JOYCE CARY: THE POLITICS OF LIFE

by

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ABSTRACT

Joyce Cary's political trilogy is the projection of his philosophy as expressed in *Power in Men* and *Art and Reality*. This trilogy attempts to demonstrate, through form and characterization, not only the confusion of political life, but also the political art of human relations and man's isolation in a free, creative world.

The trilogy delineates the problems which exist in a democratic and free world where men are imperfect and must struggle together to discover the truth.

Cary portrays three disparate visions of life and their inadequacies. Nina is the noncommittal woman who tries to reconcile the opposing forces of life; Chester is the politician who recognizes the need for manipulation in a democratic society, and Jim is the dogmatist who refuses to accept any degree of manipulation. These characters are interrelated through formal involvement in government but are also enmeshed in a love triangle, thus portraying the complex human relationships which make government necessary.

Each of the main characters writes an *apologia* justifying his actions. The trilogy itself demonstrates the dichotomy between truth and history, it further demonstrates that "No one could say that anyone was in the wrong. They just had different principles."
CHAPTER I

THE FREE, CREATIVE WORLD

When Joyce Cary published his first trilogy in the early 1940's, he had already written voluminously: poems, short stories, seven published novels—together with several novels and fragments of novels which were never published—and one of his four political treatises. But these self-contained works lacked the form he sought in order to convey his vision of life. Only a trilogy which employed three first-person narrators could embody that vision of a reality wherein multiplicity only serves to emphasize the essential aloneness of men. In his introduction to the first trilogy, Cary explains his purpose:

What I set out to do was show three people, living each in his own world by his own ideas, and relating his life and struggles, his triumphs and miseries in that world. They were to know each other and have some connection in the plot, but they would see completely different aspects of each other's character.

(FT, ix)

All parenthetical references to Cary's works are identified by the following abbreviations:

First Trilogy - FT
(New York, 1958)
Power in Men - PM
(Seattle, 1963)
Art and Reality: Ways of the Creative Process - AR
(Garden City, 1961—Anchor Edition)
He wanted to make these characters representative of all men in a world of free will:

Their situation, in short, was to be that of everyone who is doomed or blessed to be a free soul in the free world and solve his own problems as he goes through it. He must have power to think for himself and so he must be cut off from the mass instincts which join ants and bees in communities which have no need to think and no individual freedom. . . . Their reactions to life, their feelings about the world, their valuation of achievement would be completely beyond each other's understanding. (FT, ix-x)

Cary believed this is the situation we all endure: "We can sympathize with each other, but we can never completely understand each other. We are not only different in character and mind, we don't know how far the difference goes" (FT, x).

That is why each of his chief characters had to write in the first person, why each had to reveal his own world in his own style. Each was to reveal how he felt about the whole world (politics, art, religion, and family life); by this means Cary hoped to achieve "not only a richer sense of life in its actual complexity, but a three-dimensional depth of characterization" (FT, x).

Prisoner of Grace

Except the Lord

Not Honour More

Initial and terminal ellipses are omitted in quotations.
But Cary was dissatisfied with his first trilogy. His "failure," he thought, "was in the contrast or overlap of these worlds. They were not sufficiently interlocked to give the richness and depth of actuality that I had hoped for" (FT, xiv). Consequently, he planned and wrote his second trilogy, which he limited "to a single subject, politics, and tied the three chief characters closely together in the same complex development" (FT, xiv). Convinced that his political trilogy achieved the contrast and conflict that he wanted, he chose still another aspect of existence for a third one: religion. But time and health forced this to take the form of a single volume narrated in the third person.

It is not surprising that the subject of the second trilogy was politics. Sometimes calling himself a political scientist, Cary wrote four political treatises and several political essays, all imbued "with an idea of freedom that explains the injustice with which he was surrounded from childhood, and which is the normal and tragic lot of a man alive in any century."\(^2\) Cary did not limit his concept of politics to the formal definition of "government"; he asserts, in his introduction to Prisoner of Grace, "Politics is the art of human relations, an

\(^2\)Andrew Wright, Joyce Cary: A Preface to His Novels (New York, 1958), p. 35.
aspect of all life." In the political trilogy itself, the three chief characters are interrelated through formal involvement in government, but they are enmeshed as well in a love triangle, thus portraying the complex human relationships which make government necessary. It had been Cary's purpose to make the first trilogy encompass politics as well as art and religion. Whether or not he succeeded—in spite of his own view that he did not—is beyond the scope of this paper. At least Edward Wilcher in To Be A Pilgrim gives the purpose clear statement:

No one has written a real novel—giving the real feel of politics. The French try to be funny or clever and the English are too moral and abstract. You don't get the sense of real politics, of people digging frantically about to dodge some unknown noise overhead; of worms all driving down simultaneously because of some change in the weather, or rising gaily up again because some scientific gardener has spread the right poison mixture. You don't get the sense of limitation and confusion, of walking on a slack wire over an unseen gulf by a succession of lightning flashes. Then the ambitious side is always done badly. Plenty of men in politics have no political ambition; they want to defend something, to get some reform—it's as simple as that. But then they are simple people, too, and it is the simple men who complicate the situation. Yes, a real political novel would be worth doing. I should like to do for politics what Tolstoy has done for war—show what a muddle and confusion it is, and that it must always be a muddle and confusion where good men are wasted and destroyed simply by luck as by a chance bullet. (266-7)

What Cary "did for politics," or more particularly what he did "with" politics, how he did it and how well,

will be the subject of this paper. I shall attempt to show how, out of the "muddle and confusion," depending largely upon characterization, he created a fictional form projecting a vision of reality.

Mr. Cary's philosophy of life is well elaborated in *Power in Men* and *Art and Reality*. Both of these works embody his belief that man is a free, creative soul in a dynamic world in which absolute truth cannot be known and in which man must create out of the chaos of events his own vision of reality. Cary believed each man is a pilgrim "who is obliged to construct his own idea, his own map of things by which he is going to find his way, so far as he can, through life. He must decide what he wants and how he shall achieve himself" (FT, ix).

Like William Blake, Cary believed that "man either creates his own world within his imaginative being or allows the world to trap him within a prison of dead matter." In conjunction with this belief, it is important to realize that we "do not merely perceive but actively make our reality." It is also necessary to understand that Cary did not define "liberty" as the absence of restraint, but as a free creative power through which men

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5 Adams, p. xxii.
achieve self-realization. Liberty "is the power in man to do what he likes in so far as his power can reach" (PM, 7). The key of liberty is education (PM, 18), which is the controlled experience through which both the family and state are able to help the individual develop this power (PM, Ch. xii). Dogmatism and censorship must be excluded from society, for "progress is impossible without toleration" (PM, 195). And for the individual, "freedom of mind, the courage to know and to learn, is the only foundation of self-respect and responsibility" (PM, 209).

However, Cary believed that absolute truth cannot be known. He asserted that "because final truth is not known and can never be complete, all expressions of it have equal title to be heard" (PM, 198). And each man must create his own vision of truth. He is alone and dynamic in his own dynamic world, trying to create a satisfactory vision of reality, and only through the sharing of these visions can man hope to approach truth.

Each man's attempt to create his idea of things begins when he is a child. "He makes a world that is his work of art. He is not only expressed in it, he is committed to it, and its destruction is for him an irreparable loss, for with it he loses all the meaning, all the emotional satisfaction of his life, its whole realisation" (AR, 90). Thus, each man is passionately bound to the
world which he creates for himself. Cary recognized the destruction which threatens this world:

The reason why the young revolutionary becomes the old conservative is not some disease of age, but simply the fact that he has created in imagination that world, a free revolutionary world, which is being torn from him. We live in the creation and it presents us with two kinds of tragedy: that of the young genius who desires his own world, in politics or art, and is defeated by the academicism of those whose art and reputations are threatened by his innovations; and that of the conservative whose world is being destroyed. (AR, 91-2)

A recognition of these beliefs contributes to our appreciation of the absolute necessity of the first-person narrative technique of the trilogy, whose three moral viewpoints are juxtaposed against a fourth: that of the creative reader. It is significant that Cary intended this juxtaposition; he believed that "reading is a creative art, subject to the same rules, the same limitations as the imaginative process by which any observer of the arts turns a mere lump of stone, colours scattered on a canvas, noise, things completely meaningless in themselves, into a formal impression" (AR, 137). For the reader to ignore the creative responsibility placed upon him by Cary is to deny his obligation to create his own vision of reality. There can be no moral center in the trilogy, for, according to Cary, there is no moral center in the universe.

At least one critic, Robert Bloom, has disparaged Cary's trilogies for having no moral center: "By writing
with an unyielding relativistic, ultimately indeterminate, objectivity, by refusing to clarify Jim's inadequacy and sanction Chester's behavior unmistakably in the trilogy itself, Cary becomes guilty of a kind of novelistic dereliction of duty.\(^6\) But Mr. Bloom overlooks the function of the novel as Mr. Cary states it: "A novel should be an experience and convey an emotional truth rather than arguments,"\(^7\) and "the function of the novel is nothing less . . . than 'to make the world contemplate and understand itself, not only as rational being but as experience of value, as a complete thing.'"\(^8\) It is with such awareness that we must read the trilogy and assume our creative responsibility.


\(^7\)Bloom, p. 2.

\(^8\)Wright, p. 14.
CHAPTER II

PRISONER OF GRACE

In his introduction to *The African Witch*, Cary asserts that "The fundamental question, the root of all politics, all arts, is what do men live by?" This is a basic issue with Cary and informs his use of the three first-person narrators to convey their divergent views of life in a trilogy whose scope is the art of human relations.

Related not only through the formal involvement in government but also in a love triangle, each of the characters writes an *apologia* for his actions. Each of these apologies presents the vision of its narrator and a different dimension of the central figure: Chester Nimmo. The sympathetic ex-wife Nina, whose sole aim in life is happiness, presents Chester as a sincere man who is a victim of politics. Chester portrays himself as a man who is specially endowed by God to save Britain. Jim, a conservative who deprecates Chester's technique of manipulation, believes Chester to be a "wangler" and a "crook."

The trilogy spans the social, economic, and religious revolutions at the turn of the twentieth century, and Chester's career closely parallels the history of the
British Liberal Party between the 1890's and 1926. 9
Against the background of war (the Boer War, the Balkan
War, the First World War, and minor skirmishes), of labor
strikes, of scientific discoveries, of religious disap­
pointments, of new educational opportunities, and of the
extension of the voting franchise, Cary depicts the complex
politics of life, both public and private.

The three apologies are written between 1924, after
Chester has lost his last major political battle and has
moved in with Nina and Jim to write his memoirs, and 1926,
when Chester dies of a heart attack and Jim kills Nina.

Chester's apology recounts the experiences of his
youth, from the late 1850's to 1882. At the age of six, he
moves with his family to Shagbrook, a small country town
where his father is employed as a farm hand. Before he is
ten, his mother and baby sister die, and he and his two
sisters are forced to do odd jobs to help support the
family, while his brother Richard receives an education
which takes him to the university. Disillusioned by his
father's false prediction of the Second Coming, Chester
turns away from the Church to communism and begins to
participate in labor union activities. At the age of
twenty-one, Chester rejects violent strike tactics and is

9John Teeling, S.J., "Joyce Cary's Moral World," Modern Fiction Studies, IX (Autumn 1963), 281. Also see
Adams, p. xxxiv.
expelled by the Marxists. Returning to his home, he experiences a religious conversion. His account closes as he begins a fourteen-year preaching career.

Nina's apology is the story of an aristocratic girl who, at seventeen, becomes pregnant by her cousin Jim but marries Chester, who is then thirty-five. Her money and social connections enable him to begin a political career which lasts twenty-five years and which is termed by some a "disaster and a fraud." Her apology recounts Chester's career, the birth of a second child (which was also fathered by Jim), her attempts to leave Chester, the suicide of her son Tom, Chester's political defeat, her desertion of Chester and marriage to Jim, the birth of their second son, and Chester's attempts to renew his political career. Chester, asserting that she must help him write his memoirs, moves into her home where he sexually assaults her. The account concludes in 1924 as she tries to maintain harmony by sexually satisfying Chester without the knowledge of her husband.

