CHAPTER II

THE GRAY OF SIN

"Yet Oliver's predicament, the nightmare fight between the darkness where the demons walk and the sunlight where ineffective goodness makes its last stand in a condemned world, will remain part of our imaginations forever."

Graham Greene *

In A Sort of Life, the first volume of his autobiography, Greene suggests that a few lines from 'Bishop Blougram's Apology' should serve as an epitaph to all his novels :

"our interest's on the dangerous
edge of things.
The honest thief, the tender murderer,
The superstitious atheist, dead - rep
That loves and saves her soul
in new French books -
We watch while these in
equilibrium keep
The giddy line midway" [1]

Talking to Allain[2], daughter of his friend Yves Allain, Greene clarified that for him 'the dangerous edge of things' remained what it always had been - the narrow boundary between loyalty and disloyalty, between fidelity and infidelity, the mind's contradictions, the paradox one carries within oneself. Greene said that he was interested, not in betrayal or defection, but in the moment when a man reaches 'the dangerous edge' where faith wavers.

* The Lost Childhood and other Essays, P. 61.
1. Quoted in the Statesman, 'The Superstitious Atheist', April 13, 1991.
2. Chaudhury, M., 'End of the Journey', The Statesman, April 14, 1991.

Graham Greene is primarily concerned with the problem of sin. His major novels, as also his minor works, give a persistent feel of this problem. In them, we become aware of the Christian conception of original sin. We know of a strong human susceptibility and fascination towards it. Greene, along with Mauriac and Dostoevsky, shows the predicament of his major characters in an involved incomprehensible situation. They get caught up and suffer an unconceding weariness. This is the vice - a sinful act of intention, that tempts the sterile life of these characters. An unanswering puzzle of the mystery of inexplicable, inexpressible and uncertain vicious forces raises its ghostly fog in their minds.

These novelists present a picture of life, in which both the external environment and the inward man are the cause of sin. These forces, uncertain and unauthentic, pull the characters in opposite directions. Greene's character D., in The Confidential Agent, exemplifies this situation. Greene writes about D., 'Despair began to loss its hold : this was a mistake, and his enemies couldn't afford many mistakes. But then, he remembered that somebody somewhere, must be dead : that couldn't be a mistake'.[1] In these lines, Greene emphasizes the dual nature of D. As a sensitive human being, D. experiences despair in himself but he also has an apprehension of the death of his enemy. From a similar standpoint, Mauriac and Dostoevsky arrive at a positive confirmation of the existence of sin. They too stress the limitedness of human nature and show the existence of a diabolical self which prompts man into sinful acts disproportionate with his

1. The Confidential Agent P. 102.

finite nature. Sin in the human soul and the collapse of characters on this account constitutes Greene's central pre-occupation. The tragedy lies in the spiritual inertness and inapprehensible mind of the characters. The worst type of negation befalls Greene's priest in The Power and The Glory, when the unfortunate child seeks his help, in the beginning of the novel. Greene writes about the priest and the child, 'He said his mother was dying - The brown eyes expressed no emotion : it was a fact. You were born, your parents died, you grew old, you died yourself.'[1] This point could be further elucidated with reference to the novels of Dostoevsky and Mauriac. The character of these novelists too are the guilty of the corruption of the soul and the sin of the flesh. Dostoevsky's The Brothers Karamazov shows sensual fascination to be the root-cause of the degradation and, consequently of the alienation of the members of the Karmazov house. Mitya beautifully links up hatred and bitterness to such insidious demonic intentions in his following words to Alyosha, 'All we Karamazovs are such insects, and angel as you are, that insect-lives in you, too, and will stir up a tempest in your blood. Tempests, because sensual lust is a tempest-worse than a tempest.'[2]

The other aspect of evil is its irrational nature. As the antithesis of good, it exists as a powerful counterforce. In Dostoevsky's Notes from Underground, the underground man confesses his absolute wickedness and depravity because of such life. This kind of uniform process of evil also finds its place in Graham Greene

1. The Power and the Glory, P. 18.
2. The Brothers Karamazov , P. 157.

There seems to be no connection with good when his works suggest an unrelieved picture of pessimism and defeatism. We arrive over a standpoint that sin is implicit in the metaphysical nature of man and his environment.

Another cause of sin, paradoxically enough, is the strict and unswerving observance of moral principles. Brigitte Pian in Mauriac's A Woman of the Pharisees has such an unquestioning application of her moral norms that she antagonises other characters like Michele, Octave Pian and the narrator. Monsieur Jalou says truly of her in the same novel, 'If ever that gift of judgement and condemnation which she now exercises at the expense of others is turned against herself, she's in for a bad time.'[1] Indeed in the novel, Brigitte considers herself infallible in her acts, intentions and religious scruples. She has her self-righteous dogma that conceals itself and she embarrasses other characters with her elusive consciousness. Thus the narrator writes about her, - 'Brigitte Pian pursued an opposite course, finding each day over stronger reasons for thanking her Creator that he had made of her so admirable a person.'[2] Something similar happens in Greene where the picture of a sinner becomes atrocious when he rages with his plain innocence against the laws of the orthodox church.

Such is the absolutely chaotic universe of a finite man when a satisfactory kind of moral standards is denied to him and he is discovered overstepping its limits in reaction against its nothingness. Louis in Mauriac's Viper's Tangle is consumed by

1. A Woman of the Pharisees , P. 187.
2. Ibid , P. 181.

self-hatred because his fine emotions like love or trust and baser emotions like hate or distrust plunge him into this world of nothingness. They are all clouded in an infinite vacuity. Louis speaks of his insatiable love in the following words, 'It was not enough that I should maintain her in embarrassed circumstances, almost in poverty; she must be always at my disposal, never see anything else, so that I might take her, leave her, pick her up again as my fancy dictated during my scanty leisure.'[1] Greene's characters, too, are afflicted by this horrible spell and they have to follow the verdict of their conscience. It may be of some interest to examine, in this context, the psychological state of the contemporary man. The weariness and what Kierkegaard calls 'sickness unto death' coupled with the fear of the unknown invariably point to danger and disaster. Reinhold Niebuhr, speaks of anxiety as, 'the basic and defining emotion which induces man to sin.'[2] The stage that involves a singular sense of failure overwhelms most of the melancholy-ridden characters of the novelists we are discussing. Despair and abandonment are the natural limits to which they are driven. Greene's character Scobie in the novel, The Heart of the Matter, commits suicide. One of the reasons for this is an ultimate psychological self-disgust. In the following lines is explained Scobie's movement towards such a stage, 'Oh God, It's better than a millstone... I can't give her pain and I can't go on giving you pain. Oh God, if you love me as I know you do, help me to leave you.'[3] The narrator in Maurice's

1. Viper's Tangle , P. 66.
2. The Case of Modern Man , P. 88.
3. The Heart of the Matter , P. 254.

A Woman of the Pharisees describes his despondent childhood and soiled adult experience which he attributes to the image of Brigitte Pian. Her relentless and dominating character would torment him constantly. He tells how his vision of hope is thwarted in his abandoned childhood : 'My step-mother said that I had done my duty, why, then, should I feel so remorseful ?'[1] Mauriac, in these lines, hints at the narrator's estrangement from Brigitte's affections. Thus all these writers make clear that human nature, society, religion or an isolated subjectivity - any one of these can be the cause of evil. A sense of betrayal by the society or some positive folly in human nature is what pervades the works of the writers mentioned here.

