CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

At the outset, it is in the fitness of things to consider for a while the various angles and perspectives from which Greene and his works have been so far studied by some of his renowned critics.

It is paradoxical to note that to many, Greene still appears to be an enigma. Weatherby, for instance, says, “Graham Greene has proved himself to be one of the great masters of camouflage, red herrings and false identities” (5). In the same vein John Atkins compares Greene with Conder in Greene’s novel *It’s a Battlefield* who surrounds himself with a heap of unrealities, and opines: “Greene is a difficult person to understand. In nearly everything he does there is ambivalence” (237). It is said that Edward Sackville West once called Greene “the electric hare whom the greyhound critics are not meant to catch” (qtd. in Philip Stratford vii). The same critic further says: “Graham Greene’s rather elusive character” (“Unlocking the Potting Shed” 30).

Further, the clues Greene himself has offered in his autobiography and his confessional essays regarding his own stance is more concealing than revealing. He has very often changed his views and statements that as Stratford states Greene “diabolically tells one critic one thing another to another” (“Unlocking the Potting Shed” 131). Once Greene acknowledged to Kenneth Allott that he was inspired and influenced by Mauriac, but later when this was questioned by Martin Shuttleworth and Simon Raven, he unabashedly protested and exclaimed: “That is the sort of thing one says under pressure” (qtd. in Samuel Hynes 161). When questioned about the ending of his novel *Brighton Rock*, Greene’s evasive reply was that he wrote it
in such a way that people could plausibly imagine that Pinkie went to hell, and then
I cast doubt upon it in the ending” (qtd. in Samuel Hynes 173). The diversity of
critical opinions about Greene and his works is so intriguing that one is impelled to
agree with David Pryce-Jone’s observation: “Few writers have provoked such
contradictory assessment during their life as Graham Greene” (1).

However, quite a good number of critics like Walter Allen, Anthony
Burgess, Alastair Fowler, Frederick Karl, etc. argue and aver that Greene is first and
foremost a Catholic novelist. They have directed their critical attention mainly to
Greene’s Catholic novels: *Brighton Rock, The Power and the Glory, The Heart of
the Matter* and *The End of the Affair* in which Greene has brought in a number of
Catholic characters and dealt with some of the rites of the Catholic Church. In these
novels, Greene deals with Catholic themes such as sin and suffering, crime and guilt,
redemption and salvation, etc. As Greene’s concerns are overtly religious, in these
novels, the critics have put him within the Christian strait-jacket. Most of these
critics base their argument on Greene’s presentation of the eternal conflict between
Evil and Good. In the conflict, they show God as a relentless pursuer of the evil and
the sinful man who is ever fleeing from Him towards damnation and destruction.

The so-called Catholic critics are never tired of showing Greene’s allegiance
with God and the Church. Harold C. Gardiner upholds Greene’s theological views
and calls him an “eschatologist” (12). He adds that Greene is concerned with “the
geography of the soul” (12). Robert A. Wichert asserts that “Greene wants God to
have the last word” (103). A.J.M. Smith maintains that “the very crux of Greene’s
plot is the true cross” (17). Smith also observes that Greene is a loyal Catholic who
is out to “justify the ways of God to Man” (17). In his first novel *The Man Within,*
Greene makes Elizabeth say to Andrews “But you always seem to leave out God” (52).

About *The Heart of the Matter* Evelyn Waugh wrote: “It is a book which only a Catholic could write and only a Catholic can understand” (qtd. in Samuel Hynes 96). Charles J. Rolo reaches at a simple and unambiguous conclusion that the message of Greene’s work “is simply this: that the *Heart of the Matter* and *The End of the Affair* are man’s relationship with God” (10).

According to Mesnet, “. . . it is only by bearing in mind and heart the Christian view of life that a reader will appreciate the profound significance of his [Greene’s] work” (81). Mesnet senses in Greene’s works the presence of the “Grace of the Living God” (6). She also asserts that Greene’s thesis is: “The greater the failure of man, the greater the mercy of God” (78). She adds: “The light of the infinite love of God is shed over all Greene’s characters” (108). She further says that it is only God’s presence that gives a new meaning to everything and gives an “answer” to “those who despair” (79).

Francois Mauriac has eulogised Greene’s *The Power and the Glory* for its message. He says that “The message is addressed to believers, to the virtuous . . . . It is addressed in particular to Christian priests and laymen, especially to writers who preach the Cross . . .” (qtd. in Samuel Hynes 77-78).

