

MARIAN CROWE

Catholicism and Metaphor

The Catholic Fiction of David Lodge

“WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THE CATHOLIC NOVEL?” is a question often asked by lovers of the novels of Graham Greene, Evelyn Waugh, François Mauriac, and Georges Bernanos. What these readers usually have in mind is not simply a novel by a Catholic or one that includes some Catholic material, but a work of substantial literary merit in which Catholic theology and thought have a significant presence, with genuine attention to the spiritual life. Such a novel often draws on Catholicism’s rich liturgical and sacramental symbolism and is enriched by the Catholic imagination, which, according to Andrew Greeley, is one that is more analogical than dialectical and sees created reality as a revelation of the presence of God.¹

Catholic novels are still being written, but they seem somehow different from the classics of the genre. More than forty years ago David Lodge, an English novelist and critic explained why: “I don’t think that one can talk of the Catholic novel in quite such sharply-defined terms any more, partly because Catholicism itself has become a much more confused—and confusing—faith, more difficult to define, mainly in the last ten or fifteen years as a result of Pope

John and the Vatican Council. The Church no longer presents that sort of monolithic, unified, uniform view of life which it once did."²

In fact, Lodge himself, one of the most interesting Catholic novelists in England today, has enriched and expanded the possibilities of Catholic fiction by demonstrating that comedy, wit, and satire are legitimate modes for expressing serious religious themes—especially as they pertain to recent developments in Catholicism.

Bernard Bergonzi provides an account of Lodge's religious position in his 1999 essay, "A Conversation with David Lodge."

Graham Greene, in his later years, after he had moved away from the tormented orthodoxy of his Catholic novels, defined himself as a "Catholic agnostic"; Lodge prefers to reverse the terms and call himself an "Agnostic Catholic." He remains in the Church as a practising Catholic, though he is agnostic about the ultimate reality behind the symbolic languages of liturgy and scripture. He has abandoned much of the traditional Catholic world-view which he grew up with and expressed in *The Picturegoers*, now regarding it as over literal and anthropomorphic; at the same time, he insists that religious language is not empty of meaning. It is a perennial symbolic and speculative mode in which we articulate the contradictions and anxieties which are ineradicably part of the human condition. By traditional standards—perhaps those he would have upheld himself as a young man—Lodge acknowledges that he is probably a heretic; but he thinks that many theologians, including Catholic ones, would now hold similar attitudes.³

What makes Lodge's fiction distinctive is that his Catholic characters are so ordinary. Whereas Waugh depicted aristocratic Catholics and Greene portrayed anguished sinners in exotic settings, Lodge's Catholic characters are resolutely middle class; and their locales—London and Rummidge (Birmingham)—are about as far away from Greenland as you can get. This very ordinariness is what

makes his novels so appealing to many readers. Yet some Catholics see more in them. Sociologist and priest Andrew Greeley says that Lodge's "protagonists are often swept up by some kind of salvation—an imperfect and problematic salvation perhaps, but one in which there are not only grounds for hope but also powerful hints of grace."⁴

One does not find in Lodge's fiction the severe, moralizing critique of the secular world that characterized many earlier Catholic novels. His critical and discerning perspective is focused more on the Church. His gentle satire catches all of the ludicrous aspects of Catholic life but has an angry edge when directed at what he sees as pre-Vatican II Catholicism's overly strict and rigid sexual morality, which has caused needless anguish to some Catholics and alienated others. For Lodge, sex is not so much an archetypal sin to be conquered as a delightful and comic part of life, although one that does require some restraint and discipline. Lodge's characters sin, yet even serious sins like adultery and fornication are seen more as foibles and flaws than as grave offenses against God and the moral order; in fact, some of their "sins" seem to make Lodge's characters more human and loveable. If anything approaches the category of sin it is more likely to be coldness, selfishness, or lack of self-awareness.

Lodge has a clear grasp of many of the issues that have preoccupied Catholicism in the second half of the twentieth century. To my knowledge no other writer has described so cogently the moral dilemma of Catholics who simply did not find the arguments of *Humanae Vitae* persuasive, as well as the way in which this controversy called into question the whole network of Catholic moral teaching. He also portrays how Catholics, deprived of their old certainty of an authoritative moral guide, try to live in a sexually permissive society by relying on the best that secularity has to offer: a good heart and a desire not to hurt others. Lodge also sees the disruptive nature of the pace, extent, and quality of liturgical and other changes in Catholicism, as well as the profound ramifications of a loss of belief in hell, and a greatly attenuated belief in immortality.

One of the most striking ways in which Lodge manages to be both amusing and profound is his metaphors—some original and witty, and others traditional and venerable, but freshly illuminated—that manage to get at the heart of Catholicism's splendors and struggles.

I. How Far Can You Go?

My argument that Lodge has produced serious Catholic fiction is primarily based on three novels: *How Far Can You Go?* (1980, published as *Souls and Bodies* in the United States), *Paradise News* (1991), and *Therapy* (1995). In some of his earlier novels, Lodge had used Catholic material primarily for sociological background and comedic possibilities.⁵ In *How Far Can You Go?*, however, Catholicism is the sum and substance of the subject matter. With this novel a new note of theological depth and seriousness enters in, aptly expressed in the question that forms the title, "How far can you go?" Older Catholics immediately recognize the question with which young Catholics have traditionally sought to learn what was appropriate sexual expression and affection and at what point it becomes mortal sin. On a more philosophical level, however, the title questions how far you can go in altering the externals of a religion—forms, rites, language, and practices—before you begin to erode some of the substance as well.⁶

The main character in *How Far Can You Go?* is the Catholic Church itself. The novel has no single protagonist, for it follows the lives of eight young Catholics, their spouses, and a priest over a period of twenty-three years. What gives the tale piquancy is that these ordinary Catholics find themselves in a hierarchical and authoritarian institution that, with the Second Vatican Council, the sexual revolution, and other social upheavals of the 1960s, finds itself propelled into turbulent change.

The novel contains many metaphors for the institutional Church. The first is the dismal interior of the church where in the opening chapter the students are attending a weekday Mass.

