Part III
Chapter 5

Greene’s Women

Having discussed a few leading ladies who played a prominent role in Greene’s life, we may now turn our attention to some of the prime women characters he had created in his fiction. An analysis of the personalities of these women would enable us to gain an insight into Greene’s mindscape while he was in the workshop of his creativity. For a proper understanding of these significant women, brief summaries of the works of Greene in which they appear are furnished at the end of this chapter.

Greene’s first successful novel, The Man Within, written when he was hardly twenty-four, has the nineteen year old Elizabeth as its central woman character. As the title of the novel indicates, it deals with the theme of the divided self of the man of the novel – Francis Andrews. Though Greene himself
condemned the book as 'very sentimental' (Greene, 1971, p.140), what is significant about it is that it reveals the two halves of the divided self of this man as ruled by two women – the carnal half by the lascivious and lusty Lucy, and the spiritual half by the saintly Elizabeth. Lucy makes her appearance in the novel only for a short while. But her brief appearance is sufficient to lure the hero into doing two things which he was unwilling to do in the beginning.\(^1\) Having done them, he regrets his folly, and his remorse at his second deed is so very strong that he is ridden with guilt throughout his life.

The influence of Elizabeth on the contrary is morally superior. But the superior the influence, the more devastating its impact on Andrews. Born the daughter of a man whose memory was not registered in her consciousness or even unconscious, Elizabeth was brought up by her mother on the money she obtained by taking in lodgers in her house. She speaks about it to Andrews: "... I can’t remember who my father was. I think he must have died or left my mother" (Greene 1976, p.74). When Elizabeth was hardly eleven years old her mother died, and she

\(^1\) (i) To testify against the gang of smugglers of which he also was a member and (ii) to have sex with Lucy.
had to cook and keep house for the lodger who had purchased the house from her mother prior to her death.

The man was kind to Elizabeth in his own way. He kept her in food and clothing and sent her to school. It appeared as if he was satisfied in watching Elizabeth grow through the years. But just before her eighteenth birthday, while Elizabeth was in her room taking off her clothes at night, the man entered the room with a strap in his hand to punish her for an act of rebellion. Looking at Elizabeth the angry look in his eyes changed in one moment to amazement, and he dropped the strap. Later he candidly expressed his desire to have her, but Elizabeth held him off with tricks and played on his fear with quotations from the Bible. She later traded on his desire for her, and gave him to understand that one day she might come to him voluntarily, if he desisted from forcing her into it. Thus she held him off till he died.

It was while his dead body was lying in a coffin at her house that Andrews, a man little over middle height, slightly built, with frightened obstinate eyes, came to her seeking shelter from his pursuers whom he had betrayed. Surprisingly, the young Elizabeth who looked like a wavering “slim upstrained
candle flame”, greeted him calmly with a gun in hand. “Stay where you are”, were her first words to him (Greene, 1976, p.6). Ironically, the command fragmented him, and he could never ever again stay together where he was, as later events show.

The intimidation, intimacy, and indifference she employed in her attitude towards Andrews, drew him closer to her\(^2\). Circumstances constrained him to acquiesce to Elizabeth’s suggestion to pretend as her brother, and Andrews was carried away by her little acts of kindness, which protected her as well as him, from his enemies. The magic in her eyes and arguments persuaded Andrews to believe that it was best in his interests to testify in a court of law against his enemies. As a mark of gratitude, Andrews left behind him the only weapon he had, to enable Elizabeth to protect herself in case his enemies returned again.

Cowardly in his make up, Andrews could not bring himself to testify against the smugglers whom he had betrayed. However, under the influence of Lucy, the lustful mistress of the prosecution lawyer who promised to satisfy him sexually, he gave

\(^2\) It is now generally accepted that Elizabeth is the fictional version of Vivien.
evidence at the court. There, when insinuating remarks were made against Elizabeth, Andrew’s feeling of responsibility were aroused, and he vehemently protested. When the smugglers were acquitted in spite of his evidence, Andrews became frightened, and for better safety from his enemies, he went to Lucy’s room, and yielded to the temptation of the flesh put forward by Lucy. After engaging in the *sexual act*, Andrews was ridden with *feelings of guilt* and *remorse* that he had betrayed Elizabeth.

   When informed that Elizabeth’s safety was in peril because the smugglers intended to punish her for shielding him, Andrews rushed to her cottage to warn her of the imminent danger. Devoid of other fit human company, Elizabeth wanted Andrews to stay with her, and she bewitched him by her charm. Having won him firmly to her side by boosting his morale with ‘praise’,³ she however showed him a piece of her mind: “But all the same, I’ll do what I think is right . . . I love you, but if you can’t take my terms, you must go” (Greene, 1976, p.203). Elizabeth’s reaction in this context goes very much contrary to what Phyllis Chesler stated

³ “One of the most useful factors in conditioning man is praise . . . if praise is applied in the correct dosage a woman will never need to scold.” Esther Vilar (1972). *The Manipulated Man*. N. Y: Farrar, Straus and Girous. p.52.
about women to New York Times: “Many women still want to live in the Castle, still believe in the myth of rescue by marriage and still believe in Prince Charming . . .” (Paludi, 1998). Young as she was, Elizabeth was intelligent to realize that men suffered from an addiction to praise and the best way to hook them was to repudiate their advances with baits of praise.

The bewitched Andrews couldn’t leave Elizabeth like that, and he does everything that she commanded him to do, meticulously as a penance for his action of making her angry and cross. He apologised several times, and Elizabeth on her part played on Andrew’s sensibilities very successfully. Whenever he harped on his cowardly temperament, she filled him with necessary courage by furnishing evidence of Andrew’s “three specific acts of courage”\(^4\) in the past (Greene, 1976, p.210). She assured him that if he showed courage a fourth time also, it would guarantee permanent peace for both of them.

Andrews’s sheepish nature however overpowered him when the final test of courage was demanded of him. He left the

\(^4\) (i) He agreed to go to Lewes, to testify against the smugglers whom he had betrayed. (ii) left the only weapon of his self defence (a knife) for the safety of Elizabeth. (iii) came back to Elizabeth’s cottage to warn her against the danger imminent to her.
defenceless Elizabeth at the mercy of his enemies, and ran away to secure additional help. Elizabeth killed herself in the meantime, for she felt that she may have to betray Andrews.

Andrews after a short while returned to the scene. Moved with guilt and pity, he decided to own up the responsibility of the deed. He confessed to the officers who arrived on the scene that he had killed Elizabeth. By this final act of courage Andrews not only compensated for his cowardice, but also killed his father in him, who was responsible for making him what he was: ‘... It's not a man's fault whether he is brave or cowardly. It's all in the way he is born. My father and mother made me. I didn't make myself' (Greene, 1976, p.46). Had it not been for the 'saintly Elizabeth', Andrews would have existed for some more years at least!

**England Made Me**, a personal favourite of Graham Greene – “I have always had a soft spot in my heart for my fifth published novel England Made Me . . .” (Greene, 1980, p.34) – contains in it **Kate Farrant** as its central character. A remarkable creation of Greene, she is the sun around which the other planets of the novel revolve. It is significant that the novel begins and ends with
her appearance and decision to disappear from the scene of action of the narrative.

At the opening of the novel we find her anxiously waiting for her brother like a jilted lover, and at the turn of the last leaf of the book we find her deciding to leave Sweden for she had seen the corpse of her brother being licked by the flapping flames of a crematorium. The object of her incarnation had been achieved!

The thirty-three year old Kate, senior to her twin brother Anthony by half an hour, embodies in her almost all the qualities of a Greene woman. In the pursuit of virtues like reliability and efficiency, she had outstripped her brother, but had left him in the process, 'charm' which would have served any woman better.

Born as the children of a conventional father, the twins, Kate and Anthony, lead a joint yet several lives. Kate used to know when Anthony was in pain and Anthony used to know if Kate was miserable. Anthony was a rolling stone all throughout his life, and he couldn't stick to anything. Kate too was not different in the beginning. She started her career as a nurse in a hospital, but couldn't continue there long. Anthony had come to see her during her training, wanting to know whether he could
sell a vacuum cleaner to the matron. Their outing for the cinema and the club, and Kate’s behaviour immediately thereafter, convinced the matron that Kate was unsuited for nursing.

