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Vztahy ústředních postav k sobě samým, k jiným postavám a k Bohu ve vybraných „katolických“ románech Grahama Greena (*Brightonský špalek, Moc a sláva, Jádru věci*) s ohledem na typické črty Greenových románů a jejich typické protagonisty

Relationships of the Principal Characters of Graham Greene's Selected "Catholic" Novels (*Brighton Rock, The Power and the Glory, The Heart of the Matter*) to Themselves, Other Characters and God with Respect to the General Features of Greene's Novels and Their Typical Protagonists

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Prohlašuji, že jsem diplomovou práci vypracoval samostatně a že jsem uvedl všechny použité prameny a literaturu. V Praze dne 24. 8. 2009

I declare that the following BA thesis is my own work for which I used only the sources and literature mentioned. Prague, 24. 8. 2009

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Table of Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. The Life of Graham Greene, His Novels and Protagonists	3
2.1. <u>Autobiographical Features that Substantially Influenced Greene's Works</u>	3
2.2. <u>A Unique Nature of Graham Greene's Works – “Greenland”</u>	6
2.3. <u>Universal Protagonist of Greene's Novels – General Characteristics of the “Greenean Man”</u>	9
3. Brighton Rock	13
3.1. <u>Pinkie's Egocentrism with Reference to His Childhood</u>	13
3.2. <u>Pinkie's Feeling of Hatred</u>	15
3.3. <u>The World Seen as “Hell”</u>	18
4. The Power and the Glory	22
4.1. <u>A Depraving Feeling of Priest's Pride</u>	22
4.2. <u>Priest's Self-Sacrificing Responsibility as the Source of His Actions</u>	24
4.3. <u>Priest's Sinfulness and His Attitude to God's Salvation</u>	27
5. The Heart of the Matter	32
5.1. <u>Scobie's Love of Failure</u>	32
5.2. <u>Scobie's Pity</u>	34
5.3. <u>Scobie and the Issue of God's Decision</u>	38
6. Conclusion	42
Bibliography	46
Summary	47

1. Introduction

The novels of Graham Greene have been of great interest to many literary scholars for years and are even nowadays. For their provocativeness in the broadest sense of this word, they have been either praised and recommended (even by the author himself) or condemned and censured. Nevertheless, his works in general have gained popularity of readers from all over the world (not excluding the Czech Republic) probably thanks to Greene's captivating style of writing and the themes with which he is concerned. Therefore, it appears to be important to examine the writings of an author who was even nominated for a Nobel Prize, for such discussion may raise interesting problems or give answers to yet unanswered questions.

Understandably, it would be impossible to cover all Greene's novels in a greater depth in this thesis. For the present analysis, three of his four "Catholic novels" have been selected: *Brighton Rock*, *The Power and the Glory* and *The Heart of the Matter*. The main aim of this thesis is to provide a deeper analysis of the selected novels. As relationships of the central characters to themselves, other characters and God help to demonstrate the themes and motifs which Greene presents in the given novels, they will be examined. Further, it will be shown on particular examples in what way these protagonists or novels match with the image of the "Greenean man" or "Greeneland". It should be noted that the respective types of relationships cover the areas which describe the concept of the "Greenean man". As to the method, the research will be based on the close reading of selected works and, where appropriate, also similarities or contrasts between the central characters will be presented.

Reflecting this aim, the thesis is structured into four main chapters which are further divided into three sub-chapters. Taking into account the research done on Greene, the first chapter shortly introduces the autobiographical features that influenced Greene's works and presents the concepts of "Greeneland" and the "Greenean man" which are central for this work. In the next three chapters, the analysis of the three selected novels is made – each novel is analysed in one chapter. In each of the three sub-chapters, one of the three types of relationships is examined. The titles of these sub-chapters then refer to the motif or theme that characterizes best the actual type of relationship. In this respect, it is important to stress that the relationship of the individual protagonists to God encompasses the religious dimension of the novel, whereas the other two types of relationships are related rather to secular matters.

As the grounds for the selection of the novels and structuring of the thesis can seem obscure, it will be made clear. The primary reason for the choice of these works was that

they are usually subsumed under a more general term “The Catholic Trilogy” by the scholars. This, nevertheless, should not lead to the conclusion that they have been written one after another but rather that Greene presents similar topics and uses similar motifs in them, which makes these works comparable. Further, as it can be argued that these novels belong to the finest out of what Greene wrote, it can be assumed that the themes which he discusses in them are significant in a more general context of his writings.

Next, a decision to examine the novels in individual chapters was based on a belief that it is most efficient to study them this way. As a result of this, it will be less complicated for the reader to follow our line of reasoning and create a picture of the novel as a whole. As it was many times important to refer to previous sub-chapters (in other words, to different aspects of relationships within the framework of the one novel), the reader would easily become confused if he or she had to return to another chapter where also other protagonists would be discussed. Nonetheless, when the novels are put next to each other in this way, differences and similarities become more obvious and help to understand the works more deeply.

Furthermore, subsuming the three works under one larger chapter or section would convey the feeling that they must be read as one unit, which is not evidently true. Some critics discuss the novels separately and even if they discuss these three novels, they usually devote one section to each of them. Interestingly, the Czech scholar Jan Čulík even regards *The End of the Affair*, the last of Greene’s “Catholic novels”, to be part of the “Trilogy” and excludes *Brighton Rock* from it.¹ This leads to conclusion that even this term seems not to be established. For this reason, it was not used in the title of this thesis.

¹ Jan Čulík, *Graham Greene. Dílo a život* (Praha: Academia, 1993) 263.

2. The Life of Graham Greene, His Novels and Protagonists

Graham Greene, distinguished as one of the prominent novelists of the twentieth-century British literature, can be characterised as a prolific writer. He is the author of short-stories, plays, travelogues, autobiographical pieces, literary and film reviews and essays. Nevertheless, it was mainly his novels that brought him greater fame and put him in the centre of interest. Greene himself divided them into “serious novels” and “entertainments” in order to make distinction between those in which some greater “message” (religious or ethical) can be distinguished (and which are more intellectually stimulating in this respect) and those which serve for mere “entertainment”.

However, such division should not be taken absolutely for granted, as critics generally argue that “the element of suspense” can be recognized in both “serious novels” and “entertainments” and even some of his characteristic motifs as absurdity, critical situations or escape are present in some degree there.¹ Understandably, this approach should not undervalue the credibility of Greene’s own words but should only make clear that the scholars were able to view some of his works differently than he himself did. In the following lines, let us more deeply consider Greene as a man of letters and focus on his life experience, his works and protagonists of his novels.

2.1. Autobiographical Features that Substantially Influenced Greene’s Works²

Firstly, it is important to ask which episodes from Greene’s life are reflected in his writings. First of all, let us point at the period of his childhood. John Spurling notices that although early years of Greene’s life can be compared to “Eden”, the period of his maturation can be perceived rather as “hell”.³ Yet, he does not certainly mean the sort of physical hell but rather the mental one which is comparable to the psychic state of various characters of Greene’s novels. The main issue of Greene’s adolescence was the problem of “conflicting loyalties”, as the headmaster of the senior school at which he studied, was his own father. What is more, Greene did not suffer from any bodily attacks from his classmates but, on the contrary, from a mixture of negative emotions caused by his presence in a typical English boarding school where he experienced the feeling of

¹ Jan Čulík, *Graham Greene. Dílo a život* (Praha: Academia, 1993) 208-209.

² It should be made clear that the features which have some relation to the themes discussed in this thesis will be highlighted in this chapter.

³ John Spurling, *Graham Greene* (London: Methuen, 1983) 18.

loneliness and loss of identity. Therefore, the period of adolescence which stays in contradiction to an adult life plays an important role in his works.⁴

Naturally, the fact that Greene travelled a lot during his life and that the travel experience from his numerous journeys is reflected in many of Greene's works must not be forgotten. The account of places that he visited would be too long and unnecessary for the purposes of this thesis. Nevertheless, let us name those which became ground for the novels which are of our interest. After Greene had finished *Brighton Rock* (1938), he had set out for Mexico in 1938. On the one hand, this meant a sort of "escape" from England for him but on the other hand, it was a great opportunity to study the religious situation that was in the country. As a result, he published *The Power and the Glory* (1940) in which he recorded the life stories of the people he met there.⁵ As far as *The Heart of the Matter* (1948) set in Sierra Leone is concerned, Greene drew the inspiration for this novel from his stay in Africa in 1942-1943.⁶ Reflecting these facts, it is evident that (most of the times) Greene knew intimately the places about which he was writing and thus his novels are believable for the reader and can be described as "realistic".

Next, David Pryce-Jones puts stress on the "climate of opinion" which is expressed mainly in Greene's earlier novels. He is persuaded that the political atmosphere of the nineteen-thirties is observable in these works. Although Greene is not recognized as a Marxist, Pryce-Jones asserts that the feeling of a lonely individual which sees himself overwhelmed by the capitalistic machinery is present in his novels. Obviously, Greene does not develop any political theories but from this viewpoint, he can be regarded as the one who "penetrates the weak spots of the capitalist world" for which "details of poverty and misery and human shabbiness" are symptomatic.⁷ As a result, the central plots are built around "the smuggling, the destruction of a dictator, the death-sentence passed on a Communist, international capitalism, a juvenile delinquent, and civil war."⁸ Understandably, all these themes reflect the ambience of the approaching Second World War commonly characterized by emotions of fear and uncertainty.

⁴ In *A Sort of Life*, Greene comments on his traumatising childhood experience: "Years later when I read the sermon on hell in Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist* I recognized the and I had inhabited. I had left civilisation behind and entered a savage country of strange customs and inexplicable cruelties: a country in which I was a foreigner and a suspect, quite literally a hunted creature, known to have dubious associates. Was not my father the headmaster? I was like the son of a quisling in a country under occupation." Graham Greene, *A Sort of Life* (London: The Bodley Head, 1971) 72.

⁵ This fact Greene admits in his *Ways of Escape*. Graham Greene, *Ways of Escape* (London: Bodley Head, 1980) 84.

⁶ Nevertheless, it was not his first stay on this continent. Already in 1934 he made a journey to Liberia, the account of which he made in his travelogue *Journey Without Maps* (1936). It is interesting to note that "Greene loved Africa in contrast with Mexico." Čulík 257.

⁷ David Pryce-Jones, *Graham Greene* (Glasgow: Oliver and Boyd, 1963) 9.

⁸ Pryce-Jones 9.

In the later stage of his writing, Greene diverted from these “political” motifs for a certain period and paid much attention to the field which brought him greater fame – Catholic faith. It has again its roots in his life story, as he was converted to Catholicism at the age of 22, when he was working as a journalist in Nottingham. The way to this conversion can be seen in various respects. On the one hand, it seems that Greene’s Catholicism was of a formal kind only and no strong feelings were involved in it: “I had not been emotionally moved, but only intellectually convinced.”⁹ This approach to faith and religion was determined by Greene’s close relationship with his future wife Vivien Daryell-Browning who was a doctrinal Catholic. Therefore, it can be believed that “the conversion should have eliminated her demurs.”¹⁰

However, Pryce-Jones sees a more intellectual or rather social cause for such a step. In relation to the atmosphere which was ruling the society of that time, Greene’s “new-born” faith can be viewed either as an indirect reaction to the events that he experienced in the thirties or as a need for some other alternative. Consequently, he decided to take a pessimistic view of the world around him, which did not bring him any reconciliation or inner spiritual balance. However, it seems that it was somewhat the other way around: “Theology for Greene has been no easy release, no diversion of earlier compassion into easily accepted doctrinal morality.”¹¹

Nevertheless, the turning point came when Greene made his visit to Mexico in 1938. The persecution of religion which he witnessed there radically changed his view on Catholicism and faith as such. The cruelty which surrounded him caused that it became of more emotional nature: “And so faith came to me – shapelessly, without dogma, a presence above a croquet lawn, something associated with violence, cruelty, evil across the way.”¹² Although it is believed that Greene’s faith came from a deliberate and rational determination, his attitude to it altered after a strong personal experience. All these facts may explain paradoxical and at times conflicting nature of his major works and also his opinions on the author who is a believer. Greene is convinced that E. M. Forster’s, Virginia Woolf’s or Sartre’s characters are flat in comparison with Bloom in Joyce’s *Ulysses*, for example, for “the religious dimension” is not lost in the latter.¹³

⁹ Graham Greene, *Ways of Escape* 58.

¹⁰ Čulík 48.

¹¹ Pryce-Jones 10.

¹² Graham Greene, *The Lawless Roads* (London: William Heinemann & The Bodley Head, 1978) 3.

¹³ Marie-Françoise Allain, *The Other Man* (Harmondsworth: The Bodley Head, 1984) 161-162.

2.2. A Unique Nature of Graham Greene's Works – "Greeneland"

Secondly, it is important to note that all Greene's works are generally subsumed under a more general term coined by the critics – "Greeneland" which can be characterized concisely as the individual world which works according to certain principles given by Greene and in which his characters act. Greene believed that this term had been used for the first time by a man who "used to write rather good novels, who was at Oxford the same years he was there."¹⁴ Yet, he felt irritated by the expression: "This is Indo-China, I want to exclaim, this is Mexico, this is Sierra Leone carefully and accurately described. I have been a newspaper correspondent as well as a novelist. I assure you that the dead child lay in the ditch in just that attitude. In the canal of Phat Diem the bodies are stuck out of the water..."¹⁵ It is distinct that his reaction refers mainly to the geographical and realistic understanding of the "Greeneland". What Greene underlines is his conviction that the places which he depicts are the actual localities which he visited and that he presents them to the reader with preciseness of a journalist (which he was in fact) as accurately as possible.

Nonetheless, the scholars highlight the fact that although Greene was setting his novels in the authentic places around the world, he made a deliberate selection of his own personal experience and so produced "a disturbed and disturbing personal fiction shot through with fragmentary perceptions of fallen contemporary life."¹⁶ The term relates to everything general about his writing and also to the specific nature of his "realism": "Greeneland' is not the original landscape; it is the way a landscape is distorted as in a heat haze by the view of life projected on to it."¹⁷ In this way, "Greeneland" becomes the region of Greene's mind rather than the account of places which he visited himself. Therefore, it should not be understood as a geographical but as a "psychological" concept.

It can be argued that the already mentioned "heat haze" which is so distinctive of Greene's novels is accurately characterized by Jan Čulík who calls Greene "the poet of awkwardness" (básník trapnosti). He accentuates that Greene should be called "a poet", as he creates a "multi-layered text resonating on other semantic levels which is rightly referred to as poetical."¹⁸ According to his view, the impression created by Greene's texts conveys not only some philosophical meaning but also something which can be hardly expressed in objective terms (in this connection it is valid to talk about a poetical text).

¹⁴ Henry J. Donaghy ed., *Conversations with Graham Greene* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1992) 130.

