

**T.C.  
ISTANBUL AYDIN UNIVERSITY  
INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**



**JOURNEY TOWARDS NATURAL SELF:  
A KIERKEGAARDIAN ANALYSIS OF GRAHAM GREENE'S FAITH  
FICTION**

**Ph.D. THESIS**

**Emrah PEKSOY**

**English Language and Literature  
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**Thesis Advisor: Prof. Dr. Hatice Gönül UÇELE**

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18/06/2019

**T.C.**  
**İSTANBUL AYDIN ÜNİVERSİTESİ**  
**SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ MÜDÜRLÜĞÜ**  
**DOKTORA TEZ ONAY BELGESİ**

Enstitümüz İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Anabilim Dalı, İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Doktora Programı Y1314.620008 numaralı öğrencisi Emrah PEKSOY'un "JOURNEY TOWARDS NATURAL SELF KIERKEGAARDIAN ANALYSIS OF GRAHAM GREENE'S FAITH FICTION" adlı doktora tez çalışması Enstitümüz Yönetim Kurulunun 16/04/2019 tarih ve 2019/8 sayılı kararı ile oluşturulan jüri tarafından *oybirliği* ile Doktora tezi olarak *kabul* edilmiştir.

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Prof. Dr. Ragıp Kutay KARACA

Enstitü Müdürü



## **DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that all information in this thesis document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results, which are not original to this thesis.

**Emrah PEKSOY**



*To my dear wife Ayşe Nur and little daughter Nil,*



## FOREWORD

The seeds of this study were planted during my undergraduate years in METU when our British Novel professor assigned me to read *Brighton Rock* and write a reflection paper on it. I remember how I struggled so hard to change it to an ‘easier’ book from a ‘more famous’ writer for whom I can find more reference materials. I read it, wrote the paper and passed with AA. But how would I know the book would stuck in my imagination and I would remember every detail in it with vividness that is more than light-hearted nostalgia? Indeed, I think Greene has such a power on his readers resulting either from the gravity of his themes or from his masterful story-telling skills; it is hard to tell. It did convince me, though, who but likes science fiction, computer games, horror and detective fiction, to develop a passion for him.

The same is true for my dealings with Kierkegaard. I encountered his name when I read somewhere that Lukács extensively read his books and even kept them on his bedside before his death. It was just a trivia, I thought, but also an interesting match. When I googled it, the first thing that came up really got me. He was briefly saying that ‘inner’ and ‘outer’ are different things. He was referring to the age as the age of ‘assistant professors’ whose work and beliefs do not match. We, assistant professors, work on something without truly believing in it. Life, religion, philosophy and thought are not something you can speculate in a disinterested fashion. Philosophers, writers, journalists give their ideas without really believing in them. It is then that the close connection between Greene and Kierkegaard made itself felt in my imagination. They both lived according to their beliefs without considering the nullifying effects of the ‘public’ opinion. We are all the results of our own historical conditions; we eat the way the society tells us to do, we believe the things the public forces us to believe. Yet, they did not do so. They upheld their beliefs for the sake of being ridiculed, scorned and considered as the ‘black sheep’ of their societies. It was then that I decided to look deeper into their lives and thoughts, and this is how this project came to life.

This belief had ramifications though. Reading one of most difficult philosophers in history and trying to understand religious musings of a writer with whom I do not share religious beliefs were the greatest ones. Nothing is impossible with valuable people around supporting and believing you. Any worthy academic work requires a tremendous effort and time to be sacrificed. But the result is more than satisfying. When everything is over and you are happy about what you have done, it is worth millions.

Here I want to give my sincere gratitude to people who helped me during this challenging process. The first one is to my respected advisor Prof. Dr. Hatice Gönül UÇELE without whose valuable feedback I would be lost by now under mountains of books. She encouraged and supported me even when I started losing hope for the project. With her tolerant manner, friendly attitude and constructive approach, she easily managed to keep me on track. Looking back to first drafts of this thesis, I cannot but help admire her professionalism or the way how she directed me to the

right path. Thank you. You are an inspiration. I consider myself lucky if I can manage to be like you.

And to some of the esteemed thesis committee members, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ferma LEKESİZALIN, Asst. Prof. Dr. Yıldray ÇEVİK, Asst. Prof. Dr. Berna KÖSEOĞLU, for their valuable feedback and encouragement.

And to my colleagues Özhan HARMAOĞLU and Abdil Celal YAŞAMALI in Foreign Languages Department. You are great friends. I will always appreciate your kind, unrequited friendship.

And special thanks to Assoc. Prof. Dr. Gillian Mary Elizabeth ALBAN for her diligent manner, Dr. Gordon MARSHALL for his complaisant attitude and again Prof. Dr. C. Günzeli İŞÇİ for her passionate way of teaching. These are what makes a teacher a good one. I always consider myself lucky for having the chance to take courses from them.

And to my dear family; my father, my mother, my brothers and sister. You are the ones that make me who I am. Thank you for your endless love and support in any circumstance.

And to my little daughter Nil and beloved wife Ayşe Nur. You showed me what is important in life. Without your unconditional love and support, I would not have completed this study. You put up with my tempers and raised me on my feet when I was about to give up. Knowing that you are always there for me is the thing that encouraged me more than anything.

**June, 2019**

**Emrah PEKSOY**

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## ABBREVIATIONS

- CA** :The Concept of Anxiety. Translated by Reidar Thomte. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1980.
- CI** :The Concept of Irony. Translated by Howard and Edna Hong. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1989.
- CUP** :Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments. Translated by Howard and Edna Hong. 2 vols. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1992.
- E/O I - E/O II** :Either/Or. Translated by Howard and Edna Hong. 2 vols. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1987.
- EUD** :Eighteen Upbuilding Discourses. Translated by Howard and Edna H. Hong, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press 1992.
- FSE** :For Self-Examination. Translated by Howard and Edna Hong. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990.
- FT** : Fear and Trembling; Repetition. Translated by Howard and Edna Hong. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1983.
- JFY** :Judge for Yourself!. Translated by Howard and Edna Hong. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990.
- JP** :Kierkegaard's Journals and Notebooks, vols. 1–10. Translated by Howard and Edna Hong. Eds Bruce H. Kirmmse, Niels Jørgen Cappelørn, Alastair Hannay, George Pattison, Jon Stewart. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2015.
- PC** :Practice in Christianity. Translated by Howard and Edna Hong. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991.
- PF** :Philosophical Fragments; Johannes Climacus. Translated by Howard and Edna Hong. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1985.
- PV** :The Point of View including On My Work as an Author, The Point of View for My Work as an Author, and Armed Neutrality. Translated by Howard and Edna Hong. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press. 2009.
- SLW** :Stages on Life's Way. Translated by Howard and Edna Hong. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988.
- SUD** :The Sickness Unto Death. Translated by Howard and Edna Hong. Princeton, N.Y.: Princeton University Press, 1983.
- TA** :Two Ages: The Age of Revolution and the Present Age. A Literary Review. Translated by Howard and Edna Hong. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2009.
- WL** :Works of Love. Translated by Howard and Edna Hong. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1998.



## JOURNEY TOWARDS NATURAL SELF: A KIERKEGAARDIAN ANALYSIS OF GRAHAM GREENE'S FAITH FICTION

### ABSTRACT

Being a self and attaining authentic selfhood is at the heart of Graham Greene's fiction. Especially in his religious novels he traces what it means to live an authentic life with meaning and explores the various ways of attaining natural selfhood. Yet, considering that Greene ends his novels with no clear ends and definitive results, it can be argued that he experiments with different possibilities of selfhood and lets his readers choose the right portrayal of the ideal selfhood. In the light of this information, this study argues that Graham Greene's religious quartet – *Brighton Rock* (1938), *The Power and The Glory* (1940), *The Heart of The Matter* (1948) and *The End of The Affair* (1951) – collectively depicts a gradual, chronological formation of an ideal self. They act complementary to each other, and develop and further the main agenda where the previous one leaves off. Thus, as each novel comes to a close, Greene's idea of natural selfhood is matured and the last novel depicts a fully-developed, perfected portrayal of natural self.

Moving from this argument, this study associates Graham Greene's religious novels to Danish existentialist philosopher Soren Kierkegaard's theory of existential stages as outlined in his major pseudonymous works. I argue that each major character in Greene's faith fiction adopts a Kierkegaardian mode of life, experiments its possibility and moves on to the next stage until the natural selfhood is established. Each major character – *Pinkie*, *the Whisky Priest*, *Scobie* and *Sarah* – resides in the aesthetic, the ethical and the religious stages of life respectively. The self starts its journey with Pinkie as the embodiment of immediately sensuous selfhood in the aesthetic stage. Then it moves to the ethical stage with its strict commitment to ethical rules and societal norms characterized by the Whisky Priest and Scobie. Finally, it reaches its full maturity in the religious stage represented by Sarah by resigning from all transient elements.

I first introduce the basic concepts of Kierkegaard's idea of self and explain each stage of life with references to his major works and secondary literature. I create an existential reading framework and define its major concepts to be used for close reading. Later, I analyse each novel with the help of the framework introduced with the close reading methodology adopted.

This study makes two major contributions to the literature: 1) Kierkegaard's influence on Graham Greene's major works is contextualized. The reciprocity of themes, arguments and discourse presentation style are highlighted in detail in each work. Greene's imaginative mind as he creates his major characters has been greatly influenced by Kierkegaard's existential theory of stages. 2) A novel reading framework is introduced based on Kierkegaard's theory of stages. By extracting the key concepts from each stage, I outline an existential close reading strategy.

**Keywords:** *Greene, Kierkegaard, self, stages, existentialism, natural selfhood.*



## DOĞAL BENLİĞİN İNŞASI: GRAHAM GREENE'İN DİNİ ROMANLARININ KIERKEGAARD FELSEFESİNE GÖRE ANALİZİ

### ÖZET

Benlik haline gelme ve benliğe ulaşma temaları Graham Greene hikayeciliğinin temelini oluşturmaktadır. Greene, dini romanlarında hakiki bir hayat sürmenin ne anlama geldiğini ve benliği elde etmenin çeşitli yollarını bulmaya çalışır. Ancak, romanlarının açık uçlu bitmesi ve kesin bir sonuç bildirmemesini göz önünde bulundurduğumuzda, romancının çeşitli benlik türlerinin olabilirliğini test ettiğini ve okurlarından ideal benlik tanımlarını kendilerinin seçmesini beklediğini iddia edebiliriz. Bu bilgiler doğrultusunda, bu çalışmada Graham Greene'nin dini dörtlü romanlarını oluşturan Brighton Rock (1938), The Power and The Glory (1940), The Heart of The Matter (1948) ve The End of The Affair (1951) romanlarının toplu bir şekilde ideal benliğin aşamalı oluşumunu betimlediği iddia edilmektedir. Bir önceki romanın kaldığı yerden devam ederek ana fikri ilerlettiği ve bu şekilde birbirlerini tamamlayıcı bir rol üstlendikleri söylenebilir. Böylece, her bir romanın sonunda, Greene'nin doğal benlik düşüncesi biraz daha olgunlaşmakta ve son romanda, doğal benliğin tamamen gelişmiş, kusursuz bir tasviri verilmektedir.

Bu iddiadan hareketle, bu çalışma, Graham Greene'nin dini romanlarını Danimarkalı varoluşçu filozof Soren Kierkegaard'ın takma adla yazdığı temel metinlerinde ana hatlarıyla belirtilen 'benliğin varoluş aşamaları teorisi' ile ilişkilendirmektedir. Greene'nin inanç kurgusundaki her bir ana karakterin Kierkegaard'ın varoluş alanlarından birisini benimsediği, yaşayarak olabilirliğini test ettiği ve ideal doğal benlik oluşuncaya kadar bir sonraki aşamaya ilerlediği savunulmaktadır. Söz konusu romanlardaki ana karakterlerden Pinkie, Whiskey Priest, Scobie ve Sarah, sırasıyla estetik, etik ve dinsel alanlarda yaşamaktadırlar. Benliğin yolculuğu, estetik aşamada anlık duyuşsal benliğin temsil edildiği karakter olan Pinkie ile başlar. Sonra, Whiskey Priest ve Scobie tarafından temsil edilen ve etik kurallara ve toplumsal normlara sıkı bağlılığı gerektiren etik aşamaya geçer. Son olarak, tüm fani unsurlardan feragat edildiği ve Sarah'ın temsil ettiği dini aşamada tam olgunluğa ulaşır.

İlk olarak, temel metinler ve ikincil kaynaklara referans verilerek Kierkegaard'ın benlik fikrinin temel kavramları tanıtilip varoluş aşamalarının her bir durağı açıklanmıştır. Burada varoluşsal bir okuma çerçevesi oluşturulup sonraki bölümlerde eserlerin yakın okuması için kullanılacak temel kavramlar tanımlanır. Daha sonra, her bir roman, bu benimsenen yakın okuma metodolojisi ile analiz edilir.

Bu çalışma ile literatüre iki önemli katkı yapılmaktadır: 1) Kierkegaard'ın Graham Greene'nin en önemli eserleri üzerindeki etkisi bağlama oturtuluyor. Her iki yazarın kullandığı temalar, argümanlar ve söylem sunum tarzı her eserde ayrıntılı olarak açıklanarak, Greene'nin roman yaratıcı zihninin, eserlerin yaratılması esnasında Kierkegaard'ın varoluşsal aşama teorisinden büyük ölçüde etkilendiği belirtilmiştir. 2) Kierkegaard'ın varoluş aşamaları teorisine dayanan yeni bir okuma çerçevesi tanıtilir. Her bir aşamadaki anahtar kavramlar çıkarılarak, varoluşsal yakın okuma stratejisi ana hatlarıyla belirtilir.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** Greene, Kierkegaard, benlik, varoluş aşamaları, varoluşçuluk, doğal benlik.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This thesis is a thematic analysis of Graham Greene's prominent religious novels – *Brighton Rock* (1938), *The Power and The Glory* (1940), *The Heart of The Matter* (1948), *The End of The Affair* (1951) – from the perspective of Kierkegaard's existential philosophy and theory of stages. The thesis consists of two parts. First, the religio-existential problem and theory of stages as discussed in Kierkegaard's major works such as *Either/Or* (1988a, 1988b), *Fear and Trembling* (1983a), and *Stages in One's Life Way* (1988c) is discussed with its features, development, traits, and tenets. In the second part of the thesis, the novels are analysed within the boundaries of Kierkegaardian stages of existence. The main argument here is that each of Greene's characters embodies a Kierkegaardian existential period in one's life one has to dwell for some time and move on until the pure self is established. I argue that Pinkie in *Brighton Rock*, Scobie in *The Heart of The Matter*, the Whisky Priest in *The Power and the Glory*, and Sarah in *The End of The Affair* represent 'aesthetic, ethic, and religious' existential stages respectively. Graham Greene makes his characters embark on a journey through Kierkegaard's stages to find their natural selves and existence in their melancholy. In fact, theirs is a holy quest, a pilgrimage to achieve the concept of Kierkegaard's 'single individual.' All four of Greene's characters in these novels which are referred to as "the gold standard" (Bosco 2005, p. 3) of religious fiction form one unified, natural self at the end of the last book. In fact, each successive character acts as complementary to each other as if the same person is traveling from aesthetic through ethical to the religious stage until pure 'self' is established.

Graham Greene and Soren Kierkegaard's ideas on faith show parallelism and both seem to have concerns about moral and religious issues. In her thesis *Graham Greene, Soren Kierkegaard, and The Discourse of Belief*, Salvatore (1984) showed that the writings of Kierkegaard can be regarded as an analogue to Greene's work. However, her focus was on the discourse strategies employed during their creative process on faith and moral issues. She argued that each author shows a very similar

view of irony and applied this view to dialectical structures that they both employed in their works. While the thesis highlighted Kierkegaard's ambiguous relation with Greene on purely discourse level and meaning making strategies of both authors, it did not reflect much on their existentialist concerns and main themes reflected directly or indirectly. In addition, Salvatore (1984, p. ix) informs us that in a personal letter, Greene admitted that he was "a great admirer of Kierkegaard" and both underwent similar creative processes while producing their works. Though we will never know the nature of this 'admiration' – whether Greene was familiar with his works or he read his books at all<sup>1</sup> or it was a personal sympathy to the man – both men have a lot in common in terms of their authorship. Thus, moving from the assumption that Kierkegaard was Greene's philosopher-forefather in terms of his religious agenda, this study argues that religious themes in Greene's major faith fiction resemble Kierkegaard's existential philosophy, particularly his theory of stages. It is a thematic investigation of Graham Greene's early faith novels using Kierkegaard's existential approach to 'authentic self.' In particular, his theory of stages of existence in his writings and Greene's faith fiction is compared and explored in detail.

It is argued that the characters seamlessly reflect Kierkegaardian existentialism and religious view of the self. Pinkie in *Brighton Rock*, the Whisky Priest in *The Power and The Glory*, Scobie in *The Heart of The Matter* and Sarah in *The End of The Affair* are pilgrims trying to find their natural selves and each one resides in an existential stage proposed by Kierkegaard. At the end of the journey, they become a unified self. This study has both theoretical and practical purposes. Theoretically, it aims to make a detailed explanation of Kierkegaardian existentialism. Kierkegaard's existential ideas are explored to lay the foundation of the theory of stages leading to his authentic religious existentialism. The research is significant in that it demonstrates the application of Kierkegaard's existential philosophy to the religious literature. Practically, it tries to uncover the religo-existential similarities between

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<sup>1</sup> Even if he read Kierkegaard's works, he must have done so after he produced his major religious fiction. When first translations of Kierkegaard began to appear in English after 1940s, Greene had already proved his legacy as an established author and published *Brighton Rock*, *The Power and The Glory*. Furthermore, the translations were not issued in chronological order – *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* and *Fear and Trembling* were the first to be translated and *Either/Or* was translated in 1943-4. Thus, it is highly unlikely that Greene read these works before or during writing his major works, which are the topics of this study, and he was directly influenced by them.

Greene's fiction and Kierkegaard's theory of stages in the narrative structure, the plotline, and major characters of the texts in question. Though the reading method and content choice is arbitrary, and they seem strictly limited to Greene's religious fiction which is purely Catholic and Kierkegaard's theological philosophy which is mainly Lutheran, this study acts as a major contribution to literary criticism methodology in that it provides a general framework to make an existential reading of literary text regardless it is religious or secular. Considering Greene's repugnance on being classified as a 'Catholic novelist' (Bosco 2005, p. 157) but a novelist who happens to be Catholic, and Kierkegaard's pursuit of consistent, authentic existence irrespective of religion, the framework presented here becomes a novel practice to approach literary texts from an existential perspective. In *Ways of Escape (1980)*, for instance, Greene stresses that his Catholic characters and their Catholic ideas were not necessarily his. He is inclined to bestow "his characters" with "a larger and deeper moral capacity" (Baldrige 2000, p. 10); hence, the books' general agenda is beyond upholding Catholic themes on the surface. While Greene depicts the general 'human condition' and existential 'heart of the matter,' Kierkegaard proves the futility of 'given' or 'received' world views against 'attained' subjective life projects. Indeed, it is worth noting the fact that most existentialist philosophers such as Heidegger, Sartre, Camus, Beauvoir, Levinas and Wittgenstein were influenced by Kierkegaard<sup>2</sup> and based their philosophy taking Kierkegaard as a critical vantage point. As Evans (2009, p. 16) claims, Kierkegaard's thought has proven to be "interesting to those who have little or no interest in his own religious faith"

This chapter is a methodological introduction to Kierkegaard's philosophy, and it lays the ground for a more advanced reading in the next chapters. First, the basic principles of Kierkegaard's thought are presented. The importance of having an authentic self in his thought is given with extensive references to his books and secondary literature. I explore its various definitions and their strong connection with each other. Kierkegaard's definition of 'the self' as an *ideal* to be attained, a *relation*, a *synthesis* and a *transition* from inauthenticity to authenticity is contextualized and

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<sup>2</sup> See Stewart, J. (ed.) (2012) *Kierkegaard's Influence on Philosophy: German and Scandinavian Philosophy*. Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate Publishing.

Stewart, J. (ed.) (2012) *Kierkegaard's Influence on Philosophy: Francophone Philosophy*. Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate Publishing.

Stewart, J. (ed.) (2012) *Kierkegaard's Influence on Philosophy: Anglophone Philosophy*. Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate Publishing.

briefly explained. Then I explore how these definitions relate and lead to his theory of stages. In the second part, moving from these definitions, I briefly explore each stage of existence as they are presented mainly in *Either/Or I* (1988a), *Either/Or II* (1988b) and *Fear and Trembling* (1983a) with side readings from his other seminal works. The key concepts in each stage are illustrated. *Immediacy* and *reflection* in the aesthetic stage; *choice*, *freedom* and *duty* in the ethical stage; and *paradox*, *absurd* and *silence* in the religious stage are deciphered to create an existentialist reading methodology based on each stage of existence.

In *Chapter One*, a close reading of the Greene's religious thriller *Brighton Rock* is done based on the Kierkegaard's first existential stage – the aesthetic stage. Greene skilfully experiments with the idea of 'the metaphysical implications of crime' and carefully fuses carnal and religious worlds in a story of violence and murder. Pinkie, the protagonist of the novel, a mob leader with his child-like appearance, lives in an ambiguous territory between good and evil. Like Kierkegaard's aesthetic individual, he is a lonely wanderer desperately looking for a route in his life. He has a strange belief of God and sin in that he takes up the role of an inquisitor who wants to punish everyone on his way. His belief in God culminates in only one dimension of the religion: the punishment. He doesn't believe in the existence of Heaven and redemption. Therefore, his faith is based solely on penalty for crimes. For this reason, he has no commitment to anybody let alone to a spiritual being. He represents the perfect model of Kierkegaard's aesthetic individual. The metaphorical travel of Greene's unified self begins with Pinkie's reasons for being a castaway in the society. Since he seeks immediate pleasure from all acts, even his daily activities make him feel bored. His reason for not wanting to marry Rose is because he dreads the repeated acts during the marriage. Later, unsatisfied Pinkie is transformed into a reflective aesthete who becomes aware of the futility in his existence and looks for more refined aesthetic enjoyments in life. Unable to find a cure for his existential crisis at this stage, he commits suicide to experiment with another stage, which symbolizes a metaphorical leap of faith towards a higher existence.

In *Chapter Two*, the search for natural selfhood which Pinkie started continues with the Whisky Priest in *The Power and The Glory* and Scobie in *The Heart of the Matter*. Although Chapter Two consists of two parts, each dealing with two novels separately, the whole chapter employs the second stage in Kierkegaard's

existentialism – the ethical stage. Heroes in both novels are also travellers seeking their identity through the ethical categories of choice, freedom and duty. Unlike Pinkie in the previous chapter, they are aware of the existential dilemma in their quest in that they are both devout Catholics. However, they experience a feeling of an *impasse* with their fidelity. They are true pilgrims in that they look for their true selves behind their own religious masks. The hero in *The Power and The Glory* is a priest who knows all about the religion. Contrary to other priests, he drinks to the excess, has a daughter from a sexual relationship and plans to escape from the country instead of practicing the religion. Indeed, he is crushed under these faults and continually repents. Just like an ethical individual, he is committed to the moral teaching of the church and wants to live a spiritual life. Thus, he sets off on a journey from one side of the country to the other to find the true revelation on the road with his radical choices, impenitent freedom and absolute duty for other. On the other hand, Scobie in *The Heart of the Matter* is tested with his marriage and his adulterous relationship. His loyalty to his marriage vow and his pity for his recently widowed mistress leave him in a moral limbo. Just like Kierkegaard's ethical individual, he is completely committed to his marriage and is ready to get pleasure from the repeated acts with his wife since he doesn't want to be isolated. Although he doesn't feel enjoyment from such a life, he agrees to live a moral life as instructed by his beliefs. However, his adultery creates an imbalance in this superficially perfect life. His conscience and belief do not meet on common grounds thus, he is forced to implement a radical version of Kierkegaardian freedom. Therefore, he also becomes an escapee – a pilgrim to find his true self. However, he finds the solution in committing suicide and it becomes his escape route from his unfulfilled self.

In *Chapter Three*, Graham Greene ends the religious travel of his seeker of God with the main character *Sarah* in *The End of the Affair*. He clearly marks the end of his Catholic cycle since he does not so plainly refer to religious concepts in his later novels. He seems to be bidding farewell to his vocation as a spiritual experimenter. The book is unique in that it represents the culmination of 'the natural self' in one character, who seems to be suffering from the same religious pains as *Pinkie*, *the Whisky Priest* and *Scobie* (hate, love, and desire) throughout the book. Unlike them, she finds her true self by humbly submitting herself to God's will despite her adulterous and pagan relationship with Bendrix. Her 'leap' from the basest feelings

to absolute faith without an intermediary agent makes her the ultimate traveller in search of God. Within her sexual love, she enforces Kierkegaardian concepts of paradox, absurd and silence and she finds the true love – the love of God – in the end. Through *Sarah*, Greene completes the cycle of search by equipping her with all humane characteristics he showed in the previous novels and then by making her find her natural self in love. Just like Abraham’s journey to Mount Moriah to sacrifice his son, she sacrifices her profane love and desire by resignation and faith. In Kierkegaardian sense, she experiences a vertical ‘leap’ towards God, which the previous characters failed to achieve. Sarah is the perfect example of the religious self Kierkegaard described in his book *Fear and Trembling*. She becomes a ‘knight of faith’ just like Abraham by subordinating all ends to God.

### 1.1 Theory of Existential Stages in Kierkegaard’s Idea of Selfhood

Soren Kierkegaard traced the idea of ‘the single individual’<sup>3</sup> in his great tomes where he tried to find how to live an authentic life. If one wanted to summarize his voluminous authorship into a few words, these would be “that single individual” which he regarded as the “most decisive” feature of his writings and which he confessed to have led to disagreements with his contemporaries (Kierkegaard 1998, pp. 113-4). This theme is closely linked to his ideas on existence, authenticity, self and how life is synonymous with the notion of ‘natural self.’ In both senses, they essentially refer to a religious category and mean the highest level of existence and an absolute relationship to God to be attained.

The most significant investigations of the concept of ‘self’ are explored in *The Concept of Anxiety* (1981), *Either/Or I-II* (1988a), *The Sickness unto Death* (1983b), *Fear and Trembling* (1983a), and several other edifying discourses, each of which

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<sup>3</sup> The term is quite fitting for Kierkegaard himself considering his various other names in literature, some of which are: *Danish gadfly, father of existentialism, the melancholy Dane, single individual, proto-modernist, concrete philosopher, anti-philosopher*.  
See Mooney, E. F. (2013) *On Søren Kierkegaard: Dialogue, Polemics, Lost Intimacy, and Time*. Ashgate Publishing Limited. p. 3;  
See Baggini, J. (2002) 'Jean-Paul Sartre: Existentialism and Humanism (1947)', *Philosophy: Key Texts*. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, pp. 115-133;  
See Martin, H. V. (1950) *Kierkegaard, the Melancholy Dane*. Epworth Press;  
See Weinstein, P. M. (2018) *Unknowing: The Work of Modernist Fiction*. Cornell University Press. pp. 2-3.;  
See Sartre, J. P. (1972) 'The Singular Universal', in Thompson, J. (ed.) *Kierkegaard: A Collection of Critical Essays*: Garden City, N.Y., Anchor Books. pp. 230-66.

explores different features of the self. While *Either/Or* explores the self depicted as an absolute decision, leading a person to make a choice between either an aesthetic or ethical lifestyle, followed by the religious existence explored in *Fear and Trembling* and his other signed books, in *The Concept of Anxiety* the pseudonymous author Vigilius Haufniensis explores the self in terms of a transition related to the phenomenon of anxiety. On the other hand, in *Sickness unto Death*, where the natural self is theoretically explained in detail, it is contextualized as the antithesis of despair and sin and a ‘self-less’ individual is described as “spiritlessness.” In all these works, the self is seen as the highest form of existence, a *goal* to be attained<sup>4</sup>, a *relation*<sup>5</sup>,

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<sup>4</sup> Becoming self is at the core of Kierkegaard’s existentialism and it is considered the highest task in life. He gives becoming self much importance by stating that “next to God there is nothing as eternal as a self” (1983b, p. 53). Thus, the meaning of existence as an authentic human being is uncovered only by becoming a self. As Roberts argues, “the process of self-becoming consists in the continual struggle of bringing the poles of the self into equilibrium” (2006, p. 24). It is and should be the aim of all individuals in the world and one must live up to attain this highest form of existence. Those who do not shape their lives to be individuals are destined to be non-existent slaves of their age, family, wealth etc. Those who distance themselves from the duty of becoming a self or who cannot withstand this heavy burden become a regular part of the material world. They are driven into the abyss of no-self. Since they lost their identities as spirits, their presence in the physical world does not make any difference at all and they lead “a merely vegetative life” (Kierkegaard 1983b, p. 45). The most dangerous problem with this kind of existence, Kierkegaard posits, is that they are ignorant of their despair or have no idea that they live inside it. He likens this situation to someone devoured by consumption. At the last phases of the illness, “he feels well, considers himself to be in excellent health, and perhaps seems to others to radiate health” (Kierkegaard 1983b, p. 45). However, he is dying of despair or spiritlessness. Thus, one must be in continuous relation with finding his authentic identity as it can incessantly oscillate between despair and faith. This declaration transforms the concept of the self into a goal, an objective and a life-long pursuit of an ideal. Kierkegaard argues that “Every human being is primitively intended to be a self, destined to become himself and as such every self certainly is angular” (1983b, p. 33). For this, it requires a perpetual effort to form it into a shape – to make it concrete, that is, the realization of the ideal in one’s being. As Elrod maintains, “one can with justification say that Kierkegaard’s life and authorship were devoted to the fulfillment of this task” (2015, p. 36).

<sup>5</sup> The second proposition Kierkegaard offers on the task of attaining selfhood is its being a relation either to itself or to another force outside one’s self. Glenn argues that “everything about the self is subject to an independent variable—namely, the stance which the self takes toward it” (1995, p. 11). To be an individual self is to be so constituted as to have the capacity to act and feel with a high degree of social independence in Kierkegaard’s philosophy. In *The Point of View*, he confesses that he chose to be in opposition with ‘the established order, his contemporaries and the crowd’ for the sake of becoming “by oneself before God,” that is, to become “the single individual” (Kierkegaard, 1998, p. 18). In his various other writings as well as in *Two Ages* (1978) Kierkegaard criticizes the modern man for being insensitive to the task of becoming self and being a part of the ‘crowd’ rather than an individual. What Kierkegaard offers against this attack from the public is that the self needs either to establish itself or to be established by other (1983b, p. 13). The first one basically means that one needs to have an intimate relation with its own self, for subjective experience is the truth in Kierkegaard’s philosophy. Therefore, one needs to have a strong bond with his or her inner capacities and powers. In *Either/Or II*, Judge William highlights “know[ing] yourself” as the main difference between ethical and aesthetic life-views. If the self knows its needs, desires, weaknesses, and capacities, it should be better armoured against other relations such as the crowd. On the other hand, the second proposition – self’s being established by another – refers to the notion of grounding your identity on something more powerful than individual’s own ‘self’ for the self alone is insufficient to attain its authentic existence. Kierkegaard’s concept of ‘single individual’ entails placing one’s

*synthesis*<sup>6</sup> of different concepts, and a *transition*<sup>7</sup> from non-existence to existence. Having an authentic self is and should be the aim of all individuals in the world and one must live up to attain this highest form of existence. For this, the self relates first itself to its own self and later to a higher being, for the self cannot build itself isolated from its own identity and a superior force. A natural selfhood does not exist in a vacuum but is formed by synthesizing the opposite forces. The physical, temporal, necessary conditions are merged with the psychical, eternal, possible elements present in individual's identity. Finally, the self makes a deliberate attempt,

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identity in relation to God and standing "before God" as true spirits; that is, the self relates to itself as an individual standing before God. As the individual is sinful, he must cope with this problem first by relating himself to himself and then to God, "for whom all things are possible" (Kierkegaard 1983b, p. 71). One must truly recognize his own identity by refining his soul by self-knowledge and stand as a 'single individual' before God. The self as a relation is the key concept in Kierkegaard's thought, for different stages of life are formed in relation to each other – aesthetic life in relation to desires, ethical in relation to moral duties, religious in relation to God, and each of these in relation to each other.

<sup>6</sup> The self is synthesis – the third proposition on natural selfhood proposed by Kierkegaard. He postulates that "[a] human being is a synthesis of the infinite and the finite, of the temporal and the eternal, of freedom and necessity, in short, a synthesis" in one place and "man [...] is a synthesis of psyche and body" in another place (Kierkegaard 1983b, pp. 13, 43) (Kierkegaard 1981, p. 85). He regards the concept of synthesis as a precondition of becoming human along with self as an ideal and relation. As Glenn argues, "the self's task is to give its existence a unifying meaning [...] without becoming merely abstract or stultifying" (1995, p. 9). The relation explained before takes a new form here. The self that relates itself to itself (chooses itself) or relates to God in contrast to 'the crowd' needs to move into a new kind of relational sphere: a new relation that is synthesis. Glenn maintains that "human existence is a paradox. A human being is neither god nor beast – yet is somehow like both" (1995, p. 6). Similarly, all human beings consist of material elements such as eating, sleeping, sexuality and so on along with psychical components such as mind, feeling, cognition and spirit. Body and soul need to be combined for an individual to become an authentic self. If one is not eager to achieve this, the demonic side in himself begins to flourish and seizes its selfhood. Therefore, one needs to be aware of his material elements and try to synthesize it with his spiritual qualities. Only this way can one become a single individual. To conclude, the authentic self is a balanced synthesis of psychical-physical, finite-infinite and necessity-possibility, each one of which tries to dominate one another in the battleground of 'selfhood.' This continuous struggle between them is one of the defining elements of the theory of stages.

<sup>7</sup> The self is transition or movement which highlights the self's constant process of becoming. Kierkegaard emphasizes the transition as a kind of "a breach of immanence, a leap" (1992b, p. 262). Transition, leap, movement, motion, change are the most prevalent metaphors in much of Kierkegaard's corpus. All his major pseudonymous writings are scattered with allusions to becoming as a struggle, way, or transition from inauthenticity to authenticity. In one of his journals written before he began creating his pseudonymous books, Kierkegaard says, "the category to which I intend to trace everything [...] is motion (kinesis), which is perhaps one of the most difficult problems in philosophy. In modern philosophy, it has been given another expression—namely, transition and mediation" (vol. 5, 1967, p. 5601). Transition is closely related with his concept of 'inwardness' which requires a metaphorical journey to be taken into one's mind. As he states in Judge For Yourself, the final aim of this path is to move the self "to oneself in self-knowledge and before God as nothing before him, yet infinitely, unconditionally engaged" (1991a, p. 104). The main objective of Kierkegaard's writing is directing the person into taking the inward journey towards natural existence – the religious personality. The term literally means a conscious movement from what is not actual to actual – an ideal which is described as 'transition from possibility to actuality.' According to Kierkegaard, faith needs to strengthen a person's self-consciousness. The change, transition, activity, or the movement towards self leads one to what he calls as crucial moments or stages on life's way, which takes place from aesthetic existence to ethical and then to religiousness.

progress or a leap to realize these qualities. Hence, it needs to be in constant movement to attain the natural selfhood. All these four related definitions form the backbone of Kierkegaard's theory of existential stages.

Without further elaboration on this issue and taking the literal meanings of these definitions, I now refer to Kierkegaard's categorization of stages where concept of self as an ideal to attain, a relation to a higher category, a synthesis of opposite poles and transition from inauthenticity to authenticity are contextualized and where everyone in society resides in their lifetime. Through his pseudonymous authors in *Either/Or* (1988a), *Fear and Trembling* (1983a), *Stages On Life's Way* (1988c) and *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (1992b), he holds that humans live in one or more of three different spheres of existence which are called the *aesthetic*, the *ethical* and the *religious*. In other words, if human travellers of the world want to be cured of their existential crisis and attain natural selfhood, they are to pursue one of these stations or stages during their journeys to find the Absolute Truth – the authentic selfhood. Since having the *selfhood* is a dynamic and evolving process, the necessity to proceed from inauthenticity to authenticity needs to be done in a repetitive fashion and the struggle for a better existence type needs to be pursued. As Elrod (2015, p. 69) maintains, this structure and movement “constitute[s] an abstract description of a process which occurs throughout the dialectical development of the self. It is the abstract form by which the self develops”.

An existing self is a dynamic, fluctuating, transforming concrete entity for which every moment in life presents itself as a unique opportunity. Becoming authentic “is something which touches [one's] personal life in a crucial way” (Malantschuk 2003, p. 120). Therefore, one needs “to order, shape, temper, inflame, control—in short, to produce an evenness in the soul, a harmony, which is the fruit of the personal virtues” (Kierkegaard 1988b, p. 259). It is constantly in a progression towards becoming and that creates an emotional response as well as active participation in life. As long as one lives, he makes a choice between several possibilities and acts accordingly. Thus, Kierkegaard's stages of existence as separate life-views emerge as the result of one's choice in life.

Thereby, the aesthetic, ethical and religious forms of life constitute the three distinct forms of existential possibilities that each person is required to choose and that determine a set of world views that prescribe certain ideals, motivations and

behaviour. Since they follow a developmental progress and they are considered "progressive plateaus on a mountainside" which every individual should "ascend if he would attain to the highest point and experience the *summum bonum*" (Pojman 1984, p. 121), they are generally referred to as 'stages.' As a person develops a more matured consciousness over time, these stages are imagined as vertical developments of identity. It is a general tendency to consider one life view less developed or more exalted compared to other life views. Hence, individuals residing in one of the stages might elevate themselves into a more developed stage or might fall back to a less evolved stage as a result of their conscious choices. The progress is not a physical growth but the result of one's deliberate attempt to move to a higher ground. It is also essential to note that these stages do not have clear-cut boundaries. As mentioned above, the self may relate itself to other forces or synthesize contradictory elements to form a new identity. That is, the ethical sphere, for example, does not wholly reject aesthetic life view, might borrow some of its motivations from it. As such, the religious stage conflates both aesthetic and ethical categories, but its impetus is religious ideals.

