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THE CONCEPT OF PITY AND FAITH IN
THE HEART OF THE MATTER

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Anotace

Hlavním katalyzátorem děje v románu *Jádro věci* (1948) je víra a milosrdenství hlavního protagonisty. Diplomová práce se zabývá Greenovým unikátním pojetím těchto konceptů. Je to právě víra a milosrdenství, které představují jeden ze základních stavebních kamenů v Greenově tvorbě. V tomto románu vrcholí Greenova náboženská a osobní angažovanost. Teoretická část práce podává stručný, ucelený pohled na Greenův život, jeho náboženské a politické názory, jeho neutuchající zájem o lidskou zkušenost a zároveň se snaží zachytit Greenovo místo v kontextu dvacátého století. Ústřední část je věnována detailnímu rozboru románu společně s interpretací klíčových myšlenek a pojmů.

Klíčová slova

Graham Greene, víra, milosrdenství, katolicismus, paradox, existencialismus, Jádro věci

Abstract

The main catalyst of the narrative in *The Heart of the Matter* (1948) is pity and faith of the main protagonist. This thesis deals with Greene's unique conception of pity and faith. It is particularly faith and pity which represent keystones in number of Greene's novels. In *The Heart of the Matter*, Greene's personal and religious interests culminate. The theoretical part of the thesis provides a brief and comprehensive overview of Greene's life, his religious and political views, his unrelenting interest in human experience and at the same time, it aims to place him in the context of the 20th century. The central part of the thesis is dedicated to the detailed analysis of the novel along with the interpretation of key concepts and ideas.

Key Words

Graham Greene, faith, pity, Catholicism, paradox, existentialism, The Heart of the Matter

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1 Introduction

I was first introduced to the works of the great British author, Graham Greene, during my studies at grammar school. After preparing a presentation on one of his most popular novels *The Heart of the Matter* it occurred to me to elaborate on the topic in my thesis. The more I became familiar with Greene's concepts and ideas, the more fascinated I was.

Greene keeps me interested, because his novels are timeless. It does not matter that many years have passed since the publication of his works; we can still relate to his characters and what they go through. In today's secular age, it is especially intriguing to dive deep into the world of Graham Greene as he finds balance between spiritual and everyday life. His religious beliefs have undeniably shaped his art and become central to many of his novels.

This thesis focuses on the concept of pity and faith in Greene's novel *The Heart of the Matter*. I have chosen to focus mainly on these concepts because I believe they are crucial for understanding Greene and his writing. I intend to document how pity and faith of the main character bring him discomfort and push him to his ultimate end. The first part of the thesis is going to be built on the life and work of Greene and his place in literary context. I plan to touch upon Greene's Catholicism and question why he is so often labeled as a "Catholic writer". I aim to determine if and how much his personal faith influenced his writing. After a general introduction into Greene's life, work and his religiosity, I will proceed with a close analysis of *The Heart of the Matter*. Through the analysis, I plan to provide a study revealing the complex nature of Greene's text. The core part of the thesis consists of the examination of narrative style, comparison of the characters and their relationships, their environment and its effect on the characters and finally the essential concepts that permeate the novel – faith and pity. Many of Greene's literary works show his probing interest in religious matters. His novels indicate that throughout his whole life, he has been asking essential questions concerning human existence and religious faith. Greene's paradoxical and controversial religious views redefined standard Catholic notions on piety as he emphasized that devout Catholics often lack charity while sinners can find a path to redemption. The concept of pity is going to be examined through the main protagonist of the novel, Major Henry Scobie. His overwhelming sense of pity and his personal faith determine the course of the novel.

Despite all of his weaknesses, Scobie represents a perfect example of Greenian “saint-sinner” hero. Even though Catholicism is significant for Greene's art, I try to indicate that it is not as important as his interest in human nature as such. Lodge comments that Greene's Catholicism is “a system of concepts, a source of situations, and a reservoir of symbols with which he can order and dramatize certain intuitions about the nature of human experience—intuitions which were gained prior to and independently of his formal adoption of the Catholic faith” (*Graham Greene* 6). Greene does not urge strict rules of the Church, but he is fascinated by his human protagonists, their struggle with faith and life. Repeatedly, he raises social, political, philosophical and religious issues and that, I believe, is what makes his writing still relevant today.

The last part of the thesis is devoted to Greene and his relationship to cinema, because it played a profound role in his career. Most of his novels were adapted to screen. Even his writing style is considered “cinematic” among critics. Therefore, the last chapter is dedicated to Greene, cinema and the movie adaptation of *The Heart of the Matter*.

2 Greene in the 20th Century Context

2.1 The Loss of Faith: Modern Literature and The Death of God

Literary modernism has its roots in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It marks the period between two great wars when society faced rapid changes. Modernist theories put an immense emphasis on language and text itself. As Bradbury describes it, modernism “is experimental, formally complex, elliptical, contains elements of decreation as well creation, and tends to associate notions of the artist's freedom from realism, materialism, traditional genre and form, with notions of cultural apocalypse and disaster” (145). For the most part, literature did not try to represent reality and its aim was not to moralize or provide us with life lessons. Therefore, dominance of realism as prominent form of a novel was challenged by writers throughout the twentieth century as modernists introduced alternative ways of representing reality and the world (Childs 3). Greene stood out among his contemporaries. Born in the same generation as Beckett, Orwell, and Auden, his career spanned the period that ran from the height of modernism in the 1920s to that of postmodernism in the 1970s. His major works, however, display little of the self-consciousness and literary devices characteristic of these literary movements. Apart from brief flashes of the supernatural (usually in connection with Catholicism), Greene is insistent in portraying the world as absurd, grotesque, bleak, and deeply disappointing. Greene's early works such as *The Man Within* or *England Made Me* contain passages that could be described as streams of consciousness and the author employed other modernist stylistic techniques as well. Nevertheless, Greene soon abandoned this technique in favour of a tougher and rawer style. He wished to portray the real world in all its horror and struggle. His works are written in a realistic style with clear, exciting plots. As I mentioned above, unlike the other writers of the century, he did not experiment with language or subvert traditional narrative. In Greene's view, high modernism was at once too self-regarding and too removed from the everyday reality of ordinary people, whereas he believed that the proto-modernists (e.g. James, Conrad) whose works he celebrated were in touch with the social realm, he himself wanted to explore. Greene's passion for fine details of daily life is driving power of his early narratives. In his fiction, Greene documents the changes taking place in decaying society and depicts the bewilderment of people trapped in events they can neither understand nor control. Furthermore, he explores the relationship between the visible and the invisible, the human and supernatural, in many diverse ways. As

Gasiorek notes, “Conrad, of course, held that the writer should disclose what is hidden *behind* surface realities, and Greene is no less interested in exposing the truth underlying appearances. This drive to uncover, to challenge conventional ways of seeing and thinking, motivates much of his writing” (21).

Growing realization in the twentieth century that God is dead, too, led to transformation in consciousness, sensibility, and ontological values. Without the presence of God, without the horizon of the absolute and the idea of eternity, a writer faced the world that is no longer held together and transfigured by the sense of divine. Glicksberg notes that “It is changed, alas, into a bare, alien, desolate universe of sense data and quantum mechanics” (3). Man, left alone in the universe, had to face his mortality. When the idea of the divine was taken away, whole universe of men's consciousness was transformed and his vision of life was drastically altered. Nevertheless, this loss of faith enabled art to take a special place within the society: “Through the meditation of art, man makes repeated effort to rise above death. Even in the face of death, artist keeps faith within his creative mission and composes a message that might reach down to the next generation and pierce to the heart of the mystery that is life” (Glicksberg 14). This knowledge of the absence of God makes a difference in the way a writer responds to the challenge of existence and interprets the nature of man. The modern novelists, thus, faced a serious handicap. They had to compose their work in times of rampant scepticism, moral confusion and crisis. On the whole, modern literature illustrates not the presence but the absence of God, not the triumph but the defeat of faith. Despair and the general sense of purposelessness haunted almost all major writers of the twentieth-century. The virtues of honesty, courage, and compassion that had typified the nineteenth-century heroes had been seriously undermined so they could no longer function effectively. The negation of these, previously cherished, values extended to different spheres from literature to science and anthropology (Roston 9). With the fall of traditional values, the novelists could no longer rely upon them to fashion their hero. Greene's original approach in that respect served as the groundwork for his major novels and as inspiration for authors that came after him.

The slippage in religious belief in Greene's generation was one of the issues he had to deal with while writing thematically Catholic novels. He needed to overcome the problem of creating a central character with whose values readers could identify, but also to overcome potential hostility towards a character committed to a religious belief

generally disliked by his Anglican readership. Yet, Green recognised that the problem was not merely about faith, aversion to Catholicism. He saw that his generation lost the sense of human significance without which no novel concerned about human affairs could be convincing. Greene merged symbols with the factual to create a setting within which his characters strive to find meaning. The unimportance of character in the world of senses is only matched by his enormous importance in another world. At the same time, Greene avoided the problem created by the collapse of traditional hero. In most of his novels, there is no real hero - only villains or anti-heroes. In the end, however, his protagonists mostly remain sympathetic in spite of their serious flaws. There are no “good” or “bad” characters, but simply human.

2.2 Greene as a Catholic Writer: Between Heaven and Hell

“I began to believe in heaven because I believed in hell.” (Greene, *The Lawless Roads*)

Graham Greene has often been labelled as a Catholic author, although he repeatedly rejected the label saying that he is simply “a writer who happens to be Catholic” (*Ways* 74). He was a superb storyteller with a gift for provoking controversy by writing topical novels in political settings while many of his deepest concerns were spiritual. Many of his major novels reveal his probing interest in religious matters. Throughout his career he has found himself involved in essential and often paradoxical issues concerning religious faith. His major works thus constitute a substantial documentation of man's spiritual condition in the twentieth century. They portray people who are trapped in the turmoil of modern times, and brought to the limits of their spiritual strength; they exist in ever-changing conditions between belief and disbelief, hope and despair, loyalty and betrayal.

However, the fact that most of Greene's major characters were Catholics does not necessarily make him a “Catholic writer”. He does not try to advocate or promote the doctrines of Catholic teaching. Greene adamantly denied being a Catholic writer, because such a designation limits the scope of his vision and makes objectivity of his work questionable (Cloete 314). As Glicksberg points out, “The artist who is preoccupied with doctrine, religious or political or moral, suffers a serious, if not fatal, decline in sensibility. ... Yet there are novels that are profoundly religious in content without ceasing to be novels, and it is these that merit profound critical consideration” (72). In such works, religion and faith are presented as an experience, struggle, a search, suffering and as a spiritual conflict rather than codified theology. The writer provides us with a vivid, convincing and comprehensive picture of life in all its shapes and forms. We, as readers, witness the never ending conflict between divine and ordinary, good and evil, doubts and faith. In other words, the author attempts to depict all the irrational and disorderly elements of human existence.

Greene was more focused on the anguish of conflict that goes far beyond dogmatic content of any belief. Even though he was a Catholic himself, he showed creative courage to confront the predominant horror of evil and strived to represent both sides of coin. He illustrated hell with greater imaginative vividness than he did the attractions of heaven. Greene always emphasized that his characters are flawed

creatures driven by biological urgencies they cannot fully control, but even at their worst and weakest moments, he suggests that God is concerned about them. He wrote with an intense awareness of the contradictions of existence, the meaninglessness of fame, and the certainty of failure. Greene's grim view of the world and of nature of man has been shaped by his own life experiences and temperament. He adapted consistently pessimistic and tragic view of life. This outlook, however, fits in logically with his belief in the reality of hell and damnation as well as the reality and presence of evil. As he shared on multiple occasions, he has been fascinated by the problem of evil and betrayal all his life. This explains Greene's choice of major themes he explores in his work: the universality of evil, the seed of failure that is implanted in the heart of success, the sense of doom that rules this Earth and the miserable men crawling on its surface (Glicksberg 124). The religious aspect of Greene's fiction is more complex than religious belief of some of his characters. Greene explores real pain and unhappiness, obsessing over human problems rather than Catholic ones. He is interested in human beings, their psyche and everyday struggle. For Greene, religion or faith are simply part of our lives. As Glicksberg summarizes, "What makes Greene so singularly effective as a religious novelist is that he does not write *religious* novels; he writes novels that deal illuminatingly with an essential aspect of life that we call religious. He knows the heart and hope of the unbeliever as well as the vital intuitions that support the devout Catholic, and he knows, too, the devils of doubt that at times sorely afflict the believer" (128).

Greene's works illustrate that we should be cautious while labelling novel as a "religious". The subject matter of fiction does not matter as much as what the author does with it. Fiction inevitably portrays the existential conflicts of human beings, crises throughout life they must face, struggles they experience and suffering they endure. If the writer happens to be a Catholic, it might colour his interpretation of characters, the world around them and his vision of life, but the religious atmosphere and aspects that pervade his work is just that - atmosphere and background that help to depict the landscape of novel as a whole.

A catholic novel basically presents drama of sin and redemption, a plot that is concerned about guilt and atonement (Glicksberg 130). Greene himself focused on the dark side of human soul. For him, it is the sinner who best serves as an example of cardinal Christian virtues and comes closest to being a saint. In *The Heart of the Matter*,

Greene gives us a great example, describing with extraordinary insight the despair and diabolical inner workings of the mind that often overtake human relationships. The novel's main protagonist Scobie discovers that guilt and innocence are relative, not absolute terms. Greene makes the religious element psychologically and dramatically convincing by indicating that there were times when Scobie found it difficult to explain the mystery of God's actions, to understand the seeming cruelties of God. There were no happy people in this world - constantly recurring theme in Greene's fiction. Scobie thought that it was absurd to expect happiness in one's portion of life. After the novel was published, some Catholics and critics accused Greene of heresy. Greene, however, insisted on telling the truth with objectivity of insight, refusing to hide things. His faith, as it is represented in his novels, is a complex thing, perpetually in a state of conflict and paradox. As a novelist, he is naturally more attracted to the sinner, the wicked, the damned, than to the saint. Such characters provide him with fruitful content for the purposes of fiction and allow him to portray religion as a never-ending struggle between good and evil. Greene focused on exploring the moral problems that afflict modern man. He discussed questions of the meaning of life, the meaning of human actions, and man's inevitable corruption. Thus, Greene was not so interested in the religion itself, but more in inner human conflicts. He portrayed his characters as ordinary human beings who face all sorts of problems. It is these qualities that make Greene's work stand out - his tendency to identify with all mankind, guilty as well as innocent, his uncompromising revelation of the power of evil, his psychological interest in the sinful and suffering and his compassion for the torments men withstand as they face the certain knowledge of doom (Glicksberg 138).

