

**‘What is the nature of a religious journey?
How St. Luke, Caravaggio and Graham Greene use symbolism and revelation to
illuminate the journey metaphor.’**

Summary

Journeys feature extensively in religious literature and art but they are not all understood in the same way. Therefore I want to consider what makes a journey religious and how this is manifested. I will show this by exploring how symbolism and revelation are crucial elements of this expression and how they illuminate the traveller's path. I will focus on the Gospel of St. Luke's story of the *Road to Emmaus*; Caravaggio's two paintings of the *Supper at Emmaus* and Graham Greene's novel *Monsignor Quixote*. Although these represent three different media, I will show how they are united in their use of the journey metaphor.

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Setting off: introduction

Journeys feature extensively in religious literature and art but they are not all understood in the same way. Therefore I want to look at the *religious journey* which is not simply any process of change (too vague) or a pilgrimage (too specific) but is nevertheless of spiritual significance. I want to consider what makes a journey religious and how this is manifested. I will show this by exploring how symbolism and revelation are crucial elements of this expression and how they illuminate the traveller's path.

I have chosen the Gospel of St. Luke's story of the *Road to Emmaus*; Caravaggio's two paintings of the *Supper at Emmaus* and Graham Greene's novel *Monsignor Quixote* because first, only in Luke's Gospel does the Emmaus story appear.¹ Second, it is through the use of symbol and revelation within the serendipitous journey that the climax occurs, which third, provides Caravaggio with a rich narrative palette from which to interpret the biblical text visually; and a journey of Caravaggio's own between painting the picture twice over five years. Fourth, Greene's novel also contains several journeys that form the basis of the central plot, and a similar climax is reached at the end of his characters' adventures through dramatic symbolism and revelation.² Thus in presenting a gospel, fine art and a novel in three different periods of history and culture, I will demonstrate how their creators and their techniques, despite using different media, can nevertheless be united in showing their use of the journey metaphor.

I argue that a religious journey is not the same as a pilgrimage. Pilgrimages are dedicated journeys to specific holy shrines with the purpose of engaging with one's faith; undertaken when the individual is seeking enlightenment and spiritual renewal. Wherever and whatever the length of the pilgrimage, a key component is the openness to interior change. Religious journeys however, need not be so focused, and the destination may be less important. In the New Testament the idea of pilgrimage is virtually non-existent despite several sacred places being mentioned. Pilgrimages became popular from the fourth century A.D. through the encouragement of writers such as St. Jerome; although he cautioned the believer that their faith in one place was just as acceptable to God as in another "*though you have not seen Jerusalem.*"³ While pilgrimages are central to all the world's major faiths, according to Ian Bradley, Christian pilgrimage reached its zenith in the Middle Ages with thousands of people travelling mainly to Rome, Santiago de Compostela and St Andrews.⁴

The journey to Emmaus that the two disciples make, one called Cleopas while the other is unnamed, begins, so far as we know, as neither a pilgrimage nor specifically a religious journey although it becomes holy as soon as the 'stranger' joins them.⁵ The destination becomes both a journey towards Emmaus and a passage towards realised faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God. The latter occurs through a unique symbolic gesture that physically and 'spiritually' reveals Christ to the disciples just before they begin to eat their supper. Caravaggio's two paintings of this story do not focus on the travelling motif. Rather, he provides two slightly different interpretations of the story as the culmination of a journey which becomes religious through the use of dramatic symbolism and revelation. Not only does Caravaggio create a representation of the key moment in Luke's story but because he paints it twice, Caravaggio presents the viewer with a further journey of his own in the years between. I contend Norman Sherry's view that Greene's novel *Monsignor Quixote* is "also a theological and political pilgrimage..."⁶ because the journey on which Quixote and Sancho

¹ I will quote throughout from *The New Jerusalem Bible*, London: Darton, Longman & Todd Ltd & Doubleday, 1985.

² I will quote throughout from Graham Greene's *Monsignor Quixote*, London: Vintage 2006.

³ Jerome, *Letter 58*.

⁴ Bradley, Ian, C, *Pilgrimage: A spiritual and cultural journey*, Oxford: Lion, 2009.

⁵ Luke: 24:18.

⁶ Sherry, Norman, *The Life of Graham Greene: Volume 3: 1955-1991*, London: Pimlico, 2005, p.661.

embark begins as a holiday. However, the two friends' travelling becomes religious as their adventures unfold and the journey too reaches its climax with a celebration of the Eucharist.

Throughout this dissertation I will explore how the journey metaphor can be read as religiously significant and shaped through the vehicles of symbolism and revelation. What is it that is being revealed through symbolic imagery and language? What is the significance of the travellers' participation? Can we distinguish between deliberate, artificially implanted symbolism and that which is intrinsically present or latent? Let us begin by defining symbol and revelation.

Signposts: Symbol and revelation

'Symbol' derives from the Greek word σύμβολον (*symbolon*) meaning a 'token' and originates from Homer's use of the idea of throwing two things together and creating something new.⁷ Revelation is *revelatio* from *revelare* in Latin and ἀποκάλυψις (apokalypsis) in Greek. It is the act of revealing something obvious in part or in full, through communication that is most commonly with supernatural beings. Revelation originates directly from a deity or through an agent such as an angel or prophet. The Christian faith is dependent on the divine revelation of God incarnate in the flesh of Christ. Unlike the Homeric example, a Christian object, place or person can symbolise the sacred while remaining exactly as it is.

In Paul Tillich's book *Dynamics of Faith* he claims that symbols have six characteristics of which four are relevant to this study: they point beyond themselves to something else; they participate in that to which they point; they open up levels of reality which are otherwise closed for us; and they unlock dimensions and elements of our soul which correspond to the dimensions and elements of reality.⁸ I disagree with Tillich's two remaining characteristics of a symbol: that they cannot be produced intentionally or invented since we will see that Luke, Caravaggio and Greene all created and manipulated symbols precisely to reveal a further meaning. To comprehend a symbol requires participation in the reality of what it represents and reveals, as well as the ability to abstract the essence of the symbol from all its other elements and context. As all symbols point to something beyond their physical form, the way in which their form is revealed tells us much about what they are transcending.

Symbols are central to humanity because they help to make sense of the world and create connections between the ordinary and the transcendent, the particular and the universal, the present moment and eternity. They create bridges between the past, present and future. They reveal and conceal in equal measure. They push forwards and against their own meaning creating a tension of opposites that is not held in equilibrium since the symbol always points to something more. Symbolism is the making of a truth present where it would otherwise be absent. In symbolism mimesis (representation) leads to methexis (participation). Symbols participate in the reality of that which they symbolise. In recapturing the perception that the ancient world had of symbols, writers and artists make present the realities they signify. I have chosen Luke, Caravaggio and Greene because they were able to convey what certain symbols signified in such a way as to make manifest the Biblical God and his incarnation. They also showed how to depict the Judaeo-Christian fellowship meal (which later came to be the sacrament of the Eucharist) in the context of the journey metaphor.

Paul Avis argues that Christian theology implies a spiritual interpretation of the material world so that the material world is understood as an insufficient definition of the world's

⁷ The earliest example of the term is in the Homeric Hymn to Hermes where Hermes on seeing a tortoise exclaims σύμβολον ἤδη μοι μέγ' ὀνήσιμον "symbolon [symbol/encounter/chance find?] of joy to me!" before turning it into a lyre. *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*, Classics in Translation, Mackendrick and Howe, p.81.

⁸ Tillich, Paul, *Dynamics of Faith*, New York: Harper & Row, 1957, pp. 41-44.

purpose and meaning.⁹ Christian theology points to a transcendent creativity as the essence of the universe. The sacraments are there to make God's presence real to the material world in the absence of God incarnate as Jesus the man. In receiving the Eucharist, Christians receive Christ because that symbol represents him. This does not mean that the sacramental view of symbols needs to be specifically Christian but it does imply that within the Christian faith there is a particular purpose and way in which symbols are manifested and understood. For Christian apologists, such as Origen and Augustine, symbols are charged with complex meanings and enhance the Christian faith with new insights. These symbols await the fulfilment of their meaning in the actualisation and recognition of them although never totally in *this* life. The waiting for fulfilment is partially dependent on time, and time is intrinsic to the spiritual significance of a religious journey.

Time turns into a *pleroma*, that is, a totality of divine powers, by the fact of Christ's incarnation, and then transfigures itself – the time that saw Jesus live, be crucified and resurrected. Thus time is ontologised; time is made to be, which means that it ceases to become, time transforms itself into eternity. There is a cosmic story being played out against a linear Newtonian concept of time. The instant that is transfigured is the revelation. The Divine is concealed in history since Jesus of Nazareth is not outwardly distinguished from his Palestinian contemporaries either visually or in behaviour. Yet he becomes the total theophany. After the incarnation and death of Christ, miracles are not easy to recognise, the mysterious becomes more complex and therefore, the symbols and what they reveal, become more necessary.

In western storytelling and art, the concept of time is as much a mystery as it is a revelation: the author, the artist, the reader and the viewer have all to confront it. It is a recurrent measurement of movement and the location of a focal point. Luke's understanding of time is described in two ways, as he relates to past Israelite history and as he promises the Kingdom of God through the journey and mission of Christ. Caravaggio achieves a suspension of time in motion through the focus of one act that has consequences beyond his paintings' canvases, and the visual and the invisible moments are brought together. Caravaggio's visual insights and techniques prove in a different medium from the written word, that vision is greater than speech can show. Greene learned much from Cervantes in his use of time in *Monsignor Quixote*. Texture, mood, landscape, dialogue and gesture are all described with perfect ease. Greene held the tension between time and motion in balance so that the final action takes place where time is not of human creation, but of God's doing. With all three of my protagonists we notice a further element in our concept of time, the difference between telling and showing.

