Univerzita Palackého v Olomouci

Filozofická fakulta

Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky

Bc. Diana Chovanová

Aspects of Suicide in Graham Greene's Catholic Novels

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Prehlasujem, že som diplomovú prácu na tému “Aspects of Suicide in Graham Greene’s Catholic Novels” vypracovala samostatne pod odborným dohľadom vedúceho práce a uviedla som všetky použité podklady a literatúru.

V Olomouci dňa Podpis

Touto cestou by som sa rada poďakovala v prvom rade vedúcemu práce PhDr. Davidovi Livingstonovi za jeho trpezlivosť a cenné rady pri smerovaní práce, ďalej profesorovi Donovi Saltrovi za jeho konštruktívne pripomienky a kamarátovi Waldemarovi Nionovi za jeho teologické vysvetlenia.

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1. Introduction

Successful suicide is often only a cry for help which hasn't been heard in time.

Graham Greene, *A Sort of Life*

The goal of this thesis is to examine so called 'Catholic novels' of Graham Greene (1904 – 1991), a controversial British writer, literary and film critic, and a Catholic convert.

In Greene's writings, the theme of suicide is not an infrequent one, however, as a basis for this work I have chosen those four novels (*Brighton Rock*, *The Power and the Glory*, *The Heart of the Matter*, and *The End of the Affair*), which reflect the author's several-year-absorbtion of his newfound Catholic faith and thus enrich this delicate theme with innovative religious views. Inasmuch as Greene until the end of his life suffered from suicidal inclinations caused by his diagnosis, it is presumable that his own personal experience will provide him with inspiration for his literary creations. In spite of the fact that Greene's private faith resulted from Catholicism, it was never hundred percent identical with the Church's dogmatic statements. Therefore the aim of the thesis is also to compare the standpoint of the Church with the author's attitude particularly in the matter of the suicidal act of an individual.

The thesis consists of two parts. In the first I propose a theoretical part that contains the introduction of the author and highlights those events in his life which had an immediate impact on his thought processes and thus ultimately on his literary realization. The literary production of Greene will be embedded in the context of the 20th century Catholic novel with focus on the influences and similarities with other writers. Last but not least, it presents the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church on mortal sin accentuating the most serious one and that is suicide.

The second part provides the analysis of particular Catholic novels which include for a better comprehension an overall profile of suicidal protagonists. It also concerns the main characters' motivation for suicide as well as the circumstances and methods of its realization. In addition, the thesis deals with personal faith of the heroes and the effect of this serious deed on their post-mortal life as it was seen by the author, protagonist and the Church.

In the conclusion, final findings together with the general comparison of the protagonists and emphasis on repeated patterns in the novels will be summarized in connection with theoretical knowledge.

2. Greene's Personality; or One Foot in the Grave

This chapter presents a brief overview of Graham Greene's life which gave his literary production a distinct quality. The text highlights those events and influences in the author's life that demonstrate his position and attitude to death and to suicide in particular. Furthermore, the chapter focuses on the writer's relationship to the Catholic faith which becomes an omnipresent part of his prose. The more detailed interconnection of the author's profile and his Catholic novels will be subject of examination in following chapters.

Henry Graham Greene was born on the 2nd of October, 1904, as fourth of six children to the family of the Anglican Church practitioners in Berkhamsted. He was educated at the Berkhamsted school in which Graham's father was a headmaster and later in the years 1922 – 1925 attended Balliol college in Oxford.[1]

Graham had always been rather a fragile and sensitive child. Since he was a little boy, Graham had been provided with "extra-sensory perception"[2] and haunted by prophetic nightmares of sinking ships. At the age of five, he had a vivid dream of a shipwreck that coincided with the time of the Titanic catastrophe. These truthful visions resulted in Greene's lifelong phobia of drowning. "I cannot to this day peer down into a lock, down the sheer wet walls, without a sense of trepidation…"[3]

In his first autobiography *A Sort of Life* the author recalls family trips to London where the Greenes together attended Graham's favorite Peter Pan performances which in their mysterious way reflected the writer's future preoccupations. "'To die will be an awfully big adventure' was a line which echoed through all my adolescence; it only really faded from my mind when death became for all of us a common everyday risk."[4]

The childhood describes Graham Greene as a particularly happy one.[5] "Greene's expulsion from Eden came in his thirteenth year, when he entered the senior part of his father's school."[6] The new environment left him feeling homesick, insecure and lonely mainly due to the father's position at the school, which in addition to missing sport skills, made his son an outcast and a bullied target among his peers. Being tormented by

[1] Henry J. Donaghy, *Graham Greene, an Introduction to His Writings* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1986), 7.
[2] Graham Greene, *A Sort of Life* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984), 24.
[3] *A Sort of Life*, 13.
[4] *A Sort of Life*, 42
[5] *A Sort of Life*, 12.
[6] John Spurling, *Graham Greene* (London and New York: Methuen, 1983), 18.

two boys in particular, Carter and Watson, however, shaped young Graham in two ways: it brought to his fiction a motif of betrayal and it strengthened his drive to become an excellent writer.[7] Reading has always represented for Graham a way of escape and the first impetus to begin writing gave him a book by admired Miss Marjorie Bowen. "Human nature is not black and white but black and grey. I read all that in *The Viper of Milan* and I looked round and I saw it was so."[8] Later in *A Sort of Life* the author contemplates that it is only in our childhood that reading has a deep influence on our lives.[9]

Nevertheless, it was the thirteenth year of Graham's life that triggered his manic-depression and consequently aroused in him desire to kill himself. His attempts at suicide were numerous and they were products of creative and inventive mind.

> I tried other forms of escape after I failed to cut my leg. Once at home on the eve of term I went into the dark room by the linen cupboard, and in that red Mephistophelean glare drank a quantity of hypo under the false impression that it was poisonous. On another occasion I drained my blue glass bottle of hay-fever drops, which, as they contained a small quantity of cocaine, were probably good for my despair. A bunch of deadly nightshade, picked and eaten on the Common, had only a slightly narcotic effect, and once, towards the end of one holiday, I swallowed twenty aspirins before swimming in the empty school baths. (I can still remember the curious sensation of swimming through cotton wool.)[10]

Graham's planned escape from the boarding school on a nearby meadow was the last drop of his father's patience who asked his older son Herbert, medical student, for an advice. Thus at the age of sixteen was Graham sent to undergo Jungian psychoanalytical treatment by Kenneth Richmond, a part of which was dream analysis. "Kenneth would have told Graham to listen to his own voice – listen to the God in him. That's the whole point of Jung's analysis – to unite your conscious mind with an unconscious God in you."[11]

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[7] Donaghy, 11.
[8] Graham Greene, "The Lost Childhood" in *Collected Essays* (Aylesbury: Hazell Watson & Viney, 1983), 17.
[9] *A Sort of Life*, 40.
[10] *A Sort of Life*, 64.
[11] Quoted in Norman Sherry, *The Life of Graham Greene: Volume I: 1904-1939* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 2004), 197.

Paradoxically, he had emerged from the psycho-analysis "without any religious belief at all."[12] Greene claims, that six months of the treatment belonged to the most happiest in his life[13], and yet, they did not do without permanent side effects on the author's psyche. For the rest of his life he was struggling with a deep boredom which could temporarily fight off only increased level of adrenaline in the author's blood.

At the age of nineteen, his boredom reached its peak and the writer accepted a new challenge, Russian roulette. Adolescent Greene never considered this act suicidal, for him it was a gamble which restored to him an extreme joy of life by risking its total loss. His ambivalent feelings evoked by his new 'hobby' are well reflected in one of his poems (its second part) that was published in Sherry first biographical volume.

> Will it be mist and death
> At the bend of this sunset road,
> Or life reinforced
> By the propinquity of death?
> Either is gain.
> It is a gamble which I cannot loose.

The author was searching for extreme situations where he could get a great sensation simply by staying alive. When the occasional hazard game reached the point of being nothing more than a mere routine, young Greene ceased to push his luck. Around that time he sought help to cope with the ordinariness of a day in alcohol. "I had found another alleviation of the boredom-sickness and later at Oxford it served me dangerously well, when for a whole term I was drunk from breakfast till bed."[14]

The greatest of the drugs, however, was young Greene's love for Vivien Dayrell-Bowring, a Roman Catholic convert. "Graham became absolutely devoted, obsesses to see her, needed her more than anybody else."[15] Gradually as he began to play with the idea of marrying her, he perceived the necessity to become more acquainted with her faith. After detailed studies of Catholicism, Graham Greene eventually converted in 1926 and the following year he made this conservative pious woman his wife. As for his own faith, Greene claims that at that time he "had not been emotionally moved, but only intellectually convinced."[16]

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[12] *A Sort of Life*, 84.
[13] *A Sort of Life*, 72.
[14] *A Sort of Life*, 87.
[15] Sherry, *The Life of Graham Greene: Volume I: 1904-1939*, 179.
[16] Graham Greene, *Ways of Escape* (London: Penguin, 1982), 58.

His main difficulty was not to believe in the existence of Christ but in the existence of God, "a supreme, omnipotent and omniscient power," the belief which would destroy his stabilized concept of unlimitless life.[17] Yet, according to his conviction, he "took the name of Thomas – after St Thomas the doubter and not Thomas Aquinas…"[18]

Only after more than a decade since the writer accepted the Roman Catholic faith was he able to incorporate it in his writing. By publishing *Brighton Rock*, his first-fruit employing religious features, in 1938, received the author his signification 'Catholic novelist' which he considered a "detestable term" and preferred to call himself "a writer who happens to be a Catholic."[19] Within next thirteen years followed the novels *The Power and the Glory* (1940), *The Heart of the Matter* (1948) and *The End of the Affair* (1951) commonly referred to as 'Catholic cycle' for they are religiously more thought-provoking that the rest of Greene's work. New Catholic dimension reflected in his novels was undoubtedly beneficial, according to Greene, it put him into an advantageous literary position over non-believing writers such as Virginia Woolf whose characters remained paper-thin.[20]

In 1946, the marriage with Vivien came to its end and the couple officially separated, though never divorced.[21] The reason of such act, Greene admits, was a result of his infidelities and even more of his benzedrine nights, when he was simultaneously working on *The Power and the Glory* and *The Confidential Agent*.[22] One such adulterous relationship, deep and long-running, inspired the creation of the last of his Catholic novels *The End of the Affair* where the female protagonist Sarah is the embodiment of Greene's lover Catherine Walston.[23] Even in the fifties, Greene suffers from the symptoms of his bipolar personality and infinite boredom and seeks not the end of love like Bendrix but the end of life. "I hadn't the courage for suicide, but it became a habit with me to visit troubled places…"[24] During his life, Greene had travelled places like Mexico during the religious persecution, Liberia where he

[17] *A Sort of Life*, 120.
[18] *A Sort of Life*, 121.
[19] *Ways of Escape*, 58.
[20] John Mortimer, "The Secret Name: Graham Greene," *In Character: Interviews with Some of the Most Influential and Remarkable Men and Women of Our Time* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984), 71.
[21] John Sunderland, *The Lives of the Novelists: A History of Fiction in 294 Lives* (London: Profile, 2011), 178.
[22] *Ways of Escape*, 69.
[23] June Rockett, *A Gentle Jesuit: Philip Caraman, SJ, 1911-1998* (Leominster, Herefordshire: Gracewing, 2004), 97.
[24] *Ways of Escape*, 109.

rediscovered extreme joy of life, Congo, Kenya, Israel and so on.[25] These journeys proved to be beneficial as a temporary cure for the writer's adventurous soul as well as for his rich literary production. Indeed, Greene was a prolific writer who during sixty-seven years of writing produced twenty-five novels, two autobiographies, seven plays and numerous short stories, literary essays and film reviews.[26]

One can see that the life of the author has been not less fascinating and adventurous than the life of his imaginative characters which must learn to swim through it by being thrown into the gloomy water of despair, doubts and hopelessness. Much of the writer's personality mirrored also in his writing was shaped during his childhood and adolescence when he experienced the hell on earth. Despite Greene's claim of being an optimist, one cannot put a blind eye on the fact that from Greene's early childhood till the end of his life, he has been an observer, mediator and a tempter of death which had a huge impact on his literary career.

[25] Daniel Dlouhý, "Aspects of Catholicism in Graham Greene´s novels" (Thesis, Palacky University, 2012), 12.
[26] Mark Bosco, *Graham Greene's Catholic Imagination* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2005), 12.

3. Graham Greene and the Literary Context

Graham Greene's writing can be described as a fusion of various influences, in particular his childhood, manic-depressive personality, Catholic conversion, and his non-dogmatic faith, amplified by his literary connections.

From traditional English literary world, Graham Greene looked up to Henry James with great respect and admiration categorizing *The Wings of Dove* as one of his three most favourite novels. Numerous similarities can be traced with this nineteen century writer,[27] whose death, according to Greene, meant a religious loss to the English novel, "and with the religious sense went the sense of importance of the human act."[28] Among them "a special sense for evil, distrust to success, tragic misfit characters and no happy endings,"[29] and other themes were reflected in Greene's novels. In addition, Čulík claims that both James and Greene are sympathetic towards souls predetermined to damnation.[30]

Besides Henry James, from that period another person had an immense impact on shaping Greene's faith and writing and that was a Catholic thinker John Henry Newman.[31] His notions that all religion "is founded in one way or other on the sense of sin" and that to search one's faith one must be "conducted under a deep sense of responsibility," Graham Greene gladly employed in his work.[32] What Greene missed in the Anglican Church and found in Roman Catholicism was the concept highlighted by Newman of original sin. As Greene's personal guidance served him Newman's assertion from the book *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* which he used as an epigraph for his travel account, *Lawless Roads*: "…either there is no Creator, or this living Society of men is in true sense discarded from His presence… *if* there be a God, *since* there is a God, the human race is implicated in some terrible aboriginal calamity."[33] Greene agrees with the precedent Catholic convert that evil is an integral part of human life.

