

## **I. Humanistic Catholicism of Graham Greene**

The present dissertation explores humanistic Catholicism of Graham Greene in *The Power and the Glory*, *The End of the Affair* and *A Burnt-out Case* through careful and close analysis of setting, atmosphere and characters. This is an attempt to comment upon Greene's catholic opinions and beliefs. In doing so, this research work examines various themes inherent in his novels and finally shows how these themes are connected with humanist Catholicism.

Though Greene's writings are brimmed with the theme of Catholicism, his writings have much more to say about life, suffering, sin and humanity. This paper argues that Greene is not advocating the traditional catholic dogmas of sin, suffering and damnation. It is undoubtedly clear that he shows devotion towards God and religion. But he gives different meaning to life, sin, suffering and damnation through his redefined religious faith where human are at the centre. He promotes humanistic Catholicism through his novels. Though there are contradictions and paradoxes in his ideas, which help us in understanding his faith in God, religion and more than anything else his unshakable belief that spirituality is the essence of life.

The present dissertation does not use any specific grounded theory to explore and analyze the primary texts of the research. Rather it mainly focuses on technical aspects of the texts like setting, atmosphere and characterization to prove its hypothesis. And, it is done through the close analysis and interpretation of these elements.

Greene was born on October 2, 1904. He was the fourth child of Charles Henry Greene and his wife Marion Raymond Greene. His father C.H. Greene was the head master of an English Public School at Berkhamsted. He was educated at this school until he went up to Balliol College Oxford. After finishing his studies he found work as a journalist and sub-editor in the Nottingham Journal. He did not live and work in

Nottingham for a long time, he lived there only about four months. However, it was a valuable practice for him and a good starting point for the work in London newspaper 'The Times'. He married Vivien in October 1927. After his marriage, he became friendly with a Roman Catholic Priest, Father Trollope and after three months of discussion, he got diverted to Roman Catholicism in February 1926. His wife helped him greatly in becoming a catholic writer. However, due to his infidelities, his relation with his wife was not very warm and intimate for long. They lived separated for long time but remained married throughout their life. He lived the last years of his life in Vevey, Lake Geneva, in Switzerland. He had ceased going to mass and confession in the 1950s, but in his final years began to receive the sacraments again from Father Leopoldo Durán, a Spanish priest, who became a friend. Graham Greene died in 1991 at the age of 86 of leukemia and was buried in Corseaux cemetery.

Greene was given a conventional middle class and Anglican upbringing in the confines of his father's school, which he attended as a pupil. Many people believe that he had a miserable and troubled childhood at his father's school which resulted into a psychic disorder. Sherry in his book *Life of Graham Greene* states that his time as a boarder at St John's was traumatic for him, but also seminal for his future as a writer. He returns to it again and again in his work (45). He made several attempts to run away from there but did not succeed. Moreover, he also tried to commit suicide and thus he was taken to psychotherapist. His traumatic childhood and conversion to Catholicism brought a profound influence on Greene's thought and his writings. Greene's conversion to Catholicism may be attributed to some sort of dissatisfaction with life. However, it is only assumed that he sought spiritual solace in Catholic faith. Though he was always reluctant to talk about his conversion, there is seen a deep imprint of Catholic faith in his writings.

Another important factor that helped Greene to become a successful writer was his interest in travelling. As a journalist and correspondent Greene travelled into countries of political disorders. Greene suffered as mentioned above from manic-depression and therefore travelling was a kind of escape for him. He often felt boredom and despair and therefore searched for exceptional experiences and inspiration for his work in countries with difficult political situation. Greene in *Ways of Escape* stresses that writing or travel was a way of escape from the everyday routine, the sense of failure, the fear of future (39). Throughout his life Greene visited many third world countries in Asia and Africa and was also interested in the political situation in Latin America. The experiences acquired by travelling became valuable source for his writing.

Greene is one of the foremost post-war novelists who gave English novel the spiritual dimension. Greene has been considered a modern spiritual writer. His didacticism led him to be a 'Catholic Novelist'. His obsession is pre-dominantly religious. But Greene's modern novels lost religious values. Greene is the writer of the profound religious orientation both in his so-called Catholic novels and his other works which is pervaded by an intense religious feeling. Adventure and suspense are constant elements in his novels and many of his books have been made into successful films as well. Greene was nominated for the Nobel Prize for Literature several times. His reputation as a novelist has been on the increase since the 1930's when his novels began to appear. He merged psychology with history, conventionalism, neo-realism, and religion and theology. He is a widely read author, both at home and abroad. Evil, sin, suffering and redemption are the central conceptions of Christian theology. In his novels these themes are predominant.

He started his literary journey in the year 1929 and by the 1958 he had already earned the name and fame as a prominent British novelist and was probably the best known British novelist. He was one of the few, who had managed to combine critical and popular success over a long career. His first novels were the following: *The Man Within* (1929), *Stamboul Train* (1932), *A Gun for Sale* (1936), *The Confidential Agent* (1939), *The Ministry of Fear* (1943), *Brighton Rock* (1938), *The Heart of the Matter* (1948), *The End of the Affair* (1951), and *The Power and the Glory* (1940). During World War II, he also worked for the British Foreign Office and was stationed for a while at Freetown, Sierra Leone. He was recruited into the Secret Service in 1941. As a reporter, he visited many countries. Greene also visited Poland (Lublin) in 1955. Later on, especially in the 1980s, he was a careful observer of the Polish aspirations for political freedom and self-government.

The second part of his novels falls on the post-war years. In this period we find such works as: *The Quiet American* (1956), *A Burnt-Out Case* (1961), *Our Man in Havana* (1958), *The Comedians* (1966), and last four novels: *The Honorary Consul* (1973), *The Human Factor* (1978), *Monsignor Quixote* (1982), and *The Tenth Man* (1985). Furthermore, Greene published several collections of short stories, plays and essays.

Some of these novels had domestic settings and focused on personal relationships or matters of religion, but many were set abroad and engaged seriously with the politics of decolonization. For example, Greene's *The Quiet American* is set in Vietnam while the *The Comedians* exposes François Duvalier's regime in Haiti during 1960s. Greene was a resolute supporter of radical and anti-colonial movements: through his personal relationship with Omar Torrijos, the president of Panama, he became closely involved in the return of the Panama Canal to Panama, a

process begun in 1977 though not completed until 1999. He was also a firm supporter of the Cuban Revolution; his support for Cuban Revolution is seen in the two essays he wrote in 1963 and 1966 for the archconservative British newspaper, The Daily Telegraph, and in his admiring 1966 portrait of Fidel Castro.

*The Power and the Glory*, the struggle between secular and religious values takes place against a violent background. During the visit to Mexico in 1938 to research a report commissioned by the Catholic Church on religious persecution under the new revolutionary socialist regime, Greene discovered a situation in which this struggle had literally become a matter of life and death. The experience of Mexico affected Greene profoundly. Greene realized that it is his duty as a novelist to be a thorn in the side of Roman Catholic as well as social and political orthodoxy and the questioner of the complacent who accepted a religious dogma and political ideology blindly in order to awaken the essential mystery of life.

Although his writing is painted with the color of Catholicism, he does not seem to teach or advocate orthodox catholic dogmas and beliefs. Rather he shows the human aspect of Catholicism — puts human at the centre. He presents himself as different catholic writer. Being catholic writer has two different directions. Gianina Daniela Sab u and St ncu a Ramona Dima-Laza in their article in the International Journal of Social Science and Humanity (2012) write:

The very attempt to define the concept of Catholic author takes on different meanings as it seems to approach two kinds of direction. On one hand, we have classic literary Catholic writing which illustrates doctrines of Catholic faith, while on the other we have a new kind of Catholic writing which is the personal vision of human life. Although these Catholic writings draw on elements of Christian doctrine their

purpose is rather artistic than apologetic. They do not paint an idealized picture of what a man should be rather their role is to show life through the eyes of their characters' spiritual make-up. Thus, most of the novelists, including Greene, are those belonging to the second category which refuses to separate the sacred from the secular. (438)

Greene does not fall in the category of classic literary catholic writers as we see that his writings not merely talk about the doctrines of Catholicism. Greene shows the personal vision of human life. He simply does not portray the ideal picture of human life. In most of his novels what we see is human suffering, evil and sin.

Commenting on Greene's life and his views, Pico Iyer says:

He (Graham Greene) read theology constantly and always refers to God, but it's God he doesn't always claim to know and often doesn't even claim to believe in. He called himself a Catholic agnostic and often said that he had faith (the emotional pull that for many lies at the heart of religion) but not the belief (the rational conviction). He always placed kindness before anything, and many of his novels are illustrations of how anyone can act compassionately and with understanding, even if faith is flagging. (Herlinger, 10)

He does not believe in Catholicism, but why? This is obvious question that comes to anyone's mind who read his novels. Iyer further reveals in his interview, "Greene did famously convert to Catholicism in his early twenties in order to marry his devout wife Vivien, but he (Iyer) would say he took the church into his life as he took his wife: both became frequent inspiration but also frequent antagonists, whom he deserted and treated badly" (Herlinger, 11). Greene was not a catholic by birth, he was a converted catholic and thus it is not difficult for us to guess that he had suspicious

corner in his heart for Catholicism. With the increasing gap with his wife, his belief in catholic also started fading way. Hence, in his later part of the literary carrier he turned more political than religious.

Another critic Mark Bosco in his book *Graham Greene's Catholic Imagination* writes:

Catholicism is not the very fabric of many of these texts; it is always a thread that helps to bind his literary preoccupations into a recognizable pattern. For Greene Catholicism serves to raise the standards, heighten the awareness of the fallen sense of the world, and challenges the characters to respond to extreme situations in full knowledge of what is at stake (3-4).

In his novel, Catholicism is just like a lens to look at the human life. It provides a perspective to view life. In the novels like *The Power and Glory* and *The End of the Affair* we can see Greene's preoccupation with Catholicism. It is used to see the world as a fallen state. Stefanie Joob in her essay *Politics and Commitment in Graham Greene's Writing* says:

Greene maintains that he does not use literature to any political or religious ends. Just the way he happens to be a Catholic who writes, his books happen to be political. Greene states not to write in order to change anything. He neither intends to convert his readers to Catholicism nor to any political ideology (5).

Many critics have given him the title of catholic writer but he himself denies the fact that he has any serious intentions of promoting Catholicism or any particular political ideology. In his book *Ways of Escape* he called himself "a writer who happens to be Catholic". Critics often study his life closely and relate his life history with his literary

work. "Greenland" a term given to the fictional world of Graham Greene depicts the suffering sin and evil present in human world. Socio-political and religious turmoil is often presented in a very dramatic way. It is almost impossible to figure out the religious and political stance of Graham Greene from his novels. Some Critics are of the view that he is a catholic writer by heart but some others see contradiction and ambivalence in his religio-political stance. Whatever be the case, it is an agreed upon fact that Graham Greene had very complex belief and views on Catholicism and politics.

Graham Green's novel *The Power and Glory* was first published in the United States in 1940 under the title *The Laybrinthine Ways*. This is Greene's most moving and much acclaimed novel. The novel is about a priest's struggle for survival in post-revolutionary Mexico. Since its publication many critics and scholars have analyzed it from different perspectives. David Kelly examines the characters of the novel. In his essay, he tries to show how Greene gives multi dimension to his characters. He writes, "There are several characters in the novel who, though they are rendered with precision, are also functional, revealing what it meant to be a priest in Mexico in the early to middle twentieth century" (140). In the novel characters like priest, Coral Fellows, and Pedro are two dimensional characters.

Similarly, Mark Bosco has tried to analyze the novel through Hans Urs von Balthasar's theological aesthetics. He writes:

The novel offers the reader a look into the life and death of a Mexican "whiskey Priest" probing how the form of Christ shapes his sense of self, his relationship with his world, and his ultimate destiny.

