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GRAHAM GREENE'S THEMATIC USAGE OF GOOD AND EVIL IN
BRIGHTON ROCK, THE POWER AND THE GLORY,
AND THE HEART OF THE MATTER

A Monograph
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the Faculty of the Department of English
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In Partial Fulfillment
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Master of Arts

by
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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Graham Greene has usually been considered a Catholic novelist because he is a Catholic convert and his work has often been judged, not on literary bases, but instead, upon dogmatic approaches. However, Greene is a novelist, not a theologian. Furthermore, the vision of life which he presents is his own, not someone else's or some institution's, although his ideas correspond closely to those of Catholicism. In fact, Greene's novels have been infiltrated with his acceptance of Catholic doctrine.

In this study an attempt is made to support the hypothesis that the themes of good and evil which are present in Graham Greene's novels Brighton Rock, The Power and the Glory, and The Heart of the Matter correspond to the Catholic Church's conception of good and evil. The following Catholic definitions of good and evil have been established as a guideline which will direct the course of this discussion. In explaining good, there are two generally recognized theories of moral good. One advocates that moral good lies in searching for man's highest good--happiness; the other, that good is seen in doing one's duty without expecting reward. Catholic doctrine unites these two theories in the ultimate good--God. In God, man supposedly finds the fulfillment and
satisfaction of his existence, his happiness, and at the same time he fulfills his highest duty by accomplishing the purpose for which he was created.

Like good, there are two principal kinds of evil: physical and moral. Physical evil is a privation of due good in things themselves, such as the lack of sight in man. It is inseparable from creation and is a necessary postulate for a perfect universe. Plants must die that men and animals be nourished. Fruits and vegetables are destined to be destroyed to serve the higher good of the universe. Thus, physical evil exists for the sake of greater good.

Moral evil is the privation of a moral good, or the lack of right order in the will. Moral evil may be considered as punitive evil (evil of punishment) or as a sinful act (evil) of sin. Punitive evil is considered evil because it deprives the person of a good: his freedom or his rights. The order of justice demands punishment for personal sin either in this life or the next. Punitive evil is found only in free agents. An animal, for example, is not free, and although he may be disciplined or corrected, he is not punished for his acts. Thus, punitive evil is by definition a punishment for sin.

Sin is much more evil than punitive evil. It is a willful turning away from good and in itself can never be directed to good. While sin makes a man evil, punitive evil may work toward his greater good.\footnote{1}
The beginning hypothesis of this study is Greene's realization that man is a combination of good and evil which Greene presents in his works. By presenting man in this manner Greene strives to awaken a sense of sin in his reader. The more or less standard qualities of the best modern novelists—narrative excitement, psychological insight, and dramatic realism—have been recognized in Greene; however, he is a writer who provokes intense arguments from a wide variety of sources. Most critics believe that Greene has greater potential than any other Christian novelist and that he has instilled a sense of sin with the knowledge of God's infinite love within the reader.

In advancing the proof of this study, passages from Greene's novels will be exemplified to prove the stated hypothesis. In addition, the critical works of Greenean scholars will be cited for their views upon Greene's impact and influence in the literary field in reference to ethics and morals. After an evaluation of Greene's fiction and the critical data, a conclusion will be drawn as to the validity and significance of the correspondence between Greene's conception of good and evil and that of the Catholic Church.

There are three sources for data on Greene's treatment of the themes—good and evil. The researcher will give examples of good and evil found in the novels and Greene's essays. However, these examples will be substantiated by articles and essays concerning Greene's faith as a Christian throughout his lifetime. Critical works discussing Greene's philosophy
of life and interpretations of his fictional works will be used when they reveal the elements of good and evil as they correspond to the Catholic definitions of these terms.
Chapter II

THE THEMATIC USAGE OF GOOD AND EVIL IN BRIGHTON ROCK

Brighton Rock, The Power and the Glory, and The Heart of the Matter are three excellent examples of Graham Greene's thematic usage of good and evil in his novels. These novels not only show his usage of good and evil, but they also reveal Greene's vision of life and Greene's sympathy with man even at the expense of disloyalty to the Catholic Church. Therefore, this paper will serve as an intensive study of Greene's thematic usage of good and evil in Brighton Rock, The Power and the Glory, and The Heart of the Matter. The novels will be analyzed in the order listed above.

Greene's works can be divided into several classes, two of which are the entertainments and the novels. His entertainments reflect a lighter approach to life, while his novels reveal deeper insights into human behavior. Brighton Rock is most characteristic of him because it unites these two classes of his work. This novel contains the religious theme of his major works and illustrates his talent for the mystery story. From the first sentence in the book, the reader learns that Charles Halle is aware that he will be killed in three short hours after his arrival in Brighton. Henceforth, the book moves forward with only slight pauses building suspense tauter and tauter.
Evidently, Greene began *Brighton Rock* as an entertainment, a melodrama of murder and detection in which coincidence would play a large part, the chase would be exciting, and Ida Arnold would be treated more kindly than the novel eventually permitted. However, according to R.W.B. Lewis:

... evil has always stimulated Greene a good deal more than the rightings of wrongs; and in this case, the figure and story of *Brighton Rock*... expanded in Greene's imagination until a recognizable tragedy took its place in the book alongside the well-made entertainment.

Thus, *Brighton Rock*, which was announced as an entertainment in the first edition, developed into a serious novel.

The combining of the detective story and the tragedy could have resulted in two different books, but instead, *Brighton Rock* is a novel which reflects a relationship between two levels of reality:

... a relation between incommensurable and hostile forces; between incompatible worlds; between the ethical world of right and wrong, to which Ida constantly and confidently appeals, and the theological world of good and evil inhabited by Pinkie and Rose.

Hence, Greene presents his view of reality as he formulated it. In his view, the ethical world is in conflict with the theological world. Therefore, Greene is reaffirming his view or belief by using the themes of good and evil in *Brighton Rock*.

Graham Greene's thematic usage of good and evil can be found in this novel. The characters in *Brighton Rock*

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3 Ibid., p. 200.
live in a world of physical evil. Rose possesses moral good, while Pinkie illustrates physical evil, punitive evil, and sin. Ida represents physical evil, punitive evil, and moral good. Thus, she is the only character who is presented as both a combination of good and evil. Physical evil and moral evil in the form of sin are exemplified in the characters Spicer, Dallow, Cubitt, and Mr. Drewitt. Hence, this chapter will prove that Greene's usage of good and evil corresponds to the Catholic Church's conception of these terms.

Physical deformities which suggest the presence of physical evil can be found in *Brighton Rock*. The first feature that Hale noticed about Ida was a physical deformity, her huge breasts:

> His eyes turned to the big breasts; she was like darkness to him, shelter, knowledge, common-sense.

The word *darkness* is also used in this description of Ida and hints at the possibility of evil in her. The man who was selling objects on the street corner had a physical deformity:

> A man stood by the kerb selling objects on a tray; he had lost the whole of one side of the body: leg and arm and shoulder.

Even Hale's physical appearance indicated the presence of physical evil:

> It made Hale's manner strange. He couldn't help showing his desperation. He could hear the girls laughing

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5 Ibid., p. 13.
at him after he'd gone, at his clothes and the way he talked. There was a deep humility in Hale; his pride was only in his profession; he disliked himself before the glass, the bony legs and the pigeon breast, and he dressed shabbily and carelessly as a sign—a sign that he didn't expect any woman to be interested.6

Hale was ashamed of his physical appearance which was not as masculine as he wanted it to be. Ida, the man selling objects, and Hale are each described as having a physical deformity, and this deformity is a privation of a due good in these three characters.

Another example of physical evil is Hale's despair; it deprives him of hope which is a due good. Hale thought of his life as a long dreary pilgrimage:

He was damned, he told himself with the temporary courage of another whiskey, if he'd let that mob frighten him into spoiling his job. 7

Hale realized shortly after arriving in Brighton that Pinkie and his followers intended to murder him, so he became nervous and lonely. This loneliness of Hale's is mentioned often and he tries to avoid it by clinging to Ida.

The character Rose exemplifies moral good. When Pinkie and Rose are discussing repentance, Rose mentions Molly Carthew and her despair:

"Molly Carthew burnt. She was lovely. She killed herself. Despair. That's mortal sin. It's unforgivable." 8

Thus, the reader sees that Rose has been surrounded by a world of despair throughout her life; yet, she has managed

6 Ibid., p. 15. 7 Ibid., p. 9. 8 Ibid., p. 162.
to have hope. Rose was always remembering past events or dreaming of a better future:

She had an immense store of trivial memories and when she wasn't living in the future she was living in the past. As for the present—she got through that as quickly as she could, running away from things, running towards things, so that her voice was always a little breathless, her heart pounding at an escape or an expectation.

Even when Pinkie and Rose drive out into the country to commit suicide, Rose is aware that despair surrounds her, but she is unable to conceive of it:

She had the sense that he was a thousand miles away—his thoughts had gone on beyond the act she couldn't tell where; he was wise; he was foreseeing, she thought, things she couldn't conceive—eternal punishment, the flames... She felt terror, the idea of pain shook her, their purpose drove up in a flurry of rain against the old stained wind-screen. This road led nowhere else. It was said to be the worst act of all, the act of despair, the sin without forgiveness; sitting there in the smell of petrol she tried to realize despair, the mortal sin, but she couldn't; it didn't feel like despair.

Once more the reader sees Pinkie's great despair and his choice to kill not only himself but Rose also. Pinkie's despair results in sin which is a form of moral evil because he willingly turns away from good. Rose is able to escape the despair of Brighton. A vague thread of hope remains with her throughout the novel, even after Pinkie's death. Rose's hope indicates moral good by searching for happiness.

Most of the children in Greene's novels are conspicuous because of their precocity with evil: "It is the vivid

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9 Ibid., p. 67  
10 Ibid., p. 332.
awareness of evil in themselves and others that make some of Greene's younger characters so horrifying to the older ones, who do not expect much from the world in the first place." 11 Greene believes that innocence does not exist in early childhood and that in order to find innocence, one must go back to birth. He further states that during infancy hell lies all around a child; thus, a child is continually exposed to evil. Greene's philosophy of evil, therefore, correlates closely to that of the stated hypothesis which advocates that evil is inseparable from creation and is a necessary postulate for a perfect universe.

Pinkie can be characterized as being physically and morally evil. Even Greene's first description of Pinkie indicates physical evil:

A boy [Pinkie] of about seventeen watched him from the door. A shabby smart suit, the cloth too thin from much wear, a face of starved intensity, a kind of hideous and unnatural pride. 12

On the following page, Greene further describes Pinkie:

He had a fair smooth skin, the faintest down, and his grey eyes had an effect of heartlessness like those of an old man in whom human feeling has died. 13

Greene's use of the word heartlessness indicates physical evil in Pinkie because there is a privation of human feeling and sympathy in him. This idea of being deprived of human

12 Greene, Brighton Rock, p. 7.
13 Ibid., p. 8.
feeling is reinforced by Greene several times during the course of the novel:

The word "murder" conveyed no more to him than the words "box," "collar," "giraffe." 14

He didn't want that relationship with anyone: the double bed, the intimacy, it sickened him like the idea of age. 15

A passion of cruelty stirred in his belly. 16

Thus, Pinkie exemplifies physical evil since he lacks sincere human feelings.