Luke: scripture's compass

According to Mogens Müller, the emerging faith of the New Testament expressed itself by interpreting the collection of writings which for the Christian Church, was later to become the Old Testament.¹⁰ Early Christianity appeared at the start as a complex community that began to define itself within the Judaic framework, and slowly developed as a specific Christian model reflecting the transition from a Jewish sect to a religious community. It consisted mainly of members for whom the Jewish bible had not relevant authority. This 'natural' divine revelation necessitated fresh ideas and interpretations to hold the community together and a body of writing as a constitutive part of the community's foundation. Legitimising the faith of the resurrected Christ through re-interpreting the existing Hebrew scriptures enabled the emerging writings that became the New Testament to establish their particular Christian significance.¹¹ Within this development was the task to find specific

⁹ Avis, Paul, *God and the Creative Imagination: metaphor, symbol and myth in religion and theology*, London: Routledge, 1999, p. 108.

¹⁰ Müller, Mogens, 'The Reception of the Old Testament in Matthew and Luke-Acts: From Interpretation to Proof from Scripture', *Novum Testamentum*, 43:4 (Oct, 2001), 315-330, BRILL.

¹¹ This does not mean that there were no longer concurrent Jewish writings.

scriptural proof that would confirm the coherent and long-awaited salvific acts by God and therefore the fulfilment of salvation through the incarnation of Christ. This way of handling scripture enabled a fixed narrative to be created which would convey the religious significance of the Christ events to the faith community. "Scripture" in Greek is γραφή (*graphē*) from which we derive our English word 'graphic', and can be defined as pertaining to writing, although now we would include the ideas of representation and illustration. This etymology allows both the written word and the visual to be woven together and mirrors Caravaggio's role as an artist who interpreted the Christian Scriptures for his contemporary audience. It also reflects Greene's writing later, in the modern novel genre.

According to Brown, Fitzmyer and Murphy in the New Jerome Bible Commentary, Luke was not an eyewitness to Jesus' life and his Gospel was once a single two-volume work with the book of Acts written A.D. 80-85.¹² Luke wrote primarily for a Gentile audience rethinking their mission and the Jewish peoples trying to bridge the gulf between the old Israel and the newly reconstituted faith community. Paul Minear argues that Luke handles this gulf by categorising Jesus' audience into five groups: *people* (largest and most inclusive), *crowds* (major source of disciples), *disciples* (those who hear, obey and follow), *the Twelve and the Seventy-Two* (Jesus' specially chosen disciples, authorised to preach and heal) and the *rulers* (priests, elders, scribes and Pharisees – the Pharisees opposed the disciples).¹³ By emphasising the types of audience to whom Jesus spoke, Luke was able to demonstrate their differing needs and responses. Parables, stories, miracles, signs and scriptural exegesis are the means to communicate his key messages.

Therefore when the two disciples exclaim that Jesus of Nazareth "... showed himself a **prophet** powerful in action and speech before God and the **whole people**; and how our **chief priests** and our **leaders** handed him over to be sentenced to death, and had him crucified" Luke is alerting the reader to a specific historical and covenantal community which has been set apart by God, namely Israel, and that Luke is not hostile to Israel, only to its rulers. Fewer phrases than 'whole people' have greater ecclesiological resonance in Luke's Gospel. Rather than exclude other people, it reminds us that Luke presents an inclusive message which is consistent and distinctive.

Luke was probably the most literary of all the gospel writers which enables us to compare his writing with Greene's more directly. Like Greene, he was also a reporter. Luke was widely read in the contemporary literature and consciously utilised the structures, forms and images from popular literature in his writings. He developed his theological writing around history, biography and romance literature and clearly saw himself as a literary person by the way he introduces his work in his prologue. Luke's use of symbolism and revelation throughout his Gospel's journey motif is deliberate and intentional as we shall see now.¹⁴

Preparations: literary mapping

Luke devised various ways to structure his Gospel, the first being the travel narrative which Gill maintains scholars largely agree has a theological-Christological rather than a geographical purpose.¹⁵ Thus Luke's Gospel could be seen in three parts: Jesus' extended journey from Galilee, the central journey that he takes and his arrival in Jerusalem and onto God; while the emerging church journeys from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth in Acts

¹² Luke came from Syrian Antioch in first century Israel. Colossians 4:14 says he was a Greek physician, a disciple of Paul and his companion on missionary journeys to Macedonia and Rome (Acts 16:10ff; 20:5ff; 27-8). *New Jerome Bible Commentary*, eds. Raymond E Brown, Joseph A Fitzmyer and Roland E Murphy, London Geoffrey Chapman, 2000, pp. 675-76.

¹³ Minear, Paul S, Jesus' Audiences, According to Luke, *Novum Testamentum*, 16:2 (1974) 81-109.

¹⁴ Luke 1:1-4.

¹⁵ Gill, S. J, David, Observations on the Lukan Travel Narrative and Some Related Passages, *The Harvard Theological Review*, 63: 2 (Apr.,1970) 199-221.

1:8. This narrative is kerygmatic in style which means that Luke told the story and then proclaimed its religious significance.¹⁶ He loved parallels and the events predicted become reality within his text, promising literary and literal fulfilment. This method of telling and then showing runs like a thread throughout his gospel. One of the most important examples of its use lies in his story of the *Road to Emmaus*.

Why the death and glorification of Jesus is depicted symbolically as a journey by Luke is intriguing but is probably influenced by his main source Mark, especially Mark's eighth and ninth chapters. Perhaps Luke reminds the reader that the despondent disciples' travelling to Emmaus are set against the wider context of Jesus' greater but more willing journey to his Father. The journey symbolism is directly mentioned or alluded to in Luke between chapters nine and nineteen allowing for this theme to be opened out before and beyond the Emmaus story.¹⁷ This enables the reader to travel alongside Jesus as he is underway, to keep up with the movement and pace of the narrative (literally and figuratively) and to grasp the theological significance of Christ's mission and destiny. For Luke, God's revelation is the purpose of the journey in which all travellers are called to witness along the way. Thus Luke has already prepared his readers throughout the Gospel for the final journey of the disciples to Emmaus, their ensuing mission, and for Jesus' onward journey to Jerusalem.

Luke was a master theologian, an expert in Greek and adept in employing several literary devices and motifs to combine traditions and sources together. The second of these is that of table-fellowship which incorporates the use of both symbol and revelation. According to Dennis E. Smith, Luke adapted the Greek literary form of the symposium genre (the Hellenic forum for men to debate and party, with Plato's *Symposium on Love* being the most well-known) in the description of various meals throughout his gospel, the Emmaus meal being the most relevant here.¹⁸ Smith claims that Luke relates to this literary tradition by his use of this motif in several ways which are significant to this study: the ranking at table as a symbol of status; table-talk as a means of teaching; table service as a symbol of community service, and table fellowship as a symbol of community fellowship. Diners ate in a u-shaped formation around a central table with the most important person sitting in the centre.

The key question for Luke's audience is theodicy: if God was faithful to the elect people then why did he allow the holy city and Temple to be destroyed, and if Jesus was the Messiah, why did he die on a cross? As the two disciples talked to Jesus, they exclaimed that "... our chief priests and rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and had him crucified" which is the earliest explicit statement of blame for Jesus' death being the responsibility of the Jewish leaders.¹⁹ Luke therefore, sets out to prove how God was faithful to his promises but in a different way from what was assumed. What is therefore necessary for Luke is to reveal how the Jewish Bible plays a more important role for the prediction and theological justification of Christ's coming than is found in the other two synoptic gospels.²⁰ Luke's statement via Jesus that "was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer before entering into his glory?" draws heavily on the disciples' and the reader's understanding of the Old Testament as a preparation for the incarnation and death of the Messiah.²¹ We also find in Luke the verb to 'fulfil' or πληρόω used in connection with scripture twice in his Gospel.²²

¹⁶ Kerygma is a Greek word κήρυγμα, used in the New Testament for preaching. It is related to the Greek verb κηρύσσω, to cry or proclaim as a herald, meaning proclamation or preaching.

¹⁷ See Luke 9:51, 53, 56, 57; 10:1, 38; 13: 22, 31, 31, (35); 14: 25; 17:11; (18:31, 35); 18:36; 19:1,11, (28, 29, 36); 19:37, 41, (45). Parentheses indicate those references that are not peculiar to Luke.

¹⁸ Smith, Dennis E., 'Table Fellowship as a Literary Motif in the Gospel of Luke,' *The Journal of Biblical Literature*, 106: 4 (Dec 1987), 613-638.

¹⁹ Luke 24:20.

²⁰ Luke quotes from the Jewish Bible extensively including: Leviticus 19:18; Deuteronomy 6:5; 1 Samuel 2:1-10; Psalms 22:19, 31:6, 110:1, 118:22; Isaiah 26:19, 29:15, 40: 3-5. 53:12, 56:7, 61:1-2; Jeremiah 7:11; Hosea 10:8.

²¹ Luke 24:27.

²² Luke 4:21; 24:44.

This is a Septuagint verb used 'to fill up a valley' as seen in Isaiah 40:4 and re-quoted in Luke 3:5.

Rites of passage: faith and miracle

The wonderful Emmaus story, which is unique to Luke, dazzles with his favourite themes: journey, meals, hospitality and faith as seeing, and all are significant throughout Luke's Gospel. The two disciples have abandoned their faith in Jesus because his death disappointed them. When Jesus approaches them and asks "what are all these things you are discussing as you walk along?" They stopped, their faces downcast.²³ They presumed that was the end. The idea of journey recurs in this story as a metaphor and as a golden thread.²⁴ Luke narrates how the risen Christ reconciles two travellers, who once they have been forgiven and enlightened through the scriptures and the symbol of the meal's blessing, race back to Jerusalem to share their news. In conversation, Christ opens their eyes yet they do not see fully until he blesses their meal. Although this implies that they need to see the physical blessing before they believe, the blessing is at one level merely an action of the hand and the lips. It is the symbolism and the subsequent recognition of the sacred that makes the connection in their hearts, and in that light, they see with genuine faith.