Throughout the novel Greene posits the question of how form shapes a human being's heart and mind. (35)



Mark Bosco looks at the novel from the perspective of aesthetics and shows how the whisky priest sees the 'form' through his daily experiences and how he understands himself better in an effort to escape from Lieutenant.

Moving on to the next novel *The End of the Affair* by Greene, we once again find the similar catholic theme in the novel. This novel was also successful in drawing the attention of many critics and scholars. It was published in 1951 in England and theme of Catholicism is more explicit and strong in this novel. This novel is about a woman named Sarah. The plot revolves around the adulterous affair of Sarah and Bendrix. The very year when the novel was published a critic named George Mayberry described the novel as "savage and sad, vulgar and ideal, coarse and refined, and rather accurate image of an era of cunning and glory, of cowardice and heroism, a belief and glory"(New York Times, October 28). He read the novel in binary opposition and finds the novel a unique blend of these binaries.

Another critic who comments on this novel is Richard Hauer Costa who asserts that in *The End of the Affair* the theological elements are intimately connected to the characters' human emotions (148). He finds the presence of God in the novel as a central force around which the action of the novel revolves. Critics have not only appreciated the novel for its strong thematic issues but also criticized the novel for its narrative style. One among them is Francis Wyndham who asserts that the first person narration creates too many narrow views, preventing the reader from truly gaining a perspective on a story (24). Furthermore, he concludes by saying that the book must be regarded as a stumble in Green's progress.

The last novel which I have used as my primary text for this dissertation is *The Burnt-Out Case* by Greene. The book was first published in 1960. This novel is about an architect named Query who no longer finds any meaning in art or pleasure in life

and arrives in a remote African leprosy run by nuns and priests. Robert Davis describes the novel as a "fascinating study of the relationship of suffering especially freely accepted suffering to wholeness." Furthermore, he argues that "in *A Burnt-Out Case* the balance has shifted. Greene no longer tries to make both humanity and Christianity seem as distasteful as possible (New York Times Feb19).

This research paper will have following chapter division:

- i. Humanistic Catholicism of Graham Greene
- ii. Death and Degeneration in *The Power and the Glory*
- iii. Ambiance of Divine Love and Romantic Love in *The End of the Affair*
- iv. Atmosphere of Disease and Theme of Suffering in *A Burnt-Out Case*
- v. Conclusion: Religious and Secular selves of Graham Greene

## II. Death and Degeneration in *The Power and the Glory*

*The Power and Glory* is a novel set in Tabasco, Mexico, during the time the state had decided to ban church and its practices. The state completely abolished the Catholicism blaming it for poor's oppression and suppression. Church and its people were blamed for the poor condition of the people and thus priests and the other members of the church were restricted from practising the rituals. They were compelled to live a life of a common people or else they had to leave the state.

*The Power and the Glory* is a story of a priest who struggles to save his life running away from the state authorities. In this process of escaping from the state authorities, he happens to meet many people and also comes across such incidents which really change his goal and gives him a new meaning of life. The novel has abundant themes and complex characters who cannot be apprehended in the first reading. The novel touches upon the themes of sin, degeneration, death, decay and damnation etc. the characters are very complicated — some characters do not have any names, some are multidimensional and some others are counter parts of each other.

Commenting upon Greene's purpose behind writing this novel, a Russian critic Ivasheva Valentine says:

The novel constitutes main body of his writing, and it has in common the themes that fascinate Greene—sin and salvation. By examining man's relationship to himself, society and god, Greene explores the nature of evil and the possibility of man's redemption. The novel shows how a man is forced into committing sin in social life. Greene attempts to show the possibility of redemption for the sinner. It also shows close relationship between religion and society. (118)

Valentine gives a religious touch to this novel and indirectly supporting the critics who believe that Greene is basically a catholic writer. However, there are other critics too who do agree with this line of thought and try to look into his writing from political point of view; that is to say that they give the novel a secular touch. One among such critics is Richard Hoggart. He writes:

The book has been written from a specific political point of view, he raising voice against dictatorship. This is Greene's most overtly political novel which with a bold view strikes the authority and power of the upper class system. It gives the serious blow to the oppressor and plea for freedom. (qtd. In O' Prey 98)

This particular novel of Graham Greene has been read and reread from different perspectives and the writer has been given tag in different period of time. However, this paper looks at various aspects (atmosphere, Setting and characters) of the novel in order to understand Graham Greene's Catholicism. In this section of the dissertation, I explore how the atmosphere and setting of the novel give the much needed ballast to the multiple themes of the novel (specially the themes of death and degeneration). And, how do his characters serve his discursive politics of the writer.

The novel is set in a Mexican state where Catholicism is banned. It begins with "out into the blazing Mexican sun and the bleaching dust. A few buzzards looked down from the roof with shabby indifference" (1). Blazing sun shows that everything in the place is drained of life giving source like water. And everything is in dying condition. Reference of buzzards hints towards the theme of death and decay. It creates the atmosphere of gloom and hopelessness. Buzzards are the birds that prey on dead bodies. And in the very beginning of the novel, Greene gives us the clear hint that there is hardly any living being left in the city.

Further the narrator describes the village near the capital city in following words:

There was no paving: during rain the village (it was really no more) slipped into mud. Now the ground was hard under the feet like stone. The two men walked in silence past barbers' shops and dentists': buzzards on the roof looked contended, like domestic fowls: they search under the crude dusty wings for parasites. (5)

Once the village used to be muddy but now the ground is hard like stone. It means that there is no rain for very long and it once again suggests that life in the village is draining out due to the lack of water. Through this description narrator makes the readers feel that, the place has been cursed and has been plagued. And once again we could see the description of buzzards who look quite satisfied because they have enough to feed on. Next the setting moves to nearby village of the capital city. When the priest was walking along with the child who came to call for him, he felt that "a smell of damp came up all round him; it was as if this part of the world had never been dried in the flame when the world was sent spinning off into space: it had absorbed only the mist and cloud of those awful spaces" (10). The surrounding of the place has the damp atmosphere. This dampness is caused most probably by the decay and death of the living organism. There is mist in the air. However, what has caused this decay and death is not clear in the first chapter.

In Chapter two, the setting is slightly different. When the police make their way back to the station, the place around is described in following words:

The slam plaza on the hill top was lighted with globes strung together in threes and joined by trailing overhead wires. The treasury, the presidencia, a dentist's prison— slow white colonnaded building which dated back three hundred years, and then the steep street down

— the back wall of a ruined church: whichever way you went you came ultimately to water and to river. (12)

Here, we can see the presence of police and different buildings are mentioned. One among such buildings is the ruined church. And around that church we could see water everywhere. Destruction of church is somewhere connected with the present state of the lives of the people. Readers are compelled to think that degenerating lives of the people of that place has something to do with the ruined church. Ruined church here is the symbol of lack of faith, absence of supreme power like God.

What special purpose does Greene achieve through this setting and atmosphere? There might be different possibilities. He might have done so to show that then rulers — the Red Armies, who were against Catholicism, have failed to bring happiness in people's lives. This outer atmosphere of the place does have resemblance with the state of mind of the character of the novels. Despair, gloom, and decay resemble the spiritual degradation of the people. People are physically alive but they are spiritually dead.

Moving further in the novel, we see the priest leaving the plantation of Mr and Mrs Fellows as he is at the risk of getting caught. Escaping from the authorities, he arrives in the village where he used to live before and work as a pastor. On his arrival he sees:

Half dozen huts of mud and wattle stood in a clearing: two were in ruins. A few pigs rooted round, and an old woman carried a burning ember from to fill the hut with smoke and keep mosquitoes away. Women lived in two of the huts, the pigs in another, in the last unruined hut, where maize was stored, an old man and a boy and a tribe of rats.

Again we see ruin and destruction which gives rise to very eerie and isolated atmosphere. Yet we are not given any detail about who caused all this. Once again we come across insects and animals like mosquitoes, rats and pigs. There is very less presence of humans — one old man and a boy. This description of the setting also creates the atmosphere of rottenness, dampness and gloom. Reference of the Mosquitoes has more than just literal meaning; mosquitoes can be related with sin because mosquitoes and sin both hatch out of certain conditions. Mosquitoes thrive when they get warm temperature mixed with moist soil and stagnant pool of water. Similarly, sin also gets space in human heart under certain conditions; when people lose faith in god and go after their selfish desires, it gives birth to sin. In bible James writes, “...each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin ...” (James 1:14-15). From this description of setting and atmosphere we get to know that Greene is trying hint towards the sin which people have committed and thus living in the present condition.

Wherever the priest goes he comes across the places which are dark, gloomy and deserted. One more example of this is when he takes leave from the villagers and Maria with whom he had an illegitimate relation and also had a daughter. The narrator describes the setting as:

Down a slope churned up with the hoofs of mules and ragged with tree roots there was the river—not more than two feet deep, littered with empty cans and broken bottles. Under a notice which hung on a tree reading: it is forbidden to deposit rubbish...” all the refuse of the village was collected and slid gradually down the river. When the rains came it would be washed away. He put his foot among the old tins and

rotting vegetable and reached for the case. He sighed: it had been quite a god case: one more relic of the quiet past..... soon it would be difficult to remember that life had ever been any different. (64)

Here also narrator describes the place as very polluted with rubbish and waste which once again evokes the filthy and stinky atmosphere. The particular vicinity is full of rotting vegetable. It seems as if God's fury has fallen upon this place and even vegetation has started dying or in the process of decay. This setting also supports the theme of death and degeneration. In the last line, the narrator says that it would be difficult to remember that life had ever been any different. It signifies that once the life was completely different than what it is now.

Like different insects and animals, there is the presence of flies in almost all the places that the narrator describes. The swarm of flies could be seen everywhere. Reference of flies also reinforces the theme of death and decay. One could see flies near the dead organisms or decaying organism. Even in bible there is a mention of flies. In the book Exodus, we can see following lines on flies:

For if you do not let My people go, behold, I will send swarms of flies on you and on your servants and on your people and into your houses; and the houses of the Egyptians will be full of swarms of flies, and also the ground on which they dwell. "But on that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, where My people are living, so that no swarms of flies will be there, in order that you may know that I, the Lord, am in the midst of the land. I will put a division between My people and your people. Tomorrow this sign will occur. (Exodus 8:21-31)

Above lines make it clear that god sends flies to destroy. They eat up bodies and ruin the humans and every living organism. In this novel presence of flies show that the



place is cursed by God because of the sins of the people and thus swarms of flies prey upon humans to remind them of their sins.

On the way Carmen, after six hours long journey, the priest comes to La Candelaria where he found tin roofed village, dusty streets and the buzzards sat on the roofs with their head hidden from the sun (66). Here also once again the narrator brings the reference of flies and buzzards. This doesn't end here. When the priest backtracks from Carmen and reaches to the capital city. He looks for some wine and for this he is led forward by the beggar and he comes across the place where the beetle were flocking out and covering the pavements: they popped under the feet like puffball and a sour green smell came up from the river (83).

Being caught with the wine, the priest is sent to the prison. In the prison also we see mosquitoes droning and when the priest preaches the fellow prisoners, we find him sitting silent and rigid against damp wall, with his dead feet, like leprosy under his hunches (104).

After coming out of the prison he returns to the banana plantation where he found that there is no one and the village has been deserted. On reaching the place "the priest sat down on the veranda steps. There was silence everywhere — no life around the abandoned banana station except the buzzards which had not given up hope" (116). Throughout the novel wherever the priest goes there is an atmosphere of isolation, eeriness, gloom, despair, decay and death.

