

Chapter - II: S I N A N D G R A C E :

Graham Greene is addressing a post war audience which has seen the collapse of morality and decay of Christian values. He examines and talks about it (internationally) drawing on intellectual, literary and theological traditions. (Considering more positively that all have turned away from God and become corrupt and have fallen short of God's standards and of moral code. Greene's early plays deal with the inevitability of pain and suffering in a world that has rejected spiritual values.) They also deal with spiritual tension within man so intolerable that he cannot help breaking under the strain - at which point he must throw himself on God's mercy for his own salvation. Greene's three plays: The Living Room (1953), The Potting Shed (1957), and The Complaisant Lover (1959), mark his obsession with evil. He gives an effective dimension to the evil which confronts man; side by side he discusses the subjects like marriage, sex, adultery, fornication, miracle, faith and nobility without losing this dimension.

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? . Sin never consists merely in a voluntary act of transgression. Every volition proceeds from something that is more deep-seated than the volition itself. A sinful act is the expression of a sinful heart. The Bible speaks about sin:

Sin & Subconscious

That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of man, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man. (Mark 7: 20-3)

'Sin' must always include, therefore, the perversity of heart and mind, disposition and will. Sin has a stronger moral connotation as misdeed or trespass; going beyond the norm - generally moral and spiritual depravity.

'Grace', the word, denotes forgiveness and has the nearest meaning of 'Mercy'. Still 'Grace' is preferred to 'Mercy', because it includes the idea of the divine power which equips a man to live a moral life. Grace involves such other subjects as forgiveness, salvation, regeneration, repentance and the love of God. (Finally, Greene shows through his Catholic religion, when repentance is stressed as a condition of salvation; the grace of God could be achieved.)

Conat x
proof 3

The Living Room is an excellent rearrangement of the Greene love triangle. The tangle of Scobie's life shown in The Heart of the Matter is reproduced with a few inversions. Peter Glenville, the British producer of The Living Room aptly points out in the Introduction to the 1953, Penquin Book edition:

The majority of modern English plays are romantically conceived, and their absence of intellectual vitality is compensated for by a warm optimism in the emotional pattern. In this play there is a firm and masculine optimism in the matter of intellectual conviction, combined with a searing pessimism about anything that concerns the question of immediate satisfaction of emotional needs. Moreover it is written within the framework and premise of Catholic belief. This play is no apologia for Catholicism...The play is not for or against Catholics, it is about them - or rather about certain individual Catholics who find themselves (through their own fault) in a terrible dilemma; a dilemma pushed to its farthest limit.¹

In this play Rose Pemberton a young orphan girl has been seduced by Michael Dennis on the night of her mother's funeral by the weakness of the flesh to which she is powerless to prevent.

*Seduction
defensive on
the night of
a mother's
funeral*

Before embarking on any detailed analysis of this play it is essential to examine the concept of adultery and fornication as a sin, used by Greene in his depiction of the main character, Rose. Cassell's New English Dictionary defines 'adultery': "Violation of the marriage-bed, illicit sexual intercourse on the part of married person". And 'fornication': "Sexual intercourse of un-married person or of a married one with an unmarried person". And New Bible Dictionary defines: 'adultery'

and 'fornication' are sexual relationships that society does not recognize as constituting marriage. In the New Testament we find the comparison between adultery and fornication:

And I say unto you, whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery. (Matthew 19:9)

Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let everyman have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.

(I Corinthians 7:2)

Here fornication is commonly taken as being equivalent to adultery. In the Revised Standard Version of The Bible we get fornication equivalent to 'Unchastity'. And 'immorality' is Greek 'fornication'.

Other theories have been held about the meaning of Christ's words. Some refer 'fornication' to pre-marital unfaithfulness, which the husband discovers after marriage. Others have suggested that parties discover that they have married within the prohibited degrees of relationship.²

Fornication, adultery, unchastity, immorality, pre-marital unfaithfulness, prohibited relationship - all these mean a sinful act according to Catholic religion which Graham Greene has very subtly depicted through Rose and Michael.

