god-hypothesis on the fringes of life. In so far as this is meant, I have little quarrel with the concept. But this appears an arbitrary and untraditional use of the expression, fraught with possibilities of misunderstanding. Certainly the Christian is to be godless, if such be the 'god'; certainly we are not to promote this concept by the terroristic tactics of obsessing him with sins, death, etc. Certainly we should rid Christianity of false withdrawal and empty religious worship, and of selfish seeking of salvation. But none of this is to do away with God, with the recognition of our sin before God, of the contingency of this life, and of the realisation in human ways of the community of Christ's Body; none of this is to do away with true religion.

Graham Greene's Indirection

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This article presents a parallel to my previous article¹ entitled 'Dante's Indirection'. Both are attempts to study a certain method of achieving effects in a reader, a method to which Kierkegaard gave the title 'Indirect Communication'. Both articles are concerned basically with Kierkegaard's technique, due to the angle from which I approach indirect methods in other writers. The expression 'Indirect Communication' is ambiguous, as was its use in Kierkegaard's own hands, and sometimes in studying it, in and for itself, one's attention is drawn to parallel and much clearer uses of the principle, when one finds it in poets or novelists of less involved theoretical pretensions. Such a man is Graham Greene, novelist, Catholic, individual. It is to him that I turn for further illustration of the principle which seems to defy (in Kierkegaard's case at least) all attempts at analysis and capture. Critics for over a century, from all countries in the world, have tried to solve the enigma of Kierkegaard's use of Indirect Communication. Perhaps his Indirection can only be approached indirectly. This essay on three novels of Graham Greene is such an attempt.

What did Kierkegaard mean by 'Indirect Communication'? This he sets forth in a book called *The Point of View for my Work as an Author*, a book

¹BLACKFRIARS, April 1963.

about which he had such terrible doubts that its publication in complete form was eventually only undertaken by his brother after his death. In it he draws the distinction between the 'aesthetic' works and the 'religious' works in his output with such clarity that we would expect no problem. But he himself obviously felt, and any reader of his works feels immediately, that the explanation he gave in that work simply did not answer to the actual feel of his production, even contradicted its spirit. The later theory does not explain the former practice.

My contention in this essay, as elsewhere, is that the Indirect Communication in its later phases introduced a category which is of decisive importance, and one which the critics have not evaluated at a methodological level—that I mean of Reduplication. The Danish word is strangely used, as is its English translation, and its best definition is the phrase 'at traede i Karakteer': to step out in character, existentially, to 'exist' something which is believed. Hence the ambivalence of Socrates in Kierkegaard's work, and his famous struggle with Hegel over him: Socrates 'existed' what he believed, and in like manner the category of reduplication comes to include for Kierkegaard the saint and the martyr and, as its highest point, the Imitatio Christi itself.

But as Professor Fabro points out in a recent article² the communication of the truth became more and more impossible for Kierkegaard to conceive, and eventually he shelved the whole problem by turning to the figure of Christ as incarnate truth, and measuring all earthly efforts and existences by that standard. Christianity by this standard becomes not so much a doctrine as an existence. It follows from this that there can be no communication in a direct way of the Christian truth.

The pictorial effect of the martyr's death, the indirect effect of someone's actions or personality, become then for Kierkegaard the true indirect communication: strangely enough, that is to say, nothing verbal at all. We are playing, as it were, before the darkened hall, in whose darkness we may not pick out any faces we know. Impersonally we are watched, and we act 'in character' as far as we may: we act in character, in order indirectly to have the overwhelming effect on people that such wordless communication can have, to create, as it were, an artistic effect upon people's moral and spiritual consciousnesses.

This is a sketch of the effect of the martyr and the saint on the sensibility of their times. It is the effect of the Imitatio Christi. These categories, and their difference from the categories of the genius and the poet, occupied

²La communicazione della verità nel pensiero di Kierkegaard, Studi Kierkegaardiani, Brescia 1957.

Kierkegaard in the period when he was writing his great love-poems to Christ himself, *The Works of Love* (1847) and *Training in Christianity* (1850). His own analysis of himself becomes acute at this point as never before. In the Journal he writes:

About myself.