The barrier for the despondent disciples lay not in scripture itself but in their inability to understand God's reign in the time they had spent with Jesus, and to apply the scriptures they knew and remembered, to his death and resurrection. This is why Christ had to illuminate those scriptural passages which predicted his fate and to connect their meaning with him as their symbol and subject, and the fulfilment of the biblical promises. What is interesting is that the disciples see this not when Christ is speaking but when he is doing – when he blesses the bread and wine. They understand only in the symbolic act and participation of the meal. Is scripture therefore, more effective when it is accompanied with a physical gesture, a dynamic symbol? In line with Tillich, does scripture need to be revealed creatively to enable its meaning to open up levels of reality that would otherwise be closed to its receivers?

Luke's Gospel clearly marks something new in the perception of scripture because it becomes a means to understand God's salvific acts in the past, present and for the future. Luke reveals that scripture is understood in itself and that Christ is both its meaning and its revelation which is why, for Luke, Christ is the perfect symbol. Luke also uses comic irony: nowhere else in the New Testament does anyone accuse Jesus Christ of not knowing what he has been doing. Cleopas' unforgettable "You must be the only person staying in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have been happening there these last few days."²⁵ And Jesus' mischievous "What things?" provides the reader, who knows who the stranger is before the disciples do, with humorous suspense akin to that of the similarly disguised archangel Raphael in the *Book of Tobit*. There is a likeness between these two stories since the dénouement of each hangs on symbolism and revelation of scriptural prophecies.

Although the Emmaus meal is now commonly interpreted as the symbol of the then newly instituted Eucharist, and Christ's body and blood have become key symbols of the sacred meal, we cannot immediately transpose this idea onto the original story. The theme of eating throughout Luke's gospel also implies that God's kingdom has come about through Jesus' eating and fellowship with everyone regardless of their gender or status. This only happens because the disciples were hospitable and their sorrowful ignorance is transformed into joy and renewed faith in Jesus. In offering hospitality to the stranger in Emmaus, the journey away from Jerusalem, the journey into darkness is transformed and becomes a journey

²³ Luke 24:17.

²⁴ Luke 24:15,17, 28, 29, 32, 33, 35.

²⁵ Luke 24:18.

outwards. Now their hearts burn with passionate understanding because the symbol of the humble supper revealed their long-awaited Lord. Scripture and sacrament, word and meal unite in this divine revelation.

Luke's Last Supper serves as a transition for the theme of table fellowship with Jesus from the time of Jesus until the time of the church.²⁶ It also becomes a new focus for the disciples with Jesus' presence at the meal being intrinsically linked with their future relationship with him once he has left. This transition is well captured as the reader moves from the Last Supper account to the resurrection story of the road to Emmaus culminating in the recognition of the resurrected Christ only in his "breaking of the bread."²⁷ Whenever the church celebrates this breaking of bread, Luke reveals that it is a continuation of this same theme, in which the risen Lord is known to those who participate in his shared symbolic meal and through which Christians can look forward to the future blessings of the messianic banquet. Luke 24:23 describes a flashback in which some women recall the scene as "a vision of angels." The luminosity of the resurrected Christ which faded into the concrete form of his physical body did not detract from the radiance of the accompanying figure. "But their eyes were prevented from recognising him" shows that it is not a matter of normal vision that is required since Christ's outward appearance was similar to theirs.²⁸ It is a matter of faith that sees beyond the immediate reality and perceives the symbol and the revelation contained within. Thus faith is described as a mental as well as a physical journey. It is a symbolic and literal journey from despair to wonder at a miracle requiring humility before divine revelation. Now let us turn to Caravaggio to see how he interpreted this remarkable story in paint.

Caravaggio: travelling light

Michelangelo Merisi, known as Caravaggio because that was the name of his native village near Bergamo and Milan, was born in 1571. He was repeatedly arrested and imprisoned for villainy, libel, paedophilia and for murder in 1606. He died in poverty in 1610 of a fever in Porto Ercole, Tuscany while travelling to Rome to seek a Papal pardon for his crimes. Caravaggio was first nurtured by Cardinal del Monte who was a notable art-lover and genuine father-figure in his early days. Between 1594 and 1599 Caravaggio cut all family ties, first by refusing to attend his sister Caterina's wedding and later, by disowning his priest brother Giovan Battista who had visited him. Why Caravaggio chose to isolate himself so radically is unclear but Andrew Graham-Dixon posits that his contemporary, Guilio Mancini believed Caravaggio to be ashamed of himself.²⁹ Nevertheless, Caravaggio was a painter of genius and the apotheosis of what came to be the Baroque period but in his time caused just as much scandal on the canvas as he did in his personal life. As a result, he had to wait three hundred years for his reputation as an artist to be vindicated.

As we are now studying two paintings rather than the written word, the journey metaphor takes on a different shape. Caravaggio represents the destination rather than the journey itself. While the biblical narrative is far from seamless, Caravaggio provides us with a visual narrative in another form. This form is shaped by the Roman Catholic Church. 1601-1602 was the height of the Counter-Reformation in Europe with the Council of Trent (1545- 1563) establishing the continued threat of Protestantism to Roman Catholicism. The Counter-Reformation therefore encouraged the portrayal of the Roman Catholic faith in the written word and in art so that the laity would be instructed in the habit of remembering the miracles that God had performed, and therefore, would cultivate piety and devotion. The Council reaffirmed the importance of both sacraments and pilgrimage partly to counter the Protestant reformers' attack on the nature of practical worship, the arts and their corresponding

²⁶ Luke 22:14-19.

²⁷ Luke 24: 35.

²⁸ Luke 24:16.

²⁹ Graham-Dixon, Andrew, *Caravaggio: a Life Sacred and Profane*, London: Allen Lane, 2010, p.187.

devotional practices.³⁰ St. Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556) through his influential Spiritual Exercises had also encouraged Christians to engage with all five senses when contemplating the Christian message; to internalise the faith in order to imagine and identify with Christ's suffering. Caravaggio, aware of these various movements and coupled with his own innovative techniques and methods, was a gift to the Roman Catholic Church. He gave his believing viewers and patrons of the church, a particular clarity which countered not just Protestantism but the pretensions of the Mannerist art that preceded him.

However, according to the seventeenth century art biographer Bellori, Caravaggio often had his paintings reversed, whereby they were taken down from the altars they had previously honoured because of their stark realism.³¹ Caravaggio's realism implied that the divine was closer than the Church wanted its believers to think. By the Church's insistence that religious art was painted in specific ways that were removed from reality, and there were detailed books of criteria with fines and punishments for disobeying the standards, the logic maintained that the church's defined means of expressing the divine could be preserved.³² Bellori claimed that "art should not represent the world as it is, but as it should be, sweetened and idealised."³³ Yet one of the great achievements of seventeenth century painting was that the religious narrative developed through the exploration of the underlying emotions of biblical stories. A religious picture no longer merely illustrated the actions described in the scriptures but revealed the nuances of human and theological symbolism inherent in the original texts. Caravaggio excelled in selecting and then isolating the most pertinent moments and emotions of a particular story with a clear simplicity, while losing nothing of the complexity of the biblical narrative and its spiritual dimension as it unfolds in time and on the canvas.

Caravaggio's first painted the *Supper at Emmaus* in 1601 for Ciriaco Mattei and his brother Cardinal Girolamo. It was later bought by Cardinal Scipione Borghese but now hangs in the National Gallery, London.³⁴ Caravaggio's depiction of this event does not focus on the physical journey itself but its destination, as he follows Luke's model description of the symposium meal, in which the artist places Christ at the centre and the disciples on either side. What is more fascinating is that Caravaggio created a large space between the two disciples. This enables the viewer to see and relate to Christ directly rather than via the disciples and allows the viewer to participate in the symbolic meal. Jesus is seated at a table laden with food with the disciple Cleopas on his right and an unnamed disciple on his left wearing the pilgrim's symbolic scallop shell. As discussed previously, the disciples were not on a pilgrimage since the concept had yet to be invented. Caravaggio probably appropriated this idea for two reasons. He saw the symbol in other Emmaus paintings (cf. Melone, Titian and Veronese), and he wanted to convey a further revelation to his seventeenth century viewers. As part of the Counter-Reformation revivals in mediaeval religious devotion, both the laity and the clergy were encouraged to undertake pilgrimages, and to connect the sacred past with the present.

Caravaggio chooses the moment in Luke's story when the miracle is revealed in the blessing of the bread. Caravaggio creates the ambience of bright illumination despite no signs of candles, torches or lanterns. The illusion of light is not new in Italian painting but according to Janis C Bell, Caravaggio's methods are since he works without tonal unity.³⁵ This means

³⁰ Protestantism believed that visual art was against the second of the Ten Commandments.

³¹ Bellori, G. P., *Le vite de' pittori, scultori e architetti moderni*, Rome 1672, ed. E. Borea, Einaudi, Turin 1976, pp. 230-1.

³² Carlo Borromeo 1538-1584, a Catholic Cardinal during the Counter-Reformation, was responsible for numerous reforms, especially in the arts. His book *Instructiones* was highly influential during Caravaggio's time.

³³ Graham-Dixon, A, *Caravaggio: A Life Sacred and Profane*, London: Allen Lane, 2010, p.6.

³⁴ Borghese was Pope Paul V's nephew.