Moreover, moral evil in the form of sin can also be found in Pinkie. Pinkie is aware of the damage that vitriol can do, but he enjoys carrying a bottle of it with him:

... a faint secret sensual pleasure he felt, touching the bottle of vitriol with his fingers as Rose came hurrying by the concert hall, was his nearest approach to passion. 17

Pinkie threatened Rose by telling her that he was going to throw the vitriol on her face. He reinforced the idea of the serious damage that vitriol could do by telling Rose what had happened to Peggy Baron. Thus, Pinkie's carrying the bottle of vitriol deprives Rose of her rights. However, he sins when he throws the vitriol on his face:

... glass--somewhere--broke, he screamed and she saw his face--steam. He screamed and screamed, with his hands up to his eyes; he turned and ran; she saw a police baton at his feet and broken glass. He looked half his size, doubled up in appalling agony; it was as if the flames had literally got him and he

14 Ibid., p. 62.
15 Ibid., p. 144.
16 Ibid., p. 151.
17 Ibid., p. 63.
shrank—shrank into a schoolboy flying in panic
an pain, scrambling over a fence, running on. 18

Pinkie's decision to blind himself was a willful turning
away from good. Hence, moral evil can be seen in Pinkie.

Greene believes that a process of reciprocal corrup-
tion exists in life. Man sees evil when he looks at the world
around him and when he looks within himself. However, the
continual influx of evil from the world into man's soul is
counteracted by the movement of evil in the opposite direction.
In exemplifying this belief, Greene further substantiates
his philosophy which coincides directly with the previously
cited definition of physical and moral evil. Hence, Greene's
interest in the criminal and his world results from the
acknowledgment of a sense of universal guilt in which all
men must bear a part.

Therefore, Greene attempts to make Pinkie, the
murderer in Brighton Rock, a sympathetic character. Pinkie's
background is very similar to that of Raven's in This Gun for
Hire. The similarity between these two characters is their
common betrayal by society. Their innocence has been destroyed
by the poverty of the slums. Raven is hare-lipped and this
disfigurement causes him to be repulsive to the world that has
denied him. Pinkie also bears a scar like Raven, but his is
psychic. 19 As a child, Pinkie saw his parents making love
and this traumatic experience resulted in his becoming bitter

18 Ibid., p. 352.
19 A.A. DeVitis, "Allegory in 'Brighton Rock',''
and older than his years. Thus, to Pinkie all the ills of the world are ascribed to sex. However, these two characters, Pinkie and Raven, differ because Pinkie is conscious of his choice to do evil whereas Raven is morally confused. To link the characters of Pinkie and Raven to the asserted hypothesis is to recognize that Pinkie reflects moral evil while Raven symbolizes physical evil. Furthermore, Pinkie damns himself by the utterance "Credo in unum Satanam" and willfully rejects grace. Moreover, the sin of blasphemy is added to his sin of murder.

In analyzing Ida, both kinds of good and evil can be found in her character. As mentioned previously, her huge breasts are a physical deformity and suggest physical evil. Punitive evil can also be found in Ida's desire for vengeance in Hale's death. In discussing Ida's vengeance, Greene refers to the Christian attitude concerning vengeance and indicates clearly that Ida did not accept this attitude:

Somebody had made Fred unhappy, and somebody was going to be made unhappy in turn. An eye for an eye. If you believed in God, you might leave vengeance to Him, but you couldn't trust the One, the universal spirit. Vengeance was Ida's, just as much as reward was Ida's, the soft gluey mouth affixed in taxis, the warm handclasp in cinemas, the only reward there was. And vengeance and reward—they both were fun.

Ida's idea of vengeance is an eye for an eye, and she considers finding Hale's murderer as a mission which she must accomplish in order for her idea of vengeance to be fulfilled. The

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following quotation describes Ida's mission as she viewed it and also suggests the presence of evil in Ida:

But it did no one any harm, it was just human nature, no one could call her really bad--a bit free and easy perhaps, a bit Bohemian; it wasn't as if she got anything out of it, as if like some people she sucked a man dry and cast him aside like a cast-off--threw him aside like a cast-off glove. She knew what was Right and what was Wrong. God didn't mind a bit of human nature--what He minded--and her brain switched away from Phil in pants to her Mission, to doing good, to seeing that the evil suffered. 21

Ida's conception of doing good is to punish the evil. Thus, punitive evil becomes evident in her character.

However, unlike Pinkie, Ida is not all evil. Hale immediately noticed some good in her:

... she smelt of soap and wine; comfort and peace and a slow sleepy physical enjoyment, a touch of the nursery and the mother stole from the big tipsy mouth, the magnificent breasts and legs, and reached Hale's wired and frightened brain. 22

Hale detects a mother image in Ida. The fact that she seems to offer comfort and peace to a person indicates her good. This moral good in Ida can be described as doing one's duty without expecting reward. Both good and evil aspects can be found in Ida's disposition:

She was cheery, she was healthy, she could get a bit lit with the best of them. She liked a good time, her big breasts bore their carnality frankly down the Old Steyne, but you had only to look at her to know that you could rely on her. She wouldn't tell tales to your wife, she wouldn't remind you next morning of what you wanted to forget, she was honest, she was kindly, she belonged to the great middle law-

21 Ibid., p. 218. 22 Ibid., p. 20.
Ida wants to enjoy life and she does just that. However, in enjoying life she does things which are considered questionable and evil by society. Ida also has the tendency to "go along with the crowd" which often results in her being considered free and easy, but one must also note her good qualities: her cheerfulness, her honesty, her kindness, and her desire to enjoy life. Thus, moral good, which can be defined as seeking man's highest good—happiness, is seen in Ida's character.

However, Greene views Ida Arnold as a contemptible person. Ida is the person who leads the police to Pinkie and in so doing she considers herself to be doing justice. She is condemned by her jolliness because this characteristic does not permit her to conceive of the evil in life. The waitress, Rose, whom Pinkie marries so that she cannot testify against him, says the following in reference to Ida:

"I'd rather burn with you than be like her. . . She's ignorant." 24

And Greene can feel only contempt for a person like Ida who does not even believe in hell, while he can feel pity for Pinkie who willfully damns himself to hell. Ida's preoccupation with "fair play" and the enjoyment of life makes her unaware of Pinkie's suffering and his evil. Her compassion for Rose and her desire to save Rose from Pinkie suggest a

23 Ibid., p. 113. 24 Ibid., p. 162.
mother image; however, Ida is basically a callous person. She
begins her hunt of Pinkie by consulting a ouija board and
continues the search because it turns out to be fun, like
making love and drinking which she does a good deal of both.
Thus, because of her stupidity and her heartiness Ida is
content and heartless.\textsuperscript{25} Ida, therefore, illustrates that
basically man desires the good, but it is difficult with certainty
to detect and to reject the evil. She chooses the easier course
for man to choose which is to rationalize with himself and to
silence the voice within that says an action or thought is evil.

According to A.A. DeVitis, the theme of corrupted
innocence, the theme of betrayal, the motif of the chase,
and his own symbols of evil applied to a specifically religious
theme are related by Greene for the first time in \textit{Brighton
Rock}. \textsuperscript{26} The religion of Pinkie and Rose is used to define
good and evil. Greene's subject matter is repetitive of
previous work; however, the melodramatic conventions are
subjected to the dominating religious motif. According to DeVitis,

The plot concerns the race track gangs and the
razor slashings that accompany the protection
rackets. . . . It moves against the sea, the traditional
symbol of changeless change, of continuity. In bare
outline the novel seems just another thriller: Ida
Arnold, the inquisitive person who seeks natural
justice; Pinkie Brown, the pursued; Rose, the love element. \textsuperscript{27}

By uniting the melodramatic contrivances with the religious

\textsuperscript{25}Voorhees, pp. 391-93.

\textsuperscript{26}DeVitis, "Allegory in 'Brighton Rock'," p. 219.

\textsuperscript{27}Ibid.
theme, the presence of the Church is constantly felt. Therefore, a coherent allegorical meaning is given to the novel by the religious references.

Ida represents the mother image in *Brighton Rock*. But she is more than the mother image because she becomes the representative of humanity in the allegory. Ida is uncomfortable when an issue of good and evil appears, but she does feel that she can distinguish between right and wrong. Ida says:

"I'm a sticker where right's concerned." \(^{28}\)

She believes that reality exists only in what she sees around her and she appears to have no religion. Ida is vitality and strength and represents the humanity of most people. It is logical for her to become the revenger of Hale's death since she discounts the idea of God and believes in a natural order:

Since Ida believes in the natural world, within the pattern of the allegory her idea of justice is easy to understand. The idea of God's justice, however, is not so facile for right and wrong are aspects of good and evil. \(^{29}\)

Pinkie also believes in right, but his belief involves might controlling right. After witnessing his parents' ritual of sex as a child, he rejects them and adopts Kite as his father image because he offers Pinkie a refuge from sex. However, Kite dies and Pinkie still continues to prolong his


\(^{29}\) DeVitis, "Allegory in 'Brighton Rock!', " p. 221.
existence. Thus, the allegory can be summarized in the following manner:

The natural mother, within the allegory, battles the unnatural father—Ida versus Kite, love and violence opposed. For Kite represents the cult of power as Ida represents the religion of humanity. The strong man in terms of the allegory runs up against the forces of society and is defeated. 30

Thus, Pinkie's rejection of his parents exemplifies punitive evil in that it deprives him of a good: his freedom or his rights.

R.W.B. Lewis discusses the sense of universal drama in *Brighton Rock*. In his discussion, Lewis places this novel in theological terms of early and late medieval tradition:

the tradition of Tertullian and the dark, negative, and incorrigibly paradoxical theology, wherein everything supernatural stands in implacable hostility over against everything natural and human; and for the most part, vice versa. 31

However, Albert Camus attacks the above Christian traditional view and instead supports theocentric humanism where there is an intermediate figure who makes the existence of intermediate ends, goods, and explanations possible. This figure reconciles and makes order out of human history. But in Pinkie's world, everything is sudden and final and there is nothing intermediate. Pinkie is not involved with money, sexual love, or even with Brighton, but instead, he is immediately faced with evil and disaster. 32

Pinkie, however, is involved with good through Rose who is as doomed to salvation as he is to damnation. He

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30 Ibid. 31 Lewis, p. 200. 32 Ibid.
realizes that he is evil, but he is able to see in Rose just the opposite—good. Pinkie tells Rose:

"I'll be seeing you... You an' me have things in common."

But, Pinkie thinks that goodness and ignorance are identical; however, Rose recognizes Pinkie's evil and still loves him. With this recognition, moral good is introduced in Greene's novel through Rose's loving Pinkie without expecting his love in return.

In *Brighton Rock*, Greene compares Rose to the Biblical character Ruth, a virtuous woman who remained loyal to her husband's family even after his death. The same type of loyalty can be found in Rose's note to Pinkie:

"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."

Rose's loyalty and devotion to Pinkie exemplifies moral good because she does her duty as a devoted wife and she expects no reward in return.

