Chapter VII

CONCLUSION

The foregoing study of Iris Murdoch's, Ivy Compton-Burnett's and Graham Greene's concept of sin is so oriented as to serve the purpose of comparison and its basic criterion is the author's conformity to and their departure from the Christian concept of sin. Each author was studied separately in Chapters Three, Four and Five and a comparative assessment of their world view vis-à-vis the question of sin was made in Chapter Six. In this chapter, which concludes the dissertation, it is felt necessary to make a few general observations and to present a summary of the whole argument.

All the three authors dealt with in this study are basically Christian in their treatment of sin. But their approaches towards sin and sinners are different. Compton-Burnett has highlighted the view that individuals are combinations of good and evil. In Christianity the universal quality of sin, i.e. the idea that no man born into this world can help becoming a sinner is a major point. In the psalms it is mentioned: "They have all fallen away; they are all alike depraved; there is none that does good, no, not one."

Murdoch also has presented this idea in her novels. Her characters are sinners
because they fail to perceive reality. True freedom enables a person to exist sanely without fear and to perceive what is real. The modern man pictured in her fiction lives without the background of values and realities with only a facile idea of sincerity.

Greene is equally obsessed with the deterioration in the moral sense of man. He is constantly haunted by the idea of salvation and damnation. He has made an attempt to release the "Mercy of God" from the rigid shackles and boundaries of conventional religion and render it attainable for even the worst sinner. In the novels of Greene, as he acknowledges, he accepts and adheres to the Christian principles wholly. Sin has acquired an exalted and different manifestation through his novels. Even in his latest novel Monsignor Quixote, he continues to hold this view. The Monsignor prays to God: "O God, make me human, let me feel temptation. Save me from my indifference." Another instance is when he protects a man who tries to rob a bank. The Monsignor explains:

The Good Samaritan didn't hold an enquiry into the wounded man's past--the man who had fallen among thieves--before he heeled him. Perhaps he was a publican and thieves were only taking back what he had taken from them.
It is impossible for any author to establish the universal nature of sin more effectively and convincingly.

The novels of Compton-Burnett deal with simple, violent plots of thefts, forgeries, betrayals, murders etc. and are covered with layers of wit. She is pre-occupied with the temptations that overcome human beings. She doesn't entertain any false notions about man's prowess to manoeuvre situations where he is likely to succumb to temptations. But she resorts to a method of using insinuations, witty remarks etc. to depict the voluptuous, evil, unpleasant nature of her characters. Many of the characters deliberately indulge in evil actions with the intention of harming others.

Greene has also emphasised the necessity of the purity of heart. He doesn't believe in outward conventions. He stresses the importance of having a zest for life. The lukewarm type of people are derided. Throughout his novels there is the infallible expectation that purity will emerge from impurity and saintliness will be the ultimate result of demonism. His characters are mostly ardent believers and find solace in the Grace of God. In spite of wallowing in the carnal sins, they cherish the silent, strong hopes that they will be redeemed by the Mercy of God. The Christian concepts of
sin and saintliness are compatible with the free-will theory, which says any man is free to choose the right or the wrong. Greene's characters are provided with this freedom to act according to their will and the decisions they make are fully in accordance with their conviction. In the eyes of the society, they are not justified but their rationality is harmonious with their personal codes of morality. The congruity between one's rationality and their personal moral vision brings about the purity of the heart. Thus the characters who are extolled by Greene definitely have the purity of the heart. They behave according to the dictates of their conscience.

But Greene has bitterly criticised and satirised those individuals who never succeed in maintaining a clean and unblemished heart. The outwardly perfect characters are depicted as hypocritical prigs really. The imperfect characters are fully aware of their shortcomings and this quality itself endears them to God. Greene has sympathy only for this group.

'Ego' and the deterrent effect of this vice are discussed and analysed in the works of both Greene and Murdoch. Ego stands in the way of an individual's purification. Murdoch picturises the modern individual as without any identity in the modern society. She prefers
extroversion to introspection. Introspection and suffering in an individual, lead him to concentrate on himself and ultimately his ego is overgrown. Greene has also suggested the disastrous effect of pity as distinct from compassion. This sort of pity is an effect of 'ego' which provides a mental constitution for a man to project himself in the role of a redeemer or helper possessing superhuman qualities to pacify the throes of mankind. Another manifestation of 'ego' itself causes the over coincidence in Ida Arnold of Brighton Rock and Louise of The Heart of the Matter. These characters are repulsive for Greene and he has fully endorsed the Christian view in this aspect of condemning the hypocrites.