¹⁵ Graham Greene, *Ways of Escape* 60.

¹⁶ Roger Sharrock, *Saints, Sinners and Comedians* (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984) 31.

¹⁷ Spurling 62.

¹⁸ Čulík 6-10.

Moreover, the term “awkwardness” best expresses Greene’s specific kind of “realism” characterizing the grievousness of human life. It should not be associated with decadence but rather with Greene’s tendency to discuss the tragic aspects of human existence: “Greene writes about failure and a catastrophic existence of man so convincingly that we have an impression that it is a natural, normal and a logical phenomenon.”¹⁹ He can depict the world as being damned in such manner that it is believable and “if it were different, the narrative would lose the contact with the real life, it would become artificial and unreal.”²⁰ Greene’s talent dwells in his ability to select what could be called the “negative”, “existential” or “seedy” aspects of our life and link them so artfully that they create a meaningful whole which is both entertaining and stimulating.

Evidently, these attributes refer also to the world (or “land” in other words) in which crime, violence, love, betrayal and attempts to escape play central roles in individual plots of Greene’s novels. As may be expected, it should not be certainly viewed as an easily definable “location” and as Čulík claims, “Greeneland is much wider, deeper and conflicting.”²¹ “Conflict” and “paradox” are then the right terms which could characterize it appropriately.

As a result of this, there exist various approaches to a straightforward “penetration” of “Greeneland”, neither of which can be regarded as the most appropriate. One can decide for a strict literary discussion and will undoubtedly understand that it is the story telling which makes Greene’s novels noteworthy. Nevertheless, one might miss or undervalue his personal vision of an evil and a corrupt world. To handle it, philosophy may serve as one of the most understandable ways. Čulík attempts to see “Greeneland” from the perspective of the existentialist philosophy and elaborates on the work of the German thinker Karl Jaspers. Although, as he claims, “it does not matter whether Greene has ever read Jaspers or not,” in Greene’s novels characteristic motifs typical of this scholar (namely failure and absurdity) appear.²² They do not determine only the plots but also the characters which, as a matter of course, do not live happy lives because they are either crushed by their environment or feel an inner pain. Consequently, it is possible to talk not only about objective but also about subjective components of “Greeneland” that are intermingled with a distinct religious element.

In view of this, Greene is most of the times characterized as a “Catholic” writer. This attribute owes much to an immense success of his “Catholic” novels (*Brighton Rock*, *The*

¹⁹ Čulík 7.

²⁰ Čulík 7.

²¹ Čulík 385 .

²² Čulík 9.

Power and the Glory, *The Heart of the Matter* and *The End of Affair*), the first of which was published one year before the war ended. They are not distinguished as political thrillers as those written in the 1930's and thus belong to the category of "serious novels".²³ In these works, Greene expressed his (already mentioned) position of greater pessimism and focused on the "spiritual" matters such as sin and human suffering, both of which are viewed as a part of an everyday life. They are mainly concerned with weak elements of human existence – "lack of self-confidence, loss of faith and hope, the sense of failure, the need for advice and authority."²⁴

Nonetheless, religious motifs appear as central in these works. Considering this, it should be noted that Greene has modified the doctrine of Original Sin into a specific world-picture in which man's existence is doomed and which "offers us a tragic vision of man's predicament."²⁵ In this relation, the main feature of his novels can be seen as an effort to present evil in a comprehensible manner. As a result of this, Greene demonstrates how innocence is exchanged for experience and portrays the world into which he sets his characters is as "hell" that can be seen as abandoned by God. As R.W.B. Lewis argues, even the "environment" in which the plots are developed has a deeper spiritual potential: "Physical settings could be managed so as to exude a meaning that transformed them into spiritual situations, into elaborate images of fate."²⁶

In an attempt to define the nature of Greene's Catholicism, Bernard Bergonzi shows that Greene is not preoccupied solely with the Catholic doctrine, as it is generally recognized. He stresses that Greene fuses the traditional Catholic notions with "his

²³ When discussing Greene's "Catholic" novels it is important to introduce a few notes on his reading of some of the other Catholic writers which he presents in his *Collected Essays* and which, according to scholars writing on Greene, may have had some influence on him. Greene states that after Henry James died in 1916 "the religious sense was lost to the English novel". Graham Greene, *Collected Essays* (London: Penguin Books, 1988) 91. Thus he considers the work of three French Catholic writers – François Mauriac, Bernanos and Léon Bloy. Firstly, Greene attributes to Mauriac the ability to create great characters which "have the solidity and importance of men with souls to save and lose." They are believable and, what is important, their actions are not significant so much as "the force, whether God or devil, that compels them." Graham Greene, *Collected Essays* 92-95. As to Bernanos, Greene states that after Bernanos' works were published "it is not possible to write off the infantile devils of *Doctor Faustus* with their fire-crackers and conjuring tricks," as hell bears a distinct mark of infanthility and it "is the home of eternally undeveloped." Graham Greene, *Collected Essays* 96-99. A relation between this view and Pinkie's role of childhood and his attitude to Hell can be seen in *Brighton Rock* (cf. 3.1, 3.3.). Finally, Greene praises Bloy's writing for "occasional flashes of his poetic sense" and the presence of hatred which he even directs on himself in his writings. Graham Greene, *Collected Essays* 102-104. It was already shown that Greene has also some "poetic sense" and it will be made clear that hatred plays also its role in his works.

²⁴ Spurling 64-65.

²⁵ Pryce-Jones 105.

²⁶ R.W.B. Lewis, "The 'Trilogy'," *Greene, Graham Greene: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Samuel Hynes (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1973) 49.

personal mythology which was concerned with betrayal and loss, cruelty and evil.”²⁷ As a result of this, Greene chooses to examine the “negative” concepts of hell, damnation and evil (out of many others which appear in the religious doctrine). Further, David Lodge states that “there is a great deal of evidence, internal and external, that in Greene’s fiction Catholicism is not a body of belief requiring exposition and demanding categorical assent or dissent, but a system of concepts, a source of situations and a reservoir of symbols....”²⁸ These observations support the view of Greene as the “poet of awkwardness” and the definition of “Greenland” from the existentialist viewpoint.

Yet, aspects of adventure (as crime or violence) did not absolutely disappear and play likewise their important role in Greene’s “Catholic” novels. The outcome of this is that the motifs of suspense, crime, violence, murder, betrayal, hostility and pursuit characterize the plots. However, it should be made clear that they are not completely “liberated” from any connection with the religious sphere. Lewis sees a direct relationship and even interdependence between the action and religion: “(...)The plot and the action of Greene’s novels are increasingly given their meaning by the religious motif.”²⁹ Moreover, he claims that these settings can be understood as the “elaborate images of faith” due to the meaning they produce and due to the fact that this meaning transmutes them into “spiritual situations.”³⁰ Generally speaking, violence fulfils “that moral craving for the just and reasonable expression of human nature left without belief.”³¹ In this way, Greene made use of what he mastered in his previous works – a capability to create a plot distinguished by suspense, and added to it the already mentioned “stimulating” element.

2.3. Universal Protagonist of Greene’s Novels – General Characteristics of the “Greenean Man”

Thirdly, it must be made clear that both the sources of Greene’s inspiration and the “face” of “Greenland” inevitably determine the type of characters that Greene creates and their roles in the novels. Although some of their traits have already been mentioned, they should be studied separately, as they help to understand the themes that Greene discusses in his works. The critics have even developed the term “Greenean man” which

²⁷ Bernard Bergonzi, *A Study in Greene* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006) 93. The fact that Greene’s Catholicism is not doctrinal explains why the word “catholic” is put into quotation marks in the critical literature and also in this thesis.

²⁸ David Lodge, *Graham Greene* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966) 6.

²⁹ Lewis 50.

³⁰ Lewis 49.

³¹ Anonymous, “Graham Greene: The Man Within,” *Graham Greene, Graham Greene: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Samuel Hynes (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1973) 10.

should stand for the general traits of his principal characters. One of the most straightforward ways to describe them and show their position in the plot is to examine their relationship to themselves, to other characters and to God. Logically, the second area (their relationship to God) is prevalent mainly in the “Catholic” novels but the other areas have also their importance in these works.

As to the relationship of the characters to themselves, it can be seen, analogically to the already discussed areas, as conflicting and complex. Undoubtedly, the characters are always at war with themselves – good and evil or strength and weakness combine in them.³² As Braybrooke states, “it is this duality in man’s nature with which Greene is primarily concerned.”³³ Therefore, his main heroes feel expelled from the common social life. They are usually the weak and the failures (social, professional, marital) surviving in a gloomy world and experiencing the critical situations. They live in a routine boredom out of which they are released in the moments of crisis when they have to make a distinct decision.³⁴ On their example, “negative” or “existential” aspects of Greene’s novels are demonstrable.

Next, Spurling and Pryce-Jones highlight another subject matter which is present in Greene’s writings and which is directly related to the first of the studied areas – the theme of childhood. Spurling characterizes most of Greene’s principal characters as being “still trapped within the adolescence and its immediate aftermath”³⁵ regardless of their nominal age. In his view, they do not absolutely grow up, do not enter the adult life and stay bound to their early years. Spurling sees a direct relation between this feature of Greene’s writings and his adolescence, which proves to be in this way one of his main sources of inspiration. Pryce-Jones notes a very significant aspect of childhood which can be generally presupposed – its relation to innocence. According to him, Greene presents childhood “as the period during which innocence is betrayed and corrupted,” which may be related again to his own personal experience.³⁶

Additionally, Lodge is convinced that willingness to die is one of the central features of the “Greenean man”. He is convinced that death is omnipresent in the plot of Greene’s novels and talks about different kinds of deaths that Greene presents to his readers:

³² Francis Wyndham, *Graham Greene* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1955) 6.

³³ Neville Braybrooke, “Graham Greene: A Pioneer Novelist.” *College English*, Issue No. 1, 12.Oct. 2008 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/371542>> 1. Braybrooke further quotes Sir Thomas Browne whose words appropriately represent one of the main traits of Greene’s characters: “There’s another man within me that’s angry with me.”

³⁴ Sharrock 19.

³⁵ Spurling 18.

³⁶ Pryce-Jones 6.

violent, suicidal or even “little death” connected with sexual love.³⁷ What is distinct here is Greene’s omnipresent tendency to view reality with a sense of pessimism and negativity. These treats of his characters help him to develop the themes which likewise bear the mark of paradox. Also this proves the appropriateness of Čulík’s attribute “the poet of awkwardness”.

Next, Braybrooke calls Greene “a pioneer novelist” which he defines as “an author who gives the reader a newer and deeper understanding of reality.”³⁸ The main subject matter related to this concept is the theme of “pursuit”. Greene depicts men who are physically pursued by other characters and as Lodge points out, the individual characters establish a relationship of the “hunter and hunted” between themselves.³⁹ Thereafter, the protagonists simply become travellers who wander through the “no-man’s-land” and escape into the world which is evil and corrupt. As Braybrooke claims, the pursuit leads them “to a profounder understanding of themselves.”⁴⁰

This brings us directly to the theme of “betrayal” which relates to the role of a man (who can be also described as the “agent”) who, according to Sharrock, does not respect the rules which ordinary people have to respect. This individual detaches from the common moral norms and, instead of them, establishes a sort of personal “code” which helps him to handle danger from the world which surrounds him and from the other characters that he meets. Furthermore, the “code” even represents his private mental life. In order to follow it, he conforms to an inner call, which results in betrayal. Consequently, “the agent becomes a double agent, betraying and betrayed.”⁴¹

As to the relationship of the principal characters to God, it may be viewed as being determined by the general plan of his “Catholic” novels. As Francis Wyndham points out, the relation between “the religious sense” and “the importance of the human act” becomes of utmost importance for Greene in these works. This act must have a moral meaning. The protagonists have then in their desperate position a capacity for pity, fear and love for God who has an immense capacity for mercy.⁴² In addition, God’s grace causes that evil is manifested on the background of vice and crime appearing in “Greenland”. Thus, not merely the act but the guilt after the act interests Greene and this position gives strength to his novels. In these terms, it is valid to talk about his obsession with “man’s burden of

³⁷ Lodge 9.

³⁸ He is convinced that Greene explores “the possibilities of life” and compares him to such authors as Dostoevsky or Melville. Braybrooke 2.

³⁹ Lodge 9.

⁴⁰ Braybrooke 8.

⁴¹ Sharrock 16-17.

⁴² Wyndham 5-6.

sin” from which “the strength of Greene’s writing as a novelist who is a Catholic comes.”⁴³

In this respect, it is important to emphasize that Greene introduces a type of character which shows the contrast between God’s perfect goodness and human weaknesses and so is “capable of imitating both Christ and Judas”⁴⁴. Robert A. Wichert talks about the sinner the main feature of whom is that he may be saint and who then becomes the “sanctified sinner”.⁴⁵ This oxymoronic expression correlates with the omnipresent “conflict” in Greene’s work and also represents his notion of religion and faith. Although it may seem that this feature disparages human nature, Lewis is convinced that the religious impulse introduces “a kind of beauty and a kind of goodness” into it.⁴⁶

In this connection, it should be mentioned that the already discussed theme of “pursuit” can also be examined with respect to the attitude of the characters to God. Greene views God as the pursuer from whom there can be no escape. As a result, the principal characters become often the victims of their unforgettable love for God and so can be viewed as being pursued. In this manner, Greene is concerned with a spiritual pursuit which “becomes a way to salvation.”⁴⁷ Therefore, the “Greenean man” can be seen not only as an active pursuer (which relates him to Judas) but also as being pursued (which relates him to Christ) and thus has “the splendid potentiality either of damnation and salvation.”⁴⁸

To conclude, it was made evident that the characteristic features of the “Greenean man” reflect the central themes Greene is concerned with in his novels. Further a direct link between the various sources of inspiration, thematic motifs and Greene’s protagonists was made. In this way, the basis for a close study of his three “Catholic” novels was established.

⁴³ Pryce-Jones regards Greene’s view that he takes on sin to be delimiting. In his opinion, Greene does not take into account a man with no religious beliefs who would be looking for a moral basis for his actions. Consequently, his obsession is “pressurised by the acceptance of God.” Pryce-Jones 101.

⁴⁴ Lewis 52.

⁴⁵ Robert A. Wichert, “The Quality of Graham Greene’s Mercy.” *College English*, Issue No. 2, 12 Oct. 2008 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/373398>>. The same expression appears in the title of George Orwell’s essay. George Orwell, “The Sanctified Sinner,” *Graham Greene: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Samuel Hynes (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1973) 105-109.

⁴⁶ Lewis 60.

⁴⁷ Braybrooke 4.

⁴⁸ Lewis 52.