Finding the highest degree of spiritual intensity in Greene’s sinners Mesnet comments that Pinkie, the whisky priest and Scobie are not characters but “souls whom Christ died to save” (108). Mesnet’s views have prompted a number of critics to consider Greene primarily as a Catholic novelist. John Atkins, for instance, has observed: “Having read the poems [of Greene] it is possible for me to say that . . .
the Catholic faith offered him [Greene] anchorage” (44). According to Atkins, Scobie “. . . like all English Catholics, is torn in his loyalties” (161). Atkins finds in Greene the motives of a Catholic propagandist and says that “We are led to believe that a bad Catholic, though not morally better than a good Protestant, actually lives in a superior level of being” (93).

A careful and cautious reading of the bulk of the views of the Catholic critics is highly essential though some of them are clearly misleading. Laurence Lerner, for instance, turned all these upside down and wrote that Greene’s is a “religious vision without religious joy” (22). Lerner remarks that Greene’s God is “ironic and perverse” (219). According to Lewis, God can move “in a singularly Mephistophelean manner” (Lewis, “The Trilogy” 214). David Lodge has rightly said that “the popular image of Greene as a master technician with a crucifix hidden behind his back (or up his sleeve) obviously will not do” (87). Greene did not want himself to be regarded as a “Catholic novelist”. He preferred to be called a novelist who was a Catholic: “I would claim not to be a writer of Catholic novels, but a writer who in four or five books took characters with Catholic ideas for his material” (In Search of a Character 24). To Marie Francoise Allain, Greene confessed: “I don’t as a rule write to defend an idea. I’m content to tell a story and to create characters . . . I don’t want to use literature . . . for religious ends . . . my so-called ‘Catholic’ novels are [not] written to convert anyone” (15).

Keeping clear of the religious debate Kenneth Allott and Miriam Farris point out that Greene’s The Heart of the Matter is “organized primarily with an artistic, rather than a philosophical or theological intention” (214). Again, denying the importance of Greene’s Catholicism in understanding his works, the two learned critics observe: “There is a sense in which Greene’s Catholicism is the least
important thing about his outlook, that is to say, in connection with his books . . .” (17). They conclude saying “what is substantially the Greene outlook exists to all much earlier date than his conversation (sic) to Catholicism which took place in 1926” (23).

At the same time a number of critics find Greene as a social and political propagandist. James L. McDonald, for example, holds the view that Greene’s deepest and most abiding concerns “have always been social and political” (198). He comes to the conclusion that Greene’s *The Heart of the Matter* is a “war novel” (201). Writing in the same vein V. Ivasheva, the eminent Soviet critic, maintains that social criticism is a chief feature to be noticed in Greene’s works and capitalism is “the all too recognizable target in *England Made Me*” (234). He regards Greene’s Catholicism as of a marginal interest and opines that if there are “sinners” in Greene, their sin “lies in their environment” (230). The critic goes on to explain that *The Quiet American* recommends Communism “as the ideology of the future” (234) and that *The Human Factor* is “a political thriller” (236). David Pryce-Jones also notices in Greene social sympathy and a strain of “undergraduate communism” (10). According to him Greene’s novels are not mere entertainments, but they are also the “presentations of a social scene through an unexplored medium” (76).

Related to Greene’s social concerns there exists in Greene his interest in painting the contemporary scene which mostly serves as settings for his novels. This has earned him the reputation of a topical writer. The numerous topical allusions in his novels bring out his social consciousness. Greene, as a matter of fact, finds the modern world as a “Wasteland” and to a great extent, he is conscious of its barrenness, emptiness and meaninglessness. The unspeakable amount of human misery and agony he encountered while serving as a War-Correspondent in
several parts of the world, easily puts him on the side of the victims. Greene found that human habitation was full of misery and untold suffering. He has seen the worst part of “human condition” in the troubled parts of Mexico, in war-ravaged Saigon, in Haiti, in Liberia, and in many parts of the God-forsaken world ravished by the K.G.B. and the C.I.A.