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[27] Sherry, *The Life of Graham Greene: Volume I: 1904-1939*, 22.
[28] Graham Greene, "Francois Mauriac" in *Collected Essays* (Aylesbury: Hazell Watson & Viney, 1983), 91.
[29] Dlouhý, 13.
[30] Jan Čulík, *Graham Greene: Dílo a Život* (Praha: Academia, 2002), 12.
[31] Bosco, 38.
[32] John Henry Newman, *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent* (1870; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 253, 274.
[33] John Henry Newman, *Apologia pro Vita Sua* (1865; London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1908), chapter 5.

It was not until the beginning of the twentieth century when the genre of Catholic novel rose in Protestant Britain (among the first writers one can find names such as Mrs Wilfried Ward, Robert Hugh Benson, and Maurice Baring), while in France where it originated "as a reaction against the dominant discourse of Enlightenment philosophy and the antireligious doctrines of the French Revolution,"[34] it was popular already in the 1890s. As opposed to the French counterparts, early English novels were prone to depict the confrontation of Catholicism with the modern age as well as inner crises of individuals who cannot find a compromise between the Church's teaching and their personal desires. The French novels, on the contrary, preferred to portray "explicit irruption of the supernatural into the material order."[35] Whereas in Britain the pivotal figures of the 20th century Catholic novel were Graham Greene and Evelyn Waugh, the French novel was developed by literary giants, in particular León Bloy, Charles Péguy, Georges Bernanos, and François Mauriac, all of them making on Greene a great impression.

In the literary works of León Bloy (1846 - 1917), which celebrate poverty as the only Christ's imitation and interweave God's divine pain with the pain of human beings, Greene admired "indestructible honesty and self-knowledge" of Bloy's beliefs. He referred to the writer as a "religious man but without humility, a social reformer without disinterestedness, he hated the world as a saint might have done." Despite admiration of Bloy's occasionally violent and vengeful prose, Charles Péguy (1873 - 1914) influenced Greene in a more profound way. The writer was enchanted by two Péguy's themes that are "the sinner as the heart of Christianity" and "voluntary damnation". The resonance of both of them is echoed in each novel of Greene's 'Catholic cycle'. Georges Bernanos (1888 - 1948), on the other hand, inspired Greene by his "saint-heroes whose virtues lie not in superheroic, conventional saintliness but in their human frailty." Greene's resemblance to Bernanos's writing consists also in his strong perception of evil operating in the world and the choice of religious scapegoats in his Catholic novels.[36]

However, from among the French writers it was François Mauriac (1885 – 1970) who held probably the most significant position in Greene's life. The writers were good friends helping each other on the practical level of their literary career and expressing admiration for each other's works. Greene, that time a director of the publishing house

[34] Bosco, 8.
[35] Richard Griffiths, *The Pen and the Cross: Catholicism and English Literature, 1850-2000* (London: Continuum, 2010), 61.
[36] Bosco, 41.

Eyre and Spottiswoode, took a responsibility to have all Mauriac's works translated into English and Maurice, on the contrary, wrote a preface to the French edition of Greene's *The Power and the Glory.* As to their literary inclinations, Greene said that "his purpose, like François Mauriac's, in choosing the weakest, the most abandoned human beings as material for his creative imagination, was to throw a bright light on God's infinite mercy and on his power to turn even evil – 'etiam peccata' – into a good."[37] Bosco claimed that the difference between the two authors is that Mauriac's characters were driven to religious awakening by sexual passion whereas Greene's protagonists needed to be aroused by moral choice and physical action for the same purpose.[38] Although many critics advocate that Greene's literature contains 'Mauriacism', the writer himself refuted their assertions during one of the interviews. "I read *Térèse* in 1930 and was turned up insight but, as I have said, I don't think that he had any influence on me unless it was an unconscious one. Our Catholicism is very different: I don't see the resemblance that people talk about."[39]

Another befriended author with who Greene was often exchanging ideas was Evelyn Waugh who entitled him, to Greene's dislike, 'Catholic novelist'. Interestingly enough, none of the writers ex perienced Catholicism fully until they witnessed the missions or heroism during persecution in action.[40] Despite being both Catholic converts from rational rather than emotional reasons and great friends, the writers are rather dissimilar "either in their personalities or in the ideas to which they call attention".[41] Regarding the choice of themes, Greene was always closer to the French Catholic writer.[42] However, what remains same for all mentioned authors is their accessibility even to non-believing readers.[43]

[37] Marie Béatrice Mesnet, *Graham Greene and the Heart of the Matter: An essay* (London: The Cresset Press, 1954), 78.
[38] Bosco, 48.
[39] Donaghy, *Conversations with Graham Greene* (Jackson: University of Mississippi, 1992), 40.
[40] Griffiths, 110.
[41] W. Gore Allen, "Evelyn Waugh and Graham Greene," *The Irish Monthly* 77, no. 907 (January 1949): 16, accessed October 6, 2013, http://www.jstor.org/stable/20515919.
[42] Bosco, 27.
[43] Bosco, 8.

4. Suicide and the Roman Catholic Church

Inasmuch as suicide of a believer is often emerging phenomenon in Graham Greene's Catholic novels, this chapter is focused on the perception of self-killing by the Roman Catholic Church. To be able to introduce the attitude of the Catholic Church to suicidal act, it is necessary to characterise what a suicide is. In the following chapters analysing particular novels the classical general view of the Church on suicide will be confronted with the suggestions and ideas of the author himself.

The theme of suicide on the Catholic level is very vast and complex, therefore I will take into consideration only those definitions and notions that are in accordance with the mainstream Roman catholic thinking. In the theology of the Roman Catholicism, which endeavours to be dynamic and meet the requirements of the age, have occured in the last fifty years numerous radical changes and that also in the reception of one's suicide. It is important to note that the approach of the Church towards suicide is nowadays more liberal that it was before the Second Vatican Council, i.e. in the time when Graham Greene published his religious thought-provoking novels which are the object of this paper.

To characterise suicide is a very delicate matter as it must take account of diverse external factors and aspects. Barry claims that defining suicide too broadly might cause that Jesus's death would be seen as suicide,[44] supposed that he knew his end. Not to confuse it with an accident, insistency of another person, or other cases, Barry offers an elaborate definition of the frame of suicide:

> A suicide is a deliberate and voluntary performance or ommission, done with adequare freedom and knowledge, that aims at the destruction of one's self. It is a planned, chosen, intended, and consented action to bring death as either a means or an end in itself. It is a choice made where death is reasonably expected to result from the specified performance or omission in common circumstances and situations.[45]

The Roman Catholic Church has always considered suicide a mortal sin; i.e. a "sin whose object is grave matter and which is also committed with full knowledge and

[44] Robert Laurence Barry, *Breaking the Thread of Life: On Rational Suicide* (New Brunswick: Transaction, 2012), 1.
[45] Barry, 10.

deliberate consent."[46] It teaches that a mortal sin "destroys in us the charity without which eternal beatitude is impossible. Unrepented, it brings eternal death."[47] The New Testament says that all sins will be forgiven except the one against the Spirit. "And so I tell you, every kind of sin and slander can be forgiven, but blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven."[48] Therefore the Church teaches that "murderers, suicides cannot confess and receive absolution for their sin."[49] One of the most significant portrayals of the suicidal act in the Bible is that of Judas Iscariot who after betraying Jesus felt remorse and hung himself.

It has been a few centuries since Saint Augustine in the 5th century and Thomas Aquinas during the 13th century objected the act of self-killing arguing that it "usurps God's power over life and death." [50] Aquinas "presented some new arguments against suicide and he held that it was not only against love, but also against fortitude, prudence, temperance, hope and faith, our obligation in justice to the community and God, and ultimately our natural inclination of life." [51] Later in the Middle Ages the Church pronounced it as a deed which breaks the sixth commandment 'thou shall not kill' destroying thus God's creation.[52] Before the second half of the 20th century the Roman Catholic Church labelled suicide as a self-murder arguing that it attacks an innocent life, the gift of God, and thus attacks God himself. These claims were often criticised as inadequate for it is not the defying of God which is the main purpose of the act. However, the Church adhered to the notion that a person committing suicide is guilty of blasphemy as he or she does not believe or trust in God's guidance and mercy.

In the years 1962 – 1965 during the Second Vatican Council the redefination of the Catholich Church and discussion about its functioning in the modern age took place being described in detail in the pastoral constitution promulgated by Pope Paul VI on December 7, 1965.[53] One of the fundamental changes regarded the reconsideration of

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[46] "Catechism of the Catholic Church – Sin," Catechism of the Catholic Church, accessed November 2, 20113, http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p3s1c1a8.htm, paragraph 1857.
[47] "Catechism of the Catholic Church – Sin," paragrapgh 1861.
[48] "Mt 12:31 (New International Version)," in Bible Gateway, accessed December 1, 2013, http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%2012&version=NIV.
[49] Lewis R. Aiken, *Dying, Death, and Bereavement* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2001), 79.
[50] Aiken, 79.
[51] James L.Werth, *Contemporary Perspectives on Rational Suicide* (Philadelphia: Brunner/Mazel, 1999), 32.
[52] Aiken, 79.
[53] "Preface," Catechism of the Catholic Church, accessed November 2, 2013, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html.

the Church's view on suicide, which now takes into account extenuating circumstances. It means that the act of self-killing does not necessary lead to damnation. "We should not despair of the eternal salvation of persons who have taken their own lives. By ways known to Him alone, God can provide the opportunity for salutary repentance. The Church prays for persons who have taken their own lives." [54] The Church still emphasises that the life is a gift and we must accept it with gratitude. "Everyone is responsible for his life before God who has given it to him. It is God who remains the sovereign Master of life. We are obliged to accept life gratefully and preserve it for his honor and the salvation of our souls. We are stewards, not owners, of the life God has entrusted to us. It is not ours to dispose of."[55]

However, Werth claims that there is multiple evidence that 90 – 95% of suicide were committed as" the result of emotional or mental dysfunction, as opposed to a rational decision."[56] The Church is now aware of such medical results and teaches that: "Grave psychological disturbances, anguish, or grave fear of hardship, suffering, or torture can diminish the responsibility of the one committing suicide."[57] By such claim, however, it does not defend or encourage an individual to the act but introduces more compassion and understanding toward those who despair.

Werth in his book informs that "in comparison to the other major religions of the world, Catholicism is one of the few that has aggressively refused to condone suicide."[58]

[54] "Catechism of the Catholic Church – Respect for Human Life," Catechism of the Catholic Church, accessed November 2, 2013, http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/__P7Z.HTM, paragraph 2283.
[55] "Catechism of the Catholic Church – Respect for Human Life," paragraph 2281.
[56] James L. Werth, *Contemporary Perspectives on Rational Suicide* (Philadelphia: Brunner/Mazel, 1999), 145.
[57] "Catechism of the Catholic Church – Respect for Human Life," paragraph 2282.
[58] Werth, 34.

5. Graham Greene's Catholic Novels

Graham Greene converted from Protestantism to Roman Catholicism in 1926 at the age of twenty-two. The author acknowledges that "it took him over a decade of being a Catholic to feel fully comfortable to write about Catholic Characters and to see how the symbols and doctrines of his faith might find expression in his literary imagination."[59] The books *Brighton Rock* (1938), *The Power and the Glory* (1940), *The Heart of the Matter* (1948) and *The End of the Affair* (1951) are by critics generally referred to as 'Catholic' novels.[60]

The writer, however, objected to the impropriety of such a label. "I would not claim to be a writer of Catholic novels, but a writer who in four or five books took characters with Catholic ideas for his material."[61] The author chooses protagonists with Catholic beliefs intentionally as a tool "to examine more closely the effect of faith on action."[62] In addition, Greene argues that employing the religious consciousness in his characters, thus giving them a new dimension, protects them from literary 'paper-thinness'. The common feature of these novels is the writer's unconventional application and questioning of the Catholic faith in life of a 'fallen' man with focus on an individual. Bosco accurately remarks that having "one's religious faith not always in harmony with the doctrinal belief statements of one's faith was a constant starting point for Greene."[63]

The author exposes his heroes to numerous life difficulties and Bosco proposes that it is just due to their awareness of the presence of God that "they are treated differently and often more harshly than the non-Catholics in his novels."[64] The novels often deal with wavering faith of the main characters, with their personal crisis of extreme proportions the only way from which they see in self-killing, and moreover they provide a view on the core of human soul stripped of any religious and personal secrets.

The controversial Catholic novels of Graham Greene many a time inquire the justness of the Church's teaching and propose thought-provoking religious questions for

[59] Bosco, 32.
[60] *Sunita Sinha, Graham Greene: A study of his major novels* (New Delhi: Atlantic, 2007), 2.
[61] Quoted in Michael G. Brennan, *Graham Greene: Fictions, Faith and Authorship* (London: Continuum, 2010), 8.
[62] *Ways of Escape*, 79.
[63] Bosco, 35.
[64] Adèle King, *Graham Greene: The Power and the Glory* (Beirut: York, 1989), 8.

which they never give satisfactory unambiguous answers. It is "paradoxical" writing that "dealt with extraordinary circumstances" what became the main reason of Cardinal Giuseppe Pizzardo, at that time the head of the Holy Office, to condemn (although not publicly) one of Greene's Catholic novels, *The Power and the Glory*, requesting the author to alter certain passages. Greene, however, substantiated his refusal in terms of the copyright possessed by his publishers. The contrary view held Giuseppe De Luca, a churchman, who in his letter to Giovanni Battista Montini (in 1963 to become Pope Paul VI) conveyed his positive attitude to the book. "In this suffocating atmosphere of unctuous and arrogant imbecility, perhaps a scream – chaotic but Christian – would do some good." [65]

The writer recalls in his biographies how he few years after the incident met with Pope Paul VI, who mentioned to have read the book. After Greene said that the novel was condemned by Cardinal Pizzardo, more liberal Pope "repeated the name with a wry smile and added, 'Mr. Greene, some parts of your book are certain to offend some Catholics, but you should pay no attention to that.'" And so he never did.[66]

[65] "The Atlantic - Graham Greene's Vatican Dossier," The Atlantic, accessed October 29, 2013, http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2001/07/graham-greenes-vatican-dossier/302264.
[66] *Ways of Escape*, 67.

