

## **ON BORDERING IN GRAHAM GREENE'S ACROSS THE BRIDGE AND TWO GENTLE PEOPLE**

*The subject of the present research is concerned with bordering perspective in Graham Greene's short stories: Across the Bridge, and Two Gentle People. It applies the cultural approach to the study of bordering. It is confined to the cultural studies that are remarkably incorporated within the postcolonial criticism. Its relevance is to one of the prominent literary issues of the postcolonial criticism: the frontier. The politically, historically, and geographically oriented conceptions of bordering are eliminated from the discussion and application of the term of bordering.*

*The study aims at shedding light on bordering perspective in Greene's two short stories: the cultural perspective. This perspective contributes to uncover two characteristics of the cultural difference: contradiction and contest. The study illuminates the role of difference in constructing the world image throughout the characters' bordering journey.*

*This study exposes Greene's views of certain countries as he expresses his bordering perspectives. In Across the Bridge, Greene shows two characters' attitudes to Mexico: Mr. Calloway's attitude and the policeman's attitude. They express their depression of the miserable situation of Mexico and their yearning to America.*

*Alternatively, Greene presents a character inclined to other countries. In the first story, Two Gentle People, Henry Greaves is a character who is attached to life in France and India in spite of his British origin. He is fond of the old places of these countries. Henry would have a more meaningful time with a French woman called Marie-Claire than they may have had in the past years. Yet, the story underlies the different perspectives of these characters.*

*To conclude, Greene presents two contrastive views of two countries which are geographically, ethnically, culturally and linguistically different from each other: Mexico in one hand and India and France on the other. It reflects the character's alienatory feelings in the two stories. It sheds light on their humanistic angle of vision of the world through their experience of border crossing.*

**Key words:** story; borders; psychological barrier.

To begin with, it is necessary to present a short overview of the concepts of boundary and border so as to give a preamble to the concept of bordering perspective. Boundaries and borders have been a crucial affair in the colonial age. It has become a significant issue in the age of increasingly border claims and protection. The subjects of boundaries and borders are becoming an increasingly important constituency for post-colonial studies [1, p. viii].

The idea of the border is clearly significant to post-colonial studies and highlights itself in the constructed boundaries between peoples, nations and individuals. It is considered «implicit in the outreach of European cultures in the colonial period» [1, p. 25]. The contemporary cultural studies have proposed «that such borderland spaces can be spaces of energy, when they question fixities and release the potential for change and revision» [1, p. 25].

However, it should be taken into account that the concept of bordering has been studied within the issue of border/boundaries itself. It turned from the geographical, political orientation to the cultural one [10, p. 1]. In the

1960s, Victor Turner proposed that liminal spaces create poetry, myths, and art. Bordering has taken its shape as a cultural term through the prominent contribution of the scholars of cultural studies like Anzaldúa, Ashkroft, Glissant, Harris, and Hennesy.

One of the salient features of Graham Greene's stories is the employment of bordering throughout the exposition of place and characters. Greene throws light on certain issues in his exposition of the non-English places and characters; these issues include alienation, isolation, violence and others. It can be remarkably recognized in many of his short stories. It has been inspired from his transatlantic experiences. Greene recorded his impressions, opinions, views, and attitudes to the countries that he visited in his transatlantic journeys. When Greene has moved around the world, from the politically tensioned areas in Europe, Africa, Indochina, and Latin and South America, he has manifested in his fiction many of the most distressing and disturbing aspects of the colonial age and uncovered its deep moral confusions.

Critics and scholars tackled Graham Greene's experiences of bordering. They studied his fiction that was inspired from his journeys around the world. Georg M. A. Gaston states that after publishing *The End of the Affair* (1951), Greene's fiction moved to expand experience life on the other side of the border. Gaston writes: «Greene is a very restless kind of writer drawn by the uncertainty and variety of experience» [5, p. 122]. He himself ranks him «among the novelists of the great humanistic tradition» [5, p. 123]. Grahame Smith remarks, in his study of Graham Greene, to Greene's unpopular writings (the short stories, the travel books, and the essays) as worthy of critical attention [8, p. 191]. The journeys not only gave Greene «an outlet for his restlessness, they also provided the setting for some of his major works – *The Power and the Glory* (1940), *The Heart of the Matter* (1948), *The Quiet American* (1955) and *A Burnt Out Case* (1961)» [8, p. 11].

