

# Mood Spectrum in Graham Greene



# Mood Spectrum in Graham Greene:

*1929-1949*

By

Brian Edwards

Cambridge  
Scholars  
Publishing



Mood Spectrum in Graham Greene: 1929-1949

By Brian Edwards

This book first published 2015

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Copyright © 2015 by Brian Edwards

All rights for this book reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner.

ISBN (10): 1-4438-8253-4

ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-8253-8

**In Memoriam:**

*Karen Carlson, Jeff Evans, Kathleen May, John Taylor, and Jade Phillips*

**For My Inspirations:**

*Keith and Kyle; Brandon and Caitlin  
Tempest and Emily*

**And My Mentor:**

*John V. Knapp*

*I took the oars: the Pilot's boy  
Who now doth crazy go  
Laughed loud and long, and all the while  
His eyes went to and fro.  
'Ha! ha!' quoth he, 'full plain I see  
The Devil knows how to row.'*

—From *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, Samuel Taylor Coleridge

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Abbreviations .....	ix
Preface .....	xi
Chapter One.....	1
Manic Depression and the Artistic Temperament: Why Biography Matters	
Chapter Two .....	27
Mixed Moods and Agency in the Early Domestic Novels: <i>The Man Within, It's a Battlefield</i> and <i>England Made Me</i>	
Chapter Three .....	53
A Theme of Initiation: Death to Sinners and Misfits— <i>Brighton Rock</i>	
Chapter Four .....	83
Mania, Seduction, and Obsession: <i>The Confidential Agent</i> and <i>Ministry of Fear</i>	
Chapter Five .....	111
Madness in Greene: The Faces of Manic Depression— <i>The Power and the Glory</i>	
Chapter Six .....	143
Depression to Delirious Melancholia: <i>The Heart of the Matter</i>	
Chapter Seven.....	169
Genes, Memes, and Manic Depression	
Appendix .....	183
Medical Terms for Manic Depression or Bipolar Disorder	
Bibliography .....	189





## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations from Penguin editions are used.

The Man Within (1929)	TMW
(A) Orient Express (1932)	OE
(E) Stamboul Train	
It's a Battlefield (1934)	IaB
England Made Me (1935)	EMM
Journey without Maps	JwM
(A) A Gun for Sale (1936)	AGfS
(E) This Gun for Hire	
Brighton Rock (1938)	BR
(A) The Lawless Roads	LR
(E) Another Mexico	
The Confidential Agent (1939)	TCA
The Power and the Glory (1940)	TPatG
The Ministry of Fear (1943)	TMoF
The Heart of the Matter (1948)	THotM
The Third Man (1949)	TTM
End of the Affair (1951)	EotA
Loser Takes All (1955)	LTA
The Quiet American (1955)	TQA
Our Man in Havana (1958)	OMiH
A Burnt-Out Case (1960)	AB-OC
The Comedians (1966)	TC
Travels with My Aunt (1969)	TwMA



## PREFACE

Since mental illness and the creative genius have enkindled again as a topic for study and analysis, I would like to suggest that in order to best understand the connection, case studies that involve creative artists and the typical diagnostics to determine mental illness should be applied to them. I outline a method for one such individual that accomplishes this end. Unlike other studies testing the validity or mythology of such a connection, I examine it as a means of treatment compliance for those who have bipolar disorder, recurring depression, or schizophrenia. I hypothesize that if Greene does have manic depression, which he admits in *A Sort of Life* and which his behavior warrants, then his novels would reflect that illness. My study illustrates that his creations project his dominant moods and their fluctuations across the mood spectrum, triggered by the inconsistency of his social relations. For Greene and others, consistency entails involuntary mood switches indicative of a mood-affected mental illness. His family pedigree of manic depression suggests the close connection between creative artists and manic depression that psychologist Kay Redfield Jamison describes in *Touched with Fire* (1993), and more clinically and comprehensively addresses in the textbook that she co-authored with Frederick K. Goodwin, *Manic-Depressive Illness: Bipolar Disorders and Recurrent Depression* (2007). The progress that has been made in pathology, however, has been distorted by recent attempts to dichotomize the brain and the disease, or to challenge the heritability written into gene mutations that bear directly on behavior, not just thought and emotion. The disease and the brain are one and the same, but we are not all inclined to be creative geniuses. Creativity is more than the sum of its parts.

I trace the dominant moods in Greene's novels during his London, or "domestic," period (1929 to 1949) – from *The Man Within* (1929) to *The Third Man* (1949) – which illustrate irritable mania (mixed dysphoria); paranoia and agitation (agitated depression); negative self-imaging and neurotic guilt (depression); and on occasion, delusional psychosis that ends in madness and death. My analysis also reveals why Greene's dark comic novels (hypomania) seem so out of character to him but represent highly sophisticated parodies of his and other literary works and periods, as we would anticipate from an antic mood. Chapter one explains manic

depression and its connection to the artistic temperament, disease pathology, and its stipulation in Greene; Chapters two through six classify and illustrate those mood episodes mentioned above as they dominate the tone and mood of his novels, as they shape either the interactions between character constructs, or characterize and typify those characters in mood pathology and/or symptomology. In chapter seven I reexamine the progress in manic-depressive pathology and the connection between the illness and creativity. The difficulty for those with this disease is that the locus seems to be psychic and not biopsychosocial and autonomously triggered. As I maintain, Greene writes his psychic pain and emotional turbulence into his novels from an array of autonomous triggers and mood switches in his private life. In essence, I treat Greene and his novels as a case study for the symptomology and pathology of manic depression and a component of his art.