The extreme kind of disharmony in society is well brought out by Ivan in Dostoevsky's The Brothers Karamazov. Ivan speaks of the suffering of innocent children on account of their 'father's sins'[2], as he says in the novel. This suggests the treachery of society, which follows a natural chain of cause and effect. Similarly Chantal, in Bernanos' novel, Joy , points to the intrinsic badness of characters who surround her. She maintains her goodness and says about them that their 'secret of sadness' is in their 'wretchedness.'[3] In a like manner Ivan in The Brothers Karamazov, in the person of The Grand Inquisitor presents an indictment of religion as heretical. He says, 'All therefore is still in the

1. A Woman of the Pharisees , P. 20.
2. The Brothers Karamazov , P. 232.
3. Joy , P. 230.

Pope's hands and there is no need for Thee to come at all.'[1] Ivan points out that the church has failed in its rightful spiritual mission. It is also clear that Dostoevsky is pointing his finger at the spiritual heads who alone claim the divine knowledge and are engaged to-day in misusing it. In the case of a self-governing subjective consciousness, a set of positive and negative possibilities are offered. Not being true to its ideal, i.e. to be self-governing, man has to wrestle with the consciousness of another being. Sartre well illustrates this point in the following words - 'The intimate discovery of myself is at the same time the revelation of the other as a freedom which confronts mine, and which cannot think or will, without doing so either for or against me.'[2] The above statement implies two poles of confrontation (two different kinds of consciousness) and both of them seem legitimate. Such is the problem of a subjective consciousness and its main conflict. All these writers, therefore, it seems clear, show a common concern about the moral-metaphysical psychological state of man. Herein lies the origin of sin. But fundamentally, it seems, it is the pollution of the self that expresses man's chaos and his attitude towards the world. The writer's delineation of evil, therefore, converges on the suffering state of man. Since this is a permanent feature of human nature, all the writers explore its mystery and uncover the complex motivation of a sinful experience.

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1. The Brothers Karamazov , P. 237.
2. Existentialism and Humanism , P. 45.

Pinkie in Brighton Rock has an absolute sense of evil. Out of sheer despondency his communication with his social background terminates. His willing love for Rose is in the guise of treachery to society, because of its callousness. Finally, he is overwhelmed by his appalling guilt. The degenerate Pinkie faces his retribution.

The point does not lie in the sheer indictment of society, for Pinkie's ghastly confusion lies in the sordid drama of his life, as in the following lines: 'The stuffy room, the unkempt children, the Saturday night movements from the other bed. Was there no escape-anywhere-for anyone ? It was worth murdering a world.'[1] His insecure position is explained also by a negative life-principle. The earthly mortal state is an outlet for the unbecoming emotions and instincts. Pinkie is melancholy-ridden under a horrible spell which in turn motivates him for misdeeds.

We arrive at an incongruity in a sinful experience. The complexity in it is furnished by its mystery. Scobie, in the exploration of it, faces the Catholic church and his love for Louise. His deviation from his doom is inescapable in a notable conflict between the transient nature of his love and the self-righteous or meritical church-teachings. Scobie becomes panicky and morbid in passing through these imperfect confines. Throughout the novel he experiences self-pity and nihilistic notion of life. He is deserted and sin originates in his suffering. His unvaried misery and pathos convey the tragic sense of fatality and resignation. Scobie's loneliness is an acute form of this attitude and its

1. Brighton Rock , P. 93.

actuality consigns him to the worst form of conscious despair when he commits suicide in the end of the novel.

Scobie lacks a divine principle in his life. In its absence the reality projected by his love or the church-association as a Catholic is only of relative significance. His is the consciousness of lack of trust everywhere in the objective standpoints or in his subjective mind. Scobie finds himself unforgivable because of his sins. He considers his redemption impossible. To Father Rank in The Heart of the Matter, he seems pleading, 'Help me, Father, Convince me that I would do right to abandon her to Wagster. Make me believe in the mercy of God.'[1] Scobie's decadent nature does not disengage itself from the imminent ills that flow from his love. Oppressively so in the unrelenting, the unalterable confessional-practice, Scobie has his natural recourse to an inscrutable desolation. Consequently, he thinks himself capable only of annihilating himself.

No life-transforming ultimate analysis of life can conceal a terrible propensity to evil. The protagonist of The Power and the Glory, i.e., the priest understands life as [illegible] to the streak of detestation in himself and the outside world. This eventually brings us to the meaning of life and particularly of human existence whose goal is embedded in it. For the priest, what counts in battle with his suffering is his provoking split nature. He yields to an illegitimate sex-passion which results in the birth of the child Brigitta. The sentimental gestures of the half-caste's friendship obtrusively figure in his mind. His is

1. The Heart of the Matter , P. 212.

not an autonomous being able to know for himself his role in life and the world.

Disbelief comes after the rejection of all externals that do not satisfy man. Society, church and morals deflect from innermost human needs that proceed along a different direction. To the priest, his obsessive element is his service to his people. Herein lies the source of his habitual dread and nervous exhaustion. Thus his insatiable longing becomes unanalysable to himself. Faith does not become visible anywhere so that his spiritual life does not receive its fruition.

Nothing seems to be interchangeable for the priest's torment and suffering in The Power and the Glory. The divine plan is imponderable to him and he has no clear perspective of an alternative. All his calls remain unanswered as he realises : 'What an impossible fellow, I am, he thought and how useless. I have done nothing for anybody, I might just as well have never lived.'[1] The priest's repentance is over an unfulfilled communion with his people. His sense of loss points emphatically to the unused potential in him. The priest, as a shepherd of his place, falls short of the set ideal.

Greene's works point to a new concept of individuality and indicate hope. Bendrix in The End of the Affair does not liberate himself from the predominant aspiration of the love of God because of his guilt in it. In spite of being dragged down in

1. The Power and the Glory , P. 210.

life where his all is at stake, he does not sacrifice his unbecoming passion. Bendrix, thus, undertakes a risky love and his life becomes hazardous. For the complete absorption in one closes the door of the other. This points to two opposite attitudes, namely, the glory of man in self-development and solitaestory or against it his absolute degeneration and decay.

