And so faith came to one — shapelessly, without dogma, a presence above a croquet lawn, something associated with violence, cruelty, evil across the way. One began to believe in heaven because one believed in hell, but for a long while it was only hell one could picture with a certain intimacy — ...  

Graham Greene in *The Lawless Roads*
CHAPTER IV

FAITH WITHOUT DOGMA

A Gun for Sale and Brighton Rock

In the earlier chapter, the technical devices which Greene used in his entertainments were thoroughly discussed. The discussion also demonstrated the modern use he made of the traditional devices. Now an attempt will be made to highlight the difference between the entertainment and the novel proper in the entire corpus of Greene's fiction. Albert J. Guerard discussing Conrad's The Secret Agent says, "The word entertainment comes to mind in the honorable sense given it by Graham Greene: an exciting story for the thoughtful readers, in which the most serious and most intimate human concerns (such as alcoholism and bodily degradation, political loyalty and international conflict, even religious conversion and neurotic self-destructiveness) are put to dramatic and "entertaining" use. This does not mean that Greene does not intend quite sincerely his wry general reflections and religious asides, but simply that they subserve the major aim of original and successful entertainment... Briefly, one of the appeals of Greene's fiction derives from the expository play of an
interesting and sardonic mind. But the books were not written for the sake of this expository play. Nor were they written to convert readers.¹ Guerard's statement on the nature and function of entertainment does not help us in stating the differentia of the entertainment for the sake of critical evaluation. If we take the companion books, A Gun for Sale and Brighton Rock, Guerard's opinion does not take us far. In many ways both the books deploy same technique and both end in tragedy. While in other entertainments discussed in the earlier chapter there is a sort of happy ending which makes the hero enjoy peace and love ultimately, Raven and Pinkie are doomed from the beginning.

What Greene himself says in A Sort of Life seems to supply a critical formula that helps us to arrive at a precise evaluation of both the books - A Gun for Sale and Brighton Rock.

"My long studies in Percy Lubbock's Craft of Fiction has taught me the importance of the 'point of view' but not how to convey physical excitement... Excitement is simple: excitement is a situation, a single event. It must not be wrapped up in thoughts, similes, metaphors. A simile is a form of reflection, but excitement is of the moment where there is no time to reflect. Action can only be expressed by a subject, a verb, and an object, perhaps a rhythm - little else. Even an adjective slows the

pace or tranquillises the nerve."¹ From this it is obvious that what he aimed at in a book like A Gun for Sale is to convey the excitement, one of the characteristics of a popular writer like Dickens or Stevenson. In Brighton Rock, even though there is excitement there is time to reflect. This may be illustrated by comparing two crucial passages from both the books.

Murder didn't mean much to Raven. It was just a new job. You had to be careful. You had to use your brain. It was not a question of hatred. He had only seen the Minister once; he had been pointed out to Raven as he walked down the new housing estate between the small lit Christmas trees, an old grubby man without friends, who was said to love humanity.²

The Boy said slowly, leaning out across the rail into the doubtful rain, 'When people do one murder, I have read they sometimes have to do another - to tidy up'. The word murder conveyed no more to him than the word 'box', 'collar', 'giraffe'.³

The passage from A Gun for Sale conveys the tone of the book remarkably in six sentences. The first five are simple declarative sentences with Anglo-Saxon verbs. The last one is a coordinate sentence. The very word 'murder' unobtrusively makes the reader excited. But the passage from Brighton Rock conveys

¹ Graham Greene, A Sort of Life, op. cit., pp.198-199.
a different impression, although it emphasises murder. The adverbial phrase 'to tidy up' conveys what is passing through Pinkie's mind, as if he is trying to clear the hurdle placed before him. To Raven murder is a new job. But Pinkie shows a theoretical knowledge of the whole procedure: "I have read they sometimes have to do another" reinforces the impression we had of him in Part One. The examples, box, collar, giraffe, make us realise that Pinkie is not excited about what he did or what he intends to do. There is definitely more reflection in Pinkie than in Raven.

We can, for the sake of making the point certain, pick up at random two more passages from both the books:

Nobody was beaten on Christmas Day; all punishments were saved for Boxing Day. Love, Charity, Patience, Humility - he was educated; he knew all about those virtues; he'd seen what they were worth. They twisted everything; even that story is there, it was historical, it had happened, but they twisted it to their own purposes. They made him a god because they could feel fine about it all, they didn't have to consider themselves responsible for the raw deal they'd given him. He'd consented, hadn't he? That was the argument, because he could have called down 'a legion of angels' if he'd wanted to escape hanging there. On your life he could, he thought with bitter lack of faith, just as easily as his own father taking the drop at Sandsworth could have saved himself when the trap opened. He stood there with his face against the glass waiting for somebody to deny that reasoning, staring at the swaddled child with a horrified tenderness, 'the little bastard', because he was educated and knew what the child was in for, the double-crossing Judas and only one man to draw a knife on his side when the Roman soldiers came for him in the garden.

But 'Spicer', the Boy's thoughts came inevitably
back with a sense of relief, 'they've got Spicer.'
It was impossible to repent of something which
made him safe. The nosy woman hadn't got a wit-
ness now, except for Rose, and he could deal
with Rose; and then, when he was thoroughly se-
cure, he could begin to think of making peace,
of going home, and his heart weakened with a
faint nostalgia for the confessional box, the
priest's voice, and the people waiting under the
statue, before the bright lights burning down
in the pink glasses, to be made safe from eternal
pain. Eternal pain had not meant much to him;
now it meant the slash of razor blades infinitely
prolonged.

The first passage unmistakably conveys the excitement of Raven
himself. At number of places in the novel, the narrator mentions
that Raven is educated. Ironically enough, his education drains
him of all possible belief in what is good and holy. That he is
obsessed at being double-crossed is amply conveyed by the refe-
rence to the double-crossing Judas. The pronoun 'they' which
in a way includes those who double-crossed him presents another
dimension of Raven's character. We know that he is a machine
made to murder, but those whom he is chasing are no better. From
the narrator's point of view, the passage conveys briefly all
the information necessary to assess Raven's predicament. The
passage from Brighton Rock in spite of its apparent clarity
forces on the reader the calculating and scheming mind of Finkie.
His own safety is the prime consideration in all that he does
in the novel. Spicer's supposed death gives him 'sense of relief'.

Spicer's death would weaken Ida Arnold's strategy against him. The words 'relief', 'safe', 'secure', dominate whenever Pinkie reflects. It is obvious that Pinkie is not as excited as Haven. He experiences pain and fear only when he is slashed by Colleoni's gang. The passage juxtaposes eternal pain and physical pain. In spite of his boastful talk about hell and damnation, we know that Pinkie knows only one kind of pain, "the slash of razor blades".

Since Greene himself thought that Raven, the killer, was a sketch for Pinkie in Brighton Rock, it may be helpful to discuss the structure of both the books if only to make clear the difference between what he achieved in a popular thriller and in a novel which uses religious motif as the principle of structuring. Like all other thrillers (thriller is the American word for entertainment), A Gun for Sale is built round a character who is betrayed. He becomes a chaser and in the process of chasing meets his doom. As has been noted earlier, the story has a tragic ending. Greene's craftsmanship is at its best here and shows achieved maturity. As in all other entertainments, there is a 'key scene' in which Raven with implicit confidence in Anne recounts his past, and it illustrates the argument and solidifies the theme.

The 'key scene' is laid in a dark shed in the station yard of Nottwich. Raven has already visited the shed and chosen
it as a place of refuge from the pursuit of the police. The
two characters of Haven and Anne come alive in the scene that
is dramatised in Section 1 and 2 of Part Five. Haven who is
accustomed to a life of hatred and isolation is surprised by
the fact that Anne has not betrayed him even though he had
threatened to kill her. It is this unforeseen warmth in her
that helps to thaw the chip of ice in his breast. When it be-
comes clear to him that Anne has not grassed to the police, and
when he spots her bag in the possession of a vicious-looking
old lady in the St Luke's Jumble Show, Haven wants desperately
to find her. After rescuing her from the disreputable lodging
house in Khyber Avenue where she is gagged and thrust in a fire-
place, Haven brings her to the dark shed in the station yard
in Section 1 of Part 4. They are followed by Mather and the
other policemen who have been pursuing Haven from the Jumble
Show. As it happens to be dark, they wait for the daybreak to
nab Haven. Mather goes away leaving Saunders to keep watch on
the fugitives hiding in the shed, as it is too shocking for
Mather to find his fiancée involved in the case of Raven and
even to have become the latter's accomplice.

It was a No Man's Land full of torn iron across
which one soldier picked his way with a wounded
companion in his arms.1

This observation is made by Mather. Anne has chosen her side

to be with Raven if only to prevent the outbreak of war.
War to her means "The mothers alive in their masks watching
the babies cough up in their insides". This thought has
been weighing on her mind ever since Raven told her of the
treachery behind the murder of the continental War Minister.

She wouldn't play God or the Devil's game;
she had evaded Raven, leaving him there in
the bathroom of the little empty house, and
Raven's affair no longer concerned her. She
wouldn't give him away; she was not yet on
the side of the big organised battalions;
but she wouldn't help him either. It was a
strictly neutral course she steered out of
the changing-room, out of the theatre door,
into Nottwich High Street.

But after seeing the agonised crowds turning their white faces
towards the sky with a kind of secular entreaty, Anne decides:

Well, she told herself, I believe in Fate, I
suppose I can't just walk out and leave them.
I'm in it up to the neck. If only Jimmy were
here. But Jimmy, she remembered with pain, was
on the other side; he was among those hunting
Raven down. And Raven must be given chance to
finish his hunt first. She went back into the
theatre.

With remarkable courage and presence of mind, Anne follows
Mr Davis and gathers particulars about his employment.

Alone with her in the dark shed, Raven begins to see
the possibility of finding someone whom he can trust. Repea-
tedly assured by Anne that she is on his side and that they

1. Graham Greene, A Gun for Sale, op. cit., p.146
2. Ibid., p.63.
3. Ibid., p.63.
are friends, Raven feels, "it is sort of — good in here out of the way of the whole damned world of them. In the dark".¹ He tries to make her comfortable by covering her with all the available sacks in the shed.

The urge to speak out the things that are in his mind is motivated by the sense of guilt he feels when Anne recounts the true nature of the murdered War Minister — that he was a Socialist trying to alter the living conditions of the poor. More than the Minister's egalitarian attitude, Raven is disturbed to learn that the Minister belonged to a poor class and there was something common in him with Raven's own background — "His father was a thief and his mother committed suicide". And he too had been brought up in a 'Home'. This new knowledge impels Raven to seek out the double-crossers with redoubled vigour. Raven has a brief dream in which he sees the War Minister coming towards him. "Raven was a child with a catapult in his hands. He wept and wouldn't shoot and the old Minister said, 'Shoot, dear child, we'll go home together. Shoot.'"²

Added to this stirring of guilt in Raven is the rousing of disturbed memories when he finds Anne praying. He is reminded of the futility of prayer which he discovered during his stay in the 'Home'. But now Anne's prayer brings to his mind the places and the people he wanted to forget. Assured by Anne that

¹ Graham Greene, A Gun for Sale, op. cit., p.141
² Ibid., p.149
she would not go to the police, Raven unburdens all the things weighing on his mind. He thinks that his happiness would be incomplete till she knows everything, till he had shown his trust completely. He does not want to shock or pain her.

Raven has a basic honesty and a radical innocence. "If people go straight with me, I'll go straight with them."¹ His warped thinking and twisted emotions are caused by the bitter traumatic experience he had in his childhood. The central and the most shocking experience had been his exposure to the sight of his mother's suicide - "She'd cut her throat - she looked ugly - her head nearly off - she'd sawn at it - with a bread knife."² This is the ugliest sight he had seen and his whole being was filled with venom. He was convinced that nothing he did could equal that ugliness. Then he was brought up in a 'Home' where the education he received only made him smart and clever. Even the hanging of his father did not trouble him as the sight of his mother's death and what it implied by way of his mother's utter disregard for her son. "She hadn't even thought enough of me to lock the door so as I shouldn't see."³

He then proceeds to recount his killing of Kite, a race-course gangster, and the way in which he was brought up against Cholmondeley. Then he narrates the killing of the secretary.

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² Ibid., p. 153
³ Ibid., p. 183.
Fawn gives out his revelation in the guise of dreams. But Anne is shrewd enough to see through the guise. The killing of the secretary is not ugly for Raven. He then tells how he killed the old Minister. He qualifies his narration with his innocence. He didn't want to hurt him. He didn't mean anything to him. But ironically, he comes to feel much for the murder of the Minister. It has been hanging like an albatross round his neck. He didn't care for the war. He had all these days been involved in a different war. He appeals to Anne to show sympathy towards man and not only for children.

He feels relieved. "It feels good to trust someone with everything."1 He is purged of his burden. Later he dreams of building a great bonfire on Guy Fawkes Day, in which he burns all the images that have been oppressing his mind: "a saw-edged knife, a lot of racing cards, the leg of a table".2 The old War Minister appears on the other side of the fire and steps into it himself. Raven runs to the fire to pull him out but the old man willingly burns himself and sags like a Guy Fawkes in the flames. The fire in the dream symbolically purges Raven's mind of the oppressive thoughts. He is now free to accomplish the revenge on Davis and his boss. The ship of ice in his breast melts.

2. Ibid., p. 159
The irony that develops out of this scene is important. His revelations instead of evoking pity in Anne give rise to repulsion and contempt for him. She keeps calm and cleverly manages to help Raven escape from the place, realising how hard it becomes for one to think of saving the world. Finally she too betrays him.

"Murder didn't mean much to Raven." This comment by the narrator sets the tone of the book and specifies Raven's attitude. While the irony implied in it gets revealed as the story progresses, it focuses attention on the casualness and indifference with which Raven as a hired murderer goes about his job with machine-like precision. His eyes, we are told, are like little concealed cameras and his brain retains every detail recorded there. His mind works with mechanical accuracy like a ready-reckoner. He is pitiless, indifferent and proud in doing his job. He carries in his breast a ship of ice which gives him no pain.

The ship of ice symbolises his frozen sensibility, which is the result of certain unhappy, deeply-shocking experiences to which as a child he was exposed. His father hanged; his mother committed suicide; Raven was exposed to the ugliness of the act and the utter disregard of his mother for her son. Later, he was
brought up in an orphanage where he learnt to become smart and clever. With warped thinking and twisted emotions, he nourishes a grouse against the whole world. He has a hare-lip which he carries like a badge of class. The education he received has made him profoundly disillusioned with the entire society that has blindly ignored him. Like Pinkie, he has been fed the poison of hatred from boyhood.

Though, driven by circumstances, he has become an outlaw of society, he always keeps in his heart a sense of justice that is outraged. Like the heroes of the other entertainments, he is a hunted man.

His crimes have an excuse and yet he is pursued by the Others. Others have committed worse crimes and flourish. The world is full of Others who wear the masks of Success, of a Happy Family.¹

His bitter reflections on the relevance of Christ in such a ravaged world contain an ironic comment on the kind of society that has made him what he is.

Raven turns hunter when his innate sense of justice is outraged by the double-crossing of Cholmondeley. The battle within Raven is externalised. He is hunted by the police for a crime which he has not committed, like Arthur Rowe in The Ministry of Fear, while he himself is determined to catch the double-dealers. In this externalised spiritual struggle, Raven meets his doom.

but before that he succeeds in punishing the double-crossers and gets in the process straightened of the twisted, frozen sensibility.