Because Greene viewed his illness in Freudian terms originally, the significance of my study can be highlighted by examining the Freudian misconception of normal and abnormal psychology and human relations, the bedrock of many counseling centers even today in the United States. By adopting Freud, we ignored genetic epistemology – Piaget’s stages and modules of cognitive development. Postmodern social and cultural critiques have repeatedly rejected scientific explanations for human nature and human behavior (the “scientistic” narrative). They counter biological arguments with blank slate insistence that culture exclusively shapes our behavior, or that brain patterns or brain construction play the more significant role in artistic / creative output – no different in effect than the nature / nurture argument that misdirected analysis as an either or proposition (fallacy). A more pertinent connection today is what E.O. Wilson, one of the architects of sociobiology, declares in a foreword to *The Literary Animal*: “Human behavior is determined by neither genes nor culture but instead by a complex interaction of these two prescribing forces, with biology guiding and environment specifying” (xiii).

In mood-affected illnesses it is likewise the case that biology guides – the mutated genes switch on and follow their genetic recipe. Unfortunately, because the genes do not contain the same recipe, the subsequent behaviors will differ. For instance, if all chocolate chip cookies contain baking soda and a mutation occurs in some, substituting baking powder for baking soda, the new cookies will resemble the old cookies, and they will smell alike, but they will have a different texture and consistency. That is how manic depression works. Mood-affected behaviors follow from their own biological triggers, but they are experienced in one’s social

environment and as disturbances in the mind and emotions; they work in tandem in other words, even though they are separate forces exerting different influences. E. Fuller Torrey and Michael B. Knable assert “that the disease is not the person” (21), and it is clear that Greene, as do all with this illness, often suffered from a lack of agency that is difficult to comprehend without a better understanding of disease pathology and symptomology.

I critique Greene’s mood-affected novels as they reflect mood and behavior in Greene’s private life, as we would expect behavior to impact the sufferer with this illness. I hypothesize – a full study would be necessary – that literary analysis by those who suffer with manic depression provides a means to discover the hidden connection between symptoms and stress that trigger mood switches. Chapters One and Seven include an overview of mood-affected illness and its impact on creative lives, specifically, that could be applied diagnostically to other mood-affected novelists. Greene has tied his artistic virtuosity to fractured social relations that trigger the frequent and dynamic mood switches that obsess him all his life. They result in part from the mental illness for which he never received efficacious treatment. The illness and the talent share genes, and cutting edge artists in the vanguard of new artistic movements tend to be individuals with mood-affected illnesses: including Romantics Blake, Coleridge, Shelley, and Byron; Victorians Tennyson and Dickens; transitional Modern Emily Dickinson, James and Twain; and Conrad, Woolf, Pound, and Eliot, to name only a select few. The talent can be retained even as one subdues the illness into remission. When I complete my work on Greene’s distinct literary periods – 1950-1969 and 1970-1987 – I will demonstrate manic depression as a progressive illness though triggered by similar feeling tones, even as Greene creates literary tropes as a means to organize and adapt to his own mind and illness. I will also offer strategies so those with the mutated genes might develop another tool for living a whole, healthy, and happy life. To experience wellbeing, one must be able to distinguish it from what it is not.

I would add one final note on sources and citations. Where possible, I have attempted to find original documents. On occasion I have been required to cite indirectly. Because Greene’s letters have not been collected and are therefore housed in a number of locations, travel would have been prohibitive. I have obtained digital copies when available, but the Graham Greene Estate refused permission to quote from the Greene-Walston Collection on file in Georgetown University Archives, Georgetown University Library Booth Family Center for Special Collections,

Washington, D.C, although the Estate allowed me to quote from Kim Philby's letter to Greene, sent from Moscow in 1980. Consequently, I have relied on Richard Greene's, *Graham Greene: A Life in Letters* and on several occasions on Norman Sherry's three volume biography, *The Life of Graham Greene*, both of whom must have received permission for reprinting copious correspondence denied me. I do not consider these letters essential to my argument; I refer to them as confirmation that the moods we anticipate in Greene and the subsequent symptoms he experiences and projects into his novels can be traced in both the personal writing and the artifacts.

I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the generous contributions from John Knapp, who slogged through many drafts while I found the thread to my analysis; and the due diligence of Scott Balcerzak, whose generous critique has helped me craft a set of essays into a monograph; and William Baker, whose energy is infectious. I also gratefully acknowledge Bradley Bond, Dean of the Graduate School at Northern Illinois University, who extended a fellowship to complete my dissertation. And though I can never truly repay them, I would like to thank my mother, Geri Edwards, whose unflagging support has been a catalyst to me, and her brother, David Carlson, who has helped generously support me and my two youngest boys as I worked to complete this task. I am forever in their debt, as I am David Evans and Stephen Constantine, whose avuncular presence for Keith and Kyle and continued moral support for my project rekindled me when my confidence waned.

# CHAPTER ONE

## MANIC DEPRESSION AND THE ARTISTIC TEMPERAMENT: WHY BIOGRAPHY MATTERS

### Prologue

*Graham Greene is in a class by himself. . . . He will be read and remembered as the ultimate twentieth-century chronicler of consciousness and anxiety.*

—William Golding

In the past twenty years neuroscience, sociobiology, evolutionary psychology, genetics, animal ethology, archaeology, anthropology, and too many other disciplines to list have revolutionized our understanding of human beings and psychological disorders. My analysis brings the current biopsychosocial synthesis of manic depression to the discussion of Graham Greene's novels, and particularly those novels that constitute what I refer to as his domestic period – novels written before his separation from Vivien Greene, his spouse of two decades. More specifically, I argue that manic depressive behavior can be traced back to the triggers that switch Greene's moods (see Appendix for my descriptions and definitions of psychological terms), and then tracked through the moods of character constructs in his novels. His illness often imbues the emotional development or stasis of his characters. Upon them, he projects these feelings that typify moods characteristic of manic-depression. Greene himself thus provides some of the most fruitful insight into the disequilibrium of an unquiet mind.