Bendrix has a look of faith in himself not because of his mere skepticism but by virtue of his dominating love. Life-reality becomes for him unapproachable. So, when he speaks of his gratuitous love for Sarah, we can consider it a sin. 'I wanted something very simple and very easy : I wanted Sarah for a lifetime and you took her away.'[1] These lines explicitly state Bendrix's abiding unhappiness. His solitary being has an unattainable sense of divine loss. Bendrix does not extricate himself from the fleeting sense-impression of things and his love.

The sensitivity to society, morals or inward subjectivity have no permanent value for the characters of Graham Greene. It is quite evident that they do not have any chance of gaining perception in their external symbolic form. Scobie, who conveys a strong sense of estrangement from all this, shows no reconciling self. He cannot compose in a unified form his diverse disparate impressions. We may note it as an entirely different thing that his love or goodness is illuminating. Scobie remains from all standpoints a sinner. He is paradoxically a weak character and is groping in an unsound metaphysic.

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1. The End of the Affair , P. 196.

Scobie's love or goodness is incomplete. In spite of his strong sense of these virtues, he does not find their expression in real life. His church-scruples, for instance, contribute to his inhibition and he impulsively feels reproached by them. It is not for him to conclude their validity for himself. He is conscientious and his spirit earnestly seeks for the existing traditional rituals. Scobie's goodness in Mass or Holy Communion is strangely interpolated with unmatching elements. The chief fact of his person is a divided mind. In an involvement with Louise and Helen in his love, he is constantly harassed by his notion of responsibility. The following statement in the novel, 'Go to your house and say good-bye to your wife and live with your mistress. If you live you will come back to me sooner or later. One of them will suffer, but can't you trust me to see that suffering isn't too great ?'[1] is the key to Scobie's entity. Being interlocked in his double love, the interacting forces of Helen and Louise isolate him. Thus their suffering is an inversion of his own and their indifference is identical with his own. Scobie's painful feeling of responsibility unfolds his privacy. God's love would be beyond him as long as he does not grapple with realising his individuality.

Scobie, as we have seen, cannot define his self. All his secular entanglements do him injustice and he continues to be their victim. This could be a consoling cause for him to offer his repentance at the church according to the traditional rule or express remorse to Louise or Helen over his impure love. However,

1. The Heart of the Matter , P. 260.

when the revelation of immediate felt-experience is relegated to background, what is left resounding is his guilt within. Scobie is a sinner not because of any deficiency of human attributes at an ordinary level. He becomes one when a higher decision for transcendence is to be made and he remains unversing.

Truly, the supernatural way of life is incompatible with the natural conditions of life and Scobie's attempt at the receipt of it would involve conscious choice and action. Why then, inevitably he falters, Greene suggests, is in the hanging void of what he is to forge. 'He had always been prepared to accept the responsibility for his actions, and he had always been half-aware too, from the time he had made his private vow that she should be happy, how far this action might carry him. Despair is the price one pays for setting oneself an impossible aim.'[1] Now, Scobie is unable to anticipate any success in his aim in spite of the fact that he is so fully aware of it. Sartre would say that a responsible action and a responsible choice implies a total comprehension of it and commitment to it. Scobie's attitude towards life is one of futility. Any responsible action repels Scobie and he relents from undertaking it in his circumstances.

Conformity with godness and virtue is an absolute ethic which Greene's characters like Pinkie never come to affirm. Pinkie knows that the sustaining factor in life is not the support of the church or his love. They are abominable inasmuch as they humiliate him to the underground world of Greene's early works like <u>It's a Battlefield</u>. When he confesses his lust for Rose and

1. The Heart of the Matter , P. 68.

arouses the indignation of Dollow or Jubitt, he simply seems to clarify the natural condition of his relationship with Rose. What stirs him to an unintelligible escape from all these characters as also Mr. Deremitt is his response to an intrinsic demand upon him. That the ethic of his relationship should be unconditional in its nature and scope seems to be the assertion of Pinkie.

The irony of this standpoint is that this self-realization in Pinkie does not become a marked reality. To seek an answer to it is not in his bad catholicism, for we are made aware of his radical nature and of God, Eternity, Heaven and Hell. He has a brooding consciousness and a powerful passion. From the angle of existentialist philosophy, Pinkie can discover himself only in his freedom. What this freedom is from this point of view would be a riddle for Pinkie. This is where the ethical content of life is fully enclosed in its definition. This is perfectly moral and religion must confirm it. Pinkie, who makes an attempt to be grasped by his freedom does not acquire it fully. His demonstration of it needs to be built up by his clear mind and soul.

The needs of the human soul and social justice rightly call for harmony in man. We see how Pinkie is inclined towards making his ego to have the central place in his life in the context of a self-seeking dishonest society. Pinkie glorifies his selfishness and implies an absolute justice in his inordinate coercion. Since both the facts of life i.e., his selfishness or conversely the social injustice are the source of evil because of being gratuitous, the secular standards that class him a sinner tend to be inappropriate.

Pinkie shares both the pride and egotism of Greene's

protagonists like Fowler and Bendrix. When human existence is unceasingly symbolic of it, Pinkie jubilates in his drift towards another pole from characters like Colleoni and Ida Arnold, which only aggravates evil in him. Pinkie is arrogant and conceited. He and his men are disrupting the already degenerate social order in the hands of Colleoni. Pinkie wants to set no restraint in acquiring an immeasurable power for himself and his greed is in consonance with the terrible judgement upon himself. Thus the violation of social law and sanctity by a subsequent transference of it to Pinkie's own focal aspiration is condemnable. His is a frivolous pleasure of lower order and one misconstrued. Pinkie is a sinner.

To the priest in The Power and the Glory his devotion to his child Brigitte and Roman Marie induces in him lip-service in his profession as a priest. He becomes credulous and seeks to state an empirically sound position which is in direct opposition to his spiritual life. Like Brigitte Plan in Mauriac's A Woman of the Pharisees, he exemplifies set attitudes. Both these characters seem to stand for an incomplete church-service. The remarkable assignment for the priest seems to regain his spiritual life. It becomes apparent beyond doubt that his incompatible world-views and a perverse divine judgement are unsurmountable.

The perplexing struggle for the priest starts from the very beginning of the novel. The lieutenant is merciless towards all of his class; the church views with contempt his fornication and the habit of excessive drinking. At the end of the novel he is rightly overcome by chagrin. The curse of thinking for himself

makes him feel at odds with the practices of the church. The priest is alienated. His visions and glimpses of his spiritual goal are confronted by the barrier of his individual and social living.

Thus the priest, who had a strong sense of his duties and a life of deeds, finds himself misconceived in a world without God. His divine work consists in the breath of his love and compassion. What subduce this providential task are the actual facts of life. The priest, as a living human being, remains active in this region. His convictions about God or sainthood become baffling. He finds himself terror-stricken in having a soul without grace.

The following lines sum up the priest's assessment of his life: 'He felt only an immense disappointment because he had to go to God empty-handed, with nothing done at all. It seemed to him, at that moment, that it would have been quite easy to be a saint. It would only have needed a little self-restraint and a little courage.'[1] Herein we see how the priest's spiritual sphere, being destitute of any universal ethics afflicts him corrosively. Now when he contemplates his failure to reach anything approaching sainthood, he muses that such a kind of divine intervention and his acceptance of it should have come quite early. The priest, thus, becomes a sinner.