Jim's apology begins in May 1926, with his attempt to murder Chester for his sexual interference with Nina. Chester is involved in political maneuvers to regain his position and during the famous strike of 1926, he enlists Jim's aid as a member of the special police. Jim resigns after disagreeing with his superiors. The account concludes
It is fundamental to the meaning of the trilogy that Nina's apology be first. She is the apex of the love triangle, but more significant than this, she represents the feminine point of view, which seeks to reconcile the issues of life. Morally noncommittal, her only desire is happiness, and it is through her relatively unbiased mind that the issues of the trilogy must be presented.

What was Nina Woodville like? Dreamer, orphan, wife, mother, adulteress, what was her vision of life? Perhaps she has written the most perceptive analysis of her own character: "In fact, I am a very ordinary kind of woman who simply wants to be happy without giving too much trouble and can, in fact, be happy quite easily" (PG, 69-70). "Women are different; they like things friendly and peaceful in the house" (PG, 64). Throughout the apology, her actions demonstrate that these analyses are correct. She also demonstrates that she is a woman who is incapable of managing her own affairs; she is the type of person who makes government necessary but who also reconciles opposing forces within that very government.

Her account begins with a description of her childhood. She was a girl of many moods, whose primary desire

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10 Wright, pp. 97-106.
was happiness. She enjoyed the greatest freedom in her aunt's large house, Palm Cottage, and was alone in a child's world except during the visits of her cousin Jim. Out of fear, Nina would climb into his bed for protection from the bats and ghosts which he brought to life in his teasing. Like brother and sister, they fought, but they found much security in their world together:

Jim, raging against me, would ask what was wrong with me—had I got the pip? Then he would be suddenly kind and say, "Cheer up, Rabbit; what's wrong?" and hug me and even (what was very rare) kiss me. Then he would rage again and tear at me as if he wanted to kill me (and I really think he did—I mean, it was the same rage that makes people do murder, and in the most cruel ways); but however he beat me and whatever he did, I would stay limp and not say a word. This, of course (because he realized that he could do nothing to me except batter me or kill me and that even then I should not care), made him still more furious, especially as he thought I was doing it on purpose; though in fact, I could not help it. All I could do was to try to ignore the whole terrible situation, and I was quite ready to be killed if only it would stop. And it would go on sometimes till I wished I were dead. But in the end Jim was sure to start abusing me again, and then sooner or later he would use some words like sulks (or spite or silly), which I could not bear, and I would find my voice and say that it was a lie. Then we would argue for a time and accuse each other; and Jim, wanting peace, would withdraw all his charges and I would be moved to remorse for defeating him, and the end of such quarrel was always that we swore eternal devotion to each other, agreed to be married as soon as possible, and often, in fact, fell asleep in each other's arms. (PG, 5)

Nina's sole motivation, even during those early days, was to have peace and harmony, while Jim tried to assert
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himself over her; and it was Aunt Latter who taught her to fulfill Jim's desires: "If he wants to do things to you, do them willingly" (PG, 2).

Living a romantic existence in the cushioned world of the lower aristocracy, Nina and Jim had little comprehension of the economic and social realities which plagued the poorer classes, that lower world exemplified by the village Chester lived in: "Shagbrook ... was a highly complex and delicate balance of personal relations between families and persons, who were obliged to live so close together that the whole of everyone's actions, and almost his thoughts, was open to inspection by all the rest" (ETL, 21). This sort of reason in politics, Nina learns slowly: "I was far too young and scatterbrained to manage our relations or even to know (as some children with brothers and sisters know quite young) that relations need managing" (PG, 2).

One result of this poor management is Nina's pregnancy at the age of seventeen. Practical Aunt Latter, concerned that her precious Jim should not resign his commission to marry Nina and concerned that Nina should not bring embarrassment to the family, arranges her marriage to Chester Nimmo. Not in the least attracted to him, Nina consents out of necessity and readiness to adapt, observing, "I think that I was probably capable of anything because I
had begun to suspect that I could reconcile myself to anything" (PG, 13).

Bound together in the most exacting relationship between individuals, Nina and Chester are worlds apart, but their marriage endures nearly thirty years and dramatizes the whole question of government. At the beginning of her marriage, Nina considered politics the "enemy of all peace and comfort" (PG, 11), and was "strongly against political entanglements" (PG, 36). Her apology reflects her gradual recognition of the need for politics in all human relations. She recognizes that people differ from one another and that only through compromise and manipulation can people exist together in harmony. She also observes that people change each other:

For (I thought) even if I had given him certain habits, it was only to make our marriage "work," to make the man happy and to stop him from killing me with his fearful domination. People who live together can't help changing each other—everybody in the world is "corrupting" everyone else. Even if one shut oneself up in a desert island, one bit of one's mind would "corrupt" another bit and try to "convert it" so that they would be able to work together. (PG, 279-80)

She discovers from her relationship with Chester that people become bound to each other through their association:

I found myself bound to him in a relation which was still "spiritual." For I knew a Chester unknown and unimagined by anyone else in the world, a man full of whims and nerves and feelings, who needed something that only I could give, not because I was a woman but because I was myself, because I knew him.
through and through, because our ways had grown
to fit each other, because he could trust me
(even though I was disloyal in not admiring all
his "political acts") to be sympathetic in a
thousand things which the most adoring stranger,
even Sally, would not perceive. (PG, 235-36)

Nina changes in many ways throughout the trilogy.
She reconciles herself to Chester's differences; she
accepts his religion, his prayers over their sexual union,
his political career; she accepts his suspicions of class
plots and his rejection of her as an unsympathetic person
because she is a member of the aristocracy:

"You don't know what class is," he said (and I
saw him shaking with excitement). "You don't
know how different you are. Why, you would
have more in common with a Negro--I mean a
Negro gentleman--than with Bill Code" (Bill was
our gardener for one day a week). "You think
me a cad" (and he made a face as if he were
going to burst into tears). "No, no, that's
not fair--not true" (he put out his hand and
touched me on the breast, as if to say, "Forgive
me"). "You feel me a cad." (PG, 20)

Nina even accepts Chester as a husband and helps him further
his career, when she loves another man; she edits his
speeches and campaigns for him, playing the role of the
politician's loyal wife. She is aware of these changes in
herself as "conversions": "Certainly I had had a whole
series of conversions that year, so that I was quite a
different kind of person" (PG, 30).

The most significant of these early conversions is
her "decision" to remain with Chester rather than to elope
with Jim after the Boer War. Her submission to Chester is
externalized not only by her return to him but more significantly by her participation in his campaign tricks:

And I discovered that it had been put about by Chester's agent that I was in a certain condition and that only my devotion to Chester and "the cause" had brought me, at the very grave danger of a miscarriage, to help him in his great fight. I was quite furious at this low electioneering trick. . . . And yet, only a day later (but it was the day of the poll), I found myself playing this very "low trick," and even more deceitfully, for I went out so pale (with a little powder added) and so dark under the eyes (with a little 'bronze') that Chester himself was alarmed for me.

(PC, 79-80)

This is only the first of many actions which Nina undertakes to aid Chester. She is determined to do everything in her power to avoid the criticism of being a bad wife: "The reason why I worked so hard at the letters and speeches was that I was afraid of being a very bad wife; or, to speak more truly, I was afraid of what would happen to me, if I came to hate Chester" (PG, 41). She recalls:

Everyday there were visits to pay, receptions, luncheons, official functions at which it was my duty to appear as the "charming and chic Mrs. Chester Nimmo," who had been judged a "considerable social asset to the new Government which lacks the big guns and big houses of the Tory hostesses." (PG, 127)

Throughout her marriage to Chester, Nina attempts to reconcile herself to events. It is only Nina the mother who asserts herself. She is deeply aware of the shaping influence Chester has upon her children, and it is to save her son's soul (PG, 128) that she battles with Chester to allow Tom to go away to school. Unfortunately, Tom does
not escape the influence early enough; after his suicide in 1923, Nina reflects:

I was fighting against a secret wonder if anything or anyone could have saved Tom. For he could never get away from Chester's influence. Somehow Chester had got right inside the boy from his very childhood, so that everything he thought and did was affected. I remembered that the only thing which made Tom really angry was the charge that he was imitating and making fun of Chester, at the very time when the imitation was such a masterpiece that all London (I mean, of course, night-club London) was talking about it, and when Tom knew that it was his masterpiece. The only chance for the boy (when he could have really respected himself) was in a political career, and indeed he had tried it after the war when Chester put him into the radical disarmament committee. But by that time, at least, he had come to hate politics. (PG, 266)

Nina is sensitive to the fact that she is bound to Chester and that she is a "prisoner of grace" in a double sense. Though she is unaware of the religious grace which binds her to Chester, she recognizes that she is bound to Chester through her fear that she will waste him as a man of God and through the obligation of his love for her (PG, 92). She realizes that her ties to him increased because they had changed each other during their marriage and because she had suffered as his wife. After she has married Jim and Chester sexually assaults her, she writes:

And I saw that it was no good pretending that I merely tolerated an old man's whims because he was pitiful--I did not love Chester and I had never loved him, but now, more than ever, at the

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end of his life, I was in his power. When he fixed his eyes on me (it was perhaps the only time in a week that he even thought of me as a human being) and I felt myself shrink, I knew that he held me still with a thousand ties that I should never break—ties from a marriage of nearly thirty years that was all the more "part of me" because I had suffered in it. (PG, 300)

Nina's uncomplicated desires for happiness lead her to numerous expedients designed to maintain an undisturbed status quo. Since she is incapable of accepting responsibility, reality at times becomes too much for her to bear. Like the child Nina who escaped into the world of fun and books, Nina the woman escapes reality by withdrawal. Early in her marriage she retreats to her rocking chair in her sitting room:

So in my sitting room I enjoyed many hours of peaceful bliss, for which I did truly thank Chester. I had learned already how much, in such a complicated and "political" (I was soon to understand what Balzac or perhaps it was what Vauvenargues meant by calling matrimony a political education) relationship as marriage, one should be grateful for simple thoughtfulness. (PG, 18)

After the Boer War, she escapes through sailing with Jim. When pressures become too great, she takes an overdose of sleeping pills, but succeeds only in antagonizing Chester. During the World War, she retreats to Palm Cottage. When she returns to Chester, her hatred of him moves her to attempt suicide for a second time; but her attempt is foiled and she reconciles herself to the situation:
Yet I did not feel humiliated—far from it, because it seemed now to me that I was doing the only reasonable thing. In fact, I suppose what had happened to me was simply another "conversion," like those which happened to me in the first years of my married life. Somehow or other I had discovered that what I had thought was an "impossible" situation was not only possible—it was quite absurdly simple. \( \text{PG, 230} \)

After Chester's defeat and Tom's suicide, however, Nina retreats from him for good. She marries Jim and they retire to the romantic haven of their youth, Palm Cottage. Not Honour More relates her continued attempts to repress reality. Unable to cope with the political and labor unrest, she attempts suicide and plans to retreat from European civilization to Africa with Jim.

Nina is unable to accept the involvement of adult life because it necessitates decisions and responsibility. Her fear of guilt and criticism motivate her actions. She is unable to leave Chester until he is politically defeated because she "knew with real 'certainty' that what was 'impossible' for me was taking the risk of his being wasted" \( \text{PG, 81} \).

Nina's account is filled with references to self-guilt; she notes her guilt toward Jim: "And since I was so much in the wrong and felt so guilty toward Jim . . . " \( \text{PG, 47} \); and she recalls her guilt toward Aunt Latter: "Which made me ashamed of not loving her more often, and determined to love her better in the future" \( \text{PG, 111} \). Typical
of her apology is the brief reference to guilt: "And then I was ashamed" (PG, 232). These are only a few of the explicit references; in addition to these are numerous implications of guilt. In the famous train station scene, Chester challenges Nina: "I really think, Nina, that our life together has had God's blessing upon it, and you might blame yourself if you broke it up" (PG, 65). During the same crisis, Aunt Latter reinforces Chester's implication: "Do you want him to lose the only chance he may ever get?" (PG, 77) Chester, Aunt Latter and even Jim manipulate Nina by suggesting the guilt which she is unable to bear.