Examining the many ambiguities and contradictions in Graham Greene's biography without an understanding of his mental illness too often leads to conjecture rather than causality. For instance, one such biographical anomaly that continues to draw critical attention is that he remained friends with Kim Philby until they died, even managing an octogenarian

visit to the former Soviet Union where Philby now lies in state with Lenin – a visit that still elicits political opprobrium. Philby and Greene met as agents for MI6 during the Second World War; each had had a relative detained “under Emergency Powers Regulation 18B,” but W.J. West only discusses Philby’s father – in part because it helps him explain a letter to Greene years later in which Philby references H. St. John Philby (West 250), the expert spy on Islamic affairs, briefly jailed in 1940 and then released in time to recommend his son to MI6. As with one of Greene’s best thrillers, West follows the sinuous plot even though the outcome remains in doubt until the very end. But life is seldom a book, even if West insists that when “the Foreign Office files are opened in thirty years’ time” we might know if Philby and Greene played a role “in the emergence of the regime which created Gorbachev” (251).

To what end? If we examine the letters from Philby to Greene without the intent to discover espionage, we see a more human connection (*The Human Factor* 1978) for their friendship rather than a political one too many wish to connect. Without motive we cannot determine the sentiments discussed between friends. Their actions, however, reveal much more. Philby committed treason and Greene remained friends with him, but he did not follow him or emulate his behavior. By Philby’s own admission he was not irrational and did not understand such behavior (Greene Papers 2; Box 1, Folder 1). But the “common skeleton” in Greene’s closet that West ignores characterizes such an irrational act; Greene’s cousin (of German descent) had been detained not because the government suspected him; rather, Graham’s brother, Herbert, another Greene with bipolar-I disorder, reported him to the authorities during a manic episode – the same Herbert who had been “spying” for Japan by supplying them well documented and publicly published information – a plot that would become *Our Man in Havana*. It is difficult to believe that the following describes two masterminds of a new Soviet regime: “You describe yourself as my aged friend,” Philby begins his concluding remarks. “I am not so far behind you; and your handwriting is still legible, which mine is not” (Greene Papers 2; Box 1, Folder 1).

In 1967, Greene was forced into exile for his involvement in tax evasion with Charlie Chaplin, Ian Fleming, and the sinister Tom Roe, and was pilloried for writing an introduction (West 190-204). Perhaps this very bourgeois-capitalist episode does not matter for some critics, but I would argue that it mirrors the mood-affected and irrational Herbert’s manic betrayal; moreover, the very contradictory ideological poles involved reinforce a personal Greene-Philby friendship indicative in Greene’s



introduction to Philby's book (*My Silent War* 1968). West characterizes it in his quest: "A close reading today" – which of course implies a lack of such in 1968, when emotions ran hot – "shows that Greene had not been disingenuous, but was simply following the dangerous edge . . . along the borders of politics and religion" (205), or the default position for many critics. These dangerous-edged behaviors actually represent similar moods in the manic-depressive spectrum, differing only by degree. They represent how different types of stressors trigger similar types of mania, that manifest in different behavioral symptoms that are unique to the interdigitation of baseline temperament and those of manic depression: similar symptoms manifest in the character-constructs of his novels based on similar stressor triggers in his life.

How Greene experiences moods daily are the moods that his constructs often share, and the rapidity of those switches I leave for colleague and Capri friend, Shirley Hazzard, to describe. I quote at length to illustrate how difficult it is to separate Graham Greene from mood-affected Greene:

I think . . . that any restriction, unless self-imposed, was not only galling to him, as [it is] to many *high-strung natures*, but intolerable. . . . Resentment of a *real or fancied imposition*, or the inability to prevail in his view or desire, could *ignite a sense of infringement that seemed like madness*. In certain *enkindled moods*, the inconsequential supposition of a shared opinion might be *angrily repelled as importunate*; while the failure – *particularly by a woman* – to fall in with his judgment could be a betrayal. (Hazzard 23, my italics)

I will not treat such information as "code" per se, but I will suggest that some of what Hazzard describes relates to Greene's temperament, though much of it relates to manic depressive, mood-affected behaviors. Jablow Hershman and Julian Lieb (1998) would describe what Hazzard does this way: "Mania is noted for quick changes of mood," and a "change to irritability is the most common departure from euphoria. Opposition to the manic's wishes or opinions . . . or even mild criticism can turn . . . good humor into rage" (27). Although some therapists and psychologists might refer to such rapid shifts in mood as "rapid cycling" (see Appendix) there is a major distinction that must be made. What Hazzard describes and Hershman and Lieb confirm is that moods are rarely stable over the course of any day. Though it might appear that these rapid shifts across the manic spectrum qualify as rapid cycling from mania to depression, they do not. Greene might have described his behavior as resulting from depression (*WoE* 73-4), but it was dysphoria and on occasion agitated depression – or mixed manic moods – from which he suffered.

Greene has written about depressed periods in his life (ASoL128-33) – one of the more severe of which Hazzard characterizes as resulting from “the suicidal crises prompted by his love for Catherine Walston” (Hazzard 64) – so we would need at least to acknowledge that “high-strung” describes some of Greene’s behavior. What many writers with this illness hope (if not consciously then subconsciously) is that they will find the source of their despair in the works they construct, or dazzle the world with the greatest thriller ever written – as Greene brayed he would with *The Confidential Agent*. Mostly what they do is fictionally illustrate mood influences in their psychic lives as they experience them. Only efficacious treatment – starting with drug therapy – leads to understanding.