Inside the church of Our Lady and St Jude, a greystone, neo-gothic edifice squeezed between a bank and a furniture warehouse, it might still be night. The winter daybreak is too feeble to penetrate the stained-glass windows, doubly and trebly stained by soot and bird droppings, that depict scenes from the life of Our Lady, with St Jude, patron of lost causes, prominent in the foreground of her Coronation in Heaven. In alcoves along the side walls votive candles fitfully illuminate the plaster figures of saints paralysed in attitudes of prayer or exhortation. There are electric lights in here, dangling from the dark roof on immensely long leads, like lamps lowered down a well or pit-shaft; but, for economy's sake, only a few have been switched on, above the altar and over the front central pews where the sparse congregation is gathered.⁷

This description can be read as an icon of one view of pre-Vatican II Catholicism. The language—*greystone, squeezed, feeble, stained, soot, bird droppings, lost causes, fitfully, paralysed, dangling, pit-shaft, economy's, sparse*—create an impression of feebleness, lethargy, ugliness, and decay. The church is being squeezed by a bank and warehouse, symbols of the modern secular and commercial world. The traditional stained-glass windows admit little light, partly because the light itself is dim, and partly because of dirt and stains (perhaps the Church's own shameful past). The church is associated with lost causes. The saints depicted in the statues seem to be paralyzed, suggesting that all they can do is pray or exhort, but not really live and interact in the modern world. The lamps could conceivably light up a dark space, but "only a few have been switched on." Is it a false economy that keeps the light feeble and ensures a sparse congregation? This is an image of the Church on the eve of the Vatican II, which, in an attempt to modernize the Church, to "open the windows and let in fresh air," as Pope John XXIII said, would shake and unsettle that ancient institution to a degree probably unforeseen by anyone.

The meaning of the Church is also explored with the analogies

of a game, and later, an insurance policy. Lodge uses the children's board game Snakes and Ladders to describe the "metaphysic or world-picture" (6) of the university students.

Up there was Heaven; down there was Hell. The name of the game was Salvation, the object to get to Heaven and avoid Hell. It was like Snakes and Ladders: sin sent you plummeting down towards the Pit; the sacraments, good deeds, acts of self-mortification, enabled you to climb back towards the light. Everything you did or thought was subject to spiritual accounting. It was either good, bad or indifferent. Those who succeeded in the game eliminated the bad and converted as much of the indifferent as possible into the good. . . . On the whole, a safe rule of thumb was that anything you positively disliked doing was probably Good, and anything you liked doing was probably Bad, or potentially bad—an "occasion of sin." (6-7)

Even readers too young to remember the pre-Vatican II Church can appreciate the jarring disjunction between the metaphysical seriousness of such matters as the ultimate meaning of life, morality, the afterlife, salvation and damnation, and the trivial amusements of a children's game.

This game of spiritual Snakes and Ladders is played not for fun, but out of self-interest. For the young students, religion "is their insurance—the Catholic Church offering the very best, the most comprehensive cover—and weekday mass is by way of being an extra premium, enhancing the value of the policy" (16-17).

For the students, the strongest feature of the Catholic Church is its identification with sexual repression. They see it as a kind of moral Gestapo, trying to keep eros at bay. An early scene in the novel shows the students being severely scolded by their chaplain, Fr. Brierly, for a risqué skit they present at their Valentine's Day party. The students see the two pillars of Catholic sexual morality—sexual abstinence before marriage and no artificial contraception

after marriage—excluding them from a free, unabashed, exuberant expression of their sexuality.

This theme reaches its apex about halfway through the book when Lodge breaks the spell of narrative realism and inserts an extended analysis of the Church's teaching on contraception, *Humanae Vitae*, and Catholics' widespread dissent from it.

Thus it came about that the first important test of the unity of the Catholic Church after Vatican II, of the relative power and influence of conservatives and progressives, laity and clergy, priest and bishops, national Churches and the Holy See, was a great debate about—not, say, the nature of Christ and the meaning of his teaching in the light of modern knowledge—but about the precise conditions under which a man was permitted to introduce his penis and ejaculate his semen into the vagina of his lawfully wedded wife, a question on which Jesus Christ himself had left no recorded opinion. (115)

This satire refuses to indulge in easy answers. Lodge points out that this “was not such a daft development as it seems on first consideration, for the issue of contraception was in fact one which drew in its train a host of more profound questions and implications, especially about the pleasure principle and its place in the Christian scheme of salvation” (115). Not only was contraception the crack in the dam that would lead to a general lowering of sexual moral standards, but it also called into question the credibility of the Church as a reliable moral teacher.⁸ It is noteworthy, however, that Lodge locates the counter to the apparent triviality he satirizes as a utilitarian and pragmatic issue: the Church's loss of credibility and authority, and a hornet's nest of possible societal consequences. He avoids the questions at the heart of the Church's teaching: whether artificial contraception in itself compromises the integrity of the marital bond and whether the discipline of periodic abstinence enhances it. In this respect the narrative voice reflects the beliefs of the vast majority of Catholics who find the arguments of *Humanae Vitae* unpersuasive.

This ongoing theme of sexual repression and the teaching on contraception is, however, imbedded in a matrix of larger religious questions, which give the novel a weightier substance and keeps it from being just one more amusing diatribe on a repressive Catholic upbringing.

The confrontation of simplistic faith with the problems posed for belief by the modern world takes on cosmic proportions in a scene that takes place several years after the students have left university and married. Fr. Brierley (now referred to by his first name, Austin)⁹ visits Michael, one of the former students, and looks through his son's telescope. Austin wonders how to reconcile the immensity of space and the enormous age of the universe with the Christian story.

Had other Christs died on other Calvaries in other galaxies at different times in the last twenty billion years? Under the night sky, the questions that preoccupied philosophers and theologians seemed to reduce down to two very simple ones: how did it all start, and where is it all going? The idea that God, sitting on his throne in a timeless heaven, decided one day to create the Universe, and started the human race going on one little bit of it, and watched with interest to see how each human being behaved himself; that when the last day came and God closed down the Universe, gathering in the stars and galaxies like a croupier raking in chips, He would reward the righteous by letting them live with Him for ever in Heaven—that obviously wouldn't do, as modern theologians admitted, and indeed took some satisfaction in demonstrating. On the other hand, it was much easier to dispose of the old mythology than to come with anything more convincing. When pushed to say what happened after death, the most ruthless demythologizers tended to become suddenly tentative and to waffle on about Mystery and Spirit and Ultimately Personal Love. (171)

The universe seen through the eyes of modern science seems forbidding, heartless, and chilling. Furthermore, under the pressures of scientific discoveries and modern Biblical scholarship, which Fr.

Brierly has been studying, it is becoming increasingly difficult to affirm the seminal Christian doctrines of original sin, the Incarnation, the atonement, and the resurrection of the body in a way that is coherent with a contemporary world view. Miracles, visions, and other metaphysical aspects of the religion are de-emphasized to the point of disappearing. The result, however, is that Catholicism comes to seem little different from benevolent, secular humanism. More importantly, it offers little reassurance in the face of a cold, empty universe, random evolution, and materialistic determinism. The ancient Church, once so confident that it had all the answers, is experiencing a metaphysical upheaval. The formulas and definitions carefully crafted by the Council of Trent in the sixteenth century will no longer serve. They certainly won't do for the young people like Michael's son, who find Christian dogmas not so much irrational, as simply irrelevant. Whereas their parents' only real problems with Catholicism had been its restrictions on their sexual lives, the younger generation is indifferent to religion altogether.