However, the uncomplicated and noncommittal Nina is a good mirror of life. Precisely because she is morally ambivalent and incapable of blaming others, Nina can reflect the dilemmas of humans in a free, creative world. She is a sincere woman who wishes to understand and reconcile the divergent forces of life. When she becomes pregnant, she says: "Oh, Aunt, I'm not blaming anyone--I'm only explaining" (PG, 10). This is Nina's function: to explain, to reflect, and not to pronounce judgment. In Cary's world of multiplicity, her function is to demonstrate that "the truth is quite different from the facts and much more complicated" (PG, 70); that no one knows exactly what goes on in another person's mind (PG, 91); that "we can both be right" (PG, 120); that "no one could say that anyone was in the wrong. They just had different principles" (PG, 121); and
that "we were different and the difference was due to our education and the ideas we had been brought up with" (PG, 67). Nina recognizes that people are different and that within the context of their beliefs, all men can be right. This becomes apparent through her portrayal of Chester and Jim who are incompatible in most ways.

The question of politics and goodness is basic to Nina's justification of Chester's actions. Her attempt to demonstrate "the fearful condition of political life, the fundamental want of all security, the appalling risks of those who accept any large responsibility for their fellows" (ETL, 218-19) is her attempt to represent the dilemma of being a politician and retaining one's morality. She does not wish to demonstrate that Chester is a perfect man, but that he is human and fallible and that he behaved better than most men would have under the same circumstances. She observes:

And what I am trying to do in this book is not to make out that Chester was a saint (which would be stupid, after all the books and articles about him) but to show that he was, in spite of the books, a "good man"--I mean (and it is saying more than could be said of most people) as good as he could be in his special circumstances, and better than many were in much easier ones. I think politicians (I mean good honest ones who have good principles) can be more admirable than saints, because they do far more difficult work and are not allowed just to "save their souls." (PG, 159)

Nina is referring to the terrible "muddle and confusion" of political life. She realizes that a politician's actions
are open to criticism at any time and that unlike a saint, a political servant must satisfy all of the people all of the time—an obviously impossible task. Nina reflects about Chester's involvement in the Contract Case:

But owing to the very special conditions of politics, and the way people treat politicians, looking for a chance to find the smallest fault with them, and quite ready to invent faults that don't exist, it would have been quite misleading for Chester to have told the whole story of Banks Rams. It might have produced a great injustice, that is, the ruin of Chester's career. I know it is a very difficult question, what you can tell the public—it depends on the public mind at the time (and I often think, after my experience as a Minister's wife, that ten per cent of the public mind is just plainly and simply lunatic and, of course, being lunatic, makes nearly all the noise and seems to have all the influence); but anyone knows that the noblest men have thought it right to be careful of how much they tell. Nobody, for instance, would say to a country at a critical moment, "You have no army and no proper defenses," because it might stop it trying to defend itself. It's not good, in fact, pretending that there is any easy way to solve political questions, because they are all so mixed up with feelings and prejudices that people have to be persuaded and induced to do and think rightly (unless you just shoot them, which is impossible in a democracy). (PG, 158)

In this succinct statement, Nina poses the dilemma of all politics—elaborating upon the task she set for herself at the beginning of her account:

I am writing this book because I understand that "revelations" are soon to appear about that great man who was once my husband, attacking his character, and my own. And I am afraid that they will be believed simply because nowadays everyone believes the worst of a famous man. (PG, 1)
Nina does not believe that Chester is perfect, but she does believe that he is a sincere man, religiously devoted to his political career, and she corroborates Wilcher's assertion that politics "must always be a muddle and confusion where good men are wasted and destroyed by luck as by a chance bullet." Nina sees Chester destroyed by the chaos of political life; in 1918, after Chester is nearly broken by the pressures of the war, Nina observes:

Now in the same way the Chester I had known for more than twenty years grew suddenly dim and melted into the worried haggard fierce old man, who then stood before me like an apparition. And I almost cried out those words which I had repeated a thousand times in the last five years without knowing what they meant, "But he has changed."

I was looking at a different slide, a different man. And for the first time I understood what Sir Connell had been talking about when he had said that Chester was in a "special position," and that he "was giving his life to the country in a true sense."

... For I understood how much this new Chester had to be "handled" with sympathy and patience and (something that Sir Connell had tried to teach me) that he deserved it like any other victim of the war—he, too, was a wounded soldier. (PG, 231-32)

Nina sees her husband, who "you must never forget... was a truly religious man" (PG, 46), destroyed by the responsibility of government. Chester has changed, the whole man. He deserts old principles, including the austere religion of his youth; he betrays old friends; in sexual behavior he becomes fiercely demanding and at last violent. When he entered politics at thirty-five, he
believed he had a special mandate from God to save Britain. During the early years of his career, Chester refused to compromise his beliefs; he would not send his son Tom to a private school until he realized that Tom could earn his way on a scholarship; yet ten years later, during the World War, Chester renounces his pacifist policy in order to join the War Cabinet. When he first entered politics, he was true to his friends, yet during the war, he victimizes his life-long friend:

I saw that Chester had planned the attack on Goold by bringing up a scandal seventeen years old, about some tinned meat sent out to the troops which was said to have poisoned some of them—a terrible case, but so long ago; and Goold had not known that the tins were bad.

I was astonished, not so much that Chester should do a cruel thing as that he should allow it to be known.

What is incredible in a person you respect is not that they should do something evil (which might be an impulse) but that they should plan it coldly and brazenly. That seems like an unnatural thing, as if the walls of some peaceful room should dissolve away and show a landscape of fire and ash.

... It was as though I had never before seen this man (to whom I had been married for twenty years) who had suddenly revealed himself capable of a cruel and spiteful plot against an old friend.

(PG, 205)

Chester loses himself in glory and the exaltation of his ego. We learn from Chester's apology that he can never truly suppress his satanic desire for glory and power, and Nina's account demonstrates this. Sensitive to the oppressive poverty of his youth, Chester delights in giving Nina gifts which will enhance her beauty: "He enjoyed the
feeling that now he could afford me, . . . he wanted me to
be admired" (PG, 154). But by the end of his career,
Chester is oblivious to the needs of others; he has devoted
himself to the "cause," just as Pring had devoted himself
during Chester's youth: "I told myself that Pring loved
power too much and men not at all" (ETL, 261). When Nina
decides to leave Chester after the War, she observes:

I knew that he was quite pitiless and completely
satisfied with himself. "He has become a god,"
I said to myself. "He would kill me as he
nearly killed his oldest friend, poor Goold,
because we have not given ourselves over to him,
bodies and souls." (PG, 229)

Nina comments on her husband's spiritual degenera-
tion; once an evangelical preacher, Chester "gradually
stopped being very particular about going to chapel. He
would often come instead to a short service in my church,
which was just around the corner" (PG, 148). Since the
church has lost its use to him, Chester has become less
particular about his worship. His spiritual degeneration
is manifest in his sexual relations with Nina. At the
consummation of their marriage, Chester prayed over their
sexual union. In contrast, however, to the complete ful-
fillment which he found in his early relations with Nina,
he comes to consider her a mere tool. He had found sexual
relations to be "the only way in which he escaped completely
from tension and was really himself" (PG, 187); yet under
the increasing pressures Nina discovers that "as Chester
grew older and more harassed, he needed me more. And for some time now he had got into the way of looking for me at very unexpected times" (PG, 187). During the last year of the war, when Nina tries to commit suicide, their relations had become even more strained: "And he turned round and went back to bed while I followed like a Trojan captive on a rope, with a feeling of submission so acute and complete and sudden that it was comical, like something that happens to a clown at the circus" (PG, 230). And after she divorces Chester and he assaults her sexually, she writes: "I did indeed struggle with him . . . but the only result was to make him angry. He actually exclaimed aloud, 'We haven't time to waste on this nonsense'" (PG, 290).

This is the degeneration, the change, which makes Nina leave Chester after she has endured him for nearly thirty years. He has become so involved in his religious goal to save Britain that he has lost himself in the ends-means justification of his actions. The "changed" Chester and Nina observe the shambles which he unadmittedly has made of their marriage; he sees their life as both hollow and false:

"He's not my son--I have no children. By a truly brilliant contrivance, I was placed in a situation guaranteed to make me the obedient slave of family interest, and highly vulnerable to family resentment. I was to live under the perpetual threat of being exposed in the supremely ridiculous role of the duped husband--the captive cuckold. No, please," (he waved his hands to stop my protest);
"let's be honest for once and have done with this life of deceits. I know too well that you prefer the easy way and the comfortable dream, but where has it led us? Our life is eaten hollow with falseness."

But Nina observes that Chester insists on being alone at this point and would not come near her, and she exposes his hollow speech:

For one thing, as I had discovered during my many years past, Chester no longer attended to arguments; discussion of any kind with him was a kind of debate. He was not interested in facts, but only wanted to win, so that in this battle words like class, plot, treachery, even truth, and a phrase like "Let's be honest for once and have done with deceits," had nothing to do with the truth—they were simply weapons which he had picked out of his store because he thought they would do the most damage to the enemy.

And she continues with an analysis of the devastation through which he has isolated himself from men:

And for another, as I had realized that evening, he really was alone. It was impossible any longer to reach him. He had, so to speak, in thirty years of war, made such a devastation round himself that to talk to him at all was like calling across a waste full of broken walls and rusty wire and swamps of poisoned water; full of dead bodies, too, like that of poor Brome.

Chester had tried earlier to base his marriage on lies (he refused to admit to Nina that Tom was not his son, and he refused to be truthful with her in other matters, distrusting her as a member of the aristocracy). Nina had recognized the need for mutual confidence in marriage (PG, 27), but Chester ignored it, and his marriage failed. He pursued his political career by way of lies until he
deceived himself to his very soul. It is important to remember, however, that Nina considers him a sincere man victimized by politics and that even at the end of his career he considered himself the "chosen leader" (PG, 289).

Most of Nina's observations about political life (the muddle and confusion, the victimization of good men, the need for manipulation) can be correlated with Cary's but it is important to realize that her views are justified within the trilogy. While Chester represents the man who desires social progress through manipulation, Jim Latter represents the conservative man who wishes to maintain tradition and harmony through the use of force. Jim is an aristocrat, a nationalist, a career soldier, a tyrant in public and private life (PG, 274). He is a man of ideals who cannot accept the commonplace reality; Nina says "Jim could have been a Jesuit if he had not been so mad about horses and so fond of domesticity--I mean the idea of domesticity" (PG, 51). He is an incompetent person who is dependent upon the "family" fortune: Aunt Latter had "not only fitted him out for the army but paid his debts three or four times, to the amount of at least two thousand pounds" (PG, 50). And he is an irresponsible business man: "He never had the faintest idea which of his possessions had been paid for and which not. He distinguished only between what he absolutely needed (like four new suits a year) and what he did not absolutely need (like two dressing cases or
antique furniture") (PG, 99). Debts accrued through irresponsible business methods and numerous debts of honor forced him to take a position in Africa while the "family" defrayed his debts. The accusation that Jim is a kept man (NHM) is substantiated not only in his own account but also in Nina's.

Jim is unable to adjust to change. When he returns from Africa during the World War, he insists on wearing the "dandy" cloths which were in style in 1908. Unable to adjust to reality, he views everyone as a "profiteer" (PG, 237). He is unwilling to accept the manipulation which is inevitable in a democracy and refuses to exercise diplomacy.

Jim is ambivalent towards Nina. At one time he tells her of his happiness with her and then turns on her in rage, ready to kill her. He characteristically loses his temper and resorts to the use of force; Nina writes about their childhood: "Then he would rage again and tear at me as if he wanted to kill me (and I really think he did--I mean, it was the same cruel rage that makes people do murder, and in the most cruel ways)" (PG, 5). Years later, when they are married, Nina records: "In fact, I suddenly discovered that, as well as a devoted tyrant of a husband, I had a very jealous one. He went into a rage about the letters ('You've played fast and loose with me for thirty years--God help you if you let me down again')" (PG, 274).
He cannot admit to himself that Nina is only human, that she may have faults, because he cannot live with a real woman in a real world. He is unable to admit that Nina is allowing Chester to engage in sexual relations with her: "It is as though he said to himself, 'I am not going to accept happiness from that woman at the cost of my honor. I know she is lying and deceitful, but I'm not going to connive at her tricks. I shall behave exactly as if she were honest, and if I catch her out, so much the worst for all of us'" (PG, 301). This is the Jim who two years later unexpectedly catches Chester sexually interfering with Nina, and who is forced to kill her to defend his honor. Trying to justify his actions, he deceives himself into believing that he has killed her for the honor of the country.