What those with the illness intuit, but of which they are seldom conscious, is that certain kinds of stress tend to trigger certain moods and the experiences they manifest. International travel for Greene, ways of escape, generally triggered a manic mood – a biological probability as long flights disrupt circadian sleep-cycles, and coupled with stress from social relations they frequently trigger mania. Unfortunately, the initial mania that the disrupted cycle triggers too often switches from euphoria to dysphoria, because no matter where one lands, the internal stressors from which one sought escape remain. Hence one trip to Cuba for the brothels and pleasure renders *Our Man in Havana* (1958), while a second trip for the same effect to shoot the film version might have begun that way but ends at another point on the spectrum – one that would eventually lead to the despair that became *A Burnt-Out Case* (1960). The Philby incident represents a similar dichotomy in Greene. We conjecture but can never know if, as West notes, Professor D.W. Brogan had struck a Greene nerve when he implies in the 7 September 1967 *Spectator* that as Philby had done, Greene might defect (204).

Nor would it be wise to accept Greene’s characterizing of the FBI surveilling him with the intention of deporting him in his snuffy response to Brogan (West 204). For Greene, such a superior tone generally suggests less confidence than more manic irritability if we pay attention. He had certainly made himself unfriendly to American critics who pilloried his representation of the American CIA in *The Quiet American*. Enormous ego and paranoia, the sense of being so important an intruder that it requires surveillance, are both symptoms of manic-depression, and could as easily be responsible for Greene’s subsequent flight to Havana as the fear of being deported to Haiti would – if it were true at all. Moreover, Greene’s emotional volatility is part of both his public and personal personae, as another MI6 colleague, Malcolm Muggeridge, recalls: “I

remember him saying once that he had to have a row with someone or other because rows were almost a physical necessity to him.” What Muggeridge describes reflects Greene’s irritable mania. What follows in the same passage, he adds with an almost nostalgic fondness: “Greene is a very loveable character” (Muggeridge 249), which from the number of those who knew Greene, including his biographer Norman Sherry, might suggest Greene’s baseline temperament.

Sherry quotes Muggeridge but he fails to understand why what Muggeridge offers differs from Sherry’s assessment. Muggeridge files a report in his diary without moralizing a friend’s behavior whereas Sherry seeks a source to attach psychic agency to Greene’s mood switching. To Vivien, Greene describes his irritability – his mixed manic mood – as Hillary Trench, and Sherry supports Greene – enables him – by attributing it to agency (a persona) rather than a mood switch. Greene recognizes that he is “possessed” by a mood that does not represent his baseline temperament, hinted at by Muggeridge above. Consequently, he creates a persona that emblemizes that feeling tone within: much like his cousin, Robert Louis Stevenson, famously did with Jekyll and Hyde. Many who have manic depression would describe the hectoring and cruel mood that surfaces from a trigger-switch – pathology – as a “creature” or “monster,” and that they are possessed and powerless to control it. Cultural background and experience in large part shape how individuals experience these moods, and process evolves as an individual’s experience does.

The unique mood that Greene typifies as Hillary Trench – symptomology – reflects his creativity and his background in spy and adventure stories at that time. Trench is not unlike E.A. Robinson’s title character, “Miniver Cheevy,” a “child of scorn”: a type of temperament we have all encountered – angry and miserable, mocking and always unpleasant to be around. Greene did not understand the trigger-switch that summoned the name-calling and hectoring brute he could become on occasion; it is nearly impossible to do so without proper treatment. Nevertheless, Sherry insists: “When Greene felt particularly desperate or felt the need to express unpleasant aspects of his personality [,]” he would do so by “[revealing] the Mr. Hyde side of his personality,” under the guise of Hillary Trench (2: 67). Sherry identifies the trigger for Greene that is common to nearly all who suffer from manic depression. Tension, stress, desperation, and paranoia can trigger a mood switch to irritable mania, but why would anyone *want* to reveal such a cruel streak, particularly to Vivien, whom he wanted to make his spouse? Sherry, as do most critics whose understanding of psychology matches that of Greene’s in these domestic

novels I address here, grants Greene agency where none exists. Sherry concludes that “this secret personality” – how secret can it be if he discusses it with Vivien? – “took over.” It did, but not in the way that Sherry understands manic-depressive illness.

Greene’s irritable mixed manic mood does take over, but so do his hypomanic moods, his depressive, and his agitated depressive moods “take over.” What Greene lacks and what fails Sherry’s understanding, and Muggeridge’s to a degree, is apparent in their sense of Greene’s apparently bifurcated personality. It is more than bifurcated; each mood on the spectrum can represent what appears to be a separate personality. Moreover, Muggeridge intuits that Greene’s split does not result from a choice because he sees the one seeking a row as foreign to the lovable Greene, “the very remarkable writer” (Muggeridge 249). Neither he nor Sherry understands the underlying mechanisms of mental illness because both imply some form of agency. Muggeridge, however, seems to infer that this kind of possessed mood does not define Greene. In some regards that is true. Equally important, Sherry provides us with an alternative understanding for Greene’s alleged Catholic trilogy. Contrary to critical consensus that the trilogy is a peon to God, faith, and grace, we see that under the spell of irritable mixed mania and agitated depression, “Greene felt a total sense of emptiness and hated the initiator of life – God” (2: 68). I agree, as I will demonstrate in Chapters Three, Five, and Six.

### **Antic Disposition and Temperament – Evolving Psychology**

Greene has written that he required writing as “a form of therapy . . . to escape the madness, the melancholia, the panic fear which is inherent in the human situation” (*WoE* vii). I will explain how Greene’s novels expose those dominant moods that occupy him as he composes. Moreover, I will illustrate by comparison on occasion how manic-depressive illness itself manifests in a unique way as it interacts with an individual’s native temperament. Spectrum moods are often experienced in a collage of feelings, stimuli, stressors, and stress-related relations that trigger mood switches. The more pronounced fluctuations in manic-depressive-merged temperaments are often characteristic of the sort of madness associated with Bipolar-I, the delusional obsession and grandiosity of the type that Greene embodies so well in novels featuring characters such as Pinkie Brown (*BR*) Conrad Drover (*IaB*), Maurice Bendrix (*EotA*), and Mr.