Greene establishes a polarity between the abnormality of Haven and the normality of Anne. This can be viewed as a secular version of the polarity between good and evil which is dramatised in *Brighton Rock*. Raven finds it difficult to cope with the simplicity and credulence of Anne. Music is used as a structural device to emphasise the impact that Anne brings on Haven. In the beginning of the book, Raven is made to hear the song played by Anne in her apartment. Later, when Raven pushes her into an empty house and intends to kill, Anne hums the song to keep her courage up. Raven remembers the song, which unsettles him. "It was as if something sharp and cold were breaking in his heart with great pain." Earlier he had also a smack of pain when Anne dashed hot coffee at his face. Finally, after all the burden of his oppressive thoughts is removed by making a confession to the trustful Anne, death comes to him in the form of unbearable pain, when he is divested of all bitterness in spite of Anne's betrayal:

It was as if he had to deliver this pain as a woman delivers a child, and he sobbed and moaned in the effort. At last it came out of him and he followed his only child into a vast desolation.¹

Even Pinkie's death is described in a similar way:

It was as if he'd been withdrawn suddenly by a hand out of any existence - past or present, whipped away into zero - nothing. 1

In terms of the structuring, both Haven and Pinkie meet their doom which is engineered by the social process of punishing a criminal.

From the above analysis of *A Gun for Sale*, a few interesting points emerge which could be used in discussing Greene's first Catholic-oriented novel, *Brighton Rock*. In *A Gun for Sale* character and environment are so fused as to make the corruption of Haven a compelling and inevitable consequence of a corrupt society. As David Lodge rightly remarks, "Haven's violence is thus an extension of a much larger public violence... and his guilt is diminished by juxtaposition with those who kill with clean hands". 2 Without resorting to compress Haven's predicament in a theological framework, the novelist presents his theme by focusing attention on Haven's childhood and other relevant details. The traumatic childhood experiences freeze his heart and the governing metaphor is 'the chip of ice in his breast'. The entire action of the book is progressive and gradual melting of 'the chip of ice'. The entire action takes place during Christmas season which is cold and nipping. It is as if the outer world physically sympathises with what is there inside Haven.

Moreover, this metaphor is also connected with metaphors of death and rebirth. In this way the book is shaped to reveal the awful social and individual life.

In Brighton Rock Greene tries to present his hero from the point of view of his childhood experience. The corruption that vitiates Pinkie's system is compared to poison and this image occurs at number of places in the novel. What is of utmost significance in discussing Pinkie's character is his adolescence. Many of Greene's critics seem to have missed the crucial point in evaluating the novel. Violence for the first time is traced to the predominence of evil in the visible world after the Crucifixion. What any thoughtful reader of the novel is to consider is whether this theme is dramatised convincingly, whether the structural complexity and textual richness resolve into a recognisable form.

In interpreting a work of art, if one agrees with the argument set forth by E.D. Hirsch, Jr. in Validity in Interpretation, to establish the author's meaning is the most reliable interpretation. There is no unanimity among Greene's critics as to what exactly is conveyed in the violent and awful events dramatised in the novel. According to David Lodge, the novel explores the paradox stated by T.S. Eliot in his essay on Baudelaire that it is better, in a paradoxical way, to do evil
than to do nothing and this leads to the "celebration of the sinner as one perversely aware of supernatural values".  

Kenneth Allott thinks, "Brighton Rock is an extended argument for the reasonableness of the terror of life". According to R.W.B. Lewis,

Brighton Rock could have been a kind of disaster, two different books between the same covers only by mistake ... for the relation between the detective story and the tragedy expresses exactly what Brighton Rock is finally about. It is a relation between two kinds of levels of reality: a relation between incommensurable and hostile forces; between incompatible worlds; between the moral world of right and wrong to which Ida constantly and confidently appeals and theological world of good and evil inhabited by Pinkie and Rose.  

Whether the novel endorses the view of Baudelaire, Eliot and Lodge or it convincingly explores the 'reasonableness of the terror of life' is not easy to decide. Graham Martin, on the other hand, is of the opinion that the career of the damned Pinkie illustrates the truth of Mephistopheles's words, "Why, this is Hell, nor are we out of it" quoted by Pinkie's lawyer, Prewitt. The mood of the book according to him is not unlike that of The Waste Land. "Brighton/ Hell exists both in its own right, and as a vehicle for Pinkie's character, a projection of his sterile guilt". One may agree with Martin's

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opinion regarding the association given to 'Hell', but a close reading of the novel does not seem to suggest the sterility of Pinkie's guilt because towards the end of the novel we find Rose carrying in her womb Pinkie's offspring, whatever may be the implication of her condition.

Then we try to explicate a work of art it is necessary to establish carefully its genre. Although the term novel is broadly used to include all kinds of fictional works, various distinctions are made even among novels. To an extent novelists are themselves responsible for this state of affairs in novel criticism. For instance, Conrad subtitled The Secret Agent A Simple Tale. In the same fashion Greene tells us in his Introduction to Brighton Rock:

That was the kind of book I always wanted to write; the high romantic tale, capturing us in youth with hopes that prove illusions, to which we return again in age in order to escape the sad reality. Brighton Rock was a poor substitute for Krovania, like all my books, and yet perhaps it is the best I ever wrote— a sad thought after more than thirty years.¹

Greene's statement provides an invaluable clue to understand not only the meaning of Brighton Rock but also its form. No doubt he uses the technique of his thrillers. But in presenting his characters we find definitely a different approach. Brighton Rock can be viewed as the tale of two adolescents in their struggle to know the situation in which the vicissitudes

of life placed them. The core of the book develops the relationship that exists between Pinkie and Rose. We may even say that all other characters and incidents are subordinated to highlight Pinkie-Rose relationship. Throughout the novel, the narrator refers to Pinkie as the Boy, except on two crucial occasions, and Rose is generally referred to as the girl. The word child is also used with reference to both on various occasions. This fact leads to the inference that the novelist is not at all interested in presenting a case of simple juvenile delinquency. Right from the beginning we are reminded of Pinkie’s ambition. It is his misfortune that he chooses a despicable person, Colleoni, as a model to imitate. In Section 3 of Part Three, when he fails to receive gentlemanly treatment from the waiters at Snow’s, Pinkie thinks of Colleoni padding through enormous rooms and the embroidered crowns on the chair-backs. Later, we are told that his mind staggered before the extent of his ambitions. After Spicer’s murder, when he is in the country with Cubitt and Dallow, he meets Spicer’s girl at the Queen of Hearts and recoils from her contact:

He was conscious for a moment of his enormous ambitions under the shadow of the hideous and commonplace set: the suite at the Cosmopolitan, the gold cigar-lighter, chairs stamped with crowns for a foreigner called Eugene. Hale dropped out of sight, like a stone thrown over a cliff; he was at the beginning of a long polished parquet walk, there were busts of great men and the sound of cheering, Mr Colleoni
bowed like a shop-walker, stepping backwards, an army of razors were at his back; a conqueror. Hooves drummed along the straight and a loud-speaker announced the winner; music was playing. His breast ashed with the effort to enclose the whole world.1

Again in Section 1 of Part Four, after receiving a severe slash of razor blades from Colleoni's men and fleeing to save his dear life, Pinkie thinks,

One day - one day - he limped along the sand with his bleeding hand hidden, a young dictator.2

From the above quotations it is obvious that Pinkie's ambition as the leader of the racetrack gang is to beat Colleoni and to excel him. The words 'conqueror', 'dictator', 'army' have a romantic aura about them and in terms of the tale characterise and define the nature of Pinkie's ambition. When he meets Rose privately for the first time, he tries to impress her as a hero courting a common girl which in fact she is. To a girl hailing from Nelson Place, the most ugly and poor area of Brighton, a visit to Sherry's is definitely a thrilling experience. In Nelson Place from which she has emerged like a mole into the daylight of Snow's restaurant and the Palace Pier, she has never known a boy with enough money to offer a drink to her. Pinkie tells her, "You're a good kid". Discovering that she belongs to his own Roman Catholic faith, he answers her questions by saying, "Of course there's Hell, Flames and damnation."3 He also tells her

2. Ibid., p.188.
3. Ibid., p.69.
that he is a non-practising Catholic. Their first private
meeting in Section 1 of Part Two is definitely one of the
most impressive scenes in the novel full of ironic juxta-
positions. Pinkie's sole purpose is to terrorise her and
to seal her mouth. He carries a bottle of vitriol and tells
about a girl called Peggy Baron who got mixed up with a mob
and had her face splashed with vitriol. Rose is terrified
when Pinkie shows the bottle of vitriol and spills a little
on the wooden plank of the Pier which burns with a hissing
sound. She tells him that she would avoid such a situation.
He warns her, "You can't always help it. It sort of comes
that way."

Even though she is in a state of terror, her
admiration and respect for Pinkie are firmly rooted in her
mind. At Sherry's they both watch the dancing couples and
Pinkie feels lonely in spite of the girl's company.

He eyed the slow movement of the two-backed
boasts: pleasure, he thought, they call it
pleasure: he was shaken by a sense of loneli-
ness, an awful lack of understanding.

Later he hears the song, "Music talks, talks of our love".

Then occurs the following passage:

The Boy stared at the spotlight: music, love,
nightingale, postmen: the words stirred in his
brain like poetry: one hand caressed the vitriol
bottle in his pocket, the other touched Rose's
wrist. The inhuman voice whistled round the

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2. Ibid., p.58.
galllery and the Boy sat silent. It was he this time who was being warned; life held the vitriol bottle and warned him: I'll spoil your looks. It spoke to him in the music, and when he protested that he for one would never get mixed up, the music had its own retort at hand: 'You can't always help it. It sort of comes that way'.

What is significant in this passage is the reversal that takes place. The conditions of life are such that one cannot avoid getting mixed up with unexpected situations. Earlier he warned Rose. Now life holds the vitriol bottle and warns him: 'I'll spoil your looks'. This is a prophetic moment because the vitriol bottle ultimately defaces him. At this point it is worth emphasising that he suffers from an awful lack of understanding, perhaps an adolescent characteristic. This impression is reinforced in another passage in the same section in which the popular tune and the Latin excerpts from the Prayer Book are ironically juxtaposed:

'Why, I was in a choir once,' the Boy confided and suddenly he began to sing softly in his spoilt boy's voice: 'Agnus dei qui tollis peccata mundi, dona nobis pacem.' In his voice a whole lost world moved - the lighted corner below the organ, the smell of incense and laundered surplices, and the music - 'Agnus dei', 'lovely to look at, beautiful to hold', 'the starling of our walks', 'credo in unum Dominum' - any music moved him, speaking of things he didn't understand.2

The lost innocence, the present confusion and corruption are both beyond Pinkie's understanding. "Any music moved him, speaking of things he didn't understand". This could be easily explained.

1/ Graham Greene, Brighton Rock, op. cit., p.69.
2. Ibid., p.61.
He is just seventeen and has no parents. He left Nelson Place and was adopted by Kite, Collaioni's rival. After Kite's death Pinkie becomes the leader of the gang. Even though there is the minor motive of avenging the death of Kite, the major drive behind murdering Hale appears to be one of self-assertion. Right from the beginning we see that he suffers from an invincible pride. Spicer's carelessness brings him into contact with Rose whose memory for faces is remarkable. Rose is so simple and innocent as to take Pinkie's words at their face value. There is no doubt that she sincerely loves him from the beginning.

If we pay close attention to the vocabulary of the novel, we can easily notice that the Boy fitted himself into a mask. When we meet him for the first time watching Hale, his face has a "starved intensity, a kind of hideous and unnatural pride". There are innumerable references to his grey eyes: "his grey eyes had an effect of heartlessness like an old man's in which human feeling had died". "Hale looked up at the grey inhuman seventeen-year-old-eyes". "When you meet him face to face he looked older, the slatey eyes were touched with the annihilating eternity from which he had come and to which he went." "...they all three left their fish untasted as they stared at the Boy - like children before his ageless eyes." He sat perfectly still.

2. Ibid., p.5.
3. Ibid., p.15.
4. Ibid., p.22.
5. Ibid., p.25.
with his grey ancient eyes giving nothing away."¹ "You could not tell if he was scared; his young ancient poker-face told nothing."² "But his eyes shifted quickly from the image of smooth, never shaven cheek, soft hair, old eyes; he wasn't interested."³ Towards the end it is stated that his face is like a child's,

It was like a child's, badgered, confused, betrayed; fake years slipped away - he was whisked back towards the unhappy playground.⁴

This overwhelming reference to Pinkie's young face and old eyes is not a mere descriptive detail. It suggests that in order to thrive as a notorious gangster in spite of his adolescence he has to put on a kind of mask which he maintains throughout. But the dynamics of life are such that they shatter any kind of mask. This tendency according to the tale has its origin in the instinctive dislike he developed when he saw his parents in bed one Saturday. It is plausible to infer that life does not give time to Pinkie to understand what his parents did because of the loneliness he felt when he was with them and the loneliness he felt when he succeeded Kite as the leader of the mob. The usual interpretation about Pinkie's perverse attitude to sex is that in his mind sin and sex are mixed up. But from

¹ Graham Greene, Brighton Rock, op. cit., p.69.
² Ibid., p.27.
³ Ibid., p.72-73.
⁴ Ibid., p.304.
the above analysis we can safely conclude that the loneliness
he felt when he saw the sex of his parents made an indelible
mark when he was a child and later developed into a mask, just
as his ambition to succeed in his chosen vocation made him
cultivate the habit of being heartless.

When he visited Nelson Place to meet Rose's parents and
to seek their permission to marry her, we get another dimension
of Pinkie's character:

He was scared, walking alone back towards the
territory he had left - oh, years ago... He
thought he had escaped for ever by the whole
length of the parade, and now extreme poverty
took him back... His home was gone: a flat
place among the rubble may have marked its
hearth; the room at the end of the stairs
where the Saturday night exercises had taken
place was now just air. He wondered with horror
whether it had all to be built again for him;
it looked better as air.

He had sent Rose back the night before
and now draggingly he rejoined her. It was no
good rebelling any more; he had to marry her;
he had to be safe. The children were scouting
among the rubble with pistols from Woolworth's;
an iron brace limped blindly into him; he pushed
it off; someone said in a high treble, 'Stick
'em up.' They took his mind back and he hated
them for it; it was like the dreadful appeal
of innocence, but there was not innocence; you
had to go back a long way further before you
found innocence; innocence was a slobbering mouth,
a toothless gum pulling at the teats; perhaps
not even that; innocence was the ugly cry of
birth.

The foregoing passage makes it clear that Pinkie likes very much

to snap for ever his connection with the origin of his life. The extreme poverty of the place and the misery of his parents evoke horror and this horror has become a habit. He is simply scared to pass through the territory he had left years ago.

The words 'scared' and 'territory' point to the dual aspect of his frame of mind. The word 'scared' is used number of times to characterise Pinkie's condition. Even though he tells Rose that he is not scared, he is definitely scared of everything including Rose. In spite of his ingrained dislike of marriage and what it means in terms of his parents' poverty and their Saturday night exercises, he has to marry her because he has to be safe. The sight of children makes him think of innocence which is not there. "Innocence was the ugly cry of birth." This deep-rooted conviction explains the fact that his "imagination had not awoken. That was his strength. He couldn't see through other people's eyes, or feel with their nerves". This accounts fairly well for his pride, his apparent heartlessness and lack of feeling. Since ambition and pride go together, the poison imagery running throughout the book appears to be appropriate.

When he is warned by the police authorities to clear out from Brighton, he feels insulted.

There was poison in his veins, though he grinned and bore it. He had been insulted. He was going to show the world. They thought because he was

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only seventeen... he jerked his narrow shoulders back at the memory that he'd killed his man, and those bogies who thought they were clever weren't clever enough to discover that. He trailed the clouds of his own glory after him; hell lay about him in his infancy. He was ready for more deaths.\footnote{1}

The poison twisted in the Boy's veins.\footnote{2}

The poison drained back into its proper glands: he was admired, no one insulted him, but when he looked at the girl who admired him, the poison oozed out again.\footnote{3}

From the above passages it is clear that he suffers from a sense of injured merit which is virtually the Satanic predicament and it is this that explains the idea, "he trailed the clouds of his own glory after him; hell lay about him in his infancy". As the leader of the mob he feeds his ego with so much of self-glory that he becomes too sensitive to withstand any good advice. His contempt for Rose and his rage are the result of the feeling he has that she has hold over him by remembering Spicer's face and thereby hang him.