2.3 The Dangerous Edges: A Portrait of a Writer

Henry Graham Greene was born on 2nd October 1904 in Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire. He was the son of Charles Henry Greene, who later became headmaster of Berkhamsted school, and Marion Raymond Greene. At the age of fourteen, he became a boarder at Berkhamsted school. This turned out to be the crucial event that had lasting impact on the young boy and his maturing. At school, Greene was victim of bullies and he was also struggling with divided loyalties. One of the boys bullied him, and another, whom Greene considered a good friend, turned out to be in league with the bully. He also found himself torn between loyalty to his father, the headmaster, and loyalty to his school friends who rebelled against the school's authority. At school, he had his first painful experiences with betrayal, divided loyalties and persecution. Greene himself believed that these occurrences provided a basic pattern for his fiction. It seems, however, that every period, even the worst one, had some positive outcome. The struggle with bullies, for example, strengthened his desire to become a successful writer (Greene, *A Sort of Life* 97).

Throughout his youth, Greene struggled with loss of identity and strived to find a position within society. This exertion resulted in a small personal revolt against his own parents (Sherry 138). Later, he also shortly entered the Communist Party of Great Britain in 1922, while still at Oxford. However, his conversion to the Roman Catholic Church in 1926 can be seen as a milestone of his life. Despite a conventional Anglican upbringing, upon urging of his future wife Vivien Dayrell-Browning, he took instructions in the faith and was received to the Roman Catholic Church. Thus, Catholicism and faith became a frequent underlying theme of his novels. Nevertheless, Greene did not appear to use his novels for religious purposes or to persuade anyone to become a believer. As I pointed out above, his main focus is the inner struggle of characters and how they cope with their faith and why it is significant to them. He himself was far from being a virtuous Catholic as he had many affairs throughout his life and did not behave according to the teachings of the Church.

Greene wrote twenty six novels in total, including two that were never published and those that he called "entertainments". Additionally, he wrote short stories, poetry, plays, screen-plays, biographies, children's books, essays and he was active in journalism as well. So far, at least thirty eight films and seventeen television adaptations have been made of his fictions (Barrett 423). His best novels are complex works that

focus on major religious, political, and ethical themes. He often deals with absurd situations and characters on the edge. He focuses attention on the dark side of human existence. His adult life and career are intertwined with the period of totalitarian regimes of the 20th century and with the peak of existentialism. In fact, Greene's work is primarily a protest against corrupted society, politics and those who are abusive of their power. That makes his work timeless and till today very topical. Catholicism might not be at the very base of many of these texts, but it is always there and presents a connection that helps to bind his works into recognizable pattern (Bosco 3). Though, Greene's novels never stress that one ideology is superior to other. Greene confirmed this statement in an interview by saying: "I don't want to use literature for political ends, nor for religious ends. Even if my novels happen incidentally to be political books, they're no more written to provoke changes than my so called "Catholic" novels are written to convert anyone" (Allain 78).

It appears that Graham Greene was not interested in politics where elections and votes about the degree of income tax are concerned, but it is clear that he took interest in politics where the issue of life and death was present. Indeed, he was interested in political and religious battles and ideologies. He, as an author, examined how politics or religion negatively influenced people's lives. He is concerned about the dangerous edges of life, about poor and weak rather than the powerful and they are the ones he would like to see saved and redeemed.

2.4 Literary Influences and Inspirations: From Conrad to Auden

In his essay “The Young Dickens” (1951), Graham Greene remarks that he tends to believe that “the creative writer perceives his world once and for all in childhood and adolescence, and his whole career is an effort to illustrate his private world in terms of the great public world we all share” (Greene, *Collected Essays* 83). It seems that childhood was particularly important and influential part of Greene's life. There has been an ongoing debate between scholars whether Greene embellished or exaggerated some of the stressful memories of his youth, however what seems to be more significant is the profound, painful effect these years had on Greene's imagination and how they shaped his artistic approach. Nevertheless, to fully understand and appreciate Greene's work, we have to look beyond his personal experiences and consider literary influences that are equally substantial sources of inspiration. Greene himself asserted that “The influence of early books is profound. So much of the future lies on the shelves: early reading has more influence on conduct than any religious teaching” (*Sort of Life* 52-53). Greene's accounts of his own life might have been twisted when necessary, turned around, dramatized or exaggerated, but when they deal with the books and the authors that influenced him, they present the genuine source of information. Syniard notes that “Entertaining and individualistic, Greene also carries with him the resonance of an older and distinguished literary tradition. He not only absorbed what he observed for future use in his novels but also absorbed what he read. As important to his literary biography as the life in his books were the books in his life” (23-24). Greene wrote many critical essays on a wide range of authors as well as introductions to some of their works. He absorbed the influence of writers he appreciated and from whom he felt he could learn. However, this does not mean that Greene imitated other authors. His work was distinctively his and no one else's. Even with rich literary background, he could still create the world of his own. At the same time, we cannot fully embrace and credit what Greene wrote without taking into account what he read, its effect on him and the usage of that effect. There is a great deal of authors who influenced Greene, but there are a few of especial significance in the way they shaped his writing career and development. Perhaps the most significant of all is Joseph Conrad. In *Ways of Escape*, Greene admitted how one of his early novels had been contaminated by the influence of Conrad's *The Arrow of Gold*” (15). After that he stopped reading Conrad because he felt he was having too great impact on him and his writing and his own literary style. Supposedly, Greene kept his word for more than thirty years until he found himself

reading *Heart of Darkness* while travelling to Congo. Nevertheless, we can see Greene as Conrad's successor for several reasons. First of all, they both seem to share the fascination of exotic places. The setting is often almost as important as characters themselves. They both explore the effect of the place on characters. In their works, we get to observe the struggle of a civilised man going to seed in foreign lands and examine obsessively human characteristic of betrayal - betrayal of one's country, one's friends and oneself. Lodge commented that the controversy over the Catholicism in *The Heart of the Matter* might have obscured an indebtedness the novel owes to *Heart of Darkness*, indicated not only by the similarity of title but by their similarly stringent critiques of colonialism” (Lodge, *The Art* 159-60). As important influence as Conrad was Henry James. James's fascination with and insights into lost innocence and European corruption undoubtedly found an echo in Greene. For example, “The Basement Room”, which tells the story of lost innocence with its situation of a child stumbling upon adult treachery and passion with long term tragic consequences, owes much to James's *The Turn of the Screw*. Greene admitted that he always felt that *Turn of the Screw* had much stronger sense of evil than *Heart of Darkness*. As important influence as James's novelistic practice were James's meditations on that practice. These were explored in his Prefaces, which Greene took in with the same enthusiasm to find out about his craft. The Prefaces, with their insights into the whole business of novel writing - how you use minor characters, the selection of point of view, the indivisibility of the plot and character, the technical nuts and bolts of putting a novel together and making it work - had a huge impact on Greene. Another book that particularly influenced Greene's literary approach is Percy Lubbock's classic text *The Craft of Fiction* (1921). Out of his immediate contemporaries, there was no writer Greene admired more than T. S. Eliot. Greene was likely most intrigued by Eliot's unforgettable imagistic rendering of the seediness of modern civilisation and yet the paradoxical spiritual dimensions of his work that arise in compensation from this despair (Syniard 27). In *A Sort of Life*, Greene wrote that “literature can be a far more lasting influence than religious teaching” (114). Writing those lines, Greene was supposedly thinking of Robert Browning, whose work was presented to Greene by his father and whose influence stayed with Greene for fifty years. “With Robert Browning”, he wrote, “I lived in a region of adulteries, of assignations at dark street corners, of lascivious priests and hasty dagger thrusts, and of sexual passion far more heady than romantic love (*A Sort* 115).” What Greene adapted from Browning was both thematic and technical.

Browning perfected the form of dramatic monologue, where characterisation is established through the narrator's own words and through the technical and psychological sophistication of the poet's moral relativity. Greene absorbed from Browning's dramatic monologues a lot about the technique of the first-person narration, notably its capacity for self-justification that could be a form of self-deception, and its potential for unconscious irony (Syniard 28). Greene came into maturity as a writer in 1930s and, for someone of his generation, the another poet and inescapable presence of that time was W. H. Auden. There was empathy between Greene and Auden, partly because of similarity in background and similarity too in social and political views. More importantly, what Greene and Auden shared was a particular style of dynamic, contemporary imagery. Hoggart identified some of the key characteristics of Auden as follows: the use of startling contrast, a mixture of the abstract and concrete, and a habit of conveying a particular quality or idea with a strikingly modern image” (*Auden: An Introductory Essay* 48-50). Greene himself often came up with a compelling instance of the combination of concrete with abstract. Sometimes he coupled it with the use of contrast or paradox. In the process of finding his own style, Greene undoubtedly found Auden and others an invaluable guide.

3 Greene's Use of Narrative Techniques

The aim of this part of the thesis is to deal with the method and style of narration employed in *The Heart of the Matter* in addition to studying used narrative techniques. It seems that over the years, it has become common place to read Greene's works in the light of his own life experiences, on the assumption that he has translated these experiences into his fiction. However, there is no reliable evidence available for us to assess the nature or extent of such conclusions and reassessments. The biographical approach has been similarly applied to the settings of his novels, by relating the fictional settings to Greene's travel experiences on the assumption that he felt an urge to write about events that had deep impact on him and wanted to translate them into literary form (Roston 4). Because it is difficult to untangle connections between author's life and his fiction, I will be focusing upon the novel as a text, attempting to identify narrative strategies, how they manipulate reader's response and achieve their effect. Primary interest lies with Greene's ambiguous narrative and the stylistic aspects of his writing routine.

The novel is narrated from the third-person-limited point of view, as we see action unfold through the eyes of Henry Scobie. However, Greene sometimes switches to other characters, e. g. Wilson, as a narrator. This sort of third person narration gives us better perspective on the whole story. Wilson's point of view nicely supplements Scobie's and adds other dimensions to Scobie's character. The only remnants of authorial omniscience in *The Heart of the Matter* are to provide the reader with information which is not available to Scobie himself. On two occasions the significance of events is heightened by intrusion of the author (*The Heart* 13, 121); and as I mentioned above, the rare shifts in view-point reveal Scobie as others see him. At the end of the novel, there is also an epilogue which follows Scobie's death and establishes his sanctity. Greene resorts to patterns of imagery, similes, metaphors and symbols which serve as implicit comments on the action. The juxtaposition of neutral objective details is often given metaphorical weight: "A vulture flapped and shifted on the iron roof and Wilson looked at Scobie" (*The Heart* 13). Symbolism is even more explicit in Scobie's own consciousness - the broken rosary in his drawer serves as the instrument of his betrayal of Ali, which Scobie feels is also the betrayal of God himself (*The Heart* 247). The events of the plot are depicted in linear narrative with occasional flashbacks into the past. Greene's writing is often paradoxical and ambiguous. He often leaves

readers with more questions than answers. His choices in narrative style show the protagonists' motives and actions from many different perspectives. That provides readers with unique and intimate view from which to study the characters, resulting in connection that enables the reader to get to, in Scobie's words, the heart of the matter.

3.1 Ambiguous Narrative: Manipulating Reader's Response

The ambiguity surrounding Greene's protagonists is the result of a carefully planned technique. He is not simply telling a story, or merely developing a character. Greene makes an extra effort, so he can control the reader's perception of his protagonists. He chooses to *show* characters and events as they develop, instead of telling about them. Telling is, mostly, used in a very limited manner. The narrator rarely explains motives or expresses judgment of situations or other characters. Instead, his thoughts and actions usually speak for themselves. Telling is restricted to a peculiar type and authoritative, judgemental voice is notably absent. When the narrator talks about something, he does so only from the point of view of the third person. As a result, what is being told is not at all objective. The narrator does not merely talk about character's feelings and thoughts. This sort of extra insight provides the narrative with a stronger sense of psychological realism and adds intimacy to reader's experience. The events and action seen through the eyes of protagonists are supplemented by protagonist's thoughts and opinions as they are reflected by the narrator. That is, however, where the ambiguity lies. It is not always, at all, clear whether it is simply a general commentary by the narrator or if we are faced with character's own thoughts and feelings. As Roston points out, "In this novel, while the narrator himself is not unreliable, the narrative is. The narrator is employed to create ambiguities, ambiguities of attribution, leaving us in doubt who is speaking or meditating the comments reproduced" (49). Repeatedly, statements that seem to stem from authoritative voice that we normally inscribe to a narrator turn out to be ambiguous. We, as readers, cannot firmly decide whether such a third-person accounts belong to an authorial condemnation of Scobie's actions or his own self-criticism:

[He] looked up at Fraser to see whether he could detect any surprise or suspicion. There was nothing to be read in the vacuous face, blank as a school notice-board out of term. Only his own heart-beats told him

he was guilty - that he had joined the ranks of the corrupt police officers - Bailey who had kept a safe deposit in another city, Crayshaw who had been found with diamonds, Boyston against whom nothing had been definitely proved and who had been invalidated out. They had been corrupted by money, and he had been corrupted by sentiment. Sentiment was the more dangerous, because you couldn't name its price. A man open to bribes was to be relied upon below a certain figure, but sentiment might uncoil in the heart at a name, a photograph, even a smell remembered. (*The Heart* 55)

The description above begins as narration, providing basic information about Scobie's movement and with whom he is sharing the room. That is followed by what seems to be a shift into his thoughts. Nevertheless, there is no clear answer to whom we can attribute utterances concerning sentiment or Scobie's guilt. There is no definite transition between Scobie's thoughts and authoritative voice, so naturally we wonder how reliable are these statements and how much weight we should attribute to them. Yet another example of this interesting situation presents itself e.g. when the captain of smuggling boat begs Scobie to return his letter:

[...] he kept on wiping his eyes with the back of his hand like a child - an unattractive child, the fat boy of the school. Against the beautiful and the clever and the successful, one can wage a pitiless war, but not against the unattractive. (*The Heart* 50)

The scene opens with actual description of the situation, followed by what seems to be a universal truth uttered by the narrator. However, the statement is far from being universal - most of the time, human beings are actually attracted by the beautiful, clever and successful people. That way, we quickly realize that statement above is directly linked to Scobie, who feels overwhelming pity towards weak and unattractive. Therefore, it appears there is no single consistent controlling viewpoint in the novel. The technique of narrative ambiguity is Greene's way for manipulating reader's response. As Roston concludes, throughout the novel, Greene presents an initial impression of Scobie's failures only to later modify them in his favour (53). This sort of strategy, where readers gradually re-evaluate and get closer to the central character, allowed Greene to create a protagonist who assumed he was eternally damned for his

actions, and yet in the eyes of the readers he is seen with sympathy and as a redeemed character.

