Chapter Three

The Sinner - Saint Paradoxical Motif

Issues of religion have been repeatedly debated over centuries of the history of human civilization, often resulting in persecutions, dissensions and wars. Fundamental divisions in the Church, growth of democracy, collapse of feudalism, conflicts between religion and the State, growth of science and technology and similar factors have raised new questions challenging certain well-entrenched so-called 'holy' tenets. Ironically, 'sacred' values have resulted in profane murders and massacres also, often in the name of a 'God' who almost every religion professes to be an embodiment of 'Love'.

Perhaps sex has not been a taboo in the West in recent times, as much as it has been in the tradition-bound Oriental societies. For instance, the novels of D.H. Lawrence, once considered obscene are now freely read and their literary values have been increasingly recognized by critics and scholars everywhere. Moreover, thanks to the advance of technology, there has been an explosion of publications on sex and pornography and books that used to be read once covertly behind the barn are now freely churned out in millions of copies.
and marketed wherever possible. As a result of such developments, values which once bound the family as one, inviolable unit, have dipped to an all-time low in recent years. As Henry Steele Commager pertinently observes in his *The American Mind*:

... Marriage came to seem more tentative, virtue more relative, and parental control less authoritative than had been assumed even a generation earlier, and the Seventh Commandment, long the most rigorously enforced, came to be regarded almost as irreverently as the Third and the Fourth ... Puritanism gave way to hedonism, inhibitions to experiments, and repression to self-expression. (428-29)

Greene's characters, by and large, are naturalistic and often quite uninhibited in their sexual behaviour. In this regard, Greene can be bracketed with Lawrence, Durrel, Dorris Lessing, Iris Murdoch and Anthony Burgess. But what have been galling to his Catholic critics in particular, are not his observations and values relating to sex, but his broad-based humanist attempts in novel after novel, to present a most 'anti-Catholic' paradox, that it is the sinner, who is perhaps
closer to God, than the so-called puritanical, canonised 'saints'.

In the opening chapter of this study, an attempt has been made to show, a hamstrung, so-called "Christian" mode of reading of Greene's novels cannot be an "answer" to "those who despair", as Mesnet observes (79). O'Brien's *Maria Cross* which "closely examines the work of eight Catholic writers" (Kermode, *Continuities* 34) has one "serious lapse" (34) which is "the chapter on Graham Greene" (34). In truth, Greene is profoundly preoccupied with "a larger view of the condition of humanity as a whole" (Quennell 40) in a God-forsaken world. Even his Catholic characters are metaphorical for the universal human condition, and hence, their relevance is timeless.

Pure saintliness, even as pure evil, cannot be represented in literature in the form of human characters. Milton and Goethe, therefore, had to humanize the devil. Because the human element is desiccated in a saintly character in fiction, the reader cannot have, the vicarious experience which he normally has, in the study of a simple human character. In other words, Art cannot be a supplementary to Theology, though the opposite is true. Barbara Wooten offers
perhaps, the correct perspective: "Plainly, what is actually happening in the world is the result of the accommodation of religions to evolving humanistic ideas and not vice versa" (350).

A close look at the genesis of Greene's religious awareness, may help to answer many of the problems raised by his Catholic detractors. While still a young boy at school, Greene had a mystical experience of the complementary nature of Good and Evil, as interdependent and co-existing. He experienced within his being what was far above the popular religious dogma, namely, a tenuous demarcation between Heaven and Hell, Sin and Goodness:

... It was an hour of release - and also an hour of prayer. One became aware of God with an intensity - time hung suspended .... There was no inevitability anywhere... faith was almost great enough to move mountains... the great building rocked in the darkness. And so faith came to me - shapelessly, without dogma, a presence above a croquet lawn, something associated with violence, cruelty, evil across the way. I began to believe in heaven because I believed in hell.... (The Lawless 14)
Here one can clearly discover a clue to Greene's ambivalent stance towards religion. His faith has no shape or creed and is invariably pitted against violence, cruelty, evil or hell, resulting in an apparent paradox: a belief as well as a disbelief. Charles J. Rolo defines Greene's vision as follows: "As a novelist and as a man, Graham Greene is a figure surrounded by paradox, ambiguity and surprise" (60). Greene's art is thus carefully based on a paradoxical perception of reality. Hence, any criticism, Catholic or otherwise, that dubs his vision as inconsistent, licentious and self-contradictory can, at best, be only partial. Greene's self-conscious employment of the recurrent sinner-saint motif, has an artistic implication and relevance, far beyond the ambit of any narrowly interpreted code of religious prejudices and pseudo-syllogism, and thus warrants a deeper enquiry.

