

How does greene  
make the character of  
pinkie so abhorrent?



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

The novelist of Brighton Rock, Graham Greene, is said to always have been interested in the metaphysical questions involved in Catholicism and its doctrine: what is the essence of survival and existence; what is the real purpose of God and the world we reside on; what is the mystery as to why humanity was ever liberated. He exhibits these arguments in the book and probes at the possible solutions to the relevant problem through the definitive characterizations of various people.

For example, Pinkie, who is presented with no complexity who yet, particularly in his case, has obtained a radically different way of belief and the antithesis of this unique, unexplored way of thinking, resonates with him wholly. In fact, he rules pretty much entirely the aspect of religious values as obsolete, or at least for him they are. This nonconformist way of living is essentially what isolates Pinkie and as a result makes him appear much more extraneous than perhaps he really is. The benevolence, amiability and charity that Brighton and its people display is something that Pinkie struggles to understand. He is the absolute reversal of its generosity and jubilant aura and thus he discovers that it is difficult to adhere to as the juxtaposition is so vast: ' They extricated from the long day the grain of pleasure: this sun, the music, the rattle of the miniature cars, the ghost train diving between the grinning skeletons under the Aquarium promenade, the sticks of Brighton rock, the paper sailors' caps.' The asyndeton here creates the sense of a smooth, co-existing population that this ' boy' (Pinkie) is unable to interpret. This portrays Pinkie as that bit more unusual and extrinsic therefore highlighting his fanatical, although not rigorously adopted and perhaps not wholly in concordance with whichever variation of belief he

follows, ideas and almost degenerate moral values; with that his abhorrence. Pinkie does accept the Catholic church but in a rather delusional and perverted way. He understands that there might be heaven but fundamentally he cannot form any image of it and so neglects the idea. However, he can relate to Hell and constructs a vivid picture of what it might be: 'Of course there is hell. Flames and damnation'.

Pinkie often uses examples of hendiadys, like this one, in his spoken lines as I believe somebody of his character likes to seemingly draw parallels between things in order to live in reality and not to seclude themselves in their head; a means of escape. This connection of two objects is a symptom of alexithymia- often related with sociopaths. Alexithymia is a condition where you are unable to process your emotions in the self and have a dysfunction with interpersonal relating and social attachment. These traits are often exposed with Pinkie when dealing with sexual intimacy. He is repulsed by the idea of affection and when any sign of it does occur; Pinkie immediately links it to Hell: 'Now it was as if he was damned already and there was nothing more to fear ever again. The ugly bell chattered, the long wire humming in the hall, and the bare globe burnt above the bed - the girl, the washstand, the sooty window, the blank shape of a chimney, a voice whispered, "I love you, Pinkie". This was hell then; it wasn't anything to worry about; it was just his own familiar room.' The tricolon here of the bell and the wire and the globe exhibits how Pinkie can only relate to things that are of character; they are bland and dull, they are constant, unchangeable images, but all he has.

The alliterative diacope of the 'bare globe burnt' portrays Pinkie's life perfectly on a primitive level and catches the ear with the aural hook to draw your attention to it; the 'bare' is his lack of imagination and his breach of normality, the sociopath within him; the 'globe' is his inexperienced gang war for Brighton raging on; and the 'burnt' is his constant resonation with the underworld. These are the things he has lost to Rose yet this is mediocrity for him, he cannot construct an image of anything that would surpass this life. The diminuendo of the objects reaching Roses direct speech are all repugnant to the normal human but seem homely and nostalgic for Pinkie as he ends by saying that essentially Hell lies in his strangely familiar room. This leads us to suggest that this oxymoron is something that Pinkie relates to every day; the curious role of love, that, to usual person, would come as relief and happiness but to Pinkie it is a burden and manifests the real hell.

