Part V
Chapter 7

Greenneland Revisited

A world which is morally as well as physically corrupt, inhabited by Greene's characters has been termed Greeneland. The almost tangible atmosphere of this world is ugliness, sordidness, and seediness. Absence of lasting pleasure and noble behaviour further characterise this Greeneland. Outwardly clumsy and disgusting, seething with greed, lust, betrayal, and decay, it is never a neutral space; it is constantly open to habitation by Greene's “Personal Evil . . . that sends . . . ghastly dreams. And it whispers” (Sherry, 1989, p.286).

It is to this world, and the rough terrain of Greene's mindscape, that we are to make a re-visit for summing up. The attempt herein made has been to analyze Greeneland and its

1 Greene, letter to Vivien Dayrell Browning, 23 January 1926.
inhabitants in reality, as well as in a psychological perspective, especially through the eyes of some of the renowned personalities including Freud (sexual love and the unconscious), and Jung (persona, anima and animus), and the concept of 'Aphrodite', principles of psychoanalysis (transference and countertransference), and the psychology of women, in the context of culture and religion. Before starting on this perilous flight it is necessary for us to recall at least three significant details of Greene's life:

(i) At school Greene was stigmatized for failing to live up to the requirements of the male gender role. Consequently he was devalued as a male. The resultant struggle by Greene to repudiate his own "feminine" attributes, caused the "loss of inner space" for Greene (Lowenstein, 1993, p.242).

(ii) Subjected to psychoanalysis early in his life, Greene was by "no means 'cured' by the treatment" (Lowenstein, 1993, p.258). A self-diagnosed "manic depressive", Greene himself has admitted that the analysis "had not cured" his condition (Greene, 1971, p.92). But he "never ceased to be grateful" to his analyst (Greene, 1971, p.72).

(iii) Although he idealized his mother who was "undemonstrative in behaviour" and "astonishingly remote" in her manners (Sherry, 1989, p.46), Greene suppressed his rage against her internally (Lowenstein, 1993, p.248).
Greene’s Psychological Connection

Graham Greene was a man of varied tastes and interests. In an article in New Yorker, Robert McCrum reports about Greene’s library and testifies that a look at Greene’s collection, “gives the literary detective vital clues to aspects of his life that have until now remained hidden” (McCrum, 1994). With an eavesdropper’s anxiety he invades Greene’s privacy and states that he was impressed by the scope and variety of Greene’s interests. There were books on art, religion, politics, film, travel, history, philosophy, and psychology, to name just a few subjects.

Born into a generation which had begun to assimilate the Freudian view of human nature, and subjected to psychoanalysis, Greene’s favourites in psychology were Freud and Jung. Jung in one of his profound insights has shown that just as genetically every man has recessive female chromosomes and hormones, he has a group of feminine psychological characteristics that make up a minority element within him. This feminine side of man Jung called ‘anima’. The masculine minority component within a woman he labelled ‘animus’.
The ‘Aphrodite’ Myth and Greene

A widely popular myth regarding femininity would help a great deal in understanding the concept of femininity in general, and ‘anima’ in particular. Many psychologists have carefully studied myths, and Jung in his studies of the underlying structure of human personality has paid adequate attention to myths. Myths according to him are a product of collective imagination; through years of re-telling and refining by countless people, they carry a powerful collective meaning. They depict levels of reality that include the outer world as well as the less understood inner world within the psyche of each individual (Johnson, 1977).

The myth related to femininity referred to, is that of Aphrodite. (Roman equivalent is Venus). When the genitals of God Uranus was severed and fell into the sea, the sea was fertilized and Aphrodite was born – In biological terms also, the mother is the nurturing plane. The male seed is the source of creation and without the active penetration of the female entity, the seed is wasted and the egg dies, and is washed away in a river of blood. Being born out of the sea, Aphrodite is oceanic
femininity, ever keen to draw in everything that would satisfy her appetite. She is at the bottom of the sea and holds her court there. She is an age-old goddess of femininity and she had been reigning since the beginning. In psychological terms she reigns the unconscious, symbolised by the waters of the sea.

