Adultery and Redemption in Nathaniel Hawthorne’s *The Scarlet Letter* (1850) and Graham Greene’s *The Power and the Glory* (1940)

Hany A. Abdelfattah
Faculty of Al-Alsun
Minia University, Egypt

Abstract

The relationship between priests and younger women from their audience has been turbulent for centuries. Our protagonists, here, are two priests who fathered two daughters out of the wedlock; thereafter, their self-torture commences. This paper examines the relationship between adultery and redemption through a comparative analysis of two priests: Arthur Dimmesdale in *The Scarlet Letter* and the whiskey priest in *The Power and the Glory*.

But many questions arise here, such as: what is the benefit of confession when the priests love the daughters who are born of their crimes? How can the illegitimate daughters drive the priests to repent in public? Why do the two authors resort to fiction as the best genre to convey their messages? This paper offers possible answers to these questions by examining the following: first, the reasons behind the choice of novels; second, the biography of each author and the reception of his novel; third, Puritanism and Catholicism as denominations of the Christian religion; fourth, the dissent of the authors from faith; finally, the wilderness in each novel—for example, the brook in *The Scarlet Letter* and the rural villages in *The Power and the Glory*—and its influence on the protagonists. Through a comparative study of the similarities and differences, the paper investigates plot lines, themes, significance of names, biblical allusion, the confession, and the redemption of the two priests.

*Keywords*: Catholicism, Greene, Hawthorne, Puritanism, redemption,