montage arrangements formed by the calls, Green also adds other sounds. Directly after Edge has been halted by the second call, she turns to the problem of how to get 'this curious creature Rock' thrown out of his cottage, when she is suddenly arrested again: 'There was a knock. A nervous Marion came in with scrambled eggs' (p.16). The functions of the knock and the calls are obviously related, because the knock is immediately associated with Mary: 'Now that Edge was away on her pet topic she did not think to ask after Mary a second time'. Compared to the great emphasis Green puts on the significance of the calls, Baker's repeated insistence that Edge have 'scrambled eggs' seems incongruously trivial (the topic of eggs was in fact also being discussed in combination with Baker plucking a fishbone from her mouth). The montage deepens the conflict between the two ladies' preoccupation with their 'perennial subject' (eggs and how to dispose of Rock) and more vital matters associated with Mary. It suggests the superficiality of their domestic routines and the misanthropic detachment underlying their institutional regimentation.

Viewed against the number of examples given so far, there is clearly a recurrent pattern of montage conflicts in Concluding. There can be no doubt that the use of montage accentuates the novel's tone. Green entreats an affirmative response to reality, implying the values of

love, care, and tolerance. On the other hand, Green makes no clear distinction between these values and sexuality. Sexuality is not isolated as a force that immerses the self into the disintegrating rhythms of flux. Rather, Green emphasizes its vital potentiality. Affirmation of human nature counteracts the dark, disintegrating forces that threaten to quench 'living'. Denial of sexual impulses is ironically dramatized through montage in the following scene. Green's technique in the first part bears much resemblance to what Eisenstein would call a conflict of event and its duration. The deliberate slow motion of Green's description only increases the underlying conflicts in the passage. It reveals Edge's fear of Life; it increases the reader's expectation that something will suddenly break up the slow progress; and it makes the collision of incongruous images all the more powerful when that does happen. Slowly, Edge

moved across to draw one pair of curtains, merely to look at the weather, or to lower a window perhaps, she did not know, but the room influenced her to act on graceful impulse. She took hold on velvet, which had red lilies over a deeper red, and paused, as she gently parted the twin halves, to admire her hands' whiteness against the heavy pile. Delicately, then, she proceeded to reveal window panes ... to disclose glass frosted to flat arches by condensation, so that the Sanctum was reflected all dark sapphire blue from electric light at her back because it was not yet morning. She could even see, round her head's inky shade, no other than a swarm of aquamarines, which, pictured on the dark sapphire panes, were each drop of the chandelier that she had lit with the lamps switched on in entering.

(p.12)

The restraint of Edge's movements is dynamized by sexual undertones. This technique highlights the head-mistress' repressed sexual proclivities. Very delicately, she 'took hold on velvet' and 'gently parted the twin halves'. In doing this, Green makes her pause while he pictures the whiteness of her hands against deep red velvet, a contrast intended to heighten the underlying sexual tension of the description, not only because of the contrast in colours, but also because deep red is a dramatic colour evoking associations of blood, and because velvet has a delicate quality that appeals to the tactile senses. This depiction of latent energy is counteracted by the image of 'glass frosted to flat arches'. Moreover, Green creates tension and suspense due to the incongruity produced by highly dynamic, vivacious images - such as 'dark sapphire blue' reflections and a 'swarm of aquamarines' - and Edge's slow disaffectedness which is enhanced by negative expressions: Edge sees 'no other than a swarm of aquamarines' (emphasis added).

It is at this very instant that Green's style suddenly changes into a highly energetic vehicle for conveying dramatic action. 'Excited emotional speech', as Eisenstein would term it, provides the sensory impact of a sudden filmic close-up which accentuates conflict between Edge's attitude and vital values.

She also caught a glimpse of matter
whisk across behind, then dart back to
hide. She turned. Held her breath,
or she might have screamed. And it was,

as she had feared, a horrid bat.
 She made one dive for the wicker
 basket and put that on her.

(p.12)

The image of the bat serves, on one level, a similar function as the repeated calls for the disappeared Mary. It clashes with attitudes in the preceding context - here with Edge's distrustful cautiousness. After the incident, her still strong desire to open the curtains wrestles with her fear that she may see more bats, that they might even 'flicker up her skirts', so she merely 'peeped at the day as if by stealth' (pp.12,15). Edge's reaction to the bat reflects not only her sexual repressions, but also (since the bat appears in the context of brilliant, light-reflected aquamarines) her more general denial of natural dynamism. Facing this scene, Edge dives for a wicker basket and puts her head into it, thereby creating a conflict of scales. (Similarly, Gates, in Living, puts his head into the basin.) The wicker basket has the same functional meaning as the pot, the sink, and the basin, all extensively discussed in the analysis of Living. The conflict of scales produces a sense of confinement, of repression, and of alienation from the sun. This tone is immediately strengthened by a new conflict of scales and masses between the wicker basket and the outside world. Baker opens the window. 'A light came through, so grey it was doomed, together with a wisp of mist. The bat flew outside at once' (p.13).

By concentrating on new visual details, Green reinforces the connection of Edge's misanthropy, her denial

of natural vividness, and her sexual repressions. Edge, removing the basket from her head, cynically remarks:

'If we could as easily rid ourselves of Rock' (p.13).

She is referring to her symbolic equation of Rock and the bat. Immediately, Baker notices a piece of paper which has been in the basket on Edge's head. It reads

'FURNICATES'. The piece of paper on Edge's head (with the word misspelt) makes Edge look ridiculous. It ironically points to Edge's repressed sexuality, perhaps even to a repressed attraction for Rock. When she drops the 'word' and lets it 'spiral to destruction', she implicitly defies Rock, the bat, the forest, and all Nature.

In order to find a measure of stationary security in the midst of Nature and flux, Edge mistakenly chooses to view life as a static, repetitive pattern which brings hope in terms of calculated intervals. After dropping the piece of paper to rotate to the ground, Edge remarks to Baker: 'Each Wednesday that you and I go up to Town ... the weather we have here, Baker, is exquisite, truly exquisite. There may be black fog outside, just now, this minute, but we shall be cheated, dear. The sun will shine' (p.13). The sun will certainly shine some time during the day; this is what both Rock and Adams also tell themselves for comfort. However, renewal of human life is not the inevitable result of the diurnal pattern. Concluding exposes life's habitual yielding to the tragic flux of formless, cyclic propensity which can only be

challenged through participation in the living present.

'Day was committed to night; the sequence here is light then darkness, and what had been begun in this community under the glare of morning, is yet to be concealed in a sharp fresh of moonlight, a statuary of day after sunset, to be lost, at last, when the usual cloud drifts over the full moon' (p.109, emphasis added). Green emphatically equates artificially imposed patterns and the cyclic pattern in the following scene. Edge is facing a new day:

sun up, a lovely day had opened and, as she watched, a cloud of starlings rose from the nearest of her Woods, they ascended in a spiral up into blue sky; a thousand dots revolving on a wave, the shape of a vast black seashell pointed to the morning; and she was about to exclaim in delight when, throughout the dormitories upstairs, with a sound of bees in this distant Sanctum, buzzers called her girls to rise so that two hundred and eighty nine turned over to that sound, stretched and yawned, opened blue eyes on their white sheets to this new day which would stretch on, clinging to its light, until at length, when night should fall at last, would be time for the violins and the dance.

(p.19)

As in the sunset scene watched by Rock and Liz (quoted in the Introduction), the spiralling fluctuation of a swarm of starlings fills up the entire scene, uniting sea and sky, conquering and transcending time. This instant revelation of Life, which reflects Green's sensuous commitment to the present moment, is shattered by buzzers from the Sanctum. They produce an audio-visual counterpoint which abruptly

reasserts chronological time and signals a conflict of scales between freedom outside and institutional order within the school. 'Two hundred and eighty nine' girls wake up to the commencement of a day filled with domestic chores and institutional schedule. Resembling flowers, they open 'blue eyes on their white sheets' only to enter into the preordained direction of a day which, in desperation, will 'cling' to its light until it is doomed by night. Due to the way in which the audio-visual counterpoint signals a collision of timeless present with the temporal, Green's equation of repetitive institutional patterns and a tragic cyclic pattern is emphasized by their contextual closeness to one another. The organizing of the dance referred to, represents the culmination of Edge's attempts to fit human impulses into a controlled pattern.

The suggestion that Concluding affirms the value of natural human impulses, which significantly are linked to sexuality, is countered by Russell. Russell argues that 'Nature's potential regenerating force'

is warped in Concluding into league with unnatural powers. Although physical drives bid fair to defy prohibitive regulation - although nature endows young girls with growing bodies, and instinctive needs - the woods they fly to harbour old Adams and the corrupt lovers, and may hide Mary's body. Nature is even responsible for old Rock's sexual susceptibility, which he must overmaster. Sex in Concluding, connected with greed and depravity, is a dark contributor to 'The sequence here (that) is light then darkness'.¹

1. Russell, p.188.

Russell contends that nature has been self-corrupted. The dominance of irrational inclinations in the characters is threatening to conquer what is human in them and is consequently driving them towards darkness and disintegration.

As argued previously, however, some critics seem too ready to identify the various elements in Concluding with a tragic vision. Russell hints that Adams is lurking in the deep woods and may be exploiting the girls sexually, but there is never any evidence that he really does. Similarly, it is rumoured in the novel that Sebastian meets the girls in the dark woods at night. It is probably for this reason that Russell refers to Sebastian and Liz as 'the corrupt lovers'. However, as Edge admits, despite her fears about Sebastian, 'There's never come even a hint of trouble, the five years he's been here, between him and one of our girls' (p.18). Adams himself suspects Rock of having done away with Mary; Rock suspects Adams. Green never gives any sign that might confirm the actual presence of active perverse forces in the woods, or in Adams and Rock. Mary's disappearance, the calls in the woods, and the deep, muddy lake certainly have ominous undertones, but the fears they evoke are primarily caused by the characters' sense of insecurity in face of the inexplicable darkness. Nor can the girls' sexual impulses be called corrupted or destructive because they find mystic outlets; their natural needs have become all the stronger due to excessive control

of the human spirit. On the whole, the fears are reduced to the level of evil forces subjectively imposed. Despite multiple intrigues in the world of Concluding, linked with characteristic human motives of egotism and jealousy, these aspects do not shift the impartiality of the narrative tone.

The previous montage approach has revealed the vital distinction Green makes between objective reality and subjective attitudes. Green does not dwell on a tragic objective reality of which major motifs are symbolic, integral components. He creates a reality of contradictory facets. Different contexts emphasize different aspects of life in relation to the author's or characters' subjective evaluations. Comic and tragic images coexist; it is the subjective conception of their interaction that determines their tone.

This approach is based on the view that Green's world is not simply cyclic, but also dialectical. Northrop Frye's analysis of the counterpoint of comic and tragic phenomena in Shakespearean comedy (Concluding's affinity with Shakespearean comedy has already been indicated) elucidates Green's vision. Frye suggests that the first half of the cycle of nature, 'the movement from birth to death, spring to winter, dawn to dark, is the basis of the great alliance of nature and reason, the sense of nature as a rational order in which all movement is toward the increasingly predictable'. Against the tragic direction

of the objective world is set the comic power of the subjective imagination: 'We can see that death is the inevitable result of birth, but new life is not the inevitable result of death. It is hoped for, even expected, but at its core is something unpredictable and mysterious, something that belongs to the imaginative equivalents of faith, hope, and love, not to the rational virtues'.¹

In Concluding, these mystical, even magic values, are associated with the forest, whereas the contrary image of the State Institute is confined in a rational, unimaginative order. Significantly, the sense of the forest is modified by being a metaphorical reflection of various characters' subjective imaginations, their dreams and fears. Concluding's most poetic scenes in the forest capture a world of instant eternity. The green world is also represented by the Eames's 'garden of Eden' in Living, Green's most conspicuous metaphor for man's spiritual aspiration. Growth and fertility contrast with the black factory town beyond. When Mrs Eames reproaches her husband for listening to Bentley's complaints in the garden, Mr Eames replies that 'if Eve hadn't've started off clacking the serpent wouldn't 'ave caught 'er in his trap'. Mr Eames's question, 'What's Adam and Eve got to do with Bentley?', suggests the Biblical implications of their values (Living, p.248).

1. A Natural Perspective, p.122.

The comic vision, according to Frye in 'The Archetypes of Literature', generally centres around a 'garden, grove or park', or the forest in Shakespeare's comedies. In the tragic vision, the vegetable world is a 'sinister forest'.¹ The forest in Concluding, inhabited by Rock, has qualities of fertility and magic that pertain to the comic vision. However, its sinister mysticism reflects Green's awareness of contradictory forces. Consequently, Green employs montage to emphasize the value of comic, subjective perception and imagination, against a background of conflict. Frye says that 'it is the separation between redemption and destruction which constitutes the dialectic of romantic comedy'. Despite the difference in structure between Shakespeare's and Green's work, their visions are similar. The dialectic in Shakespeare's comedies works along a traditional narrative line: beginning, middle section of complication, and dénouement. According to Frye, 'the renewing power of the final action lifts us into a higher world, and separates that world from the world of the comic action itself'.² In contrast, most of Green's novels lack a conventional plot; the 'renewing power' is evoked through dialectical montage - in the image of contradiction, in the sensuous commitment to the present moment.

The main symbolic conflict in Concluding is between the

1. Northrop Frye, 'The Archetypes of Literature', in 20th Century Literary Criticism, p.432.

2. A Natural Perspective, p.133.

forest and the house. The garden of the Institute does not correlate with the archetypal comic garden image. Here even flowers are confined into categories, of white and red. In contrast, the forest contains qualities of free, instinctual nature. The significance of life in the forest is enhanced through biblical allusions. Green repeatedly refers to Rock as the 'sage', and Adams's name is biblical. Adams is a forester; Rock has withdrawn from the 'civilized' world where he was once a famous scientist, refuses to open mail, and has now retreated to 'nature'. He lives a life of simple pleasures, a shepherd tending to his three animals - a pig, a goose, and a cat. Viewed from the Institute, everything beyond the third terrace of the garden is concealed in mysticism and mist. As Mrs Blain, the cook, remarks to Rock, 'you're one who's never in the light, is he girls?' (p.26).

The opposition between Rock and the garden is emphasized in the following scene. Edge catches sight of an intruder: 'She cried out, in shocked vexation, "Rock flaunts himself ... Must he trail across our beautiful front, even with his swill? ... Stumbling over our grass", Edge protested, when there was a knock ... "It's Mary and Merode"', a girl stutters, telling Edge how they have disappeared without a trace (pp.19-20). The knock, with its reference to the lost girls, is an echo of Edge's deepest anxieties. She fears Rock and everything connected with the forest, the to her dark abyss of lust and disintegration.

In accordance with a by now well known montage pattern, the knock arrests Edge's protestations against Rock's intrusion, heightening the irony of her position. It emphasizes the antagonism between Edge's institutionalized virtues and the values of Rock and his pig (Rock shortly introduces himself as the 'swill man').

Different attitudes to Rock's animals provide an important clue to the nature of conflict between the forest and the Institute. In the animal world within the comic vision, Frye says, one generally finds gentle birds and domesticated animals. To the tragic vision belong more violent animals such as 'beasts and birds of prey'.¹ A major function of Green's animals is to reflect various characters' attitudes by their reaction to these animals. The pig, the goose, and the cat are treated by Rock as domesticated farm animals. Still, they are seen by Edge as 'serpents' in her garden, because their natural instincts represent a powerful force which resists complete domestication. Edge is in terror of the goose: '"A blow from one of its great wings", and her voice rose ... "one blow, in one of its savage tempers, and the miserable bird could smash a leg"' (p.106). She protests against Rock's cat: 'and who is there can stop a cat making free with the Grounds?' (p.107). Precisely the animals' instinctual self-sufficiency is of great significance for a full

1. Frye, 'The Archetypes of Literature', p.432.

understanding of Concluding. Rock's animals have a strong will of their own, they act on their own impulses, and they thereby represent a certain set of values of their own accord. In central montage contexts, they embody a comic suggestion.

The rotten, muddy lake is as deep and mystical as the forest surrounding it. Here Rock takes Daisy, his pig, to help him search for the disappeared Mary, for, he believes, 'pigs ... possessed a sense of smell which might come in handy amongst thick reeds'. Daisy's manner of confronting darkness answers to the ideal as communicated in Concluding. What is an activity burdened with sinister undertones - Daisy burying her snout in black earth and rotten leaves - Daisy turns into pure delight:

now that they had moved once more under the beeches, she kept turning last year's leaves with her snout, also the ground beneath, but so slowly and with such loud delight that they hardly progressed forward; and the ends of sticks of sunlight, pointed down from high trees, moved across his pig's flanks like pink and cream snails, then over his own face in little balls of warmth ...

- He would never get her home, he knew. She would have to be left to make her own way back at meal time.

(p.146)

In a conflict of masses, in which prodding 'sticks of sunlight' collide with the dark, decaying ground, Green creates an intense visual experience of time stopped, 'moments when Daisy actually knelt, and all was still'.

The competitiveness of Life and death necessitates Daisy's affirmative response. Rock reveals his affinity with the animal by possessing the same perceptual power. He sees the surface of the lake, now in full sunlight, as

a white mirror almost to the level of his eyes, and out of which grew rushes, pink and green, with willows and other smaller gray bushes everlastingly leant over their several likenesses in a faint lakeside, sunlit smell of rotting, for perhaps all of three times seventy years.

(p.147)

The shining 'white mirror', adorned with vivid, sunlit pinks and greens, creates an intense present moment. Rock's perception of instant beauty counteracts disintegrating forces. 'Everlastingly' bending 'gray bushes' in the lakeside and a 'smell of rotting' form a contrasting atmosphere of decay. Furthermore, by suggesting that the process of decay has been going on for a period of 'three times seventy years', Green (besides emphasizing the significance of number three) makes a clear reference to Rock who is in his mid seventies.

Green's visualization in his montage scenes of man's tragic predicament only enhances the vital necessity for countering powers with which Rock's pig is communing. Daisy possesses the capacity to conquer darkness, a capacity visualized through conflicts of graphic directions and audiovisual counterpoint: at the scent of rotting from the lake, Daisy 'in her startled whiteness'

suddenly trotted forward, burst through a little undergrowth with a great amount of noise ... halted at the brink, nose

up, ears folded forwards over violet eyes, and with deeply heaving flanks, by which Mr Rock assumed she must wish to challenge ...

(p.147)

The montage conflicts produce the sensory impact of a filmic close-up. Dynamic intensity absorbs the reader's senses into the very life of the scene so as to render the impression of time being transcended. Thus, with Daisy standing heaving at the brink of the lake, 'All was still, not a bird moved, but the sun was already turning edges of green leaves red, and soon it would be time for russet pheasants roosting' (p.147). When Green suddenly turns his attention back to the passage of time, a sense of affective distance between reader and scene results, a transition which functions as a conflict between close and long shots. This conflict intensifies the values of the present moment, offering a sensuous fulfilment despite the cyclic reassertion of darkness.

As a result of the way in which montage brings the vital human aspects into prominence, Rock's search for Mary is put into a metaphysical perspective. Mary will never be found; the lake is too deep and impenetrable to reveal what it might hide. The essential point made by Green is that the answer Rock is seeking cannot be found in the ultimate attainment of his goal - the recovery of Mary - but in the actual process of turning darkness into sensuous delight. Into this realm of values, Daisy, in all her unselfconscious but self-assertive sensuality, is

the key. In the world of the dark woods, rational 'eyesight' is an insufficient guide, a lesson Rock has partly learnt after a long life. Rock 'reminded himself that he should not come out from the shelter of the trees, must not be seen. Daisy would be his eyes' (p.147).

Ted, Rock's goose, serves the same structural function and points to the same values as does Daisy. In fact, along with Daisy, Rock, in his search for Mary, also makes use of Ted's instinctual powers. 'Ted, his goose, covered a deal of ground each day' (p.147). Daisy and Ted also possess the same intuitive judgment as to who are their enemies. When Daisy suddenly rushes forward as if to 'challenge' the rotting lake, there is also some intimation that Daisy has sensed another threat that she wants to challenge, 'someone on the further bank to whom, in her startled whiteness, she might seem his [Rock's] goose' (p.147). On the other bank are Baker and a representative of another 'regiment', a police sergeant come to look into the mystery of the disappeared Mary. Green's direct association of the rotting lake and the official suggests his alliance with life-negating forces.

On the other side of the lake, there is Ted to face the enemy Daisy cannot reach. Rock has just caught sight of the police sergeant. 'The blue uniform gave Mr Rock a jolt'.