Robert A. Johnson, the author of that small but brilliantly illuminating book *SHE: Understanding Feminine Psychology*, writes:

Every woman has an Aphrodite in her who is easily recognized, her chief characteristics being vanity, conniving lust, fertility, and tyranny when she is crossed.

Actually, one sees Aphrodite everywhere. At every supermarket, Aphrodite parks her grocery cart squarely in the middle of the aisle and says, “If you won’t court me, you will at least bump into me”. That is Aphrodite (Johnson, 1977, pp.6-7).

Greene’s ‘Anima’

Greene’s femininity or more specifically, his ‘anima’, had the element of the Aphrodite in him to a great degree as is evidenced in his life and most of his works. In his lecture on *Anima and Animus* Jung also certifies that an “inherited collective image of a woman exists in a man’s unconscious with the help of which he
apprehends the nature of woman" (Jung, 1982, p.79). With this streak in him, Greene always wanted to catch and hold the attention of every member of the opposite sex for whom he had a special attraction. Greene's long time friend and acquaintance, Trevor Wilson narrated to Norman Sherry, Greene's official biographer, one example of Greene's craze for women:

He likes women. They have to be attractive to him, and he would immediately go after the lady. In Bangkok, we were at the airfield, and he suddenly saw a lovely lady – a beautiful person and he said 'I must go and look at her'. He went over to see her and he made a date in Singapore. She was the wife of a hunter and he'd go off, and she'd say come down to Singapore and we'll have a nice time there – that's where she lived you see – so he booked a plane the next day and went off to Singapore (Sherry, 1994, pp.498-99).

Greene thus possessed the conniving lust, and enticing sexuality of an Aphrodite. Although no scientific evidence is now available to suggest a gender generalization, this researcher is of the view that the life and fiction of Greene show that the sexuality of Greene's women has its roots in Greene's own anima.
Referring to Greene's association with women, it is worthy of note that he tried to place every 'new woman' he came into contact with, with someone he knew closely. Greene seldom approached a new woman as an entirely unknown quantity. He filled the Rorschach silhouettes of her personality with his own experience (Storr, 1989, p.56), the store of memories derived from his previous encounters. This 'placing' activity was for him a kind of safety precaution. To know whether she was a friend or foe, he wanted all the clues he could obtain so as to approach and address her effectively. This knowledge often cut him both ways. It gave him new insights and at the same time made him susceptible to misconceptions. For example, for Greene plumpness and bigness of breasts were indicative of independence of mind and strength of will buried underneath it. He disassociated himself from such women, even if they were near and dear to him.

Another significant thing about Greene was that he felt most intense sympathy, not only for those "who corresponded with his own femininity" (Jung, 1982, p.78), but also for those
whose psychopathology resembled his own. A man of strong sexual drive, and sex being in Greene’s mind all the time, women who felt themselves sex starved and isolated, appealed to him always. In The End of the Affair, he even tried to elevate an adulteress Sarah, to the level of a saint fit for canonisation. His England Made Me holds in its pages his best drawn woman character, Kate Farrant, who seethes with sexual passion for her own twin brother, Anthony, even though she is the trusted mistress of Eric Krogh, the international industrial tycoon. The central woman of The Complaisant Lover, Mary, though the mother of a girl aged fifteen and a boy aged twelve, is in hot pursuit of a thirty-eight year old bachelor keenly interested in married women. Victor Rhodes, Mary’s husband, is so tied to her apron strings that he cannot think of a life without her. Even when he realizes that Mary is crazily after her lover, he cannot put up with reality and allow her to leave him, just as his real counterpart in Greene’s own life, Harry Walston.

Greeneian Concept of Sexual Love and Intimacy

“Sexual love”, Freud said:
... is undoubtedly one of the chief things in life, and the union of mental and bodily satisfaction in the enjoyment of love is one of its culminating peaks. Apart from a few queer fanatics, all the world knows this and conducts its life accordingly... when a woman sues for love, to reject and refuse is a distressing part for a man to play (Freud, 1961, Vol. 12, pp. 169-170).

Greene seems to have totally subscribed to this view. Being a professional writer, he found several reasons to rationalize his conduct of entering into sexual intimacy with the women he liked.