When Anthony went abroad, Kate tried her hand at bookkeeping and shorthand. Five years at the dingy counting-house at Leather Lane secured for her a position at Krogh’s. Anthony was for her a weakness and, weaknesses can sometimes be very strong. From the moment she joined Krogh’s, Kate had been planning and saving for securing a position for Anthony, beside her at Krogh’s.

The incestuous love Kate felt for Anthony was sufficient for her to throw to the winds all feminine impulses in her, save that of having sex with him. The ordinary human inhibition regarding sexual desire never checked her. To her Anthony was more than a brother. He was the ghost that warned her, the experience she had missed, the pain, fear, despair and disgrace, she never felt. She couldn’t do without him because he was everything for her, except success.

Dexterously she played her cards at Krogh’s, and soon she became “invaluable” (Greene, 1970, p.80) to Eric Krogh. Having
become Krogh’s mistress, she cleverly weaned Krogh away from his personal protector, Fred Hall, who was his close associate from the very beginning of his career. This terrier like protector, Kate thought, will hinder her in her attempts to bring Anthony in the employ of Krogh. Subtly she convinced Hall that he was not of any use to Krogh, and kept him out of bounds. Both Hall and Kate were people with the same ideas; the difference lay in the persons they served. Hall was deeply devoted to Krogh, but Kate’s loyalties lay with Anthony. Hall’s absence at Krogh’s side paved the way for Kate to persuade Anthony to come over to Krogh.

The undistinguished devotion of Kate towards him startled Anthony. Two great standards, “one for the men and another for the women, were the gate posts of his brain” (Greene, 1970, p.25). He mistook Kate’s concern for him as family affection. Kate however emphatically refuted it. She told Anthony that she had schemed everything in such a way that Krogh will have to take him in his employ. She did all these not because she loved Krogh, but because she loved Anthony. “I love you. I’ll come back to London with you tomorrow if he won’t give you a job”, she declared to Anthony (Greene, 1970, p.54).
Kate was such a clever manipulator that others including Anthony, thought that she was fond of Krogh. Krogh, the internationalist on his part, felt that he could “always ... trust” her (Greene, 1970, p.94). But she emphatically asserted to Anthony, “I’ve never loved him [Krogh]. I’d have despised him if I loved him . . . . We need things of which we can think, not things we only feel. He thinks in figures, he doesn’t feel vague things about people” (Greene, 1970, p.136).

Even though she had been Krogh’s mistress for several years, she had desired sex with him only once. And that too because she had made Krogh, Anthony, by a clever trick of transference. Krogh had invited an ambassador for dinner. While they talked business in one of the rooms, the first secretary who was tall as Anthony with a scar like Anthony’s under his eye, pulled at Kate’s dress. Kate wanted to let him do what he wanted with her. But for fear that Krogh and the Ambassador may be back any moment, she couldn’t engage in the act. That night she desired Krogh, ‘because of that man’s scar’ (Greene, 1970, p.64).

At one point of their relationship Krogh proposed to Kate: “We’ve known each other for a good many years now, Kate. Will you marry me ?” (Greene, 1970, p.141). Kate’s reaction was
instantaneous: “A wife, you mean, doesn’t have to give evidence? Is that true in Sweden as well as in England? . . . I shall want a settlement for myself.” When Krogh readily agrees to the demand, she adds, “And something, too, for Anthony” (Greene, 1970, p.141). Her thought at the moment was that she might have been marrying Anthony, and not Eric at all.

Kate believed in no scruples when she got what she wanted most. Unlike his brother who was not “dishonest enough” (Greene, 1970, p.11), Kate was willing to go to any length because she had perceived that perseverance paid. In spite of it all she had one virtue; she pitied the man whom she had “mercilessly used” (Greene, 1970, p.139), supplying him whatever he needed, just to secure what she aspired after. “She was like a dark tunnel connecting two landscapes” (Greene, 1970, p.139), on one side the huddled houses, and on the other, magnificent and posh villas.

When crossed, Kate behaves wildly; she strikes at Anthony’s face with a clenched fist. When frustrated she is even more violent; she drives at Anthony’s fingers with a penknife. Anthony being conversant with the behaviour of sex starved and neurotic women was never shocked at these tactics. At Kate’s
proclamation, “I love you because you are the only damned man in the world I love”, Anthony jeers jovially, “Brother and Sister”. For Anthony, “Love” and “in love” were greatly different (Greene, 1970, p.186).

The thought that she was sterile does not worry Kate at all. The wish to have children is totally absent in her, and she declared that she never wanted them. Her sterility as far as she was concerned, had set her free to be on her own – to be with Krogh or Anthony. Narcissistic in her behaviour, Kate is fastidious about her looks, and meticulous in her job. Such efficiency often irritated Anthony, and when he comes into her office to tell her about his fateful decision to leave Krogh, she arranges the opened letters in two piles leaving everything neat before she speaks to him: “Even her face was arranged carefully, ... in terms of affection, the right measure of affection: not yours sincerely, yours devotedly, yours passionately, but simply ‘Love from Kate’” (Greene, 1970, p.183).

When Anthony makes it known to Kate that he intends to throw away his potential for prosperity, Kate rightly presumes
that it is Loo’s\textsuperscript{5} doing. She tries to dissuade him, but for the first time wearily admits that, “A sister’s handicapped . . . I can’t appeal to you like Loo can; you’d think it indecent to say you loved me” (Greene, 1970, p.185). Besides Kate, this Loo too, has contributed a great deal to the hastening of the sealing of Anthony’s fate.

When the fear of the untoward happening to Anthony looms large before her, Kate wanted to pray:

\begin{quote}
I love him more than anything in the world; no, inexact, go nearer truth: I love no one, nothing but him; therefore give him me, let me keep him; never mind what he wants, save me, the all-important me, from pain\textsuperscript{6} (Greene, 1970, p.195).
\end{quote}

But pruned by life and developed by dangers along one line, she couldn’t pray. She preferred to plan, scheme, and devise.

Towards the end of the novel, Anthony is murdered in the fog and thrown into the lake by Fred Hall, Krogh’s self styled protector. Hall was convinced that Anthony’s association with

\textsuperscript{5} Loo, short for Lucia Davidge, an young girl of loose morals with whom Anthony falls in love.

\textsuperscript{6} A perfect example of the prayer of a ‘self consumed woman.’ A self consumed woman never thinks of trashing other people’s minds with her problems. There is no pleasing this woman because her only knowledge of satisfaction is self-gratification. She is consumed with her “self” Zubaty, 1993, p.111.
Kate, and Kate’s *zealous* attachment to Anthony, had given Anthony access to the fraudulent transactions of Krogh’s industrial empire. The *telepathy* that had helped Anthony and Kate to know about the misery of each other, did not work at this fateful moment. Hall however was *intelligent* enough not to harm Kate. He had sensed Kate as dynamite because of Krogh’s attachment to her.

Minty, the misogynist journalist who had been a friend of Anthony, was at the funeral site, and he watched Krogh and Hall – the brain and the hand – marching out side by side, from the crematorium. Kate now came out alone, and Minty wanted to know what Kate planned to do, being certain of Krogh’s involvement in the murder of Anthony by Hall. Standing there she awed Minty with her quiet, “moneyed mourning”:

> . . . a few days ago I could have ruined them. A word to Battersons. But what would have been the use? There’s honour among thieves. We’re all in the same boat . . . Stealing a livelihood here and there and everywhere, giving nothing back (Greene, 1970, p.206).

No doubt Greene was right in adjudging Kate as the woman “drawn better than any other” (Donaghy, p.31).
Perhaps if I had wife like that, I’d sleep with niggers too, you’ll meet her soon. She’s the city intellectual. She likes art, poetry. Got up an exhibition of arts for the shipwrecked seamen. You know the kind of thing – poems on exile by aircraftsmen, water-colours by stokers, poker work from the mission schools. Poor old Scobie . . . (Greene, 1948, p.5).

The very first words we hear of Louise Scobie, a major woman character in The Heart of the Matter eloquently expresses Greene’s views on the influence women have over men. Neurotic as she is, Louise undermines the honesty and integrity of her husband Major Scobie, the Assistant Commissioner of Police, regarded even by his enemies as an upright officer.