6. *Brighton Rock*

This chapter focuses on the personality of the protagonists in *Brighton Rock*, Pinkie and Rose, and describes the philosophical and practical circumstances of their suicide. To deal with the suicide in context, the contribution provides the overal profile of its fictional characters as well as highlights that personal experience of Graham Greene himself which might have had an immediate impact on his literary creation.

Brighton Rock written in 1938 is the first of the cycle of Graham Greene's Catholic novels. The literary piece presents through the antipodal protagonists of Pinkie and Rose a theme of betrayal and lost innocence which Greene's critics agree to be a persistent feature of the author's writing.[67] Besides, it is a story about human beings searching for their place in the world as well as it deals with the conflict of good and evil dominated by love and loyalty on one side and meanness and cruelty on the other side. It is "a moral fable"[68] which will never bring a satisfactory 'happy ending'.

Greene's inspiration is anchored in his childhood and adolescence when he was introduced to the evil world first through his readings (of which most influential on his literary career was *The Viper of Milan* by Miss Marjorie Bowen's) and later through his own experience as a target of bullying in the boarding school. Greene's vivid memories of his tormentors, one in particular, are portrayed in the essay *The Lost Childhood* (1951). "His name was Carter. He exercised terror from a distance like a snowcloud over the young fields. Goodness has once found a perfect incarnation in a human body and never will again, but evil can always find a home there."[69] It was the depressing adolescent encounter with 'the hell' that the writer transferred to his Catholic first-fruit *Brighton Rock* and concentrated it all into a single protagonist Pinkie Brown, a heartless vicious seventeen-year old leader of the gang who feels pleasure only through violence and pain-giving. Greene using the motif of eyes as a window to Pinkie's rotten soul writes, "his grey eyes had an effect of heartlessness like an old man's in which human feeling has died."[70]

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[67] Bernard Bergonzi, *A Study in Greene: Graham Greene and the Art of the Novel* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2006), 20.
[68] Laura Feigel, and Alexandra Harris, *Modernism on Sea: Art and Culture at the British Seaside* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2009), 28.
[69] "Lost Childhood", 17.
[70] Graham Greene, *Brighton Rock* in *The Collected Edition* (Chatham, Kent: Guild, 1988), 12.

The onset of Pinkie's sadistic perversion and contempt for love-making must be traced back to his childhood when he was a witness of Saturday's 'exercise' of his parents. "His father panted like a man at the end of a race and his mother made a horrifying sound of pleasurable pain. He was filled with hatred, disgust, loneliness: he was completely abandoned: he had no share in their thoughts – for the space of few minutes he was dead, he was like a soul in purgatory watching the shameless act of beloved person."[71] The traumatic experience of his childhood deformed Pinkie's psyche so much that even minimal stimulus could throw him off balance. In the scene where Pinkie is fleeing from Colleoni's men, he finds a shelter in a random garage. Its interior covered by child rummage, "the doll, the pram, the broken rocking-horse", awakes in him instant hatred towards its nameless owner.[72] No less heart-burning he feels against a group of children (one of them with an iron brace on its leg accidentally limped into Pinkie) which "took his mind back" to those days of 'lost childhood'.[73] The fact that the negative experience in the pre-mature era has created in Pinkie a mental block is, in addition, demonstrated by the author's choice of the protagonist's metaphorical nickname the Boy.

Whatever the cruel nature of a grown-up the main protagonist has, it does not get by without his parallel childish naivety and perhaps innocence. The dormant inferiority complex of Pinkie awakes once in the scene where the inspector emphasising his age implies that the Boy is not capable of running a racket. Ambitious as Pinkie is, he "was going to show the world" that he was "a man". The main protagonist is convinced that he can gain respect solely by his evil power and lust to cause pain. "He trailed the clouds of his own glory after him: hell lay about him in his infancy. He was ready for more deaths."[74] However, when he realizes that his motivation to violence is not a sufficient proof of being "a man", he remains perplexed and more aware of his greenness and frailty. To become socially accepted he must overcome his deeply rooted fear, "...his virginity straightened in him like sex. That was how they judged you; not by whether you had the guts to kill a man, to run a mob, to conquer Colleoni."[75] Later the idea of post-marital sexual intercourse with Rose reaches extreme dimension of his

[71] *Brighton Rock*, 177.
[72] *Brighton Rock*, 104.
[73] *Brighton Rock*, 135.
[74] *Brighton Rock*, 67, 83.
[75] *Brighton Rock*, 87.

phobia. He is sickened by the thought of the act itself and by abhorrence of his pride being wounded, due to his inexperience, "by a little bitch of sixteen years"[76].

Pinkie surely possesses a certain level of naivety but could be his character considered innocent? Literary critic Terry Eagleton sees Pinkie exactly this way adding that "Pinkie may be 'evil', but he is not a 'corrupt'; his evil is a pure pristine integrity, a priestly asceticism which refuses the contaminations of ordinary living."[77] I cannot agree with this point, neither the narrator does as he depicts Pinkie's innocence as "a slobbering mouth, a toothless gum pulling at the teats, perhaps not even that; innocence was the ugly cry of birth." It is negative life experience which gradually rid us of this virtue and there is a great difference in personality between him and Rose. Yet, I must agree with Eagleton in that point that Pinkie was *not* corrupted, however, not corrupted by 'good' which only lightly touched him but never entirely pierced his soul. He never fulfilled his childish dream to become a priest neither he, it seems, fully grasped the meaning of the choir's song, 'Agnus dei qui tollis peccata mundi, dona nobis pacem' (Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, grant us peace), he was now singing in his "spoilt" voice. Furthermore, he himself is aware of his wickedness and is proud of it. "It's in the blood. Perhaps when they christened me, the holy water didn't take. I never howled the devil out."[78]

Although the character of Pinkie strikes us with the impression of its supernatural quality, representing what Shakespeare would call the devil incarnate, being far-distant from any average human being, many of his "morbid obsessions" [79] he shares with the author himself. Just as Graham Greene, the character of Pinkie points out the nightmare suffering revealing his fear of drowning. Similarly, both the author and Pinkie share their primal disgust to sex. Sherry describes Greene's trip to a bawdyhouse in Paris where Greene did not want or did not dare to lose his virginity. He sees the connection between Greene's private life (the feelings of horror and fascination which aroused in him after beholding a copulating couple from the hotel window) and the scene in his second novel *Rumour at Night Fall* ("They stood against each other under a street lamp, like two people who are supporting and comforting each other in

[76] *Brighton Rock*, 128.
[77] Terry Eagleton, "Reluctant Heroes: The Novels of Graham Greene," in Harold Bloom, ed., *Modern Critical Views: Graham Greene* (New York: Chelsea House, 1987), 117.
[78] *Brighton Rock*, 122.
[79] Mesnet, 54.

the pain of some sickness.")[80] which thirteen years later reappeared with similar resonance in *Brighton Rock* as Pinkie's vision: "The new raw street…was empty except for a couple pressed against each other out of the lamplight by a wooden fence. The sight pricked him with nausea and cruelty."[81]

The writer shares with Pinkie not only such delicate juvenile experience, he even puts in Pinkie's mouth his own idea of faith. Greene believed in hell before he believed in heaven[82], just like for Pinkie "Heaven was a word; Hell was something he could trust."[83] At the age of fourteen Greene shows little resemblance to Pinkie's personality when he later confesses his attraction to human pain, "I could think about pain as something desirable and not as something dreaded. It was as if I had discovered the way to enjoy life was to appreciate pain."[84] Peter Quenell defined similar suspicion about Greene's approach to work as if he "gets a good deal of fun – light-hearted schoolboyish fun – from causing his own and his reader's flesh to creep, and that he half enjoys the sensations of disgust and horror that he arouses with such unusual terror."[85]

The standing-out character of Pinkie becomes in the novel even more conspicuous due to the presence of his 'good' counterpart, a sixteen-year old waitress. Pinkie meets Rose at her workplace where he is trying to find and confiscate a proof of his homicide which was left there frivolously by one of his men. In her gloomy world, Rose is easily attracted to Pinkie because they have "youth and shabbiness"[86] in common. Later we learn that both protagonists are Roman Catholics coming from the same part of the city.

Rose's juvenile life is similarly to Pinkie's affected by non-functional family relationships and feelings of loneliness. Having parents who "get moods" and make business out of their own daughter (giving her hand to Pinkie for no less than guineas), however, did not strip Rose of her childish innocence and naivety. Unlike Pinkie she has never been corrupted by evil.

Rose is faithful and totally devoted to her new acquaintance and neither after she is fully exposed to his dark side the fact alters. She is cognizant of his murders but she responds to his doubts with blind love and unwavering loyalty, "I don't care what

[80] Quoted from Greene's *Rumour at Night Fall* in Sherry, *The Life of Graham Greene: Volume I: 1904-1939*, 163.
[81] *Brighton Rock*, 97.
[82] King, 5.
[83] *Brighton Rock*, 215.
[84] *Graham Greene, Journey Without Maps* (*London: Vintage, 2002*), 36-37.
[85] Peter Quennell, *The Sign of the Fish* (New York: Viking Press, 1960), 60-64.
[86] *Brighton Rock*, 29.

you've done." Pinkie might have for the first and last time experienced the taste of received absolution because she saw in him a beautiful person devoid of sins. "He was speechless; and some knowledge of the astuteness of her simplicity, ...the possible depths of her fidelity, touched him like cheap music... ."[87]

The presence of the girl even deepened Pinkie's disgust towards her obtrusive obsession with him, yet he "was aware that she belonged to his life, like a room or a chair: she was something which completed him... What was most evil in him needed her: it couldn't get along without goodness."[88] Their relationship is metaphor for a balanced correlation between extreme good and extreme evil which can never exist separately; two forces influence and define each other. "Good and evil lived in the same country, spoke the same language, came together like old friends, feeling the same completion, touching hands beside the iron bedstead."[89] Even the main characters' imagination of post-mortal life correspond with their mindset. Whereas Rose believes and longs for heaven and salvation, Pinkie is perfectly sure only of the existence of hell where he is convinced to belong. Rose anyway brings to Pinkie's life the glimpse of hope for his redemption, but he is more pleased to see her succumb to his own power, "there were things she couldn't imagine, and he thought he saw her imagination wilting now in the vast desert of dread."[90] Rose as a witness, though "dumb and devoted as ever she'd been"[91] has according to Pinkie the capacity to destroy his 'great future'. Because the wife cannot give evidence, Pinkie decides to marry her. It seems more probable that, rather than by a means of marriage, Pinkie as a multiple killer would liquidate his enemy.

Just before signing the marriage contract, Pinkie as well Rose are feeling certain pride as they are going to do a mortal sin, that is having an illegal civic marriage and later fulfilling the post-marital duty. Pinkie unlike blissfully ignorant Rose is rather pleased and proud to commit other unpardonable sins as well. Not only gives he false oath during the wedding solely for the purpose of his self-preservation, but his attempt to persuade potentially dangerous Rose to accede to the suicidal pact he himself never intended to follow is the crowning piece of his wickedness. As rightly pointed by

[87] *Brighton Rock*, 109.
[88] *Brighton Rock*, 121.
[89] *Brighton Rock*, 121.
[90] *Brighton Rock*, 132.
[91] *Brighton Rock*, 106.

Mesnet, Pinkie's act is the outcome of satanic nature that desired to bring an unspoiled soul to the kingdom of damned.

Pinkie himself is haunted by phobia of age and death for it is life which offers him space for self-realization. The fear of his possible end strikes him particularly in the scene when he is approached by the inspector. "Boy's heart missed a beat: for almost the first time it occurred to him that the law could hang him, … put an end to the great future…"[92] Paradoxically, the project has turned against its creator and it was Pinkie not Rose who in the end committed suicide. I will briefly draw the context to the final scene.

Rose is sitting in the car being urged by Pinkie to pull the trigger while he is stepping away towards the main road. Just in time somebody calls the Boy's name and Rose believing that it is a heaven's sign opens the car door and throws the gun away foiling thus the arranged plan. In few moments Rose and Pinkie are surrounded by heroic Ida Arnold accompanied by the policeman and Dalloway, Pinkie's right-hand man.

> 'Where's that gun?' Pinkie said again. He screamed with hate and fear: 'My God, have I got to have a massacre?'
> She said: 'I threw it away.'
> …
> He said: 'You little…' he didn't finish – the deputation approached, he left her, diving into his pocket for something. 'Come on, Dalloway,' he said, 'you bloody squealer,' and put his hand up. Then she couldn't tell what happened: glass – somewhere – broke, he screamed and she saw his face – steam. He screamed and screamed, with his hands up to his eyes; he turned and ran; she saw a police baton at his feet and broken glass. He looked half his size, doubled up in appalling agony: it was as if the flames had literally got him and he shrank – shrank into a schoolboy flying in panic and pain, scrambling over a fence, running on.
> 'Stop him,' Dallow cried: it wasn't any good: he was at the edge, he was over: they couldn't even hear the splash. It was as if he'd been withdrawn suddenly by a hand out of any existence – past or present, whipped away into zero – nothing.[93]

The final death of Pinkie is in the story presented rather ambiguously and views of critics do not provide a unified view. The major part of analysis with which I would

[92] *Brighton Rock*, 65.
[93] *Brighton Rock*, 228-229.

agree concludes that the main protagonist died by drowning as it was already foretold by his childhood dream. Due to Pinkie's familiarity with the surrounding it cannot be considered an accidental fall. Indeed, his leap is an intentional desperate act resulting from Pinkie's burst of hysteria over eventual loss of his great future.

On the contrary, Dr. C. L. Khatri in his contribution rather inaccurately suggests that Pinkie committed "the blackest of sins" by taking vitriol.[94] In my opinion, Pinkie might have been by the time of incident decided about his suicide, but would be a small bottle of sulphuric acid strong enough not only to disfeature his face, but to actually kill him (if we omitted the final leap from cliff)? It sounds irrational but that was the state of Pinkie's mind too. When I read the passage for the first time I was almost sure that he pulled out the bottle to harm Rose which he deeply hated and his intention was foiled by the policeman's intervention (a police baton and glass at his feet). Then I came back to the extract and my attention was drawn towards the sentence "the deputation approached, he left her". Would really Pinkie let his victim escape, if he was about to damage her body? I do not think so. It seems as if something snapped in him and his innermost self was now begging for damnation that follows the worst sin of all.

