CHAPTER - I INTRODUCTION

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Graham Greene is one of the major post-war novelists who gave English novel the religious dimension, which had gone out with Henry James. As a Catholic Writer, he has dealt with evil in his writings. He feels that demoralisation of the modern society is the result of the loss of faith in God and traditional human values. Graham Greene tries to deal with successfully complex themes like man's relationship with himself, with society and with the God. He writes about 'Sin and Salvation' in his religious novels. He believes that only faith in God is necessary in the present world.

Greene, 'the novelist of guilt', is concerned with loss of human innocence and strangled condition of man-kind. In her article, Gable Sr. Mariella aptly maintains, "by concentrating on man's relationship to God and analysing the peculiar nexus between moral and the spiritual order. Greene has expanded the boundaries of English novel."

Graham Greene has usually been considered as a contemporary religious writer. His didacticism has led to his being a 'Catholic Novelist', an identification which he has disowned. His obsession is pre-dominantly religious. To him, "The modern novel has lost religious sense and with religious sense

went the sense of the importance of the human act."² Greene is a writer of the profound religious orientation both in his so-called Catholic novels and his ostensibly secular work which is pervaded by an intense religious feelings.

So many scholars and critics remarked on the religious views reflected in the novels of Graham Greene. Philip Startford brought out the influence of Catholicism on Greene's writing. A. A. De-Vittis has concentrated on the religious themes reflected in his works. John Atkins attempted to make spiritual study of Greene's work. Samuel Hynes says, "Greene's melodramatic, Contemporary novels are Catholic." R. W. B. Lewis observes Greene's psychological study of distress and strains of modern person. J. P. Kulshrestha concentrates on Greene's primary obsession with 'Evil' and 'Faith'. Anuradha Banarjee focusses her attention on Greene's view of the evolutionary process. Francis L. Kunkel finds out theological ideas in Greene's novels. David Pryce Jones has discussed the religious themes in his novels.

Since his conversion in 1926, Greene's Catholicism had been fairly formal kind. He went regularly to Church (and confession) and read a good deal of theology. Still he was not a thorough catholic. He accepted Catholism as an intellectual likelihood, that it was perhaps nearer to truth than other religions. He said, "I had not been emotionally moved but only

intellectually convinced." He had no emotional attachment to Catholicism till he went to Mexico and saw the faith of peasants during the persecution there.

Greene's obvious masters are Henry James and Joseph Conrad. He has studied them thoroughly and has turned that learning into his own. But as a Catholic, he had a profound influence of Newman who was strict against infallibility. Greene especially liked his 'Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine' in which New man has argued against a too-dogmatic church and demonstrates to evolution of ideas.

Greene is concerned with 'Other World'. In his novels, the world of senses is seedy, sordid, violent and cruel but there is another world in which man is diverted from evil to some good sense that is 'Religious Sense'. Greene has expressed the religious sense and created a fictional world in which human acts are very important. His novels are deep and poignant because they evoke the religious sense within intellectual, moral, Social and Political life in the world today. Each of the novels, explores the Man-God relationship and man's confrontation with social, political and religious institutions. Catholic priest is the protagonist in his novel. The power and the Glory (1940). He is always in confrontation with a representation of the state, the Police-Lieutenant, whose official ideology has no place for religion. Scottie in The Heart of The Matter (1948) is a converted Christian but he does not observe religious practises like Mass, Communion etc. Sarah in The End of The Matter (1955) has been

baptised but is not aware of fact and doesn't practise her religion. Querry in A <u>Burnt out Case</u> (1961) says, he has retired from Catholicism.

Greene's novels are contemporary in their political as well as religious content. Greene himself describes his work as being first political then Catholic and political again. Greene's religious views have political implications. During his visit to Mexico, he observes the oppression of the Catholic Church and he sees there the devotion of peasants praying in the priestless church and attending masses in upper-rooms where Sanctus bell could not sound for the fear of the police. Experience of political and spiritual realities in Mexico resulted in Keener understanding of the meaning of the faith. From these Mexican experiences, Greene Realises the importance of faith in life.

Greene's novels illuminate the moral sense by structuring the narrative within a frame-work of political consciousness and religious sense. They illustrate that the religion and politics traditionally seen as antagonistic forces. Church and state, sacred and secular, God and Caesar are elements of the same reality. Greene, with his compromising note feels that both religion and politics are mingled with each other and are inseparable. So Greene thinks, 'There is no true religion nor moral life without its embodiment in politics and there is true politics without religious underpinning.'