The old man's cottage stood, like the hub of a wheel, on a spot at which several

rides met. As he watched the policeman he saw, out of the corner of an eye, his goose come in a rush, absurd sight, its neck outstretched, wings violently beating to help cover the ground it had never left. Sun now made the bird a blaze of white.

(p.72)

The visual counterpoint between the policeman's 'blue uniform' and Ted - a 'blaze of white' in the sun - heightens the dynamic conflict of graphic directions between the policeman and Ted, who comes in a rush to confront the enemy. A conflict of planes deepens the opposition between the two, for 'as Ted came up hissing, the policeman walked round his bike to put this between the goose and himself'.

Green's attention to the position of Rock's cottage, 'like the hub of a wheel' at the centre of a crossroads, brings associations of the grinding of time. Into the wheel's mechanical rotation (suggestive of the decaying lake) all the divergent 'rides' of life eventually meet. However, Green here equates Rock's values with the counter-acting powers of Ted. Rock explains to the policeman: 'Well, if you live on a place you take part in the day to day affairs'. To what values Rock, or Green, is referring is immediately made evident by a rapid shift in point of view: 'The goose, having finished what there had been, made off, wagging its tail'.

'You come to feel part of it', Mr Rock corrected. 'Still missing, eh?'

The sergeant, in his rational officialdom, misinterprets Rock's incoherent talk. He thinks that Rock's confession

that he feels 'part of it' refers directly to Rock's own oppressive preoccupation with the void left by the missing girl. What Green intends to convey is the necessity of man's active commitment to Life due to its precariousness. The policeman's alienation from the goose, and from Rock, is visualized in the image of the policeman's bike, which Green significantly terms a 'machine'. 'He left the machine where it lay on the ground. Mr Rock noticed, with a dreadful reluctance, that its uppermost pedal still revolved' (p.74). The revolving pedal suggests a mechanical rotation, a counterpart to the grinding 'wheel' and the decaying lake.

The preceding montage scenes enforce Green's distinction between objective world and non-rational subjective perception. The revolving pedal (and related images) does not encompass the material world and all sustaining powers and human endeavours in a tragic vision. Tone is produced in the image of contradiction, in the polarity of the cyclic and human sensibilities. 'To feel part of it' attains another significance than mere surrender to flux, to the continuum. What Russell calls 'Rock's sexual susceptibility', therefore, is, in a broad sense, not a force 'which he must overmaster'. Sex, to Green, is not pure animalism (Daisy and Ted are significantly not portrayed as mere beasts) but is part of a more complex sensibility which implies spiritual commitment to Life. Sensuous delight is directed towards the particular

and has therefore the capacity to crystallize moments amidst life's cyclic flux. Green emphasizes this point in the scene in which Rock, as 'swill man', identifying himself with the natural susceptibilities of his animals, enters the kitchen of the Institute early one morning.

Rock sees

a great shaft of early sunlight which, as it entered one of the windows, shone so loud already that it bisected the kitchen, to show him air on the rise in its dust, like soda-water through transparent milk. It hid the line of girls beyond, fetching their own breakfasts at the other cooker. They were no more to him than light blue shadows, and their low voices, to his deafness, just a female murmuring, a susurrating of feathers ...

The girl [Marion, who has fetched Rock a cup of tea] and the old man came together over this, in the megaphone of light ...

'You didn't catch sight of Mary and Merode?'

(p.21)

Russell says of the girls in Concluding that 'when we see them first [in the quoted passage] they are consigned to darkness'; they are therefore 'sinisterly non-individuated'.¹ However, the principle of montage implies that the girls, even if they stand in darkness, are not necessarily committed to dark, destructive forces. All characters in Concluding exist in darkness. Again, it should be pointed out that in montage it is not the sum of elements that provides the meaning, but the 'product'. The meaning of the scene is illuminated by Coleridge's idea

1. Russell, p.189.

of montage (referred to by Eisenstein in the epigraph to The Film Sense): 'Give Coleridge one vivid word from an old narrative; let him mix it with two in his thought; and then (translating terms of music into terms of words) "out of three sounds he (will) frame, not a fourth sound, but a star"'. What is emphasized, in other words, is the actual collision of images whereby a third meaning is produced in terms of the graphic totality of the picture. The collision of masses is so powerful, the passage so filled with sexual imagery, that it generates the impact of darkness being raped by sunlight. Like the sun in a Turner painting, Green's sun 'bisects' the darkness so that the whole 'picture' comes alive with particles of light, to reveal 'air on the rise in its dust'. In the graphic totality of the picture, then, 'female murmuring' does not function as an antagonistic force; rather, it functions, together with the 'loud' sunlight, as an audio-visual counterpoint, to intensify the sensuous impact produced by the colliding, vibrant sunlight. The girls are not individuated, because they are not important as characters in themselves, but as images which emphasize the vitality of Rock's presence.

This interpretation is supported by Green's association of the 'female murmuring' with a 'susurrations of feathers', the image of birds suggesting a comic vision and freedom of flight. A transition which has the effect of a conflict of close and long shots further supports this interpretation.

The dynamic intensity of the quoted passage is so strong that sexual as well as audible images are needed to convey the pervasive insistence of the scene. As a result, the whole passage renders the sensory impact of a filmic close-up. As Rock and Marion 'came together' in the 'megaphone of light', there is an abrupt dispersal of sensual intimacy. Marion's mentioning of the missing girls, and the dark overtones that evokes, brings the narrative back to the intriguing topic concerning them all. In terms of montage, however, the sense of disparity produced by this transition heightens the values of the preceding scene.

The interpretation of the kitchen scene as signifying a penetration of darkness by forces allied with the sun is reinforced by the close connection of this scene with qualities characterizing Rock's animals. Outside Rock's window, on the first page of Concluding,

the goose posed staring, head to one side, with a single eye, straight past the house, up into the fog bank which had made all daylight deaf beneath, and beyond which, at some clear height, Mr Rock knew now there must be a flight of birds fast winging - Ted knows where, he thought.

(p.5)

Ted pierces the thick fog with his single-eyed stare in the same way that the 'shaft' of sunlight 'bisects' the dark kitchen. Just as Rock senses a 'susurrations of feathers', so Ted is in some mystic, instinctual communion with 'birds fast winging'. Ted's powerful stare penetrates the 'deafening' fog (suggestive of confinement) to

the 'clear height' of 'winging' freedom above. This is an implicit suggestion of Ted's affinity with other birds that fluctuate through Green's fiction. Correspondingly, the schoolgirls, in Concluding, are repeatedly attributed qualities of birds. As Edge and Baker enter the refectory, the girls 'with a rustle of a thousand birds rising from willows about a warm lagoon ... stood in silence to mark the entrance'. They sit down again 'with another outburst of talk as of starlings moving between clumps of reeds to roost' (p.99). Green chooses the image of 'birds fast winging' as a metaphor for a natural vitality, and the embodiment of a comic suggestion. Reality, then, is determined by point of view, and truth depends on the subjective, perceptual state of mind. Ted's natural integrity has not been ossified by institutional mandates; he possesses an independent perceptual vitality and potentiality which have not been blurred by institutional limitations.

Ted's perceptual self-reliance becomes a pervasive model for the human world. When Miss Marchbanks momentarily recovers from her official 'farsightedness', Moira sheds the darker aspects of her personality, for which she might deserve to be 'sinisterly non-individuated'. 'Extremely shortsighted, she had taken off her spectacles and put these on Miss Edge's desk as though, in the crisis, at a time when she had been left in charge, she wished to look inwards, to draw on hid reserves, and thus to meet

the drain on her resolution which the absence of the two girls had opened like an ulcer high under the ribs, where it fluttered, a blood stained dove with tearing claws' (emphasis added). Taking off her spectacles of officialdom, the girl's sensual vitality wells in on her:

So that when Moira entered, and did not shut the door but stood leant against it, half in, half out of the room, dressed in pink overall ... her bare legs a gold haze to Miss Marchbanks's weak eyes, her figure, as the older woman thought, a rounded mass softly merged into the exaggeration of a grown woman's, her neck and face the colour of ripening apricots from sun with strong eyes that were an alive blue, shapeless to Miss Marchbanks's dull poached eggs of vision, but a child so alive, at some trick of summer light outside, that the older woman marvelled again how it could ever be that the State should send these girls, who were really women, to be treated like children.

(pp.47-48)

The sensual youthfulness of the girl, expressed in florid images of colour and light, impinges on Miss Marchbanks's senses, wants to encompass her. Her rationalism, however, pulls her away from this blooming vitality which begins to irritate her, because, competing with her instinctual self-assertion, is her need to solve the more pressing problem: what has happened to Mary and Merode? When Moira refuses to answer, because the question cannot be answered, Miss Marchbanks resorts to official detachment. Moira's youth suddenly dwindles out of the range of sensuous nearness to where it can only be empirically observed through official lenses. Putting on her spectacles again, 'Miss Marchbanks no longer approved, and was

even half irritated with the creature's blankness ...

"You've a smut on your nose, child", she said' (p.50).

Green's demonstration that reality is largely determined by the projection of subjective states, significantly affects his narrative technique when dealing with experiences that invigorate the deeper recesses of the mind. These scenes are often given a surreal, dream-like quality that heightens the sense of their being the product of a subjective, symbol-making imagination. Since Green employs imagery as an emblem for consciousness, one should be cautious in seeking a direct correspondence between the meaning of the imagery and an ulterior, empirical reality. For the same reason, Russell's categorical statement that 'the ubiquity of death is the part of Concluding's dark theme that mystery enhances' needs amplification. Particularly relevant in this connection is his view that the women in Concluding have been corrupted, so that 'what is deadly in them is no longer counter-balanced by what is vital'. Russell's argument also has broad political implications. According to Russell, Green believes that 'the power of the will' acts not only as a weapon of self-defence against institutional dictates, but also as a weapon by which to 'overmaster' one's own basically sensual nature, which is one of the forces that threaten to 'denature' humanity.¹ Green's portrayal of

1. Russell, pp.182-83,187-88.

Merode in her bath is an illustrative example of Green's surreal technique. The girl lies

stretched out under electric light and water, like the roots of a gross water lily which had flowered to her floating head and hands. This green transparency was so just right, so matched the temperature of the hidden blood, that she half closed her eyes in a satisfied contemplation of a chalk white body. She felt it seemed to sway as to light winds, as though she were bathing by floodlight in the night steaming lake, beech shadowed, mystically warmed ... her hair ... in this light, was dark honey coloured.

(pp.63-64)

Russell argues that Merode, not only in the scene in which Green describes her brilliant knee (quoted in the Introduction), but also in her bath, is 'at one with' a 'power' 'that has made the natural unnatural, the organic unable to support life'. 'Merode is in repose', he says, 'as if at one with an element of decomposition so unhurried as to seem static'. Thus, Merode's repose in her bath has sinister overtones of 'transformation by water', an image 'as well suited to a drowned body as to one bathing'.¹

A more valid interpretation is one which incorporates the images as metaphors of her subjective mind, which stem from Merode's (and Green's) 'satisfied contemplation' of her body. As elements of style, the juxtaposition of the flowering vividness of a floating water-lily and the darker aspects contained under water primarily serves to enhance the mysticism of the experience, thereby heightening its

1. Russell, pp.192-93.

deeply sensual impact. In effect, a synthesis expressing intense sensual fulfilment and harmony, is produced.

Russell's argument that Merode, in her bath, reflects the empirically observable movement of the world towards dissolution, and that the scene represents an 'element of decomposition', is indirectly contradicted. In a later scene, Green likens 'Merode's hair in her bath' with a 'mass of bloom' which 'trumpeted the sun', 'a slope of deep golden honey with its sweet heavy scent and a great buzz of bees about' (p.95). Green associates these two compared images with life, not death. The vitality of golden flowers bathed in 'full sunlight' in the one passage has its parallel in the other, in the image of Merode's golden hair 'under electric light', or as bathed 'by floodlight in the night steaming lake'. Green's portrayal of Merode in her bath, as well as of her brilliant knee, is not a statement concerning 'the organic unable to support life'; it is a paean to organic life.

Green provides further examples that contradict the idea that female nature has been perverted into league with destructive forces.

Moirra came out of a ride into the small open space before Mr Rock's cottage. Its hideous mauve and yellow brick was swamped in shade, marked out by sunlight, for the beech trees were tall but not thick together hereabouts.

Sun lit up blue smoke, spiralling out of the chimney for two full yards in this stillness.

(p.81)

Dark shade and blue smoke serve as background in order to

enhance, in a conflict of masses, the visual impact of sunlight which creates a vibrant moment of stillness. Into this picture, Moira enters, seemingly uniting herself with the life-giving sun. Moira is coming to see Mr Rock who is chopping wood. "'Why don't you use the tree Mr Birt found Merode under?", she asked. "Not dead enough", he said ... while he examined her youth'. Rock's remark is significant insofar as it offers a striking counterpoint to her youthful vitality. In this, Russell's statement that the scene in which Green portrays Merode in repose under a fallen beech, her shining knee sticking from a torn pyjama leg, is a picture of static decomposition, is incorrect. Rock's remark naturally leads up to and sheds light on the meaning of the following passage - a love scene at the fallen beech under which Merode is found.

A great beech had fallen a night or two earlier, in full leaf, lay now with its green leaves turned to pale gold, as though by the sea. It had brought more vast limbs down along with it, so, in the bright morning, at the thickest of the wood, colourless sky was suddenly opened to Elizabeth and Sebastian above a cliff of green. The wreckage beneath standing beeches was lit at this place by a glare of sunlight concerted on flat, dying leaves which hung on to life by what was broken off, the small branches joining those larger that met the arms, which in their turn grew from the fallen column of the beech, all now an expiring gold of faded green. A world through which the young man and his girl had been meandering, in dreaming shade through which sticks of sunlight slanted to spill upon the ground, had at this point been struck to a blaze, and where their way had been dim, on a sea bed past grave trunks, was now this dying, brilliant mass which lay exposed, a hidden world of spiders working

on its gold, the webs these made a field of wheels and spokes of wet silver. The sudden sunlight on Elizabeth and Sebastian as, arms about one another's waists, they halted to wonder and surmise, was a load, a great cloak to clothe them, like a depth of warm water that turned the man's brown city outfit to a drowned man's clothes, the sun was so heavy, so encompassing betimes.

'It will be hot', she said, as though stroking him.

'I love you', he said. She pretended to ignore it.

'I wonder what brought her down', she said. She might, from the tone, have had in mind a middle aged woman he'd seduced.

'Oh Liz, I do love you, and love you', he replied ...

[She] turned with a smile which was for him alone to let him take her, and helped his heart find hers by fastening her mouth on his as though she were an octopus that had lost its arms to the propellers of a tug, and had only its mouth now with which, in a world of the hunted, to hang onto wrecked spars.

'Darling', she said in a satisfied voice, coming up to breathe.

(pp.54-56)

For the sake of comparison and contrast, Russell's impressions of this scene will be illuminating. Russell dwells on the 'bizarre' quality of the 'image-world' which he thinks 'conforms to Concluding's world', a 'world of hunters and hunted' in which 'the sea transforms matter', or in which 'nature has in some way undergone a sea change', so as to produce a dominant tone of 'organic nature subsiding'.¹ It is precisely this 'bizarre' quality of the 'image-world', however, which suggests Green's concern with creating an imaginary, aesthetic form. This implies

1. Russell, pp.191-92.

that although form can scarcely be a self-sufficient artifact, Green's emphasis extends beyond a narrow correspondence with the objectively observable cyclic world. The nature of the images must be examined in terms of their correspondence to the artistic form, rather than in terms of their inherent, denotative meanings.

Intimations of death fill the first part of the passage. The fallen beech with fading leaves is personified with 'vast limbs' and 'arms' 'which hung on to life by what was broken off'. Mysticism and magic pervade this world, distinguishing the account from realistic representation. It is a world transformed in the subjective renditions of the wanderers. This impression is strongly suggested by the occurrence of a conflict of masses, a montage conflict providing a highly important clue to a full understanding of the scene. It provides a separation between a mood of darkness and decay, an imaginary world through which 'the young man and his girl had been meandering, in dreaming shade', and a 'blaze' of sunlight which suddenly makes them halt to 'wonder and surmise' among golden 'wheels and spokes of wet silver' (emphasis added). Shining wheels of reflected sunlight have previously been identified as the visualization of a life-giving instant moment separated from the onward cyclic rotation of the external world. Thus, the conflict of masses most significantly creates a conflict between

'then' and 'now'.

In providing a framework of correspondence, or synthesis, between 'then' and 'now', Green suggests a romantic vision which reintegrates the alienated observer with life, physically as well as spiritually. Through sensuous contemplation of the particular, Green transcends naturalistic pessimism by the recognition that

No waste so vacant, but may well employ
Each faculty of sense, and keep the heart
Awake to Love and Beauty!¹

These lines from Coleridge's 'This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison' may well be said to communicate the same essential sensibility as does Green's passage. Coleridge's juxtaposition of darkness and light produces a perceptual polarity between objectivity and subjectivity. The synthesis of opposing worlds provides a framework of counterpoint in which the underlying sordidness of the dell brings into relief the import of Love and Beauty. The first part of the poem, like the passage from Concluding, conveys the darkened solipsistic mood of the author who sits brooding in his bower. Imaginatively accompanying his friends who are walking in the hills, he imposes his dejection onto the scenery through which he imagines they wander:

The roaring dell, o'erwooded, narrow, deep,
And only speckled by the mid-day sun;

1. Coleridge, 'This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison', The Complete Poems of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, edited by Morchard Bishop (London 1954), pp.158-60.

Where its slim trunk the ash from rock to
 rock
 Flings arching like a bridge; - that
 branchless ash,
 Unsunn'd and damp, whose few poor yellow
 leaves
 Ne'er tremble in the gale, yet tremble still.

As in the world of 'dreaming shade' through which Liz and Sebastian have been wandering, the scenery which Coleridge here envisages is filled with a surreal, dreamlike quality. However, as he imagines his friends emerging from the 'dark green file of long lank weeds', there 'all at once' appears to him 'a most fantastic sight'. By a transition which renders the sensory impact of a conflict between close and long shots, the poem emerges from the more distant dream-world of the author's drifting mind to a confrontation with the concrete, visual instant present. The transition also involves a conflict of masses and of scales.

Now, my friends emerge
 Beneath the wide, wide Heaven - and view
 again
 The many-steepled tract magnificent
 Of hilly fields and meadows, and the sea.
 (emphasis added)

This panoramic experience is remarkably similar to the way in which 'at the thickest of the wood', 'on a sea bed past grave trunks', 'colourless sky was suddenly opened to Elizabeth and Sebastian above a cliff of green'. To both Coleridge and Green, the contemplation of the particular is unifying.

Silent with swimming sense; yea, gazing round
 On the wide landscape, gaze till all doth seem
 Less gross than bodily; and of such hues
 As veil the Almighty Spirit.
 (emphasis added)

Similarly, as Liz and Sebastian halt to 'wonder and surmise', they are 'clothed' by a 'cloak' of 'sudden sunlight', a unifying, life-giving image, made the more so because the cloak of sunlight is like a 'depth of warm water' which blurs the outlines of Sebastian's 'brown city outfit' into unity with the world of perception. Green expresses the same longing as does Coleridge - that of someone having 'hunger'd after Nature, many a year,/ In the great City pent'.

The idea underlying Coleridge's montage technique, a vision analogous to Green's, is finally formulated in his contemplation of an old walnut-tree bathed in sunlight:

... a deep radiance lay
Full on the ancient ivy, which usurps
Those fronting elms, and now, with
blackest mass
Makes their dark branches gleam a
lighter hue.

Juxtaposition of light and darkness is not meant as a mere contrast between the positive and the negative, but should, in terms of montage conflict, produce a synthesis in which the dark intensifies the values of light in spatial collision. With regard to the vision of Concluding, the extension of this idea would be that one must recognize the presence of darkness in order to strongly perceive the vital aspects of Nature, or of Life. This process is clarified by Green's previously cited statement in Pack My Bag: that 'there must be a threat to one's skin' to awaken vital images, and that these we should 'take with us like a

bar of gold'. It is thus with a strong awareness of decay that Sebastian, towards the end of Green's passage, urged by Liz's concern with the fallen beech, exclaims: 'Oh Liz, I love you, and love you'. This vital connection of 'darkness' and 'light' is not made through senseless immersion into flux, but by commitment to the sacred, vibrant moment, when

... now the bat
Wheels silent by, and not a swallow
 twitters,
 Yet still the solitary humble-bee
 Sings in the bean-flower!
 (emphasis added)

The images used here by Coleridge are all recurrent in Green's most poetic passages. They signify momentary transcendence of darkness; the sensuous appreciation of Love and Beauty.