Similarly in novels like The Heart of the Matter, the lack of genuine, sincere relationship in married life is a major concern. Compton-Burnett has also depicted the frivolity of family relation, the extremity of selfishness etc. Still some of her bad characters are at times inspired by virtues. The frankness and innocence of children are glorified and highlighted in her works, apparently as a technique to accentuate the foibles of the elders. She is exposing the dangers of the corruptive nature of money and power. As in the case of Greene's works, the hypocritical group of people are a repulsive lot to her. She dislikes the pretentious characters and
so-called virtuous characters because she is convinced that altruism serves the self-interest and self-esteem of an individual. But the language she adopts remains tolerant and devoid of any trace of indictment.

Murdoch has admitted her disbelief in any personal God. But she has maintained a strict moral sense in her outlook and perception of this world and the fellow beings. She was always fascinated by the problem of human freedom. She states that true freedom is possible only for an individual who can love and accept an object (human or non-human) which is other than and distinct from the loving object. So this real freedom involves self-control, a proper understanding and a total liberation from irresponsible motives. In her perspective the most important attainment in the growth of the personality is the perception of reality. This perception is a mirage unless the ‘ego’ is liberated. The spiritual force of a person should win over the material for us like passions, conventions, egoism, cruelty, neurosis etc.

The Christian perspective of sin and the sinner makes a cosmic vision possible. Since ‘sin’ is present in all human beings, a strong bondage is formed among all the fellow beings which erases all sorts of disparity and discordance. Greene has succeeded in imparting this
cosmic outlook into the mind he reaches through the portrayal of his characters. The feeling of oneness enjoyed by the whisky priest, in the company of the criminals and sinners is an apt example. Scobie’s prayer for the six-year-old dying child: “Father,” he prayed, “give her peace. Take away my peace for ever, but give her peace” also leads to the same sort of realisation. Christianity implies the feeling of togetherness as fundamental in its teachings. Greene has taken advantage of the above situations to drive home this fundamental principle. He writes about seediness, morbidity and other repulsive aspects of life in his novels for the same purpose. The spiritual level of each man has been equalised with that of the others through his techniques.

Murdoch also has envisaged a life of moral discipline for a person even if he doesn’t believe in a personal God. The acceptances of another individual with all his defects and weakness is the covetable moralistic approach she expects from a person. This is considered “acceptance of the otherness of another person,” as mentioned earlier in Chapter Four of this dissertation. In her philosophy she has endeavoured to concentrate on the mental condition of a person who does a sin. She emphasises the purity of the mind. Religion, in her vision, serves to curtail the base urges of the
individuals and to reach spiritual heights. Awareness of reality would lead a person to humility and thus to freedom. Only when the mundane desires and whims of a man are controlled, can he drag himself into the light of reality. The disintegration of modern man is symbolised through the primitive psychic drives which have their manifestations in the uncanny, supernatural elements. Death remains the ultimate reality which brings humility and the feeling of oneness into the mind of human beings. Rationality and self-justification are the major impediments in the path of the spiritual progress of her characters.

Another idea connected with the Christian concept is the re-assurance to the sinner about the proximity of God. Christ has stated that God is vigilant and concerned about the sinner. God doesn’t have that much anxiety about the sinless or those accepted by the society. In the state of sin man is tempted to go away from God, but God remains close to him. Greene’s characters exhibit the greatest qualities of love, understanding, concern, unselfishness, humility etc. Greene suggests that only a human being in the ordinary sinful state can enjoy the proximity of God. Monsignor Quixote craves for the presence of God which is possible for him only in the state of sin. The dialogue between Scobie and God in The Heart of the Matter also gives the same idea. Scobie
before committing the gravest sin of suicide feels miraculously closer to God than earlier. We can assume that he reclines safely in the arms of God. This idea of the nearness of God to the sinner which had been rendered as a comforting message by Christ himself, is made even more liberalised by the presentation of Greene.

There is a closely related topic to be considered here, that is, the redemption of the sinner by the Grace of God. In the Christian approach, God doesn't encourage the damnation of a single soul. Greene has upheld the same view through his novels. Even the worst criminal Pinkie, who is to be damned eternally, gets a kind of redemption. The anonymous priest remarks to Rose at the end of the novel about the strangeness of God's mercy. He adds: "We must hope and pray, hope and pray. The church does not demand that we believe any soul is cut off from mercy."