David Pryce-Jones writes about sin:

Greene refers back and forth to illegitimate babies, alcohol, adultery, fornication, suicide, the tale of human life failing to rise above itself. The possibility of damnation and salvation are dilated between the narrow lines of human fortune.³

At the heart of Greene's work, entangled with his obsession, lies the 'Fallen' man. In keeping with the Catholic doctrine, Greene subscribes to the view that man's nature has been wounded by the Fall; and that he is in need of divine grace. Man is weak and prone to evil - Men commit sins because of their weakness - man is not good or bad but good and bad. The fall runs through Greene's world. Its inhabitants do not fall from innocence, they are already fallen when we meet them.

We cannot call Rose as an innocent girl, because though she already knows that Michael is a married man she has an affair with him which is revealed when both of them for the first time meet Rose's aunt Helen. There Helen says: "I am interested to meet you Mr. Dennis. My poor niece mentioned you often in her letter".⁴ Formerly, both of them might have a good relationship as Michael was a friend of her father and now an executor to her mother's will. But because of human weakness both of them commit adultery.

Rose comes to stay in her aunts' house. The scene takes place in the living room. The living room is significant where an orphan girl can get solace, security and happiness in a 'room' in a large house after her mother's funeral. She would begin her new life in the real sense of 'living'. For her it would be a heaven. Greene wants to suggest that for Rose this living room would be a heaven. Formerly she dwelt in a hell outside this room where adultery, fornication, sin, frustration, fear, betrayal and lust were present. She has a fall in that hell, Greene has also presented the reflection of two worlds in Brighton Rock (1938), where Brighton consists of two worlds. One occupied by Pinkie and Rose and the other inhabited by people like Ida. In the one exists the fear of God and in the other no fear of God exists. In the one lust and self-gratification exist and in the other nothing.

Teresa and Helen are living in a large house. Helen is a younger sister, she precipitates the tragedy. Because of her lack of charity, she is herself the unhappy victim of fear, and she sincerely believes that she is right in all her actions. Actually, she dominates everybody in the house. The only evil in Helen is an absence of a sufficiency of goodness. She wishes to act rightly but her charity is not large enough to know what is right. She has locked up the doors of all the rooms except the living room in this house where somebody has died. She does not want to use those rooms because of the fear of

death as she is closer to death. She does not have firm faith in her religion and God. Locking up the room is locking up the faith in God. Greene suggests that we shut up our minds, and become faithless and stop working. Greene [?] | has satirised the post-war society through these characters. As A.A. DeVitis says: "The Living Room deals with Roman Catholicism as a factor that emphasizes the individual's responsibility to himself and to a code."⁵

Rose is a Catholic and loves Michael, a non-Catholic middle-aged man with juvenile delinquency of satanic proportions. He can be regarded as a self-styled man, occupying an anti-God world determined to satisfy his desires and to prove his superiority to everyone around him.

Rose is a child of the faithless world. She must, therefore, accept what she finds, and seeks her own stature [?] | in her own milieu. She is in such a situation that she cannot be dealt with according to normal standards. Everything in which she moves becomes an adultrous environment. Helen comes to know ₂ their adultery. So she diverts Rose from meeting Michael by telling a lie that Michael has been out of station for a week but when Rose comes to know the reality, both decide to meet at Regal Court. For Rose and Michael, Regal Court is very much like heaven. It is heavenly in the same way as Milton's Lucifer created a heaven for himself out of the hell to which he and his cohorts had descended. Morally, Rose is unconscious of herself