To elaborate, in the aesthetic stage the individual bases his existence on immediate sensate feelings, spontaneous desires and momentary satisfaction. Having no inward projection in the self's development, its whole development expands from external world of possibilities. The individual in this stage is a drifter in the world with no inward or outward objective to attain. Unlike the aesthete's vegetative life, in the ethical stage the self reveals itself as grounded upon other forces than itself – like family, friends, society, state, religion etc. With a strong commitment to these elements, the ethicist creates ideals, commitments, values for himself to live for and to stick itself to. Yet, Kierkegaard holds the belief that these stages lead one to despair and non-existence in the end though they have features which cannot be negated, even when they respect universal values like friendship or duty to society. The religious stage, however, combines both finite and infinite, physical and psychical, actual and possible elements in its scope. Thus, it acts as the ultimate right path of the natural self. In *Sickness Unto Death*, he compares existence as an apartment with its occupants<sup>8</sup>. The basement belongs to the aesthetic person, the

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<sup>8</sup> "Imagine a house with a basement, first floor, and second floor planned so that there is or is supposed to be a social distinction between the occupants according to floor. Now, if what it means to

ethical lives on the first floor, and the religious person is on the second floor. Everyone wants to have a moral life but also secretly wants to satiate their basest desires and passions. Human and existence thrive in the context of its self-choice, freedom, and possibilities. Stages represent the confirmation of the dynamic nature of human beings in that they choose to live life a certain way. Elrod (2015, p. 74) refers to each successive stage as the "higher degree of consciousness and freedom" one tries to attain during his search for authentic self.

Kierkegaard adopts a rather unorthodox philosophical method of communication to expound the theory of stages. Normally we would expect a philosophical work to defend a single, coherent thesis that is generally attributable to the author himself. But Kierkegaard, who believes that there is no objective truth but subjective one the individual experiences in life, writes in a poetical style full of metaphors, double-meaning, irony and narrative voices different than the author's. For example, almost all his unsigned (pseudonymous, anonymous) works include various text types such as poems, prose, diaries, letters, aphorisms, scholarly articles, speeches etc. In *The Point of View*, he claims that "one thing the author must not forget [...] the esthetic, the incognito" (Kierkegaard 1998, p. 53). Instead of directly laying the foundations of each way of life with their strengths and weaknesses and defending his own position and inclination towards one of them, he devises an 'indirect communication' method in which he creates pseudonymous characters for each way of life. These fictive characters all speak for themselves and tacitly defend their points of view. This way, Kierkegaard (1992b, pp. 625-6) distances himself from the message of his books by stating that "in pseudonymous books there is not a single word by me." He does not overtly take sides with any of the lifestyles evoked, but implicitly shows the inadequacy of a life without an ideal. Thus, by distancing himself from his readers through pseudonymous characters, he gives readers space for self-discovery and thought. Different stages speak for themselves as his fictive characters try to entice readers into choosing a certain way of life. As Carlisle (2006, p. 25) claims, "this

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be a human being is compared with such a house, then all too regrettably the sad and ludicrous truth about the majority of people is that in their own house they prefer to live in the basement. Every human being is a psychical-physical synthesis intended to be spirit; this is the building, but he prefers to live in the basement, that is, in sensate categories. Moreover, he not only prefers to live in the basement—no, he loves it so much that he is indignant if anyone suggests that he move to the superb upper floor that stands vacant and at his disposal, for he is, after all, living in his own house" (Kierkegaard, 1983b, p. 43).

kind of truth is not ready-made: it is not a doctrine, a list of facts, or a set of instructions". Since existence cannot be reduced to mathematical formulas or definitive expressions, his characters discuss the truth from their point of views in the form of dialogues. The objective then is not to present his readers with an objective, sided facts but to give them opportunity to make their own decisions on which way of life they feel themselves inclined to. For example, in *Either/Or*, where the aesthetic individual 'A' and the ethicist *Judge William* discuss 'how to live life' the aesthetic stage is presented with various fictional characters, each of whom exposes one to imaginary mind experiments as to the nature of this stage as applied in daily life. Supposed editor Victor Eremita again in *Either/Or* claims he found some papers written by 'A', who, in turn, claims that *the Seducer's Diary* in the last part was written by someone else called Johannes. We are faced with four layers of indirect communication intermingled in this case; Kierkegaard → Victor Eremita → the aesthetic individual A → and Johannes the Seducer. To give another example, *Stages on Life's Way* depicts a (Shakespearean) banquet scene in which five imaginary characters<sup>9</sup> come together in a secret meeting to discuss how to live life, each one presenting their own points of view. Hiding himself behind these multiple layers of meaning, Kierkegaard "motivates us to find our own way out of the abyss of despair by taking full responsibility for the choices we make in our life" (Watts 2003, p. 191).

The notion of 'stages' can be resembled to Freudian *id*, *ego*, and *superego* concepts which are defined by the keywords of desire, duty, and belief. It is interesting to note that Kierkegaard also lived and passed these stages himself on his own accord, not as a play of fate; thus, it is also possible to associate them with his personal life<sup>10</sup>. Thus, he wants an individual to act freely and choose to make the 'leap' on his own. For one to cross into a higher form of existence, one needs a purposeful act of 'leap.' It is the individual's own decision to determine what kind of life he wants to pursue. For Kierkegaard, *the self* as the highest form of existence should be an act of free will. In the next section the aesthetic and ethical stages as theorized in *Either/Or* and the

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<sup>9</sup> *Hilarius Bookbinder, William Afham, Married Man, Frater Taciturnus, and Quidam*

<sup>10</sup> We can also find allusions to Kierkegaard's own life in the categorization of stages. The aesthetic stage refers to his early years when he lived a relatively free and careless life during his studies. In his later life, he committed himself to social norms and moral values, which is a direct reference to the ethical sphere. Towards the end of his life, he devoted himself to religion, living on his own like a hermit. He even considered being a pastor in a distant village in Denmark.

religious stage as presented in *Fear and Trembling* is explained in detail with references to his other writings and to secondary literature.

### 1.1.1 Aesthetic stage

In the preface to *Either/Or*, which Kierkegaard regards as his ‘first’ book, pseudonymous editor Victor Eremita narrates how he came to the possession of some papers and letters inside the drawer of his newly-bought-second-hand writing desk. Realizing that they are following a pattern, he divides the documents into two and decides to publish them. Papers written by a supposedly young man ‘A’ give the account of an aesthetic lifestyle while letters from ‘B’ (later known as Judge William) constitute the arguments of ethical lifestyle written as a response to A’s claims in the first part. Thus, *Either/Or* consists of two volumes. A’s papers in the first volume were written in various styles and assorted topics that do not seem to be connected. According to Lowrie (2013, p. 149), readers, and reviewers of *Either/Or* admitted that “they were unable to understand what it was all about” since its content, structure, and themes were inconsistent. They are mainly in the form of aphorisms, scholarly articles on literature and theatre, imaginary speeches and narrative in the form of a diary. However, the overall theme is how to live an aesthetic life – the first stage of existence in Kierkegaard’s philosophy.

In Kierkegaard’s thought, the aesthetic stage is divided into two categories personified by immediate and reflective aesthetes. In the first category, the word ‘aesthetical’ refers to a completely different phenomenon from its daily usage. While it means ‘beauty, related to sensual, of good quality,’ philosophical meaning generally refers to ‘material’ or ‘corporal’ quality of an object. True to its latter meaning, the aesthetic stage refers to a person completely devoid of any moral or religious standards. Kierkegaard’s concept of the aesthetic stage is “the view that pleasure is the sole intrinsic good” and he tries to attain “the greatest possible amount of pleasure and the least possible amount of pain” (Evans 2009, p. 71). Thereby, Kierkegaard opens *the Rotation of Crops* chapter in *Either/Or I* with a reference to one of Aristophanes’ plays where all mundane desires are listed: love, literature, loaves, honor, sweets, cheesecakes, command, ambition, pea soup, etc. (p. 282). Bodily values or feeling of love are the primary objectives of an aesthete. Since he acts based purely on his desires and passions, social roles and duties have no meaning for him. The concepts of good and evil have equal burdens as long as they

satisfy his primal desires. As Evans argues (2009, p. 70), “The young child is a natural aesthete because the child lives “in the moment,” dominated by immediate desires. For the young child, ‘I want it’ is a powerful argument indeed”. The aesthete as the embodiment of sensuality acts as the ultimate ‘natural man’ who seeks nothing but pleasure.

The prevalent mood in both *Either/Or I* is boredom, melancholy, and depression<sup>11</sup>. As such, the aesthete is an unhappy, homeless, nihilistic and despairing individual. The aesthete contemplates that people misunderstand the meaning of life, for there is no meaning. One cannot become truly happy with death waiting at everyone’s door. He is too bored to act: “I don't feel like lying down, for either I would have to stay down, and I don't feel like doing that, or I would have to get up again” (p. 20). He sees making a choice a futile effort: “Hang yourself or do not hang yourself, you will regret it either way” (p. 38). Whatever one does or does not will affect him in a negative way. Thus, what the aesthete offers as a solution, Caputo (2007, p. 26) argues, is “never to let the gears of this either/or get engaged, never to allow yourself to get caught in its suction”. The whole principle of aesthetic stage lies in avoiding making decisions and remaining neutral when forced by outside stimuli.

However, rather than suffering miserably from this pain, he proposes that one needs to live the life to the fullest and enjoyment must be his sole purpose. One needs to smile to death’s face just like the “insects that die in the moment of fertilization” and everything he does should be accorded towards the “most splendid moment of enjoyment”(Kierkegaard 1988a, p. 20). His main aim in life is to “take himself as a given, complete with a set of wants to satisfy, and tries to satisfy as many desires as possible” (Evans 2009, p. 71). In other words, the aesthete’s main aim in life is to achieve what Kierkegaard points out as “immediacy.” It is the ultimate enjoyment received from the first encounter with a pleasurable situation, which the aesthete tries to get from every experience. The first enjoyment from an experience cannot be repeated and subsequent encounters cannot be felt the same way as the first

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<sup>11</sup> “How empty and meaningless life is. -We bury a man; we accompany him to the grave, throw three spadefuls of earth on him; we ride out in a carriage, ride home in a carriage; we find consolation in the thought that we have a long life ahead of us. But how long is seven times ten years? Why not settle it all at once, why not stay out there and go along down into the grave and draw lots to see to whom will befall the misfortune of being the last of the living who throws the last three spadefuls of earth on the last of the dead?” (Kierkegaard 1988a, p. 29).

encounter. Therefore, all “the potency of the interesting must be exhausted” since “everything is buoyant, beautiful and transient” (Kierkegaard 1988a, pp. 345, 367) The most suitable medium for aesthetic life style is music according to ‘A’. Considering A’s former remarks on the futility of life, transitory nature of feelings, one needs to live in accordance with life: life is transitory, so live it like music; sublime, beautiful, and transient. Since “music does not exist except in the moment it is performed” (p. 68), the aesthete lives in the moment like a soft touch of wind which is felt but not expressed. Likewise, the dreaded acts of obligation and commitment lead to “repetition”, which, in turn, completely prevents attaining pleasure since it is against the rule of immediacy. Therefore, the aesthete does not have any moral values or social obligations since they all lead to repeated feelings of enjoyment, that is, boredom. In fact, he tries to retain his inner consistency, rather than seek a true individuality. Thus, he is doomed to absolute despair.

The aesthete who “sees the other (the seduced) as a means to an end, as an object to be dominated and manipulated, and in so doing, engages in an act of destructive defiance” (Julin 2011, pp. 48-9) comes to notice the great abyss in his existence and develops a *reflective* attitude towards his selfhood. Just like a baby’s growing up into the adulthood, the aesthete’s repetitive enjoyment and non-fulfilling sensuousness matures into an aestheticism that orders one to use his intellect or higher faculties. As human beings grow up, they move from satiating their animalistic desires to flourishing more refined, intellectual and imaginative sense of ‘immediacy.’ Evans claims (2009, p. 87) that “the immediate aesthete’s life is unlikely to succeed very long, dependent as it is on external circumstances and good fortune”. Thus, he is transformed into “reflective aesthete” characterized by Goethe’s Faust and Johannes the Seducer, a fictional character in *The Seducer’s Diary* chapter. These two characters are also aesthetes, but their ways of performing their desires are different from the ‘immediate aesthetes.’ For example, Faust has no interest in satisfying his erotic desires but his intellectual hunger. The reflective aesthete wants to cultivate the ‘interesting’ quality in any experience. Evans (2009, p. 80) posits that “such a reflective seducer seeks not sensual pleasure per se, but lives for ‘the interesting’” as well. However, enjoying the experience of ‘interesting’ is more enjoyable than getting pure physical taste from experiences. Since the immediate pleasures start losing their novelty, the Seducer devises new ways and methods to make the

situations more interesting. He states that “it is no art to seduce a girl, but it is a stroke of good fortune to find one who is worth seducing” (1988a, p. 335). The important thing for the Seducer is not an erotic desire, but to attain a spiritual and intellectual pleasure in sensuousness. He posits that just like the body “the soul, too, requires sustenance” (1988a, p. 201).

While the immediate aesthete’s mood is joy and happiness, the reflective aesthete has a more melancholic and bored attitude towards life. The aesthete in this stage develops a more sophisticated sense of aestheticism because “repetitive forms of sensual gratification become boring” (Watts 2003, p. 197). He is in repetitive melancholy: “The night is over; the day is beginning its unflagging activity again, never, so it seems, tired of repeating itself forever and ever” (Kierkegaard 1988a, p. 230). The world we live in now rises on the shoulders of bored people and they are the cause of our current melancholy. He states that “the gods were bored; therefore, they created human beings [...] Adam was bored alone; then Adam and Eve were bored together; then Adam and Eve and Cain and Abel were bored *en famille*. After that, the population of the world increased, and the nations were bored *en masse*” (p. 286). The boredom makes the human beings act, but they always give wrong decisions. How does one evade this ‘bottomless abyss’? What the aesthete offers to cultivate the interesting is “proper crop rotation, [...] changing the method of cultivation and the kinds of crops” (p. 292). He creates occasions for new experiences or continually changes the method and object of enjoyment. A poet does not sit in his solitary room waiting for the coming of the muse. He needs an occasion to create his “even the most consummate, the most profound, and the most meaningful work” (Kierkegaard 1988a, p. 235). However, one cannot create his own ‘occasion’ for “the occasion is always the accidental” (p. 233). Hence, “one is weary of living in the country and moves to the city; one is weary of one’s native land and goes abroad; one is *europamüde* [weary of Europe] and goes to America etc” (p. 291). There seems to be no cure against the *Weltschmerz*. Thus, instead of lamenting, the aesthete embraces his situation and tries to extract even small amounts of pleasure. After all, “what is life but madness, and faith but foolishness, and hope but a staving off of the evil day, and love but vinegar in the wound” (p. 230).

Though immediate aesthete is presented with ‘actual’ pleasures and determinate set of actions, reflective aesthete has many options or possibilities to choose from. This

is ironic in that what he adopts to “cancel all actuality and set in its place an actuality” is not an actuality. He is just too “intoxicated [...] by the infinity of possibles” (pp. 290, 315). According to Taylor (2000), the distinction between immediacy and reflection is that they are on the opposite poles of the same problem. While immediacy lacks infinitude and possibility, reflection lacks finitude and necessity. Thereby, “the aesthete who feels sad at least feels something, and thus has an object for aesthetic appreciation” (Evans 2009, p. 84). The result is wandering aimlessly in the abyss of (non)existence. This is when the aesthete must show an act of will and move towards a ‘higher plane’ of existence – the ethical stage. For Kierkegaard, no one can live in this situation forever and there comes a time when one realizes “that his inner spirit craves for a more meaningful existence” (Watts 2003, p. 198) in a more refined life project. Otherwise, it is depression.

### **1.1.2 Ethical stage**

Showing the aesthete’s life has no continuity and he does not have a unified self, Kierkegaard turns his face to his other existential stage proposed in the second volume of *Either/Or*: the ethical stage. The main topic of the volume is the refutation of the arguments presented by the aesthete A in the first book. ‘B’ the name given to the author by the editor, writes a series of letters to his friend ‘A’ to persuade him of the folly of his existence and to show him a better way, the ethical. The ethicist ‘B’ later known as Judge William is a public official and a married man. Throughout the whole book, the Judge defends marriage as a manifestation of ethical life which requires commitment against the aesthete ‘A’ who finds marriage, obligations and commitments boring. This stage presents itself as an ‘intermediate’ stage between aesthetic and religious spheres.

In Kierkegaard’s philosophy, the concepts of *choice*, *freedom*, and *duty* are presented as the foundations of ethical life-view. The ethical person has a duty to himself concretized as choosing the concept of ‘know yourself.’ The ethicist knows and understands himself. This notion is only executed when one has transparency in his character. However, Judge William claims that the ethicist’s knowing himself “is not merely a contemplation [...] It is a collecting of oneself, which itself is an action” (p. 258). Thus, this knowledge is transformed into ‘choosing oneself’ in active involvement with one’s own existence. “The act of choosing,” asserts Kierkegaard’s ethicist, “is a proper and stringent expression of the ethical” (p. 151). Unlike the

aesthete who exists only as a 'self as dative' (Cole 1971, pp. 16-20) and abstains from making choice, the ethicist, in making the conscious choice of his self, moves beyond the tendency to view life as immediate and sensuous. Thereby, he gets closer to authentic existence: "When the individual knows himself, he is not finished; but this knowing is very productive, and from this knowing emerges the authentic individual" (1988b, pp. 258-9). The main difference between an aesthete and ethicist is "[t]hat the ethical individual is transparent to himself and does not live *ins Blaue hinein* [in the wild blue yonder]" (Kierkegaard 1988b, p. 215) in contrast with the aesthetic individual. This difference encompasses everything. This consciousness helps the ethicist attain the ideal of 'concrete individual' because "only as a concrete individual is he a free individual" (p. 207). Since the aesthete "spontaneously and immediately is what he is," in making this absolute choice, the ethicist "becomes what he becomes" (p. 77). Thus, the ethical individual grounds his identity on choosing a path in life and trying to achieve it. As Palmer (2007, p. 99) argues, "the rising tide of despair brings the [aesthetic] individual to the 'Either/Or'" and then, the self is urged to make an act of choosing that "entails the extinction of his old, sick self".

The second related concept that arises on the journey towards ethical selfhood is the individual's deciding a particular way of life through his own *free will*. According to Taylor (2000, p. 241) "the becoming that is essential to ethical selfhood arises through the subject's free decision". Kierkegaard claims that being human requires having the *freedom* of choice in contrast with the aesthetic avoidance of 'choosing' for the sake of sensuality. However, the ethicist suppresses this aesthetic anguish by 'collect[ing] himself out of dissipation' through the free choice of social conduct. Thereby, "freely acting temporal subject negates the abject spiritlessness of aestheticism and points toward the authentic form of spirit" (Taylor 2000, p. 242). Freedom is a concept which is manifested when human beings are confronted with a choice of their life-time. An individual is free when he stands alone with the unknown future that is to come after his radical choice. "A form of existence comes into being through an individual's free choices and these make her life unique" (Sánchez 2014, p. 22). Thus, it can be argued that the ethical individual moves towards his authentic existence through his freedom to act as the result of his choosing. "To be independent is not to have the liberty to sway in the wind. It is to

possess oneself in the sense of responsible ownership for one's inclinations, intentions, and actions, and consequently also in the sense of exerting an active control or influence over one's self" (Ong 2009, p. 223). However, freedom doesn't entail choosing something rather than something else as in the case of deciding to drink tea or coffee in the morning. This would not be a choice because there is no freedom in this case<sup>12</sup>. Kierkegaard calls this situation a '*liberum arbitrium*'<sup>13</sup> – *arbitrary freedom* of choice, which is manifested within the aesthetic stage of existence. By not taking a 'point of departure' the aesthete is unable to use his freedom because he 'never starts.' However, "a true, positive freedom," Giordano (2014, p. 90) claims, "is the very possibility to 'risk oneself' in making a choice that changes life and world". Thus, freedom in the ethical stage becomes taking risks, making commitments, and taking responsibility for oneself and others. Pojman (1990) posits that freedom is essentially an inward state which has to do with our loyalties, commitments, and beliefs.

The last salient paradigm of ethical life and the concept of freedom as a result of this absolute 'choosing' is the concept of *duty* that manifests itself as the institution of marriage<sup>14</sup> that Judge William uses against the aesthete's attacks on the

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<sup>12</sup> However, freedom has its consequences and one must bear them. In *Concept of Anxiety*, in referring to the first sin of Adam and Eve, Kierkegaard claims that they have come to really exist with their first sins – that is, if they had not chosen to disobey God, their existence would have no meaning at all. (See *Concept of Anxiety* p. 31 for a detailed account).

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, p. 112; E/O II, p. 175

<sup>14</sup> Judge William in *Either/Or II* puts marriage in a special place as the manifestation of the ethical stage that prioritizes ethical duty. The chapter *Esthetic Validity of Marriage* positioned against the *Diary of a Seducer* part in the first book presents his main arguments on marriage as the chief instrument of morality by criticizing the aesthete's way of life. For the ethicist, "marriage is and remains the most important voyage of discovery a human being undertakes" (Kierkegaard, 1988c, p. 89). Positioned against the 'spontaneous love' of the aesthete, the institution of marriage combines the material quality of sensuous love with ethical duty of committing oneself for another. While aesthetic person seeks sensuous beauty in love, the ethicist looks for heavenly love inside marriage. According to Judge, love is and must be what creates marriage. A life, with love ripped out of it, is nothing but corporal desire. Similarly, without marriage, love is only flirtation and seduction.11F Since love in marriage is not based on bodily desires, it is not sensual; thus, time cannot wear it out. Love becomes a combination of freedom and necessity. With this feature, love becomes both corporal and eternal at the same time. It is instantaneous and eternal simultaneously. As the Judge claims, "[e]ven more than the first love, it has an interior infinitude, for marriage's interior infinitude is an eternal life" (p. 54). Thus, it has both aesthetic and ethical qualities. Marriage "represents the best lifestyle possible because it retains spontaneity and does so because it is a result of free choice" (Dip 2015, p. 189). Marriage, the Judge claims, carries the immediacy and sensuousness in a great work of art that the aesthete is seeking. It "has its teleology within itself" (Kierkegaard 1988b, p. 62). Marriage within the ethical stage helps the self transform itself into a universal individual. According to Watts (2003), the ethical individual "strives to embody in his existence enduring universal values such as freedom, justice, love and peace. This helps to detach and free him from the impulse to satisfy his own immediate interests" (p. 200). Since he can judge his personality objectively and he has the potential

meaninglessness of life. The ethicist feels himself “therefore responsible for deeds that concern remote people and places” (Giordano 2014, pp., 90). Initially, the aesthete considered freedom being independent of other people and self-sufficient. However, at this stage, the concept of freedom undergoes an essential modification and presents itself as obligation as a result of one’s choosing oneself in freedom. Therefore, the idea of freedom is inseparable from the concept of duty. As Watkin (2000a, p. 77) argues “the ethical [...] path is explained both in terms of how one sets about it and also in terms of what types of ethical code can be followed”. Rules, commitments, and norms are liberating in that they force the self into taking actions to be authentic in contrast to the aesthetic who is not troubled by any responsibility; thus, has no identity. Malantschuk (2003, p. 33) fittingly asserts that “when a person, [...] has chosen himself absolutely and thereby attained the absolute freedom, the ethical promptly asserts its claim to the self”. That is, the self which has freed itself through making a choice has gained the possibility to act because freedom means movement. The self grounds his existence on outer forces because “without clear norms, there is always the danger of individual arbitrariness or of deviation from the task the self is to fulfill” Malantschuk (2003, p. 33). With ethical norms to follow and responsibilities to attend to, the ethicist moves deeper into being an authentic, concrete self, for the aesthete’s disinterestedness with his surroundings except taking momentary pleasure from isolated events makes him live an abstract, finite life limited by the necessities of life. To give an example, the aesthete abstains from forming relations of any kind, be it a friendship or love relation. He sees other people, events, and relations as means to an end – to get immediate pleasure. Thereby, though he is surrounded by people, he is considered a sick man, a solitary mystic in demonic sense. However, the ethicist has comparative freedom inside his duties. By deliberately putting himself under obligations, he is, in fact, materializing his existence. Kierkegaard (1995, p. 38) states that “by coming into existence, [...] he becomes free, but at the next moment he is dependent on this self. Duty, however,

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to do so, “he has come to the point where he has become the unique human being [...] and he has also become the universal human being” (p. 214). “The ethical as such is the universal, and as the universal it applies to everyone, which from another angle means that it applies at all time” (Kierkegaard 1983a, p. 54). Kierkegaard states that the single individual, who finds his telos (purpose, end) in the universal, must “annul [himself] in order to become the universal” (p. 54). This ethically annulled individual is someone with a high degree of social responsibility. This way, the ethical person gains the right to ‘concrete self’ who finds his telos in the moral duties within the universal.

makes a person dependent and at the same moment eternally independent”. When he commits himself to marriage, for instance, the ethicist is bound by some responsibilities. However, he is at the same time liberated from inert, catatonic, and unsatisfactory existence of the aesthete. Thus, the self’s task is to choose himself by being responsible for others, because “it is law that gives freedom” (Kierkegaard 1995, pp. 38-9).

For Kierkegaard, the ethical stage is not sufficient to relieve the individual’s *Weltschmerz*, either. A strict obedience to moral norms does not necessarily mean obedience to God. For, “purely ethical approach to life does not always work, because life is filled with ambiguity and paradox” (Watts 2003, p. 201). While it is admirable that the ethicist chooses to live a life of principle, commitment, and consistency, the adherence to moral norms is the only reasonable way to follow. As Watts (2003, p. 202) argues, “anyone who measures their existence against ethical standards must judge himself or herself a failure” because “when people completely submit to universal moral values, they lose their sense of individual responsibility”. As a result, the ethical duties should be suspended and another, final leap of faith should be done to reach to a higher plane – religious existence.

### **1.1.3 Religious stage**

The final stop in Kierkegaard’s existentialism is the religious stage in which he shows and describes the ways to become a complete God-man (self, individual, person etc). For him, the aesthetic person with his singularity and ethical person with his moral obligations are not the true identities or relations. Thus, one needs to make a final movement, a final leap of faith to reach this stage. Kierkegaard presents his ideas with another pseudonymous author *Johannes de Silentio* (or John of Silence) in *Fear and Trembling (1983a)*. Johannes de Silentio who introduces himself as someone who is interested in philosophy, logic and religion devises a mind-experiment in which he reanimates the Biblical story of Abraham sacrificing his son Isaac<sup>15</sup>. According to Agacinski (1998, p. 131) “*Fear and Trembling* is all about trembling in the face of sacrifice”. Abraham consented to sacrifice his son with a message from God. Amazed by Abraham’s readiness to obey the order, de Silentio tries to find out the true nature of his faith and test “the faith of his contemporaries by

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<sup>15</sup> Genesis 22

raising the questions of whether they would act as Abraham did” (Carlisle 2010, p. 4).

In the *Problema I*, de Silentio offers the concept of ‘*paradox*’ as one of the ways to comprehend faith. Faith is paradoxical, contradictory, and contrary to general belief. As the most defining element in the religious stage, it refers to doing what is illogical or ‘suspending the ethical’ norms, societal rules and morale reasoning in the face of paradoxical faith. When Abraham progresses to Mount Moriah to sacrifice his son, he symbolically surpasses all mundane explanations of faith – his faith becomes inexplicable, a paradox that is beyond all logical explanations. If one can suspend the ethical in this stage, he becomes a knight of infinite resignation. For, “faith is precisely the paradox that the single individual as the single individual is higher than the universal” (Kierkegaard 1983a, p. 55) ethical duties. De Silentio argues that modern people “do not want to know anything about the anxiety, the distress, the paradox” (Kierkegaard 1983a, p. 63), which, he thinks, form the basis of faith. However, without these qualities, faith becomes a futile, mindless obedience to God. Abraham’s real motivation and his obedience were not based on following societal rules or rational thought. He did it with “an infinite movement of resignation” which is followed by “strength and energy and spiritual freedom” (Kierkegaard 1992b, p. 47) Yet, again as it is quite difficult to suspend what is logical, de Silentio calls it a prodigious paradox, “a paradox that makes a murder into a holy and God-pleasing act [...] which no thought can grasp, because faith begins precisely where thought stops” (Kierkegaard 1983a, p. 53). There is no resignation if you do not give up on your most precious possessions. According to Kierkegaard translator Hannay (2006, p. 17) “resignation is [...] renouncing one’s most cherished hopes when whatever is hoped for proves unattainable”. Abraham wilfully chose God – he obediently renounced his love for his son. In a similar situation, an ethicist would also resign his beloved ones yet on different grounds<sup>16</sup>. The ethical is suspended in the face of an existential paradox: to obey a paradoxical, illogical order or to choose the finite.

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<sup>16</sup> This act of resignation should not be mixed with what an ethicist would do in similar situations. De Silentio refers to Agamemnon who sacrificed his daughter just like Abraham. His act, though, is not based on faith but on gaining his people’s sympathy. Thus, de Silentio considers him a ‘tragic hero’ because his act of sacrifice is based on utilitarian grounds. “The tragic dilemma Agamemnon faces is between his civic duty qua king [...] and his love for Iphigenia” (Lippitt 2004, p. 97)

Yet, this stage is also transient because one can follow divine orders without understanding them as it would be the only rational thing to do. It does not necessarily lead to faith. “One who expresses the universal and even sacrifices himself for it does not exemplify the paradox of faith” (Turchin 2016b, p. 46). To put it another way, one can force himself into a voluntary act of resignation through submitting himself before the infinite. In *Problema II*, the concept of ‘*absurd*’ manifests itself as one of the other ways to comprehend the faith. As a very closely related notion to paradox, it refers to the degree one’s understanding is offended when encountered with something it cannot grasp. It is paradox intensified to the degree that faith takes an almost comical expression. When Abraham was about to sacrifice his son, he held an intrinsic hope that his son would be restored to him. From a philosophical point of view all the events leading to Isaac’s being restored are something comical or absurd to take place. God’s order to kill his son, his submission, and annulment of the order in the last minute are events which seem quite impossible to occur. Yet, the knight then starts to ‘believe on the strength of absurd’ and is transformed into a knight of faith. During his journey to the mountain, he was determined to do the act, but he also had faith based on the absurd. He knew that his son would be killed but he also secretly believed that somehow Isaac would be restored to him again. Abraham “had faith by virtue of the absurd, for human calculation was out of the question” (Kierkegaard 1983a, pp. 35-6). The whole act is marvellous according to the author. This last movement is “even more wonderful than all the others” (Kierkegaard 1983a, p. 46). It does not make sense, but Kierkegaard thinks that this is what faith should be – believing the impossible, the absurd within religion.

What is absurd in this specific case is not Abraham’s willing to kill his son, but his ability to live with this after his attempt. According to de Silentio, “to be able to lose one’s understanding and along with it everything finite, for which it is the stockbroker, and then to win the very same finitude again by virtue of the absurd — this appals me” (Kierkegaard 1983a, p. 36). With this, the previous knight is transformed into a knight of faith for whom having faith does not mean other-worldliness. One can resign from the finite world, earthly possessions or even his son; yet, it does not necessarily require one to completely ‘renounce’ them. As Ferreira (2008, p. 54) claims, “[t]he knight of faith ought to look like everybody else,

his faith being undetectable from externals, and his faith being exercised in the most mundane worldly endeavors”. Abraham’s faith, Green (1998, p. 259) states, is “not an intellectual achievement but a prodigious ability to live trustingly and obediently”. With this absurd quality of his faith one attains the infinite while at the same time guarantees the finite<sup>17</sup>. “For Abraham to continue to have faith” at that dreadful moment of sacrifice “was to believe the preposterous” (Blanchette 1993, p. 34).

The knight of faith who has qualitatively developed himself through *paradox* and *absurd* must stay in close connection with the absolute so as not to lose himself. That is, the leap of faith needs to be continuously done and the knight must stay within the religious sphere. In the third and final problem raised in *Problema III in Fear and Trembling*, Kierkegaard offers the concept of *silence* as defining category of gaining one’s personality. Kierkegaard defends it when he answers the exegetical question, “[w]as it ethically defensible for Abraham to conceal his undertaking from Sarah, from Eliezer, and from Isaac?” (Kierkegaard 1983a, p. 82), which basically asks why Abraham did not explain anyone what he had been going through. The answer is self-referential in that Kierkegaard’s choice of pseudonym for the book – *Johannes de Silentio* which can be translated as *Johannes of Silence* or *Silent Johannes* – clearly suggests silence as the prominent theme of the book and as the central element of authentic faith. The term has two facets to consider. First, Abraham, de Silentio argues, cannot speak and explain his condition to anyone because no one would understand and reason with him. If he were to speak, he would immediately be downgraded to ethical sphere because “ethics demands disclosure” (Kierkegaard 1983a, p. 87). For “talking about one’s God-relationship is an emptying that weakens” (Kierkegaard 1967, p. 3988 vol. 4 ). The clash of ethical stage with the

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<sup>17</sup> Abraham did not know what the outcome of his actions would be. If he were to consider the results of his actions and how it would seem to the outside world, he would be stuck in the ethical stage in which acts are judged according to their face values. De Silentio associates this kind of reasoning with that of what he calls “under the common name of assistant professors” (p. 62). From their comfortable chairs, permanent positions and secure futures, he claims, they judge the great men and pass verdicts on the validity of their actions. As such, “since the creation of the world it has been customary for the result to come last” (p. 63) but it is the beginning of an action that needs one’s attention. The psychological burden one carries at the beginning of a dreadful act might normally be devastating for the individual since he would not know the consequences of his act. Since people know the result after it is completely over, their judgements cannot wholly grasp what is going inside the hero’s mind. Thereby, an encounter with the absurd necessitates an inward reaction, which resists an objective, outward, rational contemplation. It is a subjective paradox that keeps one at the finite level in an absurdly close connection with the infinite. While he walks among the people, he feels the divine presence in his selfhood.

religious stage is best highlighted in this concept of silence. While the ethicist requires the universal, the religious person seeks solitude. The ethicist needs verification for his actions (Agamemnon for example) and prove his case (Socrates), thus, disclose the reason behind his actions. Yet, this is what defines a tragic hero in Kierkegaard's classification since disclosure, speech, revelation devalues what is seemingly a heroic act. Second, de Silentio's constant claim that he cannot understand Abraham and his faith is a forceful indication of one's impotence to define inwardness. Hence, he takes up the role of just depicting his story. As Blanchette (1993, p. 29) claims, "unlike Abraham who remains silent, Johannes tries to convey the spiritual sense of the speechless and unspeakable act of faith".

The knight of faith suspends the ethical, the universal duties and embrace the particular on the way to become a single individual. "By his act [Abraham] transgressed the ethical altogether and had a higher *telos* outside it, in relation to which he suspended it" (Kierkegaard 1983a, p. 59). Yet, this situation generates a tremendous anxiety, contradiction, and distress in one's conscience. He is in absolute isolation both from his inability to disclose his pathos and from the fear that he will not be understood. As known, disclosure is key to philosophy but for a single individual it has the power to reduce one to universal categories. But "the single individual is already higher than the universal" (Kierkegaard 1983a, p. 98). The movement of faith is beyond comprehension of any system, and thus, it has 'silencing' force. Any act of single individual cannot be mediated ethically or philosophically. As Taylor (2009, p. 185) states, "the radical individuality of the believer [...] cannot be articulated in or mediated by language". Yet, it does not necessarily lead to a closed, one-sided understanding of faith. The individual communicates through his noncommunication. Unlike Socrates, for instance, who is expected to speak to present his life's meaning even in the moment of death because ethics demands disclosure, Abraham's disclosure manifests itself as silent communication. He speaks in a strange tongue that nobody understands. Though in the moment of fear, sorrow and anxiety an individual needs someone to speak to, Abraham's silence seals his immense trust in divine promise that he will be the father of faith and secures his position as the knight of faith.

To sum up, in this stage, man is aware of the temporality and emptiness of the world and attempts to create a strong bond with God. For Kierkegaard, faith means having

a personal relationship with God, and all ends are subordinated to Him. Therefore, a religious person must resign from all temporary concerns, though the sacrifices are hard. The “knight of faith” is in complete isolation, but this isolation is not like the one an aesthete feels. He is isolated from the society, but he formed a strong relationship with God by resigning all finite agents. Ethical obligations, laws, temporary rules are all subordinated to God. Kierkegaard argues that this is the ultimate form of existence since faith is an existential commitment. With “the self [...] grounded transparently in God” (Kierkegaard 1983b, p. 45) can man attain an authentic selfhood.

## **2. BRIGHTON ROCK (1938)**

In this chapter, it is argued that the anti-hero Pinkie in Graham Greene's first overtly religious novel *Brighton Rock* (1938) echoes Kierkegaard's aesthetic way of life, devoid of ideal and courage. With its narrative structure, plots and themes, *Brighton Rock* experiments with the capacity of an aesthetic life to form an authentic selfhood through the main character Pinkie Brown. Yet, this experimentation fails due to Pinkie's living in absolute proximity to good and evil and his latent desire to experience them at the same time. His distorted view of religion and strong imagination of physical hell creates a cataclysmic force that eradicates himself though he desperately seeks for a pristine experience of his selfhood. Greene figuratively annuls this life-project by clearly demarcating it from a 'strange' operation of God's will. In the end, Pinkie as the embodiment of non-existing individual with his melancholy, anxiety, and despair progresses from purely destructive aesthetic categories of sensuality, immediacy and boredom to alleviating reflection which in the end enables him to make a 'leap of faith' that will carry him to an upper-level existence – the ethical stage.