Tamil literature too is gradually becoming secular in character owing to emerging "new moral codes and social foundations" (Sivathampi 53) and writers increasingly perceive the necessity for a shift in focus. Pudumaipithan, "the prince among Tamil short story writers" (Thandayutham 25) has said:

We are often embarrassed to directly analyse
certain subjects in literature... Is the vigour of society going to be undermined on account of a description of a prostitute? .... There is nothing more paradoxical than dealing with certain fantasy figures in the name of romance, instead of accommodating a realistic treatment of characters such as the prostitute, the store-clerk, the actress and the broker. (Veluppillai 209-10)

Tamil literature in recent times, has tended to be more and more accommodative of revolutionary insights into life, often provided by humanist writers. As Ka. Sri. Sri. observes: "A literary writer is not one who pleases society by giving it what it wants" (122). And, in order to redeem a socially and morally exploited generation, writers increasingly feel the need to question established taboos and "put man at the centre" (Sivathampi, Ilakkiyamum 53). In this regard even such a great novelist as Mu. Varadarajan is extremely wary. His protagonist Vadivoo in Neęcil Oru Mul [A Thorn in the Bosom], having lost her chastity, seeks a "transformation" in the role of a social worker in order to win social approbation (Geetha 60). Akilon's Puvana who lives like Madame Bovary and earns five thousand
rupees per hour as a prostitute, finally gives away all her wealth for a social cause, as if to atone for her transgressions and dies without any compunction. Even feminist critics who say that "Akilon's women characters elicit greater sympathy from him than their male counterparts" (Ramalingam 151) concede that in his novel Enke Pōkirōm? [Whither are we bound to?], his interest is not so much in enlisting the readers' sympathy for Puvana, the individual, but rather in the general description of "people who sell their souls for money" (Kurusami 234). The truth is that "Akilon does not dare to break away from the prison-house of conventions" (Ramaswamy 277).

Traditionally, the Tamils have always prescribed the dharma of chastity for women. Polyandry and polygamy have been legally banned for centuries in Tamil society. Any frank discussion on sex is considered taboo often even in literary circles. For instance, one cannot discuss anything openly about Ravana's sexual attraction for Sita, the protagonist of The Rāmāyanā. Though, the triangular love motif is a reality in the life of many, any elaboration of it, is a literary taboo in Tamil culture. Only books which have yellow streaks about them can exploit such motifs beyond all limits of decency for commercial purposes.
It was Pudumaipithan again who, out of his profound human concern, dared to cut across conventional barriers in order to give a distinct religious identity to the hitherto ignored criminals and crooks, the so-called sinners and the sensualists and find them a new space in Tamil Literature, paying a heavy price indeed for his candour and courage. He simply carried on with his defiance, with an unflagging spirit. As he puts it: "I grew up among condemnation" (Azhahirisami 113). In two of his short stories "Akalikai" and "Cābavimōcanam", Pudumaipithan voices his concern for the morally depraved with extraordinary power and conviction.

Akalikai, a mythical woman, wife of Kautama, a hermit, is seduced by God Indira. Kautama, "being a wise Mahatma ("a great soul) forgives both" (Vallikannan 45). He asks Indira: "My son! shouldn't you consider the women of the world as your own sisters?" (45) and asks his wife in a sympathetic tone: "My darling! Did your body transform itself to be a lifeless stone during that moment?" (45). These words bear out the magnanimity of the divine mind of that great soul.