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But sometimes, Greene has been called 'The romantic anarchist'. His Catholicism and his romantic anarchism exist in polarity as in The power and the Glory. He presents atheist Police-Lieutenant as good man while the representative of God, Whisky Priest as bad man with many weaknesses like indulging in sexual act, and drinking brandy. Allen Water asserts, "If the priest attains to something like 'Sanctity', the policeman is something like 'Secular Saint.' The last words in A Burnt Out case (1961) are those of the atheist doctor, Colin and Querry in the same novel says, "I am not Catholic, I not even 'Christian. I won't be adopted by you and your church."

The theme of alienation is the great theme of contemporary novel. Isolation from self, from Nature, from society and from the God are recurring themes of Modern fiction. In the words of Raymond Williams, "The experience of isolation, of alienation and of self-exile is an important part of the contemporary structure of feeling." Greene has used the theme of alienation in his novels. He deals with the problem of man's isolation from the external world. The material and spiritual world today seem to stand apart from each other as a result of human-degradation and Greene explores, the themes of man's isolation from the God and Crisis of faith.

As a child, Greene experienced feeling of insecurity from the atmosphere of school and dormitory where he encountered the world of father.

To him, his father stood a symbol of authority with whom the child always felt a communication block. 'The green baize door' stands as befitting symbol of Greene's alienation from his surroundings. His characters are lonely men and women, alienated due to their eccentric qualities. According to Greene, 'Isolation is a part of human nature and like 'Original Sin', aggravated by the vicious atmosphere and evil, destructive forces prevailing in the present world'.

Greene's fiction reveals the pre-dominance of evil in modern world. His primary obsession is with evil, the dark side of human nature. In the words of Reed Henry, "Greene is serious practitioner of the novel in the literary perspective by examining his reintroduction of the sense of evil in English novel."

Themes like isolation, guilt, betrayal, corruption, crime, violence dramatise the evil which permeates the world of Greene. His pre-occupation with evil is doubtlessly concerned with religious consciousness, his awareness of God and His mercy. His characters are pulled in opposite direction finding themselves torn between Good and Evil. Greene presents not only demonic qualities of man but exhibits angelic principles which drive man towards God. Eventually Greene discusses 'Sin' and its consequence and shows there a dire need of attaining the Divine grace.

The knowledge of death came early to Greene. In the prologue to the 'Lawless Road', he declares that man's desire to end his life stems from his loss of sense of God. "He was going to cut his throat with a knife, If he could get away from his neighbour, having no hope and without God in the world." Greenes early life is rather unhappy and is full of bitter experiences. He lives in the world full of evil things. The innocence of his childhood is betrayed and the seed of future corruption is shown. The child lived in the evil world, the world of moral chaos. Greene's early mind is horrified to see the tragic incidents - a woman's killing of her husband with a knife and a suicide of a boy of twenty and a girl of fifteen, who found headless on the railway line.

At the age of fourteen, Greene got the idea of 'perfect evil' from Marjorie Bowen's book, 'The Viper of Milan. He writes about the influence of the book, "Goodness has only once found a perfect incarnation in human body and never will again, but evil can always find a home there. Human nature is not black and white but black and grey, as evil stains all"

It seems that the book has influenced him profoundly. Later he toured extensively and visited Liberia, Mexico, Indo-china, Haiti. He finds here seediness and ugliness, violence and cruelty. He feels much about the loss of the faith. Vexed by the problem the evil and suffering Greene finds a hint of explanation in the Roman Catholic Church. He thinks "Faith was almost great enough to move mountains....",10

Greene is converted Catholic and he feels disgusted with modern society. He finds vindictive delight in the failures and poverties of human nature.

Allott and Farris say about Greene, "Where there is faith in Greene, there is a sense of evil and more helpless degeneration."

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In his 'Collected Essays', Greene says, "perfect evil walking the world over where perfect good can never walk again." According to third-century, Manichaean hearsy, Satan was co-eternal with God, according to the Seventeenth Century Jansenists, the physical world was given up to evil and God's elect could find salvation. But Greene is different from Manichaeism in his idea of the simultaneous existence of 'Bright' and 'Dark' worlds.

Greene is much more interested in the fundamental doctrine of church and state that states spiritual war between 'Good' and 'Evil'. He, with the help of Church, tries to explain the mystery. In his interview, he declares, "Once you try to explain the mystery, you get things tabulated, But I certainly believe that there is 'Good' and 'Evil' in the world." (13)

Greene's idea of purposive evolution is essentially a product of his Christian consciousness and it is mystical like that of William Blake. According to Blake, 'God is origin of Good and Evil and that God and Devil are two sides of the same force. The force has contrary forms of innocence and of cruelty. For Greene, too, is the prime embodiment of opposite aspects - the 'Night-Side' and the 'Day-Side' held in eternal balance.