Brown (*TC*). It also explains why William Golding considered Greene the chief exemplar of an age of angst and hysteria.

Greene's temperament requires that we contrastively identify Greene's "temperament" generally versus his temperament merged with manic depressive-illness. When we understand his mental illness, much of the critical noise surrounding his novels can be recalibrated. Renowned psychologist and researcher, Kay Redfield Jamison, has written about her own struggles with the illness in *An Unquiet Mind* (1997), and she has written about the close relationship between the artistic and the manic-depressive temperaments in *Touched with Fire*. It is her discussion of temperament, however, that I find most useful in my work with Greene. She writes: "The fact that manic-depressive illness really comprises a range of temperaments . . . has led, as we have seen, to much of the controversy – and confusion – surrounding the needlessly polarized 'mad genius' versus 'psychologically healthy' artist debate" (102). Jamison emphasizes that most individuals with manic depression have a temperament that represents at least one part functional and other parts dysfunctional, as well as psychotic and delusional for the percentage with bipolar-I. How this breakdown plays out in Greene, I contend, he has left us in the mood tonality of his novels: a pattern that Greene critics generally ignore, or when they do address it, show an inadvertent lack of empathy for those who suffer with mental illness (I will explain this point in more detail in Chapter Three).

E. Fuller Torrey and Michael B. Knable assert: "It should be clearly stated . . . that *the disease is not the person*. The symptoms of manic depressive illness are merely symptoms and are distinct from the person's underlying personality" (21, my italics). What this means for our understanding – and especially those families who scapegoat members as a means of coping with or denying mental illness – Torrey and Knable clarify: "Manic depression is an equal opportunity disease: It may affect those whose underlying personality is shy or outgoing, altruistic or narcissistic, responsible or spoiled, kind or cruel" (21); hence "understanding the symptoms of manic depressive illness may also increase sympathy for the person affected" (21). It could shape the family culture that ignores rather than seeks treatment because of the strong social stigma associated with mental illness – I will address the Greene family's approach to their rebel eccentrics as it influences and enables Greene's life and development as a creative artist.

I would maintain that biographical critics grounded in a Freudian psychological model of neurosis and mental health pathology also confuse symptoms for illness. What has traditionally made it difficult to distinguish and then accommodate behavior resulting from impulsive switching is the fact that much of what passes as “mad” behavior appears reasoned to observers – reasoned or part of the individual’s core personality. The opposite is quite often true. Manic and depressive symptoms “interdigitate with . . . underlying personality to create a unique medley that differs not only from person to person but [quotidian] within a single person as the disease process evolves.” They conclude: “*It is this interaction of disease symptoms with underlying personality that makes manic-depressive illness so difficult to comprehend for most people*” (Torrey and Knable 21, my italics).

I will suggest the following method: Greene’s novels can be partly understood by motive and mood cycles that reflect the emotional instability of their author – or stability, as those with manic depression experience normal mood cycles as well. I will develop this point in more detail in chapters that typify those moods: depression, mania, mixed dysphoria and mixed agitated depression. The rub to understanding and compassion (humanly and critically) is our terrible misapprehension of those who suffer from the illness. Michael Shelden, unauthorized biographer commissioned by Greene’s own publisher, Heinemann, typifies how symptoms can be mistaken for personality traits or behaviors. Because he finds it difficult to feel empathy for Greene, Shelden gathers enough circumstantial straw lying about Greene’s life from which to project a bitter, hateful, and spiteful artist whose personal conduct of his life offends the unauthorized biographer’s morality. Shelden cannot empathize with Greene because of Greene’s philandering and deviant sexuality – for which he might express sympathy rather than pillory if he understood Greene’s illness. It is widely known – as Constance Hammen and Amy N. Cohen remind us – that “[m]arital status rates appear to indicate high risk of failure to sustain intimate relationships among people with bipolar disorder” (18). Hammen and Cohen follow up their statistics on bipolar divorce by citing a “classic study” dealing with “caregiver burden – the experience of significant others, often spouses, in dealing with the problems posed by life with an individual who has bipolar disorder” (23). Fifty-one percent said they would not have married had they known their spouse had bipolar disorder.

Just as individual personality can be affected by dominant moods, so too can the narrative voice that shapes our inner lives and their outer

connections. Graham Greene was as interested in the world as any writer, and he probably spent more time abroad than most. It should be no surprise then that what he witnessed comes as close to universal human nature and behavior as most could experience. Nor is it surprising that what interests Greene in England will also interest him in Vietnam because universal themes exist in human psychology. Joseph Carroll, the dean of Darwinian criticism, describes the inner world:

Human beings . . . envision their lives as a developing narrative sequence in which they are the primary agents or victims. . . . [and] adopt roles and narrative structures that prevail within their own cultures, but those roles and plot lines display strong cross-cultural similarities . . . . We can understand the inner lives, including the self-images, of people from all cultures. (Carroll, "Truth in Fiction" 158)