We can see Greene portrays Pinkie as a pessimist here with the absence of a gradation in objects; instead he begins at the top and works to the bottom; from his familiar objects to the Hell in his room. At first, Pinkie believes that hell awaits him after death and there is not much use in troubling about it before hand: " Hell - it's just there. You don't need to think of it - not before you die", but becomes lost with confusion in what he trusts. However, this encapsulates his lack of imaginary sustenance which affects much of his decisions in the novel. His immaturity as a result of his sociopath traits is shown with his lack of temper control. After speaking with Colleoni, he feels affronted; ' The poison twisted in the Boy's veins. He had been insulted. He had to show someone he was- a man.' The pretence and arrogance in this

phrase is highlighted by the personification of the poison moving as if some power inside him and the anaphora of ' he' suggests his plans and mind are focused egocentrically. This outburst appears childish and sparked by someone with more rationale than him and therefore showing high ambitions and standards but also substantial levels of ignorance; which ironically he believes he does not possess. Collectively, these examples collate a loathsome appearance of Pinkie to the reader.

We perceive Pinkie from his first appearance, because of his vocation, as a man. However, when we discover this ' boy' is only seventeen, we wonder why and how this youth has become tainted to such an extreme, ' Suddenly taking her wrist he brought the poison on to his lips. " I could break your arm"'. This sudden impulse of hatred to such a depth by someone of such a young age is surely Greene exhibiting the potential of how people can be so severely blemished. The monosyllabic laconic caesura of direct speech forces reflection on the deranged emotions of Pinkie; repulsion embedded further into our memory. It also contrasts the long flowing gradation, end-stopped with an acrimonious phrase. The idea that at that time moral values could be to such an extent neglected by a man of solely 17 years, I believe leads the reader to be left feeling shocked and perturbed by the execrable concept. The leitmotif of the scarred young is displayed through Pinkie so as to allow us to focus on him and for our frustration, enmity and repulsion for the boy to be acquired as a result; he is the symbol, the icon, the epithet that lies, linking the spoiled young with a life of delinquency. What our wisdom sees as reprehensible; his ignorance envisages progression, ' His mind staggered before the extent of his ambitions': his aspirations are too

bold and inconceivable for his naivety. The harsh consonants of the 'g' in 'staggered' are mimetic of his difficulty to achieve with his reputation as a youth, caesurically breaking it up, and appears to be proleptic of the struggles to come.

The way with which Greene refers to Pinkie as the 'boy' in the narrative creates this slightly mysterious, blurred image of what his true persona might be like, "' I don't eat chocolates", the Boy said'. Ironically, the stereotype, or what links we fabricate in our minds, of a 'boy' of a young age, is that he would cherish chocolate but Pinkie despises it. The confusing contrast of images in this phrase of the hyper sugar-junky child we would expect from this boy, to him saying that chocolates are not for him, leads us to believe that Pinkie is no ordinary boy at all; him being named as 'Boy' creates ambiguity, reflection and dislike. Pinkie is referred to as the 'Boy' in moments of decision and seriousness. This disassociates the reader with the character, opaquely portraying him, leading us to distrust Pinkie as someone concealing the truth. It creates a sense of ambivalence towards what his real motivational morals, ethical values and his notions are. 'The Boy's whole face loosened again: he put his hand on Dallows arm. "You're a good sort, Dallow. You know a lot. Tell me what I should do-"''. The anxiety created by the cruel, derogatory reference to Pinkie as the 'Boy' in these tense situations just extends that dislike further and particularly the sycophancy used by the enigmatic 'Boy' to gain Dallow's opinion dismisses any feeling of amiability towards Pinkie from the reader; no one enjoys reading about someone who obtains peoples information by flattering,

In conclusion, it is due to Greene's personal beliefs, unanswered questions, and concepts of things yet to appear are what portrays Pinkie's abhorrence. The choice of words in the narrative and the hidden metaphors within the boy's extreme and radical desires, successfully illustrate his repugnance. Yet, the real reason as to why he appears repulsive is his inability to utilize social awareness, and fundamentally these are the attributes that the human mind can sense and, essentially rather judgementally incorrect, warms to. The mind sees these skills and is enticed or fascinated; the mind sees Pinkie and is selectively, but inappropriately, rebuffed.