³⁵ Bell, Janis, C, 'Light and Color in Caravaggio's "Supper at Emmaus"', *Artibus et Historiae*, 16:31 (1995), 139-170.

that Caravaggio's colours range from the darkest to the lightest in the illuminated areas such as on the unnamed disciple's clothing but unlike artists such as Leonardo da Vinci who relied on subtle gradations to achieve their effects, Caravaggio's innovative skill lies in shifting abruptly between one tone and another. This chiaroscuro technique ensures that the light is at the service of the whole picture and therefore, the whole meaning. Caravaggio enables the viewer to engage with the painting directly - we are invited in because the picture appears deceptively real rather than imagined. Its tension and force lie in the illusion that we are participators in this miraculous event. This ambiguity of presentation and revelation shows Caravaggio's conscious effort to enable reality to pose as art and illusion as reality. While Caravaggio's manipulation of chiaroscuro was considered crude by his opponents, according to Bellori, the painters in Rome were impressed as they "looked on his work as miracles."³⁶

Motion and emotion: Supper at Emmaus

The ability to represent the full subtleties and interactions between human relationships in purely visual terms is profoundly challenging. Yet Caravaggio creates this through the gestures and body-language of his characters which are clearly recognisable even when the actual themes he is addressing may not be immediately obvious to the viewer (especially a contemporary viewer not well-versed in the Bible). Caravaggio eschewed the prevailing academic practice of making numerous preparatory sketches before selecting the most beautiful studies with which to create the final painting. He was heavily criticised for painting directly from living models who were often people he met on the streets. How dare he depict the boy or woman next door as biblical saints!

Luke similarly conveyed the universality of the biblical message: anyone could come to Christ. By posing his models in darkened rooms, adjusting the light and then reproducing his scenes directly onto the canvas, Caravaggio was ultimately admired, especially considering how few *pentimenti*, or changes made whilst painting, that there are in his works.³⁷ Although he frequently painted directly from nature this did not exclude his simultaneous working from imagination. Caravaggio's interest in the psychology of human encounters and his ability to capture a story's most telling moment, while using colour in a radically different way from his contemporaries, combined to make the supernatural visible in a highly convincing way.

In Caravaggio's first *Supper at Emmaus* we see these dynamics at work as he employs symbolism and revelation to depict the transformation of an evening meal by divine intervention. To prevent this being a passive event, Caravaggio focuses on the reactions of the disciples and innkeeper. Caravaggio does not depict Christ with obvious credentials except that of his red and white cloak symbolising the triumphant resurrection; we cannot see any nail marks in his hands, nor a wound in his side or any facial features that would distinguish him from his companions. He is recognised in his gesture alone. The innkeeper is static and bewildered, he does not recognise the blessing symbol and therefore, does not understand the reaction of the disciples; perhaps he represents the faithless who fail to recognise Christ as the Messiah, hence not removing his cap. For some critics such as Bellori who reviled this painting, the innkeeper's role was an illustration of Caravaggio's crude attempt to dishonour a sacred story.³⁸ This may reflect a certain seventeenth century academic bias because today scholars argue that the innkeeper's covered head deliberately

³⁶ Bellori, Giovanni Pietro, *Le vite de pittori, scultori et architetti moderni*, Rome, 1672, 213, translated by W. Friedlander, *Caravaggio Studies*, Princeton, 1955.

³⁷ Andrew Graham-Dixon argues that "x-rays of Caravaggio's finished work have failed to yield anything resembling a conventional underdrawing." *Caravaggio: A Life Sacred and Profane*, London: Allen Lane, 2010, p.118.

³⁸ Bellori, Giovanni Pietro, *Le vite de pittori, scultori et architetti moderni*, Rome, 1672, 213, translated by W. Friedlander, *Caravaggio Studies*, Princeton, 1955.

points to the servant's exclusion from the miracle of divine revelation. Graham-Dixon believes that the innkeeper was worried in case the disciples could not pay their bill.³⁹

Food for the journey: Caravaggio's fruit basket

One of the painting's areas of controversy lies in the purpose of the fruit basket. Caravaggio placed it centrally - for him it is symbolically entwined with Christ's resurrection and the tradition of the 'first fruits'. In classical Greek, Roman, Hebrew and Christian religions, the first fruits were a religious offering of the first produce of the harvest which was offered to the temple or church. A full basket is a symbol of abundance and immortality but because of where it is placed it might also mean transience, fruit that will rot soon because it is matter not spirit. At the moment the fruit is not quite ripe even though Easter has just occurred, therefore, Caravaggio is implying that this points to the Biblical image of everlasting fruit still to come in Christ and the future emerging church in 1 Corinthians 15:20-23.⁴⁰ In Caravaggio's painting, the fruit serves as an earthly visual metaphor ensuring that salvation is close at hand.

There are grapes which symbolised fertility and wine and here the inference is the blood of Christ (John 6:54) and Jesus as the true vine (John 15:1-17). The quince was sacred to Venus and was thought to be the golden apple of Hesperides and later was associated with the resurrection in line with the apple, traditionally thought to be the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden. Plums usually connote fidelity but this plum is purple thus referring to Christ's death and passion. The pomegranate (the more likely fruit in the Garden of Eden) has many seeds and alludes to the church - the seeds being the congregation and also symbolises a blessing as it was considered a gift from heaven and its red juice related to Christ's sacrificial blood. In pagan mythology the pomegranate was an attribute of Persephone's who returned from the underworld annually and therefore, was assimilated into the Catholic symbol of the resurrection. The fruit basket is precariously placed at the table's edge perhaps suggesting that it will soon fall off at the observer's feet. The fruit and its basket is reminiscent of two of Caravaggio's earlier works: *Boy with Basket of Fruit* painted 1593-94 and *Basket of Fruit* 1598-99.

Leading light: illumination

The shadow underneath the basket is possibly symbolic of a fish indicating a metaphysical quality of Caravaggio's chiaroscuro technique, and this hypothesis is enhanced by the innkeeper's shadow behind Christ creating the effect of a halo above Christ's head. The fish has long been a mnemonic for Christ – the Greek word for fish ἰχθύς forming the initials of Jesus Christ, Son of God.⁴¹ Martin Gayford, in the *Saturday Telegraph* newspaper in July 2010 quotes the artist David Hockney who greatly admires Caravaggio's lighting techniques, stating that "he invented a black world that had not existed before, certainly not in Florence or Rome. Caravaggio invented Hollywood lighting." And this lighting was no accident.⁴² David Jarman's seminal film *Caravaggio*, maximises this concept of lighting to the full by filming entirely in the dark with artificially illuminated areas to achieve this chiaroscuro effect. While today we often argue that the chiaroscuro effect creates a mystical and theological association with light, for Caravaggio's contemporaries, this effect simply gave more volume and depth to a composition, the drama it reveals was not *a priori* connected with a spiritual meaning unless that was already obvious from the painting's overtly religious content.

³⁹ Graham-Dixon, A., *Caravaggio: A Life Sacred and Profane*, London: Allen Lane, 2010, p.222.

⁴⁰ "... Christ has been raised from the dead, as the first fruits of all who have fallen asleep. As it was by one man that death came, so through one man has come the resurrection of the dead. Just as all die in Adam, so in Christ will all be brought to life; but all of them in their proper order: Christ the first fruits, and next, at his coming, those who belong to him."

⁴¹ In Greek - Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς Θεοῦ υἱός.

⁴² Gayford, Martin, quotes David Hockney's *Secret Knowledge* in 'How Caravaggio saw in the dark', *London: Saturday Telegraph*, 13th July, 2010.

Caravaggio is able to convey the ambiguity of the sensual and the spiritual through his lighting techniques, but which interests him more is worth pondering.

The dramatic energy of the composition and the way in which the perspective shatters the picture plane is inspirational: the strong diagonals, the contour created by Christ's upper arm and his hand are a viewer's magnet. Christ's forearm and the shadow on his left hand, the parting in his hairline, the bridge of his nose, the edge of the table and the direction of light which all lead to the fruit basket compete with Christ for our attention. We also notice that the elbow of the disciple's torn sleeve is at such an angle as if to show that the canvas has also been torn in his gesture. Caravaggio often used a variety of perspectival devices to increase the viewers' and/or worshippers' participation in the mystery of his pictures. Martin Gayford again quotes Hockney as defending Caravaggio's use of optical instruments such as mirrors and the camera obscura (cf. Vermeer) to create his semi-photographic compositions.⁴³ If this is true it does not detract from his extraordinary realism, rather it enhances it because Caravaggio recognises it as a vehicle for strengthening the scene's dramatic and emotional content. According to John Drury, Caravaggio's "central revelation is both material and visual, even ocular."⁴⁴

Caravaggio's bread is already broken whereas Luke 24:30-31 recounts that Jesus "took the bread and said the blessing; then he broke it and handed it to them." This broken bread is known as *fractio panis*.⁴⁵ Named after an early Roman fresco portraying the Eucharist in Rome it defines the precise moment of the breaking of the bread in the Roman Catholic Mass.⁴⁶ Caravaggio's Jesus is focused more on the blessing as if to prolong the sublime gesture and to raise the symbolism to a heightened level of dramatic and divine intervention. The focus is on the action of blessing and not breaking bread. The disciples are understandably overcome with shock which Caravaggio emphasised by having one disciple grasping the sides of his savonarola chair (previously used in his *Calling of St Matthew*) while the other counterbalances this with outstretched arms bridging darkness and light, our world and the picture's. This disciple's arms have been thought to symbolise further, the shape of the cross, therefore, he could be Peter. If the cross symbol was consciously included, then Caravaggio was reminding his viewers of the basic Christian tenet that the 'sacramental' meal occurs precisely because of Christ's crucifixion. Caravaggio is also showing the spectator that time is inclusive: the breaking of the bread, its blessing, the disciples' reaction and the cross symbol are happening simultaneously on the canvas. The disciples are the conductors of this revelation.

Headlight: Jesus in another form

In Caravaggio's first painting Christ is shown young and beardless. Is this intentional? All previous paintings of the *Supper at Emmaus*, mostly painted in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries portray Christ with a beard, it is in the early Christian mosaics, relief sculpture and catacomb paintings that Christ is clean shaven and young, and this continues in various mediaeval manuscripts. As it is unlikely that Caravaggio would have known about or had access to these sources why did he categorically break with tradition? Charles Scribner argues that Caravaggio deliberately wanted to convey the paradox of the event – that it was both rational and supernatural. To achieve this he first decided to reveal Christ with unconventional features, thus drawing on the plain fact of the text that the disciples still did

⁴³ Gayford, Martin, quoting from David Hockney's *Secret Knowledge* in 'How Caravaggio saw in the dark', *London: Saturday Telegraph*, 13th July, 2010.