Understanding the self within the narrative structure that Carroll describes can and often does prove elusive for those with mood-affected disorders. Without medication to stabilize the potential for mood episodes and suicide, those with manic depression will not benefit from therapy. They will find it virtually impossible to distinguish memory from mood memory or feeling tone, or to distinguish personal agency and behavior that does not reach a level of conscious understanding. In short, they will find it difficult to recognize mood shifts though they will be cognizant of the episodes themselves. In the opening chapter of *Ways of Escape*, Greene puzzles over a mood he has yet to fully grasp because his initially successful third novel, *The Man Within*, he now agrees suffers from sounding imitative of "Walter de la Mare's prose rather than of personal experience." Near the end of the same paragraph he also contends: "*I can see* that it is strangely optimistic for one of my temperament" (*WoE* 3, my italics). What Greene describes are really two separate characteristics of the novel. Most critics agree that this work is a juvenile effort showing great promise. What is not understood at that time, however, I will address in Greene's first "manic" narrative (*TCA*). Structure does not speak to the second point Greene raises about temperament – it does however speak to mood. Greene thinks himself to be acerbic and melancholic, but he is also brooding sentimental and nostalgic, as he is in his 1971 memoir (*ASoL*), and in the failed, derivative novel: a work that is a better chronicle of Greene's pursuit of Vivien and her religious purity, and which will one day be venom spewed by Pinkie Brown at innocence and marriage (*BR*), and which reveals Greene's earliest recognition of the voices in his head. The novel represents Greene's personal experience as much as any other he wrote.

Greene is melancholic some of the time, but it is not his temperament, which seems to have been a little secretive, manipulative, glib, and somewhat nervous. Greene was shy; he was private and studious, intellectually curious, and obviously adventuresome – facts his life illustrates. How much, though, was Greene's native temperament and how much was Greene's temperament under the influence of a mood-affected condition? Note, for instance, his "logic" in a gently importunate letter to Vivien, his spouse, on 3 June 1948, merely a week after publishing *The Heart of the Matter*, which he dedicated to her and the children. As he writes he plots to convince one woman, Catherine Walston, to marry him, while for another, Dorothy Glover, he arranges a long safari to Africa. Sincerity is often an unfortunate casualty of mood switches. After a brief recitation of business affairs, he begins paragraph five with, "You know I am fond of you," which is like the soldier facing artillery barrages who receives from his fiancé a letter that begins, Dear John. It is equally disingenuous because he is mostly if not completely at fault – and the guilt is what eats away – and at the same time his moods switch from euphoric to irritable mania in his relations with Catherine, which he will describe much differently in letters to her. Still he attempts to reassure Vivien with continued financial support before pressing his point: "But, mainly through my fault, the fact that has to be faced, dear, is that by my nature, my selfishness, even in some degree by my profession, I shall always & with anyone have been a bad husband" (qtd. in R. Greene 159).

What is telling in this passage and the several with which I will follow it are the contradictions and the difference in mood / tone. Greene continues in the letter: "my restlessness, moods, melancholia, even my outside relationships, are symptoms of a disease & not the disease itself, & the disease, which has been going on ever since my childhood & was only temporarily alleviated by psycho-analysis [sic] . . ."; Greene had only recently been diagnosed with manic depression, and his volatile, obsessive relationship with Catherine is behavior typical of the illness. The way he describes his disease to Vivien typifies the way that individuals experience moods as being intruders on one's psyche, especially those dark moods that conjure suicidal ideation as a solution to psychic pain. Even though Greene experiences these symptoms physically, he is unable to find their source. From the logic of symptomology he falls back on the psychological understanding he knows best. He continues that the disease "lies in a character profoundly antagonistic to ordinary domestic life. Unfortunately the disease is also one's material. Cure the disease & I doubt whether a writer would remain. I daresay that would be all to the good" (qtd. in R. Greene 159).



Richard Greene, a faculty member at the University of Toronto and no relation to Graham Greene, seems to have been commissioned by Graham's niece, Amanda Saunders (née Dennys) and son Frances, to set the biographical record straight. He has provided an understanding of Graham Greene that does differ from the better known biographies by Sherry and Shelden, but his characterization of the novelist's illness shows the same flaw in agency as those who employ psychoanalysis. Kay Jamison asserts that a handful of "artists resist entirely the idea of taking medication to control their mood swings and behaviors" despite that they "disproportionately seek out psychiatric care. Other writers and artists . . . fear that drug side effects interfere with the clarity and rapidity of their thought or diminish their levels of enthusiasm, emotion, and energy" (Jamison, *Touched with Fire* 7-8).

On one hand, Greene's guilt feelings are those of the penitent seeking absolution from the one he has injured, yet he leaves open the subject of guilt by claiming that his "disease" is largely responsible. We know today that it is; Greene is prescient in his understanding of his illness in the general, symptomatic way; nevertheless, he fails to understand that his behavior originates from the same source – those symptoms and not the source of his illness, which is biological. What seems clear is that the domesticity Greene characterizes for Vivien does not match the mood from which he writes Catherine Walston a series of letters a year later: He begins by claiming on 18 December 1949, "I used to like being alone, but now it's a horror. One thinks of times when we were happy & one tries to shut off thought. . . . My dear, I never knew love was like this, a pain that only stops when I'm with people, drinking" (qtd. in R. Greene 168-69). What Graham Greene references here is a common behavior for those with un-medicated and/or undiagnosed bipolar disorder. Self-medicating implies an attempt to control symptoms that increase general stress and particular stressors; alcohol and other depressants numb the brain or amphetamines kick start a manic shift from the doldrums. The medicinal value (and Jamison acknowledges reduced stress from alcohol) is outweighed by the risk of mood switches that alcohol and/or drugs can trigger. A month later, on 30 January 1950, Greene writes to Walston:

I'm certain I could make you happy, & the church would not be excluded. . . . Dear, this letter may make you angry. Don't be. . . . It's the dearest wish I have – the only wish – to have you with me & to make you happy with me. I believe I could do it, *after the bad period was over*. . . . I have great trust, admiration & gratitude (because of the amount of

happiness you have shown me *during my bad period*). (qtd. in R. Greene 169-70, my italics)

With Vivien he is abrupt and desperately guilty, enough so that he blames his “disease” for hurting her – it is not he who is hurting her and I think he is correct. It is not his nature to hurt but his mood-affected behavior speaks otherwise. With Catherine we see the vulnerable Greene who has been jealous and spiteful with menace and aggression because she will not divorce her husband and marry him, yet she has been solicitous. Unfortunately, both moods characterize the disorder and are sometimes experienced simultaneously as “mixed.” To Vivien, he despairs: “I daresay that would be all to the good,” and forecasts: “So you see I really feel the hopelessness of sharing a life with anyone without causing them unhappiness & disillusion” (qtd. in R. Greene 159). A year later, while melancholic and sentimental, he employs a different tactic with Catherine, the veiled threat of suicide: “One wishes over & over again that one of these planes will crash & they never do” (qtd. in R. Greene 169).