Throughout Concluding, scenes which depict love and beauty incorporate darker aspects of reality in order to heighten dynamic tension, thus intensifying the reader's participation in a scene. Commitment to Nature, then, implies commitment to both the positive and negative aspects of it, for it is only in the private imagination that disparate sense impressions may form a montage or synthesis of a higher order. In the extension of this attitude there are suggestions that surrender to the particular must take place to the exclusion of disturbing impressions from the world at large. It is on this level that the power of the will becomes a necessary instrument by which to defend human integrity. With this aim, Rock

has retired from his life as a scientist and now refuses to open mail, especially 'official' mail. Rock's attitude links him to some extent with the Eames's in Living, who are unwilling to allow intrigue to quench the growth of their garden. Their selective self-sufficiency is bound up with fears of disintegration. Green, however, allows his characters these fears (from which most of them suffer) if only they do not quench their humanness which is of vital importance since 'the sequence here is light then darkness', and the 'glare of morning' is 'to be lost at last, when the usual cloud drifts over the full moon' (p.109). Perhaps the girls in Concluding are the only ones who do not let Mary's disappearance seriously disturb them. Russell says that 'Mary's absence ... exhilarates them' and attributes this to their evil potential, to their allegiance with the forces of darkness.¹ However, if Mary's disappearance is viewed as an integral part of Concluding's sequential structure, the girls' disaffectedness is not meant to reveal inhumane negligence of a fellow human being. Rather, the girls' attitudes are intended to highlight how their youthfulness preserves its vitality in face of an inexplicable dark void.

The impression that Green is seriously concerned with the necessity of excluding oppressive forces from the mind is strengthened by two parallel scenes. In the first, the

1. Russell, p.189.

two lovers are seen obliviously asleep in one another's arms:

Meantime the lovers, Sebastian and Elizabeth, were asleep in that same corner of a fallen beech found by Merode, and to which they had returned. They lay under lace of gold, through the hush of an afternoon's fine heat, at rest in one another's added warmth, in a peace of sleep ...

Then she sat straight with a jerk.

He lay on his back, wore a sulky expression.

'Good heavens', she went on, 'Here we've been snoring, isn't it awful, and all the while that poor girl's lord knows where, dear. What d'you think? Isn't it awful?'

He gently said, 'Don't fuss'.

(p.110)

A 'hush' of warm, sunlit stillness unites the two lovers in a blissful intimacy enhanced by the presence of the 'fallen beech'. The abrupt way in which this intimacy is shattered by the disturbing element of Mary's disappearance produces the sensory impact of a sudden filmic close-up. The effect is partly to awaken a sense of guilt in Liz; but much more significantly, the dark undertones enhance the intense beauty of Liz's and Birt's oblivious sleep, suggesting the vital importance of 'Living' in face of existential uncertainty.

This scene sheds light on the meaning of the following one, involving Miss Edge, parallel to, and immediately preceding Green's portrayal of the oblivious lovers. That Green is seriously concerned with the necessity that life must go on in the midst of an encompassing uncertainty is suggested by the emphasis Green gives to these scenes.

Like Liz and Sebastian, Edge has been drifting into sleep in the warm afternoon, but is awakened at the noise of the buzzers. 'Then she sat up straight. How could she have dropped off, she asked herself, with Mary missing yet?'. Despite the fear and uncertainty which has gripped Miss Edge, she is nevertheless determined to carry out her plans of arranging an evening dance; 'the coming entertainment', she rationalizes, 'could not be cancelled at the whim of a single student' (p.110). James Hall takes Green's attitude towards Edge's undauntedness to be favourable because, he says, 'though Miss Edge's determination to keep organized fun going is grimly comic, it also comes through as real. Better grim fun in the face of the disturbing than not carrying on at all - and her determination to go on with the dance even when she has near-hallucinations about Mary's body concealed in the floral decorations is one of Green's memorable scenes'.¹

The arrangement of the evening dance represents the climax of Concluding. It brings to a peak the various levels of conflict in the novel - that between organization and the individual, between the individual and metaphysical uncertainty, and most essentially, between Life and death. Green's oblique thematic presentation creates a critical inability to locate and assess the precise tone of the dance scene. Weatherhead argues that 'the dance is, of course,

1. Hall, p.88.

a triumph for structure', meaning the victory of organization and order over the individual.¹ 'Fun', he says, 'is inimical to growth. And it is essentially, and to a depressing extent, organized fun ... virginal ... sexless ... It is an instance of the general crippling aim of the institution to insulate its girls from knowledge, both from knowing, that is, and from being known as individuals'.² Weatherhead reduces the theme of the dance to a political conflict between institutionalization and individuality, thus failing to recognize the different levels of reality with which Green is concerned. Montage, on the other hand, reveals tone in Green's handling of different aspects of the dance, and so gives it a far wider and richer significance than that of a mere organized puppet show. Russell's interpretation, which differs considerably from Hall's, or from Weatherhead's, provides another limiting analysis which therefore justifies a montage approach. Russell claims that 'the dance is deadly in that it projects the children comfortingly into their futures'. Russell obviously sees no hope in Concluding for the future which is brought nearer in an accelerating, centrifugal motion by 'that culminating dance of drowning'. In addition, Russell says, the dance 'is replete with autumnal imagery'.³

1. Weatherhead, 'Structure and Texture in Henry Green's Latest Novels', p.115.

2. Weatherhead, A Reading of Henry Green, pp.108-09.

3. Russell, pp.193-94, 200.

Russell bases his pessimistic analysis of the dance on the symbolic meaning he finds in the autumn, sea, and water images, and justifies his interpretation by showing their frequent recurrence. True, life and death are in a constant competitive relation throughout the dance, a fact which is of course reflected in Green's use of imagery. However, as has previously been pointed out, images in Concluding may produce different meanings, and tone, depending on the context in which they occur. This is very much the case in Green's depiction of the dance.

The following passage demonstrates the manner in which montage calls attention to thematic conflicts which alter the function of the autumn and water images.

The music was a torrent, to spread out, to be lost in the great space of this mansion, to die when it reached the staff room to a double beat, the water wheel turned by a rustling rush of leaf thick water. It was so dispersed and Winstanley, seated alongside Sebastian, could, for the conversation of her fellow teachers, hear no breath, neither the whispering in the joists from a distant slither of three hundred pairs of shoes, nor the cold hum of violins in sharp, moonstruck window glass. She did not know until Sebastian, who could not tell why, other than that he was restless, got up to open a door, when at once she realized the house had come to life.

(p.199, emphasis added)

The music, streaming through the 'great space' of the mansion, in this context clearly suggestive of a great metaphysical void, dies 'to a double beat' in a conflict of graphic directions as it collides with the walls of the

staff room. It is as a comment on this lethal collision that Green includes the deadly image of the rotating water wheel which carries away dying leaves. The meaning becomes quite clear in an audio-visual counterpoint (Sebastian opens a door so that the distant music suddenly becomes insistent) which thus signals another montage conflict, of planes, between the staff room in the Institution and the music and dancing outside which are identified with 'life'.

Green's inclusion of bird imagery, and its relation to Rock's goose, Ted, contradicts a narrow interpretation of the dance as a contribution to death. The bird imagery is used as metaphor to reflect individual feelings. Green thereby stresses his vital distinction between subjective experience of the dance and an objective cyclic world represented by the rotating water wheel. To the women who rise and 'make haste' to the dance, the music 'called as air, beaten through stretched feathers, might have spoken to the old man's goose, that long migratory flight unseen' (p.199). The appeal of the music correlates with that of 'birds fast winging', with which Ted communes through the thick fog. Green's association contains a comic suggestion of freedom and flight, not the confinement of death.

It seems then, that Green, on one level, views all that the Institution stands for, embodied by the staff as a group, as alienated from, even opposed to Life, as represented by the violins. The very arrangement of the dance, when viewed on the level of individual freedom in

relation to institutionalization, is certainly treated as something negative. 'They must and shall enjoy themselves', says Edge, and she 'will not be bothered tonight with individuals' (p.213). When Green, at times, adopts the encompassing view of a detached observer, Edge's idea of organizing the human spirit in the celebration of the Founder's Day is charged with grim irony. At the opening of the dance, the lonely figures of Miss Edge and Miss Baker, 'oblivious, inside their long black dresses ... lovingly swayed in one another's bony grip, on the room's exact centre ... at spinsterish rest in movement, barely violable, alone' (p.195, emphasis added). Around the two spinsters, circle 'one hundred and fifty pairs in white' in a 'soft ritual'. The organized pattern becomes a mechanically revolving universe with an exact number of turning pairs and with two spinsters isolated by their blackness at its axis.

Green's suggestion that the mechanical patterns of organization are life-denying and leave the individual alienated in an empty universe, is emphasized by a cinematic technique of gradually widening long shots. Starting from the 'exact centre' of the dance floor, Green switches his focus to the lonely figure of Merode who is being kept in custody after her night walk. 'Above, locked safe into a sick bay, curtains close drawn against the moon, Merode's infant breathing told she was asleep. Still farther off, in their retiring room, unaware that the dance had opened,

the staff sat to make scant conversation'. In this remote room, Sebastian Birt is being isolated by the others who 'out of sympathy, perhaps, for the lovesick Winstanley, had chosen to pretend, by ignoring him, that Birt, who seemed most ill at ease, was not present in fat flesh amongst them'. The whole mansion has an atmosphere of alienated isolation. 'All over the Institute hardly a word more was now spoken Then, suddenly at a doorway, there loomed unheralded the figures of Elizabeth and the old man. Both were dressed as black as those two Principals' (p.195). The fact that Rock and Liz are dressed in black does not have any obvious thematic significance. Their blackness does not set them off from the two Principals; in fact, Green stresses that the two newcomers are 'as black as' them. Moreover, there is in this scene no major opposition between Rock and the girls in white, for although he has on a black suit, 'His great white head nodded to rapt, dancing students' (p.196). Only if viewed in terms of montage, does Green's cinematic technique in the preceding scene become clarified. Focusing first on the two lonely spinsters turning on the dance floor's 'exact centre', Green gradually widens the scope of the camera to reveal the sordid state of affairs in various corners of the Institute building: alienated, subdued human beings in increasing distance from the centre. On this note, Green suddenly presents a close-up of two black, 'looming' figures. The function of the

sudden close-up is to create a sense of incongruity in the mind of the reader and thereby accentuate the sombre atmosphere of isolation which hovers about the mechanically rotating dance room. In this way, Edge's insistence on pattern is brought into a deeply ironic perspective.

In focusing on the theme of alienation and loneliness, Green's cinematic technique in the preceding scene strongly suggests the essential values and contrary forces with which the dance in all its aspects is concerned. It has been argued that Edge's manner of fitting dancing girls into an organized pattern is treated ironically by Green. It is also possible to show that on a different level - in the relation between individuals and a metaphysical void - the actual dancing, as experienced by the students, represents a communal vitality and ritual. Audio-visual counterpoints illuminate different aspects of Concluding's central values. In the following passage, some students are involved in a disturbing dispute concerning Rock's old age, how his death will most probably mean the death of what he stands for, and how Edge and Liz are to be blamed for the threat they pose to everyone. 'Honestly I've got now so that I loathe my own cloth, I hate all women', one of them exclaims. Another calls Liz a 'viper'.

'You're all of you crazy', Moira said.
At this precise moment, and out of sight of these girls, Miss Inglefield, without warning, started the gramophone just once more to see if it would work. The loud speaker was full on so they could even hear the conductor, dead these many years, tap his stick at a desk some thirty summers back,

and the music, with a roll of drums, swayed, swelled into a waltz. The girls, each one, gave a small sigh, moved, as one, each to her long promised partner, took her by the hand; they held hands as women but in couples, what had been formless became a group, by music, merged to a line of white in pairs, white faces, to the flowers and lighted ballroom, each pair of lips open to the spiralling dance. Then it stopped sharp into silence At once these students broke away disappointed, years younger once again.

'False alarm', someone commented severely.

(pp.186-87, emphasis added)

The way in which the crash of music abruptly interrupts the girls' intriguing conversation indicates that the music represents conflicting values intended to disrupt the girls' animosity and preoccupation with disintegration. Formlessness dissolves by the patterned forms of the music, accordingly instilling a collective pattern. The dancing pairs of girls do not thus testify to the triumph of a super-imposed, crippling, institutional structure. The scene expresses deep longings in the girls, a need for affection and togetherness. Nor does the dancing become just a senseless rotation towards death; it counteracts death; it is not a disintegrating experience, but an expanding one; the music 'swells' into a motion of girls who sensuously open their lips to the spiralling sensation. Such sensations are prohibited by the protocol of the Institute. The disruption of the music leaves the girls 'disappointed, years younger once again'. This does not signify their temporary salvation from death in that the 'deadly' dance

'projects the children comfortingly into their futures'.¹
 It refers to the Institute's denial of the girls' feminine maturity. When Miss Marchbanks recognizes Moira's fecundity without her 'official' lenses, she 'marvelled again how it could ever be that the State should send these girls, who were really women, to be treated like children' (p.48).

Green emphasizes the meaning and significance of the music and the dancing by also letting it be experienced from outside in the dark.

A single pigeon, black in thickening sky, flew swift and on past the Park.

It was dusk.

Light from wide open windows increased by strides, primrose yellow over a dark that bled from blue.

With a swoop an owl came down across and hooted while Mr Rock and his granddaughter crept up the last stone flight when, unheralded, unannounced, and they could not see inside for the windows were yet too high above their heads, the gramophone crashed out once more, so loud now the old man halted entranced by the first bars of another great valse of drums and strings.

(p.187)

The solitary pigeon in darkening sky seems to function as a metaphor that mirrors the moods of Rock and his granddaughter. This image is made all the more sinister by a 'dark that bled from blue' and by the image of two dark figures 'creeping', as if they were reptiles, up the stone steps. There is a significant difference in function between the hooting of the owl and the sudden crashing

1. Russell, pp.193-94.

out of the gramophone. The former serves as an audio-visual counterpoint to heighten the sinister atmosphere of lurking dark forces, as well as to increase the dynamic tension in the conflict of masses produced by the opposing light streaming from the window. The latter audio-visual counterpoint, on the other hand, is so forceful that it 'entrances' Mr Rock and halts the encroachment of dark forces. Green makes this a significant point, because, when the music is suddenly cut off, Rock immediately regresses to an implacable 'attack on Edge for not keeping the instrument in proper order'. Then again, however,

he was silenced, made mute, because
through his deafness, he had caught the
last echoes of this music sent back by
the beeches, where each starling's agate
eye lay folded safe beneath a wing.

'We've started well', he then
contented himself by suggesting.

These montage conflicts are clearly a technique by which Green communicates human values to the reader. They function as an urgent appeal to Rock, as well as to the reader, to consciously turn darkness into light, animosity into life-giving feelings of sympathy.

Inside, in the light, the eyes of the dancing girls are like precious gems as the girls swirl out of their solitude into one another's embrace.

Quite soon, girls began to cut in.
While Inglefield kept the instrument
hard at it, the original partners began
to break up, to step back over the wax
mirror floor out of one another's arms,
moving sideways by such as would not be
parted yet, each to tap a second favourite
on a bare, quiet shoulder. Then
the girl so chosen would give a little

start, open those great shut eyes,
much greater than jewels, as she circled
and, circling yet, would dip into these
fresh limbs which moved already in the
dance, disengaging thus to leave her
first choice to slip sideways in turn
past established, whirling partners
until she found another who was loved
and yet alone.

(p.198, emphasis added)

The swirling dance absorbs the girls into a community of good feeling and intimacy. As the music starts working on their senses, the original partners, who have been revolving in orderly formation around the room's 'exact centre', break up. The mechanical rotation of ordained repetition is dispersed; so is flux. New affections are nourished in expanding circles over the dazzled floor; the movements are steered not by programmed dancing routines, but by the beating of human emotion. Only the two Principals revolve unaffected at the geometrical centre of events. 'One after the other they would be tapped on a hard, black garmented back. But, as was traditional on these occasions, they lingered in one another's orbit, until at last Edge had had enough' (p.198). The authority of the two spinsters is not strong enough to restrain the natural rhythm of human emotion. In oblivious intimacy, Liz is seen to

give herself over, dance as one with
Sebastian, deep in his arms. They
moved as though their limbs had mutual,
secret knowledge, were long acquainted
cheek to cheek; the front of their
thighs kissed through clothes; an un-
conscious couple which fired burning
arrows through gasping music at her.

(p.201)

The dancing may, of course, be an anaesthesia, as Miss Marchbanks suggests, 'People plunging into the hurly-burly to forget their miserable condition, their worries' (p.201). Still, on the other hand, the dancing comes through as something deeply valuable. In its centrifugal dynamism, it elicits basic sides of human nature that give room for hope. Most important, dancing is movement away from spiritual death. Mrs Blain, the cook, 'pushed that spiralling orderly away at arm's length until, she felt, the girl revolved about her like a wisp of kitchen paper. "Lost?" she yelled', referring to the missing Mary, 'but it was drowned by music' (p.197).

As exemplified by this last passage, imagery of water and of drowning are used by Green, not necessarily to render an atmosphere of dying, but, on the contrary, in order to provide a strong contrast which intensifies the meaningfulness of 'living', of dancing. Thus, in response to her own exclamation, 'Lost?', the cook 'folded the child to an enormous bosom. Upon which both gave their two selves over, entire. As they saw themselves from shut eyes, they endlessly danced on, like horns of paper, across warm, rustling fields of autumn fallen leaves' (p.198). The dance of the two women is not a death dance, not a destructive self-immersion into a dying vegetative world. Their dance is a surrender to 'warm', 'rustling', benevolent human feelings which carry them above and across an external world of decay.

Once it becomes clear that the theme of metaphysical loneliness versus life-giving exchange of love and sympathy is one of Concluding's major themes, one also notices how autumnal imagery is recurrently used not simply to describe empirical reality, but in order to bring human values into relief. Thus when Rock, offended after a strange encounter with a group of girls in an underground room, suddenly decides to leave the dance and thrusts past 'a white bunch of children', they 'fell open to let him through like a huge dropped flower losing petals on a path'. When in a commanding voice he makes Liz and Sebastian follow, the dancing children again 'parted as another vast bloom might that, torn by a wind in summer, lies collectedly dying on crushed fallen leaves' (pp.230-31). A sudden shift to a succinct statement (which gains emphasized meaning by the omission of the definite article modifying the noun, a rarity in Concluding) explains why these deadly images occur: 'The three left music'. The images are not meant as a contribution to a dominant mood in Concluding, but as a value comment on Rock's determination to leave the music. It suggests something precious and 'living' destroyed by a callously proceeding force. The precise tone is revealed by an audio-visual counterpoint, so powerful that it functions as a conflict of graphic directions. When Rock 'shamble[s] off uglily' towards the dancers in order to command the two lovers to leave with him, precious flowers falling apart in his wake, 'then the thunderous, swinging

room met him smack in his thick lenses' (p.230). Mental 'farsightedness', failure to see what is valuable and alive due to thick lenses, is a recurrent motif in Concluding, and accounts for the ironic tone of this passage.

Since montage only creates tone in relation to specific scenes, Green does not imply that Rock's decision to leave the dance reveals basic traits in his personality. Throughout most of the novel, Rock is presented as a vital force. In fact, when he sits overlooking the dazzling dance floor, he thinks it is a 'grand sight' (p.200). It is after Rock's integrity has been seriously challenged by experiences in an underground room that he denies his generally affirmative attitude to life. The preceding montage conflict between the dance music and Rock's negation of it significantly extends tone back to Green's portrayal of Rock's reactions in the cellar.

The cellar into which Rock is enticed by Moira is the secret meeting place for girls who rebel against the conformity of Institute life. Entrance into the dark cellar signifies descent into a void of 'blinding silence'. This is where Green makes Moira take Rock in order 'to leave him alone' (p.204). "'What foolishness is this?" he pettishly demanded aloud of his solitude'. Still, old Rock, despite his misgivings, has confidence in the dark; he ventures into it because he lets himself be led by instinctual impulses rather than by reason or eyesight;

'this was like the pretty child that led the blind', he thinks on his way down. When Moira startles him by letting her 'soft lips brush[] his that were dry as old bone' (p.204), Rock is not really shocked; it is what he has subconsciously wanted, perhaps even expected. He even agrees to entering the cellar a second time. So when Melissa 'laid a cheek against him, then rolled it over until her lips brushed his', Rock steps back, but having half wanted, half expected it to happen, 'not so far that he got whitewash on his clothes this time' (pp.224-25). In fact, while down in the cellar, 'he began to have a gross feeling of immoderate amusement, such as had not come his way in years' (p.226).

Rock's real motive for entering the cellar with the young girls is suggested earlier in the novel, in the scene where Rock is chopping wood, and Moira comes and invites him to the dance. 'Because, if you did, I might even give you a kiss', she teases.