Christianity in these parts simply does not exist; but before there can be any question of its being restored again 'first a poet's heart must break, and I am that poet'—these words of mine about myself are only too true... Denmark has need of a dead man... the God-Man is the only individual who can express Christianity by himself. When it is not the God-Man it always requires at the very least two in order to express Christianity.³

'At the very least two in order to express Christianity'. The communicational implications of this are my subject in the rest of this article, as Greene works it out in his Saint and Martyr (the 'whisky-priest' of 'The Power and the Glory) and in three indirections which cause a conversion or a redefinition. It seems to me that the greatest effect of an indirect communication is that it leads to a redefinition. There are three such cases I want particularly to look at: the conversion of Sarah in The End of the Affair; the consequent process of being profoundly moved, which happens to Bendrix her lover; and finally the deep understanding which comes to Scobie in The Heart of the Matter when he stares upon the dead body of Ali.

All four places (there are many others) are famous already and have their philosophical orientation marvellously done for them in cultural and theological terms by Paul Rostenne. To set these situations in a general cultural pattern and crisis is his concern there, and it could not be done better.

But I am only concerned with these passages insofar as they illuminate my especial theme, the way, that is, that to 'step out in character', or to reduplicate something believed, is to have colossal effects on others, perhaps effects which reach down to the deepest levels of their unconscious need for faith and lead them insensibly or violently to it.

Kiekegaard's vision of the martyr as the ultimate Christian achievement is given pure expression in *The Power and the Glory*, where the whisky-priest is on the run. On p. 210⁵ we have the morning of the whisky-priest's death:

³X4, A.586, Dru's translation No. 1258.

⁴Graham Greene: témoin des temps tragiques, Paris 1949.

⁵I refer to the Penguin editions throughout this article.

Tears poured down his face; he was not at the moment afraid of damnation—even the fear of pain was in the background. He felt only an immense disappointment because he had to go to God empty-handed, with nothing done at all. It seemed to him, at that moment, that it would have been quite easy to have been a saint. It would only have needed a little self-restraint and a little courage. He felt like someone who has missed happiness by seconds at an appointed place. He knew now that at the end there was only one thing that counted—to be a saint. It may seem as if Greene has reached the extreme point of pathos here,

as if the God-Man (to use Kierkegaard's paradox in reverse direction) were truly so insignificant that one might not notice his achieved state of Reduplication. The paradox is in reverse direction, for of course, for Kierkegaard, the absolute Paradox is that God should be incarnated for an historical moment in Man. For Greene, the absolute Paradox is that Man should for a moment in history be incarnated in God. For that is Greene's meaning here. The little whisky-priest takes on the quality of the divine and can bless others precisely because of the quality of his humility and his doubt. At his execution the priest, who is torn with remorse that he has achieved nothing of spiritual greatness, that he is not even worthy of Hell, inspires the Lieutenant (p. 201), Mr Tench (p. 216) and the nameless family who read the lives of the martyrs (pp. 217-222) to acknowledge that here indeed was a saint and a martyr, and, by so inspiring them, brings back to their secular and desiccated consciousnesses an impression of spiritual greatness and possibility, indirectly moving them, perhaps at an unconscious level, to a greater spiritual moment in themselves.

There is a moment in the actual execution of the priest when the analogy to the crucified Christ is very clear. When Mr Tench observes the execution from his window, he seems to hear the whisky-priest cry out the word 'Excuse':

The officer stepped aside, the rifles went up, and the little man suddenly made jerky movements with his arms. He was trying to say something ... but perhaps his mouth was too dry, because nothing came out except a word that sounded like 'Excuse' ...

The reference is surely to 'Father, for give them; for they know not what they do'. The Imitatio Christi has been fearlessly carried to its highest point. Its indirection in terms of Reduplication is at the point of snapping.

We come then to the first of the three cases I have selected of Indirect Communication, in this case between Sarah in *The End of the Affair*, and a crucifix in a Roman Catholic church she happens to enter. The hidden

nature of the divinity wells out of the piece, enriching and answering to some deepest pattern in Sarah towards which she is obscurely struggling.