For Greene, the closest kind of intimacy had always been sexual intimacy, and he in his life never missed an opportunity to have sex with any woman he came into contact closely. It was characteristic of Greene to be riven by the violent force of his need for women. His credo regarding intimacy and sex is found in one of his best known novels, The End of the Affair: "If two people loved, they slept together, it was a mathematical formula tested and proved by human experience" (Greene, 1974, p.136).

This idea might have been reinforced in Greene during the war time. While he was working in the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS), the organisation employed beautiful spies extensively to extract secrets from the enemy. Greene himself at Freetown on
wartime duty, thought of recruiting a woman to manage a ‘roaming brothel’ to discover various secrets from the Vichy French colonial officers. He even found the madam he wanted, and sent all the necessary information for the approval of the headquarters. “Best of all she has earned her living on her back for a good many years”, Greene reported (cited in Shelden, 1995, p.296). His idea however was not approved by the headquarters.

What went wrong with Greene’s conception about sexual intimacy has been precisely stated by Dr. Anthony Storr, a practising psychoanalyst in his brilliant book, The Art of Psychotherapy:

Whilst sexual intimacy often encourages other kind of intimacy – hence, the wartime convention of the ‘beautiful spy’... – a sexual relation may not only render verbal relation less necessary, but also create an illusion of mutual understanding which shatters when the sexual partnership comes to an end (Storr, 1989, p.55).

Revenge, the Overpowering Obsession

Greene maintained good relation with the women with whom he shared sex, all throughout his life. But soon after his sexual congress with these women cooled off or ended, he was
overpowered by his **innate obsession for revenge**, as he felt a genuine rage against the objects of his dependence. He then regarded “women as dangerous and powerful victimizers, and himself as the helpless victim” (Lowenstein, 1993,p.248). Even his best loved Catherine was not spared from revenge. Being a craftsman of great skill and tact, he found ways to cover his tracks subtly. He called the madam of the best brothel in Haiti, in *The Comedians*, ‘Mère Catherine’.

**Femininity and the Unconscious**

Jung in his lecture on *Anima and Animus* categorically states that no man is entirely masculine so as to preclude everything feminine:

> The fact is rather that very masculine men have – carefully guarded and hidden a very soft emotional life often incorrectly . . . described as “feminine”. A man counts it a virtue to repress his feminine traits as much as possible, just as a woman, at least until recently considered it unbecoming to be “mannish”. This repression of feminine traits and inclinations naturally causes these contrasexual demands to accumulate in the unconscious . . . a man in his love choice is strongly tempted to win the woman who best corresponds to his own unconscious femininity . . . it may turn out that the man has manifestly married his own worst weakness (Jung, 1982, pp.77-78).
It is to be remembered in this context that Greene's devaluation at school as a male, compelled him when he grew up into a writer, to assert his manhood and repress his feminine self which he had internalised. This assertion and repression may be seen as a way for achieving autonomy. But it did a great deal more than that.

**Persona and the Pursuing Monsters**

In classical Roman theatre, persona was a mask which the actor wore expressing the role he played. In psychological parlance it refers to "a complicated system of relation between individual consciousness and the society, . . . designed on the one hand to make a definite impression upon others, and, on the other, to conceal the true nature of the individual" (Jung, 1982, p.81). Greene, as a writer, had to wear a suitable persona. But this division of his consciousness into two figures, preposterously different, was a painfully incisive psychological operation for him. The key to the two dominant and inter-locking themes in Greene's life and fiction lies here. These two themes - compulsiveness to prove his masculinity, and the splitting off of the female in him, - may well be considered as the pursuing monsters of Greene's
fication. Object relation theorists have identified the splitting off of
the female or the feeling part of man as “one of the tasks and
dangers of growing up male in the society” (Lowenstein, 1993,
p.250).

It is a well accepted fact that no man can get rid of himself
in favour of an artificial personality without punishment. As Jung
has pointed out, “whoever builds up too good a persona for
himself . . . has to pay for it” (Jung, 1982, p.82). Greene’s
attempt naturally brought upon him unconscious reaction in the
form of bad moods, affects, phobias, obsessive ideas, vices etc.