He watched her with his soured virginity, as one might watch a draught of medicine that one would never, never take; one would die first - or let others die.\footnote{4}

Thus that Rose would have acted as the right kind of medicine to purge him of the poison, which he refuses to take and thereby meets his doom. It is exactly here that the character of Rose acquires all significance which helps to arrive at the meaning

2. Ibid., p.103.
3. Ibid., p.104.
4. Ibid., p.106.
of their relationship. It is here that the theological terms 'good' and 'evil' become precise in their connotation. Good redeems evil but evil because of its very nature refuses to be redeemed. This idea could be given a detailed examination.

Like Pinkie, Rose comes from Nelson Place. Poverty makes her both in appearance and manners somewhat coarse. When Pinkie tells her on various occasions about his business (without explaining what it is), his lawyer, his car, it is but natural that she begins to adore him as a hero. The fact that he too is a Catholic makes her adoration strong. After their marriage, when she dimly glimpses Pinkie's real existence, her faith and loyalty to him do not waver because as a Catholic she is bound by the vow of marriage even though it does not take place under the auspices of the Church. When they are walking in the street after the marriage, Rose tells him, 'It's wonderful being with you. Everyone knows you. I never thought I'd marry someone famous.' And it is after this that she prevails on Pinkie to give as wedding present a gramophone record embodying his voice. Pinkie does not like the idea of putting anything on record because it reminds him of fingerprints. When he is forced to say something to be recorded, he says in a low voice, 'God damn you, you little bitch, why can't you go back home for ever and let me be?'

2. Ibid., p.220.
Pinkie's death. It is difficult to establish the fact that Pinkie ever loved her. Of course there are glimpses of tenderness, pity for her innocence, a realisation of his own diabolic depravity and awareness of the value of repentance but no real change. The mask becomes an inescapable part of his being which death alone dissolves.

One significant difference between Raven and Pinkie is that Raven is never scared; he does not know what fear is. He is a murdering machine who later becomes human. Pinkie is definitely scared, is afraid of being caught and executed. That means as a criminal he is aware of the scope of the law and the social disapproval. But this does not mean that he is subtle and intelligent. It is surprising to note that George Orwell observed,

In Brighton Rock, on the other hand, the central situation is incredible, since it presupposes that the most brutally stupid person can, by merely being brought up a Catholic, be capable of intellectual subtlety.

Our entire discussion on the novel so far goes against Orwell's observation. It is Pinkie's lack of understanding, lack of intellectual subtlety that made him vulnerable against Ida Arnold whom he never considered his real danger and threat to his safety.

While a critic like Orwell dismisses the novel as incredible, R.W.B. Lewis goes to the other extreme when he says:

As Pinkie pursues his dream of damnation, the tragic dimension of Brighton Rock turns into a sort of saint's life in reverse. The seven sections of the book dramatize one by one an inversion of all or most of the seven sacraments: as Pinkie is confirmed in the habit of murder (Well lay about him in his infancy. He was ready for more deaths), he ordained as a priest of his Satanic Church (When I was a kid, I swore I'd be a priest... What is wrong with being a priest? They know what is what), performs the act of matrimony (which here is a mortal sin), and receives the vitriolicunction in the moment of his death. The entire reversal accomplished in Brighton Rock, haphazard though it is, manages to dignify the repellant protagonist on the principle indicated to Rose, at the very end by the sniffling old priest: Corruptio optimi est possimae. The worst is the corruption of the best; only the potentially very good can become so very evil and only the sacraments that save can so effectively become the sacraments that blasp.

This kind of criticism is not unusual, when a critic tries to present a synoptic account of a movement in which only apparent similarities between different writers are stressed to the exclusion of glaring differences. This results in focusing attention on certain aspects of the text. A simple fact to be kept in mind when we try to interpret the theology of a book is whether it would integrate various parts of the work. That is, whether it would account for the book's totality. Lewis's interpretation does not take along with it the predicament of Rose.

Rose is as much the victim of Pinkie’s evil as he himself is the victim of his own evil designs. There is no doubt that she loves him. When Pinkie is talking to Cubitt, she scribbles on a piece of paper “I love you, Pinkie. I don’t care what you do. I love you for ever. You’ve been good to me. Wherever you go, I’ll go too.” It is this implicit confidence and trust she has placed in him that Pinkie wants to exploit when he plans to make her commit suicide. Ida Arnold has definitely saved her. But has she understood her predicament? Right and wrong, justice, let not the innocent suffer, are only platitudes which she hurl at Rose in order to separate her from a murderer whom she has married. Those critics of Greene who find fault with him for making Rose talk of good and evil, mortal sin and damnation and thereby creating an incredible situation forget the fact that throughout the early sections of the book the reader is prepared for the crucial meeting of Rose and Ida Arnold at Frank’s in Section 1 of Part Seven. During their first meeting in Part Two when Pinkie wants to leave Sherry’s, Rose packs her hand-bag when something chinks in her bag. He asks her what it is and she shows him a string of beads and they come to know about their common faith. She tells him that she attends Mass sometimes and whenever she attends she does not get sound sleep. We have to remember her poverty and nowhere

is it mentioned that she had any formal education. Visit to
the Church is the only kind of education she had; hence no
wonder in her talking about things like heaven, good and evil,
whatever her intellectual grasp of them might be. She is lonely
because her parents never took interest in her except for
the money she gives them by doing odd jobs. She comes late to
the registrar's office because she got confused and went into
the Church. She tells Pinkie, "I wanted to be in a state of
grace when I married you". The narrator's comment, "The
theological term lay oddly and pedantically on her tongue.
They were two Romans together in the grey street. They under­
stood each other. She used terms common to heaven and hell" seems
to convey the difference between Rose's comprehension of
what she heard from priests and what her narrator thinks of it.
No doubt it is pedantic to a non-Catholic. But to Pinkie and
Rose, who are Catholics, the terms convey some meaning which
they may or may not believe. And we know that Pinkie does not bother
about the theological implications of Rose's vocabulary as the
following passage amply demonstrates:

The actor with a lick of black hair across a
white waste of face said, 'You're mine. All
mine.' He sang again under the restless stars
in a wash of incredible moonshine, and suddenly,
inexplicably, the Boy began to weep. He shut
his eyes to hold in his tears, but the music
went on - it was like a vision of release to

2. Ibid., p.206.
an imprisoned man. He felt constriction and saw—hopelessly out of reach—a limitless freedom: no fear, no hatred, no envy. It was as if he were dead and were remembering the effect of a good confession, the words of absolution: but being dead it was a memory only—he couldn't experience contrition—the ribs of his body were like steel bands which held him down to eternal unrepentance.

Music and tears are closely connected because we noted earlier that any music moves Pinkie since it is associated with his memory of a choir boy. But this memory is vitiated by other deep-rooted experiences of childhood which made him a prisoner of his own childhood obsessions. The passage suggests that 'the memory of the choir boy' and what it implies—innocence—no fear, no hatred, no envy—is hopelessly out of reach. The next sentence clinches the point. He is like a dead person who cannot make use of mere memory. In a paradoxical way he dies to innocence to live a life of corruption which becomes a habit and the image of 'steel bands' effectively conveys the hardness of habit. All his moves, strategies, and sly asides spring from fear, fear of being caught and hanged for Hale's murder. He hates others who may punish him and envies Colleoni because he has managed to escape from the clutches of law while maintaining a race-course mob. The names of Pinkie's victims are significant from this point of view. Hale in one of its senses means health, wholeness. By perpetrating the murder of Hale, Pinkie loses in a metaphorical way his sense of being spiritually healthy or

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his wholeness. It was Spicer who suggested to him to marry
Rose to shut her mouth about the facts of Hale's murder. Had
he taken Spicer's advice in the right spirit he would have
been free. In stead, he kills Spicer, who as his name indicates
might have brought the flavour of the spicy quality of charity
into his life. Finally he tries to get rid of Rose by persuading
her to kill herself two days after their marriage. Rose is sym-
boles of the grace of God which Pinkie tries to crush under his
feet.

From the foregoing discussion it follows that Rose as a
free agent loves Pinkie and loves him knowingly that he is be-
yond redemption. The following passage drives home the point:

In the world outside it was Sunday - she'd for-
gotten that! the church bells reminded her, sha-
kling over Brighton. Freedom again in the early
sun, freedom from the silent prayers at the
altar, from the awful demands made on you at
the sanctuary rail. She had joined the other
side now for ever. The half-crown was like a
medal for services rendered. People coming back
from the seven-thirty Mass, people on the way
to eight-thirty Watins - she watched them in
their dark clothes like a spy. She didn't envy
them and she didn't despise them: they had their
salvation and she had Pinkie and damnation.

It is while this is passing through her mind that she meets Ida
Arnold who visits her in order to save her from Pinkie. She gets
all the details from Cubitt concerning the murders of Hale and
Spicer. If we analyse the scene, the theme of the novel clearly

merges. Rose is simply shocked to find Ida in the room instead of her mother. When Rose says, 'I won't have anyone worry Pinkie', Ida asserts, 'he's going to have plenty to worry him soon'. Then Rose implores, 'Who are you? Why do you interfere with us? You're not the police'. Ida replies, 'I'm like everyone else. I want justice'. Now we have to see what kind of justice Ida wants. In an earlier novel, It's a Battlefield, Greene explores the theme of justice at various levels: from the point of view of the condemned man, Jim Drover, from the point of view of his wife, from the point of view of the Assistant Commissioner and from the point of view of a political party. Each member has his own views. We get the points of view of the minister and his cheerful secretary also. Even from a secular point of view, it is not easy for Rose to grasp fully what Ida is saying, even though Ida is fully aware of the dangers to which Rose is exposed. From Rose's point of view, since she feels responsible for Pinkie and identifies her fate with that of Pinkie and courts the most serious punishment known to her adolescent imagination namely damnation, Ida is only a busybody creating confusion in her affairs.

'You think he's in love with you,' the woman said, 'he's not.'

'He married me.'

'And why? because they can't make a wife give evidence. You're just a witness like that other man was. My dear,' she again tried to close the gap between them, 'I only want to save you. He'd kill you as soon as look at you if he thought he wasn't safe.'
With her back to the bed, Rose watched her approach. She let her put her large cool pastry-making hands upon her shoulders. 'People change,' she said.

'Oh, no they don't. Look at me. I've never changed. It's like those sticks of rock; bite it all the way down, you'll still read Brighton. That's human nature.' She breathed mournfully over Rose's face - a sweet and winy breath.

'Confession ... repentance,' Rose whispered.

'That's just religion,' the woman said. 'Believe me, it's the world we got to deal with.' She went pat on Rose's shoulder, her breath whistling in her throat. 'You pack a bag and come away with me. I'll look after you. You won't have any cause to fear.'

'I'll look after Pinkie.'

Rose said, 'I'll do anything - anything you want...'

'That's the way to talk, fear.'

'If you'll let us alone.'

While Rose hopes that 'people change', Ida is firm in believing the exact opposite. Religion is simply dismissed. According to her, religion and the world are polarities. But even a non-believer has to concede that the polarity that exists between the world and religion is the result of our making. If the legal decision is a standard of justice, then Pinkie is set free by the police after examining all the available evidence about the murders of Hale and Spicer. It is Ida who pursues the matter further and drives him to plan the death of Rose. Dallow tells Ida precisely this: "God's sakes, this is your doing. You made him marry her, you made him..." It is her active intervention that in fact endangers the life of Rose although she saves Rose in the last minute. A few of Greene's critics feel that the

2. Ibid., p.296.
rhetoric of the book defeats Ida. But a close look at the events makes it evident that Ida's merciless compassion makes matters worse for Rose. Had she left them to themselves, we do not know what would have happened.

When we turn to the last scene in which the priest consoles Rose, it appears that she goes to the confessional to think of her misery. She loves Pinkie knowing that he is damned. It is in this context that the priest after telling her about Charles Peguy says, "You can't conceive, my child, nor can I or anyone ... the appalling strangeness of the mercy of God". But this does not relieve her pain completely and we know what is in store for her, when she walks rapidly towards 'the worst horror of all'. From this we infer that the worst horror is evil refusing to redeem itself - Pinkie refusing to love her. Ida Arnold's secular view of life cannot penetrate the murky heart of Pinkie. It only explains the kind of society that produces the Pinkies of the world. The inevitable corollary of the view is that when society punishes its criminals it is in a way punishing itself. But there is no way out of this vicious circle. This theme is explored with impeccable craftsmanship in A Gun for Sale. In Brighton Beach, Pinkie's predicament exemplifies the religious sense of evil always crashing with good. Since Pinkie refuses to be redeemed, does not want to howl the devil out, Rose's predicament gains tragie

significance because of her love and willingness to do anything for him. Rose will love the child to be born although it shares his evil. Ida Arnold's merciless compassion may doom the mini finkies of the world, but Rose's love will give them chance to survive and redeem themselves. In this sense *Brighton Rock* is a love story. It is in terms of the perspective outlined above the novel is a high romantic tale involving two adolescents.

The opinion that the novel endorses Eliot's oft-quoted remark on Baudelaire - 'it is better, in a paradoxical way, to do evil than to do nothing; at least we exist - seems too particular to do justice to the perennial theme and complexity of the novel. Baudelaire's notion of sin and evil is largely a matter of sex. Baudelaire, the Christian Satanist, thought that 'the expanse of spirit in a waste of shame' is the gateway to eternal damnation. He is his own victimiser. In *Brighton Rock* we are concerned with a problem of greater magnitude. Within its narrative scope, it dramatises the perennial conflict between evil and good and the inclusiveness of God's mercy and human love.
The Power and the Glory

The Power and the Glory, even though it takes the most significant place in the Greene canon, has its detractors. Critics like Mr. F.N. Lees and Mr. Richard Hogart have successfully damned it with faint praise. Any revaluation of this remarkable book should negotiate with the objections raised by Mr. Lees and Mr. Hogart. At the outset we may tentatively make the point that the so-called trilogy, Brighton Rock, The Power and the Glory and The Heart of the Matter, proliferate with common themes and iterative images. Murder, betrayal, perversion, horror and pity find a suitable fusion in the thrillers which are characterized by rapid movement. But in this trilogy, the same features are dramatized in terms of an inclusive view of human condition. The chief characters act out their doom fully conscious of damnation both in its metaphysical and theological implications. More than anything else, it is this foreknowledge that all the characters share that unifies this trilogy. Moreover, it is one of the characteristics of the modern mind.

Mr. Lees and Mr. Hogart reach similar conclusion but in different ways. Mr. Lees notices the "blurring of issues in the conduct of the priest", unanalysed emotionalism resulting in much falsification of values and romanticization of what the book
itself pronounces to be sinful. According to him, "it is the protagonist's good qualities, his loyalty and courage that bring about his dangers and death, not his bad ones and the bad ones are not utilised to produce any of the significant action which is the analytic and evaluative structure of the novel." After quoting a few passages, he comments: "One wonders what degree of gravity is being assigned to the various grounds of self-accusation; but the intention, plainly, is to claim sympathy and approbation for a self-sacrificing humility and searching self-knowledge in the priest - the result is to do it at the expense of any precise moral desirability of the very values the book endorses".

When we attempt to meet the foregoing adverse criticism made by Mr Lees, we are confronted with evasive terminology. What exactly is the evaluative structure of a novel? Should we take it as something that suggests failure of technique or the withering of vision? Mark Schorer in "Technique as Discovery" says,

Technique is the means by which the writer's experience, which is his subject matter, compels him to attend to it. Technique is the only means he has of discovering, exploring, developing his subject, of conveying its meaning, and finally, of evaluating it.