However, in the chapter one of part three we see a sudden change in the setting and the atmosphere as the priest reaches moves across the border where religion is not outlawed and where few Protestants like Mr. Lehr live. The opening scene of this part is described as: the middle aged woman sat on the veranda darning socks; she wore pince-nez and she had kicked off her shoes for comfort. Mr. Lehr, her

brother, read a New York Magazine — it was three weeks old, but that didn't really matter the whole scene was like peace" (126). The atmosphere suddenly changes; it evokes the sense of peace, serenity and cleanliness. This place is free of flies, misquotes, beetles and other insects. The difference between this place and the other places described in the novel is that here religion is not seen as corrupting force and Greene makes the readers feel that in the presence of God and religion, everything comes to order and life moves in its own way.

In this state there is significant difference in surroundings as well, water here is clean, and one can breathe fresh air. When the priest asks Mrs. Lehr about whether they had to boil the water. She replies "our water is fresh and clean" (126).

Further the setting of this place is described as "the shiny magazine leaves crackled as they turned..... Pasture stretched away beyond the garden fence, undulating gently towards the next mountain range, and a tulip tree blossomed and faded daily at the gate" (126). Description of shiny magazine leaves, pasture, tulip tree blooming fill the readers with freshness, hope, positivity and joy. Even the priest's degrading health shows some improvement. We get to know about this when Miss Lehr says "you are certainly looking better, father" (126).

In this context, analysis of the setting and atmosphere leads to the hypothesis that the hidden politics of Greene is to promote and valorize Catholicism. During the time when Catholicism was outlawed in the state of Mexico, churches were burnt down and clergymen were chased away or converted into common humans by forcing them to marry. Greene through this novel tries to show how life devoid of religion passes into wilderness and loses meaning and purpose. He, in fact, shows the terrifying scene of the state where God is not respected and where people lose faith in God and become slave to their desires and commit sins.

To understand Greene's Humanistic Catholicism, now let's analyze the characters of the novel. Mr. Tench is the first character that we come across in the novel. He is a dentist who came from England and lives a life without purpose. He has left his wife and children back in England and now he has no connection with them. He even does not know about their whereabouts. This may be one of the reasons for sadness and despondence. Reason behind his sadness and frustration is not explicitly given but his frustration of life is quite evident from the line "he wasn't carried yet". This line clearly tells us that he is not dead but a degenerated self who is incapable of feeling for others. Further his disappointment in life is revealed in these lines "a faint feeling of rebellion stirred in Mr. Tench and he wrenched up a piece of the road with splattering finger nails and tossed it feebly up at them" (1). In the beginning of the novel he is found waiting to receive his ether cylinder. His character resembles the quality of ether — forgetfulness and numbness. No doubt he is a living human but he is in a way spiritually dead person. He finds no meaning in life which clearly indicates towards lack of spiritualism, faith and feelings.

However, his experience changes once he comes in touch with the whisky priest who is a complete stranger to him. When Tench opened the book, which the stranger had left behind, he was taken aback and looking at the content of the book he grew thoughtful (10). All these details in the beginning of the chapter foreshadow the further happening of the story. Greene, through this character asserts his viewpoint that man devoid of true faith is dead and frozen. And it is only with the communion with God one can find peace and meaning in life. After the communion with God through the interaction with priest and reading of the holy book, there comes a kind of regeneration in Tench and this become evident in chapter four of the first part of the

novel when he writes letter to his wife. This suggests that he has regained purpose in life and also gained human feelings to enjoy his life.

Thus, through this character readers can see how the author emphasizes on catholic sentiments and faith.

Priest is the protagonist of the novel. The entire story revolves around him. He is a very important character to understand Greene's Catholicism in the greater length. The priest in the novel is not given any name; rather he is introduced to people by his social functions. He is called by the names like stranger, whiskey priest, father, etc. He is an example of tormented soul. In the novel, he goes through a struggle on two levels — internal struggle and external struggle. He is haunted by his sinful past and tries to overcome this but at times thinks that he will not get rid of this. He says initially in the novel, "Oh, hell. I don't know what it is just this bloody land. You can't cure me of that. No one can" (1). He says this to Tench who is a doctor and this reveals that he knows no science can cure his disease which more moral than physical.

The priest, who is in the beginning of the novel misunderstood as a doctor, says "I could do no good" (8). His self doubt is reflected when he was called by a boy for his mother's help. More importantly he is aware about his degenerating self. He says "I know these people she will be more dying than I am" (9). Because of his sinful past he feels that he has lost the status of a priest and through this the author shows the contrast between spiritual dying and physical dying.

He is a priest yet seems very much like common man. We can see all the follies of a common man in him. One among them is his fear of death. This is revealed when he shows his unwillingness to listen to a dying person's confession. He is a priest yet loves to have beer and brandy which signifies that he loves to live in the

state of unconsciousness and cannot abandon pleasure. He is even unaware of time and month. He fears death yet shows unwillingness to renounce his faith. When Coral asks him to do so he says “it’s impossible. I am a priest. It’s out of my power.” (29)

Running away from the red shirts, running away from death, he happened to come in a village where he had an affair with a woman named Maria. He had one illegitimate daughter also from the same woman. This is another folly of the priest who could not have control over his lust. And it is the mortal sin he committed and this is what hunts him the most throughout the novel. In an attempt to escape his physical death he in fact regenerates his spiritual self. The kind of suffering he goes through makes him realize his shortcomings. When he happens to be in the village where he fathered a child he encounters with the villagers and Maria and he felt as if he had descended by means of his sin into the human struggle to learn other things beside despair and love.

When Villagers requested for mass and confession he felt very low and realized what he did and also felt ashamed of himself. He knew he is not worthy of such prayers and mass yet he could not run away from the place. His mortal sin, his fallen state and his self realization elevated him to the status of a priest and also agreed to say mass and listen to their confession. His human heart started beating again for love and care. Seeing his daughter whom he left years before because of his pride “he became aware of an immense load of responsibility: it was indistinguishable from love” (52). For the villager he was the only hope. They knew that if he left them, they would be safe from the red shirts but they would be deprived of any religious faith and their children would never know anything about god. For the villagers it was the priest from whom they would learn about God and if he was gone it would be as God in all this space between the sea and the mountains ceased to stop (51). Despite

all the follies and weaknesses, the villagers accepted him as the rescuer of their sins and raised him to the status of a saint.

This priest is a mouthpiece of Greene; his ideas on religion are conveyed to the readers through him. He redefines God and heaven. When the priest says mass in the village tries to make these people aware about the concept of God and heaven. He says, “I tell you that heaven is here: this is a part of heaven just as pain is a part of pleasure.....heaven would not be complete” (54). Greene through the priest tries to redefine Catholicism. He put humans at the centre and tries to justify god and religion in relation of humans. Greene also pin points the hypocrisies of so called saints who preach about goodness and devotion but they themselves are not able to get rid of lust, pleasure and desires. The whiskey priest does not give the people the false hope about heaven and perfection. He for the first time feels that he has got rid of his hypocrisies. After preaching about heaven, suffering and God, he felt an immense satisfaction that he could talk of suffering to them without hypocrisy (56). It became possible for him after he went through all these sufferings and experienced his own shortcomings and weaknesses. He felt as if God was here in the body for the first time in six years (56). From this point he goes through the process of transformation.

The result of this transformation can be seen when he was with the half caste running away from the authority. He finds the half caste suffering from fever he gives away his shirt and starts confessing “O God forgive me — I am proud, lustful, greedy man. I have loved authority too much..... they deserve a martyr to care them — not a fool like me, who loves all the wrong things” (75). He develops the virtue of a saint, i.e. sacrifice.

He committed sin, he is a coward, yet his beliefs are firm and realization of his mortal sins and human sufferings make his beliefs even stronger. In the prison when

the prisoners call him a martyr he clearly says “I don’t think martyrs are like me. He further said, “It would not be a good thing to bring mockery on the church” (102). He listens to the confessions of the villagers and he also confesses to himself that he is in the state of mortal sin. His confessions elevate him to the status of a saint. When he was doing all this, all the prisoners attentively listen to them and he also addresses them by saying children which indicate that he is gaining the status of holy men through repentance and confession. These are in fact the strong beliefs of the writer who values repentance and confession over offerings and sufferings for the sake of religion.

Whiskey priest is depicted by Greene as an epitome of faith and hope. Whoever comes in touch with this priest, they go through a change which signifies that religion and faith is the only source that can bring life in death and that can transform evil into good. After Tench, it’s the prisoners who show this transformation. They could have easily earned the reward for revealing the identity of the priest in the prison to the authorities but they did not do so saying that they didn’t want their blood money (103). A pious woman in the prison asks for hearing her confession in the prison even though she was aware about his mortal sins.

After coming out of the prison, he goes back to the banana plantation but on reaching there, he finds that everyone had left the place because of the violence inflicted by the American gangster Yankee. However he met a mother near his dying child. The child soon died and she asked for his burial near a church. The priest who was in the process of transformation agreed to do that putting his life at risk. But again we could see he has not achieved the status of a saint. He casts doubt upon his own ability because of his guilty conscience. He often show fear for death. But very soon when he was done with all the suffering and hardship, we can see a changed

priest who now does not fear snakes and other reptiles he sees them as a form of life. He comes out of a dying condition and then realizes that death is not something that one should be afraid of.

Up to this point in the novel, he is found trying to save himself by hiding his identity but after this realization, he does not hesitate to say that he is a priest and we see a birth of a true priest — a saint who doesn't fear death.

Seeing people having immense faith in Christianity and giving him true respect he even agrees to say mass for just fifty centavos. And he did not show any fear even if he knew there also he could have some risk of getting caught.

This new transformed priest is a saint in true sense. Whatever he say is in fact is the catholic philosophy of Greene. When listening to the confessions of the villagers, he says “those laws were made for man. The church doesn't except.... If you can't fast you must eat” (135). He doesn't advocate suffering at the cost of salvation.

When the priest was about to take leave from those people in Las Casas, there came the half caste who informed the priest that Yankee is in dying state and wants to confess. The priest knew that it was a trap set by the half caste for the reward yet he agreed to go to Yankee and listen to his confession (141). He treats all the humans equally. Even though Yankee was a cold blooded murder, he was ready to sacrifice his life for him. He now talks about peace, love glory and compassion but he himself could feel all that because of his guilty conscience (149).

At the end, when he is caught by the lieutenant, we see priest really confessing in front of him,

it was when he left I began to go to pieces. One thing went after another. I got careless about my duties. I began to drink. It would have



been much better, I think, if I had gone too. Because, pride was at work all the time. Not love to go.....pride was what made the angels fall.

Pride the worst thing of all. (155)

This confession has great significance in the context of the story. As for every Catholics, it is very important to confess about his sins. The priest also confesses about his sins in front of the lieutenant who doesn't believe in god yet he is a good human by heart. On one hand Greene emphasizes on the need of confession and on the other hand, he brings to light the fact that for confession, one does not necessarily need a priest of a church — confession to one's true self is enough for true salvation.

Similar philosophy of Greene is reflected thorough the incident when the half caste asks for the priest's blessings, he said, "You are so superstitious. You think my blessing will be like a blinker over God's eyes. I can't stop Him knowing all about it. Much better go home and pray. Then if he gives you grace to feel sorry, give away the money" (156). These lines from the novel makes it clear that God is omnipresent and blessing of priest or any other messenger of god cannot give redemption from one's sins. For this one need to pray with true humility and feel sorry about one's own deeds.

During his last meeting with the lieutenant, he tries to justify that his hatred for him is pointless and has no strong grounds. He says, "I am not as dishonest as you think I' m. why do you think I tell people out of the pulpit that they are in danger of damnation if death catches them unawares? I am not telling them fairy stores I don't believe myself..... I want justice, that's all" (158). He just like the lieutenant does not believe in religious dogmas and superstitions. He fights for justice just like the lieutenant. By this time we the birth of a completely new priest who feels for human

and understands that no one is perfect and repentance is the most powerful tool for redemption from sins.

