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**ASPECTS OF CATHOLICISM IN GRAHAM
GREENE'S NOVELS**

Bakalářská práce

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Prohlašuji, že jsem tuto práci vypracoval samostatně na základě uvedené literatury a pramenů.

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ABSTRACT

The thesis deals with the study of Catholic aspects in two novels by Graham Greene – *Brighton Rock* and *The Heart of the Matter*. These aspects were most visible on the main characters of the novels – Pinkie Brown and Major Scobie, who are tremendously controversial characters. The first chapters describe Graham Greene's life and the context of his style in connection to other Catholic writers of the 20th century. The main core of the thesis is divided on the analysis of *Brighton Rock*, *The Heart of the Matter* and its comparison. Although both the novels are of different genre, the Catholic aspects seem to be similar. To summarize the essential Catholic aspects, these are: question of redemption of the central protagonists, the controversial faith, the clash between religious and humanistic view of the world and the presence of metaphysical evil.

INTRODUCTION

The main objective of the thesis is to find and discuss Catholic aspects of two Greene's novels called Brighton Rock and The Heart of the Matter. Both the books seem to be remarkably different in the used style of writing, therefore, it is presumed that the Catholic aspects are also dealt with differently. However, it is difficult to highlight the particular Catholic aspects because, according to words of John Henry Newman¹, it is presumptuous to proclaim a book a Catholic piece of literature because “*it is a contradiction in terms to attempt a sinless literature of a sinful man*” (Newman, 1999, p. 172). Yet Graham Greene, often denoted as 20th century's Dostoyevsky, presented a sinful literature of a sinful man and his books are highly controversial in terms of Catholic teaching. Perhaps its controversy distinguishes them from other Catholic titles. The aim of the final project is to study in what way they are controversial. Moreover, readers may easily identify themselves with the main characters, or at least they can feel a certain sympathy for them. An exception is probably the main character in Brighton Rock – an evil, young gangster called Pinkie.

The thesis deals with the personal faith, relationships and environment of the main characters – so called tragic heroes or antagonists. Greene nurtured a peculiar care for desperate, miserable and unsuccessful people. He shows their struggles with their own personal faults and with other characters. He often leaves an open ending that readers can make their own conclusion.

There are several approaches in the thesis. The first one is the close reading of the above mentioned books and self-reflection connected to the reading as well as further study of Greene's autobiographies. The second one is a complex study of the critiques on

¹ John Henry Newman (1801 – 1890) is a blessed Roman Catholic Cardinal who wrote several books on various theological, psychological, social and art issues and is world-widely acclaimed.

Greene, which includes names such as Bergonzi, Bosco, Čulík, Leah, Lodge and many others.

The main core of the thesis is divided in the analysis of Brighton Rock, the analysis of The Heart of the Matter and comparison of the characters and their environment. Graham Green's biography was included at the beginning in order to find out whether there is any significant connection to his life in the novels. Greene was also put in the context of other Catholic writers to determine whether they share some similarities or not. By creating the sinful Catholic characters, Greene made his books exceptionally attractive for a wide range of readers. They speak their own language, are highly readable and convey a message even in the 21st century.

1. BIOGRAPHY OF GRAHAM GREENE

This chapter briefly describes how events in Graham Greene's life shaped a career of one of the most distinguished writers of the 20th century. It also deals with the role of religion in his life and includes other aspects, which influenced his style of writing.

Graham Henry Greene was a novelist, short-story writer, essayist, playwright and travel writer (Ousby 1993, p. 391). He was born in 1904 in Berkhamsted, near London, as the fourth of six children in the upper-middle class conservative family which kept traditions of the Anglican Church. They lived in the Edwardian household on Hertfordshire Street (Spurling 1983, p. 16).

Greene was educated at the Berkhamsted School and graduated from Balliol College, Oxford in 1925 (Stringer 1996, p. 265). Yet the most pivotal period is supposed to be, as Greene himself mentioned in the autobiography *A Sort of Life* (Greene, 1971, p. 11), his early childhood and adolescence. “*If I had known it, the whole future must have lain all the time along those Berkhamsted streets*” (ibid) appears in the book as the opening sentence. In another place, Greene mentions:

the creative writer perceives his world once and for all in his childhood and adolescence, and his whole career is an effort to illustrate his private world in terms of the great public world we share (Greene, 1970, p. 83).

One of Greene's most joyful moments of childhood was when Greene slipped out of school with a book telling everyone he had extra math lessons (Greene, 1971, p. 26-8). He also wrote: “*perhaps it is only in childhood that books have any deep influence on our lives.*” (ibid, p. 13) As Greene (ibid, p. 12) mentions, his childhood was a particularly happy one. He rarely found himself experiencing loneliness (ibid, p. 52-9). In addition, Spurling (1983, p. 17) thinks that childhood, in Greene's perception, is the closest thing to

Heaven on Earth with all of its peace, trust, relaxation, absence of anxieties and especially with the feeling of unlimited adventure. On the contrary, Sherry (2004, p. 65) claims that Greene's childhood could not have been so happy. His parents did not devote much time to their children and were rather reserved and cold. Greene himself was a solitary child of ambivalent good and bad, joyful and desperate feelings and without any friends.

However, childhood plays an important role in Greene's main characters as most of so-called 'tragic heroes' experienced unhappy and difficult childhood. The most distinguished character of this kind is undoubtedly Pinkie from *Brighton Rock*. (Bergonzi 2006, p. 138) The detailed analysis of this theme is to be dealt with further in the thesis.

As the main turning point in Greene's life, Sherry (2004, p. 95) sees entering his senior year at the Berkhamsted School at the age of thirteen. When he began his junior year, he was still without problems. However, in the senior year, he tasted squalor, loss of identity and the loneliness which was typical of a mediocre English public school. One of the worst aspects was the fact that his own father was the headmaster of Berkhamsted School. Greene (1971, p. 60) continues that he suffered from bullying, not in physical form but via a sophisticated system of mental torturing, which was developed by two of his classmates and based on his difficult situation. Therefore, according to Spurling (1983, p. 19) it can be said that the senior year of school was like hell for Greene.

His suffering from depression and boredom was becoming more and more severe due to school. He tried to slip out pretending illness and contriving other evasions but was soon discovered. Consequently, he had committed a variety of serious suicide attempts (Greene, 1971, p. 85-131). After his parents learned about the suicidal attempts they sent 16-year-old Graham to a psychoanalytic treatment in London which did not remove the manic-depressive disease but his remaining religious faith instead (Sherry, 2004, p. 105). It seems, however, that every period, even the worst one, had something positive to offer.

For example, his bullies shaped his strong desire to be a successful writer (Greene, 1971, p. 97).

Greene's loss of identity strengthened his need of finding a position in society and what resulted was a small personal revolt against his parents (Sherry, 2004, p. 138) as well as entering the Communist Party of Great Britain in 1922 for a short time while still at Oxford (Alexander, 1993, p. 351). Čulík (2002, p. 62) points out that Greene's sympathies to Communist ideologies, particularly to the Marxist doctrine, remained warm throughout his life. His conversion to the Roman Catholic Church in 1926 can be seen as a milestone of his life. Although, Sherry (2004, p. 169) argues his acceptance of Catholicism might have been either a rebellion against the family's traditional Anglican faith or born out of a desire to marry Vivien Dayrell-Browning, a Catholic woman seeking to marry a Catholic man. This may have created an indirect pressure on Greene to convert. They married a year after his conversion in 1927. However, the marriage broke after a couple of years although Graham and Vivien had never divorced; they were simply separated (Sherry, 2004, p. 359). Greene, himself, mentions that he cheated his wife with other women, even visited bawdyhouse (Greene, 1980, p. 89; Sherry, 2004, p. 417-9). It provides another controversial aspect which diminishes his Catholic reputation.