Since the beginning of life, there has been an eternal war between Good and Evil. The growing love for materialism has certainly created problems in the society and it results in the dominance of evil over good. So Woodcock George aptly remarks, "Though Greene may be Catholic Propagandist, his portrayal of the spiritual struggle between good and evil shows his concern with the actual violence of human life."

Greene thinks that dehumanisation of modern society is taken place due to embracing 'Night-Side' (Evil) and forsaking 'Day-Side' (Good). To save the day-side from being overpowered by the night-side or to maintain the balance between these two opposite aspects of God, Greene feels that it is necessary to strengthen the Day-Side as it happened once at the arrival of the Son of God, Jesus Christ, whose message of 'love and sacrifice' soothened the suffering hearts, at the same time, it served to turn evil into good. Hence to Greene, these opposite aspects of God reflected in man and life have their unique significance and place as both are inseparable. Allen Walter discusses, "Greene's awareness of evil and vision of human life as the point of intersection of Heaven and Hell and as the qualities that constitute his uniqueness among contemporary novelists." 15

Greene as a Catholic writer draws more on French influences than on English. Christian Ethics have become the base of his writings. Greene as

Christian existentialist and a novelist whose many affinities with French makes him popular in France. Greene received serious criticism from French-Scholars who studied his novels. Jacques Madaule's, 'Graham Greene' and Paul Rostenne's 'Graham Greene 'te moin des temps tragiques' are good observation of Greene's early novels and his position in literary world.

Born on 2nd october, 1904, Greene was brought up and educated in the small Hertfordshire. His father, Charies Greene was head-master of well-known public school. Until his School-days began, Greene's life was nursary-oriented. He remembered his childhood days. He remembers his nursery at the school house as "a large confused room.....with toy cupboard and boo-shelves and a big wooden rocking-horse with wicked eyes and one large comfortable wicker-chair for nurse beside the steel fire-guard."

Greene received a conventional, middle class and Anglican upbringing in the confines of his father's school which he hated utterly. He was moody, sensitive boy who felt disgusted with dark noisy School-room of dirty smell. Greene describes the school-room in <u>A Sort of Life</u> (1971), "no servant would have endured the squalor we lived in......a changing room, smelling of sweat, and stale clothes.....no moment of the night was free from noise, cough, a Snore, a fart." This 'devik-infested' condition of the school made Greene utterly bored and he tried to escape from it through his restless truancies and

other acts of rebellion. Green's unhappy childhood has had a seminal influence on his fiction. Most of his characters are born out of his traumatic experiences of his childhood. He stresses the importance of "the memories of flight, rebellion and misery during those first sixteen years, when the novelist is formed.",18

At fourteen, being frustrated, he made several attempts of committing suicide. He tried to drink developing fluid and hay fever-lotion, ate a bunch of deadly night shade. Once he swallowed twenty aspirins and jumped into school-swimming-pool. When all defence mechanism failed, in 1920, Greene had to be sent to Kenneth Richmond, the Psycho-analyst, who treated him. At seventeen again, he made suicide-attempts six more times by placing Russian roulette. Eventually, he gave up an idea of suicide.

Events came together and Greene met Miss Gwen Howell, Nursery Governess during his family holiday at Shering ham, and fell in love with her. He reminds Goven Howell's body, "She was lying on the beach and her skirt had worked up high and showed a long length of naked thigh." The experience of Greene's first adolescent love but hopeless and miserable.

From Berkhamsted, Greene went to Balliol College, Oxford.

During his college days of Oxford, he fall in love with a Roman Catholic girl,

Vivien Dayrell Browning. He used to write poems and at the end of his career of

Oxford, he published the volume of poems, "Babbling April' in 1925. In order

to marry Vivien Browning in 1926, he embraced Roman Catholicism. He gave up his own Anglicanism. He took essential instructions from father Trollope, who performed their marriage. After leaving Oxford, Greene worked as Journalist in Nottingham and thenafter as sub-editor of 'The Times' in London. Giving up the job he made a successful literary debut, publishing his first novel, The Man Within in 1929.