### **2.1 The Aesthetic Discourse in Brighton Rock**

*Brighton Rock* tells the story of a demonic, seventeen-year old youngster, Pinkie Brown, who tries to maintain his position as a gang-leader by killing, rivaling with another mob and marrying a waitress to secure his alibi for the murder of Fred Hale whose betrayal has led to the death of the previous leader of the mob. A few minutes before the murder, terrified and pursued, Fred attaches himself to Ida Arnold, a jovial middle-aged sex-figure of the city, in a desperate attempt to divert the mob but he cannot escape death disguised as a heart failure while eating Brighton rock candies. Acting as Pinkie's nemesis, suspicious Ida she takes up the position of a volunteer detective to illuminate the murder. As she learns too much and is on the brink of persuading Rose the waitress to testify against Pinkie, the latter is stuck between the chain reaction of events that leads him to murder a nervous fellow gang member,

make an enemy of a strong mafia leader, and lure Rose to marrying him to secure his escape. Though Rose acts as a salvation for him and his already distorted religion and faith, his spiritual dilemma persuades him to kill Rose, too. Pinkie takes her to the cliffs to stage her suicide, but Ida arrives at the last minute with police and evidence to convict him. Rose is saved, but Pinkie falls (or jumps) off the cliffs under great agony caused by burning vitriol on his face.

Contrary to the brief summary above that stresses the hard-boiled features of an ‘entertainment’ and Greene’s pick of ‘an entertainment’ as its subheading<sup>18</sup> on its first publication, it is the consensus of critics – despite a few opposite remarks – that *Brighton Rock* is more than an entertainment. It contains deep philosophical and theological implications of Greene’s burgeoning religious ideals, as will be explored later here in this chapter. Though the vivid depiction of violence, brutal murders, hectic atmosphere and mercurial characters are not the elements that define a typical Greene novel, the book as his first fully mature work and as his first step into a new territory called ‘religious fiction,’ I argue, acts as an unconventional start to his more serious undertakings in his remaining three religious novels. To do justice to the novel’s importance as ‘a turning point in Greene’s career, I will focus on the formal features of this unconventionality, which is also informed by Kierkegaard’s presentation of the aesthetic stage in *Either/Or*, before delving into thematic discussion of the aesthetic stage. It is argued that the narrative structure, discourse style and characterization in *Brighton Rock* reifies Kierkegaard’s aesthetic categories that is explored subsequently within the novel. Indeed, Greene’s deliberate use of specific narrative devices that render and perpetuate a thematic analysis of the novel allow one to dismantle the story in a more potent way.

In the first place, Kierkegaard’s use of ‘indirect communication’ and use of pseudonyms that “allow for an exploration of [...] a life-style, from within, as it were” (Harries 2010, p. 15) is also invigorated by Greene in the novel. The method of ‘indirect communication’ Greene utilizes in most of his novels is utterly manifest especially in *Brighton Rock*. This explicates itself as Greene’s ‘indirectly’ dealing with ‘serious’ topics in the form of a thriller in *Brighton Rock*. For example, it is

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<sup>18</sup> We are informed that Greene changed his mind on its being ‘an entertainment’ at the last minute but he was too late to inform the publishers in America. Thus, the first edition in US was published as “*Brighton Rock: An Entertainment*” (Bergonzi p. 80).

literally a crime novel and is generally classified under Greene's "entertainments." However, it was later included in his major Catholic novels which deal with more serious themes of sin and salvation. The opening paragraph in *Brighton Rock* starts in the manner of a detective fiction: "Hale knew, before he had been in Brighton three hours, that they meant to murder him" (Greene 1938, p. 5). Greene skilfully hides the main themes of sin, damnation, good, innocence, salvation and repentance under this moving tale of suspense. Greene himself accepts this fact. More serious themes unearth themselves as he progresses in the novel. In a letter to his brother, he informs that he was commissioned to write "this damned thriller" (Greene 2011) referring to *Brighton Rock*, but he later admits in *Ways of Escape* (1980) that it turned out to be something else without him being aware of it. In the same vein, as Bergonzi (2008, p. 85) upholds, the book "is firmly structured in ways that go beyond the detective-story plot". In *Brighton Rock* "the structure of the detective story is woven into the fabric of the novel and cannot be taken out" (Diemert 1992, p. 386). A critic may well approach it as if it were a detective fiction and would not misinterpret it.

The indirect communication method is also underlined by Greene's refusing to be a Catholic novelist. In an interview, he refuses being a Catholic novelist, but "a novelist who happens to be a Catholic" (Allain 1983, p. 149, in an interview with Greene). His way of handling the human condition "derives from [his] experience of life, from what [he] can observe" (Allain 1983, p. 153). He does not accept the role of a theologian, moralist or preacher stating that "[he] had no apostolic mission" (1980, p. 253). Greene and his readers stand in the same shoes before his texts for the aim of learning their lessons. Thus, it is no wonder to observe that all his characters are fallible souls with their weaknesses, sins and failures. In *Ways of Escape*, he admits the powerful force of his characters taking over the story: "it was as though my characters had taken the Brighton I knew into their own consciousness and transformed the whole picture (I have never again felt so much the victim of my inventions)" (1980, p. 79).

This overly-realistic portrayal of characters detaches the writer from his message. In the same way as Kierkegaard's using pseudonyms to distance himself from his characters' message, Greene's position is not to convey an objective message on morality and faith, but mull over the subjective experiences or better, 'the human

condition' of his characters. Recapitulating the Kierkegaardian dictum that 'truth is subjectivity' in *Brighton Rock*, Greene fulminates the instructive role of literature and rejects any direct moral imposition on his readers rather an artistic one, which again directs us to indirect communication method. Direct communication leads "the novelist [...] [to] a philosopher or a religious teacher of the second rank" (Greene 1969, p. 53). Hence, as Salvatore (1984, p. 40) proves, Greene "seems to adopt an 'artistic incognito,' a habit of hiding behind what he calls the 'facade of his public life'" as in *Brighton Rock*. Last but not least, Greene's masterful utilization of the contracted authorial voice is another example of his communicating indirectly. Though written in third person omniscient narrator's point of view, we experience more of Pinkie, Ida and Rose, than of Greene himself. Pinkie's distorted vision of faith and religion is his personal, subjective reflections on his existential paradoxes. And this gives more freedom to Greene to experiment on Pinkie's way of life. To summarize, Greene's hiding himself behind masks of the genre, layers of meanings and point of view connotes Kierkegaard's 'indirect communication' in which both writers experiment with the existential potential of the aesthetic way of life without being part of their characters' rationalizations.

The second structural element that foreshadows the aesthetic stage in *Brighton Rock* is its use of fragmentary chapter and meaning formation method. The lack of sound philosophical basis, unstable attitude towards one's existential potential and fluctuating moods present in Kierkegaard's aesthetic stage are displayed as disconnected presentation of the message by Greene. For instance, there is a distinct difference in the characters, style and expected plot between the first chapter and the rest of the book. The first chapter includes a character called Hale that readers will not meet again. The readers are tempted to think Hale as the protagonist of the novel, for Greene gives intricate details about his look, psychology, and melancholic life. There is not even a single hint in the first chapter on the religious issues that will be the main topic of the book. However, after the first fifty pages, the book evolves into something else. Unlike the rest of the novel, the first chapter is totally secular with only a non-gripping tale of murder in the suburbs of Brighton. Furthermore, Pinkie the villain whose distorted faith is the focus of the book acts as a side character to Hale in the beginning. Referring this fluctuating stance in the book, Greene admits in

*Ways of Escape:*

“Brighton Rock began as a detective story and continued, I am sometimes tempted to think, as an error of judgment [...] how was it that a book which I had intended to be a simple detective story should have involved a discussion, too obvious and open for a novel, of the distinction between good-and-evil and right-and-wrong and the mystery of ‘the appalling strangeness of the mercy of God’ – a mystery that was to be the subject of three more of my novels? The first fifty pages of Brighton Rock are all that remain of the detective story” (Greene 1980, pp. 58-60).

It is argued that as Kierkegaard’s *Diapsalmata*, the first chapter in *Either/Or*, prepares the readers for the rest of the content, the first chapter in Greene’s *Brighton Rock* induces the readers into the ensuing melancholic mood. Indeed, it has a disturbing effect; there is something ‘seedy’ in Brighton. The depiction of the festival crowd in a ‘beautiful’ summertime is melancholic and sinister. The existential crisis is hinted with “bewildered multitudes”, “a pale Victorian water colour”, “aeroplane advertising something for the health in pale vanishing clouds across the sky” (p. 5). All the people in town are described as ‘masses’ looking for enjoyment anywhere. Thus, Hale finds it “quite easy [...] to be lost in Brighton” (p. 5), which insinuates both the literal and figurative dissipation of his existence. The atmosphere of violence to envelop the story is sure to give birth to flagitious Pinkie, violence, damnation, lust and seediness. However, Greene clearly demarcates the world of Pinkie from the world of Ida, for whom the world is just “a bit of fun now and then ... nothing mysterious” (p. 77). Ida’s chapters portray lively characters, an enjoyable atmosphere, music, dance and drinks. Pinkie’s world is one of tragedy with overtones of *Macbeth* in which murder leads to more murders until it started to mean nothing to him, while Ida’s world reflects the characteristics of a traditional thriller in which coincidences pile up and the villain is punished or restored to justice. The ostensible clash between theological good and evil embodied by Pinkie and Rose against ethical right and wrong embodied by Ida accentuates Greene’s masterly skills to enmesh the vicissitude of opposing narrative types (thriller vs religious) in a single text. Considering the competing life-views of Pinkie and Ida, each chapter is in constant negation to each other – a technique which Lewis (1957b, p. 203) defines “as a technique of befuddlement”. Yet, the irony stands in *Brighton Rock’s* having none of their qualities – it is a thriller with no mystery and a religious fiction with no salvation. It would not be wrong, I assume, to adopt Salvatore’s claim on Greene’s

discourse style to his narrative technique in this specific example. “Greene's fictions are masterpieces of fusion, [...] the artist's technique meshing into an orchestrated wholeness through a repeated emphasis” (Salvatore 1984, p. 3). As Lewis (1957b, p. 200) maintains, “[a]s Pinkie's perils increase and his ambitions enlarge, the very design of the book shifts and re-forms”. The method which would normally result in “a kind of disaster” becomes “an original and a striking work” (Lewis 1957b, p. 200). Indeed, the opposing forces come together to convey the message. The Brighton rock stick candies, as inspiration to the name of the novel, also refer to Greene’s creating a uniform cosmos out of this fragmented, narrative chaos. It is a form of candy in which wherever you break it, the word ‘Brighton’ is visible on each side of the stick. It is as if Greene is asserting the same message through two completely opposing life-views and narrative structures. From whichever side you observe, you get the same aesthetic view of life. Hence, it can be argued that fragmentary chapters, shifts in style, topic and lack of continuity were deliberately exploited by Greene to highlight the discrepancies and instability of the aesthetic life view in general.

The other striking structural element that foreshadows Kierkegaard’s aesthetic way of life is the utilization of aphoristic style in *Brighton Rock*. It is full of existential aphorisms in the same way as Kierkegaard’s *Diapsalmata*. Since *Brighton Rock* is situated in-between Greene’s early entertainments and later ‘serious’ novels, it is quite consistent to detect episodic moments, intense dialogues and caricatured characters in the way present in a cinema film as they were quite prevalent in his entertainments. Small, disconnected paragraphs and sentences with no explanatory or supporting evidence supported with highly visualized settings demarcates Greene from his contemporaries. As such, Kierkegaard’s utilization of aphorisms in the form of small sentences assisted with no sound philosophical explication alludes to Greene’s use of small, detached, script-like sentence forms. Sheldon (1994) highlights that his early novels are abundant with passages which can be easily transformed into imagist poems in the manner of Ezra Pound. As such, as Bergonzi (2008, p. 85) contends, “Greene effectively deploys what Henry James recommended as the ‘scenic method’ by presenting his narrative as a succession of scenes”. Disconnected scenes coupled with the use of free indirect style to rapidly move in and out of characters’ mind create an atmosphere of one-way communication

between characters whose ‘aphorisms’ are not replied to with equal riposte. Considering that Greene also writes cinema scripts and turns his novels into screenplays, his sentences are cinematic and revealing like aphorisms. The book is abundant with judgments such as:

“Why, this is Hell, nor are we out of it” (p. 210)

“He put his mouth on her and kissed her on the cheek; he was afraid of the mouth-thoughts travel too easily from lip to lip” (p. 241)

“It's a good world if you don't weaken.” (p. 19)

“You can't conceive, my child, nor can I or anyone the... appalling... strangeness of the mercy of God.” (p. 246)

In the same way a cameraman catches the rare moments of superb acting, Greene captures the evocative scenes and squeeze them into small but meaning-laden utterances in way a poem does. Bergonzi (2008, pp. 86-7) rightfully observes that “Brighton Rock often shows a degree of rhetorical organization that is closer to poetry than to modern fictional prose”. Greene’s utilization of this method evokes economic reasons as well. Closely related to his method of ‘indirect communication’, the aphorisms prove to be quite useful for Greene in conveying quite opposite arguments within the same paragraph. The close connection between evil and innocence and right and wrong is easily conceived as interconnected categories as shown in the aesthetic stage of life. Kierkegaard depicts the aesthetic stage with fluctuating moods, different characterization and shifting attitudes towards certain situations to highlight the unstable ground it is based on. Likewise, fragmentary chapters and aphoristic style reflect the unbalanced life-style of Pinkie and mirror the psychological reverberation of the aesthetic life in *Brighton Rock*.

The incoherence between the structural pattern of the chapters is stressed with characterization as well. The main characters Pinkie, Rose and Ida Arnold each represents different features of the same religious perspective in the same way Kierkegaard presents aesthetic life-view in *Either/Or*. Just like Kierkegaard who introduces fictional characters whose varying points of view conflate to build up aesthetic stage and each of whom defends their own position from different perspectives, in *Brighton Rock*, Greene adopts a comparable characterization method, in which all characters speak for themselves and defend their position, which collectively produces the aesthetic life style. Ferreira (2008, p. 19) states that the imaginative characters in the aesthetic stage “begin an unending story of love,

passion, seduction, sorrow, and deception". Thus, it is argued that aesthetic existence is not a single, solid, one-sided experience but dynamic, multitudinous and evolving. As the supposed editor Victor Eremita states, "A's [the aesthete's] papers contain a multiplicity of approaches to an esthetic view of life. A coherent esthetic view of life can hardly be presented" (Kierkegaard 1988b, p. 13). Each character represents one feature of aesthetic existence which is accumulated in the last chapter. Likewise, as will be discussed more in detail later in this chapter, the aesthete moves from immediate sensuousness, repetition, and boredom to reflection in the end, and each characteristic of an aesthetic life style is embodied by an artistic persona. Pinkie, for example, obviously has faith, but lives the egoistic life of an aesthete. Desperately looking for his own salvation, his actions lead him to severity, murder, and suicide. Trying to find eternal peace, he develops a troubled view of faith just like the aesthete who pretends that he has found the meaning of life. Just like Nero with whom Kierkegaard associates the aesthete and who "burns down half of Rome in order to visualize the Trojan conflagration" (1988a, p. 292), Pinkie's faith is demonic, destructive and painful. Ida Arnold, on the other hand, takes the role of *Judge William* in the second volume of *Either/Or*, who continuously preaches to Rose about what is right and wrong. Though she is depicted as Pinkie's nemesis and executioner and wants to bring him to justice, she never internalizes her teachings. She has many lovers whom she regularly changes and lives in the moment. She refuses salvation and redemption and embodies a caricatural way of faith. She sees finding Hale's murder as a way of adventure that will bring some excitement to her boring life: "it is going to be fun, it's going to be a bit of life, Old Crowe" (p. 44). Therefore, she symbolizes the 'immediate sensuousness' of Kierkegaard's aesthetic life and her presence negates Pinkie's reflective sorrow. Lastly, Rose represents the hope and salvation that Pinkie might have. She desperately tries to convince Pinkie of Heaven and God's mercy. In the Kierkegaardian sense, she exemplifies the 'leap of faith' and the possibility of repentance to move to a higher existence. To sum up, since being is multivariate and evolving, all major characters in *Brighton Rock* represent one part of aesthetic existence and they all together form the aesthetic life-view. The regular succession of characters from the metaphysical demon Pinkie, the judgemental Ida and to innocent Rose informs the aesthete's progress from abstract to concrete, from more sensuousness to reflection. To conclude, Greene amalgamates the narrative elements, discourse formation and characterisation in the novel with its

contextual and thematic message so that a balanced, harmonious presentation of them is ensured to lay the foundation for Kierkegaard's aesthetic stage.

## **2.2 Pinkie's Aesthetic Way of Life: Natural, Sensuous, Immediate**

Graham Greene in *Brighton Rock* portrays the world of Pinkie as brutal, violent and desperate where he lives a blank life in the sense that he cannot concretize his existential self. Just like Kierkegaard's aesthete, Pinkie feels he was thrown into existence. However, he fails to form a meaning in this forced existence. Thus, he becomes a drifter, lonely traveller, or a never growing child in this world. His existence is purely natural in the same sense as an aesthetic work of art or a natural man. It is argued that Pinkie's existence can be resembled to what the aesthete 'A' offers as an aesthetic work of art. Sensuousness, proposed as the first characteristic of the aesthetic stage presented with its various manifestations and artistic embodiments, becomes a defining element to describe Pinkie's art-like existence. And it reveals itself in Pinkie first as adopting the category of 'natural-ness.'

The aesthetic person claims that a piece of art decorated with sensuality needs to be universal and natural. He likes seeing the world as a perfect 'whole' that does not need any interference: "happy Greek view of the world that calls the world a cosmos because it manifests itself as a well-organized whole, as an elegant, transparent adornment for the spirit that acts upon and operates throughout it" (Kierkegaard 1988a, p. 47). If one tries to expound the beauty of the 'universe', his efforts will go useless, for this will destroy its integrity, its naturalness. It is beautiful as it is, in its unspoiled condition. Therefore, the duty of art should be to define the 'natural' to withstand time. As such, each person, experience or concrete material around Pinkie has a transcendental, natural quality. He looks "at the spotlight: music, love, nightingale, postmen: the words stirred in his brain like poetry" (p. 50), and they have no impact on him, as a baby makes no sense of poetry. He lives in an abstract, theoretical world. Just as Kierkegaard's speculation that Mozart's *music* has a purely sensuous, abstract quality, Pinkie's identity is depicted as a perfect unity of natural qualities. Hence, it is argued that Pinkie utterly feels his existence only when he lives an unchanged, unspoiled, natural life with no outside interference. This position strictly stresses the sensuality in art-works, say *music* which is composed to be felt. Pinkie's insistence to live a natural life adumbrates Kierkegaard's continuous

reference to music in its natural state. If you change even a single note in a beautiful piece of music, everything will be spoiled; it is beautiful in its natural, original form. As such, Pinkie's aesthetic way of life is likened to a beautiful piece of music that Pinkie tries to keep in its original form.

According to Amir (2016, p. 95), "the aesthetic stage constitutes the beginning because we are born into it". Thus, it represents the man in its most natural, primitive and undeveloped condition. Pinkie wants to preserve his existential integrity by living a natural, solitary, untouched life. When Rose tidies his room after their marriage, he looks "round with angry disappointment at his changed room the position of everything a little altered and the whole place swept and clean and tidied" and feels a threat to his natural condition: "it was her Hell now if it was anybody's he disowned it" (p. 213). So, his existence is shaken, and he feels "driven out" as his only physical contact with the outside world is disturbed. Sensuality is a state that one is *de facto* equipped with, and one does not act to alter it, just like a newborn baby. A baby's life is solely dependent on satisfying immediate pleasures and sensuous needs. It does not have an ideal, commitment and responsibility for its life. Similar to the Sartrean dictum which preconizes that we are "thrown into existence," the aesthetic person lies "in the middle of the ocean like a child who is supposed to learn to swim" (Kierkegaard 1988a, p. 31). Since he has no power to change it, he chooses to live like a 'natural man' and enjoy it as it is rather than act to change it.

Pinkie developed an anomalous antagonism to domestic life that has the potential to shatter his 'unspoiled' – natural – becoming. Although he passionately has overtaken the gang leadership and wants to clear the path for 'the great future' awaiting him, he is happy in his unhappiness and creates hatred for everything that is upsetting it. Rose, the crumbs of Cubitt's sausage roll on his bed, a tidied room, Ida Arnold, his starting dreaming at nights are, I argue, what trigger the action in the story as they disrupt Pinkie's natural flow of life. He undertakes every risk to get rid of this situation: "That was what happened to a man in the end: the stuffy room, the wakeful children, the Saturday night movements from the other bed. Was there no escape anywhere for anyone? It was worth murdering a world" (p. 92). The most striking example of his hatred for unnatural condition is described in the garage of a suburban house when Pinkie is pursued by rival gang members. The garage is piled up with useless junk one buys to use for something, but this accumulated 'wealth' is what

destroys the natural life. Thus, Pinkie starts hating the owner: “the Boy hated him. He was nameless, faceless, but the Boy hated him. The doll, the pram, the broken rocking horse. The small pricked-out plants irritated him like ignorance. He felt hungry and faint and shaken” (p. 108). Thus, he always wants others to “leave him” to his natural existence. The reason why he condemns everyone because ‘they don’t know a thing’ is not, I presume, because he knows what real faith is, but because he has noticed the futility of life. He hates Ida Arnold not as an enemy, but as someone spoiled with ‘experience’ against himself with ‘limited experience.’ He is unspoiled by the knowledge of the world, for which he developed a strange antagonism. He feels attracted to Rose because she is “the cheapest, youngest, least experienced skirt in all Brighton” (p. 113), with her natural, innocent qualities.

The depiction of naturalness creates a contradictory effect in Greene’s early novels. His early protagonists are all young, seemingly unmatured teenagers who can be likened to Kierkegaard’s aesthete. Yet, their potential to bring destruction and devastation is highlighted with their paradoxical outward qualities. Pinkie, for example, is a ‘boy’ who has no experience in life. Greene places so much emphasis on Pinkie’s youth to refer to his *naturalness*. In most of the book, he is referred to as ‘the Boy.’ Though he is seventeen, his looks are “like an old man’s in which human feelings has died” (p. 8) and “touched with the annihilating eternity from which he had come and to which he went” (p. 21). He looks older from behind and wears a suit “too big for him at the hips” (p. 21). He does not drink alcohol but drinks milk or squash out of the bottle. He does not bet or smoke, hates the opposite sex and sexual intercourse is repulsive to him. He never kissed a girl, for “anything was better than the lips” (p. 92). He is relentless with his friends as a child is cruel to others. He joyfully explains how he gave hell to one of his school friends when they met on the day he died. His appearance is that of an innocent child: “a light lit his face and left it; a frown, a thought, a child's face” (p. 228). This juvenile imagery in perversion follows him to death. As the vitriol burns his face, Rose could “see his face indistinctly as it leant in over the little dashboard light. It was like a child's, badgered, confused, betrayed—fake years slipped away he was whisked back towards the unhappy playground” (p. 242). Like Kierkegaard’s aesthete, he sees the devilry behind innocence:

“They took his mind back and he hated them for it; it was like the dreadful appeal of innocence, but there was not innocence: you had to go back a long way further before you got innocence; innocence was a slobbering mouth, a toothless gum pulling at the teats, perhaps not even that; innocence was the ugly cry of birth” (Greene 1938, p. 141)

As Baldrige (2000, p. 24) explains, Greene’s frequent emphasis on Pinkie’s inexperience and seeming innocence creates “a juxtaposition of his moral extremity”. Greene portrays Pinkie as a wolf in sheep’s clothing. He represents Christian idolization of humans thrown into the world of sins. *Brighton Rock* is, indeed, a story of evil concealed behind the daily lives of innocent people in Brighton. Thus, what Pinkie finds as a solution is to remain aloof of the material world. He does not act to change the conditions of his existence and chooses to preserve his natural existence rather than being a number inside masses. In his utter immediacy and sensuousness, Pinkie is living in a world “for the poetizing arbitrariness” in which “all existence becomes just a game” (Kierkegaard 1992a, p. 302). When he visits Rose’s parents to get their permission to get married, he affirms this mode of life: “nobody could say he hadn't done right to get away from this, to commit any crime...” (p. 143). He prefers living in hell to living a domestic, stagnant, polluted, unnatural life.

Pinkie’s *artistically sensuous* existence finds a better explanation with the role of music acting as a powerful background motif in *Brighton Rock*. Trying to achieve stability in his inner self, Pinkie’s life is reflected as a piece of music that has achieved the balance between its subject matter and medium. Kierkegaard posits that what makes *Don Giovanni* a great work is that Mozart skillfully combined the perfect subject matter (sensuousness) with a perfect medium (music which is sensuous). This subject-medium balance needs to be one’s ultimate aim in life, as Victor Eremita claims that “the accuracy of that familiar philosophical thesis that the outer is the inner and the inner is the outer” (Kierkegaard 1988a, p. 3). In the same vein, music has a special importance in *Brighton Rock* as one of the intermediary agents of Pinkie’s existence. In fact, what connects Pinkie to the material world which he wants to divert from is music that reflects his sensuousness in Kierkegaardian sense. It acts as the only veracious thing that can remind Pinkie of what is real. As an egoistic sociopath, he only feels music or is disturbed by it: “That was his strength. He couldn't see through other people's eyes or feel with their nerves. Only the music made him uneasy, the catgut vibrating in the heart” (p. 45). He becomes aware of his existence whenever he hears it, for “this music”, “spoke to

him in music”, “that music” are allusions to his life view. In his meeting with Hale in the bar, he is so annoyed by Ida’s voice that he shouts at her to shut up because it continually drags him down to the lives of ordinary men. When he is out to create an alibi for Hale’s murder, he goes to a shooting booth where he hears music in the background: “he felt the music as a movement in his belly; the violins wailed in his guts” which reminds him of “Hail Mary...in the hour of our death” (p. 21).

Life speaks to Pinkie through music but in a negative way, Pinkie considers. In *Collected Essays (1969)*, referring to Dicken’s novels, Greene considers Dicken’s novels as “lulling us with the music of despair” (p. 86). Similarly, considering other characters’ positive relations with music, Pinkie’s satanic existence is best described in music just like Kierkegaard’s example of *Don Giovanni*. He is argued to dwell inside music. At Snow’s restaurant where he goes to scare Rose, the music again makes Pinkie experience disjunction between him and the world in its decayed nature: “The wireless droned a programme of dreary music, broadcast by a cinema organist – a great *vox humana* trembled across the crumby stained desert of used cloths: the world’s wet mouth lamenting over life” (p. 26). He takes Rose away from the music to talk to her about Hale so that the music does not disrupt his evil plans. He feels pity towards Mr. Prewitt since “the room vibrated, and the music wailed through the wall” (p. 207) from next door. He considers Prewitt must be living in ‘hell.’ The music further “beat on the boy’s resistance” when Sylvie offered him sex, which signifies his impotence to form his existence. In all these scenes music becomes a factor that reminds Pinkie of his awful condition “like a voice prophesying sorrow at the moment of victory” (p. 129).

According to Consolo (1962, p. 15), “the pathetic vestige of Pinkie’s religion” is “a shred of song”. However much the music is repulsive to him, his whole existence is summed up with divine music, unlike the secular ones which bring him back to earth. Holding a vitriol bottle in one hand and touching Rose with his other hand, Pinkie is in a dilemma as to whether he should kill Rose who, he thinks, creates a connection with the material world. Upon learning that she is also a Catholic, he considers they might have something in common in their faith and thus, calls off the execution. The music from the bar is mixed with his memory of a mass hymn, and the reader sees Pinkie in all his musical sensuality. He exists in divine music:

“‘Why I was in a choir once,’ the boy confided, and suddenly he began to sing softly in his spoilt boy’s voice: ‘Agnus dei qui tollis peccata mundi, dona nobis pacem.’ In his voice a whole lost world moved; the lighted corner below the organ, the smell of incense and laundered surplices, and the music. Music, it didn’t matter what music—‘Agnus dei,’ ‘Lovely to look at, beautiful to hold,’ ‘the starling on our walks,’ ‘Credo in unum Dominum’—any music moved him, speaking of things he didn’t understand” (Greene 1938, p. 52)

Although Pinkie asserts that ‘any music’ affected him, music that does not have eternal tones has no significance for him. Whenever he does something evil, the words “*Dona Nobis Pacem*” resonate in his head. When he is about to kill Spicer, his whole experience of ‘murder’ culminates in this lyrical unrest: ‘grant us peace.’ Pinkie’s development as a character from beginning to the end of the story is evoked by music. His first reaction to “a little vicious spurt of hatred—at the song? at the man?” which is reflected by music as ‘peace’ at the beginning of the story, is transformed into a sense of loss at the end when he says he believes ‘*Credo in Unum Satanum.*’ After the marriage ceremony, Rose and Pinkie go to see a film where “the Boy began to weep. He shut his eyes to hold in his tears, but the music went on” (p. 179). The music officially announces his damnation and his ‘eternal unrepentance’ is revealed, which he fails to express. Musical sensuousness is Pinkie’s language like Kierkegaard’s aesthete.

Closely related to the musical nature of sensuousness, the aesthetic individual seeks ‘immediacy’ in all his experiences, for “music always expresses the immediate in its immediacy” (Kierkegaard 1988a, p. 70). Watkin (2000b, p. 53) states that “the aesthete is the one who lives a spontaneous or ‘immediate’ life and, changeable in feelings, moods and bodily condition, thus interacts with his changing environment”. One’s behaviours and attitudes towards life in the aesthetic stage do not depend on reflection or spiritual experience; the person acts according to his basic instincts and feelings. It is ‘immediate,’ for the person wants to extract whatever pleasure he may have from every experience with no intermediary agents present such as conscience, ethics or religion. The pleasure obtained from music is momentary and temporary; thus, the aesthetic in person “is that by which he spontaneously and immediately is what he is” (Kierkegaard 1988b, p. 178). The aesthete seeks an incessant pleasure that is immediately reified and consumed until he finds a new one. It is completely musical and immediate. Like music, it is “over as soon as the sound has stopped and comes into existence again only when it sounds once again” (Kierkegaard 1988a, p.

102). The music's instantaneous appearance as an ephemeral experience becomes a defining element for the aesthete's coming into being.

For Greene, the crowd in *Brighton Rock* lives an aesthetic life, pursuing pleasure in every way possible. It is a dark atmosphere with "cramped streets and the closed pubs and the weary walk home" (p. 6). Thus, "with immense labour and immense patience they extricated from the long day the grain of pleasure" (p. 6). Pinkie does the same: to suck the life in its immediacy. He "is a bodily personality" (Rovira 2010, pp., 61) that enjoys immediate sensual impressions. As Elrod (2015, p. 40) maintains, the aesthetic self is "soulishly determined" and it "means to exist in immediate unity with one's natural condition. Kierkegaard equates this soulish determination with a state of ignorance and innocence". However, the immediacy of pleasures is reflected in Pinkie in the form of inflicting pain to himself and to others. His understanding of getting pleasure from every experience is through pain and suffering. Pinkie's violent acts become a replacement of sexual desire that the aesthete praises as an immediate pleasure. As someone who would 'like to carve the whole bloody boiling' and feels no empathy for his victims, Pinkie feels elevated when he hurts Rose. When he decides to scare Rose, he shows her a bottle of vitriol to spoil her looks. He feels desire like a sexual pleasure: "just as a faint secret sensual pleasure he felt, touching the bottle of vitriol with his fingers as Rose came hurrying by the concert hall, was his nearest approach to passion" (p. 46). Again, when they are on the dance floor, "one hand caressed the vitriol bottle in his pocket, the other touched Rose's wrist" (p. 50) as if the idea of giving her pain is what makes him alive. He remembers "all the good times he'd had in the old days with nails and splinters, the tricks he'd learnt later with a razor blade" when Rose does not seem frightened, he feels disappointed: "what would be the fun if people didn't squeal?" (p. 51).

Pinkie experiences a sublime enjoyment when he sees others experiencing pain and he "couldn't picture any eternity except in terms of pain" (p. 97). He explains his religion only through suffering:

"But you believe, don't you," Rose implored him, "you think it's true?"  
"Of course, it's true," the Boy said. "What else could there be?" he went scornfully on. "Why," he said, "it's the only thing that fits. These atheists, they don't know nothing. Of course, there's Hell. Flames and damnation," he said with his eyes on the dark shifting water and the lightning and the

lamps going out above the black struts of the Palace Pier, "torments."  
"And Heaven too," Rose said with anxiety, while the rain fell  
interminably on. "Oh, maybe," the Boy said, "maybe." (Greene 1938, p.  
52)

For him, heaven was a word that cannot materialize itself. Thus, he preserves his faith through a strong belief in hell, pain, and damnation. When he is attacked by Colleoni's men, his knuckles get slashed and his first reaction is astonishment to pain rather than horror: "Pain happened to him; and he was filled with horror and astonishment as if one of the bullied brats at school had stabbed first with the dividers" (p. 106). He realizes that "the mob were enjoying themselves, just as he had always enjoyed himself" (p. 106). Even in the moment of possible death, he wonders how they enjoy themselves. He feels "the finest of all sensations, the infliction of pain" (p. 102) when he schemes for Spicer's murder. Pinkie's materialistic worldview makes him seek immediacy as he cannot experience peace or salvation "from the mirror over the ewer, the soap dish, the basin of stale water" (p. 98). He agrees to marry Rose though he finds marriage and sex repulsive and disgusting. He notices that there is "a kind of pleasure, a kind of pride, a kind of—something else" (p. 239) in the act which he cannot designate. This 'something', I assume, is the pleasure of committing a mortal sin. Since he cannot feel God in his daily life, he wants to "to taste God in [Rose's] mouth" by deliberately doing a secular marriage. With every sin he commits, as a human being, he seeks to feel his existence in its immediacy with the infliction of agony that succeeds.

### **2.3 Pinkie's Progress from Immediacy to Reflection**

Pinkie's aesthetic life exemplified as absolute sensuality consisting of naturalness, transience, and immediacy takes a new form as the plot thickens. The same way the purely aesthetic individual takes up a melancholic mood after realizing the meaninglessness of this kind of life<sup>19</sup>, Pinkie's stance in life evolves from being sensuousness into being reflective towards life. While the aesthete living in sensuousness has been quite content with his sensuous way of life in the beginning, later he develops an awareness of the failure of immediate sensuousness and assumes

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<sup>19</sup> In *Either/Or I*, the aesthete's tone and mood start changing after the supposed speeches (*The Tragic in Ancient Drama*, *Silhouettes* and *The Unhappiest One*) delivered to a society of aesthetes called *Symparankromenoi* (translated as 'The Fellowship of the Dead')

a mood of melancholy and boredom. As Ong (2009, p. 218) argues, “a person at this stage is immersed in melancholy, taken to flights of poetic yearning, and determined to distance herself from external commitments and obligations”. The aesthete notices that ‘living like a work of art’ in the moment leads to repetition of pleasures and thus, to boredom. In fact, it is not a negative quality, but a vertical “development from pre-reflective sorrow to reflective unhappiness” (Harries 2010, p. 53).

Pinkie leads such a life in his search for existence which is always interrupted by allusions to a boring life with endless repetition. Harries’ allusion of the aesthetic person as “Sisyphus, Tantalus, endlessly repeating the same meaningless act” (2010, p. 74) becomes a perfect description of Pinkie. He is a bored person, for repetition is the essence of boredom. As he looks for the ‘interesting’ in his daily life, he becomes more reflective of his condition, and the rejoicing he previously felt in pleasurable situations is transformed into a qualitative sorrow that produces reflection. Some critics claimed that Pinkie, as a child, watched the sexual acts of his parents and developed a hatred for life. Kulshrestha (1979, p. 60) wrongly suggests that “the effect of the primal scene, the parents in the sexual act, is represented as a major crisis of Pinkie's pre-adolescent emotional life”. At first, one is inclined to think that Pinkie felt lonely for “he had no share in their thoughts [...] he was like a soul in purgatory watching the shameless act of a beloved person” (p. 186). Pinkie’s hatred for sex, life, human and pretty much everything, I assume, is due to infinite, pointless repetition of daily tasks. He is not scared of his parents’ ‘frightening Saturday exercises’ but its being ‘weekly’ with seemingly no-end. In the end, he confesses that “he couldn't blame his father now” since “it was what [...] you got mixed up” (p. 220). Repetitive life leading to infinite boredom is what scares Pinkie. Thus, since he is scared that the habit will grow, his whole acts are construed as an ‘escape from tedious life.’ When he catches a glimpse of Rose’s thigh on the bus, the dreaded act of repeated sex is what pricks him like ‘sickness.’