Regardless of what would the Church consider a clear damnation, Pinkie's fate is subject of many disputes. During one interview Graham Greene unceremoniously and with surprise claims that there are no doubts about Pinkie's redemption. According to him, the outcome of his death is conspicuously implied several times within the novel. The key to the writer's answer lies, he says, in the repetitious allusion to an English proverb: "Between the stirrup and the ground, he mercy asked and mercy found."[95] In another interview Greene also confesses that none of his Catholic characters is in the end doomed.[96] However, with all his ambiguous and misleading implications Greene puts his reader at the crossroad of possible explanations and I found myself tempted to believe rather in the contradictory verdict. My opinion is subjected to indications that appear throughout the entire text. Greene writes at the beginning, "…the slatey eyes were touched with the annihilating eternity from which he had come and to which he went."[97] We know from the novel that Pinkie was never sure about the existence of heaven, for him it was all about "hell, flames, and damnation" and at one moment he perceived how "a dim desire for annihilation stretched in him: the vast superiority of

[94] C. L. Khatri, *British Authors and Texts: Critical Responses* (New Delhi: Sarup & Sons, 2005), 34.
[95] Donaghy, *Conversations with Graham Greene*, 19.
[96] Donaghy, *Conversations with Graham Greene*, 38-39.
[97] *Brighton Rock*, 24.

vacancy."[98] Even Rose was entirely convinced about his destiny for she was always resolute and keen to join him in his post-mortal suffering. The last drop which supports my opinion is the depiction of the aftermath of Pinkie's mortal sin when he seems to be swallowed by the flames. And yet it seems that the author wants to deprive his protagonist of the only guaranteed option. In Greene's fictional world where everything is possible, the author fights with even greater insistence for the protagonist's salvation. Through the mouth of a priest he compares Pinkie to a Frenchman (possibly Péguy) who lived in sin all through his life and people nevertheless thought of him as of a saint. The final inexplicit scene can, moreover, easily convey a spiritual meaning. We know that vitriol hit Pinkie's face very likely making him blind. Blindness might be spiritually recognized either as a punishment or as a gift to see the invisible and thus in the context might be used as a metaphor for the protagonist's spiritual awakening. Commenting on his Catholic characters, Greene adds during the interview: "They have all understood in the end."[99] Also Pinkie's drowning in the sea might figuraly represent the holy water which in the end 'did take'.

Interchanging of the agents of suicide is the novel's ultimate twist. What we expect to be Rose's self-sacrifice on behalf of eternal love turns to be Pinkie's 'last minute' escape from his despair and failure. From what a reader might see as an inevitable death of Rose remain only her regrets about not fulfilling her husband's dream. She still longs for the connection of their souls in whatever post-mortal world but her decision is conquered by much greater fear than that of the death itself. "She would have had the courage now to kill herself if she hadn't been afraid that somewhere in that obscure countryside of death they might miss each other – mercy operating somehow for one and not for the other."[100]

Although Rose has aways wished to spend her life (real or post-mortal) with beloved Pinkie, she has never desired death. Even when she was being persuaded by her 'husband' to kill herself, she prayed to God to find for her another solution, and it seems that God heard her prayer and intervened as it happened in other Greene's Catholic novels as well. And now when Pinkie was dead, it was too late for her to follow her heart and join him in his destiny.

[98] *Brighton Rock*, 138.
[99] Donaghy, *Conversations with Graham Greene*, 39.
[100] *Brighton Rock*, 231.

7. *The Power and the Glory*

In winter of the years 1937 – 1938, Graham Greene was summoned to Mexico to write a report on the state religious persecution. From his troublesome journey arose a travel account *Lawless Roads* (1939) and his rich experience from the country, where destroyed churches and priests sentenced to death was quotidian reality, served the author a year later as an inspiration for the novel *The Power and the Glory* (1940).[101] The second of the Catholic novels describes a story of the last active priest, who due to his great sense of responsibility and pride can await nothing but his own death. The author juxtapose the protagonist who "had the air, in his hollowness and neglect, of somebody of no account who had been beaten up incidentally, by ill-health or restlessness,"[102] to the character of lieutenant: "the idealistic police officer who stifled life from the best possible motives: the drunken priest who continued to pass life on."[103] This chapter aims at introduction of the nature and life of the main character, the whisky priest, in the faith-challenging time and environment. Besides, it will focus on the circumstances of the protagonist's death and their impact on his post-mortal life.

In Mexico, a country stigmatised by the religious persecution and alcohol prohibition, the whisky priest represents an outlaw and a social outsider for he is guilty of both transgressions. His committing of the latter serves him as a supportive means to face the former. Alcohol, as implies his agnomen, is an essential part of his life; it facilitates the priest to reach mental relief but ruins his career at the same time. It is a double-edged sword which gives him courage ("'A little drink,' he said, 'will work wonders in a cowardly man. With a little brandy, why, I'd defy – the devil.'"[104]), but which betrayed him three times and caused the degradation of his reputation as a priest and almost an instant death. Not only did he in the past, being completely drunk, baptised a boy under the name Brigitta (the name of his own daughter) and later in the time of grave danger was he imprisoned for a bottle of brandy, but it was the state of intoxication that helped him into a five-minute affair resulting in a child, a wound in his pride that never healed properly. In spite of all difficulties, he has never given upon

[101] Graham Greene, "Introduction," in *The Power and the Glory*, in *The Collected Edition* (Chatham, Kent: Guild, 1988), 321.
[102] Graham Greene, *The Power and the Glory*, in *The Collected Edition* (Chatham, Kent: Guild, 1988), 331.
[103] Greene, "Introduction," 321.
[104] *The Power and the Glory*, 357.

'acqua vitae' which accompanied him even in the last moments of his life. "He felt sick with fear, his stomach ached, and his mouth was dry with the drink."[105]

Being a priest with extramarital child the protagonist was followed by shame, primarily because he produced an offspring in such disagreeable manner, and later because he has voluntarily given it up. Like Reverend Arthur Dimmesdale in Nathaniel Hawthorn's novel *The Scarlet Letter*, he dedicated his life to the Church (though not to the Protestant one) and thus for the fear of negative social reception disclaimed his only daughter who was born and subsequently reminded him of his own mortal sin. It is only later (being hunted he ought to hide himself in the village of Maria, his ex-lover and mother of his child) that he becomes more aware of Brigitta's existence and more preoccupied with her future. From that time on as if his sinful conscious gave way to his paternal love. "He tried to think of his child with shame, but he could only think of her with a kind of famished love – what would become of her? And the sin itself was so old that like an ancient picture the deformity had faded and left a kind of grace."[106] The love to his biological daughter grows in him to such extent that the protagonist is willing to disclaim his salvation in exchange for Brigitta's spiritual redemption. "He prayed silently: 'O God, give me any kind of death – without contrition, in a state of sin – only save this child.'"[107]This voluntary self-damnation offering for somebody else's good is present also in Greene's later novels *The Heart of the Matter* and *The End of the Affair*. It was Robert H. Benson who observed this phenomenon and called it a 'contract' with God.[108]

The drive to the whisky priest's deeds is his pride, in Catholic notion a mortal sin. It is anchored in the core of his personality and remains there even after the main character undergoes influenced by the political and social situation a mental transformation and acquires a sense of modesty and gratefulness. From the description in his memories, one learns that the main character commenced his professional path not much for religious reasons as for an image of potential luxury and, as the book title implies, power, and glory. The poverty that he was contemning first like a crime becomes later, after conquering numerous life challenges, an essential 'ingredient' for his clandestine sermons.

[105] *The Power and the Glory*, 505.
[106] *The Power and the Glory*, 426.
[107] *The Power and the Glory*, 393.
[108] Griffiths, 170.

In the time of religious persecution, the whisky priest was compelled to reducing his living standards to a total minimum, roaming in shabby clothes accompanied only by fear and despair. However, pride became significant for the priest's character to such extent that without it his role in the story might seem meaningless. From what we see in the book, even in the presence of the deceitful mestizo who wanted to report the priest for monetary reward, it was the whisky priest's "pride, devilish pride, lying here offering his shirt to the man who wanted to betray him..." [109] which prevented him from fulfilling his family duties. After several years of being God's messenger, he regretfully reflects on his past when he was thinking, "I was a fine fellow to have stayed when the other had gone. And then I thought I was so grand I could make my own rules. I gave up fasting, daily Mass. I neglected my prayers and … I got a child. It was all pride."[110]

In his final moments what he confesses before God, is the painful truth that not love to Him but pride was always present at his work. "O God, forgive me – I am a proud, lustful, greedy man."[111] Not only did the character admit his vice, but he repents of it, which according to the Church is the entrance gate to one's redemption.

Just like Scobie in *The Heart of the Matter* also the whisky priest is noted for his unusual sense of responsibility, which is directed firstly towards his professional duty as the only priest in the country and later towards his daughter. Charity and love, which fulfilled him in crucial moments, the whisky priest feels not towards his only now ex-mistress Maria, "affection was taboo between them,"[112] but mainly towards his only child. Similarly to Scobie, the priest as well defines this higher human emotion in terms of commitments. "He was aware of an immense load of responsibility: it was indistinguishable from love…"[113] Paradoxically, it was not love to his daughter but loyalty to his occupation which decided about the tragic fate of the protagonist.

The whisky priest devoted his entire life to the Catholic faith, and regardless of his initial intentions which were not in accordance with the catechism of the Church, neither in the most demanding situations did he disown his duties. As opposed to Padre José, who surrendered to the political regime and officially gave up his faith in order to protect his own life and family, the whisky priest never considered this option.

[109] *The Power and the Glory*, 405.
[110] *The Power and the Glory*, 494.
[111] Ibid.
[112] *The Power and the Glory*, 386.
[113] *The Power and the Glory*, 379.

The courage of the main character lies in my opinion not only in risking his life for the sake of religious preservation among the folk but also in the fact that he acted ambitiously despite being haunted by the lack of his self-confidence and self-importance. "He was a bad priest, he knew it,"[114] but he also knew that nobody would take on his dangerous commitments. "When he was gone it would be as if God in all this space ceased to exist."[115]

During his mission the main character has to overcome numerous crises. In the country the lieutenant issued a new order that a hostage will be taken from each village and will be killed in case the residents lie about the presence of the wanted priest. There is a scene in the book when the lieutenant has all villagers called and in front of him stands also the object of his tracking. The villagers do not reveal the identity of the whisky priest creating thus in him a tremendous dilemma. On one side, he can sacrifice his life and redeem Miguel and other potential victims, on the other side, he is unable to declare himself off his faith and the gift of his life. "Wasn't it his duty to stay, even if they despised him, even if they were murdered for his sake?"[116] The protagonist defends himself by saying: "The Church taught that it was every man's first duty to save his own soul,"[117] and he keeps hiding his profession. However, not to do an injustice to the whisky priest, he does not observe the entire situation passively and attempts to save the young man by offering his life to the lieutenant instead of his, though this proposal is not accepted. "The priest said aloud, 'I did my best.' He went on, 'It's *your* job – to give me up. What do you expect me to do? It's my job not to be caught.'"[118]

The main character after such psychical terror when he becomes responsible for the suffering of the others feels strong sense of guilt and begins to doubt the rightness of his decisions. He is conscious of the fact that his religious effort brings more pain than gain. He succumbs to the feelings of fecklessness and failure. "He felt his own unworthiness like a weight at the back of the tongue."[119] He recognizes that the burden of responsibility lies on his shoulders only and in spite of the fact that he initially found it as an advantage, later he desires for the opposite. "He prayed silently: Oh God, send

[114] *The Power and the Glory*, 374.
[115] *The Power and the Glory*, 378.
[116] Ibid.
[117] Ibid.
[118] *The Power and the Glory*, 390.
[119] *The Power and the Glory*, 382.

them someone more worthwhile to suffer for. It seemed to him a damnable mockery that they should sacrifice themselves for a whisky priest with a bastard child."[120]

Nevertheless, the protagonist succeeded in the test of his faith even at the time of jeopardy by the double-tongued mestizo, who often provoked him to admit aloud his religious occupation. "He knew. He was in the presence of Judas."[121] Although the main character did not confirm his Catholic activities by a means of words, he definitely did not deny his faith by his deeds. The main character realized the intention of the old man, nonetheless, he was willing to follow the traitor meeting thus his own death. It was at the opening of the story that the whisky priest for the first time refused his chance to escape the persecution. Coming across a little boy begging the priest to rescue his mother, the protagonist let the ship *General Obregon* leave postponing thus his escape. Swearing over the unsolvable situation and acceding to the exaggerated plea, the protagonist alleges: "I'm meant to miss it."[122] Later he is exposed to another situation which withdrew him from safety (meanwhile he managed to cross the border). The mestizo encounters him again and he turns to him with entreaty to hear the confession of the mortally wounded gringo, an American killer. The priest immediately recognizes the trap, however, his inner sense of Catholic duty makes him accept the request and enter the dangerous land. Precisely as he expected during the conversation with the gringo he is arrested by the lieutenant. The lieutenant with surprise admits that he would never believe the priest would show up. "Oh well, lieutenant, you know how it is. Even a coward has a sense of duty."[123]

The question is if such conduct can be possibly called a suicide, as the main character is cognizant of the high probability of his death. According to Barry to recapitulate, suicide is described as "a deliberate and voluntary performance or omission done with adequate freedom and knowledge that aims at the destruction of one's life." Here it is necessary to notice that the protagonist's primary goal was not the death itself, but the loss of his life was definitely a result of 'omission' of any precaution. Barry explains further: "It is a choice made where death is reasonably expected to result from the specified performance or omission in common

[120] *The Power and the Glory*, 441.
[121] *The Power and the Glory*, 401 .
[122] *The Power and the Glory*, 334.
[123] *The Power and the Glory*, 489.

circumstances and situations,"[124] the definition being in accordance with the priest's deed.