Greene's choices of technique deliberately focus attention on the protagonist and support reader's identification with him. The intensity of that focus is made possible by use of the third-person narration. When we, as readers, share the experiences of the protagonists who walk along the "dangerous edge", it is difficult to remain detached and objective. Scobie's failings are almost impossible to condemn because judgement is withheld by sympathy and identification. Booth argues that an author can create sympathy for his protagonist by "control of inside views". He further explains that "the solution to the problem of maintaining sympathy despite almost crippling faults" lies in using the protagonists as the third person focus through which events and ideas are related" (245). Scobie, as flawed as he is, becomes almost heroic in his struggle because readers share his point of view. If we had a chance to look at Scobie through the eyes of others, it would probably drastically change our perception of his character. However, as I mentioned earlier, such instances are rather rare and Scobie's is primary viewpoint in the novel. If another voice had narrated the events, Scobie would most likely appear foolish. Instead, we enter Scobie's mind and watch story unfold as he sees it:

The voice was silent in the cave and his own voice replied hopelessly: No. I don't trust you. I've never trusted you. If you made me, you made this feeling of responsibility that I've always carried about like a sack of bricks. ... I can't shift my responsibility to you. If I could, I would be someone else. I can't make one of them suffer so as to save myself. I'm responsible and I'll see it through the only way I can. (*The Heart* 259)

Scobie's rejection of God and his sense of responsibility have the same effect on the reader. His point of view might be faulty and distorted by pride, but because a reader has shared Scobie's point of view throughout the novel's course, it is difficult to view him and his actions objectively. Booth explains that "In reacting to [the protagonist's] faults from the inside out, as if they were our own, we may very well not only forgive them but overlook them" (249-50). As a result, by the time Scobie decides to commit suicide, the reader is so intimately involved in the thoughts and struggles that

Scobie experiences that it is nearly impossible to remain objective because we view his shortcomings and inner battles almost as our own.

3.2 Writing a Story: Stylistic Aspects of *The Heart of the Matter*

Critics often speak of Greene's distinguished manner of writing. His novels are written in a lean, realistic style with straight, exciting plots. Unlike many of his contemporaries, he did not experiment with language or traditional narrative. The technique he uses is that of a journalist. The line between facts and fiction is frequently blurred. Because of his style, Greene is also considered as one of the most “cinematic” writers of the twentieth century. To learn more about his writing process, we can turn to Greene's own answers and interpretations from the book *The other Man: Conversations with Graham Greene* by journalist Marie-Francoise Allain. In his answers, he provides us with important insights into his work. Greene reveals that he finds it particularly difficult to come up with mere description of an action, because it is much more challenging to convey street fight than a dialogue. Apparently, the hardest part of writing is an expression of floating time. When asked about writer's precautions and rules to follow, Greene shares that “There are, of course, basic principles to be observed: adjectives are to be avoided unless they are strictly necessary; adverbs too, which is even more important. When I open a book and find that so and so has 'answered sharply' or 'spoken tenderly', I shut it again: it's the dialogue itself which should express the sharpness or the tenderness without any need to use adverbs to underline them” (Čulík 379). Greene was fond of efficient and economical style of writing. He considered a great deal of explaining and describing as synonym to bad style. He rather let his readers to use their own imagination, to create their own world and images, so they do not have to remember whether a character wore a blue jacket or had red hair. Dialogues usually stand above the description of actions. Delineation should be secondary. Greene's descriptions are sometimes labelled as cinematic, because of emphasis he puts on floating moments and action. His experience of watching and reviewing films had significant effect on his writing technique - descriptions written as with a mobile rather than a static camera, economy of expression, shifts between foreground and background, and a strong sense of place:

Three merchant officers from the convoy in the harbour came into view, walking up from the quay. They were surrounded immediately by small boys wearing school caps. The boys' refrain came faintly up to Wilson like a nursery rhyme: 'Captain want jig jig, my sister pretty girl school-teacher, captain want jig jig.' The bearded Indian frowned

over intricate calculations on the back of an envelope - a horoscope, the cost of living? When Wilson looked down into the street again the officers had fought their way free, and the schoolboys had swarmed again round a single able-seaman: they led him triumphantly away towards the brothel near the police station, as though to the nursery. (*The Heart* 8)

Such vivid descriptions of places and people provide Greene's novels with rich background and help to set the pace for their main plots. Greene rejected the static viewpoint of the filmic camera. "When I describe a scene, I capture it with the moving eye of a cine-camera rather than with the photographer's eye—which leaves it frozen," he admitted to Allain. In the past, authors like Walter Scott or the Victorians were influenced by paintings and constructed their backgrounds as though they were static. Opposed to them, Greene worked with the camera, following his characters and their movements, so the landscape moves (Allain 132–3).

In Greene's eyes, metaphors are just as undesirable and dangerous as adjectives and adverbs. As a young man, Greene was inspired by metaphysical poets and tried to produce so called prose poetry. Later on, he abandoned this style, focusing on more realistic and straightforward prose without symbolism. Nevertheless, there are still many metaphors and similes across his prose and some are especially inventive:

A lamp-lit bridge across the Danube gleamed like the buckle of a garter. (*Stamboul train* 134)

The rooms were badly heated, and yellow fingers of winter fog felt for cracks in the many windows. ("Proof Positive" 183)

He was just too late. The flower had withered upwards from the town; the white stones that marked the edge of the precipitous hill shone like candles in the new dusk. (*The Heart* 23)

All the techniques that I listed above contribute to Greene's unique narrative style. Ambiguous narrative, powerful dialogues, cinematic descriptions or occasional use of metaphors, similes and other devices help to present Greene's conscientious, precise and responsible narrative. What gives his excessively grim worldview its plausibility, and redeems sometimes uneventful plots, is the incredible amount of

careful observation and detail which Greene crams into his novels. These striking descriptions enrich his works and bring the characters to life, creating their own universe, so called Greeneland.

4 *The Heart of the Matter*: Greene's Study of Human Nature

In this part of the thesis, I plan to give a thorough analysis of the novel. I will look at complexities of the plot, Greene's characters, their relationships and the role of the landscape. The crucial part of the analysis is focused on Greene's unique concept of pity and his, sometimes controversial, representation of faith in the novel.

4.1 Plot overview

Henry Scobie, nicknamed "Scobie the Just", because of his honesty, lives in a British colonial outpost, on the scorching coast of Africa. The heat and moisture are stifling, the whole town is dreary. Not only is the whole place reeking with physical discomfort but the town is also riddled with corruption. There is vicious gossip at the club, there is smuggling of diamonds, there is a filthy brothel just across the street from Scobie's police office and most importantly, there is the unsettling atmosphere of Scobie's loveless home. His wife Louise is portrayed as an unattractive, unpleasant woman who is in exact opposition with Scobie. Their only child Catherine has died at young age and her photograph on the table is a constant reminder of their loveless home.

However, Scobie does not complain. He is strangely attracted to the ugly colony. He finds beauty in all unwanted, lost beings, which hold him by an unfathomable sense of pity. His strong sense of pity for the outsiders, underdogs and lost souls, makes the ugly irresistibly attractive to him. He feels zero responsibility towards intelligent, rich and beautiful creatures because he feels that they can fend for themselves. He seems to think that it is his purpose to protect and help those who are disinherited from society.

Scobie is fully devoted to his duty and does not have any ambitious plans. He does not mind when he is passed over for a promotion, but Louise cannot bear that. She insists on leaving the colony and pushes Scobie to the edge. Meanwhile, a young colleague and rival Edward Wilson arrives in the colony and shortly after, he falls in love with Scobie's wife. Louise, however, does not love Wilson and wants to depart for South Africa. Scobie yearns for Louise's happiness and tries to get a loan from a bank. The bank cannot help Scobie and so he is forced to borrow money from a corrupt and crafty Syrian trader Yusef. Louise leaves for South Africa and Scobie is finally left alone.

One of the main Scobie's duties is preventing illegal diamond smuggling and control of foreign ships to stop them from handing over encrypted messages to enemies. Since the novel is set in 1942, the war was underway. Scobie is, however, overwhelmed by his strong sense of pity for everyone, not just his wife. He feels sorry for the Portuguese captain who carries a suspicious letter. Instead of turning in the letter, he burns it. That is the first step in the wrong direction and Scobie slowly starts down the slippery slope.

One of those days, the rescue boat arrives with few shipwrecked survivors. Among them is Helen Rolt, a nineteen-year-old widow, whose husband died during shipwreck. Eventually, Helen recovers and settles down in the town. She becomes Scobie's friend and mistress. In his naivety, Scobie believes he can keep this a secret, but soon after the whole colony finds out about the romance between the two.

The hearsay about Scobie's affair reaches Louise's ears and she decides to return back home in advance. Louise asks Scobie to receive Communion together but he is trying to avoid going as he is well aware that he committed a mortal sin of adultery. He comes up with various excuses, finally goes to confession but he is unable to promise Father Rank that he will break up with Helen. Scobie is conflicted about the whole situation: he does not want to leave Helen but at the same time he cannot admit his affair to Louise because he knows it would hurt her.

In the meantime, Yusef gets hold of the letter that Scobie wrote to Helen and blackmails Scobie. He forces him to help out with the diamond smuggling. The situation becomes even worse when Scobie's loyal servant Ali becomes a witness to Scobie's illegal dealings with Yusef and also his affair with Helen. Scobie is paranoid and he no longer trusts anyone. He complains about Ali in front of Yusef, who takes matters into his own hands and gets rid of the servant. When Scobie learns about Ali's death, he feels crushing guilt. He feels responsible for what happened to Ali and realizes that he lost his only friend. Scobie is pushed over the edge by the death of his beloved friend and feels like he is only hurting those people around him. He comes to conclusion that the best way how to deal with his hopeless situation is suicide. However, he knows it would crush Louise if she or anyone else found out about him taking his own life, so he tries impossible to make it all look natural. After all, the suicide is considered a mortal sin and act of blasphemy. Scobie starts writing a diary; he

pretends to be insomniac and complains about suffering from heart attacks. In the diary, Scobie carefully and with great details maps the development of his illness, so there is no doubt or suspicion about him committing suicide. He hopes that after he dies, Louise will get paid his life insurance and that she can be finally happy and free. When he makes all the arrangements, he takes a big dose of sleeping pills and dies. However, Scobie's plan fails as by the end, Wilson reveals that Scobie actually committed suicide.

4.2 Saints and Sinners: The Characters in *The Heart of the Matter*

Graham Greene has often been praised for the quality of his observations and accurate creation of an atmosphere of the period he was writing about. However, his novels stand out among the others especially because of the variety of characters that he brings to life in his stories. As Testa points out, “Greene's ethos, throughout his authorship, has primarily been character driven” (8). Greene's treatment of heroism differs from heroism often conceived through terms of strength, bravery and boldness. His protagonists are usually portrayed as self-aware, vulnerable and full of inner struggle. The conflicts lie within the characters. Most of his protagonists are lonely, alienated people who live in remote places. Greene's recurring hero is a haunted man who is seeking either lost peace of mind or an escape from his mental torment.

The modern authors reacted against romanticism which brought with it inevitable disdain for the romantic hero (Karl 85). Greene was also interested in the darker aspects of life, rejecting the superficial facade of gentility that surrounded romantic heroes. His “heroes” are oftentimes fallen, struggling outsiders, all of whom, in the absence of God, try to believe in themselves. Having assumed that the romantic hero is dead, Greene still believed that man can be heroic, although his form of heroism takes on a different shape. As Karl notes, “Greene feels that he must allow for the “fall” that is central to Aristotle's view of the tragic hero” (87). His heroes often seem closer to demons than to saints. Greene believed that the imperfect man, the one closest to the devil, is precisely the one who is in need of God. Such “anti-heroes” live within rotten world, the world filled with corruption. Yet, Greene's protagonists try to regain some sense of balance in this decayed world. Their heroism can be seen through their attempts to find God in what appears to be the devil-controlled universe.

All the characters feel real in their struggle, innocence and corruption. They are further reinforced by evocative settings. The world of Greene's novels is unhappy world, desolate and harsh, populated by heroes without hope who are constantly betrayed by their most precious virtues. The universe that Greene represents is also mainly the world of doubt rather than the world of faith. Perpetual doubting makes Greene interested in the “dangerous edges” and paradoxes of human nature where good coincides with evil. His characters, then, are often paradoxical figures such as “honourable thief” or “tender murderer”. The essence of Greene's writing is based on human experience. His humanism leads to emphasis on such values as love, pity, doubt

and responsibility (Hilský 37). The main focus is on failings, vulnerabilities and doubts of his characters. They are portrayed as fallen creatures that carry with them the stain of sin. Greene's heroes are often victims of their own love and faith; they are caught between pain and despair, and are afraid of damnation. This obsession with evil, the dark side of human nature and life connects most of Greene's works. Čulík went as far as to call Greene "the poet of awkwardness", meaning that Greene was mainly preoccupied with seamier side of human existence, e.g. failure, alienation, disappointment, betrayal, humiliation or solitude (5).