3. *Brighton Rock*

Scholars generally characterize *Brighton Rock* as the first of Greene's "Catholic" novels. At the centre of the work there stands the individual (Pinkie) who is deeply influenced as by his early youth, so by the conditions in which he lives. He is, in some respects, an extraordinary criminal whose main aim is to secure his position in the gang and in the city in which he lives. The setting with the typical motifs of crime, violence and existential situations perfectly fits into the image of "Greenland". The fact that these features are not recognized purely as social problems but that they are tinged with a Christian conviction gives this work its strength and enables the interplay of secular and religious themes. In this part of our thesis, the importance of Pinkie's selfishness and his physical age will be closely examined. Further, his extreme hate of the other characters and the non-secular dimension of the novel will be discussed.

3.1. Pinkie's Egocentrism with Reference to His Childhood

Firstly, let us analyse the role of the childhood which plays an important role in the novel. From the very beginning, Pinkie's age seems to be one of the most notable and most striking features of his character. His youth is underlined by the narrative voice which refers to him not by his name (as other characters do) but as to the "Boy". Although he is only seventeen, he becomes the leader of the Kite's gang and wins respect of all its members who admire him and even fear him of him. This is conditioned by the fact that his adolescence is distinctly marked – he is described as "a cruel child"¹ or "a young dictator"² who is "dangerous and unfeeling"³. Despite his age, he has "ageless eyes"⁴ or "eyes which had never been young"⁵.

These attributes perfectly prove the already mentioned Pryce-Jones' characterization of Greene's attitude to childhood as to the stage in one's life which is distinguished by the loss of innocence (cf. 2.3.). In Pinkie's understanding, a human being is innocent only at the moment when it is born. In this respect, he differs substantially from other children of his age to whom he feels strong hatred, as they remind him of his earlier years and of the lost childish innocence which is a mere "slobbering mouth, a toothless gum pulling at the teats" for him.⁶ Therefore, it should be understood that Pinkie's character embodies the

¹ Graham Greene, *Brighton Rock* (London: William Heinemann, 1947) 133.

² Graham Greene, *Brighton Rock* 144.

³ Graham Greene, *Brighton Rock* 33.

⁴ Graham Greene, *Brighton Rock* 26.

⁵ Graham Greene, *Brighton Rock* 62.

⁶ Graham Greene, *Brighton Rock* 188.

features of the “Greenean man” who has left behind him his youth and ignores it entirely and so his look bears the mark of a “soured virginity”⁷.

As a result, Pinkie feels as an adult but does not range himself into the category of ordinary individuals. He is self-confident, for the territory which used to be Kite’s is ruled solely by him now. Kite is even presented as a paternal figure which left his inheritance to his son who is convinced that it is his duty to do his job properly. Moreover, Pinkie feels that he has no rival and is the best at what he does. Nobody has any right to ridicule him under any circumstances for that reason: “He knew what he was good at: he was the top: there was no limit to his ambition: nothing must lay him open to the mockery of people more experienced than he.”⁸

However, as Pinkie is not experienced enough, he is unable to organize events according to the strategy he has, which is actually determined by his physical age. Thus his plan to conceal the murder of Hale is doomed to failure from the very beginning and ends up in Pinkie’s death. What is more, Pinkie suffers internally when not being treated as a grown-up man, which is manifested by his hatred. In this respect, he is a typical character of Greene’s novels who does not fit in the society which surrounds him. Outwardly, he appears to be strong but inwardly, he is evidently feeble. In his attempt “to show the world”⁹, he only proves to be a failure even in his criminal actions. This feature is shown also at the end of the novel when Pinkie is forced to make a clear-cut decision but is unable to withstand the critical situation and ends his life.

Paradoxically, Pinkie also refuses everything that is specifically adult at first – he does not either smoke or drink alcohol. Moreover, he is even afraid of any intimacy or sexual intercourse, which puts him into the category of immature individuals. The idea of his parents performing their “weekly exercise”¹⁰ on Saturday nights frightens him and fills him with loathing of sex. In this way, Spurling’s observation that some of Greene’s protagonists have not actually matured (cf. 2.3.) seems to apply. Nonetheless, in the course of the novel, Pinkie accepts these things into his life, drinks and sleeps with Rose, which naturally changes him in a way although he still remains the scheming individual who egoistically follows his own plan. This only substantiates the argument about the conflicting nature of Greene’s works (cf. 2.2.) and characters (cf. 2.3.). Moreover, it also corresponds to Lodges’ interconnection of the theme of death and sexual intercourse (cf. 2.3.), according to which it could be argued that by having sex with Rose, Pinkie

⁷ Graham Greene, *Brighton Rock* 115.

⁸ Graham Greene, *Brighton Rock* 176.

⁹ Graham Greene, *Brighton Rock* 87.

¹⁰ Graham Greene, *Brighton Rock* 117.

predetermined the act of his final self-murder. Although he tried to avoid his death, paradoxically, by staying with Rose, she could not prevent his suicide.

Finally, the reasons for Pinkie's approach to life and his way of behaviour should be made clear. According to the text, it was the environment tinged with crime and violence which shaped him to a large extent: "Man is made by the places in which he lives."¹¹ However, the stand of an anonymous author writing on Greene that "it is our origins, and not events, that shape us"¹² seems also to prove right. The visit of Rose's house where Pinkie witnesses similar conditions in which he was born arouses the feelings of hatred and contempt in him. It is the sort of place that he attempted to escape; it is the kind of home which he abandoned and into which he never wants to return. When he meets Rose's parents who do not support the decision of their child to marry the man she loves and are interested merely in the finances, he recollects with abhorrence his own father and mother and cannot see anything positive in their behaviour. Thus he can easily justify his escape from home, his way of life and his lost innocence: "He looked with horror round the room: nobody could say he hadn't done right to get away from this, to commit any crime..."¹³ Yet, he entered the life which is hard, perilous and in which he encounters much more than the boy of his age would. This substantiates the argument that it was not solely his internal decision to become the kind of person he is.

3.2. Pinkie's Feeling of Hatred

From what was already mentioned, it is distinct that Pinkie does not rely on anyone (not even his closest companions) but himself: "You couldn't make mistakes when you trusted nobody."¹⁴ This creed becomes his life philosophy and according to it he must keep the crucial things and feelings only for himself. As was already shown, this fact is demonstrated on Boy's appearance: "He sat perfectly still with his grey ancient eyes giving nothing away."¹⁵ As a result, his relationship to others is characterized by a profound hatred. His detestation even results from these relationships, as people make him angry when they disrespect his will and do not let him do what he is willing to do. It does not matter whom he meets and under what circumstances – he abominates his enemies, the people he does not even know and, what is surprising, he feels a sort of ill will also to his fellows at times. Sometimes it is unclear to whom or for what reason he

¹¹ Graham Greene, *Brighton Rock* 44.

¹² Anonymous, "Graham Greene: The Man Within," *Graham Greene: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Samuel Hynes (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1973) 15.

¹³ Graham Greene, *Brighton Rock* 190-191.

¹⁴ Graham Greene, *Brighton Rock* 74.

¹⁵ Graham Greene, *Brighton Rock* 74.

expresses his distaste: “The boy rose furiously, and giving way to a little vicious spurt of hatred – at the song? at the man? – he dropped his empty glass on the floor.”¹⁶ In this context, it is worth mentioning that when he is wounded by a rival gang, he experiences a typical existential situation and is crushed both physically and mentally. At that time, the reader can observe not only his hatred but also his tears, pain and fear.

It is equally important that Pinkie is not able to express any kind of affection: “He smiled at her stiffly; he couldn’t use those muscles with any naturalness.”¹⁷ Neither can he feel pity, as he is not old for it.¹⁸ As was demonstrated, he is still rooted in the childhood and thus he has not matured for such feeling (cf. 3.1). The only way he can establish a relationship with others is to make use of them. Even a friendship is a matter of obedience to him. This becomes clear when he proposes the friendship (and later the relationship) to Rose and instead of asking her, he warns her as a typical criminal: “That’s not vitriol, that’s just spirit. I wanted to warn you, that’s all. You and me’s going to be friends. I don’t want a friend with her skin burned off. You tell me if anyone asks questions.”¹⁹ What he means by this “friendship” or “relationship” is merely a sort of pact in which something is exchanged for something. What he gets from his fellows is the assistance whenever necessary and what he gets from Rose is the assurance that she will not reveal what she knows about “Kolley Kibber” to anyone. The effect of this is that he behaves authoritatively and imposes his own will on the others disregarding their own wishes or needs.

Throughout the novel, Pinkie becomes physically pursued by Ida Arnold who desires to revenge for Hale’s death. In this way, a typical plot in which the “pursuer and pursued” are involved is established (cf. 2.3.). Ida representing “right” wants to “eliminate” Pinkie representing “wrong” in her eyes and thanks to her deep insensitivity, she cannot be hindered by any emotions. As Lynette Kohn demonstrates, she is subordinated merely to the “secular order” of the world which is corrupted and evil and puts herself in the position of the one who will reform it.²⁰ Therefore, she can be seen as a direct counterpart of Rose.

This brings us to a closer discussion of Pinkie’s relationship to Rose which appears to be important in the novel. Firstly, it should be understood that he approaches her as other characters in the novel in some sense – he needs her because she is of some

¹⁶ Graham Greene, *Brighton Rock* 6.

¹⁷ Graham Greene, *Brighton Rock* 32.

¹⁸ Graham Greene, *Brighton Rock* 124.

¹⁹ Graham Greene, *Brighton Rock* 60.

²⁰ Lynette Kohn, *Graham Greene: The Major Novels* (California: Stanford, 1961) 4.

use to him. As was already made clear, he is afraid of her love and even of her admiration, as these intrude what could be called “his territory” or “his world”. Pinkie can be seen as “hunted” by Rose’s love or rather by the relationship with her: “(...) Her praise was poison: it marked her possession of him: it led straight to what she expected from him, the horrifying act of desire he didn’t feel.”²¹ Although it was him who searched for her and imposed his will upon her, she was the one who understood their marriage as a matter of her responsibility from the very first moment and could see no boundaries in it. She has even (quite naturally) begun to behave in Pinkie’s room (his “territory”) like at home and has changed it, which has made Pinkie furious and resulted in seeing Rose as his “enemy”. Pinkie simply cannot stand the status of a married person and thus proves to be a marital failure (cf. 2.3.).

In connection to these details, the problem of “betrayal” (cf. 2.3.) can be seen on the example of Pinkie’s character. He masterminds a cunning plan according to which he attempts to deceive Rose into belief that he will commit a suicide right after her. This idea is a direct result of his set of principles in which only hatred and a twisted understanding of the relationship are included. This “code” differentiates him not only from the girl but also from other characters in the novel. Its observance simply leads to the betrayal of Rose’s confidence in him. On the contrary, Pryce-Jones suggests that Pinkie can also be viewed as being betrayed by his companions (Kite who introduced him to the gang or by Cubitt who denies to Ida that he knows Pinkie), by his parents when having sex or by the society itself which did not do anything to “save” him and improve his position.²²

Next, Pinkie’s loathing of any sexual activity which was mentioned earlier (cf. 3.1.) should be further developed. This stand has actually its explanation in his deep egotism. On the one hand, Pinkie does not want to feel subservient or rather attached to any kind of a person who would expect anything of him. On the example of his parents, he became aware of what becomes of a married couple after years and what would be his role in such a relationship. He knows that he would lose his independence which he gained by leaving his home: “That was what happened to a man in the end: the stuffy room, the wakeful children, the Saturday night movements from the other bed. Was there no escape – anywhere – for anyone?”²³ Therefore, he is horrified by the idea of marriage, birth of children or even kissing a girl. On the other hand, he believes that intimacy changes the status of an individual in society. Man is expected to behave in a certain way (to be

²¹ Graham Greene, *Brighton Rock* 191.

²² David Pryce-Jones, *Graham Greene* (Glasgow: Oliver and Boyd, 1963) 34.

²³ Graham Greene, *Brighton Rock* 121.

intimate with a woman) and is evaluated according to that. His deeds then may seem to be second-rate and unimportant, which, understandably, Pinkie cannot accept: “That was how they judged you: not by whether you had the guts to kill a man, to run a mob, to conquer Colleoni.”²⁴ He feels to be the man of action and is proud of it. Almost everything that he does gives him strength and serves to strengthen his position in the gang and in the city.

3.3. The World Seen as “Hell”

As to Pinkie’s stance towards religion, the reader is assured that he is a Catholic. Although he believes, he is not a doctrinal believer, as he does not attend Mass. Furthermore, he has a very specific picture of faith and spiritual things. On the one hand, he is uncertain about the existence of heaven, yet he feels definite about the presence of hell. Pinkie experienced that “flames, damnation and torments”²⁵ in the period of his infancy, which had a great impact on him. Hell does not mean anything abstract for him but rather something concrete which can be directly sensed. It is closely related to the world full of crime in which he lives and which bears the typical existentialist features that have already been considered (cf. 2.2.).

In short, Pinkie knows that “he wasn’t made for peace”²⁶ – he is tormented by his memories, pursued by Ida (and Rose’s love) and disturbed by the lack of praise. As mentioned earlier, Pinkie’s childhood might have determined his picture of the world as “hell”, in which evil is more palpable than good. His life experience actually caused that he did not view hell from the religious viewpoint, for he “couldn’t picture any eternity except in terms of pain”²⁷. He can neither imagine eternal pain, as he would have to feel it physically in order to understand it. On the contrary, he is well aware of the existence of mortal sin and of his committing it: “He had no doubt whatever this was mortal sin...”²⁸

This brings us to the presence of the “spirit of evil” which lends the novel that would otherwise be a simple detective story pervaded by suspense and crime a stronger “metaphysical dimension”.²⁹ Naturally, Pinkie is a representative of “evil” which stays in a direct opposition to “goodness” embodied by Rose. Despite Pinkie’s feeling of hatred and his view of Rose as his enemy (cf. 3.2.), he is aware of the fact that they complement or rather influence each other. On the one hand, she is capable of bringing something new

²⁴ Graham Greene, *Brighton Rock* 117.

²⁵ Graham Greene, *Brighton Rock* 66.

²⁶ Graham Greene, *Brighton Rock* 306.

²⁷ Graham Greene, *Brighton Rock* 127-128.

²⁸ Graham Greene, *Brighton Rock* 225.

²⁹ Kohn 2.

to him – the goodness and the “glimpse of Heaven” both of which contrast with his previous experience of wickedness and pain. Interestingly, he realizes that he needs these “qualities” in his life: “What was most evil in him needed her: it couldn’t get along without goodness.”³⁰ Nevertheless, he is not able to accept Rose’s “salvation” and so remains damned. On the other hand, he brings her to damnation which she willingly shares with him.