When the social or religious life of man, too, contains evil, man recoils upon his subjective frame of mind. This is the state, where too evil persists and reduces man to the state of sin. Fowler in <u>The Quiet American</u> is vulnerable to this stage because the

1. The Power and the Glory , P. 210.

supra-human realm of values is not inhabited by him. His mind is perfectly at home in human and sub-human regions and their ground of differentiation. He exults over his boisterous love for Phuong as also over his corruption and malice against Pyle's innocence and charity. Fowler's way of looking at life and the world is in consonance with an absolute evil which permeates society's noble or ignoble forms and the chaste or unchaste cycles of life. To Fowler, the dual nature of good and evil makes him sensitive to an infection of evil even in the area of good.

Fowler, who does not concern himself with his heavenly identity, is taken in by the humility of Domingues in the novel. Domingues has no element of vice in him and is a bearer of gentleness. How Fowler finds Domingues agreeable is revealed by his own weakness. He envies Pyle's better character and indulges in blackmailing him. Fowler does not have an analytic self which can rightly ascribe its due to his higher divine entity. Instead when he sinks himself into a lower scale, he increases evil in himself and becomes steeped in it.

We briefly lay our finger on another source of sin. The point in human failing suggests the existentialist point of view. Fowler with courage and determination can curb ruthlessly his weaknesses and submit to a disciplined pattern of life. This is according to this point of view, when he does not follow the path that begins his unsound sub-rational life. Fowler's sense of competition with Pyle is engendered and his dead life-capacities make him all the more cynical. At once stage in the novel, the death-wish weighs heavily upon him and he in his affliction corroborates it. 'Death was the only absolute value in my worldlose

life and one would lose nothing again for ever.'[1] The evidence of Fowler's mental state contained in these lines is purely deductive. He is commending a one-sided truth. The fact of death is real to him and not that of life. When we interpret them as the constituent aspects of Nature, they become distinguishable in their proper perspective.

The subject of sin thus is an interwoven one. This includes a multitude of human states. The discrepant points in Fowler's scheme of things become quite evident when he has to conform to a high moral way of life with Pyle and a highly religious way in analysing God or life-processes. Fowler is significantly fastidious with Pyle and unconvincingly critical with the priests. Not being fully satisfied with them, Fowler is prompted to take recourse to an attitude that constitutes his essential nature. Fowler is stubbornly imprudent.

The priest in The Power and the Glory can seek truth in life and emancipate himself from his sinister longings in a righteous life. That is one with a super-empirical level of approach in all the affairs of his life. The priest can cease to have contradictions between his religious conviction of a dedicated service and the example of Padre Jose. What bewilders him in the case of this corrupt priest is his so easy acceptance of corrupt priesthood and an extravagance in profession for material ends. A sublime conduct and an exalted behaviour do not become an unflinching employment in the hands of the priest. His sense of selflessness starts becoming a distant end when the superempirical note in his life does not

1. The Quiet American, P. 43.

gain the meaning it needs.

The priest's independent analytic self is not characterised by a harmony of its own. Its lack of complicity in its own sphere shows a discontinuity between his sense of being-in-the world and Creator-of-the-world. Between God and him, the oneness and singularity that should take place in actual life does not become so. For instance, his attitude towards the half-caste, whom he always considers the epitome of prudence, is notable. When no sense of his togetherness exists with his companion characters as in the case of the half-caste, the holy God is pictured as a criminal and father. The priest, who does not assign himself to a distinct whole of his own, cannot draw sustenance for a heavenly possibility inasmuch as his discomfiture is contained in the cosmic picture. Its plurality and absence of a single flowing spirit is his own. He, therefore, becomes a sinner.

The concept of perfection that emerges from these conclusions is an exercise of a convincing personal morality. The priest can be confident of a worthy happy life, if, for instance, communion with God becomes a self-initiated personal act of high faith and integrity. The priest, who knows that such a correspondence can only be of souls, has to be orthodox about it. The flexibility that appears in life and fills him with its cumulative wreckage can turn out to be consolation. By ordering and subjecting his physical-mental-moral state to an all-embracing ethic of his own, he can safeguard his righteousness.

When we see the priest a failure in the novel from this perspective, the point becomes unmistakably clear. The priest's spiritual sense unfolds a path that accords with his self. He is

motivated towards it as a result of meaningless life and believes in it. The direction that becomes luminous, therefore, is by his own sense of discretion. The priest can actualize God as a potent force in the minds of his congregation. He can do so by the virtuous example of his prayers and mass-meetings. He can commend people to a grateful and merciful God. This implies having an elevated conception of divine life and consequent preparedness to execute it fully. The journey of the priest's life, from the beginning in the novel, has a supreme object. He understands himself to be a sinner, the one dethroned from God's kingdom. The world presents him always with his indecisive fate and the multiplicity of life-problems or the characters he comes across show a refracting angle of life. Constancy is not a virtue and sacrifice is just preposterous. While becoming involved in himself and impersonal to the world, he is reversing a natural course by being uncharitable. Thus, the lines, 'You could trust God to make allowances, but you couldn't trust small-pox, starvation men...'[1] suggest the vicissitudes of a situation that have a concrete impact on the priest. When he is impelled to give a decisive verdict upon himself in such crucial situations, his course can be clearly either of the two : good or evil.

Greene's Scobie in <u>The Heart of the Matter</u> shows that sin lies in many things. What is symbolic of good serves as an instrument of evil. What is regrettable as abstract in life becomes singularly concrete from the point of view of an eternal virtue. Scobie's sincerity, fellow-feeling are all virtues in the novel, and

1. The Power and the Glory, P. 66.

yet from them stems and thrives evil. Wilson, Yusef are links in the chain and to them Scobie is incommunicable and shallow. The point is the extensive nature of sin permeating Greene's works and thereupon the improbability of atonement of sins in another life. With this feeling Scobie does not subject himself to a single divine casuality. Since he has to put up an appearance of virtues like the other characters in the novel, he cannot always manifest them as their bond-servant and does not do so.

Thus the presence of evil has no fixed formation. Scobie does not discover any content of the eternal in a life whose chief feature is indefinite. Wilson and Yusef, who do not find anything beyond their concrete situation, sound flat and whimsical to Scobie. Scobie, on getting caught up in the network of his relations with other characters where God also figures, cannot identify himself with its complexity. That points to various physical, psychical and spiritual aspects, for which Scobie cannot find sufficient connection in his self and in Christian truth.