as being at times perhaps rash and imprudent to go out - unaware that she is wrong and immoral. For her, love is everything. She created her own morality, like Mary in The Complaisant Lover. She is ready to get married with Michael if Michael gets successful in divorcing his wife. Rose is even ready to be his mistress. Michael is unsuccessful and unhappy in his marital life. How to divorce his wife is a dilemma before Michael. He commits a sin, an act hostile to God. He really does not believe in God, like Henry Callifer, the rationalist, in The Potting Shed. Michael is literally a hellish figure who represents the Devil; and who fights for a total satanic cause. The climax of his satanic career is his tempting of Rose and exploiting her love for his lust. He is successful in seducing Rose. It demonstrates his malevolence in the guise of a lover. This makes him an ambassador of evil as dedicated to his cause as a saint is to the love of God. Even he is fascinated by his own diabolism. He suggests his illegal marriage with Rose and the state of mortal sin into which they will automatically be plunged. This is only a prelude to the total corruption on the edge of which he now stands. A professor of psychology he could come in contact with his students and had even used them for his satisfaction. This evil act of Michael is revealed by Mrs. Dennis when she meets Rose.

Helen feels that Rose is her responsibility, and considers her going away with Michael a mortal sin. A.A. DeVitis has aptly pointed out the thematic framework of the play:

It is through Helen Browne, as well as Rose Pemberton, that Greene advances the theme of the play: which is the greater sin? To cut oneself off from grace, as Rose would do in living with Michael outside the "living room"? or to sin and remain near the source of grace and the possibility of salvation?⁶

Helen wants to stop Rose anyhow. She tells lies to Rose and to Teresa that she is ill. Father Browne, a crippled priest, tries to divert Rose from Michael saying to her: "The trouble is you don't trust God enough. He would make things so much easier for you if you would shut your eyes and leave it to Him".⁷ Being a Catholic priest, Father Browne knows well that what Rose is doing is all fornication and against Christianity. He wants her not to fall in an adulterous hell. Rose tells everything about her to Father Browne very boldly. Even she confesses her adultery to him, saying: "Since my last confession three weeks ago, I've committed adultery twenty-seven times".⁸ She does not believe in God; she is away from religion. She further says to Father Browne:

"...Don't talk to me about God or the saints, I don't believe in your God who took your legs and want to take away Michael".⁹

The conversation between Rose and Father Browne clearly indicates her faithlessness. She accepts to live in the hell of lust created by Michael. Though she is Catholic



she is ready to deny God and prefers sinful world to a living room.

Rose is terribly perplexed in her mind because everybody in the home is against her; Michael, too, is not giving a firm consent to take her away with him. Mrs. Dennis is also urging her not to take Michael away. In this horrible situation she craves for guidance from Teresa but she shuts the door. Father Browne, too, is unable to guide her properly. As a priest he fails Rose in her moment of crisis to guide her properly. He could only advise her to pray and get help] from God. Rose tries to pray and her first prayer is a formal one: "Our Father who art...who art...".¹⁰ Then she lapses into a prayer of her childhood: "Bless Mother, Nanny and sister Marie - Loise and please God don't let school start again".¹¹ A prayer that is meaningless in the situation; for she may not have earned God's grace. Rose Pemberton is now in her final dilemma. The sense of exile engulfs her. She feels that she is totally abandoned. In this chaotic situation she takes Mrs. Dennis's pills as she finds the only way of release - suicide. (Pemberton was also the name of the young man whose suicide in The Heart of the Matter triggered off the idea in Scobie's mind as a means of release.)

The Living Room is a tragedy - Rose's tragedy. Greene wants to depict not only Rose's tragedy but the tragedy of those who commit adultery in society. (He wants to advocate

C.S. - the consequences of adultery, like the tragedy of Rose.)
 ? There is a universality in this concept of sin, which leads
 the individual to tragedy.

Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that commiteth fornication sinneth against his own body. (I Corinthians 6: 18)

Rose committed fornication against Catholic religion and ultimately against God. And for such sin death is the penalty.

'The wages of sin is death.' (Romans 6: 23)

is this a
 morality
 play?

Greene wants to show God's deliberate purpose in punishing sinful persons through the portrayal of Rose. Since sin is against God, God cannot be complacent about it or indifferent to it. He reacts inevitably against it. This reaction is specifically His wrath.

Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.