⁴⁴ Drury, John, *Painting the Word: Christian Pictures and their Meanings*, Yale University Press and The National Gallery London, 2002, p.121.

⁴⁵ The phrase recurs in early Christian literature; the "blessing and breaking" of bread is mentioned in all four accounts of the Last Supper, in Acts, 2:7, 27:35 and 1 Corinthians 10:16.

⁴⁶ The fresco is in the Greek Chapel in the catacomb of Priscilla on the Via Salaria Nova in Rome. It depicts seven persons at a table, six men and a woman and dates from the first half of the second century. The painting is found immediately over the altar upon which the sacrament of the Eucharist was performed.

not know who he was. "By revealing an unexpected Christ - one who does not look like himself – Caravaggio was the first painter to justify the disciples' lack of recognition along the journey to Emmaus."⁴⁷ As Luke never explains why the disciples failed to know Christ until the blessing – was it for dramatic effect and suspense and/or to illustrate their slowness to believe? Caravaggio therefore, combined that observation with the minimal text in Mark's Gospel where Mark states that Christ appeared to the disciples "in another form".⁴⁸ The problem of the two texts was united in the one painting and aesthetically, it also heightens the difference between the youthfulness of Christ and the older, wrinkled faces of the disciples and innkeeper. This therefore becomes an example of breathtaking perception of the central mystery: that the symbol and what it reveals are entwined in the same person and his actions.

Caravaggio was already supported in this idea by the early Christian theologian, Origen (AD 185-254) who in his *De principiis* explains how Christ was manifested in different forms for different purposes.⁴⁹ At a time when the Catholic Church was confronting the Protestant implications of a divided church in Europe, it sought to recover its Christian heritage to support its historical claims to truth. Thus by Caravaggio renewing an old idea (consciously or not, as he may not have read Origen), rather than being a 'revolutionary', he was helping to justify the central and long-standing ecclesiastical power of the Catholic Church. Catholic doctrine maintains that salvation is inseparable from Christ's resurrection and his Second Coming, thus it is no accident, according to Scribner, that we also discover in the Sistine Chapel, that Michelangelo had painted Christ at the end of time as a young, beardless deity. Unsurprisingly, Michelangelo was criticised by his contemporaries, notably Giglio da Fabriano for his lack of decorum.⁵⁰ For Caravaggio, Christ's appearance to the disciples is a proleptic response to his Second Coming, that is, an anachronistic representation of something as existing before its proper or historical time. Within a few minutes the risen Christ will vanish from the table but the apparition will live on in their hearts and minds. Caravaggio shows this supernatural revelation because as Graham-Dixon states, his images "freeze time but also seem to hover on the brink of their own disappearance."⁵¹

Returning to the scene: the second Supper

Caravaggio wanted to elevate the painting by creating a visual form that would allow the viewer to see it as a moment of revelation and grace rather than simply a painting of a 'sacramental' meal. The Roman Catholic definition of a sacrament as an outward sign of an inward grace perfectly conveys this meaning in both Caravaggio's *Suppers at Emmaus*. However, it would be presumptuous to assert that Caravaggio, while painting for a Catholic patron, was actually portraying the Eucharist as defined by the Catholic doctrine of *transubstantiation* rather than his striving to depict Christ resurrected and physically present at a human meal made miraculous.⁵² What is important, however, is that Caravaggio was able to express both the symbol and its revelation in a didactic and catechetical manner so that the viewer is invited to join in and accept Christ alongside the disciples. Since it is only in the Eucharist that Christ reveals himself both physically and spiritually, in this way the

⁴⁷ Scribner III, Charles - "In Alia Effigie: Caravaggio's London Supper at Emmaus", *The Art Bulletin*, 59:3 (Sept.,1977), pp. 375-82.

⁴⁸ Mark 16:12.

⁴⁹ Origen, *The Trinity, Jesus Christ: the Shape of his Body*: "Not only did He possess two forms, one in which He was seen by all, another into which He was transformed before His disciples on the mountain but that He used to appear to every individual in a form corresponding to his worth. The Word appears in different forms in accordance with each man's capacity."

⁵⁰ Cf. Vasari, G - *la vita di Michelangelo nelle redazioni del 1550 e del 1568*, curatae commentate da Paola Barocchi, Milan-Naples, 1962, iii, 1317-19 (no. 569).

⁵¹ Graham-Dixon, A, *Caravaggio: A Life Sacred and Profane*, London: Allen Lane, 2010, p.3.

⁵² *The Council of Trent* states that "... by the consecration of the bread and wine there takes place a change of the whole substance of the bread into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of his blood. This change the holy Catholic Church has ... called transubstantiation." 1551: *DS 1642* and *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1994, p. 310.

painting becomes timeless. Any viewer and/or believer in any age is welcome to the table of Christ. Thus Caravaggio offers the gift of salvation.

Caravaggio's second version of the *Supper at Emmaus* (Pinacoteca Brera, Milan) was painted in 1606 after five years of travelling and his inevitable flight from Rome to Naples since murdering his comrade Ranuccio Tomassoni. Compared with the first Emmaus painting, Caravaggio's technique and approach, as well as his representation of light and colour are pared right down. This is partly because of his patron, Cardinal Mattei's ascetic influence, and because of the inevitable murder, thought by Graham-Dixon to be triggered partially by Caravaggio's painting of one of Tomassoni's prostitutes, Fillide Melandroni. These experiences as well as a precarious existence and the rise of lesser painters now receiving more of the official commissions, cast a profound shadow over Caravaggio's life; as well as his having to paint in unstable times without a studio or sufficient materials.

Therefore, in the second version, we see that the hues are more muted, his palette is restricted to brown, green, yellow and white, and the paint is applied more thinly. We observe an increasing awareness of the precariousness of Caravaggio's fugitive existence, a clinging onto life through a more tempered, sensitive style because the disciples (while the same size as the earlier painting) are notably less surprised. The composition is more intimate and Jesus' hand is raised much lower, his blessing is more enclosed. Like the artist, Jesus is older and burdened with suffering. The light in the room is reduced alongside Caravaggio's own life. The tones are softer, creating a greater gentleness overall. It is, as Graham-Dixon argues, a confessional painting as well as a revelation since "how much harder Caravaggio now finds it to see the possibility of salvation."⁵³ Caravaggio never allowed his models to pose in broad daylight, there are no landscapes, instead, he chose small rooms to create intimacy rather than remoteness. The still life is reduced to remnants of lamb - symbolic of Christ as the sacrificial lamb, bread and salad leaves; the emphasis is on the humble inn rather than the symbols of abundance and resurrection. Caravaggio included a new character, a woman who was probably the innkeeper's wife and who looks similar to the old woman in his *Madonna of the Palafreni*. The revelation itself is more subtle so that in discarding much of the detail of the first version, the viewer can focus more fully on the blessing gesture rather than the symbolic journey on and around the table.

Caravaggio's two versions are given some decorative furnishings. Apart from the obvious compositional parallels between the pictures, there are extraordinary similarities in the way in which the tables are appointed, both covered with late sixteenth century Anatolian carpets and both presenting majolica tableware. It might be considered ironic for Muslim carpets to decorate what became a Christian meal. For Caravaggio, setting the scene in roughly the correct geographical area possibly outweighed the Christian associations. Both paintings were produced for private patrons and this may have affected the choice of accessories within the commissions. Along with Jesus' traditional costume and the more modern clothing of his disciples, we may view this as unnatural and unhistorical.

Luke and Caravaggio took the written word and created a visual language that would symbolise the central Christian doctrine of the resurrection and thus reveal the divine. Roger Sharrock claims that "Art, as well as being imitation and illumination, is prophecy, and lures the reader or spectator along paths which, before the reception of the work, were but dimly perceived."⁵⁴ If we now turn to Graham Greene we see that he also manipulated the word to reveal a similar religious truth, yet his fiction rarely uses colour and is astonishingly non-visual for someone whose travels were so exotic. Yet all three men utilised the human and

⁵³ Graham-Dixon, A, *Caravaggio: A Life Sacred and Profane*, London: Allen Lane, 2010, p.332.

⁵⁴ Sharrock, Roger, *Saints, Sinners and Comedians: The Novels of Graham Greene*, Burns & Oates/University of Notre Dame, 1984, p.22.

the divine to convey their meanings to an extraordinary degree so that while their context and media are different, their effects were often the same spiritually.

Graham Greene: Spanish routes

Graham Greene's novel *Monsignor Quixote* was published in 1982. Like Luke, Greene is skilled in adapting various literary devices and motifs in all his novels, thus *Monsignor Quixote* is partly a homage to the classic, picaresque Spanish novel *Don Quixote* by Miguel de Cervantes and also draws on the Italian tradition of *Don Camillo*. Despite being in different centuries and countries, Graham-Dixon claims that the escapades of Don Quixote "are... close parodies of the scrapes and adventures in which Caravaggio" was "embroiled."⁵⁵ Compared with Greene's major novels such as *Brighton Rock*, *The Power and the Glory*, *The Heart of the Matter* and *The End of the Affair*, *Monsignor Quixote* is more gentle yet it offers profound reflection concerning life after a dictatorship, Communism, and the Catholic faith expressed in a journey of two friends.