The focus of the former students' faith, struggling first with premarital chastity and then with the ban on contraception, is gone as they all gradually give up even trying to comply with official Catholic teaching on sexual morality. That is not all they have given up. They have also given up hell.

At some point in the nineteen-sixties, Hell disappeared. No one could say for certain when this happened. First it was there, then it wasn't. Different people became aware of the disappearance of Hell at different times. Some realized that they had been living for years as though Hell did not exist, without having consciously registered its disappearance. Others realized that they had been behaving, out of habit, as though Hell were still there, though in fact they had ceased to believe in its existence long ago. By Hell we mean, of course, the traditional Hell of Roman Catholics, a place where you would burn for all eternity if you were unlucky enough to die in a state of mortal sin. (113)

The students' metaphysical world has changed.¹⁰

To see *How Far Can You Go?* as simply a farcical satire on the Catholic Church's position on contraception would be a superficial reading. The big problems for faith that are presented in the novel—the inability to believe in the miraculous, the tendency to see the Bible more as a human creation and less as a divinely inspired one, the immensity of the apparently indifferent universe—whirl around in a metaphysical cosmos that has lost its moorings. The clear definitive architecture of the “Snakes and Ladders” universe is gone; the scaffolding holding it up has disappeared.

Yet the basic human needs and longings and the big questions remain. Furthermore, the attenuation of sexual anxiety and guilt does not address the fears that plague those too old, too sick, or otherwise disadvantaged to distract themselves with erotic joy. “The good news about sexual satisfaction has little to offer those who are crippled, chronically sick, mad, ugly, impotent—or old, which all of us will be in due course, unless we are dead already. Death, after all, is the overwhelming question to which sex provides no answer, only an occasional brief respite from thinking about it” (121).

The students have lost not only creed and code, but also cult. Catholic liturgy, forms, ceremonies, and popular piety, much of it little changed from the Middle Ages, is undergoing rapid and chaotic change. Not only ceremonies and prayers have changed, but the very language itself. The Mass is “celebrated” rather than said or offered, Confession is “Reconciliation,” Extreme Unction is the “Anointing of the Sick.”

The last chapter, titled “How It Is,” takes the form of a transcript of a television documentary, “Easter with the New Catholics.” Austin, who would soon leave the priesthood and is accompanied by a woman he would soon marry, says, “We can't be sure that the Resurrection actually happened” (228). The sacrament of confession is administered, not one to one in a dark confessional, but to people who “sit around and talk about [their] personal failures and hangups, then at the end [the priest gives] general absolution” (233). One of

the former students, who has been away from the Church for many years, says of the new Mass, "It's certainly more comprehensible, but rather flat, somehow. Like a room that's too brightly lit. I think you have to have shadows in religion. Bits of mystery and magic" (238).

Lodge's extraordinary achievement in this novel is his ability to turn a steady eye on both the failings and the strengths of both the old and the new Church. Furthermore, the title *How Far Can You Go?* suggests that the liturgical changes and other innovations of Vatican II—Mass in the vernacular, the abandonment of religious habits and clerical dress, lay lectors and Eucharistic ministers, guitars and folk groups instead of organs and choirs—are much more than simply matters of taste and style in worship "fashions." For embodied creatures, the "packaging" of religion is more than packaging. Outward forms are the conduits through which believers apprehend, absorb, and express the core beliefs of their religion.¹¹ Lodge doesn't minimize or ignore the difficulties for faith in the modern age, and the novel suggests that these difficulties do not disappear with a more contemporary Mass and trendy liturgical music. At the same time, he insists on the perennial urgency of the basic questions that religious belief purports to answer, and he stresses the need for a language and symbolism for articulating those questions and answers that avoid the twin dangers of being either rigid, lifeless, and formulaic or trendy, trivializing, and ephemeral.

How Far Can You Go? clarifies that unexamined assertions and formulaic answers are not adequate vehicles for a contemporary faith. Yet a religion that claims to be an historic faith rooted in past events, handed down by an authoritative tradition, and expressed in inherited symbols and rituals needs to be cautious of changing too much too fast. As the narrator puts it, "in matters of belief (as of literary convention) it is a nice question how far you can go in this process without throwing out something vital" (143).

II. *Paradise News*

In *Paradise News* post-Vatican II changes are referred to, but in this novel, Lodge's primary focus is on faith, in particular, belief in the afterlife. The protagonist, Bernard Walshe, is a former priest who has lost his faith, but being untrained for any other kind of work, is teaching at an ecumenical theological college. One of Bernard's lectures sets forth nicely the problematic nature of belief in the afterlife in our time.

Modern theology therefore finds itself in a classic double bind: on the one hand the idea of a personal God responsible for creating a world with so much evil and suffering in it logically requires the idea of an afterlife in which these things are rectified and compensated for; on the other hand, traditional concepts of the afterlife no longer command intelligent belief, and new ones, like Rahner's, do not capture the popular imagination—indeed, they are incomprehensible to ordinary laypeople. It is not surprising that the focus of modern theology has turned more and more upon the Christian transformation of *this* life. . . .

But if you purge Christianity of the promise of eternal life (and, let us be honest, the threat of eternal punishment) which traditionally underpinned it, are you left with anything that is distinguishable from secular humanism? One answer is to turn that question around and ask what secular humanism has got that isn't derived from Christianity.¹²

Called to Hawaii by his dying Aunt Ursula, Bernard helps and comforts her, facilitates a reconciliation between her and her brother (Bernard's father), and becomes romantically involved with a divorced woman, Yolande. He returns to England hoping for a life with Yolande, but without a firm commitment from her. The "paradise" of the title refers to both the traditional Christian heaven and Honolulu, Hawaii, the setting for most of the novel. In this novel,

as in *How Far Can You Go?*, Lodge demonstrates his talent for creating metaphors that yoke the spiritual and the mundane world and manage to be both comic and illuminating. Bernard articulates the central metaphor when he reflects on his life as a priest: "The Good News is news of eternal life, Paradise news. For my parishioners, I was a kind of travel agent, issuing tickets, insurance, brochures, guaranteeing them ultimate happiness" (153). One of Bernard's traveling companions, an anthropologist writing on the myth of tourism and the myth of paradise, says, "I don't think people really want to go on holiday, any more than they really want to go to church. They've been brainwashed into thinking it will do them good, or make them happy. In fact surveys show the holidays cause incredible amounts of stress" (62).