(I Corinthians 3: 16-7)

Here the individual is called a 'temple'. Schism is tantamount to profanation of the temple, and merits the same terrible penalty of death. Here the characteristic feature of the temple image is its hortatory and admonitory application. Rose committed suicide and put an end to her own life and body. Greene wants to suggest that committing suicide is not only putting an end to sin; but it is again a sinful

act against Catholic religion and ultimately against God. For a sinful person the legal term is 'guilty'. The priest tells his niece: "...you know your own guilt".¹² Suicide is prohibited by Christian religion and by the Constitution too. Adultery leads to fall; further it leads to penalty of death and damnation. (It is very hard to justify now, *const.* | Rose would have got salvation.) Since sin is never impersonal, since it is committed by persons, the wrath of God consists in His displeasure to which we are subjected. The sense of guilt and torment of conscience are the reflections in our consciousness of displeasure of God. The essence of the final perdition will remain in the infliction of God's indignation.

A Roman Catholic who believes in the rules of the Church, and who commits sins deliberately, consciously, and with a total awareness of the fact that, according to ecclesiastical teachings he is thus spelling out his own damnation. (One recollects the final, brief conversation between Father Browne and Rose). Greene has very subtly shown this in the dramatis personae of The Living Room and appealed the citizens to be free from sin. X |

Father Browne, the priest, is but an agent of God, however, an imperfect agent driven by a divine power into human enactment of a highly emotional drama. The Priest's disability as a cripple is in fact used by God. If he had been able, his parish would have been different from this

living room where Rose died. To demonstrate the eternal validity of religious belief he has tried to renew it in the girl, Rose. Also his supporting Teresa to shift in the living room asserts his action. Greene shows how God graces the Browne family. By coup de grace priest's eyes are opened at the right time and then he acts as Marie Beatrice Mesnet points out:

In The Living Room, the crippled priest is given a new aim in his apparantly useless life through a humble recognition of his tragic powerlessness to help the young girl. His eyes are opened by her death and in the end he conveys, like the priest in "The Hint of an Explanation", an impression of serenity achieved in the loving contemplation of human suffering and the growing awareness that love and faith alone can save us.¹³

Rose is not mature enough spiritually, on the other hand she has reached an impasse in her illegitimate relationship with Michael. In theological terms she is near her eternal damnation. She is unable to achieve God's grace. Salvation is impossible for her.

Michael is a symbol of both a decaying class system and decayed theological social structure. Michael is very much a product of post-war Western civilization. If we examine The Living Room we can see that it deals with the disintegration of culture as well as the moral collapse of an individual.

'He who trusts in his own mind is a fool'. (Proverbs 28:26)

Helen is a fool as she is willing to lock up the room, but her failure to do so shows the lack of her appeal. "Through Father Browne, Greene reasserts a favourite motif, the 'appalling' nature of the mercy of God".¹⁴ And Teresa's last action of stay in the living room where Rose died symbolizes the eternal renewal of God's grace.

The whole house is like a universe. Greene wants to subdivide it into Hell and Heaven. The locked rooms suggest Hell while the living room suggests Heaven divided by doors. (As Greene's school dormitories and family rooms were separated by green baize door) At the end, all the doors are opened. This means that the Hell has vanished and the everlasting joy of Heaven has entered the large house and now there is no fear of death, pain and tragedy. Dwelling in such a 'room' is in the real sense 'living' and this is called the real 'living room' filled with God's grace.

This is a schematic reading. Schoolboyish.

Roman Catholic context - but to keep by G.G. . . . framework

The Potting Shed is also extremely religious in theme within a specifically Roman Catholic context. It deals with the problem of God's existence and with miracles. The story revolves round the search by James Callifer, the hero, for the meaning of childhood, which is shrouded in mystery. From the thematic point of view, The Potting Shed represents the other side of the coin as reflected in The Living Room. As R.W.B. Lewis comments:



The Living Room, Greene intensified the dramatic stress and strain, the pulverization of feeling (his characters' or audience's) that he has so often drawn from an insistence upon the total discontinuity between the human and the divine. And yet, we feel, there is another side of Greene beyond that, and we encounter the rest of him, perhaps, in his second play, The Potting Shed.¹⁵