**The Trauma Greene Underwent**

Our knowledge of the multiple forces, which shape
personality, makes it difficult to trace clear correlatives between
specific childhood experiences and later life. But in Greene’s
case, however, it is not very difficult to trace many scenes in his
fiction to his recorded childhood experiences. The experiences
that Greene underwent as a boarder at his school, was
comparable to the trauma experienced by survivors of war and
torture. The “symptoms of depression and anxiety, emotional
anesthesia, hyperalertness and impulsive behaviour, recurrent
dreams and nightmares" that Greene suffered, have been classified as "the characteristics of post traumatic disorder" (Loewenstein, 1993, p.257).

The Psychoanalyst in Greene

An important event in Greene's younger years was his psychoanalysis at Kenneth Richmond's house in London. In the first volume of his autobiography Greene gratefully acknowledges that it did him a "world of good". There he was able to transform his "hysterical misery into common unhappiness" (Freud, cited in Greene, 1971, p.74). Naturally he was very much interested in the technique.

Jung's classic, Psychoterapists or the Clergy in Psychology and Religion influenced Greene a great deal. There, Jung exhorted doctors practising psychoanalysis to feel with his patient's psyche. To him, feeling meant "a human quality, a kind of deep respect for the facts, for the man who suffers from them, and for the riddle of such a man's life" (Jung, 1958).

Greene took this advice to heart. His former psychotherapeutic situation offered him the unique opportunity
for self-exploration, and from his experience he knew that a psychotherapist must not only be interested in people, but also should possess the capacity for *empathy* with a wide range of different types of *personality*.

**Countertransference, the Crux of Greene’s Fiction**

Greene knew that it was the capacity for countertransference of an analyst, that is his “emotional involvement in the therapeutic interaction” (Reber, 1985, p.164) - that helped him to alleviate the misery of his patients. Naturally, Greene employed it to mitigate the unhappiness of the world around him. Full of empathy, his attitude towards the world was the attitude of a psychotherapist towards his patient. In this sense much of Greene's writings can be grouped into a category – the *literature of countertransference*. Part of this countertransference he used, appears to be an *irrational prejudice* in favour of the damaged, the despised, the insulted and the injured. In this group, Greene included the women he came into contact with intimately.

Greene, no doubt, possessed very many qualities necessary for 'a natural psychoanalyst'— he was gifted with intuition, empathy and compassion. But the essential virtue required of a
good psychoanalyst, he lacked – unprejudiced objectivity, or the necessary degree of detachment. According to Dr. Anthony Storr, an analyst “has to walk a tight-rope between over and under-identification with his patient” (Storr, 1989, p.67). Greene’s objectivity on the other hand was neither unprejudiced, nor wholly objective. It was something more than “the unconditional positive regard” – referred to by Carl Rogers (cited in Storr, 1989, p.68). One may excuse conduct in members of one’s own family, which one may condemn in others. But Greene was more indulgent than that towards the faults of his women. A man of great perception, he possessed an antenna which noted all nuances and undertones of an event alertly. As a consequence, he tried his best in his fiction to defend the victims of misery, especially women, even though it meant self-abnegation.

Apparently the pain and unhappiness that Greene explores in his fiction are felt through his protagonists. But it is evident that it is really drawn off the subordinate characters, mostly women. In such cases the protagonist acts as a kind of central receptacle of whatever angst or suffering that is around, much in the same way as a priest, or an inexperienced psychoanalyst.
does. A look at the suffering of the men characters of his fiction is sufficient to prove the truth of this statement – Andrews of *The Man Within*, Anthony of *England Made Me*, Scobie of *The Heart of the Matter*, Bendrix of *The End of the Affair*, Michael of *The Living Room*, James of *The Potting Shed* and Victor of *The Complaisant Lover*, all are examples. In this sense, we can say that Greene’s fiction has a genuine religious or a mistaken psychoanalytical dimension. This is not to be confused with the melodramatic backdrop of good and evil which he used in his fiction as a way of laying the colours.

**Greene’s Knowledge of Psychology under Attack**

Greene’s knowledge of psychology has been called in question by several men of letters. For example, Artur Lundkvist, one time chairman of the committee which decided future Nobel prizes, a profound Greene hater, called Greene’s first play *The Living Room*, “a monstrosity of anti psychology” (Sherry, 1994, p.453), and Brian Inglis, a famous reviewer, branded the
psychiatrist of The Potting Shed, as one who had “picked up his craft by an assiduous reading of The Seventh Veil” ².