In this way, Lewis’ argument that the setting of the novel is associated with the religious sphere (cf. 2.2.) is relevant for this work. The two form a couple signifying the “theological world”³¹ which sharply contrasts with Ida’s “secular world” (cf. 3.2.). Nonetheless, no church doctrine applies in the non-secular world. Pinkie is sceptical about the wisdom of priests, as they do not have the knowledge of the society like he does because “ideas change, the world moves on.”³² In this manner, he demonstrates that his notion of “hell” derived from the experience is more stable than any theological conception.

Yet, Pinkie himself wanted to be a priest. Reflecting this, Kohn views him as an “inverted priest” with a character of a “spoilt saint”³³ (which resembles to the concept of the “sanctified sinner” (cf. 2.3.)). Clearly, it must have been Rose who introduced sanctity to him. It is again the eyes “touched with the annihilating eternity from which they had come and to which he went”³⁴ that uncover his relationship to the religious sphere. It becomes evident from the discussion of his character that his self-interestedness can be viewed as one of the causes for his rejection of Rose’s love. As a result, Pinkie could not avert his further sins. Considering this, Rose and Pinkie can be understood as complementary characters. In connection to Christianity and its conception of God, these observations mean that everyone (even the one who is evil in his or her heart) has right for God’s love and does not lose his or her potentiality to be saved.

This introduces the concept of mercy into the novel. Pinkie as the “representative” of hell and evil cannot articulate it properly and so uses a descriptive phrase: “‘Between the stirrup and the ground, he something sought and something found.’”³⁵ It is then Rose’s duty (who functions as the “envoy” of heaven) to say the term aloud. Nevertheless, Pinkie is convinced that there has to exist a “chance” (how he calls mercy) which man is given under one condition – repentance: “You could be saved between the stirrup and the

³⁰ Graham Greene, *Brighton Rock* 167.

³¹ Kohn 4.

³² Graham Greene, *Brighton Rock* 185.

³³ Kohn 7.

³⁴ Graham Greene, *Brighton Rock* 23.

³⁵ Graham Greene, *Brighton Rock* 119.

ground, but you couldn't be saved if you didn't repent and he hadn't time, scrambling down the chalk down, to feel the least remorse."³⁶ He is, however, unable to repent for either lack of time or the fact that death of someone "made him safe" (for instance Spicer's death). Greene does not further solve this problem and leaves the reader with doubt whether Pinkie was granted the "gift" of mercy or not. The deep paradox of the novel and mystery of God's mercy (in Greene's opinion) dwells in this.

In this light, Bergonzi understands Pinkie as "a dark angel" whose character is not conditioned by either time or human qualities. He proposes to read him as "an archetypal figure" and, as a result, the whole novel as a piece of fabular fiction.³⁷ Consequently, Douglas Stewart interprets marriage of Pinkie and Rose as a "marriage of heaven and hell" or "the war between hell and heaven".³⁸ The first view can be validated by Pinkie's portrait of a Satanist (with his creed "Credo in unum Satanum"³⁹) and the image of his partner as his direct opposite convinced of the reality of heaven. Considering the omnipresence of Pinkie's hatred, the second view proves also to be right. Whereas Pinkie fights with his loathing and pride, Rose has nothing except for her devotion and love. Although "right" defeats "wrong" in secular terms in the very end of the novel, it is hell which wins over heaven in theological understanding of the work.⁴⁰ The view of the victory of hell can be supported by the fact Pinkie did not change his relationship to God and left Rose with "the worst horror of all"⁴¹ and a recording with the following words: "God damn you, you little bitch, why can't you go back home for ever and let me be?"⁴² She participated in his mortal sins and she was finally abandoned and corrupted both spiritually and physically (by the sexual intercourse).

As was demonstrated, Pinkie's character proves that the themes of childhood and betrayal are central in Greene's work, for they are directly connected with other areas which interest Greene, such as the influence of the environment or the presence of the conflict within individuals. Pinkie is distinguished from other characters by egotism and hatred which both mark him as an unstable failure that cannot successfully finish his plan. Finally, the paradoxical nature of the novel comes from Pinkie's attitude to faith and God's mercy which shows to be almost inexplicable and impalpable. His view of the world as "hell" contrasting with the good-natured Rose only confirms Greene's deep

³⁶ Graham Greene, *Brighton Rock* 141.

³⁷ Bernard Bergonzi, *A Study in Greene* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006) 88. This may be actually also supported by the fact that the narrative voice refers to him as to the "Boy" and not by his name.

³⁸ Douglas Stewart, *The Ark of God* (London: The Carey Kingsgate Press Limited, 1961) 76-78.

³⁹ Graham Greene, *Brighton Rock* 220.

⁴⁰ Stewart 80.

⁴¹ Graham Greene, *Brighton Rock* 333.

⁴² Graham Greene, *Brighton Rock* 236.

preoccupation with evil (cf. 2.2) which, however, does not have to be seen entirely in theological terms but can be discussed also in a purely secular sphere (as “right” and “wrong” in Ida’s “world” (cf. 3.2.)).

4. *The Power and the Glory*

The Power and the Glory belongs to the most famous of Greene's novels which made him a widely-read author. The story presents the unnamed priest who escapes through the no-man's land (which again has the emblematic features of "Greenland"), as he is persecuted by the state power and doubts about his office and its lost glory. Although malefaction and aggression is not that explicit as in *Brighton Rock*, it is present in the novel all the time either in the form of a hostile and even hell-like environment permeated with the feelings of tension and anxiety or less or more directly in the form of the persecutor (the lieutenant) and his deeds.¹ In the next three sections, priest's self-humiliating views, the strong voice of his vocation and, at last, his peccancy and view of salvation will be of our main concern.

4.1. A Depraving Feeling of Priest's Pride

To begin with, from the outset of the novel, it is unquestionable that the character of the unnamed priest bears distinct marks of a crushed individual who is on his endless journey. It is not obvious where he comes from and to what place he is heading, which is emphasized by his way of behaviour (and a conveying attribute "the black question mark"): "He sat there like a black question mark, ready to go, ready to stay, poised on his chair."² Concerning his appearance, he looks neglected and weak as someone "who has been beaten up incidentally."³ These features only support the fact that he is described as a "disreputable" man distinguished by little dignity.⁴

All already introduced traits definitely match with the typical picture of the "Greenean man" (cf. 2.3.). The priest is a professional and a social failure that was unsuccessful in a proper execution of what was expected of him. He became a drunkard or (as others referred to him) a "whiskey priest" who even breached the law of celibacy and thus absolutely disgraced himself in the eyes of many people to whom he had served before. In contrast to Pinkie who selfishly pursues his aims without recognizing his own limitations, the priest is well aware of his imperfections. He feels to be unworthy for his vocation and, reflecting the given "label", thinks of himself as a bad priest: "He felt his

¹ Two lines from Dryden's poem which Greene chose as the motto for this work seem appropriate in view of this: "Th' inclosure narrow'd; the sagacious power / Of hounds and death drew nearer every hour." Graham Greene, *The Power and the Glory* (London: Penguin Books, 1990) 6.

² Graham Greene, *The Power and the Glory* 15.

³ Graham Greene, *The Power and the Glory* 14.

⁴ Graham Greene, *The Power and the Glory* 15-17.

own unworthiness like a weight at the back of the tongue.”⁵ Therefore, Roger Sharrock characterizes him as an “unheroic figure”⁶.

Except for the above mentioned sins, the priest sees pride as one of the main flaws of his character, which he confesses to God in his sincere prayer: “O God, forgive me – I am a proud, lustful, greedy man.”⁷ The authority of a priest in the country where Catholic religion is deeply rooted (although it is fought against by the lieutenant) now merely rests with him like an intense remembrance. In a way, now forgotten and lost glory of his office and his resolution to cling to it despite unfavourable and even critical circumstances “betrays” him and makes his life grievous and more difficult. He is too weak to live mocked by people like Padre José who decided rather to abandon his office than to be persecuted. Therefore, he admires this man for his humbleness to accept scorn although, quite paradoxically, he is disrespected himself by those who knew him in the past. Nonetheless, it is the “devilish pride” which causes that he has not yet abandoned his vocation and it is the very same feeling that brings him into critical situations in which he is in peril of his life. Remarkably, Sharrock suggests reading of priest’s sinfulness as “a demonstration of Christian life, an obedience which of definition may not be selfishly proclaimed as Christian virtue.”⁸ Despite his flaws, the priest does good to many who are in need and thus proves that combination of good and evil is possible in one’s character.

This brings us again to the period of priest’s childhood which substantially conditioned his future existence. In the novel, it is shortly recounted that his early days were happy although they were affected by poverty which the priest could not stand. Therefore, he decided to take Holy Orders, as he was convinced that they would bring him richness and pride, both of which he understood as “having a vocation”.⁹ Yet, it is evident from the story that he has not actually got any fortune in his adulthood and the feeling of pride has lied on him like a burden since that time.

Although the reader does not have more information about priest’s childhood, it can be assumed that the priest’s situation contrasts with Pinkie’s, as the latter experienced hardship unless he left his parents (and even thereafter). Like the principal character of the *Power and the Glory*, he also thought of becoming a priest but, on the contrary, ended up as a rotten criminal. Moreover, he stayed in opposition to some of the typically adult deeds (drinking and having sex) for the great part of his life, whereas the unnamed priest

⁵ Graham Greene, *The Power and the Glory* 69.

⁶ Roger Sharrock, *Saints, Sinners and Comedians* (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984) 109.

⁷ Graham Greene, *The Power and the Glory* 95.

⁸ Sharrock 110.

⁹ Graham Greene, *The Power and the Glory* 67.

instantaneously succumbed to them (which corrupted him). The same applies to pride itself, which, as was already demonstrated, causes much distress to the priest but, on the contrary, fills Pinkie with strength.

As a result, the priest (suffering in his inner struggle) moves, poor and degraded, in the very same area in which he has spent his entire life. He is a representative of a typical Greenean exile who has lost hope and feels absolutely useless. In this respect, it is possible to apply Lodge's observation concerning the issue of death of Greene's principal characters (cf. 2.3.), as the priest does not protest against his persecution. Instead of showing any marks of resistance, he feels it as his duty to be arrested (and then executed), as otherwise, "there's pain. To choose pain like that – it's not possible."¹⁰ In this respect, his character strongly contrasts with that of Pinkie who struggles to survive till the very end of his life.

4.2. Priest's Self-Sacrificing Responsibility as the Source of His Actions

Evidently, the priest is aware of the danger of living in a country where religion is in disfavour and clerics are mercilessly persecuted. Yet, he believes to be obliged to serve his former parishioners for otherwise, they would lose any contact with God or, more precisely, they would completely forsake Him: "But it was from him too they took God – in their mouths. When he was gone it would be as if God in all his space between the sea and the mountains ceased to exist."¹¹ Moreover, he even helps those who are unknown to him (like the sick woman at the beginning of the novel) with the same determination. Nevertheless, the main paradox of his will and the feeling of duty lies in his conviction that he serves as a bad example to these individuals and, additionally, endangers them by his presence.

Yet, the priest stays with the people despite being a despised outlaw. After he returns to the place where he used to be a regular priest, the villagers themselves do not show him respect by kissing his hand but only urge their children to perform this deed. As they know about his past everything quite intimately (for the mother of his child is one of them), they are sceptical about his words and, over all, about his character. As a consequence, they are certain that he is useless and would like to banish him forever: "We don't want you any more."¹² Consequently, he feels "as a guilty man does before his judges."¹³

¹⁰ Graham Greene, *The Power and the Glory* 39.

¹¹ Graham Greene, *The Power and the Glory* 65.

¹² Graham Greene, *The Power and the Glory* 78.

¹³ Graham Greene, *The Power and the Glory* 64.

As may be expected, his child has the very same attitude to him although he feels deep affection for her. Her stance uncovers a great deal about priest's past, as it is conditioned by the fact that she was conceived without love and in a state of priest's drunkenness caused by a profound sense of his loneliness. Nonetheless, his present love to the girl does not arise from any sentiments but rather from the feeling of a parental responsibility which intermingles with other emotions. The priest sees her as "the incarnation of his crime" and knows that her hate comes from his own sin.¹⁴ Therefore, he is ready to die for the sake of child's salvation even though she does not even want him to touch her: "O God, give me any kind of death – without contrition, in a state of sin, only save this child."¹⁵ Moreover, it is possible to deduce from the prayer that he does not even object his own damnation (for dying "in a state of sin" results in perdition).

This brings us to the consideration of the question of priest's responsibility in general. Priest's attitude to death has already been introduced (cf. 4.1.) and in this context, it should be noted that it is determined by his pride on the one hand and by his faith on the other hand. Over all, there stands his zeal to protect everyone who shows even the slightest marks of being in need, whether it is his daughter filled with hate or his neighbours expressing clear animosity: "The passion to protect must extend itself over a world..."¹⁶ In this way, his actions are similar to that of Coral, the thirteen-year-old girl who shelters the priest out of the feeling of duty. Although she does seem to be a believer, she is ready to risk in order to help the stranger because she is convinced of her deep responsibility.

The priest actually behaves similarly to the people that he meets on his journey. As Kohn claims, "the priest knows that through sin and suffering he has increased his capacity to love."¹⁷ Nevertheless, his fervour diminishes what could be called the instinct of "self-preservation" (with reference to damnation meant not exclusively in a physical sense) and results in a self-sacrificial tendency to save the entire universe (or at least the people of the country in which he lives). In this respect, his relationship to his illegitimate child and a parallel between him and Coral becomes clearer.

Moreover, the notion of his responsibility at the time when he urges his former parishioners to give him up to his persecutors can be seen as being perverted and paradoxical. On the one hand, he expresses his wish to protect them but on the other hand he is prepared to be gone in a minute. Quite surprisingly, he does not strive to live long in order to be able to save more souls. It is only his sense of duty mixed with fear and

¹⁴ Lynette Kohn, *Graham Greene: The Major Novels* (California: Stanford, 1961) 37.

¹⁵ Graham Greene, *The Power and the Glory* 82.

¹⁶ Graham Greene, *The Power and the Glory* 82.

¹⁷ Kohn 43.

persuasion of his own unworthiness which can help to explain his overtly “existential” position.

In this relation, a thematic motif of physical pursuit should be considered. Firstly, let us shortly introduce the character of the lieutenant who plays the central role with reference to this area. He is the one who is willing to exterminate all churchmen, for he believes that they pose a great threat to ordinary citizens. His conviction that they are “traitors to the republic”¹⁸, as they deceive the others in order to earn some money, makes enemies out of them for him. Yet, he acts out of a deep responsibility for the residents of his area the state of which will be improved after there will be no one alive who would propagate religious thoughts.