Greene (1970, p. 58-60) described the main reasons for his conversion as the gradual losing a once-unshakable atheist attitude and of being convinced about the existence of God and truths of the Catholic Church. He felt this came as an intellectual conviction opposed to an emotional movement (Greene, 1980, p. 58). Greene (ibid, p. 63) also wrote that due to his conversion, his suicidal attempts were remedied but not his extreme boredom or manic-depressive illness. Still, Sherry (2004, p. 412-3) mentions that he still kept some risky habits, especially in his innumerable expeditions to countries in conflict: to Spain and Mexico during times of Catholic persecutions and Civil war, to

Liberia, Congo, Kenya, Israel and so on. These travels, as Alexander (2000, p. 351) points out, were beneficial for Greene's novels. He used the overall atmosphere of the countries and accumulated much information and experiences which he used later on.

Bergonzi (2006, p. 123) claims it is natural that Greene started to include Catholicism in the novels, in connection to controversial themes and heroes according to his own life experience. Čulík (2002, p. 40) says that it is not necessary to connect the novels with Greene's own life but to give them enough space to speak for themselves.

Greene wrote over thirty-five literature pieces during his career. *Brighton Rock* (1938) is considered to be the first Catholic novel or better - the first novel with Catholic themes. (Ousby, 1993, p. 392) Subsequently, *The Power and the Glory* (1940) had been issued, followed by other books. In 1948, *The Heart of the Matter* was published, and the fourth main Catholic novel *The End of Affair* saw the light of the world in 1951. However, Greene adapted religious and Catholic themes in most of his works. In some of them are more explicitly noticeable.

In conclusion, it is essential to consider all possible influences on Greene especially during his childhood and adolescence. These periods created Greene's personality and his slightly dark, complicated view of life. They bestowed absurdity to his characters and above all, formed Graham Greene to what he is known today.

2. GRAHAM GREENE IN THE CONTEXT OF 20TH CENTURY'S WRITERS

When one wants to describe Graham Greene's style of writing, the overall consideration is needed - the personal philosophy, faith, upbringing and last but not least the context of other writers, especially the Catholic ones.

Greene was a passionate admirer of James and thus he adapted many similarities in the themes of the novels. To mention a few - a special sense for evil, distrust to success, tragic misfit characters and no happy endings. A human being is in a circle of a perpetual struggling between good and evil. There is no victory for the protagonist who is always punished either on the side of God or on the other side of Devil. Thus, evil is becoming a personal philosophical term. Both James and Greene show certain sympathies to a damned soul predestined to Hell (Čulík, 1999, p. 176-7).

Greene (1970, p. 43-4) mentioned that James' depiction of evil had never been outdone by anyone, not even by Bernanos or Mauriac. Čulík (1999, p. 177) speaks about so called 'Judas complex' which is supported by the end of a poem by G. W. Russell which structure Greene used as the title for his memoir *The Lost Childhood*:

In ancient shadows and twilights

Where childhood had strayed,

The world's great sorrows were born

And its heroes were made.

In the lost boyhood of Judas

Christ was betrayed.

(George William Russell - *Germinal*, 1931)

It seems that both James and Greene, took pity on Judas being predestined to betray Christ. Therefore, if their characters are not obviously evil, they all possess this 'Judas complex'. They know they will betray beforehand, they commit the betrayal, and after that, they regret their behaviour (Bosco, 2005, p. 123-5).

As Bergonzi (1986, p. 172-3) wrote Greene is also being compared to French novelists such as Françoise Mauriac, Georges Bernanos, Léon Bloy and from poets to Charles Péguy and Paul Claudel. There was a strong influence from French Catholic authors on Greene, particularly from Françoise Mauriac, whose novels were translated by Greene into English. Both of them wrote admiring essays on each other's literature pieces.

Lodge (2003, p. 202) adds that the Catholic novel, originating from Huysmans and developed by Bernanos, Mauriac and Greene, cannot be defined by the terms it used to be in the beginning of the 20th century. The Roman Catholic Church has been changed under Pope John XXIII and after The Second Vatican Council. The faith has become more complex, confusing and uneasy term to define. The Catholic Church is no longer presenting so monolithic, uniform way of life (Lodge, 2003, p. 202-3).

Bergonzi (1986, p. 177) writes that critics of the explicit aspects of Catholic novels were of the opinion that the religious themes, if they appeared, were not adapted to supernatural happenings but instead were often connected with a social or ethical topic. The French Catholic writers presented struggling, instable characters balancing between the forces of Good and Evil similarly to Greene's characters. Green (1967, p. 76) claims the French Catholic writers offered a high drama plot which was often lacking in their counterparts. This was the same case for James and Greene.

In addition, Green (ibid, p. 74) points out that the Catholic novel in England and France was an embodiment of a literary convention rather than the enactment of religious experience. He mentions that Greene's influence had been Baudelaire before Mauriac and

other French Catholic writers and his style of writing can be generally defined as Romantic Satanism. He continues that Greene's Catholic doctrine was incorporated into Satanic melodrama.

In the words of Conor Cruise O'Brien, "*Catholicism was hardly separable from a personal romanticism and a class loyalty*" (Bergonzi, 1986, p. 175). This obviously seems to be true for many of Graham Greene's characters. Bergonzi (ibid, p. 174) continues that in the novels of earlier Catholic writers the action of grace towards the corrupted soul is more intensive and obtrusive. The 20th century Catholic writers did not tend to show the supernatural in the natural. Their characters are not interrupted in acting by any supernatural power. What is presented in their novels is the consciousness and inner world of protagonists without visible interference of either God or Satan. The symbols of Good and Evil remain somewhere at the background of the plot. However, the protagonists are those who remind about the presence and importance of higher spiritual powers, these are present, at least, in the imagination of the characters (Moeller, 1967, p. 367). This opinion can be approved from both *Brighton Rock* and *The Heart of the Matter*.

According to Bergonzi (1986, p. 172) another distinguished writer Greene is being compared to is Evelyn Waugh, who officially called Greene a 'Catholic novelist' although Greene did not like this signification. Alexander (2000, p. 350) explains that Waugh created a mad and depraved world without conveying hope that it can change for the better. This theme is typical of the world of Graham Greene, so called 'Greeneland', as well. Another intriguing comparison is that both the writers had a similar reason to a conversion to the Roman Catholic Church. Waugh's acceptance of Catholicism was also a reasoned one. Waugh sought for fidelity and clarity which life rarely offers whereas Greene, as it has been already mentioned, was moved rather intellectually than emotionally.

Waugh, as well as Greene and other French Catholic novelists, chose morally and sociologically weak characters with a strong love either for God or Satan (Moeller, 1967, p. 374). To finish this chapter, Čulík (2002, p. 186) says that sympathies to characters and not judging the natural human (often sinful) behaviour are the aspects which Greene admired the most on other writers. Sinclair (2011, p. 131) and Spurling (1983, p. 42) agree that Greene's genial idea was to connect Catholic theological system to experience of despair and terror of human beings. His novels would not be so intriguing without this connection.

3. BRIGHTON ROCK

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Brighton Rock is considered by critics (such as Bergonzi, Čulík, Spurling, Wyndham) to be the first novel with unequivocal Catholic aspects written by Graham Greene. Although Greene (1966, p. 1) claims that all his books were written by a Catholic and all of them contain Catholic themes. However, no one had noticed this fact before *Brighton Rock* was published. Suddenly, he had been marked a Catholic writer, more precisely a writer who happens to be a Catholic (ibid). Greene intended to write an ordinary detective story which is clearly visible from the first 50 pages of the book (ibid, p. 4). However, the story developed gradually into transcendental motives - metaphysical evil, questions of redemption, martyrdom and justice dominated it.