The word *paradise* can refer to heaven, the Garden of Eden, or an idyllic vacation spot. In Honolulu the ubiquitous use of the word for Hawaiian businesses—*Paradise Parking*, *Paradise Dental*, *Paradise Beverages*—debases all three meanings of the word, creating a context for disappointment for those seeking paradise in any of its senses: tourist-pilgrims seeking an Eden-like terrestrial paradise and Christian spiritual tourists hoping for a heavenly paradise. For the most part, cynicism, artificiality, and disappointment characterize the presentation of Hawaii. Bernard's expectations of tropical beauty are met with the traffic in Honolulu, the prevalence of McDonald's and other fast food chains, hula girls in plastic skirts, and crowds that remind him of those around Victoria Station.

The narrative technique of the novel also undermines the possibility of an affirmative or comforting answer to eschatological anxiety. As in *How Far Can You Go?*, Lodge disrupts the mostly straightforward, realistic narrative, to push it into the self-conscious narrativity of meta-fiction, thus destabilizing his readers and refusing to allow them to stay in the comfortable space of a traditional story. Parts of the narrative consist of postcards by members of Bernard's tour group, a newspaper article, and an advertising video. Most effective is a home video called "Everthorpes in Paradise" made by

one of the tourists. A random series of events, it is arranged by its creator to render it a story of "paradise," but that meaning is clearly at odds with the facts. The maker of the video asks for patience with his "rough cut" and apologizes for the lack of music (266). Two time sequences are taking place simultaneously, as the present conversation of the tourists is interspersed with descriptions of the past events on the videotape. The bombardment of disparate viewpoints and mixing of time periods is an appropriate analogue for the experience of the contemporary Christian who is both drawn toward and tantalized by—yet conscious that he may be misled by—the hope of reaching some kind of "paradise."

Another destabilizing factor is the narrator's ambivalence about tensions within contemporary Catholicism. Although the novel is saturated with Catholicism, the narrative voice conveys attitudes that characterize both traditional and liberal Catholics. Two celebrations of the Eucharist in the novel, Bernard's father's reception of Holy Communion in the hospital and Yolande's presence at a Mass on Waikiki beach, disclose a tension with regard to modes of celebration: formal versus informal, pre-Vatican II versus post-Vatican II, ritualistic or charismatic. The novel refuses, however, to speak univocally on this issue. Aunt Ursula admits that when she returned to the Church after years away from it, she was discomfited by "a bunch of kids up at the altar, with tambourines and guitars" and "a woman on the altar reading the epistle" (135). Although Bernard seems patronizing and dismissive of the old lady's views, the narrative voice seems to have some sympathy with her distress. There is a disjunction between the fashionable contemporary and the cherished familiar.

As in *How Far Can You Go?*, there is a critique of Catholic attitudes toward sex. Bernard believes that his Catholic childhood made him "paralysed with fear of hell and ignorance of sex" (145). Feeling confused by his own burgeoning sexual feelings in adolescence and worried about a future career, he escaped into a minor seminary as a way of solving both his sexual and vocational problems. He is convinced

that the fear and shame engendered by a strict sexual ethic and the dehumanizing effects of mandatory celibacy for clergy have retarded his emotional maturity, leading to his priestly life being artificial, self-indulgent, and disconnected from the pulse of real life. Having never come to terms with his own sexuality nor recognized any value in the Church's attempt to provide needed discipline on powerful sexual forces, Bernard is bitter and has lost confidence in the Church as a reliable spiritual guide and a guarantor of eternal salvation.

Other features of the novel critique aspects of liberal theology. Bernard compares the wide variety of courses and beliefs at his ecumenical college to the variety of products available in a modern supermarket. "On its shelves you could find everything you needed, conveniently stored and attractively packaged. But the very ease of the shopping process brought with it the risk of a certain satiety, a certain boredom. If there was so much choice, perhaps nothing mattered very much" (29). The ecumenical movement seems to have eroded clarity, diminished meaning, and reduced the urgency involved in the life of faith.

This critique of "advanced" religion strains against the critique of traditional religion, opening up a kind of aporia in religious life. Although the old ways crippled the spirit and distorted one's sensual and emotional maturity, the new way starves the hunger for religious experience and the desire for meaningful answers to ultimate questions. Thus Lodge opens up a kind of postmodernist religious space, in which the old certainties have fallen away to leave the would-be Christian religiously destabilized and paradoxically open to new possibilities of faith.

This theme is articulated in the novel when Bernard receives a letter from Yolande in which she includes a photocopy of a passage from Miguel de Unamuno's *The Tragic Sense of Life*, which apparently struck a chord with this secular woman:

In the most secret recess of the spirit of the man who believes that death will put an end to his personal consciousness

and even to his memory forever, in that inner recess, even without his knowing it perhaps, a shadow hovers, a vague shadow lurks, a shadow of a shadow of uncertainty, and while he tells himself: "There is nothing for it but to live this passing life, for there is no other!" at the same time he hears, in this most secret recess, his own doubt murmur: "Who knows? . . ." "He is not sure he hears aright, but he hears. Likewise, in some recess of the soul of the true believer who has faith in the future life, a muffled voice the voice of uncertainty, murmurs in his spirit's ear: "Who knows? . . ." Perhaps these voices are no louder than the buzzing of mosquitoes when the wind roars through the trees in the woods; we scarcely make out the humming, and yet, mingled with the roar of the storm, it can be heard. How, without this uncertainty, could we ever live? (293)¹³

An element of doubt is seen by some contemporary theologians as essential for a healthy faith. Theologian Kenneth Leech asserts that without "creative doubt, religion becomes hard and cruel, degenerating into the spurious security which breeds intolerance and persecution."¹⁴

As indicated by the Unamuno passage, the desire for some existence after death persists in contemporary people, even if it is as much fond hope as the remnant of theological faith. That desire is nourished by a sense of sacramentality in the novel, both in the sense of the seven traditional sacraments of Catholicism and the broader principle of sacramentality, which insists that matter can be a vehicle for spirit, that God's grace comes through material things, and that God is still present in our fallen world. Thus the images and reminders of sacramentality, while not providing any definitive answer to the question of an afterlife, suggest a sense of connection with the Divine and a context for hope that that connection survives bodily death. Some of the sacraments of the Church, Holy Eucharist and Anointing of the Sick, are celebrated in the novel. In a broader sense, Confession and Confirmation function as overarch-

ing themes. Bernard not only facilitates Ursula's reconciliation with her brother, but he also has to "confess" to himself and to another human being the sins of his past life: his inauthentic vocation, his ineffective ministry, his masquerade as an "atheist" priest, his desiccated emotional life, and his failure to relate to people. Bernard makes his "confession" in the form of the journal he writes and lets Yolande read. Confirmation marks the transition to adult Christianity and the acceptance of its responsibilities. There is no explicit indication that Bernard has renounced atheism and is moving back toward theism, nor does he give even a hint that he will return to Catholic belief and practice. Yet grace builds on nature, and until Bernard becomes a mature human being, he cannot be a mature Christian. His personal growth in Hawaii may be laying the foundation for a mature relationship to God.