Observably, the priest (embodying the Church in general) represents a typical “hunted” character that is chased after by the state power symbolized by the lieutenant (the “hunter”) (cf. 2.3.). It is notable that lieutenant’s reasons for his actions are very similar to that of the priest and the substantial difference between them lies in the fact that the lieutenant represents absolutely secular world while the priest religious one. Reflecting this, Bergonzi talks about “a Platonic dialogue between opposing views of the world.”¹⁹ Although, the relationship between the two worlds is contradictory, the fact that “there was something of a priest in his [lieutenant’s] intent observant walk” and that “he was a mystic” like those who had a direct experience of God²⁰ makes both characters comparable and complementary to each other. Whereas lieutenant’s belief in “the existence of a dying, cooling world”²¹ leads him to the assumption that God is a “fiction”²², the priest has no doubts about the existence of God. Moreover, both feel responsible for others and want better life for them. A substantial difference between the two can be seen in the fact that lieutenant’s “affection (...) has been channelled into destruction.”²³ Concerning these observations, an instance of a deep paradox can be seen in this respect.

Further, priest’s double encounter with the mestizo (half-caste) should be pointed at. In both cases, mestizo attempts to give the priest away with the aim of earning the reward for his capture. For the first time, he is dangerously ill and pretends to be a Christian willing to say his confession in order to keep the priest from leaving, which would result in priest’s arrest. For the second time, mestizo lures the priest into a trap when he asks for help for the dying gangster. Although the priest is certain that he is being deceived in both cases, he

¹⁸ Graham Greene, *The Power and the Glory* 74.

¹⁹ Bernard Bergonzi, *A Study in Greene* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006) 112.

²⁰ Graham Greene, *The Power and the Glory* 24.

²¹ Graham Greene, *The Power and the Glory* 24.

²² Graham Greene, *The Power and the Glory* 194.

²³ Kohn 7.

willingly takes care of the mestizo at the time of their first meeting and answers positively his plea when they see each other for the second time. As a result, the lieutenant is given the opportunity to get the priest. Priest's decision to help is conditioned by the feeling of responsibility for the state of soul of the other person, which is manifested at the moment when he urges the murderer to repent his sins: "Don't depend too much on God's mercy. He has given you this chance."²⁴ Yet a conflict lying in the fact that "it was only one criminal trying to aid the escape of another"²⁵ is observable also in this situation.

Evidently, the priest follows his personal conviction or "code" that can be generally characterized as his vocation and that explains his deeds and distinguishes him from Padre José (cf. 3.1.). As Kohn states with respect to this "code", "the priest is caught between two realities and two ethics, but his subjection to the supernatural world determines his actions."²⁶ This assumption also reflects the great conflict in his soul which arises from the fact that he has betrayed the teaching of the Church and his behaviour goes against it in some instances. In this relation, it should be made clear that in the relationship with the mestizo, priest belongs to the second pole of the opposition "betraying-betrayed" presented by Sharrock (cf. 2.3.).

4.3. Priest's Sinfulness and His Attitude to God's Salvation

With reference to this studied area, let us first consider the first scene from prison in which the priest meets the criminals and talks to them. His remark that "this place was very like the world"²⁷ clearly conveys that he feels that his situation of a sinful individual is somehow associated with theirs. Their crime may be different from his but from his viewpoint, it is evil anyway. Moreover, the priest indirectly expresses his opinion on Christianity when he does not object to the stance that faith makes cowards out of people.²⁸ He cannot strictly oppose to this, as he is the "whiskey priest". However, despite his own self-degradation, he does not discredit other priests and the office of priesthood in general. He is certain that "there are good priests and bad priests"²⁹ and the proclamation that he belongs to the latter category should not convey the feeling that all priests are like him. In this way, Greene asserts that it is essential to distinguish between the individual and his office. Both an ordinary citizen and a priest can be wicked and sinful but this fact does not tell much about priest's vocation, his responsibilities or Church in general.

²⁴ Graham Greene, *The Power and the Glory* 188.

²⁵ Graham Greene, *The Power and the Glory* 190.

²⁶ Kohn 49.

²⁷ Graham Greene, *The Power and the Glory* 120.

²⁸ Graham Greene, *The Power and the Glory* 126.

²⁹ Graham Greene, *The Power and the Glory* 191.

In spite of priest's comparison to Christ, his low opinion of himself brings him to the conclusion that he cannot be a martyr, as "martyrs are holy men"³⁰. In contrast to them, he is in a state of mortal sin and cannot find the words to repent. This is conditioned by the fact that he loves the fruit of his sin – his daughter, which is comparable to the sin of murder for him. It is "the sense of innocence" accompanying sin from which he cannot liberate himself and which prevents him from becoming a saint who is free from it.

As was shown, it is love which has, paradoxically, corrupted the priest. He recognizes two contrasting phases of his life – a period of supreme innocence in which he regarded venial sins like "impatience, unimportant lie, pride, neglected opportunity"³¹ as being more serious than the most horrible ones and a period of corruption in which he learned to love others (cf. 4.1). When he was in the first one, he believed that because of the above mentioned sins he could not receive God's grace. When he entered the second one, he felt that the cause of his perdition was the burden of love imposed upon him.

Therefore, he feels corrupted to such a degree that he is not sure whether there is "anyone anywhere who would rid him of his heavy heart."³² He judges that he is damned and cannot be "freed" from this state because he does not know "a thing about the mercy of God" and "how awful the human heart looks to Him."³³ It is noteworthy that alcohol which he drinks (and which is one of the greatest of his sins) fills him literally with this conviction: "He drank brandy like damnation."³⁴ It has become his habit like everything which is related to his office – piety, prayers or receiving respect from ordinary believers. He got used to all these things (together with the sense of innocence), which, in his opinion, excluded the possibility of his salvation. Thereafter, the criminals like the mestizo can be, oddly enough, granted this "gift" but he feels disposed of it.

Priest's image of God is much conveying about his attitude to himself, the world around him and even the people which live there. Also in this way, a link between the secular and religious sphere can be made. God actually represents a figure of many disparate faces for the priest. In his view, He is "the parent, (...) the criminal, the priest, the maniac, and the judge."³⁵ This can be explained quite clearly by priest's belief that the main mystery of God's act of creation lies in the fact that "we were made in God's image."³⁶ Consequently, all deeds of individuals (including priest) are morally excused, for

³⁰ Graham Greene, *The Power and the Glory* 126.

³¹ Graham Greene, *The Power and the Glory* 139.

³² Graham Greene, *The Power and the Glory* 173.

³³ Graham Greene, *The Power and the Glory* 200.

³⁴ Graham Greene, *The Power and the Glory* 169.

³⁵ Graham Greene, *The Power and the Glory* 101.

³⁶ Graham Greene, *The Power and the Glory* 101.

every action, however wrong or evil, is done in God's image. As Pryce-Jones believes, this ends in a "limitation of responsibility"³⁷ which, paradoxically, gives the impulse for priest's activity most of the times. Yet, according to what Lewis claims (cf. 2.3), it is essential to understand that the position of faith in the work does not weaken the role of the priest in the world but rather makes of him a morally better creature.

In this manner, the concept of the "sanctified sinner" who attempts to serve other men as properly as possible but is himself sinful is introduced. The portrait of his corruptness is strengthened by his vocation, which differentiates his position substantially from Pinkie's who is an ordinary criminal by his "profession". Pinkie makes use of his friends but the priest protects them. Therefore, it is possible to put him in the group of actual saints. Although the text does not give us a definite clue about his sainthood, it makes it distinct that the priest tersely asks for pardon of his sins in his prison cell and thinks again not about himself and his damnation but about what he did for the others. The priest comes to the conclusion that he has to "go to God empty-handed, with nothing done at all."³⁸ So, he affirms his faith through negation and because of that he can be read as a martyr.

Nonetheless, priest's words about himself must be viewed critically. François Mauriac states that the priest is protected from any sin that comes from the feeling of self-importance (like pride, complacency or self righteousness) and so diminishes himself to a great extent. As a result, he ascribes supremacy and glory which definitely win over his sacrilegious deeds solely to God. Therefore, the novel shows "the utilization of sin by Grace," in view of what Mauriac claims that it is priest's faith and not virtue which contrasts with his sin.³⁹ The text gives us a definite clue about the centrality of faith. In the talk with Coral, the priest confesses that the faith is "like a birthmark" which cannot be denied or removed.⁴⁰ So, Mauriac's words become clearer priest's strong belief in his vocation (contrasting with the awareness of his own faults and his determination to serve the others) is taken into account. The priest can be attributed the features of the individual pursued by God who, in view of this, has not lost possibility of salvation (cf. 2.3.).

Next, as was demonstrated in the previous sub-chapter on the example of priest's relationship with the mestizo, the priest is compared to Christ who is betrayed by Judas (the mestizo). According to this, a level of allegory is directly introduced and so the novel

³⁷ David Pryce-Jones, *Graham Greene* (Glasgow: Oliver and Boyd, 1963) 58.

³⁸ Graham Greene, *The Power and the Glory* 210.

³⁹ François Mauriac, "Graham Greene," *Graham Greene: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Samuel Hynes (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1973) 76-77.

⁴⁰ Graham Greene, *The Power and the Glory* 41.

can be (similarly to Brighton Rock (cf. 3.3)) read symbolically.⁴¹ As was already made clear, priest's illegitimate child physically represents his greatest sin. Coral embodies the qualities which are also typical of the priest – the feeling of duty and a self-sacrificial tendency to protect others. Further, the night in jail with criminals can be regarded for priest's purgatory in which he meets various sins materialized in the form of his fellow prisoners.⁴² Finally, the lieutenant should be seen as priest's direct counterpart who enables him not only to see but also to experience the sense of responsibility which has, however, different results than his own. Thereafter, priest's journey becomes the allegory of the spiritual endeavour of an individual who is willing to trace the nature of his relationship to God. At the beginning of the novel, he distinguishes himself mainly by his pride and at its end he can be regarded for a saint. So, it can be assumed that he does not have to suffer the life of hardship after his death any more. What is more, this "positive" approach can be supported by the very last scene of the novel, in which a man who claims to be the priest comes. This certainly symbolizes hope and strength of faith which can never be eliminated.

At last, it is obvious that Greene has created a paradoxical character whose humanity is more obvious the more he lives in sin. Although many look down on him, his self-sacrificing devotion to the needs of others does not lose its strength but, on the contrary, urges him to further actions. Moreover, the fact that he, the priest, is a "criminal" interrelates, in a very specific manner, secular and religious world and proves that his office does not have to be seen as the area in which innocence is cultivated.⁴³ His doubts about God's salvation show that neither a religious man can be sure about afterlife or even about his position in this world. He is presented as a common individual in an extreme situation who has his fears and troubles and so clings strongly to what is more or less certain – his faith.

Greene's Catholicism which stresses mainly adverse aspects of religious faith (cf. 2.2.) then gets a very specific flavour of conflict and ambiguity. Spurling believes that the novel is "a story of heroism" in which the Catholic faith is "stronger and better than its persecutors."⁴⁴ It is clear that Greene demonstrated that faith as such will survive also in the country where religion is forbidden. Nonetheless, the fact that the main protagonist of the novel becomes an "unheroic figure" (cf. 4.1.) proves the conflicting nature of Greene's

⁴¹ Bergonzi claims that the priest can be understood as "an allegorical figure standing for total dedication to mission," which is accentuated by the fact that Greene did not give him any name. Moreover, the mestizo and the police lieutenant do not likewise have names. Bergonzi 111.

⁴² In her study, Lynette Kohn examines the prison scene in detail. Kohn 41-43.

⁴³ The character of priest verifies Greene's preoccupation with the shift from innocence to experience stated above (cf. 3.2.).

⁴⁴ John Spurling, *Graham Greene* (London: Methuen, 1983) 36.

works (cf. 2.2.) and the priest's character even shows Greene's ambiguous stance towards religion. Over all, it also points at Greene's obsession with losers who cannot find peace in their souls and wander around in order to find it. Yet, in the same way as "whiskey priest", they are distinctly ambivalent, for their character combines good and evil or weakness and strength in a noteworthy manner.

5. *The Heart of the Matter*

The Heart of the Matter belongs to the most traditional and, overall, to the best of Greene's novels, for it discusses themes which are typical also of his other works. Scobie, the central character, is a compassionate being who is devoted to others despite the fact that it undeniably degrades him. He is also a Catholic but his attitude to God is deeply unsettled. At last, he is also a just man who, nevertheless, corrupts himself by his undying affection for people in despair who need some help and, in effect, proves to be a failure himself. In view of this, Wyndham's attribute a "three-dimensional character" which stresses Scobie's difference from the protagonists of Greene's earlier works sounds appropriate.¹ In the following lines, the attention will be paid to the attitude of Scobie to failure, his sense of pity and the problem of God's judgment over Scobie's final deed.

5.1. Scobie's Love of Failure

One of the areas which should be considered in relation to Scobie's attitude to himself is naturally his occupation and the environment in which he lives. He works as a police officer whose main job is to prevent the smuggling of diamonds on sea and to reveal any potential secret reports which can harm the country. It can also be expected that wrongdoing of another kind would also flourish in the place where "injustices, cruelties, the meanness that elsewhere people so cleverly hushed up,"² as a result of which Scobie has to deal with petty crimes and various problems which arise in his territory. At the beginning of the novel, it is stated with some expressiveness that Scobie can even feel the misdemeanour with his senses. So, the town smells of "zoo, of sawdust, excrement, ammonia," and what is likewise important, of "lack of liberty."³ As nobody compares it to the "heaven on earth"⁴, it can be easily assumed from the very first page that Greene has introduced the reader to the "hell" into which he sets his characters (cf. 2.2.).

As to Scobie's personality, he is devoted to his profession and is certainly not ambitious. Although his wife would like to see him promoted, he does not long for that. One of the main features of his character is best expressed by his colleague who draws a parallel between him and Aristides the Just. Nevertheless, Scobie resolutely opposes to that: "I don't think I'm just as that."⁵ His opinion of himself is legitimate to a great extent,

¹ Francis Wyndham, *Graham Greene* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1955) 18.

² Graham Greene, *The Heart of the Matter* (London: Vintage, 2004) 26.

³ Graham Greene, *The Heart of the Matter* 7.

⁴ Graham Greene, *The Heart of the Matter* 26.