Greene saw nothing but violence and bloodshed which put him in the doldrums. His bitter experiences brought him very close to the suffering, the poor, the wretched, the sick, the oppressed and the unlucky. Hence it was natural that social sympathy and political atrocities have unobtrusively entered into his works. However, as pointed out by Graham Martin “Greene’s topicality . . . remains ambiguous, however pervasive, however deep-seated” (The Modern Age 402). No one has so far constructed his political philosophy which underlies his social sympathy or political commitments. This, in addition to the truth in the observation made by Graham Martin is due to the fact that Greene is politically vague and ambivalent and his inability to find political solutions to the ills and perils of human life. A few of Greene’s characters attest this fact.

In The Honorary Consul, Dr. Plarr finds Das Kapital as unreadable as The Bible and Castle, the double agent in The Human Factor, seeks “not the city of God or Marx, but the city called Peace of Mind” (The Human Factor 116). The stark reality, therefore, is that readers of Greene do not have much interest in knowing his social and political concerns.

On the contrary, a number of critics confirm that Greene is predominantly concerned with Man’s existential predicament. Noxon interprets Greene’s characters with the tenets of Kierkegaardian theistic existentialism. Robert O. Evans finds
Sartre’s atheistic existentialism in Greene and finds its culmination in Greene’s *The Quite American*. Sartre’s philosophy almost supplies a key to the development of character and situation in *The Quiet American*. “Only aesthetic existentialism will explain Fowler, and only Sartre’s particular brand of existentialism will do to explain his *mauvaise foi*” (“Existentialism in Greene’s *The Quiet American*” 248). Evan’s conclusion is that since Fowler’s suffering is not Christian, it must be existential – the natural concomitant of his freedom, choice and responsibility.

Evans quotes a lot from Sartre, but fails to find adequate illustrations in Greene’s novels. Only once he brings in Mathieu, the protagonist in Sartre’s autobiographical work *The Age of Reason* to prove the fact that sexual matters are abundantly seen in existentialist works. Again, feelings of anxiety, boredom, guilt and absurdity are central in Sartre’s novels. Both their existence and non-existence do not have any good reason. For no plausible reasons Roquentin and Ivich cut the palms of their hands and Mathieu Jabs a table knife into his hand. But to Greene’s characters absurdity is only a fake and passing word. It is not ingrained in their physiological and psychological construct. Evans pursues the presence of existentialist elements in Greene, and says in his introduction to *Graham Greene: Some Critical Considerations*:

> After *The Heart of the Matter*, where Greene seems much more openly attracted to heresy than in the earlier books – especially because of its denouement in which Scobie commits suicide – I descry not so much St. Augustine behind Greene’s ideas, or in his intellectual background, as Kierkegaard. (x)

Evan’s book *Graham Greene: Some Critical Considerations* contains essays by writers as varied as Kunkel, Dominick Consolo, David Hesla and Herbert Haber
– all discuss the existentialist ideas discernible in Greene’s works. For instance, Haber in his essay entitled “The End of the Catholic Cycle: The Writer Versus the Saint” finds that there is similarity between the “state of anxiety ridden impatience” of Bendrix in Greene’s *The End of the Affair* and Kierkegaard’s idea of “the sickness unto death” (134). Majid, while discussing *The Quiet American* and *The Comedian* from an existential perspective shows that in both the novels the atmosphere of political tension is responsible for all the agitations experienced by the protagonists. In Fowler, he sees “the free individual who has left religion behind” (78) and one who considers himself responsible for all actions. The existential thinking of Greene, more importantly, his depiction of the “absurd” is dealt with by Henry A. Grubbs and C.H. Muller. Both have found similarities in the “thinking” of Greene and Albert Camus.

In his full length book on Greene, David Pryce-Jones points out the close relationship between Greene’s thematic concerns and the writings of the existentialists, especially the French thinkers. DeVitis deals with Sartre’s influence on Greene and says that like his mentor Greene is interested in the “cult of the individual” (Graham Greene 151). V.S. Pritchett says that betrayal, loneliness, and despair as seen in relation to contemporary civilization are the prominent existential motifs seen in Greene (80).