### **Politics, Genre, and Religion – Alastor and the Preacher**

Elliott Malamet borrows from social and philosophical theorists – particularly Michels Foucault and Bahktin – to infer “that Greene’s work repeatedly grapples with the questions of presence and absence, authorship and authority, power and marginalization, art and popular culture, textuality and intertextuality, that [had] been at the forefront of critical interest in recent years” (Malamet 3-4). Cates Baldrige (2000) suggests that Greene’s focus is not conventional religious heresy but modern social and political heresy. He employs Victorian comparisons while admitting that “nothing about Greene’s sexual morality or his politics or his psychology reeks of musty Victorianism, and each is deeply intertwined with his conception of God” (5). Baldrige distinguishes between bourgeois Jane Austen’s middle class orthodoxy and Emily Brontë’s reclusive individualism, and then he insists that Greene’s sense of spiritual presence in the physical world – his gnosis – is only achieved “through the experience of extreme states of feeling and moral apperception located beyond the pale of what middle-class orthodoxies deem seemly, prudent, and ethically acceptable” (13).

I will return to this point specifically in Chapter Three because it introduces a misunderstanding of mental illness that parallels other critical conclusions concerning Greene’s unusual life and the novels he created from that life, and which Pinkie Brown entails (*BR*). Baldrige applies a

postmodern understanding of discourse to very real physical symptoms of mental illness. In so doing, he comes across as a little bit callous since he seems to think that only the mentally ill can validate (does he mean illustrate?) an existence outside of an orthodox life, when in fact many of the mentally ill end up in hospitals or dead. Orthodoxy, though, is not really a term one can apply to one with a severe mental illness because social conformity is the norm for our species. Olivia Judson did her doctoral work with D.W. Hamilton – whose theories on kin selection have informed some of our essential understanding of human social relations. She explains conformity: “the ability to adjust our behavior to fit a given social environment is one of our main characteristics, yet [it is] so instinctive we [do not] even notice it, let alone consider it worthy of remark” (154). In other words, our understanding of human social relations can now be expressed in probabilities.

Orthodoxy seems also to extend to Greene’s critics who insist that his novels project the dominant political theory of his day, even though I would argue that the politics in his novels tends to reflect more the dominant and often volatile moods of their creator. Greene declares of *The Name of Action* (1930): “I was trying to write my first political novel, knowing nothing of politics. I hope I did better many years later with *The Quiet American*” (WoE 7). Does Greene suggest that twenty-five years elapsed between novels focused on politics? More likely, it means that he focused intellectually on politics while composing a few novels just as many of the high moderns engaged politics – as atmosphere but not the thematic source of meaning. It could mean as well what Greene himself describes in his 1971 memoir of his provisional membership in the communist party while at Oxford, “a very small branch” serving the university and the town. He continues: “Cockburn and I, *with no scrap of Marxist belief between us*, joined with the farfetched idea of . . . perhaps winning a free trip to Moscow and Leningrad, cities which . . . still had a romantic appeal” (ASoL 134, my italics).

Even as Greene engages in postcolonial topics, politics tends to be background. Let me illustrate my point by addressing what many critics do consider a political novel. Greene engages third-way government (*TQA*) – a novel Kim Philby admired – in the development of Alden Pyle and the subsequent brooding guilt his rival, Thomas Fowler, cannot hide as the plot unfolds. In the first pages of what appears to be Fowler’s confession, we learn that he is an accessory to Pyle’s murder, and that he lies to cover it up. When Fowler queries Inspector Vigot of Pyle, “Is he in the mortuary,” Vigot suspiciously wonders and asks how Fowler knows Pyle

is dead. Fowler responds more flippantly than he intends: “Not guilty,” but reassures himself: “I told myself that it was true” (*TQA* 18). Politics and war in *The Quiet American* function in some respects as war does in *The Heart of the Matter*, even if the war better reflects the verisimilitude of Vietnam in *The Quiet American* than as a World War II backdrop to the psychological study of Henry Scobie in the former novel, and which explains why the politics receives more attention than the crime of passion Fowler commits.

The political discussions (at times a bit didactic) and the war background set the novel in a real space and time, but the relationship between Pyle and Fowler follows a more typical plot: an older and a younger man compete for a breeding age female. Jealousy and envy ensue, and the older man, spiteful and vindictive generally, for whom “[it has taken] years of brooding and of guilt, of self-criticism, and of self-justification, to clear from the eyes the haze of hopes and dreams and false ambitions,” touches on a much more human connection than politics might explain (*WoE* 7); Greene blurs the roles of hero and villain as he does in many of his novels. The problem is that brooding Thomas Fowler might have grown up, but he has not learned much – which is why the atheist seeks absolution from the reader in the end for his part in Alden Pyle’s assassination: “Everything had gone right with me since he had died, but how I wished there existed someone to whom I could say that I was sorry” (*TQA* 189). There is Phuong, or Pyle’s parents, but obviously not Vigot, the French inspector.