Perhaps the most powerful sacramental image in the novel is Bernard's symbolic baptism. About halfway through the novel Bernard decides to go for a swim. The experience is idyllic, almost a kind of bracketed space excerpted from mundane time.

It was a perfect hour for a swim. The sun was low in the sky and had lost its fierce daytime heat, but the sea was warm and the air balmy. I swam vigorously for about a hundred yards in the general direction of Australia, then floated on my back and gazed up at the overarching sky. Long shreds of mauve-tinted cloud, edged with gold, streamed like banners from the west. . . . Occasionally a bigger wave surged past, swamping me or lifting me into the air like a matchstick, leaving me spluttering in its wake, laughing like a boy. I decided I would do this more often. (162)

Several elements lift this experience into a supernatural, liturgical realm: the "perfect" hour, the establishment of direction in terms of another continent (the fact that swimming to another continent is a preposterous notion establishes bigger than life parameters for this experience), the "overarching sky," a mauve and gold natural

world (instead of the more natural colors of blue and green), elevation into the air, the intense joy. Most importantly, the event is transformative. When Bernard comes out of the water and sees the silhouettes of boats against "a backdrop of shimmering gold," he feels "for perhaps the first time . . . how Hawaii could cast a spell upon the visitor" (163).

He discovers to his horror, however, that his keys are lost, probably buried somewhere in the sand. But his momentary panic and despair is dissipated when he notices that the beams of the sun, which is almost touching the horizon, are "level with the surface of the ocean" (165). He walks "in a perfectly straight line" to the water's edge: "I stopped, turned, and squatted on my heels. I looked back up the gently sloping beach to the spot where I had changed for my swim, and there, a yard or two to the right of my towel, something gleamed and glinted, something reflected back the light of the setting sun, like a tiny star in the immensity of space" (165).

Again, the language—"perfectly straight line," "gleamed and glinted," "sun," "star," "immensity of space"—suggests transcendence. From his new angle of vision, keeping his "eyes fixed on the spot where the spark of light had gleamed," Bernard is able to locate the all-essential keys. Thrilled with his newly found competence, he feels "light-hearted and gleeful." Just as Catholicism has traditionally taught that baptism leaves an indelible mark on the soul, Bernard notes that he clutched the newfound keys so tightly that "the indentations in [his] palms have not yet faded" (165). The keys not only open a door, but also give Bernard the ability to harness energy from a powerful force and to use it to move in the direction of his choice. From this point on, Bernard displays new competence, self-confidence, and vitality. The theology of sacramentality focuses on presence, efficacy, and transformation; and the sacramentality in the novel counters the negativist tendencies of the cynicism, fragmentation, and destabilizing narrative techniques, creating a context for affirmation and possibility.

Although Bernard's first impression of Hawaii's pseudo-par-

adise is that it is tacky, it gradually rises to its promise. Bernard has glimpses of transcendence in its natural beauty—especially the ocean. In Hawaii he reconnects with his family and acts as peacemaker, intercessor, comforter, and aide, thus confirming that even during his dry, academic, ecclesiastical life, he was growing in virtue. His surprising discovery that he is, in fact, a very good man may be his most precious gift in Hawaii, one indispensable to his ability to re-find his faith and connect to God. He also discovers erotic love, which orients him toward a richer, more fully human life. Thus paradise, which originally seemed to betray its promise, ends by living up to it in an unforeseen way. Human love, growth in virtue, forgiveness, and intimations of transcendence through the natural world all suggest that, though we are denied certainty, we have grounds for believing or at least hoping that God touches us sacramentally and is drawing us toward a paradise beyond all imagining. The first sentence in the novel is a question: “What do they see in it, eh?” (3). The last sentence in the novel is an answer to a question: “Very good news” (294).

Lodge has described himself as “by temperament tentative, skeptical, ironic,”¹⁵ so it is not surprising that *Paradise News* remains ambivalent on the question of an afterlife. Yet the serious exploration of the possibilities for faith in a postmodern age and its intimations of sacramentality in everyday life make *Paradise News* not only an engaging and thought-provoking novel, but a theologically rich one as well.

III. *Therapy*

In Lodge’s *Therapy*, a television comedy writer becomes captivated by the philosophy of Søren Kierkegaard, which leads him to make a life-changing pilgrimage. He is the only protagonist of Lodge’s Catholic fiction to be neither a Catholic nor a former Catholic, thus coming at Catholicism from the outside. Laurence Passmore, known as “Tubby” to his friends and relatives, is the successful script writer of a popular

television comedy show. He is married to an attractive, talented university professor, has a grown son and daughter, a lovely home, a flat in London, and a large income. Yet, Tubby is plagued by an inexplicable malaise. He exemplifies the penchant of late twentieth-century people to utilize various sorts of therapies to alleviate physical and emotional pain. When the novel opens, he is receiving physiotherapy for a painful knee, cognitive behavior therapy, aromatherapy, and acupuncture. His inexplicable discontent, however, is not soothed. When a friend asks him how his *angst* is, he looks up the word in his dictionary, which leads him to reference books to look up existentialism, which leads him to look up Kierkegaard—and he is off on an experience that transforms his life.

Looking up the name *Kierkegaard* in a biographical dictionary, Tubby is transfixed by the titles of his books: "*Fear and Trembling, The Sickness Unto Death, The Concept of Dread*—they didn't sound like titles of philosophy books, they seemed to name my condition like arrows thudding into a target."¹⁶ Tubby is particularly fascinated by Kierkegaard's concept of dread because, unlike fear, which has for its object something definite and concrete, the object of dread is indefinite and as yet unknown. He also finds compelling the philosopher's analysis of the three stages of life: the aesthetic, where a person is devoted to pleasure, even pleasures of a very refined variety; the ethical, where one recognizes and accepts rational rules of conduct; and the religious, where one makes a leap of faith when, conscious of his own sins, his alienation from God, and his inability to fulfill the moral law by his own efforts, he makes a leap of faith into a relationship with God. Kierkegaard provides more questions than answers, but when Tubby's comfortable life is suddenly turned upside down, he faces his own existential crisis, which leads him all the way to the shrine of Santiago de Compostela in Spain.

At the beginning of the novel Tubby is a Kierkegaardian aesthete, who delights in the pleasures of the senses: good food, an expensive car, and the pleasures of sport. He enjoys a satisfying sex life with his wife, but he is faithful to her not so much out of principle as

for the sake of comfort and security. "To enjoy sex you need comfort—clean sheets, firm mattresses, warm bedrooms—and continuity" (28). Yet even with all these pleasures, he is not able to feel the joy and delight that should come from his professional success and comfortable life.