Some of Greene's characters are also partly autobiographical. Greene's own brother served as an inspiration for characters, who were con-men repeatedly getting into financial troubles through questionable themes: e.g. Anthony Farrant in *England Made Me* (1935) or Jones in *The Comedians* (1966). Another examples of partly autobiographical characters are Fowler (*The Quiet American* 1955) and Query (*A Burnt-Out Case* 1961) who are the writers, seeking the detachment. Another interesting aspect about Greene's characters are names he uses for them. He seemed to enjoy playing games with the names of his protagonists as we can find curious patterns and pairings of names in his texts. Most striking examples are the names that are associated with birds: Phuong (Phoenix) from *The Quiet American*, Kite and Crowe in *Brighton Rock*, Crane, Raven or Henne-Falcon. Greene himself said that he "can't start writing until a character has a name (Donaghy 83). Neil Sinyard also highlights importance of names for Greene: "Greene always chose the names of his characters carefully" (131). Many other critics were occupied by studying names in Greene's fiction. There were numerous characters whose names start with the letter C. Greene was superstitious and after failure of his early novels, he decided to abandon C. Greene, however, broke his own rule and by the end of his career 97 characters had last names beginning with C. As I have indicated above, Greene certainly did name most of his characters with care and cleverness. He made use of the names of family members, friends and made use of literature he has read as well. As Gale found out, Greene created 1353 characters with names or capitalized titles. Out of 1353, 749 characters have last names and 661 have first names (5). Greene did not overuse many names, but he obviously had some favourites. Names with the highest counts (including certain variations) are Henry (35), Mary (25), Peter (24), Joseph (23), William (19), John (17), Michael (15), Thomas (12), Charles (11) etc. (Gale 5). There are considerably less female characters than male. The

name Henry was perhaps inspired by Greene's father whose name was Charles Henry Greene. Additionally, even Greene's own full name is Henry Graham Greene. The perfect example of Greene's cleverness and wit is the character of Henry Cooper in "The Overnight Bag" (1965). It is the name of the character, which might or might not be hiding a dead baby in his luggage. This character was named after Henry Copper, the recognized English boxer, and the only man who has won Lonsdale belts in 1961, 1965 and 1970. Coincidentally, 1965 was the year when Greene's story about Henry Cooper was published. The most significant figure among Henrys is tortured Henry Scobie who Greene chose as a main protagonist in *The Heart of the Matter*.

4.2.1 Henry Scobie

Major Henry Scobie, the main protagonist of *The Heart of the Matter*, is the perfect case in point. The novel's plot is linear and it is mainly driven by perceptive insights into the mind of conflicted Scobie. Fifty years old Henry Scobie is a deputy police commissioner, who is on duty in an unnamed British colony in West Africa during the Second World War. Scobie is living there with his wife Louise who seems constantly miserable. Thanks to his wife, Scobie has become a Catholic. He is not only a devout man, but above all he is an honest and incorruptible police officer: "He didn't drink, he didn't fornicate, he didn't even lie, but he never regarded this absence of sin as virtue" (*The Heart* 105). Similarly as other Greene's heroes, Scobie has almost no friends with the exception of his loyal servant Ali. He feels alienated from his wife and other people around him. His worldview is incorrigibly bleak: "What an absurd thing it was to expect happiness in a world so full of misery. Point me out the happy man and I will point you out either extreme egotism, evil—or else an absolute ignorance" (*The Heart* 116). He seems to have accepted the way life is. He is not an ambitious man and he resigned himself to living plain boring life. Scobie almost seems to cherish the meanness of life in the colony, for here "you could love human beings nearly as God loved them, knowing the worst" (*The Heart* 41). For many years, Scobie managed to balance between doing his job and doing it too well. His colleagues and associates call him "Scobie the Just", but it is used rather to mock him than to show admiration. He has reputation for his resistance to corruption and that does not make him popular among other officers in the colony. Behind his back, they say that he has "gone native". There is even a rumour going around that he is in the pay of the Syrians and that is long before he gets involved in the business with Yusef. The widespread rumour leads to the arrival

of Scobie's adversary, Wilson, who is a British intelligence officer and who is supposed to report back to his supervisors about the situation in the colony. Nonetheless, Scobie has grown wise in the ways of the natives, and he no longer endeavours to enforce a British "justice" upon them. He is committed to doing his job well, but at the same time we notice his lack of efficiency and policing power. He is rather self-conscious about his job and his dialogue with God only represents how serious he is about his function: "I'm not a policeman for nothing - responsible for order, for seeing justice is done" (*The Heart* 236). Scobie believes that being a policeman it is his duty to take care of all the deprived and lost people. He, however, acquires his own conception of justice using his own moral judgement according to which he always tried to take into account circumstances of each individual. According to Lehman, Greene's technique of presenting Scobie's work is characteristic of the detective story: "Humble, prosaic, oafish, well-meaning, slow – these are some of the adjectives called to mind by the policemen that populate detective stories" (57).

Scobie's main concern is for his wife. He reconciled himself to being passed over for a promotion. His wife Louise, however, can't withstand Scobie's failure and feels embarrassed in front of her friends. Scobie's loveless marriage is at the centre of the story. Scobie has an overwhelming sense of pity and responsibility. He is never so moved by his wife than when she looks ugly and vulnerable: "He lifted the moist hand and kissed the palm: he was bound by the pathos of her unattractiveness" (*The Heart* 35). Scobie feels it is his duty and responsibility to make his wife content and happy. Louise keeps complaining and says she cannot stand the tropical climate. She repeatedly begs Scobie to let her leave to South Africa: "Ticki, I can't bear this place any longer. I know I've said it before, but I mean it this time. I shall go mad. Ticki, I'm so lonely. I haven't a friend, Ticki" (*The Heart* 58). Scobie is desperate to make his wife happy, and so he makes a promise that he will do anything within his power to make her wish come true, even though he knows he does not have enough money for her to travel to South Africa. Scobie starts to believe that unhappiness of Louise is his fault. This sense of pity and responsibility for others ultimately is his undoing. All Scobie craves is the blessing of peace, but that is unattainable. As Glicksberg notes, "Scobie disciplined himself not to let emotions get the better of him, for in this climate it is dangerous to yield to love or hate" (131). Through Scobie, Greene also shows that even though men may sink to the lowest level, accept bribes and succumb to corruption, some might refuse to sell their

souls. Scobie is such example and he is prepared to accept the consequences of his actions. He represents the most striking embodiment of that feeling of responsibility and pity, which is so often seen among Greene's heroes. Scobie sacrifices himself for others and gives up what he considers the most precious, his eternal salvation. His ultimate breakdown is then religious in nature. The corruption, the adultery and above all his false communion, seem to condemn him to damnation.

4.2.2 Louise Scobie

“Literary Louise” is Henry's snobbish Catholic wife. Opposed to Scobie, she is immensely unhappy living in the colony. She complains she has no friends, and she is disappointed in Scobie's stagnating career. Louise is not very popular and she is well aware of her lack of acquaintances. Guilt, pity and responsibility are main forces shaping their relationship: “I've been here too long to go. He thought to himself, poor Louise, if I had left it to her, where should we be now? And he admitted straight away that they wouldn't be here - somewhere far better, better climate, better pay, better position. She would have taken every opening for improvement: [...] I've landed her here, he thought, with the odd premonitory sense of guilt he always felt as though he were responsible for something in the future he couldn't even foresee” (*The Heart* 17). Scobie does not love his wife, but ultimately he cares about her very much. He feels it is his fault that she is miserable at all times. The only joy and passion of hers is literature and poetry which is an interest that eventually draws her closer to Wilson.

Scobie is desperate to provide the better life for his wife but Louise does not give him anything in return. She is demanding but fails to see how much pressure she is putting on her husband. She is not beautiful anymore and there are no admirable qualities about her. That is, however, something that Scobie likes about her. Her unattractiveness, ugliness even, make Scobie feel strongly about his wife. The pity and sympathy he feels towards his wife function like glue for their marriage. Scobie is well aware that he helped to shape his and his wife's life and he is responsible for who they are and how they live their lives: “Besides, it had been a very early photograph, and he no longer cared to be reminded of the unformed face, the expression calm and gentle with lack of knowledge, the lips parted obediently in the smile the photographer had demanded. Fifteen years form a face, gentleness ebbs with experience, and he was always aware of his own responsibility. He had led the way: the experience that had come to her was the experience selected by him. He had formed her face” (*The Heart*

8). He is so hard on himself thanks to permanent sense of guilt for having persuaded Louise to come to this “hell-hole” and then doing little to gain promotion or moving away.

Scobie and his wife are also bound by the cruel loss they suffered together. They lost their daughter Catherine when she was a little girl, and it might be this tragedy that made Scobie so drawn to those who are wounded, weak and vulnerable. Louise is very perceptive and even though she knows that Scobie does not love her, she tries to keep their marriage together. People laugh at Louise behind her back, calling her “Literary Louise” while she appears to be depressed, sometimes unable to get out of the bed and frequently crying. The painful marriage is painted with plenty psychologically accurate details. Psychological depth of the novel might be inspired by Greene's own troubled marriage at the time. As Čulík notes, “... it is noticeable at first sight, that *The Heart of the Matter* mirrors personal problems. It is an anatomy of his own emotional relationship with his wife, a swan song of a love that is falling apart. Scobie's experience is undoubtedly Greene's own experience” (263). The loveless marriage is wretched and haunted by wounds of the past. Nevertheless, through Wilson's eyes, we can see Louise in more positive light.

4.2.3 Edward Wilson

Wilson is a newcomer to the colony and Scobie's main rival. Compared to Scobie, Wilson is young, naive and inexperienced man. He is a romantic who loves poetry. After meeting Louise, he immediately falls in love with her. His clumsy attempts at seducing her fail and his hatred of Scobie grows steadily stronger. Like some of the other characters, Wilson feels isolated and lonely. He shares the room with Harris who has been in Africa for several years as a cable censor. They both can't stand the place: “I hate the place. I hate the people. I hate the bloody niggers” (*The Heart* 22). As we learn later on, Wilson is actually a spy who was sent to the colony. Louise is kind to him and that makes him even more obsessed with her. His naivety is presented by his romantic but empty declarations of love for Louise. Wilson and Louise also embody the literary awareness. Wilson's interest in poetry is emphasized when he insists on publishing his own poem for his school magazine. His enjoyment of poetry along with Louise's nickname are clear indicator of that. Wilson's love of poetry, however, stands in sharp contrast to his pettiness.

Wilson is portrayed as a weak and vengeful man. There are almost no admirable qualities about him. According to some critics, Wilson's weakness can be seen as representation of the fall of the imperial prestige. Martin Green notes that "Wilson and Harris are mercilessly harried and mocked by their author because of their lack of fire and force, their failure in master-class style" (Testa 369). Even though Wilson is described as rather repulsive and unpleasant character, it is worth noting that characterization of others in the novel is mostly at mercy of Scobie's observations and opinions.

4.2.4 Helen Rolt

Helen is a nineteen-year-old shipwreck survivor who just lost her husband. She had to live through horrendous forty days stranded in a lifeboat at sea. Along with the other survivors of the shipwreck, she arrives at the colony. Scobie is drawn to her in part because she reminds him of his lost daughter. She is found weak and starved while holding on to an album of old postage stamps. He feels strong urge to take care of her, to save her. Pity makes him increasingly interested in the young widow. As they become closer, though, Scobie begins a passionate affair with Helen. Her presence at the colony only further complicates things because Scobie is not good at keeping it a secret and eventually everyone, including Louise, learns about their affair. Early on, it becomes apparent that Scobie does not have a good relationship with his wife. He thinks often about his responsibility towards her and he feels guilty, but there is no sign of love for his wife. It is with Helen that Scobie experiences momentary happiness. Unfortunately, the feeling of love and happiness does not last long. After the night that Scobie spent with Helen, he reflects: "Was it the butterfly that died in the act of love? But human beings were condemned to consequences. The responsibility as well as the guilt was his (...) he knew what he was about. He had sworn to preserve Louise's happiness and now he had accepted another and contradictory responsibility. He felt tired by all the lies he would sometimes have to tell; he felt the wounds of those victims who had not yet bled" (*The Heart* 148). In a way, Helen represents Scobie's downfall since he is well aware that being with her equals committing a serious sin of adultery. The whole affair leads to more lies and deceit and that slowly destroys Scobie. His feeling of entrapment stems from conflicting loyalties between loyalty to his wife and his mistress, and his intense sense of pity for both.

4.2.5 Ali, Yusef and Scobie

Ali has been Scobie's right hand and servant for fifteen years. His relationship with Scobie is very much a master-servant relationship, but at the same time Scobie trusts Ali like he trusts no one else and perhaps he is the only person that Scobie loves. Ali never betrays Scobie and every time Scobie comes back, he has Ali waiting for him there. Ali takes the best care of Scobie as he cooks for him and sees to it that his bed is set up etc. However, there is much more to their relationship. All these duties are typical of a servant, but Ali also provides Scobie with his companionship and genuine care. When left alone with Ali on the road to the town of Pemberton, Scobie felt happiest: "He could see in the driver's mirror Ali nodding and beaming. It seemed to him that this was all he needed of love or friendship. He could be happy with no more in the world than this" (*The Heart* 78).

The complication ensues when Scobie compromises his own moral standards as he borrows money from a Syrian black trader, Yusef. The role of Yusef in the narrative is significant as he plays an important part in Scobie's downfall and also mirrors Scobie's spirituality (Testa 388). He is depicted as the devil, the embodiment of evil within the story. It seems as if Yusef reflects corruption beneath Scobie's virtues and similarly, we can see Ali as reflection of Scobie's loyalty and honesty. With Ali's death, Scobie's goodness also fades away. Dealings with Yusef eventually pull Scobie into illegal diamond smuggling operation and it escalates with Scobie indirectly approving of Ali's murder. Scobie's own moral decline is expedited when Scobie turns a blind eye to Yusef's smuggling activities. Later on, Scobie realizes that Ali has found out about his involvement with Yusef and his affair with young Helen. He is desperate to keep all of this a secret so at the end he agrees to let Yusef help him with his "problem". Yusef tells Scobie: "Do not worry. Leave everything to me, Major Scobie. I will find out whether you can trust him. ... I am going to help you, Major Scobie. That is all" (*The Heart* 240). As I have mentioned earlier, trust and betrayal are among the main themes that Greene explores in his novels. Ali was the only person who Scobie used to trust, but as the story unfolds he feels alone and betrayed. Scobie has been lying to others and to himself and eventually becomes suspicious of his loyal servant as well. Yusef's understanding of trust between two people gives us insight about his real nature: "'It is a bad thing not to trust ... One must always have boys one trusts. You must always know more about them than they know about you.' That, apparently, was his concept of trust"

(*The Heart* 239). Scobie only fully realizes what he has gotten himself into when they find Ali's slashed body. Throughout the novel, Scobie is an honest and observant narrator. However, there is certain naivety or moral blindness when it comes to Yusef and Ali. We can perceive this "blindness" in Scobie's naive agreement to Yusef's help and in his unfounded distrust of Ali. Scobie is simply incapable of seeing both of those men for who they are. Ali has been a faithful servant of his for many years. He devotedly followed Scobie into danger and during his long journeys in Africa. On the other hand, Scobie is well aware of Yusef's activities and character. Yet, he lets Yusef get too close to him. Later on, Yusef convinces Scobie that Ali is spying on them. He concludes that they need to get rid of Ali. This seems to be the breaking point for Scobie and his morality. Greene employs various symbols underlining Scobie's decline: Scobie reaches into his pocket and touches "the broken rosary grating on his nails," almost as if the rosary itself is scratching upon his conscience (*The Heart* 282). On one level, the broken rosary can represent Scobie's conflicted Catholicism. However, the rosary can also serve as a more abstract symbol of decline that have been employed throughout the narrative, such as Scobie's distorted view of Ali, or Scobie's own recognition that his heart has changed: "He thought: my heart has hardened, and he pictured the fossilized shells one picks up on the beach" (*The Heart* 241). All the details and symbols in the story are closely tied to matters of faith and spirituality: "It seemed to him that he had rotten so far that it was useless to make an effort. God was lodged in his body and his body was corrupting outwards from that seed" (*The Heart* 241). According to Testa, the network of symbols in *The Heart of the Matter* serves as surrogate course that used to be conveyed through action in earlier Greene's works: "In *The Heart of the Matter*, Greene emphatically interiorizes his thriller: the drama is rendered within Scobie, and it is gauged through symbols which give the reader some standard through which to understand the process of what could be a remotely abstract process of mental deterioration" (390). Scobie's responsibility for Ali's death rests heavily on his conscience for his failure of trust and his blindness to what is occurring before his eyes. Therefore, the roles of Ali and Yusef are vital to the story. Each of them reflects the opposite sides of human nature: loyalty, betrayal and good and evil. They both push Scobie in different direction and both serve as crucial catalysts for Scobie's tragic end.