Yet, most of the criticism on Greene has focused on his novels, and the attention is mostly given to the religious or Catholic themes of his works. His experiences of bordering, however, have received little attention, though there are some exceptions. Casey Blanton offers a close reading of *Journey without Maps* in his *Travel Writing: The Self and the World* (2002): he sees the text as a typical example of travel writing in the modernist period. Andrew Thacker has also achieved an analysis of the same book in the essay 'Journey with Maps' in *Cultural Encounters: European Travel Writing in the Thirties* (2002) in which he mainly focused on the presence of actual maps in many travel books. The freelance academic Bernard Schweizer studied both *Journey Without Maps* and *The Lawless Roads* in his *The Politics of English Travel Writing in the 1930s* (2001) along with works by Auden, Orwell and West. Another essay that deals directly with both works is Jefferey Meyer's «Greene's Travel Books» in *Graham Greene: a Collection of Critical Essays* (1973).

In addition, both texts are mentioned as part of the literary scene in England in Bernard Bergonzi's *Reading the Thirties: Texts and Contexts* (1978) and Samuel Hynes' *The Auden Generation: Literature and Politics in England in the 1930s* (1976). Most of these studies remain few in number and are connected more with their period than to the works themselves [3, p. 19]. As for bordering experience in Greene's short stories, it has not been assessed in detail by scholars and critics. Hence, the importance of this study lies in its tackling the topic of bordering perspective in Greene's selected short stories.

The research deals with bordering perspective in Graham Greene's short stories: *Across the Bridge*, and *Two Gentle People*. It applies the cultural approach to the study of bordering. It is confined to the cultural studies that are incorporated within the postcolonial criticism. It is relevant to one of the prominent literary topics of the postcolonial stage: the issue of the frontier. The research excludes the politically, historically, and geographically oriented conceptions of bordering.

The purpose of the study is disclosing bordering perspective in Greene's two short stories: the cultural perspective. This perspective helps to uncover two characteristics of the cultural difference: contradiction and contest. The study throws light on the role of difference in the

process of constructing the world image outside the characters' or narrator's country.

Social sciences have taken the cultural aspect of borders into consideration, and consequently, a rapidly growing amount of cultural study has been published on various sub-cultures, minority cultures, resistance, and counter cultures. These studies concentrate e.g. on forms of literary and visual culture (literature, art, photography) produced by writers and artists who ranged from amateurs to professionals, oral narration (oral tradition and oral history), media, as well as aspects of every-day life (Donnan & Haller 2000b; Aldama et al. 2012; Kurki & Laurén 2012).

Since the 1990s and early 2000s, cultural studies focused on issues of literature and art relating to borders, borderlands, and border crossings (Alvaréz, 1995; Sadowski-Smith 2002b: 2; Wilkinson 2010). These aspects became the entry to understand the experiences and emotions at borders and border crossings. Borders do not exist without humans (as Sartre (1966) points out in *Being and Nothingness* – the world is human) Henceforth, the human factor and understanding of borders are indispensable in studying the meanings, functions and possible consequences of establishing various borders.

The cotemporary border studies have witnessed the emergence of the concept of metaphorical border. It was conceptualized through the recognized cultural differences. In this sense, the border referred to cultural «situations characterized by contradiction and contest». It has become one of the extended usages of the border concept in contemporary border research [4, p. 40].

Greene's *Across the Bridge* and *Two Gentle People* were set in ethnically and culturally different settings: Mexico, and France. The interesting feature of the bordering perspective in the first story is that two geographical spaces lie in the scope of the perspective. The character's bordering perspective in the first story was oriented to a Mexican border town on a bridge, and an American town on the other side of the bridge, whereas, in the second story, it was oriented to India. The two stories show diversity of orientations of bordering perspective.