In terms of self-killing, Robert L. Barry further distinguishes between "self-sacrificial acts undertaken to realize a higher and more perfect good" and "egoistical and cowardly acts of escape or self-destruction." According to his criteria, the person to be regarded as a martyr must sacrifice his life to save another person's life who would otherwise lose it.[125] Barry deals with suicide on the rational level thus not distinguishing between the earthly life and religious post-mortal life, therefore the answer remains ambiguous. However, all the indications are that the death of the whisky priest should be regarded as self-sacrifice, whereas the pursuit of the main character is to ensure the grigo absolution and therefore save him from damnation. On the other hand, the grigo refuses to confess his mortal sins making thus the priest fall into the trap without any reward for his priestly conscience except for his good-hearted effort. The fact remains that the priest had previously often been on the brink of possibilities and expressed a desire for his own death. The whisky priest as an outlaw feels the need for a definitive peace, and asks God for a quick death, as requested also by the characters of the other novels, Major Scobie and Sarah. In moments of crisis the death "was beginning to attract him by its simplicity,"[126] and after being rejected, he feels disappointment. "Now that the immediate fear was over, he felt only regret. God had not decided. He had to go on with life ..."[127] However, the priest perceived his suicidal inclinations only at the time of imminent danger, i.e. during his stay in the anti-religious state.

Furthermore, the whisky priest is a character who is fully aware of the depth of his sins, though unable to repent them. The similar motif depicts Greene later in *The Heart of the Matter*, where Scobie says that he cannot repent of his adulterous love. Alike the priest finds delectation in the result of his unpardonable sin, in his retrieved daughter. "He couldn't say to himself that he wished the sin had never existed, because the sin seemed to him now so unimportant and he loved the fruit of it."[128] He knows very well that the state of his mind is not in agreement with the teaching of the Church

[124] Barry, 10.
[125] Barry, 14.
[126] *The Power and the Glory*, 436.
[127] *The Power and the Glory*, 444.
[128] *The Power and the Glory*, 434.

and that he lacks modesty and meekness. The whisky priest concedes that "when we love our sin then we are damned indeed."[129]

Later, after talking to the dying American murderer, the priest willingly falls into the hands of the lieutenant and without any self-defence or attempt to escape he submits to his fate (as in the case of non-sailing away the persecuted area). Waiting for his execution experiences the protagonist as follows:

> When he woke up it was down. He woke with a huge feeling of hope which suddenly and completely left him at the first sight of the prison yard. It was the morning of his death. He crouched on the floor with the empty brandy-flask in his hand trying to remember an Act of Contrition. 'O God, I am sorry and beg pardon for all my sins…crucified…worthy of thy dreadful punishments.' He was confused, his mind was on other things: it was not the good death for which one always prayed. He caught sight of his own shadow on the cell wall; it had a look of surprise and grotesque unimportance. What a fool he had been to think that he was strong enough to stay when others fled. What an impossible fellow I am, he thought, and how useless. I have done nothing for anybody. I might just as well have never lived. His parents were dead – soon he wouldn't even be a memory – perhaps after all he wasn't really Hell-worthy. 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.[130]

In his last thoughts the character realizes his paltriness and regrets his insufficient actions. Suddenly, as his life comes to an end the protagonist realizes that the hardest examination is only now to come and that is to stand before the gates of heaven unprepared. Paradoxically the whisky priest was never afraid of his damnation, even though he knew that the damned is the one who loves his mortal sin just like him. Either was this fear surpassed by horror of pain or the vision that "he was not really

[129] *The Power and the Glory*, 473.
[130] *The Power and the Glory*, 506-507.

Hell-worthy"[131]. The whisky priest is entitled to a last wish, but his plea to be able to confess his sins, Padre José refuses.

The writer inserts into the story two parallel scenes, one is the fate of the main character and the other gives an image of an old Mexican reading to his grandson a story about the life of the holy martyr Juan. The character of the book hero is "loosely based on the life of Miguel Pro, SJ, who had died a martyr in 1920 in Mexico and was later canonized." Greene juxtaposes "the unflinching heroism of an authentic martyr," whose last words before his execution were panegyric 'Viva el Cristo Rey', "in sharp contrast to the weak but undoubtedly saintly, alcoholic priest of Greene's imagination,"[132] whose before the capital punishment writhes in fear and from his mouth "nothing came out except for a word that sounded like 'Excuse'."[133] Although Cunningham has no doubt about the sanctity of the non-ideal priest Litonjua denies the allegation. Litonjua claims that despite the fact that the protagonist "had been faithful in his own way" emphasizing his positives, he "was no saint."[134] Neither the literary hero perceived himself positively.

On one hand, I agree with Cunningham that this comparison may indicate that Greene sees the character of an alcoholic priest as a saint. It would not be the first time that the author is looking for non-flawless heroes among ordinary people, as in the case of adulterous Sarah. Also M. B. Mesnet argues that: "*The Power and the Glory* is a striking illustration of how a priest can be subjected to temptation and still retain his sacred dignity unimpaired, whatever degree of corruption he may have reached."[135]

Another metaphor to prove this statement is a scene where the boy whose mother read aloud the story of Juan sees under the window the lieutenant, who once let him touch his gun. After the execution, however, "the boy crinkled up his face and spat through the windows bars, accurately, so that a little blob of spittle lay on the revolver-butt."[136] The boy figures in the novel as a link between a literary though authentic hero and a real hero being on his side.

On the other hand, the life of the priest is not indispensable, as soon after his death a new Father, whose name is not revealed, knocks on the boy's door. God often in

[131] *The Power and the Glory*, 506.
[132] Lawrence Cunningham, "The Twentieth Century," *A Brief History of Saints* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005), 109.
[133] *The Power and the Glory*, 513.
[134] M. D. Litonjua, *Joint Ventures: Religious Studies and Social Sciences* (Bloomington: Authorhouse, 2012), 328.
[135] Mesnet, 56.
[136] *The Power and the Glory*, 516.

the works of Graham Greene hears the prayers of the characters (as in the case of Rose, Scobie, Sarah, and Bendrix), although He usually intervenes in an unexpected form. When the whisky priest felt unworthy of his position and asked God to send somebody more worth of villagers' suffering, suddently after his death a subtitute enters the good-hearted boy's home... And just so inscrutable was mercy of god when the whisky priest begged for death when having been in the state of highest danger and it came to him only after he regained a peaceful life.

8. *The Heart of the Matter*

Only one from among Greene's Catholic novels, written as the penultimate, *The Heart of the Matter* directly addresses in detail the issue of suicide which was intentionally arranged and eventually committed by its victim. Such self-controlled suicides are portrayed in the novel twice while the more significant one, this chapter will dedicate it more space, is an act of the main character Scobie, the Deputy Commissioner of Police.

Scobie, nicknamed among his colleagues as Scobie the Just appears in the story initially as a person rather unusual for his moral scrupulosity and admirable rationality. According to Spurling, Scobie is the rarest protagomist of Greene's fiction for he lacks cynism and eschews grown-up vices.[137] "He didn't drink, he didn't fornicate, he didn't even lie, but he never regarded this absence of sin as virtue."[138] Unlike his co-workers who "had been corrupted by money", the protagonist "had been corrupted by sentiment."[139] Although Scobie feels content and secure in the routine of his working life ("The thought of retirement set his nerves twitching and straining: he always prayed that death would come first."[140]), his personal life is scarred by the marital crisis caused by the inability of Scobie's wife Louise to integrate into the environment. Louise's fastidiousness and insistency on the necessary change of her living place steer Major Scobie into an unceasing fight for her happiness at the expense of his own. After her final departure to South America, Scobie is trapped in a love affair with a significantly younger woman Mrs Helen Rolt and his main struggle now lies in his effort to accord life commands of both women which leads to his tragic end.

The main character acts in the story not only as a self-sacrificing husband and lover but I must agree with John Spurling that Scobie represents "pre-eminently a father figure."[141] Indeed, the paternal feature of the Deputy Commissioner appears in the story several times. In spite of the fact that Scobie's daughter is dead before the story begins and the author does not allow her to occupy much of Scobie's thoughts, she survives as an eternal note about her death in Scobie's diary. It is difficult to demarcate Scobie's notion of love as it is very often confused with his sense of pity and responsibility but if

[137] Spurling, 37.
[138] *Graham* Greene, *The Heart of the Matter* in *The Collected Edition* (Chatham, Kent: Guild, 1988), 625.
[139] *The Heart of the Matter*, 570.
[140] *The Heart of the Matter*, 559.
[141] Spurling, 40.

he was capable of such pure human emotion, it must have been directed exclusively towards his only child. Louise taunts her husband: "You've never loved anyone since Catherine died."[142] After the death of his own offspring, Scobie's paternal feelings paradoxically do not subside (perhaps because of his sense of guilt that he was not with her during her last moments of life) but rather fixate on a new substitutive 'object'.

Soon after Scobie arranges Louise's journey to the South Africa, the victims of a torpedoed ship, who spent forty days in open boats are being brought. On one of the stretchers lies a little desolate-looking dying girl, "she couldn't have been more than six."[143] Scobie under the burden of past trauma and the fear of repeating history is afraid to stay alone with the child. "He had been in Africa when his own child died. He had thanked God that he had missed it."[144] Now he cannot escape witnessing the girl's suffering and collapses into despair. He is trying to amuse her by "taking out his handkerchief" and making "the shadow of a rabbit's head fall on the pillow beside her."[145] Just before the nurse returns, the girl utters her last word 'father' dedicated mistakenly to Scobie and passes away. The moment was so powerful that it etched in Scobie's memory only to emerge later during his prayer.

At that time Scobie encounters also a nineteen-year-old Mrs Helena Rolt, another from the rescued persons, who had lost her husband on the ship. The sight at an exhausted young lady moved in Scobie some kind of parental tenderness which immediately made him want to comfort her and protect her. "Scobie always remembered how she was carried into his life on a stretcher grasping a stamp album with her eyes fast shut." Initially, due to a great age difference, he perceived her as a parent perceives his child, "they both had an immense sense of security", because they "could never be anything else than friends."[146] It is striking how few pages later this pseudo father-daughter relationship turns into a love affair. Notwithstanding that their relationship reached the sexual level, they could never become equal partners as they were divided by "years and years of experience."[147] Helena firstly functioned nourishing his parental feelings as a substitution for his lost daughter and later fulfilling his help-giving obsession.

[142] *The Heart of the Matter*, 573.
[143] *The Heart of the Matter*, 629.
[144] *The Heart of the Matter*, 633.
[145] *The Heart of the Matter*, 634.
[146] *The Heart of the Matter*, 647.
[147] Ibid.

Although Scobie from the beginning approached both 'children' with father affections, later when he prayed for strength to overcome his sense of responsibility for Helen and to leave his affair for rational reasons, "it was not Helen's face he saw as he prayed but the dying child who called him father…"[148] This scene, in my opinion, perfectly demonstrates that Scobie has never been able to cope with the loss of his child and that the love for her is of greater significance than the one for his lover or wife.

At the time of writing *The Heart of the Matter* Graham Greene became involved with Catherine Wilston, an American woman of a civil servant, who according to Sherry held unbeatable position in the author's heart. "No one touched Greene as deeply as Catherine Walston, even at a religious level."[149] Brennan extends the information about Greene's personal life: "During the early-1940s he was torn between his love for Vivien and that for Dorothy Glover but, following his contacts with Catherine, his love for them was transmuted into what he regarded as self-destructive pity."[150] We learn from the novel that the prevailing feeling of Scobie, paralleling certain features of Greene's situation, towards his mistress and spouse is exactly that of pity in addition to his sense of responsibility which only wear the mask of 'love', though the mask very convincing.

Scobie is a solitary character who experiences the greatest happiness not in the presence of women about who he claims to love but alone because only then he is relieved of his obtrusive instinct to abandon his contentment for the happiness of the others. "It seemed to Scobie later that this was the ultimate border he had reached in happiness: being in darkness, alone, with the rain falling, without love or pity."[151] It is his compulsive sense of duty and pity which primarily lead the protagonist to abuse his profession for illegal activities which have in Scobie's thinking more human purpose. "In our hearts there is a ruthless dictator, ready to contemplate the misery of a thousand strangers if it will ensure the happiness of the few we love."[152] For instance, having sympaties for a father-captain he destroyed a letter to his daughter never reporting it and to satisfy his wife's desire to move out he acceded to the loan from an untrustworthy by the law persecuted Syrian shopkeeper Yusef. The importance of Scobie's sense of duty towards others is demonstrated by gradual voluntary ruining of his career for their sake

[148] *The Heart of the Matter*, 718.
[149] Norman Sherry, *The Life of Graham Greene, 1939-1955* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1994), 257.
[150] Brennan, 82.
[151] *The Heart of the Matter*, 642.
[152] *The Heart of the Matter*, 691.

which represents the most please-giving pillar of his life. As opposed to Sarah Miles in *The End of the Affair* who to be able to overcome the 'desert' of her being needs to obtain admiration of man, loyal husband, and passionate lover, for Major Scobie these interpersonal relationships mean only another burden which draws him apart from his longed-for peace. "He wanted happiness for others and solitude and peace for himself."[153] For him 'peace' represented "the most beautiful word in the language".[154] What, on the contrary, connects the characters of Sarah and Major Scobie is their inability to see their closest acquaintances suffer, in particular if they themselves are responsible for their affliction. "People talk about the courage of condemned men walking to the place of execution: sometimes it needs as much courage to walk with any kind of bearing towards another person's habitual misery."[155]

As mentioned before one way Scobie defines love is in terms of responsibility for other person's happiness which is best demonstrated in a scene where the protagonist speaks to his lover. "'When we say to someone, 'I can't live without you,' what we really mean is, 'I can't live feeling you may be in pain, unhappy, in want.' That's all it is. When they are dead our responsibility ends. There's nothing more we can do about it. We can rest in peace."[156] Indeed, the track of thoughts of the main character implies that only death can dismiss the commitment. Another concomitant of Scobie's notion of love is a persisting sense of pity which appears after the original passion fades away and it smoulders "like decay at his heart."[157] The main character perceives it in both his marriage as well as in his adulterous relationship despite the objections from the other side. Scobie cannot control any of his weaknesses and they remain with him while everything else is removed. "Love was the wish to understand, and presently with constant failure the wish died, and love died too perhaps or changed into this painful affection, loyalty, pity…."[158]

The sense of responsibility, which gains super human proportions, is a goal so high that the protagonist is unable to reach it and plunges into a psychical crisis. Although he manages to give up his job in favor of his wife, his additional adulterous relationship leaves Scobie split between the two worlds. "He had sworn to preserve Louise's happiness, and now he had accepted another and contradictory

[153] *The Heart of the Matter*, 690.
[154] *The Heart of the Matter*, 575.
[155] *The Heart of the Matter*, 571.
[156] *The Heart of the Matter*, 660.
[157] *The Heart of the Matter*, 680.
[158] *The Heart of the Matter*, 747.

responsibility."[159] He is stuck in the interspace that gives him a feeling of permanent failure, which he is not under the weight of current circumstances able to dispel. "It seemed to him that he must have failed in some way in manhood."[160] Similarly to the majority of Greene's characters, even Major Scobie is an escapist, who cannot rationally approach the problem and who as Gordon very well pointed out finds consolation and excuses in his personal faith which "helps him to justify his flight."[161] The answer to his hopeless situation he sees only in his suicide, as it is death only which can terminate all the commitments. "I can't bear to see suffering, and I cause it all the time. I want to get out, get out."[162] Regardless of protagonist's excuse that it would be the easiest and necessary solution for the sake of both female characters' happiness, it would be a mistake to think that is an act of pure unselfish self-sacrifice.