Rose and Pinkie have been exposed to the same symbols of good and evil because they are both Roman Catholics, but Rose's innocence has not been destroyed. The goodness in her responds to the evilness in Pinkie, and she realizes that Pinkie needs her:

What was most evil in him needed her; it couldn't get along without goodness. 35

33 Greene, *Brighton Rock*, p. 36.
34 Ibid., p. 273.
35 Ibid., p. 179.
Hence, Pinkie destroys Rose's innocence when he marries her. Their marriage can be described as a marriage of heaven and hell:

She was good, he'd discovered that, and he was damned: they were made for each other.36

Thus, Rose and Pinkie form opposites—good and evil. Moreover, Rose's marrying Pinkie exemplifies moral good in her searching for her highest good—happiness.

Greene describes the sense of sin that Pinkie and Rose feel after their marriage which has been arranged by Mr. Drewitt. As they leave the Crown, Greene records the following:

They stood on the pavement and heard the door of the Crown closed and locked behind them—a bolt grind into place; they felt as if they were shut out from an Eden of ignorance. On this side there was nothing to look forward to but experience.37

Thus, the scene is very similar to God's casting Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden after they committed the first sin. Hence, sin which is a form of moral evil reappears in Pinkie's life and also Rose is once more brought into close contact with sin and evil.

The fact that Rose and Pinkie know the religious significance of their actions is presented overtly. Pinkie no longer practices his religion, but he does believe that the Catholic religion is "the only thing that fits."38 As a result, he further admits "there's Hell. Flames and damnation."39 Rose and Pinkie often discuss their chances

\[36\text{Ibid., p. 180.} \quad 37\text{Ibid., p. 249.} \quad 38\text{Ibid., p. 72.} \quad 39\text{Ibid.}\]
of salvation, but they realize that they are doomed unless they are given time to repent before death. However, Pinkie knows instinctively that he will not repent. Pinkie remembers: "You could be saved between the stirrup and the ground, but you couldn't be saved if you didn't repent," and later he returns to his previous thought with the idea: "Between the stirrup and the ground there wasn't time: you couldn't break in a moment the habit of thought: habit held you close while you died." Thus, knowing that he will not break his habit of unrepentant hatred, he later tells Rose: "The stirrup and the ground. That doesn't work." Rose responds to Pinkie's remark by saying that she also wants to be doomed. Hence, Rose, like the whiskey priest in The Power and the Glory and Scobie in The Heart of the Matter, is prepared to lose Heaven as a result of her love for Pinkie. Here again, Rose illustrates moral good in doing her duty--loving Pinkie instead of attaining satisfaction from loving God.

According to Wilhelm Hortmann, this choice of damnation is "first and foremost the anguished outcry of the soul torn between love of God and the love of fellow-beings."

However, this choice is made by Rose, the whiskey priest, and Scobie after considerable thought and it is not a decision upon which any of the three would renege. Hortmann further explains that the choices made by Greene's characters represent:

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40 Ibid., pp. 152-53. 41 Ibid., p. 155 42 Ibid., p. 162.

... a well-premeditated standpoint, the ultimate end of the spiritual road which each of his characters has measured out in its entirety. It's a deliberate attempt to force God's hand, if that is possible, to compel Him to intercede for the beloved person or persons or otherwise commit the divine injustice of damning what is presented by Greene as an obviously innocent person. 44

Therefore, when Rose considers the suicide pact with Pinkie she thinks:

He was going to damn himself but she was going to show them that they wouldn't damn him without damning her too. 45

In her confession later Rose also remarks:

"I don't want absolution. I want to be like him--damned." 46

Since throughout Brighton Rock, Rose incorporates both recognized objective theories of moral good which are stated in the hypothesis, it appears to be an injustice to damn an innocent person like her.

As previously stated, Pinkie realizes that a conscious effort of will is necessary in order to obtain salvation. He concludes that there is no time in death for this conscious effort, even though there has been plenty of time to do evil. Robert O. Evans comments: "the metaphysic of Brighton Rock requires an act of will for both good and evil." 47 Evans further points out that Pinkie is hellbent on damnation.

44 Ibid., pp. 66-67.

45 Greene, Brighton Rock, p. 332.

46 Ibid., p. 355.

All of Pinkie's friends—Spicer, Dallow, Cubitt, and Mr. Drewitt—represent physical and moral evil. Spicer, Dallow, and Cubitt belong to Pinkie's racetrack gang. Each of these men is directly associated with razor slashings, rackets, book-makers, and gamblers. They become restless after Hale's death and are afraid that they will be punished for the murders and wrong doings they have committed. This restlessness is especially noticeable in Spicer:

Spicer was restless these days. There was nothing for him to do. When the races began again he wouldn't feel so bad, he wouldn't think so much about Hale. It was the medical evidence that upset him: "Death from natural causes," when with his own eyes he'd seen the Boy . . . It was fishy, it wasn't straight. He told himself that he could face a police inquiry, but he couldn't stand this not knowing, the false security of the verdict. There was a catch in it somewhere, and all through the long summer sunlight Spicer wandered uneasily, watching out for trouble. . . .

He knew it was just nerves. "I'll be all right when the races start," he told himself, like a man with a poisoned body who believes that all will be well when a single tooth is drawn. 48

This restlessness which can be found in all the gang members is physical evil because the men are being deprived of living a calm, restful life. Moreover, sin can also be found in these three men since they have intentionally killed other people to obtain their own selfish goals. By being aware of what they were doing and by willingly turning from good, they have sinned.

Mr. Drewitt is also a friend of Pinkie's who can be categorized as morally evil. He is the lawyer who "fixes" things for Pinkie. When Pinkie decides to marry Rose, he sends

for Mr. Drewitt:

"I want Mr. Drewitt fetched. I want him to fix me something. He's the only lawyer we can trust round here--if we can trust him." 49

Mr. Drewitt is not the honest, respectable person that one would think of as a lawyer. Instead, he is the type of person who has done so much evil that he has given up the determination to do the right thing and he permits Pinkie to tell him what to do. Mr. Drewitt covers up for Spicer's murder and even tells Pinkie how to make it look like his death was an accident. Mr. Drewitt sins by willingly turning from good and covering up for Spicer's murder.

Mr. Drewitt and Pinkie's friends are discussed in William D. Ellis' article "The Grand Theme of Graham Greene."

In discussing *Brighton Rock*, Ellis comments:

*Brighton Rock*, like *Moby-Dick*, conceals beneath its characters and plot, its sex, cruelty, terror, murder, and other violences and treacheries a symbolic allegory of mankind's gaining salvation or damnation after reaching moral maturity. 50

In order to understand this allegory, the symbolic nature of the characters must be understood. Spicer, Dallow, and Cubitt each suggests in name and action one aspect of physical love. The "spicy" approach to physical love is suggested by Spicer; the "dallying" approach, by Dallow; and the chivalric approach among high lords and ladies in cheap fiction, by Cubitt. The priestly or legalistic approach to physical love


is suggested by Drewitt who arranges the marriage between Pinkie and Rose. Ida also indicates the physical approach to love. However, she also reveals the attitude of having no real love for Hale or any other human being. Thus, the minor characters represent what the world calls love.

Pinkie and Rose, however, symbolize true love which can be obtained only by mature individuals. Their names suggest two similar shades of the same color; therefore, these names suggest the double nature of man—good and evil. Man, by emphasizing either side of his nature, can select damnation or salvation. Pinkie consciously does evil by killing Hale and Spicer and by subjecting Rose to terror, violence, and treachery. Ellis comments:

All this suggests that Pinkie is man's evil nature which prefers the demands of self to the demands of others and even tries to kill, as Pinkie did Rose, the good within himself when the importunities of those who, like Ida Arnold, talk of Right and Wrong make him despair. 51

Rose is man's good self. Even though she submits to the evil in others, she continues to hope and refuses to despair about God's mercy. By doing so, she gains salvation. In gaining the salvation of God, Rose finds the fulfillment and satisfaction of her existence and her happiness. In so doing, she exemplifies one of the stated definitions of moral good.

Greene has said that Hale and Mr. Colleoni are neither good nor evil. They represent the supernatural forces in the allegory. Hale is presented as the Christ figure who

51 Ibid., p. 249.
gives out cards of salvation, while Mr. Colleoni represents Satan. "Hale and Colleoni symbolize the idea that man's evil is in himself, not 'in his stars' or in the forces of the supernatural." 52 Hale and Mr. Colleoni exemplify the conflict of man wanting good and evil at the same time. However, it is difficult to detect and to reject the evil. Therefore, the easier course for man to choose is to rationalize with and to silence the man within who says that an action or thought is evil.

In the final scene of Brighton Rock, Greene emphasizes the relationship of good and evil with love. After Pinkie's death, Rose remembers their discussions dealing with deathbed repentance and salvation. But Rose knows that Pinkie was damned and that he died in mortal sin with no chance for repentance. When she goes to confession, Rose explains that she wants to be just like Pinkie—damned. However, the priest tells her the following story:

"There was a man, a Frenchman, you wouldn't know about him, my child, who had the same idea as you. He was a good man, a holy man, and he lived in sin all through his life, because he couldn't bear the idea that any soul could suffer damnation... This man decided that if any soul was going to be damned, he would be damned too. He never took the sacraments; he never married his wife in church. I don't know, my child, but some people think he was—well, a saint. I think he died in what we are told is mortal sin—I'm not sure; it was in the war; perhaps. ... You can't conceive, my child, nor can I or anyone—the . . . appalling . . . strangeness of the mercy of God." 53

52 Ibid.

Of course, Rose does not recognize the Frenchman as being
the patron saint of the modern Catholic novel, Charles Peguy,
but she does promise to return the following day for absolution.

The final blow that Pinkie strikes to Rose's love
for him is the recording of his voice which says, "God damn
you, you little bitch, why can't you go back home for ever
and let me be?" 54 After leaving confession, Rose goes back
to the boardinghouse to play the recording and to receive
the betrayal of her loving spirit. "Pinkie's life was shot
through with evil, the 'dreary hopeless failure of love';
and for that he is damned, as Rose knew." 55 However, Rose
can will her fate, even though it appears to be dismal and
hopeless. Rose is far too innocent to understand the priest
and her innocence is an asset, but it is not an assurance
of virtue according to Greene. Hence, "innocence has kept
Rose from selflove . . . and accordingly, there is very real
hope she will find salvation. She must, however, earn it." 56

At the end of Brighton Rock, the emphasis shifts
from Pinkie to Rose because Greene's interest is salvation
not damnation. Rose's premonition that she is pregnant is
left uncertain by Greene; however, it is suggestive that Pinkie's
evil has backfired once more. In discussing this possibility,
Robert O. Evans states:

This conception [Rose's belief that she is pregnant] in fact gives Rose something to live for, rather than sinks

54 Ibid., p. 257 55 Ellis, p. 250. 56 Evans, p. 167.
her deeper into the traps of life. Such a view would be consistent with her selfless character and her innocence. 57

Thus, the reader is encouraged to believe that Rose's goodness will result finally in salvation because she exemplifies not only the theory that moral good lies in searching for man's highest good--happiness, but also, that moral good is seen in doing one's duty without expecting reward. 58

The correspondence between Graham Greene's thematic usage of good and evil and the Catholic Church's conception of them has been proven in this chapter. The character Rose possesses moral good, while Pinkie illustrates physical evil, punitive evil, and sin. The characters Spicer, Dallow, Cubitt, and Mr. Drowitt also exemplify physical evil and moral evil in the form of sin. Ida represents physical evil, punitive evil, and moral good. Thus, she is the only character who is presented as a combination of good and evil. She represents the conflict which man has in choosing between good and evil, and man's tendency to rationalize when an issue of good and evil exists. By using the themes of good and evil in Brighton Rock, Graham Greene has been able to accomplish his purpose of awakening a sense of sin within the reader, and also, at the same time, reminding the reader of "the . . . appalling . . . strangeness of the mercy of God." 59

57 Ibid.
58 Ibid., pp. 166-68.
59 Greene, Brighton Rock, p. 357.
Chapter III

THE THEMATIC USAGE OF GOOD AND EVIL -- IN THE POWER AND THE GLORY

The Power and the Glory is a considerable advance on Brighton Rock because in it good and evil are more truly mingled in the central character of the priest than they are in the separate characters of Pinkie and Rose. In The Power and the Glory, Greene presents the story of a hunted, desperate, and driven man--a priest. The conflict within the novel involves the priest who represents the old and traditional religion and the lieutenant who represents the new political order and power group. The priest represents "everyman" or "anyman" and the plot revolves around the priest's battle with the government and his attempt to find himself and his God. In searching to find his true identity, the battle of good and evil becomes evident. Thus, moral good is exemplified in the priest's searching for his highest good--happiness, which the Catholics further unite with ultimate good, God.