Theme of death and degeneration resonates through another character of the novel, Yankee, who is an American gangster and he killed a lot of people. He never bothered about sin, damnation and other things. He lives a life which is degenerated due to the lack of faith and feeling of love and compassion. His cruelty and brutality is an example of that. However, when he is shot by the police and priest comes there to listen to his confession, we see a certain change in him. Though he is dying physically but we see a kind of regeneration in him. A new form of realization and faith dawns upon him. He was taking his last breath but realizes that the priest has been trapped by the half-caste, he shows more concern in saving the priest from the police. He says to the priest, "You beat it out of here quick..... you don't need to trouble about me" (160). He feels that he is damned. This is in fact a faith in God that makes him feel for people.

The Lieutenant is another character who has lost faith in religion and has developed a strong form of hatred and contempt for church and priests. He seems as if he is in sharp contrast with the priest but at last readers get to know that in fact priest and lieutenant both have same goal — that is to serve humanity and help people to get rid of their sufferings. His hatred for church and its rituals are reflected in the following lines:

He remembered the smell of incense in the churches of his boyhood, the candles and the laciness and the self-esteem, the immense demands made from the altar steps by men who didn't know the meaning of sacrifice. The old peasants knelt there before the holy images with their arms held out in the attitude of the cross: tired by the long day's labor

in plantations, they squeezed out a further mortification. And the priest came round with the collecting bag taking their centavos, abusing them for their small comforting sins, and sacrificing nothing at all in return — except a little sexual indulgence. (14)

Remembering this, he expresses his determination to catch all the priests of the state. He believes that a criminal is no harm to the society but a priest is more dangerous. Through these lines, Greene also achieves his purpose of showing the follies of church. He does not believe in church and priest blindly. By showing these shortcomings and corrupted nature of priests and church, Greene is showing the need of rectification and need of new form of Catholicism which keeps morality and humanity at the centre. Not only through the secular person like lieutenant, Greene pinpoints the corrupted nature of Church through the protestants like Mr. Lehr tells the priest that church spends a lot on luxury when people starve. He says churches have all the gold leaf (127).

The lieutenant takes pride and honor in catching the priest. For him it is a virtuous deed. He shows his desire to go to any extent for catching the priest. He is even ready to kill some villagers in order to catch the priest. This reveals his cold side of the character that lacks sympathy and feelings. This aspect takes him closer to degeneration. His secular views of life deprive him of basic human feeling like compassion sympathy and love. He views life as “a complete certainty in the existence of dying, cooling world, of human beings who have evolved from animals for no purpose at all” (14). He reflects upon the action taken by his people on the priests yet could not feel the pain they inflicted on those people. Lying on his hard bed, in the damp, hot dirt, felt no sympathy at all with the weakness of the flesh (16).

His secular views are further revealed in these lines:

You are fools if you still believe that priests tell you. All they want is your money. What has god ever done for you? Have you got enough to eat? Have your children got enough to eat? Instead of food they talk to you about heaven. Oh everything will be fine after you are dead, they say. I tell you — everything will be fine when they are dead, and you must help. (59)

His words and priests words do have similarity. They both favor human lives over death. They both firmly believe that heaven is here in earth. They both are well aware about the corrupted nature of priests who exploited people in the name of religion. Yet they stand in sharp opposition to each other that is just because one is full of faith, where as the other is devoid of it. They both believe in same yet people seem to support the priest just because of his spiritual faith and believe in God. Once again through this Greene reasserts his philosophy that life is not possible without hope, faith and belief in some super power like God.

However, Lieutenant also goes through a change when he knows more about the priest. The lieutenant, who was very harsh on priests, suddenly shows pity on the whiskey priest and happily helps the priest by requesting Padre Jose for hearing the whiskey priest's confession and also gave him brandy breaking rules of his duty. These sentiments and feelings for priest show how his degenerating self is revived when he came in touch with the priest—a symbol of faith and spirituality.

Theme of death runs through the entire novel. Every action of the novel is driven by fear of death. Priest himself is afraid of death and still he is the only source who gives hope for regeneration and spiritual salvation to the villagers who have faith in god and religion. This faith of the villagers is revealed in the novel when a boy died and there was no priest in the village for prayer. They requested Padre Jose but

he did not show courage to do show because he was afraid of physical death. The villagers were not afraid of such death but they were really desperate for spiritual salvation. Following lines show how desperately people believe in prayers and religion:

Suddenly and unexpectedly there was agony in the cemetery. They had been used to losing children, but they hadn't been used to what the rest of the world knows best of all — the hope which peters out. The woman began to cry — dryly, without tears, trapped noise of something wanting to be released; the old man fell on his knees with his hand held out. (172 )

Lieutenant also tries to accomplish his goal through the fear of death. He threatens people of their lives; he decides to take hostage form each and every village. Yet people hardly speak anything about the whereabouts of the priest. Physical death is not a matter of fear for the villagers but they really are afraid of dying without confession and proper prayers. Similarly, Padre Jose who decides to marry a woman and live a life of a common man does so due to the fear of death. The priest during his escape from the police sees people dying and waiting for someone to hear their confessions. Though he could save people from physical death but he helps the people like Trench, Lieutenant, Half caste and Yankee from spiritual degeneration.

Last scene of the novel also has much significance in understanding the Greene's humanistic catholicism, in the last scene, we see that the priest is about to be shot. And just before the crash of the rifle shook, priest was seen saying the word "excuse" (173). This sacrifice of priest is another example of Greene's Christian faith. He once again reminds the readers of Jesus' sacrifice of his life for people. And the

word excuse may be the request to god for excusing all those who shot him in their ignorance.

After the death of the priest, a young boy name Jaun had a dream in which he sees a stranger coming at his door and on being asked by the boy who he is, he say that he is a priest (176). This incident at the end of the novel supports catholic faith of Greene, but at the same time his sacrifice is also for people. He must be indicating towards the resurrection of Jesus, and also it shows the resurrection of the Christian faith in those people who were compelled to abandon their faith in God and church forcefully by the State.

Hence, it can be concluded that, Greene through this novel tries to convey the message that lack of faith in religion and god can lead to degeneration of lives and no happiness can be achieved through hatred and violence. God's grace and love can be achieved through love and compassion for fellow humans. He is undoubtedly a true believer of Catholicism but he promotes a new form of Catholicism — humanistic Catholicism.

### III. Ambience of Divine Love and Romantic Love in *The End of the Affair*

Set partly in 1944 and mostly in 1946, the story of *End of the Affair* revolves around illicit love affair between Sarah, a married woman, and Maurice Bendrix, a writer. The story takes place in England at the time of World War II (1939-1945) — when religious values and beliefs of people were dangling. Sarah is married to a government official Henry but secretly keeps relation with Bendrix. This relation continuously reminds her of degraded self and could not continue her romantic love with Bendrix. She decides to abandon her lust for Bendrix and accepts divine love over romantic. This makes Bendrix hate Sarah and her God for taking her away for him. In short, Greene's *End of the Affair* revolves around love and hate.

This novel has a strong catholic theme. It mainly focuses on sin, redemption and damnation. Writer has filled the main character Sarah with such a strong sense of sin resulting from her adulterous relations that she is compelled to abandon her lustful relations. Since she realizes that she had already committed a sin by involving herself into sensual pleasure, she devotes her life to the love for God fearing damnation.

Greene raises his voice against degrading human values that results into lack of faith in God. By setting the story against the backdrop of degraded and devastated England, Greene is trying to reassert his views on Christian values. He shows the possibility of redemption for even the fallen men like Sarah and Bendrix. He views hatred from new perspective. A Scholar from India Dhruva Shankar argues that this novel is very much dominant with theological elements comparing this novel with Greene's other novels. He writes in his article:

In *The End of the Affair* the theological element is very prominent.

Like *The Heart of the Matter*, this novel too shows the possibility of redemption and salvation through love and suffering. The protagonist

of the novel, Sarah is led through renunciation to sanctification. Sarah feels a peculiar delight in the spirit of self-surrender. She gradually comes to understand God's love and mercy. She has a firm resolve to achieve salvation and she pursues this goal single-mindedly. The political context is more muted than in earlier novels but it is significant that the setting is London under siege, a tremendous moment of fear, destruction, and political turmoil. Beyond that background, Greene's religious imagination focuses on the competing visions of a religious and specifically Catholic belief system versus the modern, secular visions of atheism. (213)

Redemption, salvation, sin, sanctification, God's grace and love are all part of catholic beliefs. The novel revolves around all these concepts. Sarah abandons Bendrix for God's love. Bendrix is a representation of a modern day atheist and Sarah represents those who through self surrender regain God's grace and achieve salvation. Besides, analyzing the novel from thematic perspective, there are critics who have analyzed the novel's technical aspects like narration, setting, atmosphere and characters. One among them is J.P. Kulshrestha, who analyses the atmosphere and setting of the novel and show connection with the themes of the novel. He states:

As the action is more interiorized than in his other novel, Greene does not resort to naturalist description of objects which evoke the usual milieu of decay and corruption. There are of course, a few details of physical environment to suggest that the world of his novel is barren of beauty and joy as that of the other novels. (113)

As Kulshrestha said Greene has not used natural objects and insects like in *The Power and the Glory* to suggest decay, degradation, suffering and death, the writer has spent



very few words to describe setting of the novel. But the kind of world Greene has shown in this novel is devoid of any joy and beauty. The novel mainly describes the human passions and emotion centered upon love and hatred. Another critic S. Daina Neil appreciates the careful handling of narrative voices and plot structure.

The central figure in the book is a woman, ripe for spiritual experience. Two years the story begins she has had a love affair with a middle-aged novelist, but has ended the relationship suddenly without apparent reason. Attempting to discover what has happened to his former mistress. The novelist comes upon her diary and learns that she still loves him. But believing that he had been killed in an air raid, she had prayed to god and promised that if he were restored to life she would give him up. The novelist tries to persuade her to come back to him, but she falls ill and dies soon after. After persuading her husband to have her cremated, the novelist learns that she was born catholic. From this point in the story, Greene invokes a series of miraculous interventions which strain credulity in order to bring about the desired ending. The central episode, however, the finding of the diary, is handled brilliantly, and the struggle between passion and the spirit is honestly examined. (394)

Neil has brilliantly analyzed the structural aspects of the novel. He explains how Greene has shown the struggle between passion and the spirit in this novel. However, Neil has not connected structural study of the novel with the themes of the novel.

Catholic theme is very much blunt and explicit. However, this paper tries to show how this conflict between romantic love and divine love serves to accomplish Greene's humanist approach to Christianity. For him Christianity is only about

adopting basic human goodness but also evil. True Christian would accept both human love and sin.