In this novel, Father Quixote is a humble parish priest in El Toboso in Spain's La Mancha region, and he innocently believes he is a descendant of Cervantes' character of the same name, even if Don Quixote was a fictitious character. He restarts a mysterious Italian bishop's car and offers him an unexpected horse-meat lunch, which subsequently results in his promotion to *monsignor* by the Pope. Much to the surprise and annoyance of his own bishop who is highly derogatory of Quixote's name and abilities, Father Quixote is encouraged to take a holiday while a new position is being sought for his future ministry. The Italian Bishop of Motopo has no problem with Quixote's name: "perhaps we are all fictions, father, in the mind of God."⁵⁶ Meanwhile, Quixote's friend, the Communist and atheist ex-Mayor nicknamed "Sancho" after Don Quixote's companion Sancho Panza, needs to reflect on his life after losing the local elections. Thus together they embark upon a trip through Spain with Quixote's old Seat 600 appropriately called "Rocinante."⁵⁷

As events unfold, Quixote and Sancho have both hilarious and deeply moving adventures along *Don Quixote's* ancestral lines through post-Franco Spain. They encounter the contemporary equivalents of the windmills, are confronted with a thief, a brothel⁵⁸, a pornographic cinema, church and civil authorities. Like two Greek philosophers, they converse throughout, although this is on equal terms. They are without a Socrates or Plato to tell them who is always and obviously right. Quixote and Sancho question each other's views and convictions, they confide personal experiences, thoughts and fears. Like the Emmaus disciples they bond over doubt. The journey along central and north-western Spain is the Priest and the ex-Mayor's travelling symposium. Their halts along the road are like the travel references throughout Luke's Gospel, they offer a ritual of repetition which enhances the final symbolic ritual and revelation at the end of both stories.

Quixote and Sancho walk little but discuss constantly when driving and feasting on Manchego cheese and wine by the road; and each day they share their souls. Both hold different positions on politics and religion: Father Quixote is (or had been) a supporter of Franco and is a Catholic, Sancho is a Communist and an atheist. Two different creeds but one friendship, two different faiths but united in self-doubt. Their journey is a summary of the many trips Greene and his close friend, Father Leopoldo Durán made across Spain. In their numerous conversations concerning Catholicism and Communism, Father Quixote and Sancho are brought closer, and begin to appreciate each other's perspective as well as question their own beliefs. Although Quixote is briefly taken back to El Toboso, confronted

⁵⁵ Graham-Dixon, A, *Caravaggio: A Life Sacred and Profane*, London: Allen Lane, 2010, p.174.

⁵⁶ *Monsignor Quixote*, p.16

⁵⁷ Rocinante was Don Quixote's horse; the Spanish word alludes to a "reversal" making this appropriation for a car more comic.

⁵⁸ Here the innocent priest when faced with a bidet, refers back to Greene's earlier novel *A Burnt Out Case* p. 61.

by the bishop about his inexplicable actions and then suspended from the priesthood, he escapes a second time (as in Cervantes' novel) with the help of his loyal housekeeper Teresa, and sets out again with Sancho. In his last adventure, Quixote is severely wounded while attempting to save a statue of the Virgin Mary from hypocrites who are desecrating her by offering her up for money. Quixote and Sancho are brought to a Trappist monastery where, later that night, sleepwalking and in delirium, Quixote rises from his bed, goes to the church and celebrates a fragmentary old Tridentine Mass in his pyjamas. All the time he imagines he's holding the symbolic but non-existent bread and wine in his hands—and then, in a last effort, administers communion to the atheist Sancho before sinking dead into his friend's arms.

Roman roads: Greene's Catholicism

Graham Greene was born in Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire, England, in 1904. Greene's context was a Protestant England in which Roman Catholicism was subordinate. The Englishness of the English novel was precisely because it was Protestant unlike the Catholic *oeuvre* of the rest of Europe, but what this actually meant according to Marina Mackay "was the privileging of realism over romance...".⁵⁹ Knowledge was superior to mystery yet for Greene they were not diametrically opposed, they were close friends. In 1926, Greene converted to Catholicism as a *sine qua non* to marrying Vivien Dayrell-Browning, a convert herself, yet, like Caravaggio, his personal life caused widespread scandal as he embarked on numerous affairs throughout his life. Greene's conversion to Catholicism was not resolved simply by instruction and reception into the Church but required years of reflections. He was "much more interested in the theological arguments" than in finding certainty or authority within the Church.⁶⁰ Unlike the Emmaus disciples who recognized Christ in a single act of blessing, Greene spent his whole life impassioned and tortured by his relationship with his faith. Yet this was the "backbone of his best work" according to Ruth Franklin, writing in the *New Yorker*.⁶¹ Like Caravaggio, Greene's output was vast and *Monsignor Quixote*, among the last of his writings, contains at least 132 issues related to religion and theology. Theology comes into the text naturally and culminates with a Mass celebrated without the main elements and a reflection on the permanent nature of love.

It is unclear which Bible translations Greene read during his life: those that were accessible were the Westminster, Ronald Knox and Jerusalem Bible editions but the Second Vatican Council of 1962-65 profoundly influenced Greene's understanding of the Catholic Church's authority and its correlation to the Bible. Papal infallibility, contraception, the Immaculate Conception and the relationship between Catholicism and Communism were major preoccupations of Greene's, but his motivation lay in his personal journey of faith, hope, love, despair and doubt. These frequently appear in Greene's books. The visual values and virtues that confronted Caravaggio correspond to the moral values and virtues that confronted Greene. Both offered a redemptive and humanistic approach to grace that undermined their Church's tradition, its demand for obedience at both a moral and an aesthetic level, and its fear of Jansenism.⁶²

Monsignor Quixote is a synopsis of Greene's spirituality, and his disagreements with the Church's hierarchy. However, as the book has a dialectical form it allows Greene's thoughts to be exploratory, to question or suggest possibilities that might arrive at deeper truths,

⁵⁹ Mackay, Marina, 'Catholicism, Character and the Invention of the Liberal Novel Tradition', *Twentieth Century Literature*, 48:2 (Summer, 2002), 215-238.

⁶⁰ Cornwell, John, 'Why I am still a Catholic: Graham Greene on God, sex and death', An Interview, (1989) *Articles of Faith: the collected Tablet Journalism*, Oxford: Signal Books/ London: The Tablet, 2006, p.127.

⁶¹ Franklin, Ruth, *New Yorker*, "God in the details: Graham Green's religious realism," 18th October, 2004.

⁶² Jansenism was a theological movement arising from the aftermath of the Council of Trent. It emphasized original sin, depravity, the necessity of divine grace and predestination. Pope Innocent X condemned it as heresy in 1655.

rather than raise a counter-attack or deliver infallible answers. What is far more significant is the way in which Greene progressively introduces the theological virtues (faith, hope and love) in order to develop their effects by God's grace. Grace was an essential element in most of Greene's novels and in his own life. Norman Vance argues that:

"There is more corruption than grace in Greene's novels. His imaginative substance is moral confusion and sour hopelessness fitfully illuminated by glimpses of an ultimate radiance beyond comprehension or explanation... beyond hope lies the grace of God, though Greene does not always invoke the theological term."⁶³

Yet *Monsignor Quixote* does explore this grace fully. The theological virtues are the backbone of this story and through their evolution an atheist is transformed. This has parallels with St Augustine's admission in his *Confessions*, that: "your [God's] mercy is unknown to sinners such as I was then, though step by step, unwittingly, I was coming closer to it."⁶⁴ In the *Confessions*, a sinful man (Augustine), determined to be against the Christian God runs out of reasons not to believe in him, and through grace becomes one of the most influential saints and theologians of the early Christian Church.

Crossroads: faith and doubt

The theological virtues work their way along the road and into the adventures of Quixote and Sancho's journey via symbols and revelations, but each character has their own shadow that causes hesitation: faith has doubt, hope has despair. However, like the Emmaus disciples, by seeing and accepting God's grace, their light can defy their shadow. Faith and doubt were to Greene as light and dark were to Caravaggio. It is poignant that in his biography of Greene, Durán described the book as a "chiaroscuro ('tenebrista') painting. In the painting Graham will be the light and I the shadow."⁶⁵ Greene, alternatively described himself and Durán as Sancho and Quixote respectively.⁶⁶ Greene revels in the paradox, the question (sometimes more than the answer) and what a person did in a particular situation as well as how they arrived at it in the first place. Significantly enough, Greene chose Thomas as his Christian name when he was baptised and later explained that it was after Thomas Didymus, the Doubter, not after Thomas Aquinas. Yet unlike the two Emmaus disciples he never lost his faith completely, because his faith remained above his belief. In an interview with Alberto Huerta he says that "My faith remains in the background, but it remains."⁶⁷ It is difficult to know whether Caravaggio lost his faith but according to the biographer Francesco Susinno, Caravaggio did question his religion "for which he was accused of being a disbeliever..."⁶⁸ Whether this was reflected in his last paintings or not is hard to ascertain but his brushstrokes are noticeably weaker and more lifeless considering he was still relatively young.

Greene made a clear distinction between belief and faith. Belief is what we can accept as true based on available objective information and rational arguments, regardless of whether we can personally confirm it or not. Faith implies further effort: we have to accept something based on very slim evidence or even no objective evidence at all. The experimental method does not work: God and the Trinity cannot be proved scientifically. Father Quixote shows this almost comically in his attempt to explain the Trinity to Sancho using three wine bottles. The symbolism begins well with the metaphor of the wine, akin to the relationship between Father, Son and Holy Spirit, being of exactly the "Same substance. Same birth. They're

⁶³ Vance, Norman, 'Corruption and Grace in Graham Greene', *Theology*, (July 1983), 275-283.

⁶⁴ Saint Augustine, *Confessions*, London: Penguin Classics, 1987, p.107.

⁶⁵ Durán, Leopoldo, *Graham Greene: Friend and Brother*, London: HarperCollins, 1994, xiv.

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, p.75.

⁶⁷ Huerta, Alberto, *Graham Greene's Way, An Interview*, (1991), *Articles of Faith: the collected Tablet Journalism*, Oxford: Signal Books/ London: The Tablet, 2006, p.158.