The interpretation of the characters as they appear in Nina's book are basically substantiated by the self-deceived Jim Latter in the third volume of the trilogy. Nina is the sincere, noncommittal woman whose only desire is happiness; her actions at the conclusion of her apology are justified by such an interpretation: "But how could I make him understand that it is because happiness is so precious to me that I dare not turn Chester out. For I should know that I was committing a mean crime against something bigger than love" (PG, 301). This is the woman who perjures herself on the witness stand to preserve
Chester is the religious man who cannot accept the fact that a younger generation must replace him in the government and he tries to regain his position by any means available to him, including compromising with the communists and victimizing an innocent man. Jim is the man of honor who cannot live with common men; he must convince himself that all of his actions are "honorable" ones.

The second volume of the trilogy adds depth to Chester's character. It convinces us that he is a "man of God," though self-deceived. It provides a dimension to Chester's character which even the sympathetic and comprehending Nina is unable to recognize because her background is so different from his: she knows nothing of poverty and evangelism, the two forces which shaped Chester's mind. According to Cary, Chester's reactions to life, his feelings about the world, and his evaluation of achievement are beyond Nina's comprehension.

The style of Nina's book is a superb achievement in the synthesis of form and content. Nina, the morally ambivalent woman who understands everyone's point of view, qualifies all of her judgments.\(^\text{12}\) She uses parentheses for the qualifications and quotation marks to set off words which are ambiguous or popularly applied in charges against Chester's career.

And these speeches, in Chester's "thrilling" voice, had a very strange effect on my nerves. I write "thrill," because as soon as I heard this description (not by a woman, either, but by an enthusiastic young man) I felt how right it was. Chester's voice was one of his great gifts—it made him a power. And now when his voice shook, I felt myself shaking all through my body (as I say, I was really worn out with feeling already), so that I wanted to scream, "Stop, stop!" I would have done anything to stop this frightful quivering which seemed to shake my ideas and self-control to pieces. It seemed that I was two women, one of them quite furious still and watchful of every move by this cunning enemy, and one of them so close and sympathetic to him that she felt all his feelings like her own. And this was the most agonizing sensation I had ever known. It seemed that I was being torn apart (though I was told only the other day by a very intelligent and happily married woman that she had felt just the same on the honeymoon, and that she believed most women were more or less "split personalities"); so that when Chester went on telling me of his love I was angrier and angrier, and yet when I felt his hand tremble as well as his voice this love seemed to fly all through me, so that I was all a tension of anger and pity at the same time, and all my arguments seemed to fall apart into dry dusty fragments which were quite contemptible.

(NP, 23)

Nina sets off "thrilling" because it is vague and because it is a popular description of Chester's voice. She digresses in the second sentence to justify her use of the word, and further digresses in the parentheses to add more support to the description by saying that it was made by a man. She resumes her initial subject only to digress again to say how worn out she was. Again she resumes her subject and still again digresses.
But Nina's digressions are not merely those of a woman who cannot stick to her subject; they represent her moral confusion. She is unable to sort out relevant facts. However, we must recognize that many of the digressions do contribute to her arguments. She justifies Chester's actions during the Contract Case by digressing for a whole chapter to show that Jim himself could have been termed a hypocrite for his actions (Chapter 78). She digresses for another chapter to demonstrate that society and not Chester had shifted its morals.

Nina does not directly refute the charges made against her and Chester; she merely qualifies them. The most obvious example of this is the qualification of her defense of Chester, which was quoted above: "And what I am trying to do is not to make out that Chester was a saint . . ." (PG, 159). Elsewhere she defends Chester and herself by demonstrating that they have not acted differently from anyone else:

Now I have to explain what happened on this occasion because of this other charge that "I corrupted" my poor husband, not only in soul but body. It is obvious, of course, that people, simply because they are in the same house or family (or only meet at a dance), do change each other in various ways. (PG, 81)

Nina's style is "fluent and temperate, with little affectation and much feeling." It is the style of a "sensitive, intelligent person, accustomed to using her charm to sway others but not by being deliberately
untruthful."  

"Nina is so frank about herself that her estimate of Nimmo seems to be equally honest."  

Her chronology, however, is vague, making it difficult for the reader to reconstruct the events which she records. The inexactness which characterizes her narrative technique was intended to demonstrate the vagueness of a woman's mind; however, the chronology is inconsistent and error appears to have been Cary's rather than the inexact narrator's. It is difficult to believe, for example, that Nina would not know the date of her own marriage. According to the chronology in Chester's narrative, the marriage took place sometime between 1892 and 1894; however, according to Nina's narrative, she was married in 1895 or 1896. I shall not attempt to demonstrate all the inconsistencies in the trilogy, but I should like to observe that there appear to be errors in the first and second volumes of the trilogy which can be attributed to no one but Cary. These errors may be the result of Cary's artistic attempt to reveal Nina's mind; in any event, they are apparent only to the scholar and do project her vague and inaccurate mind.

Cary's success with Nina is a monument to his artistic ability. She comes to life for the reader as a sincere woman, merely trying to make a happy life for

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14 Ibid., p. 324.
herself, her husband and the ex-husband who she "felt was trying to do right."\textsuperscript{15} She sets the stage for Chester's apology with her observation that no one can know what is going on in another person's mind (PG, 91)--Chester must tell his own story.

CHAPTER III

EXCEPT THE LORD

As noted above, the political trilogy is executed upon the pattern of the first trilogy. While Nina's apology in Prisoner of Grace embodies much of the feminine viewpoint related by Sara Monday in Herself Surprised, Chester's apology in Except the Lord parallels that of Wilcher's narrative in To Be A Pilgrim. I shall not attempt a comparison here, but at least (from the ensuing discussion) some resemblances should be immediately apparent to the readers of both trilogies.

Written by an "old and broken man," Chester's apology is an attempt to justify his life against charges that his "whole career has been a disaster and a fraud" (ETL, 263). He disregards the immediate charges against him and attempts to justify his actions by recounting the forces which shaped his life. The son of a poverty-stricken evangelical lay preacher, he portrays a life which was deeply affected by its religious surroundings. Chester's apology is that of a pilgrim who has nearly completed his journey through a world which "is but the testing place for the soul" (ETL, 189). His story, which

16Wright, pp. 97-106.
embodies Cary's beliefs as found in *Art and Reality* and *Power in Men*, is that of a free, creative soul which is striving to make its own vision of reality, and the reader sees and feels the tortures which accompany the growth of that soul during the dynamic revolutions which anticipated the twentieth century.

Chester is writing a defense of his life which strikes us as sincere and convincing, but following Nina's account, it poses a problem of truth for the reader. Is Chester, as Nina asserts, the man broken by the trials of his political career and in a no-man's-land of isolation, engaged in a futile struggle to regain his position as a chosen leader? Or is he, as he asserts, a man who, as a youth, "came so near perdition that his escape still seems to him like a miracle" (*ETL*, 234), and who is now acting through a special mandate from God to save the country? Or is another view justified?

Chester's account suggests another interpretation. Ignoring immediate attacks upon his career, Chester relates the story of his religious training, his disillusionment, his turning to communist theories and his subsequent disillusionment with them, and his subsequent return to the evangelical tradition of his father and sister. His account stops just as he begins his lay preaching and long before (approximately fourteen years) he enters politics. Yet the reader can infer that the old man nearing his end
has reflected on those subsequent years and that the boy who came so near perdition foreshadowed the man who writes the apology. During his political career, Chester is beaten and battered. According to Nina he is a victim of world events and has suffered the hardships which accompany a political life. He first acknowledges these conditions after he is beaten for his suspected "betrayal" of the union: "It was the first time I had been made to understand the fearful condition of political life, the fundamental want of all security, the appalling risks of those who accept any large responsibility for their fellows" (ETL, 218-19). He also suggests the issue which is to be his nemesis: "When and where is one justified in telling a flat lie?" (ETL, 180) Chester the boy was saved from perdition; he returned to religion and devoted himself to a cause, which he chose to effect politically. But in the political arena, he lost himself in the ends-means conflict of achieving his goal. We recall from Nina's account the Chester who was appalled that his wife should ask him to send his son to a private school: "I tell you that it is impossible. It would be a criminal thing. Think of my position, Nina. You are asking me to back upon all I stand for, in the most public manner" (PG, 130). And we recall the pacifist who joined the war cabinet. The latter represents the "changed" Chester who wanted to keep office so he would have a voice in the government.
A victim of politics, Chester did change. The truths which he discloses about the young Chester defeated by Pring and his Marxists apply equally to the old Chester, and he subtly suggests and admits this very fact: "So I myself was now a ruin with all my secret places laid open, and I was astonished at their mean appearance. My glory had ended in this pitiful rubbish heap, I turned my eyes away from it, it said nothing to me of good or evil, only of sordid failure; I had no meaning even to myself" (ETL, 268). And reflecting upon one of his father's favorite Psalms, Chester says:

And for me the music of that great Psalm brought with it a thousand remembrances, my soul stirred and rose to it as to an old trumpet. And as the trumpet brings with it to the soldier more than he can speak or even analyse, vast regions of history, of his nation's glory, so I felt the release of a man who becomes for that moment greater than himself. I did not know then what had happened to me. I might say that it was years before I grasped the full significance of that profoundest of truths not only for the man but for all his endeavours—not only in his family life but in his political activity—that unless he aim at the life of the soul then all his achievement will be a gaol or a mad-house, self-hatred, corruption and despair. (ETL, 273)

And as he stands by his sister's grave at the close of his book, he questions himself: "What impulse took me now? I was myself as a dying man, in body as in spirit. My life lay in ruins and, as it seems, all that my life had meant. Was it perhaps the thought of my own death that sent me, that afternoon, to see where Georgina lay?" (ETL, 275) He
concludes the apology with this answer:

I had come at last and my heart was beating again strongly to a heart that could not know despair because it forgot itself in the duty of its love.

And my way was made plain. "Here," I said, "the story began and here it shall begin again, in the things I have lived with this forgotten one, in the young cruelty of the world, in the making of our souls." (ETL, 276, italics mine)

Chester vows to begin his life again; he wishes to renew his efforts for the "cause," yet he has been broken by events. His shadowy sense of ends-means justification and his misuse of the spoken word have too thoroughly penetrated his actions. He is a victim of his very skill in politics and has degenerated into a wicked, conniving old man so that even his sincere desire to recognize and adhere to the truths that he recounts is overwhelmed by his corrupt nature. We see the futility of this vow and Chester's insurmountable hypocrisy in the first and third volumes of the trilogy.

Chester has so long deceived himself in trying to achieve his goals that he is unable to recognize the depth of the truths which he relates. He is sincere within the limits of his corruption, but we must recall Nina's statement: "He was nearly always true to what he felt at the moment" (PG, 176). In his pragmatic code, he had lost his orientation and lost himself in his policy of always choosing the most expeditious course of action. He could

17 Teeling, p. 283.
believe whatever he thought necessary, and at the time he writes it seems necessary to associate his goals with evangelism: "and we were all agreed that it would be an excellent thing if Chester took up religion again, because he would certainly need all the chapel vote if he was going to win another election" (PG, 250)

Thus, we must interpret Chester's apology in the light of Nina's statements and realize that he is writing to win the vote, but that he also believes what he is writing. His account, though he does not fully grasp the truths which he relates, gives us a remarkable picture of the religious, social, and economic forces which shaped him.