Now let's analyze the setting of the novel to understand Greene's Catholicism. The novel begins with Bendrix informing the reader about him. Then he goes on to talk about the night he encounters Henry Miles. The night is described as "Black January night on the common in 1946, the sight of Henry Miles slanting across the wide river rain" (1). The very opening sets the tone of the novel. His inner darkness is reflected by the darkness outside. It also hints towards the uncertainty people face living in England — a war ravaged nation. Bendrix further describes the place in the following lines:

There was no comfort even in the bed sitting room I had at the wrong- the south- side of the Common, in the relics of other people's furniture. I thought I would go for a walk through the rain and have a drink at the local. The little crowded hall was full of strangers hats and coats and I took somebody else' umbrella by accident- the man on the second floor had friends in. then I closed the stained- glass door behind me and made my way carefully down the steps that had been blasted in 1944 and never repaired. I had reason to remember the occasion and how the stained glass tough and ugly and Victorian, stood up to the shock as our grandfathers themselves would have done. (1)

It is clear from the above lines that the novel presents the war destroyed London where there is no peace yet. Turbulence looms over the city and equally troubled are the people including the narrator. As he describes the place we get the feeling that there lacks human sympathy, there is strangeness in the air. Greene here might be suggesting that this lack of human feelings and commotion is due to degrading values

of the city dwellers who have lost the faith in God and as result trust in fellow humans. Another critic who has analyzed the novel's technical aspects like setting and plot structure is Robert Graham Davis. He describes the setting of the novel in similar fashion:

In Greene's novel everything is as drab and dreary as possible. London is bomb-damaged and, it rains all the time, the heroine has a bad cough, the meals are boring or never-racking, love is described largely in physical terms, and those repellent ones. The characters turn to the church because they find life intolerable. (60)

Davis is accurate in describing the setting as drab and dreary. This outer drabness resembles the inner psyche of the major characters. Bombarded London and continuous rain create really a very dull atmosphere. Readers know about this through Bendrix. Where ever he goes he finds similar conditions. He reaches Pontefract Arms for drinks and finds that "it was still decorated for Christmas with paper streamers and paper bells, the relics of commercial gaiety, mauve and orange and the young lady leant her breasts against the bar with a look of contempt for her customers" (2). Human degradation is further strengthened by the description of those young ladies flaunting their breasts. It clearly depicts the city that was engulfed in lust and romance rather than devotion and spirituality.

One among those city dwellers is Bendrix and the reason behind his suffering is lust and lack of faith. Bendrix compares church of the city with a toy. He says "the eighteenth century church stood like toy in an island of grass" (11). It clearly shows how people abandoned and belittled the church and rushed to bars and clubs to fulfill their physical needs. In the lavatory Bendrix found "the walls were scrawled with the phrases: Damn you landlord and your breasty wife. To all pimps and whores a merry

syphilis and a happy gonorrhoea” (3). This hints towards the prevalence of sexually transmitted diseases. This is again a result of not being faithful in marriage.

From theme, now let's move to analyzing the characters. The main character of the novel is Bendrix and much of the story is narrated from his perspective. Bendrix is a jealous lover. He is a writer, who, like many characters of Greene's novel, is an atheist and helps provide better insight into Greene's views on Christianity and god. He lacks faith in god and his love for Sarah is nothing but a romantic love — a love driven by lust. He lacks compassion, care and feeling for Sarah. When his physical needs are fulfilled, he loves Sarah but when Sarah is away and he thinks he could not get her, he expresses his hatred for her. In the beginning of the novel, when he narrates his affair with Sarah he says “nothing would have delighted me more than to have heard that she was sick, unhappy, dying. I imagined in those days that any suffering she underwent would lighten mine, and if she were dead I could be free (2). He is a non believer of god who finds happiness in material things. For him anything that does not have certain shape and size does not exist. His views on God become explicit when he says, “How twisted we humans are, and yet they say a God made us; but I find it hard to conceive of any god who is not as simple as a perfect equation, as clear as air”(3). He is so much so indulged in illegitimate affair that he could not see anything beyond that he is seen telling Henry “oh, it's not done, but neither is adultery or theft or running away from the enemy's fire. The not done things are done every day, Henry. It's part of modern life. I have done everything myself” (7). He does not regret for what he has done and provokes Henry also to do the same. He makes physical relations with Henry's wife and yet he pretends to be his good friend. He is not at all troubled by his degrading morality and guilty conscience. In fact it seems that his sense of morality is consumed in lust. He

recalls how “sometime she would come between two queues, and we would make love between the green grocers and the butchers” (16). This also hints towards the then degraded London city that was engulfed in material prosperity and suffered spiritual crisis. Bendrix is a character who represents the majority of those city dwellers who lacked faith and spirituality. He did not believe and trust anyone. And wondered how people trusted each other. He says, “What an odd collection the trusted professions are. One trusted one’s lawyer, one’s doctor, one’s priest; I suppose if one is a catholic” (8). He doesn’t only lack faith and trust in God, he could not even trust the women he says he loves. Bendrix imagines “Sarah making love, Sarah with X. doing the same thing that we had done together, Sarah kissing in her own particular way, arching herself in the act of sex and uttering the same cry like pain, Sarah in abandonment”(37). His mind is full of doubts, suspicion, lust and hatred because his love is earthly in other words physical than divine and lacks godly quality like trust, faith and compassion.

He does believe that trust, faith and divine love are the qualities of a catholic. His believes that his hatred for Sarah also is the result of his love for Sarah. He says “hatred seems to operate the same glands as love; it even produces the same actions. If we had not been taught how to interpret the story of the passion, would we have been able to say from their actions alone whether it was the jealous Judas or the cowardly Peter who loved Christ” (12). Bendrix doesn’t find himself guilty. He thinks whatever he does is good since it does not harm others. For him adultery is no crime, he finds no wrong in lust and believes that all lovers are nearly always innocent? They have committed no crime, they are certain in their own minds that they have done no wrong as long as no one is hurt (10). These words of Bendrix reflect Greene’s Catholicism.

However, as Bendrix starts to suffer and feels the pain of separation from Sarah, we see some change in him. He feels that there would have been more sense in marrying and having children and living quietly together in a sweet and dull peace than in furtive business of lust and jealousy and the reports of Parkis (39). He represents romantic love which is marked by jealousy and hatred. At the church when Bendrix finds Sarah sitting with eyes closed “he thinks she loves us both, I thought but if there is to be a conflict between an image and a man, I know who will win. I could put my hand on her thigh or my mouth on her breast: he was imprisoned behind the alter and could not move to plead his cause” (65). He is of the opinion that one surrenders to physical pleasure and underestimates god’s presence. He limits god to mere image and thinks that God could not take her way from her.

He doesn’t accept the presence of God. “I had no intention of pleasing him (Gordon): this god was also Sarah’s God, I was going to throw no stones at any phantom she believed she loved” (68). However, when she finally dies, he takes god as his enemy and denies believing any god she believed in. He blames God for her death. He says “if she hadn’t believed in you she would be alive now...” (70). When he takes God as his enemy it is quite evident that he also starts believing in his presence. He even I wished he could send Parkis after her to interrupt their eternity (70). Yet, he refrains from believing in God, he says, “I must not be like Richard Smythe, I must not hate, for if I were to hate I would believe, and if I were to believe, what a triumph for You and her” (70). Here also, we can see how Greene he asserts his views on belief and hatred. It’s not only love for god rather hatred for also an assertion of god’s presence.

Another important character is Sarah. Bendrix believes that she was a born catholic although she believed in god as little as he did (25). Bendrix was a jealous

lover where as Sarah was a completely different character than him. Bendrix describes her in the following lines:

I was jealous of the past, of which she spoke to me frankly as it came up — the affair that meant nothing at all. She was loyal to her lovers as she was to Henry but what should have provided me with some comfort angered me. There was a time she would laugh at my anger, simply refusing to believe that it was genuine, just as she refused to believe in her own beauty and I would be just angry because she refused to be jealous of my past or my possible future. (27)

Bendrix was full of hatred but Sarah was exactly opposite. She loved both Henry and Bendrix equally. She enjoyed sex with Bendrix but she also did not forget her duty towards her husband. She had true Christian qualities. Her love for Bendrix opens the path for divine love with God. The sense of disgrace and sin brought her back to the path of divinity and religion. Her love is marked by sacrifice, compassion. She wanted Bendrix to be happy. She tells Bendrix:

You may be right, I am only saying I want you to be happy, I hate your unhappy. I don't mind anything you do that makes you happy .You need not be scared. Love does not end. Just because we don't see each other ..... my dear. People go on loving God, don't they, all their lives without seeing him? When you are hopeless enough, she said you can pray for miracles. They happen, don't they, to the poor and I was poor. (37)

Here in these lines, Sarah defines love in divine sense. Her love for Bendrix is also elevated to the level of divine love. Bendrix claims that he loves Sarah but only seeks pleasure in her company, could not understand her problems and never thinks about

her inner conflict. On the other hand Sarah, owns his pain, his unhappiness tries to change the way Bendrix thinks. She is more firm in her love and seems more confident. She has faith in divine power.

However, thorough Sarah's diary, we get to know more about her. She also lacks faith in god and Christianity in the beginning. This lack of faith leads her to keep illicit relations with Bendrix. She could not decide whether it was wrong or right. But some kind of fear starts hunting her day and night. This fear is evident in following lines:

If one could believe in god, would he fill the desert? I have always wanted to be liked or admired. I feel a terrible insecurity if a man turns on me, if I lose a friend. I don't even want to lose a husband. I want everything, all the time, everywhere. I am afraid of the desert. God love you, they say in the churches, god is everything. People who believe that don't need admiration, they don't need to sleep with a man, they feel safe. But I can't get a belief. (46)

She is afraid of losing prestige and her husband if her adulterous relation is exposed. Like Bendrix, she also surrenders to sensuous pleasure. Though she did not have strong faith in god but she hopes that it's only god who could rescue her from such situation. As her relations with Bendrix continue, she slowly regains her faith. But it's not that easy for her to abandon worldly pleasure so suddenly. When Bendrix gets buried in a debris after a bomb attack, she resorts to prayer wholeheartedly and takes a vow that she would abandon the affair and Bendrix. She writes in her diary "I knelt down on the floor: I was mad to do such a thing: I never even had to do it as a child—my parents never believed in prayer anymore than I do. I had not any idea what to say. Maurice was dead. Extinct" (49). She was not a catholic by birth yet suddenly in



her desperation she happened to call for God's help. She blamed herself for all that happened. She thought it was God's wrath that fell upon Bendrix for her sin. She further writes in her diary:

Dear god, I said — why dear, why dear? — make me believe. I cannot believe. Make me. I said, I am bitch and a fake and I hate myself. I cannot do anything of myself. Make me believe. I shut my eyes tight and I pressed my nails into palms of my hands until I could feel nothing but the pain, and I said, I will believe. Let him be alive, I will believe. Give him a chance. Let him have his happiness. Do this and I will do nothing if you will make him alive. I said very slowly, I will give him up forever, only let him be alive with a chance, I pressed and pressed and I could feel skin break. (49)

Fear of losing Bendrix compels her to surrender to God. Suddenly, she realizes that love cannot be physical only. Love exists without seeing each other also. Her love for Bendrix also takes a divine form. She knows that she really loves Bendrix, it's not only for sexual pleasure. The way she took a vow to abandon Bendrix shows that divine love also culminates from romantic love. But her urge to meet Bendrix is so strong that she once again starts getting attracted towards breaking her vow. She in fact finds herself in an ambivalent position. There is a kind of tussle between her mind and heart, which is becomes evident from these lines:

Vow is not at all that important—a vow to somebody I have never known, to somebody I don't really believe in. nobody will know that I have broken a vow except me and Him—he does not exist, does he? He can't exist. You cannot have merciful god and this despair. (50)

The agony of separation from her lover at time makes her destroy herself. She writes:

I have kept my promise for six weeks. I cannot believe in you, I cannot love you but I have kept my promise. If I don't come alive again, I am going to be slut, just a slut. I am going to destroy myself quite deliberately. Every year I will be more used. Will you like that any better than if I break my promise? (50)

She could not get peace of mind getting separated from her lover and this pain makes her hate even god. She says, "I begin to believe in you and if I believe in you I shall hate you." (51). She further says, "If I go down in to the bar and pick a man up and take him on to the beach and lie him along the sand-dunes, won't I robbing you of what you love most?" (51). She blames god for robbing her of all her happiness. She found happiness in Bendrix's company but that bonding with his is broken by her vow to God. She even goes to meet Riachrd Smythe, a secularist in Cedar road for counseling. She finds herself in a very difficult condition. She tells him, "I am not sure that I don't believe. But I don't want to" (54). She was so troubled by her vow that she could not decide whether she was a true believer of god or a materialist. At a church at the corner of Park road she describes the Roman church as:

Full of plaster and bad art, realistic art. I hated the statues, the crucifix, all the emphasis on the human body. I was trying to escape from the human body and all it needed. I thought I could believe in some kind of a God that bore no relation to ourselves, something vague, amorphous, cosmic, to which I had promised something and which had given me something in return. (55)

This clearly reflects that she prayed to something vague which has no form and is cosmic but when she saw the church she really started questioning herself whether she was a materials or a spiritual. She believed that God has no body like humans. But

see God's depiction in human form at the church made her believe that loving human body was not sin. She writes in her diary:

Am I a materialist after all, I wondered? Have I some glandular deficiency that I am so uninterested in the really important thing and causes..... am I a materialist because I believe in the dependent existence of that man with the bowler, the metal of the cross, these hands I can't pray with? Suppose god exist, suppose he was a body like that, what is wrong in believing that his body existed as much as mine? Could anybody love or hate him if he hadn't got a body. (59)

Suddenly this made her feel free and happy. She thought she would not worry anymore and questioned herself whether her belief was right. She was trying to know about the existence of God. She is seen divided in her thoughts. She mention further in her diary, "whether you existed or whether you gave Maurice second chance or either I imagined everything. Perhaps this is the second time chance I asked for him. I am going to make him happy, that's my second vow, God, and stop me if you can" (59). She tries to console herself and make her believe that whatever she did was not a sin. She tries to break her vow and goes to Bendrix for reunion. By this time she undoubtedly believes in god, but, she doesn't know whether the god she believes in is like humans or it's different. She accepts his presence and tells him, "Dear God I want your pain, but I don't want it now. Take it away for a while and give it me another time" (63).

Unable to find true solace even after abandoning Bendrix for God, she decides to meet Bendrix to continue her relation with him. They meet once again after long but When Bendrix puts his hand on her knee she asks him to let her be. This shows that she has no physical bonding with Bendrix anymore. After this episode, she

devotes herself to God, she loves Bendrix but could break her vow to please him. Thus, her love for Bendrix achieves a true form and she dies without meeting him.

Her death brings transformation in Bendrix too. The person who did not believe in god' presence says "it was as though by dying she had robbed me of part of myself, I was losing my individuality. It was the first stage of my own death, the memories dropping off like gangrened limbs. I hate all this fuss of prayers and grave-diggers, but if Sarah wanted it, I'd try to get it in a church" (71). Her suffering brought her closer to god. This suffering is a result of her adulterous relations with Bendrix and pain that the separation caused in her. Bendrix also suffers with pain of separation and finally it leads to believe that there is God and he gets rid of his lustful desires. He tries to make love with a girl after Sarah's death in order to forget her but it seemed to him that he had given all the sex had had away (72). A girl named Sylvia was ready to make love with Bendrix after the completion of Sarah's funeral but we could see Bendrix imploring Sarah "get me out of it. I don't want to begin it all gain and injure her, I am incapable of love. Except you" (83). Sarah's death transforms him but there remains bitterness in Bendrix heart for God as he believes that it was God who took her away from her. He expresses his bitterness and hatred in following lines:

If I began to believe that, I could believe in the body and the blood.  
 You did not own her all those years: I owned her. You don't win in the end, you don't need to remind me of that, but she won't deceive me with you when she lay here with me, on his bed, with this pillow under her back. When she slept, I was with her, not you. It was I who penetrated her, not you. (86)

After her death, Bendrix also realizes that his love for Sarah was not only for sexual pleasure. He goes to the extent of calling god his enemy. His lust transforms into love but it generates hatred for god. Critics like Jennifer Bussey believe that Bendrix is unlikely to reach the spiritual peace that Sarah attained before her death. She argues:

Because of the fundamental differences between the two characters and Bendrix's last minute shift to apathy, however, however, it is highly unlikely that he will ever change. Instead, he will probably continue to live as a bitter man, feeling wronged by the God who created it, sinking deeper into his cynicism. (33)

While writing this, Bussey seems to have overlooked the transformation seen in Bendrix. This hatred is seen in every human when one's hopes and dreams are shattered. These emotions are momentary and they subside with the passage of time. Clear evidence of his transformation is seen when he develops love and compassion for fellow humans. Sarah's death made Henry and Bendrix close and their hatred vanished. He says "he depended on me now as much as before he had depended on Sarah"(79). Accusing god of robbing him of his love, he denies showing any love for god but showing love for fellow humans is nothing but a true Christian virtue. The way Sarah got spiritual redemption through sacrifice, Bendrix also goes on the path to such redemption by sacrificing his happiness for Henry's happiness. He also refrained indulging any kind lustful sex. "Once when Henry was away from home Bendrix picked a girl up and brought her back but he realized that he was impotent and told the girl that he had promised a woman he loved not to have sex with anyone else" (90). This shows that his romantic love has also been transformed to divine love.

Her sacrifice is not only for Bendrix peace of mind, her sacrifice has religious and moral implications too. The man employed by Bendrix named Parker also shows

transformation in due course. Parker in last chapter reveals how he also believed in god and Sarah's presence in heaven. He tells Bendrix:

I don't mind telling you Bendrix that I prayed very hard. I prayed to god and then I prayed to my wife to do what she could because if there is anyone in heaven now, and I asked Mrs Miles if she was there, to do what she could too, now if a grown man can do that, Mr Bendrix, you can understand my poor boy imagining things. When I woke up this morning, his temperature was ninety nine he hadn't any pain. He told the doctor it was Mrs Miles who come and took away the pain. (94)

The man whose task was to keep an eye on Sarah's activities also gets greatly affected by her sacrifice. It was her divine love for God and Bendrix that helped Parker to regain his faith in god. His boy, who was sick and in pain, recovers from the sickness as Sarah comes in his dream and takes away his pain. The element of miracle is once again evident in this novel also. Like in the Power and The Glory, Greene's faith in Jesus Christ's sacrifice and reincarnation is evident through Sarah miraculous appearance in boys dream and curing his sickness. After this event Bendrix undergoes a complete transformation. He meets father Crompton and says "he hates him and his God because he took her away from her and his eyes are all full of tears" (95). A man full of hatred cannot cry and cannot breakdown in this way. His tears signify his repentance and this brings about a complete change. Following lines prove this:

I could believe that you came to Parkis's boy in the night with your touch that brings peace. Last month in the cremation I asked you to save that girl from me and you pushed your mother between us- or so they might say. But if I start believing that then I have to believe in

your god. I'd have to love your god. I'd rather love the men you slept with. (95)

Hatred of his heart is replaced by love; jealousy is replaced by sense of sacrifice and doubts and suspicions are replaced by faith and hope.

Love and hatred are predominant themes in Greene's novel. Here Greene uses love and hatred to prove his point that hatred and love are not binary opposite rather they are the part of the same passionate belief. A.A. DeVitis find the novel to be the most Catholic of Greene's books he writes:

In the narrowest sense of the definition' the critic point to the saintly status of Sarah as evidence and the sensitive characterization of the priest as more than just a spokesperson for the church. He also writes that Greene's fixation on suffering seems masochistic, morbid; certainly the notion that religion should be nothing but suffering is as distasteful as the notion that it should be nothing but sweetness and light. (32)

He has tried to highlight how like other novels of Greene, this novel also sticks to the theme of suffering. But, in this novel Greene's focus seems to be more on love and hatred. Every character in the novel suffers either because of love or hatred. Bendrix suffers as he develops hatred. Sarah's suffering is result of love. In the beginning Bendrix takes his lust for love. He defines love in his own way. He says:

I became aware that our love was doomed: love had turned into love affair with a beginning and an end. I could name the very moment when it had begun, and one day I knew I should be name the final hour. When she left the house I could not settle to work: I would reconstruct what we had said to each other: I would fan myself into

anger or remorse. And all the time I knew I was forcing the place. I was pushing, pushing the only thing I loved out of my life. As long as I could make believe that love lasted, I was happy — I think I was even good to live with, and so love did last. But if love had to die, I wanted to die quickly. It was as though our love were small creature caught in a trap and bleeding to death: I had shut my eyes and wring its neck.

(16)

Bendrix's anger and unhappiness was caused by his lustful thoughts but he names it love. It was his love for Sarah's body. That is why he feels happy when she is with him but in her absence he could not even settle to his work. At a hotel in Arbuckle Avenue Bendrix says, "When I kissed her again and said how I hated thought of her going to Henry and hate even the idea of his kissing you" (22). He hates Henry, he hates Sarah and he even hates God. He is a man of hatred because he could not understand divine love. He knows how to hate because he is not capable of true love. His hatred for god is seen when he says, "There goes again — the I as though this were my story, not the story of Sarah, Henry, and of course that third, whom I hated without yet knowing, or nor even believing in him" (17). His hatred for Henry is also beyond any humanly nature. He felt a malicious delight at the absurdity of Henry's sickness (24).

At times Bendrix gets rid of his jealousy and becomes human "seeing the miserable condition of Mr Parkis he says "it occurred to me with amazement that for ten minutes I had not thought of Sarah or my jealousy: I had become nearly human enough to think of another person's trouble" (20). He also realizes that he does lack humanly qualities. In book two, Bendrix even goes to the extent of comparing his indulgent too lust with devotion of saints towards god and prayers. He says:



The words of love have been used by the saints to describe their vision of god and so, I suppose, we might use the terms of prayer, meditation, contemplation to explain the intensity of the love we feel for a woman. We to surrender memory, intellect, intelligence, and we too experience the deprivation, the *nocheoscura*, and lovers sometimes experience too the little peace. (23)

He is a person completely blinded by his lust and jealousy. Thus he has lost his intellect and memory but most importantly he has lost emotions and feeling. But, he regains feeling and emotions only in Sarah's presence. Hatred makes him lonely, jealous and gives him pain. Whereas, love provides peace. How Sarah's presence brings change in him is seen when he says:

I woke with the sadness of her last cautious advice still resting on my mind, and within three minutes of walking her voice on the telephone dispelled it. I have never known a woman before or since so able to alter a while mood by simply speaking on the telephone, and when she came into a room and put her hand on my side it created at once the absolute trust I lost with every separation. (23)

Greene here clearly shows how only love has the power to give peace and build trust. Bendrix lacks love what he possesses is lust and hatred. He himself accepts this when he says "I refused to believe that love could take any other form than mine: I measured love by the extent of my jealousy, and by that standard of course she could not love me at all" (27).

On the other hand Sarah's love is divine. If Bendrix stands for hatred, Sarah stands for selfless love. It is the same love that makes her sacrifice her happiness and peace for Bendrix. She has strong faith in God, which gives her power to bear pain.

Her love and sacrifice comes to surface when she says, “You were there, teaching us to squander, like you taught the rich man, so that one day we have nothing left except this love of you, but you are so good to me. When I ask you for pain, You give me peace. Give it him too. Give him my peace — he needs it more” (45).

In short, it can be concluded that the love and hatred is not only depicted on the level of humans. The writer beautifully shows love and hatred of humans towards God. Bendrix’s hatred for Sarah is hatred towards God and Sarah’s love for Bendrix is love for God as well. By juxtaposing two opposite emotions of humans, Greene is asserting his views that love and hatred both are humanly qualities. The one who is capable of hatred can only express love. Greene through this novel also attacks Christian dogmas and puts humans at the centre. He tries to prove that there is every possibility for fallen men to rise and get spiritual redemption. Bendrix spiritual redemption shows that a man who once sinned or a man fell from God’s grace can also get redemption by feeling others’ pain and suffering. If one is capable of feeling other’s pain and suffering, one can always hope for god’s grace. Through his novel Greene asserts his catholic views putting humans at centre and at the same time cleverly criticizes the religious dogmas and hypocrisies of so called priests.