Aspiring and ambitious, Louise wanted a better place with better climate, better pay, better position, for her husband: apparently ideal qualities in an ordinary woman; in her case however, not at all. In her attempts to secure all these for her husband, she ultimately leads the poor man into damning his own soul by committing suicide. The cruelllest woman of classical English literature, Shakespeare’s Lady Macbeth, too did only wish to make her husband the King of Scotland.

Plain, sarcastic and cruel, Louise hardly had any friend in the English Colony of West Africa. “Ticki, why won’t they like me”
(Greene, 1948, p.38), she enquires despondently to her husband, soon after their return from the exclusive club for English men. For her, only a “new face” that “didn’t know” (Greene, 1948, p.24) was welcome. With her “Lady Bountiful” (Greene, 1948, p.25) manners she estranged every junior officer, and she knew that everyone shunned her company. In her attempts to accumulate evidence to prove that she had friends like others, she displayed her photographs with others in her bedroom.

Fifteen years ago, Scobie thought his wife to be beautiful, and had become a Catholic just to marry her. At that time a white skin would not have “reminded him of an albino” (Greene, 1948, p.12). But fifteen years of married life with her calls up to his mind a gathering of albinos when he looks up at a snap shot of his wife in the company of a few other English women. Huddled up in bed under a mosquito net, she reminds him of a “joint under a meat cover” (Greene, 1948, p.15). That’s the effect of her intimacy with Scobie!

The impression of Scobie about Louise need not be taken as a guide to determine her physical appearance. At least one man, Wilson, falls in love with her at first sight. Whereas people who

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7 Like Scobie, Greene became a Catholic, just to marry Vivien.
knew, pitied Scobie and extended an extra warmth of friendship towards him for being Louise's husband, Wilson who "did not know" (Greene, 1948, p.24), adores her and considers her "too good" (Greene, 1948, p.136) for Scobie. That's the way a man in love feels about the woman he loves.

In spite of her unattractiveness to him, Scobie was bound to her by the pathos of her unhappiness. The elegant little ceremony among laces and candles fourteen years ago in which he promised to ensure her happiness, haunted him always. He never counted the cost for fulfilling his part of the promise. No man with integrity could do otherwise, and Scobie was no exception.

The constant nagging at home, and the subtle means employed by Louise to enhance the enormous pity that Scobie had for her, forced Scobie to knock at several doors to secure enough money to send her to South Africa, as she wished. First, he approached his bank manager for an overdraft; then he felt terrible remorse at not having accepted a bribe from a Portuguese smuggler captain; finally, acting against his conscience he succumbed to the offer of a known delinquent, Yusef, to satisfy her whim. The knowledge that Scobie would be left all alone in
the dirty colony, was not enough to deter her from egging on poor Scobie. She even advises Scobie to do without a cook at home so as to economise on the expenses (Greene, 1948, p.39). What a “self consumed woman”! (Zubaty, 1993, p.111).

With Louise away, Scobie settled at home which was built by a process of accumulation by his wife. For him home meant reduction of things to a firm friendly minimum, and he was feeling comfortable at the process of reduction he had begun. Unluckily for him, another woman now gatecrashed into his life, to seal his doom: a nineteen year old widow, quite unattractive in appearance, *Helen Rolt*. She had survived forty days in an open boat, when she won Scobie's sympathies. Starved of *feminine* contacts, Scobie turned to her for some sort of solace even though her white skin reminded him “of a bone the sea had washed, and cast up” (Greene, 1948, p.142). But, with her *manipulative* ability, she could quickly build up an affair with the fifty year old Scobie.\(^8\)

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\(^8\) The need for sex is very strong in man and its fulfillment gives him intense pleasure (an endorphin is released at the centre of his brain). As a result, he becomes enslaved to the woman who satisfies him sexually. Man's longing for subjection may be a fact of his sexual make up. Zubaty, 1993, pp.93-99.
It was impossible for Scobie to think of her “being saved from the sea, and then flung back like a fish” unworthy of catch (Greene, 1948, p.166). He talked to her about the possibility of securing an employment for her in the Secretariat. One of Scobie’s junior officers, Bagster, had an eye on Helen, but she preferred the fifty year old, married, childless Scobie, to the bachelor Bagster. Scobie was taken by surprise at Helen’s remarks about her late husband: “He’s been dead – how long – is it eight weeks yet? And he is so dead. So completely dead. What a little bitch I must be!” According to her own estimate, she was “Horribly tough” (Greene, 1948, p.163).

One day while the rain surrounded Helen and Scobie falling regularly on the iron roof, Bagster knocked at Helen’s door. She stood pressed against Scobie with her hand on his side, and she looked like an “animal chased to its hole”. When Bagster’s feet receded, she raised her mouth and kissed Scobie. What they thought was safety, proved to be the “camouflage of an enemy” (Greene, 1948, p.169) who works in lessons of friendship, trust and pity. They made love that night, and when Scobie woke up at four in the morning, Helen lay in the “old cramped attitude of someone who has been shot in escaping.” Before his tenderness
and pleasure awoke, Scobie felt that he was looking at "a bundle of cannon fodder." Yet, the first words Helen said when the light had roused her were, "Bagster can go to hell!" (Greene, 1948, p.170).

From then on, Scobie had accepted another contradictory responsibility – besides preserving Louise's happiness, protecting Helen. The incubus of persevering to meet the challenge, enervated him. He turned to his religion, but it was hardly of any use. Feline, feminine charm had him in its grip.

Hearing about Scobie's association and involvement with Helen, Louise hurried home from South Africa. She was careful however not to give any indication to Scobie, as to her knowledge about his affair with Helen. Scobie tried prayer, but the Lord's prayer⁹ lay dead on his tongue. It wasn't his daily bread that he wanted, but so much more. He wanted happiness for others, and solitude and peace for himself. He prayed, "O God give me death before I give them unhappiness" (Greene, 1948, p.202).

Scobie was caught up between the claims of the two women. One teased him with his religion, the other pleaded to continue as his mistress. The villain of the piece, Yusef, played

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on his sensibilities. Finally, Scobie yielded to the *temptation* to protect and preserve the happiness of his women; he committed *suicide* without leaving any trace of evidence to prove his *self-annihilation*.

With Scobie gone, the two women are again at their game. Though she had hit Wilson once, Louise now prepares to accept his love. Helen on her part, decides not to waste her powers at enthralling older men, but chooses to stay with Bagster.

*Sarah Miles*, the *lecherous* yet greatly devout wife of Henry Miles, a top civil servant, is one of the subtly drawn characters of Graham Greene; subtle because she is the *fictional* version of a woman who enamoured him and haunted him as a *passion* all throughout his life. In the novel, *The End of the Affair*, the narrator-author, Maurice Bendrix, chews the cud of his intimate association with Sarah. While doing so, feelings of hatred, and love, alternate in his mind with the regularity of a pendulum's swing.

Born the daughter of a mean woman who had a string of husbands, Sarah, had to tolerate a series of step-fathers in her younger years. Interested in writing a novel in which a top civil
servant is the central character, Bendrix comes into contact with the young, pretty, vivacious Sarah Miles, at a dinner, hosted by her husband. With the cold intention of picking her brain for details regarding her husband, Bendrix took Sarah out for a dinner in early 1939. Suffering from a kind of ‘cophetua complex’, Bendrix couldn’t feel any sexual desire for her at that time. According to him, beautiful women especially if they were intelligent, stirred in him some deep feelings of inferiority.

Sarah however had a way with men. Her way of touching people with her hands as though she loved them, endeared her to hotel waiters as well as the intellectual elite. When Sarah first met Bendrix, she had read his books; but he was careful enough not to make any lengthy mention about it in her conversation with him. Bendrix felt himself “treated at once as a human being rather than as an author” (Greene, 1974, p.22), and was soon drawn to her. He on his part treated her as a person in her own right; not as part of a house like a bit of porcelain, to he handed with care.