3. 2 THE STORY

The story is set in the 1930s Brighton horse gangs environment and begins with the arrival of Fred Hale in Brighton on Pentecost Monday. Hale is an employee of Daily Messenger, and as a promotion of the newspaper, he travels under a nickname 'Kolley Kibber' and leaves special cards on various places. It earns a certain amount of money to the one who finds them. If anyone challenges him with an appropriate form of words, they win a big prize. Hale has a threatening suspicion that he will be murdered by Pinkie Brown and his gang companions - Cubitt, Dallow and Spicer.

Pinkie Brown is a 17-year-old Catholic boy who leads the gang after the death of the boss named Kite, in which Fred Hale was somehow mixed. Fred has to follow a certain schedule because of the card distribution. When the gang spies on him, he gets across a woman called Ida Arnold and spends time with her in order to save himself. Ida leaves him for a couple of minutes so it is a convenient opportunity for the gang members to strike. They want to kill him, but Hale dies of a heart attack before they are able to do anything (Hale's death is not properly explained in the story).

Spicer puts a Kolley Kibber's card under a tablecloth of a restaurant to provide the gang with an alibi but the card is discovered by a 16-year-old waitress called Rose. The official medical report says it was a death of natural causes. No one supposes it was a suicide or a murder.

However, Pinkie Brown is not satisfied with the fact that there are witnesses. He approaches Rose in order to find out what she knows. After he realizes that she knows about dangerous details, which would convict him of the crime, Pinkie decides to marry her to assure that she will never give evidence in court against him. Rose is a Catholic too

but her perception of faith is totally opposite to Pinkie's. A complicated relationship starts because Rose falls in love with Pinkie whereas he only pretends to love her.

Ida Arnold gets to know about the death of Hale and in spite of the fact they met only for a short time, she starts to investigate his death because of certain sympathies and enormous 'eye for an eye' sense. She wins a lot of money from a horse competition stake tip which Hale gave her. Thus, she is strongly determined to find out what happened to him. She discovers that Rose knows something about Hale's death and she hunts her with questions.

Pinkie hastens the marriage process with Rose and they have a modest secular wedding. He manages to order killers to get him rid of Spicer, who is becoming a potential imminence of revealing the truth on Hale's death. However, gangsters attack him too, moreover they do not kill Spicer. Pinkie finds him at home and kills him by throwing him down from old stairs.

Ida continues with her investigation and finds out that Pinkie killed Hale and Spicer. One of Pinkie's companions, named Cubitt, tells Ida a lot of useful information when he is drunk. Ida wants to save Rose, who is in danger, because Pinkie intends to kill her. He tells her that there is no other way except a collective suicide and persuades Rose to shoot herself first. He gets out of the car and Rose is not strong enough to do such a thing and drops the gun.

Finally, Ida Arnold, Dallow and a police officer arrive at the scene. Ida invents that she knows everything about Hale, Spicer and Rose and convinces Pinkie about it. Pinkie pulls out a bottle with vitriol but is knocked down by a police officer. The bottle breaks and the vitriol spills to Pinkie's face. He is enormously shocked, comes to an edge of a cliff, falls from it into the water and dies.

3.3 GOOD AND EVIL VERSUS RIGHT AND WRONG

This chapter deals with the main conflict in the novel. It is represented by three probably most important characters that personify different worlds. They offer a bipolarity of Good and Evil, which stands for the religious world in contrast to the Right and Wrong – in the secular humanistic view of the world (Priest, 2010, p. 123).

According to Čulík (2002, p. 241) there are at least two main layers or themes in Brighton Rock. Even the title of the book itself offers an ambiguity. It refers either to a famous sweet stick or to a rock in Brighton. The first option offers a certain parallel to Hale's death as he was probably choked with the sweet rock:

Cubitt suddenly, furiously, broke out, 'I can't see a piece of Brighton rock without. . . 'He belched and said with tears in his voice, 'Carving's different.'

(Greene, 1993, p. 196)

The second meaning of the title a rock in Brighton is connected to the death of Pinkie Brown as he fell down from a cliff near Brighton (Bergonzi, 2002, p. 103). However, one layer of the main conflict lies upon Pinkie Brown representing pure Evil and Rose, who is a naïve representative of Good. Both of them are Roman Catholics and thus stand as extreme opposites of the religious world. Pinkie's Catholicism conveys a tremendous closeness to Hell. Heaven is just a unreal distant possibility and there is no hope that it can be achieved. Pinkie does not even want to achieve it, he longs for damnation "*Heaven was a word: hell was something he could trust*" (Greene, 1993, p. 275). In Pinkie's dark wish, the Evil acquires a transcendental, supernatural level. On the other hand, Rose believes in Heaven and her life conveys a certain Hope. Nevertheless, her love to Pinkie is so overwhelming that she wants to follow him everywhere he goes and does not ascend him to her vision of salvation. She rather descends to his obsession with

damnation. She wants to be damned together with him (Bosco, 2005, p. 95-101; Priest, 2010, p. 123; Wyndham, 1955, p. 15- 6).

Another extremely important character - Ida Arnold - is seen as a personification of Right in the non-religious, humanistic world. This world of hers follows the rules of society, the moral code based on laws. It stands as an opposite to the transcendental religious world of Good and Evil (Ruotolo, 1964, p. 426).

'An eye for an eye. If you believed in God, you might leave vengeance to him, but you couldn't trust the One, the universal spirit' (Greene, 1993, p. 47).

The humanistic world with its Right and Wrong is paradoxically an offspring of religious, particularly Christian tradition (Moeller, 1967, p. 369). Ruotolo (1964, p. 426) continues that Ida Arnold's overall ideology sees every crime as evil which should be punished accordingly without any exceptions. If there is no one who is able or willing to make justice, thus she must do it herself, to restore the world order and, above all, to satisfy her own conscience. Therefore, she becomes a judge, a substitution of God in the world.

As Čulík (2002, p. 246-7) points out, the struggle between theological and secular morale offered a great tension to the plot. However, Greene had been criticized for presenting superiority of the Catholic morality above the secular. For instance, George Orwell (1976, p. 106-7) protested against the image of a Catholic who makes errors being spiritually absolute to a virtuous Pagan. He blamed Greene for despising of the value of ordinary human fairness. Orwell also criticized Greene due to using the image of hell as:

A sort of high class night club, entry to which is reserved for Catholics only and other people outside the religious, Catholic élite are not worthy to be judged or doomed and, therefore, die the same way as animals do (Orwell, 1976, p. 107).

Čulík (2002, p. 247) mentions that even Waugh was of the similar opinion to Orwell's. Waugh wrote in his essay *Felix Culpa?* that certain superiority of Catholics was alleged in Brighton Rock. This passage demonstrates the superiority of Catholics sufficiently:

'I know one thing you don't. I know the difference between right and wrong. (...) Rose didn't answer; the woman was quite right: the two words meant nothing to her. Their taste was extinguished by stronger foods – Good and Evil. The woman could tell her nothing she didn't know about these – she knew by tests as clear as mathematics that Pinkie was evil – what did it matter in that case whether he was right or wrong?'(Greene, 1993, p. 241 – 242).

Or several dialogues between Pinkie and Rose:

'(...) You believe in things. Like Hell. But you can see she don't believe a thing.'
She said bitterly, 'You can tell the world's all dandy with her' (ibid, p. 111).

Yet most precisely it is described in this monologue by Rose:

'Right and wrong. That's what she talks about. (...) As if she knew. 'Oh, she won't burn. She couldn't burn if she tried' (ibid, p. 139).