In his second story "Cābavimōcanam", undaunted by the severe all-round criticism evoked by his maiden attempt, Pudumaipithan gave a new slant to the same
story of Akalikai, in which, Kautama, in anger, curses both the seducer and the seduced. Akalikai becomes a statue of stone and she can hope for resurrection only when the dust from the holy feet of Lord Rama falls on the statue. Years later, Akalikai realizes her salvation through Rama. Still, being pricked in her conscience, she loses all her peace of mind. She meets Sita who discloses to her that even her husband, the Lord himself, had put her to the fire ordeal in order to prove her chastity. Akalikai is deeply perturbed on realizing that the very God who forgave her and gave her back her life had applied yet another queer code of conduct, with regard to His own divine consort. Stunned at this gross injustice, Akalikai turns into stone once again. "Her hope of getting remission for her guilt from Rama is shattered, as when her husband comes to embrace her, she turns into a stone" (Manuel 39).

No doubt, Pudumaipithan has successfully deconstructed a traditional myth, driving home the fact, that new literary avenues and solutions are certainly possible for creative writers who wish to accord a religious sanctity to sinners who are pitted against Evil.

Jayakanthan follows the steps of his mentor, Pudumaipithan, with unswerving devotion, utterly
unmindful of all the harsh and carping criticism aimed at him. His short story "Akkini Piravēcam" ["Entry into Fire Ordeal"] which appeared in Ananda Vikatan, a popular Tamil Weekly, in November 1966, raised a violent storm of protest in the entire Tamil literary world. For, it was yet another deconstructed version of the Akalikai myth, with even a more forceful thrust against societal regressions and doctrinaire morality. Jayakanthan calls the protagonist of the story Aval [She] as he wants her to stand as "a symbol of all general feminine frailties as well as womanly strength" (Cuya Taricanam [Vision of the Self] 4). On a rainy day, she has been raped by a wealthy married man. Throwing on her head a pot of water on her return home, her mother washes away all her sins and stains, keeps the matter a secret, and prays to God to protect her child in future. This story triggered off an avalanche of criticism "from the traditionalists and the upholders of new, hypocritical values" (Kannan 22). Some even ventured to rewrite the story making the hero marry her or confining her within the four walls without marriage. But Jayakanthan went on with indomitable courage, retaliating against such criticism with singular energy, in almost all the prefaces of his novels and short story collections which immediately
succeeded *Cuya Taricanam*. The following observations not only reveal the literary/social intentions of Jayakanthan in ample measure but also lead to the forthcoming, meaningful discussion:

This is my response to that writer who considers himself to be very clever... when we burn her, we burn only her body and not her stigma or stain... Is it not an extraordinary maternal wisdom that prevented the mother from burning her alive? This particular writer decides easily to burn her down. For, is she not the daughter of someone else? ... *(Cuya 6)*

How can such an act of absolution be considered as a crime on her part? Even the most barbaric court on earth will not be mean enough to indict her .... *(7)*

Let me pose a simple question to those who say that mere ablution cannot remove her stain. What other cleaning agent can they prescribe in this context? ... *(8)*

The recurrent motif of the sinner-saint paradox in Greene and Jayakanthan, functions in a manner complementary to each other, as both the writers seek to highlight their profound interest in humanism through
characters representing the situational motif of the sinner who holds within his being, the potential also of a saint. In the words of Weisstein, "motifs" are "related to situations" (139).

Greene's play The Living Room presents the love of Rose, a young Catholic girl, for Michael, a married man with children, condemned outright by the convention-ridden elders and the unsympathetic, religious people, resulting in a tragic conflict eventually leading to her suicide.

Rose, the daughter of a Catholic mother and a non-Catholic father, finds herself suddenly orphaned, and is forced to live with two elderly aunts and a crippled uncle, who is a priest. They all live in a large house in London, in which most of the rooms are locked as their occupants have already died. Superstitions and conventional morality prevail in their household, embodied in the two elderly Catholic aunts who are in constant grip of the fear of death. James, their brother, the priest, sums up their distrust: "Perhaps it's the fear of death - of the certainty of death. They don't seriously mind accidents... It's the inevitable they hate... In mercy. My sisters don't seem to have any trust" (30-31).
The two aunts are religious to the core. All they hold on to are their holy books, pious rites and rituals. And they are utterly devoid of compassion and understanding for Rose, who has fallen in love with the middle-aged Michael. Greene's concern in the work is to highlight the fact that often it is the narrow, doctrinal approach of the religious minded, which proves to be totally inadequate in the face of the bewildering complexity of human problems. James, the Priest in the play, admits: "We've ruined her [Rose] between us... Don't blame him. Blame our dead goodness. Holy books, holy pictures, a subscription to the Altar Society" (61).