2. Ibid., p.34.
3. Mark Schorer, The World We Imagine, op. cit., p.3.
From this it becomes obvious that there cannot be any analytic and evaluative structure of a novel apart from its total structure. Even Schorer's term 'technique' seems to be too broad a term to allow precise analysis of a work of art. But it draws attention to various devices a novelist may choose for his purpose. Now the question is whether Greene employed the right kind of technique to convey the meaning of his experience. Since form and meaning cannot be separated, the scheme of values which the book endorses cannot be examined apart from its form. It is also to be noted that Mr Lees nowhere mentions what exactly are the values The Power and the Glory endorses.

In Section 3 of Part Three, after his capture the priest is asked by the Lieutenant, "why you - of all people - should have stayed when the others ran", and the priest replies, "I asked myself that. The fact is, a man isn't presented suddenly with two courses to follow: one good and one bad. He gets caught up". The entire novel evolves in such a way that the reader is confronted with a situation in which it is not easy to decide whether the priest is wilful or simply unaware of what he is doing. It appears as though he is both. And this is precisely the climax of the book. A careful analysis of the novel up to this point may help us to explain the structural complexity which ought to include Mr Lees's analytic and evaluative structure.

a quack and Mr Tench takes him to his place. When they are drinking brandy, the priest's dark suit and sloping shoulders remind Mr Tench of a coffin, "death was in his curious mouth already". Later, "Mr Tench examined his companion again with surprise. He sat there like a black question mark ready to go, ready to stay, poised on his chair". Through Mr Tench's eyes we see the priest, who is like a black question mark. This image which is repeated with reference to the lieutenant in the next section establishes the link between the two men of which they are not immediately aware. The priest poised on his chair is ready to go and ready to stay. He likes to take the ship proceeding to Vera Cruz but a few moments later he proceeds with the boy who comes there saying that his mother is dying. Then the priest is accompanying the boy, he hears the sound of "General Obregon"'s siren and feels abandoned. With his brandied tongue he mutters, "Let me be caught soon... Let me be caught". Now it is easy to understand the reason for his addiction to brandy. Like ether, brandy makes one momentarily immune to pain. In the initial stages it is the past and all the memories associated with it that agonise the priest. This agony cannot be eliminated but can momentarily be suspended. "Let me be caught soon... Let me be caught" is in fact a cry for the end of this agony.

2. Ibid., p.11.
3. Ibid., pp.16-17.
Thus 'The Fort' presents the priest who comes to escape but who is drawn into the heart of the land to which he is tied like the King of a West African tribe.

'The Capital' introduces the priest's antagonist, the lieutenant. His 'neatness', we are told, 'gave an effect of inordinate ambition in the shabby city'. He learns from the Chief of Police about the last surviving priest and takes on himself the responsibility of catching him. Even the lieutenant suffers from unhappy memory:

The lieutenant walked home through the shattered town. All his life had lain here: the Syndicate of Workers and Peasants had once been a school. He had helped to wipe out that unhappy memory. The whole town was changed: the cement playground up the hill near the cemetery where iron swings stood like gallows in the moony darkness was the site of the cathedral. The new children would have new memories; nothing would ever be as it was.

Just as the memory of the eradication of religion is painful to the priest, to the lieutenant the memory of his childhood associated with religion is painful. As a utopian he does not want the children to be burdened with old memories. From the lieutenant the scene shifts to a home where a mother is giving readings from the lives of the saints to her children. Her young son asks about Padre Jose. Fat comes the reply, "The traitor to God".

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2. Ibid., pp.22-23.
3. Ibid., p.96.
Here memory plays its part. The lady wants to refresh her own and her children's memory with the significance of martyrdom. Immediately we are presented with a glimpse of Jose's life. The rulers make him marry. "He crouched like a galley-slave" when his wife calls Jose, Jose.

He thought with envy of the men who had died; it was over so soon. They were taken up to the cemetery and shot against the wall; in two minutes life was extinct. And they called that martyrdom. Here life went on and on; he was only sixty-two. He might live to ninety. Twenty-eight years — that immeasurable period between his birth and his first parish: all childhood and youth and the seminary lay there.

Even this 'traitor to God' cannot shake off the memory of the past.

'The River' presents Captain Fellows and his daughter Coral. The lieutenant visits them to find out whether they have seen the priest. "The lieutenant stood there like a little dark menacing question mark in the sun." The question mark image to which Mr. Lees takes strong objection is here functional since it has already been used with reference to the priest. In the case of the priest it implies vacillation. In the case of the lieutenant it implies determination. In this way, right from the beginning the characters of the priest and the lieutenant are delicately but unambiguously hinted. The priest is weak. The lieutenant is strong. The weak man is crushed but the strong man...

2. Ibid., p.29.
3. Ibid., p.37.
appears drained out of all action. After the priest is caught, the lieutenant feels:

... there was nothing left to think about. The spring of action seemed to be broken. He looked back on the weeks of hunting as a happy time which was over now for ever. He felt without a purpose, as if life had drained out of the world.  

Greene himself has pointed out in his Introduction to *The Power and the Glory* in the Collected Edition,

I had not found the integrity of the lieutenant among the police and pistoleros I had encountered - I had to invent him as a counter to the failed priest; the idealistic police officer who stifled life from the best possible motives: the drunken priest who continued to pass life on.

From the above analysis and from Greene's comment emerges the dialectic that pervades *The Power and the Glory* which is also its structural core: it is a struggle between forces which stifle life and those which perpetuate it. The way to eternal hell on earth is paved with the best possible motives. From pain and suffering the way to heaven on earth is slowly but surely laid.

In Section 4, 'The Bystanders', Mr Tench, Padre Jose, the mother and the children, the Chief of Police and the lieutenant appear. To find the lieutenant ascertaining the features of his enemy. The section closes with the lieutenant cogitating on the ways and means of establishing the utopia for the boy Louis

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2. Ibid., Introduction, p.x.
and the other children:

He would eliminate from their childhood everything which had made him miserable, all that was poor, superstitious and corrupt. They deserved nothing less than the truth - a vacant universe and a cooling world, the right to be happy in any way they chose. He was quite prepared to make a massacre for their sakes - first the Church and then the foreigner and then the politician - even his own chief would one day have to go. He wanted to begin the world again with them, in the desert.

The foregoing passage suggests his determination to make a massacre for their sake but the ensuing drama which ends with the shooting of the priest, as the lieutenant later realises, does not eliminate all that is poor, superstitious and corrupt.

From the above analysis a few facts emerge which help us to explain the theme and the structure of the book. The Port symbolises the doorway through which people may escape from the awful burden of the past. It is the way through which ether and brandy are brought to provide momentary immunity from pain resulting from the remembrance of the things past. Perhaps it is through this port that another priest enters after the death of the whisky priest, reinforcing the forces of life. The Capital symbolises life; the River time in the sense of sheer chronicity. The Bystanders stand for those who engineer the events and those who witness them, without being aware of their full implications. As the priest later tells the lieutenant (the passage

is quoted at the very beginning of the discussion), one is not
confronted suddenly with two courses, the good and the bad. One
gets caught up. The way in which he is caught provides the plot
and how he extricates himself from his awful predicament con-
stitutes the comment on the action the plot presents. The struc-
ture of the book depends on a subtle fusion of these two, which
will be discussed in the following pages.

In Part Two and in Part Three the narration proceeds
from the point of view of the priest. It is here that R.W.B.
Lewis sees the picaresque structure and theme. For the follow-
ing reasons it appears to be a lopsided approach to a novel
like The Power and the Glory. The whisky priest is not a pica-
resque character like Fielding’s Tom or his modern variation,
Bellow’s Augie March. He is not a character who comes under the
category of types. His character does not evolve from a socio-
logical situation involving an inevitable generalising process.
On the other hand, it emerges from a theological and metaphysi-
cal situation involving an inevitable particularising process.
Moreover, the omissions and commissions of the priest are a
part of a situation rooted in a dialectic. A closer examination
of Part Two and Part Three definitely points to the idea of a
pilgrim trying to evade in a weak manner the destination of his
pilgrimage. We may say that he never wanted to be a saint. Ma-
tyrdom is not his chosen ambition. Towards the end, he feels
only an immense disappointment because he has to go empty-handed. Throughout the novel, and especially in Part Two and in Part Three, we find him confused. He prays without conviction. His ministry does not produce in him the kind of satisfaction which we associate with peace and sanity. Even when he is about to be shot, he is under the spell of brandy. His legs are not fully under control. Merely because he is pursued and he shifts from place to place, he cannot be called a picaresque saint. Just before he enters his parish, he is filled with a sense of happiness:

He was feeling happy. It is one of the strange discoveries a man can make that life, however you lead it, contains moments of exhilaration; there are always comparisons which can be made with worse times; even in danger and misery the pendulum swings.

One simple cause for his happiness is the change he notices in his face.

He knelt down in the late sunlight and bathed his face in a brown pool which reflected back at him like a piece of glazed pottery the round, stubbly and hollow features. They were so unexpected that he grinned at them - with the shy evasive untrustworthy smile of a man caught out. In the old days he often practised a gesture a long while in front of a glass so that he had come to know his own face as well as an actor does. It was a form of humility - his own natural face hadn't seemed the right one. It was a buffoon's face, good enough for mild jokes to women, but unsuitable at the altar-rail. He had tried to change it - and indeed, he thought, indeed I have succeeded, they'll never recognise me now, and the cause of his happiness came back to him like the taste of brandy, promising temporary relief from fear, loneliness, a lot of

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things. He was being driven by the presence of soldiers to the very place where he most wanted to be.

What is of interest in this passage is the juxtaposition of past and present. In the past, the face did not express humility. It was a buffoon's face, unsuitable at the altar-rail. Now, there is a change and it is difficult for the police to identify him. The simile, 'the cause of his happiness came to him like the taste of brandy', reinforces the point that brandy helps him to have a temporary relief from fear, loneliness and a lot of things. This leads to introspection and momentary awareness of failure. The taste of brandy, the promise of temporary relief, is gradually fading. And it is in this context we get the following passage, which Mr Lees dismisses as mere emotionalism:

The routine of his life like a dam was cracking and forgetfulness came dribbling through, wiping out this and that. Five years ago he had given way to despair - the unforgivable sin - and he was going back now to the scene of his despair with a curious lightening of the heart. For he had got over despair too. He was a bad priest, he knew it. They had a word for his kind - a whisky priest, but every failure dropped out of sight and mind; somewhere they accumulated in secret - the rubble of his failures. One day they would choke up, he supposed, altogether the source of grace. Until then he carried on, with spells of fear, weariness, with a shame-faced lightness of heart.

What is to be noticed in this passage is the balancing of despair, the sense of despair and a curious lightening of heart. As he

2. Ibid., pp.68-69.
proceeds we do not find his happiness, the lightening of his heart, sustained. He meets Maria and her daughter who is also his illegitimate daughter, Brigitte. He does not receive the welcome he expects from his parishioners. Brigitte asks him, "Are you the gringo?" And he learns for the first time that the police are pursuing an American gangster. Later, the police surround the village. Though he confronts the lieutenant, he escapes because he looks like a peasant. Ultimately he leaves frustrated, disappointed.

He was a man who was supposed to save souls. It had seemed quite simple once, preaching at Benediction, organising the guilds, having coffee with elderly ladies behind barred windows, blessing new houses with a little incense, wearing black gloves ... It was as easy as saving money; now it was a mystery. He was aware of his own desperate inadequacy.

Even here again the memory of the past and the burden of the present are brought together. From now on his own desperate inadequacy characterises every thought and deed. He leaves Concepcion travelling in the actual track of the police. On his way to Carmen he meets the mestizo, the half-caste who betrays him to the police. When the half-caste says, "If I wanted to rob you, could not I have done it already? You are an old man", the priest says mildly, "Not so very old."

His conscience began automatically to work: it was like a slot machine into which any coin could be fitted, even a cheat's blank disk. The words proud, lustful, envious, cowardly, ungrateful - they all worked the right springs - he was all these things.

2. Ibid., p.98.
3. Ibid., p.104.
In this passage we find that the priest's thoughts and movements have become mechanical. His failures are so many and varied that any word, any act makes him think of his past. On the next page we find his conscience ceased to accuse him of uncharity. He knows that he is in the presence of Judas. The next paragraph develops an interesting idea:

He leant his head back against the wall and half closed his eyes - he remembered Holy Week in the old days when a stuffed Judas was hanged from the belfry and boys made a clatter with tins and rattles as he swung out over the door. Old staid members of the congregation had sometimes raised objections: it was blasphemous, they said, to make this guy out of Our Lord's betrayer; but he had said nothing and let the practice continue - it seemed to him a good thing that the world's traitor should be made a figure of fun. It was too easy otherwise to idealise him as a man who fought with God - a Prometheus, a noble victim in a hopeless war.

The priest's memory, it seems, cannot dissociate itself from Judas. His innate sense of evil ironically takes a comic turn. In spite of the objection from the other members of the congregation, he allowed the practice of hanging a stuffed Judas because it mitigates the evil. If this were not done, there is a possibility of Judas becoming a hero. One fact that is always mentioned about the priest is that he giggles. This suggests that he has immense capacity to reduce the enormity of evil so that even the half-caste could be given the place he deserves instead of being idealised by men who killed God. When the

half-caste is shivering in cold with fever and asks the priest to hear his confession.

The priest was reminded of an oil-gusher which some prospectors had once struck near Concepcion—it wasn't a good enough field apparently to justify further operations, but there it had stood for forty-eight hours against the sky, a black fountain spouting out the marshy useless soil and flowing away to waste—fifty thousand gallons an hour. It was like the religious sense in man, crashing suddenly upwards, a black pillar of fumes and impurity, running to waste.1

This remarkable passage has an evaluative purpose. It unmistakably suggests the priest's own predicament and the predicament of other sinners like him. It serves the dual purpose of generalising the predicament of modern man and particularising that of the half-caste. The image of the oil gusher provides the necessary clue to appraise the momentary rejuvenation when it comes of religious sense in man. Its relevance gains more depth when the priest thinking of the old days remembers how he confronted the question of an Indian child:

'What is God like?' and he would answer feebly with reference to the father and the mother, or perhaps more ambitiously he would include brother and sister and try to give some idea of all loves and relationships combined in an immense and yet personal passion... But at the centre of his own faith there always stood the convincing mystery—that we are made in God's image. God was the parent, but he was also the policeman, the criminal, the priest, the maniac and the judge. Something resembling God dangled from the gibbet or went into odd attitudes before the bullets in a prison yard or contorted

itself like a camel in the attitude of sex. He would sit in the confessional and hear the com-
plicated ingenuities which God's image had thought out, and God's image shook now, up and down on
the mule's back, with the yellow teeth sticking out over the lower lip, and God's image did its
despairing act of rebellion with Maria in the hut among the rats.¹

This passage seems to be the very centre of the book and requires
careful scrutiny. Once again we are back in the priest's past.
To a question which demands an answer from the whole soul of
man, he gives facile answer. Suffering and incessant movement
make him think of an answer to the question posed by the Indian
child. The answer now comes in the form of a mystery, which is
convincing, which is at the centre of his own faith. We are made
in God's image. But the image is inclusive. What is interesting
is the variations of the image - the policeman, the criminal,
the priest, the maniac and the judge. Later follows the treat-
ment given to the image. It dangles from the gibbet bored by
the bullets and contorts with lust. Ultimately comes its clever-
ness and its despairing acts. There is no doubt that at least
now the priest is aware of the grandeur and mystery, pettiness
and misery of man. Here we have an identification of man with
the image of God even in his most despicable state. Since God's
image is embodied both in the criminal and the priest, he rushes
in spite of certain death to hear the confession of the American
gangster. It is here that we find the priest again failing to

exploit the invaluable spiritual insight: "It was like religious sense in man, cracking suddenly upwards, a black pillar of fumes and impurity running to waste". A variation on this theme could be seen in the predicament of the Chief of Police. When the Governor's cousin, the beggar, the priest and the jefe are consuming brandy, the jefe under the spell of brandy says,

The first I can remember with any distinctness is my first communion. Ah, the thrill of the soul, my parents round me... life has such irony. It was my painful duty to watch the priest who gave me that communion shot - an old man. I am not ashamed to say that I wept. The comfort is that he is probably a saint and that he prays for us. It is not everyone who earns a saint's prayers.¹

But the jefe, like the priest, has not the courage of his convictions to prevent the whisky priest from being caught and shot.