His reputation as a novelist has been on the increase from 1930's, when his novels began to appear. His outstanding writings took him to the remarkable position in the fictional world of England. His novels may be divided into three periods: first political, then Catholic and the Political again. The first period (1925)-1935) includes Greene's three novels - The Man Within (1929), Its A Battlefield (1934) and England Made Me (1935). The first group of novels deal with the terror and the destructive spirits of thirties engendered by materialistic civilisation which destroyed the basic human values, convictions and generated the crisis of identity. In this group novels, Greene studies the problem of isolation from the Psychological and Sociological point of view. Greene's protagonists felt isolation from their fellowmen, from society and even from their own self.

Greene's first published novel, <u>The Man Within</u> (1929) deals with the underworld activities of smugglers and thieves. It studies the problem of man's isolation from his own self as well as from the external world. Central Character, Francis Andrews, betrays others and also gets betrayed himself. His second novel, Its a Battle Field (1934) deals with a case of murder committed by Jim Drover, a Communist bus driver, in fit of rage. In this novel, Greene tries to study the problem of man within in the context of modern civilisation. The last novel of the group, England Made Me (1935), deals with the man's quest for identify. The quest for home is more problematic since the individual is twice removed from home. Two more novels of the period. The Name of Action (1930) and Rumour At Night Fall (1931) differ from the novel mentioned earlier. The Name of the Action is the story of Oliver Chant's withdrawal from the Polished London Society to support the revolutionaries, fighting against the dictatorship of Trier Paul Demassenger and Rumour at Night Fall is the story of double-betrayal during Carlist-Wars.

The second phase of Greene's fictional career is called as <u>Catholic</u>

<u>Phase</u> (1935-1950). Three novels of this period <u>Brighton Rock</u> (1938), <u>The</u>

<u>Power and The Glory</u> (1940) and <u>The Heart of the Matter</u> (1948) constitute the main body of religious writing, dealing with common central theme. 'Sin and Salvation'. They form the best 'trilogy' in which Greene's pre-occupation is with Roman Catholicism and his obsession with 'Salvation' versus damnation.

The present study aims to study "The conception of 'SIN' in Catholic Christianity and possible redemption for 'The Sinners'". Pinkie in Brighton Rock, Whisky-Priest in The Power and The Glory, and Scobie in The

Heart of the Matter are 'Sinners' who in spite of their Sinning, rise to height of self-sacrifice and are ultimately saved from their damnation by Divine grace, which works out mysteriously. In these novels, Greene explores the nature of Sin, committed by protagonists and seeks possible redemption for the Sinners.

Greene's awareness of widely powerful and omnipresent evil is balaced by his faith in the existence of a positive good in the universe which alone can attribute meaning and significance to human life and action. Greene's conception of 'Sin' is related with such ideas - a mental perversion, moral deprivation, weaknesses, guilt, betrayal. He discusses Sin and its consequences and shows there is a dire need of Divine grace which can save the man from his damnation. To stress his belief, Greene has used the statement of Peguy as epigraph to The Heart of The Matter. - 'The Sinner is at the very heart of Christianity. Nobody is as competent as the Sinner in the matter of Christianity. Nobody, If it is not the Saint.' Greene believes that 'Path of sin is precisely the road to God'. He further says, 'better a Catholic Sinner than a decent non-Catholic'. The Catholic Sinner knows that the world is a battleground of good and evil and can, if he is in earnest, always find the road to God. Greene never thought that Sinner can miss the way to heaven.

With his first Catholic novel, <u>Brighton Rock</u>, Greene has recovered the lost dimension - 'The religious Sense' in the English Fiction. The novel deals with a world of racketeers, who engaged in their reckless violence

and razor-slashes to grab more power in the underworld where the closest friends are betrayed in the coldest blood. The central character Pinkie Brown, Roman Catholic adolescent commits murder. It is nothing but a kind of a Moral sin but he accepts damnation. The novel made him the twentieth century laureate of Sin and Salvation, Next novel The power and the Glory is based on the writers visit to Mexico, It mainly deals with the theme of conflict between the Church and the State. Ultimately the Church becomes victorious. It is the story of Whisky Priest, who inspite of threaten of stately power, performs his religious duties. But at last he is captured and executed by Lieutenant.

The most famous of 'Trilogy' is <u>The Heart of the Matter</u>, which is set in West-African colony ruled by British. It is the story of Scobie, the Deputy Commissioner of police. He is a married Catholic; He is torn between his loyalty to his wife, Louise and his love fore mistress, Helen Rolt. In order to escape from his mental-strife he commits Sin of Suicide. <u>The End of the Affair</u> (1951) is marks the end of the Catholic phase in his fiction. It is the story of woman's adultery. Sarah, the heroine is gay and vivacious but dis-satisfied wife of Civil-Servant, She gradually gets involved with Maurice Bendrix and famous with him.