Greene’s superficial knowledge about psychology and his incompetency to become a good analyst are evident when we examine the ‘placing activity’ that Greene performed with regard to the women he came into contact with. A reference in this regard was made earlier. It was stated that Greene in his real life disassociated himself from plump and big-breasted women because he regarded them as people with extra-ordinary independence of mind and unyielding strength of will. An experienced analyst, with a profound knowledge of psychology would have discounted such conceptions in his practice as an analyst, which he himself may have formed subjectively in his personal life. But Greene in his career as a writer never tried to correct such misconceptions. Like an inexperienced and young therapist, he made assumptions about his women characters which he had gathered from his own experience and background. In his fiction plumpness and bigness of breasts are associated with least affable women – Mrs. Bertram of The Man Within, Ida

Brian Inglis, in Spectator, 14 February, 1958, p.203.
Arnold of *Brighton Rock*, Louise Scobie of *The Heart of the Matter*, and Helen of *The Living Room*, are examples.

Another instance to suggest Greene's weakness to become a good analyst was stated earlier. It may be recalled that Greene had a special affinity for women whose *psychopathology* resembled his own. He was intensely sympathetic towards them in his fiction. Sex starved as they were, Sarah, Kate, and Mary were in a way engulfing women. They had a kind of *transference love* for the men with whom they were involved. In Greene's life too, the women who held him under their sway – Dorothy, Catherine, Anita, Yvonne – all had such a kind of love (positive transference)\(^3\), regard, and concern for him. Had Greene been a professionally experienced therapist, he would not have fallen prey to such a self-consuming type of love; instead, he would have considered such transference love as therapeutic, and “shelved (it) in favour of higher ideals” (Gunn, 1988, p.60), and better forms of behaviour. Greene failed to do it but used it for

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\(^3\) If in the course of psychoanalysis, the analyst becomes emotionally important to the patient, like a caring parent, such emotional valuation by the patient is known as positive transference, as opposed to negative transference which consists of assumption of rejection and hostility (Storr, 1989, pp.72-73).
his own enjoyment and fun, like an unprincipled therapist, without any sense of morality.

Absence of Consonance in Approach and Representation

Greene in his eagerness to be a good analyst with regard to women in real life and in his fiction, followed Jung’s advice to young doctors practising psychoanalysis: “If (one) wants to guide another or accompany him a step of the way, he must feel with the person’s psyche. He never feels it when he passes judgement” (Jung, 1932). Greene’s compassion was roused whenever he came into contact with women who best corresponded to his own unconscious femininity. He helped them on several steps of their way, providing them with material and physical comforts and satisfying his male ego, but portrayed them as really as he found them, in his fiction. All this while, he kept Jung’s advice at the back of his mind and never ever blamed them, in spite of his religiosity. In fact he even turned the principles of religion – he called them “‘rules’ of the church” (Duran, 1994, p.312) – to his, and his character’s advantage. He never even tolerated antagonistic criticism against the most unpopular of his women characters, Louise of The Heart of the Matter. His response to
adverse comments on the conduct of Louise by a large section of his readers, is sufficient evidence. He exonerated Louise of all misconduct, and called Scobie, his self's own counterpart, a victim of "monstrous pride" (Greene, 1980, p.120). In this sense the geese of his fiction always turned into swans despite his lack of consonance.

**Life Experience and Portrayal of Women.**

What has been stated so far would show that Greene's system of treating his women characters with sympathy and antagonism, takes its roots from his own life experience. Experiences do not become real, as long as it remains vicarious. To be real, experiences have to be 'lived'. Greene 'lived' all these experiences, and like Luigi Pirandello, the great Italian dramatist and novelist, he seems to say that women are like dreams; they are never the way you would like to have them. In portraying his women characters he followed unconsciously Lawrence Durrell's advice that there are only three things to be done with women: love her, suffer for her, or turn her into literature. After having loved and suffered for the women in his life, Greene had turned them into literature.
Femininity – Its Cultural Grounding