She was as far from either of them as she was from Hell – or Heaven (ibid, p. 154).

Not only is Ida low-graded but also, as Williams (1992, p. 72) mentions, the wealthy Italian gangster Colleoni who owns the visible world but do not possess any spiritual level. Greene, therefore, created superiority of religious thinking over non-religious and as an omniscient narrator, he expressed himself through thoughts of Rose and dialogues between Pinkie and Rose. This attitude was criticized not only by George Orwell, as mentioned above, but it is appealing to consider the idea of a virtuous pagan

being spiritually lower than a murderer, sadist and ego-centric Catholic who does not obey teaching of the Catholic Church at all.

Yet as Čulík (2002, p. 247) points out these questions do not belong to literary critics but rather to the field of interest of theologians. However, as Hodgkins (2006, p. 60) points out, Greene forces readers to sympathize rather with Pinkie than with Ida, and that makes the crucial conflict of morals.

3. 4 PINKIE BROWN – PURE EVIL

This chapter will analyze the main character of Brighton Rock - Pinkie Brown, also called 'The Boy'. His Catholicism is ruined and limited to the view of damnation and Hell. "*These atheists, they don't know nothing. Of course there's Hell. Flames and damnation. (...) torments*" (Greene, 1993, p. 66) or "'Credo in unum Satanum²,' the Boy said" (ibid, p. 200). Pinkie even sees the real world, represented by Brighton, as God forsaken place. The most prominent theme of the story seems to be a question of Pinkie's salvation (Čulík, 2002, p. 246; Bergonzi, 2006, p. 95). "*Between the stirrup and the ground he something lost and something found*" (Greene, 1993, p. 111 & 130).

Pinkie Brown is an exceptional example among other Greene's characters. Greene tried to create the most vicious and frightening villain and Pinkie's Catholicism gives his behaviour a metaphysical dimension. Thus, the evil is even more agitating. In general, Catholicism bestows controversy, cruelty and depravity to Pinkie Brown in the eyes of readers and critiques. "*(...) but the Boy couldn't picture any eternity except in terms of pain*" (Greene, 1993, p. 119). Moreover, he is not a typical Greene's 'fallen character' as, for instance, Scobie in *The Heart of the Matter* or the priest in *The Power and the Glory* because he is pure evil and totally aware of his acts (Lodge, 2003, p. 233-4).

² I believe in Satan – conversion of the Apostles' Creed (Credo in unum Deum – I believe in God).

To illustrate this opinion: *“he trailed the clouds of his own glory after him: hell lay about him in his infancy. He was ready for more deaths”* (Greene, 1993, p. 71).

As Spurling (1983, p. 22) mentions, Pinkie Brown has an enormous disgust, almost sickness, for the sexual act due to his experience in childhood when he was a witness of a sexual intercourse of his parents: *“remembering the room at home, the frightening weekly exercise of his parents which he watched from a single bed”* (Greene, 1993, p. 110). Bosco (2005, p. 106) says it indicates Pinkie’s poor Catholic background for which he found himself ashamed and thus had never told anyone about his roots. His childhood in poor Catholic family and traumas from watching the sexual intercourse of his parents might have crooked his view of the Catholic doctrine. Nevertheless, Lenfest (1974, p. 376) objects that Greene did not provide much information about Pinkie’s background and thus expects the readers to refer to Pinkie’s theological attitude as the real sense of his actions.

By marrying Rose, Scobie *“graduated in the last human shame”* (Greene, 1993, p. 219) which he commits in the sexual act with his wife. Bergonzi (2006, p. 142) argues that the secular marriage with Rose might be a conscious rebellion against one of the cardinal Catholic sacraments and in the eyes of not only Rose but Pinkie, it is a mortal sin:

He had no doubt whatever that this is a mortal sin, and he was filled with a kind of gloomy hilarity and pride. He saw himself now as a full grown man for whom the angels wept (Greene, 1993, p. 204).

Their secular marriage, according to the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church, is not blessed by God and for both Pinkie and Rose it is not a real wedding:

(...) he was touched by the sense of communion with Rose – she too knew that this evening meant nothing at all, that there hadn’t been wedding (ibid, p. 206).

Čulík (2002, p. 244) mentions that Pinkie's strange asceticism, for he avoided not only sex but also alcohol and all kinds of entertainment, gives Pinkie a weird image of a degenerated priest. Maybe it is another feature of Catholic morale which was distorted into hatred against those who enjoy this so called 'forbidden fruit'.

'You can take your bloody prize,' Bill said, 'and hop it. What do you want? Chocolates?'

'I don't eat chocolates,' the Boy said.

'Packet of Players?'

'I don't smoke' (Greene, 1993, p. 26).

Or in another place:

'What's wrong with a bit of fun?' Dallow took him up, (...) The word 'fun' shook the Boy like malaria (ibid, p. 199).

Carey (1993, p. 16) adds that Pinkie himself unveiled his desire to be a priest. The idea originated in his childhood, when he sang in a church choir, and was buried by his own evil behaviour and thoughts when he got older.

He said in a low voice, 'When I was a kid, I swore I'd be a priest.'

'A priest? You a priest? That's good,' Dallow said. (...)

'What's wrong with being a priest? The Boy asked (Greene, 1993, p. 199).

Carey (1993, p. 16) also claims that Pinkie is, therefore, provokingly aligned to Jesus Christ. He sees a certain parallel when Cubitt denies being Pinkie's friend and Ida's recalling of the Bible: "a courtyard, a sewing wench beside the fire, the cock crowning" (Greene, 1993, p. 194; Matthew 26:74) to Peter's denial of Christ. In addition, Dallow's betrayal at the end of the story, when he agrees to tell Ida about the whereabouts of Pinkie and Rose, is again compared to a biblical motive, particularly to Judas' betrayal after the

Last Supper. Dallow's arrival at the last scene, with Ida and a police officer, is compared to the motives of the Garden of Gethsemane. Judas came to mark Jesus Christ for soldiers.

However absurd it might seem, Pinkie is spiritually superior to Ida Arnold and Rose. His vision is pure and uncomplicated and he sticks to it until the very end of his life. Ida Arnold does not believe in God although she is superstitious and has the awareness of spiritual powers. Rose, on the other hand, slowly transforms her own perception of Catholic faith under the influence of Pinkie (Carey, 1993, p. 16-7; Čulík, 2002, p. 241-6; Bergonzi, 2006, p. 101-3). Pinkie's belief in the Catholic sense of damnation and his definitive choice of this way makes him demonic and mature. Both Čulík (2002, p. 247) and Lenfest (1974, p. 376) agree on the inappropriate maturity of only 17-year-old Pinkie, which can be explained only by his Catholicism.

3. 5 PINKIE AND ROSE – REPRESENTATIVES OF EVIL AND GOOD

This chapter describes a relationship between two main characters. Pinkie as a representative of evil and Rose as a representative of good. One of the main themes of the whole story, salvation, is thus seen differently by both Pinkie and Rose. It is described in this dialogue:

'You know what they say – "Between the stirrup and the ground, he something sought and something found".'

'Mercy.' (adds Rose)

'That's right: Mercy' (Greene, 1993, p. 111).

Rose's sights are set on salvation, which distinguishes her from Pinkie and, therefore, she is a counterpart to him. Bergonzi (2006, p. 153) claims that Rose sacrificed everything she had because of love for Pinkie. She even sacrificed her personal faith and above all, her eternal life.

'These atheists, they don't know nothing. Of course there's Hell. Flames and damnation. (...) torments.'

'And Heaven too,' Rose said.