A household is again involved in the plot. This time it is the home of Henry Callifer, a man who is a rationalist, and who has dedicated his life to writing books on proving how a Christian God does not exist. This is evident when Mrs. Callifer speaks to Dr. Baston about Henry Callifer:

"Of course, But how he hated those sentimental myths, virgin births, crucified Gods."¹⁶

Greene wants to show how Mr. Henry Callifer, a respected agnostic, Grand Old Man of liberal humanism, is dying off-stage, how bitterly the author mocks at his dedicated but *lamentable* misguided life! The books names: The Cosmic Fallacy and The Credo of a Sceptic which gave him fame were all in vain.

How do ye say, we are wise, and the law of the Lord is with us: Lo, certainly in vain made he it; the pen of the scribes is in vain. The wise men are ashamed, they are dismayed and taken: lo, they have rejected the word of the Lord; and what wisdom in them?

(Jeremiah: 8:8-9)

Greene wants to prove that though Henry Callifer is a Scholar, he is away from God. Whatever he has written is against the Christian religion and God. It is nothing but blasphemy. And the act of blasphemy is a sin. He is exiled from the spiritual life and causes all his family to be exiled from (the) God's grace. All the members of the family and friends are nervous and guilty due to the event which happened in the potting shed. (The event that took place in the life of James.) Henry Callifer, with all the fame he enjoyed, does not get happiness. His wife, too, protects him in every decision even when it is wrong to do so. The whole family is on the verge of breathing out. Henry Callifer drives his brother, William, away from his family. James is also abandoned and all think about his insanity and decide about his undergoing compulsory treatment. Sara is also away from the family. The gardner, Mr. Potter, is also sent away thinking that he is being paid good pension. In short, the head of the family makes this home like a hell. Here agony, doubt and dispair are present. James is not ready to live in this hell. He goes out to find reasons why he attempted suicide and why his family abandoned him, why his marriage failed. In addition to this, the feelings of fear, guilt, and loss permeate this play. We can see how Greene captures in his characters all the emotions he himself had experienced. All the characters possess a sense of Greene's own compassion for ~~the~~ exiled member of the human race, and

conflict

dramatic detachment?

express quite brilliantly the terror that runs through the life of the hero and his family. Greene places great stress on the sufferings and tensions of his characters in order to reconcile such pain with God's love.

Greene's work is marked by an element of tension, notably spiritual and existential in nature. This tension usually springs from an analogous human situation in which mundane, secular or non-spiritual values appear existentially more attractive to a character than the supernatural, spiritual values which pull him in the opposite direction. The ultimate, salvaging relief for this state of tension in human course of events, is sometimes the fall or martyrdom; so Greene calls The Potting Shed a sort of 'drama'.

*Good
R.C. &
existential
tension
how to be
reconciled*

In his childhood, James was taught about Christian faith by his uncle, Father Callifer. He wants to lead his life in this belief; but specifically, Henry, his father does not approve of such living. So James is deprived of the parental love and care. He feels lonely in his family. He does not receive family care and affection; on the contrary he is forbidden to know more about the living God. All this affects his delicate mind. He finds no other way than committing suicide. And committing suicide is a mortal sin. "The Living Room and The Potting Shed pit the comparatively young against the old and involve a suicide".¹⁷ Despair leads James to commit suicide. In a state of feeble mind suicide is inevitable for him. At the age of fourteen in

the frustrated condition James hangs himself in the potting shed; but his uncle saves his life by praying God at the cost of his faith. Then James is sent away for schooling where he is to fight the boredom and despair. He is punished by God as he gets the feelings of strangeness and insanity. James is a lonely wanderer in the Greene circle of the tormented ones. He remembers nothing, even the potting shed accident, and his uncle too, does not remember it. The days go by in his wilderness. In the mean time he marries Sara but he cannot love her. He tells Sara:

Sara, I simply don't know what love is. What is it? But if I took my hands away and we saw each other I'd see - a want. Isn't there a love that just exists and doesn't want? My father's dying, he has nothing to hope for, and more, for ever. When he looks at me, don't you think I might see - just love? No claim, no hope, no want.¹⁸

James feels that love should just exist, it should not contain any claim, hope or want. Because of this he fails to love Sara. He loves nothing and Sara gets tired of his nothingness and finally, she divorces him. She goes away and marries some one else. She does not feel contented and satisfied. She experiences the sad loneliness. Greene wants to show that without love marital life cannot be happy and successful.