When I came in and sat down and looked round I realised it was a Roman church, full of plaster statues and bad art, realistic art. I hated the statues, the crucifix, all the emphasis on the human body. I was trying to escape from the human body and all it needed. I thought I could believe in some kind of a God that bore no relation to ourselves, something vague, amorphous, cosmic . . . I thought, instead of my own body, of Maurice's . . . I thought of a new scar on his shoulder . . . and I knew I wanted that scar to exist through all eternity . . . So today I looked at that material body on that material cross, and I wondered, how could the world have nailed a vapour there? A vapour of course felt no pain and no pleasure . . . Suppose God did exist, suppose he was a body like that, what's wrong in believing that his body existed as much as mine? (p. 107-110).

Sarah is indirectly touched by an image of something physical, and takes its inner significance to herself by unwillingly and angrily dipping her physical hand into the water, the spiritual effect of which is healing and faith. She sees here that indirectly she is becoming convinced that her previous rationalisations against Smythe were mere lack of attention to detail and to real experience or thought. The path to faith lies through another human being, Maurice, and through his body: we are reprehensible before the bar of complete human sensibility if we bring so little, as we usually do, of our emotional and intellectual abilities to bear on what God means. Here Sarah feels the physical and emotional need of God for her complete being (at whatever depth the subconscious is involved in Jung's terms) and feels God move uneasily on the cross in response to the urgency of her projected desire. The Indirection moves Sarah to redefinition in this way, that there is nothing to be gained by dividing God off from the whole range of our physical and emotional sensibilities, from some deep region of which, doubtless, the intense need for faith arises in its first instance.

Sarah however is in a very receptive state to such impressions. She has been keeping the Diary, the Diary which as it falls into Bendrix's hand is to have the indirect effect on him that Sarah's contagious love of God has for everyone. We see in these Diary entries the superb structuring of the novel as an indirect piece. On the 10th January 1946 Sarah writes . . .

tonight the rain soaked through my coat and my clothes and into my skin, and I shivered with the cold, and it was for the first time as though I nearly loved You. I walked under Your windows in the rain and I

wanted to wait under them all night only to show that after all I might learn to love and I wasn't afraid of the desert any longer because You were there . . . (p. 111).

We remark the extraordinarily subtle use of capital and small letters in the word 'You'. We understand 'it was for the first time as though I nearly loved You' as an expression for God, but we are confounded when the capital is retained for 'Your windows' when the subject is evidently Bendrix. Likewise 'I wasn't afraid of the desert any longer because You were there' maintains the obscurity in Sarah's mind about whether she is thinking of Bendrix as divine or of God as human. Again we have the Kierkegaardian Paradox of Incarnation in reverse direction. On page 120 Sarah begins a love-letter to 'You', where God is directly addressed, but the confusion between God's body on the crucifix and Bendrix's body is still maintained deliberately by Greene:

I have no need to write to You or to talk to You, that's how I began a letter to You a little time ago, and I was ashamed of myself and I tore it up... did I ever love Maurice as much before I loved You? Or was it really You I loved all the time? Did I touch You when I touched him?... But was it me he loved, or You? For he hated in methethings You hate. He was on Your side all the time without knowing it...

Here again we meet the psychological issues slantingly. Bendrix is represented as being potentially a lover of God. It is through women that the redemption is worked so richly and so many times in Greene's novels, which is in keeping with the most modern theories of the unconscious and its salvation by the pattern of the *Anima*. Sarah's Diary however goes on to pray for Bendrix, and in a way which will catch at Bendrix's heart when he reads it. Sarah, in contact with the divine in herself, knowing herself now utterly as God's thing (through her body) can look down on Bendrix as from a superior height in human achievement, from the Indirect position of the Saint:

But even the first time, in the hotel near Paddington, we spent all we had. You were there teaching us to squander, like You taught the rich man, so that one day we might have nothing left except this love of You. But You are too good to me. When I ask You for pain, You give me peace. Give it him too. Give him my peace—he needs it more.

'Give him my peace'. The implications of spiritual bounty are too plain to ignore. Whether or not we are to accept Greene's account of her childhood baptism as decisive in this later fullness, we see that something has led Sarah to this profound richness of being. Sarah has 'miraculous' effects on several other people in the book, when like Kierkegaard she is

become 'in the most solemn sense of the word, an "absent one".' I do not think it relevant here to discuss whether this is a formal effect of baptism. Greene presents it to us as the phenomenon of someone who knows herself deeply enough, even at the subconscious level, to give peace and grace to others. She is moved by her *Animus* to understand the whole of her spiritual longing. Indirectly then, by this prayer for the soul of Benddrix (who 'needs peace more') she answers to his search for the *Anima*. Psychologically the structure is complete.