Graham Greene's thematic usage of good and evil can be found in The Power and the Glory. The whiskey priest indicates both moral good and physical evil in his character. Like the whiskey priest, the lieutenant displays physical evil also. In addition, the world of the whiskey priest and the Mexican village together exemplify punitive evil by the suggestion of death, treachery, and violence. Punitive evil
is also illustrated through the characters of Padre José and the gangster. Brigida, like her father, is a combination of both moral good and punitive evil. Lastly, Mr. Tench, the dentist, demonstrates punitive evil through his loneliness.

The apparent plot of *The Power and the Glory* deals with the organized search to find the priest:

"I am looking for a man," the lieutenant said. "He has been reported in this district."
"He can't be here."
"Your daughter tells me the same."
"She knows."
"He is wanted on a very serious charge."
"Murder?"
"No. Treason." 60

Within the Mexican villages, this constant search for the priest is recognized in the above dialogue. "The hidden or secondary plot moves independently of the apparent plot until they finally merge at the point of discovery." 61

However, this hidden plot begins to appear when the suffering of the people causes the priest to suffer also:

"What is the matter with you all?" he said.
"Why should you be afraid?"
"Haven't you heard . . . ?"
"Heard?"
"They are taking hostages now--from all the villages where they think you've been. And if the people don't tell . . . somebody is shot . . . and then they take another hostage." 62


Thus, people are being killed because of the priest. This cruel search by the Mexican governor is an attempt to rid the region of all traces of religion, especially Catholicism. Therefore, the tragic plot of the novel involves the apparent plot—the search for the priest—and the hidden plot—the priest's search for peace of mind. Hence, in God, the priest finds the fulfillment and satisfaction of his existence, his happiness, and at the same time he fulfills his highest duty by accomplishing the purpose for which he was created.

Through his search for peace of mind, the priest is confronted with the battle of good and evil through several conflicts. His flight, hiding, and drinking are the surface level conflicts, while his one-time marriage, lack of dignity, sins, and frailty are the conflicts in the hidden plot:

She [Maria] said savagely: "I know about things. I went to school. I'm not like these others—ignorant. I know you're a bad priest. That time we were together— I bet that wasn't all you've done. I've heard things, I can tell you. Do you think God wants you to stay and die—a whiskey priest like you?"

The above lines represent the increasing seriousness of the novel. The complex interactions are many. Sin, human frailty, value judgments, and religious assertions comprise the growing seriousness of the novel. The following passage indicates the conflicts which are growing within the mind of the priest:

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Ibid., p. 107.
If God intended him to escape he could snatch him away from in front of a firing squad. But God was merciful: there was only one reason, surely, which would make Him refuse His peace—if there was any peace—that he could still be of use in saving a soul, his own or another’s. But what good could he do now? They had him on the run; and he dared not enter a village in case somebody else should pay with his life: perhaps a man who was in mortal sin and unrepentant: it was impossible to say what souls might not be lost simply because he was obstinate and proud and wouldn’t admit defeat. He couldn’t even say Mass any longer—he had no wine. It had all gone down the dry gullet of the Chief of Police. It was—appallingly—complicated. He was still afraid of death; he would be more afraid of death yet when the morning came, but it was beginning to attract him by its simplicity. 64

Thus, the theme of good and evil continually grows in predominance as the priest becomes more and more involved with his search for himself and his God.

As stated previously, the hidden plot merges with the apparent plot and this mergence occurs when the priest says:

"Heaven is where there is no jefe, no unjust laws, no taxes, no soldiers, and no hunger. Your children do not die in heaven." 65

The conflicts within the priest's mind concerning life, death, and rebirth are now as important as his flight from the soldiers. The priest, who is running from himself and God, becomes aware of his predicament when he is betrayed by a half-caste Judas:

...this was Judas sick and unsteady and scared in the dark. He had only to beat the mule on to leave him stranded in the forest—once he dug in

64Ibid., p. 175. 65Ibid., p. 95.
the point of his stick and forced it forward at a weary trot, and he could feel the pull, pull of the half-caste's arm on the stirrup, holding him back. There was a groan—it sounded like "Mother of God," and he let the mule slacken its pace. He prayed silently: "God forgive me": Christ had died for this man too: how could he pretend with his pride and lust and cowardice to be any more worthy of that death than this half-caste? 66

In these lines the conflicts within the priest concerning good and evil become more apparent. The priest realizes that instead of being in a state of grace, he is a sinner who is no better than the half-caste. The priest allows his pride and lust so to interfere with his duties that he forgets that Christ had died for men like the half-caste as well as for himself. Thus, the priest reveals physical evil in his blindness to the full meaning of Christ's death.

Even though the whiskey priest lacks this insight into the full meaning of Christ's death, he does exemplify moral good. He is an affectionate man who thinks kindly and fatherly of his daughter:

At the word bastard his heart moved painfully: it was as when a man in love hears a stranger name a flower which is also the name of a woman. Bastard: the word filled him with miserable happiness. It brought his own child nearer: he could see her under the tree by the rubbish-dump, unguarded. He repeated "Bastard?" as he might have repeated her name—-with tenderness disguised as indifference. 67

He tries to cast aside his true feelings for his daughter; however, he is unable to do so. When he thinks of her, he does so affectionately and tenderly, not resentfully. The whiskey priest's affection can also be seen after he has

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66 Ibid., p. 133. 67 Ibid., p. 168.
spent the night in the jail:

He was moved by an enormous and irrational affection for the inhabitants of this prison. 68

This affection which characterizes the priest exemplifies moral good, since the priest performs his duty of loving his daughter and the sinful people in the jail with no thought of being rewarded.

The priest is incapable of hating others. In fact, he believes that there is no such thing as hate:

When you visualized 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 again to feel an enormous responsibility for the pious woman. 69

The priest feels obligated to the Mexican people, even though many of them no longer respect him as they had in the past. Since the lieutenant is taking hostages from the villages, most of the people simply want the priest to perform his duties hurriedly and to leave. However, the priest does not hate the people for their attitudes, and he continues in his work even though he has had opportunities to escape from Mexico. By loving the people instead of hating them, the priest demonstrates moral good.

Furthermore, the existence of moral good in the form of searching for happiness can be seen through the priest's desire to take part in confession:

68 Ibid., p. 171. 69 Ibid., p. 177.
He thought: If I go, I shall meet other priests; I shall go to confession; I shall feel contrition and be forgiven; eternal life will begin for me all over again. The Church taught that it was every man's first duty to save his own soul. The simple ideas of hell and heaven moved in his brain: life without books, without contact with educated men, had peeled away from his memory everything but the simplest outline of the mystery.  

By taking part in confession, he hopes to receive absolution. Thus, a faint indication of hope can be seen in the whiskey priest.

The whiskey priest, who has been searching for God, finds Him in the darkness and stench of a prison, among the sinners and the rats and the rascals. And in finding God, he experiences the companionship of the guilty and wretched. The priest is placed in the jail after being arrested for carrying brandy. While in the pitch-black cell with a woman on one side demanding to make her confession and an unseen couple copulating somewhere on the floor, the priest is touched:

... by an extraordinary affection. He was just one criminal among a herd of criminals ... he had a sense of companionship which he had never received in the old days when pious people came kissing his black cotton glove.  

In this effective scene, the priest realizes fully his sinful nature and his likeness to the people around him in the cell. By feeling a companionship with these people, the priest is able to find the God he is seeking. Therefore, he reaches the ultimate good—God.

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70 Ibid., pp. 88-89.  
71 Ibid., pp. 173-74.
The story of the whiskey priest is similar to Christ's story. Like Christ, the priest is betrayed by a Judas whom he forgives; he enters the death-trap willingly; he dies beside a thief; and he is executed for his faith! However, according to Karl Patten, the priest does not stand for Christ in any simple allegorical equation:

... he [the priest] is Christ-like in that he has consecrated himself, as any Christian should, to live a life in the pattern of Christ. He is not the Son of God who redeems the sins of mankind, but he can redeem himself and be a witness, albeit flawed, to the Christian way in an unChristian world, an example to mankind. 72

Thus, the priest serves as Greene's example of a man who can redeem himself and be a witness for God. In this redemption, the priest accomplishes the purpose for which he was created—loving God.

As mentioned previously in chapter two, the whiskey priest is conscious of his choice of damnation and it is not a choice from which he will renge:

"Listen," the priest said earnestly, leaning forward in the dark, pressing on a cramped foot, "I'm not as dishonest as you think I am. Why do you think I tell people out of the pulpit that they're in danger of damnation if death catches them unawares? I'm not telling them fairy-stories. I don't believe myself. I don't know a thing about the mercy of God; I don't know how awful the human heart looks to Him. But I do know this—that if there's ever been a single man in this state damned, then I'll be damned too." He said slowly: "I wouldn't want it to be any different. I just want justice, that's all." 73


73 Greene, The Power and the Glory, p. 269.
Such sentiments are heroic and the implications seem to be that "either God or the Church is at fault in envisaging the possibility of hell for almost anyone at all."  

In asking for justice the priest is thinking only of himself and does not want any different treatment from others. The meaning of the passage seems to be:

... if the limited and sinful priest recognizes how pitiful human beings are, how much more must God in His all-encompassing understanding of human nature find them objects of pity and forgiveness.

Thus, the suggestion arises in The Power and the Glory, as in Brighton Rock, that the Church is limited in its understanding of and providing for human failure, that one cannot expect true justice from the Church, and that an all-merciful God will make the final decision concerning damnation. Hence, Greene appears to be guilty of heresy, although he has no conscious intention of subverting the authority of the Church.