The fragmentary nature of life-experience in conjunction with an unfettered freedom conveys for Greene's characters a terrible impulse for evil. Scobie rebounds upon himself when an image of goodness that he ought to embody in himself comes up before him. Yusef and Wilson do not see eye to eye with him in this respect. All value of life lies for Yusef in the sole motivation of his self. His law of life is to see its ultimate good alone and so he turns out to be profoundly selfish. A flattering superficial man with high profession of friendship and trust, he tactfully manages the smuggling of diamonds. The denouncing act on part of Scobie shows

how he is dragged in the world of sin in spite of his will against it. His free-will does not have its links with higher ethics. Scobie, who does not discern the meeting-point of the two in his situations, is sinful. There come into picture regrettable lapses on Scobie's part.

The above evaluation shows a void in Scobie which precedes all other considerations. In the novel he is assailed by it and when this operates as a priori value, all assumptions of high integrity are trust into the background. Scobie feels moved by the suicide of Pemberton and the image of it persists in his mind. His predominant emotion of pity finds a channel of expression. Scobie's woe, in reality and internal monologue, becomes rational by the surrounding environment. The following statement well sums up his position. This is an evidence of his sin. 'He didn't drink, he didn't fornicate, he didn't even lie, but he never regarded the absence of sin as a virtue.'[1]

Now, Scobie gets entangled in a situation notwithstanding his ideal of free detachment. That is because of a romantic strain in him. The difference with an accepted notion of life is indicative of a far-off destiny which can fall his way only in a different manner. Its indeterminate character is Scobie's despondency. More shattering it eventually passes through his mind and spirit insofar as the concept of transcendence implies for him a suicidal end of his life-denying will.

We now take up Querry's case in <u>A Burnt-out Case</u> and see, to what extent, his pain, the heavenly possibility and his innate good-

1. The Heart of the Matter, P. 109.

ness can be juxtaposed. The forces that shake Querry are three-dimensional. He has an insight into his superior nature in comparison with other characters in the novel. Secondly, the spiritual principle for him implies a constant effort and finally his community with other characters is a stiff formality. Querry's position, therefore, is much different. All threads of his life establish their essence and that precedes any other consideration.

Querry's world shows a uniform approach in its co-ordination with other elements in it. His obligation towards other characters like Father Thomas and Mrs. Ryker is a strict conduct with bare limits of response to their queries alone. He lives by virtue of his own personality which has no repressed fear. Querry has a divine mission in him and he is governed by it fully. The final approval in the dynamic course of life is to be provided by his spirit. He is frankly critical of Father Thomas's scruples such as grace, mercy, when they do not apply to real life. Their material significance is of a different nature and does not invariably speak for the substance contained in these concepts. Querry, despite his clear-cut attitude, becomes a sinner.

Querry's error is not reducible to any cause-and-effect equation. This being inherently true of life, there cannot be any law for Querry, which implies a strict observance of it. Querry's attitude towards Mrs. Ryker is unconventional and has the total effect of his person. Being fluctuating, this is remarkably perverse and psychologically decadent. For to Mrs. Ryker, the only thing to be affirmed is an immense love of Querry. The divine ingredient in Querry's person includes Mrs. Ryker's love but does

not discriminate it in a proportionate manner. Querry, who has to surrender everything to divine purpose in his life, fails to give a clear account of his love for Mrs. Rycker. Another consideration with him is the supra-rational level of his goodness, which again is beyond the law of sheer reciprocity.

Querry's consolation is in acting up to the needs of the hour. He shows no inclination for intimacy with Mrs. Rycker but becomes so in his endeavour to tide over her crisis with Mr. Rycker. Querry's love is an inter-connected part of his concept of fluid life.. He is fully alive to it and embodies in himself Sartre's view that existence precedes essence. All considerations regarding the indefinite position of Mrs. Rycker occur to him in order to show her vital love. Querry, thus, appears stoical to Mrs. Rycker and the well-characterial features of his character come out. The area of love in him is one divinely ordained and in his composite nature, Mrs. Rycker's love becomes transient.

Querry's self finds contingent satisfaction in his love for Mrs. Rycker. Querry feels alienated from other characters in the novel on account of his synthesis of thought and feeling. He becomes sinner in their eyes, when he is inexplicable to them. Characters like Rycker want to ascribe evil to Querry's nature and seek an evidence of it in his life. Thus, it seems clear that Querry should subscribe to Sartre's viewpoint and make life a valuable adventure. For then, Querry can affirm his good nature.

Querry in one of his dreams records as follows : 'He dreamt of a girl whom he had once known and thought he loved. She came to him in tears because she had broken a vase which she valued, and she

became angry with him because he didn't share her suffering.'[1] Querry's thirst for heavenly peace can only have a negative place for ordinary woman's love. His excessive joy being one of the spirit and his soul-life being the converging point in his mind, the dream-image of a woman's love becomes a transfiguring feature in it. When his love becomes pervasive and flows towards Mrs. Ryker and other characters, it proceeds like an all-embracing phenomenon of human existence of Nature. Querry's love is effective in its being transmitted. Querry, who cannot rightly value the woman's faithful feelings about the vase becomes evil for her.

Querry suggests an intermediate character when moral norms are not faithfully observed. His love and profession are his forte and an otherness is implicit in his divine making. Querry is overcome by nausea in the withholding of the facts from him and in the chasm between his individual self and social self. The situation referred to in the preceding paragraph, which is a mockery of his love by acting as a mirror for it, proves him to be evil. Greene's characters indeed in his major works except for Brighton Rock are prevented from a deep-seated anger which works its fruition in murder by consciously looking into themselves.

Pinkie's sense of goodness develops only after murdering Hale in Brighton Rock. The circumstances are such that he is caught in the game of pursuer and pursued. To Pinkie, the social ills become so persistent that he does not find an escape from them. The fact about the social situation is entirely the continual stream of sin being passed on from an unknown source. Pinkie is a sinner,

1. A Burnt Out Case, P. 32.

for among the group of his characters like Dallow, Juliitt, Spicer etc., the social good is to assert an irresponsible power, which he relishes. When he is forced to remedy his sinful social self by Ida Arnold, this is indeed a victory for the right and defeat for the wrong.

Pinkie as an active subject arrives at the realisation of the intrinsic badness of society. The guilt to his self-awareness implies a rejection of society. Pinkie is to forget the frontier of time and space and involve himself in a cycle of change. That is to say that his self has to split everything into subject and an object; the former aspect alone has an identity with his subjective self. To Pinkie, this higher truth does suppress the social stimulus of Dallow or Spicer in the later stage of the novel; but this does not completely make for the gratification of his new self.

Pinkie's justification about change in progress and decay does not become so on the ground of dividing units in his mind and spirit. His social association is immutable to him so that an escape from Ida Arnold's chase is sought in a strong defiance of justice and order. Pinkie is identifiable only with the lower rung of the social ladder where rivalry, jealousy makes him an enemy of social justice and equality. In an ultimate unity of his subjective self, his social state is independent of it. Thus mere regeneration does not bring about an end of degeneration, Pinkie remains a sinner. The wretchedness of society merely twists him for a better purpose.