Christ has said: "So it is not the will of my Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish." Greene entertains the same idea in his novels. The noticeable fact is that Greene, like Christ, had a hostile and uncompromising attitude to the hypocrites and the pious group. He couldn't tolerate this complacent variety of people who were cocksure about their perfection and spiritually. Hence, as Christ has envisaged, this group remains outside the mercy of God.
Their 'ego' doesn't permit them to attain a true sense of reality which is possible only by the shedding of their pride and the false notion of perfection. Hence we can discern that this stringent view adopted to the 'pious hypocrites' is also basically Christian.

Christ extended the scope of his teachings and the laws of conduct in such a manner that they became suitable for the common man who approached him. Similarly Green made the moral codes of Christianity broad enough to encompass all people within their limits. Even in his novels on themes other than sin and salvation we see very relevant quotations pertaining to this fact. "... It was as if some code of faith and morality had been lost for centuries, and the world was trying to reconstruct it from the unreliable evidence of folk memories and subconscious desires. ..." Even in the secular statement given above we see Greene's insinuation that Christianity is based on all-pervasive and adaptable codes of morality which can be re-furnished in a society which has lost the significance of these codes. Because of the flexibility that has been attributed by Greene to Christianity, we see that most of the sinners turn out to be saints in his fiction.
Yet another notable feature of Greene's work is the unpredictability of God's judgement. Christ has pointed out that all men are sinners. "What is impossible with men is possible with God." Greene has established that God's mercy upon human beings is not something that can be prophesied. This unforeseen nature of God's Grace increases the scope and possibility of the same upon the common, corrupted, individuals. Father Rank tells Louise in *The Heart of the Matter*: "It may seem an odd thing to say--when a man's as wrong as he was--but I think, from what I saw of him, that he really loved God."

He has dealt with 'suffering' connected with sin in the Christian manner. Suffering definitely has an ennobling and purifying effect on the sinners. Through suffering the process of purgation becomes complete and the individual is received into the Kingdom of God. Scobie's suffering, the whiskey priest's suffering and Sarah's suffering are good examples. Sarah when she comes into the vicinity of God's Grace, feels intense anguish about her own sinful condition and realises the unworthiness to be sanctified. This awareness is expected from a true Christian and for the same reason soon after her death Sarah is exalted to the position of a saint.
Certain slight deviations can be discerned in his treatment of the temptations and saintliness. Temptations usually lead a man to a sinful path, according to Christian belief. But we see Greene making a contradictory suggestion. Rose, the innocent character in Greene's *Brighton Rock* feels that virtue tempts her like sin. From the same outlook, he brings forward a slightly different idea about saintliness also. Saintliness is considered covetable in Christianity and it is not an easy path. To become a saint, one has to tread a very arduous route. But Greene's whisky priest feels that he could have easily attained saintliness with a little courage and self-control. Though Greene has employed some rare deviations from the original Christian principles regarding the concept of sin and salvation, it is clear that he adheres to the basic Christian moral codes as much as possible. The deviations used by him can be taken as the allowances utilised by an ingenious writer for the impressive and convincing presentation of the elevated themes finding expression in his novels. Moreover he has succeeded in widening the range of the Christian ethics beyond ordinary human comprehension so that very favourable and relevant results have ensued. It can be stated beyond any doubt that Greene has succeeded in
re-establishing the lost religious sense, in the society by this unique presentation.

The contrast in Ivy Compton-Burnett's approach with that of Greene is pronounced. "Even in a secular approach it is impossible to overrule the codes of morality absolutely. Morality is the necessity for a stable society. Goodness and badness or truth and justice unite inseparably in morality."10

None of the characters, she has depicted has any strong sense of morality. She, herself, has delineated them as feeble individuals likely to yield to temptations easily. She doesn't make any attempt to probe into the recess of the hearts of the individuals dealt with. She remains an objective writer without applying any of her own emotions to her works. The definition of D. H. Lawrence of a true moral work is applicable here. Only a novel revealing true and vivid relationship amounts to a moral work and so the works of Compton-Burnett cease to be moral endeavours because they don't conform to this definition.