The chopping stopped. But he did not look up.

'There's an absurd idea', he said loudly. 'If you want to know I've completely forgotten about it'.

'I mean what I promise', she insisted.

'All I intended to convey', he said, frightened and embarrassed, 'was, thank God, I've reached an age when I've long since forgotten everything to do with all such nonsense. Now do you understand?'

'No', she answered.

'Then why not?'

'Because I bet you haven't really', she said. He went on with his work rather fast.

(pp.85-86)

Moira is right. Rock retains his juices of youth. Russell

makes an invalid statement when he claims that the girls' kisses 'offend' Rock. Nor is there any justification in the text for claiming that 'Rock's escape is crucial, for he has been susceptible to these children - especially to Moira, and "the endless prize of her fair person"'.¹ What Russell sees as destructive elements embodied in the girls of Concluding, are really signs of vitality.

It is not until Moira mentions Liz's and Sebastian's engagement that Rock is offended and leaves. Rock's jealousy of Seb, mixed with insecurity and dread for the future if Liz is to share her devotion for himself with someone else, is what upsets him: to his mind, 'she could not have them both' (p.174). Despite his basically affirmative response to life, Rock is also in need of permanence. In his self-pity, he unjustly evokes his granddaughter's feeling of guilt and becomes a restraining force against her happiness. Green here links Rock with Craigan in Living, who for similar reasons restrains Lily's search for fulfilment. Furthermore, Green's acknowledgement of the vitalness of Liz's and Sebastian's love, from Liz's point of view, indicates criticism of Rock's negative response in the cellar. Sebastian is a contradictory, elusive character. His flaws obviously correlate with his official position as a representative of State rationalism, virtues against which Rock rebels. Green repeatedly

1. Russell, p.189.

points out that Sebastian's officialdom competes with his real, natural self. However, it is also hinted that Rock's anti-statism and possessiveness of Liz blind him to Sebastian's worth. Sebastian's care for Liz is revealed in small gestures: "'Don't you fuss, my dear", Mr Birt said in his natural voice, which Winstanley heard so seldom that she was not sure to recognize it' (p.97). There are suggestions that only Liz knows the 'natural' Sebastian: 'But he's true, Gapa, you must believe. Because, naturally, I realize you don't like him. But I do know what you don't, that you will in time, you'll come round, there's noone in the world who wouldn't, once they'd seen the real person underneath the skin' (p.176). Green (for example in the love scene at the fallen beech) does reveal Sebastian's poetic capacity to 'wonder and surmise'. Rock's jealous distrust of him is countered by Sebastian's own sense of attachment to Rock, by 'the chance which bound him to these two strange people by the love he had for the granddaughter, the love, he thought, of his life' (p.38). In accordance with the comic elements in Concluding's design, Green seems to give Sebastian the benefit of the doubt. Green's reminder that 'all's well that ends well' essentially refers to man's capacity to perceive the positive in the negative.¹

1. All's Well and Concluding show similar thematic concerns, which supports the previous interpretation. The King approves Helen's and Bertram's reunion, despite Bertram's dubious integrity. The King's geniality springs from his awareness that life, because competing with death, is best served by sympathy and tolerance. He forgives Bertram his rascality knowing that life is precious: (cont.)

Green, then, is not quite so pessimistic with regard to humanly sustaining powers as Russell suggests. The girls certainly cause much intrigue; they may be petulant and inconsiderate, even malicious at times, but they are not basically corrupt or destructive. The negative sides of the various characters do not alter the value pattern which is discernible in Concluding, nor the tone concerning Rock's behaviour in the cellar. Green, by means of montage, draws attention to those aspects of his narrative which he wants emphasized. It is in accordance with this technique that the scene in the cellar does not portray a confrontation with destructive forces, but functions rather as a test of Rock's ability to face existential darkness, and to turn it into something 'living'.

It is significant that when Rock, together with his granddaughter, first arrives outside the mansion before entering the dance, he approaches 'sure of himself, from the dark' (p.190). 'Never try to duck when you're in the open', he advises Liz and Sebastian (p.190). When nearing the sunset scene earlier that evening, he had also given this advice: '"Don't be afraid of life, Liz", he said. "Everything settles itself in the end. I've lived long

1. (continued from the previous page)

Not one word more of the consumed time;
 Let's take the instant by the forward top;
 For we are old, and on our quick'st decrees
 Th'inaudible and noiseless foot of time
 Steals ere we can effect them.

(All's Well That Ends Well (London 1967), pp.131-32.)

enough to know that"' (p.176). Thus, when first arriving at the mansion, Rock is prepared to courageously confront the darkness surrounding the House; he is ready 'to enter and be lost, as if by magic, in a cube of impenetrable shade', and in order to gain access to the dance, to recover 'his dead hand' from the dark 'to stab the bell' (p.190). Significantly, Rock, at that moment, is still under the encouraging influence of 'music sent back by the beeches, where each starling's agate eye lay folded safe beneath a wing' (p.187, emphasis added). On leaving the music to go home, however, he is unresponsive to its message. As Rock faces 'the pitch black between trees at night, which they were yet to meet in the ride leading to their cottage', he turns round 'to view the hated mansion', and exclaims the name, 'Petra' (pp.244-45). The word, which means 'rock', brings associations of hardness or tenacity, but it also suggests, in light of its biblical connotations, denial (allusion to Simon Peter's denial of Christ).

Russell claims that when Rock 'lastly stomps from the Institute, through frightening woods, to the cottage ... Green has in effect provided him with a state of mind approximated two hundred years earlier by Jonathan Swift, who resolved when he should come to be old, "Not to be fond of children, or let them come near me hardly"'. Russell goes on to conclude that 'there seems to exist, between author and reader, a silent agreement that only if nothing softens Rock, in the crumbling civilization of

this novel, can his contest be deadlocked'.¹ It is true that a strong individual integrity, as exhibited by Rock throughout the most part of the novel, is essential in order to fight the crippling influence of conformity. However, Green stresses that resistance against conformity must not quench sympathy and tolerance for other individuals. The reason for this is that the preservation of individual integrity in a metaphysical perspective implies fighting against spiritual death. Life depends on positive response to good feelings as expressed in the dance. This seems to be the message to be drawn from Rock's last meeting with Edge before finally leaving the House. For a moment, Rock finds that 'he no longer seemed to hate the woman' (p.235). However, mutual misunderstanding intervenes, and Rock leaves the Mansion as defiant as ever.

By means of a series of montage conflicts, Green brings central values into relief and reveals Rock's irreconcilable mood during his nocturnal walk through the woods to be life-negating. Rock:

cautiously lifted boots one after the other in an attempt to avoid cold lit veins of quartz in flagstones underfoot because these appeared to him like sunlight that catches in sharp glass beneath an incoming tide, where the ocean foams ringing an Atlantic.

So much so, that when he came to the first flight of stone steps Mr Rock turned completely round and went down backwards.

Upon which a faint cry came from those beechwoods he had been facing ... 'Mar...eee', the gabled front returned.

He was halted by it between two steps.

(p.245)

1. Russell, p.190.

Throughout Concluding, the girls' eyes are recurrently referred to as jewels. They contain the brilliance and vitality to which the individual must respond if he wants to create something which is alive. The same motif recurs in Green's description of Rock's walk through the dark woods, where he treads over ground covered with brilliant quartz. The function of this image may be accounted for by reference to 'Ariel's Song' in The Tempest:

Full fadom five thy father lies;
 Of his bones are coral made;
 Those are pearls that were his eyes:
 Nothing of him that doth fade,
 But doth suffer a sea-change
 Into something rich and strange.

These lines reflect the spirit of Concluding. Shakespeare presents a grand vision of poetic order in nature. It requires only a transformation of perception to recognize precious 'coral' and 'pearls' in a world of cyclic flux. The sea is seen to be not merely at the service of disorder; it is an aspect of a natural force that is both threatening and beneficent. Through a dialectical process of the imagination, the sea regenerates the world 'into something rich and strange'. Man's capacity for wonder turns reality into something magic and precious. Similarly, in Green's passage, jewels are hidden 'where the ocean foams ringing an Atlantic'. Failure to enchant their raw potentiality implies the binding of the human spirit to solid rock and flux.

In the scene from Concluding, Rock attempts to 'avoid' the jewels under his feet, jewels which, to his darkened

mind, appear 'cold' and dangerous. When at last he turns his back on them, fearing them, he is suddenly interrupted by the cry for Mary. The cry, with its associations of a dark void into which Mary has been lost, serves as an audio-visual counterpoint to accentuate the irony of Rock's attitude. Explication of this passage in terms of Shakespeare's vision in 'Ariel's Song' is made even more relevant when it is viewed in relation to its juxtaposed passage. Green provides a contrary glimpse of the vitality Liz experiences along the same path:

she walked as someone will who, in a dream, can find herself on frozen wastes where the frost is bright then black, but will still keep warm with the warmth of bed, although that imagined world outside stayed cold, dead cold.

(p.245)

The cry comes three times, increasingly louder and more insistent, suggesting the threefold denial of 'life' by Simon Peter, the 'rock'. When these have no profound effect on him, Green ~~leads~~ him on to a confrontation with two of his three animals in the dark forest. Rock's life-denying alienation makes him dependent on his torch in order to find his way, for even if 'every twenty yards or so there was a separate marsh of moonlight ... the way looked lonely to him'.

When he had the thing on, he shone around him. Immediately there came a string of startled grunts. He shuddered, then waved the small megaphone of light here and there through a black shadow of trees till he lit on his pig. Daisy was caught looking full in their direction, until she turned, began to make off, squealing.

(p.251)

The conflict of masses is intensified by Daisy's squealing which creates an audio-visual counterpoint and is a direct negative reaction to Rock's ironic attempt to illuminate the darkness. Rock increases Daisy's uneasiness so that when 'he gradually turned his wrist to bring his dunce's cap of moonlight on all of Daisy, she grunted crescendo Till he saw a slipper in white satin had been tied round her white neck'. Significantly, when Rock switches off his light again, Daisy is quiet. The slipper may be plural in significance. It reinforces the magic atmosphere of Shakespeare's fairy-haunted woods. The fact that the pig carries a satin slipper may signify its alliance with the fairies who play tricks on mortals, perhaps as a warning to Rock. It also heightens the sense of a menacing forest, and serves as a metaphor of Rock's fears. The slipper, which may be Mary's, serves the same purpose as the recurrent calls in the woods: it functions as if it were an exclamation, 'Lost!'. In this way, the image of the slipper deepens the irony of Rock's persistent attempt to illuminate darkness to provide eyesight. In contrast, Daisy relies on her intuitive senses.

It is, of course, natural to raise the question of who is responsible for tying the slipper round the pig's neck. Both Liz and Rock think that it has been done by schoolgirls who prowl the forest at night playing all sorts of mean tricks on them. However, there is no sign of the girls anywhere. Not even in his next traumatic encounter,

this time with his goose, does Rock find an answer. 'He listened, intent for giggles. He heard no hint of such' (p.252). At the end of the novel, Rock concludes about his experiences that night: 'We shall never know the truth' (p.253). This statement seems to cover all the mystic experiences in Concluding; they are not meant to be explained. Rock's encounters with his animals in the forest must rather be seen as part of a montage structure intended to convey tone.

Hence when Rock, still 'oppressed by the dark', fearing the worst, enters

the second pool of moonlight which was let through by a break in trees, and Daisy skirted this, keeping to black shade, Mr Rock heard Ted, his goose, burst into sharp cries of alarm not sixty yards in front. He halted dead.

Again, the conflict of masses, suggesting Rock's desire to illuminate the darkness, is heightened by an audio-visual counterpoint which puts Rock's position into an ironic perspective. The tone is deepened through an ensuing conflict of graphic directions.

Next there was a rush out there towards him, a rising string of honks like an old fashioned bicycle, and the goose, which had never flown before, came noisily by at speed six foot off the ground, while Daisy grunted. The granddaughter stepped to one side. But the old man knelt, trembling.

He feared a collision.

Then Ted was gone.

(p.252)

'She came straight for my spectacles', Rock cries.

Rational bias, through spectacles, is in direct opposition

to instinctual self-assertion as represented by Ted. The image of spectacles (a recurrent motif stressed by Green) points back to Miss Marchbanks's disapproval of Moira's fair person through 'official' lenses and to Rock's denial of the dancing girls who then 'met him smack in his thick lenses'. Rock's mistrust now is evident by his previous reliance on Daisy (down by the rotting lake) and Moira (in the dark cellar) to be 'his eyes'. In Ted's wake, old Rock is left in a pitiable position, trembling on his knees, wondering what is 'at the bottom of this'.

The ending of Concluding is ironic as well. Rock is surprised to find that all his animals - the goose, the pig, and the cat - have found their way home on their own. Once Rock is home, he almost forgets his fears. 'How many times have I to tell you I am never nervous', he grumbles to his granddaughter. 'It's only my eyes, can't you understand' (p.253). When Rock finally falls asleep, 'on the whole ... well satisfied with his day', it is after having experienced the truth of his own statement made earlier in the evening, and lastly by Liz: 'All's well that ends well'.

Although Rock, however, is satisfied with his day, he is finally, and ironically, not quite able to respond positively and creatively to darkness. His last significant act is to tear the slipper away from Daisy's neck and hurl it away, as if to emphatically defy the night. 'Once it was no longer in moonlight it disappeared, the

thing might have flown. He did not, of course, hear it fall' (p.254). Rock hurls the white satin fairy slipper into a magic void so unfathomable that it does not send back a single sound - 'Upon which he realized he still had Elizabeth's shoes in the despatch case'.

Green's direct association of the bottomless void and dancing (Liz's shoes are significantly dancing shoes) creates a symbolic counterpoint between the two. At the same time, it makes Rock's act of throwing away the slipper, associated with Liz's dancing shoes, deeply ironic. He wonders if he should call Liz back to give her her shoes, knowing that she cannot enter the dance floor in her rubber boots. However, he decides against it for selfish reasons. 'Gum boots would not help Birt, he considered, not realizing they would force her to take the young man outside' (p.254). The final irony of Rock's position is that darkness cannot be obliterated; therefore he should respond positively to it. This is what Liz does at the end of the novel. Once she has seen her grandfather safe home, she dives into the darkness again, full of love and hope. Her last words to him 'the young woman sang over a shoulder, stepped out of moonlight, and disappeared' (p.253).

Concluding is primarily a metaphysical, not a political, novel. This means that Green advocates individual freedom in relation to society in terms of what contributes to Life. Political issues as to the organization of society are bypassed in ambiguous, general terms. Green is

obviously antagonistic towards a political arrangement which breeds conformity, as represented by the new State directive that the Institute should be provided with a pig farm, the expression of a desire to institutionalize natural instincts. Sebastian accounts for this plan:

'A mass feeding of swine should not be haphazard. The surplus of a hundred thousand State factories must be made up into balanced pig foods'.

'And what if the pigs don't like?'

'They will. That is the purpose of the State', he said.

(p.207)

The whole novel, with all its individual vitality, runs counter to this plan. On the other hand, Green never takes a clear standpoint as to the positive and negative effects of complete political freedom for the individual. The State's view on this matter is also formulated by Sebastian:

'But an incautious movement towards the centre', he went on with an effort, 'towards the shaft upon which our little world revolves, that is to say upon the State which employs us at our main function, that of spinning like tops on our own axis', and here he gave one of his cracked laughs to point the jest, 'can only fracture the spinning golden bowl, the whole unit, and bring the lot to nought, in other words, reduce us to the lowest, the unemployable'.

(p.118, emphasis added)

Sebastian, when making a dogmatic political statement, tends to assume a pompous, mocking style as if he does not sincerely believe what he is saying is true (this supports the assumption that he may possess redeeming 'natural' qualities). Green repeatedly stresses that Sebastian 'fell

back on the voice of the sort of lecturer he was not' (p.117). In fact, there is no sign in Concluding that the centrifugal motion of the dancers, which leaves the two Principals isolated at the centre, signifies the collapse of the State. In terms of political statements, there is no intimation that 'the centre cannot hold', to quote Yeats's 'The Second Coming', or that 'anarchy is loosed upon the world'. Nowhere in the novel does Green anticipate fundamental political changes, mainly because this is not his central concern.

The centrifugal motion of dancing girls, upsetting a repetitively revolving pattern, is applauded by Green because it is not a political statement. Rather, it expresses the girls' sensuously fulfilling commitment to the present moment. Green is not concerned so much with social and political institutions as with individual attitudes to life. Rebellion against order is justifiable to the extent that it defeats spiritual death. Thus, when Rock, after his traumatic experience in the cellar, has a misanthropic fit, he tells Edge that 'there must be limits, after all'. However, at Edge's question 'Where would you draw them?', Rock falters. "'Where would I draw the line?" he echoed, but without conviction. Then he pulled himself together. "Yet there must be human decency"' (p.237). In the world of Concluding, human decency is not a faculty of the State. This point, therefore, does not interfere with the basic tone of Concluding.

In the final analysis, it is not Rock that is the principal projector of values, but Green, the author and narrator. It is Green that arranges and perceives the world in relation to his characters' sensibilities. This world eludes symbolic meaning or illumination of the rational faculties. Green's poetic conception of intelligibility is inherent in his spatial composition of discordant qualities. Images of contradiction enact moments of human significance. Their tone is a projection of a cohesive, evaluating artistic sensibility. Concluding's providential design reflects the author's commitment to basic human values which provide hope of reintegration. The vision that 'all's well that ends well' applies to the human capacity that subordinates empiricism to the effect of wonder. Concluding's magic, enchanted atmosphere ultimately represents Green's comment on the relation between art and life. It is a place through which the reader passes in order to renew and strengthen his sense of reality.

Chapter Six

PARTY GOING (1939) , NOTHING (1950) ,

DOTING (1952)

Chapter Six

PARTY GOING (1939)

From a technical point of view, Party Going differs considerably from Nothing and Doting. In his last two novels Green aims to consummate his theory of the abstract, non-representational work of art. His authorial detachment from his characters is complete; their motives, attitudes, or values are merely intimated through direct speech and appearances. The reader must fill in the rest. Party Going, published a decade previous to Nothing and Doting, only partly conforms to Green's modernist idea of depersonalization in art. Stokes notes that Party Going is 'the most omniscient of all Green's novels We have an almost constant double view of the characters, which is almost indecent, for it is as if these members of the beau monde were all sitting about naked, without knowing it. Not only do we hear what they say, but simultaneously we are told what are their motives for saying it, what they hope to get out of their present attitude, what, in fact, their game is at the moment'.¹

Notwithstanding the great technical differences between these three novels, there are substantial thematic reasons for examining them in relation to one another.

1. Stokes, p.86.

They present the same Mayfair set of frustrated, shallow party goers - beautiful, self-gratifying, spoilt, cunning, deceitful, intriguing, and bored. Stokes remarks that 'Party Going is also the most satirical of Green's novels; although there is no trace of acerbity or acrimony in Green's attitude, the cool dispassionate interlinear commentary underlines the horrifying futility of these lines dedicated to party going'.¹ Stokes's characterization of Green's method in Party Going is equally valid as a comment on his attitude and value judgment in Nothing and Doting. It is primarily the lack of vital values in these three novels that sets them apart from novels such as Living, Caught, Back, Loving, and Concluding. A second important reason for stressing parallels between Party Going, Nothing, and Doting, is that the obviously satirically or ironically presented themes in Party Going thereby aid the interpretation of similar aspects of Nothing and Doting, novels which are far more oblique. Finally, such comparison, aided by a montage approach, will support the argument that Green fails to make his two last novels 'as diffuse and variously interpretable as life itself', and that they do reveal the orderings of an evaluative author.

Party Going is a novel in which practically nothing happens at all. A group of young socialites destined for a holiday in France are delayed by a heavy fog and have to

1. Stokes, pp.86-87.

wait in a fashionable hotel at the railway terminus. They kill time with gossip, drinking, and chasing. Max, the playboy host of the party, and the richest of them all, is the cause of much intrigue and jealousy among the women who compete to capture him. An operator seeking his own gratification, his job is also to cater to the whims and needs of his fellow travellers, which means an endless ordering of drinks and extra rooms.