Greene's characters pass through a prolonged study of themselves. Pinkie, when left to himself, is groping in his darkness for an enduring life-attitude. After being thoroughly belied by a double attitude which makes him mock-heroic in her relations with

Rose, he seeks for a new realm of values. For an integrated self admits of no rigid self as manifested in Pinkie's liaison with Rose at the end of the novel. The Christian law of love, being the most harmonious pattern, implies Christian approach for Pinkie in his problems. Thus Pinkie, who has his being-for-other in Rose, is urged to have this obligation. Pinkie's love, then being infinite, will make live his natural love for Rose.

Pinkie's sin is in the nihilating act of his sensibility. Often, at the end of the novel, he feels gripped by a sense of shame and fear over his temporary alliance with Rose. At such moments Pinkie concludes a sense of betrayal in Rose's love. "He said : 'But suppose she killed herself ?' An insane pride bobbed in his breast; he felt inspired; it was like a love of life returning to the blank heart; the empty tenement and then the seven devils worse than the first..."[1] Herein Pinkie portrays his self-torturing desire to flee from Rose; but then, again, this is his isolated reflection when the object Rose is removed from him. Pinkie, who does not achieve a contented love, continues to be in quest of it. That happens as he is not able to remove himself from Rose's love and an attraction for her. Here, for instance, in these lines, Pinkie, who appears arguing for a new life and new love, is, in fact, subject to a condition where Rose's position is taken into account.

Pinkie does not experience a boundless freedom. His horizon becomes expressible when the constraint of Rose's love clings to him. Pinkie's world of self-awareness seem to be threatened by Rose's interference. This becomes magical indeed when the priest speaks of the 'appalling... strangeness of the mercy of God'[1] and insists to

1. Brighton Rock , P. 269.

Rose upon the innocence of her child. Pinkie's combination of a sinful and redemptive consciousness shows in him the limits of his sin. His sense of repentance belongs to his new self.

Greene's characters, who are often half-good and half-evil, fail in their striving towards absolute goodness. Pinkie does not bring to birth a self-contained self and does not become a Christ-like figure, when his redemptive consciousness is at work at the end of the novel. It does not threaten with extinction his demonic world which is only partly being encompassed. Pinkie, like the underground man in Dostoevsky's Notes from Underground, is not saved from being monstrous and a devil. He still appears sadistic with Rose and shares with the underground man a big dose of hatred and revenge upon her. To the underground man, his self despair is a big penalty out of which arises his bitterness.

Greene and Dostoevsky are alike in presenting the fallen man whose substance consists of sin and virtue. To Pinkie, God and the devil's force are constantly blinding him. The church and society do focus his good inasmuch as God's Grace flows to him finally and to a large extent he retires from his gangster criminal world. Like the Grand Inquisitor in The Brothers Karamazov , Pinkie is rebellious against a society and the world which is God-forsaken and where moral presuppositions like sin to be necessarily followed by forgiveness work. Pinkie, who sees a complete absence of social cohesion and a moral conduct which is not subject to any scrutiny or examination, acts in order to jeopardise it.

Pinkie's sinful state is provided by sheer rational formulations of the society or the moral rules of the church. They do not assimilate in them the law Pinkie in his goodness incorporates in

himself. The vast area of his freedom can only work for his good in the Christian law of love. Pinkie, after becoming aware of the divine spark of love in him, does not find its true expression. Society or church, which represent such emotions, is oblivious to them. Pinkie remains tied to his hitherto sinful state in the novel. The obligation of higher love is not fully realised.

Pinkie's newly generated love, thus, does not penetrate sufficiently the society which is not true to itself. For the spirit of this love with Rose cannot work within the calculating frame of society or the church-meaning which are just functional. It is beyond doubt that Pinkie does stress mutual advantage in his love for Rose and is found persuading her to a suicide-pact, on which the devil in him still insists. It is also clear that Pinkie's self does so not for its own good alone but considers Rose's good also.

With the birth of new love, Pinkie's concept of mutual love for Rose is under constant correction and direction. His meeting-point with Rose is only a stage where self's decision to be for itself alone is shattered once for all. The fellowship with Rose binds him for a short spell in view of a future relation in God's kingdom. Pinkie, who is fascinated by notion of the divine, experiences a crucial stage for himself. He is tempted by Rose's love and scared by her information to police. Pinkie's guilt clearly stands as an intervention.

Pinkie does not find any solution in his escape from Rose and Ida Arnold; the one representing his deterministic love and the other a social rationale. With Rose, Pinkie does not experience a heedless love which alone can make it full by inducing a relation-

ship beyond sheer reciprocity. Pinkie who thinks of his positive gains over Rose does not attach them significance. To Ida he is a sinner primarily and, therefore, is mercilessly pursued by her. The social bonds are bound to slacken and creak for a society which reprimands but does not know of its debt to sinners.

Pinkie, who till the end of the novel, is guided by preferential and self-referential motives, considers Rose to be an intruder in the world of his self alone. His love for Rose marred by his keen self-interest is disposed towards its own happiness. Pinkie, thus, is affirming his sin. To him the social norms of Ida Arnold as the due punishment of the guilty fall very much short of the true notion of justice. The Christian pattern seeks to rekindle hope in a love devoid of its divine substance. Pinkie's sin can be shaped towards virtue and his love can be made sacrificing.

Pinkie's sin, we may conclude, lies not in himself or in Rose or in Ida Arnold alone; the three represent a course towards sin and not away from it. Pinkie, in spite of the stirrings of his new divine love, does not make the faint glimmers of it achieve reality in him. For all purposes, his love does not become self-sacrificial. Rose, Greene suggests, must break with him to preserve herself. In the end she is saved by Ida Arnold and does not die.

We can also see Rose's love for Pinkie as authoritative. On being contract-bound to him, she does not develop in herself the new divine love. Pinkie, who cannot be self-giving in his love and receive her co-operation, repeatedly admonishes her with no recompense. Both of them do not participate in a heedless love, which can unite them in real love. Ida Arnold's moral injunction at the end of the novel also speaks only of distributive justice. The

statement, 'It was like when the switch shifts and the signal goes down and the red lamp changes to green and the green engine takes the accustomed rails. It's a strange world, there's more things in heaven and earth ...'[1] is of Greene and makes the point.

Thus the relative justice propounded by Ida does not form the solution. Rose has been saved but Pinkie is condemned as an irredeemable sinner. In the light of heavenly justice, even this sinner is to be owned by the society. For Pinkie's incredible hatred does turn upon him as self-hatred. His love, which starts materialising as self-love, falls short of love of others and Rose, and therein lies Pinkie's continuation in sin.

In The Man Within , Andrews reflects the agony and sweat of a man who is not acceptable to his world. Through him Greene projects his vision of human reality. He is shown to be struggling hard to conquer his baser self. Andrew is a victim of his surroundings. He has no future, no hope, no consolation. His constant instability to face things squarely, his whole schizophrenic personality is shaped by his unhappy past.