In Pinkie’s trepidation of repetitive life culminates in his visit to his lawyer, Mr. Prewitt’s house. Before the visit, his mind oscillates between killing and sparing Rose. He thinks maybe there is still hope for them and if they can manage to escape from the law, they can go on ‘the way they are.’ However, in Prewitt’s gloomy house haunted by domestic tediousness with his wife for twenty-five years, he observes what is waiting for him if he marries Rose. Prewitt continuously refers to his wife as

‘the spouse’ or ‘old mole’ and keeps telling Pinkie that he should see her. He considers Pinkie ‘lucky’ as he is so young now with a life full of possibilities, unlike him. He observes that if they get caught “the worst that can happen to you [Pinkie] is you’ll hang. But I can rot” (p. 209). Pinkie threatens to ‘ruin’ Prewitt, but it has no effect on him. Quoting from *Faustus*, he states that “Why, this is Hell, nor are we out of it” (p. 210), stressing there is no escape from this boring life. He incessantly reminisces the missed adventures with ‘little typists’ he might have had in his youth. Even Pinkie’s offer of money does not tempt him, for no money can heal a mind corrupted like his. His sharp intellect, youth, bright career, the power of speech is piled up into this catatonic existence with no future expectations. The visit which took place on Sunday when Prewitt does not work symbolizes the aftermath of Saturday night exercises of Pinkie’s parents. Infinite boredom is what it all leads up to and what Pinkie is terribly afraid of. This could be one of the reasons why “the word "murder" conveyed no more to him than the words "box," "collar," "giraffe” (p. 45). Everything becomes equally unsatisfying in the end.

Pinkie’s methods for coping with this boredom are worth consideration since they seem to be pushing him more into non-existence rather than avoiding it. Just as the members of the fellowship of the dead are chasing sorrow in every place, Pinkie develops a positive disposition towards sorrow, pain and suffering. The aesthete whose motto in life is to conquer sorrow rather than abate it strives to find the secrets of sorrow, for ‘sorrow’ is more interesting than ‘joy.’<sup>20</sup> Joy is everywhere but sorrow is rare. The aesthete looks for pleasure in his every experience. However, since life is brief and not worth living, one should extract pleasure from sorrow as well as from immediate experiences. Pinkie seems to adopt a similar self-imposed sorrow in his existence in that he seems to embrace this condition rather than act to change it. He seeks sorrow and suffering, and similar to the aesthete that becomes more ‘reflective’ as time passes, Pinkie’s reflection manifests itself as an acceptance of his sorrow. Rather than concealing behind a melancholic mood and despairing attitude, he transforms his sorrow into pleasures distilled even from minor incidents.

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<sup>20</sup> Kierkegaard’s aesthete gives a detailed account of three unhappy women - Marie Beaumarchais from Goethe’s *Clavigo*, Donna Elvira from Mozart’s *Don Giovanni* and Margarete from Goethe’s *Faust* - as the embodiments of reflective sorrow. He argues that these three women became the subject of the fellowship’s conversation due to their deep sorrow, for their sorrow is what makes them ‘interesting’ and ‘existing.’

Evans (2009, p. 84) states that “suffering is given a kind of meaning and is no longer pointless” in the reflective aesthete’s world. This meaning, though, takes a more distorted shape in Pinkie. He considers that he is far beyond peace and salvation, for “hell lay about him in his infancy” (p. 68). This is a world of razor blades, murder, pain, gambling, despair, Saturday night exercises, dark room, stale water, and boredom. When he is driving Rose to the country to kill her, he snaps at Rose’s statement that life is good: “I’ll tell you what it is. It’s jail [...] Worms and cataract, cancer. You hear ‘em shrieking from the upper windows, children being born. It’s dying slowly” (p. 226). As an immature young man, he has not seen any place else apart from Brighton. He became the embodiment of the city in a way – “I suppose I’m real Brighton” – as if his single heart contained all the cheap amusements, the Pullman cars, the unloving week-ends in gaudy hotels, and the sadness after coition” (p. 220). Yet, it offered nothing but sorrow to him since his childhood. According to Greene, “a brain was only capable of what it could conceive, and it couldn’t conceive what it had never experienced” (p. 228). As Pinkie never felt goodness, kindness, and love in his life, he cannot imagine a life with these qualities. His upbringing guaranteed that he will have a despairing life: “his cells were formed of the cement school playground, the dead fire and the dying man in the St. Pancras waiting room, his bed at Frank’s and his parents’ bed” (p. 228).

The aesthete argues that the pain one experiences makes one a real human being. Feeling pathos is the real existence, for life would be boring and repetitive without it. Pinkie’s situation could be resembled to ancient tragedies in which the hero’s downfall is absolute with no possibility of being saved. He is a tragic hero doomed to eternal suffering, which ironically has a refreshing effect for him. Suffering rejuvenates his selfhood and he experiences his existence in its fullest meaning. Kunkel claims that “Dante merely visited hell; Pinkie comes from there” (Kunkel 1959, p. 153). One of the rare moments that he fully felt his existence is when sorrow came upon him “like a vision of release to an imprisoned man” (p. 179). Then he tries to repent:

“He felt constriction and saw hopelessly out of reach a limitless freedom: no fear, no hatred, no envy. It was as if he were dead and were remembering the effect of a good confession, the words of absolution; but being dead it was a memory only he couldn’t experience contrition the ribs of his body were like steel bands which held him down to eternal unrepentance” (Greene 1938, p. 179)

The scene clearly highlights his dilemma. While his conscience desires salvation, his body resists. Suffering is true existence for Pinkie, for he is poisoned by the pleasure of suffering. As Evans (2009, pp. 83-4) argues, “it has been recognized that tragedy offers something profound as well as enjoyable. So, turning one’s own life into a kind of tragedy to be aesthetically appreciated makes sense [...] from an aesthetic perspective”. Like Adam who was thrown into the world due to his sin, he needs to experience faith through his self-induced sorrow. Harries (2010, p. 57) posits that Adam and Eve came to know the difference between good and bad by eating from the tree. However, “the decision cannot have been made with such knowledge”. Since they cannot possibly have known this before the deed, they cannot be held responsible for the action. Only this way, only by sinning, they have become ‘existing’ individuals according to the aesthete. One is ‘thrown into existence,’ into the conditions not of his choosing. So, one needs to live like a drifter at the hands of fate and should do nothing to direct his life. That is the reason the ancient tragedy is more beautiful and epic. The hero’s sorrow has an aesthetic quality: “The wrath of the gods is terrible, but still the pain is not as great as in modern tragedy, where the hero suffers his total guilt” (Kierkegaard 1988a, p. 148). Pinkie’s sorrow became ‘an insane pride’ that he utilizes to master in this fallen world and that acts ‘like a love of life returning to the blank heart.’ From this perspective, Pinkie is transformed into Milton’s Satan in *Paradise Lost* that states that “To reign is worth ambition though in Hell / Better to reign in Hell, then serve in Heav'n” . He prefers being a master of his existence in his sorrow to being one in a crowd. When Dallow suggested that three of them leave the city and retire in a faraway city, Pinkie envisages a happy life. However, he quickly refuses since a happy, married life with friends around terrifies him. The main reason behind his hatred for Rose is that she could provide the ‘heaven’ he seems to be seeking. Yet, Pinkie cannot reify Heaven, for “hell was something he could trust” (p. 228). Joy and peace are categories that mostly depend on external conditions outside of our control. Pinkie chooses the feeling of sorrow and unhappiness that is easier to attain against happiness that lasts for a limited amount of time. To refer to Evans (2009, p. 84) again, “it is very hard to be deliriously joyful over a long period of time, but not so hard to be chronically unhappy”. Instead of not feeling at all or feeling an emptiness, Pinkie focuses on his sorrow as an aesthetic object of appreciation. The key point for sorrow to be

appreciated is its not being repetitive and not providing the same feelings repeatedly. He wants himself considered happy due to his unhappiness.

It is also worth mentioning the ways Pinkie develops to cultivate the interesting and not to fall into this abyss of sorrow through repetition and boredom. As known, great works of art are produced by poets, writers, and artists based on certain happenstances that occur occasionally or accidentally. Likewise, an experienced aesthete should never feel bored, but know how to carve interesting experiences even from minor incidents. For him “a spider, the coughing of a neighbour, sweat running down a conductor’s forehead” (Kierkegaard 1988a, p. 235) are chances to produce great moments of joy in this meaningless life. Pinkie’s stagnant existence is dominated by the same force of *occasion*. His need for an occasion to poetize his daily life creates destructive results for him and for people around him. Since life is accidental and the daily experiences and people around him are mere occasions, he does not create a bond with anyone, or his connection with them is superficial. Since “the person in the aesthetic [stage] finds meaning for his existence outside himself” (Bedell 1972, pp., 81), Pinkie feels himself forced to mingle with people and his involuntary contact with the outside world acts as the trigger of action. He acts according to the flow of actions. Even his passion for gang leadership that seems to be his only aim in life has no explicit realization in his mind. His long-term goal to overthrow Colleoni and to live in luxury like him acts as a momentary diversion from emptiness. Before his visit to Colleoni at the hotel, he considered Colleoni should be living a relatively untroubled life considering he seems to have everything a mafia leader might have: “the armchairs, stately red velvet couches stamped with crowns in gold and silver thread, [...] the wide seaward windows, and the wrought-iron balconies.” However, in the hotel “it was he who looked like an alien in this room” (pp. 63-4) and he realized that it is not the answer to his troubles. He still pursues to lead the gang though. He sees the whole affair as ‘acting-like-leader’ to kill time. Unlike his nemesis Ida Arnold who happens to have always plans, he acts according to the occasion. He accidentally meets Hale, his first kill, in a bar; he needs to silence Rose either by killing or marrying her as a witness; he decides to kill her on the way to the countryside; and instantly pushes Spicer over the banisters. Referring to his marriage with Rose, he states that “Hale and Spicer were trivial acts, a boy's game, and he had put away childish things. Murder had only led to this – this

corruption” (p. 167). His thoughtless, unprepared, occasional acts lead him to more atrocity. Like Kierkegaard’s aesthete, he treats his friends as ‘pebble stones on his way.’ His motto in life is “you couldn't make mistakes when you trusted nobody” (p. 58).

The most interesting solution the aesthete offers against the feeling of boredom and Pinkie seems to embrace is ‘the rotation of crops’ method. The same way a farmer changes the products he cultivates in the field every year or changes the land for better yields, the main point of crop rotation is finding the new, first and interesting so as not to fall into boredom that is the root of all evil, all activity in the world. The aesthete states that “boredom is demonic pantheism” which means that everything has equal value – working or not working, marrying or not marrying, makes no difference for the aesthete. Hence, one need to find new ways of enjoyment which is also unsatisfying itself. For lonely prisoners condemned to a life sentence, a spider in the cell can be the source of great enjoyment for them. The rotation of cultivation method is thus a meaning discovered in what is in itself meaningless. Similarly, Pinkie is quite capable of cultivating the interesting and enjoyable in his life. In fact, since his marriage with Rose will be ‘like a prophecy, a certain future, a horror without end’ he quickly looks for ways to avert it. Similar to Ida Arnold’s statement that “I like to start something fresh [...] not off with the new and on with the old” (p. 29), Pinkie tries to find new ways of enjoyment, but in more devilish ways. When he is looking for a way of escape from marriage, he considers planning Rose’s murder to make it look like a suicide. At this moment “an insane pride bobbed in his breast; he felt inspired; it was like a love of life returning to the blank heart” (p. 203). His discovery makes him embark on a new adventure in his motionless life; this time, he will experiment in killing a girl as his previous murders had lost their significance. Using the aesthete’s rotation method, he finds new ways of experiencing the feeling of murder. Otherwise, one kill is no different than the other one for Pinkie. His real motive in killing Rose is to experience what it would be like to cause someone else’s damnation by intentionally forcing her to commit ‘a mortal sin.’ His intention might be justified, considering his suspicion that Rose knows about his murders and might be working with the police or Ida. However, it is later revealed that Rose does not know anything about his kills. Thus, his motives for killing her are removed. However, he deliberately informs her that he is the culprit so that he could create the

motives for her murder. Though his friend Dallow warns him that there is no need to kill her and Rose told him that she loves him and will do whatever he pleases, his lust for the pleasure of inflicting pain is insatiable.

After their first night in Pinkie's room, Pinkie feels a momentary satisfaction while Rose is sleeping in bed. At that moment, he "was [in] hell then; it wasn't anything to worry about: it was just his own familiar room" (p. 182). In the familiar atmosphere of his dark room with its "the ugly bell [...] the long wire humming in the hall, and the bare globe [...], the washstand, the sooty window, the blank shape of a chimney" (p. 182), he once again started to experience his dull, solitary, obtuse existence with nothing to worry about. However, when he felt sexual desire aroused "again, like nausea in the belly," he felt defeated again since "he no longer had a sense of triumph or superiority" over Rose (p. 187). After all, "all attempts to conquer boredom depend on the cultivation of variety" (Evans 2009, p. 78). The whole act of sex or the feeling of committing a mortal sin had lost its interesting nature for Pinkie.

"all his pride coiled like a watch spring round the thought that he wasn't deceived, that he wasn't going to give himself up to marriage and the birth of children, he was going to be where Colleoni now was and higher... he knew everything, he had watched every detail of the act of sex, you couldn't deceive him with lovely words, there was nothing to be excited about, no gain to recompense you for what you lost, but when Rose turned to him again, with the expectation of a kiss, he was aware all the same of a horrifying ignorance" (Greene 1938, pp. 92-3).

Like Kierkegaard's aesthete, he has exhausted the first and the interesting quality of sexual encounter; thus, he needs to find other 'crops' to reap. He felt "momentarily exhilarated by the strangeness of his experience." The spectre of a domestic life starts haunting him again since "now there would be nothing strange ever again he was awake" (p. 187). Rose as a person has lost her significance as a source of enjoyment: "there was nothing he could see that was heroic in the bony face, protuberant eyes, pallid anxiety" (p. 143).

Just after Spicer's death, his girlfriend Sylvie meets Pinkie in a bar and proceeds to have intercourse with him. Pinkie also agrees since he will know what is 'the game' like and be experienced before his marriage with Rose. When she is "wait[ing] for him with luxurious docility" (p. 134) at the back of a car, nausea, disgust and fear seize him and he runs away. The carefully laid plans and strategies to conquer someone is more important for Pinkie than having someone so easily. The idea of

adventure and the enjoyment it carries is more satisfying than the experience itself. Thereby, Pinkie is argued to be impersonating *Johannes the Seducer* in the last chapter *The Seducer's Diary* in *Either/Or I*, where Kierkegaard consummates the aesthetic life-style by describing how he seduced a young girl in his diaries. The chapter acts as if *Johannes* is incarnating the concepts of aesthetic stage described here. The Seducer's whole aim in life is to "to accomplish the task of living poetically" (Kierkegaard 1988a, p. 304). Unlike the immediate sensuous and bored aesthete, he seems to have embraced life and tries to enjoy it no matter what. However, the Seducer's actions are not directed towards getting physical enjoyment; what he seeks is the reflective enjoyment which means getting intellectual pleasure. Every new experience that will divert him from daily life is welcome. Though he is young, handsome and rich and can get every girl he wants, he deliberately wants the most difficult and adventurous ones: "the fishing is always best in troubled waters" (Kierkegaard 1988a, p. 322). His stance in life can be summarized as:

"Real enjoyment consists not in what one enjoys but in the idea. If I had in my service a submissive jinni who, when I asked for a glass of water, would bring me the world's most expensive wines, deliciously blended in a goblet, I would dismiss him until he learned that the enjoyment consists not in what I enjoy but I getting my own way" (Kierkegaard 1988a, p. 31)

Cordelia, the object of his desire, has no importance for him. Since he knows everything is either boring or will lead to boredom in the end, he is happy to experience little crumbs of adventure and achievement. He gets engaged to her and after a while deliberately breaks the engagement just to observe her feelings in new situations. Though he seems happy with his 'scheming' to enjoy the idea of pleasure, Kierkegaard shows the inadequacy and inapplicability of aesthetic life in this chapter. Seeing that "exits from his foxhole are futile" he tries to cover his despair through adventures and mind experiments: "he is continually seeking an exit, and continually finding an entrance through which he goes back into himself" (Kierkegaard 1988a, p. 308).

On his visit to Rose's parents at Paradise Piece, Pinkie stands on top of a hill and briefly watches the slums where he grew up. He sees the place unchanged, preserving its desolateness. The scene he observes marks the end of his quest. The extreme poverty, glassless windows, rubble, torn gravel and asphalt, flapping gutter are what he has come from and what he will return to in the end. If his life continues

as it does now, all that was demolished “had to be built again for him.” Pinkie becomes a person who “confront the dilemmas of *The Waste Land*, struggling to find meaning in an empty world” (Crawford 1982, pp., 103). Like Kierkegaard’s aesthete, he notices the “the vast superiority of vacancy” that his life is leading to, and “a dim desire for annihilation stretch[es] in him” (p. 144). Pinkie exhausted all kinds of material pleasure one can taste in life, and even experimented the feeling of condemning Rose to eternal punishment by leading her to suicide. Towards the end when he drives her over the cliffs where she is supposed to shoot herself, he feels a brief ennui; he is ready to leave everything as it is and turn back to his normal life. However, he “could hardly believe in the freedom at the end of it, and even that freedom was to be in a strange place” (p. 238). Still, Pinkie asks Rose if ‘she would always have stuck with him’ to give her one more chance. When she says ‘yes’ “he began wearily the long course of action which one day would let him free again” (p. 239). Unlike his previous evil deeds, this last one has a reflective nature. He no longer tries to extract enjoyment from killings; he feels a kind of apathy towards his existence.

Pinkie has been transformed into Kierkegaard’s reflective aesthete: “It’s not what you do,” the Boy said, “it’s what you think.” He boasted” (p. 127). However, “the intrusion of the ethical” takes place “in the reflective aesthete’s life” (Evans 2009, p. 87), and similar to Kierkegaard, Greene shows the failure of aesthetic existence at the end of *Brighton Rock* with an open ending. Rose is afraid to shoot herself and throws the gun away. At that moment, Ida and Dallow arrive with a policeman at their side, and Pinkie thinking that he was betrayed moves for the vitriol bottle in his pocket. The bottle is shattered, and he is sprayed with vitriol. In an appalling agony, he runs and falls over the cliff. Whether he cracks the vitriol bottle himself or it was hit by a police baton and whether he jumps intentionally or falls by accident are not highlighted by Greene. Thus, whether Pinkie is saved or damned is unclear. However, considering that Kierkegaard’s aesthete notices the impossibility of an aesthetic life in *The Seducer’s Diary* and that the chapter acts as a turning point for a higher level of existence, Pinkie’s jump also becomes a Kierkegaardian leap of faith towards a higher stage of existence. According to Kohn (1961, p. 3), “the simple and intense moral universe that Greene presents in *Brighton Rock* reflects [...] that the primitive and horrible contain the seeds of grace”. Though Greene depicts his ‘leap’

as ‘withdrawn out of existence’ and ‘whipped away into zero’, the reader is forced to lean towards Pinkie’s being saved through Rose’s confessor at the end of the book. The priest states that “you can’t conceive, my child, nor can I or anyone the ... appalling ...strangeness of the mercy of God” (p. 246). The recurrent use of “between the stirrup and the ground” highlights the possibility of redemption even for Pinkie. He might have been saved by this mysterious agency as he previously felt grace as “something trying to get in, the pressure of gigantic wings against the glass” (p. 239). In an interview, Greene highlights this possibility:

“I tried, as a sort of intellectual exercise, to present the reader with a character whom he could accept as worthy of hell. But in the end, you remember, I introduced the possibility that he might have been saved “between the stirrup and the ground.” I wanted to instill in the reader’s mind a fundamental doubt of hell” (Greene cited in Allain 1983, p. 148).

Pinkie’s possible redemption through his jump into abyss metaphorically symbolizes the leap of faith Kierkegaard’s aesthete makes towards ethical existence.

### **3. THE POWER AND THE GLORY (1940) and THE HEART OF THE MATTER (1948)**

This chapter offers a synchronous reading of Greene's two major novels *The Power and The Glory* and *The Heart of The Matter* from the perspective of Kierkegaard's ethical way of life represented by pseudonymous *Judge William* in the second volume of *Either/Or*. The despairing and non-existing self embodied in the first chapter continues its rejuvenated journey through characters of *the Whisky Priest* and *Major Scobie*, who are argued to dwell on the ethical stage of life. With their bourgeois morality, strict commitment to ethical rules and societal norms, they are the antipodal characters of the aesthetic individual. Both novels act as complementary to each other and the characters reflect the ethical life-view, either by fully implementing it or by representing the lack of it. However, the ethical life project, just as the aesthetic one, fails to achieve itself in the *Whisky Priest* and *Scobie* and the ideal self is not established. In their despair and melancholy, the characters needed to annul their identity by committing suicide and move to a higher level of existence – the religious stage.

#### **3.1 The Ethical Discourse in The Power and The Glory and The Heart of The Matter**

Considering that “Greene's artistic maturity is evidenced by [...] his blending of “religious theme” and “overall pattern” so effectively that theme and plot become inseparable” (Hoskins 2004, p. x), it is worth considering the structural elements in the novels in question, where basic tenants of ethical existence are explored. Both novels have similar thematic structure, narrative strategy and characterization that inform the ethical categories explored subsequently and this justifies the reason for treating these two novels as a single work reflecting a different aspect of the ethical stage.

As stated before, Judge William is the pseudonymous author of letters addressed to the aesthetic individual in the second volume; and he takes up the position of an

inquisitor, an instructor, admonisher and a judge in literal sense. While the aesthete adopts a life style of 'immediacy' and 'pleasure', William "depicts the ethical worldview, i.e., the life devoted to right conduct" (Julin 2011, pp., 23). By showing the impossibility of aesthetic life, he tries to negate aesthetic hypotheses one by one. The ethical life is a life of commitment and obligation as the name suggests. Since aesthetic life has no stable foundation, Judge's main argument revolves around the fact that it is more 'rational' to adopt an ethical life. According to Elrod (2015, pp. 111-2), "the existing individual is an individual who accepts the task of ethics" and his "ethical task of actualizing and understanding himself gives rise to existence". This existence is actualized by commitment, which leads to responsibility. Family, work, friendship, religion are all personal contracts one needs to concur. For instance, marriage, as the most significant expression of ethical life, as argued by the Judge, puts someone in the responsibility of another person. Thus, ethical life is a life of responsibility and living for the good of others.

This theme – the theme of responsibility – pervades both of Greene's novels. In *The Power and The Glory*, for instance, Greene narrates the story of an unnamed Roman Catholic priest in Mexico during 1930s, a time when practicing religion was outlawed by the totalitarian communist regime. The protagonist called the Whisky Priest travels through whole Mexico to secretly minister to people and is pursued by a police lieutenant to be executed in public. All other priests either fled the country, renounced their faith in exchange for their lives or were killed in action. Crushed under the heavy burden of being exemplary to people who have faith, the Priest is also haunted by his personal demons: that he is an alcoholic and has fathered a child. Greene analyses the Priest's strict physical and moral suffering on the way to his deliberate surrender and eventual death. Just to portray a positive image of the faith in people's eyes, the Priest chooses to be remembered as a martyr than an alcoholic. On the other side, Major Henry Scobie in *The Heart of The Matter* is a police officer in a distant colony in Africa. Trying to portray a good-family-man image, a church-goer and a good citizen who respects the rules in his private and public life, Scobie suffers in a great moral dilemma towards his wife, duty and faith. Amid corruption rumours, his hellish marriage, crooked faith, he seeks for a way out from this conundrum just like the Whisky Priest. He thinks he is in eternal damnation due to his adulterous relation with Helen, his infidelity towards his wife and unintentional

involvement with a mob leader. Not achieving the fusion of good and bad sides of life, he literally sacrifices himself for the sake of others' wellbeing. It is obvious that Greene's agenda in both novels is to show the grey zone between good and evil and a good act like self-sacrifice for the good of others can be 'not-good' from a religious perspective.

Another structural resemblance of the novels to the ethical life is their narrative structure. Kierkegaard depicts aesthetic life style through the style of 'indirect communication' (as shown in the previous chapter) in the form of aphorisms, articles, journal entries etc. However, Judge William in the second volume takes up a more 'direct' style for correcting the aesthete. The volume consists of two long letters directly addressed to the young man of aesthetic stage and the ethical arguments follow a straight line of reasoning that "proclaim responsibility, freedom, purpose, awareness of the future, and movement" (Carlisle 2012, pp., 54). Unlike the aesthetic individual who conceals his agenda behind masks, William's exchange is more unequivocal. Similarly, the religious agenda hidden behind the masks of thrillers and man-hunt in many of Greene's novels have become more obvious with *The Power and The Glory* and *The Heart of The Matter*, which reinforced Greene's position as a religious writer after *Brighton Rock*. Indeed, In *Ways of Escape*, Greene (1980, p. 85). declares that *The Power and The Glory* is the only novel "[he has] written to a thesis". Unlike Pinkie as a character who is argued to have both likeable and repulsive qualities, Priest and Scobie are sympathetic figures that are commissioned to convey the message of 'the possibility of grace' from a religious perspective.

The last structural element that informs the main agenda of the books employed by Greene is his use of characterization. In these specific books, Greene uses stagnant characters that remain same from beginning to the end. The ethical stage is depicted as a somewhat quiet, un-developing way of life. The ethical individual "is a university graduate, husband, father, even an exceptionally competent public officeholder, a respectable father, pleasant company, very gentle to his wife, solicitude personified to his children" (Kierkegaard 1983b, pp. 175-6). Unlike the aesthetic stage in which the individual takes an active part in the formation his existence under the influence of fluctuating moods, the ethicist considers himself "only a witness" "not a philosopher" who asks of philosophy "what a human being

has to do in life” (Kierkegaard 1988b, p. 323), and he is more stable, unchanging and contemplative. While the aesthete moves from immediacy, melancholy, reflection and to despair, the ethicist remains un-developed from beginning to the end. Underlining this fact, Kierkegaard scholar Harries (2010, p. 111) states that “the ethical is more boring than the aesthetic”.

The same strategy is employed by Greene for the Whisky Priest and Scobie as well. Roston (2006, p. 20) argues that the Whisky Priest “does not progress or change in the course of the novel but that he is, from the very opening and throughout the narrative itself, [...] not a model”. The same remorse, pity and self-hatred are preserved throughout the novel. According to Bergonzi (2008, p. 111), “[t]he fabular quality of the narrative is emphasized by the fact that we never learn [the Priest’s] name”. The Priest’s first dilemma either to leave the country or to continue preaching at the beginning is always present to the end. He suffers from the same moral struggle – his unworthiness for the priesthood – all along the journey into his death. In fact, surrendering to the police, renouncing his faith and marrying like other priests are the only triggers of action in the novel. Unlike Pinkie in *Brighton Rock* whose spiritual development is the main theme of the novel, the Priest remains undeveloped with no apparent change in his thoughts and manners. As Roston (2006, p. 21) argues, “it is not the priest who changes but the reader’s assessment of him, as the truth of his spiritual condition gradually emerges into the light”. Similarly, Scobie in *The Heart of The Matter* is in constant questioning of his faith and one can easily sense his suicidal tendencies between the lines from the start. His relations with his friends, wife, Yousef, Wilson, Helen and his faith have no impact in his development as a character except increasing his responsibility towards more people. For instance, in the confessional box, he says he feels an emptiness towards life. The soothing words of the priest and routine acts of contrition have no effect on his conscience. He does not feel absolved due to God’s being so ‘accessible’ to common sinners like him. His agony is not annulled even after the confession. Instead of highlighting a journey towards grace, Greene chooses to catch a glimpse of a sinner’s psychology. Unlike Pinkie who carries hell with him (literal flames and torment), Scobie lives in a hell with “permanent sense of loss” (Greene 1948, p. 171). To sum up, the Whisky Priest and Scobie do not progress and develop as separate characters and this situation clearly has implications for the ethical life-style proposed by

Kierkegaard through Judge William. Greene asserts that “The priest and the lieutenant remained themselves to the end; the priest, for all his recollection of periods in his life when he was different, never changed” (Allain 1983, p. 136). “The apparent seriousness of the ethical position of the Judge” (Dip 2015, p. 188) can be compared with Greene’s serious-thriller classification of his novels. While his thrillers generally are in the form of man-hunt and detective fiction, his serious novels reflect the human condition in the face of religion as is the case with *The Power and The Glory* and *The Heart of The Matter*.

### **3.2 The Ethical Self-choice in The Power and The Glory**

In *The Power and The Glory*, the ethical stage of existence finds its clearest expression in the Whisky Priest’s conclusiveness “to choose himself” in his quest for finding his concrete or authentic self. In fact, the whole book revolves around ambivalent binary options in which the Priest finds himself to choose from. Similarly, one of the most dominant themes *Either/Or II* is that of choice, which Judge William constantly cautions the aesthete to “choose yourself” ; “why it takes courage to choose oneself” ; “the ethical constitutes the choice”; “to choose is an intrinsic and stringent term for the ethical” etc (Kierkegaard 1988b, pp. 166, 169, 216, 222). In the same vein, Greene depicts Whisky Priest as a character that has achieved to be an ethical self by making his life’s choice. Unlike the side characters Mr. Tench, Coral Fellows, Padre Jose, lieutenant, the mestizo and the faithless boy who represent the opposite poles of his existence, the Priest tries to actualize his identity by having his principles and rules to live for. Just like Kierkegaard’s aesthete who obstinately abstain from making a choice between possibilities and who lives his life according to possibilities, those characters refuse to make a choice and thus, live like a drifter in life. They act as the epitomes of aesthetic life the Priest might have chosen, and the Priest represents their desperate attempt for a life with meaning. In fact, the Priest’s duty is the duty of a determination for a choice.

In every scene the Priest encounters one of these characters on his escape from the police, he is faced with an inherent ‘absolute choice’: either to adopt their life style or to pursue his. For instance, in the very first scene when he is waiting in port to flee the country on a boat, he meets Mr. Tench, a local English dentist who has arrived there to earn money but cannot leave the country because the currency heavily

dropped. Losing all his attachment to his country, wife, children and his responsibilities there, Mr. Tench lives a barren, dull, faithless life with all obligations deferred or annulled. Just like Kierkegaard's aesthetic individual, he fights with boredom and meaninglessness of his existence by taking arbitrary decisions as if he is literally 'playing shuttlecock with existence' (1988a, p. 294). Mr. Tench "lived putting off everything. [...] That was the whole world to Mr. Tench: the heat and the forgetting, the putting off till tomorrow" (Greene 1940, p. 2). He feels great enjoyment for a few cases of beer to be unloaded from the ship and the brandy the Priest offers to drink in his hut. Furthermore, he has the same irreverence towards women as the aesthetic individual and sees them as potential sources of temporary enjoyment. Referring to smuggler's girlfriend, he says "she is a pretty bit. Of course, in two years she'll be like all the rest. Fat and stupid. O God, I'd like a drink" (p. 4). Another clear example of his aesthetic existence is when he is telling the Priest about his children in England. His children started to have no meaning for him, for he can "remember that watering-can better than [he] can remember the kids" (p. 8). The Whisky Priest is appalled by this sight. Just like Judge William in *Either/Or II*, he takes up the position of a judge to argue against Mr. Tench's aesthetic life, but with his actions in this case. Judge William asserts that "[t]here comes a moment in a person's life when immediacy is ripe, so to speak, and when the spirit requires a higher form, when it wants to lay hold of itself as spirit (Kierkegaard 1988b, p. 188). As Evans (2004, p. 47) argues, one needs to "seek ideals for which a person can live and die". Seeing the despair and drabness with no ideal to pursue in his life in Mr. Tench's existence, the Whisky Priest chooses not to get on the boat which would take him to Vera Cruz where he might live a safe life:

"But the stranger had got up: unwillingly he had been summoned to an occasion he couldn't pass by. He said sadly: "It always seems to happen. Like this."

"You'll have a job not to miss the boat."

"I shall miss it," he said. "I am meant to miss it."

[...]

"You know nothing," the stranger said fiercely. "That is what everyone all the time says—you do no good." The brandy had affected him. He said with monstrous bitterness: "I can hear them saying it all over the world."

"Anyway," Mr. Tench said, "there'll be another boat. In a fortnight. Or three weeks. You are lucky. You can get out. You haven't got your capital here.'" (Greene 1940, pp. 10-1)

In this scene when a boy asks for a doctor for his dying grandmother, the reader is surprised with his readiness to follow him for the sake of missing the boat. Though it will bring pain, suffering, and blood, he makes an ethical choice that will give him a reason to live for against Mr. Tench's aesthetic stance: 'you haven't got your capital here'. As Elrod (2015, p. 121) asserts, "the aesthetic stage of existence [is] being dethroned from its dominating position in existence by the ethical" with the Priest's encounter with Mr. Tench.

According to Elrod (2015, p. 124), "the ethical choice is the initiation and the heart of the ethical stage of existence, and the individual's fundamental task of self-understanding involves the elaboration and clarification of that choice". Judge William argues that the aesthetic young man does not have an authentic self because he does not "win [himself], acquire [his] own self" (Kierkegaard 1988b, p. 167) or "choose [himself]" (Kierkegaard 1988c, p. 124). Aesthetes do not make this radical choice and have no conception of their selves, for their lives are centred on their immediate pleasures. In *The Power and The Glory*, the faithful mother who tells religious bed-time stories to her children is such a character that has failed to make a choice in her life though she seems to be a devout Christian. As an antithetical character to the Whisky Priest, the mother covertly tries to convey the message to her children. However, her son finds those stories absurd and does not believe in them. When the son tells his father, he correctly diagnoses his wife's problem:

"That book—it is like our own childhood."

"It sounds so silly."

"You don't remember the time when the Church was here. I was a bad Catholic, but it meant well, music, lights, a place where you could sit out of this heat—and for your mother, well, there was always something for her to do. If we had a theatre, anything at all instead, we shouldn't feel so – left" (Greene 1940, p. 47)

For the woman, religion is something she found herself in when she was born – not a deliberate choice on her part. Julin (2011, p. 35) asserts that "lacking any sort of connection to a larger 'life project' or 'task' the aesthetic choice amounts to nothing more than a whimsical expression of an individual's particular preference or feeling at a point in time, a passive response to the satiation of his desire". Unlike the Priest

who ‘chooses himself’ as his task and who tries to uncover the reality of his own existence apart from formal religious rules, the woman chooses the established church or stories of saints as her life task. In the absence of churches and rituals to ground her self as part of her daily life, the mother reading supernatural stories makes a caricature of her belief and is doomed to feel deserted. According to her husband, her belief has the same value as going to theatre or cinema on Sundays. Similarly, all other characters, such as the lieutenant who relates himself to – or chooses himself in – Communism, Padre Jose who chooses to survive by abrogating his vow of celibacy, *mestizo* who chooses earning money by betraying the Priest and Coral Fellows who chooses simply not to have faith in God, fail to conceive their selves and thus, become mythical personalities, unlike the Whisky Priest who finds himself ethically in his inner self. For instance, Hoskins (2004, p. 267) argues that “In *The Power and the Glory*, the lieutenant is ironically more priest-like in his habits than the Priest himself: he is celibate, highly disciplined in his devotion to the duty of his belief, and ascetic in his conduct of life”. However, since he grounded all his identity on his ideology, seizing the last priest in the country, what he only feels is not achievement but anguish. Referring to the hollow personalities these people construct, the Priest asserts that “God might forgive cowardice and passion” and asks, “was it possible to forgive the habit of piety?” (p. 166). Thus, every time he encounters one of these characters, he “become[s] so radically conscious of himself that no adventitious trait escapes him” (Kierkegaard 1988b, p. 258).

Another striking example of the Whisky Priest’s choosing his decisive self is his relationship with his daughter, whom he gets the chance to meet on his escape. Kunkel describes the Priest as a “drunkard and fornicator” and Pryce-Jones (1966, p. 48) shows “how unworthy this man is to be the final representative of the church in a province cleared of priests”. Sharrock argues that:

“He is a drunkard and has broken his vow of chastity: more seriously he has not achieved anything: ‘What an impossible fellow I am, he thought, and how useless.’ The villagers are too terrified to shelter him: he cannot help his child: the American will not make his confession to him: he is caught in the end like a rat in a trap” (1984, p. 152)

Though he has many vices, he is courageous enough to face with the consequences of his sins. He avoided the village for six years where his mistress, Maria and his daughter, Brigitta live. Although he was driven into the village by the presence of

soldiers in the woods, it can be said that he is happy to meet the fruit of his sin. He thinks that “five years ago he had given way to despair – the unforgivable sin – and he was going back now to the scene of his despair with a curious lightening of the heart. For he had got over despair too. He was a bad priest, he knew it” (p. 58). Normally a sinner is expected to renounce the fruits of his crime and repent, but the Priest finds himself incapable of rejecting his daughter because “the sin seemed now so unimportant and he loved the fruit of it” (p. 126). His dreams “to go to confession [...] to feel contrition and be forgiven: eternal life will begin for [him] all over again” (p. 62) when he finds a priest over the border are aborted with a feeling of enormous parental responsibility on his shoulders. Though he sees the apparent corruption of Brigitta and “the whole vile world [is] coming round the child to ruin her” (p. 79), he is more than ready to sacrifice his soul– or to choose his own self – in exchange of his faith. He prays “O God, give me any kind of death – without contrition, in a state of sin – only save this child” (p. 78). Choosing his daughter as the concrete evidence of his sin even at the price of his eternal damnation, the Priest predicates his existence on concrete grounds rather than relating his identity to his religion that is abstract and mystical. Thus, in the end, he is “born of the principle of contradiction, or born by the fact that [he] choose [himself]” (Kierkegaard 1988b, pp. 215-6).