It may seem hyperbolic to suggest that Tubby is suffering from *angst* or Kierkegaardian dread, but Kierkegaard gives Tubby the vocabulary to describe his emotional state. "Dread is what I feel when I wake in the small hours in a cold sweat. Acute but unspecific Dread" (64). Also, he may be poised to make a transition to Kierkegaard's second stage, the ethical, for he seems to be experiencing the emotion that usually precedes the transition from the aesthetic stage to the ethical: a feeling of boredom and a sense of one's life as empty and meaningless.

Tubby's vague, unfocused despair suddenly becomes very focused when his wife Sally asks for a separation. This shock propels Tubby into a spate of erratic behavior, including trying to bed various women and spying on his wife's handsome tennis coach. Sally's announcement is followed by a series of first-person narratives by other characters, including Sally and women Tubby tries to seduce, giving their versions of what has happened. Although multiple viewpoints are common in contemporary fiction, *Therapy* provides a *tour de force* when Tubby again becomes the narrator and reveals that he has written all of the previous accounts by imagining himself into the psyche of those people. Although the ability to capture the idiosyncratic flavor of each person's speech could be attributed simply to the talent of a practiced script-writer, Tubby's ability to enter into other people's mindset and vicariously live their experience goes beyond a good ear for dialogue. His capacity to appreciate the uniqueness of those individuals suggests that he may be ready to move to the ethical stage. According to Kierkegaard, "The ethical is concerned with particular human beings, and with each and every one of them by himself."¹⁷

Several other incidents suggest that Tubby is moving toward or-

dering his actions more by principle than by inclination, such as when he refuses to let his friend use his apartment for an extra-marital tryst, and his reluctance to turn over to the police a young squatter who has taken up residence in his entryway. Tubby explicitly credits Kierkegaard with his decision not to follow through with his intention to enjoy the sexual favors of an attractive and willing colleague he has brought with him to Copenhagen. "You're quite right, that was why I asked you to come, but when I got here I found I couldn't do it. . . . Because of Kierkegaard" (190). In fact, what started out to be a sexual escapade ends up being a kind of pilgrimage as Tubby stands in reverence before Kierkegaard's possessions in the Kierkegaard room of the City Museum "as if they were sacred relics" (184).

If Tubby's Copenhagen trip can be considered a pseudo-pilgrimage, his next strategy for coping with the end of his marriage involves him in a very real—if not exactly traditional—pilgrimage. He begins thinking about his first girlfriend, Maureen Kavanagh. Maureen was from a strict Catholic family, and non-Catholic Tubby was able to see her only by joining the Catholic youth club at her parish. Tubby recounts how Maureen's growing sense of guilt about the liberties she was allowing him led him to end their relationship in a hurtful way. He is impressed with the parallels between Kierkegaard's break with his fiancée Regine and his own with Maureen many years ago. His extended reflection on this era of his life leaves him determined to find Maureen and make up to her for his cruelty. Learning from her husband Bede that she has gone on a pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela, he decides to try to find her in Spain. For Kierkegaard significant moral growth occurs, not as a slow and gradual process, but as a leap; and Tubby's decision to seek Maureen in Spain is such a bold and radical decision that it can be considered a leap. Having made this decision, his focus and attitude change. He stops fighting the divorce and agrees to a generous financial settlement.

Even before Tubby actually finds Maureen, he is drawing close

to her world by his encounter with Catholic Spain. He attends a Catholic Mass, liking “the idea of doing something Maureen would certainly have done a few weeks earlier” (290). As in *How Far Can You Go?* and *Paradise News*, Lodge depicts the surprise of someone who encounters the post-Vatican II liturgy, for Tubby remembers attending highly formal Latin services with Maureen. Yet there is a sense of connection with the past as well. “The liturgy echoing round the pillars and vaults of the ancient church, as it had for centuries” (291). Although the exotic strangeness of Catholicism is much attenuated in contemporary Spain, it is still there. In the village of Cebrero, the church “contains relics of some gruesome mediaeval miracle, when the communion bread and wine turned into real flesh and blood, and the place is also said to be associated with the legend of the Holy Grail” (293).

Although his goal is just to find Maureen, Tubby actually becomes a pilgrim himself. He has told his agent that the trip he is planning is “not a holiday . . . it’s a pilgrimage” (280). At one point, a television crew filming a documentary asks to interview Tubby, but he insists, “I’m not a true pilgrim.” “Ah! Who is a true pilgrim?” asks the director. “Someone for whom it’s an existential act of self-definition,” proclaims Tubby. “A leap into the absurd, in Kierkegaard’s sense” (304). Tubby may not consider himself a true pilgrim, but his Kierkegaardian overlay certainly renders his journey serious and spiritual, if not religious.

Tubby has worked out a schema for pilgrims corresponding to Kierkegaard’s three stages of personal development. The aesthetic pilgrim is “mainly interested in having a good time,” the ethical sees the pilgrimage “as essentially a test of stamina and self-discipline” (304–05). The true pilgrim, the religious one, makes the pilgrimage as a kind of leap into the absurd.

“To Kierkegaard, Christianity was ‘absurd’: if it were entirely rational, there would be no merit in believing it. The whole point was that you chose to believe without rational compulsion—you made a leap into the void and in the process chose yourself. Walking

a thousand miles to the shrine of Santiago without knowing whether there was anybody actually buried there was such a leap"¹⁸ (305).

In fact, however, Tubby's participation in the pilgrimage goes beyond his moral support of Maureen and his endorsement of pilgrimage in the Kierkegaardian sense. Through patient questioning and searching, Tubby finally finds Maureen, and he physically joins in. Because Maureen is suffering from strained ligaments, he arranges to drive with her pack to each day's destination, arranges for accommodations, and then walks back, meets Maureen, and walks the rest of the way with her. Amazingly, his problem knee gives him no trouble. Maureen attributes this "miracle" to St. James. At the end, Tubby walks the whole last stage of the pilgrimage. Tubby's pilgrimage, unconventional though it may be, turns out to be his true therapy. His inexplicable malaise and separation from his wife have initiated a period of self-examination and repentance, culminating in his visiting churches and participating in ancient rituals.

