

Preface

Graham Greene, one of the most prolific and talented writers of modern times, is recognized as an eminent Catholic novelist. The universal appeal of Greene to readers of varied interests is the ample proof that he is primarily an artist. Critical estimations of Graham Greene centre on the obsessions attached to Catholicism, the theme of betrayal, lost innocence and corrupt human nature. Greene exemplifies the spiritual struggle of the modern man and hence his relevance as a novelist exceeds beyond the particular form of his novels and they transcend all the barriers of theological frontiers. Greene's fictional characters hover between the damnation and salvation, an ambivalent idea which embraces his whole life. Analyzing his major Catholic novels – *The Heart of the Matter*, *The Power and the Glory* and *The End of the Affair* – in particular, the proposed study tries to explore the themes of suffering and sanctification as exposed in the novels by making a Biblical parallelism.

Much has been written about Greene's relationship to his Catholic faith and its privileged place within his fictional works, especially in his Catholic novels. The present study explores the Biblical parallelism in the select novels of Graham Greene on the realm of spiritual conflict, where the very nature of suffering which leads the human soul through the path of progress to God. Chapter one charts Greene's life and works in the light of the conflict between good and evil and serves the introduction to the study. Chapter Two examines Greene's view of the mental agony suffered by

Scobie, the protagonist of *The Heart of the Matter*, before committing suicide and compares with the inner struggle of Samson, the last Judge of Israel, the Biblical model selected for the study. It is an analysis of the conflict of the individual against the Orthodox religious conception. This parallel study helps the reader to realize the willingness of the characters to die for others, accepting some sort of martyrdom in their life situations. Chapter Three discusses the spiritual conflict of the whisky priest during the time of religious persecution in comparison to the Biblical model, King David. Chapter Four assesses Greene's real sense of sinner-saint paradox, in his novel, *The End of the Affair* which leads the readers into the heights of sublime level and of the celestial bliss. The theme of suffering and sanctification has been analyzed in the study. Chapter Five considers the present study and evaluates the observations done earlier. Summing up, the last chapter tries to establish that Greene, though apparently expressed his disbelief, was a staunch Catholic to the last. He led a Catholic life and surrendered himself to the infinite mercy of God. Greene was not confined by the official teachings of the Catholic Church as he had his own views on man, sin, grace, freedom, redemption, damnation, suffering and salvation. Greene may very well have the same opinion of Thomas Merton that: "It is only the infinite mercy and love of God that has prevented us from tearing ourselves to pieces and destroying His entire creation long ago." The creative achievements of Greene as a Catholic writer may be reflected through the challenging task of plumbing the depths of evil in a fallen world and exploring sin to enhance the possibilities of salvation or seeing through the "appalling strangeness" of God's mercy.

It is God who comes in search of man, while man attempts to hide himself

behind creatures from the divine pursuit. Greene's preoccupation with the Biblical themes, where his perplexed mind meets new life, is revealed through the characters of Henry Scobie, the whisky priest and Sarah Miles. In connection with the spiritual struggle of man, and faith in the religion, Greene says, "It is a mystery which can't be destroyed . . . even by the Church . . . a certain mystery". This mysterious way of God is reflected in Greene characters in an explicable manner by the author. This very fact which is applicable to the present world, attracted my attention and inspired me to land upon the title: "Suffering and Sanctification: A Study of Biblical Parallelism in Select Novels of Graham Greene".

First and foremost, I thank God Almighty, who showered His abundant graces upon me, and strengthened me to cross each step successfully.

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Unlike Milton, who was anxious to explain the ways of God to man, Greene is eager to demonstrate that the ways of God must remain inexplicable.

- Frederic R Karl, *A Reader's Guide* .