Such brooding over guilt is one reason religion has always been a part of Greene criticism, just as “[h]yperreligiosity is a major feature of mania, obsessive-compulsive disorder, schizophrenia, temporal-lobe epilepsy and related disorders” and leads to “exaggerated attentional or goal-directed behavior toward extrapersonal space” (Previc). In Greene’s case, it also means to be famously successful. Neuroscience now explains behavior based on chemical activity in the brain that directs it; hence it demystifies the many spiritual conundrums critics have grafted onto Greene – now nearly a martyr to their cause – in their attempts to maintain a place for religion as anything other than historical context in the academy. Darren Middleton insists that as a “novelist who tried to illuminate divine mercy” (Middleton 185), Greene extends grace to some of what might be some of the cruelest, most vindictive creatures to occupy modern novels: and that would include Henry Scobie (*THotM*), the whiskey priest (*TPatG*), Conrad Drover (*IaB*), Pinkie Brown (*BR*), and Maurice Bendrix (*EotA*) to name a few. The fact remains that religious criticism that pursues a Greene

theodicy will find one. It will find one because as Middleton reminds us – “to say anything less horrifies [him] religiously” (Middleton 192).

Middleton does not mention Alfred Lord Whitehead’s “God in the molecules,” but to believe that Greene considered sin as process theologians or as creationists do, as Middleton insists (Middleton 185), ignores facts that suggest otherwise. Greene agreed to adopt Catholicism as a condition for marriage to Vivien. In the novel that derives in part from his courting her, *The Man Within*, and from Sherry’s account of instances of their courtship (see above) involving Greene’s Hillary Trench persona (his irritable manic moods), Greene seems to have engaged religion intellectually, while considering it counter-intuitive to treat murder and infidelity as equal sins. Catholicism did not promise salvation for Greene’s life because the Catholic division of transgressions reflected false piety, even as it promised pain and eternal punishment for behavior instinctive to human nature. Such a view suggests that Greene understood evolution, and he sometimes presents an evolutionary counterpoint to the religious ones on which he focuses in some novels (*BR*, *TPatG*, *THotM*). The essential problem in Middleton’s analysis is that one must accept a premise for which not a single shred of physical evidence has been presented (see Victor Stenger 2007). Greene’s Catholic reproaches grapple with Greene’s moods, and rarely do they show any genuine remorse. As often as not, his sinners and misfits choose a path away from grace: a path that makes God the villain. The relationship between heritability and onset of the disorder does illustrate how childhood trauma can impact the course of the disease. Although the connection between childhood trauma and adult neurosis as Freud insisted has been “largely discredited,” a more measurable link does exist: children with a genetic predisposition to manic depression and who were physically or sexually abused “were found to have an earlier onset of illness, more severe mania, and more alcohol and drug abuse” (Torrey and Knable 90-91). Moreover, the heritability and behavioral combination tends to produce a pattern that ensures children will be abused and become abusers.

Greene’s “religious” novels are often considered amongst his classics, but they are often not so much a glance at the nature of Catholicism as they are the nature of guilt, sometimes identified as sin. Greene’s constructs plumb the landscape of forgiveness and end up misunderstanding God because they, as did Greene, feel only pity and not empathy. Greene’s Catholics are at odds with simple Church doctrine, but they want God’s grace anyway because the sinner argues that the sin is exaggerated, even if the guilt is palpable and beats like a tell-tale heart. Even as they seek

external remedies for the feelings that direct their behavior, their hyperreligious obsessions devolve into psychotic dreams presenting God and Jesus as prostitutes and barkers seducing one with red light district relief for the hypersexuality that was the other side of Greene's Janus. The whiskey priest and his buffoon face spies Jesus pole dancing (*TPatG*) even as he reconsiders the daughter of the drunken itch that became his sin; and Scobie, "'Aristides the just" (*THotM* 9), Greene exposes as an incorrigible liar whose sexual obsession he refuses to renounce and whose final appearance in the church produces a pleading God bartering for his soul over the magnitude of his sin, like a barker hawking philandering over suicide. Such obsessions fuel both mixed manic states.

Greene has a bad case of the "guilts" in *The Heart of the Matter*, as he does in *The Power and the Glory*, and to an extent in *It's a Battlefield*, and anyone who has known or knows someone with manic depression can identify this mood. It is the one at odds with the voices crowing in one's ear; those terrors that stalk with miscreant deeds and bad behavior that lead to fornication and / or crime: or the hole in the memory where the guilt throbs but the source is fodder for an imagination that runs as rapidly as the guilt throbs. Any remembered image turns into a misdeed, a story, a blank before the facts that people share later, which one tries vainly to keep from settling in where experience should be. All that irritates Greene's miscreant constructs and triggers their psychotic delusions results from a responsibility to behave rationally; yet they fail miserably at it. As these novels unfold we discover one unreliable narrator after another desperately attempting to provide cover for seriously ill character-constructs, who in turn often reflect the turmoil and turbulence Greene experienced in personal relations – well documented by his biographers from Norman Sherry to Michael Shelden, and from W.J. West to Richard Greene – until they literally go insane.

Greene so ably draws such characters because he is the troubled one who cannot live with his guilt yet cannot prevent his own impulsive nature – nearly impossible without medication. No matter how Greene wrangles with his conscience and attempts to correct what is aberrant in his own nature, all he does is draw greater attention to the emotional meat-grinder that is *his* psyche. Greene's own issues with intimate relations, frequently projected into the male-female relationships in his novels, included physical intimidation (he seems a perfect candidate for it) and no doubt striking on occasion: as he hints at – and tries to cover at the same time. When Scobie grabs Helen's wrists (*THotM*), we do not hear her obvious response: "You're hurting me." We do not hear it because Greene does not