Greene’s knowledge of psychology, especially in his Catholic novels, has drawn a good deal of critical attention. A large number of books and articles have been written on them. Of the book-length studies, mention must be made of *The Art of Graham Greene* (1951) by Kenneth Allott and Miriam Farris. But the scope of this painstaking study is limited because the authors are very much concerned with the theme of Greene’s obsessions. The critics may be right in asserting that
everything that Greene writes “is discoloured by an original hurt to his sensibility” (14), but they seem to be needlessly tied up with Greene’s confessional statement in *Journey Without Maps* and *The Lawless Roads*, and quote from Greene’s essays on Walter de la Mare with wholesale approval: “Every creative writer worth our consideration; every writer who can be called in the wide eighteenth century use of the term a poet, is a victim: a man given over to an obsession” (13). Allott and Farris are, no doubt, right in maintaining that “the terror of life” is the “key obsession” in Greene: “This terror has been established as the ground of all Greene’s obsessions, linked equally to the night-mares of his childhood and to later religious desperations” (55). They, however, overplay the obsession motif and give the impression that Greene’s stories are sustained by his obsessions alone. Thus, Pinkie’s childhood-suffering and his evils are treated as an illustration of the “intense absorption with obsessional ideas in *Brighton Rock*”, (47) and pity is shown to be “the obsessional theme” (215) of *The Heart of the Matter*.

Reducing novels like *The Heart of the Matter* to a matter of a few obsessions is obviously an oversimplification. This preoccupation with obsessional themes, however, saves Kenneth Allott and Miriam Farris from a common pit-fall – overemphasis on the Catholic themes. The critics, quite sensibly refuse to go into the theological implications of *The Heart of the Matter*, because they know that they are “dealing with a piece of fiction, not an actual case-history” (214).

Yet another theme which comes within the purview of Greene is “The Terror of Life”. Incidentally, it should be noted that Kenneth Allott and Miriam Farris have given this as the title to the introductory Chapter of their book *The Art of Graham Greene*. They observe: “A terror of life, a terror of what experience can do to the individual, a terror at a predetermined corruption, is the motive force that drives
Greene as a novelist” (15). S.K. Sharma deals elaborately with this theme and brings into focus all its ramifications. He refers to Greene’s Francis Andrews, the hero of *The Man Within* who speaks of a terror of life which makes him soiling himself and repenting and soiling again and again. He adds that Andrews is “the forerunner of a host of characters who bear the scars of experience and the resultant terror” (43). His thesis is that Greene’s characters “live in a world that is seedy and sordid, violent and cruel. In this dreary world of isolates and exiles, betrayal, flight and pursuit are everyday occurrences and evil the triumphantly active principle” (43). He concludes saying:

‘Having no hope, and without God in the world’ – this almost sums up the world of Greene’s novels. Bedevilled by the terror of life the characters in these novels are engaged in a vague quest for some belief or beliefs to live by. In this quest, they have the nodding approval of their creator who himself does not seem to be sure of his religious bearings. (71)

A few other critics lay stress on the “search pattern” in the novels of Greene. John Atkins, for example while commenting on *It’s a Battlefield* says: “Throughout the book runs the question, what can you believe?” (38). He describes Greene’s world as “a compound of violence, terror and a bewildered search for some form of faith” (79). Beekman W. Cottrell says in his “Second Time Charm: The Theatre of Graham Greene”:

It is fashionable to say that Greene has applied the detective story technique to religion, but this is a superficial judgment of something which is far more fundamental and functional. The search pattern had demonstrated Greene’s work from the outset and *The Potting*
Shed is so successful because it is a kind of apotheosis of that form.

(254)

In a review of Gwen R. Boardman’s *Graham Greene: The Aesthetics of Exploration*, DeVitis rightly upholds Boardman’s view that “Greene’s journeys though motivated by temperament and curiosity, fall into typical patterns of psychological and spiritual quest” (“Allegories in Brighton Rock” 276).

No doubt, Greene’s characters are always torn between doubt and belief, and engaged in an endless and interminable quest. But as Greene’s critics have been so busy in debating the orthodoxy or unorthodoxy of Greene’s Catholicism, discussing the politics in his novels or explaining his other obsessive themes which occur again and again in his novels, the “quest” theme or the search for a belief theme has not been given enough attention and it still remains largely unexplored.