Another situation which accentuates the motif of the inadequacy of religion is the meeting between Rose and her uncle James. James has lost one of his legs in an automobile accident and his handicap is symbolic of the helplessness of the Church in the context of human predicament. When Rose appeals to him for help in her love-affair with Michael, he fumbles for words, though, being a priest, he can condemn her forthright. In fact, he is anxious to be of use, but his "tongue is heavy with the penny catechism" (74). He can mumble little more than the tame, cliched homilies: "Dear,
there's always the Mass. It's there to help. Your Rosary, You've got a Rosary... Perhaps our Lady ...
(74).

This is nothing short of spiritual obscurantism, and hence, can only be of cold comfort. Ironically enough, the Priest who has to help her in need, feels proud and self-complacent dwelling on his own spirituality and high moral code of conduct, as evidenced by the rude manner in which he snubs Rose's lover at one point saying, "You can't fob off a Catholic with a registrar's signature and call it a marriage" (42).

Yet another situation which reinforces the motif, is the meeting between Rose and Michael. She decides to elope with the latter, disregarding the views of her people and the Church. The following conversation of the lovers bears out her cynicism:

Michael : My plans haven't been a success. My wife won't divorce me. We may never be able to marry.

Rose : ... It doesn't really matter, does it? It wouldn't have been a real marriage...
Michael: You don't mind - about the Church.

Rose: Oh, I expect it will come all right in the end. I shall make a death-bed confession and die in the odour of sanctity.

Michael: Our children will be illegitimate.

Rose: Bastards are the best.... (45-46)

The noose tightens around Rose even as she is bent on going steady with Michael in the teeth of stout opposition from her pious, platitudinous aunts and uncle, who are all utterly incapable of offering her any practical solution. They only repeat, parrot-like, Rose's need to go for a confession. The crippled, bloodless values of the elders, pale into insignificance in the face of Rose's passionate desire to live, as can be seen from her words: "live a life-time without the sacraments. That wouldn't hurt - but a life-time, without him ..." (63).

Another, even more suspenseful situation is the meeting between Rose, Michael and his wife. Rose's heart moves in pity and guilt when she meets them together as a couple. She would rather suffer without love than create a rift in a peaceful home. In a way, she is thoroughly at a loss:
I can't think about people I don't know. She was just a name, that's all. And then she comes here and beats her fists on the table and cries in the chair. I saw them together. They are married ... oh, he told me they were, but I hadn't seen them ... It was just like something in a book, but now I have seen them together ... Tell me what to do, Father. (73)

When her uncle urges her to pray, she retorts:

Don't talk to me about God or the saints. I don't believe in your God who took away your legs and wants to take away Michael. I don't believe in your Church and Holy Mother of God. I don't believe. I don't believe. (74-75)

Rose just cannot believe in a God who has denied her, her love. But what she can show to Him is her desire not to hurt others; a desire to suffer for others, and a desire to offer love and peace to others even in the face of pain, misery, loneliness and sorrow. In the end, she commits suicide, which is most certainly an unpardonable sin for a Catholic.

Though an ostensible sinner, Rose, with her extraordinary capacity for agape, has almost all the
halo of a saint in her, at her death. After all, some theologians can see Christian love only in the following terms: "the essential characteristic of ... higher love is its readiness to sacrifice itself for others" (Kagawa 923).

In short, the play does not seek to present any confrontation between spiritual and human values, but to highlight how a dry, rigorous, religious outlook strangulates the finer human sensibilities, and even poses a threat to the very human existence. It leaves the impression that Rose, though a sinner, when viewed from the point of view of a dogma-oriented religion, proves to be morally superior to her religious aunts and uncle, by virtue of her supreme capacity for caring, dedication to a selfless cause, her instinctual urge to live in the face of all odds and her natural disposition to feel responsible for the life and well-being of others. What the readers of the play are ultimately left with, is the need for the realization of re-orienting the religious values in order to accommodate the more exalted human values exhibited by rare individuals. In other words, Greene has succeeded in proving that even the worst sinner has some saintly traits about him, through "images that adequately convey" (Sullivan 657).
The sinner-saint motif can be seen also in Jayakanthan's novel Cila Nēṟankaḷi Cila Maniṭarkal, which is a variant of his much disputed short story "Akkini Piravecam" already discussed at the beginning of this Chapter, about which Jayakanthan says: "The more I read it, the more I am drawn to it" (Cuya 3).