The most outstanding force was his religious heritage. The son of an evangelical lay preacher who falsely predicted the Second Coming, Chester was steeped in the religious tradition of John Bunyan. The seventeenth-century dissenter's views appear throughout Chester's apology, whose theme is similar to the pilgrimage theme of Bunyan. References to "pilgrim" and to Bunyan himself occur, but usually more subtle references identify the pilgrimage theme. Chester's statement of purpose clearly relates to this theme:

This work is the consequence, and if I do not continue to the end, to the time when I entered on that political career which has earned me so much hatred, then at least it shall stand to show something too easily forgotten by statesmen and their critics alike—the mystery which lies
beneath all history, all politics—the mighty and everlasting pressure of the soul seeking by ways unseen, and often unsuspected, its own good, freedom and enlightenment. (ETL, 150)

It is further developed in another passage:

And this book is not the history of political events but of a boy's mind and soul, of one who came so near perdition that his escape still seems to him like a miracle. And if perdition is a word that makes you smile, a preacher's word out of date even among preachers, I must urge you that I use it in a strict sense, for the state of one who is lost. (ETL, 234)

The pilgrimage theme is elaborated within the apology. Chester recognizes that the "world is but a testing place for the soul" (ETL, 189), and the creative soul must learn to choose in a world of free will where the possibilities for both good and evil exist. Each person must struggle with the Satan within him, and the struggle is vividly depicted by Chester's sister Georgina. Throughout her life, Georgina battles with the wild spirit within her. As a young girl, she fought the Battwell girls, she fought the village boys, she used foul language, she ran off for a day to Tarbiton, ignoring her responsibilities; as she grew older she restrained some of her impulses, but delighted in dancing, which was definitely an unacceptable activity to an evangelist. And though the Shagbrook people believed "Georgina was a limb of Satan who urgently needed correction," the elder Nimmo chose prayer rather than force to subjugate the evil (ETL, 31-32).
Georgina was not the only one in Chester's account who was so rich in possibilities for both good and evil. Georgina's first employer, G, represents the duplicity of man, and Chester says: "For the view in the village was that G was G. There was good and there was bad in him and it was the business of those who had dealings with him, young or old, male or female, to reckon with both" (ETL, 53).

Chester's puritan heritage is further demonstrated in its objection to falsehood. He interprets this objection when he challenges it by attending the play at the Lilmouth Great Fair:

Our whole education as children turned on respect for the truth--falseness was a sin and falseness had a very wide meaning. Any kind of pretence, any kind of conduct having the least tincture of hypocrisy was not only a sin but a deadly trap. How often had I been told that the lie corrupts and poisons the very soul? This was the principle that lay at the root of our objection to plays and players--they dealt in falsehood. (ETL, 81-82).

Yet this tradition has become a part of Chester; even when he acknowledges that plays do not necessarily deal in falsehood, he does not attend the theatre again for nearly forty years.

The Satan of Milton's Paradise Lost intrudes upon the Bunyan tradition, for it is the independent soul which defies, in a satanic manner, the forces of authority, and it is this image which recurs throughout the book. In his
youth, Chester admires Cran, for "to defy the law was brave and free" (ETL, 20). He remarks later about Georgina's and his attendance of the circus play: "Her unexplained arrival at the fair, her still more extraordinary appearance at the play, to commit a sin against all her father's teaching, made the occasion even more portentous, more exciting than before" (ETL, 85). And of the evil Corder in the play, Chester says:

Still stranger and more terrible truth, even in the midst of my horror at this monster in his blood guilt, I was aware of a fascinated admiration. When in his soliloquies at the front of the stage, his eyes roving over the audience, seemed to meet mine, they sent forth an indescribable thrill— it seemed that something flashed from the very centre of evil into my deepest soul. (ETL, 89)

And juxtaposed with this statement is a reflection on Milton's Satan in Paradise Lost. Chester admits the power of attraction which the figure held for him; despite his father's warning "against the charm of that devil," Chester notes that "Satan still carried an irresistible appeal" (ETL, 90). He continues with a powerful rendering of the effect of the satanic Corder in the play at the circus:

Let us confess it—power itself has a fascination for the young soul in its weakness and dependence. And when to power is added the guilt of blood, some horror of cruelty, its force can be hypnotic. Looking back on the event of that evening—upon boy I was--I have come to see a dire significance in his excitement—the more so that he was a simple, untutored son of the moors, unable to falsify his own experience.
Pure awe indeed fell upon him at sight of Maria as she appeared in her mother's dream to reveal the place of her grave--pure terror when she rose through the very stones of the condemned cell, a ghost with snow-white gleaming face and shift all dabbled with great gouts of blood, to stand in silence before her murderer.

She represented for him then not only a supernatural being but the Rhadamanthine judgment of Heaven--the inescapable vengeance of the Most High. But did not terror itself bring with it a sense of fearful glory in the man who had defied that vengeance?

How that boy's very bowels shrank within him at the sight of Corder on the drop, between chaplain and hangman--with bound hands and noose about his neck. I remember how he tried to turn away his head when the hangman drew the white cap over those staring eyes, that pale haggard face--and failed. His eager glance devoured to the last moment of his existence the villain, the devil--and the hero. (ETL, 90-91)

And the young boy sensed the evil of the power of the spoken word:

For me the actor had revealed a fearful, an astonishing power--one that entranced my boy's soul not only by its imposing solitary glory, but perhaps even more profoundly by its defiance. And this was a power that could be achieved by anyone capable of learning this art of stringing words together in a poetic form, and striking the right attitudes. (ETL, 95)

And the young boy, inspired with "a vision of glory, of power, by means of the spoken word" began to practice this power as he tended the sheep (ETL, 107).

Not yet ready to try his own independence, eleven-year-old Chester is duly awed by his brother Richard, who dared to defy their father's religious authority and to profess atheism after the failure of the Second Coming:
I was thunderstruck, and asked, "Do you mean you don't believe in God?"

"Do you?" Richard asked with mild contempt. "Where could He live for one thing? We know the sky is only air." And he went on to say that God seemed to him impossible—in fact he repeated all the common arguments which might appeal to a clever boy of fifteen—the scientific one against miracles, and the moral one based on the existence of evil. If there were a God, he asked, why did He not stop wars, and why had He let our good mother die so miserably.

What struck me at that time was not Richard's argument but his indignation, so unusual in my brother. I thought that he was angry with his father for making him so foolish.

I did not dare to ask him if this were true—I was too overwhelmed by the blasphemy of his talk.

"But aren't you afraid?" I said at last.

"Afraid of what?" he asked.

But I was afraid even to explain—to insult God by suggesting that He might be flouted. I feared Him too much, or rather, I simply feared. But Richard understood me, "Afraid of that poor old God who can't stop Ruth from coughing or keep mother Weaver out of the workhouse—I'd be ashamed. Why, if He was real, I should have to hate Him.

After these words, I dared not speak again. I crept into bed and lay in terror, not only for Richard but all of us. And always after that night I had a special awe of Richard. I did not know if I felt more horror or admiration for my clever brother, but I could not be intimate with him. He had passed finally out of my world. (ETL, 118)

But Chester himself learns to challenge authority and delights in the challenging. He revels in power and rejoices in his strong ego. And it is this love of power, this defiance of authority, this unrestrained satanic streak, which is Chester's ultimate undoing. At the age of fourteen, his association with Dolling is one of the
earliest manifestations of his desire for a satanic, heroic stature:

But I believed him then, and nothing could have been more attractive to a boy of my age than such a challenge—to defy the established authority of the land was itself a distinction, it gave me the self-respect achieved by an heroic gesture. But to make such an affirmation for liberty and brotherhood—that was a glory of the noblest kind. (ETL, 144)

He meets Dolling and reads the communist pamphlets without his father's knowledge and associates with a man who he believes is a dangerous rebel. Later he rejoices in his perilous and defiant position during his association with the Marxists: "Now I am so important that I am never allowed out without a guard, now it is not my shame but my glory that I need a guard. It is my pride to have enemies—in truth, everything about me turns to my pride" (ETL, 235).

He recalls the glory and challenge of the strike of 1879-80:

As I sat there above that excited crowd—the faces coloured for once with something like health if it were only a fever of wonder and anxiety, the raised eyes imploring comfort and guidance from me, Chester Nimmo—I felt a glory, I said to myself, "If it is war then let it be war. I'm not afraid." (ETL, 249)

He delights in forsaking all for the "cause" and he notes "There arose in me a sense of glory and triumph, something quite unexpected in its force and puzzling even to myself—I had lied to Georgina for the cause" (ETL, 244).

Chester is deceiving himself, however, when he feels that he has accepted his father's evangelical beliefs
in his conversion. Having been cast off by the Marxists, rejecting the use of force, dejected and wanting a cause to follow, he assumes the role of preacher and rejoices in the security of a religious creed, but he never truly subjugates his satanic wish for defiance and personal power. How often does Nina's apology justify a conclusion that Chester was as tyrannical as Mrs. Coyte of whom Chester says:

The reason of this action by our mistress was not apparent and she gave none. Like other persons accustomed to absolute rule, she seemed to enjoy doing even a kind and good deed in an arbitrary manner—or perhaps in order to maintain a certain atmosphere of helplessness and terror in the dependent. (ETL, 35)

Nina notes the gifts which he gave her in just such a manner throughout their marriage. And is not the Chester described in the first and third volumes of the trilogy a man who rejoices in the fact that he has to be guarded?

The fact that he did not truly repress his satanic drive, his wish for personal power and glory, is evident in the apologies of both the sympathetic Nina and the hostile Jim. His pilgrimage has been cyclical; he returned to the shelter of religion after he was cast off by the communists in his youth, and he returns to religion after he loses his position in the government as an old man. For the second time in his life he admits that his glory has ended in a rubbish heap, that he has no meaning even to himself (ETL, 268).
Chester's apology is replete with acknowledgments which Nina and Jim demonstrate to be hypocritical. The most severe deception is Chester's practical interpretation of Psalm 127: "Except the Lord build the house, their labour is but lost that build it; except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain. Lo, children and the fruit of the womb are an heritage and gift that cometh of the Lord" (ETL, 273). Chester tells us that through the experience of hearing his father read this psalm, he eventually grasped the full significance of that profoundest of truths not only for the man but for all his endeavours—not only in his family life but in his political activity—that unless he aim at the life of the soul then all his achievement will be a gaol or a mad-house, self-hatred, corruption and despair. (ETL, 273)

This psalm initiates Chester's conversion and his devotion of fourteen years of his life to lay preaching. But Chester becomes a hypocrite. In his practice of choosing the most expeditious actions, he suppresses religion and God in a satanic gesture which elevates him, Chester Nimmo. His reference to this psalm is an ironic pronouncement of his own guilt and a foreshadowing of the fall of the house which Chester Nimmo, not the Lord, has built. We have already seen it begin to crumble in Nina's account, where Chester is childless\(^\text{18}\) and his marriage is a failure; we\\

\(^{18}\)Teeling, p. 280.
shall see its total destruction as it falls on Chester and his most intimate associates in Jim's apology.

Generally speaking then, the second volume of the trilogy relates the shaping of the mind and soul of Chester Nimmo against a vivid background of the social, economic and religious revolutions at the close of the nineteenth century. Chester recounts his spiritual redemption as a young man, convinces us that he has always been sincere though he has done evil in the name of good, and that he is still a man of God, devoted to the cause of the oppressed.

Chester's perceptive analysis of his environment temporarily deceives us into believing that he is a sincere man, but Jim's apology demonstrates that Chester cannot comprehend the significance of his analysis because of the lie in his soul. However, the fact that he is lost in the ends-means justification of his actions does not destroy the accuracy of his interpretation of life, and many of his observations echo Cary's philosophy as expressed in *Power in Men, Art and Reality* and his other non-fictional works.

In recounting his childhood experiences, Chester records many of the problems which Cary believed confront the free, creative soul in a dynamic world. One of the most perplexing of these problems is how to reconcile the
presence of evil with a belief in justice. Chester and his brother and sisters are as perplexed as Cary had been in his youth. They were taught that justice does exist:

"We knew, in the common phrase, exactly where we were—the wicked would be punished, and the good should have reward" (ETL, 6); however, they soon perceived situations in the world which challenged this absolute truth: why did Mrs. Nimmo and the young Dorothy die? Why did Mrs. G die in an accident which was the fault of her drunken husband? Why did Georgina have to sacrifice her happiness to take care of her ailing father? Why did she die a victim of poverty? What justice existed in these and the other events which perplexed Chester? When truth or sincerity go unrewarded and are even trampled upon, children question how truth and sincerity are to live in the world of men (ETL, 15). And, like Richard, as quoted above, they turn away from God.

Chester is also aware of the delicate complexity of societal relationships which Cary intimates in his non-fictional writings: Shagbrook "was a highly complex and delicate balance of personal relations between families and persons who were obliged to live so closely together that the whole of everyone's actions, and almost his thoughts, was open to inspection by all the rest" (ETL, 21).