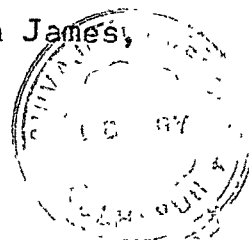
Father Callifer lives in an East Anglican town. He dwells in a room that is without faith. James speaks about

Father Callifer's room: "...I saw his room. Have you ever seen a room from which faith has gone? A room without faith".¹⁹ Something in its homelessness reminds us of James Callifer's lodgings in Nottingham and the living room in The Living Room which are without faith. But at the end
 } - all rooms are filled with God's grace.

When James goes to see his uncle he finds that his uncle has become a drunkard. James asks the reason of his agony. He tells him that he does not like to remember it. He is lacking faith in him. Since that terrible night he has still been praying, and practising a faith, day in day out, for the last thirty years. Father Callifer says to James:

"...if God existed, why should he take away his faith from me! I've served him well. I go on serving him. The saints have dark nights, but not for thirty years. They have moments when they remember what it felt like to believe".²⁰

Greene wants to show that God has punished Father Callifer for
 x thirty years because he had sacrificed his faith and become
 faithless. Losing faith is a kind of association with satan. It is a sin. The priest offers conditional release for the poor boy, James. He is in a very strange way offering it to God. The priest is by any standards more of a criminal nature than the hanging boy, for, he is hounded by the guilt of having desecrated his vows to God.²¹ The priest's state of unbearable tension is relieved only by meeting with James,



who points out correctly what is wrong with him. Lastly Father Callifer explains everything to James:

CALLIFER: "I'd have given my life for you - but what could I do? I could only pray. I suppose I offered something in return. Something I valued-not spirits then. I really thought I loved God in those days. I said, "Let him live, God. I love him. Let him live. I will give you anything if you will let him live". But what had I got to give him? I was a poor man. I said, "Take away what I love most, take... take..." (He can't remember)

JAMES : "Take away my faith, but let him live?"...

CALLIFER: He answered my prayer, didn't he? He took my offer, Look around you. Look at the room. It makes sense, doesn't it, now".²²

[Sarah's prayer in a novel by Greene, viz. The End of the Affair provides a striking parallel to Father Callifer's prayer. When the bomb falls, Sarah thinks that Bendrix is dead. In despair she prays to a God she does not believe in: "Let him be alive, and I will believe".²³ Bendrix, who is knocked unconscious, comes into the room and she thinks that her prayer has been answered. And Sarah realises that the agony of being without him is started as she decides to break with her lover. The same parallel also is found in The Heart of the Matter, Scobie out of pity makes a prayer when he sees a six year old dying girl carried in as a survivor from a vessel torpedoed by a

German submarine: "Take away my peace for ever, but give her peace".²⁴ The girl dies. But Helen Rolt a nineteen year old widow who is brought as a survivor on shore at the same time, is effective response to his prayer. Helen Rolt comes in Scobie's life and the period of his tragic anxiety begins. Father Callifer, Sarah and Scobie struggled painfully against the consequences of their prayers.

Mrs. Callifer thinks Jame's resurrection is nothing but story, but Mrs. Potter denies it and says: "It is not the first time. There was Lazarus. They buried him".²⁵ In the Bible we see the story of Lazarus, who was the brother of Martha and Mary, who lived in Bethany. He died, but Jesus resurrected Lazarus from death. This was a miracle. The word 'miracle' literally means a marvelous event or an event which causes wonder. In Christian theology the miracles are not simply works of providence, but a demonstrative evidence for unbelievers. Greene wants to nourish faith in his sceptic characters, through the portrayal of James - the resurrected Lazarus. The whole Callifer family is dead in the Catholic faith but at the end all are resurrected with faith.