⁶⁸ Susinno, Francesco, reprinted in Howard Hibbard, *Caravaggio*, London 1983, p. 385.

inseparable. Whoever partakes of one partakes of all three.”⁶⁹ Quixote then realises that one of the bottles is half the size of the others. He is visibly distraught at his ‘heresy’ and pleads Sancho not to think of the Holy Spirit as less than God or Jesus. Sancho politely affirms his new understanding but not his belief in the Trinity and Quixote is only mollified by drinking a new bottle of wine.⁷⁰ For Greene, what we believe in is beyond all reason, but God’s grace helps us to accept the unreasonable. In an interview with John Cornwell he declares “And I pray at night... that a miracle should be done and that I should believe.”⁷¹ Similarly, Father Quixote, when challenged by Sancho says “*I want to believe*”, very much in accordance with the Spanish writer and philosopher Miguel de Unamuno, who greatly influenced Greene, and who thought that “*to believe is to want to believe*.”⁷² Luke and Caravaggio’s two disciples similarly wanted to believe but only succeeded fully when they were given God’s tangible blessing.

In accepting this difference between faith and belief, between the known and the unknown, Greene’s and Unamuno’s thoughts are consistent with Thomas Aquinas. Faith compensates for the limitations of our senses, of our rational knowledge. Both Greene and Unamuno differentiated between the rational God from the God we can feel in our hearts, but our rational mind is reluctant to accept. For Greene the constant tension between knowledge and faith was clear and is well captured in Durán’s book when Greene says “the trouble is I don’t believe my unbelief.”⁷³ Both the atheist and the believer have faith: faith in Communism and faith in God. The intellectual process is identical: the acceptance of something or someone they do not fully know in this lifetime.

However, “...sharing a sense of doubt can bring men together perhaps even more than sharing a faith. The believer will fight another believer over a shade of difference: the doubter fights only with himself.”⁷⁴ Doubt is intrinsic to humans. “I hope -friend- that you sometimes doubt too. It’s human to doubt,” says Father Quixote to Sancho.⁷⁵ We cannot live without doubts: “Can a man live without faith?” Monsignor asks the Mayor: “We live by faith, not by sight.”⁷⁶ Later, the Mayor remembers a reading in a lecture by one of his professors when he studied at the University of Salamanca which was a reference to Unamuno: “There is a muffled voice, a voice of uncertainty which whispers in the ears of the believer who knows? Without this uncertainty how could we live?”⁷⁷

Doubt was very important to Greene. In a way, doubt could be the beginning of faith as it could be for Tennyson in his *In Memoriam* where he utters:

There lives more faith in honest doubt,
Believe me, than in half the creeds.⁷⁸

Greene tried to defend hope in all of life’s circumstances because for him, despair was the worst sin of all. Both Father Quixote and Sancho doubt but they also have hope, and, as with their faith, their hope is different. Quixote hopes that, one day, Sancho will convert to Catholicism, and Sancho hopes that Quixote will convert to Marx. When one of their lunches

⁶⁹ *Monsignor Quixote*, pp. 43-46.

⁷⁰ Greene later nods at his novel *The Power and the Glory* with Fr Quixote trying not to drink too much because he will be known as “a whisky priest”. *Monsignor Quixote*, p. 82.

⁷¹ Cornwell, John, Why I am still a Catholic: Graham Greene on God, sex and death”, An Interview, (1989) *Articles of Faith: the collected Tablet Journalism*, Oxford: Signal Books/ London: The Tablet, 2006, p.126.

⁷² Unamuno, Miguel de, *Tragic Sense of Life*, London: Dover Publications, 1954.

⁷³ Durán, Leopoldo, *Graham Greene: Friend and Brother*, London: HarperCollins, 1994, p.97.

⁷⁴ *Monsignor Quixote*, p.51.

⁷⁵ *Ibid*, p.50.

⁷⁶ 2 Corinthians 5:7

⁷⁷ *Monsignor Quixote*, p.104.

⁷⁸ Tennyson, Lord Alfred, *In Memoriam A.H.H.* 96, ll. 11-12.

occurs under a wall painted with a hammer and sickle, Quixote says he would prefer to eat under the cross, while Sancho thinks that their cheese won't be affected by either symbol because "they were both protests against injustice." Quixote replies "One created tyranny, the other charity."⁷⁹ We could say with comic irony that unlike Quixote and Sancho, Quixote's Bishop has despair because he cannot comprehend how Quixote has been made a Monsignor by the Papal authorities under which they both serve. Friendship and hospitality have the power to unite humanity and this is revealed through God's grace. Like Charles Péguy, the French Catholic writer, Greene also believed that saints and sinners are two sides of the same coin, the sinner is a flawed instrument of divine grace.

Father Quixote and Sancho's hope moves beyond immediate personal need: the hope for Catholicism leading people to a fulfilling future and the advent of Communism to help workers of all nations, are both discussed. Neither seems to have arrived, yet, and both Quixote and Sancho sometimes despair. Quixote even wrestles with the lack of both doubt and faith in a terrible dream in which Christ is saved from the cross but also the resurrection. Quixote watches Christ triumphant while the soldiers, disciples and Mary are overjoyed as "there was no ambiguity, no room for doubt and no room for faith at all."⁸⁰ Greene paid much attention to the significance of dreams and regularly analysed his own dreams but the point of this device here, according to C. S. Gurrey, is to show the essential uncertainty of faith, its instability and therefore, to question its purpose while simultaneously asking - to what extent does Jesus fulfill certain prophecies?⁸¹ Luke's two disciples had hoped that Jesus "was the one to set Israel free."⁸² Luke and Caravaggio similarly perceiving their audiences to be susceptible to competing religious beliefs, wanted to ensure that the two disciples' despair and lack of faith could be transformed when presented with the literal presence of Jesus Christ.

Frontiers: choosing hope

Father Quixote and Sancho's hope is revived when they drink another glass, for "...vodka inspires me with hope"⁸³ says Quixote. It is interesting to note that both their faith and their hope arise from the books they read. Sancho reads Marx and Lenin and Quixote reads the Bible, moral theology, St John of the Cross, St Teresa of Avila, and St Francis of Sales. "They are all the faith I have and all the hope" Quixote tells Sancho when he mocks his books in a similar vein as Cervantes' *Don Quixote* is ridiculed for his obsession with books about chivalry.⁸⁴ There are a number of other modern parallels with the adventures in the original *Don Quixote*. When, for instance, the two men run into trouble with the Guardia Civil, the mayor compares the state police to the windmills against which the knight tilted; after all, the police "revolve with every wind"⁸⁵, gladly serving whoever is in power, whether it is Franco or the present government or even the Communists, should they ever gain control. Similarly, when Father Quixote impulsively allows an armed robber to escape the Guardia, the reader is referred to the Don's freeing of the galley slaves. While Sancho's hope is merely materialist, Quixote hopes for universal salvation, sustained by his faith in Christ's death and resurrection, something that Sancho finds completely absurd. But "It's an absurd world or we wouldn't be here together", says Father Quixote. His faith goes beyond rationality and even if something looks absurd, he still has some faith - with or without a glass of wine in his hand.

⁷⁹ *Monsignor Quixote*, p.38.

⁸⁰ *Monsignor Quixote*, p.68-9.

⁸¹ Gurrey, C.S., Paradox, Will and Religious Belief, *Philosophy*, vol. 66, No. 258 (October1991) 503-511.

⁸² Luke 24:21

⁸³ *Monsignor Quixote*, p.25.

⁸⁴ *Monsignor Quixote*, p.77.

⁸⁵ *Monsignor Quixote*, p.95.

Quixote and Sancho left El Toboso for Madrid; then they journeyed to Segovia, Arévalo and Salamanca. From Salamanca they went to Valladolid and León, they saw the Valley of the Fallen, Franco's shrine to the dead of the Civil War and the humble tomb of Unamuno. Durán writes that "*Monsignor Quixote* was born in the cemetery at Salamanca... Miguel de Unamuno's tomb would become almost a place of pilgrimage for us... As he (Greene) stood there in front of the numbered box – 'one cannot call it a tomb' the idea for his novel entered his mind."⁸⁶ Thus again, the physical journey is as important as the mental journey that draws Quixote and Sancho together, and this is captured in the film adaptation of *Monsignor Quixote* which begins with a journey so that the viewer is already travelling with the characters. While on route, news of their strange adventures and misinterpretations of how they helped a bank robber escape arrived to Quixote's bishop, who had him swiftly returned to El Toboso. Perhaps this is a reference to the dying thief on the cross in the Synoptic Gospels.⁸⁷ At this moment, Sancho was faced with the dilemma to choose between crossing the frontier and seek refuge with Communist friends in Portugal, or to go back to El Toboso and rescue his friend. And he could not cross the frontier. Here Sancho has his own startling revelation: his loyalty and love for his friend was greater than his desire for safety.⁸⁸ There always is a frontier in Greene's stories that cannot be crossed, a reminder of the green-baize door that separated Greene's school and its unfriendly atmosphere from the safety of his parental home. The image of a frontier is central to Greene's novels – frontiers between heaven and hell, salvation and damnation, political and spiritual frontiers unite as journeys towards freedom and enlightenment.

Love is the way: revelation

Sancho manages to rescue Quixote who has challenged a desecration of the Virgin Mary's statue. With Quixote now a martyr and fulfilling his priestly vocation, they escape again through secondary roads to end their journey at the Monastery of Osera, in Galicia, north-west of Spain. Quixote is seriously injured because, being followed by the civil guards, they had a car accident on arrival at the monastery and he is taken to one of the monastic cells for the night. He is in a state of semi-consciousness. When he says "I don't offer you a governorship, Sancho, I offer you a kingdom," paraphrasing a passage from *Don Quixote*, and continues "Come with me, and you will find the kingdom," Sancho answers "I will never leave you, father. We have been on the road together too long for that," and Quixote replied "By this hopping you can recognize love."⁸⁹ When Quixote is delirious perhaps his subconscious reveals the truth more than when he is awake, rather as King Lear was more lucid when he descended into 'madness'. A few moments later, he enters the church sleepwalking, followed by Sancho, a monk and a professor who is doing research at the monastery. Fr Quixote begins saying Mass recited in Latin, (as Greene preferred), and consecrates with no bread or wine. At the time of communion, he takes the communion first, with no Host or wine, and then tells Sancho "Compañero ... you must kneel, compañero" and Sancho receives the invisible Host from Monsignor's fingers. Sancho finally catches him as he falls down dead. It is always the interior for Greene, always as Tillich defines it, as that which points beyond its self, to reveal a further truth. This technique of Greene's is similar to Caravaggio's skill in depicting the ambiguity of presentation and revelation, illusion and reality.

