

Chapter - VI: CONCLUSION :

Graham Greene has managed to create ~~bea~~ beautifully one of the most significant forms of literature in the Twentieth Century. He shifted from novel to play writing. [Though, he says, he is tired of novel writing; yet, on the face value ^{consid} it is not all true.] One can, no doubt, write adequately and clearly in novels, even then he turned to plays because he wanted to show the actual meaning of life more effectively and more dramatically on the stage. And he is successful in showing so through his dramas. But, he being/uncomplacent writer, his novels are being published till date. The strength of Greene's writing as a playwright who is a Catholic comes from his obsession with man's burden of sin, tension and agony; the view he takes does not concern only the Catholics but every human being in the present human predicament. Almost all his plays teach us about morality and religion. His first two plays are serious and religious while this intensity is lessor in varying degrees in his remaining plays. Therefore, Greene's plays - moral and religious alike, enlarge and clarify our understanding of the world of his imagination.

Graham Greene's characters live under a great stress of suffering and tension. They are prey to an obsession and divided against guilt and sin and share persistent agony

of mind. They feel torn between a natural need of happiness and requiring effort of demands of faith; this leads to a fall of a man and results in damnation.

Modern man is illusioned by the progress in science,
 — Greene emphasizes the eternal renewal of religious faith. The people like the Callifers are away from God and love, but they are disillusioned in the end. Greene believes that religion can supply some answer which psychology cannot. *god* "Psychology may teach you to know a mind. It doesn't teach you to love".¹ He takes the support of his Catholic doctrine to solve the human problem. In an interview he says:

"...redemption is not the exact word...we must be careful of our language. They have all understood in the end. This is perhaps the religious sense".²

Redemption is deliverance from some evil by payment of a price and it is more than a simple deliverance. So Greene clarifies that his characters know finally the reality of life and they are delivered from the tragic dilemmas of human existence. It centres round Greene's deeply personal vision of the contemporary man. However, Greene has successfully understood the predicament in which man finds himself today and his characters who are trapped in crucial web are shown to have discovered some positive values of life like genuine love, loyalty, duty towards children within the frame of religious and moral codes.

Graham Greene exposes boredom in man. Sometimes boredom creates thought of sexual love to relieve the tension of boredom which results in disintegration of a family. He protests against the moral and spiritual degradation of man in our age. The Complaisant Lover, for instance, records Greene's criticism of conventional standards of morality. Though Mary, the heroine, is torn between her sexual love and fear of losing her affection towards her husband, Greene emphasizes moral duty towards children and domestic security as a successful marriage is very important. "Marriage is living in the same house with someone you love".³ He depicts the true values of life at the end of this play.

All of his plays demonstrate some constant conflict in the characters' mind between different kinds of love and fear of something or the other. He is hostile to the dehumanized men with a rational outlook as the Callifers do; he advocates simple and loving life and conveys that there should be no conflict between real love and fear of offering love to the individual. Instead one should fear anything that corrupts and destroys individuality.

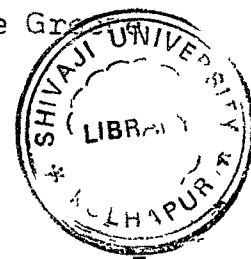
At the heart of Greene's work, entangled with his obsession, lies children's need. Greene subscribes to the view that a child needs care (the "essence of fatherhood is to be needed" in the words of Ronald Brydon.⁴). When

a man is fully occupied with his own task he loves only himself and forgets his duties to his dependents as the Sculptor in Carving a Statue does to his son. Greene warns such persons and does not allow them to be perverts so that they should not neglect their duty to their children. The children will be saved from the sense of loneliness in their later life. Otherwise such children tend to commit suicide. Having been estranged, James as a boy in The Potting Shed and the Sculptor's son in Carving a Statue undergo the experience of suicide. Greene also takes an analytical view of the mental crisis of mature minds. When proper help is not given at this acute time such persons tend to suicide as the only way out. The example of this is Rose in The Living Room. Some critics find Rose as an innocent girl. They say that because of her innocence she might have secured salvation. But, in fact Rose is a mature enough to know that she is committing adultery which is against her God and religion. The only thing one can say is that she cannot resist the weaknesses of flesh and hence her total fall and damnation. Sometimes suicide is seen as the natural tendency in persons having weak minds but deep suffering matures a mind and such a person leaves the thought of suicide. Victor Rhodes in The Complaisant Lover is an example in view.

To Graham Greene faith is a rebound from utter despair of unbelief. He believes that self-knowledge is more relevant to faith than reason., Faith is an act of will and choice. Therefore, knowledge of God is an inward experience. Man

sometimes shuts his eyes to the naked truth. But when the proofs are produced before him he has to believe in God. Dr. Kruezer in The Potting Shed says, "I only want a relative truth to make life tolerable".⁵ Greene seeks to arrive at pious life through the realization of divine love. His plays dramatise the spiritual and moral failure which are symptomatic of presence of the evil in the characters' mind. Some of them are driven to prolonged misery and spiritual death in a suffocating atmosphere of destruction. Father Callifer, Browne sisters and James have spiritual tensions and sufferings in a world that has rejected spiritual values so intolerable that they cannot cope with. At this point they must throw themselves on God's mercy. Therefore, Greene emphasizes that when human life is victimized by satan in this dark and merciless world it is needed to correspond it to God's plan. In such cases God intervenes and frees him through an act of divine power and love. But, when one goes away from God's ways He shows His wrath and punishes him. God sometimes uses men, though they are sinners or crippled for His plans to be fulfilled. Father Browne says: "I said to God, 'put words into my mouth', but He's given me twenty years in this chair with nothing to do but prepare for such a moment..."⁶

According to Graham Greene, when man is spiritually dead and remains without faith, he should reaffirm his faith in God as Teresa does. Then there will be the bestowal of spiritual blessings. To understand the secret of life Gre



appeals to be free from doubt and to seek by reasoning and love what is the divine perspective for leading a holy life. For, "God is conditioned, isn't He? If He's all-powerful, He can't weaken. If He knows everything, He can't forget. If He is love, He can't hate. Perhaps, if someone asks with enough love, He has to give".⁷ At the same time Greene emphasizes the soul to have moral life. He stresses that one should die for the worldly trappings and resurrect in a new life which is related to deliverance from sin and its consequences and hence from guilt, from the law and its curses, from death and the judgement thereafter, and also from fear and bondage.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Graham Greene, Three Plays, London: Mercury Books, 1961, p. 67.
2. Martin Shuttleworth and Simon Raven, Interview with Greene, 'The Art of Fiction' in Graham Greene: A Collection of Critical Essays, Ed. Samuel Hynes, New Jersey: A Spectrum Book, 1973, p. 159.
3. Graham Greene, Three Plays, London: Mercury Books, 1961, p. 217.
4. Ronald Brydon's description of the need of children is a good summary of Greene's view of children's problem. Brydon speaks: "The one moral imperative on which he bases his religion is the need of children: If a child is hungry it must be fed, if it cries in the night it must be answered. The villains in his work, as many of them religious as otherwise, are those who deprive children, who will not answer need. Fools are those who see the world as anything but childlike, he argues the necessity of God": (Preface to Carving a Statue, Penguin Books, 1972, pp. 7-8). To anyone familiar with Greene as a boy who had had the same problem, therefore, it should be clear why this problem should appeal to him and why he stresses this point so much in his works.
5. Graham Greene, Three Plays, London: Mercury Books, 1961, p. 153.
6. Ibid., p. 68.
7. Ibid., p. 150.