The subjective narrator in Greene's *Across the Bridge* recounts his experience of bordering in a Mexican bordering town. It is delineated in three issues: Mr. Calloway's character, the panoramic view of the town, and the policeman's impression of bordering. In the opening of the story, the narrator introduces Mr. Joseph Calloway's character from a cultural perspective. Mr. Calloway's character is presented differently from the Mexican citizens: he appears wealthy, reputable, distinguished, and respectable. His life is perceived as contradictory with the citizens' lives. He leads an English-styled luxurious life.

'They say [Mr. Calloway is] worth a million', Lucia said.

He sat there in the little hot damp Mexican square, a dog at his feet...The dog...was very nearly an English setter...At midday [Mr. Calloway] took a stroll across the square to the Antonio Bar...the setter sticking to heel as if they were out for a country walk in England ...[Mr. Calloway] was staying in the best hotel [6, p. 71].

The narrator gives a description of the town from his western cultural perspective. He perceives it as uninteresting, 'damp', dusty, and poor. Unlike the western towns, its squares and cinemas are unified with another town across a river in their spots and number. The town looks monotonous and devoid of life.

There was no interest in the place for anyone; it was just damp and dust and poverty, a kind of shabby replica of the town across the river. Both had squares in the same spots; both had the same number of cinemas. One was cleaner than the other, that was all, and more expensive, much more expensive [6, p. 72].

The American detective's impression of crossing the borders is incarnated in his depressed feeling of crossing the bridge that links the United States to Mexico.

He expected a different life on the other side of the bridge, a life of 'so much more colour and sun, and love'. For him, the other side meant a place of a much more luxurious, refined, amusing life. On the contrary, he found a life characterized by dirtiness and ugliness. He sees it a disgusting life.

He was disgusted; he had had some idea that when he crossed the bridge life was going to be different, so much more colour and sun, and - I suspect - love, and all he found were wide mud streets where the nocturnal rain lay in pools, and mangy dogs, smells and cockroaches in his bedroom [6, p. 73].

The detective shares Mr. Calloway the same feeling of Mexico, and the other side of the bridge (the American town). They agree on the lifeless nature of Mexico, and the lively nature of the American town. They feel depressed of the miserable reality of Mexico. They yearn to go to other side of the bridge; the American town. Their feeling reflects the contradiction between their anticipation of bordering and their reality after crossing the borders.

-[The detective] said, 'This is rather a dreadful place, don't you think?'

-'It is', [the detective] said

-'I suppose you are passing through.'

-'Yes,' Mr. Calloway said.

-'I'd have expected over here there'd have been.... life. You read things about Mexico.'

-Oh, life,' Mr. Calloway said. 'That begins on the other side' [6, p. 74].

As for Greene's *Two Gentle People*, Henry Greaves, the central character recounts his bordering experience of Indian cities to Marie-Claire, his French friend. He confesses to her his fondness of these cities and his alienation in Washington (his city) and New Delhi. He perceived Washington and New Delhi from the same bordering perspective.

'I served on a government mission, in India. I became very fond of India,' He began to describe to her Agra, Lucknow,

the old city of Delhi....The new Delhi he did not like....It reminded him of Wahington [6, p. 362].

Greaves did not find enough happiness in his country. He feels nostalgic to the old things in India, Britain, and France. For him, these things mean his home even though Marie-Claire expresses a different view of the oldness of a French location, 'The Promenade des Anglais'. The old things contradict and contest what is built in America; because the latter, in his view, 'never ages beautifully'.

-'Then you do not like Washington?' [She asked]

he said, 'I am not very happy in my own country.

I like old things. I found myself more at home....

in India, even with the British. And now in

France, I find it's the same.'

-'The Promenade des Anglais was very new then,' she said.

-'Yes, but it aged. What we Americans build never ages beautifully' [6, p. 362-363].