Once Tubby and Maureen actually get to Santiago, the cathedral itself is a kind of icon of Catholicism, a montage of its colorful, grotesque, troubled, and romantic past. As Tubby describes it:

The Cathedral is a bit of a dog's breakfast architecturally but, as we say in television, it works. The elaborately decorated façade is eighteenth-century baroque, with a grand staircase between the two towers and spires. Behind it is the portico of the earlier romanesque building, the Portico de la Gloria, carved by a mediaeval genius called Maestro Matteo. It depicts in amazing, often humorous, detail, some two hundred figures, including Jesus, Adam and Eve, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, twenty-four old codgers with musical instruments from the Book of Revelations, and a selection of the saved and the damned at the Last Judgement. St. James has pride of place, sitting on top of a pillar just under the feet of Jesus. (309)

The sense of exuberance, bordering on burlesque, and the tumultuous variety of this building capture an aspect of Catholicism

that can be both off-putting and attractive. The juxtaposition of Tubby's earthy colloquialisms ("dog's breakfast," "old codgers") with the language of high art ("façade," "portico," "baroque," "romanesque") is a linguistic icon of the rich texture of Catholicism that is both awe-inspiring and comic. Behind the main altar, pilgrims climb up on a platform behind the statue of St. James and embrace it, the traditional "hug for St. James" (310). Even Tubby is swept up in the enthusiasm and, like the other pilgrims, knocks his head against the forehead of the bust of the sculptor, Maestro Matteo, the tradition being that doing so will enable one to acquire something of his wisdom.

Tubby's droll comments about this spectacle come close to rendering it satire—if not farce. Yet that doesn't quite happen because it is overlaid with a genuine respect for Maureen's faith. She has reserved a room in the most elegant hotel in Santiago for the day she arrived. When asked how she could be so sure she would arrive on that very day, she replies, "I had faith" (312).

Pilgrimage not only provides the central narrative framework for the last part of the novel, but also functions as a metaphor for the Church. The phrase "pilgrim Church," one of the key metaphors from the documents of Vatican II, is often invoked to support the model of a church that is less rigid and hierarchical, and more flexible and porous, less concerned with immutability and more concerned with spiritual growth and responsiveness to a changing world.¹⁹ The pilgrim Church in this novel is clearly a seasoned traveler, weighed down with baggage, with bruised feet, feeling at times, as Maureen says of herself, "almost at the end of [her] tether" (302). The pilgrimage experience—the ancient churches, the cult of martyrs, relics, and miracles, the enormous outpouring of piety that can result from a scribal error²⁰—is a visible manifestation of the Church's long history, which is both an inspiration and an encumbrance, indeed, at times, an embarrassment. Yet, as Maureen says, people "must have got something tremendous out of it" (303).

As in Lodge's other Catholic novels, the Church's traditional sexual morality comes under critical scrutiny, especially in the chapters where the young people's burgeoning sexual feeling is crushed by Maureen's guilt and Tubby's frustration. Yet, unlike Bernard's, in *Paradise News*, Maureen's puritanical upbringing and over-protective father do not seem to have irretrievably warped her burgeoning sexuality. Tubby learns that although she cried for ages when he broke off their relationship, she fell in love twice before marrying her husband when she was on the rebound from an affair. Maureen's passionate nature suggests that perhaps one's family has a stronger influence on one's sexuality than does strict Church teaching. Having grown up in a warm, loving, albeit strict, Catholic family, unlike Bernard's cold one, Maureen, although subject to the proverbial "Catholic guilt" when dating Tubby, is clearly a warm, passionate woman. Ironically, her marriage to the cold, arrogant Bede when on the rebound from an affair suggests that had she followed Catholic teaching and refrained from premarital sex, she might have married a more loving husband.

On their journey Tubby and Maureen become lovers. She reveals to him that she has lost a breast to cancer and that since then her husband has had no sexual relations with her. What is actually adultery is overlaid with the compassion and tenderness with which Tubby treats Maureen, who not only has lost the sexual love of her husband but is also grieving her son killed in Africa. Novelist Piers Paul Read comments that in this novel, "the compassion expressed in this act transcends any sin that might once have been considered implicit in its adulterous nature. We have come a long way from both *Brideshead Revisited* and *The End of the Affair*."²¹

Although the dour Bede seems an unworthy beneficiary of the erotic energy of such a lovely young woman, there is something solid, even sustaining, about the home and family they have established. Bede and Maureen have stayed connected to their Catholic roots. They represent the resilient and tenacious Catholic faith that survives in some people who lived through the tumultuous upheav-

als of the post-Vatican II years. Sociologist Andrew Greeley attributes such faith to the Catholic sacramental imagination nurtured in “a pervasive religious culture that [has] been shaped by it and continued to be supported by it.”²² Maureen’s belief in St. James, miracles, and prayer, and the importance she attaches to traditional rites associated with the pilgrimage suggest her connection to “the imaginative tradition and the spirituality of the lay folk,” which Greeley sees as both a wellspring and guardian of faith.²³

If pilgrimage functions in this novel as a useful metaphor for Catholicism—both the institution and the individual Catholic’s experience—and provides visual icons of the “dog’s breakfast” of Catholicism, the Kierkegaardian themes further enrich the depiction of religious experience. Kierkegaard’s emphasis on choice and commitment are certainly characteristic of a genuine embrace of religious faith. Catholic spirituality also partakes of Kierkegaard’s notion of repetition in its stress on the need for continual reconversion and repentance, especially through the sacrament of reconciliation, and in its encouragement of repetitive devotions like the rosary and litanies. The pilgrimage theme, with its rich sacramental sense of the sacred conveyed through matter, and the Kierkegaard theme, with its strong “either-or” mode, enables Lodge to achieve something quite remarkable. Andrew Greeley says of *Therapy*, “Combing the two imaginations, analogical and dialectical, in the same ‘therapy’ is a deft touch, evidence that the two imaginations need not exclude one another.”²⁴

On their last day together in Spain, Maureen and Tubby drive to Finisterre (the end of the world). Nature is foregrounded in its elemental and primitive beauty.

The rolling wooded hills of the country around Santiago gave way to a more rugged, heath-like terrain of windblown grass broken by great slabs of grey rock and the occasional stubborn, slanting tree. As we approached the tip of the peninsula the land seemed to tilt upwards like a ramp, beyond

which we could see nothing but sky. You really felt as if you were coming to the end of the world; the end of something, anyway. We parked the car beside a lighthouse . . . and there was the ocean spread out beneath us, calm and blue, shading almost imperceptibly into the sky at the hazy horizon. We . . . watched the sun, like a huge communion wafer behind a thin veil of cloud, slowly decline towards the wrinkled surface of the sea. (315)

As they drive back to Santiago, they get out of the car to look at the Milky Way, "a pale, glimmering canopy of light." Tubby remarks that the "ancient Greeks thought it was the way to heaven," and Maureen says, "I'm not surprised." This exchange, together with the earlier eucharistic imagery and their dinner of fresh fish "grilled . . . for us over charcoal," (317) reminiscent of the disciples' post-Resurrection breakfast with Jesus by the sea of Tiberius (John 21:9-14), overlays the scene with a shimmer of transcendence. With profound awareness of the contingency of their lives and their ongoing responsibility for the choices they have made, Tubby and Maureen situate their lives within the mystery and beauty of the larger universe.