'Oh, maybe,' the Boy said, 'maybe' (Greene, 1993, p. 66).

When confronted with Pinkie's personality, behaviour and his opinions about Catholic faith and praying, she constantly changes her own views and is, on one hand, frightened of him but, on the other hand, she admires him. Therefore, Rose is caught by the power of his astonishingly dark soul (Priest, 2010, p. 123- 4).

Rose promises Pinkie to do whatever he wants and to follow him everywhere he goes:

She scrambled out and was about to mutter her quick 'Our Fathers' and 'Hail Marys' (...) What was the good of praying now? She'd finished with all that: she had chosen her side: if they damned him they'd got to damn her, too (Greene, 1993, p. 229).

When Rose proclaims "*I want to be like him – damned*" (ibid, p. 296). Pinkie owns her, but Rose owns him too, through what she knows about the death of Hale and Spicer (ibid, p. 168). She accepts Pinkie's strange relationship to her. He starts to court her and continuously switches between pretended love and threatening. Rose marries Pinkie and has sexual intercourse with him, which both of them see as a mortal sin which means that even Pinkie remembers and partially accepts Catholic morale: "*(...) this was the ritual of mortal sin: this, he thought, was what people damned each other for...*" (ibid, p. 218). Rose is willing to commit suicide with Pinkie to be damned together; nevertheless, this 'suicidal pact' revealed to be one-sided. Bergonzi (2006, p. 157) points out that Rose did not pull the trigger to kill herself because of the uplifting aspects of Catholic doctrine, in the light of which she could feel her guardian angel who tempted her to virtue. Pinkie's

guilt is even bigger, from the theological point of view, because not only did he murder two people but almost killed Rose, his wife, and poisoned her soul with his dark view of the Catholic doctrine.

Throughout the entire story, Rose is humble and pious and it is Pinkie's selfishness and evil plans which overwhelm her (Priest, 2010, p. 123). Rose, as well as Pinkie, is unnaturally matured in her opinions about life and in her style of speaking and Čulík (2002, p. 248) suggests that Greene reflected his own intellectual perception of Catholicism on both characters.

To sum up, Wyndham (1955, p. 19) sees Rose as a counter-character to Pinkie because she is naturally good, naïve, loving, humble and creates a certain stereotype of the way 'good' Catholics are seen by the society whereas Pinkie is the very opposite.

3. 6 PINKIE'S SALVATION

The main question of Pinkie's salvation is expressed by the saying 'Between the stirrup and the ground' which is often repeated in the novel. Yet the crucial moment is the very last monologue of the priest to whom Rose came to confession, yet it may seem absurd:

'There was a man, (...) he lived in sin all through his life, because he couldn't bear the idea that any soul could suffer damnation (...) this man decided that if any soul was going to be damned, he would be damned too. He never took sacraments, never married his wife in church. (...) but some people think he was – well, a saint. You can't conceive, my child, nor can I or anyone the ... appalling ... strangeness of the mercy of God' (Greene, 1993, p. 297).

This is a clear expression of the concrete possibility of mercy for Rose, yet the chances for Pinkie are still not high. However, the priest continues:

'The Church does not demand that we believe any soul is cut off from mercy. (...) a Catholic is more capable of evil than anyone. I think perhaps – because we believe in Him – we are more in touch with the devil than other people. (...) If he loved you, surely (...) that shows there was some good...' (ibid, p. 298).

There are several hints that Pinkie felt sort of love but maybe only to his former boss Kite, whom he respected, but evidently not to Rose, although some softening towards her can be noticed throughout the story. He, however, possessed all the cardinal vices like selfishness, pride, hatred and committed several mortal sins – murders, sexual act, and above all, he killed himself. Yet it is suggested that he could be saved but it is very unlikely to happen. Especially, if Pinkie himself chose damnation:

She was good, but he'd got her like you got God in the Eucharist – in the guts. God couldn't escape the evil mouth which chose to eat its own damnation (ibid, p. 215).

Greene tried to put the solution to the question of Pinkie's salvation in the last scene when Rose goes to a pub to play the record with Pinkie's dedication to her. Yet, it is not clear evidence because Pinkie was in affection when he was recording the vinyl. However, it may be an evidence of hatred against Rose:

'God damn you, you little bitch, why can't you go back home for ever and let me be?' (ibid, p. 214).

Greene offered several hints for readers to make their own opinion whether Pinkie is redeemed or damned. Yet the intention of killing Rose seems to abandon all hope that he will be saved from Hell. Moreover, Greene himself gives light to Pinkie's salvation when he claimed that he had created a character which goes straight to Hell. Even Pinkie is sure about his destination. The only person who brings hope for Pinkie, and at the same

time for Rose, is the priest. However, the question of Pinkie's redemption is open to individual interpretations of readers.

4. THE HEART OF THE MATTER

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The Heart of the Matter was written as Greene's third book of the four most distinguished Catholic novels. This novel is considered to be Greene's masterpiece and it contains significant connections to Greene's own biography. It is a psychological novel as the essential themes of the story happen inside the mind of the main protagonist. Hence, there are chapters dealing mainly with the main character and the environment that surrounds him is mentioned only partially.

4.2 THE STORY

The book tells a story of 50-year-old Major called Scobie living in a nameless harbor city in western Africa. Scobie married his wife Louise by which he became a Catholic, however, after the death of their baby, they remained childless. Scobie is a humble, gentle, unscrupulous, loyal police deputy commissioner who is remarkably precise. One of his main duties is to fight against the smuggling of diamonds and to catch secret messages. The story is situated in the WWII, particularly in the year 1942. Scobie is totally devoted to his service and does not have any ambitious plans. His resignation to any success, as he does not want to be highhanded, tortures his wife. Their marriage is not ideal. A young colleague and rival Wilson arrives in the colony and falls in love with Louise, who does not return his love. Louise does not feel good in the climate of the

colony and wants to depart for South Africa, but due to the lack of money she has to wait. Scobie longs to satisfy the wish of his wife and tries to get a loan from a bank, which fails and so he is forced to borrow money from a cunning crooked Syrian trader called Yusef. Louise leaves for South Africa and Scobie is happy to be alone. His disadvantage is the fact that he is full of pity for others and when a safe-boat with wounded people arrives, he is deeply moved by a 19-year-old widow Helen Rolt, who falls in love with him. He visits her secretly but everyone in the colony knows about their romance.

Scobie's wife returns from South Africa in advance as she knows about the affair too while he still thinks that it is a top secret. Louise wants to receive Communion together with Scobie but he is not willing to because he is convinced that he committed a mortal sin by having a sexual intercourse beyond marriage. He successfully makes a variety of excuses, goes to confession but is unable to split with Helen so he leaves without the absolution.

Meanwhile, Yusef possesses a letter which could reveal the relationship between Scobie and Helen and he blackmails Scobie. He forces Scobie to dip his fingers into the diamond smuggling. Scobie's servant Ali finds out about the deal with Yusef and his relationship with Helen. Scobie complains about his servant to Yusef, who gets rid of the servant. When Scobie gets known about the death of Ali, he feels extreme guilt and takes all the responsibility for the murder. Scobie deceives his own believes and pretends to be insomniac and to have heart attacks to make an excuse for not going to Communion with Louise. However, he fails to make excuses all the time and, finally, receives the Eucharist which he sees as his own eternal damnation. In his desperation, he starts to think more and more about suicide. He is torn apart due to his feelings to Helen and a marriage to Louise. Eventually, he convinces his doctor to prescribe him pills against insomnia, falsifies his diary notes and saves a sufficient amount of pills because he intends to kill himself. The

death has to be natural in order to gain money from Scobie's life insurance. His suicide is revealed by his rival Wilson who notices the differences in the style of writing and used pen. Yet these observations are made after the successful suicidal attempt.