Unlike those in Green's other novels, the party goers' (the characters of Nothing and Doting included) suppression of vital perceptual powers makes synthetic techniques, as defined by Coleridge, redundant. Rather, their activities and preoccupations form a monotonous pattern, revealing the author's satire and irony on the demerits of its triviality and absurdity. As in Back, as long as Green focuses on his characters' minds and behaviour (Charley's confusion; the party goers' static self-centredness), he presents a claustrophobic atmosphere which precludes synthetic dynamization. On the other hand, Green is far more emotionally estranged from the party goers' consciousnesses than from Charley Summers's. In Party Going, his detachment enables him to interrupt his characters' diversions through juxtaposition of contrasting scenes, focused outside the travellers' immediate sphere. These cinematographic devices bring the characters' ironic position into relief. Two major recurrent images serve as components of Party Going's most significant montage

effects: the window image which deepens the party goers' separation from the crowd outside, and the image of Miss Fellowes with the dead pigeon, counteracting the party goers' mindless triviality. As in Back, Green begins Party Going with a montage that sets the tone of the ensuing narrative. In fact, the opening passage encapsulates the central themes in the novel:

Fog was so dense, bird that had been disturbed went flat into a balustrade and slowly fell, dead, at her feet.

There it lay and Miss Fellowes looked up to where that pall of fog was twenty foot above and out of which it had fallen, turning over once. She bent down and took a wing then entered a tunnel in front of her, and this had DEPARTURES lit up over it, carrying her dead pigeon.

No one paid attention, all were intent and everyone hurried, nobody looked back.

(p.384, emphasis added)

The essential irony of this passage stems from the party goers' total negligence of the bird. They are all blindly hurrying to their trains which are to carry them away, to the insouciance of an exotic setting, indicative of escape, in the context of this novel. (Amabel envisages 'that smiling country their journey together would open in their hearts as she hoped, the promised land' (p.510). Miss Fellowes is the only person to care. She carries the dead pigeon with her and washes it conscientiously in the ladies' room and then wraps it in brown paper. Her name connotes fellow-feeling, although her personality is too obscure, her behaviour too peculiar, to make her a

moral centre in the novel. Her main function is to create a counterpoint to the party goers, thereby highlighting the significant conflicts. A complex interaction of montage conflicts specifies and accentuates the important themes. As in the introduction to Back, where the cackle of panic-stricken geese warns Charley against continuing his absurd quest for Rose, so, in Party Going, the pigeon, falling at Miss Fellowes's feet, creates a conflict of graphic directions that warns her against pursuing the mindless course of the travellers. Birds usually represent vivacity in Green's fiction. It is therefore significant that the bird which suddenly disturbs Miss Fellowes, and which she afterwards carries into the tunnel, is dead. The tunnel into which they all proceed, forms a conflict of scales against the outer world, producing a sense of enclosure and confinement (enhanced by associations of a flying pigeon now dead). The main conflict of the passage is obviously related to the symbolic connection of the dead bird and the entering into the tunnel. This message is intensified by a shift of focus from the bird in the direction they are all heading, a close-up of a luminous sign with prominent capital letters - 'DEPARTURES'. Green's visual technique highlights the party goers' estrangement from vital concerns.

There has been much critical confusion as to the meaning and function of the bird within the structure of Party Going. Ryf states: 'That the dead bird is central

to the story is clear, even if its significance is not. Somehow the pigeon and Miss Fellowes are connected, for after ceremoniously scrubbing it she feels ill and wonders whether she'll fall downstairs, like the bird'.¹ Miss Fellowes and the pigeon certainly are connected and central to the story. Their significance, however, does not pertain to the kind of thematic pattern stipulated by Weatherhead. He argues that 'The main business of the novel is the "departure" of young people for maturity. In a word, it concerns the death of youth, the abstract, which formerly had been presided over by the nannies and Miss Fellowes. Miss Fellowes now sees fit to watch over the death of youth and to grant it a decent burial. Her care of the pigeon figures her last proper function as a guardian of youth'. Weatherhead seems to ascribe to the pigeon a symbolic meaning that correlates with what he sees as the theme of human development in the novel. 'In Party Going', he maintains, 'the author chooses the metaphor of travelling to describe growth', and, he says, 'the hotel is a metaphor for the stage of withdrawal from the world in the process of growth'. Weatherhead claims that 'The deterrent common to all the party is the fog and darkness. The condition for self-creation is a temporary withdrawal from the self-in-the-world which ... is figured as a withdrawal from light into darkness'. It is true that

1. Ryf, p.17.

the confrontation with death and destruction is an instigation to moral and emotional maturation of the characters in Green's fiction. In Party Going, however, growth certainly does not invest the travellers (except, possibly, Miss Fellowes). The fact that the trains ultimately resume running is definitely not a metaphor for the party goers' movement towards maturity. In the meantime, Weatherhead suggests, each of the characters 'is beset by his own private anxiety or guilt, or both, which becomes a deterrent from travelling and a reason and excuse for retreat'. Thus, he argues, growth for Max 'consists in his diverting his sexual quest away from Amabel', with whom sex only represents 'comfortable, conventional security', and directing it toward Julia who can offer 'proper sexuality'.¹ In a Green novel, the urge to depart for exotic settings admittedly suggests deep underlying needs for sexual and spiritual fulfilment. However, the tone enveloping the party goers' venture is not, specifically for this reason, identical with the tone enveloping Lily's similar yearnings in Living. Close inspection reveals that, in Party Going, Green focuses on his characters' self-centred obliviousness to pressing existential human concerns. Their departure is a symptom of their mindless inhumanity. In accordance with this theme, the image of the dead bird is not an independent

1. Weatherhead, pp.40-41,46-47.

symbol denoting the death of immaturity; it is associated with closely related images throughout the novel for the purpose of bringing the travellers' action and pre-occupations into ironic relief. Montage provides the essential tonal framework of the plot. There is no evidence of a significant differentiation in the value of Amabel's and Julia's sexuality. Walter Allen's assessment of the episode with the pigeon also requires attention. He concludes that it 'disturbs the party, as it disturbs the reader; the incident is funny, but it is more than that, and its meaning cannot be paraphrased. Party Going is a comic novel, which may be read simply as such; as it may be read as a satire on people with wealth but without responsibility. It is both these things, and something more; obstinately itself and irreducible to a single moral'.¹ Arnold Kettle copies Allen's statement, stressing 'the unsatisfactoriness of discussing a novel of this kind in terms of what it is about as opposed to what it is The truth is that about a successful work of art there is in an important sense nothing whatever to say'.² Eudora Welty echoes both Allen's and Kettle's statements by characterizing Party Going as 'all an image in itself, satirically conceived, mysteriously complicated,

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1. Walter Allen, Tradition and Dream: The English and American Novel from the Twenties to Our Time (London 1964), p.216.
 2. Arnold Kettle, An Introduction to the English Novel Vol.2 (London 1953), pp.171-72.

held like the long breath of enchantment'.¹ Although the full 'meaning' cannot be 'paraphrased', the mystery of Miss Fellowes's dead pigeon may be elucidated by the distinct pattern of Green's 'web of insinuations'. Through analysis of a few central montage arrangements, the episode's relationship to the entire structure of the novel may be delineated. Although these montage arrangements are not reducible to a 'single moral', a single moral may certainly be discerned.

The moral to which Green relates his montage is indicated by Alex, one of the travellers, who is pondering how these 'clean-shaven port drinkers' all have 'lace curtains to guard them in from fog and how many naked bodies on sentry go underneath adequately, inadequately dressed'.

Here he pointed his moral. That is what it is to be rich, he thought, if you are held up, if you have to wait then you can do it after a bath in your dressing-gown and if you have to die then not as any bird tumbling dead from its branch down for the foxes, light and stiff, but here in bed, here inside, with doctors to tell you it is all right ... no worry since it did not matter if one went or stayed.

(p.493)

From the point of view of Green's existentialist preoccupation, the impenetrable pall of fog is, as Ryf suggests, 'a reflection of the pervasive cosmic uncertainty in the novel'.²

1. Eudora Welty, p.252.

2. Ryf, p.16.

To Julia, the walk to the station seems frightening: 'As a path she was following turned this way and that round bushes and shrubs that hid from her what she would find she felt she would next come upon this fog dropped suddenly down to the ground, when she would be lost ... it was so strange and dreadful to be walking here in darkness when it was only half-past four' (pp.389-90, emphasis added). The travellers avoid direct confrontation with 'cosmic uncertainty', which might incite growth, instead escaping from it. Their anxiety is evident in their obsession with comfort and triviality. They all nervously await the arrival of Max on whom their escape depends. Without him, they are trapped and rendered impotent in this tedious station. Julia is worried because she forgot to bring her charms, a little wooden pistol, an egg with tiny elephants in it, and a painted top. These charms represent some sort of magic by which Julia can protect herself. They belong to the security of the past, of her childhood, from which she cannot liberate herself. Julia's charms belong in the category of the 'hobby-horses', extensively discussed in the chapter on Loving. Significantly, the party-goers' egocentrism cramp the growth of their human instincts. Claire Hignam asks her husband 'if he had seen that Edward Cumberland was dead, so young. He paid no attention for he was thinking of something he had forgotten' (p.391). The recurrent intimations of death, in Party Going, are in some mystical way connected with the dead pigeon, and with

the characters' negligence of its significance. Miss Fellowes meditates: 'There was that poor boy Cumberland ... what had he died of so young? One did not seem to expect it when one was cooped up in London and then to fall like that dead at her feet' (p.394). The series of montage arrangements involving Miss Fellowes and the travellers highlights the disparity of their respective experiences. Miss Fellowes immerses herself in storms of darkness and death - antecedent to a symbolic resurrection, whereas the others are oblivious of her ordeal and remain entangled in gossip, petty intrigues, and trifles. Julia worries about her luggage and asks Robert to call the station master (who is attending to far more pressing matters at the moment) so that he may send someone out to look for her servant, Thomson, who again is to go and see her porter does not put her luggage in the cloakroom. The porter has been instructed not to put it in the cloakroom, 'whatever happened', because she does not trust those places.

'But I say, Julia, you know that station master must be a pretty busy man, what with the fog and everything. What do you think?'

'He'll be glad to do it because of my uncle. It would be ever so sweet of you, my dear'.

Miss Fellowes, in her room, felt she was on a shore wedged between two rocks, soft and hard. Out beyond a grey sea with, above, a darker sky, she would notice small clouds where sea joined sky As this cumulus advanced the sea below would rise, most menacing and capped with foam, and as it came nearer she could hear the shrieking wind in throbbing through her ears ... Each time this scene was repeated she felt so frightened, and

then it was menacing and she throbbed unbearably, it was all forced into her head; it was so menacing she thought each time the pressure was such her eyes would be forced out of her head to let her blood out. And then when she thought she must be overwhelmed, or break, this storm would go back and those waters and her blood recede, that moon would go out above her head, and a sweet tide washed down from scalp to toes and she could rest.

(p.423)

The sudden shift of focus from Julia's conversation with Robert to Miss Fellowes's struggle with a menacing darkness does not merely provide two contiguous impressions of disparate realities. The images are calculatingly juxtaposed in a montage fashion to produce incongruity, and in this resulting perspective expose Julia's shallowness and self-deception. In contrast, Miss Fellowes encounters the ultimate darkness and isolation from which she cannot escape, and which admits of but one solution: a strong determination to live. Like Charley Summers on the night of Mr Grant's death, Miss Fellowes does exhibit the strength to oppose desolation. Green states that 'she was fighting. Lying inanimate where they had laid her she waged war with storms of darkness which rolled up over her in a series, like tides summoned by a moon' (p.421).

The following passage demonstrates even more obviously how Green employs montage to negate the party goers' outlooks. Julia stands by her hotel window, observing the masses of people in the station below, in her estrangement feeling like a Queen condescending to her subjects. She

imagines 'how wonderful it would be when they had arrived'.

Alex came up and said what they saw now was like a view from the gibbet and she exclaimed against that. And Miss Fellowes wearily faced another tide of illness ... But now with a roll of drums and then a most frightful crash lightning came out of that cloud and played upon the sea, and this was repeated, and then again, each time nearer till she knew she was worse than she had ever been. One last crash which she knew to be unbearable and she burst and exploded into complete insensibility. She vomited.

'Come away for a minute', Max said to Julia. As they went off and passed that door it opened and Claire came out with Evelyn. Both of them were smiling and said she would do better now, now she had done what the doctor said.

(p.430)

Alex appears as a cynical, disillusioned observer aware of the hollowness of their lives, and, for this reason, a joyless character. He is Dick Dupret's counterpart. On another occasion, Green watches him as he, exactly like Dick, 'picked up a newspaper and behind it picked his nose' (p.495). The presentation of Julia, on the other hand, stresses her naive evasion of the deeper existential vision propounded by Green. Claire's and Evelyn's confident comment on Miss Fellowes's health betrays their complete lack of understanding for the real nature of her trauma. Green emphasizes the irony of the passage by next focusing on Max's and Julia's escapism: 'As she walked down that corridor with Max ... all the while she was telling him about her charms, her mood softening and made expansive by his having taken her away' (p.431).

As is demonstrated by one more example, the manner in

which Green repeatedly employs montage to oppose Miss Fellowes and the rest of the group, forms a clear pattern which points towards a 'single moral'. Alex is now telling Angela about previous travels with Max:

'I'm not saying that one isn't exceedingly comfortable, but it's definitely wearing' ...

'Have you ever been to Barshottie?'

'No', she said, 'why do you ask?'

Miss Fellowes was better. She was having a perfectly serene dream that she was riding home, on an evening after hunting, on an antelope between rows of giant cabbages. Earth and sky were inverted, her ceiling was an indeterminate ridge and furrow barely lit by crescent moons in the azure sky she rode on.

In the sitting-room next to where she lay dreaming watched by those two nannies, Claire and Evelyn discussed Angela's looks, which they admired, and her clothes, of which they did not think so much.

(p.440)

As indicated by a double shift of focus, Miss Fellowes's profound trial is surrounded by tedium and superficiality, by people who are killing time. Whereas Miss Fellowes wrestles for life and is now improving, the other characters' condition is static and powerless. While Alex and Angela discuss their endless travelling, Miss Fellowes is 'riding home'. It is also significant that Miss Fellowes's 'ride' is endowed with a serene, magic vision which transcends the prosaic realities of the party people. At the end of the novel, when the trains resume running, Julia ecstatically rushes about to relay the good news. Believing Miss Fellowes still to be unconscious, she has a shock when she hears Miss Fellowes's voice. Miss Fellowes, now sitting up in bed, thinks they have finally come to remove

her from the confinement of the hotel. "'My dear", she said, "I'm very glad to hear it, I feel I've been here long enough"' (p.522). She counters their protests, 'But I feel quite well now, Claire, quite well'. They implore her not to fuss. 'She was about to say she was in no fuss ... when she realized it would be better to let them think they were having their own way like Daisy had when they put her in that asylum. She had kept on telling them how glad she was to be there until they had pronounced her sane and let her go'. Miss Fellowes equates the hotel, inhabited by party goers, with an asylum. Her situation suggests a parallel between the travellers' uncomprehending judgment of her state of mind with the doctors' and officials' insensitive treatment of Pye's sister in Caught. The ending of Party Going reveals Miss Fellowes's disengagement from Max's companions. 'She looked as if she had been travelling'. She has indeed been travelling, not on the surface of life, but into the 'Heart of Darkness'. In fact, Miss Fellowes never intended to join the party to the south of France. She only came to wave good-bye to her niece, Claire (p.385). Now recovering, she only wants to be left alone and 'to be allowed to get better in the comforts of her home' (p.522).

The kind of magical imagery imbuing Miss Fellowes's profound experiences does occur in other contexts in the novel, but somehow does not surface in conjunction with the characters' acute encounter with an immediate reality.

It is in a sense merely vaguely contemplated by them, or experienced by a detached author, beyond the characters' own sensibilities.¹ Despite elements of poetry and wonder, the characters' estrangement from a palpable reality, and the author's disaffection with them, account for the novel's lack of 'vital', 'synthetic' montage as defined by Coleridge. An examination of poetic images in Party Going illuminates this clearly.² There is, for example, the passage comparing Angela and Robin to 'two lilies in a pond, romantically part of it but infinitely remote, surrounded, supported, floating in it if you will, but projected by being different on to another plane' (p.395, emphasis added). Green's characterization of Amabel's beauty also emphasizes remoteness. To Alex, she seems

not unlike ground so high, so remote it
had never been broken and that her outward
beauty lay in that if any man had marked
her with intimacy as one treads on snow,
then that trace which would be left could
not fail to invest him, whoever he might
be, with some part of those unvulgar
heights so covered, not so much of that

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1. Stokes, p.204. Stokes notes that 'Like all of Green's novels Party Going has a dimension of poetry and wonder; there are at least a dozen scenes, episodes and passages in which Green endeavours to fire the reader's unconscious imagination into life. In these passages the style becomes more colourful, imaginative and metaphorical in language, more developed in rhythm, and more complex in syntax. In these passages ... we for a time escape from the banal consciousness of the characters; or, more accurately, we have superimposed on the characters' consciousnesses the poetic vision of Green himself'.
 2. These images and scenes are also quoted by Stokes to illustrate his statement.

last field of snow before any summit as
 of a high memory unvisited, and kept.
 (p.463, emphasis added)

Images of fragile sublimity testify to Amabel's physical beauty, but the presentation generates no sensual or spiritual intimacy; the experience is merely one of contemplated beauty, an abstraction. Similarly, moments of strong spiritual fulfilment tend to belong to a present now merely distantly remembered. Max recalls that

When he opened his eyes close beside her [Amabel] in the flat she had blotted out the light, only where her eye would be he could see dazzle, all the rest of her mountain face had been that dark acreage against him. He had lain in the shadow of it under softly beaten wings of her breathing, and his thoughts, hatching up out of sleep, had bundled back into the other darkness of her plumes. So being entirely delivered over he had lain still, he remembered, because he had been told by that dazzle her eyelids were not down so that she lay still awake.
 (p.482, emphasis added)

Amabel, in the preceding passage, is associated with a bird. Significantly, birds in Party Going - according to Stokes, 'symbols of life, of sex and flight' - tend to be obscurely connected with the past by the characters.¹ Despite Stokes's contrary view, therefore, they fail to convince as conveyers of vitality (in terms of the novel's tone). On her way to the station, Julia crosses a bridge under which seagulls fly: 'Then three seagulls flew through that span on which she stood and that is what had happened one of the times she first met him [Max], doves

1. Stokes, p.147.

had flown under a bridge where she had been standing when she had stayed away last summer' (p.391). Julia repeatedly returns to the memory of her first meeting with Max. For her, the significance of birds refers to that moment in the past: 'everything she felt now would come right between them if only it was not hurried, and that promise of the birds which had flown under the arch she stood on would be fulfilled if only, as seemed likely, she could see sea-gulls that night on their crossing' (p.467). Later, she again 'remembered those two birds which had flown under the arch she had been on when she had started, and now she forgot they were sea-gulls and thought they had been doves and so was comforted' (p.473). Julia imbues birds, as she imbues her charms, with some kind of magic which can provide protection by invoking the reassurance of the past.

Images of 'Life' do exist in Party Going, but it is significant that they do not really vitalize the characters' immediate present; they tend to recede into some contemplated intangibility. For this reason, Stokes's following statement is not entirely valid. He argues, with regard to Party Going, that 'If much of its imagery conjures up an impression of death, desolation and aridity, much also conjures up a counterbalancing impression of vitality and wonder'. This balance, he suggests, has the effect of giving the novel a sufficient 'ambiguity of tone'. For, he maintains, 'It is impossible to ascribe to the

setting of the novel any single, definite meaning. Party Going is ... a symbolic novel which can be interpreted on various different levels'.¹ True, Green, in Party Going, displays 'his poet's eye for beauty in unexpected places'.² Green's strong visual and sensuous awareness of his surroundings cannot be questioned. As has been argued, however, Green's imagery does not exist in complete textual freedom, segregated from a determining context (which would cause ambiguity). Tone, when applicable, must be viewed as a product of the interaction between imagery and context. On this level, Party Going creates a consistent pattern of significations.

Stokes provides a perfect example which demonstrates the validity of this argument. He refers to the following passage, involving Amabel and Max, as offering a 'counterbalancing impression of vitality and wonder'.³

She lay on his shoulder in this ugly room, folded up with almost imperceptible breathing like seagulls settled on the water cock over gentle waves ... Lying in his arms ... her hands drifted to rest like white doves drowned on peat water, he marvelled again he should ever dream of leaving her who seemed to him then his reason for living as he made himself breathe with her breathing as he always did when she was in his arms to try and be more with her and dropped off on those outspread wings into her sleep with his, like two soft evenings meeting.

They slept and then a huge wild roar broke from the crowd outside.