### **3.3 The Priest, Sin and Freedom**

Another defining element of the ethical stage is freedom which is closely related to the concept of choice. As shown in the previous chapter, choice for the aesthete is arbitrary – there is no real difference whether one kills himself or not or marries or not for the aesthete. However, in the ethical stage, the choice is not about choosing good or bad; it is about choosing good or bad or not choosing at all. Judge William asserts that “[r]ather than designating the choice between good and evil, my *Either/Or* designates the choice by which one chooses good and evil or rules them out” (Kierkegaard 1988b, p. 169). Thus, what one needs to do at first to become a self is taking ‘the choice to choose.’ Lacking the act of choosing, the aesthete is accused of being “a hater of activity” and without choice his personality has no continuance. Although the aesthete seems free in his actions, he is in fact a prisoner of his ‘not-choosing’. All his life is bound by circumstances, occasions or random events. However, the ethical individual has the real freedom, according to Judge. He

declares that “[In] the ethical I am raised above the moment, I am in freedom” (Kierkegaard 1988b, p. 179). By denying the transient nature of the aesthete, he is, in fact, entering the sphere of freedom through his choice whether it be good or not. He further maintains that “the act of resolution is the ethical act, it is freedom” (Kierkegaard 1988c, p. 115). Accordingly, the ethical self claims that there is a mutual relationship between freedom and choice; where there is a choice there is freedom, and vice versa. He thinks that one would inevitably choose good – that is the ethical – given the freedom to act: “If one can only bring a person to the point where he stands at the crossroad, so that there is no way out for him except to choose, then he will choose the right thing” (Kierkegaard 1988b, p. 168).

As Manheimer (1977, p. 68) argues, "one becomes ethical by deciding to actualize one's possibilities in such a way that the individual defines himself". Thus, the Whisky Priest chose himself, or to put it another way, wanted to find his authentic self by turning inward and found a definition for his identity. Now he needs to make the continuous act of ‘choosing oneself in freedom’ that Judge William defines as the most abstract and the most concrete form of existence. In *The Power and The Glory*, Greene reflects the category of freedom through the Priest's unorthodox dealings with sin and sinners. Unlike others, he has come to know “the enormous privilege of life – this life” (p. 58) and its potential. For him, life and all that is related to life is sacred – even his vices. Thus, the freedom to choose the right conduct as depicted by Judge William is transformed into the Priest's tendency towards sin and sinners. Though he is required to minister, the result is, Sheldon (1994, p. 9) argues, “a personal surrender to petty vices. He drinks heavily, plays card tricks, sleeps with a woman and makes her pregnant [...] Whenever he is required to perform the traditional functions of a priest, he reveals his incompetence”. According to Bergonzi, (2008, p. 114), “[w]hen he is about to be executed the Priest finds he has no fear of damnation, only an immense sense of disappointment”. His whole actions represent his rigorousness to reach God through sin. Considering he will be killed for practicing religion, he knows he will be remembered as a saint and a martyr, which he despises. For, “it would have been quite easy to be a saint. It would only have needed a little self-restraint and a little courage” (208). Even Padre Jose, the other priest who escaped execution by marrying, considers himself “worthy of damnation” as if it was a privilege, a “gift he had been given which nobody could take away” (p.

23). According to Sinha (2007, p. 28), "*The Power and the Glory* is the story of a hunted priest whose real martyrdom is his consciousness of weakness and sin".

One of the most powerful scenes in *The Power and The Glory* where the approbation of sin as a result of freedom is when the Whisky Priest, unrecognized by the police, was temporarily cast into a dark, stinking cell congested with all kinds of common people. His wish to confess to an official priest was answered with the smell of urine, the noise of a couple making love on the corner, a pious woman captured for hiding forbidden books in her house and a man who complains about religion and priests. Being sure that he will be recognized in the morning, he develops an odd sense of 'companionship' with these criminals in this prison cell "which he had never experienced in the old days when pious people came kissing his cotton glove" and begins to confess his sins as if he was in a confessional box. He thinks that "after all it was possible to find peace there, when you knew for certain that the time was short" (p. 123). Being together with his fellow-sinners, he is relieved with a "sense of communication with a neighbour." He even encourages them to inform against him, but nobody does because "he was just one criminal among a herd of criminals" (p. 126). When he confesses his sins with disturbingly short sentences "I am a priest", "I am a drunkard", "I have a child", he is figuratively absolved from his sins and people consider him a martyr. His defence of the adulterers who fornicate in the corner in their presence and claim that it has a beauty confirms his love for sin:

"Beauty," she said with disgust. "Here. In this cell. With strangers all round."

"Such a lot of beauty. Saints talk about the beauty of suffering. Well, we are not saints, you and I.

Suffering to us is just ugly. Stench and crowding and pain. That is beautiful in that corner—to them. It needs a lot of learning to see things with a saint's eye: a saint gets a subtle taste for beauty and can look down on poor ignorant palates like theirs. But we can't afford to."

"It's a mortal sin."

"We don't know. It may be. But I'm a bad priest, you see. I know—from experience— how much beauty Satan carried down with him when he fell. [...]

Again the cry came, an expression of intolerable pleasure. The woman said: "Stop them. It's a scandal." He felt fingers on his knee, grasping, digging. He said: "We're all fellow prisoners. I want drink at this moment

more than anything, more than God. That's a sin too" (Greene 1940, p. 127)

When the pious woman threatens him to write to his bishop in Mexico City, he feels it “more difficult to feel pity for her than for the half-caste” (p. 128) who instigated his capture. As Choi (1990, p. 74) argues, “[t]he Whisky Priest’s discovery of the mystery, which is possible when he abandons intellectualism and the old habit of piety, indicates nothing else than his spiritual rebirth”. Thus, his dream of meeting other priests, going to confession, charging money for baptismal rites and hearing confessions started to seem such horrible acts. Hoskins (2004, p. 270) fittingly claims that the Priest’s encounter with sinners in prison “leads him to the full discovery and expression of his humanistic – and saintly – impulse to identify with them absolutely”. Indeed, when he starts feeling his old, careless life hardening around him like a habit – “the habit of piety” (p. 170) in the free side of the border, he immediately returns to the misery – and possible execution – he had just escaped. There, in prison, stripped of all his possessions – wine, altar stone, books and clothes – that remind him of his past life, he is metaphorically absolved from his sins and finds his authentic self in his freedom. With freedom resulting from choice, he finds beauty among the wretches.

There are many other occasions in which the Priest finds himself within the realm of Kierkegaard’s ethical freedom. Judge William expresses that “[In] the ethical I am raised above the moment, I am in freedom” (Kierkegaard 1988b, p. 179). According to Elrod (2015, p. 133), one aspect of choosing oneself in freedom “is the acceptance of oneself as radically free and responsible for oneself” and thus, freedom puts one in responsibility to his own existence. Similarly, Taylor (2000, p. 244) argues that when one admits his duty for himself as a free human being, “other dimensions of selfhood come into sharp focus. Most importantly, the subject clearly distinguishes [...] what it ought to be by differentiating its givenness and its possibility, its reality and its ideality”. Unlike the aesthete who lives in the world of possibilities, the ethical tries to combine them with the given, actual features in human beings. The conditions outside the individual and within the individual must be merged so that a balanced view of the self established. The Whisky Priest seems to internalize this fact. While entering the village where Brigitta lives he aptly remarks: “there are always comparisons which can be made with worse times: even in danger and misery the pendulum swings” (p. 56). For him, having a child is something given to him against

his wish – it is an actuality. So are his being priest, ministering in the most dangerous part of the world, drinking and pride. Instead of totally rejecting them, he tries to collaborate with them. Those are, Taylor (2000, p. 192) claims, "particular given[s] that the self [have] not determined but that cannot be escaped". Thus, freedom is, Judge William thinks, expressed in one's acceptance of what was given and in one's choice of being an ethical self. The Priest's conversation with a pious woman after he avoided the police clearly expresses his love of freedom against the woman's repulsive piety.

“‘But I’m a good woman, father,’ she squeaked at him with astonishment. ‘Then what are you doing here, keeping away the bad people?’ He said, ‘Have you any love for anyone but yourself?’ ‘I love God, father,’ she said haughtily. He took a quick look at her in the light of the candle burning on the floor – the hard old raisin eyes under the black shawl – another of the pious – like himself. ‘How do you know? Loving God isn’t any different from loving a man – or a child. It’s wanting to be with Him, to be near Him.’ He made a hopeless gesture with his hands. ‘It’s wanting to protect Him from yourself’ (Greene 1940, pp. 169-170).

For Kierkegaard (1988b, p. 176), freedom “to choose gives a person’s being a solemnity, a quiet dignity, that is never entirely lost”. Since the woman lost contact with her accidental and possible qualities and failed to merge them, she does not have an authentic self. Within the storm of people coming to confession and being absolved of their sins, the Priest senses the impossibility in their forming identities with their abstract, accidental and given faiths. Since what is posited by one’s freedom constitutes one’s essence, the ethical strives to attain concrete, essential and acquired selves. According to the ethicist, the self “is not an abstract self which passes everywhere and hence is nowhere, but [is] a concrete self which stands in living reciprocal relation with these specific surroundings, these conditions of life, this natural order” (Kierkegaard 1988b, p. 267). Thus, what finds itself as sin and love for sinners in Whisky Priest is the result of his mediation of aesthetic and ethical qualities in his identity. As Taylor (2000, p. 244) duly observes, “the ethicist simultaneously annuls complete determination by, and appropriates [...] his dependence upon, the given natural and social aspects of selfhood”. Although the Priest seems to be guided by supreme intervention in every scene and to be a victim of fate, “everything [...] belongs to him essentially, however accidental it may seem to be” (Kierkegaard 1988b, p. 260) since he chooses his freedom.

### 3.4 The Priest and His Absolute Duty

The last ethical concept proposed by Judge William is the sense of duty, which is materialized through the synthesis of abstract (aesthetic) and concrete (ethic) qualities embodied within the self. Choice and freedom are the first conditions to arrive at an existential potential where there is any question of a person as a self. Malantschuk (2003, p. 32) argues that “both elements must always be present [...] [otherwise] there is only deterioration in human existence”. As seen, freedom for the ethical means the person’s possibility to choose. Unlike the aesthete with his passive, stagnant existence, the ethical chooses to act. However, “the self [...] must have norms for its action” (Malantschuk 2003, pp., 33). Without predefined norms and rules to follow, the self is always in the danger of diverting from its aim and taking random choices. In the same way, according to Harries (2010, p. 132), “to be free is to be free, not of care, but of need”, and thus, it can be argued that ethical freedom leads to norms, rules and obligations to follow. The aesthete’s care-for-nothing attitude is transformed into care-for-all attitude with the ethicist. For the Judge, being ethical means achieving concreteness through creating self-imposed obligations and duties towards yourself and others. Indeed, according to Obinyan (2014, p. 5) “[t]he ethical person is characterized by passion: not the whimsical desire of the aesthetic person, but a care about something with all one’s being; to embrace the motivating values that one uses consciously to guide one’s life”. Mooney (1995, p. 9) observes that the Judge’s guidance “choose yourself” is “demanding, non-spectatorial [and] not potentially passive and disengaged”, which highlights the duty-bound nature of the ethical stage. In short, the ethical stage is what has authority over one’s being, which puts people under obligations independent of their desires and wishes.

In *The Power and The Glory*, Greene depicts the character of Whisky Priest with an immense sense of Kierkegaardian ethical duties. The sense of duty which finds itself as marriage in *Either/Or* is manifested as duty towards himself and others in Greene’s Whisky Priest. In the first chapter of the second volume, *Aesthetic Validity of Marriage*, Judge William’s solution for attaining eternal, selfhood, universality and authenticity is marriage which, he defends, is the definitive form ethical stage. He argues that marriage leads to freedom, liberating one from dependence on desires by binding one to another human being – that is, relating one’s self to another self. The same is true for the Priest as well for whom the concept of marriage is

manifested as an immense sense of duty. It can be argued that the whole action in the novel revolves around his consciousness of duty and he tries to attain his authentic selfhood by defining himself in relation to other beings. In fact, stuck between the conundrum of duty-to-God for saving his own soul and duty-to-people for saving their souls, he always finds himself making a choice between these two options, as explained earlier. However, he almost always seems to choose his duty towards others. On his encounter with Coral Fellows, he tells her how tired he is running and living like dogs but on the inside, desires to get caught. When she offers him to ‘get caught’ and later to ‘renounce [his] faith,’ his response highlights this fact. He says “to choose pain like that – it’s not possible. And it’s my duty not to be caught” (p. 35) in the first case and “It’s impossible. There’s no way. I’m a priest. It’s out of my power” (p. 36) in the second. In the following tragicomic scene after he leaves Coral, he arrives in a small village, where the residents feel happy for his coming because it has been ages since they confessed and had their children baptized. Desperately longing for food and rest for a while, the Priest’s plan to hear their confessions later is averted by the old man. He hurries the Priest to start his duties as soon as possible because “it would be a pity if the soldiers came before [they] had time . . . such a burden on poor souls” (p. 40). Tired to death after days of travel barefoot, the Priest occasionally falls asleep, but more people keep coming. Unable to feel grudge for people, he starts crying, saying: “Let them all come,’ the Priest cried angrily. ‘I am your servant” (p. 40). The villagers’ disturbingly egoistical desire to be absolved before the Priest gets killed is manifested as the Priest’s inability to be released his duties. Their piety is transformed into a dull and reckless assertion of religion.

The most striking examples of the Whisky Priest’s duty-bound character are when he acts with an immense sense of self-sacrifice. Though he longs for his previous pious life, he is quite ready to give up his life and soul for almost all characters in the novel. As Kierkegaard (1995, p. 38) Kierkegaard observes, “ [...] by becoming a ‘self,’ he becomes free, but at the next moment he is dependent on this self. Duty, however, makes a person dependent and at the same moment eternally independent”. The Priest wants to achieve eternal freedom by sacrificing himself for others no matter what the cost is. When he is preaching to people in Brigitta’s village, he talks about the life in Heaven where they will see “no *jefe*, no unjust laws, no taxes, no soldiers and no hunger. Your children do not die in heaven” (p. 67). However, since

he considers himself unworthy for the mission to deliver them to peace, he sees heaven inside this physical earth. He thinks that his personal heaven is his duty for people: “heaven is here” (p. 67). Thus, as a compensation for his unworthiness, he is ready to sacrifice himself: “it hadn’t after a while seemed to matter very much, whether he was damned or not, so long as these others....” (p. 67). He is ready to give himself up to the police coming to the village on patrol duty. But he is not recognized and the villagers do not betray him. Stuck between his duties not-to-get-caught and to-sacrifice-himself, he always picks the latter one. In the following scene when he is leaving the village, villagers advise him to go north, where the police think he cannot be. When his affection for his daughter clashes with his inability to do anything for her due to his responsibility as a priest, he resorts to self-sacrifice again. He takes the opposite road in desperation: “[o]ne mustn’t have human affections – or rather one must love every soul as if it were one’s own child. The passion to protect must extend itself over a world [...] He turned his mule south” (p. 80). Furthermore, Brigitta’s mockery and tease of him when he is leaving the village symbolizes his inability to perform his duties both as a father and a priest. Similarly, when Padre Jose is summoned to the graveyard to pray for a dead child, he feels himself unworthy of the duty. Though he stretches his hand to make a sign of the cross, he stops since “fear came back, like a drug” (p. 45). Here, ‘fat and ugly and old and humiliated’ Padre Jose acts as the metaphorical anti-thesis of Whisky Priest who, if he fails in his duties, would be constantly humiliated by children.

According to Miller (1990, pp. 167-8), “[w]hat Greene has succeeded in doing is to [...] to show that the only true salvation consists in living the gospel message, [...] [and] in external acts a goodness to others. Greene’s theology is one of works. We are what we do for others”. Indeed, the Whisky Priest is a confirmed altruist in a literal sense. Towards the end when he is having a conversation with the lieutenant, he confesses his burden on his shoulders: “if there’s ever been a single man in this state damned, then I’ll be damned too” (p. 198). Just before his execution, his fear lies not in his fear of death but going to ‘God empty-handed’ with nothing achieved in terms of being an example for people. He is in a great dilemma – he feels sorry for the missed chance of serving a far larger number of communicants on the other side of the border and for being unworthy to people as ‘their sole hope of absolution.’ He has failed in both. Having failed in his duties, he offers a greater sacrifice, his soul –

even for his betrayer, *the mestizo*. In one of the most striking scenes in a small forest hut where *the mestizo* starts confessing his sins to confirm his suspicion that he is a priest because it is a task a priest cannot refuse, The Whisky Priest states:

“He had an immense self-importance; he was unable to picture a world of which he was only a typical part – a world of treachery, violence, and lust in which his shame was altogether insignificant. How often the priest had heard the same confession – Man was so limited he hadn’t even the ingenuity to invent a new vice: the animals knew as much. It was for this world that Christ had died; the more evil you saw and heard about you, the greater glory lay around the death. It was too easy to die for what was good or beautiful, for home or children or a civilization – it needed a God to die for the half-hearted and the corrupt” (Greene 1940, p. 94, emphasis added).

Though he feels repulsion towards the man, it is his duty to sacrifice himself for the man. As Kierkegaard’s Judge William observes, life on the ethical level does not rely on “the multiplicity of duty but on its intensity.” For him, it is his responsibility “to throw some light on the absolute significance of duty, the eternal validity of duty-relationship for the personality” (Kierkegaard 1988b, p. 270). In so doing, the ethicist positions himself over insignificant mundane contemplations and events. Similarly, due to his intense relating himself to others, the Whisky Priest comes closer to achieving his identity as a self. On his last days, he is haunted with people’s faces whom he has contacted with – “the half-caste, the lieutenant, even a dentist he had once sat with for a few minutes, the child at the banana station, calling up a long succession of faces, pushing at his attention as if it were a heavy door which wouldn’t budge” (p. 221). He grounds all his existence on their absolution, which he thinks he failed.

Duty is like an instinct in the Whisky Priest. After he is released from the prison, he changes his route towards the border – this time with a decisiveness to leave for good. For he has lost all his means to survive. On the way back, he returns to the farm where Coral Fellows lived with her family and where he spent a few days during his escape. However, he finds the house deserted; the family moved to the capital to leave the country and Coral Fellows is dead, of which the reader is informed later. In one of the most tragicomic scenes there, the Priest is followed by a ‘bitch mongrel’ left behind. The animal is apparently dying of starvation but chooses to stay there to protect the house. He develops an odd sense of intimacy with the animal – like her, he wants ‘to retain a kind of hope’ that the old world will come

back. He resembles his inability to flee and to be an example to that of the dog's – the whole day “[t]he bitch was dragging itself along the veranda growling” (p. 140). The boundary between his sense of duty and her instinct is blurred and the dog's – as well as his – “instinct [seems] like a sense of duty – one can confuse it with loyalty very easily” (p. 140). In another scene where his instinctive responsibility arises is when he passes the border to a small village in another state where religion is still prohibited but punished with small penalties – a few days' jail time. During his time there with German siblings Mr Lehr and Miss Lehr, he observes that the life they have is “in its way, an admirable mode of life” with no responsibility for anything. Leaving the chase, humiliation and duties behind, he has the chance to minister freely, charge money for baptismal rites, hear confessions, and find wine whenever he wants. People take off their hats as a sign of respect when he passes. However, his sense of duty revives again:

“All the same, one did feel an enormous luxury lying there in a little cold stream while the sun sank . . . He thought of the prison cell with the old man and the pious woman, the half-caste lying across the hut door, the dead child, and the abandoned station. He thought with shame of his daughter left to her knowledge and her ignorance by the rubbish-dump. He had no right to such luxury” (Greene 1940, p. 221, emphasis added).

As explained earlier, the aesthete has no true responsibility, not true commitment: thus, has no self, Kierkegaard argues. The ethical, however, puts himself under much obligation as a self that can generate a positive change towards acquiring himself. The duties define the ethical self. Judge William argues that the ethical “takes upon himself responsibility for it all. He does not hesitate over whether he will take this particular thing or not, for he knows that if he does not do it something much more important will be lost” (Kierkegaard 1988b, p. 251). In the same way, the Whisky Priest becomes aware of his internal need to form his identity; thus, sacrifices himself. The *mestizo* shows up just before he is about to pass the border and informs him that the wanted American killer is seriously wounded and asks for a priest to hear his last confessions. It was a fact that the American was dying; he deduces this from his encounter with the Indian woman and her dead child in the banana station. He also knows that it is a trap to catch him. Since saving a man's soul and the

complacency it brings is a much more valuable duty than avoiding his execution, he pleasantly walks into his apparent death. As Gordon argues “[t]he Whisky Priest...sacrifices his life to hear the confession of a murderer. The sacrifice may have been wrong from an ethical perspective, yet one can argue that it propels the Whisky Priest into the sanctity of religious martyrism [...] This choice adds to his integrity” (1997, p. 90). Indeed, he is the only character who has integrity with his strict commitment to rules and duties.

In the end, the Whisky Priest demands to actualize his ideal self within Kierkegaard’s ethical life stage of life manifested as choice, freedom and sense of duty. His life style is established as one with concrete qualities against the aesthete’s abstract existence. It is no wonder, then, to argue that the Whisky Priest wants to believe in a concrete God, not an ideal being imprisoned inside temples. Since man who commits sin, murder, adultery and pride was created by God, one is most likely to find Him inside those qualities as well, Greene argues. Man was “made in God’s image. God was the parent, but He was also the policeman, the criminal, the priest, the maniac, and the judge. Something resembling God dangled from the gibbet or went into odd attitudes before the bullets in a prison yard or contorted itself like a camel in the attitude of sex” (p. 98). The person who is restricted to the aesthetic stage does not realize the possibility of a self within the ethical stage. His life is considered as having no commitment and duty for anything and he cannot attain his ideal concrete self. However, the ethical person that ‘chooses itself in freedom with duty’ might lead himself to a unified self away from the aesthetic stage that is “a dead-end route that leads to boredom and disgust and deprives life of all meaning” (Hubben 1997, pp., 31). Unlike the aesthete that lives the moment with no continuity, the ethicist creates a history of his identity through concrete actions, even if they are negative. Carpenter (1992, p. 326) argues that the Priest’s undesirable characteristics “enhance him, for they keep him on the fleshly level and prevent him from becoming inaccessibly good. He is the kind of man whom reader and author would like to be”. The sense of desolation that the lieutenant as the anti-thesis of the Priest observes everywhere can be interpreted as his way of longing to be concrete. There is no self forming inside him “no pulse, no breath, no heart-beat, but it’s still life – we’ve only got to find a name for it” (p. 199). According to Judge William “[t]he task the ethical individual sets for himself is to transform himself into the universal individual”

(Kierkegaard 1988b, p. 26). Similarly, “the duty is the universal. What is required of [the ethicist] is the universal; what [he is] able to do is the particular” (Kierkegaard 1988b, p. 263). Through following universal ethical codes, rules and norms, the individual tries to achieve his authentic, concrete selfhood. For the ethicist, to be universal means to be ordinary, not extraordinary in one’s dealings. The universal man marries, forms friendships, works and makes mistakes. The Priest tries to accomplish this by being a public man or establishing intimacy with people. By annulling his abstract qualities like being a priest, and having the power to forgive sins, he starts observing the life more concretely. Thereby, for him, lust becomes “a kind of love”; pride is transformed into “feeling pity for everyone.” In the end, the Whisky Priest feels his identity as a self by being an ordinary, public man. For “he, in his innocence” Greene argues, “had felt no love for anyone; now in his corruption he had learnt...” (p. 136) what it means to exist authentically.

### **3.5 Scobie’s Choice of ‘Others’ in *The Heart of The Matter***

Greene continues his exploration of Kierkegaard’s ethical stage of existence with the character of Scobie in *The Heart of The Matter* – the third novel in his faith tetralogy. Indeed, it can be argued that Greene pursues what he has set out to do with *The Power and Glory*. Although some critics – excluding *The End of The Affair* as one of his faith fiction – consider it the end of his religious novels which mainly experiment on the similar themes and agendas, *The Heart of The Matter* holds a unique position along with *The Power and The Glory* in terms of its explicit aspiration towards an authentic life. Greene gets closer to maturing his ‘grand scheme’ in his religious novels through Major Scobie. Caught between the love of God and love of people just like the Whisky Priest, Scobie further manifests the human condition before faith, sin and sinners and its affinities leading to Kierkegaard’s ethical existence. In fact, it can be argued that if the Whisky Priest is a saint with sin, Scobie is a sinner with saintly qualities. Thereby, they complete each other in forming one authentic self together. In addition, Scobie seems to harbour and promote ethical categories together with what the Priest represents like choice, freedom and duty – as shown previously in this chapter. Although Scobie as a character has more psychological depth compared to the Priest, he offers more sound elaboration towards ethical life

and, positioned as complementary to the Priest, he is more tangible to act as the embodiment of ethical stage.

Indeed, Scobie incarnates what the Whisky Priest has set out to do with the categories of choice, freedom and duty. Kierkegaard's *Either/Or* enjoins the reader to choose between two different world-views: either the aesthetic or the ethical. For Judge William, choice is essential in the formation of personality and he views those who fail in the process as "souls [who] are too dissolute to comprehend the implications of such a dilemma, whose personalities lack the energy to be able to say with pathos: Either/Or" (Kierkegaard 1988b, p. 157). However, it can be argued that like the Priest, Scobie seems to make this 'absolute choice' and enter the realm of ethical existence. Although the general tone of the book leans towards Scobie's existential crisis, he appears as the only character who seems to adopt a life with meaning. While all other characters are depicted as lonely, isolated, despairing individuals who symbolize the aesthetic life-view, Scobie has a qualitative 'existential pathos' that develops his personality in a positive way *per se*. Those characters live in what the Judge calls 'the supernatural amplitude of rare moments' so that their life "disintegrates into nothing but interesting details" (Kierkegaard 1988b, p. 11). For instance, Scobie's wife, Louise, has no objective in life except going to parties, seeing Scobie's promotion and going to the Mass on Sundays. She continuously complains about the hot weather and forces Scobie to find a way out of the country or to get promoted to commissionership as if her whole existence depends on this. When Scobie comes home saying they are considering someone else for the position, she says "how different the whole day would have been [...] if you'd come home and said, "Darling, I'm going to be the Commissioner" (p. 15). She considers the immediate pleasure of showing off as the commissioner's wife in the parties as her absolute aim in life. In the same way, Wilson whom Greene defines as "the lagging finger of the barometer" (p. 3), acts as a drifter in life, failing to direct his course of life. In a comical scene, bored to death, he devises a game of Cockroach Championship with his roommate in which they hunt down the cockroaches to score more points. When they have a quarrel, he feels terribly sorry for having lost his only occasion to enjoy himself: "the washbasin, the table, the grey mosquito-net, even the cockroach fastened on the wall, anger trickled out of him and loneliness took its place. It was like quarrelling with one's own image in the glass" (p. 59). He

immediately apologizes to his friend. He is the perfect personification of Kierkegaard's aesthete. As in the aesthete's account of *Fellowship of the Dead*, he experiences death everywhere like an individual "imprisoned for some fault of his/ In a body like a grave" (p. 50). According to Caputo (2007, p. 34), the ethical self "is what it does, what it makes of himself"; but, Wilson chooses not to act at all. The aesthete's arguments against marriage also express themselves through Wilson's open hostility towards Scobie's marriage as an ethical act, which he sees as "pain inevitable in any human relationship" (p. 66). Since he is someone "having only a tenuous connection with reality" (Bellinger 1995, pp., 62), he finds solace in poetry meetings with Scobie's wife. It can be argued that that they – Wilson and Louise – both live in a dream world of poetic excitement as, Bellinger (1995, p. 62) claims, "the flickering personalities of the stage are more interesting than the banal reality of the Judge" – that is Scobie.

Undeniably, Scobie invigorates the antithetical character of ethical Judge who has made the act of self-choice against aesthetic Wilson and Louise. As Mooney (1995, p. 7) observes, self-choice "is a strategy to combat the shallowness inherent in a merely aesthetic existence". Greene depicts Scobie as a character that has achieved to make the ethical act of self-choice and that has found a way to fight with this shallowness. In the first place, he is the only one among the Englishmen who loves the country despite, its climate, cruelties, bribery, monotony and suffering of all kinds. Although all others were sent there against their wishes and try to find means to leave the place immediately, he deliberately chose to move there to find his inner self. In fact, he is the only that has established a connection with the country: He asks:

"[...] do I love this place so much? Is it because here human nature hasn't had time to disguise itself? Nobody here could ever talk about a heaven on earth. Heaven remained rigidly in its proper place on the other side of death, and on this side flourished the injustices, the cruelties, the meanness that elsewhere people so cleverly hushed up. Here you could love human beings nearly as God loved them, knowing the worst: you didn't love a pose, a pretty dress, a sentiment artfully assumed" (Greene 1948, pp. 26-6).

The reason why Scobie chooses this desolate place, which Greene defines as "the original tower of Babel" (p. 6) is, Lewis (1957a, pp. 51-2) argues, "to inspect human life in its cruder and more exposed conditions: [...] where [...] there openly

flourished ‘the injustices, the cruelties, the meanness that ‘elsewhere people so cleverly hushed up’”. For others, the colony is a place of loneliness and alienation. Harris says: “I hate the place. I hate the people. I hate the bloody niggers” (p. 5). Boehmer (2005, p. 156) fittingly observes that the place is “a metaphor for human seediness, a place of moral degradation and spiritual dereliction, where even the man of integrity is corrupted”. However, this is what Scobie calls his ‘home.’ While others whom Scobie defines ‘patients’ are sent there, he asserts that “[I]f he had become young again this was the life he would have chosen to live” (p. 47). Similarly, as Smith (1948, p. 688) argues, Scobie “has chosen an inferior way of life because he is an inferior person who can get from life only the perverted satisfaction that comes from humiliation and frustration”. The place can be viewed as a test ground for men where only the suitable can survive. In the middle of this inferno, Greene makes Scobie search his authentic self by self-choice.

One of the several examples where Scobie chooses his absolute self is his dealings with public life. Unlike the Priest in the previous section who ‘chooses’ his transcendental qualities against public life, Scobie compensates his search by mingling with the crowd. According to Mooney (1995, p. 14), “self-choice is not separating oneself from others or becoming a solitary recluse or mystic. Civic duties can be embraced in self-choice”. In the same vein, for Judge William the ethical self “does not become someone other than he was before, but he becomes himself. The consciousness integrates, and he is himself” (Kierkegaard 1988b, p. 177). Although there are rumours among the colonists that Scobie is involved in illegal business with the natives, he is generally regarded as an exemplary person for all. He is known as ‘Scobie the Just’; he does not drink, fornicate and even lie. He considers himself “a man in the ranks” (p. 99-164). He is an honest police chief with “an overwhelming need to undo every form of evil or unhappiness” (Pierloot 1994, pp., 105). As Leah (2007, p. 776) argues, “Scobie is known for his scrupulous honesty and incorruptibility”. Even the Syrian merchant Yousef continuously refers him as ‘a good man’ and fails to corrupt him with his bribery. When Wilson first comes to the country and others exclude him since he is a low-level officer, Scobie is the first that befriends him. He blends with people by participating in all kinds of social activities and always volunteers for extra work and overtime. Though many critics argue that Scobie is a corrupt man, I argue the opposite. All his misconduct, be it illegal acts or

simple errors, can be considered as unintentional lapses or misdemeanours. Taking his words into account, while “they had been corrupted by money and he had been corrupted by sentiment. Sentiment was the more dangerous, because you couldn’t name its price” (p. 43). He does not report the ship captain who keeps innocent letters of his daughter despite the ban; he gets a loan from Yousef to send his wife to South Africa; and just to guard her from rascal Bagster he fornicates with Helen, in dutiful adultery. All his faults that lead to his suicide result from his pity for others and his need to be a part of the community. According to Kierkegaard’s ethicist, “the religious has a tendency to isolate the individual” (Kierkegaard 1988b, p. 246) and thus, Scobie tries to avert his ‘isolation’ by “absolutely reconcil[ing] him[self] with every human being, with all humankind” (Kierkegaard 1988b, p. 272). The most vivid example for his self-choice in relation to others is the scene where the survivors of a torpedoed ship are lodged in the hospital. When the six-year-old girl is about to die, just like the Whisky Priest’s self-sacrifice for his daughter, he sincerely prays for her: “‘Father,’ he prayed, ‘give her peace. Take away my peace for ever, but give her peace’” (p. 108) which is immediately answered. The girl dies in peace, but his suffering begins. Though this sacrifice is not compatible with religious doctrines of his faith, he gladly sacrifices his newly-acquired peace resulting from his wife’s absence.

### **3.6 Scobie Freed through His Sins**

As proposed earlier, “the idea of choice implies some idea of freedom” (Lillegard 1995, p. 100). In *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* the pseudonymous author Johannes Climacus asserts that “[i]f an individual throws himself away in order to grasp something great, he is esthetically inspired; if he gives up everything in order to save himself, he is ethically inspired” (Kierkegaard 1992b, p. 390). Thus, when one reaches a point where he chooses himself ethically, he sacrifices everything and adopts the category of freedom in Kierkegaard’s ethical stage. Kierkegaard’s concept of freedom is not about the freedom of outward actions, not about deciding whether to go out for dinner or not. As Pojman (1990, p. 49) avers “[f]reedom is essentially an inward state which has to do with our loyalties, commitments, and beliefs. Freedom is not so much what we do, as the subjective *how* with which we do it”. It is an inward action which leads to commitments, responsibilities and duties. Although

the aesthete also makes choices and seems free in his actions, he chooses according to his transient ambitions and obscure inclinations. Thus, it can be said that choosing oneself in freedom is having an absolute sense of self-knowledge. Trying to achieve consistency in all his actions, Scobie is depicted as a character who knows what he is doing and who acts within the ethical freedom. He seems to adopt the ethicist's concept of freedom through his immense sense of responsibility and pity resulting from his self-knowledge. Although his actions lead to his destruction, he is fully aware of the consequences and of what they might lead to. Scobie's consciousness of his self creates a distorted image of his religion reflected as devastating pity for others.

The Whisky Priest's dealings with sin and sinners as a result of his choosing himself in freedom emerges again with Scobie. Scobie's consciousness of sin results from his self-knowledge. On his way to church to confess his sins, he ruminates: "[t]he trouble is, he thought, we know the answers—we [...] are damned by our knowledge" (p. 194). Indeed, at the beginning of the novel where a line from French poet Peguy is quoted, Greene stresses this issue: "Le pécheur est au Coeur même de chrétienté.... Nul n'est aussi compétent que le pécheur en matière de chrétienté. Nul, si ce n'est le saint" [The sinner is at the heart of Christianity. Nobody is as competent as the sinner in matters of Christianity. Nobody, except the saint] (p. 2). Likewise, Scobie stands at a crossroad and he is free to choose either being a saint or a sinner. Anticipating that he cannot reconcile both, he chooses his responsibilities for other sinners like himself. In a striking scene when Scobie is sent to Bamba to investigate the suicide of Pemberton, a young colonial officer, he is deeply affected by his suicide. While Father Clay regards the act as the reason for Pemberton's damnation, Scobie stresses the importance of awareness of the act. They, as experienced people, would "be damned, because [they] know, but he doesn't know a thing" (p. 75). Again, when Louise states that she will never forgive Pemberton for what he has done, Scobie states "Don't talk nonsense, dear. We'd forgive most things if we knew the facts" (p. 67). He singles out himself from the public with his 'knowing' the things. Although he states that 'he had never liked Pemberton' and investigates the case because it is his duty, he is crushed under his conscience. All through the night he feels disappointment for not having been able to save him. In fact, his resentment for Pemberton is because the latter's act was not an act of freedom. Just as Judge

William defines the aesthete as “a dying person” for whom life has lost his meaning, Pemberton is dead before maturing to choose himself in freedom. However, Scobie believes that “unquestionably there must be mercy for someone so unformed” as Pemberton (p. 74). Later in a dinner meeting where people were discussing Pemberton’s way of killing himself, Scobie is disgusted by their indifference for the man. He considers them no less dead than Pemberton because “[t]hrough two thousand years, he thought, we have discussed Christ’s agony in just this disinterested way” (p. 170). Since they all develop their identity “with necessity, not in freedom” they fail to understand the enormity of dying without achieving one’s self identity. Too obsessed with Pemberton’s case, just before he takes an overdose of pills, he remembers the man again – this time in the most dramatic fashion:

“The priests told one it was the unforgivable sin, the final expression of an unrepentant despair, and of course one accepted the Church’s teaching. But they taught also that God had sometimes broken his own laws, and was it less possible for him to put out a hand of forgiveness into the suicidal darkness than to have woken himself in the tomb, behind the stone? Christ had not been murdered—you couldn’t murder God. Christ had killed himself: he had hung himself on the Cross as surely as Pemberton from the picture-rail” (Greene 1948, p. 166)

In Scobie’s distorted view of the religion, what Christ did for people was not out of love, but of responsibility for people. Trying to justify his own suicide, he claims that Christ had led the way for suicide. Similar to the Whisky Priest’s concept that “it takes a God to die for the corrupt” Scobie impersonates a fallible God – that has the freedom to go on living to suffer more or to do what responsibility requires. The sight of a pitiable God in the Mass – “a bleeding face, of eyes closed by the continuous shower of blows: the punch-drunk head of God reeling side-ways” (p. 210) – is what reifies an omnipotent God into common folk. Scobie views Judge William’s directions on “duties to God, oneself, and one’s neighbour” (Kierkegaard 1988b, p. 266) as something to be transferred to one’s civic life.

Scobie is a man decorated with an extra sense of responsibility and self-sacrifice for his wife Louise, Helen and all humanity in short as seen with Pemberton case. Plagued with “the terrible impotent feeling of responsibility and pity” he sacrifices all his identity for the wellbeing of others and he “couldn’t shut his eyes or his ears to any human need of him” (p. 164). For freedom leads to responsibilities in the ethical stage. Louise’s observation that Scobie became Catholic just to marry her presents

the reader with the rationale behind Scobie's actions. He lives according to the rules imposed either internally or externally. He is a man of words and thus, follows the rules without exception. He is a Catholic but there is no place even for a minor offence. Although he is not happy with his marriage, since his marriage vow "constituted an oath as ineffaceable as the vow by the Ealing altar" (p. 166), he cannot find a solution but to follow it to the death. Thus, he lives his marriage to the excess so that he annuls his whole identity for Louise's happiness, which he fails to do. He blames himself for her unhappiness and his inability to arrange a passage for her to South Africa. When he commits adultery out of pity for Helen, he considers himself 'already damned' and thus, postpones going to the Mass so as not to 'insult God at his own altar' by receiving communion in a state of mortal sin since "no prayer was effective in a state of mortal sin." However, he cannot feel contrition for his adultery since the act "is formed in pity and steeped in guilt and responsibility" (Bierman 2002, pp., 70).