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10 Cophetua Complex: difficulty to feel sexual desire without some sense of superiority, mental or physical. Bendrix doubts whether psychologists have yet named it. True; Dictionary of Psychology (1995), Penguin, does not make any mention of such a ‘complex’.
Sex starved as she was – her husband had long ceased to feel any physical desire for her – Sarah was looking for someone to satisfy her lust. It was then that Maurice Bendrix who was short in one of his legs, came her way. Even at that first party, Bendrix saw reflected in a mirror, Sarah separating as though from a kiss with a colleague of Henry, whose wife had run away with an able sea man, a week before. Remembering that kiss, at the end of the party, in spite of his complex, Bendrix gave Sarah a “fumbling kiss” (Greene, 1974, p.29).

A week after that, Bendrix telephoned Sarah and invited her for a film on one of his books. Realizing Bendrix’s capacity to transport her to sexual sublimity, she responded favourably. After the film, they had dinner together, and at dinner they had occasion to discuss a scene in which steak and onions were served to a pair of lovers. Impossible though it may seem, they then fell in love with each other over a dish of onions served to them,11 and leaving the dinner in the middle, they came out with the same intention in their minds, and made love at a nearby hotel. There was absolutely “no pursuit and seduction” (Greene,

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11 Greene’s falling in love with Catharine Walston was also similar. Sherry, 1994, p.21.
1974, p.43). The next four and a half years was for them a period of wild love and *promiscuity*.

Leaving the hotel, they came to her home where Henry was in his study. They went upstairs, and to Bendrix's fear that Henry may come up any moment, Sarah's response was very calm: they can hear him come up, because one of the stairs "always" squeaked (Greene, 1974, p.45). As expected, Henry came up with the squeak of the stairs, only to be sent back by Sarah for a drink.

Sarah's deception of her unsuspecting husband, - her use of caution to evade detection were remarkable prompts Bendrix to suspect that she has other lovers as well. To be the most favoured lover for the moment was not enough for him, and he begins to suffer from a devouring kind of *possessiveness*.

The next day as promised, Sarah telephoned Bendrix and invited him home. Henry being ill was at home, but that did not prevent Sarah and Bendrix from making love on the hard wood floor with a single cushion for support and the door ajar. While Sarah's was lying in the exhaustion of victory after the event, Henry appeared at the door. Contrary to the fears of Bendrix that
Henry's appearance may arouse remorse in Sarah, she was unhaunted by guilt. For her, "remorse died with the act" (Greene, 1974, p.51).

Unlike men who remember, foresee, and doubt, Sarah lived only at the moment. For her eternity was not an extension of time, but a total absence of time. According to Bendrix, Sarah's abandonment to him "touched that strange mathematical point of endlessness, a point with no width, occupying no space" (Greene, 1974, p.52). In spite of it, Bendrix continued to nurse feelings of jealousy at the imagined lovers of Sarah.

Several times he persuaded Sarah to leave Henry and marry him, but it made hardly any impression on Sarah. On the opposite, she had the firm assurance that her marriage to Henry would never be threatened. This enraged Bendrix, but he felt powerless before Sarah's firm commitment to Henry.

The end of the affair however came on 16 June 1944. After making love with Sarah in his apartment, Bendrix had spent everything he had, and was lying back with his head on Sarah's stomach, and her taste in his mouth. One of the V1 robots\textsuperscript{12} crashed down near the building, and Bendrix wanted to go down

\textsuperscript{12} These pilotless aircrafts were used extensively during World War II.
to investigate the extent of damage. To Sarah’s entreaties not to go, he promised that he won’t be a moment. While coming down, the next bomb fell, and he was caught up in the debris. Sarah ran down naked in search of Bendrix, only to see the arm of Bendrix stretching out from under a load of debris. She touched the arm, and was certain that it was a dead hand. She ran up the broken stairs, and knelt down on the floor and prayed. She pressed her nails into the palm of her hands until she could feel nothing but the pain. She prayed for belief in God, and promised that she will give Bendrix up forever, if God let him be alive with a chance to lead a life of his choice.

But for Bendrix it was a strange time. His mind was clear of everything except a sense of tiredness, as though he had been on a long journey. He had no memory of Sarah, and was completely free from anxiety, jealousy, insecurity or hate. His mind was “a blank sheet on which somebody had been on the point of writing a message of happiness” (Greene, 1974, p.74). Suddenly, he became conscious and his memory came back. He had lost two of his teeth, and his mouth was salty with blood. From the shoulder to the knee he was bruised, and he heaved himself free from under the load, and came up.
Sarah was praying still, and she was surprised to see Bendrix alive. The agony of being without Bendrix started for her, now. She couldn’t stay any more there because of her promise. Saying, “You needn’t be so scared. Love does not end just because we don’t see each other” (Greene, 1974, p.5), she walked out.

For Bendrix, this distancing of Sarah was agonising. All his efforts to get in contact with her were thwarted. He felt himself cheated. He thought that Sarah had betrayed him for another lover. Henry also had a similar feeling. Sarah was so adept at deception while she was carrying on her affair with Bendrix, that Henry never suspected any affair between Bendrix and Sarah. He learned about it only later.

Now the situation was quite different. Sarah was very much detached in her behaviour towards everyone. Thoughts of employing a private detective to find out the truth of Sarah’s whereabouts were paramount in Henry’s mind. In a weak moment, he revealed a part of his mind to Bendrix.

Moved to jealously and hatred, Bendrix agreed to undertake the mission of employing an agent. The initial reports of the detective reinforced Bendrix’s suspicions. He was so enraged at
Henry and himself, that he blew his top with great *vehemence*.

He told Henry to his face:

... you were her pimp. You pimped for me and you pimped for them, and now you are pimping for the latest one. The eternal pimp...

You pimped with your ignorance. You pimped by never learning how to make love with her, so she had to look elsewhere. You pimped by giving opportunities... You pimped by being a bore and a fool, so now somebody who isn't a bore and fool is playing about with her... (Greene, 1974, p.69).

To Henry's question, "Why did she leave you?", Bendrix's answer is very curt:

Because I became a bore and a fool too. But I wasn't born one, Henry. You created me. She wouldn't leave you, so I became a bore, boring her with complaints and jealousy (Greene, 1974, pp.69-70).

"Why didn't she leave me?", Henry wanted to know. Bendrix's answer to that question is very pointed; "You have a good safe income. You're a habit she's formed. You're security... You were no more trouble to us than you'd been to others" (Greene, 1974, p.69).

The final report Bendrix obtained later from the detective, nearly one and a half years after Sarah distanced herself from him, filled him with *remorse*. Sarah had been loving him all throughout. In her diary entry dated February 12, 1946, Sarah
had written, "I want Maurice. I want ordinary corrupt human love" (Greene, 1974, p.131). Reading the entry, overcome with emotion, he telephoned Sarah to proclaim his love to her, and to inform her that he wanted to see her. Sarah got out of the house to flee from Bendrix's advances for fear that she may break her vow, and begin their affair all over again.

After much difficulty Bendrix caught up with Sarah in a church where she had gone earlier on a similar occasion. There Bendrix confessed to her: "I've been a bad lover, Sarah. It was the insecurity that did it. I didn't trust you. I didn't know enough about you. But I'm secure now" (Greene, 1974, p.138). He promised her to take her away from Henry when she got well, because he was sick to death of being without her. Sarah though very weak, agreed that she too was feeling the same way about Bendrix. She however wanted Bendrix to leave her alone, and getting to the end of badgering and contriving, Bendrix did so. For the next few days Bendrix was very busy as he was now working for Sarah and himself. Eight days later, Henry telephoned Bendrix in the morning to inform him that Sarah was dead.
The posthumous miracles associated with Sarah may be left alone in an analysis of her character, because they deal more with the nature of Sarah's new found lover, than with Sarah herself. This new lover happens to be God, and God in His abundant mercy, chose this "earthen vessel",\textsuperscript{13} to be a receptacle of His grace. Greene's eligibility to be treated as a religious novelist rests on this ground.

If the miracles are left out, Sarah is like most other Greene women – materialistic, 'self consumed' (Zubaty, 1993, p.111), and \textit{sex crazy}. Her ability to ensnare husband and lover alike, at the same time, puts her in a unique class. While living, and after death, she makes them suffer 'a Life-in-Death'.\textsuperscript{14} After disassociating from Bendrix as a consequence of her vow, Sarah finds it difficult to lead a chaste life. She tries to lead a life of \textit{promiscuity} with other men, but for reasons not known to her, she couldn't find any satisfaction. If it was within her power, she would have abandoned her husband for a life with Bendrix, and the fare-well letter that she had written to Henry as given in her diary, proves it:

\textsuperscript{13} 2 Corinthians 4:7, Holy Bible, New King James Version.