Many literary critics misunderstand Greene's position on sin and sinners. "Sin mysticism" is a term which has been given to Greene's glorification of sin and the accompanying notion that damnation is somehow an immediate form of salvation. Herbert Haber commented on Greene's "sin mysticism" and concludes that the priest found the path to martyrdom and sainthood by being immersed into the flame of earthly sin. He further states that through adultery and

74. Hortmann, p. 67.  
75. Ibid.
drunkenness, the priest finds the capacity to love and to become humble. However, Francis L. Kunkel says that it is faulty to perceive a cause and effect relationship in terms of the priest's humility and selfless love resulting from alcoholism and fornication. Kunkel states:

The Priest and, for that matter, Sarah, also grow spiritually not because they have sinned—sin is not the condition for their virtues—but because they have been engulfed by disaster, purified by pain. The priest's complacency is corroded by persecution. In other words, Greene is exalting the whiskey priest, not his whiskey-guzzling. Thus, the sinner, not the sin, receives Greene's sympathies. Like Greene, other modern Catholic writers—Bloy and Mauriac, for example—also have the recurrent figure of the sinner who never abandons himself to sin without a struggle and who continually fights his bondage. This sinner knows that Christ alone can save him. Kunkel further explains:

Neither Greene nor the others are celebrating "sin as an incitement to salvation" but rather the weakness of man and the power of God. Greene does not glorify sin; he glorifies humility. The priest's love for Christ . . . is not augmented by his betrayal but by the sorrow that ensues from the betrayal. Hence, Kunkel recognizes Greene's purpose in writing as being the desire to awaken a sense of sin within the reader and to still remind him of God's infinite love.

Graham Greene, in his essay "The Young Dickens,"


77 Ibid.

78 Ibid., p. 58.
discusses specific reference to Oliver Twist:

This world of Dickens is a world without God; and as a substitute for the power and the glory of the omnipotent and omniscient are a few sentimental references to heaven, angels, and the sweet faces of the dead. . . . In this Manichaean world we can believe in evil-doing but goodness wits into philanthropy, kindness, and those strange vague sicknesses into which Dickens' young women so frequently fall and which seem in his eyes a kind of badge of virtue, as though there were a merit in death. 79

In The Power and the Glory, Greene portrays in the uncommon and startling guise of melodramatic allegory the power and glory of God through his two central characters, the whiskey priest and the lieutenant of the new order. "The differences that exist in these two symbolic figures are satirically antithetical, each suggesting what the other should be, each accenting the pity that is in the other while denying the evil." 80 The immediate implications of the differences in the portrayals of the priest and the lieutenant are satiric; but ultimately, by suggesting the dedication of each man, they are ironic. Physical evil is exemplified in this situation since it reveals the inability of both the priest and the lieutenant to see evil in each other.

Within the allegory, the opposite poles represented by the whiskey priest and lieutenant are arranged in satiric fashion; the religious order is represented by the priest, the secular by the lieutenant. DeVitis makes the following

statement in reference to the lieutenant:

The lieutenant's power is, understandably, the source of his belief; and he accepts the violence and brutality that this power engenders as necessary and rational concomitants of his faith. He is temperate, completely certain of the value of his creed. He is strong, resolute, and dedicated. He has self-respect. And he is celibate. As he exercises his power, he puts killing down to love. 81

In every respect except faith, the lieutenant appears much more like an ideal priest. The lieutenant's room is "like a monastic cell" 82 and "there was something of a priest in his intent observant walk—a theologian going back over the errors of the past to destroy them again." 83 His zeal in hunting down the priest is purely ideological and he twice acts unknowingly with generosity toward his victim. Finally, when the priest is killed, the lieutenant appears to feel that life no longer has any importance. Thus, the lieutenant is everything that the whiskey priest should be and is not. In this incidence, moral evil is revealed in the priest's lack of moral good or lack of right order in his will.

The opposite pole in the allegory is represented by the priest, who seeks to evade his responsibility. The priest is a coward and a creature of habit. He realizes this fact and refers to it often. He has sinned grievously in many ways, but he has kept on administering the sacrament

81 Ibid., p. 91.
82 Greene, The Power and the Glory, p. 32.
83 Ibid.
to those who needed it. His virtue lies in the fact that he has never rejected the divine spark. Thus, the differences between these two men are ultimately points of irony rather than of satire. DeVitis makes the following comment:

For Greene, in holding up to contempt the deficiencies of one man, nevertheless caricatures the virtues of the other. Neither is a hero in the traditional sense, yet both portray the force of their convictions. Hence, DeVitis recognizes that the deficiencies of the lieutenant are used to exemplify the virtues of the whiskey priest.

During the third encounter of the priest and the lieutenant over the body of the gangster, the lieutenant argues that the priest must be destroyed even though he is a good man because he is a threat to the well-being of the state. The lieutenant insists that his religion is best because it will free the people from want and misery. The priest replies to this comment with the only possible answer he can. According to the priest, the poor are in greatest favor with God and the kingdom of heaven is theirs. The lieutenant and the priest disagree on what constitutes the essence of living. The priest says that a person who rules through power and fear is open to the temptations of power and fear; and he states that unless a ruler has motives of honesty and truth that nothing but corruption can result from his office:

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DeVitis, Graham Greene, p. 91.
"It's no good your working for your end unless you're a good man yourself. And there won't always be good men in your party. Then you'll have all the old starvation, beating, get-rich-anything. But it doesn't matter so much my being a coward--and all the rest. I can put God into a man's mouth just the same--and I can give him God's pardon. It wouldn't make any difference to that if every priest in the Church was like me. 85

The priest differs from the lieutenant in that the priest uses perfection as his point of reference. "It's better to let him [the poor man] die in dirt and wake in heaven," 86 he says. Greene's satire on the political order is made explicit here. Once the lieutenant has clothed and fed the body and forced the poor to accept the "sacraments" of political progress, the only religion left for the poor man is one of fear, violence, and despair. "The priest insists that unless authority begins from perfection, from God, it will breed corruption." 87 While speaking with the authority of his Church, the priest is nevertheless aware of his inadequacies as a man and states, as previously quoted, that if any man is damned that he is and that he only wants justice.

Greene employs this same motif in the epilogue scene of Brighton Rock when Rose goes to confession. Rose is aware that Pinkie is damned, and the lieutenant's intelligence tells him that if there is salvation, the priest is saved.

85 Greene, The Power and the Glory, p. 263.
86 Ibid., p. 268.
87 DeVitis, Graham Greene, p. 95.
Thus, the lieutenant promises to ask Father José, the conformist, to hear the confession of the whiskey priest, even if it does mean a "triumph for that old corrupt God-ridden world."  

The lieutenant feels his weakness when he gives in to the priest's plea for a confessor, but he refuses to acknowledge the fact. Once more the novel's satire appears and DeVitis comments:

When Father José refuses to hear the fugitive's confession, the secular order seems to triumph; but strangely, the lieutenant experiences the sensation of vacancy as he never has before. The priest has touched the heart of the man; but in the pursuit of his duty the lieutenant is inflexible. And indeed he must remain so or tear the fabric of the allegory; his capitulation would mean the submission of the power cult to God.

In *The Power and the Glory*, the conventional ideas of sanctity and of the priesthood are challenged. The picaresque life of the whiskey priest is deliberately contrasted with the conventional saint's life that a Mexican mother reads to her son and daughter, but it is the former that has the breath of life and, more in common with the passion of Christ. The story of Christ and Judas is paralleled by the relationship between the priest and the half-caste who betrays him, and the death of Christ on the cross is recalled in the scene in which the jefe and his cousin greedily

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89 DeVitis, *Graham Greene*, p. 95.
consume the priest's wine. The sentimentality of the story alienates the little boy and throws him temporarily into allegiance to the lieutenant, but the death of the whiskey priest restores the boy's loyalty to his faith.

It is the boy who welcomes the new priest who arrives to fill the vacancy left by the death of the whiskey priest:

"If you would let me come in," the man said with an odd frightened smile, and suddenly lowering his voice he said to the boy: "I am a priest." "You?" the boy exclaimed.
"Yes," he said gently. "My name is Father ---" But the boy had already swung the door open and put his lips to his own before the other could give himself a name. 90

The new priest, then, parallels the anonymity of the whiskey priest which indicates the fact that the priestly ministry transcends personal imperfections. Thus, the priest becomes the last frail source of religious consolation in a place characterized by abandonment. For instance, Padre José made the following comment concerning the world:

...it would roll heavily in space under its fog like a burning and abandoned ship.

After the priest spends the night in jail, he feels that he has passed into a region of abandonment:

In an odd way he felt abandoned because they had shown no sign of recognition. 92

Hence, the word "abandon" recurs throughout the novel. This sense of abandonment causes the people to have little hope for

91 Ibid., p. 38.
92 Ibid., p. 183.
a better future and exemplifies the presence of punitive evil in *The Power and the Glory*.

The existence of punitive evil in the Mexican villages is immediately suggested by Greene in his opening lines of *The Power and the Glory*. He begins this novel in the following manner:

Mr. Tench went out to look for his ether cylinder; out into the blazing Mexican sun and the bleaching dust. A few buzzards looked down from the roof with shabby indifference; he wasn’t carrion yet. A faint feeling of rebellion stirred in Mr. Tench’s heart, and he wrenched up a piece of the road with splintering finger-nails and tossed it feebly up at them. One of them rose and flapped across the town: over the tiny plaza, over the bust of an ex-president, ex-general, ex-human being, over the two stalls which sold mineral water, towards the river and the sea. It wouldn’t find anything there: the sharks looked after the carrion on that side. Mr. Tench went on across the plaza.

The village appears to be almost a ghost town and it seems to be surrounded by death. The buzzards suggest the presence of death in the little village, and, in order to convey this sense of death and evil, Greene uses the words: “carrion,” and “ex-human being.” By establishing an atmosphere of abandonment and death in his opening paragraph, Greene implies the existence of punitive evil in the Mexican village.

In like manner, the whiskey priest encounters punitive evil in his world also. Most of the people with whom he comes into contact are sinners. For example,

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93 Ibid., p. 9.
the half-caste Judas confesses:

"I've given money to boys—you know what I mean. And I've eaten meat on Fridays." The awful jumble of the gross, the trivial, and the grotesque shot up between the two yellow fangs, and the hand on the priest's ankle shook and shook with the fever. "I've told lies, I haven't fasted in Lent for I don't know how many years. Once I had two women—I'll tell you what I did...." He had an immense self-importance; he was unable to picture a world of which he was only a typical part—a world of treachery, violence, and lust in which his shame was altogether insignificant. How often the priest had heard the same confession—Man was so limited; he hadn't even the ingenuity to invent a new vice: the animals knew as much. It was for this world that Christ had died; the more evil you saw and heard about you, the greater glory lay around the death; it was too easy to die for what was good or beautiful, for home or children or a civilization—it needed a God to die for the half-hearted and the corrupt. He said: "Why do you tell me all this?" 94

Thus, the priest lives in a world full of treachery, violence, and lust. His fellowmen are half-hearted and corrupt. Greene further reinforces the idea of evil existing in the world by having the scene occur at night. Thus, the presence of punitive evil can be seen in the priest's world.

As in Brighton Rock, despair can also be found in The Power and the Glory. The priest realized that he differs from the dog who crept up to the shed because the dog at least has hope:

Unlike him, she retained a kind of hope. Hope was an instinct only the reasoning human mind could kill. An animal never knew despair.