(pp.511-12)

1. Stokes, pp.148-49.

2. Stokes, p.87.

3. Stokes, pp.147-48.

The audio-visual counterpoint, created by the great roar, punctures the luxuriant stillness of their apparent communion. What is more, the disturbing sound effects a reaction disclosing that, in reality, theirs is no true rapport. Max's feelings are superficial and self-centred. At one moment believing Amabel to be 'his reason for living', he in the next 'wondered what it would be like to have Julia here in his arms to sleep on his shoulder His sleep had made him forget the urgency of what Amabel had been' (p.512). This passage demonstrates that tone is signalled through montage despite the ambiguity created by imagery of 'vitality and wonder'; in other words, this imagery does not 'counterbalance' the dominant ironic tone in the novel.

Green's persistent theme concerning his characters' remoteness from Life, their lack of vital sensibility, is emphasized by his constant use of the window image. 'Through those lidded windows, the curtains so thick and heavy they seemed made of plaster on stage sets', the individuals in the station outside are 'dimmed into anxious Roman numerals' (pp.466,482). The conflict of planes suggests the party goers' anxious withdrawal, not only from the people outside, but from vital perceptual experience.

Looking down then on thousands of
Smiths, thousands of Alberts, hundreds
of Marys ... lightening the dark mass
with their pale lozenged faces; observ-
ing how this design moved and was alive
... leaning out then, so secure, from
their window up above and left by their
argument on terms of companionship un-
alloyed, Julia and Max could not but
feel infinitely remote.

(pp.466-67)

In Green's survey of the railway station, there is an obvious analogy between the 'pale lozenged faces' seen against the 'dark mass' and Ezra Pound's vision in his famed poem, 'In a Station of the Metro'. The faces in the crowd appear to Pound as 'Petals on a wet, black bough'. Their technique, montage of masses, is pure imagism, a concentrated juxtaposition of diverse elements intended to evoke a strong visual response in the reader or spectator. However, secure behind their window high above, Julia and Max feel 'infinitely remote' from this 'design' which seems 'alive'.

Emotionally inadequate, Max and Julia can only imagine what instead they would need to truly experience - 'companionship unalloyed'. "'Have you ever been in a great crowd?" she said, because she had this feeling she must exchange and share with him' (p.468). It is important to note that Green's values are not exclusively aesthetic, nor simply concerned with human 'companionship'. These two qualities are not separate, but inextricably interdependent. Acute perceptual awareness of one's surroundings is a quality responsive to both beauty and human sympathy. It has to do with the capacity and need to penetrate into the vital essence behind and beyond appearances. Such a connection is accentuated in the following scene.

Upstairs Max and Julia had finished their tea and, in an interval of silence, she had gone over to the window and was looking down on that crowd below ... she seemed to hear a continuous murmur coming

from it. When she noticed heads everywhere turned towards that section just below she flung her window up. Max said: 'Don't go and let all that in' Also that raw air came in, harsh with fog and from somewhere a smell of cooking, there was a shriek from somewhere in the crowd, it was all on a vast scale and not far above her was that vault of glass which was blue now instead of green, now that she was closer to it. She had forgotten what it was to be outside, what it smelled and felt like, and she had not realized what this crowd was, just seeing it through glass ... their faces so much lighter than their dark hats, lozenges, lozenges, lozenges ...

'It's terrifying', Julia said, 'I didn't know there were so many people in the world'.

'Do shut the window, Julia'.

(pp.436-37)

Smells, sounds, the vaporous quality of the air, visual impressions of colours, forms, and people, 'all on a vast scale', intrude upon Julia's repressed senses. She realizes that her sensations possess some vital significance, and in an attempt to get closer, she opens the window. Julia's yearning to participate is not solely directed towards the crowd of people on the platform. The scene displayed before her represents the amorphous quality of existence on a 'vast scale'. Julia reveals a fundamental human need for a full sensuous and spiritual response to her own natural being, a desire directed towards a self-expanding communion with the dynamic essence of 'Living'. The audio-visual counterpoint produced by the crowd's unison chanting, 'WE WANT TRAINS, WE WANT TRAINS ... WE WANT TRAINS, WE WANT TRAINS', interspersed in the scene, is accompanied by Julia's visual impressions, 'lozenges, lozenges, lozenges'.

These powerful repeated images provide the sensory impact of filmic close-ups, acting as projected intensifications of Julia's repressed excitement. Julia's projection of sensual impulses into the scene is evident in her perception of the people as 'corpuscles in blood, for here and there a narrow stream of people shoved and moved in lines three deep and where they did this they were like veins'. Her susceptibility to beauty finds expression in her envisaging of the electric lighting in the station as 'November sun striking through mist rising off water' (p.430).

Despite images of 'vitality and wonder', however, it is the conflict of planes that sets the basic tone of the passage. The window is a recurrent motif in Green's fiction. It is the shield behind which Miss Edge, in Concluding, retreats from the vivid display of prismatic colours in her garden, and from her own natural needs. It separates Lily, in Living, from the vitality of swarming pigeons prior to her abortive escape, and Lily's and Bert's constant opening, leaning out of, and shutting the window in their train compartment suggest their longing for fulfilment as well as beginning withdrawal. In Loving, before Raunce's falling in love with Edith, Raunce is frequently referred to as being at the 'wrong side of the window' (Living, p.34). Significantly, the party goers' repression of their perceptual awareness also estranges them from the reality of human beings. Standing by the same hotel window, having been implored by Max to shut the window,

Julia retorts:

'But why? Max, there's a poor woman down there where that end of the crowd's swaying. Did you hear her call? Couldn't you do something about it?' ... 'After all', she said, 'one must not hear too many cries for help in this world' ... It was extraordinary how quiet their room became once that window was shut.

(pp.437-38)

Max's and Julia's decision to ignore that poor woman's cry for help, draws attention to Miss Fellowes's plight, and the party goers' negligence of her. In terms of Party Going's basic themes and structure, all elements in some way relate to the central significance of Miss Fellowes - and the dead pigeon. "'My dear, what are we to do with her?" ... Claire went on. "I don't care", she said, "she must get well, it's too absurd her being ill here"'. Claire is more worried about Max who is to take them travelling. "'But it's unfair to him if she doesn't get well soon or get over it, whichever it is, or both", she said' (p.470). In accordance with Green's use of montage in Party Going, a conflict of planes contrasts the disparate images of Amabel 'pink with warmth and wrapped round with steam so comfortable', and, in the adjacent room, of Miss Fellowes under 'mists which wrapped her round not sweet and warm' (pp.469-70). The party goers will continue their endless travelling, oblivious of the message of the dead pigeon and Miss Fellowes. As Julia's servant, Thomson, ironically remarks, 'And if she did die why you'd never be the same, none of them would, not for three days at all events' (p.500).

NOTHING (1950) , DOTING (1952)

The crucial question with regard to Nothing and Doting is whether their abstract designs preclude a reliable assessment of tone. Donald S Taylor, who has probably conducted the most thorough study of the two novels, argues that 'evaluative tendencies are countered in Doting by the textural innovations'.¹ Taylor's assertion coincides with Green's idea that neither dialogue nor a character's behaviour, in Nothing and Doting, should have a reliable meaning in itself. Green states that 'we should use combinations of words with the widest possible range of meaning in dialogue. That is, dialogue should not be capable of only one meaning, or mood'.² What is left of description (which is largely effaced in favour of dialogue) is mainly Green's directions to the reader about surface action.

Green's 'textural innovations' imply that especially the nature of the characters' motives is kept at an elusive distance from the reader. Ryf outlines perfectly the web of contra-indications surrounding the motives of Jane Weatherby in Nothing. 'The figure which emerges in central

1. Taylor, p.92.

2. Green, 'A Novelist to his Readers' - I, p.505.

focus in all this is that of Jane Weatherby, and the central mystery is her motivation. She presides over the novel, manoeuvring to separate John from Liz and Philip from Mary. She wins John for herself again after all these years, even proposing to him, and when he accepts she claims it's his idea. She is adept at putting words in other people's mouths, and at the end, if anyone can be said to have won out, it is she'. However, 'the question remains of her', states Ryf, 'is she a well-meaning matron or a manipulative monster?'¹ Apparently charitable traits are countered by her selfish outmanoeuvring of her surroundings with the aim of marrying John Pomfret. Finally reunited, they decide that their children will have to take care of their own problems from now on. Mr Pomfret casually remarks that their parents 'can't do everything for them' (p.167). Penelope, like the other children, is manipulated out of the way to boarding school. Although Mr Pomfret's and Mrs Weatherby's motives are ambiguous, their achievement is obvious - they have won each other for themselves. At the end of the novel, the couple lapse into lazy, luxurious complacency.

'And is there anything at all you
want my own?'

'Nothing ... nothing', he replied in
so low a voice she could barely have heard
and then seemed to fall deep asleep at last.
(p.168)

The ending is predictably equivocal. The question

1. Ryf, p.38.

is whether Mr Pomfret's profession of contentment coincides with the tone of Nothing. It could be that the couple's self-centred machinations leave them in a spiritual vacuum - 'nothing'. A crucial related question is whether Nothing, as a whole, evades value assessment principally as a consequence of Jane Weatherby's enigmatic moral consciousness. A more functional approach is to simply acknowledge the obscurity of her motives as a realistic manifestation of the impossibility to know the full truth, neither about oneself, nor about others. One could argue that the obscurity of her disposition is a value statement in itself; her behaviour is not sufficiently convincing to term her a 'well-meaning matron'. It seems that, like Charles Addinsell in Doting, she can 'love no one too much' (Doting, p.266).

Tone cannot be determined on the basis of Green's 'textural innovations' alone. It is necessary to look for a larger structural and thematic perspective in which the entire worlds of Nothing and Doting are presented. Only with Green's underlying existential vision detected, can the characters' dialogues and actions be brought into ethical relief, and a pattern of montage conflicts, conducive to a dominant tone, confirmed. One incident, especially, suggests the imminent threat of death: on the first page of Doting, as in Party Going, appears the image of a dead bird carried by the Middleton's son, Peter. 'So they were three in full evening dress apart from Peter's tailored

pin stripe suit in which, several weeks later, he was to carry a white goose under one arm, its dead beak almost trailing the platform, to catch the last train back to yet another term' (p.171). As in Party Going, travelling by train seems to be associated with monotony - 'yet another term'. Like the travellers in Party Going, Charles Addinsell, a friend of the Middleton's, recoils from 'loving' because he fears death. 'No, what I have against living, is the dirty tricks fate has in store', he tells the young Annabel Paynton, his new object of interest (Doting, p.263).

'And so what has anyone to live for?'
 'Blessed if I know' ...
 'Yet ... would you really warn a woman
 against looking forward to her own children?'
 'They can always die, too' ...
 'Then am I not to love anyone because,
 like all of us, they've got to die some time?'
 'Don't know'.
 'But, please, you do truly love your Joe,
 don't you?'
 'Certainly' ...
 'Then are you going to love him less for
 that?'
 'I am. You see, Ann, on account of if
 he died ... My point is, love no one too
 much, in case they do'.

(Doting, pp.265-66)

Despite the textural ambiguities of Nothing and Doting, there is strong evidence that the effete Mayfair set is mocked for their lack of an affirmative commitment to 'living'. Their inadequacy is recompensed by sex, lunching out, partying, and 'doting'. The dead bird in Doting does not have a structural function as in Party Going where it is associated with Miss Fellowes and so recurs in

montage conflicts throughout the novel. Several other incidents, however, bear witness to the characters' escapism. In one of the very few descriptive passages in Nothing - the picturing of the dining-room decorated for the celebration of Philip's (Mrs Weatherby's son) twenty-first birthday - appearances are close to perfection. Not insignificantly, the reserved private room is located in the same fashionable hotel where they hold their habitual luncheons. Tall mirrors suggest that the ornamented dining-room may be a reflection of the quality of the characters' lives. Mirrors repeat the image of the ostentatious chandeliers 'to a thousand thousand profiles to be lost in olive grey depths'. In this great room, 'prepared, empty, curtained, shuttered', 'time stood still for Jane, even in wine bottles over to one side holding the single movement, and that unseen of bubbles rising just as the air, similarly trapped even if conditioned, watched unseen across itself in a superb but not indifferent pause of mirrors' (p.61, emphasis added). Like Mrs Tennant in Loving, Jane Weatherby 'fingered daffodils here and there ... not to disarrange these but almost as though to reassure herself that all were true'. 'But it is perfect!', she exclaims (p.63). It seems that these flowers have fulfilled their function as such perfect ornaments that they are divested of natural life and vitality. They belong to a world of appearances, reflecting the party goers' empty rituals. A newly arrived couple

'came up to go through the shrill ritual of delighted cries at Jane's appearance ... and at the blossoming, the to them so they said incredible conjuring up out of these perfect flowers' (p.66, emphasis added). The party comes through as deeply ironic. Philip discovers a place card with a name, Mr William Smith, which is not mentioned on the seating list. There is obviously some mistake, because Mr William Smith is long dead, and his card is all yellow. Mrs Weatherby despairs, '"How odd and sad", she tore the thing up into very small bits ... "How dreadful", she murmured. "Philip you didn't do this to me?"'. And then she adds, 'I never like to look the other side of anything in hotels' (p.64). At closer inspection, Mrs Weatherby's 'full cream of flesh' reveals eyes 'red veined as leaves' (p.62).

To Russell's question 'whether Green has despaired of humane values, and resorted to the emotional consolations of abstract art', the answer is, no.¹ Not Green; but Mrs Weatherby and her companions attempt to escape their private fears by resorting to the consolations of an artificial pattern of appearances, as demonstrated in the ornamented dining-room scene. Their pretensions are ironically undermined. If the existentialist perspective of Nothing and Doting is recognized (notably the necessity of imposing human values into a meaningless void), Green's

1. Russell, p.203.

repudiation of his characters is not difficult to detect. Green's creation of incongruity between characters' talk and their behaviour afterwards serves the same function as cross-montage. It exposes their escape from the threat of death to a life of triviality. There is old Arthur Morris in Nothing who is having his leg amputated bit by bit due to blood-poisoning. When Mr Pomfret, Miss Jennings (his present lady-friend), and Mrs Weatherby (his lady-friend-to-be) first talk about it in their usual restaurant, they giggle hysterically because of Mr Pomfret's solemn face at announcing it. Later, they are a little more serious:

'Poor Arthur isn't it bad luck?'
she said.

'Frightful', he agreed. 'Now what
are you proposing to have now? Cheese
or sweet or both?'

(Nothing, p.38)

Green stresses Mr Pomfret's insincerity - the manner in which he pretends to care, while his behaviour reveals the opposite.

'Why', he protested, 'it's the
most frightful thing I ever heard in
all my life! Poor old fellow. No
knowing where these things'll stop
either. And the bill too if you don't
mind, waiter'.

(p.39)

Green deliberately creates ambiguity as to how much the characters really care about poor Arthur Morris. When Jane Weatherby is told of his death, tears stream down her face. Green remarks, 'She might have been able to cry at will or it could be that she dreadfully minded' (p.142).

Critics might argue that behind these characters' evasion of death, there is commitment to life. Taylor asserts that Green 'suggests comedy as a cure for the moralistic, the sentimental, the idealistic, and the banal'.¹ Mr Pomfret utters something towards this effect when, after having finished laughing over Arthur Morris's misfortune, he remarks to Miss Jennings: 'If I lay in bed about to be amputated ... I wouldn't expect you to laugh of course my dear and naturally Mary couldn't, but I'd lose a certain amount of resistance if I thought our acquaintances weren't roaring their beastly heads off!' (p.13). Green's fiction testifies to his belief that comedy should conquer tragedy, that tragedy should be met with an affirmative smile. However, the characters of Nothing and Doting are incapable of such a positive encounter. Instead, they escape death, their inhumane disregard of their 'friend's' death being a sign of their fear. This argument is supported by parallels between Nothing, Doting, and other Green novels. Arthur Morris is a counterpart to Charley Summers in Back, who loses his leg in the war. They represent loss in a metaphysical sense, a loss which can only be remedied by a full commitment to life through 'living' and 'loving'. Similarly, Miss Fellowes represents encounter with a void of darkness and uncertainty, from which the party goes ensconce themselves in the

1. Taylor, p.84.

hotel. Taylor argues that in Doting, 'The golden age - the Middletons's good marriage, based on mutual sensuality - is suggested in the first chapter and recalled throughout the novel'. After wasting his energies on the beautiful, but prudish, nineteen-year-old Annabel, Mr Middleton, middle-aged, is reconciled with his wife, and 'fruitfulness is restored'.¹ Sensuality is definitely not absent from the middle-aged characters' world. However, whether sex, in itself, is enough to make their lives 'fruitful' is a different matter. From the point of view of the novels' existentialist preoccupation, the characters' half-hearted responsiveness to 'living' in general leaves them in a spiritually impoverished world of 'doting' and triviality. The following scene encapsulates the dominant tone of both Nothing and Doting. John Pomfret has just countered Mrs Weatherby's complaint about their children's failure to live up to their parents' life-style by intimating that their own lives have been a mess.

'Now darling you're not to speak so
of what is still absolutely sacred to
me. How delicious this lobster is!'
(p.126)

The irony is produced by the non-sequitur. It highlights the possibility that what Mrs Weatherby pronounces as 'absolutely sacred' implies a superficial dependence on appearances and a life of luxurious pleasure-seeking.

With regard to tone, in Nothing and Doting, obscurity

1. Taylor, pp.93,95.

resides mainly in the dubious nature of people's motives, the reality of which equals the ambiguity of linguistic meaning. In the larger metaphysical perspective, however, these textural ambiguities cannot conceal the authorial irony. The characters' lives appear monotonous and futile. Rarely do Nothing and Doting present experience that transcends the prose logic of the linguistic medium to produce what may be termed poetry. Green justifies his abstract style by explaining that a writer 'has to create or inspire a conscious act of imagination in the reader ... the reader of a novel somehow or other must be encouraged by the writer to extend his imagination over the whole of all the questions that have been asked in life and can never be answered'.¹ If Nothing and Doting are meant to kindle the reader's imagination to all aspects of life's mystery, one may argue that ethical, spiritual, and poetic values are so well disguised that the central mystery is reduced to the question of whether they exist at all.'

The lack of values actually present in the works explains the absence of 'vital' montage. Green asserts that the reader's imagination is to be fired by 'the magic which has to be created between writer and reader'.² If there is magic in Nothing and Doting, it is due to Green's creation of a value-void, whose specific characteristics insist upon and direct the reader's own evaluative

1. Green, 'The English Novel of the Future', p.23.

2. Green, 'The English Novel of the Future', p.23.

faculties. The vacuity energizes the reader's disdain so that moral quality emerges between reader and work rather than between specific elements within it. Still, contrasts do exist within the works. Stokes, however, feels that 'the things we have accepted in Caught, Loving and Back as fresh and vivid perceptions here seem stale and shop-soiled'.¹ The descriptive passage which opens Nothing is, according to Stokes, one of a few 'failures', 'which may be justly accused of pretentiousness and affectation'. This 'pretentiousness and affectation' not only applies to the failure of Green's artistic powers, but to John Pomfret's lack of vital sensibility. Pomfret is out lunching with his mistress, Liz Jennings, to whom he professes his love:

He did not look at the girl and seemed nervous as he described his tea the previous Sunday when Liz had to visit her mother ill with flu so that he had been free to call on Jane Weatherby It was wet then, did she remember he was saying, so unlike this he said, and turned his face to the dazzle of window, it had been dark with sad tears on the panes and streets of blue canals as he sat by her fire ... while outside a single street lamp was yellow, reflected over a thousand raindrops on the glass, the fire was rose.
(Nothing, p.9, emphasis added)

Stokes thinks the passage 'stale' and open to the 'objection that nowhere else in the book is there any indication that the diabetic snob, Pomfret, is capable of the perceptiveness and eloquence here attributed to him'. There is a sense

1. Stokes, pp.219-20.

of unreality in the passage which renders the impression of something contemplated rather than vivaciously perceived. The conflict of planes, indicated by the 'great window that opened on the Park', clarifies the underlying tension. It accentuates Pomfret's separation from the 'dazzle' outside, making him a spiritual shadow. Evading this 'dazzle', as he also evades looking at his woman, he lapses into memories of the previous week, the vivacious images of which (the reflection of 'a thousand raindrops on the glass' and 'sparkling points of rose') fail to convince, because only sadly, distantly remembered. It is the image of 'dark with sad tears on the panes and streets' that sets the mood of the passage. It echoes Green's comment on the guests who, at Philip's twenty-first birthday party, admire the perfect ornamentations of flowers, 'of a spring lost once more for yet another year to the sad denizens of London in rain fog mist and cold' (p.66). The sadness and terror of the surrounding existential void seem to be the underlying motivational forces behind their endless lunches, gossip, affairs, intrigues, and their way of making 'mountains out of molehills' (a favourite expression by which they characterize one another's pastimes). They lack vital imagination, commitment to the present moment, required in order to impose human meaning upon existential nothingness. Despite John Pomfret's and Jane Weatherby's seeming fulfilment after their reunion in front of the rosy fire, the ending of Nothing is replete with lazy, somnolent

yawning, suggestive of spiritual stasis. In light of Nothing's and Doting's almost identical structures of appearances and endless triviality, it is likely that the meaning of their endings would converge - that John Pomfret's satisfied, 'Nothing ... nothing', translates 'The next day they all went on very much the same' (Doting, p.337).