It is a well-known fact that Greene has dealt with a few themes which occur repeatedly in his novels. In other words he is obsessed with them and the most obvious one is the theme of Evil. This theme has drawn the attention of a good number of critics. Along with his perception of Evil, he projects his obsession with concepts like sin, suffering, damnation, pain, misery and salvation. Elaborating these obsessions in Greene, V.V.B. Rama Rao says that Greene’s character have “a link between human and the cosmic or ontological evil” (22-23). According to him Greene has just transferred his sense of evil to his characters and the evil in them is the result of their childhood upbringing, social environment and psychological make-up. While discussing the evil in Pinkie in *Brighton Rock*, Rama Rao says: “Brighton Rock is the vehicle for Greene’s exposition of the problem of evil in a
world that has strayed into regions of godlessness” (51). Urbashi Barat, an eminent Indian critic of Greene sums up a few more recurrent themes in Greene:

Innocence in Greene’s novels is an ambivalent virtue, for to him good and evil are inextricably intermingled, and innocence more destructive than evil could ever be. This is often because the presence of a passive innocent can call forth and provoke evil, as in the Garden of Eden, where Satan is explicitly attracted to corrupt Adam and Eve because they are so good. For Greene, then, innocence is inevitably bound up with treachery, and this is suggested in his first novel too, though it becomes a major theme later. This pattern that Greene’s stories follow is Judas’s with its matrix of childhood experience, destructive innocence, love, lust, failure, treachery, flight and suicide . . . .” (40)

While all these themes and their discussions have a rightful bearing on Greene and his works, they do not tell the whole truth (emphasis added). It is a shocking revelation that all these learned critics are oblivious of or they have missed to find the overriding emphasis that Greene has put in all his major novels. It is “Humanism” which lies at the heart of almost all the works of Greene. It is the highest common factor which underlies his writings. Humanism of Greene is of paramount importance to the proper understanding of his works. The present study, though indebted to many of the critics of Greene, purports to fill a gap in the existing criticism of Greene by establishing the fact that Greene is essentially a novelist who preaches the importance of humanism – human love – in an age ravaged and ravished by violence of all types. It is an injustice done to one of the
famous and highly reputed novelists of the present age, if this approach is not upheld.

Maria Couto survey Greene’s major fictions in terms of his political and religious views in order to substantiate her claim that Greene is perhaps “the only English writer to have recognized a larger human reality”. She points out the distinctive characteristics of his fiction: Greene’s suspicion of authority and abstract system, his use of Catholic themes to explore and deepen experienced reality, his sympathy for the underdog and human inadequacy and so on. She prefers to regard the persecuting lieutenant and the whisky priest in *The Power and the Glory* as equals in their radicalism; she maintains that in the *End of the Affair* it is Sarah’s love for Bendix, nor her Newman-like belief in God, that furnishes the mainspring of the action.

Dhruv Shankar in “Graham Greene’s Paradoxical Vision” detects in Greene a paradoxical encounter of religion with secular values. According to him “Greene’s religious imagination focuses on the competing vision of Catholic belief system versus the modern, secular vision of atheism” (210).

Though Venkata Reddy considers Greene as “an aggressive left-winger” he does not fail to observe his central concern “with the mercy of God”, which according to him functions from Greene’s idea of “human compassion.”

“Modernism is an act of secularism, an act of humanism over and against religion”, says Swara Raj in his article “Rethinking Humanism” (64). According to *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary* secularism is “not concerned with spiritual or religious affairs” (“Secular,” def. 1). It means that secularism is akin to humanism which is “based on respect for the dignity and right of man, his value as a
personality, concern for his welfare, his all-round development, and the creation of
favourable conditions for social life” (Frolov 178).

Secular ethics is a branch of moral philosophy in which ethics is based solely
on human faculties such as logic, reason, or moral intuition, and not derived from
supernatural revelation or guidance. Secular ethics refers to any system that does
not draw on the supernatural, such as humanism and free thinking.

The words atheist and secular can be easy to confuse, but they have subtly
different meanings. An atheist is one who does not believe in a God, whereas
someone who is secular, by contrast, does not display any belief or religion, nor do
they promote religion of any form. In the western context, the definition of religion
is biased towards monotheism. To be religious also means “imbued with or
exhibiting religion (“religious,” def. 2).

To make it more lucid and clear, secular means without religion and
secularists are not atheists. Also, secularism is neutrality towards all religions
including atheism.