\textsuperscript{14} Coleridge S. T., The Rime of the Ancient Mariner. l.193.
Dear Henry,

'I'm afraid this will be rather a shock to you, but for the last five years I've been in love with Maurice Bendrix. . . . I can't live happily without him, so I've gone away. . . . I love Maurice more than I did in 1939...

Good-bye. God bless you (Greene, 1974, p.122).

The Living Room, Greene's first play to be produced, has as its central figure Rose Pemberton, a girl of about twenty, who has come to live with her great aunts soon after the death of her widowed mother. At the opening of the play, she is a pretty girl with "a look of being not quite awake" (Greene, 1985, p.8), lacking the capacity for deep thought. On the very night of her mother's funeral she falls in love with Michael Dennis, the executor of her mother's will, knowing fully well that he is a man "whose wife won't divorce him" (Greene, 1985, p.27). Her love for him in fact, arises out of her desire to find a father substitute, she having never known her father.

Her inability, rather unwillingness to think, lands her and all others related to her in great difficulties. All attempts of Michael to ease himself out of his affair with Rose is defeated because of Rose's pertinacity and independence of mind. She

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15 The pagination of the plays is according to the Penguin edition of The Collected plays of Graham Greene, 1985.
even advises Michael, “Dear, don’t worry so. Worries bring worries, my nurse used to say. Let’s both give up thinking for a month, and then it will be too late” (Greene, 1985, p.34).

After meeting Mrs. Dennis and listening to her *hysterical outburst*, and observing Michael’s embarrassed conduct as a devoted husband, Rose is however forced to think, and she breaks down:

... I told him not to make me think. I warned him not to ... I don’t think unless people make me ... They are *married*, Uncle. ... Oh, he’d told me they were, but I hadn’t seen them, had I? ... Uncle, what am I to do? Tell me what to do, Father! (Greene, 1985, p.56).

All that Fr. James could say, would not persuade her to leave Michael. She even spits at the word prayer. Her *independence of mind* in matters relating to herself is quite evident in her violent outburst:

... you tell me there’s hope and I can pray. Who to? ... I don’t believe in your God who took away your legs and wants to take away Michael. I don’t believe in your Church and your Holy Mother of God. I don’t believe, I don’t believe (Greene, 1985, p.57).

Like Scobie who reflects Greene’s own *conscience*, Rose can find no other solution for her grief than *suicide*. Feeling very
lonely, and finding that her impassioned plea for help to her aunt Teresa is left unheeded, she dies uttering a prayer.

Rose's two aunts, *Teresa and Helen*, contribute a great deal to the undoing of Rose Pemberton. Despite their professing to be pious women they suffer from "*anxiety neurosis*" (Greene, 1985, p.20), and don't seem to have any trust in God's mercy. They are afraid of death and seem to forget the more important thing about it – that it is a door to a greater, happier life. Their fear of death is so great that they have closed down all the bedrooms in the house where anybody has ever died. The only bedroom left open is the present living room which appears very odd to outsiders, with a lavatory door opening immediately out of it.

Of the two old women, Helen is the younger, and the more strong willed. She manages the affairs of the house the way she wants it to be, and we are made to understand that she reserves the most comfortable chair in the house for herself. Teresa, seventy-eight, the eldest in the house with her failing eye-sight, is "*obviously the anxious Martha*" (Greene, 1985, p.13) of the house, and is the "fusspot" (Greene, 1985, p.21). They look after their brother, a priest, who is unable to continue in office because of
the loss of his legs in an accident, when Rose comes under their charge.

In the play the character “best drawn, and who demonstrates most ably, Greene’s ability in the sphere of drama is Helen Browne . . .” (DeVitis, 1986, p.154). She has a capacity to drive through other people’s lives. It extends to spying on Rose and causing Teresa to fall ill to serve her end of keeping Rose in the house, so as to prevent her running away with the man she loves. Helen reasons that it is better for Rose to conduct an affair and remain within the Church and the framework of its forgiveness, than to cut herself off from repentance as Michael’s mistress. The paradox is that in spite of all their shortcomings both Helen and Teresa are “good” people.

James tells Rose, “They are good people, I doubt if they’ve ever committed a big sin in their lives – perhaps it would have been better if they had” (Greene, 1985, p.20). In spite of being “good” without the burden of any big sin, the denouement of the play revolves upon Helen’s meddling. She meddles all the time, and the reason for it to her is very clear and cogent; it is basically religious. It brings about the disastrous result of the suicide of a poor girl. In this sense, “she is scheming, calculating, cruel and
insensitive" (DeVitis, 1986, p.154). Men hate such people, but Greene points out emphatically that it is through Helen's meddling that others are made aware of the reality of God.

Towards the end of the play Rev. James, her brother whom she had called "a useless priest" (Greene, 1985, p.47), tells her when she fusses about closing the room where Rose had died: "Stop it, Helen. We've had enough of this foolishness. God isn't unmerciful like a woman can be" (Greene, 1985, p.64). This is a sentence which comes almost verbatim from The Heart of the Matter. If the living room is symbolic of hope, Helen denies that hope.

Mrs. Dennis, the neurotic wife of Michael Dennis, who is invited into the house by the mischief monger of the play, Helen, despite her brief appearance, is the prime mover of the action of the play. She resembles Louise Scobie of The Heart of the Matter. She appears in the play only once, yet the scene she stages quickens the catastrophe of the play. In that tense scene, she employs all the tricks used by neurotics – coaxing, cajoling, hysterical outburst, appeal to pity, and intimidation – to keep off her

16 Fr. Rank asks Mrs. Scobie, "And do you think God's likely to be more bitter than a woman?" Greene, 1948, p.297.
husband's mistress from him. Greene's knowledge about the hysterical behaviour of neurotic women is evident in the dialogue he attributes to Michael who speaks about his wife:

A hysterical will go on with a scene until she gets what she wants. There are only two things you can do. Give her what she wants, and that brings the next scene closer – she smells success, like a dog a bitch. Or just walk out... I shall walk out for good (Greene, 1985, pp.29-30).

It tells us a great deal about the misery Michael suffered in the company of his wife, and his desire to escape from it. Despite his desire, Michael desists at the crucial moment moved by pity, and runs after his wife full of anxiety for her well-being.

The climax of the play is reached with Mrs. Dennis's entry and exit, and all the issues in the drama are brought into focus in that scene – Michael runs after his wife, Rose turns to the priests for advice and begins to think deeply, and falls "like a stone into a pond" (Greene, 1985, p.62), uttering a prayer like Scobie in The Heart of the Matter. The portrayal of Mrs. Dennis in the context of the play well merits her being described as the dispenser of destiny of the other characters of the play.

Looking at the play this way, with some imaginative concentration on the essentials of character portrayed, we can
very well state that Rose, Helen, Teresa, Mrs. Dennis, and even Mary the daily woman, project Greene's view about the profound influence that women can exert on the people who come into contact with them.

**The Potting Shed** like its predecessor, **The Living Room**, highlights "a religio-philosophical dilemma" (DeVitis, 1986, p.150). But here too, a few very important women characters of Greene direct the whole action – Anne Callifer, an energetic exuberant girl of thirteen, Mrs. Callifer who in spite of her seventy years is a handsome upright figure, and Sara, the good looking thirty-six year old divorcee of James Callifer, the protagonist of the play.

The plot of the play is plodded on by parental betrayal, and the whole action of the play moves round the queen pin of the action, **Mrs. Callifer**. At the opening of the play, her husband, Henry Callifer, a vigorous exponent of extreme rationalist belief lies dying. He had rudely disillusioned his younger son, James's religious beliefs, and had crudely awakened his rationalist senses. As a result, the boy committed suicide. James, fourteen at the time, was dead; but by the intervention of the prayer power of his uncle who loved him dearly, he was restored to life. When
proof of God’s love was thus pushed right under his nose, Henry Callifer wanted to recant his rationalism.