Greene loved the Spanish word *compañero*, which from the Latin 'cum' and 'panis' means *companion*, literally *to break bread with* someone. Father Quixote thought that his friend Sancho was someone with whom he could share the Bread, when he recognized that there was love in him. When he realised that Sancho would not abandon him, following the natural

⁸⁶ Durán, Leopoldo, *Graham Greene: Friend and Brother*, London: HarperCollins, 1994, 212.

⁸⁷ Matthew 27: 38; Mark 15:27; Luke 23: 39-43.

⁸⁸ Similarly, the whisky priest in Greene's *The Power and the Glory* could not cross the frontier of the 'Godless state' into safety because of his love for a wounded criminal.

⁸⁹ *Monsignor Quixote*, p. 238.

instinct to seek protection, then he offered him to take communion, to share the invisible consecrated bread. Purely by his love, Sancho was allowed to communicate. After this Mass, Greene, now incarnated in Father Leopoldo (an additional homage to Father Leopoldo Durán), wrote profoundly theological words in the reflection between the professor and Father Leopoldo, with the latter arguing that there was a proper Mass in spite of there being no elements to consecrate because "... Monsignor Quixote quite obviously believed in the presence of the bread and wine".⁹⁰ At the same time and without realising it, Sancho has the most astonishing revelation, just as did the Emmaus disciples. Sancho learnt the lesson from the scriptures that love is eternal and it is more than sharing an identical faith.⁹¹ Sancho reflects that love persists after hate and death, confirming Quixote's judgment about his friend's good character and his capacity to receive communion.⁹² Sancho loved Quixote and this love accompanies him to Portugal, now that he has fulfilled his mission of helping his friend until death. This revelatory journey through the genesis and nature of love is what Plato's Symposium discussed two centuries earlier. This love, Sancho observes, "seemed now to live and grow in spite of the final separation and the final silence...." ⁹³

Departure lounge: Greene's death

Greene died of leukemia in 1991 in Vevey, Switzerland. There are extraordinary coincidences in the deaths of Father Quixote and of Greene as their roles appear to have reversed. Quixote, watched by his attentive friend Sancho during his last Mass, fell into Sancho's waiting arms. Greene died as he had long wished: holding his friend, Father Durán's hand. Quixote's death appeared as a transferred premonition.

Greene maintained that he always aimed to show the mercy of God in his novels and for him, that was usually through the vehicle of 'sinful' characters, because what is there to tell or show in the virtuous? As a reporter and journalist he wrote what he saw. Those who need mercy are on a journey unlike "the piety of the educated, the established... who have ceased to look for Him (God) because they consider they have found Him."⁹⁴ However, by the time Greene had written *Monsignor Quixote*, the main characters are not as overtly 'sinful' in their thoughts and actions compared with those in his other novels; what Greene reveals instead, is a style pared right down to the essentials. Now, purged of self-consciousness, Greene lays bare the growing friendship of his characters so that in the end all that is left is love, the highest of the virtues. Sharrock states that "... in fiction it is the accent not the doctrine that matters."⁹⁵ In Scripture it is both but in art it can be either.

Caravaggio similarly depicted the real world as accurately as he saw it, he was a visual reporter and presenter. By removing the prettiness and vanity in his colours, especially in the second of his Emmaus paintings, Caravaggio offered a more realistic and truthful representation of humanity and perhaps that of divinity. Greene defended this in the written word - for him to describe a situation in all its ugliness was more truthful than to describe it with a false notion that the types of words are more important than what they convey. Greene and Caravaggio converge in this journey towards truth. Luke, Caravaggio and Greene share a simple narrative that is self-controlled and in which the most important detail is presented without any excess. They each offer the journey metaphor to map out their wider meanings through the use of symbolism and revelation. And through these symbols and what they reveal transformation is created. The Emmaus disciples, Quixote and Sancho are all changed profoundly. Just as the disciples exclaimed "Did not our hearts burn within

⁹⁰ *Monsignor Quixote*, p.245.

⁹¹ This echoes "If I have faith to move mountains but am without love then I am nothing at all."

1 Corinthians 13:2.

⁹² This is reminiscent of "Love is stronger than death." Song of Songs 8:6-7.

⁹³ *Monsignor Quixote*, p.248.

⁹⁴ Greene, Graham, *Ways of Escape*, London: Vintage, 1999, p.257.

⁹⁵ Sharrock, Roger, *Saints, Sinners and Comedians: The Novels of Graham Greene*, Burns & Oates/University of Notre Dame, 1984, pp.13-14.

us as he talked to us on the road and explained the scriptures to us?⁹⁶ So also in Greene's autobiography *Ways of Escape*, he encapsulates Unamuno's complementary thought that "Those who believe that they believe in God, but without passion in their hearts... without doubt, without an element of despair even in consolation, believe only in the God idea, not in God himself."⁹⁷

Only in these encounters, as Luke hints, there is more, the Second Coming is waiting in the wings. Caravaggio's life dramatically changed and thus his second painting reveals what experience now shows him. This in turn bridges the gap between the real and the symbolic, the journey and the revelation, and points to what is still to come. All three challenged the status quo – Luke confronted the Pharisees and 'unbelievers', Caravaggio and Greene questioned the Catholic Church and were heavily involved in a variety of political disputes (Greene's last major dispute was with the French Mafia in Antibes). What unites our protagonists is their ability to live and present the journey metaphor using doubt as a motivating force, but each time doubt is transcended by grace. Sharrock states:

"... Monsignor Quixote is the story of a journey, but the journey becomes the metaphor for the process of illumination for those embarked on it and for the reader...., for the unpredictable, the random and the absurd all have their place on the open road and can function to rush an individual into uncharted territory beyond reason where only supernatural belief of some kind can bring experience back into focus."

This is the Emmaus story, it is Caravaggio's and Greene's as well. Greene strongly felt the loss of what he called a religious sensibility in the modern novel, the notion that powers of good and evil do exist and are at war in the world and in the human soul. Caravaggio also felt this in his art and personal life. Both restored a measure of that lost sensibility through characters whose struggle between flesh and spirit is also their door to salvation. As Norman Vance states: "But beyond the limits, beyond the corruption of the world, there is room and opportunity for the grace of God."⁹⁸

Destiny and grace: arrival

Throughout the journey metaphor we might have concluded that "to travel hopefully is a better thing than to arrive..." as we have seen that what is revealed is not automatically discovered, the objective revelation in both symbolism and in narrative is never complete in its self.⁹⁹ Yet the journey *is* the preparation for what happens next. Luke, the Emmaus disciples, Caravaggio, Greene, Quixote and Sancho all travelled literally and metaphorically. Like Quixote's faithful car Rocinante, their lives were fuelled with stops and starts, reversal and progression. For Luke, Caravaggio and Greene, travelling was their *raison d'être*, and with what better means than with God's grace. Each wanted the ordinary person to have access to God's grace, this was not the privilege of the few or the well-behaved! Greene's conclusion grows out of the novel's journey and like the *Road to Emmaus* and Caravaggio's paintings, the natural and the supernatural meet on arrival. In each case, there are small, incremental moments of revelation; and then comes the almighty revelation: so large that it cannot be ignored. The two disciples at last see Jesus as Luke tells us, Caravaggio paints this momentous realisation and Greene develops Sancho's understanding of a new love through communion with Father Quixote (an alter Christus). Through the use of symbols each character experiences a moment of grace. Grace naturally enters later in these revelations as it does in the Bible, but when it comes, the revelation is unmissable.

⁹⁶ Luke 24: 32

⁹⁷ Greene, Graham, *Ways of Escape*, London: Vintage, 1999, p. 257.

⁹⁸ Vance, Norman, 'Corruption and Grace in Graham Greene', *Theology*, (July 1983), 275-283.

⁹⁹ Robert Louis Stevenson, *Virginibus Puerisque*, 6: *El Dorado*, 1881, Oxford: Oxford Dictionary of Quotations, 1966.

Although the material Luke uses is from various written and oral sources, the ways in which he uses and manipulates his resources, is comparable to the ways in which Caravaggio distils from the gospel that which he wants to convey, as it is to Greene's selective use of Cervantes to shape his novel to his own purposes. They each shared an interest in the device of the point of view, the individual perspective, which instantly engages the spectator. According to Bergonzi, Greene proposes that "all literature draws on other literature either in imitating it, continuing it, or parodying it."¹⁰⁰ Each of the three men consciously offers his own version of a journey that will reveal and symbolise a belief in something that cannot be reduced to words or paint. This transcendence which lives on beyond the page and canvas, has yet to be fulfilled, but for Luke, Caravaggio and Greene, is nevertheless open to everyone who desires it. It is the kingdom of God.

Greene, when asked by John Cornwell, what his religion ultimately meant to him, replied "I think... it's a mystery... It is a mystery which can't be destroyed... even by the Church... a certain mystery."¹⁰¹ Using the exterior to encounter the interior and through symbol and revelation on the journey to God, Luke, Caravaggio and Greene emphasise that the turning point comes from within. Each tells of one experience and shows a further revelation. Caravaggio achieves Luke's biblical vision through paint, Greene through a priest sleep-walking, but all three are united in their capacity to illuminate the journey metaphor with dazzling grace.

¹⁰⁰ Bergonzi, Bernard: *A Study in Greene*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006, p.178.

¹⁰¹ Cornwell, John, *Why I am still a Catholic: Graham Greene on God, sex and death*, An Interview, *Articles of Faith: the collected Tablet journalism*, Oxford: Signal Books/ London: The Tablet, 2006.



Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, Supper at Emmaus, c.1600-01.
Oil and egg on canvas, 141 x 196cm. National Gallery, London.



Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, Supper at Emmaus c.1606,
Oil on canvas, 141 x 175cm. Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan.

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