The prevalence of not one but several types of humanism at different times
in Europe also points out that humanism is secular in concept. Tony Davies writes in
his Humanism:

. . . the civic humanism of qualtrocentro Italian City-states, the
protestant humanism of sixteenth-century northern Europe, the
rationalist humanism that attended at the revolutions of enlightened
modernity, and the romantic and positivistic humanisms through
which the European bourgeoisies established their hegemony over it,
the revolutionary humanism that shook the world and the liberal
humanism that sought to tame it, the humanism of the Nazis and the humanism of their victims and opponents, the antihumanist humanism of Heidegger and the humanist antihumanism of Foucault and Althusser – are not reducible to one, or even to a single line or pattern. Each has its distinctive historical curve, its particular discursive poetics, its own problematic scansion of the human. Each seeks, . . . to impose its own answer to the question of ‘What is man’. (131-32).

Edward P. Cheyney also suggests that humanism is anti-theistic and therefore secular in its concept. In the *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences* (1953), he says: “That which is characteristically human, not supernatural, which belongs to man and not to external nature, that which raises man to his greatest height or gives him, as man, his greatest satisfaction, is apt to be called human” (541).

To add more strength to the above argument one may cite what is said about humanism in the *New Oxford Dictionary*. It says that humanism is “an outlook or system of thought attaching prime importance to human nature rather than divine or supernatural matter”. Panigrahi remarks:

Humanism stresses the importance of the individual human personality and its power to learn from suffering and to rise above circumstances and in the process it takes cognizance of the paradox that lies at the root of life – the individual is part and parcel of the cultural environment that shapes him while the self is always in conflict with the culture that shapes him. (20)
Humanism as Kurtz puts it is “life affirming, and not life-denying . . .” (qtd. in Panigrahi 39). It means that it is this worldly and not the other worldly and its values are secular and not spiritual. It prefers critical thinking over acceptance of dogma or superstition. It affirms human freedom and progress. In modern times humanist movements are aligned with secularism.

Radical humanists believe in an extreme form of secularism and insist on having more human elements in its implementation. According to them secularism is a sort of condition in which everyman has a duty to help others and has a right to be similarly helped by others. The ‘duty’ and ‘rights’ have to be recognized and acted upon as moral obligation, accepted not because imposed by law or any other external force but because such behaviour is found to be consonant with the needs and nature of man. (Nigam 61)

Humanism is a distinctly anthropocentric philosophical discourse having its beginning in Greece and Rome and it had its heyday in several European countries during the Renaissance period. Now it has ended up as “secular humanism” that puts man and reason at the centre of the universe.

Having established that humanism and secularism are two sides of the same coin, it is in the fitness of things to delineate the way in which humanism has grown up over the centuries originating in the languages, literatures and thoughts of ancient Greece and Rome.

The Greek heroes had more love for humanity than for their deities. In literary works the two strains of human love and the authoritarian religion went on side by side one overriding the other. It was Petrarch who first imbibed in himself the
quintessence of the humanist philosophy which led to the intellectual flowering
during the Renaissance.

The early Latin Grammarian Aulus Gellius (125 --) says that in his days
*humanitas* was commonly philanthropy or kindness and benevolence towards one’s
fellow being. Cicero refers humanism both to humanitarian benevolence and to
scholarship.

Till the beginning of the fifteenth century humanism means the study of
classics emphasizing practical, pre-professional and scientific studies. Around 1806,
*Humanismus* was used to describe the classical curriculum offered by German
scholars and by 1836 “humanism” was lent to English only in this sense.

“Humanism” entered into England during the beginning of the 16th century
only in its first meaning – the revival of the study of classical studies and adoption of
attitudes and values that had prevailed in the Greco-Roman world. The shift in
man’s attitude was generally known as “Renaissance” which literally means
“rebirth”. Man was now not willing to accept the superstitions and customs of the
past. The scholars in England devoted their time to the study of classics and opened
a number of Latin and Greek grammar schools.

This re-discovery and re-interpretation of antiquity gave birth to what we call
today humanism. The word humanist, however, has also a wider implication; it
means an interest in humanity. The humanists were directed by the classics to have a
new and ardent interest in mankind. As a result, life no longer seemed a mere
penance to be endured by the good Christian in preparation for heaven; it was
enlarged and beautified by the records of human achievements. A window was
opened in the monk’s cell which now looked out upon men and women keenly
interested in this life and striving eagerly to make it larger and happier. “Humanism a European phenomenon, was a more worldly and thus more secular philosophy, and it was anthropocentric. It sought to dignify and ennoble man” (“Humanism”).