In my opinion this is more or less a comfortable act laced with pride as a way out of the tangled love triangle towards longed-for peace, as Scobie himself is aware that such an end is unnecessary. "He thought: of course there's the ordinary honest *wrong* answer, to leave Louise, forget that private vow [to make her happy as long as he is alive], resign my job. To abandon Helen to Bagster or Louise to what? I am trapped…"[163] Scobie's pride lies in the fact that he realizes not to be easily replaceable as well as he inconspicuously shows superiority over young Bagster.

Although Scobie seems like a humane and empathetic person who through his fallibility becomes sympathetic, Greene had the intention to highlight the cardinal sin. In his words: "the character of Scobie was intended to show that pity can be the expression of an almost monstrous pride. But I found the effect on readers was quite different. To them Scobie was exonerated, Scobie was 'a good man', he was hunted to his doom by the harshness of his wife."[164] Although I have to agree with the majority audience that the author's indication of this personal trait is only fractional, there are several examples to be found in the book.

One of the hints is Scobie comparing himself with the immediate surroundings. "He thought: am I really one of those whom people pity,"[165] as if looking down on others he was the only one entitled to feel compassion for his fellow men. Another

[159] *The Heart of the Matter*, 666.
[160] *The Heart of the Matter*, 562.
[161] Hayim Gordon, *Fighting Evil: Unsung Heroes in the Novels of Graham Greene* (Westport: Greenwood, 1997), 86.
[162] *The Heart of the Matter*, 730.
[163] *The Heart of the Matter*, 718.
[164] *Ways of Escape*, 93-4.
[165] *The Heart of the Matter*, 701.

remarkable case is Scobie's monologue to God , where he realizes his potential to hurt Him while alive and that is by hurting what He had created. Regarding the consequent behavior of the main character, the author explains: "the particular motive of his suicide, to save even God from himself, was the final twist of the screw of his inordinate pride."[166] Evelyn Waugh's reaction to the fact that the protagonist is put on the same level as God offering his life as a result of his love for God is far from being positive."To me the ideal of willing my own damnation for the love of God is either a very loose poetical expression or a mad blasphemy."[167]

Clues about the final decision of Scobie appear within the novel gradually but unobtrusively. The first introduction of the topic of suicide is through Scobie's investigation of Pemberton's death. The dead body of the twenty-five-year-old lad according to Scobie emits childlike innocence therefore the main character cannot comprehend Father Clay's lamentation over his as the Church would have it inevitable damnation. The priest tries to comfort himself by the thought that the young victim had had enough time to repent himself from the darkest of mortal sins. Both Scobie and Father Clay ponder whether his atheistic background makes the young man an exception saved from Christian punishment, however, not obtaining a satisfactory conclusion. Unlike the priest, Scobie is convinced about God's mercy, in existence of exceptions from God's punishment that particularly in case of an immature inexperienced person. "It seemed to him that unquestionably there must be mercy for someone unformed."[168] During the interview with the priest Scobie for the first time confronts with Pemberton's act hypothetical post-mortal aftermath of his own suicide. 'If you or I did it, it would be despair – I grant you anything with us. We'd be damned because we know, but *he* doesn't know a thing. … Even the Church can't teach me that God doesn't have pity with the young…'[169]

Pemberton killed himself by hanging complementing the act by a farewell-letter for his father explaining his motif – finantial liabilities. Anologous to Scobie's later situation, the victim of suicide is acting on behalf of a greater love for another person. The letter is signed as 'Dicki', the name which later echoes in Scobie's dream with the variation of 'Ticki', obnoxious nickname given to Scobie by his wife. The author was

[166] *Ways of Escape*, 94.
[167] *Quoted in* Claudia Durst Johnson, and Vernon E. Johnson, "1900 – 1999" in *The social impact of the novel: A Reference Guide* (Westport, CT: Greenwood P, 2002), 121.
[168] *The Heart of the Matter*, 600.
[169] *The Heart of the Matter*, 601.

seeking inspiration in his own life and not once he was lured by it. After Vivien discovered his infidelity in 1948, "they were embroiled in acrimonious discussions, often punctuated by Greene's protestations that his suicide would be the best solution, over whether to seek a deed of separation or a judicial separation." Similarly Scobie's disliked nickname Ticki has its origin in the writer's marriage.[170]

As mentioned before, another indication and subconscious inspirative idea was a dream following the Pemberton's case. "Upstairs Louise was crying, and he sat at a table writing his last letter. 'It's a rotten business for you, but it can't be helped. Your loving husband, Dicky,' and then as he turned to look for a weapon or a rope, it suddenly occurred to him that this was an act he could never do. Suicide was for ever out of his power – he couldn't condemn himself for eternity – no cause was important enough."[171]The nightmare continues with Louise's suicide which the main character was not able to prevent, being a precursor to Scobie's failure, and wakes up. It is important to notice that Pemberton's tragic end as well as the dream occurred before Louise's voyage to South America and Scobie's introduction to Mrs Helen Rolt, his future lover, therefore Scobie did not have any stimulus to self-killing.

Only after he falls into the adulterous relationship and takes the responsibility for young Helen, Scobie begins to, although initially reluctantly, consider his suicide. He aims to commit it the way that it would not be distinguishable from an illness arguing that it "was not only the question of his life insurance: the happiness of others had to be protected. It was not so easy to forget suicide as a middle-aged man's death from angina."[172] Scobie in Brennan's words being "driven by despair and pride"[173] has himself prescribed Evipan pills against insomnia saving them all for the final use, and with foresight enriches his daily notes with the description of his 'illness' symptoms.

The protagonist converted just like his creator Graham Greene to Catholicism out of love to his bride-to-be. The faith of the main characters undergoes various stages of development from doubting the existence of God to a great Christian love for Him. Scobie like numerous other Greene's characters does not absorb religious awareness without questioning it. Although over the course of time Scobie's faith strengthens, in the novel it is symbolized as in the drawer rediscovered "broken rosary… which should

[170] Brennan, 83-84.
[171] *The Heart of the Matter*, 605.
[172] *The Heart of the Matter*, 751.
[173] Brennan, 89.

have been mended a long while ago"[174]and which subsequently the protagonist puts into his pocket.

Scobie, besides the pre-planned suicide, is aware and taunts himself his other mortal sin, adultery, which inherently leads to the protagonist's self-destruction as he is unable to repent it and receive thus absolution. Speaking of adultery as a mortal sin, Greene objects the teaching of the Church arguing that an unpardonable sin is defined as being "committed in defiance of God. I doubt whether a man making love to a woman ever does so with the intention of defying God."[175] Scobie in the novel cannot rue his deed, "I can regret the lies, the mess, the unhappiness, but if I were dying now I wouldn't know how to repent the love."[176] His candid personality does not allow him to follow the hypocritical advice of Father Rank: "It's better to sin seventy times and repent each time that sin once and never repent."[177] Rather, on the contrary, originally a non-believing hero seems in his thinking to represent a more honest person than many other Catholics. "I can't face coming up to the altar at Christmas – your birthday feast – and taking your body and blood for the sake of a lie."[178]

Just like he knows how grave his adultery is, he is even more conscious of fatality of suicide resulting from primary unpardonable sin. "This was the worst crime a Catholic could commit – it must be a perfect one."[179] According to his contribution in the conversation with Father Clay over the dead body of the young self-killer his own suicide could bring him nothing but damnation, because 'he knows'. The act itself required from the protagonist great courage and determination. Although he had arranged everything necessary, Scobie's alarmed conscience tried to prevent him from suicidal act, firstly through dreaming later in the form of inner voice which the protagonist with a great effort tries to tranquillize. "Solitude itself has a voice. It said to him, Throw away those tablets. You'll never be able to collect enough again. You'll be saved. … 'No,' said Scobie aloud, 'no'. He pushed the tablets in his mouth six at a time, and drank them down in two draughts."[180] It is only in *The Heart of the Matter* that the author leaves so much space for inner dilemma before the anti-Christian deed. Unlike the whisky priest, Scobie is not afraid of pain or the course of his own death frequently

[174] *The Heart of the Matter*, 685.
[175] Marie-Françoise Allain, and Guido Waldman, *The Other Man: Conversations with Graham Greene* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983), 158.
[176] *The Heart of the Matter*, 710.
[177] *The Heart of the Matter*, 719.
[178] *The Heart of the Matter*, 752.
[179] *The Heart of the Matter*, 751.
[180] *The Heart of the Matter*, 758.

clamouring God for it. He is predominantly preoccupied by potential exposal of his death causes and by unpleasant fate of his two beloved women. Scobie's good-will follows him even in the last moments of his life.

> He had a message to convey, but the darkness and the storm drove it back within the case of his breast, and all the time outside the house, outside the world that drummed like hammer blows within his ear, someone wandered, seeking to get in, someone appealing for help, someone in need of him. And automatically at the call of need, at the cry of the victim, Scobie strung himself to act. He dredged his consciousness up from an infinite distance in order to make some reply. He said aloud, 'Dear God, I love…' but the effort was too great and he did not feel his body when it struck the floor or hear the small tinkle of the medal as it span like a coin under the ice-box – the saint whose name nobody could remember.[181]

During the process of writing this paper, I came across a print form of Oscard Wilde's cross-examination before his imprisonment where the Irish icon conveys his characteristics of the sense of duty as "the highest feeling man is capable of."[182] I believe that it is this 'highest' human feeling which by a means of Greene's literary timing functions as Scobie's first class ticket to heaven. Furthermore, I have to agree with professor Don Salter's idea during our conversations that the metaphorical parallel between Scobie's fall on the floor and the fall of the coin portraying an unknown saint is an obvious foretoken for the sanctity of the main hero. Although Louise considers her husband to be voluntarily doomed (after Wilson found out that Scobie's death was suicide), Father Rank defends him giving him a chance. "The Church knows all the rules. But it doesn't know what goes on in a single human heart." The priest ended their conversation saying "It may seem an odd thing to say -- when a man's as wrong as he was -- but I think, from what I saw of him, that he really loved God."[183] Greene leaves last Scobie's sentence unfinished for the reader to complete it. I would suggest that the author had in mind three persons linking his quote from before his suicide. "He stood with the gin bottle poised and thought: then Hell will begin, and they'll be safe from me, Helen, Louise, and You."[184]

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[181] *The Heart of the Matter*, 758-759.
[182] Jonathan Goodman, *The Oscar Wilde File* (London: Allison & Busby, 1988), 54.
[183] *The Heart of the Matter*, 764.
[184] *The Heart of the Matter*, 755.

Besides another Greene's creation of a saint out of a desperate person, the novel discusses a new interesting topic. Compared to the previous Greene's Catholic novels, *The Heart of the Matter* comes up with an unprecedented view on the concept of hell and the death of Jesus Christ. During Scobie's debate with his colleagues about methods of suicide and a notion of hell, the protagonist explains that hell can be explained also as a "permanent sense of loss".[185] It seems that Scobie living in the bleak world full of corruption and difficult interpersonal relationships was already experiencing hell on earth, or at least he thought he was getting closer to it. DeVivis sees Scobie's fear in the permanent sense of loss of God,[186] however, I would argue that he also dreads the loss of peace as he says before the false confession. "He felt as though he were turning his back on peace for ever."[187] Although, it can be objected that love of God and peace is one and the same thing, Scobie speaking of peace means rather tranquillity he senses e.g. after Louise left for South America. The second rather dare idea of Greene is Scobie's vision of Jesus's death as suicide, exactly of what was Barry afraid it the definition of suicide is too broad. Scobie pushes his thought: "Christ had not been murdered – you couldn't murder God. Christ had killed himself: he had hung himself on the Cross as surely as Pemberton from the picture-rail,"[188] even further. That is he visualise himself as Christ who sacrificed himself for mankind,[189] although Barry would pronouce Scobie's death as an act of despair and cowardice.[190]

[185] *The Heart of the Matter*, 694.
[186] A. A. DeVitis, "Religious Aspects in the Novels of Graham Greene" in Harold Bloom, ed., Modern *Critical Views: Graham Greene* (New York: Chelsea House, 1987), 86.
[187] *The Heart of the Matter*, 698.
[188] *The Heart of the Matter*, 690.
[189] A. A. DeVitis, 86.
[190] Barry, 14.

9. *The End of the Affair*

The book *The End of the Affair*, published thirteen years after *Brighton Rock*, represents the last of the Catholic novels and unlike its three predecessors it is formally distinguishable. It belongs to the most experimental works in Greene's rather traditional portfolio.[191] It is written in the first person narrator including a wider diary section providing thus more than a singular point of view.