Mrs. Callifer who was keen on protecting her husband’s reputation and prestige, however, would not allow it. All this happened thirty years ago, and since then, their son, James, had been leading a vegetable existence with no memory of the event, and no knowledge about his oddness. All these years he had been trying to find out the reason for his strangeness in the world, but to no avail. Had his mother told him about the incident, or had she not prevented the recantation by H. C. Callifer, her son would not have suffered so much. The severity of her crime is all the more aggravated when she forbids James from meeting his dying father to see whom he had rushed from Nottingham:

MRS. CALLIFER: . . . James, I don’t want you to see him . . .
JAMES: I know. I’m going to see him, though.

[He moves towards the open door, but Mrs. Callifer shuts it and stands with her fingers on the handle]

MRS. CALLIFER: I don’t want to be harsh. That’s why I meant to let you know afterwards. But he’s got to die in peace (Greene, 1985, p.89).
On the night previous to his departure from his parent's house where he had always been a stranger, James begged his mother to tell him what was wrong with him, so that his parents were afraid to see him. No entreaty could move her to tell the truth, for she strongly wanted to remain loyal to her husband. Eventually James had to say:

Don't worry. I won't ask you again. . . . Doesn't a child deserve protection too? . . . I pretended to myself you were a mother like other mothers, and I was a child like any other child (Greene, 1985, pp.98-99).

Not only does Mrs. Callifer refuse to tell the truth, but frustrates all attempts of James to find out the truth about his strangeness in this world. She tries her best to prevent Mrs. Potter talking with her son about the potting shed incident,17 which transformed him into the curious person that he is. Under her management James the insensitive, unemotional individual becomes emboldened and tells her, "Mother, you stood in front of a door like this once before. But not again . . . I'll send her away if you'll tell. Mother, it's you or Mrs. Potter" (Greene, 1985, p.113).

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17 Late Mr. Potter was the gardener at the Callifers when James committed suicide in the potting shed. James had called in his widow, to find the truth about the potting shed incident.
After his conversation with Mrs. Potter, James is convinced that what his mother had to say was far from the truth. He wanted to know more about his death at fourteen, and desired to talk with his uncle, Rev. William Callifer, who interceded for him with God. But Mrs. Callifer when asked about the whereabouts of uncle Callifer, callously refuses to say anything about him. “Even if I know where he was I wouldn’t tell you,” she tells her son. James for the first time in the play appears to be enraged. “Mother, you can’t hush him up. There are directories where one can find a priest’s address”, and for the first time takes the initiative in his hands and refuses the help proffered by Anne and shouts, “No! Leave this to me” (Greene, 1985, p.117).

After meeting his uncle, James returns a resolute individual convinced that his living is the result of a second birth. In his parent’s house he is this time locked up in a bedroom, while asleep. In the discussion which ensues, James’s insanity is debated upon, and Mrs. Callifer for the first time shows signs of relenting: “If I’m asked I shall say he’s as sane as the rest of us. If that counts at all” (Greene, 1985, p.131). James cleverly breaks out of the room and expresses his desire to lead a normal life with God in his “lungs like air” (Greene, 1985, p.134). Mrs. Callifer is
now no longer sure about anything. She tells James, "... give us all time. You mustn’t mind our anger – you’ve spoilt our certainties..." (Greene, 1985, p.136).

With her *pertinacity* and *obstinacy*, and her central *passion* for her husband even at the risk of endangering her relationship with her son, Mrs. Callifer reminds us of another woman in literature who was ready to pluck out her “nipple” from the “boneless gums” of her baby and dash’ the brains out\(^\text{18}\) to boost the positions of her husband in society. Her complaint against men, “... men either form us with their strength, or they form us with their weakness. They never let us be” (Greene, 1985, p.95), seems to have been put into her mouth by Greene, just to protect the “copyright” of a few women whom he knew very intimately (Greene, 1980, preface). He most probably might have meant to use the word ‘women’, rather than ‘men’ in that piece of dialogue.

**Anne**, the thirteen-year-old exuberant, energetic granddaughter of Mrs. Callifer, is the next important female character who plays a vital role in the play. She is instrumental in unravelling the mystery behind James’s oddness, and his

\(^{18}\) In Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*, Lady Macbeth uses these expressions to embolden her husband to murder King Duncan, who is on a visit to their castle (act. 1 scene 7), 57-58).
return to faith, and a normal life. Though said to possess the “Callifer touch” (Greene, 1985, p.111), she is not a rationalist in the sense that she is prepared to accept miracles as part of life. In her talk with Dr. Baston she shows a precociousness of temperament and reveals herself adept at irony and sarcasm. Being curious by nature, she is a born detective always on the prowl, eager to find out the truth about the mysteries that shroud the people around her. It is she who informs James about his father’s illness, and who brings Mrs. Potter to unravel the mystery behind James’s strangeness. It is she who transforms the passive, docile James into a bold and resolute individual who is ready to defy the authority of his strong willed domineering mother.

After James’s return from his uncle’s presbytery, he is quite convinced about God’s mercy, but he is locked up in the Callifer house branded as a lunatic. At this crucial hour it is to Anne that James turns for help to get released. Anne does it expertly, and she emerges brilliantly as the protector and guarantor of her uncle’s liberty of freedom of spirit and thought. At the close of the play, Anne, “One of the brave ones who believe . . . can find the truth” (Greene, 1985, p.138), is seen asleep on the window
seat of the living room. She had been there to listen to any plan that may be hatched against her uncle. The dream that she had in her sleep, about a lion asleep in the potting shed, and its licking her hand instead of eating her up on being woken up, is symbolic of her optimism that she shares with the audience. In fact, “... she is humanity, bright and alert” (DeVitis, 1986, p.158).

The Potting Shed is thus peopled by feminine characters who are more important than their male counterparts. Had it not been for these multi-faceted women, there would have been no play worth the name at all. Even the apparently insignificant Mrs. Potter, and the voluble Miss. Connolly who make brief appearances in the play, have significant roles to play. If the former urges James to persevere in his search, the latter strives hard in her own way, to goad back faith into Rev. William Callifer's presbytery from which faith had gone out long ago.

Greene's next play, The Complaisant Lover presents a "cliché situation" (DeVitis, 1986, p.161), wherein he shows a charm and grace peculiarly his own. Though the play is titled

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19 Miss Connolly is the housekeeper of Rev. William Callifer, James's uncle.
after Clive Root, the thirty-eight year old rolling stone in love, it has as its chief character Mary Rhodes, the middle aged wife of Victor Rhodes, the cuckolded husband. It is on Mary's conduct that the hopes of these two characters revolve. In her characterisation Greene draws against a background of literary emancipated women. There are echoes of Shaw's Candida, inasmuch as Greene also emphasises her maternal aspect, her influence over men, and their dependence on her strength.

Mary, the mother of two children Sally fifteen, and Robin twelve, is sexually frustrated in her life with her dentist husband, Victor Rhodes. The topics they discuss at home — Victor's activities in the surgery, the children, the dinner which went wrong, and the price of meat — kill their desire for each other. Mary had realised long ago that the sexual urge is killed in marriage, and Victor had "stopped giving . . . pleasure" (Greene, 1985, p.191) to Mary for the last five years. But Mary is however bound to her husband for a very practical reason:

. . . I've known Victor for sixteen years. He's never been unkind even when I've run up bills. He's a good father. The children love him . . . It wasn't his fault we stopped — sleeping together (Greene, 1985, p.180).

Only kindness grew in the soil of their married life.
Clive Root, the thirty-eight year old antiquarian book dealer with his “eye for very lovable [married] women” (Greene, 1985, p.155), comes as a big boon to Mary. He cast a magnetic spell over her, and the ardour of his responses brings her very close to him. Clive who had loved four married women before, wants to put an end to his life as a complaisant lover and yearns for a married life with Mary Rhodes. But what Mary wants, is to “have. . . [the] cake and eat it” too (Greene, 1985, p.202). While with Clive, sex being present in her mind always, she is afraid that marriage with him would kill her desire. Even though she wants to have Clive’s company when Victor is with her in the Amsterdam Hotel, she does not want to marry Clive: “You are a foreigner. Even when I sleep with you you are a foreigner” (Greene, 1985, p.181). Her audacity and hopes of beguiling her husband are such that Clive tells her, “Mary, you’re either the most immoral woman I’ve ever known – or the most innocent” (Greene, 1985, p.179).