Dame Ivy has only performed the task of exposing the evils and crimes of her characters. Even on the worst wrong doer she doesn't pass any verdict. And no punishment is meted out. A writer with a moralistic approach has the important responsibility to provide a didactic effect
through his works. It has to be agreed that Compton-Burnett has sadly failed in this attempt. Though often in real life the wrong doer is let off without punishment, (as she has mentioned in an interview with Michael Millgate) in fiction, it ought to be the opposite sort of treatment. Only such an attitude in the mind of the author can inculcate moral values in a materialistic society. Though she has a contemptuous attitude to the hypocritical, prigs, here also she maintains only a passive attitude.

Dame Burnett’s failure to project a moral world in her novels is indeed a serious topic. Moral realities remain the same whether it is a godless world or one which is truly religious. While no moral judgement is intended, the observation cannot be withheld that indifference to moral values, whatever be the justification, is moral irresponsibility.

One major reason for this moral situation in her novels is her habit of justifying the sinners. Even the worst among them, who indulge in the most severe types of sins, easily find self-justification for their deeds. Dame Ivy is aware of the religious points of view, as is clear in her interviews, novels etc. But the fact is that she doesn’t take any effort to speak about the
consequences of evil deeds in front of her readers. Even the meanest act of her character Miles is defended by himself. He says to his children:

... So you need not look at me with accusing eyes, as if I ought to have faced the truth, when the truth was impossible and there was nothing possible about anything. There was no hinge of help anywhere. There was no precedent to follow. I sent the money by way of marking time. I had to see your mother was provided for, hadn't I?^{11}

Towards the end of her novels, there is only a sort of numbness or rather indifference.

The characters of Dame Ivy are typically modern individuals who have lost their capability for any sort of emotions. The greatest curse for this age is that the people have the faculty of response. In the novel *A Heritage and its History* can be seen the character Simon, a typical Compton-Burnett character who is deceiving himself through his passive and immoral ways of life. In *Elders and Betters*, the character Terence not only fails to respond but even goes to the extent of lauding his foibles.
The amoral effect of her works get enhanced because all her characters remain at the same spiritual level they had been. The innocent children remain unpolluted. But they never succeed in purifying or reforming the sinners who continue to wallow in their sins as before.

Yet another defect of her fiction is that moral statements, even Christian and Biblical verses are employed to establish the grounds to defend immoral actions. The good characters presented in her works have only a feeble framework and fabrication to be impressive and influential. She has not bifurcated the characters as good and bad, because she believes in the presence of both these elements in all individuals. But she does not make any attempt to alleviate the sins of the mundane, weak human beings. Similarly no effort has been made to extol the saintly deeds of the good characters.

Another notable negative factor in her novels is the lack of repentance and reformation in her characters. The name 'sinners' is not attributed by the author as she doesn't adhere either to the Christian or even to the secular morality.

The characters of Compton-Burnett are ready to go to any extent to exercise their will and promote their self-interest. So her characters become sinners not only
from the religious but also from the secular point of view. As already mentioned, even existentialist philosophers like Sartre who never liked the 'past' were morbidly aware of evil. The paradox is that Compton-Burnett doesn't appear to have any awareness of the evil around her or rather she doesn't care the least to ameliorate the situation. She has also done away with the importance of the ideas of sacrifice and unselfishness. An unselfish act is no more exemplary in her view; for the one who performs it the results are usually bitter while the one at the receiving end gets the benefit. This type of materialistic approach is seen in all her novels in the dealings of most of her characters.

In the chapter dealing with the social aspects of sin, a distinction was made between concealed immorality and prudent immorality. Both may be unnoticed by the society but the one who indulges in any sort of immorality also may be unhappy. It is worth noticing that none of the characters of Dame Ivy have any sort of unhappiness or misgivings in their heart. In the same chapter it was also stated that when there is a conflict between "what I ought" and "what I want," the former should be given importance. Otherwise the person tends to be morally weak.
In short, Compton-Burnett has failed in exhibiting either the Christian (religious) or the secular concept of morality in her fiction. The definition of the word 'sin' itself is "the breaking of religious or moral law, especially through a wilful act." Where the religious or moral codes are over-ruled, there is no question of the concept of sin. Hence she can be considered an 'amoral' writer who doesn't contribute in any manner to edify the society or the individual. She has adopted a policy of negation of the concept of sin or, in other words, nullified the gravity of the implication of the word 'sin' absolutely.