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19 For a discussion of Cary's concern with this problem see Wright, p. 35, and see Edward Case, "The Free World of Joyce Cary," Modern Age, III (Spring 1959), 115-124.
Chester's close contact with life allows him to recognize this truth early, while Nina, sheltered at Palm Cottage, and Jim, protected at school, who were both cushioned by their aristocratic positions, perceive this fact quite late in their lives.

Chester's observations further embody Cary's views on the necessity for morality in art. In his powerful description of the play at the Lilmouth Great Fair, Chester notes that "Art . . . has a fearful power and responsibility in the world--it acts directly upon the very centres of feeling and passion" (ETL, 89). Cary himself asserts that "Art has its immense power for good and evil because it deals with fundamental passions and reactions common to all humanity" (AR, 163). At the play, sensitive to Corder's speech, Chester becomes aware of the power of the spoken word:

I felt the evil of that power and dreaded it. But I also understood a power that I had seen exercised by my father also--though in a lesser degree--the spell of the orator.

. . . And this was a power that could be achieved by anyone with the will and a voice, anyone capable of learning this art of stringing words together in a poetic form, and striking the right attitudes. (ETL, 95)

The powerful influence which Chester analyzed here is again dramatized by Chester's experience with Lanza, who "appealed to experience, and an experience as deep and

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20 These references to art are in terms of its broadest meaning--as all forms of communication (AR, 21-25).
strong and true as it is universal" (ETL, 131); Chester was inspired by him to join the cause for the advancement of brotherhood among men.

Chester acknowledges Cary's belief that formal "politics isn't everything" (ETL, 206), that "men live by their feelings and desires" (AR, 37). In Nina, Chester saw that "Faith, hope--the profound charity which in the truest sense of the word rests in the love of God, and is indeed the very door of His grace--were innate in that spirit" (ETL, 135). And from his experiences with both of these women he concludes,

It is not instinct that tells a young woman in love that politics deal with the ephemeral, the passing situation--while she is concerned with a permanent truth, with problems of loyalty and responsibility that never change their essence, with family duty, with the heaviest and most inescapable of responsibilities. She knows it by imagination and experience. (ETL, 209).

Chester further records the dilemma of man's good intentions: "This book would be worthless if it did not show how men, especially young and ardent men as I was then, come to do evil in the name of good, a long and growing evil for a contemporary and doubtful advantage" (ETL, 243). This statement of purpose is closely related to Cary's analysis of the ends-means dilemma: "It is not even true that the end justifies the means. The question in real life is what means, and what ends?" (AR, 179)

Chester's apology demonstrates the end which Chester
chooses; Nina's apology demonstrates the means which he employs. The reader must reconcile the issue for himself—was Chester justified?

Chester's whole apology depicts, as does Nina's, politics as "the art of human relations, an aspect of all life," and because he was involved in life he was more aware of the condition which existed in formal politics. He fully recognized the "fearful condition of political life, the fundamental want of all security, the appalling risks of those who accept any responsibility, for their fellows" (ETL, 218-19). Chester had a double responsibility, for not only was he a career politician responsible for society, he was also responsible for Nina who was admittedly incapable of managing her own affairs (PG, 128).

Chester's narrative is characterized by the evasive and vague statements of the politician. The lie of the soul, which Chester used so long to manipulate the populace, functions now to deceive Chester himself. He has spoken so habitually in generalities, trying to appeal to universal sentiments, that he cannot be specific or truly sincere. He is a spell-binder who misuses the word to win popular approval.

Chester's statement closely parallels Wilcher's statement in To Be a Pilgrim and Cary's statements in his political writings.
Chester employs the technique used by the great orator Lanza, who appealed to what I knew to be true, to the memory of my own childhood—and drew from it a conclusion so simple that it seemed to place instantly within my hands a key to unlock all problems.

I had rejected God and with God, the love, the charity, the assured faith in goodness that I had learnt in my own home. Now under another name, that of humanity, He was restored to His full grandeur and majesty as ruler of the world. For the miseries of that world were shown as the just and inevitable punishment of those who had turned their faces from that fundamental law of brotherhood. How should the world have joy which lived in joyless fear for its possessions? (ETL, 136)

He plays on the heart strings of the Chapel people who can appreciate arguments based on brotherhood and humanity.

Let us examine some of the passages in the apology. The beginning sets the tone for the whole story:

Yesterday, an old man nearing my end, I stood by the grave of a noble woman, one of the three noblest I have ever known, my mother, my sister, my wife. If I draw back now the curtain from my family life, sacred to memory, I do so only to honour the dead, and in the conviction that my story throws light upon the crisis that so fearfully shakes our whole civilisation.

It is the story of a crime, of a soul, my own, plucked back from the very edge of frustration and despair. I was a poor boy, brought up among the poorest in our moorland hamlet, itself a poor place. (ETL, 1)

Just what does Chester mean when he says "the crisis that so fearfully shakes our whole civilisation"? Each reader can impose his own meaning. Refer to his emotionally toned and lofty diction:

What are the best arguments in the world if they do not strike the time and the heart? I had not
come to my moment of illumination, I had lived with inequality all my life—for me still the cruelty of social injustice was swallowed up in a vaster, more dramatic, more immediate fatefulness of life itself, arbitrary death. (ETL, 96)

Again, refer to the lofty description of five-year-old Nina Woodville when Chester first meets her:

She was already marked by unusual qualities of thoughtfulness and sincerity. That lucid and candid gaze which so powerfully affected the awkward and embarrassed young man was not only the revelation of childhood's natural innocence but of qualities unique in that child—an inborn truth—an essential generosity of affection which no cruelty of fate, no bitter experience of human perfidy, could ever tarnish. Faith, hope—the profound charity which in the truest sense of the word rests in the love of God, and is indeed the very door of His grace—were innate in that spirit. (ETL, 135)

Is this the woman who is portrayed in the other two volumes of the trilogy?

Or examine Chester's reaction to being expelled by the Marxists:

This was not courage or even obstinacy. Can anyone who has been in the same position describe the feeling of the man who has been betrayed, and says to the world: do what you like to me now, I cannot give way, it is impossible for me to accept this thing.

And when I write betray, I am expressing something beyond human treachery. It seemed to me in this disaster of my youth that I had been tricked by fate itself, by a conspiracy of circumstances. To abandon my goods in the street would have been not only to run away from my enemies but to proclaim that circumstances had been too much for me. Yet I was in a position from which I could not extricate myself. The very silence of the street, usually fully at this time of women's voices and playing children, seemed to join in with the
falling dark like an approaching doom—as if a vast dark mind was gradually thinking itself to the point of crushing me out, a bug, a nothing, a creature rejected. (ETL, 262)

Robert Bloom says this writing is overdramatic, deliberately inflated and suggests the "whole quality of Chester's naive expectations when he excitedly substituted humanity for God and set out to make the world anew by means of a few simple, sincere negotiations with the neighborhood employers." 22

Chester avoids discussing charges against his political career. He wishes to establish his sincerity as the proper justification for his actions throughout his life. But we realize from his description of the political world that life is not so simple as he would have us believe, and from his closing statements that he does have a sense of guilt. He is aware that he has strayed from religious teachings and that sincerity does not excuse problems of ends-means justification. But he does convince us that he is sincere. Employing a superb technique he juxtaposes his experiences to achieve this response from the reader. His chapter on Milton's Satan has already been noted. And his lofty description of Nina, partially quoted above, is strikingly placed between chapters about the orator Lanza to emphasize the truth of Lanza's argument. Chester's April heart attack (1925) conveniently intrudes

22 Bloom, p. 151.
upon his reflections about Georgina's belief that "politics isn't everything" and allows him to observe that she was right, that politics "deal with the ephemeral, the passing situation" (ETL, 209).

Chester not only juxtaposes experiences, but he also manipulates these events. Beginning a discussion of Ruth in Chapter 45, Chester refers to an incident when she was just thirteen. When he mentions a few lines later that Georgina wants Ruth to go into service, he avoids observing that Ruth is now eighteen. Only the very alert reader will be aware of this time shift. This vague development functions throughout the narrative. Chapter 32 is juxtaposed against 31 by the transition "Long years after this date . . . ." Again, only the alert reader, depending on information in Nina's apology, can determine the magnitude of the time shift. In Chapter 31, Chester is fourteen, while in Chapter 32 he must be nearly twenty-five. This realization makes us question Chester's description of himself as an "awkward and embarrassed young man" (ETL, 135), especially when we recall that Chester participated in labor activities for seven years and had been preaching for two years.

His chronology, like Nina's is vague and inconsistent and suggests that Cary himself may have erred. We are unable to ascertain the exact year of his birth. Should we compute it from his statement that he was eleven at the
time of the "Second Coming" in April 1868, or should we compute it from his statement that he was just twenty-one during the strike in November 1879? Or should we compute it from other statements in the other apologies? Another striking inconsistency occurs in Chapter 31 where Chester observes that he is fourteen, but it is less than two years after the "Second Coming" when he says he was eleven. It is possible that Chester is manipulating the dates for the effect, though I find no reason for him to juggle these particular dates. Chester's narrative development is not orderly, however, and he may have erred himself. Alternating references are made to the ages of the children and to the dates of episodes, but rarely to both, making it difficult to reconstruct his life.

Throughout his narrative, Chester appeals to the sympathy of his readers. He is a poverty-stricken boy who loses his saintly mother and his innocent sister before he is ten. He works throughout his childhood and is virtually martyred because of his labor activities. He experiences a reconversion and devotes himself to lay preaching. Within a year of this reconversion, his father and beloved sister Georgina die as victims of their poverty-stricken lives.

Very conscious of his chapel readers, Chester selects images and diction to reinforce the religious approach which has been noted in the pilgrimage theme and
Biblical quotations. In the most crucial event of his early career, Chester describes the theatre tent at the fair as the "Temple of lies, where men and women practised feigning as an art, to deceive and confuse honest souls . . ." (ETL, 83). It was the place which encouraged the lie of the soul and which endangered any house not built by the Lord. Similarly, when Chester hears Lanza's speech, he sees an "edifice" arise before him (ETL, 137); this structure does fall.

Continuing his religious approach, Chester exploits a wasteland image of the city:

What I had not dreamed was the dirt, the ugliness, the sense of insignificance and helplessness conveyed by the anonymous crowds which jostled by without a glance—the train passengers who sat in rows gazing straight before them with eyes utterly indifferent to every other existence. Nothing in my experience had prepared me for this world of atomies, mere corpuscles or droplets of life, whose difference from one another had no importance, whose dignity as individual human souls was, even to themselves, lost in the moving tide which alone had purpose and meaning. (ETL, 224)

His diction contributes to the religious overtones. "Pisgah sight" (ETL, 22, 4), "perdition" (ETL, 234), and the use of "soul" instead of "person" (ETL, 224, 262) are only some of the words which set the key. Chester is the true manipulator of words. The quotations in the paragraph above would be applicable to his own narrative. His apology, a work of art, is a temple of lies built to
attract the support of the masses. Unlike the play which Chester saw in the theatre tent, his narrative deceives both the projected reader and the writer. The lie of the soul, however, destroys his temple, and we see its fall in the third volume of the trilogy.

Chester's apology adds a dimension to his character which Nina's sympathetic defense is unable to supply. She is aristocratic, feminine and non-evangelical and thus unable fully to comprehend Chester's world. His apology substantiates her conviction that he was a sincere man who was caught in the muddle of politics and who came to do evil in the name of good. We realize that his satanic urge for power and glory has overwhelmed him and that he is guilty of the misuse of the spoken word. He has transgressed the limits of sincerity and confidence which his father believed essential to human relations, and by destroying these bonds he destroys life itself.
CHAPTER IV

NOT HONOUR MORE

Not Honour More completes the political trilogy. Jim's apology presents the world of a militant conservative and a third dimension of Chester Nimmo: "faker," "hypocrite," "wangler," and "crook." The "muddle and confusion" of political life which were depicted in the first and second volumes come to a public climax with the general strike in May, 1926 and to a private one with Chester's heart attack and Nina's murder. Introducing no new issues, Jim's apology reinforces the conclusions drawn from the first and second volumes. The characters conform to the patterns delineated in Prisoner of Grace; Jim's "execution" of Nina "in the public interest and decency" (NHM, 26) appears only an egotistical defense of his honor and a denial of true justice, in light of Nina's assertion that "people have to be persuaded and induced to do and think rightly (unless you shoot them, which is impossible in a democracy)" (PG, 158).