4.3 Settings in *The Heart of the Matter*: Exoticism of Greenland

As a novelist, Greene brought to his writing an unusually rich and diverse experience of the world. As I have mentioned before, he has been praised for the quality of his observation and creation of an appropriate atmosphere. Greenland is tainted, oppressive landscape, full of decay and corruption (Watts 152-3). He repeated using the same exotic locations from mid-century Africa, Latin America, and the Far East to Caribbean. Greene's recurrent use of exotic landscapes in his novels is one of the most distinctive features of his work. The interest in Africa plays an important role throughout whole Greene's opus. In 1936, Greene visited Africa for the first time when he travelled to the dangerous and little known inland parts of Liberia. *The Heart of the Matter* is set in Sierra Leone during WWII, the landscape and period that Greene experienced firsthand. Nationally and racially mixed society of Freetown is dominated by British colonial officers. Scobie's relationship with the colonial society of Freetown is not very good by the time the novel begins. He fails to feel at home with the English colonial community. English officers strictly follow their own set of norms and rules. However, Scobie's relationship with Africa and native people is thriving. Scobie has no illusions about nature of the land, but there he feels at home. Paradoxically, he feels more compassion and love towards Africa and its inhabitants than he feels towards his own people:

Why, he wondered, swerving the car to avoid a dead pye-dog, do I love this place so much? Is it because here human nature hasn't had time to disguise itself? Nobody here could ever talk about a heaven on earth. Heaven remained rigidly in its proper place on the other side of death, and on this side flourished the injustices, the cruelties, the meanness that elsewhere people so cleverly hushed up. Here you could love human beings nearly as God loved them, knowing the worst. (*The Heart* 41)

In contrast, author's descriptions of African colony emphasize desolate, filthy and dark aspects of the place. There are cockroaches and rats everywhere you look, and humidity is so great that wounds take weeks to heal. The smell is terrible and place seems to be rotting away. Sweat is omnipresent. Sierra Leone is developed into a metaphor for human seediness, a place of moral degradation and spiritual negligence. As Boehmer notes, "Africa is not only a place of 'unexplained brutality', ... it is also a

reflector for the psychological state of Europe, and a possible catalyst for its healing” (156). Greene is openly critical of colonialism. The contrast between black-ruled and conquered nations seized his imagination. He expressed that, “To a stranger, I think, coming from a European colony, Monrovia and coastal Liberia would be genuinely impressive. He would find simplicity, a pathos about the place which would redeem it from the complete seediness of a colony like Sierra Leone” (Greene, *The Journey* 243). In *The Quiet American*, Greene voices his own dissatisfaction with colonialism in the jaded observation, “It's always the same wherever one goes—it's not the most powerful rulers who have the happiest populations” (49). *The Heart of the Matter* shows that there are visible and invisible barriers between the colonial officials and their families, and the native population. The microcosmic Britain, which isolates the British officers and excludes the colonized local people from their lives, does not provide them with a safe haven. There's transfer of lifestyle, habits, sports, institutions and codes of conduct from Britain, but all the British officials are desperate and miserable, living in the hostile environment. The British colony is plagued by harsh climatic conditions; moreover there's hate, jealousy, gossip, murders, suicides, smuggling, blackmail, adultery, all devastating forces for the colony and its inhabitants. The settings quite often subordinate cultural specificity in order to convey a “pervasive sense of corruption and despair”. However, compared to other novels, Greene takes little interest in political affairs as personal issues occupy the foreground. We can note that the settings exist as a symbolic rendering of the decay, betrayal and corruption while mirroring the inner states and conflicts of characters.

Some critics agreed that Greene's seedy, dark and negative descriptions are exaggerated and overdone. However, the geographical locations represented in the novels correspond to the actual places outside the fiction, many of which Greene visited himself. In *Ways of Escape* (1980), Greene protests against such accusations, claiming that the settings of his novels are firmly grounded in the factuality of his own experience: “'This is Indo-China,' I want to exclaim, 'this is Mexico, this is Sierra Leone carefully and accurately described.’” As Spurling points out, the descriptions of Greenland possess a genuine realism: “Greenland is real. No European writer since Conrad has put the hot, poor and foully governed places of the Earth on paper as vividly as Greene” (74). It is true that Greene repeatedly sought out “dangerous edges” of life. Greenland is much wider, deeper and paradoxical than what critics and journalists

suggested. In his autobiography, Greene characterized Greenland with the quote from Browning's "Bishop Blougram's Apology":

Our interest's on the dangerous edge of things.

The honest thief, the tender murderer,

The superstitious atheist, demirep

That loves and saves her soul in new French books--

We watch while these in equilibrium keep

The giddy line midway. (*A Sort of Life* 115)

These dangerous edges consist of the most occurrences in life whose tragic character is sometimes concealed by thin line of civilization – wars, revolutions, dictatorships, political and economic crisis, backstage political and espionage games, alienation, betrayal, failure and suffering. The love in Greenland is tragic and often ends with death. Only people who are acquisitive, selfish and mean reach some level of success. This jungle, the region of Greenland, virtually describes natural human state.

The settings and environment might be more influential than we realize. According to Kohlberg's psychological research, the individual's conception of justice changes and develops over time as the individual interacts with the environment (Suma Aleya John 155). In *The Heart of the Matter*, Scobie tries to preserve his integrity in the world without any moral values. Greene's hell-like descriptions of Africa only heighten Scobie's dissonance and inner conflicts in an isolated, almost claustrophobic setting. Greene is very capable of conveying the mood and climate of depravity. Most of his moral themes are influenced by his faith. The fundamental keystones in Greenland are sin and unhappiness. Greenland represents the world that God has deserted. Most of the times, the characters are not in control of their own lives. *The Heart of the Matter* shows Greene's tragic vision with the highest intensity. Some critics have expressed that the exotic settings of the novel do not play major role. They believe that Greene could have set his works in any place. However, it is hard to imagine that Scobie would undergo the same physical and emotional transformation e.g. in London. Africa is not merely an exotic prop. Pierloot suggests that the motif of life on the frontier is particularly important for Greene's writing (29-31). A border always implies separation

or alienation. It evokes the sense of conflicting allegiances. Geographical borders, physical and mental barriers function as important joints in the structure of his stories. It is hard to imagine more remote place than West Africa during World War II. The war made travelling to and from Africa highly dangerous. The Europeans in Africa were practically isolated from the rest of the world. In that way, the setting imposes a further constraint on the characters. The white people in the colony find themselves in different social and political circumstances. Scobie's physical alienation reflects the spiritual alienation and conflict. Greene's idea of hell is non-metaphysical one. He is convinced that if there is hell, it is omnipresent in our world. If the depths of Dante's hell were frozen, Greene's are humid and subtropical. The opening pages of *The Heart of the Matter* immediately set the dark tone that foreshadows upcoming tragic events. The people of Freetown are surrounded by the stifling air, unbearable heat and humidity and all kinds of diseases. The extreme poverty makes it difficult to see the difference between good and evil: "the guilt and innocence were as relative as the wealth" (*The Heart* 15). The climate and the surroundings inevitably start to affect the protagonists.

4.3.1 The Settings and Inner State of Characters

As I have tried to outline in the previous chapter, the setting is crucial for how it provides emphasis upon characters, their development and their inner state. The setting is inextricable from the plot and characters and semiotic structure of the text. The spaces within the novel do not necessarily represent essential attributes of locations but rather they are shifting attributes, dependent on the perspective or frame of mind of Scobie and sometimes Wilson. The setting is indivisible from characters and vice versa. As Paul O'Prey observes, "For the whites, physical alienation is a metaphor for inner alienation; their actual exile, their separation from their roots and 'nostalgia for something lost,' are all indicative of a more serious spiritual 'shipwreck'..." (86). Additionally he points out wasteland imagery in the narrative: "The vivid sense of wasteland, the seediness and sordidness of their adopted home is used as an image for a world abandoned by hope and by God" (86).

There is conformity of setting with character, yet the emphasis is always on the character. Characters reflect many human flaws and shortcomings. There's snobbery, scheming, boredom, loneliness, hypochondria and so on. Such a place then represents an archetypal "white-man's grave" (Testa 386), yet it mirrors Scobie's own condition: "... he felt his personality crumble with the slow disintegration of lies" (*The Heart* 203).

Scobie's inner thoughts often develop through sense of exile, decay and isolation. He was feeling as if "life was closing in on him" (*The Heart* 191). Isolation and sense of entrapment are important themes of the novel. All characters are profoundly isolated from one another on an emotional level: "Their silences seemed to isolate them" (*The Heart* 189). In addition to being isolated from each other, characters are also isolated from God, which is especially true for Scobie who feels disconnected from God: "As for God, he could speak to Him only as one speaks to an enemy - there was bitterness between them. He moved his hand on the table, and it was as though his loneliness moved too and touched the tips of his fingers. 'You and I,' his loneliness said, 'you and I'" (*The Heart* 231). Being set in Africa during World War II, Freetown only underlines the feeling of isolation, loneliness and alienation. Scobie's frame of mind is conscientiously reflected in his surroundings. Greene's genius in the novel lies in his ability to portray the process of Scobie's decline through a consonance of the character and setting.

4.3.2 Greene's Distinctive Representation of the World

In his novels, Greene has created his own realistic portrait of the world. He turned from romanticism and history to the present day and objective, almost cynical view of the world. He realized that life is writing stories on its own and he only needs to look around and listen: "I wasn't seeking sources, I stumbled on them, though perhaps a writer's instinct may have been at work when I bought my return ticket to Saigon or Port-au-Prince or Asunción" (*Ways* 9). Greene used his extraordinary talent of attentiveness to details and context, which were overlooked by others. Greene's realism accurately traces convoluted border of the reality but he never crosses the border as he creates his own world. It consists of physical and spiritual sphere. Greene employs subjective feelings, imagination, dreams; he is interested in driving forces behind human behaviour, landscape, city and people. One emerges from another, permeates one another and creates unique complex. As Čulík points out, Greene was able to achieve rare and magical effect that can only be achieved by charismatic artist: his characters come to life. They are no longer artificial figures inflated by the plot or pushed around by the author. They live their own lives, act unpredictably, often against the will and intentions of their creator (12). Consequently, we feel as if the characters lived long before the novel began and if not dead by the end of the novel, they might live somewhere in the world after we finish the book. We might feel that we have

encountered resembling characters before, that we have experienced described situations on our own or have heard similar expression. Greene excelled at apt depiction of what are people thinking, feeling and experiencing, but what they cannot express. Additionally, Čulík notes that through Greene's writing we can reach certain self-knowledge as we come across objective image of our own thoughts conveyed by the author (13). It is Greene's creative artistry that enables him to express what we all feel, and it is his artistic skill that orders his symbols and imagery in a meaningful way.

Greene constructs his own world where he describes, gives terms but he is not judging. There is no judgement or moralization on the side of the author. However, the moral of the story can be read thanks to dialogues, characteristics and comparisons. The style itself is an unpronounced critique. Greene created his own microcosm, Greeneland, where characters, settings and events are shaped by the reality, but at the same time they are condensed on certain number of pages into ingenious plot so nothing is redundant and all fabricated aspects are in accordance with the inner structural logic.

4.4 The Concept of Pity

“If one knew, he wondered, the facts, would one have to feel pity even for the planets? If one reached what they called the heart of the matter?” (Greene, *The Heart of the Matter*)

The man’s emotional and spiritual struggles have fascinated Greene throughout his whole career. The overwhelming sense of pity permeates many Greene's novels, but especially *The Heart of the Matter*. Many of Greene's characters are alike and many of his themes reappear in different works. There is logical connection between Greene's themes: most frequent are themes of pity, betrayal, fidelity, alienation and salvation. Through his own archetypes, Greene communicates his reading experience. Greene's treatment of pity is part of his paradox: with Greene “virtue” can often become a destructive element. W. H. Auden asserted that “in book after book, Graham Greene analyses the vice of pity, that corrupt parody of love and compassion which is so insidious and deadly for sensitive natures” (“The Heresy of Our Time” 23-24). Auden believed that pity is essentially egoistic because behind the pity for another being lies self-pity. Auden’s view, however, does not take into account Greene’s treatment of pity as a virtue. As it is true for other aspects of Greene’s work, his view of pity is highly paradoxical. He often deals with pity both as a vice and as a virtue all at the same time in the same context. An examination of the ambiguities of pity is central part of many of his novels.