Michele A. Paludi, in her book, The Psychology of Women, mournfully complains that, “women’s experiences are extremely diverse, yet women are frequently described collectively” (Paludi, 1998). She hints that such descriptions are often disparaging. The concept of femininity is viewed in another perspective by Andrea Freud Lowenstein. In her wonderfully illuminating work, Loathsome Jews and Engulfing Women she highlights the point of view that, “western men are brought up by a female parent in the context of a misogynist and women hating culture”. As a result, men “are forced as the price of their entry into adult manhood, to split off or deny the soft feeling parts of themselves, which are relegated to, and associated with the mother, and with all females” (Lowenstein, 1993, p.313). But it is to be stated that such a perception about femininity is not a peculiarity of western culture alone.

The opening sloka of the 21 sarga of the famous Yoga Vasishta of Indian philosophy and religion reads:

Prathyakṣha naraṅkavrāṭha –
Niśpannanighilanāṅgkāh .
Sthṛiyopyathra vinindyante

(Women born with all the traits of visible hell, furnish men a hellish life and are condemned).

The subject matter of this profound work is the advice given to Lord Rama, by the sage Vasishta.

Saint Paul, the most vociferous of Christian apostles, advises believers: “It is good for a man not to touch a woman.”4 He even wishes that all men were as he himself is. But to allow neither man nor woman superiority over the other he declares, “neither is man independent of woman, nor woman independent of man. For as the woman was from the man, even so the man also is through the woman.”5 The bitterest cry of early Christendom against women finds graphic expression in Tertullian’s words, “The sentence of God is on this sex of yours . . . You are the devil’s gateway. You destroy God’s image in man” (Holtby, 1945, p.23).

Islamic attitude also has never been sympathetic towards women. Wherever Mohammedan invasions had passed, things have been worse for women. Mohammed sharing Tertullian’s

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5 1 Corinthians, 11: 11,12. ibid.
opinion is said to have declared, “I have not left any calamity more hurtful to man than women” (Holtby, 1945, p.31).

In Russia too the position was not different. Echoing the English proverb, “A woman, a dog, and a walnut tree, the more you beat them, the better they be”, a Russian proverb runs: “A hen is not a bird, nor a woman a human being.”

At the face of such candid exposition, psychologists who do not find any “immutable differences . . . between men and women apart from differences in their genitals,” are compelled to concede that “some . . . unchangeable differences . . . probably . . . a number of irrelevant differences . . .” exist between man and woman (Weisstein, 1971).

**EPILOGUE**

The analysis on Graham Greene’s life and the women he created in his fiction attempted so far, would go a long way to show that a *creative writer* cannot evade the *psychologist*, and the psychologist the creative writer. It is hoped that it would further

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testify to the truth that the *psychological analysis* of a literary text can turn out to be correct without any sacrifice of its beauty.

Creative writers agreeing with Wordsworth often say that to dissect is to murder; they often resist the intrusion of the psychologist in their domain. Nabokov, for example, writes that all his books should be stamped, "Freudians keep out". Humbert Humbert of *Lolita*, speaks for his creator when he observes that the differences between the rapist and therapist is but a matter of spacing. Such hatred and antipathy, should not prevent a literary student or an earnest inquirer of human behaviour from exploring literary texts, employing the varied tools and techniques of psychology, for fathoming the depths and exploring the domains of apparently innocent, entertaining, and enlightening texts.

**SUGGESTION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

The New Critical approach to literary texts, as stated at the beginning of this report, treating each literary work as a unique and frozen object, floating alone in its own pure vacuum, helps a great deal in the enjoyment and appreciation of that work. But the present study would prove that voyages 'outside' the textual
analysis, yields a great deal of understanding and insight into *human behaviour* and *thought processes*, which form the springboard for creative action.

Fenced-off fields of learning called, 'biography', 'history', 'anthropology', 'psychology' and the like, should no longer be treated as areas 'out-of-bounds' for students. Such sorties would enable one to know what Shakespeare's Hamlet suggests to Horatio, "there are more things in heaven and earth, . . . than are dreamt of in . . . (our) philosophy" (Verity, 1989, p.32).
References