The preceding discussion of characters and linguistic particulars needs to be outlined against the larger structural patterns of Nothing and Doting. The ambiguity of specific contexts and passages is diminished once the close connection existing between structure and content is recognized. Green's concentration on dialogue with a minimal degree of commentary, naturally presupposes a scenic structure. Paradoxically enough, tone is produced, not in spite of, but as a result of Green's abstracting montage method. Life is confined into a structural pattern, a reflection of the author's evaluations. An essential issue, raised by Taylor, is to what extent 'the very dividing into scenes, the rejection of some and selection of others, puts a construction on life' and with what consequences 'the shape given each scene turns it into a structure which would seem to be aesthetically if not morally evaluative'.¹ Taylor argues that the structure does not affect Green's wish that his novels be 'all things to all men', and that any evaluative suggestions are

1. Taylor, p.90.

'completely optional'. This, he claims, is because the 'whole system' is 'so different, so aloof from the thoroughly oblique, ambiguous texture of the book [Doting] as a whole, and it is so subtly and unportentously introduced, that we can ignore it'.¹ Taylor's assertion is tenuous given that he also finds 'an almost unbelievably elaborate geometry in the structure of the book' and that 'this would, of course, reinforce in detail the mechanical quality of the waxing-waning movement of the action'. It seems to suggest, he admits, 'in its inhuman mathematics and mechanics, the much-ado-about-nothing sort of comedy that was suggested by Bergson'.² In addition to much-ado-about-nothing comedy, there is also typical Sterne-humour, notably the juxtaposition of the 'finite great' with the 'finite little'. In Doting, Arthur Middleton arranges a secret assignation with Annabel and in the middle of a passionate embrace spills hot coffee on her. Another passage, in Nothing, describes the unfortunate moment when Dick Abbott, passionately kissing Miss Jennings, suddenly has a choking fit which turns his face purple and finally black.

The important question is whether the 'textural innovations' - the comical aspects included - are, as Taylor argues, so disengaged from the mechanical symmetry of the structure so as to stress the obliquity and ambiguity of the two novels. Taylor's argument is hardly valid.

1. Taylor, pp.98-99.

2. Taylor, p.98.

Ryf suggests that 'the action of the novel [Nothing] is comic, even though its implications are not'.¹ Tragic implications are far too manifest in the lives of the characters to make moral evaluation 'completely optional'. The structural pattern is not 'subtly and unportentously introduced'. Melchiori compares it with that of the Cubist painters, a 'complete abstraction - a pattern of rigid geometrical figures creating abstract emotions through the intellect rather than the heart'.² Like the Cubists, Green does present simultaneous impressions of life's different facets. However, everything redundant to the characters' trivial preoccupations is almost eliminated from the world of these novels. Montage is scarce in the sense that life's complexity is reduced to a diagram of monotonous scenes which exclude a multiplicity of contrasting impulses. Montage, restricted within the individual scenes because of their claustrophobic quality, exists between the scenes, in the transitions between the different couples entering the arena. This composition conforms to Eisenstein's ideas on the creation of tone in film, which again echo Green's statement that 'the arrangement and superimposition of 'one scene on another, or the telescoping of two scenes into one' give the novel 'substance and depth'. The monotonous juxtapositions of different but constantly

1. Ryf, p.39.

2. Melchiori, p.209.

repeated settings, of alternating couples endlessly gossiping about the same trivial things behind one another's backs, are what produce the spiritually impoverished atmosphere of Nothing and Doting.

The disparity between what the other novels achieve, and what Nothing and Doting fail to achieve, illuminates the nature of Green's value commitment. Nothing and Doting fail to stretch the reader's imagination to all the questions which life asks. Incantatory visualization, colours, swarming birds, and natural imagery do not intrude adequately in order to infuse the prosaic with an imaginative dimension. The spiritual void may stimulate the reader's compensatory private imagination, but one could not possibly have imagined the magically enchanted world of Concluding without its visual immediacy. In Nothing and Doting, however, it may happen that Green invokes an artistic vision. Although his attempt fails to achieve true spontaneity, it at least highlights the vacuous sensibilities of the indifferent spectators. It is highly significant that Doting both opens and closes with a show of artists - a structural device to contrast the non-artistic lives of the characters. The first paragraph of the book portrays Annabel and the Middleton's watching a performance of snake-dancers and jugglers. "'Pretty squalid play all round, I thought!'" His son only grunted back at him, face vacant, mouth half open, in London, in 1949'. A juggler, to whom they react with bored indifference,

reappears in the nightclub at the end of the novel. The window motif recurs as a device to enhance the sense of distance between the distracted audience and the arena. It is also worth noting that, as in Party Going, leaning out of the window, towards a more palpable reality, instils fear. 'Ann and Claire were leaning out of an open window on the dancing side. "No Charles, or I shall feel quite sick", Diana implored the man, plainly nervous at the sight' (p.325). When the same conjuror they had watched at the beginning appears at the end, Peter says, 'Oh God!', the party breaks up, and the novel terminates. While, at the beginning, they focus their attentions on the restaurant bill,

they altogether ignored ... miracles of skill spun out a few feet beneath - no less than the balancing of a billiard ivory ball on the juggler's chin, then a pint beer mug on top of that ball at the exact angle needed to cheat gravity, and at last the second ivory sphere which this man placed from a stick, or cue, to top all on the mug's handle - the ball supporting a pint pot, then the pint pot a second ball until, unnoticed by our party, the man removed his chin and these separate objects fell, balls of ivory each to a hand, and the jug to a toe of his patent leather shoe where he let it hang and shine to a faint look of surprise, the artist.

(pp.175-76)

Taylor and Stokes believe the conjuror is Green himself, the juggler-artist conjuror who, says Stokes, 'juggles phrases and clauses with the same dexterous aplomb and assurance as the juggler does his billiard balls and beer

mugs'.¹ If it is indeed Green, his juggling act is not convincing; it does not quite come alive because it is too precise and controlled (even if Eudora Welty finds it effects a 'kinetic' sensation on the reader).² No incantatory prose conveys the true quality of this miraculous artistic performance. The reason, probably, is an echo of the protagonists' unimaginative minds, which 'altogether ignored' the act. And what they completely fail to appreciate is the beauty of the instant moment; they fail to stretch their imaginations to the 'magic' of artistry. Nothing and Doting fail to attain 'a life of their own' because they lack, unlike most of Green's other novels, the dynamic interaction of stasis and dynamism; order and disorder; prose and poetry; tragedy and comedy - the dynamic vitality of montage.

1. Taylor, p.97; Stokes, p.218.

2. Welty, p.252.

Chapter Seven

CONCLUSION

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Green's successive experiments in creating an autonomous, non-representational novel, culminating in Nothing and Doting, evince certain characteristics of the 'nouveau roman'. Robbe-Grillet (the French novelist) contends that external surfaces and appearances alone have validity. Any authorial attribution of human significance to the factual world distorts reality. What traditionally is termed 'meaning', he maintains, is only due to man's fictitious arrangement of reality into patterns that suit his needs. Robbe-Grillet, deriding contrived 'truths' in a work of art, aims at duplicating life's non-coherent nature. This, he believes, is achieved through 'scientific', neutral observation of characters and events.¹

Robbe-Grillet's theory of art and reality resembles Green's in important respects. It coincides with Green's idea that the novel should be ambiguous and have a life of its own, so as to enable the reader to construct his own meaning. Green's characters are simply there without any obvious psychological or explanatory past. Their condition reflects the peculiar uncertainties and contradictions of

1. Robbe-Grillet, 'A Future for the Novel' in 20th Century Literary Criticism, pp.467-72.

living in an age of social and cultural disorder. The lack of traditional plots in Green's novels, and the inconclusiveness of their endings, mirror the modern dubiousness about goals and identity. Instead, Green's artistic world is composed of gestures, images, situations, and heterogeneous items.

Robbe-Grillet, as well as Green, employs montage to provoke a true sensation of reality. However, Robbe-Grillet's attempt to convey an authentic image of the factual world involves a subjective interpretation of non-coherent data. His use of montage is finally incompatible with his ambition to maintain objectivity and neutrality. The very choice of montage as a literary technique - its principle being 'emotional intensification' - seems to reflect the author's private needs. The following passage from The Voyeur demonstrates this point. It suggests interesting correspondences between Green's and Robbe-Grillet's technique and vision.

It was as if no one had heard.
The whistle blew again - a shrill,
prolonged noise followed by three short
blasts of ear-splitting violence: a
violence without purpose that remained
without effect ...

A motionless and parallel series of
strained, almost anxious stares crossed
- tried to cross - struggled against
the narrowing space that still separated
them from their goal ... A last puff of
heavy, noiseless steam formed a great
plume in the air above them, and vanished
as soon as it had appeared.¹

(emphasis added)

1. Robbe-Grillet, The Voyeur, translated by Richard Howard (London 1959), p.3.

In a montage fashion, Robbe-Grillet juxtaposes incongruous words within the sentences. A static image, 'motionless', counterpoints stares which 'strained' and 'struggled'; 'heavy noiseless' contradicts 'puff'. Montage compresses opposites into simultaneity, into a conceptual synthesis whose equivalent Eisenstein would call 'graphically undepictable'. The above juxtaposition between visual and auditory images creates a tension between stasis and 'violence' which is strongly dynamic. Its dynamism possesses the potential power to conjoin fragments and contradictions by evoking a sense of perceptual immediacy between the reader and the depicted scene. Robbe-Grillet's disengaged, factual description seeks to avoid the projection of human needs into the scene. However, his attempt to create perceptual immediacy without compromising his emotional disengagement fails to reflect the author's complete 'scientific' objectivity.¹ In his portrayal of his alienated travellers, Robbe-Grillet does betray a secret impulse towards reconciliation with an ulterior reality. His depiction echoes the human need behind Julia's and Max's alienated perceptions from the hotel window in Party Going. Robbe-Grillet's technique of humanizing reality through montage aligns him, not only with Green, but with Pound, Joyce, Faulkner, and

1. David Lodge argues that 'Robbe-Grillet succeeds as a novelist by violating the consistency of his theory', 20th Century Literary Criticism, p.466.

D H Lawrence, who all employ montage to effect a dynamic sense of integration with perceptual phenomena.

The comparison of Green's and Robbe-Grillet's montage methods does not imply a full correspondence. Essentially, there is a level of value commitment in both authors' use of montage. Montage animates an otherwise disconnected world of things. For both Robbe-Grillet and Green it is the imagination that invents meaning. Thus, there is no fundamental divergence in Robbe-Grillet's and Green's conceptions of the relation between montage and reality; fresh, unexpected, concrete juxtapositions violate conceptualization, creating reality anew through unprejudiced senses. Green, however, reveals a far greater conviction than Robbe-Grillet in colouring the world with human significance. Their difference is due to Green's abundant use of metaphor, which Robbe-Grillet rejects on the grounds that it would humanize the universe by being an extension of man's soul. Robbe-Grillet's depictions 'will renounce their pseudo-mystery, that suspect interiority which Roland Barthes has called "the romantic heart of things"'.¹ As has been argued, Green's metaphors evade symbolic signification, thereby denying the world logical intelligibility. However, they do create a third dimension of mystery and wonder which is absent in Robbe-Grillet's work. Green's impulse towards integrating man and universe

1. 'A Future for the Novel', p.470.

through spiritual unification is what makes him an essentially Romantic writer.

To restore some harmony between reality and reader by sensitizing him to the particular in life is one of Green's main motivations. Green's creation of a sensual intimacy in his portrayals of man and nature links him with Lawrence. Green also stresses the spiritual side of the momentary experience. Such values, one may argue, are essentially Romantic. Green's technique generates an almost paradisaal identity of self with the universe of perception, of experience, of imagination, and of process. At one moment, swirling light revives 'the fallen world'; in the next, swarming birds and shades of red and gold counteract a 'dying world', uniting 'sky' and 'sea'.

Green's experience of sublime beauty in the contradictory quality of reality aligns him with Keats. Keats's sensitivity to the visual moment incites an impression of sensual and spiritual encompassment, as in his depiction, in 'The Eve of St Agnes', of Porphyro waking in Madeline's bedroom.

Thus whispering, his warm, unnerved arm
Sank in her pillow. Shaded was her dream
By the dusk curtains; 'twas a midnight charm
Impossible to melt as iced stream.
The lustrous salvers in the moonlight gleam,
Broad golden fringe upon the carpet lies.
It seemed he never, never could redeem
From such a steadfast spell his lady's eyes.¹
(emphasis added)

1. 'The Eve of St Agnes', The Poems of John Keats, edited by Miriam Allott (London 1970), p.472.

Dissonant images - of warmth and cold; energy and calm; vividness and stasis; light and dark - create a visual polarity. It is enhanced by an accented rhythm which, in filmic terms, produces sensory close-ups, attracting the reader's senses to the immediacy of the vision. The visual intensity of the scene creates a synthesis between objective details and the poet's subjectively projected passion. Keats's exaltation is bound up with his sense of life's total presence, an image which, to use Coleridge's expression, strikes him as a reconciliation of discordant qualities. Keats's vision is basically equivalent to the effect gained by Green's use of montage in his oft-referred-to depiction of the reclining Merode (Concluding), or in the final picture of Edith and the birds (Loving). Images of vitality are juxtaposed with the darker aspects of reality to produce an encompassing moment of beauty.

Robbe-Grillet's montage of static and dynamic images has traits in common with Keats's and Green's techniques, but his depiction lacks emotive force. Robbe-Grillet aims at objectivity in presentation, but projects a subjective disposition. Keats's and Green's energetic visualization, on the other hand, transcends the terms 'subjective' and 'objective' in a process of poetic unification. Coleridge's preoccupation with the two terms indicates how Green, while being a Modernist writer, is fundamentally a Romantic. According to Abrams, Coleridge regards Milton's

three adjectives, 'simple, sensuous, and passionate' as the main components of poetry. Coleridge suggests that "'the second condition, sensuousness, ensures that framework of objectivity, that definiteness and articulation of imagery", without which poetry evaporates into day-dreaming'. At the same time, 'the third condition, passion, provides that neither thought nor imagery shall be simply objective, but that the passio vera of humanity shall warm and animate both'.¹ Green's incantatory prose contains all the three elements required to make a fragmentary, unintelligible world poetic.

For a further elucidation of Green's methods and value commitments, a comparison with similar, though different, techniques is useful. Henry James's experimentation with visual dramatization has certainly had a strong influence on twentieth century novelists. A most vivid example of James's visualization occurs in the latter part of The Ambassadors. Strether, the central character of the novel, has gradually come to a full realization of the constrictions and deprivations of his former conventionalized existence. As he travels deeper into the French countryside, the freedom of a new world strikes upon his senses. The village he comes to affects him 'as a thing of whiteness, blueness, and crookedness, set in coppery green, and that had the river flowing behind or before it'.

1. M H Abrams, The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition (New York 1953), p.242.

Down by the stream,

the confidence that had so gathered for him deepened with the lap of the water, the ripple of the surface, the rustle of the reeds on the opposite bank, the faint diffused coolness and the slight rock of a couple of small boats ... The valley on the farther side was all coppery-green level and glazed pearly sky, a sky hatched across with screens of trimmed trees ... [Mme de Vionnet's parasol made] a pink point in the shining scene.¹

'Coppery-green', 'pearly' white, 'pink', and 'screens' of green reflect a 'shining' light over the scene, with the 'lap of the water', the 'ripple of the surface', the 'rustle of the reeds'. James's sensitivity to natural motion, to sound, and to the play of light places the emphasis on the subjective visual impression rather than on the thing itself. However, the total sensory effect is not identical to the one created by Green. James freezes motion into pictorial details, as if in a painting: the 'lap' of water, the 'rock' of boats. Whereas Green's active, mimetic phrases have a kinetic impact, James's verbs have been made into nouns which stimulate the reader's visual imagination rather than his immediate sensual involvement. In reference to Coleridge's three conditions of poetry, James's passage lacks a 'vital' polarity between 'sensuousness' and 'passion'. It is predominantly impressionistic, a function which may be attributed to the faculty of mind Coleridge terms 'Fancy'.

1. Henry James, The Ambassadors Vol.2 (London 1903), pp.225,228,230.

In contrast, Green's 'Imagination' is able to 'create'; a hard external surface is synthesized by an animating human sensibility into a dynamic interdependence of discordant qualities.

Romantic conflict between human values and an industrialized world pervades Green's fiction. The term 'pastoral', closely associated with Romanticism, applies to basic streams in his work. William Empson associates the term with a work of art which contrasts good, simple life and complicated, less natural ways.¹ Other applications of 'pastoral' refer to individuals' withdrawal from a complex civilization to an enlightening reconciliation with the elemental rhythms of nature. Some pastoralists equate the term with 'shepherd' ('Pastor' is Latin for 'shepherd').² Mr Rock, in Concluding, is a 'shepherd', watching over his three animals. The Christian allusions embodied by Rock, the 'shepherd' (whose name, in addition, means Peter), are reinforced by the idyll of the Eames's 'Garden of Eden' in Living.

Man's sensual and spiritual communion with his own natural being, the qualities implied in 'living' and 'loving', is Green's ideal. The fulfilment of the ideal is facilitated through a simple life in natural surroundings, the main reason why the different definitions of

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1. William Empson, Some Versions of Pastoral (London 1935), p.14.
 2. Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays (Princeton, New Jersey 1957), pp.99,144,176.

'pastoral' emerge as central values in Green's novels. The term 'pastoral', however, does not apply to their entire structure. The forest in which Rock seeks refuge is not the forest of Arden in Shakespeare's romantic comedy, As You Like It, or the fairy-haunted wood of A Midsummer Night's Dream, in which all complications are resolved, enmities reconciled, and true love cultivated.¹ The forest of Concluding is haunted by ghosts as much as by fairies. There is love among the characters, but hostility and suspicion prevail between Rock and Adams, the forester. Amorous love exists, not between two inhabitants of the forest, but, significantly, between Rock's granddaughter and Sebastian, an official of the State Institute. Hence, the forest, in Concluding, does not function as a symbol of Arcadian innocence. Rather, pastoral qualities are employed to express a sense of mystery, wonder, and natural fulfilment despite the presence of disintegrating forces. The 'green world', in Concluding, possesses values of growth and fertility, not by virtue of being a refuge, but as a reflection of man's soul. Northrop Frye illuminates the value of Green's forest by assessing its similar function in Shakespeare's comedies: the 'Shakespearean comedy illustrates, as

1. Frye, pp.182-83. Frye suggests that some of Shakespeare's romantic comedies centre on 'the drama of the green world, its plot being assimilated to the ritual theme of the triumph of life and love over the waste land'. In terms of primitive myths, 'The green world charges the comedies with the symbolism of the victory of summer over winter'.

clearly as any mythos we have, the archetypal function of literature in visualizing the world of desire, not as an escape from "reality", but as the genuine form of the world that human life tries to imitate'.¹

'Reconciliation' with nature, in Green's world, does not imply the value of abandoning the self to the continuum. Green is a predominantly Modernist writer, whose recognition of fragmentation is all-pervasive. In accordance with his Existentialist orientation, the diurnal processes represent a threat to humanity, and to 'living'. Critics tend to ignore the full implications of the manner in which different levels of reality operate in a Green novel. The significance of characters' confrontation with darkness exceeds a symbolic, representational meaning; it signifies not only 'a stage in self-creation'.² There is a poetic level, in Green's world, consisting of dynamic polarity between projected human values and an immanent, inorganic reality. Coleridge's poetic technique matches Green's vision; meaning is basically a spiritual and sensual interaction between human impulses and objective reality. Its principle of unity resides within the imagination.

Green's focus on the vital balance of opposites makes him rather unique among British novelists. Lawrence's novels reveal a deep conviction of the value of immersing the ego in the impersonal (perhaps divine) flow of nature.