Greaves thinks that 'the spirit of adventure' is the cause of his father's bordering journey in America and his (the character's) journey in Europe. According to him, America had a different meaning for his father when he arrived in it at his youth; it 'did not mean Coca-Cola and *Time-Life*' Nevertheless, he did not achieve any adventures in Europe to tell Marie-Claire about. Marie-Claire replaced the subject of his adventures by the affair of the marriage in a maneuvering manner when she recognized that.

- 'Why did your father go to America?' [She asked]

-'The spirit of adventure perhaps,' he

said. 'And I suppose it was the spirit of

adventure which brought me back to

live in Europe. America did not mean

Coca-Cola and *Time-Life* when my father was young'

-'And have you found adventure? Of course you married here?'

-'I brought my wife with me,' he said [6, p. 365].

Conclusively, bordering in Greene's *Across the Bridge and Two Gentle People* is perceived from a cultural perspective. It departs from the principle of difference that governs human relations across the borders or boundaries. It is characterized by the contradictory and contesting aspects of anticipations and reality of the central characters. Its effect helps to form the characters' vision of the world. The characters in the two stories pass through personal experience of bordering journey in countries which are ethnically and culturally different from their own countries. Their optimistic expectations of the other side of borders contradict and contest with their miserable, depressing reality. Consequently, the experience of bordering transforms the characters' angle of vision of the world: it transforms it from the social, geographical, ethnic perspective to the humanistic one. In short, bordering in the two stories is a psychological journey to the ethnically and culturally different societies from a western cultural perspective.

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#### **ПРО КОРДОНИ В ОПОВІДАННЯХ ГРЕМА ГРИНА «ЗА МОСТОМ» І «ДВА ЧУТЛИВИХ СЕРЦЯ»**

У статті досліджується проблема культурних, етнічних, психологічних та державних кордонів в оповіданнях Грема Гріна «Через міст» та «Два чутливих серця», оскільки ці оповідання не були об'єктом вивчення з цієї точки зору. В дослідженні використано методологічні підходи та поняття праць Х. Доннана, В. Тарнер про кордони як такі (як фізичну складову й видиму лінію поділу між політичними, соціальними та економічними просторами) та Г. Гастона і К. Доннатта про кордони культурно-етнічні й психологічні у творчості Грема Гріна зокрема. Показано, що в оповіданні «Через міст» письменник відобразив ставлення протагоніста пана Келлоує до Мексики з її злидінням життям та його прагнення до американського рівня життя, від якого його відділяє лише міст-кордон через річку. В оповіданні «Два чутливих серця» зображено психологічні бар'єри, які заважають англійцю Генрі та французенці Марі-Клер поєднати їхні життя. Застосовані підходи й висновки відкривають можливість їхнього використання для подальшого вивчення інших оповідань Г. Гріна.

**Ключові слова:** оповідання; кордон; психологічний бар'єр.

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#### **О ГРАНИЦАХ В РАССКАЗАХ ГРЭМА ГРИНА «ЗА МОСТОМ» И «ДВА ЧУВСТВИТЕЛЬНЫХ СЕРЦА»**

В статье исследуется проблема культурных, этнических, психологических и государственных границ в рассказах Грэма Грина «Через мост» и «Два чувствительных сердца», которые раньше не рассматривались с этой точки зрения. В работе использованы методологические подходы и понятия работ Х. Доннана и В. Тарнера о границе вообще (как физической составляющей и видимой линии раздела между политическими, социальными и экономическими пространствами), а также Г. Гастона и К. Доннатта о культурно-этнических и психологических границах в творчестве Грэма Грина в частности. Показано, что в рассказе «За мостом» писатель изобразил отношение протагониста Келлоуэя к Мексике с её нищенской жизнью и чуждой ему культурой и его тягу к американскому уровню жизни, от которой его отделяет лишь пограничный мост через реку. В рассказе «Два чувствительных сердца» изображены психологические барьеры, которые мешают англичанину Генри и французенке Марии-Клер соединить свои жизни. Используемые подходы и выводы открывают возможность их применения для дальнейшего изучения рассказов Грина.

**Ключевые слова:** рассказ; границы; психологический барьер.

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