4.3 SCOBIE'S AMBIGUITY

The chapter deals with the inner thoughts of the main character, of his Catholic attitude and struggles between the passion, love and conscience based on the Catholic doctrine. Scobie's main problem is the inability to love, or better, to express love. He substitutes this essential feeling for pity and takes responsibility for happiness of people around him:

When he was young, he had thought love had something to do with understanding, but with age he knew that no human being understood another. 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 . . . (Greene, 1966, p. 244-5).

Bierman (2002, p. 66) points out that Scobie has schizophrenic thoughts between his Catholic-based conscience and desire to pity someone and, subsequently, take care of them. These thoughts are in never-ending clash, the battle that he fights in his own mind. For example, when he lies down with his mistress Helen, he sees it as a mortal sin from the Catholic point of view but if he intends, according to his crooked desire, to make everyone happy and thus to satisfy a young widow, it can hardly be considered a sin. However, as Bierman (ibid) continues, one cannot justify wrong behaviour for noble intentions and Scobie is a victim of his own thoughts and plans which seem to be innocent but they prove to be terribly destructive. As the most crucial motives of the story develop in Scobie's mind, he can be seen as his own worst enemy.

On one hand, Scobie seeks peace – “*He wanted happiness for others and solitude and peace for himself*” (Greene, 1966, p. 181). On the other, he is even able to sacrifice his most important value, which is peace, for others. His prayer for a young girl, who is about to die, is the first proclaim and testament:

‘Father, look after her. Give her peace (...) Take away my peace for ever, but give her peace’ (ibid, p. 118).

Then, he once more, offers his happiness for the benefit of others:

‘O God, (...) if instead I should abandon you, punish me but let the others get some happiness’ (ibid, p. 220).

Scobie’s decision is absurd. He claims that no one is able to bring happiness because it can develop only from love. At the same time, happiness of others remains his main goal. Louise has never mentioned that she wants happiness, instead she told the very opposite:

‘But I’m only ruining you. I can’t give you any happiness.’ (Scobie)

‘Happiness isn’t the point.’ (Louise) (ibid, p. 244).

Hodgkins (2006, p. 56) and Spurling (1983, p. 23) mention that one of Scobie’s most destructive emotions which proves responsibility for others is pity. The quotation shows that Scobie is willing to make others happy whatever the price is. His love is limited to the feeling of responsibility by which other people are like a burden for him:

‘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.” (...) When they are dead our responsibility ends. There’s nothing more we can do about it. We can rest in peace’ (Greene, 1966, p. 148).

While love (caritas or agape)³ is the greatest of the three main Christian virtues – Faith, Hope and Love, Scobie’s perception of love is rather humanistic. When marrying Louise, he accepts the Catholic faith only partially, to have enough space for his own sense of guilt if something unpleasant happens to people around him and to solve it out barely by himself, without any trust in God’s help. In one of his monologues to God he proclaims: “*No. I don’t trust you. I love you but I’ve never trusted you*” (Greene, 1966, p. 250).

If Scobie’s love of God is of the same kind as of people, it only means that he pities God, maybe because the Son of God died upon a cross for the sins of the world, as Christians believe. Scobie even sees himself as God. He projected himself to Jesus Christ:

I am the Cross, he thought: He will never speak the word to save Himself from the Cross, but if only wood were made so that it didn't feel, if only the nails were senseless as people believe (Greene, 1966, p. 217).

(...) he made one last attempt at prayer, ‘O God, I offer up my damnation to you. Take it. Use it for them’ (ibid).

Schaffer (1991, p. 588) claims that Scobie’s feeling of responsibility and pity for others is a manifestation of pride. Greene noted that Scobie was created “*to show that pity can be the expression of an almost monstrous pride*” (Greene, 1980, p. 93-4). The evidence of this monstrous pride is his self-aligning to Jesus Christ. Particularly, his suicide, which meant to be a sacrifice for Louise and Helen, went into vain because there was no such need. Both of the women were able to live without Scobie. Thus, it was Scobie who, through his tangled thoughts, sacrificed himself for the sake of his conscience (Bierman, 2002, p. 73; Leah, 2007, p. 777).

Scobie’s pity causes problems to the relationship with Louise. He loves her in weakness and illness, not when she is strong and healthy. Moreover, she is not as weak and

³ Caritas (Latin) and agapē (Greek) are distinguished from amor (Latin) and éros (Greek) which are connected with sexuality. Charity – Christian love is aimed on God and people.

reliant as Scobie thinks. She seems to be the exact opposite, especially when she interacts with other people, such as Wilson with whom she speaks about poetry and literature. Thus, Scobie transfers practice of his pity and responsibility to his new mistress, Helen Rolt. Actually, it is again pity which substitutes love from the very first moment. Helen was exhausted and starving due to the fact that their boat got shipwrecked. Their relationship is not a classical loving affair because Scobie's main intention is to protect Helen, not to love her (Bosco, 2006, p. 165). Louise is aware of Scobie's weakness, the terrible sense of responsibility. She could be seen as an emotional blackmailer from the first 100 pages of the book. She addresses Scobie by a nickname that she gave him:

(...) 'I shall go mad. Ticki, I'm so lonely. I haven't a friend, Ticki. (...) I've know it for years. You don't love me. (...) You don't love anybody' (Greene, 1966, p. 56).

When the true nature of Scobie is being perpetually disclosed, as the story develops, he starts to lose sympathies of readers.

Scobie believes that his immoderate sense of guilt, pity and responsibility for others were given to him by God and thus predetermines himself, which is in conflict with the Catholic teaching because it claims that every single human being was given freedom and free motion (Bierman, 2002, p. 73). The final ambiguity is expressed before the act of suicide, just before Scobie takes the anti-insomnia pills. He seems to be in solitude but even the solitude tempts him not to commit the ultimate act (Greene, 1966, p. 256-7).

4. 4 FURTIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR A PHENOMENOUS DESTRUCTION

Scobie's environment prepares a convenient opportunity for his own destruction. The nameless colony in the west of Africa is a place worth hatred. Mr. Harris, a colleague of Scobie, offers his opinion about the place: “ ‘*But when I do get home, you'll never see*

me here again. (...) I hate the place. I hate the people. I hate the bloody niggers' ” (Greene, 1966, p. 12). Louise does not like the colony either: “ ‘*Ticki, I can't bear this place any longer'* ” (ibid, p. 42)

On the contrary, Scobie likes the environment:

If he had become young again this was the life he would have again chosen to live: only this time he would not have expected any other person to share it with him (ibid, p. 57).

The opinion of others about Scobie is more than positive: “*Poor old Scobie*” (ibid, p. 14), “*Like Aristides the Just*” (ibid, p. 17), “*Scobie the Just*” (ibid, p. 18). It is his loyalty which betrays him. From the moment when he makes his first mistake – by hiding a secret letter of a Portuguese captain which he should give over to special depository, he ranks himself among other corrupted police officers (ibid, p. 50-3; Leah, 2007, p. 776).

Wilson, his secret enemy and rival, is probably the only one person who dislikes Scobie and wants to destroy him: “ ‘*One day I'll ruin you, Scobie'* ” (ibid, p. 231). Moreover, Scobie starts to visit dangerous Syrian trader, Yusef and Wilson gains suspicion about these meetings so he spies on him. Every other Scobie's action prepares more and more his great fall. He betrays his service duties and his incorruptibility is lost. He takes a loan from Yusef and is subsequently involved in the diamond smuggling. By foreshadowing, which is visible from the moment of suicide of Scobie's colleague Pemberton, readers are given hints about the catastrophic end of Scobie. Father Clay speaks to Scobie:

'Mightn't there be a hope that it's murder?'