94 Ibid., p. 131. 95 Ibid., p. 191.
While in jail the priest also became aware of the despair of the people there:

... this place [the prison cell] was very like the world elsewhere; people snatched at causes of pleasure and pride in cramped and disagreeable surroundings: there was no time to do anything worth doing, and always one dreamed of escape. 96

The priest realizes the despair of these poor people and sympathizes with them since they are attempting to find some significance in a world that appears to be meaningless. The despair of the priest and the people in the cell exemplifies punitive evil since there is a privation of hope in their lives.

The ex-priest Padre José has committed the unforgivable sin of despair. When asked to say a prayer by the parents of a dead girl, Jose refuses by saying that it is illegal; however, he feels a slight tinge of obligation:

An enormous temptation came to Padre José to take the risk and say a prayer over the grave: he felt the wild attraction of doing one's duty and stretched a sign of the cross in the air; then fear came back, like a drug. Contempt and safety waited for him down by the quay: he wanted to get away. He sank hopelessly down on his knees and entreated them: "Leave me alone." He said: "I am unworthy. Can't you see? I am a coward." ... He knew it was absurd; a lifetime of self-analysis enabled him to see himself as he was, fat and ugly and old and humiliated. It was as if a whole seducing choir of angels had silently withdrawn and left the voices of the children in the patio—"Come to bed, Jose, come to bed," sharp and shrill and worse than they had ever been. He knew he was in the grip of the unforgivable sin, despair. 97

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96Ibid., p. 179. 97Ibid. pp. 65-66.
Jose's despair results after he is forced to leave the priesthood by the threats of the Mexican government and after his marriage. This despair is an example of punitive evil since he is deprived of hope.

The whiskey priest is also characterized by his despair:

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; they had a word for his kind--a whiskey priest--but every failure dropped out of sight and out of mind: somewhere they accumulated in secret--the rubble of his failure. One day, they could choke up, he supposed, altogether the source of grace. Until then he carried on, with spells of fear, weariness, with shamefaced lightness of heart. 98

The whiskey priest lacks hope and regards himself as a complete failure in life. A result of this despair is that the whiskey priest performs his duties in a light-hearted manner. The whiskey priest's despair represents punitive evil, just as it does in the case of Padre José. It is interesting to note that Greene characterizes both the ex-priest and the whiskey priest by their despair.

One would presume that of all individuals, these two would possess hope and the belief that a better future did exist; however, they exemplify punitive evil due to their lack of hope.

The American gunman, thief, and murderer is like the priest in that both of them are considered by the govern-

98 Ibid., p. 83.
ment to be fugitives and criminals. The gangster's picture
is hung along besides the priest's in the lieutenant's
office:

On the wall of the office the gangster still
stared stubbornly in profile towards the first
communion party: somebody has inked the priest's
head round to detach him from the girls' and women's
faces: the unbearable grin peeked out of a halo.

The priest feels very close to the dying gunman and encourages
him to repent his crimes, but the gunman instead urges the
priest to take his knife or gun and to fight his way out of
the police trap. This action by the priest is reminiscent
of Luke 23:39 when Christ while hanging on the cross was
urged to save himself. And once again, we have the suggestion
that the priest is Christ-like. By trying to have the dying
man repent of his sins and by knowingly going into a trap
to perform the last rites, the priest exemplifies good
because he is doing his duty without expecting any reward.
However, the gangster demonstrates punitive evil by refusing
to repent and, thus damns himself to eternal punishment.

The priest's daughter represents punitive evil
because she has been deprived of her childhood. When the
priest talks with Brigida, he notices:

... a look in the child's eyes which frightened
him--it was again as if a grown woman was there
before her time, making her plans, aware of far
too much. It was like seeing his own mortal sin
look back at him, without contrition. He tried to find
some contact with the child and not the woman.

99Ibid., p. 78. 100Ibid., p. 91.
The whiskey priest also notices that Brigida's body reveals her early maturity: "she had been like a rag doll with a wrinkled, aged face," and "the seven-year-old body was like a dwarf's: it disguised an ugly maturity." The presence of punitive evil in Brigida's case can be further substantiated by the realization that she was deprived of a father image, since the priest was her real father. Brigida had never realized what it was like to live in a home with both a mother and father, and this privation might have contributed to her early maturity. However, Brigida seems to have retained an odd kind of innocence and the priest automatically notes this innocence:

He thought of the immeasurable distance a man travels... And to God it was only a moment. The child's snigger and the first mortal sin lay together more closely than two blinks of the eye. He put out his hand as if he could drag her back by force from--something; but he was powerless; the man or the woman waiting to complete her corruption might not yet have been born: how could he guard her against the nonexistent?

This innocence in Brigida represents the presence of good within her character, and the priest's realization of her innocence and his desire to protect this innocence exemplifies moral good. He temporarily assumes the father's role of protecting his child and he does this with no thought of reward.

Mr. Tench, the dentist, is characterized by punitive evil through loneliness. His one main desire is to escape

101 Ibid., p. 90. 102 Ibid., p. 93. 103 Ibid., p. 92.
from Mexico:

"It was always an awful place. Lonely. My God. People at home would have said romance. I thought: five years here, and then I'll go. There was plenty of work. Gold teeth. But then the peso dropped. And now I can't get out. One day I will." He said: I'll retire. Go home. Live as a gentleman ought to live.

"This"—he gestured at the bare base room—"I'll forget all this. Oh, it won't be long now. I'm an optimist," Mr. Tench said. 104

This loneliness has caused Mr. Tench to lose pride in his profession:

... that was how one lived, putting off everything... That was the whole world to Mr. Tench: the heat and the forgetting, the putting off till tomorrow, if possible cash down—for what? 105

Mr. Tench by continually procrastinating in his work shows that he is uninterested in it. His loneliness has caused him to lose interest in his work. Mr. Tench is deprived of the feeling of companionship and professional pride. Thus, he exemplifies punitive evil since he is deprived of these rights.

Loneliness marks the character of the whiskey priest also:

He had been walking all day and he was very tired; he found a dry spot and sat down. When the lightning struck he could see the clearing; all around was the gentle noise of the dripping water. It was nearly like peace, but not quite. For peace you needed human company—his aloneness was like a threat of things to come... He had made his own world, and this was it—the empty broken huts, the storm going by, and fear again... 106

104Ibid., p. 20. 105Ibid., p. 11. 106Ibid., pp. 200-01
By lacking human companionship punitive evil is once more exemplified in the priest.

Both good and evil are exemplified in the characters of The Power and the Glory. The whiskey priest indicates moral good by being affectionate, by loving people, and by desiring to take part in confession, and by sacrificing himself. On the other hand, he illustrates physical evil by not recognizing God's purpose and punitive evil by his lacking the right order in his will, his committing the sin of despair, and his lacking companionship. Like the whiskey priest, the lieutenant displays physical evil in being unable to recognize evil in the priest. In contrast to the physical evil of the lieutenant, punitive evil is revealed through Mr. Tench's deprivation of companionship. In addition, punitive evil is demonstrated in Padre José through his sin of despair. Moreover, the gangster also exemplifies punitive evil in his refusal to repent. Brigida, a similar reflection of her father, is a combination of both moral good and punitive evil in radiating an innocent image and in being deprived of a childhood and father image, respectively. Lastly, the world of the whiskey priest and the Mexican village together exemplify punitive evil by the suggestion of death, treachery, and violence. In summation, Greene's thematic usage of good and evil is supported by the characters' confrontations with abandonment, despair, and loneliness.
Chapter IV

THE THEMATIC USAGE OF GOOD AND EVIL IN
THE HEART OF THE MATTER

Greene's thematic usage of good and evil can be found in his novel *The Heart of the Matter*. Major Scobie, the central character in this novel, has the potentiality of either damnation or salvation. By having this choice, Scobie exemplifies both good and evil in his character; and he also comes into contact with people who reveal physical evil, punitive evil, and sin and a world of punitive evil. Thus, Greene's novel *The Heart of the Matter* is worthy of study in terms of his thematic usage of good and evil.

Literary critics who have studied Greene's *The Heart of the Matter* have disagreed on the religious issues arising from the suicide of the hero, Major Scobie. As a result of this disagreement among critics, Greene has been accused of being everything from a Manichaean to an Existentialist. However, in searching for Greene's personal philosophy or religious belief, the critics have failed to realize that in this novel Greene creates an experience of life that is representative of a human condition not of a religious bias. Greene's statement to Elizabeth Bowen reinforces the above idea because he stated that literature represents a personal morality and that the morality of one individual is seldom
identical to the morality of the group to which he belongs. 107

Thus, in discussing The Heart of the Matter one should consider how Greene uses the religious theme, not why he uses it. Hence, the problem of whether or not Major Scobie is saved according to Catholic doctrine is a minor consideration since the novel presents a personal moral—Scobie's moral.

The Heart of the Matter reveals Graham Greene's thematic usage of good and evil in his novels. Moral good, punitive evil, and sin are all exemplified in Major Scobie. The world in which Scobie lives is one characterized by the presence of physical and punitive evil and most of the people living in this world are evil. While Scobie's wife, Louise, exemplifies moral good, physical evil, and punitive evil, his lover Helen Rolt is characterized by physical evil and sin. Yusef, the only person who appears to be Scobie's friend, is presented as a devil-like character and exemplifies sin. In like manner, Wilson demonstrates punitive evil and sin. Thus, once more the reader becomes aware of the usage of good and evil in Graham Greene's novels.

A.A. DeVitis makes the following statement concerning the conflict in The Heart of the Matter:

Scobie's struggle with himself and with the God of the Catholic Church forms the basis of the conflict: Scobie's pity for suffering humanity forces him to suicide, the sin of despair. And according to the Church, this is damnation. 108

107 DeVitis, Graham Greene, p. 97.

108 Ibid., p. 98.
In this statement, DeVitis uses two key words which relate to Greene's thematic usage of good and evil in his novels—sin and despair. In committing suicide, Scobie sins because he willingly turns from good and selects evil. Thus, sin results in making him evil.

In using the word despair, DeVitis reinforces Greene's usage of this word throughout his novels. Scobie feels that there is no hope for humanity:

Despair is the price one pays for setting oneself an impossible aim. It is, one is told, the unforgivable sin, but it is a sin the corrupt or evil man never practices. He always has hope. He never reaches the freezing point of knowing absolute failure. Only the man of good will carries in his heart this capacity for damnation. 109

Thus, an interesting twist concerning despair and evil is presented by Scobie. Instead of viewing a man who is hopeless as being evil, Scobie sees this man as being good. He believes that the evil man always has some kind of hope and never experiences utter failure, while the good man is the one who can see and pity the true condition of humanity.

Scobie's hypersensitivity to the sufferings of others and his excessive pity leads him to commit suicide. Scobie has no ordinary vices, but his pity leads him into defection of duty, into sacrilege, and finally into suicide. Scobie's pity, however, has limitations because he can feel

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pity only for those who lack beauty or charm or competence. Scobie breaks security regulations and allows a Portuguese ship captain to communicate with his daughter due to the very ugliness of the captain and due to the fact that he was a Catholic. He pities and loves his wife because of her inability to be graceful. At the same time, Scobie is led into adultery as a result of the unattractiveness of a young girl shipwrecked near his port. The conflict comes out in the open when Scobie's wife asks him to go to communion with her after she has heard gossip concerning his affair. As a result, Scobie takes communion in a state of mortal sin because he does not resolve to cease to be the girl's lover since he is afraid of losing her to a R.A.F. pilot. Thus, whatever Scobie does in the future will bring suffering upon one or the other of the two women. Hence, Scobie commits suicide and tries to make it look like an attack of angina pectoris.