Greene grappled with the emotion of pity even before he wrote *The Heart of the Matter*. However, in his works, Greene’s main concern is the human being, not an abstract discussion of pity. In *The Ministry of Fear*, he notes that pity can grow to “monstrous proportions necessary to action” (62), hinting Rowe’s act of euthanasia. In such a case, pity can be “a horrible and horrifying emotion” (73). Looking at pity from another perspective as a virtue, pity can resemble charity, its religious equivalent. It is the sense of pity that makes Rowe help out the bookseller with his burden. Arthur Rowe, just like Henry Scobie, has predisposition to a potentially good, and yet potentially destructive emotion of pity. Rowe’s wife is suffering from an incurable illness and that eventually moves him to despair and pity. Similarly, Scobie is longing for peace and wants to provide happiness for his wife and mistress. Greene puts his protagonists into difficult, fully human situation, which has no easy solution. Rowe and Scobie are both essentially good men, but Rowe poisoned his slowly dying wife and

Scobie indirectly assisted with Ali's murder. In *The Ministry of Fear*, Greene notes that " ... it is only if the murderer is a good man that he can be regarded as monstrous. Arthur Rowe was monstrous" (101). Greene, therefore, makes the conclusion that there must be something evil in human pity since it drove Rowe and Scobie to the ultimate misconduct. Both of these men are however acting out according to their very nature. This serves to represent the fact that good and evil co-exist in every man. Additionally, Greene is pointing out that evil might be accepted in the disguise of goodness. After all, Scobie was simply trying to make everyone around him happy and wished for peace of mind. Arthur Rowe believed that poisoning his wife is lesser of two evils and that he is helping her from prolonging her pain. However, as the saying goes "The road to Hell is paved with good intentions" and they both fail to realize the real consequence of their actions. We are forced to question whether pity, that both men felt, was mercy to themselves or to their wives. Rowe could not bear the sight of his wife in pain and similarly, Scobie could not stand the suffering and dissatisfaction of his wife and mistress. Pity thus becomes self-pity. The compassion which motivates pity, however, makes it a virtue and distinguishes Scobie from other people around him. While at the same time, pity is a frailty when it causes collapse of one's integrity: It was "the enormous breach pity had blasted through Scobie's integrity" (*The Heart* 109). In context, Scobie is an extended symbol of Greene's archetype of the hunted man. He represents Greene's continuous exploration of certain aspects of the spiritual and moral existence of a man as he deals with challenges of life. Scobie is the symbol of certain force, spiritual and human, which is in conflict not only with external forces but within itself. External forces are represented by Scobie's surroundings in the novel and the internal force is love which has been corrupted into pity. The 'heart of the matter', it seems, is pity. Greene himself revealed his intentions in the preface of the novel: "I had meant the story of Scobie to enlarge a theme which I had touched on in *The Ministry of Fear*, the disastrous effect on human beings of pity as distinct from compassion. I had written in *The Ministry of Fear*: 'Pity is cruel. Pity destroys. Love isn't safe when pity's prowling around.' The character of Scobie was intended to show that pity can be the expression of an almost monstrous pride" (*A Study in Greene* 124). Greene believed that pity is not a substitute for compassion. He is very explicit about his judgement upon Scobie's pity and false assumption of responsibility. He represents Scobie's pity as a corrupted form of love and shows that pity can be painful and destructive. Apparently, even the best of men can be blind to the distinction between pity and compassion and

they may succumb to disguised pride. Scobie, naively presuming God's prerogative, is doomed to failure. There is a thin line but there is noticeable difference between pity and compassion. W. H. Auden described the problem of pity the best when he pointed out that pity basically makes us look down on other people: "To feel compassion for someone is to make oneself their equal; to pity them is to regard oneself as their superior and from that eminence the step to the torture chamber and the corrective labour camp is shorter than one thinks" (*The Heresy* 23-24). Greene is brilliant because he sees the necessity of love and concern among men, but at the same time he recognizes the subtle distinction that we must make between a genuine desire to share burdens of beloved people and basically egoistical wish to relieve a man of pain or to spare both, oneself and another from misery and sorrow. From Greene's accounts of pity, it is clear that he realizes how unstable and dangerous pity might be. Greene is aware that in the disguise of concern for others lies fear for oneself. He warns that a person must be careful navigating between compassion and pity. This struggle is most vividly addressed in the aforementioned novels, *The Ministry of Fear* and *The Heart of the Matter*. It is a difficult task for a sensitive man to not lose one's composure while witnessing suffering of others. Men are naturally tempted to take full responsibility for pain and try to help out those in need. We try to control another's and our own destinies. Rowe and Scobie both present this issue. They are essentially good men, but pity destroys them. Rowe was cleared of all the charges at court but the climax of the novel is when he realizes his motive for poisoning his wife: "... he told himself, leaning over the wall, as he had told himself a hundred times, that it was he who had not been able to bear his wife's pain—and not she. ... He was trying to escape his own pain, not hers, and at the end she had guessed or half guessed what it was he was offering to her" (*The Ministry of Fear* 82). In many ways the character of Arthur Rowe foreshadows Scobie who Greene created five years later. However, in *The Heart of the Matter*, pity is a chief concern. The whole story is focused on showing the gradual disintegration of a just man who is consumed by pity. The paradox is that Scobie is one of few honest men in the colony, as he is trying to be fair and helpful to those around him. He seems as a perfect candidate for a police officer, but pity is his ultimate flaw: he is unable to watch the suffering of others and that is why he takes upon himself a responsibility for relieving their pain.

The first and seemingly innocent breach of law that Scobie commits is his failure to report the letter that a ship captain tried to smuggle to his daughter. It is apparent that this first lie in the name of generosity prepares the way for many lies that eventually ruin Scobie's integrity. His kindness leads to more lies and Scobie is unable to face the consequences of his actions. Scobie takes his job very seriously. He thinks that being policeman involves assuming full responsibility for all the poor and helpless of the world. Scobie is well aware that the law, authority and punishment on their own are not enough to bring about justice. He goes beyond his obligations and rigid rules. As I mentioned earlier, he is always taking into account the context of the situation the individual is in. Scobie's motivation in everything he does is pity. Pity leads Scobie to believe that he knows better than people around him. He feels as if it is his responsibility to take care of others because they are not capable of taking care of themselves. One could argue that it is Scobie who is naive and blind to certain things. E.g. he lets Yusef too close even though he knows that Yusef is immoral criminal. Like Rowe, Scobie cannot stand the unhappiness and pain of his wife, but at the same time he is seeking peace and relief for himself. On the other hand, I believe that it would be oversimplifying the matter if we summarized that Scobie is proud and wants to help others for selfish reasons. As the saying goes, "there are two sides to every coin."

4.4.1 Love and Pity

Scobie seems incapable of loving anyone, including himself. We learn that Scobie and his wife suffered a terrible loss when their only child died. Several years earlier, their nine-year-old daughter Catherine passed away because of a sudden illness. The difficulty of communication and ongoing World War II prevented Scobie from attending the funeral. I believe that the loss of his daughter helped shape Scobie and contributed to who he had become. Since then, he put his job first. It is possible that he blamed himself for Catherine's death as he was not with her at the time. His strong sense of duty towards others became the central factor in his life: "It had always been his responsibility to maintain happiness in those he loved. One was safe now, for ever, and the other [Louise] was going to eat her lunch" (*The Heart* 25). Eventually, Scobie's differentiation between the feeling of pity and love starts to blur.

Greene noted that "love isn't safe when pity's prowling around" (*The Ministry* 123), which suggests that love and pity are separable. At the same time, however, compassion and charity are necessary components of love. It is clear that even in

Scobie's "corrupted" pity lies compassion. It is compassion that seems to be the one common component of pity and love. Greene repeatedly shows that Scobie's integrity is challenged by his compassion which leads him to breaking orders: "The act was irrevocable, for no one in this city had the right to open clandestine mail. A microphotograph might be concealed in the gum of an envelope ... Scobie against the strictest orders was exercising his own imperfect judgement" (*The Heart* 51-52). In a similar way, Scobie's compassion and pity for others who are suffering cause him to question God. While we witness Scobie breaking the law, Greene secures reader's sympathy for Scobie by indicating that Scobie's act was selfless. For Scobie, pity is destructive especially because it is so akin to love that he actually believes he is doing the right thing out of love. He confuses general compassion and charity for everyone with love. Scobie considers himself "just man", but he is incapable of realizing that it is self-deception. The way Greene describes the relationship, pity can be seen as the immature equivalent of love. We can see there is a positive value to be found in pity and compassion, but one should be always aware of the dangers as well. In his relationship with Helen and Louise, Scobie equates pity with love. He cannot distinguish between the two. We see Scobie's ambivalence and his inability to decide whether what he feels for both women is the sentiment of pity or love: "Can I really love her [Helen] more than Louise? Do I, in my heart of hearts, love either of them, or is it only that this automatic terrible pity goes out to any human need—and makes it worse?" (*The Heart* 198). What Scobie feels for both women is the combination of pity, love and his sense of responsibility. He refuses to hurt either of them but paradoxically that is exactly what he has achieved by following through with his actions. The guilt Scobie feels is unbearable: "Oh, God, I offer my damnation to you. Take it. Use it for them" (*The Heart* 266). Nevertheless, he continues his affair with Helen even though he is consumed by the sense of guilt.

Throughout the whole novel, Scobie is struggling between passion, love and his Catholic conscience. He seems unable to love, or to express love. As I have mentioned above, he substitutes love for pity: "When he was young, he had thought love had something to do with understanding, but with age he knew that no human being understood another. Love was the wish to understand, and presently with constant failure the wish died, and love died too perhaps or changed into this painful affection, loyalty, pity ... " (*The Heart* 251). Scobie finds himself in an incessant clash. He fully

realizes that adultery is a mortal sin from Catholic point of view, yet if he wants to make Helen happy, in his distorted view, he has to continue seeing her. Bierman notes that we cannot justify misdeed only because person has noble intentions (66). While Scobie's intentions are definitely good, his actions prove to be destructive and he hurts those who he was trying to protect from pain. It is the goodness of his heart that leads him astray. By the end, it seems that Scobie is his own worst enemy. Among many critics who berated Scobie, Orwell was one of the loudest: "If he (Scobie) were capable of getting into the kind of mess that is described, he would have got into it years earlier. If he really felt that adultery is a mortal sin, he would stop committing it; if he persisted in it, his sense of sin would weaken" (108). Orwell is not completely wrong. Many of actions and Scobie's decisions in the book are highly paradoxical. On the one hand, we can consider Scobie a weak and selfish coward. However, it is hard to deny that there are many occurrences when he is willing to give up his own peace and happiness for others. His prayer for a young child survivor from shipwreck is the testament of that: "Father, look after her. Give her peace ... Take away my peace for ever, but give her peace" (*The Heart* 118). Another example is Scobie's monologue towards God: "O God, ... if instead I should abandon you, punish me but let the others get some happiness" (*The Heart* 220). Spurling (23) and Hodgkins (56) agree that pity is one of Scobie's most destructive emotions. Their commentary shows that Scobie is willing to sacrifice anything to bring others happiness. His love is only limited to the feeling of pity and responsibility: "When we say to someone, 'I can't live without you,' what we really mean is, 'I can't live feeling you may be in pain, unhappy, in want.'" ... When they are dead our responsibility ends. There's nothing more we can do about it. We can rest in peace" (*The Heart* 148). This view is relevant to Scobie's situation as he tries to secure peace for those around him. Even though love is considered the greatest among three main Christian virtues-Faith, Hope, Love-Scobie's perception of love is rather humanistic. After his marriage with Louise, he accepts Catholic faith but only to an extent. By the end of the novel, Scobie admits that his faith in God is limited: "No. I don't trust you. I love you but I've never trusted you" (*The Heart* 250). On numerous occasions, critics commented on Scobie's pride. It seems that at times Scobie even takes up the role of God upon himself. He imagined himself as Jesus Christ: "I am the Cross, he thought: He will never speak the word to save Himself from the Cross, but if only wood were made so that it didn't feel, if only the nails were senseless as people believe" (*The Heart* 217). Schaffer was among those who claimed that Scobie's feeling of pity

and responsibility is a manifestation of pride (1991, p. 588). Scobie's assimilation of God's role is the clear evidence of that. His suicide was unnecessary and he died in vain. Both women were capable of living without Scobie and it was Scobie, who assumed differently and sacrificed himself for the sake of his conscience. Scobie believes that his sense of pity and responsibility for others were given to him by God and therefore, predetermines himself, which is in conflict with Catholic teaching because according to doctrine, every single human being was given freedom and free motion (Bierman 73). "If You made me, You made this feeling of responsibility that I've always carried around like a sack of bricks. I'm not a policeman for nothing—responsible for order, for seeing justice is done. There was no other profession for a man of my kind. I can't shift my responsibility to you. If I could, I would be someone else. I can't make one of them suffer so as to save myself" (*The Heart* 260). After this monologue, Scobie leaves the church to make his final arrangements for his death. He takes fatal dose of medicine, convinced that this is the only viable alternative. At the end, he feels as if someone was appealing to him, someone needing him: "And automatically at the call of need, at the cry of a victim, Scobie strung himself to act. He dredged his consciousness up from an infinite distance in order to make some reply. He said aloud, 'Dear God, I love ...' but the effort was too great and he did not feel his body when it struck the floor" (*The Heart* 269). The ending is purposely ambiguous. We can only guess what Scobie was about to say—whether he wanted to express love for either of the women or for God. In the final dialogue between Louise and a priest, we get a glimpse at author's opinion of his protagonist: "It may seem an odd thing to say—when a man's as wrong as he was—but I think, from what I saw of him, that he really loved God." Mrs. Scobie is bitter as she cries, "He certainly loved no one else!" The priest's reply is the key to understanding Scobie's downfall: "And you may be in the right of it there, too" (*The Heart* 278). The priest's comment may seem paradoxical, as he suggests that although Scobie could not bear suffering of his wife and mistress, he did not really love either of them. But if we look again at the basis of Scobie's relationships with others, it is (and always was) pity and not love that binds him to people. When we meet Scobie for the first time, we see a lonely man in his office. He has no friends and does not engage in conversations with other. He was the happiest with Ali and their relationship demanded no sharing of emotions. The only occasion when he confesses to love is when he is forced to soothe Louise or Helen. Louise does not let him fool her: "I know you aren't happy either. Without me you'll have peace." This was what he always left out of account—the

accuracy of her observation. He had nearly everything, and all he needed was peace. Everything meant work, the daily regular routine in the little bare office, the change of seasons in a place he loved. How often he had been pitied for the austerity of the work, the bareness of the rewards. But Louise knew him better than that. If he had become young again this was the life he would have chosen again to live: only this time he would not have expected any other person to share it with him, the rat upon the bath, the lizard on the wall, the tornado blowing up open the windows at one in the morning, and the last pink light upon the laterite roads at sundown” (*The Heart* 54). Through Scobie's story, Greene reveals with power and clarity that pity can lead to an avoidance of reality and to the formation of a gigantic wall of egotism that isolates a man from others, for he must rely upon himself. Love can enrich communication and forms the basis for trust, while pity can corrupt the man (Kohn 19). The question of whether Scobie is eternally damned is not answered. Priest notes that “The Church knows all the rules. But it doesn't know what goes on in a single human heart” (*The Heart* 278). Even though Scobie died committing a mortal sin, the Church cannot say that he has been damned. Greene indicates that only God can judge the intentions of the individual. It is necessary to distinguish between good and bad intentions, on the one hand, and seriousness of the act. According to Greene, sin thus does not reside in actions themselves but in the minds of individuals and only God himself can know the heart of the man and his intentions. It is difficult to discern whether Scobie's sacrifice was made out of love or yet another occurrence of pity. We can see that Scobie does not trust God to take care of Louise and Helen's happiness. Greene, however, seems to side with his protagonist. He indicates that Scobie has made a selfless offering of love and that he does love God. Even though we question Scobie's decisions, thanks to Greene we always feel sympathy for him. The Church might say that Scobie's suicide is a mortal sin, but author indicates that the Church cannot know real intentions behind Scobie's act. On the whole, Greene portrays Scobie in a kind and gentle manner so that readers can identify with him to a high degree. He forces us to acknowledge the deceptive side of pity and its diverse nature.