⁵ Graham Greene, *The Heart of the Matter* 9.

to which support in the text can be found. As he believes that “it is terrible not to be liked,”⁶ he, at times, does not do his job properly and instead of investigating, he is rather inactive. In this manner, he avoids being unpopular which conditions the fact that he does not have to worry about the attribute “the Bad Man”⁷ any more. His daily tasks easily become a routine and they may even appear to be useless. Considering these facts, Lewis believes that Scobie “has the ingredients of a genuine tragic hero.”⁸

Scobie is a prototype of the “Greenean man” who lives an unhappy life in a miserable world. He is convinced that only an egoist, evil or ignorant individual can be contended under unfavourable circumstances that characterize the West African state in which the story is set and therefore, he confesses to love failure instead of success: “I love failure: I can’t love success.”⁹ Understandably, this attitude determines all the areas of Scobie’s life in which he is active. As mentioned earlier, he does not have positive results in his monotonous work and thus it can be argued that he is a professional failure. Moreover, also his marriage breaks down, as he cannot feel happy in a relationship with Louise (and neither can make her happy). As a result, Scobie feels to be pitied by their acquaintances, which he internally cannot stand: “He proclaimed to the whole club that he was not to be pitied, that he loved his wife, that they were happy.”¹⁰ This proves that he does not either prosper in the common life and the only way to survive for him is to follow his duties both in a professional and a social sphere.

As may be expected, such a way of life brings him to habitual existence, in which he is bound by everyday customs and needs. Then it sounds normal that loneliness is the only state in which Scobie could find happiness and which would disturb the omnipresent stereotype. However, it is clearly said to come only twice in the novel – at the time when his wife leaves for the trip to South Africa, for which he borrowed money from Yusef, and at the time when she returns and Helen Rolt, his lover, waits for him at her house where they would meet during Louise’s absence. The first instance of his solitude lasts only a while, as Scobie does not hesitate promptly to admit another woman into his life. Paradoxically, the second instance of his loneliness does not bring him contentment for which he was yearning – it only intensifies his private suffering and causes that the split in his soul is more palpable. Many times in the novel, Scobie stresses his adverse position

⁶ Graham Greene, *The Heart of the Matter* 19.

⁷ Graham Greene, *The Heart of the Matter* 11.

⁸ R.W.B. Lewis, “The ‘Trilogy’,” *Greene, Graham Greene: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Samuel Hynes (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1973) 71.

⁹ Graham Greene, *The Heart of the Matter* 236.

¹⁰ Graham Greene, *The Heart of the Matter* 23.

towards lying and yet, at the very moment when he feels to be alone, the lie stands at the heart of the whole situation: “There was nobody to whom he could speak the truth.”¹¹

Also this explains why he cannot bear his role and is driven to suicide. Even before the reader can explicitly see his preparation of this act (writing the diary and pretending insomnia and problems with heart), he or she can deduce from the “hints” which Scobie gives that it is drawing near. One of the most notable comes during his talk with Helen: “I can’t bear to see suffering, and I cause it all the time. I want to get out, get out.”¹² Scobie proves to be a desperate individual without any hope in a better future. He is convinced that he has ruined his existence and except for swallowing a handful of tablets, he cannot see any other way out from the seemingly insolvable situation. Similarly to the unnamed priest (cf. 4.1.), he does not struggle for a different life or at least, for survival and so his character properly matches with Lodge’s remark on the issue of death of Greene’s principal characters (cf. 2.3.).

5.2. Scobie’s Pity

In this section, Scobie’s relationship to his wife (which has already been alluded to) will be firstly considered. Similarly to the priest from *The Power and the Glory*, Scobie shows an unrelenting awareness of his responsibility towards Louise. He is bound to her by everything that distinguishes her as an imperfect and a fallible creature with respect either to her appearance or character, to both of which Scobie assumes a very specific attitude. His devotion does not stem from the sheer sense of duty (as it does to a great degree in case of the priest) but it comes from the feeling of sympathy that ends up in the omnipresence of pity which becomes “a ruthless dictator” for Scobie and predestines his further steps and actually determines the way he behaves to the others. In a dream which he has in fever, he feels that he has to do something for someone or that he has to save someone,¹³ which reflects his affection for the weak that need some assistance. It is actually paradoxical that he, who feels “pity even for the planets,”¹⁴ stays with the woman who quite selfishly pursues her own aims and her deepest wish is to get far away from home.

Interestingly, the text gives us a direct clue to the nature of Scobie’s pity and its negative aspect. In his talk to his wife, during which she appears to be doing well, Scobie wishes that she would again become pitiful and miserable in order to clear “this bitter gap

¹¹ Graham Greene, *The Heart of the Matter* 218.

¹² Graham Greene, *The Heart of the Matter* 216.

¹³ Graham Greene, *The Heart of the Matter* 79.

¹⁴ Graham Greene, *The Heart of the Matter* 111.

between us.”¹⁵ As he is a failure himself (cf. 5.1.), he can pity another human being under the condition that he or she is likewise unsuccessful. Only then he can comfort his crying desperate wife with the words that all the people in the club are fond of her, although several pages before his view of this matter is presented: “Poor Louise, he thought, it is terrible not to be liked...”¹⁶ Despite Scobie’s unfavourable stance to telling lies (cf. 5.1.), it seems that it can be excused by the feeling of pity which becomes the means of consolation and help. Nonetheless, Scobie cannot get rid of it, as pity stays deep in his spirit even after passion and other sentiments are lost. What is more, it is obvious that it controls and discredits him without his being able to do anything about it: “Pity smouldered like decay at his heart.”¹⁷

In this connection, Scobie’s encounter with the captain in the cabin of whom he finds a suspicious letter should be briefly commented upon. Even though the incriminating piece of paper may be of great danger to the state, he decides not to discredit and disbelieve the captain who confesses that it is only a private correspondence between him and his daughter. Predictably, the sense of Scobie’s pity intensifies when he learns about captain’s strong affection for the girl and, moreover, about his being of a catholic bent (similarly to Scobie), which makes sort of fellows out of them.¹⁸ Despite the fact that his professional duty is to report his findings, Scobie burns the evidence and hushes the whole case up. So, he breaches the regulations on the professional level and spoils his image of the just man. He has to lie again and thus gives rise to his own downfall.

As to Scobie’s relationship with his mistress, it is of similar nature as his marriage to Louise. Again, it is not love which makes both of them stay together but the recognition of his responsibility for her: “It was as if he had shed one responsibility only to take another.”¹⁹ The unfavourable circumstances under which they meet arouse in Scobie who dooms himself to an absolute downfall the impulse to protect. He feels a kind of distance from Helen, as she is substantially younger, her husband has died recently and his wife is still alive. Thus he claims to be safe from a relationship which could change from a friendship into something deeper in which sexual desire or love, “the terrible promiscuous passion which so few experience,”²⁰ would be involved. The reason why Scobie lies to his wife, hides and risks to be seen is that he pities this woman for she is alone, unhappy

¹⁵ Graham Greene, *The Heart of the Matter* 236.

¹⁶ Graham Greene, *The Heart of the Matter* 19.

¹⁷ Graham Greene, *The Heart of the Matter* 163.

¹⁸ It should be made clear at this point that Scobie’s daughter died, which is one of the causes of his inner suffering.

¹⁹ Graham Greene, *The Heart of the Matter* 109.

²⁰ Graham Greene, *The Heart of the Matter* 147.

because of her life experience and unattractive. Her “temporary ugliness of a child”²¹ that does not have to be interpreted exclusively in a physical sense attracts him. Similarly to his legitimate wife, she is weak and helpless and needs someone to take care of her. Although the general sense of responsibility is common to all human beings, Scobie feels to be the only one who realizes it and so does not hesitate to get into more trouble.

Paradoxically, his sense of duty does not have to be seen in a positive light. The novel uncovers Scobie’s domineering attitude to both women and his inclination to change them. Although he feels as a servant of other people, which is explicitly shown by his reading of the word “serius” as Latin “servus” when holding in his hands a letter from Helen²², he is said to have formed her the same way as he has “formed the face” of his wife²³. He does not give Louise absolute freedom but he limits her experience in order to protect her. The same applies to Helen who, however, longs for love rather than for protection. In order to assure her, he delivers a note with the following words to her: “I want more than anything in the world to make you happy....”²⁴ Nevertheless, this piece of paper becomes the means of blackmail for Yusef who threatens to show it to Louise unless Scobie assents to smuggle diamonds for him, which Scobie finally does. Thus the police officer breaks the law and his own principles, further degrades himself and does not fulfil his promise to his mistress.

As it becomes clear from the novel, it is not only the spiritual suffering which makes Scobie’s life harder. On the one hand, he is continuously watched by Wilson, a man who finally proves to be an intelligence agent investigating the smuggling and who is actually infatuated with Louise. On the other hand, he is pursued by an evildoer Yusef who intends to make use of him and so gets to an incriminating document. Furthermore, Yusef organizes death of Ali, Scobie’s “boy”, in order to cover all the traces, as Ali seems to know both about the case with the diamonds and about the affair with Helen. Ironically, Scobie, a police officer, gives the impulse to this crime, which he bitterly regrets in the end. Physical pursuit then becomes central for the novel itself.

Considering the theme of betrayal (cf. 2.3), Scobie can be then seen as being betrayed by Yusef and also as an active betrayer who questions innocence and loyalty of his servant although not having any obvious reason. Evidently, it is both his and Yusef’s deeds that bring Scobie to a profound wickedness the realization of which forces him to the act of suicide. Without any constrictions, Scobie follows an unrestrained dictate of

²¹ Graham Greene, *The Heart of the Matter* 146.

²² Graham Greene, *The Heart of the Matter* 183.

²³ Graham Greene, *The Heart of the Matter* 7.

²⁴ Graham Greene, *The Heart of the Matter* 166.

pity which becomes his “code” of communication and behaviour in this respect. It allows him to betray Louise in a sense, as she does not stay alone in the centre of Scobie’s interest any more. Obviously, he feels trapped between the two women to both of whom he feels devoted but who cannot be content and happy at once. In case he wanted to please his wife, he would have to split up with Helen, which would of course hurt his mistress. This contradictory situation brings much distress to Scobie and causes his inner suffering. As Kohn shows, “he no longer lies because he chooses to, but because one lie requires another.”²⁵ Therefore, it can be claimed that he is actually “betrayed” by his pity which, in consequence, causes that he is forced to behave like a criminal who must be scheming and calculating in order to be successful: “Like a criminal he began to fashion in his own mind the undetectable crime: he planned moves ahead: he embarked for the first time in his life on the long legalistic arguments of deceit.”²⁶ So, he begins to feel certain that peace for which he longs that much will never be bestowed upon him. Such observations prove the conflicting nature of his character which distinguishes him as the “Greenean man” (cf. 2.3.).

In view of what has been said about Scobie so far, it can be assumed that he is a compassionate individual who is acting for the good of others rather than for his own. He has a deep sense of responsibility for others, which makes him comparable to the “whiskey priest” (cf. 4.2.). Similarly to him, Scobie self-devotedly sacrifices everything that he has to his intimates and does not waver even to offer his life: “O God, give me death before I give them unhappiness.”²⁷ This inclination only supports the existential dimension of the novel in which Greene presents the human suffering of the individual. However, the main contradiction in his deeds comes from his personal belief (supported by a long life experience) that it is impossible to wholly understand another human being. Because of this, love as a mere desire to comprehend is condemned to failure from its very beginning and leaves the space for pity which can preserve the existing relationship. Thereafter, “it is always pity and not love that binds him to people.”²⁸

Reflecting Scobie’s positive attitude to failure (cf. 5.1.), it is no wonder that he pities others in order to help them. Although he is not able to identify with their thoughts and feelings, he can see whether they are successful or not and thus whether they are already secure or deserve this sentiment. Yet, as was demonstrated, pity itself debases Scobie and brings him into critical situations. Kohn sees the reason for it in the fact that if pity was

²⁵ Kohn 15.

²⁶ Graham Greene, *The Heart of the Matter* 148.

²⁷ Graham Greene, *The Heart of the Matter* 174.

²⁸ Kohn 18.

ruled by love, it would lead to a mutual understanding and confidence but otherwise, it “can corrupt the soul.”²⁹ Therefore, Scobie is not a typical criminal corrupted by money but the individual deprived by sentiment.

5.3. Scobie and the Issue of God’s Decision

As it was already remarked (cf. 5.2.), Scobie is, similarly to his wife, a Catholic but his faith and attitude to religion is different from Louise’s. In contrast to her strong conviction, his visits of church show distinct marks of routine and habitual behaviour. During the regular confession which takes place on the first Saturday of each month he feels like “a spectator” when he looks at the cross with the dead body of Christ and seeks “the face of a friend or an enemy.”³⁰ Moreover, it is only for the sake of Louise’s happiness and her inner contentment that he prays long. He confesses in his mind that his religion signifies nothing to him, which makes him tired of it. He is not sure that he believes in God in a traditional sense of the word and thus he must claim: “I feel empty. Empty.”³¹ The Latin words of absolution from the priest, “a hocus pocus”, do not likewise have any impact on his soul and because of the whole atmosphere he feels for a while that “God was too accessible (...), like a popular demagogue.”³²

The same situation repeats when Scobie prays at home alone, without being motivated or forced by any external circumstances (for which the church can be regarded). He says all the established church prayers or the act of contrition because he is used to them but he does not believe in their importance. As it may be anticipated from the observation of his character, he does not ask for more than for other’s happiness and own peace in the prayers. In view of what has been said about Scobie so far, it is likewise no surprise that, although not being fully convinced of his plea, he sacrifices even his salvation so that Louise and Helen could be happy: “O God, I offer up my damnation to you. Take it. Use it for them.”³³

This brings us to the motif of suicide recurring many times throughout the work. Despite numerous indirect hints, Greene presents it openly at the beginning of the third part of the work on the example of Pemberton who hangs himself. At the place of this act, Scobie discusses the issue of mercy and damnation with Father Clay. The priest states that such a horrible deed disposes one of God’s mercy and thus a suicide must be damned.

²⁹ Kohn 19.

³⁰ Graham Greene, *The Heart of the Matter* 139-40.

³¹ Graham Greene, *The Heart of the Matter* 140.

³² Graham Greene, *The Heart of the Matter* 140-141.

³³ Graham Greene, *The Heart of the Matter* 209.

Scobie cannot accept this view and points at Pemberton's age which should guarantee him God's pity. Furthermore, he stresses the importance of one's creed. Because the dead man was not a Catholic, he had not been introduced all the principles and rules and thus should be forgiven: "We'd be damned because we know, but *he* doesn't know a thing."³⁴

It is knowledge which, in Scobie's view, makes the difference and it is the fact that "we [Catholics] know the answers"³⁵ which causes that those who have heard the teaching of the Church either behave according to it or must be aware of the consequences for their misdeeds. Zabel believes that this acceptance of Scobie's own damnation means also an appeal for his salvation, since it suggests a supposition that "neither conduct nor morals are of final importance for the believer."³⁶ With this conviction, Scobie, a Christian, becomes sort of privileged in contrast to non-believers, for his capacity for damnation makes him fit for redemption.