Another aspect of this play is the fact that there is a strongly defined element of hope to receive God's grace. This hope is at the centre of the religious theme of The Potting Shed which accentuates as it progresses the bond between James's life and that of his family. In the interview held with Graham Greene in the spring of 1953, Greene says:

I write about situations that are common, universal might be more correct, in which my characters are involved and from which only faith can redeem them, though often the actual manner of the redemption is not immediately clear. They sin, but there is no limit to God's mercy and because this is important, there is a difference between not confessing in fact and the complacent and the pious may not realize it.²⁶

James, finds himself in Father Callifer's predicament of having to accept loss of faith as proof of belief and proof of God. He says: "Something happened to me, that's all, like a street accident. I don't want God. But He is there - it's no good pretending. He's in my lungs like air".²⁷ Greene brings out ironically that the religion can indeed supply some answer which psychology cannot. The important thing, however, is to appreciate that this state of intolerable tension is created necessarily, to strip the character off the delusion that has warped his vision and thereby bring him to the cruel realization that God's grace is impossible without humility. After humiliation of thirty years he regains the grace of God. James receives the grace of God though he committed /sin of attempting suicide (as his later life is changed). But for Rose in The Living Room it is impossible as she is not changed. Rose dies without uncovering the secret of her life while James discloses the secret of a life. As R.W.B. Lewis comments:

good ✓

Even the title of the two plays reverse each other's paradox. The irony of The Living Room: title lies in the festering death hovering just outside the room.

The title of the second play has an opposite intention ...in fact, discloses the secret of a life.²⁸

Henry Callifer witnesses the miracle with his naked eyes and he stops his writing. He is driven to death by self-enfeebling motives and is obsessed with the guilt of his sin. For him there is no area which might serve him as a possible ground for his justification in the face of God and His law. Mrs. Callifer says to Dr. Fredric Baston: "Fred, I saw his face. We always knew each other's thoughts. I could hear him saying to himself 'Must I recall all those books and start again'."²⁹ When the proof is pushed under his nose at the bottom of his own garden, in potting shed he is on the verge of changing his rational belief but it is too late. Mrs. Callifer is not ready to regard the event as she wants to have a proof. She is doubtful to accept the existence of God as their ancestors did at the time of Darwin. Mrs. Callifer asks the proof to James:

MRS. CALLIFER: You've no proof, have you, James?

JAMES : Not the kind Baston needs. But don't tell a man who has just seen a ghost that he has no proof. I have seen that room. I've seen my uncle. I don't need any other proof of God than the lack of Him there. I've seen the mark of His footsteps going away.³⁰

It is very difficult to give the proof of God. But His existence can be felt and sensed by our inner feelings. Greene metaphorically shows the existence of God in the potting shade through Anne's dream. Greene in his autobiography says: "Dreams have always had an importance for me".³¹ Greene often uses dreams-half way between the real and the imaginary, in which metaphors slide together with more natural fantasy. They illustrate his intentions, and Anne's dream serves as a microcosm of the functional world of the Callifers in the present play. Anne tells her dream:

"Oh, I've had such a funny dream. I was going down the path to the potting shed and there was a lion there fast asleep...I woke it up...it licked my hand."³²

n B. looks -
The lion is a cruel and ferocious animal. The lion which has 'the menace of beast' in a typical Greene manner 'lion fast asleep and on waking it licks my hand' adds a telling and finishing touch to the end of the play. Although, this is only a dream, we are made to feel that the metaphor depicts the Callifer family's mind which really does regard God in this way to be accepted. The result is evocative and produces a sort of striking poetic intensity.