Andrews' life has been betrayed and falsified by his father, the leader of smugglers. He lacks the 'certainty of love' although Elizabeth loves him. He is sandwiched between Carlyon, and Elizabeth. In his effort to reconcile the two opposing forces he misses both worlds at once. Andrews argues himself out : " I am a coward and altogether despicable. I know I have not an ounce of courage, that if Carlyle appeared now I'd go down on my knees to him but all I want is a little sympathy"[2] . He is in a real emotional crisis. His moral dilemma stems from the fact that he tries to

1. Brighton Rock , P. 267.
2. The Man Within , P. 17.

change the whole pattern of his life. But the point is : who is going to believe him ? There is none, not even God, who knows the innermost secret of his heart. Andrews is hoping against hope. His death-wish suggests the unrealizable dream to which he has been vainly clinging. He cannot possibly undo the past, cannot retrieve the self, however strong the inner pull might be. Eventually, he has a feeling of temporary release while acting as an informer.

Thus Andrews has betrayed Carlyon; he has betrayed the Sussex folk. He also betrays the redoubtable Elizabeth when he falls in love with Mrs. Farnay. Sin pervades in him. There is a tussle between the sacred and the profane. The theme of betrayal comes to the fore. Andrews has come to suggest double betrayal. He has not only betrayed Carlyon, by sleeping with Lucy, he has virtually betrayed himself.

Andrews finds himself ranged against heavy odds. But he does fulfil his promise to Elizabeth. Does this mean that Andrews has succeeded in his moral struggle against himself and the world ? Perhaps not. Like Scobie in The Heart of the Matter , Andrews has been trying to escape from the tentacles of the world into a world of peace. Both are obsessed with nullity. Andrews takes the knife from the belt of one of the officers assembled at the cottage and kills himself.

The theme of double betrayal makes itself strongly felt in The Name of Action. Anne-Marie betrays her husband. She cannot consummate their marriage. Then she is also found sleeping with Chant telling the revolutionaries that the dictator (Anne-Marie's husband) is impotent. In the novel, reality is nebulous and thickly overlaid. The spotlight seems to be turned on the crisis of the

soul which individual characters face. Ghent gets lost in platitudes like sin and redemption.

Rumour at Nightfall is again an "involved tale of double betrayal during the Carlist Wars in Spain"[1], like in The Man Within and Rumour at Night fall, here also Greene is grappling with the question of innocence betrayed and falsified. It is through Skinner in Stamboul Train, that Greene exposes the degenerate, corrupt world that confronts. Out of tension between dream and reality arises the sense of human predicament and sin with which Greene is immensely involved in most of his works.

It's a Battlefield like England Made Me, presents before us the agonized experience of innocents caught in the demonic world. Justice is an uncertain commodity in It's a Battlefield. If the Commissioner is pre-occupied with the incomprehensibility of justice, Conrad Drover and Jim Drover are victims of an unjust world. Conrad Drover sleeps with Milly and betrays his innocence. The compulsive nature of reality makes itself felt in human aberrations. Drover corrupts himself under stress. His sense of sin is inherent in the social system. He is emotionally warped. His morbid sensibility leads him to challenge the world, challenge the much-vaulted justice of the world. He vainly cries : "All I want is justice."[2]

England Made Me is again a throw-back to the torn world, a world that has lost its equilibrium, a world without justice. The novel derives its force from the varying shades of Anthony's

1. Jones, D.P., Graham Greene, op. Cit., P. 17.
2. It's Battlefield, P. 98.

and Kate's predicament. Neither Kate nor Anthony is fully adjusted to the world. Anthony's makeshifts, deception and sordiness reflect the crumbling structure of society. Corruption draws its reality from the external world, and is not identifiable with the supernatural or the "numinous, having a relationship with a God on the grounds that no human being could conceivably accept such evil on earth unless it came from outside himself."[1]

Raven in A Gun for Sale is so much involved in himself and in his "private misery that he sees all manifestations of the external world as a conspiracy of which religion is just one more facet"[2]. Anne is to Raven, what Rose is to Pinkie in Brighton Rock. In any case, he is going to betray Anne, who, in turn, betrays Raven. The cross-betrayal persists throughout. Raven says : "I have been condemned to suffer all my life"[3]. Raven is socially conditioned. Sin in both Raven and Pinkie come up out of injustice and brutality of the world. Raven murders because he must exist.

The Ministry of Fear provides "the truest picture of our own inescapable environment"[4]. Rowe is doomed to pity. He is fortuitously "involved with a ring of enemy agents and has to flee from a murder staged to frighten him"[5]. Like D. Rowe lives in an atmosphere of pity and anxiety. An innocent man, he is on the run. He is not a criminal, but the world would not believe him. He is

1. James D.P., Graham Greene, P. 25.
2. Ibid, P. 60.
3. A Gun for Sale, P. 184.
4. Lehman, J., I am My Brother, P. 225.
5. Wyndham, F., Graham Greene, P. 18.

compelled to prove his innocence and in the process, he becomes an outlaw.

The Comedians presents a 'characteristic world of our times', a horrifying world which militates against civilized life. At a personal level a warmer tolerance is easily discernible. Greene is kind to "the sinner and the idealist alike, to the committed and the uncommitted, to the man who plays a part and the man who is foolishly honest to himself."[1] Man has to defend humanity in its unilateral fight against the evil of the world. Violence is evil. This must be eliminated. Dr. Magiot Calls for action. He assertively says : "Catholics and communists have committed great crimes, but at least they have not stood aside, like an established society, and been indifferent. I would rather have blood on my hands than water like pilate"[2] .

The Comedians is the apotheosis of Greene's humanism. Walter Allen rightly observes : "It is rather as though Greene now sees life as an endless, bitter, desperate Resistance struggle against the elements in it that make for evil"[3] . We are struck by the radical tone of The Comedians where the priest says :

"Our heart goes out in sympathy to all who are moved to violence by the suffering of others. The Church condemns violence, but it condemns indifference more harshly. Violence can be an oppression of love, indifference never."[4]

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1. Hettle, G., Books & Bookmen, P. 28.
2. The Comedians, P. 286.
3. Allen, W., The London Magazines, P. 74.
4. The Comedians, P. 283.

Greene explores the dimension of evil in Doctor Fischer of Geneva or The Bomb Party in the context of insatiable capitalist greed. Greene takes a hard, Catholic look at the rich who undergo the severest humiliations for more and more money.

Dr. Fischer, the inventor of Dentophil Bouquet, a best-selling toothpaste, is a millionaire, who finds to his great chagrin that despite his millions, his wife still seeks the company of a poor clerk who shares her love of music - about which Dr. Fischer knows next to nothing. Out to the quick, he has the clerk dismissed from his job.