We come now to the criterion to 'suffer for' as opposed to simple suffering. To 'suffer for' is peculiar to Greene's characters, who find their eventual release from their own suffering in feeling more for someone else. This is true of the whisky-priest with his daughter, as it is of Querry in A Burnt-Out Case and Scobie in The Heart of the Matter. Here Sarah suffers for Bendrix. This defines the quality of her faith and makes possible for Bendrix in terms of peace and love a redefinition of what faith might mean. In a sense, the thought is 'He prayeth best who loveth best'. To pray for the peace of someone else's soul is surely to pray from an answering quality in one's own. If then one feels the presence and pain of another in a prayer, so that it is a real extension of one's own, then the prayer offered up on his or her behalf is equally offered up on one's own behalf. Everything becomes extension in the act of prayer and by praying for peace in another one receives it in intense form in oneself.

At this point we must study the Indirection or we shall be lost. Sarah's spiritual understanding does not stream out into the void and waste itself. It achieves a series of indirect acts which are the definition of her faith and the redefinition of Bendrix's and others'.

We remember how Bendrix reads the Diary, and is struck by her 'leap' and the ensuing sense of peace:

... If this God exists, I thought, and if even you—with your lusts and adulteries and the timid lies you used to tell—can change like this, we could all be saints by leaping as you leapt, by shutting the eyes and leaping once and for all: if you are a saint, it's not so difficult to be a saint. It's something He can demand of any of us, leap'. (p. 186).

We are precisely in the area of the Kierkegaardian paradox of the 'leap of faith'. No better definition of his meaning could be given than this reaction in Bendrix.

Bendrix is in the very condition of susceptibility, the state which Kierkegaard in *The Sickness unto Death* characterises as 'being unconsciously in despair'. Kierkegaard in a Journal entry from the same period has characterised this state brilliantly:

There is only one proof of the truth of Christianity and that, quite rightly, is from the emotions, when the dread of sin and a heavy conscience torture a man into crossing the narrow line between despair bordering upon madness—and Christianity. There lies Christianity! If this is not orthodox, we need only note it and pass on: it is the kind of argument that appeals to unorthodox men of passionate natures like Kierkegaard, and here Bendrix. For Greene there is nothing worse than the pat orthodox answer to the involved emotional processes of the individual who is struggling to find his wholeness. Bendrix is stung by his feeling of being robbed of Sarah by God into these words:

But I won't leap. I sat on my bed and said to God: You've taken her, but You haven't got me yet... You're a devil, God, tempting us to leap. But I don't want Your peace and I don't want Your love. I wanted something very simple and very easy: I wanted Sarah for a lifetime and You took her away... I hate You, God, I hate You as though You existed. (p. 186).

The protestation is too violent for credence. And we remember Sarah's definition of hate no less than love as a proof of the existence of God:

I thought, sometimes I've hated Maurice, but would I have hated him if I hadn't loved him too? Oh God, if I could really hate you, what would that mean? (p. 110).

We see what it means in the tortured doubt of Bendrix as the book closes. He has to make the decision that Kierkegaard sketched out, the real Either/Or when times become more than one can bear: despair bordering upon madness—or Christianity.

But Sarah was convinced against her conscious will, by the Indirection of a crucifix. Bendrix is convinced against his conscious will by her Diary. Sarah, by making a present of her reaction to the crucifix and by bothering to record that experience in her Diary, leaves open the path to her experience through the only mode that she and Bendrix have in common—the body and the memory of physical love. Thus Bendrix cannot fight rationally what he reads in her Diary, because it was not with the rational part of her that Sarah felt the need for faith but with the body, which by then was an analogy to Bendrix's body. Thus Sarah's conversion, couched as it is in the terms which most concerned Bendrix, 'takes' on Bendrix and he falls inevitably sick of the same longing and the same need. Greene has elsewhere characterised faith as a virus in the blood-stream.

6Journal x 1 A.467, Dru's translation No. 926.

We turn lastly to Scobie in *The Heart of the Matter*. Scobie's desperate search is for peace.