When the Red Shirts pursue the priest for carrying brandy which is prohibited, "self-preservation lay across his brain like a horrifying obsession".² This obsession loses its power when he finds in the prison cell extraordinary affection. When he confronts a pious lady who disapproves of the crude behaviour of two criminals enjoying sex, he tries to convince her of the efficacy of charity. When she says, "The sooner you are dead the better",³ he thinks,

2. Ibid., p.141.  
3. Ibid., p.186.
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When you visualise a man or woman carefully, you could always begin to feel pity - that was a quality God's image carried with it. When you saw the lines at the corners of the eyes, the shape of the mouth, how the hair grew, it was impossible to hate. Hate was just a failure of imagination. He began to feel an overwhelming responsibility for this pious woman.

It appears that he has reached a kind of maturity when he can feel that hate is just a failure of imagination.

From the point of view of the structure, Part Two and Part Three present the priest on the move in quest of safety. The whole quest is presented as a series of scenes starting from his reentry into his own parish and ending with his being summoned by the police when he has to do his duty as a priest to God's image in the shape of the American gangster. In each scene we find the priest thinking of the past and brooding over the present. The one continuous theme of his confused thinking is his own inadequacy both as a man and as a priest. And here it may also be mentioned that a slow but sure evolving towards mature comprehension of the issues at stake takes place and reaches its climax in the concluding paragraph of Part Three:

When he woke up it was dawn. He woke with a huge feeling of hope which suddenly and completely left him at the first sight of the prison yard. It was the morning of his death. He crouched on the floor with the empty brandy-flask in his hand trying to remember the Act of

Contrition, 'O God, I am sorry and beg pardon for all my sins ... crucified ... worthy of thy dreadful punishments.' He was confused, his mind was on other things; it was not the good death for which one always prayed. He caught sight of his own shadow on the cell wall; it had a look of surprise and grotesque unimportance. What a fool he had been to think that he was strong enough to stay when others fled. What an impossible fellow I am, he thought, and how useless. I have done nothing for anybody. I might just as well have never lived. His parents were dead - soon he wouldn't even be a memory - perhaps after all he wasn't really Hell-worthy. Tears poured down his face; he was not at the moment afraid of damnation - even the fear of pain was in the background. He felt only an immense disappointment because he had to go to God empty-handed, with nothing done at all. It seemed to him, at the moment, that it would have been quite easy to have been a saint. It would only have needed a little self-restraint and a little courage. He felt like someone who has missed happiness by seconds at an appointed place. He knew now that at the end there was only one thing that counted - to be a saint.

The solemn rhetoric of this passage reveals the priest's predicament. No doubt, it has doctrinal implication. But the implication unfolds from the character of the priest as seen from various angles. We have noted earlier that his various acts of contrition do not bring a definite orientation towards the doom he ought to face. The plot machinery propels the reader to this conclusion. But it is not difficult to notice signs of mature understanding when he could say that hate is simple failure of imagination. When he is carrying the half-caste on the mule,
he feels,

It was too easy to die for what was good or beautiful, for home or children or a civilisation - it needed a God to die for the half-hearted and the corrupt.

Later in the prison, when he sees Miguel who has been taken as hostage,

He prayed silently: Oh God, send them someone more worthwhile to suffer for. It seemed to him a damnable mockery that they should sacrifice themselves for a whisky priest with a bastard child.

Just before he is arrested, he persuades the gunman to confess, and when he refuses, he whispers the words of conditional absolution and prays,

'O merciful God, after all he was thinking of me, it was for my sake...' but he prayed without conviction. At the best, it was only one criminal trying to aid the escape of another - whichever way you looked there wasn't much merit in either of them.

Richard Hogart, after quoting the above passage, observes:

The priest presumably prays 'without much conviction' because, in terms of doctrine, confession for the gunman is the only relevant action at this moment, and its refusal a final refusal of grace. But both the interpretations of the attitude which is preventing the gunman from making the act of confession are wrong. He was not likely to be prompted simply by unselfish thought for the priest or simply by the wish of one criminal 'to aid the escape of another'. His response was probably lower than the former, but certainly higher than the latter. 'The bastards' is partly an angry moral assertion against the lowness of the trick, and not therefore altogether to be dismissed in this way.

2. Ibid., p.162.
3. Ibid., p.227.
Bogart finds fault with Greene's attitude "which sometimes sees only sinfulness where many of us would find something less reprehensible". This obsession with sin makes him insert an authorial comment which goes against the gunman, according to Bogart. But it seems not unfair to say that the critic seems to ignore the context, for his own reasons, in which the authorial comment seems to be justified. As has been pointed out, every act of the priest makes him think of his own past and his present spiritual uncertainty and danger. Whatever may be the ulterior motive in the priest following the half-caste to listen to the last confession of the gangster, it is his firm conviction that once a priest is always a priest that propels him to reach the gunman and hear his confession. The predication of the criminal reminds him of his own failure and inadequacy just as the word 'bastard' in an earlier context made him think of his illegitimate child. From this it follows that on the morning of his death he is confused. His mind is not on repentance but on other things. His sense of pride seems to have melted, since his shadow has a look of grotesque unimportance. The next sentence, "what a fool he had been to think that he was strong enough to stay when others fled", makes this clear. Since he has only few moments on earth, he feels immense disappointment to leave the world and face God empty-handed. Since he never aspired to be a saint throughout his career as a priest,

he thinks that mere self-restraint and a little courage would have made him one. One may feel, as the priest himself feels, that he is not really Hell-worthy; but one may be sceptical about his claim to sainthood. To any priest under Catholic dispensation sainthood is the highest honour that the Church confers. But in the case of the whisky priest who never wanted to be a saint, the mere fact of thinking about it indicates that he is slowly evolving towards an awareness of the very idea of sanctity.

The foregoing discussion amply demonstrates that the fusion that takes place between the events in the priest's life and the evaluation he makes of them determines the form of *The Lower and the Glory*. Many critics use terms like parable and allegory in discussing the structural aspects of the novel. One well-known fact that determines the attitude of many critics towards the novel is that the book closely follows the author's Mexican travelogue, *The Lawless Roads*. No doubt the travelogue has behind it the propaganda motive; but the novel is not an apology for Catholicism. After giving a brief summary of the novel, Richard Hogart points out:

One could scarcely miss the allegory. I say allegory rather than symbolism to indicate a manipulation of the material in accordance with the view of the world which the writer has from outside that material, so to speak. I reserve symbolism for a much more inward embodiment of the writer's attitude to experience, in which
the attitude does not so much precede the creation of the fiction as find itself in the fiction. I would therefore apply the adjective symbolic to Kafka's two novels but not to *The Power and the Glory*.

In Hogart's comment we easily notice the romantic demotion of allegory and promotion of symbolism, which is the dominant attitude in modern criticism after the advent of the New Criticism. But American theorists like Edward Honig and Angus Fletcher have shown that the distinction between symbol and allegory cannot stand a close theoretical enquiry. Even Kafka's novels are read as allegories.

Thus, a critic may say of *The Castle*, *The Trial*, or *The Metamorphosis* that they are mythic and then proceed to read them, perhaps employing Freudian symbols, as the purest sort of allegory.

One need not be dogmatic about terms like allegory or symbol.

The classic case of a bad priest is definitely stated by St. Paul in his Epistle to the Romans: "The good that I would do not, but the evil which I would not, that I do." When we transpose this to its modern context, it becomes the very theme of much of modern literature. The whisky priest with his constant sense of failure to regulate his life and priestly office according to the ideal reminds every reader of the norms of ideal evaluation in terms of Christ on the Cross. To be aware of one's failure and one's inadequacy implies the awareness of the ideal.

In *Brighton Rock*, when Pinkie persuades Rose to shoot herself, comes the following passage:

If it was a guardian angel speaking to her now, he spoke like a devil - he tempted her to virtue like sin. To throw away the gun was a betrayal; it would be an act of cowardice; it would mean that she chose never to see him again for ever. Moral maxims dressed in pedantic priestly tones remembered from old sermons, instructions, confessions - 'you can plead for him at throne of Grace' - came to her like unconvincing insinuations. The evil act was the honest act, the bold and the faithful - it was only lack of courage, it seemed to her, that spoke so virtuously. She put the gun up to her ear and put it down again with a feeling of sickness - it was a poor love that was afraid to die. She hadn't been afraid to commit mortal sin - it was death not damnation which was scaring her.¹

Rose is a born Catholic and knows that suicide means damnation.

In *The Heart of the Matter* 3oobie is not a born Catholic but like his creator a convert to the faith. In Section 3 of Chapter One of Part I of Book One, his wife asks him,

'Ticki, I sometimes think you just became a Catholic to marry me. It doesn't mean a thing to you, does it?'²

The novel in a way demonstrates that 3oobie took his faith more seriously than any other character. One obvious point that creates the thematic tension in the novel is the conflict between

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the religious doctrine and Scobie's responsibility to maintain happiness of those he loves. Discussing *A Burnt-Out Case*, Professor Kermode says,

The situation is characteristic of the author, who is constantly pointing out that human behaviour acquires an entirely different and often disturbing valuation when you consider it in the light of religious doctrine; and the question here is whether you ought to do so, especially when that doctrine is applied mechanically by vulgar and imperceptive people including priests.¹

Kermode's observation, even though it is relevant in the case of *A Burnt-Out Case*, is also significant from the point of view of *The Heart of the Matter*. In Part 3 of Book Three, which stands as a sort of Epilogue to the novel, Father Rank silences Mrs Scobie saying,

I know the Church says. The Church knows all the rules. But it doesn't know what goes on in a single human heart.²

Father Rank's assessment of Scobie's tragic career and death does not appear to be imperceptive. The tension between the law of the Church and the law of a human heart raises the question of mediation. In the Catholic framework, the Church is (at least in spiritual matters) the mediator between God and man. In the so-called Catholic trilogy Greene seems to suggest that man can have unmediated vision of God's mercy and make himself acceptable

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to God as he is and not as he ought to be. An approach to The Heart of the Matter from this point of view appears to be helpful to discuss the meaning of Scobie’s tragic end.

The novel is divided into three Books, which are like three acts in Scobie’s tragedy. Book One builds up the background and dramatizes the relationship among various Englishmen living in West African colony. The colonial background has the advantage of a limited scene in which it is easy to present the possible human types. Among his own people, Scobie as the Deputy Commissioner of Police receives little respect. In the very first chapter, Harris tells Wilson that Scobie loves the blacks so much that he sleeps with them, and he is probably in the pay of the Syrians, if truth were known. He also tells Wilson that Mrs Scobie is the city intellectual; she likes art and poetry. Immediately the scene shifts to Scobie and we are told Scobie could always detect the odour of human weakness and injustice. In his interview with the Commissioner, we learn that the Commissioner is retiring and Scobie is passed over. The Commissioner during the conversation twice alludes to Scobie’s integrity. “You are a wonderful man for picking up the enemies like Aristides the Just.”1 "You are a terrible fellow, Scobie, Scobie the just.”2

2. Ibid., p.18.
Chapter One mentions how he has been outmanoeuvred in the interminable war over housing. Throughout the novel we find that in one way or the other he is outmanoeuvred, except in planning his own death. His relations with his wife are far from satisfactory. His first serious problem seems to be to face the constant resentment of his wife because of his failure to get his promotion. Like most officials' wives in a colony, she is a snob. She cannot face the members of the club with her husband's failure incessantly raking her mind. Even his wife's absence he feels like a 'garrulous companion' in the room reminding him of his responsibility. The frequent use of 'Responsibility' coupled with 'pity' makes him play the role of a husband who loves his wife. The words 'responsibility' and 'pity' are used very frequently in the novel; in Part One itself, they occur 8 and 11 times respectively. Whenever Louise cries, Seobie too often begins his role by saying, 'Darling, I love you'. But this kind of acting becomes difficult the moment his wife sets her heart on leaving for South Africa, which forces him to compromise with his integrity by borrowing two hundred pounds from Yusef (the Syrian). The way in which he reconciles himself to his situation comes from the following passage:

His eyes followed the lizard as it pounced; then he picked an ant's wing out of his gin and drank again. He thought to himself: what a fool I really was not to take the hundred
pounds. I destroyed the letter for nothing. I took the risk. I might just as well ...
Louise said, 'I've known it for years. You don't love me.' She spoke with calmness; he knew that calmness—it meant that they had reached the quiet centre of the storm; always in this region at about this time they began to speak the truth at each other. The truth, he thought, has never been of any real value to any human being—it is a symbol for mathematicians and philosophers to pursue. In human relations kindness and lies are worth a thousand truths. He involved himself in what he always knew was a vain struggle to retain the lies. 'Don't be absurd, darling. Who do you think I love if I don't love you?'

This passage lucidly presents his domestic tension. This tension has its roots in what he did fourteen years ago:

He eyed her bitterly over the pink gin, the visible sign of his failure: the skin a little yellow with atabrine, the eyes blood-shot with tears. No man could guarantee love for ever, but he had sworn fourteen years ago, at Faling, silently during the horrible elegant ceremony among the lace and candles, that he would at least always see to it that she was happy.

This awareness of his situation which is by no means religious in character assumes religious colouring when the narrator sums up Seobie's situation, after Seobie promises his wife that he will arrange for her passage:

He would still have made the promise even if he could have foreseen all that would come of it. He had always been prepared to accept the responsibility for his actions, and he had always been half aware too, from the time he made his terrible private vow that she should be happy,

2. Ibid., p.87.
how far this action might carry him. Despair is the price one pays for setting oneself an impossible aim. It is, one is told, the un-forgivable sin, but it is a sin the corrupt or evil man never practises. He always has hope. He never reaches the freezing point of knowing absolute failure. Only the man of goodwill carries always in his heart this capacity for damnation.\footnote{1}

This authorial comment suggests in a way the kind of assessment the reader can make of Seobie. For one thing, his goodwill places him at a disadvantage in the eyes of both the world and the rigid doctrine of the Church. Sense of responsibility leads to despair and despair to damnation. Now the question is whether it is actually despair that drives him suicide or any other over-powering influence at work which drives him to his inevitable doom. It is at this point that we have to discuss the plot manœuvreing and the textural richness of the narrative.

This man of goodwill goes to Bamba to clear up the mess Pemberton has created by strangling himself. He meets Father Clay, an imperceptive priest, who regrets Pemberton's deplorable suicide. He tells Seobie, 'I try to persuade myself that young Pemberton had time - time, you know, while he died, to realise...\footnote{2} Seobie jocularly replies, 'Difficult to think clearly when you are strangling, Father... If it was murder you'd simply change your mortal sinner, Father.' Unfortunately, Father Clay does not

\footnote{1}{Graham Greene, \textit{The Heart of the Matter}, op. cit., pp.58-59.}
\footnote{2}{Ibid., p.82.}
know Pemberton's motive for committing suicide. After seeing Pemberton's body, Soobie has the impression that

he was looking at a child in a night-shirt quietly asleep: the pimples were the pimples of puberty and the dead face seemed to bear the trace of no experience beyond the classroom or the football field. 'Poor child,' he said aloud. The pious ejaculations of Father Clay irritated him. It seemed to him that unquestionably there must be mercy for someone so unformed.

What is of interest in this passage is Soobie's firm conviction that Pemberton should receive mercy. Stricken by malaria fever, he spends an uneasy night full of unpleasant dreams.

Pemberton and Louise were obscurely linked. Over and over again he was reading a letter which consisted only of variations of the figure 900 and the signature at the bottom was sometimes 'Dicky' and sometimes 'Ticki'; he had the sense of time passing and his own immobility between the blankets - there was something he had to do, someone he had to save, Louise or Dicky or Ticki, but he was tied to the bed and they laid weights on his forehead as you lay weights on loose papers.