Scobie's responsibility for Helen is especially problematic for he feels it "like handcuffs on his wrists" (p. 139). Helen's grief, lack of experience, weakness and ugliness are the qualities that attract Scobie's attention. Scobie "had no sense of responsibility towards the beautiful and the graceful and the intelligent. They could find their own way. It was the face for which nobody would go out of his way, the face that would never catch the covert look" (p. 139). Although he tries to end the relationship many times, he feels a great "command" ordering him "to stay, to love, to accept responsibility, to lie" (p. 164). He wonders how God would react to the love sacrificed for another love. Thus, he perfunctorily embraces both – love of God through his marriage and love of Helen explicated by his sense of responsibility. To justify his actions, he accordingly remarks "God can wait" for it would be wrong to be liable to God "at the expense of one of his creatures" (p. 223). However, upon Louise's constant nagging, he is forced to participate in the communion during which he has had to eat communion bread. Since he cannot bring pain to the women he loves for the sake of his love of God, he offers his own damnation. He prays "O God, I offer up my damnation to you. Take it. Use it for them" (p. 200). As Hoskins (2004, p. 114) fittingly observes, "Scobie [...] cannot reconcile the conduct of his life with his Catholic conscience", and thus, tries to cleanse his sin with another sin – suicide. To sum up, Scobie "deliberately damn[s] himself for the sake of others" (Bosco

2005, pp., 42), and thus, he decides to free everyone including himself from his guilty conscience.

Mooney (1995, p. 24) claims that “a deeply responsible person has moral aspirations and sensitivities to suffering and injustice that far exceed what can be caught within the nets of act or role of responsibility”. This statement is quite fitting for Scobie’s case since his over-responsibility surpasses the limit of his immediate environment. Freedom necessitates extreme responsibility that brings burden and unhappiness: “[p]oint me out the happy man and I will point you out either egotism, evil—or else an absolute ignorance” (p. 106). His responsibility is on the universal scale. In one of the most striking scenes when the survivors of the torpedoed ship are cared for, he looks at the stars in meditation:

“Outside the rest-house he stopped again. The lights inside would have given an extraordinary impression of peace if one hadn’t known, just as the stars on this clear night gave also an impression of remoteness, security, freedom. If one knew, he wondered, the facts, would one have to feel pity even for the planets? if one reached what they called the heart of the matter?” (Greene 1948, p. 107).

Though the burning stars are far away from him, he is bound to take their responsibility as well due to his knowledge of ‘the facts.’ Ferreira’s (1989, p. 30) discussion of ethical ‘imagination of otherness’ as being accountable for others forces the ethicist into “a call to engagement”. Thereby, he posits that “for Kierkegaard, the ‘other’ [...] is as much within us as outside us – the other is fundamentally the self we are to become” (Ferreira 1989, p. 31). Scobie is happy as long as others are happy – a quality that God, he blames, has put inside him and that keeps his integrity as a character. Thus, it is argued that Scobie aims to find his authentic self by putting ‘others’ into the centre of his existence. He shows his admiration for Loder, who spent forty days in open waters and walked five days, but still, wants to “report to a proper official” and keeps repeating ‘ma responsibility.’ When he fulfilled his duty, Scobie observes, “he went flat out” (p. 104) as if it was his responsibility that held him together all along the way. An interestingly similar scene where Scobie meditates over universal responsibility occurs with Judge William in *Either/Or II*. Away from all humanity, sitting under “silent, solemn as a clear, starlit night” the Judge mulls over “the eternal power” that gives ‘I’ the ability to choose itself. When it chooses, it “receives itself. [...] then the personality

receives the accolade of knighthood” (Kierkegaard 1988b, p. 177) that uses his freedom to fulfil his responsibilities.

### **3.7 Scobie’s Marriage as His Way of Freedom**

Judge William attacks the aesthete on several grounds – not choosing himself, not being free, not responsible for anything etc. However, the main attack is through the concept of love materialized through marriage. Judge likens the aesthete to a ghost, a shadow which has no material quality and is doomed to dissolve into mist in time. Thus, he needs a concrete element to bind himself so that he sustains his existence. The love practiced for ‘immediate pleasures’ loses its excitement and later, its significance. What Kierkegaard proposes as a solution through the ethicist is the marriage that has the quality of synthesizing ideality and reality. According to Dip (2015, p. 190) , the ethical stage “follows the assertion of the universality of bourgeois morality, whose unifying paradigm is represented by “matrimony”. Since love, or marriage, in Kierkegaard’s case, is directed towards another person, Harries (2010, p. 115) argues, “there is thus inevitably an ethical dimension”, and it might lead a person to achieve universality that the ethicist is trying to achieve. Similar to Kierkegaard’s use of marriage as the strongest manifestation of ethical life in *Either/Or II*, the motif of ‘marriage’ plays a significant role in *The Heart of The Matter*, where Greene skilfully employs it to explore the question of duty as exemplified by the Whisky Priest. It is interesting to note that *Either/Or II* and *The Heart of The Matter* are quite similar in their use of the concept of ‘marriage’ and marital duties so explicitly that many criticisms of both works revolve around this topic.

Greene depicts Scobie’s wife Louise as antithetical to Scobie and she acts as the accelerator of Scobie’s suffering. She is unpleasantly pious, has lost her beauty, constantly pesters Scobie in daily affairs and always unhappy, for which Scobie blames himself. Her faith is like a set of rules she has to follow daily with no emotion. She is more interested in what “the Church says...” unlike Scobie. Her ignorance is highlighted when she raises her suspicion to Father Rank that Scobie might have committed suicide. Father Rank says “furiously ‘For goodness’ sake, Mrs Scobie, don’t imagine you–or I–know a thing about God’s mercy” (p. 241). In addition, Scobie does not love her anymore though he says the opposite to make her

happy. She is not more than “a fixture as the handcuffs on the nail” (p. 7) in his life. Despite his immense misery in his marriage, similar to the Whisky Priest’s sense of duty, Scobie places his marriage to a quasi-existential position in which he tries to attain authenticity and universality. Similar to Judge William’s analogy of a child’s doing homework, Scobie has no aim in life but to fulfil his marital duties. Judge William asserts:

“[i]t seemed to me that heaven and earth would tumble down if I did not do my homework, and on the other hand it seemed to me that if heaven and earth did tumble down this upheaval would in no way excuse me from doing what had once been set before me—doing my homework. At that age I knew very little about my duties [...] I had but one duty, to do my homework, and yet I can derive my whole ethical view of life from this impression” (Kierkegaard 1988b, p. 267).

Scobie develops a similar sense of duty towards his marriage. The loss of love and lack of passion for his wife do not prevent him from realizing his responsibility. So long as he perseveres in his duty “happiness would survive” (p. 21) until a new responsibility emerges. For he firmly believed that “no human being can really understand another, and no one can arrange another’s happiness” (p. 72). All his dealings with his wife are “as if he were reading a part—a part which called for tenderness and patience, a part which had been read so often that the eyes were blank above the mouth” (p. 60). It is as if Scobie is impersonating Judge William’s overtly monotonous account in a dull manner: “I love my wife [...] My work has meaning for me [...] I rejoice that the personal lives of others have meaning for me and wish and hope that mine may also have meaning for those” (Kierkegaard 1988b, p. 324). Unlike the aesthete who sees life as an experiment and love as common pleasure, Scobie sees marriage as a duty, a vocation to be fulfilled, for that is the only way one can ascribe meaning to life for him. As Bellinger (1995, p. 63) argues, the ethical stage “seeks to stabilize human emotions through ordered structures of social life”. Therefore, Scobie considers his marriage his life’s task and pursues it no matter the cost.

Marriage has other ethical qualities that Scobie employs in his life to achieve concreteness. Kierkegaard (1988c, p. 93) avers that “neither of us is anything by oneself, but we are what we are in union. Through her I am Man, for only a married man is an authentic man”. Marriage provides a history for the self – Scobie sticks to his marriage, for it ensures his being to continue existing in eternity, across history.

Kierkegaard's analogy of 'great work of art' to define existence emerges again with Scobie. The reason to produce a work of art is to preserve time and thus, achieve the eternal. As shown in the previous chapter, the aesthetic person lives in the moment and values immediate pleasures. Like a sensuous music that exists only in the time it is produced, his existence is temporal with no possibility of stretching across time. Music arouses feelings, gives pleasure and later diminishes into oblivion. In the same way, Scobie uses his marriage to create a work of art that is not temporary, transient and purely sensuous unlike the aesthete's first love. Scobie's 'reduction' of objects to minimum at home and at work in opposition to Louise's over 'accumulation' can be interpreted as an example of this effort to attain a history. While his reduction of the number of personal articles leads him to a poetic-aesthetic existence, his wife's constant intervention in his life with her belongings covering the whole empty space takes him back to temporal existence. The articles were "of no more use to him; he carried the whole coastline of the colony in his mind's eye" (p. 7). Though Scobie is a character with "no particular interest attached to" (p. 5), his wife acts as someone who provides him with history. Though he never mentions his nine-year-old-daughter who died three years ago throughout the book, Louise's bedside photos constantly remind him of his duties. In another instance when he put Louise to bed and he had time to enjoy himself free from marriage burden, he sees Louise's books on the shelf that takes him back to the temporal world. At that time the books remind him of his responsibilities and "he couldn't concentrate: it was too hot and his wife's absence was like a garrulous companion in the room reminding him of his responsibility" (p. 14). Although Scobie is resembled to the aesthete who sees "melancholy and disappointment" (p. 12) in life, marriage acts as a concrete agent in his life that gives him history in the ethical sense. According to Plekon (1995, p. 132), "art [...] is interested in the heroic, not in those who daily struggle with themselves to be humble, patient, long suffering, tolerant, honest and so on". In the same way, Scobie's positive qualities such as his honesty, perseverance, self-sacrifice, and duty-bound nature are interpreted as his attempts to live his marriage like the aesthete's 'first love' or 'work of art' in order to preserve time and to attain the eternal in the ethical sense. As Brennan (2010, p. 86) argues, "[a]lthough he doesn't drink, fornicate or even lie, Scobie is unable to find virtue in mere absence of sin, simply because he no longer regards his life as 'important enough'. Thus, he looks for ways to make his life 'important enough.'

Judge William compares the married man to a knight in stories who fought many battles, killed wild boars and rescued princesses. For an artist who wants to immortalize this scene, it is highly poetic, but it is not eternal. The number of enemies he defeated or princesses he saved is of no importance for him. The artist takes one moment of importance and tries to depict it. However, for the married man, there is no such time as important moments. His whole aim is to preserve time in all his dealings with the outer world. Judge states that “he has not fought with lions and trolls but with the most dangerous enemy, which is time. But now eternity does not come afterward, as for the knight, but he has had eternity in time, has preserved eternity in time” (Kierkegaard 1988b, pp. 138-9). While on duty for Pemberton’s case, Scobie experiences the most lucid example of preserving his marriage as his absolute duty. On the way he dreams “of perfect happiness and freedom” without his wife and responsibilities:

“He was walking through a wide cool meadow with Ali at his heels: there was nobody else anywhere in his dream, and Ali never spoke. Birds went by far overhead, and once when he sat down the grass was parted by a small green snake which passed on to his hand and up his arm without fear, and before it slid down into the grass again touched his cheek with a cold, friendly, remote tongue” (Greene 1948, p. 70).

In this clearly Edenic scene, Scobie longs for a world with no responsibility for any human being. As Baldrige (2000, p. 120) claims, the scene reflects an “almost frozen tableau suggesting an unfallen state in which the passage of time is irrelevant”. Scobie’s paradise is loneliness. However, his duty is what forces him to return to the concrete world. While the ‘green snake’ is a cold, friendly and independent animal, he resembles Louise to “a dog or a cat” that requires his attention. He needs to suffer, despair and make others happy. For Brennan (2010, p. 85), this dream “rapidly evaporate[s] in his conscious world as an apparently irreversible immersion in self-deceiving despair takes a firm hold over his mind”. Stuck between his peace and marital duties, he chooses his marriage to be universally human rather than living in stupor. While his inner self longs for an Adamic (non)existence in Heaven even in peace with the Serpent, his conscience leads him to ‘existence’ through duties to be fulfilled. Thus, “the ethical individual realizes that which is universally human—marriage—as well as the fulfilment of duties and other obligations” (Amir 2016, pp., 93). Although Scobie’s and Judge William’s view of people, position, relationships and tasks in life differ, they comply with each other in

one critical point – that they act as mediums to preserve one’s identity and to create one’s history.

In the end, seeing all his responsibilities – to his wife, Helen, work and God – clash with each other and finding no other solution, Scobie decides to kill himself so that others would be free from troubles caused by himself. His incessant, sincere prayers – “O God [...] Kill me. Put an end to me. [...] Kill me. Now. Now. Now” (p. 224) – are not answered. So, he fakes angina symptoms and has the doctor prescribe him *Evipan* to relieve the pain. He stores the tablets for nine days to swallow ten on the last night. To make it look like a natural death, he even modifies his diary entries and mentions that he is taking an increased dosage of pills each day. Judge William’s ethical stance orders one “to be concrete, social, interpersonal, that is, in relation to one’s spouse, children, parents, colleagues” (Plekon 1995, pp., 133). This over egoistical desire to take the responsibility of even his own death can be resembled to Scobie’s ambition to play the role of God. He is jealous of Christ – just like Christ who let himself be crucified for people, Scobie considers, he needs to give all. In a way, he tries to take up the position of a god, for it is the ethicist’s absolute duty to “love human beings nearly as God loved them” (p. 25). Scobie’s desire to attain his authentic self far surpasses his sense of duty and responsibility towards others and thus, he sacrifices himself even in the cost of hiding his real intentions from people. As he relates all his existence on other’s happiness, “the peace he so ardently desires can only be achieved through his death” (Brennan 2010, pp., 87).

### **3.8 Failure of the Ethical Stage and ‘The Leap’**

Graham Greene’s religious quest to explore an authentic self that started with *Brighton Rock* had failed due to Pinkie’s aesthetic life-style, as shown in the previous chapter. Greene furthers his quest by projecting Kierkegaard’s ethical stage in the tantamount novels, *The Power and The Glory* and *The Heart of The Matter*, published respectively. However, the question still haunts the readers: did these novels achieve in reflecting authentic self? The answer to this question and thus, to the question of whether Kierkegaard’s ethical life is successful is, I argue, negative considering the general agenda presented by three characters in each book. Although the aesthete ‘A’ had ferociously defended his life-style throughout the first volume, he was transformed into ‘a reflective’ individual towards the end in *The Diary of*

*Seducer* and made a ‘leap’ towards a higher plane – the ethical stage inhabited by Judge William. In the same fashion, as the second letter comes to a close in the second volume of mammoth *Either/Or*, Judge William seems quite content with the ethical life-style, and the readers are quite ready to accept ethical stage as Kierkegaard’s main agenda within the whole book. However, in the last five pages where he forwards a letter in the form of a sermon to the aesthete ‘A’ from his pastor friend from the heath of Jutland, the failure of ethical life style is clearly expressed. Disclaiming the authorship of the sermon, Judge expresses that “[the Pastor] has grasped what I have said and what I would like to have said to you,” and “has expressed it better” than he was able to (Kierkegaard 1988b, p. 338). Therefore, it is argued that the sermon titled “*The Upbuilding That Lies in the Thought That in relation to God We are Always in the Wrong*” refuses the validity of ethical stage and acts as a kind of ‘leap’ towards religious life-style. This failure is also highlighted by Greene through the Whisky Priest and Scobie, and they both annul their selves at the end and make a qualitative leap towards a better stage. As Mooney (1995, p. 13) observes, “there is an inkling of a more adequate religious stance in [...] ethical stance. There is a latent religious core” which will carry them the a higher ground.

Although they seem to be strictly following an ethical life view, the Whisky Priest and Scobie feel failure in the end. Indeed, their absolute sense of duty characterized by marriage and self-sacrifice is latently described as loathsome categories. In *The Power and the Glory*, the marriage, for example, is not particularly attractive to the characters. The Priest’s feeling of duty is not for his mistress but for his daughter. Trixie Fellows causes extreme burden to her husband and he plans to send her home and stay behind alone. Mr Tench is separated from his wife for many years and assumes – or hopes – she has remarried. Communist Lieutenant preserves his chastity though he – and the state – forces the priests to marry. Lastly, Padre Jose’s fat wife is exceedingly unattractive, and she only appears when she is insistently calling him to bed – which he obediently does. They feel hollowness in their duties but follow them no matter what the cost is as the ethical code orders. The same hollowness prevails in *The Heart of The Matter* as well. For Wilson, tracking down Scobie has no value and he does not feel accomplishment at the end. Louise plays the role of a religious, caring wife and has no empathy for anyone except her wish to leave the country and join the Mass. She “persistently steps herself in bad faith and

embraces self-deceit” (Gordon 1997, pp., 109). Father Clay does not feel upset upon Pemberton’s death since he has failed to give him absolution. Helen sticks to Scobie who embraces her on non-sexual grounds just because he offers her a shelter from womanizers. Helen and Louise immediately start new relationships when Scobie dies, for they take their commitments for granted. Similarly, Scobie longs for an end to his duties, from which he cannot find an escape. He does not find his marriage and duties rewarding and he envies Pemberton, for he fast-forwarded life to see the end immediately. For him, “life was immeasurably long. Couldn’t the test of man have been carried out in fewer years? Couldn’t we have committed our first major sin at seven, have ruined ourselves for love or hate at ten, have clutched at redemption on a fifteen-year-old death-bed?” (p. 41). Bierman claims (2002, p. 65) that “Scobie has tailored and customized his adopted religion to fit his own generally skewed view of the world”, and thus, he fails to comply his faith with his duties. Helen duly remarks when Scobie refuses to marry her: “It doesn’t stop you sleeping with me – it only stops you marrying me” (p. 157). These characters all relate their identity to other forces such as spouses, children, works, parents or established religion. However, a life grounded on these temporary things compared to a life grounded in God is destined to fail.

According to Kierkegaard’s parson, we human beings have no connection with reality; on the contrary, we are always in the wrong. Though the ethicist claims that he is following God’s path, the parson underlines that “God cannot be used to justify our private or provincial social arrangement: marriage, civil society, state and international relations” (Perkins 1995, pp., 223). According to Plekon (1995, p. 131), the ethicist “is not so conventional at all” considering “all the conventionality of his dutiful conception of marriage, parenthood, church membership and work”. The truth imposed by outer forces and duties cannot be the truth one should be seeking. To highlight the limitation of the ethical life-view, Hannay (1995, p. 190) observes that people might adopt it “to escape the rigours of true individuality, a comforting and self-satisfying reduction of life to what is intelligible”. For him, it is another failed attempt of Kierkegaard’s solution to the problem realizing ‘individuality’ that leads one to newer attempts. To put it in the fashion of the parson of Jutland, *ethical life is always in the wrong in relation to God*. Greene’s novels in question can also be considered as failed experiments of the possibility of an authentic ethical life-style.

Stressing the failure in *The Power and The Glory*, Reichardt (2010, p. 125) considers it “a sort of ‘divine comedy’ despite its overt tragedy” and further argues that the novel proves that “God’s ways are not at all men’s ways”. Similarly, DeVitis (1986, p. 87) likens Scobie’s story to “the Fatality of Greek drama”, in which the main character seems to lose all in the end. Though both novels are seemingly the stories of sinners gaining salvation in the end, the fate of characters is a matter on which no decisive judgement can be made. Greene explicitly leaves their end in suspense. In the moment of his execution, the Whisky Priest faces his death with an unfinished word leaving readers in wonder whether he is saved or not: “nothing came out except a word that sounded like ‘Excuse’” (p. 215). Likewise, the last remarks Scobie utters is “Dear God, I love” (p. 236). Though it is not clear from whom the Priest was asking an ‘excuse’ or to whom Scobie was addressing his ‘love’, these remarks can be interpreted as their acceptance of the disappointment for the life-style they adopted. They meticulously struggled to live an ethical life, but all was in vain. Therefore, their suicide acts as Kierkegaardian leaps towards a better life-view. In *Stages on Life’s Way*, Kierkegaard (1988c, p. 477) describes the ethical stage as “a passageway”, a stopover, a station one dwells for a certain period of time and moves on towards final destination. As Bierman (2002, p. 65) observes, Greene’s characters are “not constrained or condemned by any kind of religious imposition”, but normative ethical rules based largely on their social arrangements. However, “our social arrangements and moralities are not ultimately or divinely justified. They just are, and at best, they work for the time being” (Perkins 1995, pp., 223). Just as the second volume of *Either/Or* finishes with no definitive ending and parson of Jutland, within a few pages, has negated all that Judge William built up, the Whisky Priest’s and Scobie’s latent desire for a better life negates their actual actions in their daily lives. Laughter from Padre Jose’s wife and Father Rank echoes in the background throughout the novels highlighting the fiasco of their ethical life-style. For, the truth based on entities outside one’s identity does not develop one’s self authentically. Parson of Jutland claims that “only the truth that builds up is truth for you” (Kierkegaard 1988b, p. 354) and thus, the Whisky Priest and Scobie make a leap of faith to the religious stage with their suicides.

#### 4. THE END of THE AFFAIR (1951)

In the opening chapter of *Fear and Trembling (1983a)*, Kierkegaard's pseudonymous author Johannes de Silentio informs us about the superiority of religious stage compared to previous stages. The intensity of an act of *love* in the face of an object *loved* determines one's level of conquering his existence and that he becomes a 'single individual'. Unless this love is not directed towards the highest being – that is God in this case – a person will be lost, not become eternal or not fulfil his authentic, natural selfhood. For “He who loved himself became great by virtue of himself, and he who loved other men became great by his devotedness, but he who loved God became the greatest of all” (Kierkegaard 1983a, p. 16) and they are those who will be remembered forever. We have seen that that “he who loved himself” is the aesthete as personified by Pinkie in *Brighton Rock*; and that “he who loved other men” is the ethicist embodied by the Whisky Priest and Scobie. However, the problem for the Whisky Priest and Scobie was that though they sacrificed themselves for others in their vicinity, all other sinners in the world were haunting their unconscious as if they were crying “But what about us?” Thus, one will always live in the grip of needs to sacrifice all others for the sake of one group of certain people. Since there will always be ‘others’ for the ethicist to sacrifice himself, there will come a time when he needs to sacrifice the ethical stage as well. Derrida's critique of self-sacrifice and duty<sup>21</sup> in the ethical life-style exonerates one from inauspicious, one-sided, egoistical responsibility because one “cannot respond to the call, the request, the obligation, or even the love of another without sacrificing the other other, the other others” (2008, p. 68). This overtly clear demarcation of superiority of religious stage over the aesthetic and ethical stages is reflected in Greene as his maturation as a religious novelist in *The End of the Affair* in which he accentuates and ripens his thesis presented in the previous three novels. Moving from Jutland pastor's lucid and ostensible thesis at the end of ethical stage that in relation to religious the ethical is

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<sup>21</sup> See Derrida, J. (2008) *The Gift of Death*. Translated by: Wills, D.: University of Chicago Press.

ludicrous, this chapter argues that Graham Greene's last overtly religious novel *The End of the Affair* depicts a pristine religiousness through the main character Sarah as the perfect incarnation of Kierkegaard's religious stage as illustrated in *Fear and Trembling*. Though Gordon rejects any association of Greene's characters with Kierkegaard's concepts, he gives Sarah her due. He states: "the closest example I can think of in Greene's writing that faintly resembles Kierkegaard's teleological suspension of the ethical occurs in *The End of the Affair*. In this novel, Sarah gives up her love for Bendrix because of a vow to God" (Gordon 1997, pp. 90-91). But I argue the opposite. Similar to biblical story of Abraham, Sarah resigns from her sins and travels from mundane desires of nihilism and adultery into the sphere of absolute faith in God by subordinating all ends to Him. Though Greene tells the explicit story of a love affair coming to an end, he implicitly depicts Sarah as a feminine version of Abraham who embodies the Kierkegaardian concepts of paradox, absurd and silence. Stuck between the persistent equation between mundane love and divine love of God, Sarah enters into a personal relationship with God to be transferred into authentic 'singular individual' as if she is acting Abraham's journey from 'knight of infinite resignation' to 'knight of faith' where all logical acts are suspended. Unable to live her three love affairs – Bendrix, her husband and God each of whom represents Kierkegaardian aesthetic, ethical and religious stages respectively – at the same time, she opts for the realm of faith where paradox, absurd and silence are the defining elements.

#### **4.1 The Religious Discourse in The End of The Affair**

In *The End of the Affair* (1952), Maurice Bendrix, the lame and nihilist narrator, tells his four-year-long love affair with Sarah Miles, the wife of his government official friend Henry Miles. The affair comes to an end when Sarah suddenly ceases the relationship with no possible cause according to Bendrix. When he runs into Henry by chance after two years, he feels himself forced to rekindle the affair. Under the guise of helping Henry to avert his suspicion that Sarah is cheating on him, he hires a private detective to spy on her. Upon reading her diary and letters which the detective managed to get, he learns that she had left him due to a burgeoning Catholic faith and a vow she had given to God. When they were on bed, the apartment was hit by a German V1 bomb and Bendrix was trapped under rubble.

Helpless and hopeless Sarah prayed to God for the first time in her life that if He saved Bendrix, she would stop seeing and follow His way. When Bendrix came out unscratched, Sarah kept her promise, left him and turned her face totally to her newly flourishing faith. Since Bendrix does not believe in God, he finds her vow absurd and rushes to convince her to reunite. Sarah runs out to soaking rain so as not to meet him, gets unrecoverable pneumonia and dies soon afterwards. Her husband Henry, Bendrix, detective Parkis, anti-religious Smythe, Father Crompton and her mother discuss the question of what kind of funeral it should be – a Catholic burial or cremation. Some characters inform about the miracles connected to Sarah that prove, they think, that she died as a Catholic. Since they cannot come to a conclusion, Sarah is cremated as planned before. Just after the ceremony, Sarah's mother informs Bendrix that Sarah was baptized when she was a little girl, an event which plants seeds of faith in Bendrix's mind. The novel ends with Henry and Maurice Bendrix living together as bachelors, still appalled by the strange coincidences after her death and with God forcing His presence into their subconscious.

As previously shown in the previous chapters on the works under discussion in this study, the form and content relation is utterly manifest in Greene's imagination, especially in his religious fiction. Unrelated chapters and aphoristic style in *Brighton Rock*, and instructive form and stable, predictable characterization in *The Power and The Glory* and *The Heart of The Matter* forecast the religious agenda that are explored afterwards. *The End of The Affair* is no exception: the themes, plot, narration, style and characterization conflate Greene's masterful storytelling skills in front with the theme of paradoxical faith in the background. Though considered to be the last book of his faith quartet, the novel follows a different pattern of reasoning and discourse, and it perpetuates the previous propositions by reversing its structural pattern present in previous novels. However, it is also not possible to place it into a distinct position apart from other novels as it develops and matures the previous messages. As Baldrige (2000, pp. 71, 104) argues "in some ways *The End of the Affair* is Greene's least typical major novel" in that Greene's former novels "are in fact a kind of prologue [...] to *The End of the Affair*" and it deserves a special place in his corpus. In a way, Greene amalgamates his concepts of sin, hell, duty, freedom and ethics with paradox, absurd and silence as found in Kierkegaard's religious stage.

In *Fear and Trembling*, the faith is handled as a totally personal affair with which one builds a visceral relationship. De Silentio's account of the story of Abraham sacrificing Isaac denotes a "religion of hidden inwardness that the existing individual comes to a more concrete understanding of the meaning of being" (Elrod 2015, pp., 143). This kind of inwardness refers to building a private, special, subjective relationship with a supreme being – that is God for example. According to Elrod (2015, p. 155), "God does not reveal himself in the objective world but rather in the subjective", a wholly personal relation without an involvement of any third party agents. The plot in *The End of the Affair* revolves around this private relation with one's faith and religion. Unlike the previous novels in which readers can sympathize, empathize, or stand in characters' shoes and suffer the ramifications of their failure, the novel does not present the readers with similar benefits. In the first place, Greene carefully hides the more serious theme of attaining faith under the guise of a purely sensuous love affair as if to state that true faith can only be portrayed rather than understood. Thus, he keeps the readers at a distance from the action, characters and plot by wrapping the religious themes with the visible features of chick-lit and fusing two different plot structures in the same story. As Couto (1988, p. 69) maintains, "*The End of the Affair* is Greene's most religious novel for it depends less on orthodoxy than on the intensity of Sarah's inner life". Considering the totally personal characteristics of possessing 'faith', Greene feels the urge to digress into a new form of conveying message here. The readers are asked to distil their own messages rather than being instructed, directed and shown as is the case in his previous novels. As Roston (2006, pp. 81-2) argues, the story "appears to be the account of a passionately amorous affair" and the "real theme [of] agonised search for religious faith, with its concomitant conversion of hatred into compassion" emerges later as the story unfolds because "the strategy adopted here is totally different from that employed in the previous novels". For, if Greene had unearthed his agenda – that faith is personal and promotes inwardness – at the beginning, "it would no doubt have affronted many readers and have failed to hold their interest" (Roston 2006, pp., 82).

Faith is personal; thus, Greene deliberately experiments with a new type of storytelling which is not present in his other books. For instance, being a journalist and government spy, he travelled extensively and based most of his novels on his

observations in foreign lands. Even in his totally religious novels – *The Power and The Glory* and *The Heart of The Matter* – he recounts the stories of other people in a way a newspaper reporter does. Though they are fictions, the characters are based on real people, the plots are real, the settings depict the actual places. What Greene achieves through them is just to objectively catch a glimpse of characters' psychology, the least an omniscient narrator can do if it is even possible. Furthermore, considering Greene's role in leading the way for realist revival against modernism and secret political agenda behind most of them<sup>22</sup>, he did not (or could not) experiment with characters, themes, plot and setting. However, *The End of The Affair* is regarded as Greene's first book with no political or religious agenda *per se*, and he wrote a purely fictional novel in which he could convey his personal ideas. While his other novels can be classified as objective accounts of other people, it is accepted as a story of his subjective religious ideas. In addition, it is Greene's first book that has clear insinuations to his personal life unlike any other books of his. Maurice Bendrix in the book is an obnoxious, drunkard novelist who writes exactly 500 words per day just like Greene. His affair with Sarah clearly refers to Greene's affair with Catherine Walston, the wife of wealthy landowner Henry Walston, an affair that "will provide the basis for his novel" (Sinyard 2003, pp., 5). Correspondingly, Roston (2006, p. 67) argues that "of all the novels, this, then would appear to conform most closely to the idea that Greene projected his own life-experience into fictional form". In a way, the novel acts as self-revelations of an author with existential problems. The novel reflects what is most-Greene in that it is a novel of self-projection unlike his other works in which "self-depictions [...] are almost invariably intended to arouse sympathy for the character" (Roston 2006, p. 67). Thus, it can be argued that depicting a completely personal account of a relationship with faith, *The End of The Affair* highlights Greene's truest and latest account of his idea of religion. Indeed, Sharrock's (1984, p. 161) describing it as "more French than English" refers to Bergonzi's (2008, p. 133) classification of it as "a work of concentrated psychological realism" that mainly explores authentic religious psychology of characters. This personal, subjective characteristic of the

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<sup>22</sup> Enlisted as MI6 agent, Greene had to travel to the most turbulent places and report back to the country. Thus, it was inevitable that political and ideological agendas leaked into his novels. *The Power and The Glory*, for example, is, most of the time, read as a book that reflect the communist oppression in Mexico.

novel is informed by the purely private feature of the faith as presented in *Fear and Trembling* by Kierkegaard.

The motifs presented in *The End of The Affair* also highlight the religious stage explored afterwards. As in Greene's previous novels, the motif of 'hunt' reappears here but in distorted version. Pinkie, the Whisky Priest and Scobie either hunted someone or were hunted by others, which metaphorically notified their hunt for authentic selfhood and faith. As previously shown, although they all had faith in God and seemingly operated according to God's will, their hunts led them to despair and non-existence. In fact, their story can be read as faithful ones ironically attaining hell. *The End of The Affair* has a different agenda. Greene enlists Sarah to look for true faith as well but hers is a quest in reverse order. She cheats on her husband, commits adultery and God has no place in her imagination at first. However, Sarah is depicted as a quasi-saint with an infinite sense of self-sacrifice towards the end, a feature which all other women characters in his corpus lack. As Bosco (2005, p. 58) duly observes, "Sarah Miles spiritually ascends to a kind of sainthood" though the novel does not have overt religious themes. She is an atheist that paradoxically goes to heaven, which displays Greene's remarkable storytelling skill in reversing the natural order of attaining salvation through good deeds. They do not necessarily mean a religious existence in Greene's imagination, and "the interchangeability of sinner and saint" (Bergonzi 2008, pp., 131) is a theme that is regularly unearthed in his novels. Thus, it is observed that the common motif of 'hunt' for faith takes a different form in *The End of The Affair*. Considering the deterministic unfolding of events in the novel, Sarah could not attain religious existentiality if she were to pursue it in the fashion Pinkie or Scobie did. She is hunted by God himself since she has proved herself worthy of God's grace through her sins.

Apart from the concealed themes through an agnostic love affair, the concept of religion is also revealed through the narrative form and style. As Bergonzi (2008, p. 8) argues "*The End of The Affair* [...] is unlike any of [Greene's] other novels", and this uniqueness is reflected through the structural form of the novel as well, features which were not repeated in his other books. Foremost, readers and critics as well are baffled by the lack of an authoritative narrative voice, and thus, cannot decide whose

story it is – Sarah’s or Bendrix’s.<sup>23</sup> For example, Roston (2006, p. 77) refers specifically to *The End of The Affair* when he states that “it becomes increasingly apparent that the affair with Sarah is not the primary theme of the novel but a vehicle for depicting their [characters’] progression towards faith”. Since the story is told by two equally competing viewpoints (first by Bendrix and then by Sarah’s diary), the reader is disoriented into making their own meanings towards “the spiritual awakening of both characters” (Bosco 2005, pp., 60). Secondly, a device quite new to him, Greene abandons chronological development of the plot and introduces constant time shifts and non-chronological narrative layout with differing narrative voices. Bendrix starts narrating the story in reverse order, starting with the end of his love affair with Sarah and occasionally shifting to past and present within the same paragraph. The appearance of letters and diaries, the change of narrator and narrative voice, and uncertain course of memory create an imbalance in readers in that they are forced to constantly change their stance as new information unfolds as if Greene is asserting that the religious selfhood cannot be attained temporally but spatially. Another innovation Greene adopts here is his first use of first-person narration but in multiple narrators. Although he complained about it in Proust, *The End of The Affair* is his first and last book<sup>24</sup> that he uses this device in full fashion. Rather than being authoritative and instructive as is the case in his books that he wrote with omniscient narrator style, Greene chooses to show how individuals experience real faith in their souls in the first-person. As Bosco (2005, p. 58) mulls over, “the religious point of view is filtered through a highly unsympathetic consciousness” through the first person narrative; thus, the readers are placed in characters’ shoes to experience faith in action. Similarly, Griffiths (2010, p. 173) argues that “the first-person narration, by a man who is not a believing Catholic, strangely enough ends by making us more convinced of what the author wishes to tell us, than a straightforward omniscient narrator would”. The doubt, hate, religious dilemma is more convincingly depicted than Greene’s previous novels. The “condition of doubt and uncertainty” created

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<sup>23</sup> Though Greene claimed that it is Sarah’s story, critics have different opinions. While DeVitis, Kunkel, Couto claim that Sarah is the principal agent, Pryce-Jones and John Atkins claim it is Bendrix’s story. See DeVitis 1986, p. 95; Kunkel 1959, pp. 128–130; Couto 1988, p. 83; Pryce-Jones, 83; and Atkins 1966, p. 194.

<sup>24</sup> Greene used first-person narration in *The Third Man* before and in *The Quiet American* afterwards but as Bergonzi has shown it is “in the loose and cheating form in which the narrator describes scenes at which he was not present” (125). Thus, *The End of The Affair* is argued to be his only novel in the first-person narration.

with the first-person narration presented by Bendrix at the beginning “pervades the novel” (Hoskins 2004, pp., 139). In the same way, it acts as a very effective tool to disprove Bendrix’s position as an unreliable narrator. Interestingly, Sinyard (2003, p. 104) informs us that “Greene wanted the first film version of *The End of the Affair* to employ the first-person camera technique” in which the audience see through the hero’s eyes. However “technique had baffled and irritated audiences and was not repeated” (Sinyard 2003, pp., 104), a fact which clearly proves that Greene did not aim to teach but to make readers observe faith with their own eyes, not his. The readers are given the option to opt for atheist Bendrix or religious Sarah. Last but not least, unreliable narrator, diary device, shifting viewpoints, lack of authorial voice and action are the further elements that clearly inform Greene’s religious thesis in *The End of The Affair*. According to Roston (2006, p. 71), these formal devices lead us “to seek out elements stifled or distorted in Bendrix’s account, crediting them with greater authenticity than the stated account”. Bosco (2005, p. 59) fittingly identifies these distorted elements as “the reflections and observations of the interior motivations of the main characters”, which greatly inform the atypical Greenean nature of the novel.