4.5 Faith as a State of Conflict

Greene's own life experiences shaped his writing and style. Greenland consists of objective and subjective components and it is highly influenced by a religious element. In *The Lawless Roads*, Greene describes how he encountered evil on the daily basis and how it influenced his concept of faith: "In the land of skyscrapers, of stone stairs and cracked bells ringing early, one was aware of fear and hate, a kind of lawlessness – appalling cruelties could be practised without a second thought; one met for the first time characters, adult and adolescent, who bore about them the genuine quality of evil. Hell lay about them in their infancy. ... One became aware of God with an intensity – time hung suspended – music lay on the air; anything might happen before it became necessary to join the crowd across the border. There was no inevitability anywhere ... faith was almost great enough to move mountains. And so faith came to me – shapelessly, without dogma, a presence above a croquet lawn, something associated with violence, cruelty, evil across the way. I began to believe in heaven because I believed in hell" (10). Greene's conception of faith is once again full of paradoxes and is more engaged with a man and his nature than with Catholic doctrine. *The Heart of the Matter* should not be thus seen as Greene's article of faith in Church dogma, because that would limit the novel and our interpretation of it. Like in number of other novels, here Greene's basic archetype of regeneration through experience is evident.

Greene presents the conflicting concept of faith through Scobie. Even though it seems that Scobie had never lost his faith in God, his doubts had been fostered by the conflict between Church doctrine and his human indulgence. His sense of pity and responsibility is often in conflict with the doctrine. Catholicism forms part of the meaning of the novel, yet it is only the part of other variables that give the novel its meaning. Greene is concerned with spiritual as well as human aspects of the existence. He asks the questions which touch upon the spiritual motivations of a man. The main focus is on representing the life. If we look at Scobie, we do not have to be Catholics to understand that he is a man acting in conflict with his own nature. Even though Scobie's faith is essential to the story, *The Heart of the Matter* is not Greene's article of faith.

Another of many Greene's paradoxes was his claim that faith might be compatible with doubting and disbelief. He stated in an interview that there's difference between belief and faith: "Faith is above belief. One can say that it's a gift of God,

while belief is not. Belief is founded on reason. On the whole I keep my faith while enduring long periods of disbelief” (Allain 162-63). Paul O’Prey adds that “faith for Greene means an unquestioning acceptance of God and a trust in His love and mercy. Belief, on the other hand, is man’s rationalization and institutionalization of God, through theology and the Church” (96). This view heavily reflects in his works as well. Scobie has faith but at the same time he is incessantly doubting and questioning God. No other Greene’s novel created such a storm of criticism and his concept of faith is definitely main part of the reason. Greene redefined Catholic notions on piety as he kept reminding his readers that pious people often lack charity and other virtues while sinners can reach salvation. The distinction between faith and belief further increased in *The Power and the Glory* and *The Heart of the Matter*. In those novels, they are almost two incompatible ways of relating to God. Baldrige comments on the importance of the difference between the two as follows: “The intensification of the faith/belief distinction is important not because it is a master key to Greene’s overall religious vision, but because it is typical of the way in which ideas raised in his nonfiction become accentuated, aggravated and magnified in his novels” (59). The story of Scobie could be seen as an extended meditation upon the complementary relationship between faith and doubt. The progress in the novel is mostly measured in terms of inner transformations of the character.

Greene had a lifelong interest in paradoxes and in his works he represented the duality of many issues. In *Brighton Rock*, Greene for the first time notes that “a Catholic is more capable of evil than anyone” (309). *The Heart of the Matter* develops the religious concept from Greene’s previous works. As I noted above, however, the faith and religion only underline other aspects of human existence. Religion is presented as an experience, as spiritual conflict, as struggle, search and suffering. That way, Greene created convincing and complex picture of human life. Though, Greene was a Catholic himself, he was well aware of the frustrations and dangers within the religious quest. Part of the fascination of readers and critics is the way in which Greene’s concept of faith and religion challenged the narrow and established religious views. He was even accused of heresy because of his stance. As Bosco notes, “Greene’s paradoxical literary expression of Catholic faith is never offered as comforting way out of the discomfoting realities of modernity. Rather, Catholicism serves to raise the standards, heighten the awareness of the fallen sense of the world, and challenge characters to respond to

extreme situations in full knowledge of what is at stake” (4). Catholicism becomes part of Greene’s dark and seedy world and it stands as the ground from which Greene draws inspiration. It is almost as if his Catholicism was just another tool for his writing. Roger Watkins, the organizer of the Graham Greene festival, shared that some people went as far as to say that “he [Greene] ruthlessly exploited his religious connection. Nevertheless, he says something much more serious about the human condition” (Roisman-Cooper 51). Watkins adds that in his earlier works, Greene might have used religion artificially but later on it developed into much more.

The Heart of the Matter is one of Greene’s most personal novels that shows both, faults and virtues arising from the circumstances. Like with many other works, Greene has given the book an “interpretive” title. It comes from Scobie’s inner monologue and it reflects his desire to fully understand the complexities of human existence. According to Miller, “the ‘heart of the matter’ is fundamentally the totality of vision that rests with an omniscient God that can account for the problem of evil, natural and moral, and how one is to reconcile it to one’s belief in that loving God” (112). Scobie is questioning and doubting God because he cannot grasp the pain and suffering that God permits to happen. He realizes that, as a human being, he has no control over certain circumstances. “Natural” evil is part of the life. It most strikingly emerges in the deaths of two children, Catherine Scobie and the child who survived the shipwreck. Moral evil then arises from human deeds and it occupies the central part of *The Heart of the Matter*. The heart of the matter seems to lie in understanding why this suffering occurs and why Scobie, in spite of himself, acts in ways that only cause pain to those he wanted to protect from hurting (Miller 71).

In Allain’s interview, Greene also revealed that the essential concern of all of his fiction is with rootlessness. Scobie is the perfect representation of such a rootless character, because even though he considers himself to be a part of Africa, he is basically the man without roots. While he understands Africans and the colony, it is not a guarantee of total awareness. As I have mentioned before, he is naive and blind to certain things. He is a man without a country, without a culture and without a philosophical and intellectual framework (Miller 80). It seems that in an attempt to overcome his rootlessness, Scobie finds structure and certitude in the teachings of the Church. Miller notes that Scobie, unlike others, is not committed to the English traditions and even commitment to his job slowly ceases (80). Instead, he follows the

rigid rules of his faith, which provides him with an inflexible moral code and that eventually leads to extreme and destructive feelings of pity and guilt. At the end of the novel, it is almost as if Father Rank portrayed the judgement of Scobie as irrelevant. That way, Greene might have wanted to emphasize that even his seemingly most religious novels are far more concerned with the secular. The real concern lies with the failure of a stiff faith to minister to the needs of a modern world and to overcome the disillusionment that awaits those who believe they can cope with the world through it. Scobie fails a lot throughout the novel, but in many ways his faith failed him just as well. Greene is not concentrating on the good that religion offers; neither does he highlight the evil. Rather he explores the subject of what hardships and sacrifices it brings to be a Catholic. His characters, including Scobie, are the manifestations of simple men trying to understand themselves through the psychological and spiritual inner struggles. We shouldn't look at Greene as a primarily Catholic author, but as someone who gives his characters a religious dimension that is ultimately interesting and understandable even to agnostics or atheists since it is presented as a natural part of life of his protagonists. Finally, Bosco notes why sometimes Greene's Catholic characters appear heretic: "The space between the fallen nature of Greene's characters and the mysterious, inscrutable grace of God was feared to be too wide a theological gap for many of his religious compatriots, and Greene's disdain for traditional expressions of Catholic faith and piety in the institutional Church" (19). Greene always focused rather on the human pain and suffering, life, justice and the truth than blindly clinging on to the Catholic doctrine or inhuman politics. That is probably why he never liked to be labelled as a Catholic writer. His sensitivity to human nature, interactions and beliefs helped him to create characters who might have been more heretical in some ways, but they were also more viscerally felt believers.

5 Movie adaptation of *The Heart of the Matter*

“If you ask me to give you the most distinctive quality of good writing, I would give it to you in this one word: VISUAL. Reduce the art of writing to its fundamentals and you come to this single aim: to convey images by means of words. But to convey images. To make the mind see. To project onto that inner screen of the brain a moving picture of objects and events, event and objects moving towards a balance and reconciliation of a more than usual state of emotion with more than usual order. That is a definition of good literature--of the achievement of every good poet--from Homer and Shakespeare to James Joyce or Ernest Hemingway. It is also a definition of the ideal film.” (Read, “Toward a Film Aesthetic” 170)

5.1 Greene and Cinema

In the quote cited above, Herbert Read points out that essential to both good writing and good films is the creation of images. Greene seemed to understand and agree with that principle which can be traced to the Imagist movement. Greene was one of the most versatile and prolific writers of the twentieth century and his fictions have proved to be a perpetually popular source for adaptations. Virtually almost every fictional work he ever wrote has been adapted for either film or television, with the exception of *It's A Battlefield*. Because Greene was both, successful novelist and screenwriter, his works provide us with the unique opportunity to study what happens when the word is exteriorized. Very few novelists have taken the films as seriously as Greene. None has been as heavily involved with the industry as he was. Greene was a critic, scenarist, co-producer, performer and adaptor (Parkinson xi). No other modern writers have been more frequently translated to the screen. Many critics recognized Greene's use of cinematic techniques. In a New York Time review of Greene's novel *Stamboul Train* (1933), the reviewer commented on the cinematic in Greene's writing: “Something of motion picture technique is used, with brief glimpses of the actions and thoughts now of one character, now of another, interspersed with the longer stretches of narrative. These glimpses enable the reader to reconstruct the past of each, and often they help to point the irony. For under the swift action, the impressionistic sketches of the places seen through train windows, the sense of fate worked out through [sic] little things on occasionally reluctant people, there is much of that bitterness we so mistakenly call modern” (*NYT Review*). Greene openly admitted his debt to the cinema. In a 1969 interview with Phillips, he shared that his “style has been influenced by going to the cinema” (Sherry 75-6). He focuses on movement as a way to project the cinematic in his work. Undoubtedly, Greene consciously wrote with the cinema in

mind. The narrative style of *The Heart of the Matter* was also deeply influenced by Greene's cinematic techniques. In the review of the novel, Evelyn Waugh observed the following: "It is as though, out of an infinite length of film, sequences had been cut which, assembled, comprise an experience which is the reader's alone, without any correspondence to the experience of the protagonist's. The writer has become director and producer. Indeed, the affinity to the film is everywhere apparent. It is the camera's eye which moves from the hotel balcony to the street below, picks out the policeman, follows him to his office, moves about the room from the handcuffs on the Wall to the broken rosary in the drawer, recording significant detail. It is the modern way of telling a story. In Elizabethan drama one can usually discern an artistic sense formed on the dumb-show and the masque. In Henry James' novels scene after scene evolves as though on the stage of a drawing-room comedy. Now it is the cinema which has taught a new habit of narrative. Perhaps it is the only contribution the cinema is destined to make to the art" ("Felix Culpa" 95). The use of filmmaking techniques then reconstructs a vivid scene with the addition of literary fillers such as personal, historical, geographical, biographical or other cultural information. Thus, as Balázs observes "Film art led not only to the creation of new works of art but to the emergence of new human faculties with which to perceive and understand this new art" (33).

Greene seems never to have been outside the cinematic world. Nearly twenty movies have been made from his various works. He himself has written half-dozen screenplays based on his own works, as well as film adaptations of the works of other writers. Additionally, he had been one of the finest film critics of the 1930s as he worked as a film reviewer for the *Spectator* and *Night and Day*. Between 1935 and 1940, he reviewed well over 400 films. Hand and Purssell argue that Greene was one of the "most emblematic writers' of the twentieth century" (134). Greene admired cinema's unique possibilities, but as a film critic he was also well aware of the medium's shortcomings. Greene believed the audience did not want to be soothed but they were looking for excitement: "if you excite your audience first, you can put over what you will of horror, suffering, truth" (Syniard 49). He then rejected works that reflected pompous themes or middle-class virtues in favour of the common life vitality of the thriller. He wanted to represent life as it is, and life as it ought to be, creating works filled with tension, oscillation, conflict, contradictions and connection between them.