... He dreamed of peace day and night... peace seemed to him the most beautiful word in the language: My peace I give you, my peace I leave with you: O Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, grant us thy peace. In the Mass he pressed his fingers against his eyes to keep the tears of longing in (p. 58).

Scobie is another example, like Sarah, of how God breaks into an already God-permeated consciousness, which stands on the verge of identifying itself. When Scobie at the end of the novel stares down on the body of his servant Ali, to whose murder he is party, he is overwhelmed by a rush of love for his fellow creature's body, just as Sarah had been by the crucifix. The crucifix image is again present, and it is Ali's body which moves Scobie's soul to the freeing love that has always escaped him, the lack of which is his passionate longing for peace:

The body lay coiled and unimportant like a broken watch-spring under a pile of empty petrol drums... for a moment he saw the body as something very small and dark and a long way away—like a broken piece of the rosary he looked for: a couple of black beads and the image of God coiled at the end of it. Oh God, he thought, I've killed you: you've served me all these years and I've killed you at the end of them. God lay there under the petrol drums and Scobie felt the tears in his mouth, salt in the cracks of his lips. You served me and I did this to you. You were faithful to me, and I wouldn't trust you.

'What is it, sah?' the corporal whispered, kneeling by the body. 'I loved him', Scobie said (p. 238).

The 'corporal' kneeling by the body we may see as the physical raised to the level of personification in Scobie's mind—and the symbolic value of kneeling shows how highly Scobie now values the spirit as represented by the body—the body cast away, disowning him. We have here another re-enactment of the Passion of Christ as we did in the case of the whisky-priest's death: the suffering servant, betrayed first and then killed by those he served, by those he loved and by those he trusted. As with Kierkegaard, there is a christology here of the Suffering Servant, the humble lover, the cast-off redeemer, and Greene embodies it in his whisky-priest and his Ali, where Kierkegaard dwells long, in the book called *Training in Christianity*, on the humble Inviter, whose invitation is universal, Come unto me . . .

Ali's body, the body of the servant who was trustworthy, had cast him off, disowned him—'I know you not'. He swore aloud,

hysterically. 'By God, I'll get the man who did this', but under that anonymous stare insincerity withered. He thought: I am the man (p. 238).

Here in the phrase 'I am the man' we have the overtones of 'Ecce Homo', and of Peter's denial in the Courtyard, 'I know not the man', as well as Nathan's 'Thou art the man'. It is noticeable too that Scobie cries, like Peter, hysterically and afterwards weeps just as bitterly. The denial is done, for ever. Ali alive was a mixture of spirit and body. Scobie had perhaps never really thought about Ali's body, because he was the servant, the tactfully absent. But when one is in the presence of death, when there is no longer the spirit, then the injury to the spirit of the deceased is figured forth by the presence of the body left behind on the shore of life. As Sarah discovered, if God were a mere 'vapour' one could not love him. Here 'God lay there under the petrol drums'. He is body, killed like that figure hanging in 'imaginary pain' on its wooden cross, and by its finality, with powerful Indirection, moving the viewer to redefine his beliefs, to redefine himself, before the final act of Reduplication.

Scobie, like Sarah, discovers the difference between suffering and 'suffering for'. With the 'suffering for' Ali, Scobie is released into love. Before the body, he feels neither grief nor remorse. These (for Scobie conventional) responses are switched off. Scobie feels only the overwhelming love of 'suffering for'.

The Indirection in this third case, of the human body of Ali, causes a redefinition. It springs out pictorially, in the simplest of things, very often in the human body as emblem for a personality, but it is the revelation of what that body stood for, what that death stood for, what that act stood for, what that love stood for, which is the essential revelation of the hidden nature of the divine in man, and of man in the divine. It is this sense of revelation which is at the core of the theology both of Greene and of Kierkegaard. I use 'revelation' not as a term of glory, of theological grandeur on which tomes have been written, but in a real sense as the revelation of everyday things in their infinite preciousness, and this includes human love as its apex. This is what the revelation of God is like for Greene and for Kierkegaard, as if, standing back, we see for the first time what it was we possessed, how precious it was, that we mishandled it, that we despised it, that maybe we even killed it, and then we see in what sense it is true for both writers that, in the words of the whiskypriest:

Loving God isn't any different from loving a man-or a child. It's

wanting to be with Him, to be near Him . . . It's wanting to protect Him from yourself. (p. 173)

Earlier in the book (p. 102) the whisky-priest had meditated that: If God had been like a toad, you could have rid the globe of toads, but when God was like yourself, it was no good being content with stone figures—you had to kill yourself among the graves.