Dr. Fischer's wife, lonely and frustrated, wills herself to death. Thereafter begin Dr. Fischer's notorious parties, in which a group of "toads" (as Dr. Fischer's daughter, Anna Louise, calls them) constantly fawn and toady upon him in order to get fabulous gifts. He begins his revenge with Mr. Kips who, being privy to his wife's affair, was the first witness, to the doctor's humiliation. He makes Mr. Kips assume the shape he has chosen for him and by a complete physical transformation turns him into a deformed object. He could have rebelled, but cannot give up the large retaining fee he gets from Dr. Fischer for doing nothing.

The narrator of the novel, Alfred Jones, lost his left hand in the great London blitz when he was working as a fireman. He accidently meets Anna Louise and falls in love with her. It is thus that Jones gets an opportunity to know the legendary Dr. Fischer. He is invited to one of the parties of his father-in-law. Anna Louise warns him against her father whom she hates for having made her mother miserable. She tells Jones that her father who has "a monopoly in mockery"[1], believes that the "rich are greediest,

1. Dr. Fischer of Geneva or The Bomb Party, p. 17.

(having) no pride except in their possessions"[1] . Forewarned, Jones is confident of resisting any attempts on Dr. Fischer's part to convert him into another'toad'. His poverty is almost a passport to safety.

Dr. Fischer considers his own greed "a little more like God's"[2] . He thinks that God is greedy, for "judging from the world he is supposed to have made, he can only be greedy for our humiliation"[3] . To reinforce the parallelism with God, says Dr. Fischer : "Don't I wish to humiliate ? And they say he made us in his image. Perhaps he found he was a rather bad craftsman and he is disappointed in the result"[4]

Through the characterisation of Dr. Fischer Greene raises some significant questions : What is the worth of man in a capitalist society ? What are the choices left to him in a commercial culture thriving on the cash-nexus ? What happens to the finer aspirations of man in such a situation ? And, the answers are suggested in stray comments. "He [Dr. Fischer] would certainly have despised Christ for being the son of a carpenter, if the New Testament had not proved in time to be such a howling commercial success."[5]

Greene's last novel <u>The Captain and the Enemy</u> (1988) again reveals the frailty of human beings and the deceits they are capable of, along with their penchant for corrupting their own happiness and that of others. The narrator, Victor Baxter, is kidnapped

1. Dr. Fischer of Geneva or the Bomb Party, P. 18.
2. Ibid, P. 63.
3. Ibid, P. 72.
4. Ibid, P. 97.
5. Ibid, P. 119.

(albeit willingly and with the tacit consent of his father) as a twelve-year-old, from his school boarding, by the Captain. The Captain takes him upto London, to Lisa, who wants to be a surrogate mother to Victor (or Jim, as he would henceforth like to be known). Jim refers to his father as 'the Devil', the term used by his dead mother. As the story unfolds, it is revealed that Lisa once had an affair with the Devil who caused her to lose the baby. The Devil rationalises later that they were only bed-fellows not lovers and that "She wanted to have a child. Not me"[1] ! It is then the captain supports Lisa and the Devil's child, Jim, by hook or by crook.

For the Captain, a man of many names, each name fronts a different role, from the aristocratic Colonel Claridge to the plebian Mr. Smith - 'an actor in costume', is Jim's first impression of the Captain. Jim readily responds to the mystery and uncertainty that envelop the captain and perceives him as an adventurer modern Drake or Morgan belonging to the mysterious world of Valparaiso - a pirate swooping down on the Spanish mule-trains of the Silver Mines of the New World. The Devil saw the captain as a liar and a crook, 'a dangerous underground type'. Lisa simply worshipped him, unconditionally accepting his long absences and happy to have him back. But it was as King Kong, it would seem, that the captain saw himself, supporting Lisa and Jim against all odds like King Kong protecting the blonde girls though every man's hand was against him. When the lights come on after the movie, Jim observes : "I saw that the captain had tears in his eyes"[2] .

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1. The Captain and the Enemy, P. 9.
2. Ibid , P. 78.

Though no romantic thoughts are ever exchanged between the Captain and Liza, there is always an undercurrent of genuine affection and care that flows through their relationship and the Captain's crimes are clearly motivated by the need to provide 'security' for Liza.

The Captain's dangerous brushes with the law are revealed as flashbacks, but he always manages to keep one step ahead of the police by "keeping everything hidden, even from himself."[1] Finding England too hot, the Captain gets away, entrusting Liza with Jim. Jim's betrayal (of himself as much as of the Captain) begins when he moves out on getting a job, though the captain continues to believe that Liza has Jim to look after her. Jim is trapped in a web of deceit arising out of his contacts with the Devil, who tempts him to encash a cheque sent to Liza by the captain. Concealing the fact of Liza's death in hospital following an accident, Jim then flies to Panama and is met at the airport, in Mr. Smith's temporary absence, by Mr. Quigly, ostensibly a financial correspondent.

For once, the Captain lets down his guard with Jim and even takes him to show the little plane which he flies for his 'operations'. Betrayed by Jim to Quigly and stunned by Jim's revelation of Liza's death, the captain dies in an abortive aerial attempt to help his Sandinista friends by blowing up Nicaraguan President Somoza. Jim, in turn, is killed as he is about to catch a flight to Valparaiso.

Through the tale runs the Greene theme of loyalty and betrayal - human predicament and sin - the strong ties of loyalty

1. The Captain and the Enemy, P. 60.

binding the captain and the seeds of betrayal sprouting within his young protege, Jim. "Will you be sure to know the good side from the bad, the captain from the enemy ?"[1] There is a sense of impending doom with Jim rationalising every step of betrayal. In the midst of the excitement, Greene injects a spirit of moral enquiry, with theological 'good' and 'evil' presented as distinct from 'Kindness'.

From what goes above, we find that the sense of human predicament and sin persists throughout Greene's works. He is "possessed of a passionate sense of virtue, which makes sacred the foulest of sinners, and differentiates them from their crimes and servilities"[2]. Perhaps that is why Greene's heroes, even in his crime novels, enlist our sympathy.

We see sin is the 'leit motif' in Greene's novels. His is a "bitter universe in which the Devil is utterly malignant and baleful"[3]. Evil is omnipotent, sin is inevitable. To "define and objectify the evil, to extricate it from the relativity of values and abstractions is the ultimate motive of Greene's work"[4]. In one of the almost criticism yet written of Greene, George Woodcock states : "Theologically Greene may recognise original sin, but in his writings, the evil in man is always less than evil without arising from the collective activities of society. His observation of humanity forces him into a revolutionary attitude"[5].

Greene portrays sin in its all dimensions.

1. The Captain and the Enemy, P. 117.
2. Church, R., British Authors, P. 128.
3. Ibid, P. 128.
4. Zabel, M., Craft and Character in Modern Fiction, P. 382.
5. G. Woodcock, quoted in A Concise Encyclopaedia of Modern World Literature, Ed. G. Grigson, Hutchinson, 1963, P. 199.