With reference to his planned suicide, he regards himself guilty. At the time when he decides to perform this act, he is convinced that he will never get the peace for which he was asking and that the others would be happier without him. The only excuses that he can find for the self-murder in general are actually a deep concern of a man for the people who are close to him (in his case for his wife and mistress) and, moreover, the absolute incomprehensibility of the teaching of the Church and the mystery of God. As to what the Church says, Scobie is persuaded that although God has fixed the laws for people, He can break them under certain circumstances. In the novel, this seemingly paradoxical act is impressively demonstrated on the example of Christ who, although being crucified, has not been surely murdered, for one cannot put God to death. God permitted people to persecute Him, which proves the incommensurability of His love for them. His execution evokes the scene from Pemberton's house and helps Scobie to justify the filthy deed: "Christ had killed himself: he had hung himself on the Cross as surely as Pemberton from the picture-rail."³⁷ In view of this, both Pemberton's suicide and Scobie's intended self-murder can be excused. Moreover, it becomes apparent that God and the nature of His love are presented as impenetrable in the novel.

Therefore, it can be assumed that Scobie has not lost the potentiality of salvation despite forsaking God and concentrating on the pleasure of others. In his inner dialogue with eternity some time before his death, Scobie converses with the other voice

³⁴ Graham Greene, *The Heart of the Matter* 78.

³⁵ Graham Greene, *The Heart of the Matter* 203.

³⁶ Morton Dauwen Zabel, "The Best and the Worst," *Graham Greene, Graham Greene: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Samuel Hynes (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1973) 44.

³⁷ Graham Greene, *The Heart of the Matter* 174.

representing God who blames him for not staying faithful to Him. Yet, Scobie explains that it was not possible to be loyal, as he has his sense of responsibility for human beings and not for Him. The most important thing to which he finally comes is that everybody must die, for “it’s life we aren’t resigned to.”³⁸ The reader now knows that Scobie is ready to be gone and his final words “Dear God, I love...,” open the question of his love and actually also of God’s love and mercy. Nonetheless, he or she does not know whom Scobie wanted to address and he or she is also not sure about Scobie’s afterlife. Considering the priest’s words that “it depends on your state of mind whether you are forgiven”³⁹ and that the Church “doesn’t know what goes in a single human heart,”⁴⁰ it cannot be claimed with any certainty that Scobie did not receive God’s mercy and thus was saved. Simply, the novel ends with the question which is left unanswered.

All these assertions and Scobie’s own self-sacrificing position makes out of him a typical Greenean “sanctified-sinner” who is not, despite his own flaws, deprived of the possibility to be viewed as a saint (cf. 2.3.). He is a good man who dies because he cannot stand his self-accusation. Yet, his attitude to God is not absolutely clear – even though it seems that he does not love Him, he still prays to Him and in the final moment of his life, devotes his last words to Him. Therefore, he can also be seen (together with the “whiskey priest”) as one of the heretics, for these “never suffered from lack of concern for religion.”⁴¹ Further, Evelyn Waugh suggests that Scobie complements Pinkie because both of them are convinced of damnation, believe that they are damned themselves and, in effect, both “die in a mortal sin as defined by theologians.”⁴² In fact, Scobie’s suicide can be interpreted as the act of a figure comparable to Christ, for Greene’s protagonist sacrifices himself for the peace of Helen and Louise. Therefore, he does not have to be viewed merely as a Judas who is unfaithful to people who are close to him but also as the Saviour who is prepared to suffer for them (cf. 2.3.).

Yet, the central problem of the end of the novel lies in the fact that God will have the final say in the question of Scobie’s destiny. As Braybrooke believes, Greene did not want to present any definite dogmatic statement but he rather highlighted the conviction that faith is mysterious in its nature and God’s mind impervious.⁴³ Further, it is evident

³⁸ Graham Greene, *The Heart of the Matter* 242.

³⁹ Graham Greene, *The Heart of the Matter* 205.

⁴⁰ Graham Greene, *The Heart of the Matter* 254.

⁴¹ Wilhelm Hortmann, “The Burnt-Out Catholic.” *Twentieth Century Literature*, Issue No. 2, 12 Oct. 2008 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/440617>> 68.

⁴² Evelyn Waugh, “Felix Culpa?” *Greene, Graham Greene: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Samuel Hynes (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1973) 99.

⁴³ Neville Braybrooke, “Graham Greene: A Pioneer Novelist.” *College English*, Issue No. 1, 12.Oct. 2008 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/371542>> 7-8.

that no human being knows anything about mercy which is likewise, metaphorically, hid with a veil. Wilhelm Hortmann claims that Church, in Greene's presentation, fails to recognize this. It does not show any understanding for the sinner and so disrespects that "overawing mystery which surpasses human understanding."⁴⁴

Moreover, the novel appears to be "a study of duality."⁴⁵ Greene has introduced a character which battles in his heart two contrary elements to gain peace. On the one hand, Scobie struggles with his pity for others and on the other hand, with love of God. Waugh assures us that Scobie is driven forth by this love which "sanctifies his sins" throughout the novel in fact.⁴⁶ Therefore, he does not probably resist hell or damnation and sacrifices himself for others. Yet, his attachment to religion may be viewed as being of a greater importance. James Wood concentrates on Scobie's final "willingness to surrender" to the power of God and on his religious faith: "If 'human love' can rob Scobie of his 'love for eternity,' then he was never a very passionate Christian."⁴⁷

In this way, Scobie becomes one of the Greenean protagonists who are haunted by God's love which they cannot evade. He knows that he should not further disappoint God and, moreover, he is distressed by the strong feeling of pity that brings him into serious difficulties. He is the individual who cannot withstand his own weaknesses despite his deep affection for the people in need and is doomed to failure. Moreover, the nature of his inner conflict reveals the split between the good and evil (if faith is taken for a positive and pity for a destructing force initiating corruptness), which correlates with the image of the "Greenean man" (cf. 2.3.). The entire atmosphere of the novel (in which crime in the broadest sense of the word is central for the story itself) and the presence of conflicts and paradoxes undoubtedly match with the features of "Greenland" (cf. 2.2.).

⁴⁴ Hortmann 69.

⁴⁵ Braybrooke 7.

⁴⁶ Waugh 101.

⁴⁷ James Wood, "Introduction," *The Heart of the Matter*, Graham Greene (London: Vintage, 2004) x.

6. Conclusion

As it became evident from the analysis of individual novels, Greene's protagonists bear certain features which are common to them. Yet, each of these men distinguishes from the other in a specific manner, which does not depend solely on the problems that he has to face but rather on his mentality and his way of life. It was shown that these facts are easily demonstrable on the three types of relationships which have already been discussed.

Considering the relationship of the principal characters to themselves, it is evident that each of the protagonists is a professional, social and marital failure. Pinkie's criminal actions do not lead to any success, the "whiskey priest" fails in his vocation, for he has yielded to drinking and had a sexual intercourse despite the requirement of celibacy and Scobie ignores or intentionally conceals compromising evidence in order to protect the others. Moreover, the central characters are either recognized as outlaws or are even pitied by their friends and close companions (like Scobie). Finally, neither of them lives in a happy marriage and cannot (or does not want to) make his wife pleased and content.¹⁸³ Interestingly enough, it is only Scobie who openly declares his deep love of failure.

In view of this, it can be claimed that these characters live in a sort of routine boredom which is, naturally, ended up in the moment when they are forced to make a crucial decision. Pinkie is confronted with the state of affairs which endangers his position (a premeditated marriage with Rose and a risk of being revealed by Ida Arnold), the unnamed priest gets the option to deny his priesthood and Scobie must choose between the two women in order to satisfy their expectations. Since both Pinkie and Scobie cannot find acceptable solution to their situation, they commit a suicide. In contrast, the priest is executed because he stays faithful to his profession.

It is notable that the priest and Scobie were not fighting against the idea of death from the outset of the novel and that they were even in a hurry to die. Yet, their sacrificial death differs substantially. The priest goes deliberately against the law because he is willing to "save" the entire world. He does not make differences between the people and feels responsible for them. This makes him comparable to Christ who sacrificed himself for every individual and did not object crucifixion. In contrast, Scobie's suicide is a personal act conditioned by pity to two women. It proves his inability to solve the situation which he himself caused. He does not want to let down neither Helen nor Louise and thus chooses to die. It is important to note that he does not suffer for a nameless sinner but for the human beings that he knows. Moreover, his final words raise a provocative but

¹⁸³ Although the "whiskey priest" has not married, he did not take care of the mother of his child and, in view of this, he can be (although loosely) regarded for a marital failure.

legitimate question – whom did Scobie really “love”? If he had any person in mind, his act emphasizes the personal level of the novel. Yet, if he intended to address God, it can be assumed that he died also for Him (in order not to disappoint Him any more). In this way, he would be viewed as a Christian who does not go to church regularly or who does not propagate the Catholic teaching (like the priest) but who deeply loves God in his heart and offers up his life for Him.

It is obvious that this area of our interest proves the existential and conflicting aspect of Greene’s novels in which negative features of critical situations are omnipresent. The relationship of the protagonists to other characters should be viewed in a similar manner. As it was made obvious, each of the central characters is physically pursued by either his enemies or companions, which causes much distress to their protagonists and leads even to their death. A sort of “dark” atmosphere of these novels is supported by the fact that these men are seen as betrayed on the one hand and betraying according to their particular “code” on the other hand. In this manner, Pinkie’s feeling of hatred contrasts with priest’s responsibility and Scobie’s pity, each of which turn out to be significant sources of their actions.

The role of the human act then brings us to consideration of the religious dimension of the three novels. Both good and evil are combined in the character of each of the protagonists who can be interpreted as “sanctified sinners”. As a result of this, it cannot be assumed that Greene has deprived Pinkie, the priest and Scobie of the possibility to be redeemed and saved. It becomes only distinct that God’s mercy is presented as something mysterious and incomprehensible, which is, furthermore, strengthened by the specific attitude of each of the central characters to God, eternity or the Catholic Church. All are baptised but neither of them is a doctrinal believer. In contrast to Pinkie who is convinced only of the existence of hell, both the priest and Scobie recognise God and His role in the world. The priest is well aware of his own sinfulness deeply contrasting with God’s perfection, which results in the praise of God’s glory. On the contrary, Scobie polemizes with God and also with the teaching of the Church in effect. In addition, his position is worsened by his planned suicide generally recognized as a mortal sin, which leads him to the acceptance of his own damnation. The problem of God’s decision in case of these men is then valid for each of the novels but is most noticeable in the plot of *The Heart of the Matter*.

On the example of the priest and Scobie, Greene clearly shows that he is open to dispute when dogmas of the Catholic Church are concerned. Each of these two characters understands faith and the teaching of the Church in a specific way. They do not simply

respect the established norms but rather attempt to find their own individual attitude to God. The priest does not repent his sins (mainly his love to his illegitimate daughter and his addiction to alcohol), which according to the fixed set of beliefs cannot be forgiven. Yet, he does not deny his priesthood, acts as a regular priest and protects anyone who is in need. The deep conflict lies in the fact that it is actually the awareness of his own sinfulness which causes that he (the criminal) can understand the criminals that he meets. If he wholeheartedly accepted the doctrine, he would stop preaching because he would be fully convinced that his sin disposes him of his right to do that. Nevertheless, he does not see what could be called his “mission” from the viewpoint of the doctrinal Catholic but rather quite individually.

Greene presents a similar position even more openly on the example of Scobie who does not identify with what the Catholic Church says. Although he has some doubts about religion, he still prays to God. However, he does not only utter the usual prayers, as they do not mean much to him but he uses his own words more often. Moreover, he puts himself in the position of a martyr who suffers not for the whole world (like the priest) but for the people who are close to him. In the novel, these two facts highlight the importance of the personal attitude.

In this manner, Greene evidently stresses the unmediated and direct relationship of man to God, which can be interpreted as the stand of a heretic or protestant. However, Greene goes further than that. Generally, he presents the conflict between what the Church preaches and “what goes in a single human heart” or in other words between the dogmas and the right to understand the nature of faith personally. In Greene’s understanding, to be a Christian does not mean to follow the rules but to find one’s own way that is never straight. So, a believer (who is usually a man in Greene’s writings) finds himself in an everlasting struggle which he tries to bear but which ends up in his untimely death.

At last, it was shown that the plots of individual novels show distinct similarities when put next to each other – violence, murder and corruptness are noticeable in each of them. When crime is concerned, it is traditionally presented as something which goes against the law. This “definition” applies for Pinkie’s criminal actions and to a large extent for Scobie who breached the given laws and so became morally depraved. Nevertheless, priest is a criminal only because he did not deny that he is a cleric (and so failed to comply with the state regulations) but also because of his sin which violates the rules of the Catholic doctrine.

Reflecting the presented facts, it becomes obvious that Greene introduces an individual who disagrees with the world in which he lives and makes steps to reform it or to change it

in some way. This man is always in conflict with his environment and also with himself and can never find peace. He can be recognized as the “Greenean man” and the entire works with their motifs as parts of Greene’s land that is so problematically definable in objective terms.

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Summary

Graham Greene, ktorý je považovaný za predného románopisca britskej literatúry dvadsiateho storočia, môže byť taktiež charakterizovaný ako plodný spisovateľ. Je autorom

mnohých poviedok, divadelných hier, cestopisov, autobiografických diel, literárnych a filmových recenzií a esejí. Avšak sú to práve jeho romány, ktoré mu priniesli väčšiu slávu a postavili ho do centra záujmu. Kritici tieto diela skúmajú už niekoľko rokov a vďaka ich provokatívnosti v najširšom zmysle tohto slova, boli jeho prózy buďto vyzdvihované a odporúčané (dokonca aj samotným autorom) alebo zavrňované a verejne odmietané. Ale pravdepodobne vďaka Greeneovmu podmanivému štýlu a témam, ktorým sa venuje, si jeho diela obecne získali pozornosť čitateľov z celého sveta (nevynímajúc Českú republiku). Preto sa javí ako dôležité skúmať romány autora, ktorý bol dokonca nominovaný na Nobelovu cenu, nakoľko takýto záujem môže nastoliť zaujímavé problémy alebo zodpovedať doposiaľ nezodpovedané otázky.

V tejto bakalárskej práci sa pochopiteľne nie je možné zaoberať všetkými Greenovými prácami vo väčšej miere. Preto sme si pre našu analýzu vybrali tri z jeho štyroch tzv. „katolíckych románov“, ktoré on sám radí do tzv. „vážnych románov“ („serious novels“): *Brightonská skala* (1938), *Moc a sláva* (1940) a *Jadro veci* (1948). Hlavným cieľom tejto práce je poskytnúť hĺbkovú analýzu vybraných diel. Nakoľko za pomoci rozboru vzťahov hlavných postáv k sebe samým, iným postavám a Bohu demonštrujeme témy a motívy, ktoré Greene prezentuje v týchto románoch, primárne sa venujeme týmto vzťahom. Okrem toho ukazujeme na konkrétnych príkladoch v akom smere sa títo protagonisti alebo romány zhodujú s obrazom tzv. „Greenovského človeka (muža)“ („Greenian man“) či tzv. „Greenelandu“ („Greeneland“). Zreteľ by mal byť braný na skutočnosť, že jednotlivé typy vzťahov pokrývajú oblasti, ktoré popisujú koncept „Greenovského človeka“. Naše skúmanie je založené na podrobnom čítaní vybraných diel a v príslušných prípadoch taktiež poukazujeme na podobnosti alebo rozdiely medzi jednotlivými hlavnými postavami.