1. Frye, p.184.

2. Weatherhead's interpretation in A Reading of Henry Green, p.146.

A merging with empirical reality provides a reconciliation with metaphysical reality, and a vital expansion of the self. Lawrence's attitudes, although to a large extent shared by Green, become difficult or dangerous in a Green novel. Whereas Lawrence tries to ignore the modern, industrialized and fragmented world, Green has to live with it. The factory in Living, also employing the Eameses, may clearly be seen as a symbol for the modern world in which man is trapped. Opposition between material necessity, the need to survive as an individual in face of disintegration, and the need for fulfilment, seems to be the dilemma of the modern world as Green portrays it. It may be seen in many aspects of life - in Green's perceptions of the relationship between man and nature; in the relationship between the sexes; and in man's relation to social institutions. 'Living', in Green's work, seems to depend on an ability to avoid coercive forces, exclude distracting impressions, and to assimilate opposites into a perceptual unity. It requires active participation in Life, an invigoration of human sympathetic powers. What makes Green's method poetic is the fact that his visual scenes and images do not have a primarily logical, symbolic significance. They are components of an artistic form, an artistic medium intended to arouse the reader's full response to the life (i.e. its contradictory quality) of the novel.

This study has argued that aspects of Green's method

of organization resemble principles characteristic of modern poetry - the kind of poetic technique that may be traced back to Whitman. In Whitman's poetry, values are not communicated by a subjective rhetorical voice through a regular metrical rhythm. The form is visual - an irregular, accented unit, arousing the reader's perceptual awareness to the particular rather than the abstract. Akin to Whitman's practice are the ideas propounded by the New Criticism movement. The work of art should be a self-sufficient artifact providing its own, essentially aesthetic frame of reference. It should not primarily signify, but basically be.

A reading of Green's novels in keeping with the ideas of modern poetry and the school of New Criticism elucidates intent and effects in Green's poetic scenes. His poetic passages catch a moment demanding the reader's active response. Principles of poetic montage also clarify the nature of Green's conception of a non-coherent reality, and his belief in the value of stimulating the unification of montage fragments within the reader's imagination. However, crucial aspects of Green's technique also diverge from that of most modern poetry. A poem not only conjoins a series of images, but is a concentrated unit or image in itself. It primarily insists that the reader see the picture. Values are not referential; they basically are that terse order of visual images. The basic difference between an Imagist poem and prose fiction

implies that Green can juxtapose, not only single images, but scenes containing living human beings and events. Since human beings generally dominate the novel, its total form cannot achieve complete self-sufficiency. Although Green's images do not represent specific characters or human qualities, their selection and position in relation to individual characters and events give them a referential structural function. This is why the tone of Green's novels can only be fully assessed through a combination of a poetic and filmic montage approach. Just as a poem forms one complete image in itself, so Green creates a formal sense of coherence and promise through repeated poetic scenes and by means of recurrent motifs, such as birds and water imagery.¹ However, these and other images are assimilated into a humanized sense of order only when viewed in relation to certain internal qualities in the characters. Robert Richardson elucidates a central difference between poetry and film. 'Modern poetry', he argues, 'has tended rather strongly toward the abstract and the philosophical. But the film, though it shares some of the ideas and some of the techniques of modern poetry, is not, as a medium, well adapted to expressing abstract ideas or carrying on philosophical dialogue. Thus it has been virtually forced to embody its ideas in specific human figures'.² The tone of Green's novels thus

1. Ryf views water and birds as connectives, pp.8,14.

2. Robert Richardson, Literature and Film (Bloomington, Indiana 1969), p.131.

emanates principally from various characters' responses in relation to different contexts and events.

A special interpretative problem is presented by Nothing and Doting. In them, Green's attention to structural pattern preponderates over his interest in embodying vital responses in his characters. One possible approach to the problem is to view these two works as articulations of abstract art. Nathalie Sarraute suggests that 'Books about nothing, almost devoid of subject, rid of characters, plots and all the old accessories, reduced to pure movement, which brings them into proximity with abstract art, are these not the goals toward which the modern novel tends?'¹ Although Green does not eradicate characters, only impersonal appearances remain. From the point of view of abstract art, Nothing and Doting might be said to reflect the sense of nothingness, of void, typical of man's spiritual condition in the twentieth century. Viewed in the same perspective, Green's construction of an artistic pattern of scenes might therefore suggest Green's recourse from human confusion and imperfection to an abstract, aesthetic order.² However,

1. Quoted from Praz, p.235.

2. Melchiori, comparing Green's technique to Cubism, asserts that Nothing and Doting produce 'abstract emotions through the intellect rather than the heart'. He compares them to a Mozart opera and the work of Schoenberg in their 'perfect structure', their 'beautiful ... delicate sequence of scenes, held together by a constant rhythm ... a musical edifice made of elegant nothings ...' (pp.209,211, emphasis added). Melchiori implies (his view is echoed by Praz, p.215) that the abstract design is a device by which Green is desperately 'shoring fragments against his ruins'.

viewed in terms of filmic montage, Nothing and Doting do not attain such a degree of abstraction as to suggest 'species rather than defining individuals'.¹ A more vital dimension of poetic and artistic wonder is intimated in a few scenes (which fail to incite the characters' responses). These poetic and artistic glimpses are sufficient sign that existence, from the author's point of view, is not complete nothingness. Moreover, repeated montage conflicts between characters' utterances and contradictory behaviour indicate Green's concern with the individual attitudes of a certain group of people. Accordingly, the endless series of juxtaposed scenes does not primarily reflect Green's tragic vision and recourse to an abstract, inorganic pattern. It expresses the monotony of the individual characters' existences, brought into ironic relief.

In the final analysis, the sure communication of tone, in Green's work, depends on the interaction between texture and structure, between images or scenes and their context. Thus, the textural ambiguities in Nothing and Doting appear in the right ironic light when viewed against monotonously juxtaposed episodes. The clarity of Green's metaphors also depends on context. Frank Kermode points out that 'symbols, like signals, are meaningless outside some determining context, some accepted scale or structure of

1. Taylor's argument, p.82.

significations'. He maintains that 'Until we are disposed to detect these structures our eye or ear remains innocent'.¹ The relevance of Kermode's statement to Green's work may best be elucidated through citing a passage from a third writer, Virginia Woolf:

The sparrows fluttering, rising, and falling in jagged fountains were part of the pattern; the white and blue, barred with black branches. Sounds made harmonies with premeditation; the spaces between them were as significant as the sounds.²

Our eye remains 'innocent' to the individual signification of Woolf's birds and colours. Individuality, contrasts, and disparities yield to a coherent order. The design serves as frame of reference for its elements. It does not represent ulterior reality, but the apprehension of existence as a harmonious, organic interdependence. However, whereas Green's incantatory scenes focus on the animation of finite objects, Woolf's concentrates on pattern. Her order is an order of 'premeditation', of movement away from finite reality. Woolf's proclivity to abstraction exposes her to F R Leavis's evaluative criteria for a 'great' novel - it should embody 'a responsibility involving, of its very nature, imaginative sympathy, moral discrimination, and judgment of relative human value'.³

1. Frank Kermode, 'What Is Art?', New York Review of Books 20 February 1964, p.1.

2. Virginia Woolf, Mrs Dalloway, p.36.

3. F R Leavis, The Great Tradition (London 1980), p.41.

In order to meet all of Leavis's requirements, form and a reality of individualized characters need to closely interact.

Green's novels contain an abundance of 'free aesthetic life' (a term with which Leavis associates a narrative method detrimental to moral delineation), but do not, like Woolf's, evince a susceptibility towards formal orderings.¹ Admittedly, the image of birds circulating among the machinery in the factory (Living) imparts a sense of poetic unity. From another point of view, however, the birds contrast to the lives of the workers by their freedom and vivacity; or they may act as metaphorical embodiments of the workers' unfulfilled dreams. Green's central images do possess certain general meanings, but their functions are relative to particular contexts. Thus, Green basically cultivates 'innocence' of perception. Consistent intelligible connections and aesthetic orderings are deliberately broken up, disorder maintained. Fragmentation of structure is the secret behind Green's creation of tone. Poetic qualities permeate **his** novels, but form and content interact dynamically. Accordingly, human reality, in the manner of characters and events, constantly intrude into the poetic sequences. Furthermore, vital human perceptions repeatedly animate an inorganic, empirical world;

1. F R Leavis, p.41: The expression 'absence of free aesthetic life' is one used by Henry James to characterize George Eliot's neat, symmetrical plots. He claims that her '"figures and situations" are "not seen in the irresponsible plastic way"'. .

or poetic images interrupt a character's life reluctance. In the juncture of heterogeneous elements arises a consistent code of tonal qualities. This 'web of insinuations' produces an affirmative human order based on natural human impulses. Its frame of reference is Green's ideal of full sympathetic participation in Life.¹

Only a montage-based approach can provide the key to understanding Green's novels. The fact that Green is basically a realistic writer facilitates the determination of tone through montage. Green passes critical comment on certain attitudes and events through their discordant juxtaposition with vital human needs. Richardson suggests that the montage trope accommodates the fusion of conflicting qualities:

One image plays against the next, the old can be pushed up against the new, the tender with the harsh, the lovely with the sordid ... [to achieve] that overpowering sense of the disparity between

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1. There is no fundamental difference between Green's creation of tone through montage and what is associated by Wayne Booth's term, 'implied author'. Booth dissociates himself from 'objective narration', which 'offers special temptations to the reader to go astray. Even when it presents characters whose conduct the author deeply deplores, it presents through the seductive medium of their own self-defending rhetoric'. However, the kind of objectivity involved in Green's montage technique - notably that different realities are represented through visualization rather than explained by an intrusive author - is not indebted to Flaubert's model of dispassionate narration, a technique, Booth claims, which divorces form and content. Green's montage method serves as authorial commentary on the fictional landscape, a substitute for the rhetorical voice and moral sensibility of the narrator persona, (Booth, pp.388,399).

what life has been or could be, and
what it actually is.¹

Green also perceives a dimension of poetic illumination and order in the midst of empirical disorder. Montage of prosaic description and poetic evocation affects the reader as a conjunction of the matter-of-fact world and the author's regenerating subjective imagination. Juxtaposition operates between scenes as well as between characters and images within a scene. This is why Green's dynamic values of 'living' and 'loving' are best accounted for in terms of Coleridge's poetic practice and of Eisenstein's idea of filmic montage. Coleridge's polarization of 'sensuousness' and 'passion' assimilates subjective qualities and objective fragments into a perceptual synthesis. In a basically similar fashion, Eisenstein's 'emotional intensification' of colliding elements in filmic montage stimulates the spectator's synthesizing imagination. Both Coleridge's and Eisenstein's techniques inspire the spectator's or reader's attention to the visual present moment. Green's incorporation of realistic representational aspects in his poetic vision prevents the invocation of the kind of poetic order which Coleridge would term 'day-dreaming'. The image of human order, in Green's world, resides in the image of contradiction.

1. Richardson, pp.114-15.

APPENDIX

Appendix

EXAMPLES OF MONTAGE

Conflict of graphic directions:

arises from the opposition of two or more 'lines' of direction. These 'lines' can be either static or dynamic. As an example of this kind of conflict Eisenstein depicts a human figure crawling down across the prominent horizontal lines (static) of a flight of stone steps. In Eisenstein's film Potemkin, the emotive quality of the massacre on the Odessa steps is heightened in the following way: 'the break-neck movement of the mass downward leaps over into a slowly solemn movement upward of the mother's lone figure, carrying her dead son'.

Conflict of scales:

involves collision of different spatial dimensions. To illustrate, Eisenstein pictures a wide, open yard viewed through the narrow space of an overhanging roof.

Conflict of volumes:

derives from opposition in size. Eisenstein's example presents a huge, fat woman juxtaposed with a slender one.

Conflict of masses:

described by Eisenstein as conflict between 'volumes filled with various intensities of light'. This kind of conflict also includes the counterpoint of different shades of colour. In Eisenstein's film, Alexander Nevsky, the sense of conflict is heightened by the opposition of the black-clothed Russian troops and the white-clothed Teutons.

An example from Living demonstrates
Green's use of conflict of masses.
As Lily goes to meet Bert,

Night was mauve about her, mauve and cold. She
only felt warmer ...

She came nearer street lamps and then stumbled
a little. Looking up she saw them, light sticking
out from them, and as she came nearer so night left,
excitement effervescing in her she put coat straight,
and felt cold. When she stepped into cone of light
of this lamp, night was outside and it might not
have been night-time.

She met Bert at corner ...

They walked from cone of light into darkness and
then again into lamplight, nor, so their feeling
lulled them, was light or dark, only their feeling
of both of them which was one warmth, infinitely
greater.

(Living, p.293)

The passage is cinematic in its close attention to transitions between light and dark. However, it is not an example of detailed realistic description for the purpose of being exact. Nor do light and dark; in this context, reveal any decipherable symbolic meaning. The light and darkness effects reflect Green's preoccupation with a 'non-representational' form which is essentially imagistic. Juxtaposition of visual images evokes a dynamic tension in the scene. The polarity of light and dark is intended to create response in the reader and to enhance the sense of Lily's apprehension, expectation, and excitement concerning her date with her lover.

Conflict of depths:

created by the counterpoint of foreground and background. Conflict of depths intensifies the emotive impact of a scene, as in Potemkin, 'where the "good people of Odessa" ... send yawls with provisions to the side of the mutinous battleship. This sending of greetings is constructed on a distinct cross-cutting of two themes.

1. The yawls speeding towards the battleship.
 2. The people of Odessa watching and waving.
- At the end the two themes are merged. The composition is basically in two planes: depth and foreground. Alternately, the themes take on a dominant position, advancing to the foreground, and thrusting each other by turns to the background'.

Close shots and long shots:

rapid transitions between close and long shots form 'antagonistic pairs of pieces'; the second shot acts as an 'impulse of intensification'. Eisenstein provides an example of the close-up (also conflict of depths) from Paradise Lost, where Milton depicts the approach of the 'Host of Satan':

... at last

Farr in th' Horizon to the North appeer'd
 From skirt to skirt a fierie Region, stretcht
 In battailous aspect, and neerer view
 Bristl'd with upright beams innumerable
 Of rigid Spears and Helmets throng'd, and Shields
 Various, with boastful Argument portraid,
 The Banded Powers of Satan hasting on
 With furious expedition ...

(first emphasis added)

Close-ups and composition in depth may also intensify an image of beauty. Eisenstein pictures a lilac bough and a distant background, the perception of which becomes a 'process whereby, from the overall structure of a picture, one of its elements progressively advances into the foreground' to imprint itself in the mind of the spectator. (Quoted in Yon Barna, Eisenstein (London 1973), p.26.)

Eisenstein stresses another important function of the close-up: its ability to dynamize images into a surreal unity; objective reality becomes a vivid metaphorical reflection of a subjective perception. This effect corresponds to Green's 'sensually palpable' depiction of Merode's knee in Concluding, producing the sensory impact of a close-up, which counteracts naturalism and death. Eisenstein points out that

A healthy, handsome woman's body may, actually, be heightened to an image of a life-affirming beginning, which is what Dovzhenko had to have, to clash with his montage of the funeral in Earth.

A skilfully leading montage creation with close-ups, taken in the 'Rubens manner', isolated from naturalism and abstracted in the necessary direction, could well have been lifted to such a 'sensually palpable' image.

But the whole structure of Earth was doomed to failure, because in place of such montage material the director cut into the funeral long shots of the interior of the peasant hut, and the naked woman flinging herself about there. And the spectator could not possibly separate out of this concrete, lifelike woman that generalized sensation of blazing fertility, of sensual life-affirmation, which the director wished to convey of all nature, as a pantheistic contrast to the theme of death and the funeral!

This was prevented by the ovens, pots, towels, benches, tablecloths - all those details of everyday life, from which the woman's body could easily have been freed by the framing of the shot, - so that representational naturalism would not interfere with the embodiment of the conveyed metaphorical task.

Conflict of planes:

collision between graphic surfaces or areas. Eisenstein depicts the execution of a mother and her child by shooting. The ground on which the aiming soldiers stand is marked by horizontal lines that counter the vertical lines in the ground around the victims. Thus, the conflict of planes is fashioned by a conflict of graphic directions which deepens the sense of division between the executioners and the executed.

Conflict between matter and viewpoint:

according to Eisenstein, 'achieved by spatial distortion through camera-angle'. Eisenstein finds this conflict in the works of Picasso, 'where a face or a figure is presented from multiple viewpoints, and at varying stages of an action'. Furthermore, 'the copperplate frontispiece to a seventeenth-century Spanish biography of St John of the Cross shows the saint at the moment he beholds the miraculous appearance of the crucifix. With striking effect, there is incorporated into the same plate a second view in perspective of the same crucifix - as seen from the saint's viewpoint'.

Conflict between an event and its duration:

accentuates the importance of a certain content by highlighting the incongruence between the logical sequence of an event and its distortion by cinematic montage. The effect is 'achieved by slow-motion and stop-motion'.

Audio-visual counterpoint:

produced by 'conflict between optical and acoustical experience'. Eisenstein says that Milton's Paradise Lost 'is a first-rate school in which to study montage and audio-visual relationships ... Studying the pages of his poem, and in each individual case analyzing the determining qualities and expressive effects of each example, we become

extraordinarily enriched in experience of the audio-visual distribution of images in his sound-montage'. The movement of the 'Heavenly Hosts' produces these effects:

Th' Imperial Ensign, which full high advanc't
Shon like a Meteor streaming to the Wind,
With Gemms and Golden lustre rich imblaz'd,
Seraphic arms and Trophies: all the while
Sonorous mettal blowing Martial sounds:
At which the universal Host upsent
A shout that tore Hells Concave, and beyond
Frighted the Reign of Chaos and old Night.

Eisenstein also presents a special form of montage which deals 'not only with the visible elements of the shots, but chiefly with chains of psychological association'. Association montage produces emotional dynamization giving birth to concepts. Eisenstein's first example is from his film, Strike:

the montage of the killing of the workers is actually a cross montage of this carnage with the butchering of a bull in an abattoir. Though the subjects are different, 'butchering' is the associative link. This made for a powerful emotional intensification of the scene.

A similar means of emotional dynamization is found in Pudovkin's film, Mother. It shows

the ice-break on the river, paralleled with the workers' demonstration.

In Eisentein's film, October,

the dramatic moment of the union of the Motorcycle Battalion with the Congress of Soviets was dynamized by shots of abstractly spinning bicycle wheels, in association with the entrance of the new delegates. In this way the large-scale emotional content of the event was transformed into actual dynamics.

In another scene from October,

a trench crowded with soldiers appears to be crushed by an enormous gun-base that comes down inexorably. As an anti-militarist symbol seen from the viewpoint of subject alone, the effect is achieved by an apparent bringing together of

an independently existing trench and an overwhelming military product, just as physically independent.

In October, association montage, used as symbolic montage, occurs

in the scene of Kornilov's putsch, which puts an end to Kerensky's Bonapartist dreams. Here one of Kornilov's tanks climbs up and crushes a plaster-of-Paris Napoleon standing on Kerensky's desk in the Winter Palace, a juxtaposition of purely symbolic significance.

'Cross-montage of dialogues' may also be included under the denomination of association montage. As Eisenstein points out, it is 'used with the same intention of expressive sharpening of idea'. Eisenstein quotes a passage from Flaubert's Madame Bovary in which the speech of a public orator interlaces the conversation of the two prospective lovers, Emma and Rodolphe.

Monsieur Derozerays got up, beginning another speech ... praise of the Government took up less space in it; religion and agriculture more. He showed in it the relations of these two, and how they had always contributed to civilization. Rodolphe with Madame Bovary was talking dreams, presentiments, magnetism. Going back to the cradle of society, the orator painted those fierce times when men lived on acorns in the heart of woods. Then they had left off the skins of beasts, had put on cloth, tilled the soil, planted the vine. Was this a good, and in this discovery was there not more of injury than gain? Monsieur Derozerays set himself this problem. From magnetism little by little Rodolphe had come to affinities, and while the president was citing Cincinnatus and his plough, Diocletian planting his cabbages, and the Emperors of China inaugurating the year by the sowing of seed, the young man was explaining to the young woman that these irresistible attractions find their cause in some previous state of experience.

'Thus we', he said, 'why did we come to know one another? What chance willed it? It was because across the infinite, like two streams that flow but to unite, our special bents of mind had driven us towards each other'.

And he seized her hand; she did not withdraw it.

'For good farming generally!' cried the president.

'Just now, for example, when I went to your house'.

'To Monsieur Bizat of Quincampoix!.
 'Did I know I should accompany you?'
 'Seventy francs'.
 'A hundred times I wished to go; and I
 followed you - I remained'.
 'Manures!'
 'And I shall remain to-night, to-morrow,
 all other days, all my life!'

Eisenstein remarks that 'this is an interweaving of two lines, thematically identical, equally trivial. The matter is sublimated to a monumental triviality, whose climax is reached through a continuation of this cross-cutting and word-play, with the significance always dependent on the juxtaposition of the two lines'. (Film Form, pp.12-13,57-59,115-16,170-71,242; Film Sense, pp.54-55,86.)

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