The Last phase of Greene's fictional career, covers the novels <u>The Quiet American</u>, <u>The Comedian</u>, <u>Honorary Consul</u>, <u>The Human Factor</u>, and <u>The Bomb Party</u>. These novels seem to form the last phase of his fictional career. It

travel-books, essays, journals. His travelogues - <u>Journey Without Maps</u> (1936) and <u>The Lawless Road</u> (1939) reveal his experiences in Africa, Mexico. He reveals in them, his observations of the natives, their manner, their ways of life. His critical Essays and articles have been published in volumes called <u>The Lost Childhood</u> and Other Essays (1951) and <u>Collected Essays</u> (1969). Three collections of short-stories are - <u>Ninetcen Stories</u> (1947), <u>A Sense of Reality'</u> (1963) and <u>May We Borrow Your Husband?</u> (1967). He has also contributed children's book - <u>The little Fire Engine</u> (1950), <u>The little Horse Bus</u> (1952), The Little Steam Roller (1953).

Greene is the first important writer to develop a 'Cinematic Technique'. During thirties, he wrote scripts. His career as a film-critic, a script-writer helped him in using excitement and suspense in his novels. He uses images. Greene says, "If you excite your audience first, you can put over, what will of horror, suffering and truth." According to Samuel Hynes, "in the Greene's novels, the writer has become director and producer: That is he controls the action and moves freely about it, but he is not part of it. His camera eye is like, 7 the eye of God, seeing all but with holding judgement." 22

Cinematic technique emphasises the visual context of action, the world in which men act out their lives and Greene is extremely skilful at creating his contemporary scenes out of sharply visualised particulars. Greene is always

seems that these novels deal with awareness of human commitment in face of evil. The Quiet American (1955) is the story of innocent man who is destroyed by the merciless world. Perhaps Greene seems to be more critical about the Americans here. In A Burnt Out Case (1966), Greene presents the character of Querry. He has failed in his vocation and he tries to find spiritually satisfaction. The Comedians (1966) seems to be focus on the need for revolution to purge 'Haiti' from its terror and corruption. The Honorary Consul (1973) shows that a lead of faith or commitment comes in the man's life through political ideologies and institutions. The Human Factor (1978) presents Greene's Catholic attitudes to Marxism and his hope to bring idealistic humanism, which could be balancing factor between warring ideologies.

Greene writes sometimes with lighter vein. His stories of this kind are full of crimes. They do not have any message to give. Greene names them as 'entertainment'. These are <u>Stamboul Train</u> (1932), <u>A Gun For Sale</u> (1936), <u>The Confidential Agent</u> (1941), <u>The Ministry of Fear</u> (1943), <u>The Third Man</u> and <u>The Fallen Idol</u> (1950), <u>Loser Takes All</u> (1955) and <u>Our Man in Havana</u> (1958)

Besides his fictional writings, Greene also tried his hand with various other forms of literature like, plays, short-stories, skits, travel-books, essays and children's books. Greene travelled widely through Liberia, Tabasco, Cuba, Mexico, West-Africa and other countries, which provided material for his

entertaining and his skilful use of film and thriller conventions explain a good deal of the element of entertainment in his novels. Some of his noels have been made into films. His <u>A Gun For Sale</u> was filmed in Hollywood in 1942. Then he started writing film-scripts for his five novels - <u>Brighton Rock</u>, <u>Fallen idol</u>, <u>The Third Man</u>, <u>Our Man in Havana</u> and <u>The Comedians</u>. In 1937, he was film ditor for <u>Night-Day</u>. In 1942, he published <u>British Dramalist</u>, a short book on English drama.

While gaining valuable experience in Cinema, he wrote first play, The Living Room in (1953). This was followed by two others- The Potting Shed (1957) and The Complaisant Lover (1959). The Living Room and The Potting Shed recycle the religious motif of The Heart of the Matter and The End of The Matter respectively. Adultery, suicide versus the mercy of God in the first and the bargain prayer which brings a boy back to life at the price of the Priest's own faith in second. His third, The Complaisant Lover is a comedy and his last two plays - Carving a Statue (1964) and The Return of A. J. Raffles (1975) are farces. Beside his plays, Greene has sketched his auto-biography in two volumes - A Short of Life (1971) and Ways of Escape (1981).

It seems that Greene has many occupations, Infact he is the most prolific writer of the contemporary English literature. He died in April 1991. In his tribute to Greene, Kingsley Amis says "He will be missed all over the world. until today, he was our greatest living novelist".

CHAPTER - I

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