Scobie's pity reaches unnatural proportions. In commenting upon this exaggerated pity, Richard J. Voorhees remarks:

He has reached the point where he feels a "premonitory" sense of guilt for things he cannot even foresee. And this pity goes beyond human beings to include God in its perverse embrace ("he thought with love, even God is a failure"). As if this were not enough, Scobie looks into the skies and wonders whether, if one knew all of the facts, one would have to feel sorry for the planets. 110

110 Voorhees, p. 394.
Scobie may be regarded as a sentimental or neurotic monster by unsympathetic readers or as a hopeless sinner by orthodox Catholics. However, Greene has a different point of view. When Mrs. Scobie tells the priest that her husband had damned himself, Father Rank furiously replies:

"For goodness' sake, Mrs. Scobie, don't imagine you—or I—know a thing about God's mercy." 111

Apparently Greene considers that Scobie has a good chance of being a saint in God's eyes, instead of a sinner. 112 Thus, as in Brighton Rock and The Power and the Glory, Greene emphasizes salvation not damnation.

The mood of despair, decay, and death is established in this novel. Graham Martin, discussing The Heart of the Matter in terms of its mood and point of view, views it as Greene's most successful novel. Martin comments:

Scobie's experience hovers in a kind of no-place between the condition of personal nightmare, subdued only because he feels he has chosen it; and that of a general waste land in which, though they do not know it so thoroughly as Scobie, all human beings share. 113

Evidence can be found in Greene's novel which supports Martin's comment. For example:

112 Voorhees, pp. 393-95.
Why, he wondered, swerving the car to avoid a dead pye-dog, do I love this place so much? Is it because here human nature hasn't had time to disguise itself? Nobody here could even talk about a heaven on earth. Heaven remained rigidly in its proper place on the other side of death, and on this side flourished the injustices, the cruelties, the meannesses, that elsewhere people so cleverly hushed up. Here you could love human beings nearly as God loved them, knowing the worst: you didn't love a pose, a pretty dress, a sentiment artfully assumed. 114

By using the word here, Greene emphasizes reality and at the same time establishes a mood of death by the references to the dead pye-dog. The following description of the police-station reinforces this mood of decay, despair, and death:

In the dark narrow passage, behind, in the charge-room and the cells, Scobie could always detect the odour of human meanness and injustice—it was the smell of a zoo, of sawdust, excrement, ammonia, and lack of liberty. The place was scrubbed daily, but you could never eliminate the smell. Prisoners and policemen carried it in their clothing like a cigarette smoke. 115

Louise, Scobie's wife helps to establish this mood:

He saw the fist open and close, the damp inefficient powder, lying like snow in the ridges of the knuckles. . . . He lifted the moist hand and kissed the palm: he was bound by the pathos of her unattractiveness. 116

The characters establish this mood of decay, despair, and death and the point of view is Scobie's. Therefore, the descriptions

114 Greene, The Heart of the Matter, p. 32.
115 Ibid., p. 8.
116 Ibid., p. 23.
of the police-station and Louis support Scobie's belief that people cannot even talk about heaven in West Africa. The environment here is so full of evil that the faint suggestion of hope cannot even flicker. Thus, the suggestion of physical and punitive evil in Scobie's world is illustrated by passages like those cited throughout the beginning of Greene's novel. These passages help to establish the mood of despair, decay, and death.

For Major Scobie, pity is the keynote of human existence and the imagery of the novel corresponds to the intensity of this pity. Thus, a mood is created by the imagery of the novel. An overwhelming sense of decay is developed by references to rusty handcuffs, broken rosaries, swollen pye-dogs, joints of meat and cannon fodder. DeVitis comments the following:

The broken rosary and the rusty handcuffs become symbolic of divine justice opposing human justice. Scobie stands in relationship to his sphere as God does to His.

Thus, Greene pictures a vulture hovering over Scobie, implying the terror of life and the remoteness of death:

Couldn't the test of man have been carried out in fewer years? Couldn't we have committed our first major sin at seven, have ruined ourselves for love or hate at ten, have clutched at redemption on a fifteen-year-old death bed?

Hence, the references to decay and the picture of the vulture

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117 Ford, pp. 404-09.
118 DeVitis, Graham Greene, p. 98.
119 Greene, The Heart of the Matter, p. 52
suggest the presence of punitive evil in Scobie's world. The objects in this world are not presented as natural ones; they are distorted. The vulture is a symbol of evil and implies the existence of physical evil in West Africa.

This suggestion of punitive evil existing in Scobie's world is reinforced by his feelings. Scobie feels that no one can find happiness in this world:

> What an absurd thing it was to expect happiness in a world so full of misery. He had cut down his own needs to a minimum, photographs were put away in drawers, the dead were put out of mind: a razor strop, a pair of rusty handcuffs for decoration; but one still has one's eyes, he thought, one's ears. Point me out the happy man and I will point out either egotism, selfishness, evil— or else an absolute ignorance.\(^{120}\)

This inability of man to find happiness in the world deprives him of a due good or freedom. Thus, punitive evil is suggested by the absence of happiness.

The Heart of the Matter is the story of Scobie's lapse into loneliness away from men and this loneliness results in punitive evil. After his wife Louise departs, Scobie returns to his home and immediately begins to note his condition of being alone:

> He let himself into the empty house—he had forgotten the deep tones of silence. Many a time he had come in late, after Louise was asleep, but there had never been quite this quality of security and impregnability in the silence: his ears had listened for, even though they could not catch, the faint rustle of another

\(^{120}\) Ibid., p. 129.
person's breath, the tiny movement. Now there was nothing to hear for... He was indeed alone. 121

Those persons whom Scobie regarded as friends and could trust disappear during the course of the novel. Kai Laitinen comments:

Louise is lost, Helen proves to be weak, and eventually even the priest, Father Rank, and the servant Ali betray the hopes placed on them. 122

Thus, the only person who appears to remain as a friend is the two-faced Yusef, who continually tempts Scobie. It is Yusef's action that has caused this huge gap in Scobie's human relationships and has resulted in his loneliness. 123

By being deprived of companionship and happiness as a result of his loneliness, Scobie's life exemplifies punitive evil.

Scobie once again reveals punitive evil in his searching for peace. Greene records the following scene between Scobie and his wife:

"That's what I say," she said. "If I go away, you'll have your peace.
"You haven't any conception," he accused her angrily, "of what peace means." It was as if she had spoken slightingly of a woman he loved. For he dreamed of peace by day and night. Once in sleep it had appeared to him as the great glowing shoulder of the moon heaving across his window like an iceberg, arctic and destructive in the moment before the world was struck: by day he tried to win a few moments of

121 Ibid., p. 105.
123 Ibid.
its company, crouched under the rustling handcuffs in the locked office, reading the reports from the sub-stations. Peace seemed to him the most beautiful word in the language: My peace I give you, my peace I leave with you: O Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, grant us thy peace. In the Mass he pressed his fingers against his eyes to keep the tears of longing in. 124

Louise recognizes Scobie's desire for peace and tells him that upon her leaving he will receive his peace. Hence, her prediction is correct because Scobie thinks the following concerning Louise's departure from West Africa:

Next day they went to Mass together early. Kneeling together at the Communion rail they seemed to claim that this was not separation. He thought: I've prayed for peace and now I'm getting it. It's terrible the way prayer is answered. It had better be good, I've paid a high enough price for it. As they walked back he asked anxiously, "You are happy?"
"Yes, Ticki, and you?"
"I'm happy as long as you are happy." 125

However, Scobie's peace is only temporary. As soon as Helen enters Scobie's life, his peaceful nature is once more interrupted by a woman. After learning that Helen did not receive his note, Scobie meditates the following:

... it wasn't his daily bread that he wanted, but so much more. He wanted happiness for others and solitude and peace for himself. "I don't want to plan any more," he said suddenly aloud. "They wouldn't need me if I were dead. No one needs the dead. The dead can be forgotten. O God, give me death before I give them unhappiness." 126

125 Ibid., p. 100. 126 Ibid., p. 206.
Thus, Scobie is characterized by his desire for peace.

Louise, Scobie's wife, represents physical evil. She is not an attractive person. While looking at his sleeping wife, Scobie describes her as follows:

When he found her in the bedroom under the mosquito net she reminded him of a dog or a cat, she was so completely "out". Her hair was matted, her eyes closed... Her face had the yellow-ivory tinge of atabrine: her hair which had once been the colour of bottled honey, was dark and stringy with sweat. These were the times of ugliness when he loved her, when pity and responsibility reached the intensity of a passion. 127

Scobie's pity is aroused due to his wife's lack of beauty. Thus, the presence of physical evil can be seen in Louise due to this privation.

Louise exemplifies punitive evil due to her unhappiness because she is deprived of the right to be content and to enjoy life. Also, the presence of moral good in Scobie must be noted since he continually tries to make her happy. Louise wants to leave West Africa and Scobie is aware of her dissatisfaction there:

The less he needed Louise the more conscious he became of his responsibility for her happiness. When he called her name he was crying like Canute against a tide—the tide of her melancholy, dissatisfaction and disappointment. 128

Even though Scobie has lost his love for Louise after their daughter's death, he feels obligated to make Louise as happy as possible:

127 Ibid., pp. 15-16. 128 Ibid., p. 15.
No man could guarantee love for ever, but he had sworn fourteen years ago, at Ealing, silently, during the horrible little elegant ceremony among the lace and candles, that he would at least always see to it that she was happy. 129

Thus, Scobie represents moral good by trying to please Louise. In fact, it is his attempt to make her happy that connects him with Yusef and results in his eventual lapse into loneliness and his suicide.

Greene suggests only one outstandingly good quality in Louise, Scobie's wife. This is her love for Scobie:

It occurred to him as it hadn't, for years, that she loved him: poor dear, she loved him: she was someone of human stature with her own sense of responsibility, not simply the object of his care and responsibility. 130

In fact, Louise returns to West Africa, the place she hates, because of her love for and devotion to Scobie. This love for Scobie represents moral good in Louise because she does her duty as a wife without anticipating a reward.

Scobie's unhappiness is brought about by his being married:

"Yes," she said, "I know you aren't happy either. Without me you'll have peace."

This was what he always left out of account—the accuracy of her observation. He had nearly everything, and all he needed was peace. Everything meant work, the daily regular routine in the little bare office, the changes of seasons in a place he loved. How often he had been pitied for the austerity of the work, the bareness of the rewards. But Louise knew him better than that. If he had been young again this was the life he would have again chosen to live: only

129 Ibid., p. 59. 130 Ibid., p. 97.
this time he would not have expected any other person to share it with him. 131

Scobie enjoys his work in West Africa and wants to remain there; however, his wife is constantly nagging him about leaving. As a result, he becomes unhappy and disillusioned about his marriage. Hence, the presence of punitive evil can be found in Scobie due to his unhappiness.