As I noted above, his love for the cinema naturally had a big impact on his style. We can trace multiple cinematic features in his fiction: mobile points of view, rapid shifts between background and foreground, the sense of place as a dynamic character etc. The intense cinematic quality of Greene's prose was pointed out again and again by many critics. Dominick Consolo compared Greene's style to the pan shot of a movie camera (68), while Walter Allen described Greene as possessed of "a technique of montage which he owes to the film" (in Evans 22). Atkins, Hoggart and some others pointed out that the film has had damaging effect on Greene's work, as it contributed to "a thinness of characterization, an over-emphasis on excitement and circumstance" (Skerrett 297). However, Greene's best novels provide rich background and characterization and it is hard to fault Greene for writing exciting and often ambivalent, paradoxical stories as it is part of his signature. Additionally, as McConnell argues "most of Greene's novels are so readable because they are so easy to visualize. They often progress like camera-shot analyses for a screenplay ... Greene used the resources of melodramatic movies in a way that both reflect the predicaments of contemporary life and is vastly entertaining" (174). Therefore, for Greene the influence and value of the cinema was far-reaching. Cinema played an important part in his life in a variety of different ways. There is a financial aspect where we can look at the connection to cinema as a commercial one; the sale of movie rights provided Greene with financial security and sources while he worked on his next novel. It could also be a personal one, e.g. when he fell in love with Anna Sten and rewrote the main female part of *Stamboul train* to fit her. Most importantly however, the connection to cinema was at the roots of Greene's literary inspiration. More than any other writer, Greene manifested the diverse links between literature and film (Syniard 56-7). He is often called a 'cinematic' novelist as almost all of his fictional worlds have been visualized and his experience of cinema deeply influenced his style, themes and concepts and ideas. Greene was the novelist of the human soul and his moral angst translated perfectly into characters on the screen. For many of his contemporaries, the cinema was secondary, but for Greene the connection was fundamental.

5.2 Movie Adaptation of *The Heart of the Matter*

Like number of other Greene's novels, *The Heart of the Matter* was adapted into a film. In this part of the thesis, I plan to look at the movie adaptation of the novel and try to evaluate whether the work stayed close and faithful to the original and captured its essence. The British film adaptation from 1953 was directed by George More O'Ferrall. The location filming took place in West Africa. The interiors were filmed at Shepperton Studios in London. The black and white cinematography was done by Jack Hildyard (Porter 501). The adaptation never reached such recognition and success as *The Third Man*, *The Fallen Idol* or *Brighton Rock* even though it earned 4 BAFTA awards nominations (e.g. Best British Actor, Best British Film). The movie was mainly dominated by critically acclaimed performance of Trevor Howard. As Henry Scobie, Howard did an amazing job to convey the pressure of emotion with his voice and his body. Overall the movie was very well executed, faithful to the source and especially Howard's performance was praised by many. However, I believe that the change of the ending in the movie undermined the novel's central theme.

In the novel, Henry Scobie progresses from minor offences to adultery and then to committing the mortal sin of suicide. Scobie (Trevor Howard) in the movie, however, dies when he gets in the middle of skirmish of a street gang. Since the suicide is the main climax of the novel, the ending of the movie feels like significant shift in the meaning. Ian Dalrymple produced and wrote the screenplay for *The Heart of the Matter*. There is an apparent attempt to liberalize the representation of an important African character within the film (Stollery). Scobie's faithful African servant Ali is allowed to live in the film. That is another substantial change from the novel. Lindsay Anderson commented on the movie in Monthly Film Bulletin, arguing that Ian Dalrymple "was not intimately involved in the theme" as he was non-Catholic. Additionally, he criticized the director O'Ferrall for not being "sufficiently cineaste by nature to take over the story and make it his own" (Anderson). Greene was widely accepted by intellectuals and academics by then. As a result, Greene was considered as the main authorial point of reference. Personally, I believe that two aforementioned changes in the movie truly undermine the main plotline and themes of the novel. The film adaptation entirely eliminates the part of the novel where Scobie's blindness, naivety and self-obsession lead him to suspect his loyal servant Ali. As I mentioned earlier in the thesis, betrayal and trust is among Greene's prominent and powerful themes. The

episode with Ali, who eventually ends up murdered because Scobie is unable to trust him, is a catalyst that breaks Scobie and his integrity. The film ends with Ali holding Scobie's dead body. Throughout the movie, their relationship is represented as very affectionate and devoted. It offers a positive counterweight to negative representation of Africans elsewhere in the movie. Apparently, the reason really was to represent "liberal position". Geraghty notes that this position is "marked by an extreme emphasis on empathy, care and healing. It is as if the good white characters must prove their right to take part in Commonwealth affairs by demonstrating their capacity for sacrifice, their unselfish goodness and their capacity to win, through goodness, the respect that had previously been demanded by the assertion of power (131). Geraghty further claims that the liberal position in these 1950s films ultimately displaces "the question of political rights into one of humanitarian largesse" (131-2). Some of those changes then can be seen as related to colonial representation. Contemporary critics look at the change of the ending with an open mind. They claim that it is part of the film making practice to "improve" or "rectify" the source. The question is whether we can call the change of an ending an improvement? Scobie still dies by the end of the movie. Some might argue that at least he does not commit suicide. However, I believe that the religious theme of the novel and the struggle connected to it are undermined by such ending. The death caused by a street gang makes an ending less profound and changes the intentions of the original author. As Weales points out the adaptation fails "to provide the sense of sin breeding sin ... By deciding to spare Scobie's boy Ali, whose death in the book is the immediate reason for his decision in favor of suicide, the authors of the screen version have weakened the chain of events that lead inevitably to Scobie's death" (14). The film makers disrupted the main moral and religious theme of the source. If we consider the main turning points of the novel, the film version really seems like a stripped version of its source. The last Scobie's lines in the movie are towards Ali: "Going on trek, Ali. Tell missus, God make it alright". In the movie, representations of trekking merge geographical and spiritual journeys whose destinations are either death or suicide of white characters. Therefore, it seems that creators attempted to faithfully communicate the religious concerns of the novel. However, they tried to avoid explicit representation of protagonist's suicide perhaps afraid of adamant censorship. Their alternative ending influenced the representation of Scobie's struggle with his faith and suspension between salvation and damnation, which are crucial part of the novel. Production team apparently wanted to represent progressive relationship between black and white

characters (as did many other film makers in 1950s), but letting Ali live and changing the entire ending of the novel had an enormous impact on the outcome. While the performances of the actors and work with the camera were brilliant, the major shift in the plotline caused that the original impression of the novel was lost. As I tried to prove in the previous chapters, the concept of pity and faith are fundamental part of *The Heart of the Matter* and they make Greene's work unique. By eliminating the suicide and Ali's death from the movie, film makers considerably altered Greene's original ideas, themes and concepts.

All in all, Greene is one of the first British authors to be influenced by cinema. In terms of its evocative power and economy of style, all of his fiction is 'cinematic' to certain degree. As *The Heart of the Matter* exemplifies, all Greene's works might have cinematic potential, but they will always test anyone who tries to adapt them. The brilliant works of Greene adaptation are outbalanced by mediocre works that earned no recognition. Some of the adaptations are classics of the cinema and some are now neglected. As I have noted before, Greene never saw himself as a modernist writer, yet he is connected to cinema which is seen as one of the most prominent modernist technology. His works are pervaded by an acute sense of their political, historical and cultural backgrounds and that is perhaps the reason why they have become modern classics (Hand, Pursell 135). The world might have changed since Greene's death in 1991, but the themes of crisis, corruption, faith, hope, betrayal, pity, love and redemption throughout his work continue to be relevant and attractive as sources for adaptation.

6 Conclusion

In the preceding chapters, the thesis aimed to provide thorough analysis of Graham Greene's *The Heart of the Matter*. I have introduced Graham Greene as a prominent writer of 20th century British fiction. He has taken up the challenge of analyzing contemporary evil, life and human nature. The main focus within the thesis was on Greene's unique concept of pity and his religious views. The analysis shows that pity and faith, as Greene understood them, are keystones in number of his novels including *The Heart of the Matter*. His vision of the world is distinctive. Paradoxes permeate his art. In Greene, we can encounter e.g. the concept of faith without belief, the loyalty which leads to betrayal, the pity which can be ambiguous in many ways. In his works, he offered analysis of existing tensions between the religious and secular world, tensions of human relationships and politics as well. Therefore, his works provide us with the rare depiction of clashes of modern life.

In the initial chapter, I have first outlined Greene's place in literary context of the Modernist period and I tried to point out what is his connection to religion and why he is often labelled as a "Catholic writer". Greene's religiousness has been set as the area of main interest. The aspect of faith has been continuously pointed out through the whole work, whether it was Greene's own Catholic belief, his interest in "saint sinners" protagonists, religious symbolism within the novel or some of his controversial ideas about faith and religion. I proceeded with the brief summary of his life and work, along with the part on the influential writers that have helped to shape his art.

The chapter about narrative style hopes to break the false assumption that Greene's prose is simple and unsophisticated. It attempts to expound, at least partly, complexities of Greene's writing. The main part of the chapter is focused on Greene's ambiguous narrative and stylistic aspects of his writing. Through the examination of the text, I believe that the goal has been achieved. Greene successfully employs similes, imagery, metaphors and symbolism throughout the whole novel. Greene's choices in narrative style are part of his carefully planned technique. The ambiguity is at the center of analysis of Greene's narrative style. It shows that Greene is not simply telling a story or developing characters, but he is also controlling the reader's perception of his characters. The technique of narrative ambiguity is Greene's way for manipulating reader's response. Some critics might have dismissed Greene for the simple clarity of his prose. However, that does not mean that Greene is "the easiest" writer and that he

did not employ literary devices. Much of his work is characterized by intelligence, striking descriptions, and perceptive and detailed analyses of settings and characters. His prose has become popular especially due to his powerful themes, strong portrayal of characters and evocative landscapes. Greene was versatile author and his range was immense.

The pivotal part of the thesis consists of the analysis of the novel. First off, I have covered the plot of the novel. I have tried to pinpoint the key parts of the narrative that are essential for the analysis. The following part deals with the characters of *The Heart of the Matter*. The main section is dedicated to Scobie as he is the central figure in the book. I have examined Henry Scobie as an individual, his role in the novel and also his relationships to other characters. The special attention was paid to the relations between Scobie, Yusef and Ali. I argue that Yusef and Ali are essential part of the novel as they both serve as the catalyst for Scobie's tragic end.

The settings of the novel have been examined in the subsequent section. Greene always seemed to be interested in "the dangerous edges" of life. Most of his novels are set in the exotic seedy landscapes. The setting exists as a symbolic rendering of the decay, betrayal and corruption while mirroring the inner states and conflicts of characters. Scobie tries to preserve his integrity in the world without any moral values. I have noted that Greene's dark portrayal of Africa only heightens Scobie's dissonance and inner conflicts in an isolated, almost claustrophobic setting. The climate inevitably affects all the characters. The feeling of alienation and isolation is omnipresent. Greene conveyed the sense of wasteland, the sense of the world that is abandoned by hope and by God. Most importantly, I have pointed out Greene's ability to portray the process of Scobie's disintegration through conformity of the setting and character. Scobie's frame of mind is conscientiously reflected in his surroundings.

The central theme of the novel can be described as a man's struggle with his excessive feeling of pity and responsibility and his loss of faith in God. The overwhelming sense of pity can be found in number of Greene's novel, but it is central to the narrative in *The Heart of the Matter*. Greene's concept of pity is highly paradoxical. In Greene, pity is an ambiguous element. The virtue of pity can often become destructive. According to Greene, pity can be both a vice and a virtue all at the same time. To an extent, pity also becomes self-pity. Pity is represented as a corrupted

form of love. Scobie is unable of loving others, but he assumes responsibility for them. The novel is focused on showing the gradual disintegration of a just man who is consumed by pity. Scobie is one of few honest men in the colony, but pity is his ultimate flaw. Because of his kindness and goodness of heart, he breaches the law for others and eventually his integrity is ruined. Many critics, including the author himself, noted that Scobie is proud and that is why he takes upon himself the responsibility for others. I argue that the loss of his daughter might have contributed to Scobie's strong sense of duty for others. Additionally, the pity is so destructive for Scobie because he is unable to differentiate between pity and love. He believes that he is doing the right thing out of love and in his relationship to women, Scobie equates pity with love. Scobie is constantly struggling between the pity, love and his Catholic conscience. Through Scobie's story, Greene reveals with clarity that pity can lead to an avoidance of reality and builds the wall of egotism that isolates a man from the others. Greene's main interest always lies in his characters, the human nature and their struggle. His writing represents the convincing study of human life and obstacles we might encounter. He sees the necessity of love among men, but at the same time he recognizes the subtle distinction that we must make between a genuine desire to help out beloved people and basically egoistical wish to spare both, oneself and another from pain and sorrow. *The Heart of the Matter* is a complex, psychological and analytical novel which probes into the very essence of human mind. With the analysis of Scobie's character, I aimed to introduce the author's convoluted use of the concepts of sin, evil, damnation and redemption. For, according to Greene, the sinner is at the very heart of Christianity and there is only thin line separating saints from sinners. The pity serves to show us that even a man of good will can become irreparably corrupt.

As mentioned in the very introduction to the thesis, the religion was of a great importance to Greene. A significant feature of many Greene's characters is their personal faith which often does not correspond with the teachings of Church. With his religious writing, Greene again shows his thought-provoking imagination. He portrayed Scobie as a desperate character who commits the most serious sins, as he is an adulterer, he is also part of the reason why Ali is murdered, and finally he commits the ultimate sin of suicide. The question of salvation for Scobie is crucial. According to Catholic faith, he is a fallen man who cannot escape certain damnation. However, as the title of the novel suggests, the reality is much more complex. At a close analysis of Scobie's

motifs, Greene indicates that he might be forgiven and there is a chance for redemption. The novel is controversial, because it raises wide range of questions about the nature of religious faith. Greene's concepts are paradoxical as he interprets virtue, vice, good and evil as interchangeable values. Through psychologically rich descriptions, Greene lets us peak into his character's mind so we can understand how Scobie tries to cope with his interior conflicts. Powerful Catholic themes rest upon intimate thoughts of the main protagonist. Greene's concept of pity and faith prove that he is much more interested in the psychology of the sinner and the fate of an individual as such, rather than with strict religious dogmas. Greene stands out among other Catholic writers due to his personal faith, imagination and unique paradoxical concepts.

The work reveals that Greene is one of the most complex and fascinating English novelists. Throughout his whole career, he was fascinated by the mystery of the human nature. He questioned the meaning of life and man's double nature. He examined the powers that affect human behaviour and shape one's destiny. Literature often reflects the mood of its age and Greene's fiction well represents the conflicts and pains of the modern world. According to Greene, we cannot draw a clear line between good and evil. Sometimes Catholics in the novels turn out to be selfish and callous, while outsiders might be closer to God. Greene questioned the values that are normally accepted as unquestionable and believed that the greatest evil is often hidden under the mask of righteousness. His stories remain timeless in their themes and at the same time they are evocative of the cultural moments, as they have captured significant episodes of the twentieth century history.

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