The major existentialists have widely differing viewpoints and attitudes regarding the existence of God and man, their relationship, and man’s behaviour in the world. There are, of course, a few common areas which they share, for they are basically concerned with the human predicament in the present day world. They are, as the discussion shows, highly dissatisfied with the views of the political and social thinkers like Hegel and Marx and the theories of the theologians and scientists.

It should be understood in this context that today man’s frustrations and feelings of estrangement have increased because of the industrial revolution, the world wars, the skirmishes and cold wars between countries, internal feuds, calamities, communal and racial clashes, besieges with which many countries are beset, widespread aggressions, terrorism of all kinds, unnecessary bombings, piracy which includes many things, cyber crimes, modern weapons of warfare, smuggling, disloyalty and dishonesty at all levels of life, violation of human rights, injustice caused to women, genocides, accidents – all these and many more cris-cross the world today and have ushered in a period of tremendous crisis. “In fact, in this modern age of nuclear science, human life is more complicated and more problematic” (Nabanita Roy 11).

G.S. Frazer is of the view that “the best English novels of the 1930s reflect a state of social tension” (133). Some novels, he says, give tales of “crime and adventure to put across the fighting state of the world” (133). He adds that novelists
use their “personal observation of danger-spots such as Berlin, to underline in a quieter and more exact way his [their] sense of the world’s insecurity” (133).

In the modern age people are just baffled when they think of the enormity of the problems the world has to face today. Amlan Datta in his Paths to A Human Glory with a few deft strokes of his pen touches the very heart of one of the major problems that haunts man today. He says:

Of the problems of the modern man, the deepest is the feeling of loneliness within him. In a sense, even this is not something altogether new. It has been with man since ancient times. But conditions have changed. The sense of loneliness appears today in a new setting, which changes its character. Its social causes and consequences and implications for the future have changed very significantly. How we deal with this inner problem will determine to a great extent what kind of human society we will have in the coming decades. This is our central theme. But before we talk about it at greater length, we will make a detour. There are some attendant circumstances which demand attention. We have to talk about them at some length, trying to relate to them our central problem. This roundabout approach has some advantages. (14)

Modern science and technology have completely eroded the religious sap in man to such an extent that as His Holiness The Dalai Lama says that many people ask whether there is any necessity to have any religion for man in the present context. His words are worth quoting:

In the light of our growing mastery over so many aspects of the physical world in the past two hundred years or so, it is not surprising
that many people today question whether we have any need for religion at all. This which in the past were only dreamt about – the elimination of diseases, space travel, computers – have become reality through science. So it is not surprising that many have come to place all their hopes in science, and even to believe that happiness can be achieved by means of what material science can deliver.

(Lama, *Beyond Religion* 4)

According to Ivasheva:

The revolution in technology had to affect man’s inner self, the very structure of the personality, as well as the organization and character of human activity. This process unfolded differently in different countries and under different social systems. (3)

As one looks around one finds that the words written by John Milton and Neitzsche have come true. Milton wrote hauntingly “O spirit . . . and with mighty wings outspread; / Dove-like sat’st brooding on the vast abyss” (qtd. in Beeching, *The Poetical Works of John Milton* 182).

Milton says that Man is afraid to leap forward and is also fearful of going back, but ceaselessly calling and shouting over shadows. Neitzsche in his work *Thus Spake Zarathushtra* (prologue) wrote “man is a rope sketched between the beast and the Overman – a rope over an abyss” (60). Many of our literary works amply reflect the present predicament of man who withers desperately in solitude and withers away in agony. Modern works bring in hoards and hoards of isolated protagonists who have no identity and individuality at all. “K” in Kafka’s *The Trial* (1925) and *The Castle* (1926), Mersault in Camu’s *The Outsider* (1942), Roquentin
in Sartre’s *Nausea* (1929) are some such examples in continental literary works. The hero of Samuel Beckett’s novel *Malone Dies* says: “. . . But what matter whether I was born or not, have lived or not, am dead or merely dying, I shall go on doing as I have always done, not knowing what it is I do, nor who I am, nor where I am, nor if I am” (52). Muriel Spark’s Lise in *The Driver’s Seat* (1970), the protagonists of Doris Lessing, Sarah Grant, Dorothy Richardson, Virginia Woolf, Jean Rhys, Penelope Martimer, Margaret Drabble and a number of others teem with isolates of all types. In the case of American novels and plays the list of protagonists who move with a fractured “self” can be drawn to any length. As most of the scholars and critics focus their attention on such anti-heroes, the number of books written on them has been ever on the increase.