Clive’s gift of a diamond earring, risking prison for the sake of his love, changes her mind. For her marriage with Clive, what she now wants is only a little more time: “You want to be a lover with a licence, that’s all. All right. You win. I’ll leave Victor, but
not just yet, Clive.  Be patient until January, Clive” (Greene, 1985, p.181). She hopes that in the meantime Victor will find out her *infidelity*, and throw her out. If he does, it will relieve her of the onus of making a choice between Victor and Clive. But Victor on learning that Mary’s new earring is a gift of Clive, and he bought it with black money risking a prison term, only mourns: “It’s the only romantic thing a man can do in these days, risk prison for a woman. I can’t even do that. I’m a father. I can only give you a scarf with a map of Amsterdam on it. . . .” (Greene, 1985, p.190).

Victor’s stale jokes and grotesque tricks which are “a compensation for something” that he lacks (Greene, 1985, p.149), bores Mary to the extreme. Though, “Boredom is not a good reason for changing a profession or a marriage” (Greene, 1985, p.191) according to Victor, Mary does not feel so. Even at the teeth of his wife’s *infidelity*, Victor is unable to pull on his life without Mary. His is a desperate cry:

How does a cuckold meet a lover the first time? It’s funny how even now I depend on your advice.

. . . You chose the furniture, you chose my shirts and my ties. I bring you patterns of my suits. You’ve always chosen for me. I’m lost when I’m not in my surgery. Mary, I can’t live in a surgery (Greene, 1985, p.192).
The opinionated Mary is not much moved in spite of this entreaty. Even when she suspects that her husband has gone all alone to the garage with thoughts of suicide in his mind, she is not prepared to act. She finds solace in the thought that he will not do anything silly. Having made up her mind to marry Clive, she is quite adamant in her stand. She asks Victor to divorce her, and in her effort to free herself of Victor, she tells him: "Victor, be glad you aren't married to a good woman. The good are horribly hard to leave" (Greene, 1985, p.201).

Victor who in fact is the vanquished, is however, not prepared for a divorce. He believes that his wife is labouring under some "illusions", and what she needs is a lot of "protection" (Greene, 1985, p.204). He is prepared to allow Mary and Clive continue their affair. He tells Clive: "... The only thing I ask you is to carry on your affair at a distance. You see there are the children to be considered..." (Greene, 1985, p.205). Clive who is not amenable to such a proposition is won over by Victor, and he offers to stay under Victor's conditions. Mary heaves a sigh of relief. Her wish not to "lose the past or the future" (Greene, 1985, p.206), though apparently impossible of realization by ordinary mortals, is fulfilled for her by the men about her. Her influence
over them is such that she gets what she wants from them, however insurmountable the difficulties may seem to be. In Mary’s characterisation what Greene actually achieves is the truth of the adage,” “In the hands of women, . . . man is but an innocent little child” (Corrie, 1983).

Ann, the nineteen year old admirer of Zane Grey with a lot of “puppy fat” and a belly full of lust (Greene, 1985, p.152), is the next important female character of the play. In her attempt to make herself attractive to men, she wants to get rid of her puppy fat and is on a diet, and she has the habit of taking sleeping pills and benzedrine. She does not like others treating her as a young girl. According to her, “. . . nineteen is a woman. . . [and she] could have had a child of six by now” (Greene, 1985, p.152).

Lust is her hallmark and she madly follows Clive who is double her age, “like a hungry jackal” (Greene, 1985, p.195). She does not pay a fig for established conventions, and offers herself entire to Clive on whatever conditions he deems fit. “It needn’t be always if you don’t like me. It could be a trial-week” (Greene, 1985, p.153), she tells Clive. Clive who believes that, “Lust isn’t very strong, . . . unless there’s love too” (Greene, 1985, p.154), however dismisses her offer. Perhaps, the best estimate of Ann
is her own ‘self-estimate’: “Sometimes I think I’d marry anyone who wanted to get away. Not necessarily marry either. I’m such a bitch, Clive, . . .” (Greene, 1985, p.153).

The femininity of Ann is projected when she shows jealousy towards Mary, and makes use of every opportunity to win Clive, driving off Mary away from him. Robin reports to his mother that while she was away at Amsterdam with his father, he had seen Ann and Clive “in an about-to-take-hands condition” on the heath (Greene, 1985, p.187). Her brief appearance a short while later, is well used by Greene to expose the protective and possessive temperament of women towards the men they really love. Ann does not find fault with Clive for sending an anonymous letter to Victor to secure a divorce for Mary, even though its success may injure her interest. She in fact justifies Clive’s action, and points an accusing finger at Mary for having forced him to do so. Though disappointed in her love with Clive, she probably finds consolation when Clive accompanies her down the street on her way back home. There is hope for her that Clive will appease her thirst for sex, even if he succeeds in marrying Mary.

Even though unsuccessful in her love with Clive, Ann does not lack feminine serpentine charm and capacity to hurt. Mary’s
son, Robin, is enamoured of her, and he is crazily after her with gifts of a stuffed mouse, and an electronic eye. Her indifference to his infatuation is sufficient to put the energetic, enthusiastic boy to bed, dejected and depressed (Greene, 1985, p.200).

No one can deny that there are parallelisms in the characterisations of Mary and Arin. What Greene aims at by portraying two women with similar character traits in one play, seems to be to reinforce the idea that women can shape or misshape the fate of men about, and around them.

No doubt Greene’s inner world seems to have been filled with very many painful conflicts, suffering, and betrayal, demanding some sort of relief. That seems to be the reason why the key word in his writings appears to be ‘peace’. Since the search for peace is a journey that can end only with death, that is, natural death, we very rarely see his characters enjoying it. In the novels that have been discussed here, only one woman is privileged to achieve it, and in the plays, none; no male character in the works discussed, earns it. Unnatural deaths there are; but they may be a reflection of Greene’s own thanatomania, and it is
doubtful whether these deaths had afforded the victims, a “peace ... which surpasses all understanding”.20

SUMMARIES OF THE TEXTS OF GREENE, EXAMINED IN THIS REPORT

The Man Within - 1929

The first successful novel of Graham Greene, The Man Within, set Greene on the road of a writer. It is only an apprentice's work compared with Greene's later works. Termed by the author himself as a “very young and very sentimental novel” (Greene, 1971, p.140), the novel is interesting because it highlights a major “obsession”, which occurs recurrently in almost all Greene's writings – feline feminine presence.

Apparently it is the story of Francis Andrews, a young man, one of a band of smugglers who betrays them to the authorities. He slips away during the ambush, and is given shelter by a beautiful, virtuous woman of eighteen, named Elizabeth, the daughter of a woman who lived with a man other than her husband.

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Andrews falls in love with her. Inspired and persuaded by Elizabeth, he walks a long distance to testify against the gang of six smugglers. He however vacillates, but because of his encounter with Lucy, the mistress of the prosecution lawyer, he finally does it. Falling nearly a victim to Lucy’s offer to copulate with him, he returns to Elizabeth, having lost all his courage when the smugglers are acquitted.

Both now agree to marry; but the smugglers now arrive at Elizabeth’s cottage seeking vengeance. In an act of cowardice Andrews abandons Elizabeth to the mercy of the smugglers who assaults her and she commits suicide.

Andrews rapidly reconciles to the leader of the smugglers and helps him to escape. He allows himself to be arrested for Elizabeth’s death. The novel on the whole appears to many critics largely an act of *psychological purgation*.

**England Made Me - 1935**

Had not Greene returned after undertaking his dangerous journey without maps to Liberia, *England Made Me* would have been Greene’s last novel, a perfect title for his literary farewell. The novel is significant in so far as it contains the portrayal of the
woman Greene has "drawn better than any other", and because it is one of Greene's "personal favourites" (Donaghy, 1986, p.31).

Set in Sweden, it features an incestuous relationship between a pair of twins - sister and brother. The novel opens in a Stockholm bar where Kate is waiting like a jilted lover for Anthony. He has lost his latest job, and Kate wants him to join Eric Krogh's powerful industrial empire where she is put up, so as to keep him very near to her. Being the mistress and secretary of Eric Krogh, Kate succeeds in helping Anthony to steal a livelihood as Krogh's bodyguard.