The End of the Affair is set in London during the Second World War and it deals with the tortuous love affair between Sarah Miles, the wife of a civil servant Henry Miles, and Maurice Bendrix, a promising writer. Their sheer professional encounters, Bendrix is collecting material for his biography about Sarah's husband, gradually turn into a deep mutual passionate relationship contaminated by Bendrix's intense jealousy. Despite lovers' unearthly affection for each other, the affair ends unexpectedly one night during the blitz when a bomb strikes the house and Maurice is knocked down by the door seemingly dead. After that night Sarah without any further explanation stops seeing her lover. Eighteen months later Maurice comes across her husband who now becomes suspicious about Sarah's unfaithfulness and the fact only fosters Maurice's obsessions with his beloved. Following Henry's suggestion, although without his consent, Maurice employs detective Parkis to find about her new amatory encounters and during the process of investigation receives Sarah's diary depicting what had happened the fatal night. Feared for Maurice's life Sarah gave a promise to God: if He spares him she will end the sinful affair. Just before Maurice being now aware of the true nature of her love can properly retrieve their relationship, Sarah suffering from poor health condition runs away from him into the rainy night and in few days dies of pneumonia.

The novel was generally praised and William Faulkner complimented it as "one of the most true and moving novels of my time."[192] What gives the book its authenticity might be its partial autobiographical features. "Inviting analogies between divine and human love, the affair functions symbolically as an elaborate secular meditation—Greene's own metaphysical conceit."[193] *The End of the Affair* was indeed being created

[191] Gavin Keulks, "Graham Greene," In *The Oxford Encyclopedia of British Literature*, ed. David Scott Kastan (New York: Oxford UP, 2006), 468.
[192] Alan Hager, ed., *Encyclopedia of British Writers: 1800 to the Present.* (New York: Facts On File, 2009), 217.
[193] Keulks, 468.

in the middle of an affair. In 1946 Greene's literary devotee Catherine Walston (1916 - 1978), the wife of a prominent supporter of the Labour Party Henry Walston and the mother of five children,[194] claimed that the author's books inspired her to become a Roman Catholic convert and without hesitation asked Greene through contacting Vivien first to become her godfather. Greene gladly accepted the role, however, could not attend the ceremony and thus Vivien became a surrogate godparent.[195] Graham and Catherine personally acquainted later that year during the Christmas and Greene was instantly enchanted by her beauty. They met once more and just like Maurice and Sarah in the book Graham and Catherine had fallen in love 'over a plate of onions.'[196]

At that time both of the couple were married to other partners while maintaining other extramarital relationships. Greene was during the early 1940s involved with a long-serving mistress Dorothy Glover[197] and a befriended prostitute while Mrs Walston was as William Cash frankly puts it in his controversial book "conducting affairs with a labour MP, an American general and an IRA chiefman, and… she dallied enthusiastically with several priests,… her absolute favourite sex toys."[198]

The deep long-running passionate relationship of Graham and Catherine became an open secret (Greene even publicly dedicated the book to his mistress) and led to Greene's separation from Vivien on the 20th of November, 1947. However, despite Greene's persistent jealousy scenes and public humiliation of Catherine's husband (allegedly he dared to have sex with Catherine on the back seat of the car her husband was driving[199]) it never ended the Catholic marriage of the Walstons. According to Sherry, Catherine to the chagrin of Graham had left him by 1956 (i.e. not before the publication of *The End of the Affair*) after ten years of their adulterous relationship of which first four years were generally considered as most cherishing. Despite the overwhelming impact that Catherine revitalizing Greene's already ingrained tastes for theological debate[200] had had on the production of *The End of the Affair*, the author decided to set the story into the pre-Catherine war era. The main plot of the novel goes back to the London blitz of 1941 when Graham Greene by a fluke escaped certain death. While he was sleeping at Dorothy's place (Vivien at the beginning of the war moved

[194] Archana Srinivasan, *20th Century Writers* (Chennai: T. Krishna Press, 2007), 29.
[195] Brennan, 82.
[196] Rob Walters, *Naughty Boys: Ten Rogues of Oxford* (Kindle. Rob Walters: 2011), 32.
[197] Brennan, 82.
[198] Quoted in Walters, 32.
[199] Sherry, *The Life of Graham Greene, 1939-1955,* 480.
[200] Brennan, 83.

back to Oxford), his house in Clapham Common was struck by a stick bomb and completely destroyed.[201] Nevertheless, it is Mrs Walston, twelve years Greene's junior, who shows certain resemblance with the central female character Sarah Miles. The male protagonist and narrator, the novelist Maurice Bendrix, represents "Greene's slippery alter ego."[202]

Maurice sharing with Greene his occupation of an ambitious writer is working on a new biography of a civil servant within the story and at the same time he functions as its narrator and the main character warning us that this is "a record of hate more than of love."[203] It is through his profession Maurice finds the love of his life, similarly Graham would not have been introduced to Catherine being not a prominent influential author, however, in his life it was the female counterpart responsible for their encounter and not vice versa as the novel tells.

Maurice's love for his mistress Sarah is enormous and so is his jealousy which is burning him even more after their abrupt inexplicable separation. The psychical crisis of the protagonist is depicted so authentically that the reader can feel something of the writer's own unfeigned suffering.

> That was the worst period of all: it is my profession to imagine, to think in images: fifty times through the day, and immediately I woke during the night, a curtain would rise and the play would begin: always the same play, Sarah making love, Sarah with X, doing the same things that we had done together, Sarah kissing in her own particular way, arching herself in the act of sex and uttering that cry like act of sex and uttering that cry like pain, Sarah in abandonment. I would take pills at night to make me sleep quickly, but I never found any pills that would keep me asleep till daylight.[204]

Just like Maurice could not repress in him a green-eyed monster due to Sarah's "enormous loyalty to Henry,"[205] so Greene could not cope with the thought that Catherine will never end her marriage and possibly other love affairs. Maurice is from the beginning aware of the temporality of their relationship. "I became aware that our love was doomed: love had turned into a love-affair with a beginning and an end. I

[201] Walters, 31.
[202] Neil Sinyard, *Graham Greene: A Literary Life* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 26.
[203] Graham Greene, *The End of the Affair* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1975), 7.
[204] *The End of the Affair*, 74.
[205] *The End of the Affair*, 10.

could name the very moment when it had begun, and one day I knew I should be able to name the final hour."[206] Despite his attempts to find consolation in his relationship, the main character is conscious of its mortality. Never feeling confident in the love-triangle, he secretly desired to finish it in order to prevent himself from a sudden psychical strike.

> I was pushing, pushing the only thing I loved out of my life. As long as I could make believe that love lasted, I was happy – I think I was even good to live with and so love did last. But if love had to die, I wanted it to die quickly. It was as though our love was a small creature caught in a trap and bleeding to death: I had to shut my eyes and wring its neck.[207]

It was already during their intense sexual encounters jeopardized by the existing husband and war circumstances when Maurice became attracted by his own death for the first time: "Death never mattered at those times - in the early days I even used to pray for it: the shattering annihilation that would prevent for ever the getting up, the putting on clothes, the watching her torch trail across to the opposite side of the Common like the tail-light of a slow car driving away."[208] What Maurice emphasizes is the moment of loneliness when his lover is leaving him and that is the most often portrayed way he perceives Sarah within the whole book, she represents something he would never reach or possess. And if he cannot live with her in peace he might at least wish to die with her in the most intimate position. "I have wondered sometimes whether eternity might not after all exist as the endless prolongation of the moment of death, and that was the moment I would have chosen, that I would still choose if she were alive, the moment of absolute trust and absolute pleasure, the moment when it was impossible to quarrel because it was impossible to think."[209] Maurice's longing for his life-end was reinforced after 'the end of the affair' to such extent that he was seeking not external factor to devoid him of life but his own self-destruction.

> Three weeks passed ... I began quite seriously to think of suicide. I even set a date, and I saved up my sleeping pills with what was almost a sense of hope. I needn't after all go on like this indefinitely, I told myself. Then the date came and the play

[206] *The End of the Affair*, 35.
[207] *The End of the Affair*, 35.
[208] *The End of the Affair*, 70.
[209] Ibid.

> went on and on and I didn't kill myself. It wasn't cowardice: it was a memory that stopped me – the memory of the look of disappointment on Sarah's face when I came into the room after the VI had fallen. Hadn't she, at heart, hoped for my death, so that her new affair with X would hurt her conscience less, for she had a kind of elementary conscience? If I killed myself now, she wouldn't have to worry about me at all, and surely after our four years together there would be moments of worry even with X. I wasn't going to give her that satisfaction.[210]

We see that Maurice's sense of love cannot exist without his need to possess the object of his affection. He himself confesses: "I measured love by the extent of my jealousy, and by that standard of course she could not love me at all."[211] Sarah according to what she scribbled into her diary has always been perfectly aware of his insecurity. "He is jealous of the past and the present and the future. His love is like a medieval chastity belt: only when he is there, with me, in me, does he feel safe."[212] Unlike Maurice, she expresses her endearment in a completely opposite way. We learn from her writing that she has always feared 'desert', name she gives to isolation and loneliness. "I have always wanted to be liked or admired. I feel a terrible insecurity if a man turns on me, if I lose a friend. I don't even want to lose a husband. I want everything, all the time, everywhere. I'm afraid of the desert."[213] It is through her inner feelings she tries to perceive Maurice's situation and help him overcome his 'desert' even at the cost of sharing him. "I wouldn't rob him of some small companionship in the desert if we can't have each other there,"[214] something Maurice would never allow.

Despite Sarah's effort to manifest that their love transcends everyday reality and that he is the one with whom she is able to conquer her desert, Maurice remains convinced about the disloyalty of his lover and later considers her a traitor who disappeared from his life in the most cruel manner. In his narrow-mindedness he is persuaded that their parting is the ultimate undeniable proof of Sarah's infidelity despite her claims that her marriage is sexless. "She had always called me 'you'. ... so that I imagined, like a fool, for a few minutes at a time, there was only one 'you' in the world and that was me."[215] Her ignorant behaviour towards Maurice ignites in him hatred

[210] *The End of the Affair*, 75.
[211] *The End of the Affair*, 54.
[212] *The End of the Affair*, 91.
[213] Ibid.
[214] *The End of the Affair*, 92.
[215] *The End of the Affair*, 18.

which is as great as his rooted love. “Hatred seems to operate the same glands as love: it even produces the same actions.”[216] He desires for her the same deal of suffering and psychical pain, “I wanted to take a woman back with me and lie with her upon the same bed in which I made love to Sarah; it was as though I knew that the only way to hurt her was to hurt myself.”[217] As quoted above, Maurice sees the only effective cure of his broken-heartedness in suicide, however, paradoxically he must deny himself this solution because of his own egotism; he wishes to become a living mirror reflecting upon Sarah’s sinful conscience.

Maurice’s approach to his beloved radically changes after he obtains her private diary and his limitless hatred is automatically shifted towards God, his invisible and unbelievable enemy. After revealing Sarah’s feelings for him Maurice in front of our eyes transforms his mind and becomes better-motivated to forgive his lover almost two years of silence and continue their true-love based relationship. However, soon after he grasps the whole situation and decides to act on behalf of their mutual future she becomes seriously ill and finally dies of pneumonia. Maurice’s devotion to Sarah never becomes corrupted, neither before or after her death. “My passion for Sarah had killed simple lust for ever. Never again would I be able to enjoy a woman without love.”[218]

Before the loss of his dearest Maurice’s hatred was concentrated on the husband only who according to him possessed “in the end the winning cards - the cards of gentleness, humility and trust.”[219] Despite his effort to respect him, his hurt ego and sense of loss overwhelmed him. “Last night I had felt friendship and sympathy for Henry, but already he had become an enemy, to be mocked and resented and covertly run down.”[220] Eventually once during a burst of repressed anger Maurice frankly discloses to Henry his role in Sarah’s life not knowing that it would make the husband even more adhere to his wife. After Sarah’s death, however, both Maurice and Henry gain equal position of two mourning beings, they even become friends in distress, and the lover’s disdain is turned against God who had overshadowed their relationship for almost two years and now would keep Sarah for eternity. He blusters to his foe he never

[216] *The End of the Affair*, 27.
[217] *The End of the Affair*, 57.
[218] *The End of the Affair*, 58.
[219] *The End of the Affair*, 26.
[220] *The End of the Affair*, 47.

believed in and defends his prerogative right for Sarah. “When she slept, I was with her, not You. It was I who penetrated her, not You.”[221]

Sarah is from the beginning described as a woman radiating with goodness and humanity which less sociable Maurice found impressive qualities. “All I noticed about her that first time was her beauty and her happiness and her way of touching people with her hands, as though she loved them.”[222]

The female protagonist is a perfectly non-religious character until the crucial moment when her most intimate person is in danger of life. As Donaghy rightly says, it was Sarah’s sexual encounter with Bendrix which became the occassion for her religious encounter with God.[223] From her unselfish love at the bottom of her despair she starts to pray and beg God to save her lover’s life and consequently she makes the masochistic promise. It is not the first time in Greene’s work that the true faith raises from absolute hopelessness, when the sufferer drowning in despair has no other ‘straw’ to clutch at but faith as it was the case with Scobie and the whisky priest. “People can love without seeing each other, can’t they, they love You all their lives without seeing You, and then he came in at the door, and he was alive, and I thought now the agony of being without him starts, and I wished he was safely back dead again under the door.”[224]

Due to the miracle as a response to her prayers she indeed began to believe in God (later in the story Sarah’s mother reveals, to the reader’s surprise, that she had her daughter baptised at the age of two) and the motif of inseparable coexistence of love and hatred appears again. Sarah is infinitely grateful that Maurice is saved but at the same time she despises God as her Creator because it must have been Him who put the final words into her mouth and now being unable to break her promise she wants to revenge her and Maurice’s deep unhappiness by destroying in herself what God loves most. “I said to God, I’ve kept my promise for six weeks. I can’t believe in you, I can’t love you, but I’ve kept my promise. If I don’t come alive again, I’m going to be a slut, just a slut. I’m going to destroy myself quite deliberately. Every year I’ll be more used. Will you like that any better than if I break my promise?”[225]

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[221] *The End of the Affair*, 165.
[222] *The End of the Affair*, 25.
[223] Donaghy, *Graham Greene, an Introduction to His Writings*, 59.
[224] *The End of the Affair*, 95.
[225] *The End of the Affair*, 99.