Apart from its impact on Soobie as a police official conducting the inquest, Pemberton's suicide stirs the dark pool of Soobie's subconscious self. He appears to have a vague apprehension of his own doom enacting itself in the suicide of Pemberton. But as a Catholic, he is consciously aware that "Suicide was for ever out of his power - he couldn't condemn himself for eternity - no cause was important enough". He wakes up from his

2. Ibid., p.88.
3. Ibid., p.89.
dream which ends with Father Clay saying the teachings of the Church. After his return from Darba, he borrows money from Yusef and despatches his wife to South Africa.

Book Two unfolds Scobie's involvement with Helen Rolt in the absence of his wife. His nocturnal visits are secretly watched by Wilson. The relationship between Scobie and the young widowed Helen Rolt develops from his sense of pity and her loneliness. In the beginning he is sure that he can be free in his dealings because of the gap between their age and status. When she talks of her school days,

He listened with the intense interest one feels in a stranger's life, the interest the young mistake for love. He felt the security of his age sitting there listening with a glass of gin in his hand and the rain coming down.¹

Before he actually commits adultery, he goes to confession and tells Father Rank that he feels empty. After that he reflects,

He began to speak the words of Absolution, but the trouble is, Scobie thought, there's nothing to absolve. The words brought no sense of relief because there was nothing to relieve. They were a formula: the Latin words hustled together a hocus pocus. He went out of the box and knelt down again, and this too was part of a routine. It seemed to him for a moment that God was too accessible. There was no difficulty in approaching Him. Like a popular demagogue, He was open to the least of His followers at any hour. Looking up at the Cross he thought, He even suffers in public.²

² Ibid., p.146.
Here we get a glimpse of Scobie's view of religion even though he is a practising Catholic. Confession and Absolution have become mechanical. But this is not the implication of the whole passage. The very fact that words bring no relief has deeper significance with reference to the theology that is interwoven with the events. The two most significant aspects of the Catholic doctrine which are institutionalised are the Confession and the Eucharist. Modern man knows a great deal more than his medieval counterpart about the theoretical aspect of the Confession and the Eucharist but he is deprived of the magnitude involved in going to the Confession and in receiving the Sacrament. He has so successfully intellectualised the entire process that he does not experience the process of going through Confession. Thus Scobie is a very good illustration of modern man. The words 'formula', 'routine', 'accessible' and 'demagogue' clearly illustrate the transition from the medieval to the modern view of faith.

Since pity draws Scobie towards Helen Bolt and thereby makes him responsible for her welfare, it will be appropriate to fix the meaning of the word and proceed to discuss the implications. The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary gives the following meanings to the word pity:

1. The quality of being pitiful; clemency, mercy, mildness, tenderness - 1615.
3. A feeling of tenderness aroused by the suffering or misfortune of another, and prompting a desire for its relief; compassion, sympathy MR.

3. tranf. A ground or cause for pity; a regrettable fact or circumstance; a thing to be sorry for.

Soobie's case fits well with the second entry: A feeling of tenderness aroused by the suffering or misfortune of another, and prompting a desire for its relief, compassion and sympathy. It is Helen Bolt's condition when she is carried on a stretcher, "her arms as thin as a child's lay outside the blankets and her fingers clasped a book firmly" - that draws his pity. Ever since she saw her, she became a part of his conscious being. Pity appears to be the undoing of many of Greene heroes including Soobie. Resenting his caution, when Helen says furiously, "I don't want your pity", he reflects,

But it was not a question of whether she wanted it - she had it. Pity smouldered like decay at his heart. He would never rid himself of it. He knew from experience how passion died away and how love went, but pity always stayed. Nothing ever diminished pity. The conditions of life nurtured it. There was only one person in the world who was unpitiable - himself.

"Pity smouldered like decay at his heart." Many critics have noted that one characteristic feature of Greene's style is the uneasy coupling of abstract and concrete terms. Here we find

two abstract nouns are juxtaposed. Since the novel deals with 
Seobie's emotional predicament and the word heart makes its 
appearance frequently, the verb 'smouldered' provides the 
necessary intensity to characterize his emotion. It appears 
as though pity instead of burning intensely slowly devitalizes 
his heart. That means Seobie's self gets crippled because of 
pity. The last sentence in the above passage focuses attention 
on his incapacity to appreciate his own suffering. It is this 
that distinguishes Seobie from the other heroes of Greene. 
When we look at his commitment towards Helen and Louise, this 
becomes very clear. It appears as if pity tempts like sin and 
he has no resources to resist the temptation. From this line 
of thinking it is only a step for Seobie to think that Christ 
killed himself because he pitied the sinners, his fellowmen. 
When a man is dead people discuss his suffering in a disinter-
tested way. "Through two thousand years," he thought, "we have 
discussed Christ's agony in just this disinterested way."

Now it is not difficult to see why Seobie equates what 
he promises in his letter to Helen (which is stolen by Wilson's 
by) with the vow he took at the time of his marriage with Louise. 
It is not his love that needs both his mistress and his wife 
but it is their suffering that requires him.

His wife returns from South Africa posted with the secret 
information from Mrs Carter about his affair with Helen. She
prevails on him to attend Confession and the Mass. When we compare his present attitude towards Confession and the Sacrament with his earlier attitude, we find a definite change. When his wife urges him to go to the Church, he feels as though he were being urged by a kindly and remorseless goalie to dress for his execution. When he kneels with his wife at the Communion, he feels,

It seemed to him for a moment cruelly unfair of God to have exposed Himself in this way, a man, a wafer of bread, first in the Palestinian villages and now here in the hot port, there, everywhere, allowing men to have his will of Him. Christ had told the rich young man to sell and follow Him, but that was an easy rational step compared with this that God had taken, to put Himself at the mercy of men who hardly knew the meaning of the word. How desperately God must love, he thought with shame. The priest had reached Louise in his slow interrupted patrol, and suddenly Sebbie was aware of the sense of exile. Over there, where all those people knelt, was a country to which he would never return. The sense of love stirred in him, the love one always feels for what one has lost, whether a child, a woman, or even pain.  

In this passage we notice a reversal. Man is placed at God's mercy. Now God is placed at man's mercy. In The Power and the Glory, the whisky priest prayed without conviction, heard confession and administered absolution without conviction, because of his desperate inadequacy. Sebbie not only pities those who suffer but also pities God. But a later passage indicates that he does not trust God. As Laurence Lerner remarks,

The Greene hero never finds it easy to trust;

for mistrust implies imagination. And trust, perhaps, implies selfishness, a willingness to leave to others what you should worry about yourself. Scobie mistrusts God because he cannot shrug off his part in Helen's happiness: the selfish action and the right action would, in his case, be the same, and he has to do the wrong compassionate action, even if it means giving up salvation. 'I can't make one of them suffer so as to save myself.' In fact, Scobie fails; he doesn't keep the knowledge from his absent wife, so he doesn't manage to spare her suffering, and Helen loses him. I can't make up my mind whether Mr Greene wants us to believe that God, if he had been trusted, would have looked after them any better. We can't, in Greenland, assume that he would have.

Following the one given by Mr Lerner, if we discuss the structural significance of Ali's murder, we can see the precise nature of Scobie's tragedy. When a man cannot trust God he may not trust human beings. Scobie begins to distrust Ali because of his friendship with Wilson's boy. He goes to Yusef to pull him up for sending a suspicious packet to him through his boy. Instead, he unburdens his heart. When Yusef is actually arranging Ali's murder, Scobie thinks:

This was the day of All Saints and he remembered how mechanically, almost without fear or shame, he had knelt at the rail this second time and watched the priest come. Even that act of damnation could become as unimportant as a habit. He thought: my heart has hardened, and he pictured the fossilised shells one picks up on a bench: the stony convolutions like arteries. One can strike God once too often. After that does one care what happens? It seemed to him

that he had rotted so far that it was useless to make any effort. God was lodged in his body and his body was corrupting outwards from that seed.

Even in this passage we find Scobie pitying God. When he pitied human beings, his heart had melted. And here we find his heart has hardened. Hence he feels that he has rotted so far. There can be no better awareness of one's responsibility to God than the realisation that one's spiritual decay starts from being unmindful of one's obligation. "God was lodged in his body and his body was corrupting outwards from that seed." And this outward corruption is his involvement with Yusef and thereby in Ali's murder. When he sees Ali's body

Scobie thought: if only I could weep, if only I could feel pain; have I really become so evil?

Unwillingly he looked down at the body. The fumes of petrol lay all around in the heavy night and for a moment he saw the body as something very small and dark and a long way away—like a broken piece of the rosary he looked for; a couple of black beads and the image of God soiled at the end of it. Oh God, he thought, I've killed you; you've served me all these years and I've killed you at the end of them. God lay there under the petrol drums and Scobie felt the tears in his mouth, salt in the cracks of his lips. You served me and I did this to you. You were faithful to me, and I wouldn't trust you.

Here we find a glimpse of the remarkable dialogue with God which occurs in Chapter 2 of Part Two of Book Three. Ali carries with him when he is coming to Scobie a broken piece of rosary as a

2. Ibid., pp.238-239.
mark of identification that he is Soobie’s boy. In Soobie’s mind it appears as though he killed God who served him. The last sentence points to the unobtrusive transition from what is merely an exorcising human situation to an ontological deduction in the dialogue. When the corporal kneeling by Ali’s body asks, "What is it, sah?" Soobie replies, "I loved him." Now it is easy to notice that Ali’s murder like Pemberton’s suicide unsettles Soobie in more ways than he is aware of.

The next morning he meets Helen to say good bye and when she asks him, "I heard this morning about Ali. Did you do it?" he replies, "I didn’t cut his throat myself ... But he died because I existed." When he is with his wife, he broods over Ali’s death:

Ali’s death meant little to her: why should it? It was the sense of guilt that made it so important. Otherwise one didn’t grieve for a death. 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. She sat there, reading poetry, and she was a thousand miles away from the torment that shook his hand and dried his mouth. She would understand, he thought, if I were in a book, but would I understand her if she were just a character? - I don’t read that sort of book.

Here it is evident that according to him, love is the wish to understand. Perhaps he understood Ali better than he understood...
Louise. Since constant failure has killed his wish to understand, he doesn't feel love. On the other hand, Ali's death engineered by Yusef to help Seobie and Helen torments him. It is ironical of him to think that she would understand him if he were in a book. It is only after his death through Wilson's scrutinizing and calculating mind that she sees and understands the nature of Seobie's death. Love and understanding are matters of feeling and experience to Seobie, not imaginative participation. When she talks of Christmas celebrations, he again reflects:

He looked up at her with momentary hatred as she sat so cheerfully there, so smugly, it seemed to him, arranging his further damnation. He was going to be Commissioner. She had what she wanted—her sort of success. Everything was all right with her now. He thought: it was the hysterical woman who felt the world laughing behind her back that I loved. I love failure; I can't love success. And how successful she looks, sitting there, on the saved, and he saw laid across that wide face like a news-screen the body of Ali under the black drums, the exhausted eyes of Helen, and all the faces of the lost, his companions in exile, the unrepentant thief, the soldier with the sponge. Thinking of what he had done and was going to do, he thought with love, even God is a failure.1

The novel begins with Seobie anxious, worried about his wife's health and welfare and desperately trying to meet her demands. The word love which is always on his lips whenever he tries to comfort her has no emotional urge behind it. Now it is very clear

that he did not love her as his wife but as the hysterical woman who felt the world laughing behind her back. We can stretch the point and say that he loved the helpless, lonely, widowed, adolescent Helen Folt but not the woman. In a similar fashion, he does not realize Ali's service till his death. In the sober drama of his life, we find that his understanding beats round human suffering. It is suffering he loves. His past and present are in fact at the service of failure in all its complex alignments.

All the above stray reflections are brought to a focus in his monologue which becomes a dialogue with God. After receiving the advice and the sleeping pills from Dr Travis, Scoble enters the Church, which is almost empty except for two old souls. As a Catholic he knows that he is past prayer since he is in a state of mortal sin. He feels that human love has robbed him of love for eternity. Then starts the monologue. The reference to Golgotha suggests that the object of his monologue is Christ on the Cross. He is aware of his guilt. The guilt consists in offering pain to God on the Cross instead of allowing Helen or his wife to suffer. God's suffering is invisible. It can only be imagined. This train of thought is much closer to the two forms of Assent discussed by Newman in "An Essay in Aid of Grammar of Assent". According to Newman, there can be no assent to a proposition without some sort of apprehension of its terms. There are
two modes of apprehension, notional and real. Notional apprehension consists in creating imaginatively the terms of the proposition which have not been physically experienced. What Scobie does is to apprehend God's suffering and pain by the exercise of his imagination while the pain and suffering of his wife and mistress are experienced physically, that is, at the level of human actuality. This is supported by the following passage:

I've preferred to give you pain rather than give pain to Helen or my wife because I can't observe your suffering. I can only imagine it. But there are limits to what I can do to you— or them. I can't desert either of them while I'm alive, but I can die and remove myself from their bloodstream. They are ill with me and I can cure them. And you too God—you are ill with me. I can't go on, month after month, insulting you. I can't face coming up to the altar at Christmas—your birthday feast—and taking your body and blood for the sake of a lie. I can't do that. You'll be better off if you lose me once and for all. I know what I'm doing. I'm not pleading for mercy. I am going to damn myself, whatever that means. I've longed for peace and I'm never going to know peace again. But you'll be at peace when I am out of your reach.

When once we raise a theological concept to the status of a person, then it becomes easy to conduct the dialogue. In a way, while talking to God he places before himself the various options out of which he might choose one to extricate himself from the mess. In fact, he says on an earlier occasion when

he is about to say good bye to Helen,

Oh God, ... kill me now, now. My God, you'll never have more complete contrition. That's a mess I am. I carry suffering with me like a body smell.

He cannot trust Ali or begins to distrust him when he realises that Ali moves with Wilson's boy. He cannot trust God to take care of his wife or Helen because God himself loves suffering.

We noted earlier that Scooble is sensitive and responds promptly only to pain and suffering. In his limited universe these are visible realities. Now the question is whether his suicide is the only solution to cut the knot which he himself has forged round his neck. From the point of view of Scooble it appears to be the only solution. But his wife thinks in a different way. She is on the side of the Church. To her he is a hopeless case.

As Wilhelm Hortmann cogently remarks:

At the risk of heresy Greene reiterates his view that the Church needs a broader basis of compassionate humanism, a deeper understanding of failures and misfits and that this can only be accomplished by relaxing the dogmatic rigour of Catholic notions about damnation. His equally strong obsession with and insight into the neurotic compulsions of the social misfit (Pinkie) and the individual failure (Scooble and the whisky priest) on the one hand and the Catholic religion on the other, has led him to weigh such maladjusted characters in the Catholic scales. The result of this operation is that the scales are found to be wrong. With the Catholic teaching about sin and its eternal consequences in one scale and human failures analysed as to their metaphysical helplessness in the other, the scales register damnation (for the characters) and heresy (for Greene, the analyst). This must be

so, since mercy, the balance without which such spiritual weighing is nonsense, is shrouded in mystery. Shrouded in mystery, Greene would contend, for the Church as much for himself.

The Heart of the Matter employs the usual love triangle as the organising principle only to push to the background the hero's failure as a human being and thrust into the foreground the ontological implications of modern man's predicament, since the hero's faith complicates the existing situation. While illustrating through the hero's mind the Catholic reverence for the objective nature of the Sacrament, it also evaluates the efficacy of dogmatic assertions which devastate the privacy and sanctity of individual suffering and pain. The issue of post-War debate concerning the survival of man and his values is too complex to be settled by a narrow view of innocence and guilt. Thus the novel, *The Heart of the Matter*, is a fitting climax to the artist's endeavour to reconcile the image of God with the image of man. In this sense we may say that it is a metaphysical novel in which Greene seems to have kept in abeyance many of his usual narrative devices and makes one character, Sooble, the centre of his narrative art.