Murdoch is the most complex among the three novelists studied here. Hence defining her codes of morality also remains highly complicated. She has incorporated into her moral vision an intricate network of philosophical ideas, spiritual concerns and psychological principles. Her spirituality is too intricate to be encompassed within the boundary of any single religion. We can discern a lot of affinity to Christianity, a lot of similarities to the Hindu ideals and also a passion for the Buddhist principles. A study of the progress of her moral code as revealed by her characters can be illuminative only in the context of her own philosophical ideas.
She has reiterated that her concern is with 'freedom' in the true sense of the word. All media that would enable a person to attain true freedom would be religion and morality for her. She cannot tolerate the attitude of the modern man which is absolutely self-centred. Realising the presence of others in the society and in the whole world is the basis of the morality she preaches. The major handicap in the process of this realisation is the 'ego' of any individual. About her attitude to this phenomenon Michael Levenson has mentioned:

Against this dryness, this fetish for the lonely, authentic self spreading the feathers of its 'brave naked will', Murdoch invoked Jane Austin, Leo Tolstoy and George Eliot, who produced thick social fictions that never forget 'that other people exist'.

An important aspect to be taken into account is this understanding of the otherness of the others. It is evident from this attitude itself that the religion she preaches has a universal outlook. All human beings are enveloped in the perception of this religion. A morality which doesn't accept the uniqueness of each individual in this world will be meaningless. Christianity which preaches universal brotherhood, Hinduism which visualises
the presence of the Supreme-being in all human beings and Buddhism which upholds the principles of self denial and the attainment of Nirvana are all present in the basic idea propagated by Murdoch.

Byatt, who was enamoured of the philosophy and fiction of Murdoch and who herself follows a pattern of belief closely resembling that of Murdoch, says about her belief: "Her point is not to confirm religious truth, but to enlarge the religious sense, which locates value not in the infinite but in the yearning for the infinite, not in God but in the search for God."14 This comment is fully applicable in the case of Murdoch also when we consider her approach to God and the religious sense.

The perception of reality is possible for an individual by the attainment of true knowledge. She gives the maximum emphasis to 'truth' and considers 'fantasy' the greatest sin which takes away a person from 'truth'. All the worldly allurements amount to fantasy because they are encumbrances on the path towards spiritual or Divine Light. A character in one of her later novels (The Book and the Brotherhood), Tamar Herns Law is obsessed with fantasy and reaches a state where she is to become a total wreck. She had the feeling that her soul was on the verge of destruction as she 'had to undergo the abortion
of a pregnancy. But she is given spiritual guidance and finds solace in Christ and Christianity. Whereas in the earlier novels the characters resort to the pursuit of fantasy without a relieving element, in the later novels we find a resolution of this type. This is exactly what Murdoch had been trying to achieve through her novels. She herself has admitted that the perception of reality was difficult in a life which is devoid of discipline and self-restraint. Owing to this reason many of them do not earn the true 'freedom'. Tamar is able to gain the 'freedom' by the absolute surrender to 'Christ' who is cherished as a perfect man by Murdoch. Even when she denied any personal God, she always carried the Christ-figure in her heart and this worship finds a noble expression in her work The Book and the Brotherhood.

She had determined that true love and genuine art would help a person to attain freedom:

Love can be false, egotistical and sadistic; it can spoil as well as sponsor freedom. Similarly, bad and shallow art spoils freedom. Nonetheless, love and art hold out the best possibilities for escape from the mechanisms that render human freedom impotent and useless.
Real art and lofty love are two qualities she would attribute to a sinless person. Only a saint would be bestowed with these qualities. The ordinary man bereft of these faculties is degraded to the level of a sinner. Though her novels mostly she has exhibited the helpless condition of man, where he is compelled to live on as a sinner. The reason is that the real attainment of freedom through art or love or any other sublime methods is not easily possible. In her words, this is actually the re-establishment of the idea that all people are sinners. Redemption from the sinful condition is advocated in her novels by the godly or saintly deeds like the selfless exercise of love or the noble creation of art. Blaise, a character in The Sacred and Profane Love Machine after his disloyalty to his wife is denied the truth: "... But I am placed between crime and crime and I have to move. Try to see it as an act of justice and forgive..." Since he continues in spiritual darkness, he uses the self-justification process characteristic of the sinner. Though the author has a lot of lofty ideas, the characters in her works, who are ordinary, mortal beings, are not equipped to put them in to practice.