Sarah's self-sacrifice for Maurice's health can been perceived as a metaphorical suicide preceding the real one. Has not she willingly 'lost' her life promising to avoid what she appreciated in it most? "Why did this promise stay, like an ugly vase a friend has given and one waits for a maid to break it, and year after year she breaks the things one values and the ugly vase remains?" She did not intend to degrade her extraordinary love by giving a casual promise, on the contrary, it was the power of love which she demonstrated by keeping her dooming words. Her faith becomes so strong that it simply excludes from her life any hint of possible happiness shared in her adultrous relationship and so she sees her escape only in her death which she willingly follows. "I love you but I can't see you again. I don't know how I'm going to live in this pain and longing and I'm praying to God all the time that he won't be hard on me, that he won't keep me alive." Sarah adds later in her diary also an interesting fact which only supports her belief in God. She realizes that it must have been God hearing Maurice plea to cease their affair which under giver circumstances could never flourish but only bring to him misery and heartburning.

Although Sarah died of natural causes, I must agree with Brennan that it was the act of not-preplanned suicide succumbing to favorable circumstances as it occurred also to the whisky priest in *The Power and the Glory*. What Brennan claims is that although "Sarah's death is not presented as a calculated act of suicide like Scobie's, her refusal to accept medical attention ultimately leads to her physical self-annihilation since the doctor called by Henry advises that a timely course of penicillin would have saved her."[226] Such claim would be supported by Barry as well, for he characterizes as a possible method of suicide even a deliberate refusal of essential medical treatment.[227]

Similarly to Scobie who due to his sense of commitment was not able to decide between two persons, neither Sarah could obey the commands of both God and Maurice. She was indefinitely grateful to the saver of her lover but at the same time she could not see his beloved suffering. To untie the Gordian knot of her unsatisfying relations she is prepared and wishes to accept her incoming death, before which she admits her unwavering faith.

> God has mercy: he's got mercy, only it's such an odd sort of mercy, it sometimes looks like punishment. Maurice, my

[226] Brennan, 97.
[227] Barry, 12.

> dearest, I've got a foul headache, and I feel like death. I wish I weren't as strong as a horse. I don't want to live without you, and I know one day I shall meet you on the Common and then I won't care a damn about Henry or God or anything. But what's the good, Maurice? I believe there's a God - I believe the whole bag of tricks, there's nothing I don't believe, they could subdivide the Trinity into a dozen parts and I'd believe.[228]

Sarah thus managed to escape earthly pain by receiving death she prayed for. Rather than to keep her adulterous relationship harming God, she welcomes her destiny and cruely enough leaves Maurice for the second time, as it was during the blitz, without any farewell words. As it occurred in the previous novels, Greene very carefully chooses the setting of the main character's final stage of life. Sarah's in my opinion coward act when she runs away from Maurice leads her to "the Church at the corner of Park Road" where she hides before her lover and probably before her black conscience as well (as she renewed the contact Maurice breaking thus the vow to God). It would not be Greene, if he did not leave a religious trail preceding one's dying. "[S]he was sitting in one of the side aisles close to a pillar and a hideous statue of the virgin."[229] Even though, Sarah succumbs to the illness few days later (we have no more information about her struggle and we learn about her death only from Henry's call to Maurice), in my opinion the zoom on 'hideous virgin' metaphorically explains the role of Sarah in the story. It might sound a bit exaggerated but the juxtaposition of Sarah and the statue can bear certain significance of Sarah's lost innocence who, however, feels enormous love for God and sitting in His church she experiences his mercy (her prayer for death soon comes true) and eventually salvation.

After Sarah's death a series of coincidental naturally explainable miracles occur, among them the recovery of the detective's son after he receives her children books with an adequate nursery rhyme and the healing of a strawberry-shaped mark on Richard Smythe's (a scrupulous atheist) face. The author after the publication of the book regretted a short time sequence of what he meant to be sheer non-divine haphazards.[230]

In addition, when Maurice prays for someone to thwart his flirt with a young lady, Sarah's mother suddenly appears demanding Bendrix's time after the funeral.

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[228] *The End of the Affair*, 146.
[229] *The End of the Affair*, 128.
[230] Brennan, 96.

Although unwillingly the mourner begins to acknowledge the potential existence of God, he devoids His child Sarah of a Catholic funeral, instead he chooses cremation, and addresses Him with words of full wrath. "I hate You, God, I hate You as though You existed."[231]

Following the pattern of all his Catholic novels, Graham Greene again let one of the main characters die as a result of the incapability to solve the problem by different means than an escape from the current conditions and disappearence off the face of the earth. Similarly to the story of *Brighton Rock*, suicide is reserved to the protagonist who is not considering it at first but later as if he or she followed God's instructions.

At the time of writing *The End of the Affair*, it had been four years Graham Greene was involved with Catherine Walston, the precise time of Maurice's encounters with Sarah before the bomb attack separated them. Although June Rockett argues that the writer was not particularly content in their adulterous relationship, Greene himself claims the opposite and his declining mood assigns to his diagnosis.

> I was happy in love. There are difficulties, of course, even in a love affair, but the chief difficulty was my own manic-depressive temperament. So it was that in the fifties I found myself tempting the end to come like Bendrix, but it was the end of life I was seeking, not the end of love. I hadn't the courage for suicide, but it became a habit with me to visit troubled places…[232]

In my opinion, *The End of the Affair* is a crucial story completing Greene's Catholic cycle by innovatory extension of the theme of living hell. Maurice eventually does not commit suicide as he originally planned and which might according to the Church lead him to damnation but he experiences a state of deep gloominess while alive. As Scobie in *The Heart of the Matter* described one of the possible explanations, the hell might be perceived as "a permanent sense of loss."[233] Indeed, Maurice was exposed to the biggest loss of all, the loss of what he loved and adored most.

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[231] *The End of the Affair*, 191.
[232] *Ways of Escape*, 109.
[233] *The Heart of the Matter*, 694.

10. Conclusion

The theme of suicide is present in each of Graham Greene's Catholic novels and it is expressed either directly by a means of real act of the characters (Pinkie, the whisky priest, Major Scobie, plus minor character Pemberton, Sarah Miles) or indirectly in the form of sinful thoughts which are never going to be realized (Rose, Maurice Bendrix). The author is incredibly flexible and innovative in the choice of motifs and methods of a depicted suicide.

In spite of the fact that the writer reflects some of his life experience and personal traits in his characters, his inspiration does not start or end only in the observation of his own life. Greene himself had been since his puberty affected by manic depression, of which one of the symptoms are suicidal tendencies. After undergoing a psychoanalytical treatment the course of the illness was mitigated, however, the writer began to suffer from a deep boredom. Greene's attempts at suicide were then caused by the mental decease and lacking zest for life, whereas his protagonists have to fight with completely different problems.

Greene in general has created characters who, although represent social outsiders or/and bizarre characters, they remain human enough to meet with the readers' sympathy. A possible exception might be Pinkie, the most cruel and pervert from among the mentioned persons.

Rose and Maurice are the only two protagonists who are never induced to suicide. Rose with an intention of pure love and loyalty felt towards Pinkie does not pull the trigger of the revolver in the misleading name of suicidal pact only because she believes that her prayer for life was heard and it was God's intervention. Maurice, on the contrary, disappointed by love postpones his death by sleeping pills because of his hatred for Sarah. Both characters now has to continue their lives with awareness that they will never see their dearest again.

Also the protagonists who commit the most serious sin, commit it for different reasons. Young Pinkie, as the only one, acts in the heat of hysteria, after his dream about great sadistic future is destroyed by Ida and the policeman, and jumps off the cliff dying in for him (and Greene as well) the most horrible way, drowning. The whisky priest, Scobie and Sarah unlike Pinkie acted of charity and love of God. The death of the whisky priest and Scobie is in the novel depicted as self-sacrifice resulting from their compulsive sense of responsibility. The whisky priest let himself move back to

Mexico, being conscious of the trap, to hear confession of a dying American killer. He is consequently arrested and sentenced to execution. Unlike him, Scobie is stuck between love for two women and because he cannot make them both happy, he wants to at least prevent them from himself. Scobie as the only literary character has arranged his end and under the mask of death by natural causes swallowed ten Evipan pills. Sarah similarly to the whisky priest does not disturb the natural course of things and voluntarily succumbs to pneumonia only to escape her self-destructive vow to God and unreachable harmonious relationship with Maurice. What connects all the protagonists is their incapability to react adequately to their life crisis. Instead of facing the situation they flee from it in extreme way. "Their burden becomes so unbearable that they break down from sheer impotence."[234]

A significant feature of these characters is their personal faith which not always corresponds with the Catholic teaching and which is acquired in various manners. Greene once again showed his unceasing thought-provoking imagination. Rose and Pinkie represent two antipodal worlds of heaven and hell, about which existence they are strongly convinced. By contrast, the whisky priest is, regardless of his occupation, approached by faith just like Sarah only after he is at the end of his tether in the gloomy world. Scobie and Maurice are introduced to religious belief through their female counterparts and it is a long uneasy process. What is, however, typical for all protagonists is doubting and questioning their Catholic faith.

The fundamental pillar of Greene's novels is Péguy's concept of 'the sinner as the heart of Christianity' and the examination of Catholic thought that any unconfessed mortal sin leads to exclusion from Christ's Kingdom, let alone the blackest one. All of the Greene's protagonists can be considered negativists as they for the way they live and end their own life do not expect anything but damnation. The author implies the theme of incapability to repent one's sins and that is because the characters themselves do not regard their deeds as bad and because of their love to God who they do not wish to harm by false confessions. The whisky priest feels the greatest affection for his illegitimate daughter just like Scobie cannot repent his love to Helen. The only exception is Pinkie, who is not driven to confession due to his strong belief only in hell.

Greene in his works even extended a rather daring idea, which Benson named a 'contract' with God, when the whisky priest, Scobie and Sarah offer their damnation to

[234] Mesnet, 70.

God as an exchange for redemption of somebody in their immediate environment. Basically, they are trying to bargain their post-mortal life with the deity as self-sacrifice for those they love. Similarly Rose almost commits suicide under impression they she will be doomed together with Pinkie. What Greene successfully manages in all his novels is to undermine the Church's teaching on post-mortal life. The author himself, despite having his heroes stew in their terrible fear, admits: "I have small belief in the doctrine of eternal punishment."[235]

The largest discrepancy between the attitude of the writer and that time teaching of the Church lies in their faith in God's mercy, where Greene takes a more optimistic view. Through religious clues in the text, the writer points out the path to heaven for each of his suicide victims. "If we want God's mercy to flash before the eyes of unbelievers, they must see that it is granted to the most degraded of human beings."[236] The Catholic novels of Graham Greene may indeed show certain similarity with other Catholic writers (mainly unintentional) but the writer's personal faith and belief, his imagination and personality make him a distinguished prominent writer.

[235] *Ways of Escape*, 94.
[236] Donaghy, *Conversations with Graham Greene*, 18.

Resumé

Cieľom tejto práce bolo predstaviť tzv. katolícke romány britského spisovateľa Grahama Greena (*Brighton Rock*, *The Power and the Glory*, *The Heart of the Matter* a *The End of the Affair*), ktoré sa bez výnimky zaoberajú témou samovraždy. V úvode práce sa čitateľ oboznamuje s osobnosťou maniodepresívneho autora, ktorý sám trpel až do konca svojho života samovražednými sklonmi. Následne je tvorba autora vsadená do literárneho kontextu, kde je vyobrazený Greenov vzťah k ďalším katolíckym románopiscom 20. storočia. Nakoľko je pohľad na samovraždu v románoch obohatený o náboženský rozmer, teoretická časť práce načŕta aj postoj katolíckej cirkvi k tomuto smrteľnému aktu. Práca sa snaží vyskúmať, aká existuje súvislosť medzi životom autora a jeho literárnymi postavami, či a nakoľko čerpal a prispieval do svojich diel vlastnými bohatými skúsenosťami.

Greene pristúpil na katolícku vieru z vlastného presvedčenia a jeho prekonvertovaniu predchádzalo intenzívne štúdium a informovanie sa o tomto kresťanskom náboženstve. Tak ako spisovateľa prepadávali neraz náboženské pochybnosti, tak aj jeho hlavní hrdinovia častokrát zažívali kritické obdobia svojej vlastnej viery. Čo je typické pre všetky zo spomínaných diel je, že spisovateľ necháva svoje postavy znovuobjaviť cestu k Bohu až potom, čo si siahnu na dno svojich možností a v plnej sile narážajú na vlastné zlyhanie. Táto práca sa bližšie pozerala na to, ako zvládajú, resp. nezvládajú, hlavní hrdinovia svoje utrpenie a úlohu v živote a ako sa vysporiadávajú s otázkou vlastnej smrti. Taktiež si všíma opakujúcich sa vzorcov v dielach a náznaky, ktoré smerujú k určeniu posmrtného života postáv. Autor nielenže dokazuje svoju nevyčerpateľnú fantáziu pri zobrazovaní motívov a okolností samovraždy jedinca, ale taktiež ponúka široký priestor na diskusiu vtedajšieho dogmatického učenia cirkvi.

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Anotácia

Meno: Bc. Diana Chovanová
Katedra: Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky
Názov práce: Aspects of Suicide in Graham Greene's Catholic Novels
Vedúci práce: David Livingstone, Ph.D.
Počet znakov: 129 745
Počet príloh: 1
Kľúčové slová: Graham Greene, katolícky román, samovražda
Anotácia: Táto práca sa zaoberá tzv. katolíckymi románmi Grahama Greena a literárnymi a životnými vplymi na jeho tvorbu. Podrobne skúma tému samovraždy a náboženskej viery u hlavných postáv, pričom porovnáva autorov pohľad s učením rímsko-katolíckej cirkvi.

Annotation

Name: Bc. Diana Chovanová
Department: Department of English and American Studies
Name of the thesis: Aspects of Suicide in Graham Greene's Catholic Novels
Supervisor: David Livingstone, Ph.D.
Number of characters: 129 745
Number of supplements: 1
Key words: Graham Greene, Catholic novel, suicide
Annotation: This thesis concerns 'Catholic novels' of Graham Greene emphasising literary and life influences on the author's work. It examines in detail the theme of suicide and religious faith of the main characters and compares the writer's point of view with the teaching of Roman Catholicism.