At the same time, some of the Indian thinkers and philosophers like Swami Vivekananda, Tagore, Mahatma Gandhiji, etc. have suggested another remedy to pull out Man from the pit into which he has fallen. They uphold what is called “Religious Humanism”. They are of the view that only a godly man – a man whose heart is cleansed by the powers of God alone can be a true human being and he alone can have love and compassion for others.

Gandhiji wrote in *Young India*:

The man of prayer will be at peace with himself and with the whole world; the man who goes about the affairs of the world without a prayerful heart will be miserable and will make the world also miserable. Apart therefore from its bearing on man’s condition after death, prayer has incalculable value for man in the world of the living. Prayer is the only means of bringing about orderliness and peace and repose in our daily acts . . . (26)
Commenting on the ideal of human conduct as presented in *The Gita*, A.K. Banerjee says:

> Divinity is the end or ideal immanent in Humanity . . . and the ideal immanent in the inner nature of every man should always be kept in view in men’s feelings towards the dealings with man. It is the duty of every man to help himself, as well as to help those with whom he comes in contact. . . . (115)

Swami Vivekananda is of the view that a man, who has God-realization, never sits idle; but he is with the crowd finding ways and means for people’s amelioration. He says:

> The perfected bhakta no more goes to see God in temples and churches; he knows no place where he will not find him. He finds him outside the temple as well as in the temple. He finds him in the wicked man’s wickedness, as well as in the saint’s saintliness . . . and comes to have common forms associated with the common love of humanity. (*Vedananta Philosophy: Lectures on Raja Yoga*)

Dr. S. Radhakrishnan also says that unless we do have God’s power we cannot love the common rut of humanity. He says: “It is this cursedness in human nature which has to be got over. Love, therefore, is not a mere brilliance of intellect, but it is a discipline of the heart. Without discipline mere brilliance will not do” (*Towards A New World* 105).

The Dalai Lama in an interview has affirmed that compassion and affection are human values independent of religion: “We need human values. I call these secular ethics, secular beliefs. There’s no relationship with any particular religion.
Even without religion, even as non-believers, we have a capacity to promote these things” (Web).

The present predicament of the modern man had drawn the attention of the Soviet thinkers and they have come out with what is called Secular Humanism, Revolutionary Humanism or Socialist Humanism. Most often it is called “Secular Humanism”. It is

. . . based on Marxist-Leninist philosophy and the theory of scientific humanism which postulates liberation of the working people from social oppression and the building of communism as an essential condition for the all-round and harmonious development of all men and genuine freedom of the individual. (Frolov 178)

The Soviet thinkers are of the view that man must wake up from his slumber and fight against all odds. The Socialist philosopher Ovcharenko says:

In the works of writers of the socialist world, the genuine hero of our times is the fighting man, who strives to build a world that is truly human. He lives in real historical conditions, is involved in concrete human relations and grows in the process of active participation in life: he grows and develops steadily. Is this the new man? Precisely. He exists in life and, therefore, in literature. (31)

He adds:

This humanism is not limited to teaching love of man, compassion, and generosity, for it reveals the only genuine realistic paths to true equality, fraternity and happiness for all the people of the earth. A determined struggle for man and mankind, a struggle that does not hesitate to make major changes in those circumstances that prevent
the working man from becoming man with a capital M – this is what distinguishes the new, Socialist, Communist, secular humanism from the abstract humanism not only of writers of the past, but also of such writers of our own time as Hemingway, Faulkner, Saint-Exupery and Sartre. (31)

No attempt is made here to discuss a few other forms of humanism which have come into existence in recent times as they are found to be irrelevant to achieve the proposed results of the present project work.

The discussion made in the foregoing pages of this Chapter shows that humanism has made a very long journey over the centuries from Greece and Rome and reached its present status.

Now the problem posed to the present research is where to fix the position of Graham Greene in this vast spectrum of study and find out his preference in his endeavour to save Man from his present predicament. In Greene’s novels, generally, the twin strains of religious values and the secular humanist values run side by side. As such, a sincere attempt is made in the succeeding Chapters to find out conclusively what values override the other values when they are placed in juxtaposition.