The above remarks support Salvatore’s claims in her thesis that Greene has skilfully adopted “the Kierkegaardian fusion between internality and externality” (1984, p. 22) that becomes increasingly clear during Greene’s middle period writing. Indeed, religious inwardness is the most salient feature of Kierkegaard’s corpus. Especially in *Fear and Trembling* Kierkegaard traces this inward, personal relationship of an individual before God. It is also worth noting that Kierkegaard considered the book as the culmination and the most effective of his life’s work.<sup>25</sup> In addition, the themes presented (paradox, inwardness, resignation, silence etc), the narrative form (short-story form, multiple voices, different viewpoints), style (polemical) and the first-person narration (from De Silentio’s point of view) employed by Kierkegaard in *Fear and Trembling* obviate the difficulty in presenting the religious stage of existence as Greene does in *The End of The Affair*. In addition to having similarities structural elements in terms of themes, motifs and style as in *Fear and Trembling*,

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<sup>25</sup> “Once I am dead, *Fear and Trembling* alone will be enough for an imperishable name as an author. Then it will be read, translated into foreign languages as well. The reader will almost shrink from the frightful pathos in the book” (JP 6: 6491).

*The End of The Affair* revives and visits the key concepts of the Kierkegaardian religious stage, which will be discussed in the following sections.

#### **4.2 Sarah's paradoxical faith**

Faith is paradoxical – it is the main theme of *Fear and Trembling* and the most discussed element of the religious stage in Kierkegaard's corpus. It is argued that Sarah in *The End of The Affair* seems to perfectly harbour the religious concept of paradox and her faith is completely paradoxical in the Kierkegaardian sense. Just like in the story of Abraham who resigns from all mundane desires and nonfulfilling ethical demands, Sarah leaves corporal, aesthetic desires behind, suspends ethical duties, and builds a personal, inward relationship with God, and in the end, adopts the Kierkegaardian concept of “knight of infinite resignation.” However, this relation as conceived by Kierkegaard requires one to adopt contradictory tasks, paradoxically, full of sin, doubt and hate as opposed to faith, love and resignation. Considering her relations with other people, religion and God, Sarah lives a completely contradictory, unreligious life, which, paradoxically, puts her in a position to directly experience faith without the guidance of established religious doctrines.

Sarah's first expression of paradox lies in her characterization that acts as a combination of all previous stages of Kierkegaardian existence – aesthetic and ethical stages respectively. She traverses into the religious stage of existence passing beyond her relations with her lover Maurice Bendrix and her husband Henry. It is quite easy to observe that Greene is alluding to Kierkegaard's religious paradox in *Fear and Trembling*. According to Carlisle (2010, pp., 178), “[f]aith is shown to be an inexpressible paradox”. De Silentio considers that no one can understand Abraham except “only in the way one understands the paradox [he experienced]” (Kierkegaard 1983a, pp. 119-20).

Sarah's faith has a similar paradoxical quality because it includes all kinds of lifestyles, even that are contradictory to religious stage of existence. As Hoskins (2004, p. 153) argues, “[i]n *The End of the Affair*, Sarah is positioned at first between the “innocent” husband Henry and the worldly, jealous, “twisted” and therefore implicitly corrupt Bendrix”. Like Abraham's passing beyond all different logical explanations of his act, Sarah leaves Bendrix and Henry behind and attains the

paradoxical faith. Hoskins (2004, p. 152) fittingly observes that “Sarah unites the saintly and the loose woman in one character and becomes more convincingly adult, more complex, and more interesting than any of these earlier characters”. Besides, “she is Greene’s most successful female character [...] as opposed to types or caricatures” (Bergonzi 2008, pp., 128). Moving from this argument, it would be safe to assume that she is a culmination of previous lifestyles combined. To illustrate, Bendrix is the reincarnation of the aesthete as personified by Pinkie, and Henry is the ethicist as depicted by The Whisky Priest and Scobie. Greene embarks on settling the accounts with them once and for all by putting them in a dialectic relationship with Sarah as the religious persona. To give an example, Bendrix is the personification of purely aesthetic person as Hoskins (2004, p. 138) states: “the story of novelist Maurice Bendrix in *The End of the Affair* [...] mingles personal guilt and unhappiness with a haunting sense of the contrast between contemporary alienation and anxiety”. That Bendrix is a novelist also insinuates Pinkie’s poetic existence, that is purely sensuous and immediate. It is quite easy to observe the similarities between Bendrix and Pinkie. While Pinkie inflicts pain with vitriol, razor blades and fingernail, Bendrix inflicts emotional pain with words. When he is about to hurt someone, he states that “the poison was beginning to work in me again” (p. 67) or “the demon had done its work, I felt drained of venom” (p. 65) or “Deliberately I would put the caustic soda of that word ‘affair’, with its suggestion of a beginning and an end, upon my tongue” (p. 57). In addition, he recounts the whole story as someone who is full of hatred and who wants to have his revenge for an unrequited love: “My desire now was nearer hatred than love” (p. 42); and thus, he repeatedly admits that “this is a record of hate far more than of love” (pp. 7, 131, 192). Lastly, he becomes so obsessed with Sarah’s breaking the affair that he feels almost remorse for not being the one who breaks up: “it seemed to me that if I could have her once more—however quickly and crudely and unsatisfactorily—I would be at peace again: I would have washed her out of my system, and afterwards I would leave her, not she me” (p. 28). This love-hate duality in Bendrix’s sick imagination “are merely expressions of his need to preserve a vital link with Sarah” (Pierloot 1994, p. 125). Though Bendrix admits that “I felt like a patient and I suppose I was a patient, sick enough to try the famous shock treatment” (p. 20) and she is aware of his perversity, her love increases every day: “I love Maurice more than I did in 1939” (p. 117). In fact, she is the only one who loves Bendrix, whose lame leg symbolizes his spiritual

illness. Though she is leading herself towards attaining faith, “Sarah Miles does enjoy it, and without guilt, but still finds herself surprised into a faith in God that enjoins her from ever again sleeping with her lover” (Gorra 2004, p. 110). She is paradoxically “led to that belief by sex itself. Erotic experience has brought her to a knowledge of the divine and even into a state of grace. Or as the cover of *Time* would say, in a story on the novel's publication, ‘Adultery Can Lead to Sainthood’” (Gorra 2004, p. 110). Indeed, her easy manner with the affair is surprising even for an aesthete like Bendrix: “Unlike the rest of us she was unhaunted by guilt. In her view when a thing was done, it was done: remorse died with the act” (p. 50). Greene depicts Bendrix’s aesthetic life as paradoxically being the first step leading one to faith.

In the same vein, Sarah’s husband Henry Miles represents the ethical life style, another life project Sarah is positioned against throughout the novel. Bendrix depicts Henry as an agreeable but dim civil servant who works in the House of Commons. He is a loyal husband, good friend and a hardworking man but with no religious faith. Though he is at the centre of the action, Bendrix makes him rarely speak or defend his position. Bendrix states that he holds no importance for anyone’s life in the world: “Henry was important, but important rather as an elephant is important, from the size of his department; there are some kinds of importance that remain hopelessly damned to unseriousness” (p. 10). He takes Bendrix’s attention only as a comical character of a civil servant he wants to base his next novel on. Bendrix summarizes Henry’s condition as being “the purpose of copy, copy too for a character who was the ridiculous, the comic element in my book” (p. 10). Sarah also loves her husband Henry, as the epitome of the ethical stage. When Maurice talks pejoratively about Henry, she objects: “But I love Henry: I want him to be happy” (p. 93). Sarah is interested in Bendrix’s upcoming novel, but when she learns that it takes Henry as the model, “[i]t was then she began to dislike [his] novel. She had an enormous loyalty to Henry” (p. 10). She commits adultery, but as she has faith, she does not stop committing it. “[T]hat injunction is self-imposed, and Sarah seems to fear neither social nor divine punishment” (Gorra 2004, p. 121). Greene’s position is not to fight against the social order or refute Henry’s ethical position. Greene’s biographer states that Greene “succumbed to sexual temptation” and in his later life, “scotched the notion of sexual sin altogether” (Sherry 2016, p. 254). Its social and

ethical dimension has no place in Greene's imagination, but he transforms Henry's ethical position as strict obedience to marriage into strict obedience to God through Sarah.

Bendrix as the aesthete and Henry as the ethicist are positioned against the religious life project of Sarah's, but they cannot succeed against Sarah. This fact is underlined by Bendrix when he states that "we were fellow strangers" (p. 14) referring to his and Henry's unsettled life: "Henry and I are allies now, in our fashion, but are we allies against an infinite tide?" (p. 66). On their first encounter when Henry asks Bendrix to tail a detective on Sarah, Bendrix becomes the first one to notice the failure of their identities:

"Both of them. When you are miserable, you envy other people's happiness.' It wasn't what I had ever expected him to learn in the Ministry of Home Security. And there—in the phrase—the bitterness leaks again out of my pen. What a dull lifeless quality this bitterness is. If I could I would write with love, but if I could write with love, I would be another man: I would never have lost love. Yet suddenly across the shiny tiled surface of the bar-table I felt something, nothing so extreme as love, perhaps nothing more than a companionship in misfortune. I said to Henry, 'Are you miserable?' 'Bendrix, I'm worried'" (Greene 1951, p. 12).

This 'something' they lack is love as the most important element of their existence which only Sarah has – faith. Thus, Sarah becomes an indispensable component of their selves. However, since they lack the energy to adopt themselves into this 'love' relationship, Sarah becomes the merger. Indeed, Bendrix admits "[t]he enormous pressure of the outside world weigh[ing] on us like a *peine forte et dure*" (p. 25) as if they are unconsciously refuting themselves. Bendrix ironically highlights their inability to be elevated into Sarah's higher ground by stating that "I wonder if either of us would have felt any genuine anxiety for her break through our nerves, distrust, and hate" (p. 18). However, rather than refuting them, Sarah combines, adopts, transforms and amalgamates their life styles to form her paradoxically religious existence. First, by transforming herself into the aesthetic persona and then into ethicist, she finally makes a leap of faith and attains the absolute religious self. The self portrayed in previous stages of existence were passive non-transformative existence types. Proving their futility, Greene embarks Sarah on a transformative, regenerative, self-satisfying existential journey that adumbrates Abraham's journey to Mount Moriah to sacrifice Isaac. Since the lifestyles represented by Bendrix and

Henry fail, Sarah adopts their lifestyles and fuses them into her own religious project. As Carlisle (2010, pp., 49) argues, “faith is not just a matter of obedience to God, but something inward, something about the ‘how’ of this obedience”. This is paradox because having faith is not denying one way of life and embracing the other. Sarah admits that she loves both of her lovers: “While I loved Maurice, I loved Henry, and now I’m what they call good” (p. 104). This paradoxical faith of hers elevates her from a mere sinner into a sphere of one of Greene’s ‘saints.’

Sarah’s second paradoxical relationship stretches itself into her relationship with her other lover – God. In compatible with her consolidative role between aesthetic sensuousness and ethical recklessness, the paradox of faith finds its best expression through her inward relation with God as depicted within a love and hate duality. Indeed, Lodge’s keyword analysis of the novel documents “298 occurrences of the word ‘love’” and “106 occurrences of the word ‘hate’”(1961, p. 470) though it is quite short. Roston (2006, p. 77) pinpoints Greene’s skill “to reverse the secular form of the love–hate relationship” in *The End of The Affair*. In fact, the novel revives a complex web of love-hate paradox between Sarah, Bendrix, Henry, Smythe and God, in which its all permutations are tested. To illustrate, though Bendrix continuously expresses his hatred for Sarah, his actions are solely based on his undiminishing love for her. His hate-for-all attitude kindles a genuine love for Sarah and God. The story that he starts with “a record of hate” gradually changes into a “record of jealousy” and then into a “record of love.” He cries in anguish: “I hate You, God, I hate You as though You existed” (p. 191). His paradoxical protest and hatred for God symbolically reveals the great vacancy, an emptiness which can be filled only through Sarah’s faith. Though he is quite resistant to the idea that he is steadily growing in faith, he is helpless towards this irresistible force. In the end, he addresses Sarah:

“I said to Sarah, all right, have it your way. I believe you live and that He exists, but it will take more than your prayers to turn this hatred of Him into love. He robbed me and like that king you wrote about I’ll rob Him of what he wants in me. Hatred is in my brain, not in my stomach or my skin. It can’t be removed like a rash or an ache. Didn’t I hate you as well as love you? And don’t I hate myself?” (Greene 1951, p. 191).

As Sinyard (2003, p. 29) rightfully expounds, “Bendrix’s hatred, as it were, brings God’s existence into being”, a god whom he blatantly escapes from. His hatred equals to faith: for what would he hate if god did not exist? In the end, his

transformation into faith is completed by the virtue of his hate: “And I thought, hating Sarah is only loving Sarah and hating myself is only loving myself. I’m not worth hating [...] Nothing—not even Sarah—is worth our hatred if You exist, except You. [...] O God, if I could really hate you ...” (p. 182). Greene ends the story without any clear reference to Bendrix’s attaining faith. However, as Vulcan (1988, p. 57) deduces, “the reader is sufficiently aware of the complex, interchangeable relationship between love and hate to suspect that his 'affair' with God is only beginning”. Greene calculatngly has Bendrix start the novel with the end of the affair because it is the end of their adulterous relationship of hate but beginning of their realization of God’s love. For, after Sarah’s death, we become aware that Bendrix will be haunted by God’s presence to the end.

The same paradoxical love-hate dialectic can be seen with Sarah and a third force, God, who makes his presence dramatically but invisibly felt throughout the novel. As Bendrix narrates his courting with Sarah, her journals reveal that God was also trying to seduce her in the manner of lover. However, God’s presence is not forced on the characters; though he is administering the plot quite forcefully, he does not want others to be aware of this. Bendrix and Henry hire a private detective to find ‘that other man’ who, they think, seduces Sarah. Later, they learn that “that other” is God himself, “in whom in those days we were lucky enough not to believe” and “whom Mr Parkis was so maladroitly pursuing” (pp. 7, 54). Sarah has developed a sense of hatred for God and this hatred acts as an agent of her transformation into one who pursues divine love. Just like Bendrix, she seems quite satisfied with her life at first and God has no place in their relationship. Yet, “hatred seems to operate the same glands as love; it even produces the same actions (p. 26). In fact, it would not be too far-fetched to argue that Sarah would not attain faith if she were not to have such a strong hatred of God. For, her passionate love for Bendrix and relentless hatred for God are paradoxically transmogrified and transmuted into absolute faith of God. Sarah’s love for Bendrix is boundless: “I have never, never loved a man as I love you, and I never shall again” (p. 30). Yet, as the story progresses, the doubt planted in her unconscious begins to flourish. Towards the end, her hatred for God is transformed into the love of god: “Did I ever love Maurice as much before I loved You?” (p. 123). One can trace the seeds of love in her hatred when she paradoxically expresses her intensified hatred to blame God for putting in her a desire to love:

“But, dear God, what shall I do with this desire to love? Why do I write ‘dear God’? He isn’t dear—not to me he isn’t. If he exists, then he put the thought of this vow into my mind and I hate him for it. I hate” (p. 94). Roston (2006, p. 74) unknowingly identifies this Kierkegaardian paradoxical element of love-hate duality as calling it “that element” which “has much deeper roots within the novel”. With this ‘element’ the characters “move cautiously, and against their better judgement, from a firm rejection of belief towards ultimate acceptance” (Roston 2006, p. 74). Again further down in the same book, without calling it ‘paradox’ Roston (2006, p. 81) admits its transformative power that “brilliantly transmuted[es] the anguish and suspense of a disrupted love-affair into a quest for spiritual peace”.

The last paradoxical feature in *The End of The Affair* manifests itself as an incarnation of ‘love of sin’, a motif continuously revisited in Greene’s corpus. The previous argument that Sarah acts as a combination of all Kierkegaardian lifestyles combined becomes more complicated here. Sarah attains her ultimate religious stage by continuously oscillating between carnal love for a human being and divine love for a god. Brennan’s (2010, p. 93) observation that in the novel “Greene draws a persistent equation between human love for a woman [or a man] and Divine Love” verifies this position. While defining the basic ingredients of religious fiction, David Lodge (1987, p. iv) underscores the paradoxical permeability of sin and faith: “the idea of the sinner at the heart of Christianity, the idea of the mystical substitution, the pursuit of the erring soul by God and the conflict between the corrupt flesh and the transcendent spirit”. Bosco (2005, p. 8) enriches his argument by stressing “the conflict between the corrupt flesh and the transcendent spirit, usually devised as sexual tension between male and female protagonists, ascending to a spiritual suffering”. Indeed, Sarah attains her love of God through her sinful, carnal love for Bendrix. However, just as in Kierkegaard’s definition of Abraham’s faith as “the teleological suspension of the ethical” in which totally nonsensical acts are done like murdering your son – Sarah suspends her sensuous love and duty for her husband to attain the highest selfhood. As stated, Sarah loves her misdemeanour let alone feel remorse for her actions. Though the readers follow Sarah’s gradual progression into sainthood throughout the book, Bendrix hints her intangible existence at the beginning. While he experiences the material, body, guilt and remorse, she lives in a prelapsarian, nontemporal, nonspatial vacuum in which she is unaffected by the

passing of time. For her, “[e]ternity is said not to be an extension of time but an absence of time, and sometimes [...] her abandonment touched that strange mathematical point of endlessness, a point with no width, occupying no space” (p. 51). Hence, it compels us to observe Greene’s allusion of Bendrix who attributes superior, almost heavenly qualities to Sarah. Bendrix’s erotic desire for her emits a sublime religious experience, which also leads him to belief in God unawares. In his psychological fight against faith forcing itself on him, he equates his physical love for a woman to saints’ using body metaphors to express their love of God. He speculates: “I suppose, we might use the terms of prayer, meditation, contemplation to explain the intensity of the love we feel for a woman. We too surrender memory, intellect, intelligence, and we too experience the deprivation, the *noche oscura*, and sometimes as a reward a kind of peace” (p. 47).

The comical element Detective Parkis’ hunt for Sarah’s human lover metaphorically becomes a hunt for a divine lover. Until he gets her diary, the readers are forced to believe that her lover is an actual human, considering her easy-going manner with getting new lovers. But as they read the contents of the diary, Sarah’s progress from human love to divine love is revealed. As Bendrix observes, all the relationships in the novel are that of pure “flesh” (p. 15), for which Bendrix, Smythe, and Henry are competing against each other. However, with the intrusion of God into this equation, Sarah’s carnal love, in fact, acts as an agent of her transformation into sainthood. Bosco (2005, p. 64) rightfully announces that “religious belief, Greene suggests, subversively carries with it bodily signification, a virus”, which signifies that her willingness to give herself to someone foreshadows her willingness to give herself to God. In the same way, the fact that she is impervious to Bendrix’s desperate calls to unite again, Henry’s unfortunate attempts to gain her back and Smythe’s sad disposition of non-belief, paves way for her resignation. All her lovers conflate an image of ‘flesh’ later turned into spirit, for which she resigns everything. As Couto (1988, p. 83) argues, “in renouncing Bendrix, Sarah expresses a deeper love and the *noche escura* created by the renunciation heightens her inner life”. Greene stresses the vicissitude of human love – or sex – and faith paradox in rather poignant terms in *The End of The Affair*, that paradoxically leads characters to faith. Sarah learns this fact towards the end. With a clear reference to the biblical story of *Job*, she becomes aware of the fact that she needs to pass beyond this material love: “even the first time

[...] we spent all we had. You were there, teaching us to squander, like you taught the rich man, so that one day we might have nothing left except this love of You” (p. 123). After all, they consumed their visceral relationship to reach to a faith of paradox, full of hatred, sin, and jealousy. She haplessly admits: “he gave me so much love, and I gave him so much love that soon there wasn't anything left when we'd finished but You” (pp. 89, 123). By utilizing her sexual encounter with Bendrix as a ladder to having faith, and later, paradoxically sacrificing material love and desires for something more sublime, she is transformed into ‘the knight of infinite resignation.’

### 4.3 Sarah' Faith Caught in Absurdities

Faith is absurd: the second proposition offered by Kierkegaard in *Fear and Trembling*. Pseudonymous author de Silentio announces that Abraham's faith was paradoxical because he was stuck between a dilemma either to kill his son as if he hated him or to continue loving him as if nothing had happened. However, the choice to follow the command – to sacrifice your son – does not necessarily lead one to absolute faith, de Silentio argues. In a way, Abraham resigns his son – the finite and temporal – for the sake of God – the infinite and eternal. However, as explained in the previous chapter, this is what a person in the ethical stage would do with his sense of duty and self-sacrifice. Resignation, or an ethical act, de Silentio argues, “a purely philosophical move” (Kierkegaard 1983a, p. 48), not of faith, which does not necessitate an absolute relation with God, and which does not move one into being a ‘single individual.’ Thus, he claims that he would have no trouble sacrificing his loved one if he were in Abraham's shoes. Resignation is ethical and thus, universal, doing what common sense would require one to do. Yet, faith is being singular, isolated, having “passionate concentration, this intense consciousness” (Kierkegaard 1983a, pp. 78, 258-9), shuddering before existence in fear and trembling. Following an order blindly with no inward struggle makes a person no better than tragic heroes like Agamemnon, Brutus, Jephthah or Socrates<sup>26</sup>. What these men did for others put

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<sup>26</sup> Kierkegaard develops a negative stance to these men and call them ‘tragic heroes’ because their greatness has an ethical value. The first three found themselves required to kill their children to honor their duties to the community and uphold state laws. Socrates defended himself before the jury and explained his message till his death. They did what is ethically right and they had the public on their

them within ethical stage of existence because their sacrifice is universal and an ethical duty anyone can train themselves to do. However, Abraham attained absolute faith and, thus authentic existence by passing beyond these men “by the virtue of absurd” (Kierkegaard 1983a, pp. 57-9, 99, 101). Suspending aesthetic appeal and ethical duties, Abraham’s paradoxical faith is further tested with the concept of absurd that will carry him to the level of being a knight of faith.’

In *The End of The Affair*, Graham Greene depicts a similar assessment of Kierkegaard’s absurd view of faith. Stripped of her negative qualities (aesthetic and ethical) with her paradoxical life of faith, Sarah’s transformation into natural selfhood is completed by the absurdities encountered throughout the novel. Though she resigned all temporal qualities and sacrificed her love to obey God, the act is still understandable from an ethical point of view: she keeps her promise to God and completely surrenders herself to God. However, Kierkegaardian view of absurd “is something that boggles comprehension and offends our understanding” (Turchin 2016a, pp., 5). Thus, Greene embellishes the novel with absurd, if not downright comical, elements informed by Kierkegaard’s religious stage. In her paradoxical faith, Sarah learns to embrace these absurdities of faith and uses them as a ladder to a be a ‘knight of faith.’

Undeniably, the plot in *The End of The Affair* acts as an introduction to absurdities to be encountered later. Baldrige (2000, p. 80) fittingly claims that the book invokes such unrealistic coincidences that “contribute to an atmosphere of determinism that is almost suffocating”. Silly coincidences, forced dialogues, absurd encounters, inconclusive progress of events all conflate to create an effect of a realist novel that is, absurdly, not realistic. To illustrate, that Sarah starts loving god on the day she meets Bendrix after the end of the affair, Parkis’ ease of getting hold of Sarah’s journal, that Bendrix chases Sarah and unintentionally causes her death, that the truth that Sarah was baptized as a child was revealed after her death, Henry’s excessive naivety, and Bendrix and Henry’s living together as bachelors are among the few examples of Greene’s deliberate use of loopholes in the plot. It is as if Greene is narrating the story in such an incomprehensible and far-fetched ways that the readers are forced to accept Sarah’s enforced, absurd ascent to faith light-heartedly. Bendrix

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sides to understand their situations. But they did not undergo a passionate inward struggle the way Abraham did.

is the one who notices the absurdity of Sarah's developing a religious sentimentality. Bendrix as a logical and rationalist person is placed against Sarah and her rapidly developing faith, which Greene depicts as completely irrational. On the funeral day, when Sarah's mother tells him that Sarah was baptized when she was six, Bendrix's angry protest does not founder her faith, but intensifies it: "I believe in magic even less than I believe in You: magic is your cross, your resurrection of the body, your holy Catholic church, your communion of saints" (p. 164-5). Equating faith with dexterity of a trickster, he "is [...] incapable of fully understanding this progression" (Brennan 2010, p. 98). In Bendrix's version of the scene of the house bombing, Bendrix finds Sarah knelt praying. Though he knows that she does not believe in God yet, he snaps at her: "'What were you doing on the floor?' I asked. 'Praying.' 'Who to?' 'To anything that might exist.' 'It would have been more practical to come downstairs'" (p. 72). Sarah's conspicuous atheism seems to mutate into a visceral, pristine conviction on her part that an all-potent being might really exist. While Bendrix is toiling against his mountain of certitudes, Sarah's fortuitous doubt of faith instantiates a revival of religious conviction. The concept of absurd is best explained by Henry. Mystified by extraordinary things after Sarah's death, Henry is haunted by the same power of absurd. He asks Bendrix: "Do you believe in survival, Bendrix?" "If you mean personal survival, no." "One can't disprove it, Bendrix" (p. 167).

Even Sarah does not understand 'the virtue of absurd' at work in the beginning. Yet, the people around her quickly notice the mystical air she is radiating. When Bendrix sees Sarah for the first time, the first thing he observes is "her beauty and her happiness and her way of touching people with her hands, as though she loved them" (p. 25). Foreshadowing her providing salvation for others and symbolizing Christ's healing power, Sarah as a character is portrayed as someone out of this temporal world even when she has no belief. Moreover, the unfeeling, dutiful Detective Parkis who does not allow his feelings to interfere with his job "is easily touched" (p. 170) by Sarah's absurd appeal. He knows she is cheating on her husband and he is quite emotionless with his cases. Yet, he develops an absurd connection with her: he says after her death: "a good true woman in her way too whom I miss every day of my life" (p. 178). Likewise, Sarah's leap of faith is quite absurd. Normally one would expect faith to gradually make itself felt, but her transformation is instantaneous as if touched by a divine force. She is quite inconsistent with her quickly acquired faith

and considers herself 'a bitch' and 'a slut' and resists against the faith forcing itself on her. She threatens God to break her promise and consume her body by sleeping with anyone she meets so that He cannot cherish her soul: "I can't believe in you, I can't love you, [...] I'm going to destroy myself quite deliberately. Every year I'll be more used. Will you like that any better than if I break my promise? [...] I'm falling in pieces already" (p. 99). Similar to Kierkegaard's stance while depicting Abraham's alternative acts upon God's order, Sarah develops a 'what-if' position, in which all possible explanations of faith, though some are absurd, are tested. She is questioning her faith just like Abraham's dilemma: what if everything is an illusion? What if I commit sin later? What if I start hating you? Is my love for Bendrix the same as your love? etc. Though she is the only one who has developed an authentic religious existence, this stance leads her to continuously question her existence:

"But what are you supposed to love then in the bitch and the fake? Where do you find that immortal soul they talked about? Where do you see this lovely thing in me—in me, of all people? I can understand you can find it in Henry—my Henry, I mean. He's gentle and good and patient. You can find it in Maurice who thinks he hates, and loves, loves all the time. Even his enemies. But in this bitch and fake where do you find anything to love?" (Greene 1951, p. 101).

The most striking incident in which the concept of absurd is at work in the novel occurs when Sarah visits Smythe, the rationalist philanthropist, who organizes talks and events against any belief systems. He scatters his cards to the streets and accepts visitors at his home to philosophically and scientifically prove them the futility of faith. Sarah visits him one day in case he might be useful for her troubles and the paradox she is in, but the trouble is she is already an atheist. Smythe asks: "If you haven't any faith, why do you want my help?" (p. 106). Sarah's answer does not obviate the matters: "Why indeed? [...] 'I'm not sure that I don't believe. But I don't want to" (p. 106). However, her continuous visits serve the opposite ends; it will be Smythe who is led to belief, not Sarah to disbelief. Sarah symbolically takes his indomitable rejection and alter it to an intense faith. Sarah's absurd faith castigates Smythe's rational logic, for, "the movement of faith must continually be made by virtue of the absurd" (Kierkegaard 1983a, p. 37). Such faith, based on absurd rather than reason, allows the impossible to occur. On the day Sarah died, Bendrix catches Smythe taking a bit of her hair from her corpse. This outrageously absurd act infuriates Bendrix: "I saw her for what she was—a piece of refuse waiting to be

cleared away: if you needed a bit of hair you could take it, or trim her nails if nail trimmings had value to you. Like a saint's her bones could be divided up—if anybody required them" (p. 144). He notices the immense presence of faith no matter how much he is against it. Referring to both Sarah and Smythe, he still defines their transformation as delusion though they were better equipped against faith than himself. He identifies Smythe as "[a]n hysterical type" for, "disbelief could be a product of hysteria just as much as belief" (p. 144).

The most dramatic presence of 'virtue of absurd' happens, of course, with Sarah, whose outward stance from beginning to end is rejection. She states, "And believe me, God, I don't believe in you yet, I don't believe in you yet" (p. 102), though, she has made the leap of faith unawares long before she has uttered this sentence. In a final letter to Bendrix in which she ends the affair with no possibility of reuniting, she writes, "I've caught belief like a disease. I've fallen into belief like I fell in love [...] and I've never believed in anything before as I believe now. I'm sure" (p. 147). She rejects and resists any outside force that is trying to force itself on her. The motif of 'desert' which continually unearths in the book is reflected as the place where characters' transformation begins and which they mistake as disbelief. 'Desert' acts as the ground zero of their downfall and rise immediately afterwards. Sarah is quite anxious of their affair ending and of "the desert which would be around [if their] love were to end" (p. 90) Bendrix, as well as Sarah, feels empty, meaningless and bored towards life. Sarah aptly asks: "What can one build in the desert? [...] What do we do in the desert if we lose each other?" (p. 90). At first, they find the cure against that in loving each other. Yet, their reluctance to take an active part in the formation of their selves throws them into oblivion in the desert. For, "this is the desert, there's nobody, nothing, for miles and miles around" (p. 93). However, Sarah becomes the first one to notice the possibility of salvation. Unlike Bendrix, she has the courage to ask herself "if one could believe in God, would he fill the desert?" (p. 91). Her first reaction to the blooming faith is totally utilitarian: she would offer her belief to God and He would, in turn, give her faith. As stated, her carnal love slowly transforms her pragmatic belief into an absolute faith. However, the most visible and absurd touch of faith comes to her in the bomb scene – the spiritual climax of the novel – in which Bendrix survives the collapsing building, and which signifies the fact that Sarah has made the Kierkegaardian leap of faith to become an authentic 'knight of faith' of

absurdities. This is when her relationship with God becomes more complicated. When a German air raid hits the building they are in, Bendrix is stuck under the rubble. Desperate Sarah makes a contract with God, in whom she does not believe. If he lets Bendrix survive, she will believe in him: “Dear God, I said—why dear, why dear? — make me believe. I can’t believe. Make me. [...] Let him be alive, and I will believe [...] But that wasn’t enough. It doesn’t hurt to believe [...] I’ll give him up for ever, only let him be alive with a chance” (p. 95). The absurd dilemma she feels is in its most manifest stage in this scene. Though a moment earlier she said, “there wasn’t such a thing as soul” (p. 95), she starts reasoning the possibility of faith later. She says, after all, “people can love without seeing each other” (p. 95). Bendrix is saved, but Sarah keeps her promise and ends the affair. As Walker (1984, p. 237) argues, her promise saves Bendrix, but “it also necessitates their separation. Because of the separation, both of their lives are made truly miserable, and yet out of this misery comes the loss of self necessary to the successful resolution of the divine plot”. Yet, her deliberate escape into god’s realm does intensify her love for Bendrix and flourish a divine love.

The scene revives Abraham’s sacrifice of his son in distorted fashion and in reversed order. According to Kierkegaard, Abraham’s test was not his consent to sacrifice his son, but his getting him back by ‘virtue of the absurd.’ Evans confirms that “absurd aspect of Abraham's faith is not his willingness to sacrifice Isaac, but rather Abraham's ability to receive Isaac back joyfully after having been willing to sacrifice him” (1993, p. 17). Kierkegaard’s view of authentic faith requires a ‘double movement’, “of *giving up and getting back*” (Mooney 1993, pp., 84). While anyone can do the movement of infinite resignation (the first movement), the movement of faith (the second movement) is the one that is hard to do. While the individual resigns the finite and steps into the infinite in the first one, he simultaneously gets finite and infinite back with the second. In the same way, Sarah’s involuntary prayer symbolically acts as a “double movement” of faith. Though she was sure that Bendrix died under rubble, she also believed that he will be restored. For, as Lee (1993, p. 114) argues, “by faith one gets back the finiteness one has given up”. She resigns her love (for Bendrix) – sacrifices him in the fashion Abraham sacrifices his son, but she gets him back and divine love more passionately than before. If she had despaired of getting Bendrix back, it would mean that she lacked faith. Mackey

claims (1971, p. 215) that “by faith [she] receives the world [...] after [she] has let it go”. Only through this absurd capacity for the impossible, Mooney (1991, p. 54) observes, “could one both resign and preserve one’s love. Bendrix’s being restored to life holds no importance here, but Sarah’s growing conviction that God’s emphatic presence is at work. Finally, she succumbs to faith no matter how absurd it might seem. Bendrix’s incessant trials to get her back fall short because faith requires believing in the absurd in the absence of any proof. She says:

“But what’s the good, Maurice? I believe there’s a God—I believe the whole bag of tricks, there’s nothing I don’t believe, they could subdivide the Trinity into a dozen parts and I’d believe. They could dig up records that proved Christ had been invented by Pilate to get himself promoted and I’d believe just the same. I’ve caught belief like a disease. [...] I’m sure. I’ve never been sure before about anything. When you came in at the door with the blood on your face, I became sure. Once and for all. Even though I didn’t know it at the time. I fought belief for longer than I fought love, but I haven’t any fight left.” (Greene 1951, p. 146).

Her initial rejection of God is transformed into faith through her sacrifice of Bendrix, which God “accepted it like an offering” (p. 113) as in Abraham’s case. The formal rules and rituals of established religion is annulled before absolute faith of the absurd. It does not matter whether there was “such a man as Christ at all” (p. 97) or not in Sarah’s case. Her last remarks towards the end of the book – “Give him my peace—he needs it more” (p. 123) – signifies an ultimate self-sacrifice for the other, not of an ethical kind that necessitates the salvation of both parties (as discussed in previous chapter with *Scobie* and *The Whisky Priest*), but of an absurd one that amalgamates the finite and infinite love in Kierkegaardian sense.

In the closing pages, Greene introduces his readers with the device of actual ‘miracles’, or supernatural or divine interference on the flow of action after Sarah’s death. As Baldrige (2000, p. 82) claims, “[a]lmost everyone who writes about *The End of the Affair* must, it seems, take note of the ‘miracles’, because they act as the ultimate expression of the absurd quality of faith. All characters are affected by the so-called miracles and, thus starts their transformation. Though the layout of the miracles is typical of Greene that leaves his readers in dilemma and “Greene presents them in such a way as to allow for naturalistic explanations” (Perkin 2014, pp., 58), it would be wrong to miss the general conviction that Sarah’s sudden, unexpected death creates a discontent since Greene does not provide us with an explanation as to her fate. Yet, as McEwan (1988, p. 71) maintains, Sarah’s fall in to God’ love “leads

her to sainthood” and it is “confirmed by miracles after she dies”. Hence, it can be argued that miracles, in this case, perform two functions; they act as the proof of Sarah’s salvation attained and as agents to bring peace to other characters as well. There are three miracles – or coincidences – in the novel that lucidly dismantles all logical, worldly explanations of faith. In the first instance, Bendrix tries to seduce Sylvia, a young secretary of the publisher, before Sarah’s cremation. His nascent sense of religion makes him feel the guilt before committing the crime. Haunted by his conscience that he lost Sarah to God due to his inability to love her properly, he does not want to donate another innocent to his rival. Similar to the bomb scene in which Sarah sacrificed her love, he desperately and reluctantly prays to Sarah: “Get me out of it. I don’t want to begin it all again and injure her. I’m incapable of love. Except of you, except of you” (p. 159). In that moment, the comic figure of Sarah’s mother, Mrs. Bertram, appears and saves Bendrix from meeting Sylvia. Mrs. Bertram informs Bendrix that Sarah was secretly baptized as a child as a social convention when they were on holiday. The scene does not represent Bendrix’s being saved from adultery with another woman but being saved in a religious sense. For the revelation acts as “the first unexpected crack” (p. 162) in his wall of resistance to faith. The faith that ‘took like a vaccination’ on Sarah drops Bendrix’s guard and readies him for a blooming faith. He desperately says: “You can’t mark a two-year-old child for life with a bit of water and a prayer. If I began to believe that, I could believe in the body and the blood” (p. 165), a fact which he started believing unawares. Belief becomes a healing vaccine that silently inoculates Bendrix the way it did Sarah.

In the second example, Detective Parkis’ boy Lance suddenly gets ill with deadly appendicitis. Under high temperature, the boy hallucinates talking to Sarah in his dream. Parkis says that he prayed to God, his wife in heaven and Sarah, “if she was there” (p. 178), and suddenly the boy is miraculously healed. After he wakes up, the boy tells “it was Mrs. Miles who came and took away the pain—touching him on the right side of the stomach” (p. 178). Bendrix is enraged with others’ ease of accepting it a miracle. Yet, the absurdity of the incident “provides a clarity of vision denied to the intellectually confused and emotionally weary Bendrix” (Brennan 2010, pp., 98).