The End of the Affair

The Catholic 'trilogy' explores the intensely personal view of faith in terms of sin and damnation. The tension in these novels is largely the result of the juxtaposition of the institutional interpretation and an individual experience and understanding of God's mercy. Pinkie, the whisky priest and Scobie are definitely damned from the point of view of the Church but from the point of view of their creator they are not undeserving of God's mercy. The whisky priest and Scobie evaluate their worthiness to receive God's mercy from a purely human angle. In these novels the authorial omniscience provides the necessary attitude in the reader when he tries to evaluate the experience dramatised. The End of the Affair, on the other hand, presents a character in whom there is no struggle but firm conviction which fortifies her will to do what is right. From the point of view of Sarah Miles, there is no need to feel shame or remorse. Nowhere is it stated by the novelist-narrator who is also her lover that she showed any signs of regret or repentance about their affair. When it was published, the novel provoked hostile criticism both from Catholic and non-Catholic readers. Since the novel deals with marriage and morals, about which many readers have strong views, this is to be expected. Moreover, the introduction of miracles flowing from a morally
reprehensible woman appears not only unconvincing but even blasphemous. But a discerning critic like Professor Kermode thinks that the book "seems almost beyond question Mr Greene's masterpiece, his fullest and most completely realised book". From all this it appears that more than the Catholic 'trilogy' The End of the Affair is the real crux in Greene's canon.

Before we discuss the undoubted technical brilliance of The End of the Affair, it seems to be imperative to scrutinise the vocabulary of the novel. The novelist-narrator without any reservations says, "this is a record of hate, far more than of love". But he hastens to add, "and if I come to say anything in favour of Henry or Sarah I can be trusted: I am writing against the bias because it is my professional pride to prefer the near-truth, even to the expression of my near-hate". Thus the tone is set for the unfolding of the main events in the record. The initial polarities, love and hate, trust and distrust, repeat themselves throughout. The aspiring critic is also warned that the whole affair is presented not from any sense of self-integrity but professional pride to prefer the near-truth, which suggests the irony of the narrator's own predicament. In the novels preceding the one under consideration, it is the setting that provides the perspective for the assessment of the events.

dramatised. Here it is the tone that performs the same function. For the sake of convenience, we may discuss the repeated use of the word 'trust'. Maurice Bendix tells us, "I can be trusted". When their affair has practically ended, he meets the worried husband, Henry, and tells him, "You know you can trust me, Henry."¹ Henry tells Bendix about the letter he received from Savage and says, "It seems so silly, doesn't it, that I can trust her absolutely not to read it though she comes in here a dozen times a day. I don't even put it away in a drawer. And yet I can't trust..."² Usually after their love making, Bendix feels, "And yet I could feel no trust; in the act of love I could be arrogant, but alone I had only to look in the mirror to see doubt, in the shape of a lined face and a lame leg - why me?"³ He also sadly confesses, "distrust grows with a lover's success".⁴ When Sarah rings off the phone, he feels, "the sense of trust was disconnected".⁵ When she comes to him, "trust came back".⁶ He also notes, "I felt that afternoon such complete trust when she said to me suddenly, without being questioned, 'I have never loved anybody or anything as I do now'."⁷ In Sarah's diary Bendix finds, "Have I

². Ibid., p.11.
³. Ibid., p.48.
⁴. Ibid., p.48
⁵. Ibid., p.49.
⁶. Ibid., p.49.
⁷. Ibid., p.51.
broken that old promise, lunching with Maurice? A year ago I would have thought so, but I don’t think so now. I was very literal in those days because I was afraid, because I didn’t know what it was all about, because I had no trust in love." Possessed with full knowledge of Sarah’s other affair, he hopes to convince Sarah of her leaving Henry and in that mood says, “I know with absolute certainty that before the night was out we should have slept together again ... I was back in the territory of trust”. From the above illustrations the possible inference is that within the limited sphere of human relations presented in the novel, Bendrix can trust persons whom he can possess physically. To Henry trust and distrust are merely conventional. Sarah, on the other hand, trusts both without reservations. When she writes in her diary that she had no trust in love it only means that as a wife and mistress she is loyal to one and satisfied with the other and only later when her affair with Bendrix reaches its climax that she knows that love and trust are one.

When we turn to the love-hate relationship that punctuates the novel, it appears that Bendrix hates people whom he loves or for whom he has sympathy. When he contemplated a novel with the Senior Civil Servant as the main character, he came into contact with Henry and his wife Sarah. He wanted to present the

2. Ibid., p.135.
Civil Servant as a ridiculous character. When he told Sarah about this, she began to dislike his navel. She had "enormous loyalty to Henry". When their friendship blossomed into love, he began to develop positive dislike for Henry because Sarah was loyal to him. Later, he was aware of his growing dislike for Sarah's equanimity and poise. "She was unhaunted by guilt."
"She had no doubts." It seemed to him "her abandonment touched that strange mathematical point of endlessness". When he was reading a scrap of paper rescued from the dustbin by Mr Parkin's detective sagacity, "the word abandon took many kinds of physical image". Later he felt, "Why doesn't hatred kill desire?"
All this emotional love-hate mess is brought to sharp focus in the following passage:

'Wouldn't you want me to be happy, rather than miserable?' she asked with unbearable logic.
'I'd rather be dead or see you dead,' I said, 'than with another man. I'm not eccentric. That's ordinary human love. Ask anybody. They'd all say the same - if they loved at all.' I jibed at her. 'Anyone who loves is jealous.'

We were in my room. We had come there at a safe time of day, the late spring afternoon, in order to make love; for once we had hours of time ahead of us and so I squandered it all in a quarrel and there was no love to make. She sat down on the bed and said, 'I'm sorry. I didn't mean to make you angry. I expect you're right.' But I wouldn't let her alone. I hated her because I wished to think she didn't love me; I wanted to get her out of my system. What grievance, I wonder now, had I got against her, whether she loved me or not? She had been loyal to me for nearly a year, she had given me a great deal of pleasure,

1. Graham Greene, The End of the Affair, op. cit., p.5
she had put up with my moods, and what had I
given her in return apart from the momentary
pleasure? I had come into this affair with my
eyes open, knowing that one day this must end,
and yet, when the sense of insecurity, the lo-
gical belief in the hopeless future descended
like melancholia, I would badger her and badger
her, as though I wanted to bring the future in
now at the door, an unwanted and premature
guest. My love and fear acted like conscience.
If we had believed in sin, our behaviour would
hardly have differed.
'You'd be jealous of Henry,' I said.
'No. I couldn't be. It's absurd.'
'If you saw your marriage threatened...'
'It never would be,' she said drearily, and
I took her words as an insult and walked straight
out and down the stairs and got into the street.'

The unbearable logic of Sarah's attitude towards the entire affair
is firmly rooted in her capacity to respond to moments that bring
sense of happiness. But Bendrix appears to be a psychological case.
All men are jealous but Bendrix is obsessed with jealousy. "I
hated her because I wished to think she did not love me; I wanted
to get her out of my system" places beyond doubt his odd and some-
times thoughtless response to a person who gave him a great deal
of pleasure and who has put up with his moods. Sarah, on the other
hand, is confident that her marriage with Henry would never be
threatened. Her forthright reply to Bendrix on this point in the
passage quoted above reaffirms her capacity to live on trust. Pro-
fessor Kermode's illuminating comments on the book help us to
appreciate the structural complexity of the book. But his assump-
tion that Bendrix is a natural man who sees God as a natural man

would seem to be unconvincing. The vocabulary of the novel
which we are discussing does not sustain the idea. The follow-
ing passage illustrates the point:

Hatred is very like physical love: it has its
crisis and then its periods of calm. Poor Sarah,
I could think, reading Mr Parkis's report, for
this moment had been the orgasm of my hatred,
and now I was satisfied. I could feel sorry for
her, hemmed in as she was. She had committed
nothing but love, and here were Parkis and his
boy watching every movement, plotting with her
maid, putting powder on bells, planning violent
eruptions into what perhaps was the only peace
that nowadays she enjoyed. I had half a mind to
tear up the report and call the spies off her.
Perhaps I would have done so if I had not, at
the seedy club to which I belonged, opened a
Tatler and seen Henry's photograph. Henry was
successful now: in the last Birthday Honours
he had received a C B E for his services at the
Ministry; he had been appointed Chairman of a
Royal Commission; and here he was at the gala
night of a film called The Last Siren, pallid
and pop-eyed in the flashlight with Sarah on
his arm.¹

In this passage the love-hate relationship is given an odd twist:

Hatred is like physical love. Bendrix's lust for hatred finds its
orgasm when he reads Mr Parkis's report and he is satisfied. When
he thinks of Sarah's condition, hatred recedes and love emerges.
But Henry's photograph suppresses love and brings to fore the
receding hatred. Here the irony is two-fold. Bendrix's love for
Sarah is sustained through his hatred. But hatred by itself pro-
duces the sensation of sex act. From this it obviously follows
that Bendrix's love for Sarah is something that is measured in

¹. Graham Greene, The End of the Affair, op. cit., pp. 63-64.
terms of his own ego. On the other hand, Sarah's love for Bendrix is definitely a mastery of her ego. The frequent use of the term abandon suggests this. Even in the act of physical love, she values only the moment. This becomes clear when we glance at the entries in her diary:

Sometimes I get so tired of trying to convince him that I love him and shall love him for ever. He pounces on my words like a barrister and twists them. I know he is afraid of that desert which would be around him if our love were to end, but he can't realize that I feel exactly the same. What he says aloud, I say to myself silently and write it here. What can one build in the desert? Sometimes after a day when we have made love many times, I wonder whether it isn't possible to come to an end of sex, and I know that he is wondering too and is afraid of that point where the desert begins. What do we do in the desert if we lose each other? How does one go on living after that?

He is jealous of the past and the present and the future. His love is like a medieval chastity belt; only when he is there, with me, in me, does he feel safe. If only I could make him feel secure, then we could love peacefully, happily, not savagely, inordinately, and the desert would recede out of sight. For a lifetime perhaps.1

What is significant here is the nature of their love. They make love savagely, inordinately, but not peacefully, happily. That her mind is slowly transcending the limits of sexual love is also soon in the passage. It is unmistakably clear that she understands Bendrix better than he understands himself or her. In her diary we find that in spite of her desire to love, she has her

moments of hatred. Sometimes she hates Henry because he is happy while she and Bendrix are miserable. But such moments are not many, since the usual tone of her diary entries is one of honest enquiry. For example,

Even a God can't love something that doesn't exist, he can't love something he cannot see. When he looks at me, does he see something I can't see? It must be lovely if he is able to love it. That's asking me to believe too much, that there's anything lovely in me. I want men to admire me, but that's a trick you learn at school - a movement of the eyes, a tone of voice, a touch of the hand on the shoulder or the head. If they think you admire them, they will admire you because of your good taste, and when they admire you, you have an illusion for a moment that there's something to admire. All my life I've tried to live in that illusion - a soothing drug that allows me to forget that I'm a bitch and a fake. But what are you supposed to love then in the bitch and the fake? Where do you find that immortal soul they talked about? Where do you see this lovely thing in me - in me, of all people? I can understand you can find it in Henry - my Henry, I mean. He's gentle and good and patient. You can find it in Maurice who thinks he hates, and loves, loves all the time. Even his enemies. But in this bitch and fake where do you find anything to love?!

The love affair between Bendrix and Sarah continues for five years without interruption and comes to a close when Bendrix loses his consciousness during one of the bomb blasts in which part of the building collapses leaving Bendrix under a huge door. Sarah thinks that he is dead and what she does at the moment is

In a moment of despair, not knowing that Bendrix is simply unconscious, she promises God that she would give up Bendrix provided God gives him life. Love for a person need not depend on physical presence. People love God without seeing Him. When she sees Bendrix coming to the door, she thinks of the agony of being without

him. In her diary she calls this situation "life in Hendrix's absence is desert". The desert image is present throughout her diary. Since her promise to God, she is bearing the agony of the desert. She does not see Hendrix for another two years. In the meanwhile she meets Richard Smythe, the rationalist preacher. When Smythe explains the love of God in terms of reason that "man made God in his own image, so it is natural he should love him", Sarah leaves him unconvinced. But she pities him for the spots that deform his face. She feels:

I had an enormous wish to touch it with my hand, to comfort it with words of love as permanent as the wound. It was like when I saw Maurice under the door. I wanted to pray; to offer up some inordinate sacrifice if only he could be healed, but there was no sacrifice left for me to offer.

Smythe's arguments and her own developing universe of pain move her towards a point from which there appears to be no retreat till Bendrix makes his appearance in Henry's house two years later.

I couldn't stand the house tonight, so I walked out into the rain. I remembered the time when I had stuck my nails into my palms, and I didn't know it but You moved in the pain. I said, 'Let him be alive,' not believing in You, and my disbelief made no difference to you. You took into Your love and accepted it like an offering, and tonight the rain soaked through my coat and my clothes and into my skin, and I shivered with the cold, and it was for the first time as though I nearly loved You. I walked under Your windows in the rain and I wanted to wait under them all night only to show that after all I might learn to love and I wasn't afraid of the desert any

longer because You were there. I came back into the house and there was Maurice with Henry. It was the second time You had given him back; the first time I had hated you for it and You'd taken my hate like You'd taken my disbelief into Your love, keeping them to show me later, so that we could both laugh — as I have sometimes laughed at Maurice, saying, 'Do you remember How stupid we were...'

The key sentence in this passage is "I walked under Your window... I wasn't afraid of the desert any longer because You were there."

This implies that the desert created by the exclusion of Bendrix is no longer an agony. His place is taken by 'You'. But the idea that is running throughout is that the presence of Bendrix with all its implications of sex cannot be easily dislodged even with the awareness of the existence of God since God is not seen. This reminds us of Seobie, who can displease God because He is invisible but cannot displease his mistress or his wife. In what appears to be the central passage in the novel, Sarah's doubts and certainties are brought to a focus:

Let me think of those awful spots on Richard's cheek. Let me see Henry's face with the tears falling. Let me forget me. Dear God, I've tried to love and I've made such a hash of it. If I could love You, I'd know how to love them. I believe the legend. I believe You were born. I believe you died for us. I believe you are God. Teach me to love. I don't mind my pain. It's their pain I can't stand. Let my pain go on and on, but stop theirs. Dear God, if only you could come down from your Cross for a while and let me get up there instead. If I could suffer like you, I could heal like you.2

2. Ibid., p.126.
Torn by her agony for having given up Bendrix and pitying the perverted holiness of Richard Smythe, and feeling responsible for Henry, Sarah is prepared to exchange place with God. Let God come down from the Cross and let Him take her place so that like him she may heal those who suffer. Whether her death eliminates suffering from the lives of her husband and her lover or not, it no doubt heals the spots on Richard's cheek. God grants her prayer. He also contrives to keep her without going away with Bendrix. No doubt, she craves for the ordinary corrupt human love Bendrix can give but her decision to leave Henry and accompany Bendrix is thwarted by the plot-machinery in which God has a say. Her love for Bendrix does not decrease as her love for God increases. It is ironical of Bendrix to read

"He was on Your side all the time without knowing it. You willed our separation, but he willed it too. He worked for it with his anger and his jealousy, and he worked for it with his love. For he gave me so much love, and I gave him so much love that soon there wasn't anything left, when we'd finished, but You. For either of us. I might have taken a lifetime spending a little love at a time, eking it out here and there, on this man and that. But even the first time, in the hotel near Paddington, we spent all we had. You were there, teaching us to squander, like you taught the rich man, so that one day we might have nothing left except this love of You. But You are too good to me. When I ask You for pain, You give me peace. Give it him too. Give him my peace - he needs it more."

and at the same time rush to ailing Sarah with his ordinary corrupt human love.