Havoc results from the widening gap of understanding between the characters. We have already observed Chester in "the no-man's-land of his isolation" (PG, 289), "completely out of touch" (PG, 251) with life, yet striving to regain
his political position; he has lost himself in the rati­
alization of his actions. Nina, who is bound to Chester be­cause she recognizes that he is basically a good man, laments her situation: "But how could I make him [Jim] understand that it is because that happiness is so precious to me I dare not turn Chester out. For I should know I was committing a mean crime against something bigger than love" (PG, 301). And Jim, unaware of the sincerity of Chester and Nina, kills her because he believes she is corrupt; he reflects: "She couldn't understand she was up against something bigger than either of us or anyone's happiness" (NHM, 307).

None of the characters is able to comprehend fully the others' actions. Nina characteristically sympathizes with both men, but she applauds Chester's manipulatory technique. Chester recognizes Nina's motivations but is unable to appreciate Jim's militant conservatism, while Jim is unable to recognize any position but his own. He is dogmatic, he cannot adjust to the fallibility of man; in his eyes, the "corruption" of his wife justifies his becoming her executioner. The gulf which Cary believed separates men from each other eventually consumes all three.

We have already examined the noncommittal Nina and the self-deceived, if religious, Chester. What motivated this executioner who appears in Nina's apology as a tyrant,
a nationalist, and an idealist, who is able to accept the idea of man, but not individual men? Like Chester, Jim is deceived. His apology reflects the conflict in his mind and his attempt to interpret the personal defense of his honor as a noble action "in the public interest and decency."

Nina's apology demonstrates as a husband Jim is a jealous tyrant (PG, 274) who loses his temper easily and who has threatened to kill her more than once. We have already noted Nina's fear of Jim as a child: "Then he would rage again and tear at me as if he wanted to kill me (and I really think he did . . .)" (PG, 5). Nina concludes her apology with references to this same fear; angered that she keeps Chester's letters, Jim "went into such a rage . . . ('You've played fast and loose with me for thirty years--God help you if you let me down again!')" (PG, 274). He becomes so violent when he suspects Nina's sexual involvement with Chester, that Nina is terrified: "I felt sure he wanted to kill me" (PG, 300). Jim's apology corroborates this portrayal. Continually losing his temper, in blind rage he tried to kill Nina: "And I couldn't bear her temper. I pulled the trigger. But the pistol only clicked. . . . Then, God forgive me, in my blind rage, I threw the pistol at my wife and hit her on the head, cutting her forehead" (NHM, 80). Broken by his inability to cope with reality, Jim rages as a maniac. He
repeatedly attempts to kill Chester, he argues with the newspapermen, he resigns his position as a special, berates Nina and murders her in an insane justification of himself as "executioner."

Jim's apology further corroborates Nina's portrayal of him as an idealist unable to cope with reality. He reinterprets his actions to make himself appear noble. We realize from Nina's account that Jim did not ask her to marry him, except in childish play and that the declared purity of his motives in their first physical relations was not enough to overcome the criticism of Aunt Latter nor to prevent the facile disguising of his own interests; he writes:

I loved her most passionately from a boy of ten. . . . So when she was seventeen and I was twenty-one, in my first regiment, our aunt May Latter, who had brought her up and done much for me too, was afraid we would get married and ruin my career. Because in my Hussar regiment no one was allowed to marry under captain. So I was afraid to lose my darling if she would not wait for me, and many were interested in her, being so pretty and having money, and one day when we were in Lilmouth, I said she must be my wife for ever, and she said yes, and I said, but words were not enough, and she said what did I mean, and I said she knew what I meant but it was no good saying anything because she did not really love me, she did not love anybody or anything but her own amusement. (NHM, 10)

Later, it is true, while raging against Chester, Jim spontaneously, exposes his real motivation: "But I know bloody well what I was and what I am. I was a bloody young brute who took advantage of a girl because I knew
she was good and true—because I knew she wouldn't give me away" (NHM, 90).

As another instance of Jim's readiness to distort circumstances, he does not admit that Sally is his daughter. He says: "I was pleased when people saw the likeness between us. Sally being a Latter through her mother" (NHM, 142) and "I am very fond of my niece who has been almost like a daughter to me" (NHM, 196). The reader is not able to determine whether Jim is nobly withholding the truth from the ignorant public to protect Nina's reputation or trying to deny that he fathered the girl. The second interpretation seems justified in the light of his other deceptions.

Jim can even gloss over his wife's infidelity, his actions corroborating Nina's assertion that he did not want to discover her affair with Chester (PG, 292). He is unable to accept the fact that she may be corrupt: "I didn't want to look at her in case I should see how corrupt she was" (NHM, 83). He can only think of her as she was at seventeen, when he seduced her: "the straightest, sincerest creature I ever knew" (NHM, 87).

All Jim's admirations must be couched in terms of perfection. The only people that he openly admires are his "niece" Sally ("She was in fact about the straightest girl I've ever known" NHM, 200), the victimized Maufe, and the angelic Varney ("Sergeant Fred Varney is one of my oldest
friends. It is wondered why I chose to serve under him. It's because I had so much respect for him. And I know him through and through, the finest man I ever knew, bar none. The truest, the straightest, the bravest, the loyalest. And a real Christian (NHM, 106). Jim rejects anyone with the slightest fault and excludes him from the society of man. Nina recalls that when he came home from Africa during the war he "saw everyone as a 'profiteer'" (PG, 237). He demonstrates himself to be an indiscriminate name-caller towards most people in the "mean dirty world" (NHM, 187) that he visualizes. He calls the newspapermen "Red-face" and "Cheese scoop." He calls Chester a "wangler," a "crook," a "grabber," a "hypocrite," a "gammoneer," climaxing them all with "and I know what you are--a poor old fester on a dying ramp. A shit-merchant who's so buried in filth he can't smell himself" (NHM, 90).

Jim also verifies Nina's portrayal of him as a man unable to support himself. For whatever reason Nina accepts Chester's gifts after she marries Jim, Jim is still a kept man. Chester challenges him: "Because you are a kept man. Because you have to be kept by people with some glimmer of common sapience--kept or you'd starve" (NHM, 227). And Jim observes: "She took jewels and settlements because it was easier to take them than refuse them. Because she was afraid of poverty and knew that I'd chucked away most of my own money" (NHM, 307). In fact, Jim's
credit is so bad that when Nina leaves him he is unable to pay for taxi fare with a check. He is totally incompetent to support himself in English society. The only place where he ever succeeds is in Africa where he governs the primitive natives as a feudal lord.

Nina's claim that Jim did not love domesticity, but the idea of domesticity (PG, 51) is substantiated in his failure as a breadwinner and husband. His indifference to the details of married life is further evidenced by his inability to remember the age of his two-year-old son Robert, who he says is four. He is unable to force Chester out of his home when he intrudes upon his privacy and violates Nina. His ambivalence toward Nina is emphasized when she is critically injured: "I felt bitter against my wife. I was sure she would die and it broke my heart. But I was angry against her" (NHM, 240). Although he bewails the fact that family life is mocked (NHM, 31) he himself mocked it when he lured Nina away from Chester after the Boer War and then allowed Chester to hold her. Even when Nina finally leaves Chester, Jim does not marry her until she becomes pregnant.

Jim refuses to recognize that he employs fascist methods. The very incident which he cites to refute the charge of militarism proves that he is militant:

I put in this document because of charge against me of militarism. I want to say when troops were finally summoned to Tarbition, it was not by
suggestion of Chief Constable or myself. But due entirely to very dangerous situation due to continued weakness of Watch Committee where several councillors had begun to slide. . . . (NHM, 206)

At the time of the incident however, Jim does advocate the display of force: "When I told Watch Committee on morning of 8th that serious trouble might occur unless strong display of force to prevent any gathering near Chapel Road and Potter's main entrance, I was informed no need of special precautions" (NHM, 210). His justification for murdering Nina for the sake of public interest and decency further betrays his fascist tactics.

Jim is a tyrant, a dogmatist, an idealist and a nationalist. His self-justified actions bring to mind Cary's assertion that the more sincere the faith of a dogmatist, "the more, he is bound to persecute, to save others from falling into error" (PM, 195). Believing that Nina and Chester are a mockery to the ideals which England stands for, Jim undertakes their execution, denying the process of law which could easily have convicted Nina of perjury. Jim also embodies Cary's belief that

The nationalist cannot bear to hear of a fault in his own people. He feels a bitter spite against any of them who fall below the ideal standard of his fancy. . . . These men, if they are sincere and whole men, all belong to one kind--those who as children have been taught lies about their country's glory. They were brought up on propaganda and now its wine has turned to vinegar. (PM, 211)
Jim is unable to accept the truth about men, that being human they are fallible; that life is not all glory and honor. He is a sincere man, but a militant conservative who is unable to adjust to the dynamic democracy which followed the war. He does not recognize that life has changed, that old labels have new meanings; Sally appeals to him:

"Oh, uncle, all these old labels. Do they matter any more? Do they even represent anything? The whole world is breaking up in every direction and people still talk of Liberals and Conservatives and Labour and Communists. They might as well try to put labels on a lot of broken glass after a bomb has gone off." (NHM, 197)

Jim is a man whose use of force makes compromise and tolerance impossible. His incompetence is nearly complete: he was unsuccessful in his program for the Lugas, he refused to deal with Chester or Pincomb, temporarily accepting an assignment with the specials only because he felt it was his duty to the country. The only place where he did adjust and nearly succeed was in primitive Africa where he imposed his concepts of nobility and where the stratified society allowed him to maintain his aristocratic position as a feudal lord. Unable to accept European civilization after the general strike, he plans to return to Africa with Nina and Robert. Unfortunately, Nina's "execution" precludes their retreat.
But in spite of his inabilities, Jim like Nina and Chester, does perceive some of the dilemmas of life. His advocation of freedom of the press echoes Cary's statements (PM, Ch. xii); he realizes that individual men are economically unable to challenge the corrupt newspaper system: "A chap gets married and has kids and he wants the money, and he says to himself, 'It may be dirty work but how am I going to stop it. Who am I to stand out?'" (NHM, 38).

Evaluating the nature of the mob, Jim questions:

What do they do it for? Why do they build up these grabbers and fakers into noble souls and heroes of the nation? It's all in the game. Poor devil of a Press artist has to get a job, catch the public eye. Tickle 'em somewhere. Poor devils of the mob want to think they've got a genius to look after 'em, hold off the next slump, keep out of the next war. And the politicos make hay between their tongues in their cheeks. It's the whole system is wrong. It's the way we've got fixed. By drifting along and not asking where we're going to. (NHM, 126)

Jim's observation that Chester is corrupt and that corruption in any form spreads parallels Cary's belief that "dishonesty in any form corrupts, and that a double standard of morality in politics can never serve 'as a valid motive or excuse in political action.'" However, Jim's criticism reflects his dogmatic attempts to shape the world; he challenges Chester: "You are like a cancer spreading poison everywhere through clean flesh--that's why

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I say you must be cut out, like a cancer. It's the only way to stop infection spreading" (NHM, 64).

While Jim tries to give meaning to his concepts of honor and duty, Chester tries to hold on to the reality which he created during his thirty years in politics; this is why he tries so desperately to recapture his lost power. His Shagbrook addresses on God in Politics continue the appeal for the chapel vote which he first made in his memoirs. However, these appeals expose his deceit. His third Shagbrook address is delivered in May "on the anniversary of his sister's death," yet the reader of Chester's apology realizes that Georgina died in the fall (ETL, 270). His hypocrisy is further evidenced by his feigned heart attacks. He stays at Jim's home under the pretense that he has a weak heart, yet after Nina's attempted suicide, "He was hopping upstairs like a goat, beating the secretary and Grant by about one step in two" (NHM, 248). Fittingly, he dies of a heart attack in the w.c.

But Chester is a pitiful man who sincerely believes he has a special mandate from God to save Britain. He is broken by the muddle and confusion of politics, yet he is cognizant of the chaos which surrounds him; he defends himself against the raging Jim:

"You people down here don't know what it's like --you can't imagine what I've been through," he said. "On one side a lot of rabbits in a cold sweat and on the other a pack of raging maniacs determined to commit suicide and take the
country with them. Labour terrified of its own power and Tories foaming for revenge on the starving poor who've given them a fright."
(NHM, 229)

His son-in-law, Bootham, delineates Chester's situation in a manner which recalls Nina's justification:

"He really believes he is ten times cleverer and wiser than other people. He really believes that God has given him a special mandate to save Britain--yes, and the world."