Punitive evil is once more exemplified in Scobie when he goes to confession:

He felt like a spectator—one of those many people round the Cross over whom the gaze of Christ must have passed seeking the face of a friend or an enemy. 132

In feeling that God does not care for him, Scobie is deprived of the right to believe in God's infinite love for all mankind. Hence, punitive evil is detected in his character.

Yusef represents moral evil in The Heart of the Matter. He is described in the following manner:

... the light from Scobie's car lit up the large pasty face, the lick of his white hair falling over the forehead, just touched the beginning of the huge thighs in their tight white drill. Yusef's shirt was open at the neck and tendrils of black breast-hair coiled around the buttons.

"Can I help you?" Scobie unwillingly asked and Yusef opened his eyes: the gold teeth fitted by his brother, the dentist, flashed instantaneously like a torch. 133

This description is suggestive of a devil-like character and the fact that Scobie first encounters him late at night reinforces the evil aspect of Yusef. Scobie goes on further

131 Ibid., p. 60. 132 Ibid., p. 163. 133 Ibid., p. 29.
to comment:

If Fellowes drives by now, what a story he will have for the Secretariat in the morning, Scobie thought. The Deputy Commissioner meeting Yusef, the storekeeper, clandestinely at night. To give help to a Syrian was only a degree less dangerous than to receive help. 134

Thus, the suggestion is made that Scobie may eventually sell himself to the devil--Yusef--and this is what does happen. When Scobie is unable to borrow money from the bank, he obtains the money from Yusef who is believed to be a diamond smuggler by Wilson, a British agent. Later after Scobie meets and falls in love with Helen Rolt, he writes Helen a note:

I love you more than myself, more than my wife, more than God I think. Please keep this letter. Don't burn it. When you are angry with me, read it. I am trying very hard to tell the truth. I want more than anything in the world to make you happy. 135

Unfortunately, Helen never receives the note since it falls into Yusef's hands. Thus, Yusef uses the note to blackmail Scobie into smuggling diamonds for him. Hence, moral evil in the form of sin can be seen in Yusef. Yusef operates an illegal business and places Scobie in such an awkward position that he chooses to do illegal transactions also:

He couldn't feel any hatred of the man. He had trapped Yusef as consciously and as effectively as Yusef had trapped him. The marriage had been made by both of them. 136

134 Ibid., p. 29.  
135 Ibid., p. 196.  
136 Ibid., p. 159.
Yusef willingly turns away from good and chooses to do evil; therefore, sin is exemplified in him. Helen Rolt illustrates both physical evil and moral evil. She enters Scobie's life as the result of being torpedoed and lost at sea for forty days and nights. The presence of physical evil in Helen can be detected in the first description of her:

The face was ugly with exhaustion: the skin looked as though it were about to crack over the cheekbones: only the absence of lines showed that it was a young face. . . . Her arms as thin as a child's lay outside the blanket and her fingers clasped a book firmly. Scobie could see the wedding-ring loose on her dried-up finger. 137

The existence of this evil is reinforced by Scobie's observation when he meets Helen again at the Nissen hut:

. . . the young worn-out face, with the hair gone dead . . . The pyjamas she was wearing were too large for her: the body was lost in them: they fell in ugly folds. He looked to see whether the ring was still loose upon her finger, but it had gone altogether. 138

Helen's ugliness is what attracts Scobie and causes him to love her. However, he soon realizes that his love for Helen is just another facet of his pity:

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. 139

Thus, Scobie realizes that Helen is just like his wife in that both women lack beauty and charm. Hence, the presence

137Ibid., p. 125. 138Ibid., pp. 142-43.
139Ibid., p. 192.
of physical evil can be detected in both Helen and Louise.

Moral evil is also exemplified in Helen. While Scobie and Helen have an affair, she is aware of the fact that Scobie is married. However, Helen does not care if the local people know about her relationship with Scobie; in fact, she delights in giving Scobie pain concerning this matter:

"I'm trying to protect you."
"I don't care a bloody damn if people talk." He recognized the hard swearing of the netball team.
He said, "If they talked enough, my dear, this would come to an end."
"You are not protecting me. You are protecting your wife."
"It comes to the same thing."
"Oh," she said, "to couple me with--that woman." He couldn't prevent the wince that betrayed him. He had underrated her power of giving pain. He could see how she had spotted her success; he had delivered himself into her hands. Now she would always know how to inflict the sharpest stab. She was like a child with a pair of dividers who knows her power to injure. You could never trust a child not to use her advantage. 140

By willingly having an affair with a married man, Helen has turned from good to evil and has sinned as a result. It must also be noted that Helen not only sins, but she leads Scobie into sin with her.

As a result of his affair with Helen and his inability to repent of it, Scobie decides to destroy himself in order to keep from hurting Louise and Helen. He reasons that he will stop crucifying God if he kills himself and it is God

140 Ibid., p. 193.
he loves above all things:

... O God, I am the only guilty one because I've known the answers all the time. 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 blood-stream. 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. 141

Scobie decides to deprive himself of God and to deprive God of himself. A voice tempts Scobie to virtue:

You say you love me, and yet you'll do this to me—rob me of you for ever. I made you with love. I've wept your tears. I've saved you from more than you will ever know; I planted in you this longing for peace only so that one day I could satisfy your longing and watch your happiness. And now you push me away, you put me out of your reach. 142

However, Scobie rejects the voice and replies:

No, I don't trust you. I love you, but I've never trusted you. If you made me, you made this feeling of responsibility that I've always carried about like a sack of bricks. 143

Scobie's sin is that he prefers to trust himself instead of God. Scobie's faith is love and pity is its image and because of this fact he is unable to comprehend the mercy of God. In drinking the narcotic, Scobie is aware of his conscious choice of damnation. 144 Thus, Scobie sins by

141 Ibid., p. 289    142 Ibid.    143 Ibid., p. 290
144 DeVitis, Graham Greene, pp. 100-01.
willingly turning from good and exemplifies moral evil.

Father Rank gives hope for Scobie's soul even though he commits suicide. Father Rank remarks to Louise:

"The Church knows all the rules. But it doesn't know what goes on in a single human heart." 145

Louise comments to the priest that Scobie has never loved anyone but God and the reader remembers how Scobie has remarked about this fact also. Thus, one is left with the hope that Scobie will be saved even though he commits the greatest sin--the sin of despair.

Scobie is presented by Greene as a tragic hero. R.W.B. Lewis comments the following concerning the tragic aspect of Scobie:

He has the profile of a genuine tragic hero. He is presented as a good man, rather better than most, with an inviolable habit of justice irritating to some of his colleagues... He is an able man and within limits a forceful one; and he is a strong Catholic with that special religious intensity that only Greene's Catholics... betray. And he has a fatal flaw: but it is not arrogance or any moral form of pride; Scobie calls down ruin on himself, plainly and articulately, but not through hybris. His flaw is an excess of the quality Greene calls pity—an inability to watch disappointment or suffering in others. 146

Scobie harms those who he longs to help or even to save and his trouble begins when he attempts to alleviate his wife's disappointment. Thus, Lewis' statement substantiates the presence of both good and evil in Scobie.

In discussing the character Wilson, the reader detects the presence of punitive evil in him. He, like Scobie, is marked by his loneliness:

He was alone on the balcony except for one bearded Indian in a turban who had already tried to tell his fortune . . . He felt almost intolerably lonely. 147

Greene even describes Wilson in terms which convey this feeling of being alone:

He wanted passionately to be indistinguishable on the surface from other men: he wore his moustache like a club tie—it was his highest common factor: but his eyes betrayed him: brown dog's eyes, a setter's eyes, pointing mournfully towards Bond Street. 148

Thus, Wilson's loneliness can even be detected in his eyes.

Not only is punitive evil found in Wilson, but also sin is detected. Wilson lies to people and intentionally deceives them. After getting his poem in the Downhamian, he had planned to send a copy of it to Louise and to tell her it had been published in a different source:

What madness had induced him to send that poem to the Downhamian? But it wasn't madness: he had long since become incapable of anything so honest of madness; he was one of those condemned in childhood to complexity. He knew what he had intended to do: to cut the poem out with no indication of its source and to send it to Louise. It wasn't quite her sort of poem, he knew, but surely, he had argued, she would be impressed to some extent by the mere fact that the poem was in print. If she asked him where it had appeared, it would be easy to invent some convincing coterie name. . . . It was as if his profession were slowly absorbing his whole life, just as school had done. His profession was to lie, to have the

147 Greene, The Heart of the Matter, p. 3.
148 Ibid., p. 4.
quick story ready, never to give himself away, and his private life was taking the same pattern. He lay on his back in a nausea of self-disgust. 149

By lying to Louise, Wilson hopes to gain her love. Wilson's lying is an intentional turning away from good to evil and represents sin.

Sin is also detected in the character of Wilson in another way. Wilson believes that he is in love with Louise, and he tells her about Scobie's affair with Helen Rolt. In telling Louise this, he hopes to gain her love and affection. By spying on Scobie and by deliberately trying to destroy Scobie and Louise's marriage, Wilson sins. He could have chosen to love an unmarried woman and to remain silent about Scobie's affair, but instead he turns from good and does evil.

Greene's novel The Heart of the Matter has been studied in terms of his thematic usage of good and evil. It may be concluded by the evidence presented that Greene's usage of these terms corresponds with the Catholic Church's conception of good and evil.

149 Ibid., pp. 181-82.
Chapter V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The hypothesis of this study is that the themes of good and evil which are present in Graham Greene's novels Brighton Rock, The Power and the Glory, and The Heart of the Matter correspond to the Catholic Church's conception of good and evil. An analysis of Greene's novels and critical sources reveals that Greene does present his vision of life, not someone else's or some institutions, in his writing. However, his ideas do correspond closely to those of Catholicism and his acceptance of Catholic doctrines has surfaced in his novels.

Greene presents man as a combination of both good and evil. However, in order to distinguish the good man from the evil one, Greene emphasizes the man's interactions. By depicting the evil nature of man, he arouses a sense of sin within the reader and also makes the reader aware of the fact that even the most sinful man can receive salvation due to God's infinite love. Thus, the reader concludes that Greene emphasizes salvation not damnation.

However, the person who receives salvation does not do so by observing the rules and regulations of the Church. Salvation does not come to an individual by prayer, fasting, and alms giving. Grace is given to the sinner only after he...
has recognized his sinful nature and learned to love God in his own curious, separate, and secret way.

In order to convey evil, Greene emphasizes a privation of due good in things themselves, a deprivation of a person's freedom or his rights, and a wilful turning away from good. Also, the ideas of despair, abandonment, and loneliness which reinforce the thematic usage of evil are presented by descriptions of the characters and environmental settings. Likewise, good is illustrated by the characters either searching for happiness or doing their duty without expecting reward.

This presentation of good and evil seems to support the hypothesis that Graham Greene's thematic usage of good and evil corresponds to the Catholic Church's conception of them. In addition, the critical works support this hypothesis. Thus, Greene's acceptance of the Catholic view of good and evil is evident in his novels. It must be realized that Greene is a Catholic novelist; however, his treatment of the themes of good and evil is severely objective. This realization strengthens the fact that Greene is a writer, not a theologian. Hence, the conclusion can be drawn that Greene's vision of life has been affected by the Catholic Church's conception of good and evil.
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