It is my contention that, in a similar way, the sense of the human in the divine and the divine in the human, both for Kierkegaard and for Greene, is brought about by the indirect means of outward objects and the relations we have to other human beings. The martyr and the saint and the Imitatio Christi are all good solid orthodox concepts—but it is against their being taken in an orthodox way that Greene struggles so hard. Greene uses the Christian types and pictures, but in a hidden, subtle, new, indirect way. He incarnates states and attributes: by doing so he makes us, his readers, reckon with things which we may have committed mentally to the theologian and the back shelf of the public library. Greene recognises that these types, the saint, the martyr and the Imitatio Christi are in fact people we meet every day, only we are too theoretical and too obvious-minded to look closely enough to see the divinity shining through. He also suggests that these types bring us spiritual health and peace—Greene is a psychologist, and knows that human beings are in constant search for those religious forms which answer to the requirements of their deepest spiritual and emotional forces. These hungers, one might call them, for the hero and the saint and the Christ, may be characterised (to borrow Jung's terminology for a moment) as hungers for the Symbols of the Self. What the force of the word 'Symbol' is in Jung's phrase I do not feel able to define, but some such profound search is going on in the heart and subsconscious of everyone who is not a spiritual cretin. It is to these people, 'moving about in worlds not realised', that Greene addresses his types and his paradoxical seekers. Thus while the Jungian analysis of religion has its validity, Greene insists that the types and symbols of the Christian religion are to be met much more really in human life than they are in human dreams and neuroses. Types in dreams represent a wished-for wholeness. Types in human everyday life represent achieved wholeness. Types in conscious life are therefore the higher form, as the actual is over the potential. Whatever the low psychological parentage of faith, it is in its acceptance crowned like a king. It may start from the lowest and most abject needs of the human heart, but may finally achieve the beauty of a transcendent moment when that faith may be existentially realised in an act: which reduplicates what is believed to

be the good and the true. Kierkegaard warns us against any man who claims to love God for any other reason than that he needs God desperately and this may be understood psychologically too in Jungian terms. For Jung, support and healing come from the least likely place of all, from the Self; hence, he says, 8 'the archetype of the lowly origin of the Redeemer'. Kierkegaard's love poem to the figure of Christ as we have it in Training in Christianity shows us such a Redeemer, poor, lonely, despised and rejected. He is so like oneself, that his invitation, 'Come unto me all ye that labour', coming from such an unlikely quarter, almost makes one overlook the fact that this Inviter is the source of all spiritual peace and rest. 'Is it not time', asks Jung in The Undiscovered Self, 'that the Christian mythology, instead of being wiped out, was understood symbolically for once?' And again of modern man he asks, 'Does he know that he is on the point of losing the life-preserving myth of the inner man which Christianity has treasured up for him? Does he realise what lies in store should this catastrophe ever befall him?' The Indirection in Kierkegaard's own view of the martyr, who must be first and foremost 'reflective' in the modern age, as of the saint and of the Imitatio Christi, implicates the observer. Such I believe is the intention and practice of Graham Greene. As novelist he aims at some such result. If for Greene human actions can approximate to an analogy of the divine then certainly for Kierkegaard the divine may look so human as to defeat the eye.

To those people today who are concerned to evaluate relative claims of theology and philosophy and psychology, it seems to me that this kind of indirect study of very different writers sometimes manages to destroy parti pris very usefully. Like Bultmann and Bonhoeffer, for example, Greene is concerned with essences. But unlike them he does not believe that these essences are communicable without forms and symbols, without Indirection and without pictorial, reduplicated, significance. In redefining some aspects of faith as relations between 'You' and 'you' (the 'two at the very least' of Kierkegaard) Greene uses every shade from his palette. He is psychologist and lover. Like Kierkegaard, Greene, even when he is analysing man, still loves him. When he forces his characters to think, he forces them at the same time to feel, and this may account for the extraordinary veracity of the experience of conversion or redefinition which we get in one after another of Greene's novels.

⁷Christian Discourses, trans. Lowrie, p. 198.

⁸Psychology and Alchemy, p. 28.