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour. (I Peter 5:8)

Lion is like satan and satan is always depicted as hostile to God, whose working is to overthrow the purposes of God. The satan is hidden in the potting shed. In the beginning satan captures James and leads him to destruction; but the power of God enters into the potting shed and raises him from that destruction; and makes him the testimony for his family to believe in (the) God. So God's ultimate purpose to save the whole family is fulfilled through him. As Walter Kerr observes :

The Potting Shed permits the supernatural to enter the room and to contend with the natural, but not at the expense of its natural, the people recoil and rebel, or engage and submit, in a manner that is essentially recognizable. In plumping for God, Mr. Greene has given out the devil but man his due.³³

The most striking irony of the whole play, of course, is that the horrible event which takes place in the potting shed actually is a miracle containing the seeds of salvation for them all. The potting shed is symbolic. It represents the whole universe. In this universe there is the presence of satan. We are made his victims by satan but God protects us as the shed gives shelter to the delicate seedlings. In the potting shed God sows the seeds of salvation through James for the Callifers.

Greene is not arriving at a definitive solution to an abstract theological question. He is exposing a fundamental question of great pertinence to Twentieth Century Man.

friend with the nom de plume 'Jane Crane'.

Clive wants that Mary should divorce her husband and marry him. Many times he suggests his intention to Mary. Clive says to Mary: "Leave your husband and marry your lover".³⁵ But Mary refrains from the divorce due to domestic problems. But she is not firm in her decisions. Lastly she agrees saying: "You want to be a lover with licence, that's all. All right. You win. I'll leave Victor, but not just yet. Not before Christmas. Please not before Christmas. Be patient until January, Clive".³⁶ Mary wants to break lawful marriage and elope with Clive just because of physical love. Similarly, Rose in The Living Room wants to marry Michael unlawfully, just because of sex. But marriage is not only sex. About sex and marriage in the present play Gangeshwar Rai says:

The play offers Greene's concept of Christian marriage. Marriage is a permanent union of man and woman. It is a bond that is more complex than just sex and it grows with the years with children with the kind of undertaking that has to develop between people who go through that round together.³⁷

Mary and Clive enjoy themselves in a hotel bed-room. Both are guilty from the point of view of the Christian moral code. Their physical love is dirty and shameless. Victor discovers the adultery from a letter which Clive had dictated to the hotel valet in Amsterdam. Victor, left alone, after the discovery, collapses on the musical chair. The chair starts

playing "Auld Lang Syne".³⁸ He does not hear it. He cries behind his hands. This is the highest point of pathos in the play, and all of a sudden he goes to the garage to commit suicide but refrains from doing so. And from now on the situation is in Victor's hand - the scene turns towards comedy. When Victor meets Clive alone he asks Clive to be a complaisant lover and he accepts to be a complaisant husband. Greene uses the device Deus ex machina in order to end the play as he wants it. Victor puts a final test to Clive asking him to come to dinner: "Come on Thursday. No party. Just three of us." "Yes, please come".³⁹ says Mary and in gratitude to her husband Mary puts her arm round him.

Clive faces the failure, he agrees to the compromising solution of becoming a complaisant lover. Clive looks at the couple and sadly accepts his fate and goes away.

The relationships between Mary, Victor and Clive do not depend on the general proposition that love entails suffering for the lovers. For this triangle has at least one point buried in religion which lays strict emphasis on its laws of marriage in order to make them as binding as possible.

X Thus, The Complaisant Lover, underlines the significance of the individual's unhampered decision with regard to marriage. Greene advocates that the sin of adultery or fornication is the fierce attack on a marriage and warns to be away from sin to earn God's grace for the happy life.

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Graham Greene's early plays reflect his intense search for a way of life which will preserve the moral values in the materialistic society. At the same time the religious values associated with 'Sin and Grace' dominate his early plays. The world which Greene now portrays is one in which the individual's awakening to moral and ethical responsibility is seen as fundamental to any life because it gives itself meaning. But, when man ignores the moral and religious values and adheres to the evil things, he is caught in a chaotic condition. And in the depressed condition he puts an end to his life by committing suicide. Greene's early theme of 'Sin and Grace' looks forward to the provocative theme of suicide and its consequences in most of his all plays.

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