In the last example, the rationalist, handsome Smythe is miraculously healed of ‘a purple crumpled strawberry mark’ on which he applied Sarah’s hair. In the funeral,

when Bendrix questions him on how his scar disappeared, he claims to have undergone a new treatment. But later, he phones him to tell of Sarah's miraculous intrusion. Bendrix's obstinate rejection seems to have been weakened at last. When Smythe says "It was a ..." he hangs up the phone "before [Smythe] could use that foolish newspaper word that was the alternative to 'coincidence'" (p. 188). No matter how hard he tries, he feels himself forced towards faith. For it contains suspension of the logic, rationality and common-sense and requires believing the absurd. "Magic, mystery, the inexplicable [...] that Greene embraced," Bosco (2005, p. 65) argues, are categories that castigate "the rationalist, modernist world of scientific explanation". Though "Bendrix's frustration is [...] in fact, heightened by his facing of the 'unthinkable' prospect of the existence of God" (Ali 2004, pp., xiii), he is quite helpless towards it. Greene himself accepts this absurdity as the centre of faith. In *Way of Escape* he admits that "[i]f we are to believe in some power infinitely above us in capacity and knowledge, magic does inevitably form part of our belief" (Greene 1980, p. 144), as proven in Bendrix's last remarks that nullify his non-existence to turn his face to faith: "how many coincidences are there going to be? Her mother at the funeral, the child's dream. Is this going to continue day by day?" (p. 189). The paradox of Sarah's undertaking an oath that could only be operative if one believes in God is intensified with supernatural incidents. Absurd as the intensified version of paradox makes Sarah a 'knight of faith' and carries others – Bendrix, Henry, Smythe – to faith.

#### **4.4 Sarah's Silent Transformation**

Faith requires one to be silent or to live his faith in silence; a closely related, but quite neglected, theme after paradox and absurd. The individual who has made a leap of faith and become 'the knight of infinite resignation' first through the paradox and then 'the knight of faith' later through the absurd, now feels the need to keep it that way. That is, faith is a constant, repetitive process that should continuously be undertaken.<sup>27</sup> De Silentio keeps his silence since he cannot properly portray Abraham's faith as a non-participating third. "No one [...] could understand

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<sup>27</sup> Kierkegaard's famous book *Repetition* published on the same day as *Fear and Trembling* is a detailed account of the concept of repetition and its significance on Kierkegaard's existentialism. Yet, Repetition is out of the scope this study.

Abraham” (Kierkegaard 1983a, p. 120) from his – a philosopher’s – perspective. Hence, he maintains a perfect silence as someone who “can describe the movements of faith, but [...] cannot make them” (Kierkegaard 1983a, p. 37). Graham Greene employs the same dialectic of Kierkegaardian concept ‘silence’ both while depicting Sarah as a character and while describing other characters’, as well as his own, position against Sarah as someone who dwells inside the sphere of ‘the knight of faith.’ The concept of silence has such an invigorating effect in the novel that it becomes the only way Sarah can succumb to her newly attained absolute self.

Indeed, *The End of The Affair* is full of metaphors and motifs that promote the value of silence. In fact, what the book communicates is the virtue of silent, ‘inner communication.’ No character – let alone Sarah as the protagonist – has a distinct voice of their own. It is a challenge for critics to portray or interpret other characters without taking Sarah as the critical vantage point. As stated earlier, though Bendrix is the narrator and dominant voice, which leads some critics to consider it Bendrix’s story, and he constantly speaks to prove his case, his way of communication, I argue, is a non-communication which creates an opposite effect than his claims. His constantly rejects Sarah’s version of love. When Sarah claims that their separation does not have significance so long as they love each other because “people go on loving God [...] without seeing Him” (p. 69), he says ““That’s not our kind of love”” (p. 69). Yet, it is later revealed that ‘that’s the kind of love’ he was actually seeking under the guise of hatred. He speaks too much, and this is reflected as hate towards anything. Bendrix’s search for ‘peace’ in this barren world adumbrates his disgust for having to speak too much to explain himself. His position alludes to Earnen’s statement which states that “communication must be more than loud talk or frequent chatter; it must be based on an inner communication established in silence” (Earnen 1975, pp. 171-2).

Bendrix’s useless, baseless, ineffective chatter is proven wrong many times, and he cannot help but admit that all he needs to do is experience the peace, love and faith bringing peace. That he is so obsessed with Sarah though he dislikes her proves his unconscious agenda to attain peace through her love. He says “[t]he act of love itself has been described as the little death, and lovers sometimes experience too the little peace” (p. 47). When you die, you cannot speak and are freed of the burden to explain yourself, the feelings Bendrix gets when he is with Sarah. Considering that

the only good thing he can remember of Sarah is “this peace” (p. 47), he craves for the [in]ability to speak and distil the ultimate silence of his blooming divine love. In this peace, Roston (2006, p. 75) argues, Bendrix “suppresses here, as something he hates, a religious emotion that he dimly perceives to be analogous to his experience of love”.

The same is true for Henry, Sarah’s husband, as the personification of the ethical stage. Henry stays mute throughout the novel as if his silence insinuates the failure of the ethical stage. Even on his first encounter with Bendrix after the affair, he invites him to his house to talk about Sarah’s possible cheating on him. However, he cannot clearly express his ideas, and he communicates with Bendrix without ever uttering a word. He simply puts a detective’s card on the table and Bendrix is forced to guess his suspicion of Sarah, which he quickly does because he was the one Sarah was having affair with. Bendrix’s succinct observation on married life clearly underlines the quiescence of the ethical life compared to Sarah as the personification of religious life. He says “[t]hey always say, don’t they, that a husband is the last person really to know the kind of woman” (p. 15). The failure of marriages based on ethical duties is alluded to through Henry’s silence as a dutiful husband. In one of the most comical scenes, Henry loses his voice due to cold in a time when Sarah’s cheating was at its height. Bendrix cruelly observes, “‘He’s lost his voice completely.’ I felt a malicious delight at the absurdity of his sickness: a civil servant without a voice whispering hoarsely and ineffectively about widows’ pensions” (pp. 48-9). The absurdity of the aesthetic and ethical life in relation to faith is metaphorically conveyed through Bendrix’s over-speaking and Henry’s non-speaking. Their symbolic muteness refers to De Silentio’s remarks when he feels himself incapable of describing faith. He says “[e]ven though I go on talking night and day without interruption, if I cannot make myself understood when I speak, then I am not speaking” (Kierkegaard 1983a, p. 113).

For the last example, Smythe, another silent person, paradoxically earns his life by talking and persuading people against faith and God. When Bendrix visits him in disguise with Parkis boy to learn if he was Sarah’s lover, Smythe does not want to miss the chance to ‘sow seeds’ in the boy’s mind because “they’ve just begun to corrupt him with their lies” (p. 82), he says. He even takes his chance with Bendrix too. Yet, Bendrix’s mention of Sarah’s name to measure his reaction suddenly

extinguishes his desire to talk. The rationalist logic fails in relation to absolute, authentic faith as if he is expressing his inability to act or believe in the way Sarah does. In the next scene, we see Smythe cutting a piece of hair from Sarah's hair as a relic that will also heal his birthmark. The only time he utters a word is when he says that his healing was 'a miracle,' which was cut short when Bendrix hangs up the phone. Bendrix, Henry and Smythe clearly conflate and represent Kierkegaard pseudonymous author De Silentio who does not "have the courage to speak [and] the courage to act" as Sarah. Their life views founder against Sarah's and, like De Silentio, their position in the book becomes the one of mere 'observer'. Indeed, their silence is to bear witness to Sarah's religious transformation. Whenever they attained silence the way Sarah did, their transformation also began.

Silence is the dominant metaphor in the novel and Greene depicts Sarah as the ultimate personification of it. In fact, the book is full of strong references to the virtue of Sarah's silence as a pristine manifestation of authentic religious existence. Her Abrahamic silence begins when she makes the promise to end the affair. The same way Abraham goes mute on taking God's order, her silence is dramatically felt by other characters, foreshadowing what is coming next. When Bendrix calls her the following day, "the telephone presented nothing but the silent open mouth of somebody found dead" (p. 69). Her silence is reflected as being isolated within an unqualified crowd of people. She is unaccompanied even when she is with Bendrix, but he fails to understand her. Again, the image of desert makes its appearance felt here. Though she resembles the world to a barren desert, it is later transformed into a peaceful, tranquil place with no outer influence. She resides in "[t]hat point where the desert begins" (p. 90), towards which she wants to direct Bendrix too. Bendrix is overly jealous of her talking about other men in their meetings and deliberately starts fights. Yet, Sarah's faith is more deeply rooted than one can imagine. She does not consider being with other men a big issue so long as their love is a kind of reflection of divine love in the world. She says, "I wouldn't rob him of some small companionship in the desert if we can't have each other there" (p. 92). If one cannot succeed in loving another soul in a proper way, he cannot, Sarah claims, attain divine love either. Thereby, Sarah is alone and isolated in her quest. Since Bendrix fails to comprehend her faith in action, Sarah is afraid that "he would drive [her] into such complete isolation that [she] would be alone with nothing and nobody—like a

hermit, but they were never alone, or so they say” (p. 92). She becomes a recluse who wants to find her authentic existence in the middle of the crowd. That she is doomed – or elevated – to silence is proven by Bendrix when he defines her place of existence as ‘a strange region.’ He confesses that he does not have the courage or ability to step into this place dominated by ‘an absence of time.’ He says, “[I]f this book of mine fails to take a straight course, it is because I am lost in a strange region; I have no map” (p. 50). He desperately starts questioning the existence of anything else except Sarah’s faith: “I sometimes wonder whether anything that I am putting down here is true” (p. 50). It is a faith that forces everyone to remain silent on its presence. Hence, Bendrix “himself, it transpires, is unsure of the authenticity of his own version of the events” (Roston 2006, p. 70).

Though the focus of the book is Sarah, in a figurative sense she rarely speaks. To put it another way, she speaks in a language that nobody understands, which intensifies her silence. The inverted inner-outer dialectic as presented in the aesthetic stage is reversed in Sarah’s faith which has a silencing force. Since outer qualities do not necessarily reflect the inner ones, Sarah’s silence has an inward quality that is reflected in opposite directions. As Tolstrup (2016, p. 33) maintains, “the knight of faith is characterized as having an inner conviction not visible from the outside”. This qualitative silence is best expressed when Henry takes her to country side to have a break from the incessant bombings. People in the park have good time ‘sitting on the grass and holding hands.’ Sarah observes that they must be feeling “happy because this was peace and there were no bombs” (p. 105). However, what Sarah seeks is a silence that has the power of transforming one, not of encouraging one to passiveness. She says, “I don’t like the peace” (p. 105) – a statement which refers to her search for qualitative isolation.

Silence is an inward quality and those who fail to enter inside cannot fully grasp the authentic faith it can lead to. As shown, Bendrix, Smythe, and Henry speak and attain silence towards the end as their faith has begun to flourish. Yet, Sarah is silent from beginning to the end but, her silence is of a different kind than Bendrix, Henry and Smythe’s. Though she desires to explain her condition to people around her, she is afraid that no one will understand her paradox. She says, “there’s not a single person anywhere to whom I can even say I’m unhappy because they would ask me why and the questions would begin and I would break down” (p. 95). The rationalist

logic that desires a plausible explanation for anything would try to reason with her, create excuses for her sins, and find loopholes in her divine love. But discourse yields to silence in authentic faith. Since “fundamental silence is a necessity for the existing individual, especially in relation to God” (Contreras 2016, pp., 41), it has an invigorating effect on Sarah. Though she is with Bendrix all the time, she feels her loneliness in her quest. They are “in the same desert, seeking the same water-holes perhaps” but she is the one who is “always alone” (p. 100). She speaks to God directly in a most dramatic and concise manner in the following scene:

“So that’s it. I begin to believe in you, and if I believe in you, I shall hate you. I have free will to break my promise, haven’t I, but I haven’t the power to gain anything from breaking it. You let me telephone, but then you close the door in my face. You let me sin, but you take away the fruits of my sin. You let me try to escape with D., but you don’t allow me to enjoy it. You make me drive love out, and then you say there’s no lust for you either. What do you expect me to do now, God? Where do I go from here?” (Greene 1951, p. 100).

Sarah’s unbearable agony for being trapped in her paradoxical and absurd faith discloses itself as remaining paradoxically in silence again. When one feels agony, anguish and pain, he desperately needs to confide in another person as in Sarah’s case. Yet, it is this quality of hers that fixes her place within the authentic faith. If she were to reveal her suffering, her whole personal experience of faith would be lost. As Contreras (2016, p. 42) claims, “waiting in silence is required to preserve the subjective experience, for just as the secret dies precisely in the instant it is revealed, so too does subjective experience become ridiculous”. Hence, other characters’ ‘fixed categories of objectivity’ cannot veer Sarah’s silence which is based on no categories and no intellectual arguments. It is in this distress and anxiety – that she cannot speak to others – she starts feeling her authentic existence taking shape. She tries to explain her situation to others, but knowing that they will fail to comprehend she gives up. De Silentio claims that Abraham “does not speak an untruth, but neither does he say anything, for he is speaking in a strange tongue” (Kierkegaard 1983a, p. 119). This is just the case with Sarah – the knight of faith cannot speak. If she speaks, she is relegated to universal ethical categories without a close bond with God. For God is not discovered in the immediacy of the external world. Greene himself forces Sarah into silence at the expense of having a book with a loose plot and narrative structure. All problems that would easily be solved if Sarah were to explain her situation are exonerated by her sudden death, which leads others to faith

as well. Unable to explicate her agony, she is led into death as the ultimate form of silence. She dies but continues her silent ‘speech’ from the grave. The carnal love is transformed into divine love which “has been described as the little death, and lovers sometimes experience too the little peace” (p. 47). Her spiritual journey is completed when she dies or attains the ultimate silence as if she says that ‘you have authentic faith when you are totally silent.’ In the final analysis, the characters resorting to internal dialogues and starting directly addressing to god himself as they progress towards faith implies their blooming faith. In the end, there is nothing but peace for everyone. “[F]or the human being silence offers shelter within the temporal world, a consecrated zone for spiritual communion” (Contreras 2016, pp., 44).

#### **4.5 Attaining Natural Selfhood**

Bosco (2005, p. 69) claims that *The End of The Affair* “stands as the final work of [Greene’s] four book Catholic cycle, the apotheosis and limit of the genre for [his] imagination”. The journey of Greene’s ‘single individual’ culminates in Sarah’s transformation as informed by Kierkegaardian concepts of paradox, absurdity and silence in his theory of religious stage. The clear demarcation of this stage from previous stages and its superiority over them is reflected in the way Sarah’s death is depicted. Though many critics<sup>28</sup> resemble her death to Pinkie, The Whisky Priest and Scobie’s suicide to escape from the failure of their life projects, her death is not, I argue, a deliberate escape into oblivion, but a planned rendezvous with her divine lover. That she deliberately gets wet though she was already ill and the doctor’s statement that a timely penicillin would have saved her does not present the same motive as Pinkie’s or Scobie’s deliberate deaths. When chased by Bendrix under heavy rain who wants to win her away from God, she gets soaked and escapes – shelters – into a cold church. She refuses Bendrix’s insistence to go back home and rest, and she falls asleep in the church. Before leaving her there, Bendrix unconsciously notices that God claims her physical body this time. He says, “seeing her huddled there at the edge of the candlelight, like a beggar come in for warmth, I could imagine a God blessing her: or a God loving her” (p. 131). Greene’s agenda in his previous novels to imagine a God materialized in the temporal world inside

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<sup>28</sup> See Hoskins, R. (2004) *Graham Greene: An Approach to the Novels*. NY: Routledge.

humans is negated by Sarah's imagining common people uniting with God. In the man-vs-God dichotomy, God becomes the-always-winning part. The faith's transformative power is underlined when Sarah offers herself as a sacrifice for pain and it is accepted. She says, "I believe the legend. [...] I believe you are God. [...] if only you could come down from your Cross for a while and let me get up there instead. If I could suffer like you, I could heal like you" (p. 120). Thus, instead of Scobie's and Whisky Priest's god coming down from the cross into the material world, Sarah represents a celestial human being elevated to God's pristine realm. This way, as in Abraham's case, she gains the material and eternal world at the same time. She both sacrifices her Isaac (Bendrix) – and gains him more happily than before. In this realm, she both suffers the ramifications of having faith and rejoices her love in the middle of paradoxes, absurdities and abnormalities. She loses her voice but as Henry informs, she talks to this "somebody" (p. 136) who is neither Henry the ethicist nor Bendrix the aesthete.

## 5. CONCLUSION

It is safe to assume that the nature and functioning of the self is still an issue that haunts contemporary man the same way as it did in the times of Kierkegaard and Greene. It is an absolute, timeless reality quite different from any other kind of knowledge one utilizes in daily life. Hence, an existential truth is likely to outlive any contemporary ‘turns’ that we are savagely consuming on each passing day. The selfhood is not a brand new, shiny, critical stance positioned against our relatively modern problems, but it is and should be at the heart of all human dealings with our environment and with itself. No matter what one is dealing with, it always ends up with the essential question of the meaning and nature of existing. Kierkegaard and Greene would definitely agree, both with their writings and life-styles. Greene’s always ending up with quite ‘serious’ issues even in his outwardly action-packed thrillers adumbrates Kierkegaard’s being classified as a ‘more-poet-than-philosopher’ and his being recognized more with his pseudonymous texts than with his numerous books with his own name. As the last book of his career, Greene wrote *Monsieur Quixote* (1985), a modern, parodied adaptation of *Don Quixote*, in which he tries to settle the accounts between religion and politics as his grand themes. Father Quixote and communist ex-mayor Sancho fervently defend their positions against each other on their epic trip through Spain. All events mistakenly taken as miracles by delirious Father Quixote are quite rationally explained and illuminated by ironically intellectual Sancho. Yet Father manages to administer communion to his friend at his last breath, which symbolizes Greene’s wish to be forgiven for his mundane pursuits. Similarly, Kierkegaard wanted to retire to distant Jutland heath to live a hermit’s life rather than being a philosopher pop-star in Denmark as he was. It is no wonder then that he annuls all his propositions with the pseudonymous Pastor’s three-page letter at the end of *Either/Or*, in which he stresses the importance of living a life fulfilled with

meaning against a life defined as he did. Based on this similarity between them, here I have read Greene's religious fiction through Kierkegaardian lens.

This study has explored how Graham Greene's religious fiction – *Brighton Rock* (1938), *The Power and The Glory* (1940), *The Heart of The Matter* (1948) and *The End of the Affair* (1951) – reflects Kierkegaard's theory of stages of existence (aesthetic, ethical and religious) and how they reflected a gradual, progressive maturation of authentic, natural selfhood as developed by the key terms in each stage of existence. The major characters, narrative structures, plot settings and themes favoured in the novels have apparent insinuations to Kierkegaard's notion of natural selfhood or 'single individual' who has achieved a balanced synthesis of opposites. Kierkegaard's (Greene's as well) natural selfhood is only achieved by gradually moving from inauthenticity to authenticity, by personally living every mode of life and experimenting with all possibilities to be encountered in life even though it leads us to horrendous acts, pernicious behaviours and a dull life. Though Gordon (1997, p. 91) argues that none of Greene's heroes attain 'integrity' of self, I argue the opposite. The natural selfhood develops itself as it traverses from satisfying basest feelings through blindly following ethical norms to believing the impossible, which Greene skilfully utilized in his religious novels.

The novels in question hold a special place in Greene's corpus. Though his fiction is classified as 'entertainments' and 'serious' works, and he produced more political novels and hard-boiled thrillers than his serious works, much of his reputation as 'the finest living writer' at that time in English language rests on this tetralogy as the apex of his imagination. They thus need a special focus since their very structure that informs gradual development of the self, 'the grand theme' they uphold, and the interchangeability of characters inform Greene's maturation as an artist. As he progressed from *Brighton Rock* to *The End of The Affair*, he steadily mastered his skills as an expert story teller as he had a greater freedom – than his politically oriented novels – to experiment with his characters and their religious ideas the same way Kierkegaard did with his pseudonymous authors. After the publication of his last book of his religious cycle Greene had matured his writing style and secured his position in that he "never again attains in his novels the stylistic intensity of his character's Catholic interiority so pronounced in the genre" (Bosco 2005, p. 69). Greene informed us that he has "now finished" his group of novels and that he would

“not deal primarily with Catholic themes at all” (Shuttleworth and Raven 1972, p. 159). In another circumstance, he wrote to Evelyn Waugh: “It will be fun to write about politics for a change, and not always about God” (Sykes 1975, p. 357). Indeed, he did so – because no other books after and even before the tetralogy ostensibly dealt with religious issues and none surpassed the stylistic mastery either. In *Ways of Escape* Greene laments critics’ wrongly classifying him as a purely religious writer and their assumptions that being religious gave him an unfair advantage in literary circles. However, “the ideas of [...] Catholic characters, even their Catholic ideas were not necessarily [his] (1980, p. 58). The real motivation behind his religious fiction, though, is argued to be his characters’ vertical existential ascension. His characters as the collective embodiments of a ‘single, natural selfhood’ move up the existential ladder in the same way he achieves mastery from melodrama to superior psychological realism. Indeed, the emergence of ‘ladder’ imagery in the novels informs a concurrent movement towards natural selfhood. To elaborate, Pinkie resides in a solitary room at the top of a narrow ladder with dangerously loose railings. Scobie’s wife waits him in the bedroom at the end of a dreadfully long ladder he must climb every day to do his nightmarish duties, which symbolizes his failure in his duties. His physical ascend becomes his metaphorically spiritual downfall. The Whisky Priest’s ladder is his burning desire to cross the mountains and live a relatively carefree life up there. Lastly, Sarah continuously moves up and down the staircase to symbolize the fluctuating and synthesizing force of the religious stage. As Bendrix slowly climbs up the ladder on the day of her death, he figuratively comes to a full understanding of her absolute faith and resignation.

In order to contextualize vertical ascension of the characters themselves and their selfhood, the Introduction chapter offers a brief overview of the key concepts in Kierkegaard’s existential philosophy about ‘natural selfhood’ as a result of his theory of stages. Having a consistent, matured self is at the centre of Kierkegaard’s existentialism. In opposition to rationalist philosophy, he states that the task of being a self “lies outside immanent thought, consequently outside logic” (Kierkegaard 1967, pp. 196, Vol. I). Hence, to explicate it thoroughly requires one to strip oneself away from objective reasoning and to adopt a subjective attitude towards life. The universal qualities employed to define an authentic selfhood falls short since *the self*

has an individualistic characteristic. In Kierkegaard's thought, knowing the truth and living the truth are completely different things. While philosophers try to define the meaning of life, they propose abstract concepts which are impossible to materialize. When it comes to living *a life of truth*, it requires a great effort and an individual subjective experience. Intellectual reasoning cannot direct one on how to put beliefs into practice. Thus, Kierkegaard offers his own classification of the self which defines it as an *ideal*, a *relation*, a *synthesis* and a *transition*. The only true existence, he claims, is a life in which pursuing the meaning of your existence is the only truth. Yet, one also needs to relate itself to itself and a higher being to actualize the self. If one relates itself to other unrewarding finite beings such as the public, laws, lovers, family etc, it is doomed to fail. It does not necessitate their complete rejection, though. The self is a synthesis that conflates the opposites in a harmonious order. It combines the finite and the infinite, the actual and the possible, the temporal and the eternal to form the natural selfhood. Finally, the self needs a motion, a leap, a movement to actualize itself. Since the self is not an objective quality but a subjective experimentation with the possibilities, it requires making deliberate attempt to do an inward journey to find natural existence.

These definitions manifest themselves as stages of existence in Kierkegaard's thought, especially in his pseudonymous writings. He defines three stages of existence – the aesthetic, the ethical and the religious – one dwells in one's lifetime. Yet, attaining true selfhood is not a natural process or something that we are born into. When one becomes conscious of the deficiencies in a certain way of life, he progresses to a higher stage. The aesthetic stage is characterized with the concepts of *immediacy* and *reflection*, in which the individual's whole aim in life becomes satiating his immediate, sensuous desires and searching for distraction in this meaningless life. He has no ideal in life, relates himself to satisfaction, embrace only the finite and makes no attempt to change the conditions. When he notices the great abyss in his existence, he makes 'a leap' towards the ethical stage in which executing rules and following duties are the defining elements characterized by the concepts of *choice*, *freedom* and *duty*. Yet, this stage also fails because it does not initiate these concepts – the self does not make a radical choice but passively embraces the situation. Kierkegaard refers to this stage as an escape from the difficult task of attaining natural selfhood. Thus, finally, the self moves to the religious stage which

is defined with the concepts of *paradox*, *absurd* and *silence*. The self attains its true form by referring itself to a higher being (God, for example), but at the same time, paradoxically keeps its position in the finite.

Greene's first religious novel *Brighton Rock* has clear insinuations to Kierkegaard's aesthetic stage explored in *Either/Or I*, and the structural elements that explicitly inform the aesthetic stage are prevalent in the novel. The book employs the method of 'indirect communication' that Greene succinctly employs to convey his message. The fact that it was first intended as a detective fiction, it adopted an implicit religious thesis at its heart, and Greene masterfully hid his authorial voice in the background inform that the book envisages taking an inward, subjective journey. In addition, Greene's utilization of fragmentary chapters, fluctuating character moods, style shifts and lack of continuity makes the book a melting-pot in which opposing forces come together to create a meaningful narrative cosmos. The aphoristic and poetical style with short, definitive sentences also informs an oscillating way of life, definitive of aesthetic stage. Lastly, varying points of view with different modes of life create and inform a self-referential and self-refuting Kierkegaardian aesthetic stage of life in which the subsequent themes are notified.

This way Greene provides the major character Pinkie as the embodiment of the aesthetic stage with an immense freedom to experiment with his life. Thereby, Pinkie embodies an aesthetic person who fails to create an ideal for his identity, to relate it to a more beneficial agents, and to synthesize the opposite forces in his selfhood. He is depicted as the perfect personification of *immediacy* as the epitome of aesthetic stage. Pinkie, often referred to as 'the Boy' in the novel, adopts a primitive, unspoiled, natural selfhood in which all kinds of savouring is illicit. Viewing existence as a 'beautiful work of art' that does not need any alteration, Pinkie wants to preserve time in its immediacy and natural condition. Thus, he develops a passive attitude to life and an enmity to anything that tries to change his natural existence. His inert state makes him a drifter, a lonely wanderer in life who does not act to change his condition. The category of immediacy results in Pinkie's prioritizing sensuousness in all his activities. For example, inflicting pain is the most satisfying thing for him as the feeling is experienced in its immediacy. Like a piece of sensuous music which exists only in the time it is produced, Pinkie's existence is ephemeral – he experiences it only when he feels enjoyment. The peace, salvation and heaven

which do not produce an immediate pleasure in Pinkie lose their significance and thus, he embraces the non-transient pain as his existence.

Pinkie does not pursue this stagnant, polluted life to the end. Just like Kierkegaard's aesthete, he notices the futility in this kind of existence and develops a *reflective* disposition towards life. The repeated, continuous pursuit of immediate pleasures and sensuous experiences lead him to a boring, dull life with no satisfaction. His previous antagonism against an intrusion to his natural existence is transformed into reflective sorrow that looks for ways to escape from this condition. Yet, Pinkie embraces his 'sorrow' as an element that stresses one's being alive and existing. Since happiness, enjoyable moments and pleasure will vanish in time and produce more sorrow, suffering is a more powerful element that reminds one of his existence. In order not to fall into boredom of repetition, Pinkie devises new methods to cultivate the interesting such as creating occasions for enjoyable situations and changing his methods of enjoyment. For example, he marries Rose just to see whether her temporary company will help him obviate the feeling of sorrow, or he invents different kinds of murder methods to enjoy the act to the fullest. Yet, upon consuming all possible forms of enjoyment, Pinkie condemns himself to death and commits suicide, which acts as a metaphorical leap towards a higher type of existence – the ethical stage.

The self's rejuvenated journey continues with *The Power and The Glory* and *The Heart of The Matter*, and the novels animate Kierkegaard's ethical stage of life as theorized in *Either/Or II* and maintain the self's search for natural selfhood through *Scobie* and *The Whisky Priest* respectively. Greene's quick deviation from indirect communication method and adopting a more direct style and a clear agenda in these two novels in succession to *Brighton Rock* also imply the major themes explored afterwards in them. As the products of Greene's travel to distant lands (Mexico and Sierra Leone) as government spy and working there as a journalist at the same time, they forced him to take more objective and instructive mode of communication and to convey clear, understandable themes. The overall theme in these two novels reflects the characters' immense sense of responsibility and their psychology after they failed to perform it. Though they are devout Christians and sacrifice their beings for the good of others, their excessive sense of responsibility paradoxically leads them to their own demolition in the end. Though the selfhood portrayed in Pinkie

moves from immediacy to reflection, Greene depicts them as unchanging, stagnant characters. This situation informs the key categories – *choice*, *freedom* and *duty* – of ethical stage which the ethicist seems to perform.

The Whisky Priest is depicted as a character who has managed to make the absolute ethical choice in his life. His decisiveness to choose himself absolutely instantiates his efforts to concretize his selfhood. Though he gets many chances to escape the execution, he deliberately chooses the ramifications of his actions. Positioning himself against other characters as the personifications of aesthetic stage, he defines his existence in opposition to them. In his encounters with each of these characters, his previous dilemma to leave the country or stay behind to perform his duties is quickly resolved since he chooses his own identity, referring to Kierkegaardian concept of relating itself to itself. Yet, this choosing is not arbitrary as is the case with the aesthete. The Priest uses ethical *freedom* to choose what is good. Rather than being a lonely wanderer and a drifter in life like the aesthete, he gets the chance to administer his freedom by embracing his sins, weaknesses, and faults. In his freedom, he chooses the world of common people with their wrongdoings rather than a pious, accidental, abstract life of a priest. However, administering this kind of ethical freedom ironically puts one under ethical *duties* to be performed. If one defines certain duties for himself, he will be freed of whimsical and temporary desires. Thus, the Priest frees himself from outside influences on his selfhood with self-imposed duties for people. While he relates himself to his selfhood with his choice, he starts relating himself to other people with an immense sense of duty. Comparing his duties for God and for people, he always chooses the finite world to reify existence in the material world. For this sake, he even walks into an apparent death in the end.

Scobie in *The Heart of The Matter* promotes and matures what the Priest has set out to do with his ethical life view. As the only character with integrity in the novel, Scobie makes a dramatic ethical self-*choice* in the hellish setting of the novel. While everyone else wants to leave, he chooses to stay in the war-torn country to find his authentic selfhood. To gain access to finite elements in the life, he mingles with the crowd, befriends the outcasts, helps those in need and loves the un-loved. By performing his civic duties in the most elaborate manner and relating himself to others and the public, he tries to materialize his abstract, non-conforming faith. After

he chooses his own finite existence, he steps in Kierkegaardian category of *freedom* in which identities formed as a result of necessities are nullified. Scobie develops an extreme sense of responsibility and self-sacrifice to perform this ethical freedom. He cannot divorce his wife due to his marriage vow, or leave Helen due to his enormous pity. He cannot reconcile his marriage, his adulterous affair with Helen, feeling of over-responsibility with his faith and thus, he thinks he chooses all of them to attain freedom. Yet, prioritizing others instead of one's own self alienates one further from his authentic identity though it first seems liberating. Scobie's method of attaining a concrete selfhood is via his *marriage* which acts as a mediator between finite and infinite for Scobie. Although he does not love his wife and marriage, they become the only ways for him to materialize his selfhood. Unlike the aesthete Pinkie who looks for temporary pleasures and enjoyments, Scobie promotes the daily activities within marriage to preserve time and concretise the eternal. The spiritual faith does not provide him with a sense of belonging, thus he firmly clings to his marriage and society. Yet, when he fails to perform his duties, he also commits suicide which symbolizes his 'leap' to a better existence.

The Priest's and Scobie's ethical ways of life also fail, for a life related to external influences rather than one's own self is doomed to fail. In the fashion of Kierkegaard's Jutland pastor, it is maintained that *the ethical is always wrong in relation to God*. Both characters are portrayed as dissatisfied solitary individuals seeing no light at the end of the tunnel. Civic duties, moral arrangements and social norms are not ultimately justified, for they only relate to the finite elements in a person. Considering no decisive judgement is provided for the readers in the novels, it can be argued that the search for a natural selfhood will continue with a new experimentation of life.

Sarah's religious imposition in *The End of The Affair* has clear allusions to Kierkegaard's religious stage of life as explored in *Fear and Trembling*. As shown, the duty to others is not fully satisfying for the self, for one cannot sacrifice oneself for the whole of humanity. Being aware of this, the ethical characters feel themselves trapped in a moral dilemma to choose their own selves or others, both of which are unfulfilling. Here, Sarah achieves a divine, natural selfhood by 'teleological suspension of the ethical' and the aesthetic as such. While previous characters are depicted as representatives of stand-alone life views, Sarah seems to embody all

previous life styles and improves them to a higher existential stage. In the end she attains the natural selfhood by subordinating all ends to God.

Here again, Greene succeeds in combining the form and content in such a way that they become inseparable in the novel. Greene's hiding himself behind masks and visible plot of a passionate love affair help readers have subjective experience of the main agenda presented unlike the previous novels which have clear objectives to convey a message. With the aim of making the readers 'feel' not 'passively observe', Greene creates a subjective inward experience of having a religious faith and its ramifications. Considering that the novel is Greene's only novel with references to his own life, he created a totally fictional universe uninformed by his travels and job as a journalist and government spy. While his previous novels are his objective accounts of general human condition, *The End of The Affair* depicts a purely subjective experience of faith in action. It is thus quite fitting to call it a self-reflection novel. McEwan (1988, p. 71) is then quite right to refer to it as "a religious meditation rather than a novel". Lastly, Greene's utilization first-person-narration, weak narrative voice, constant time shifts, change narrators, diary and letter devices, and uncertain course of memory inform the totally inward experience of faith in the novel and prepare the readers for the unorthodox content and message. That is, faith as expressed through the subjective categories of *paradox*, *absurd* and *silence* is more easily portrayed in the novel.

Sarah's faith is *paradoxical* in the sense that she has managed to fuse all different life styles into her own natural selfhood. Unlike the previous characters that clearly promote a certain way of life, Sarah first resides in the aesthetic, then moves to the ethical and then finally settles for the religious stage as if to prove Greene's refusal of an objective existential truth. She lives an aesthetic life alongside Bendrix, at the same time promotes her husband Henry's ethical mode of life and combines these two to build up a novel religious stage of life. Faith requires one to have an absolute relation with God and subordinate all other ends to him. Besides, considering Kierkegaard's definition of the self as its being a synthesis, Sarah's love and hate dialectic with God culminates in her efforts to reconcile both. Faith then becomes a paradoxical synthesis of finite (Bendrix, Henry) and infinite (God).

Sarah's faith has also an *absurd* quality in close connection with the paradox. In the same way as Abraham absurdly gets his son back after he has resigned him, Sarah

resigns all material, temporal and finite elements in her life but absurdly gets them all back more intensely. While the first act of resignation is considered an ethical act which does not require a passionate inward struggle, the second act of 'getting back' is the real faith located in the absurd. For the latter one proves the existence of higher being without doubt. Thus, Sarah is absurdly forced into belief which she has been strongly resisting against. Her rationalist reasoning, seeking help from atheist Smythe, and escape from God are all negated with the supernatural occurrences after her death.

In the final analysis, the seeker of natural selfhood as embodied in Sarah develops a qualitative *silence* after becoming a 'knight of faith.' Since disclosure or talking has a negative effect that devalues faith, Sarah is damned with keeping her silence about her faith. This silence develops her in a positive way because it acts as the uplifting force that keeps Sarah within faith. Her incessant search for 'peace' is promoted by Greene who portrays her as someone who rarely speaks. Indeed, all the narrative loopholes that can easily be solved if she explains her situation are deliberately kept and stressed. Thus, Sarah never speaks and moreover, she takes Bendrix, Henry and Smythe's loquaciousness and transforms it to a silence that elevates faith. It is also worth noting that these characters lose their voices as they develop faith through Sarah's guidance. In the end, she attains a divine selfhood with her death, the ultimate silence. Indeed, that the novel ends with an open ending, and provides readers with no definitive conclusion as to her faith also highlight the silencing force of the faith. We can observe but never understand what is going on inside faith, thus we keep our silence.

To recapitulate, Greene's grand theme in his faith quartet proves my argument that in his novels the *self* travels from inauthenticity to authentic, natural selfhood by traversing through certain stations of life as theorized by Kierkegaard. The self is a dynamic, changing, fluctuating agent that brings a positive change to an individual. In Greene's imagination the self is a unified whole, a combination of opposite forces and life styles. Thus, he unrolls the authentic selfhood as scattered in different characters in his faith tetralogy. Each character symbolizing a part of natural selfhood comes together to form the ideal self. Associating this with Kierkegaard's theory of stages which the individuals occupy according to their world views, I identified the concepts in each stage on Greene's characters. Moving from

Kierkegaard's definition of the self as an *ideal*, a *relation*, a *synthesis* and a *transition*, it is highlighted that Pinkie with no *ideal* in life *relates* himself to temporal pleasures. He thus fails to form his natural selfhood and *moves* to a higher stage. Scobie and the Whisky Priest define 'others' as their *ideals* and *relate* themselves to their duties. This way, they fail to *synthesize* them with their faith and move a higher ground. Lastly, Sarah defines her selfhood as her *ideal*, and *relates* herself to a superior being. Hence, she manages to *synthesize* the finite in the previous stages with the infinite and attains the natural selfhood. Thus, it shows a gradual progression from inauthenticity to authentic selfhood is at work in these novels.



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- 2nd ELT Conference:Bringing Grammar to Life, Certificate of Attendance, H.Kalyoncu Uni.
- MIT EdX, 6.00x Introduction to Computer Science and Programming, 10.06.2013
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