'Hope?' (Scobie)

'Suicide,' Father Clay said. 'It's too terrible. It puts a man outside mercy. I've been thinking about it all night.'

'He wasn't a Catholic. Perhaps that makes a difference. Invincible ignorance, eh?' (Scobie)

'That's what I try to think' (Father Clay) (Greene, 1966, p. 82).

From the moment of Pemberton's death, Scobie is thinking about suicide on various places in the book as well. According to Leah (2007, p. 777) a letter that Pemberton left was signed 'Dicky' (ibid, p. 84) which is similar to the nick that Louise gave Scobie – 'Ticki' (ibid, p. 26). It is indeed a remarkably strong connection. At first, he denies suicide but then he starts to accept it as the only solution.

All his positive characteristics are perpetually lost but his religion-based conscience remains untouched. Yet it is only for worse, as his mind is split like schizophrenic's because of constant struggling between Scobie's conscience and his own will. Under the burden of the great guilt and desire to end life, he is continually reminded about the tremendous consequences of suicide to his soul and everlasting life by his conscience. These facts make his self-destruction even more powerful, disastrous and shocking.

4. 5 SCOBIE'S SALVATION

As well as in Brighton Rock, the question of salvation may be seen as the main Catholic aspect of the story. Scobie committed several mortal sins and apparently seeks for his damnation. As his conscience, which is often suggested being God's own, tells him:

Can't you trust me as you'd trust a faithful dog? I have been faithful to you for two thousand years. All you have to do now is ring a bell, go into a box. Confess . . . the repentance is already there, straining at your heart. It's not the repentance

that you lack, just a few simple actions: to go up to the Nissen hut and say good-bye. Or if you must, continue rejecting me but without lies any more. Go to your house and say goodbye to your wife and live with your mistress. If you live you will come back to me sooner or later. One of them will suffer, but can't you trust me to see that the suffering isn't too great?

'No. I don't trust you. I love you, but I've never trusted you' (Scobie replies) (Greene, 1966, p. 250).

Scobie's statement is a contradiction in terms of Catholic teaching where loving God means trusting Him. Scobie does not trust in mercy and redemption for himself. He accepts his own pessimistic and nihilistic attitude and utters the final judgment:

'I believe, I tell you. I believe that I'm damned for all eternity unless a miracle happens. (...) I know what I'm doing. I'm not pleading for mercy. I am going to damn myself' (Greene, 1966, p. 250).

When it comes to terms of suicide, Hodgkins (2006, p. 59) says that the main question is whether Scobie's suicide is shameful or saintly. It can be saintly only in Scobie's perception, if he thought that he killed himself in sake of his wife Louise, mistress Helen and servant Ali. At least, this theory is hardly acceptable because his suicide was certainly a form of escape and cowardliness, which is not saintly at all. Moreover, Scobie's acts are seen by many (Greene, Čulík, Hodgkins, Bergonzi) as prove of monstrous pride. It is illustrated by Scobie himself, claiming:

'Only the man of goodwill always carries in his heart this capacity for damnation' (Greene, 1966, p. 59).

Not only, claims Scobie that he is a man of goodwill but also he gives himself a special privilege of damnation. Father Rank's last words, at the end of the story, make Scobie's salvation possible and puzzle the story:

'For goodness' sake, Mrs. Scobie, don't imagine you or I know a thing about God's mercy.'

'He was a bad Catholic.' (Louise)

'That's the silliest phrase in common use,' Father Rank said.

'And at the end, this horror. He must have known that he was damning himself.'

'Yes, he knew that all right. He never had any trust in mercy except for other people.' Father Rank said, "(...) from what I saw of him, that he really loved God."

'He certainly loved no one else,' she said.

'And you may be in the right of it there, too,' Father Rank replied (Greene, 1966, p. 263-4).

Helen's little conversion is beneficial for Scobie, in terms of redemption, as well:

She asked, 'Do you believe in a God?'

'Oh, well, I suppose so,' Bagster said.

'I wish I did,' she said, 'I wish I did' (Greene, 1966, p. 263-4).

Scobie's suicide was meant to be death of natural causes. It was not only because of his life insurance but also because it was easier, for others, to forget death of angina than suicide (ibid, p. 248-9). However, the very last Scobie's uttering shows that he loved, maybe in his own way, but loved: *'Dear God, I love . . .'* (ibid, p. 257). The question is whether it was God whom Scobie loved, as Father Rank claims, or if he loved himself or his servant Ali. Therefore, again, the *"appalling strangeness of the mercy of God"* (Greene, 1993, p. 297) has the last word.

5. COMPARISON OF BRIGHTON ROCK AND THE HEART OF THE MATTER

5.1 GENERAL COMPARISON

Following chapters analyze the main similarities and differences between *Brighton Rock* and *The Heart of the Matter*. The most visible difference of the novels is their genre. *Brighton Rock* is a detective story which developed into transcendental motives and *The Heart of the Matter* was written as psychological novel, in the first place. Both *Brighton Rock* and *The Heart of the Matter* have similar theme which is unpleasant environment. Brighton and the middle African colony are both described as places not worthy for living. This fact is more visible in *The Heart of the Matter*, where it is uttered by several characters whereas in *Brighton Rock* Pinkie is the only observer of Brighton's ugliness. The environment itself can foreshadow the tragical development of the characters. Some of other characters help the main heroes in their fail. In Brighton Rock, Ida Arnold is a sufficient example and even Colleoni, a wealthy boss of a rival gang, fed Pinkie's greed for success and welfare. The Heart of the Matter is more complicated, as Scobie is ruined by others only partially. The greatest motives lay upon his conscience, feeling of pity and desire to make his 'loving ones' happy. Therefore, the relationship with Louise and Helen can be seen as the main destructive power. If there are to be equivalent characters to Ida and Colleoni, these are undoubtedly Wilson and Yusef. Wilson hates Scobie and is jealous due to Louise. He spies on Scobie and reveals his suicide, at the end. Yusef, the Syrian trader, dips Scobie in diamond smuggling and thus ruins his loyalty to his work duties. In *Brighton Rock*, the first indications of Catholicism are to be found when Pinkie asks Rose:

'You a Roman?'

'Yes,' Rose said.

'I'm one too,' the Boy said (Greene, 1993, p. 65).

Whereas in *The Heart of the Matter*, they are to be seen earlier:

'I was so upset I came out of Mass before the end.' (Louise) (Greene, 1966, p. 23)

There are more direct references on Catholicism in *The Heart of the Matter* than in *Brighton Rock*. There is a remarkable one in *Brighton Rock*:

The shelves of dolls stared down with glassy innocence, like Virgins in a church repository. The Boy looked up (...), he thought – Hail Mary... in the hour of our death (Greene, 1993, p. 29).

Pinkie's memories of the times when he sang in the choir elicit on many places in the story by Latin words of the song Lamb of God: “ ‘*Agnus Dei qui tollis peccata mundi... dona nobis pacem*’ ”⁴ (ibid, p. 120). In the *Heart of the Matter*, Scobie's broken rosary can symbolically represent the state of his faith (Greene, 1966, p. 18). In *Brighton Rock*, the main indications of perception of Catholicism are represented by dialogues between either Pinkie and Rose or Ida and Rose. In *The Heart of the Matter*, these are represented by Scobie's monologues.