#### **IV. Atmosphere of Disease and Theme of Suffering in *A Burnt-out Case***

Greene's *A Burnt-out Case* is a novel set in an African country Congo in late 1950s. The entire novel revolves around Query, who arrives at a leper colony on a tributary of Congo River, after finding his life meaningless. He was a renowned architect in Europe and earned name and fame for making churches in Europe. On his arrival to a leproserie run by Catholic missionaries, he witnesses people's suffering and decides to help them in whatever way possible. During his stay at the leproserie, he comes in contact with a firm atheist like Dr Colin, failed priest like Rycker, a committed Catholic like Superior and a doubtful Catholic like Father Thomas.

In the beginning, Query's condition is seen not less than that of a leper. Dr. Colin even calls him a psychologically burnt-out case. He finds no difference between Deo Grtias and Query. As the days pass, we see Query finds meaning in life and decides to spend his entire life there. However, at the end he meets an unfortunate death at the hands of Rycker.

Like other novels, Greene presents a bleak world once again in this novel. He shows the diseased and poor people of a leper colony. Suffering, hatred for theology and lack of faith are some of the common themes of the novel. Greene once again scrutinizes catholic beliefs through his protagonist Query and Dr Colin. Philip Stratford views the novel as confessional novel. He writes "Perhaps the only safe identification between Greene and Query is the passage where Query warns Marie Rycker not mistake the hero of the fairy tale for the story teller himself. But, many critics persist on treating this as a confessional novel (528). Query is in fact the mouthpiece of Greene. His views about Christianity and life are expressed through Query. Roston M commenting upon narrative strategies of the novel writes:

One critic has remarked of this novel that after twenty pages we ‘have already encountered all Greene’s recurrent themes and metaphors and major symbols; but in fact, Greene again adopts here a narrative strategy very different from those employed in his previous novels. There the central characters — the hounded priest, Scobie, and Sarah — were all, at least by the end, committed Catholics, struggling in their various ways to live up to the requirements of their faith and, whatever their human deficiencies — or, perhaps, because of their human deficiencies — serving ultimately as models of such pursuit.

(83)

Roston M in the above lines shows some similarity between the narrative structures of Greene’s novels. In most of his novels major characters go through a conflict to live up to their faith and they regain their faith after seeing others’ suffering. Another critic R.E. Hughes, on the other hand, reads the novel as a catholic text.

Catholicism for Greene is not a collection of dogmas or rules of conduct, but rather a world view which was most exactly captured by the medieval morality play, an art form which Greene seems to be gradually approaching. *A Burnt-out Case* is the closest he has yet come..... this may be the finest contemporary version of the medieval form. (117)

Greene himself once said that he was an atheist Catholic. There no doubt that his novels are brimmed with catholic theme but it is very important to note that his novels always question religious dogmas and superstitions. So let’s explore the atmosphere and setting of the present novel first to see his catholic beliefs inherent in the novel.

The novel begins with bishop's boat on Congo River moving to its ending point – a leper colony. On the boat, we see a rich European, later we come to know that he is Query. With him there are other passengers too. Narrator describes outside conditions as “The heat that engulfed them where the river narrowed to a mere hundred metres: the shower that was always hot from the ship's engine: in the evening the mosquitoes, and in the day the tsetse flies with wings with raked back like tiny jet-fighters (1). The place is hot and humid and people there are much tormented by insects like misquotes and flies. One can foresee that the novel depicts suffering of the people. As the boat moves further, there is a board that reads “Zone of sleeping sickness” (1). Now it becomes evident that the novel is set in a place full of suffering and diseases. The narrator carefully describes the place before introducing the characters. Then , the narrator describes a poor village and the villagers on the river “The thatch of the clay huts had been gnawed way a long time since by rats and rain, and the women only wore old clouts, which had once seen service for sugar or grain” (4).This is the common thing in most of his novel. Reference of rain and rats creates drab and dreary atmosphere.

The careful selection of place helps to provide the relevance to catholic churches and hospitals run by the Catholic missionaries in the leper colony. Its Roman Catholic Church and state-supported hospital symbolize the spiritual and medical work being done to comfort the needy who wander among the squalid rows of two-room brick houses that bake in the noonday sun. Sermons about the existence of God and arguments about evolution occur within sight of gross suffering and human deformity, over which darkness mercifully falls. The writer thorough the setting reminds every catholic of his/her true duty towards humans not gods. Suffering of people caused by the diseases is further depicted in a scene at the hospital.

On the verandah the walking cases sat out of the sun — if you could call as walking case a man, who, when moved, had to support his huge swollen testicles with both hands. A woman with palsied-lids who could not close her eyes or blink sat in a patch of shade out of the merciless light. A man without finger nursed a baby on his knee, and another man lay flat on the verandah with one breast long and drooping and teated like a woman's. (22)

Setting the story in a leper colony where people are the victims of physical suffering caused by leprosy, which has mutilated and made them mentally numb, the writer tries to show that the world of lepers is very much like the world which is devoid of faith and spirituality.

The atmosphere created in *The Power and the Glory* is very much similar to this novel. *The Power and the Glory* is set in the blazing sun of Mexico, a war hit nation and in this novel Greene has selected hot and humid conditions of Congo. M. H. Abrams defines atmosphere as “the emotional tone prevailing a section or the whole of a literary work, which fosters in the reader expectations as to the course of events whether happy or terrifying or disastrous” (14).

Gloomy and eerie atmosphere of both the novels serve almost same purpose— need to restore faith to live life. Animals and insects serve a special purpose in both the novels. They torment humans and make their life difficult. They stand for suffering and decay. In part four “when Query reaches Luc with Marie, they found, the Bishop's boat was lying at her moorings. A cat was stopped halfway up the gangplank and regarded them and Query swerved to avoid a dead piedog stretched in their track waiting for the morning vulture” (82). This particular scene helps the

reader foresee what is going to happen in the novel next. Query is almost similar to dead piedog and Ryker is the vulture that preys upon him for his selfish motif.

In short, it is very much evident from the setting that Greene is trying show how the church and the hospital are the only hopes for lepers to get cured both physiological and physical. By comparing query's state of mind with burnt-out case, the writer reinforces the fact that lack of faith is equal to physical deformity.

Characters in the novel do serve the theme of suffering. In fact characters of this novel also, to some extent, resemble the characters of *The Power and the Glory* and *The End of the Affair*. Every character suffers from one or the other problem. Suffering is essential theme of Christian theology.

Greene's characters — particularly in his later novels — struggle to find their identity in a ravaged and alienating world and fight to find meaning in lives where none is apparent. Like most of Greene's later novels, *A Burnt-Out Case* is strong on characterization, rich in symbolism, and heavy with irony. (www.eNotes.com)

Main character Query suffers from lack of faith and as a result he finds no meaning in his life and work not even in women. Dr Colin suffers from loneliness, Mr Ryker suffers from failure to understand true Christianity and Deo Gratis suffers from leprosy and lost his toes and fingers to the disease.

Query is seen as an atheist, who reaches to leproserie in order to bury him there, running way from his past—fame and popularity. He lost interest in everything. He himself says, "I have no interest in anything anymore. I don't want to sleep with any woman or design any building" (22). He even hates priests and nuns. In Part II chapter one, we see him blaming himself for not realizing that the area of leprosy was also the area of this other sickness. He had expected doctors and nurses: he had

forgotten that he would find priests and nuns (9). For him preaching of priests and their behavior is sickness. For his lack of faith and interest in life, Dr Colin termed him mental equivalent to burnt-out case. At the seminary we see Query and Superior at some conversation, he tells him on being asked to use soap, "I no longer know what suffering is. I have come to an end of all that too" (5). He writes in his journal, "I have not enough feeling left for human beings to do anything for them out of pity" (24). Throughout the novel, if we observe Query closely, we see he is in confusion and could not even decide who he is, what he believes in and what he does not believe in. He does not know whether he could himself a Catholic (16). What he wants is peace. We know this as he tells Rycker, "I want peace as much as you do. If the boat had gone further, would have landed further" (11).

Rycker on the other hand takes him for a true catholic and loves to have argument with him on the issues related with theology. But Query says, "I am not competent to discuss it" (16). Rycker however, tells everyone about who Query was. And, on being asked about his history he says "I don't deny my profession once means a lot to me. So have women. But the use of what I made was never important to me. I wasn't builder of council-house or factories. When I made something I made it for my own pleasure" (21). This shows that he is not a true believer of Christianity and he seems much critical about Christian dogmas and beliefs. He even feels sickened by the word prayer. Here, Query reflects more of writer's belief. He puts humans at the centre not god. He shows the futility of spending on churches as he tells Dr Colin "Men have prayed in prison, men have prayed in slums and concentration camps. It's only the middle class who demand to pray in suitable surroundings" (21).



Querry criticizes the religious superstitions and dogmas but he is not a complete atheist like Dr Colin. After telling Dr Colin about his identity through notes, in his dream he saw:

“Querry in his dream saw that he was walking down a long railway tract in the dark, in a cold country. He was hurrying because he had to reach a priest and explain to him that, in spite of the clothes he was wearing, he was a priest also and he must make his confession and obtain wine with which to celebrate Mass. He wanted to meet the priest alone but it could not be possible because when he took the priest aside and was about to tell him something he was disturbed by women and other priest. When he was about to tell the priest something he started “feeling enormous relief and security of his confession. (25)

This shows that Querry also regrets for what he did in his life. There is something that haunts him and feels like confessing in front of a true Christian priest. He finds no meaning in his life but at the leproserie, when he is regarded as a true Catholic, he starts feeling for humans. After months of his stay at leproserie, he develops some kind attachment with his servant Deo Gratias, “One day the servant left him suddenly without informing him anything. This disappointed him. When no leper was ready to go in the thick forest to search him, he went himself into the bushes which he was not familiar with” (27). The person whom Dr Colin called a burnt out-case suddenly appeared to be a person full of life and feelings for others.

Later in part III Rycker tells the governor about the humanitarian act of Querry. He is in fact raised to the status of saint, he says, “he went out into the bush two weeks ago, they say, to find a leper who had run away. He spent the whole night

with him in the forest, arguing and praying and he persuaded the man to return and complete his treatment. It rained in the night and the man was sick with fever, so he covered him with his body” (31).

The one who said that he did not have any feeling for humans and had no interest in life suddenly moved by the suffering a leper. Not only this, he even was moved by every individual’s pity. He was just like mutilated leper, but the way he was treated by the people at leposerie, he regained the meaning in his life. Over the period of time, we see a change in Query, “he begins talking about love, talking about Marie to superior he says,” Love is not one of the commonest characteristics of marriage” (39).

He is not yet a blind follower of Christian dogmas and preaching rather questions Superior’s preaching for taking all the good as Christian and ignoring evils. “You try to draw everything into the net of your faith, father, but you can’t steal all the virtues. Gentleness isn’t Christian, self sacrifice is not Christian, charity isn’t, remorse isn’t. I expect the caveman wept to see another’s tears. Haven’t you seen a dog weep?” (40). He further says “but when you hate or envy it is not Yezu, for everything that Yezu made is good. Bad things are nothing they are not there. Hate means no love. Envy means no justice” (42). This sheds light upon Greene’s critical attitude towards Catholic dogmas.