... "You misunderstand me. I have the very highest admiration for Nimmo--I think him a unique person and probably indispensable to the country at this moment. But for that very reason I am trying to take a clear view of his character--as it is. We have to remember, Latter, that we are dealing with an old man--old for his age--and one who has lived thirty years in a very special atmosphere. A man who has had power--especially the extraordinary power of the popular speaker--the mob orator, if you like--well, naturally, it has certain effects on the character--it gives a man a certain detachment from what we might call conventional standards. He's apt to look upon us ordinary mortals as pawns in the game--he hasn't time, you might say, for our little susceptibilities--he tends to forget them."
(NHM, 147-8)

This is the seventy-year-old man who has been broken, yet who wrote in his memoirs that he had found new life. Jim's apology demonstrates that Chester can never regain his vitality. Forgetting that Jim is not one of his chapel sympathizers, Chester confesses to him:

"Yes, in adversity I fall too easily into dejection. Sometimes even my faith has left me. I have said to myself indeed, 'God is mighty and never to be mocked.' I have said it but it no longer struck an echo in my soul. The life of my life did not rise to the trumpet. I tell you, Jim, as Nina could tell
you, there were moments of the war when I was very close to breaking. The world thought me bronze, but Nina saw the poor shivering human creature and warmed him back to hope—to that life of the spirit, that deeper than faith without which hope and God himself are but words, wind."

(NHM, 246)

Chester, as noted above, is a sincere man who justifies expedient actions. But we recall Nina's assertion at the conclusion of her apology that Chester wanted only to win, that his methods were only to insure his victory (PG, 249). Chester demonstrates that his "conversion" was not complete; he exposes himself as a hypocrite. He wrote that unless man "aim at the life of the soul then all his achievement will be a gaol or mad-house, self-hatred, corruption and despair" (ETL, 273). Yet Chester does not heed his own advice. Feigning heart trouble so that he can be near Nina, he discovers himself in the house of a mad man, besieged by office-seekers; his attempts to regain his political position abound with deceit, intrigue and corruption; throughout his last months, Chester knows nothing but despair.

Well aware that he must master the forces which threaten him, Chester plots with the Communists and even enlists the aid of Jim. The key to his fear of the militant Jim appears to be the satan image discussed above. To Chester, Jim is satanic; he defies the men in power and challenges the authorities; he has no fear of Chester and repeatedly attempts to assassinate him. Chester is awed by
him as he was by his brother Richard and Cran. He controls Him in the only way that he knows—by placing him in the responsible position of a public servant; he knows that Jim cannot defy the authority of a superior. However, resigning his position, Jim rebels and challenges Chester.

Nina is caught in the clash between the two men. We have already observed from her apology that she wants only happiness; Jim's account corroborates this analysis. He records Nina's own statement to him: "Everything—everything is so that we can go on being happy together" (NHM, 186). And he agrees with Chester's assertion that Nina is "a woman who can't bear much unhappiness" (NHM, 241). In her effort to attain happiness she tries to reconcile the opposing forces (Jim and Chester) but is trapped in the dilemma of having to do evil to placate Chester. Perjuring herself on the witness stand, she victimizes Maufe. Believing that she and Jim can retreat to Africa and escape political entanglements and that Chester's political victory is insured by Maufe's conviction, Nina victimizes Maufe in a final attempt to reconcile Jim and Chester. However, Jim is driven mad by Maufe's conviction; unable to "live like a rat" (NHM, 308), he names himself the executioner of his "corrupt" wife.

The trilogy concludes with Chester's ironic death in the w.c., Nina's murder and Jim's murder trial. The exponent of force, Jim is left with the rationalization of
the murder of the only person he ever possibly loved for
the sake of intangible ideals of truth, honor, country,
home and justice and with the realization that no one
understood his motivation.
CHAPTER V

THEY JUST HAD DIFFERENT PRINCIPLES

Inextricably bound together in the politics of life, the characters suffer for visions of life which do not accord with reality. Their failure to achieve self-realization is an appeal to the reader to create an adequate existence for himself in the free world which Cary envisioned.

Each of the main characters has justified his actions by presenting his vision of reality. Each of the apologies contributes to the total meaning of the trilogy, which demonstrates the politics of human existence in a free, creative world and the inadequacy of the three narrated visions. Nina is morally noncommittal, an irresponsible position in Cary's world; Chester loses himself in formal politics, and Jim refuses to accept reality.

It is true that Cary did not create a "moral center" in the trilogy. As previously explained, he juxtaposes the moral centers of his main characters with the moral center of the reader, who is expected to assume the creative task of reconstructing the world of these three characters and contemplating the disparate visions.
He must then determine the significance of these experiences for himself.

Cary's trilogy does, however, suggest certain truths. The apologies vividly depict the muddle and confusion of political life, from the village politics of Shagbrook, where Chester learned the need for manipulation and acknowledged the highly complex and delicate balance of relations between people, to the great stage of formal politics where men accept the responsibility and guilt for governing their fellow men. Chester suffers through his satanic motivation and his preoccupation with the "cause." Denying the importance of individuals and of the means, he is an ardent man who comes "to do evil in the name of good, a long and growing evil for a temporary and doubtful advantage" (ETL, 243). He is also the victim of the democratic political system; perhaps destruction is inevitable for one who acquires so much power and holds so much responsibility. Jim suffers because he refuses to accept the manipulation which accompanies democratic forms of government. He is an idealist who lives by slogans and is the embodiment of Cary's ideologues who force all history to fit some preconceived dialectic or blueprint, who see religion as a trick to keep the poor quiet, or, alternatively, accept the miseries of poverty as ordained by God. They are people who have lost all contact with reality, who live in a fantastic world, and sooner or later they run headfirst into reality and it breaks them.
The reality which smashes every ideologue and his system is human nature, incessantly striving towards a personal achievement in a world which is essentially free and personal. (AR, 172)

Nina suffers because she is caught in the conflict between these two forces.

The trilogy further demonstrates that force is not the tool for shaping progress, is in fact incompatible with progress in a democracy. Each man must have the opportunity to propagate his beliefs, for in the free, creative world which Cary depicts, no man can know absolute truth (PM, 195). Since innocent people suffer through the use of force, men must allow divergent beliefs to battle for supremacy (PM, 200-1). The reader may understand Jim's motivation, but he cannot accept his use of force, particularly since Jim has self-deceptively used it to avenge his "honor."

Sincerity and confidence are leit-motifs of the trilogy. The apologies suggest that without them life is chaos. Nina leaves Chester because she loses confidence in him when he plans evil against Goold and threatens Jim. Chester's suspicions of class plots are the result of his own betrayal of trusts, just as Jim's murder of Nina and attempted murder of Chester are the result of his loss of confidence in Nina. Many other minor characters reinforce the assertion that without sincerity and confidence life is chaos; the elder Nimmo is the most ardent of these. Jim's
friend Potter loses confidence, and in the agony of the general strike he suspects Jim of plotting against him. This preoccupation with sincerity is a parallel to Cary's belief that "sincerity is the ground of character" (PM, 199-200).

Cary further directs the reader's conclusions by repeating events. In the final volume of the trilogy, many events duplicate Nina's and Chester's experiences as related in her apology. Sally has just married Bootham, whom she does not love and who is twice her age; five months pregnant, she helps him campaign successfully just as the pregnant Nina helped Chester twenty years before. The young revolutionaries participating in the East Tarbiton bus incident reflect Chester during his days with Pring (NHM, 151). The general strike of 1926 recalls the labor strike in which Chester participated in 1879-80. The political struggle of the early 1920's recalls the Liberal Party's struggle to power in the 1890's when Chester entered politics; in 1926, the new generation is replacing him, just as he replaced the older generation in the late 1890's. Chester accuses Brightman of the same deceitful tactics and selfish goals of which he is accused.

The other volumes of the trilogy also duplicate experiences. In Nina's apology, Tom mocks politicians and defends Chester as the only sincere minister on the cabinet. Nina's account of her childhood demonstrates that she and
Jim were not unlike the Nimmo children in their quarrels and even their hate of each other. Chester's political influence upon his son Tom parallels the elder Nimmo's religious and political influence upon Chester. In his own apology, Chester's religious concern with death resembles Mrs. Coyte's sudden concern with death after her heart attack.

The repetition of these experiences suggests that they are eternal truths; that though generations come and go, they are each confronted with the same problems; that they must create their own reality and must yield to younger generations. Chester's attempt to hold on to his vision represents "age" not wishing to yield the vision which it has created for itself. Jim's attempt represents "intolerant tradition" not wishing to be changed. Except the Lord and Prisoner of Grace depict the younger generations trying to create their own visions; they dramatize Cary's belief that

...every family shows the everlasting situation of authority and freedom; or, as I see it, of older people who have grown attached to a certain kind of existence because they have made it, and the younger people who, in their turn, are anxious to make a new existence for themselves. 24

Cary's belief that individuals must create their own visions and that tradition and age cannot inhibit them

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without incurring revolution and chaos is further demonstrated in *Not Honour More*.

The trilogy is an embodiment of Cary's beliefs. Many of these have already been discussed, but others depend upon the complete trilogy for their meaning. For example, the ends-means conflict which functions as a leitmotif is a projection of Cary's belief that "It is not even true that the end justifies the means. The question in real life is what means, and what ends?" (AR, 179) And both Nina and Chester assert Cary's belief that honesty is not always the best policy (AR, 179). Nina demonstrates this to Tom (PG, 142-144) and discusses the political necessity of lies as noted in Chapter Two above (PG, 158). Chester's career is an appeal for the manipulatory technique which employs lies, but it also demonstrates the danger of losing oneself in the ends-means justification of one's actions.

Cary's criticism of the educational system (PM, Chs. xii, xiii) also depends upon the total meaning of the trilogy. A comparison is suggested between Chester, the country boy who dropped out of school at the age of fourteen, and his brother Richard, his son Tom and Jim, the products of the best schools in England. Chester is the only one in the trilogy to contribute greatly to society; Richard retreats to the village, contributing little to society; Tom commits suicide, never finishing his
education, and Jim actually deters progress. Cary believed that liberty "is the power in man to do what he likes so far as his power can reach" (**PM**, 7) and that the function of the educational system is to foster the self-realization of every individual: "Children should be educated in freedom and every means taken to cut down censorship. Freedom of mind, the courage to know and to learn, is the only foundation of self-respect and responsibility" (**PM**, 209). Chester's basic education benefited him more than the complete and expensive educations of Richard, Tom and Jim. His own genius allowed him to develop on his own, though a more satisfactory educational system may have developed his genius to a greater extent and eliminated the satanic fault in his character. Chester's comparison to Jim, the man who dies vainly for abstract notions (**PM**, 38), is a sharp one and a strong condemnation of the educational system which shaped Jim.

Cary's basic condemnation is of the intolerance within not only the educational system but the whole civilization. His trilogy is an appeal for complete toleration in a world of free, creative men. In this respect, the trilogy is a total projection of Cary's views as presented in **Power in Men** and **Art and Reality**. He wished to demonstrate the need for tolerance and self-realization. The trilogy vividly portrays three visions of life and their inadequacies. No individual is
absolutely right or wrong. In a democratic and real world, where men are imperfect, they must struggle together to discover truth, and they must accept it, no matter what the source. In a democracy, "The only remedy for dogmatism and lies is toleration and the greatest possible liberty of expression" (PM, 201). Chester lied, but Jim was dogmatic; his "execution" of Nina was misinterpreted—the corrupt element was eliminated but not exposed. "The force of democratic liberty is that the search for truth is not prevented, so that it is continually being rediscovered, restated, and purified" (PM, 201).

Possessing both good and bad qualities, each of the main characters is privileged to relate some of the truths which Cary recorded in his political treatises. Suffering together for their inadequate visions, they demonstrate the basic aloneness of men and that truth and history are often disparate; that men are justified by their individual visions of life: "No one could say that anyone was in the wrong. They just had different principles" (PG, 121).
LITERATURE CITED