Her ideal vision about love, acceptance of otherness and real freedom gives us a cosmic perspective about the eternal goodness as echoed in the Psalms: "Faithfulness
will spring up from the ground and righteousness will look down from the sky." She remembers the major responsibility of mankind and strives to transmit the urgency of the situation into the mind of the readers. As Gorbachev had written in his book Perestroika:

"Today our main job is to lift the individual spiritually, respecting his inner world and giving him moral strength. We must realise that we all represent one human race, that we share a common destiny and have to learn to be civilized neighbours on our planet."

She concentrates on 'attention' which involves an objective, thoughtful and selfless contemplation of people and situations. This sort of attention would keep us away from emotional, impulsive and reckless deeds. Such actions would result in far-fetched consequences and hence deeds which are not preceded by 'attention' amount to sins. Her characters involve themselves in a lot of such actions which are followed by grave repercussions. David Levkin in The Italian Girl is a good example.

The best testimony of her understanding of morality and goodness in concise form is available in the essay "On God" and "Good". Here she says:
One might start from the assertion that morality, goodness, is a form of realism. The idea of a really good man living in a private dream world seems unacceptable. Of course, a good man may be infinitely eccentric but he must know certain things about his surroundings, most obviously the existence of other people and their claims. The chief enemy of excellence in morality (and also in art) is personal fantasy: 'the tissue of self-aggrandising and consoling wishes and dreams which prevent one from seeing what is there outside one...'.

All the human frailties that amount to sins can be included in her concept of 'fantasy'. Though the terminology used is different her 'fantasy' performs the same function as 'sin', i.e. alienates the 'self' of an individual from the ultimate reality, that is God.

Miss Murdoch has classified ordinary people into two groups, that is totalitarian man and ordinary language man. The former is interested only in the human condition and not any specific individual. The latter is concerned with the social facts of behaviour. The first pertains to the lonely brave man who is a godless, adventurer. People of the second variety try to return to the concept of God
by creating religious images in an empty situation. Murdoch argues for a system of belief and art forms which would consider the immediate need of the people around, without emphasising secondary aspects. The biological survival of a person is only secondary when balanced with the plight of the fellow-beings. Here also it is evident that she has delved into the depths of spirituality and come up with the true meaning. All religions direct us to the crux of true morality which is none other than a selfless concern for the fellow-beings. The character of the two varieties discussed earlier wouldn't fit into the natural rhythm of this universe and they turn out to be sinners.

She considers the projection of day dreams like those of power, excessive sexual attraction etc. the characteristics of bad novels since they take away readers by their influence. The contingent nature of life, human failings, goodness of a person etc. should be projected because there is the element of truth in it and helps influence the people away from unreality which leads to 'sin'. She has envisaged a religion of Christian Buddhism as suggested in the interview. The 'obsession' with the ego and the havoc caused by the dominance of ego is one of primary reasons for the sins present in the world as revealed through her works. All the other sinful
conditions can be related to this basic factor. She feels that cherishing Christ in the life of a person would definitely assist to progress in the part of goodness.

Psychological factors, selfish love, self-centred motivations etc. are all earthly factors which trigger the journey of an individual along the path of sin. Caught up in all these complexities, he never gets a chance to perceive his true self or rather his spiritual identity.

It all boils down to this. Greene is basically Christian in his treatment of the theme of sin. Though he cannot be said to conform completely to either the Old Testament or to the New Testament view of sin and the fallen, there is general conformity in all his novels particularly in his Catholic novels. Murdoch's treatment of sin is basically not Christian, but it is spiritual, nonetheless. However, the moral world of Dame Ivy Burnett is an amoral one, one in which actually the concept of sin is non-existent, and where the novelist as moral arbiter, does not feel obliged to mete out poetic justice. While the novelist is under no obligation to sound a homiletic note, this is not an ideal social stance since as T. S. Eliot says:

The common ground between religion and fiction is behaviour. Our religion imposes our ethics,
our judgement and criticism of ourselves, and our behaviour towards our fellow men. The fiction that we read affects our behaviour towards our fellow men, affects our patterns of ourselves. When we read of human beings behaving in certain ways, with the approval of the author, who gives his benediction to this behaviour by his attitude towards the result of the behaviour arranged by himself, we can be influenced towards behaving in the same way.21 This passage brings out the gravity of the author's responsibility. The novelist who is conscious about this majestic mandate would surely manoeuvre on to the moralistic path.
Notes

1 Psalms 53: 3.


3 Greene, Monsignor Quixote 127.


6 The Bible, Matthew 18: 14.


9 Greene, The Heart of the Matter 320.


17. Psalms 85: 11.