V náväznosti na tento cieľ je práca členená do štyroch hlavných kapitol, ktoré sú následne rozčlenené do troch podkapitol. V prvej podkapitole prvej hlavnej časti stručne podávame momenty z Greeneovho života, ktoré mali podstatný vplyv na jeho diela. Čo sa týka prvej oblasti, vyzdvihujeme tie životné periódy, ktoré majú nejakú súvislosť s našim skúmaním. Najprv si všímame obdobia detstva a dospievania, ktoré bolo pre Greena bolestné, pretože sa musel vyrovnávať s faktom, že jeho otec bol riaditeľom školy, na ktorej študoval. Ďalej poukazujeme na jeho bohaté skúsenosti z cestovania, (nielen) vďaka ktorým sú jeho romány pre čitateľa vierohodné a zmieňujeme jeho návštevu Mexika a Afriky (Siera Leone), ktoré majú priamu súvislosť s dvoma poslednými nami rozobranými dielami. Pozornosť venujeme taktiež vplyvu spoločnosti v období tridsiatych rokov dvadsiateho storočia, z ktorej Greene čerpal predovšetkým pre svoje ranné romány

či už motívy ľudskej biedy alebo „politické“ motívy týkajúce sa vládneho zriadenia a jeho vodcov. Ukazujeme, že v následnej etape jeho kariéry (aj keď nie úplne) zanechal tieto témy a venoval sa pre neho príznačnej oblasti – katolíckej viere, ktorá môže byť u neho vnímaná rôznorode. Vo svojich 22 rokoch konvertoval ku katolicizmu predovšetkým kvôli svojej žene Vivien Daryell-Browningovej a tak jeho prístup bol vskutku formálny a nevyznačoval sa žiadnymi citmi. Jeho obrátenie je možné tiež vnímať ako nepriamu odozvu na už zmienenú spoločenskú situáciu. Avšak po jeho návšteve Mexika v roku 1938, kde sa stal svedkom krutého zaobchádzania, sa jeho pohľad radikálne zmenil a jeho viera dostala väčší emočný základ.

V druhej podkapitole ďalej charakterizujeme koncept „Greenelandu“, ktorý bol vytvorený kritikmi, aby zahrňoval všetko, čo je obecné vzhľadom ku Greenovým dielam. Stručne sa dá charakterizovať ako svojrázny svet, ktorý funguje podľa Greena a v ktorom konajú jeho postavy. Tento „svet“ je obecné ťažko definovateľný, čo ukazuje už pojem, ktorý Greenovi pripisuje Jan Čulík – „básnik trápnosti“. „Básnikom“ ho nazýva preto, že vytvára texty, ktoré sú významovo tak bohaté, že je problematické ich objektívne popisovať. Prívlastok „trápnosť“ primerane vystihuje Greenov špecifický druh „realizmu“, ktorý popisuje bolestivosť ľudskeho života a jeho tragické aspekty tak, že sú jednoducho uveriteľné. Jeho talent teda spočíva v schopnosti vybrať „existenciálne“ hľadiská a prepojiť ich do celku, ktorý je pútavý a zároveň podnetný. Následne sa v centre zápletiiek jeho románov objavuje kriminálna činnosť, násilie, láska, zrada alebo snaha o únik. V dôsledku týchto skutočností je „Greeneland“ najlepšie charakterizovateľný termínmi „konflikt“ a „paradox“, ktoré privádzajú kritikov k skúmaniu jeho diela taktiež z hľadiska filozofie. Čulík tak aplikuje existencialistické motívy vyskytujúce sa u Karla Jaspersa ako sú nezdar, absurdita a hraničné situácie na Greenovu tvorbu a postavy, ktoré vytvára. Všetky tieto črty sa v podstatnej objavujú taktiež v Greenových „katolíckych románoch“ (ku ktorým okrem už zmienených troch románov obecné patrí tiež *Koniec dobrodružstva*), vďaka ktorým sa radí do skupiny tzv. „katolíckych“ spisovateľov. V nich sa nevenuje katolíckej doktríne v tradičnom slova zmysle, ale vytvára svet, ktorý sa podobá „peklu“ a ktorý mu poskytuje priestor na rozbor „negatívnych“ stránok ľudskej existencie a konceptov ako sú zatratenie a zlo.

Už zmienené zdroje inšpirácie a „tvár“ „Greenelandu“ určujú typ Greenových postáv a ich pozíciu v rámci románov. Pre typické vlastnosti jeho protagonistov kritici vytvorili pojem „Greenovský človek (muž)“, ktorého skúmame na základe troch nami vytýčených vzťahov. V prvom hľadisku si všímame, že sa jedná o neúspešných jedincov (v spoločnosti, v profesii, v manželstve), ktorí trpia vnútornými rozpormi a sú tak zároveň

dobří i zlí alebo silní a slabí. Vo veľkej miere ich ovplyvňuje ich detstvo, v zovretí ktorého sa poväčšine nachádzajú. Okrem toho sa vyznačujú ochotou umrieť, čo zdôrazňuje fakt, že smrť je všadeprítomná v Greenových románoch. Vo vzťahu protagonistov k iným postavám vystupuje téma „prenasledovania“, pričom si postavy medzi sebou vytvárajú vzťah medzi „štvancom a prenasledovateľom“. To nás privádza k téme „zrady“. Hlavná postava opúšťa obecné uznávané morálne normy a namiesto nich si vytvára svoj vlastný „kód“, ktorý jej pomáha zvládnuť nebezpečenstvo zo sveta a postáv, ktoré ho obklopujú. Jeho nasledovanie potom ústi do zrady a tak sa jednotliviec stáva „zradzujúcim“ a „zradeným“ zároveň. Tretie hľadisko sa (nie výlučne) týka predovšetkým Greenových „katolíckych románov“. Greene uvádza postavu, ktorá v sebe spojuje nedostatky a zároveň dokonalosti a vytvára tak tzv. „posväteného hriešnika“ („sanctified sinner“), ktorá odpovedá „konfliktu“ prítomného v Greenových dielach, keďže má potenciál byť svätý a súčasne hriešny. Ďalej Greene vníma Boha ako prenasledovateľa, od ktorého nie je úniku a tak sa tematika (v tomto prípade duchovného) „prenasledovania“ objavuje i v tejto rovine.

V tretej kapitole skúmame z troch hľadísk vzťahu protagonistu *Brightonskej skaly* – Pinkieho, ktorý je v istom smere neobvyklým kriminálnikom a ktorého hlavným cieľom je zaistiť si svoju pozíciu v gangu a v celom meste. Od ostatných postáv ho odlišuje jeho nízky vek, čo nás privádza k detstvu, ktoré pre neho nebolo radostné a ktoré Greene týmto spôsobom charakterizuje stratou nevinnosti. Pinkie sa vyznačuje predovšetkým svojim egocentrizmom a sebaistotou, avšak kvôli nedostatku skúseností nie je adekvátne schopný vykonávať svoju „profesiu“ a tak je jeho plán zatajiť smrť Halea odsúdený k neúspechu. Rovnako neúspešný je aj vo vzťahu k iným, ktorých nenávidí. Je prenasledovaný Idou reprezentujúcou „správnosť“, pričom on pre ňu zosobňuje „špatnosť“ vo svetskej rovine. Rovnako je ho možné vnímať ako „naháňaného“ láskou a (manželským) vzťahom s Rose, v ktorej vidí nepriateľa, čím opätovne dokazuje, že je neúspešným človekom. Motív „zrady“ sa objavuje v momente, kde sa ju snaží doviest' k samovražde s tým, že sa po nej sám zabije, čo ale neplánuje. Po zlyhaní svojho plánu spácha samovraždu. Okrem týchto črt, ktoré korelujú s obrazom „Greenelandu“, je pre Pinkieho príznačné videnie sveta ako „pekla“, ktoré pre neho neznamená nič abstraktné ale niečo, čo sa dá zakúsiť. To sa týka sveta plného zločinu v ktorom žije a ktorý nesie už zmienené typické existencialistické črty. Jedine Rose verí v existenciu neba, čím román dostáva symbolický rozmer v náboženskej rovine – Rose reprezentujúca „dobro“ doplňuje Pinkieho reprezentujúceho „zlo“. Následne je možné Pinkieho vnímať ako „posväteného hriešnika“, ktorý nakoniec nestráca „právo“ byť spasený. Tým dokazuje, že je typickým „Greenovským človekom“,

ktorý je navonok silný ale vo vnútri slabý a potvrdzuje, že téma detstva, zrady či motív konfliktu sú centrálné pre Greenove diela. Paradox románu nakoniec vychádza z Pinkieho vzťahu k viere a milosti, ktorá sa ukazuje ako takmer nevysvetliteľná a neuchopiteľná. Pinkieho videnie sveta taktiež dokazuje Greenov záujem o zlo, ktoré nemusí byť vnímané len z teologického ale aj čisto svetského hľadiska.

Vo štvrtej kapitole venujeme hlavnú pozornosť kňazovi bez mena objavujúcemu sa v *Moci a sláve*, ktorý uniká cez spustošenú krajinu (nesúcu opäť typické črty „Greenelandu“) pred prenasledovaním štátnej moci a pochybnosťami o svojom povolaní a jeho zašlej sláve. Je zlomeným jednotlivcom bez známok dôstojnosti, ktorý je neúspešný v tom, čo sa od neho očakáva. Pretože smilnil a stal sa alkoholikom, stratil rešpekt ľudí, ktorým kázal v dobe, keď kresťanstvo nebolo v krajine perzekvované. Týmto sa identifikuje s „Greenovským človekom“. Jeho detstvo bolo pre neho šťastné ale ovplyvnené chudobou, čo ho priviedlo k vysväteniu na kňaza, pretože veril, že toto povolanie mu prinesie bohatstvo a hrdosť. Avšak táto hrdosť v jeho očiach zapríčinila, že je morálne skazený. Tak neodporuje prenasledovaniu a, na rozdiel od Pinkieho, cíti uväznenie (a následné odsúdenie) ako svoju povinnosť. Aj napriek, že je nenávideným štvancom, cíti voči ostatným hlbokú zodpovednosť, ktorá je zdrojom jeho činov. Je ochotný obetovať svoj život za záchranu iných, čo sa ukazuje na príklade vzťahu ku svojej nemanželskej dcére. Tak sa dá jeho zodpovednosť vidieť ako paradoxná a zvrátená, keďže sa zároveň snaží druhých chrániť a je taktiež pripravený zomrieť. Tým sa do románu dostáva tematika zrady, ktorá je zvýraznená postavou miešanca snažiaceho sa kňaza vlákať do pasce. Kňaz je prirovnaný ku Kristovi a miešanec k Judášovi, čo nám umožňuje čítať toto dielo symbolicky (podobne ako *Brightonskú skalú*). Postava poručíka, ktorý je hlavným zdrojom perzekúcie uvádza do románu motív prenasledovania. Paradoxne, on koná taktiež z hlbokého pocitu zodpovednosti podobne ako kňaz. Z diela je zrejmé, že kňaz si je vedomý svojej hriechnosti, ale nechce, aby tak boli vnímaní všetci kňazi. Greene tak ukazuje, že existuje rozdiel medzi jednotlivcom a povolaním, ktoré vykonáva. Autor vytvoril paradoxnú postavu, ktorej ľudskosť je zreteľnejšia tým viac, čím viac žije v hriechu. To, že je „zločincom“, dáva do vzájomného vzťahu svetský a náboženský svet a dokazuje, že jeho povolanie nemusí byť vnímané ako priestor, v ktorom sa pestuje nevinnosť. Jeho pochybnosti o spáse ukazujú, že ani nábožný človek si nemôže byť istý svojim posmrtným životom. Postava kňaza ukazuje Greenovo zaujatie neúspešným človekom, ktorý je ambivalentný a ktorý zosobňuje spojenie dobrého a zlého. Román má podobne ako *Brightonská skala* symbolický rozmer.

V piatej kapitole skúmame hlavnú postavu *Jadra veci* – Scobieho, súciteľného človeka, ktorý je oddaný iným aj napriek tomu, že ho to morálne kazí. Je prototypom „Greenovského človeka“, ktorý žije nešťastný život v zavrhnutiahodnom svete. Má slabosť pre neúspešných ľudí a sám je neúspešný. Túži po pokoji, ktorý by mu mohla priniesť len samota. Avšak tento pokoj nedokáže nájsť, pretože, len čo by ho mohol získať po odchode svojej ženy na dovolenku, nachádza si milenkú. Taktiež kvôli nej musí klamať a tak si zničiť svoj profil spravodlivého muža. Rovnako ako ku svojej žene, tak i ku svojej milenke cíti ľútosť (pity), ktorá určuje jeho vzťah k iným osobám. Je k nim zviazaný ich bezmocnosťou a potrebou pomoci či ochrany. Podobný postoj je zreteľný aj na jeho vzťahu ku kapitánovi, kvôli ktorému zatají dôkazy a potvrdí, že je neúspešný vo svojom povolání. Jeho ľútosť ho evidentne korumpuje a tak je na nej zreteľný jej negatívny aspekt. Je zradený Yusefom a nakoniec ho vlastne zradza aj samotná ľútosť. Cíti sa byť chytený medzi dvoma ženami, ktorým je síce oddaný, ale nedokáže im priniesť spokojnosť a šťastie. Podobne ako kňaz bez mena aj on nebojuje za iný život alebo aspoň za svoju záchranu, cíti hlbokú zodpovednosť a nakoniec (na rozdiel od neho) spácha samovraždu. Umiera, pretože nemôže zniesť seba obviňovanie. Aj napriek tomu, že obetoval samého seba, nie je zbavený možnosti byť vnímaný ako svätec a spasený človek. Tým sa ukazuje, že božia milosť je tajomná a centrálny problém románu spočíva vo fakte, že je to Boh, ktorý má posledné slovo v otázke Scobieho osudu. Scobie je tak Greenovským protagonistom, ktorý je prenasledovaný božskou láskou a ktorý v sebe bojuje s dvoma protichodnými činiteľmi (ľútosťou a láskou Boha), aby dosiahol pokoj. Celková atmosféra diela (v ktorom je zločin v najširšom slova zmysle centrálny pre samotný príbeh) a prítomnosť konfliktov i paradoxov nakoniec nepochybne odpovedajú črtám „Greenelandu“.