Other person to take Query as saint is Father Thomas. But Query on the other hand tells him not to believe that he was a man of faith. Father Thomas even says that he gets more sense of faith from Query than from anyone there (49). In reply Query says “it is in your own mind, father, you are looking for faith so you find it. But I am not looking (49). Father Thomas however, does not accept that he is not a man of faith also asks him to pray for him. He says, “There are interior prayers, the

prayers of silence. There are even unconscious prayers when men have good will. A thought from you may be a prayer in the eyes of God” (49). Greene here brings out hypocrisy and restrictions of Catholicism. He is not denying power of prayers but for him to pray, we do not need to spend on building sophisticated churches.

It does not matter how often Query denies being a good catholic, but his talks change people for good. We see change in Father Thomas as he is later seen showing compassion for a journalist named Parkinson who reaches the leproserie with fever. On his arrival he offers to share his room with Parkinson (54). Parkinson, however, brings trouble for Query as he publishes an article about him and everyone in Luc come to know about his past. He is, in fact, presented as a modern day saint but this thing does not please Query as he wanted to get rid of his past and did not want people to talk about his deeds which he believed were not godly at all. He tries to clarify about what Parkinson wrote about him. He said to father Thomas “I am not a good man” (74). This particular incident is an indirect comment on so called saints and church people who want to see themselves regarded as god and also a comment on people who without understanding much take the saints for god. Infuriated by this news, Query goes to meet Rycker and tells him “I was happy before this started. I found I could work. I was feeling interested, involved in something, (79). He found true happiness in serving people sharing their suffering and pain not in enjoying the fame brought about by the exaggeration of Rycker and Parkinson. He further tells Rycker, you pretend to love a god because you love no one else. But I won’t pretend. All I have left me is a certain regard for the truth” (79). He seems an atheist but if we analyze him more closely we see:

A man who professes nothing but disdain of theology - acts more  
Christian than any other person in the novel. Greene, thus, upholds the

value of Christian behavior (that is, selflessness, generosity, sacrifice) while showing that there is no essential link between mouthing dogmas and being Christian ([www.Gradesaver.com](http://www.Gradesaver.com))

A man who had lost faith in god and religion, who had lost interest in life and was a victim of spiritual crisis behaved more like a true Christian. He regained the faith and got cured of his mutilated state. This change in him came after spending time with lepers, understanding the hypocrisy of people like Rycker. He himself accepts the change in Part IV, we see Querry telling Dr Colin that he was happy there among the lepers and working for Colin. Same thing he confesses in front of marry at a hotel room. Taking another long drink of whisky, he could not remember how long it was since he had experienced the odd elation he was feeling now (86). Helping Deo Gratis when he was stuck in a bog at night, taking Marie to Luc for confirming her pregnancy, extending help to Parkinson and Father Thomas show her true catholic behavior.

Yet we cannot say that he is a true believer of Christianity but one thing is very clear that he finds follies in the behavior of priests, bishops, superior and other people of church. His al worries are the products of his doubts. His doubts come to light when Marie asks Querry whether he believes in god and he says no but at the same time he also accepts that he may be wrong. Towards the end of the novel when we see Dr Colin and Querry in yet another philosophical talk, we see a self doubting Querry, he says “I don’t know that I am. You said once that when one suffers, one begins to feel part of the human condition, on the side of the Christian myth? I suffer, therefore I am” (106). His doubts are further supported by Colin’s remarks. He tells him “you are too troubled by your lack of faith, Querry. You keep on fingering it like a sore you want to get rid of, I am content with the myth; you are not—you have to

believe or disbelieve” (110). Undoubtedly his main source of suffering was his self-doubting nature and crisis of faith and spirituality. But his good deeds and the way people at the leproserie treated him, he regained the faith. This is evident when Dr. Colin tells Query “it’s much more difficult to cure the mind than the body, and yet I think the cure is nearly complete” (100).

Another incident in the text that shows change in Query is when he is accused of having illicit relation with Marie and making her pregnant. He denies the charges but Marie tells others that it was his child. She gives weird logic for that. At that point Query says that he needs a theologian to understand her logic (104). Mother Agnes trusts Marie’s words and thinks that she is innocent. Hearing this Query says, “God preserve us from all innocence” (105). As a result, we see in him Christian quality of forgiveness. He says to Rycker “Your wife has done us both an injury. I would call her a lair, if I thought she even knew what a lie was (111). He doesn’t blame Marie for her stupidity rather thought that it was only way to escape from Rycker who used to force unwilling sex on her.

Dr Colin, in the novel can be identified as Greene’s other self; he is clear about believing and not believing. We can say that the true atheist in the novel. He is not in any kind of dilemma as seen in the main character. He does not believe in Superior’s god and he does not also believe in African’s god. What he believes in is being a good human. He says, “I believe in nothing most of the time... I only wish I were as good a man”. Yet he seems happy because he shares human suffering and helps them to get rid of their suffering. He has meaning in life. This man truly upholds Christian values. When Query asks Colin whether he feels like Christian he says he is not interested and adds, “I wish Christianity could reduce the price of cortisone” (43). Towards end of the novel after Query’s death, Dr Colin asks “Your god must

feel a bit disappointed, when he looks at this world of his... Superior tells him that god cannot feel disappointment or pain". In reply Dr Colin says "perhaps that's why I don't care to believe in him" (114).

Ironically, we see Query's faith in god is brought back by an atheist whereas, true believers of god like Superior, Bishop, Father Thomas and Father Joseph fail to make any impact on him. Query always seem doubtful about what they preach at the leproserie.

Rycker, who is a manager of a palm-oil plant outside Luc, is a very important character in the novel. It through this character, Greene talks about the hypocrisies of fake Catholics. Rycker represents the people who claim that they are very religious and know about god more than any other people. They often interpret religion in their own way. He is a male chauvinist. He believes that he has trained his wife Marie to know what a man needs (6). He underestimates women he believes that Marie is hardly an intellectual companion (16). Yet, he proudly says, "I am a good Catholic, I hope, but that does not prevent me from having spiritual problems" (16). For him even those fathers at the leproserie are an unsatisfactory lot. They are more interested in electricity and buildings than in question of faith (160). But interestingly he finds, Query as a true Catholic and loves to have conversation with him on faith and god.

He is, in fact, a failed priest, he attended seminary but later married a girl who is quite young to his age. Yet, he does not fail to defend himself for marrying a very young girl. He calls himself a true Christian but lacks virtues like humility and forgiveness. Towards the end of the novel when Marie spent a night with Query at a hotel, he feels infuriated and seeks revenge. He loses his calm and could not behave like a true Christian. We see Parkinson saying "he is fighting mad. I said to him I thought Christians were supposed to forgive, but it's no use talking to him now"

(108). However, it is Rycker, who elevates Querry to the level of a modern saint though in ignorance which brings about a positive impact on him and he regains his faith. And, at the end, though Rycker kills Querry in his rage but his death is not wasted. This brings about a change in Rycker. He gets disillusioned and follows right path. At the end of the novel, when Colin asks Superior about Rycker “he says they made him quite comfortable at the prison. He has been to confession and he intends to go to communion every morning” (113). Querry, like Whisky priest of *The Power and the Glory*, sacrifices his life for the betterment of the people who are misguided.

Hence, it can be concluded that thorough this novel, Greene does advocate Catholicism but at the same time never fails to bring to the light the Catholic dogmas, superstitions and hypocrisies of the church authorities. He beautifully dramatizes the dilemma prevalent in people of the century who were more driven by the rationality than faith and spirituality. He puts human at the centre. This novel shows his firm belief in suffering — suffering is essential to understand life. In the absence of suffering, life has no meaning. The one who could not feel the suffering of other cannot be a catholic at all.

#### **IV. Conclusion: Secular and Religious selves of Graham Greene**

Greene's novels are undoubtedly brimmed with catholic theme. But after the close analysis of his three novels mentioned above, it can be said that he does advocate Catholicism but does not advocate catholic dogmas and belief. He seems very much critical of such dogmas and beliefs. Moreover, his novels help to see the follies and weaknesses of Catholicism and the priests. Catholicism is deep rooted in his mind which is evident from his novels. He talks about suffering disease, sin, hatred, love, redemption and jealousy. Through his novels, he tries to restore faith in Christianity and provides deeper insight into Christianity. He redefines love, hatred, sin and suffering in new light.

Greene advocates humanistic Catholicism. For him love and hatred, happiness and suffering and sin and redemption are not binary oppositions — he views them as part of human feelings which are interrelated. His novels show how there is always a possibility for redemption even for a sinner. He does not only associate love, goodness and happiness with godly qualities but also views hatred, suffering and evil as something which has been given by the same god. In fact, one can understand love better only after experiencing hatred; one can truly feel happiness only after going through suffering. For him love, hatred, suffering, sin, sacrifice, jealousy and kindness are all human qualities and thus godly too because for Greene God is merciful and full of love for His people.

Through these three novels, Greene shows that material prosperity never guarantees true happiness. One can get salvation or redemption by feeling others suffering and sense of sacrifice. Happiness is not in material gain happiness lies in regaining faith and belief in God. Because without faith and belief one suffers from spiritual crisis and as a result loses meaning in life. whisky priest initially could not



find true happiness and lives his life as a coward but the time he realizes that he is supposed to live for people who find divine qualities in him, he repents for his wrongs deeds and devotes his life to people's service. His revival of faith makes him bold and happily sacrifices life for god as well as the people. Similarly, Sarah, a modern woman of London, who does not believe in Christianity, indulges into extra marital affair with Query but finds no happiness even in such affair. But when she starts believing that it was the God who saved Query's life during a bomb attack, she regains faith in God happily sacrifices her life and love for Query in order to achieve a higher form of love — divine love.

Whiskey Priest, the main character of *the Power and the Glory*, is a man initially shown in fallen state, Sarah of *The End of the Affair*, is an adulterous, and Bendrix of *A Burnt-out Case* is a man suffering from spiritual crisis. These characters are representative figures of modern world. Through whiskey Priest's redemption and sacrifice at the end, Sarah' spiritual redemption and attainment of divine love and Bendrix's restoration of faith, Greene strongly asserts his views that every person is capable of getting God's grace and forgiveness. For Greene, true Christian is the one who is devoted to the service of humanity and can understand other feelings.

Having read many research articles and books written on Graham Greene and his literary works, I came to a conclusion that Graham Greene can be read as an ambivalent Catholic. His views on Catholicism are contradictory and thus ambivalent. He is divided between his religious self and secular self. This is reflected in all three novels used for this dissertation. In *The Power and the Glory*, whiskey priest represents Greene's religious self which ultimately find peace and redemption by sacrificing his life for poor people. On the other, Lieutenant, who fights against the religion and joins a mission of making his state free of all Catholics, represents

Greene's secular self. Similarly, in *The End of the Affair*, Sarah, though indulges in extramarital affairs, speaks Greene's religious voice and Bendrix stands for his secular self. In *A Burnt-out Case*, Querry represents Greene's religious self, though he is shown as an atheist in the novel, he suffers from spiritual crisis and wanders in African village to gain spiritual redemption. Dr Colin other the hand is a true representative of Greene's secular self, who is more concerned with people's suffering and pain.

In short, it can be said that Greene's internal conflict between his religious self and secular self is shown through his novels. The conflict between whiskey priest and lieutenant, Bendrix and Sarah and Querry and Dr Colin is nothing more than the internal conflict of the writer which he fails to resolve completely.

Thus, his position as a catholic writer seems ambivalent. He could not decide between rational and emotional self. His faith in Catholicism reflects the expression of his heart but his rational mind does not let him completely be blindfolded to those feelings, and compel him raise questions over his own faith. He is not a true believer of Catholicism only mere faithful catholic. Kindness and compassion for humans bring out his humanitarian self and subdue the religious self of Greene. This continuous conflict between secular self and religious self, between rational self and emotional self, between ideal world and real world put him in ambivalent situation.

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