From the above analysis it becomes clear that like good and evil love and hate are complementary. Sarah hates God for exacting too many promises from her. At the same time, since He grants what she wishes, it is obligatory on her part to love him. When she buys a crucifix she prays,

I wish I knew a prayer that wasn't me, me, me. Help me. Let me be happier. Let me die soon. Me, me, me.*

Had the novel ended here, there would not have been any hostile criticism because Sarah's death may be taken as one of the instances of the appalling mercy of God. But the novel continues in a way. There appears to be no end to Sarah's affair with God. The eight sections of Book Five place the entire affair in the context of Catholic doctrine. Father Crompton produces a formula like a bank note: "We recognise the baptism of desire", which does not convince Hendrix. Later, Hendrix meets Mrs Bartram, Sarah's mother, who tells him that Sarah was a Catholic. She got the young Sarah baptized in order to take revenge on her husband, later Hendrix gets reports about the healing of the spots on the cheek of Richard Smythe and the recovery of Pari's son from fever when Sarah's book was placed near him. Although Henry disapproves of Sarah "being bandied

about" and Bendrix takes them as a coincidence, Father Cramp-ton explains these events by quoting St. Augustine. But even Bendrix seems to have been overcoming his rational attitude towards miracles when he says,

I sat on my bed and said to God: You've taken her, but You haven't got me yet. I know Your cunning. It's You who take us up to a high place and offer us the whole universe. You're a devil, God, tempting us to leap. But I don't want Your peace and I don't want Your love. I wanted something very simple and very easy: I wanted Sarah for a lifetime and You took her away. With Your great schemes You ruin our happiness like a harvester ruins a mouse's nest: I hate You, God, I hate You as though You existed.

Bendrix loves and hates Sarah and when he hates God (we may not be wrong in saying) he also loves Him. He admits, "I hate You as though You existed", which only proves that from a firm belief in the non-existence of God he has come to hate Him as though He existed.

Greene prefaces The End of the Affair with the following quotation from Leon Bloy: "Man has places in his heart which do not yet exist and into them enters suffering in order that they may have existence". This throws much light on the theme of the novel. No man knows what he is or what he is capable of. Only moments of crisis can penetrate the habit-ridden mind and produce the urge to explore the nature of existence.

Living with a husband who is conventional, who is incapable of realising the needs of his partner, Sarah's craving for sheer excitement finds outlet when she meets Bendrix. The ravages of the Second World War do not explicitly interfere with the drama of the novel. But there is definitely the impact of the war. The building in which Sarah and Bendrix were making love collapses during one of the raids. The sight of Bendrix unconscious under a huge door brings the crisis that leads to their separation. More than anything else, it is this fact that introduces the modern element in a novel which deals with the immemorial love triangle. God's presence in the entire affair is made suddenly yet convincingly felt. In the character of Richard Smythe whom Sarah meets after giving up Bendrix, the novelist seems to present the counterpoint to Sarah's initial awareness of the presence of God. His presence the reader also feels as Sarah's agony as presented in her diary intensifies. The narrative strategy is so apt that the reader gets a clear picture of Sarah's love of sex from her lover who is also the narrator. And from her diary we know her own understanding of what it means to her. Even the narrator understands her and gets rid of his jealousy by reading her diary entries. Without this device it could not have been possible to present simultaneously Sarah's outer and inner life. The diary covers the last two years of her life. Book Four presents the last interview the
two lovers have. The narrator realises that a delayed victory
strains the nerves as much as prolonged defeat. Thus we find
ultimately Bendrix harassed by a different kind of rival whose
intrusion he never expected. As noted by Ian Gregor, Sarah’s
conversion to faith is conveyed by the imagery of disease and
infection. In her last letter to Bendrix, Sarah says, “I believe
there is a God. I believe the whole bag of tricks... I have
caught belief like a disease.” Only in times of crisis people
catch all kinds of diseases. Even faith is one of those infec-
tions one may catch. From all this it appears that the book is
a good example of craftsmanship. But craftsmanship by itself
does not elevate a tale of sexual jealousy to that of a work of
art. What makes the book a work of art is the balance that is
achieved between various views about Sarah including her own.
Just as the vocabulary of the novel keeps in balance love and
hate, trust and distrust, the technique keeps in balance Ben-
drix’s estimate of Sarah, her own estimate of herself and the
significance of her image as a woman of faith on a rationalist
like Richard Smythe and a boy like Farkis’s son. All this is
possible because of Greene’s keeping in view as a model a work
like Ford’s The Good Soldier which itself is a triumph of art.

1. Ian Gregor, “The End of the Affair”, in Graham Greene: A
A Burnt-Out Case

Greene makes the following observation in In Search of a Character:

How often people speak of the absurdity of believing that life should exist by God's will on one minute part of the immense universe. There is a parallel absurdity which we are asked to believe, that God chose a tiny colony of a Roman Empire in which to be born. Strangely enough two absurdities seem easier to believe than one.

Since the two African Journals, especially the Congo Journal, give a detailed account of the shaping of A Burnt-Out Case, the passage quoted above gives a clue to the thematic variations that resonate the novel. What is absurd from purely rational point of view does not appear absurd if placed by the side of another absurdity. In the novels written during the 60's, especially in The Comedians, Greene comes very near the comedy of absurd. In his Introduction to A Burnt-Out Case, he writes that his critics "were too concerned with faith or no faith to notice that in the course of the blackest book I have written I had discovered comedy." The sense of comedy we find gets articulated when Querry tells Dr Colin just before

... The popular priest and the popular architect - their talents can be killed easily by disgust ... Disgust of praise. How it nauseates, doctor, by its stupidity. The very people who ruined my churches were loudest afterwards in their praise of what I'd built. The books they have written about my work, the pious motives they've attributed to me - they were enough to sicken me of the drawing-board. It needed more faith than I possessed to withstand all that. The praise of priests and pious people - the Rykers of the world.¹

As many critics have noted, there is an element of autobiography in the novel but the novel has few authorial intrusions. This suggests that the required distance is maintained between Querry and his creator and the book in a way provides comment on those who praise without understanding, sometimes without conviction. The last sentence in the passage quoted couples priests and pious people under the category of the Rykers of the world. By scrupulous exclusion of authorial commentary, an intricate balance is achieved between Querry's disgust and the praise of priests and pious people.

At the very centre of the book in Section 3 of Part Four occurs the interview between Querry and Mr Parkinson, which draws into focus the comedy of the novel. A thematic variation on this we find in the fable Querry tells Mrs Ryker when they spend a night at a hotel. Querry escapes from the 'great world' to find himself in a Congo leprosérie, which is run by Catholic priests.

¹. Graham Greene, A Burnt-Out Case, op. cit., p.239.
The periodical visits of the Bishop's boat is the only means of contact between the leprosérie and the 'great world'. Just before the arrival of the Bishop's boat Quarry tells Dr Colin, "You know I am happy here". But the Bishop's boat brings the 'great world' in the shape of Parkinson and plunges Quarry again in the world from which he escaped. Ryoker supplies Parkinson with Quarry's identity and the stupid Father Thomas places Quarry's predicament in the 'Catholic context'. When Parkinson starts his hunt for Quarry's motives for settling down in the leprosérie, Quarry tells him that he has no spiritual ambition in his decision to stay among the lepers. Here he mentions that he is one of the burnt-out cases.

Leprosy cases whose disease has been arrested and cured only after the loss of fingers or toes are known as burnt-out cases... Psychologically and morally he has been burnt-out.

He also includes Parkinson among the burnt-out cases:

You really have come to an end like me, haven't you, Parkinson, so here we find ourselves together. Two burnt-out cases. There must be many more of us in the world. We should have a masonic sign to recognise each other.

Quarry's analogical argument falls on deaf ears. In order to convince Parkinson, Quarry gives a few details about his love affair with Marie Morel. Marie Morel killed herself in order to escape from Quarry's machine-like and at the same time overpowering

love. Parkinson makes Query give out a few more details.

Query says:

I have been waiting for you, Parkinson, or someone like you. Not that I didn't fear you too... You are my looking-glass, but one can be a little afraid of one too. It returns such a straight image. If I talked to Father Thomas as I've talked to you, he'd twist my words. 1

If we take Query as the object of popular interest, the variations on this can be seen in Parkinson and Father Thomas, with Nycker brooding over in the background. The object is attractive because it has many qualities that appeal to the vulgar side of human nature. But Query's unrest, does not attract the popular imagination. The present unrest seen against the past extravagance becomes glamorous. However much Query tries to de-glamorise the situation, it becomes increasingly difficult to avoid the glamour.

In the fable Query tells to put Marie Nycker to sleep, we have all the significance the novel conveys. The boy of the fable proved that the King existed by historical, logical, philosophical and etymological methods. The boy could not take on trust his parents's belief that the King existed in their hearts. One simple fact that receives repeated emphasis in the fable is the impalpability and the mysterious quality of the King's methods for rewarding and punishing his subjects. Even when fantastic jewels are made by the boy who becomes a jeweller after he is

bored by making golden eggs with crosses, the Rysers of the world interpret them as the criticism of the corruption of the times. The jeweller discovers that he was not an artist and that he never loved people as human beings. His many affairs with other women were not acts of love but acts of self-aggrandisement. The death of his mistress gave jolt to his complacency because till then he did not know what pain and suffering were. This leads him to unbelief and he is told that sometimes his unbelief is itself a conclusive proof of the King's existence. He is not punished. He does not suffer pain for the rules he had willfully broken. All along he has lived by his cleverness and now finds that even cleverness cannot take a man far when he is beset with an inexplicable problem.

The problem was complicated to the point of absurdity, and he began to envy his parents' simple and uncomplex heart, in which they had always believed that the King lived - and not in the cold palace as big as St Peter's a hundred miles away.

The fable presents Quarry's predicament in the psychological landscape. Drained of love, belief, sympathy for others, suffering, he leaves the big world and reaches the heart of darkness. In the heart of darkness, among the lepers, he finds himself capable of sympathy for those who suffer. It is Dr Colin, not the vociferous priests, that diagnoses Quarry as a burnt-out case.

The doctor also notices that Quarry is showing curiosity again about another human being, especially Dae Gratias. He tells Quarry:

It needs a very strong man to survive an introspective and solitary vocation. I don't think you were strong enough. I know I couldn't have stood your life.\(^1\)

A few paragraphs later the doctor explains his stand in the following way:

Wouldn't you rather suffer than feel discomfort? Discomfort irritates our ego like a mosquito-bite. We become aware of ourselves, the more uncomfortable we are, but suffering is quite a different matter. Sometimes I think that the search for suffering and the remembrance of suffering are the only means we have to put ourselves in touch with the whole human condition. With suffering we become part of the Christian myth.\(^2\)

The Christian myth universalises human condition in terms of suffering and the remembrance of suffering. But Quarry has not suffered. Hence he does not remember any event in his life which made him one with the collective predicament of humanity. After he reaches the leper colony, he comes to see it as a disinterested spectator. Only when he searches for his burnt-out leper boy, Dae Gratias, who does not appear one night, that Quarry gets the glimpse of what suffering is. All through his career as an architect he has been bored because of the slow enervation that sets in as a result of the discrepancy between what he is and what he does and what the world thinks about his character.

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2. Ibid., p.141.
and achievement. If God really means what the priests say, then he deserves maximum punishment. Since in the world's eye he is not a failure, in the world's opinion he is also pious. This is the spiritual dilemma in which Greene's Catholic architect places himself. This appears to be a negative attitude producing positive results. Father Thomas who places Quarry's perplexity in the Catholic context says that Quarry suffers from spiritual aridity. His foolish notion that priests are better judges of a man's spiritual condition makes him say unhesitatingly that Quarry's life is a good example of heroic virtue. Ironically enough Father Thomas faces an embarrassing situation a few moments later when one of the sisters informs him of the arrival of Mr. Ryker. In his confusion and anxiety he tells the doctor:

I envy you your skin-test, doctor. You were right to warn me against disappointment. The Superior too. He said much the same thing as you. I have trusted too much to appearances.1

From this it is clear that persons like Father Thomas who have not got the maturity to see through appearances always bungle even in spiritual matters. Here Quarry is not at fault. He repeatedly tells Father Thomas not to consider him in the light of his belief because belief played no role in his career. He tells Ryker the same thing. Father Thomas and Ryker stand unambiguously for those who fable and miss the truth, the truth about what they are talking. Quarry, on the other hand, who

believes in reason, finds himself that reason can neither prove nor deny the existence of God. The doctor, on the other hand, has no doubt as to the value of reason in worldly matters and immunizes himself from the infection of belief.

When Quarry confronts Marie Rycker with her innocent lie that the child in her womb is Quarry's child, we are told that for the first time he is confronted by an egoism as absolute as his own. When he is about to leave Marie Rycker, he warns Mother Agnes to be very careful of "that little packet of dynamite in there". Mother Agnes comments, "She's a poor innocent young..." Then Quarry adds, "Oh, innocent... I dare say you are right. God preserve us from all innocence. At least the guilty know what they are about". The following conversation between Dr Colin and Quarry throws into relief the thematic tensions in the novel that we are trying to explore:

'Where will you go to?' (Dr Colin asks.)
'I don't know. It's strange, isn't it, how worried I was when I came here, because I thought I had become incapable of feeling pain. I suppose a priest I met on the river was right. He said one only had to wait. You said the same to me too.'
'I'm sorry.'
'I don't know that I am. You said once that when one suffers, one begins to feel part of the human condition, on the side of the Christian myth, do you remember? "I suffer, therefore I am." I wrote something like that once in my diary, but I can't remember what or when, and the word wasn't "suffer".'

'When a man is cured,' the doctor said, 'we can't afford to waste him.'

'So cured!'...

No further skin-tests are required in your case.'

From this it appears that the doctor is convinced about Quarry's honesty. Quarry is troubled and feels pain because what he regarded his place of peace has become a trap. He successfully escapes many women and Marie Rycker's eaxism in the form of innocence like dynamite explodes his last hope of achieving peace. Like the doctor, Quarry is not an absolute atheist. Dr Colin is shrewd to observe,

You're too troubled by your lack of faith, Quarry. You keep on fingering it like a sore you want to get rid of. I am content with the myth; you are not - you have to believe or disbelieve.

After Quarry is shot dead by Rycker, Father Joseph says that he was an ambiguous man. Even though Dr Colin persists with his parallel between a burnt-out leper and a burnt-out artist, Quarry's case appears to be ambiguous. While he himself thinks that he tried to order his life in terms of reason and failed, the doctor gives it a psychological twist. Rycker seems to have been maddened by Quarry's laughter which makes him fire twice. Later Quarry says just before his death that he was laughing at himself and dies with the word 'absurd': 'this is absurd or else...'.

2. Ibid., p.228.
3. Ibid., p.233.
We no doubt feel the absurd situation in which Marie Rycker's innocence placed Quarry. But the alternative, 'or else', if we trust the narrator, none of the characters knows. It may be the absurdity of reason because no amount of logic would persuade Marie Rycker to desist from the havoc she has wrought. No amount of reason would have convinced Rycker to free himself from sexual jealousy. Or it may mean that Quarry is made aware of the existence of the King through the absurdity in which he is involved in spite of his efforts to keep aloof. In his Introduction to the novel, Greene says that he would seek Quarry among those in whom, according to Unamuno, "reason is stronger than will, they feel themselves caught in the grip of reason and hailed along in their own despite, and they fall into despair, and because of their despair they deny, and God reveals Himself in them, affirming Himself by their very denial of Him."¹

From the foregoing analysis of Greene's 'Catholic' novels two points emerge: one is that Greene is in complete command of his craftsmanship; the other is that they are not a new apology for practising Catholicism. Since all the protagonists happen to be Catholics, their response to a highly ritualized religion and the sacramental nature of that religion becomes an inseparable

part of the narrative. They are interesting to a non-Catholic not because of violent action which is very much there but because of the feeling of emotional participation they create. Working within the framework of realistic novel and employing traditional narrative devices and logic, Greene makes us see the value of Sacrament and religion from within, instead of grafting them on to the narrative. The shaping spirit behind the fiction is not Catholic religion but imaginative power and dramatic intensity that elevate it to provocative and paradoxical comment on human endeavour to negotiate with problems of life and its apparent failure.