5. 2 ON THE MAIN CHARACTERS

This chapter depicts the main similarities and differences of both characters, their position in the story and their development. Actually, both the heroes are antagonists. Pinkie Brown is an extreme evil character, almost a personification of Satan. Whereas Major Scobie is sympathetic and one wishes that he would not mix in all the mess. Sometimes, one would like Scobie to abandon his Catholic conscience, which may seem to force him in the act of suicide. However, it is more likely that he killed himself due to the

⁴ Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world... grant us peace (a prayer after Communion).

fact that he would fail in his main goal – to make everyone happy. It may be suggested that it was an act of chivalry but it was more likely the final act of incredible pride. Scobie's suicide was a long planned act which was supposed to look like a death of natural causes. On the contrary, Pinkie's suicide was committed suddenly due to desperation and loss. The question of both the novels is similar though – whether Pinkie is damned or redeemed and if Scobie's suicide is shameful or saintly, and therefore if they go to Heaven or Hell. Hodgkins (2006, p. 59) writes that “*Greene's Catholic novels also appear to negate ultimate judgments and his endings seem intended, to warn against any definite interpretation.*” Greene was denying any kind of judgment. Therefore, at the end of both *Brighton Rock* and *The Heart of the Matter*, a priest reminds potential judges of God's unknowable mercy (Greene, 1993, p. 296-8; Greene, 1966, p. 263-4) and proposes a faint hope in the power of love. Most readers would probably prefer Scobie to be redeemed and Pinkie to be damned. However, Scobie's pity is compared to Pinkie's hatred and can be even more destructive and develops into enormous pride (Hodgkins, 2006, p. 64). Pinkie was ruined from the beginning of the story but Scobie's destruction developed suddenly as a strike by lightning. Both protagonists are not able to feel and express love and through love they should be redeemed as it is said by priests in conclusion.

Čulík (2002, p. 257) recalls that neither Pinkie nor Scobie had any true friends, only relatives and acquaintances. They are faced with loneliness, despair and misanthropy. Yet both of them enjoy loneliness and darkness as their only relief. Pinkie likes to have solitude in his room in the shared house. For Scobie, the solitude is the happiest moment:

He walked away, feeling an extraordinary happiness, but this he would not remember as happiness, as he would remember setting out in the darkness, in the rain, alone (Greene, 1966, p. 133).

The concept of childhood is being impaired in Pinkie's and Scobie's life. Pinkie buried his own childhood by being too mature for a 17-year-old boy. Scobie, on the other hand, buried his own child (Louise had an abortion).

Both characters have their own perception of God and Catholic teaching. Pinkie's view is limited to the dark side of Christian doctrine represented by Satan. His various attempts of praying are, as he says, too late. The sentimentalism brought to him by reminiscences of singing in the choir is only occasional. In contrast, Scobie prays almost all the time as he speaks to God directly through his thoughts. Even though both characters are Catholics, specific elements of existentialism, nihilism and scepticism can be observed. Moreover, the negative theology is presented because the main heroes accept the idea that the world is sinful and decayed and that humans do not merit God's mercy.

CONCLUSION

In the words of Spurling (1983, p. 32), Greene nourished a special care for a sinner and failure. He was not interested in creating successful characters instead he had sympathy for losers – the tragic heroes. Both *Brighton Rock* and *The Heart of the Matter* include the secret presence of God in the world, the unrecognized saints and, above all, the secret possibility of mercy for the sinners, even though they committed a mortal sin. In both *Brighton Rock* and *The Heart of the Matter* hope for redemption is proposed by priests at the end of the stories.

Greene presented so called theology of extremism. There are only two possible destinations for the main characters - either Heaven or, more likely, Hell. However, in Catholic tradition there is also Purgatory offered as a 'middle-stage' destination. Thus, sinners have a chance to repent for what they committed during their life. This stage is omitted in Greene's rhetoric. Greene's quotation reminds about this fact:

It is true to say that the glory of man is his capacity for salvation; it is also true to say that his glory is his capacity for damnation (Greene, 1970, p. 42).

Greene connected Catholic theological system to experience of despair and terror of human beings. Therefore, both the novels have to be read as fiction, not as a codex of moral values. If one slips into the one-way interpretations, either to the Catholic Catechism explanations or to the materialistic point of view, there can be dangerous misunderstandings. The main point is not to judge the major protagonists but rather to consider their complex personality spiced by existentialism and nihilism.

Scobie is obviously more sympathetic character than Pinkie but the end of the story is more shocking than in the Pinkie's case. Scobie's thoughts and suicide are more nihilistic than Pinkie's. Therefore, the negative theology presented by Greene is even more

extreme. *Brighton Rock* seems to be a story of a great sinner predestined to damnation. The main Catholic aspects are represented by the conflict between the secular and the religious view of the world and the question of Pinkie's redemption or damnation. Pinkie's evil behaviour and dark thoughts may evoke a birth of Anti-Christ. Yet, most of his evil acts has its base in his deprived childhood. Therefore, he can be sympathetic to some extent. *The Heart of the Matter* offers a more complex story and the characters are described more precisely. It is considered to be one of the greatest books in Greene's career. The Catholic themes lie upon intimate, deep thoughts of Scobie. The central aspect is again the question of salvation Scobie. Another important theme is the danger of pity which can develop into enormous sense of pride. There is also a struggle in Scobie's mind, represented by the clash of his own thoughts and subconscious thoughts of Catholic morale. Both *Brighton Rock* and *The Heart of the Matter* contain some autobiographical aspects. Especially in the second one, there are similar themes to Greene's own life.

Both books are very readable and are worthy of being noticed. It would be intriguing to study Catholic aspects in other Greene's titles as, for example, in *The Power and the Glory* and *The End of Affair* or put all of the main Catholic novels into one context.

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RESUMÉ

The essential Catholic aspects in Brighton Rock and The Heart of the Matter were the question of redemption of the central protagonists. Both Pinkie and Scobie are destined to Hell but an intriguing conclusion is offered by priests at the end of the stories. The controversial faith of the main protagonists does not stick to the tradition of the Roman Catholic Church. There is a clash between religious and humanistic view of the world. Greene created a particular superiority of Catholics above other characters. Also, the presence of metaphysical evil was embodied to the central characters. Pinkie is pure evil from the very beginning of the story and, therefore, could hardly gain any sympathies from readers. On the contrary, Scobie seems to be a virtuous man but his intended goodwill destroys him eventually. Thus, his fall is even more tragic than Pinkie's. However, Greene warned against any straightforward interpretation of the eschatological motives.

ANNOTATION

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Rok obhajoby:	2012

Název práce:	Aspekty katolicismu v románech Grahama Greena
Název v angličtině:	Aspects of Catholicism in Graham Greene's novels
Anotace práce:	Bakalářská práce si klade za cíl studovat aspekty katolicismu dvou románů Grahama Greena – Brightonského špalku a Jádra věci. Na základě uvedené literatury a pramenů jsou analyzovány a následně porovnány oba romány. Důraz je kladen zejména na hlavní postavy románů – Pinkieho Browna a majora Scobieho.
Klíčová slova:	Brightonský špalek, Jádro věci, Pinkie Brown, major Scobie, aspekty katolicismu, Římskokatolická církev, katoličtí spisovatelé 20. století, tragičtí hrdinové, spása, zatracení.
Anotace v angličtině:	The objective of the final project is to study Catholic aspects in two novels by Graham Greene – Brighton Rock and The Heart of the Matter. The novels are analyzed and subsequently compared with support of the listed sources. The emphasis is put on the main characters – Pinkie Brown and Major Scobie.
Klíčová slova v angličtině:	Brighton Rock, The Heart of the Matter, Pinkie Brown, Major Scobie, aspects of Catholicism, Roman Catholic Church, Catholic writers of the 20 th century, tragic heroes, salvation, damnation.
Přílohy vázané v práci:	0 příloh
Rozsah práce:	51 stran
Jazyk práce:	angličtina