Back in England Tubby seems to have been reborn. Refurnishing his flat, which was robbed while he was in Spain, is "like starting a new life from scratch" (320). His knee pain, the original reason for therapy, has mysteriously disappeared. His marriage is over, but Maureen will not leave Bede. Instead the three of them are the best of friends and are planning to go to Copenhagen in the autumn.

Kierkegaard's theory of comedy, as explained by Eastern Orthodox theologian David Hart, provides one of the best accounts of what David Lodge achieves in *Therapy* and his other novels.

The special logic of this theory, after all, is that the Christian philosopher [or novelist]—having surmounted the "aesthetic," "ethical," and even in a sense "religious" stages of human existence—is uniquely able to enact a return, back to the

things of earth, back to finitude, back to the aesthetic; having found the highest rationality of being in God's kenosis—his self-outpouring—in the Incarnation, the Christian philosopher [novelist] is reconciled to the particularity of flesh and form, recognizes all of creation as a purely gratuitous gift of a God of infinite love, and is able to rejoice in the levity of a world created and redeemed purely out of God's "pleasure."²⁵

In *How Far Can You Go?*, *Paradise News*, and *Therapy*, David Lodge adeptly illuminates different facets of Catholicism through metaphors. Some of them are zany, like the game of Snakes and Ladders in *How Far Can You Go?*, or the priest as spiritual travel agent in *Paradise News*. Others are old and venerable like the Christian life as pilgrimage and the Church as a pilgrim in *Therapy*. Lodge's deft use of metaphors richly portrays the way that many people experience being Catholic in our time. Although he avoids the intense scrutiny of a character's spiritual life that characterizes the classic Catholic novels of Bernanos, Mauriac, Greene, and Waugh, his frank discussions and portrayals of the difficulty of faith today as well as his sensitive rendering of the enduring human longing for meaning, for answers about the purpose and end of our lives, give his Catholic fiction substance and seriousness. Even his wrestling with Church teaching on sexual morality manages to be both humorous and thoughtful, giving it a depth usually missing from other fictional treatments of this subject. John Podhoretz did not overstate when he wrote that "Lodge joins an honorable and great tradition by restoring the primacy of the soul in fiction."²⁶

Notes

1. Andrew Greeley, *The Catholic Imagination* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 5–7.
2. David Lodge, interview by Bernard Bergonzi, *Alta: University of Birmingham Review*, no. 7 (Winter 1968–69), cited in Bernard Bergonzi, "The Decline and Fall of the Catholic Novel," in *The Myth of Modernism and Twentieth Century Literature* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986), 177.

3. Bernard Bergonzi, "A Conversation with David Lodge," in *War Poets and Other Subjects* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 1999), 203.
 4. Greeley, *Catholic Imagination*, 166.
 5. For example, *The Picturegoers* and *The British Museum is Falling Down*.
 6. Unfortunately, the semantic richness of Lodge's title is lost in the American edition, which was published as *Souls and Bodies*. In this article, I will refer to the novel by its English title, but textual citations refer to *Souls and Bodies*.
 7. David Lodge, *Souls and Bodies* (New York: Penguin, 1980, 1990), 1. Hereafter cited in the text by page number.
 8. Lodge has this to say about the results of the acceptance of contraception:

The availability of effective contraception was the thin end of a wedge of modern hedonism that had already turned Protestantism into a parody of itself and was now challenging the Roman Catholic ethos. Conservatives in the Church who predicted that approval of contraception for married couples would inevitably lead sooner or later to a general relaxation of traditional moral standards and indirectly encourage promiscuity, marital infidelity, sexual experiment and deviation of every kind, were essentially correct, and it was disingenuous of liberal Catholics to deny it (*Souls and Bodies*, 115).
 9. After Vatican II it became quite common for priests to insist on being called by their first names, rather than the traditional "Father" and their surnames.
 10. Ronald Knox clarifies the significance of the loss of this belief:

I think I see that if you discount the idea of eternal punishment, and so rob Christianity of its sharp issues and severe outlines, you alter its character radically; it is no longer the same religion. I do not mean that there is no Christian motive left for holiness if you leave eternal punishment out of sight: that would obviously be untrue. But I mean that the whole thing is built to scale; the doctrine of the Atonement, for instance derives its force from the tremendousness of the issues involved; and the power of the keys becomes meaningless, or at least alters its meaning, if we are to suppose it is impossible for a soul to put itself, even temporarily, outside the covenant of God's mercy. The whole of Christianity, whether in the New Testament or in Church history, or in the history of those non-Catholic sects which have preserved a virile tradition of piety, is always framed against a background of finality, of despairing urgency, of claims and duties *absolutely* imperative.
- Ronald Knox and Arthur Lunn, *Difficulties* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1932), 58.
11. C. S. Lewis wrote, "[My] whole liturgical position really boils down to an entreaty for permanence and uniformity. I can make do with almost any kind of service whatever, if only it will stay put." *Letters to Malcolm: Chiefly on Prayer* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1963, 1964).
 12. David Lodge, *Paradise News* (New York: Penguin, 1991), 282. Hereafter cited in the text by page number.
 13. The passage is found in Miguel de Unamuno, *The Tragic Sense of Life*, vol. 7 of *Selected*

- Works of Miguel de Unamuno*, trans. Anthony Kerrigan (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1972), 131.
14. Kenneth Leech, *Experiencing God: Theology as Spirituality* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1985), 25.
 15. John Haffenden, *Novelists in interview* (London: Meuthen, 1985), 152.
 16. David Lodge, *Therapy* (New York: Penguin, 1995), 64–65. Hereafter cited in the text by page number.
 17. Soren Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript in A Kierkegaard Anthology*, ed. Robert Bretall (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1946), 226.
 18. Earlier Tubby had pointed out to Maureen that the tradition that St. James is buried in Santiago is believed by many to be due to the error of a scribe, who wrote “Hispaniam” (Spain) for “Hierusalem” (Jerusalem). Such rational quibbles carry no weight with Maureen. “I think he’s around the place somewhere,” she replies. “With so many people walking to Santiago to pay him homage, he could hardly stay away, could he?” (300–01).
 19. The metaphor is used in *Lumen Gentium*, the Constitution on the Church.
 20. See endnote 18.
 21. Piers Paul Read, “The Catholic Novelist in a Secular Society” in *Hell and Other Destinations* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2006), 207.
 22. Andrew Greeley, *The Catholic Revolution: New Wine, Old Wineskins, and the Second Vatican Council* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 146.
 23. Greeley, *Catholic Revolution*, 118.
 24. Greeley, *Catholic Imagination*, 50.
 25. David Hart, “The Laughter of the Philosophers,” *First Things* (January 2005): 36.
 26. John Podhoretz, Review of *How Far Can You Go? The New Republic* (April 7, 1982): 38.

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