Anthony shortly weans Krogh away from operas that he does not enjoy, and takes him to bars that he does. Kate - sister, mother and lover to Anthony wants to convert him to a tiger in the risky dangerous, financial "forest of the night",21 that is Krogh's empire. Besides, she eagerly wishes to have sexual relationship with Anthony. But there are too many obstacles standing between them, their family blood not being the least.

Anthony's attachment to a visiting English tourist, Lucia Davidge, his moral inhibitions in having any physical relationship

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21 Greene has borrowed the expression from William Blake's famous poem, opening "Tiger, Tiger, burning bright".
with his sister, and his moral objections to the illegal investments of Krogh, seal his doom. Having discovered Anthony’s potentially dangerous knowledge about Krogh’s investments, Fred Hall, Krogh’s terrier like protector murders Anthony in the fog, and throws his body in the river. The novel ends with the scene at Anthony’s funeral.

**The Heart of the Matter - 1948**

One of the three masterpieces of Greene, *The Heart of the Matter*, has been described as a book too full of “emotions recollected in hostility”. It tells the pathetic story of Henry Scobie, a Deputy Commissioner of Police posted at Sierre Leone, a West African colony during World War II. At the commencement of the novel his immediate superior addresses him as ‘Scobie the just’ and his enemy, ‘a Daniel who had come to the Colonial Police’.

As the novel progresses, his incorruptibility, truthfulness and boldness, degenerate to the extent that he becomes a policeman who cannot maintain law and order in his own life, violating the moral prohibition against adultery and suicide. All this come about because of two women in his life – his own wife
Louise, and a young but quite unattractive and ill-educated mistress, Helen Rolt.

These two different women stood between Scobie and freedom. Scobie felt obligated to help both of them because he mistakenly thought that they depended on his support. After many years of marriage with Louise, Scobie felt that he has nothing left to share with her except misery. To give his wife and himself a little relief from the tiresome disputes, Scobie sent Louise on a long holiday to South Africa, at her insistence.

During Louise’s absence, Scobie falls in love with Helen who is vulnerable and alone. She does not however fit the stereotype of the ‘other woman’. She is neither sexy, nor charming. Learning about the affair, Louise returns. Trapped between the emotional demands of both women, Scobie commits suicide.

**The End of the Affair - 1951**

The last of Greene’s religious novels, *The End of the Affair* which fetched for him The Catholic Literary award, is a novel about adultery. An article in *Time Magazine* about the book, bore the caption, 'Adultery can lead to sainthood'.
Married to a top public figure, Sarah Miles, the heroine, comes into contact with Maurice Hendrix, a novelist, who wants to study the habits of her husband for a new novel. The love affair between them begins in 1939 and continues till 1944. All through the years Sarah had been cuckolding her husband, and it is brought about by Sarah's inability to have sexual relationship with her gentle, but cold husband. Despite the genuine love that Sarah and Hendrix feel for each other, the affair is doomed from the beginning. Sarah on her part never considered divorcing her husband, and Hendrix always felt insecure and jealous because of Sarah's attachment to her husband.

The last time they make love is at Hendrix's house during a 1944 air-raid. Sarah discontinues their relationship immediately thereafter. Hendrix suspects that she has taken another lover. At last after her death, Hendrix discovers that Sarah's other lover was actually God. What had happened was that Hendrix seemed to have been killed by an explosion during the air-raid. Sarah who was there made a pact with God forthwith: "I will give him up for ever; only let him be alive" (Greene, 1985, pp.99-100). God accepted the pact, and Hendrix recovered. Sarah's disloyalty to
her husband, and love for her lover, now turned into a love of her God.

It appears that Sarah has become a tutelary saint in life and after-death. Two years after the event she dies of a severe cold, not remedied soon enough. Her death is followed by several peculiar happenings which suggest the miraculous: a strawberry mark on a rationalist's cheek is cured by her kiss; a boy with a grave stomach complaint dreams that she touches his stomach and he is promptly healed; Bendrix prays to Sarah to save him from fornication with another woman, and he is promptly prevented from doing so; Henry, Sarah's widower, is led towards the catholic faith; it is a long list.

Bendrix is offended, and he fights God with a jealous vengeance. He convinces Sarah's husband to cremate Sarah, thwarting efforts by a priest to give Sarah a Catholic burial. Despite the gallant fight, at the book's end, Bendrix's tone is that of a weary believer, "O God! you've done enough" (Greene, 1985, p.211). Bendrix, a fiction writer, has become a character in God's plot.
The Living Room - 1952

The first of Greene's dramas to be produced, The Living Room earned for him the title 'the new world dramatist' (Sherry, 1994, p.452). It was an enormous success. A predominantly realistic drama with symbolic over-tones and theological debate, it was also condemned 'a monstrosity of anti-psychology (Sherry, 1994, p.453).

Rose Pemberton, the central character, a young pretty, sensitive girl, gives herself adulterously to Michael, a lecturer in psychology on the night of her mother's funeral. Michael happens to be her mother's executor, and soon after the funeral, he brings Rose to live with a wood of old people – her two old maiden aunts, and a disabled uncle, a priest. Rose knows that Michael is married, and his wife won't divorce him. Yet, she is keen in continuing her affair with him. All attempts of Michael to ease himself out of the affair is thwarted by Rose. The scheming, calculating, cruel and insensitive aunt Helen, and the neurotic wife of Michael who employs all the weapons in the arsenal of neurotics – coaxing, cajoling, hysteric outburst, appeal to pity and intimidation – quicken the carastrophe of the play. Convinced that Michael will continue to be a devoted husband, and there is
little hope for her to get him heart and soul, Rose commits suicide and falls like "a stone into a pond" (Greene, 1985, p.62) at the end of the play.

The Potting Shed - 1957

The Potting Shed, Greene's next play, is a drama about living with the burdens of the past. It is important since it deals with some traumatic experiences of Greene himself, and is significant because it presents a few very important women characters of Greene. In fact, it is they who direct the whole action.

Mrs. Callifer, married to Henry Callifer, a vigorous exponent of extreme rationalist belief, is the protector of her husband for nearly fifty years. When proof of God's love was pushed right under his nose, Henry wanted to recant his rationalism. For fear that her husband's reputation and prestige would be marred thereby, Mrs. Callifer would not allow it.

Sarah, married to James, the youngest son of the Callifers, had divorced him because of the strangeness of his behaviour, and the sympathies of his mother are with Sarah. When a boy of fourteen, James had committed suicide disillusioned in his
religious belief, and awakened crudely in his rationalist sense. Apparently lifeless, he was brought back to life by the prayerful intervention of his uncle, a priest. Knowing nothing and having been prevented from knowing any details about the incident, James was leading a sort of vegetable existence since then.

Towards the end of the play, however, James finds out the mystery behind his oddness and decides to lead a normal life, re­marrying Sarah. Here too the role of a female character is significant. The fourteen year old niece of James, Anne, transforms him into a bold and resolute individual. It is she who emerges brilliantly at the play's end as the protector and guarantor of her uncle's freedom of spirit and thought.

The Complaisant Lover – 1959

Greene's "mediocre play" (Sheldon, 1994, p.420), The Complaisant Lover, primarily an exercise in sadism, has in it a lot of Greene's personal experience. In the characterisation of its heroine, Greene draws from a background of literary emancipated women, and it is on her conduct that the hopes of her cuckolded husband and lover revolve.
Mary Rhodes, married to Victor Rhodes, a dentist, is the mother of two children in their teens, but she is sexually frustrated. Victor having stopped giving pleasure, Mary turns to Clive Root, a thirty-eight year old antiquarian book dealer who has an eye for very lovable married women. Mary is however bound to her husband for a very practical reason – he has never been unkind to her even when she had run up the bills. Sex being present in Mary's mind always, she is not prepared to give up Clive either.

Clive wants Mary to divorce her husband, but Victor on his part is unable to pull on his life without Mary even at the teeth of her infidelity. Victor's efforts to intimidate Mary with suicide prove futile. At the play's end Mary succeeds to “have her cake and eat it” too (Greene, 1985, p.205). Her wish not to lose the past or the future, though apparently impossible of realization by ordinary mortals, is fulfilled for her by the men about her.
References


Holy Bible, New King James Version.


