Part I
ABOUT THE TITLE AND METHOD

The most debated of Shakespeare’s creation, Hamlet, in the play that bears his name exclaims:

What a piece of work is man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculties! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals (Verity, 1989).

That this ‘paragon of animals’ is facing a crisis of unprecedented magnitude today is unquestionable. The swirling speed and complexity of modern life with its craving for comfort, leaves little room for contemplation or complacency. Even God has been reduced to a cosmic convenience dancing attendance to our personal comforts. The basic structure of existence is topsy-turvy with the steady weakening of family ties, the slow breaking up of sociological boundaries, the overturning of educational values, and the lopsided growth of our intellectual faculties. As
Rebecca Beard says, "the consuming illness of our times is our immaturity - our refusal to grow up." Our basic problem seems to be this: "We have grown up powers handled by half grown persons" (Jones, 1952, introduction).

To correct this malady, there may be several remedies. The best this investigator can suggest, is a proper study of mankind. As Alexander Pope has aptly put it, "the proper study of mankind is man" (Pope, cited in Hornstein, 1973). A great scholar of the nineteenth century has elaborated it slightly: "On earth there is nothing great but man, in man there's nothing great but mind" (Hamilton, cited in Green, 1925). Taking a cue from what these profound men have said, an honest attempt is herein made to study a few WOMEN, using PSYCHOLOGY as a tool to open the wide vistas of their MIND.

A study of mankind, comprehensive in nature, is a herculean task and would call for colossal competence and expertise of a committee. The scope of the study therefore has to be circumscribed within reasonable limits. This inquirer basically being a student of literature, feels that it would be reasonable if he confines his inquiry to creations that loom large in the
"precious lifeblood of a master spirit, imbalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life" (Milton, cited in Seldes, 1968). A cross section of people who represent the turmoil and trouble of our times have to be present in the works of this 'master spirit'. This 'master spirit' too should be a part of this perplexing, enervating, dizzying world. While pondering over these ideas, this researcher stumbled on a few novels and plays of Graham Greene.

An author who is the embodiment of our times, Greene has stripped humanity naked in his writings. Sinners who transform themselves as saints and vice versa, fill most of Greene's pages. Greene seems to believe firmly like the famous French writer Claudel that sin also serves (Sherry, 1994, p.35). In a world teeming with crime, criminals, ills and evils, what better philosophy seems more appropriate? Greene's fiction helps a great deal, to put humanity back on rails.

Ordinarily the adjective 'fictitious' implies fabrication, and suggests artificiality or contrivance. The term 'fiction' therefore usually connotes something far from facts. But a little thought will convince us that fiction of this kind is beyond the ken of a
creative writer of Greene's class. For writers like him, things have to precede thoughts. Their thoughts are produced by their surroundings, and by the action and interaction of things upon their mind. Through their writings their thoughts become visible.

The imagination of such writers are kindled and their conscience quickened by their immediate environment. Clip the wings of their imagination and scotch their conscience, they do not exist any more. In their pages we can find individuals, natural people, who have the contradictions and inconsistencies that are inseparable from humanity. They hold a mirror up to nature and this mirror reflects with absolute accuracy. They touch the universal, their words and works throb in unison with the great ebb and flow of things. They write and work for all races and for all time.

Looking at the title to this work a very pertinent question may arise. Why women alone have been chosen to be included in this inquiry? I am not audacious enough to offer all my answers here. Only this much can be laid down now: Even before Adam was, Eve was there. At the beginning of the new millennium when men and women are making history, women march with
men from the cradle to the grave. In literature too, from Shakespeare to Shaw, and even much later, women play a prominent role, sometimes surreptitiously though. As a modern writer has aptly put it, "In the hands of Woman, my boy, Man is but an innocent little child" (Corrie, 1983). To put it differently, many literary works show that men are empty balloons which can be filled only by women. Secondly, to limit the range and scope of this enquiry.

Now about the method; Best and Kahn, exponents of the Publication Manual (1983) of the American Psychological Association observe that, "documents are an important source of data in many areas of investigation." Among documents, they have included biographies, autobiographies, diaries, compositions, books etc. According to them, analysis of such documents "serves a useful purpose in adding knowledge to fields of enquiry and in explaining social events" (Best and Kahn, 1995, p.191).

In this study, the sources of data used are books and compositions of, and on Graham Greene. ‘A legend in his own time’ (Sherry, 1989, preface), Greene had contributed a great deal
in emphasizing or obliterating prevalent impression and concepts about very many subjects. What were the ‘causal factors’ that prompted Greene to portray a sizable portion of humanity the way he did? The quest of this exploration is in that direction.
References