The protagonist of the novel is Ganga, a Brahmin girl who has been raped by Prabhu, an affluent spendthrift. Kanagam, Ganga's mother, a typical, conventional, foolish old woman raises a hue and cry about her daughter's rape in public, instead of shrewdly hushing it up. Here, Kanagam stands as a symbol for the "Old Wisdom" - the so-called Hindu dharma which says "Chastity is the first virtue in man or woman" (Vivekananda, Karma-Yoga (58), as against the "New Wisdom" (Cuya 6), which dawns suddenly on the mother in Jayakanthan's "Akkini Piravecam" that instructs her simply to wash away her daughter's sin with mere water, and forget it once and for all.

A poignant situation in the novel which intensifies the motif is Ganga's handing over a copy of the short story "Akkini Piravecam", supposed to be written by a writer R.K.V. to her mother, who on reading it compares herself with the mother in the short story and feels
utterly repentant, thoroughly breaking down:

Why couldn't I put it like that in your defence, on that fateful moment on that particular day? .... Wasn't it I who was totally responsible for all the havoc wrought .... oh! what a ruin and damnation I've brought upon you .... (Cila Nēraṅkaḷil 43-44)

Despite all her realization, Kanagam is soon overcome and subdued by the pious homilies of her brother, Venku Mama, a seventy-year old Brahmin lawyer, who assures her with the words: "You haven't done anything wrong in exposing your daughter's shame. Had you hidden it, you'd have committed the sin of ruining the image of a conventional, Hindu marriage" (47).

The other members of her family also staunchly subscribe to the conventional code of Hindu morality. Ganesan, Ganga's brother, is ashamed of her and he "comes home only to heap accusations on her" (35). His wife too thinks that Ganga has deprived the family of its pride and so "should be felled in cold blood with a sickle" (22). On the other hand, Ganga's uncle, the highly learned criminal lawyer, is full of pious platitudes. He is a pretender to spirituality and
simply pontificates like the uncle of Rose in Greene’s play The Living Room.

As regards the uncle, Ganga’s benefactor, he uses his age as a ‘screen’ for all his weaknesses. In fact, he is a screen unto his own real inner self. His demeanour, talk, his religious erudition, conventional beliefs, all vouch for his greatness (53). However, in reality, this man is a pious humbug, "a tiger" (49) "a sexual pervert and a maniac" (68). Many a time, he even misbehaves with Ganga, who out of sheer courtesy and gratitude, stomachs him to a considerable extent.

Again, like the priest in Greene’s play, Venku Mama also, instead of providing a solution for Ganga’s problem, offers her mere platitudes. For instance, he theorizes in a ritualistic vein that her marriage had already been consummated in the car in which she was raped. As per the Hindu dharma, he asserts, she cannot marry anybody else, "but can only be a concubine to someone" (65). Further, he appeals to her not to "ruin or do any harm to the sanctity of our dharmas and sastras" (65).

A situation which strengthens the sinner-saint motif further in the novel, is the one in which Venku
Mama lays down before Ganga two important prescriptions: that "she must work and stand on her feet" (63) and that "if she is clever enough, she can even find out her seducer, and make him her husband" (77). However, he gives the second suggestion not with any good intention, but with the fond hope of ultimately keeping her as his own mistress. But, luckily for her, Ganga secures a good job soon and after a long passage of twelve years, manages to dig out with great difficulty the whereabouts of Prabhu, her seducer. To her delight, and utterly contrary to her expectations, Ganga finds in Prabhu a transformed personality now. He is not a womanizer any longer, as she took him to be earlier. He has a family, a wilful wife and grown-up daughters. As he had proved himself to be a spendthrift, his father had bequeathed all his property in his wife's name, and there is no love lost between the couple. Out of sheer frustration, Prabhu has become a drunkard now. He sincerely regrets for whatever crime he has committed to Ganga, and she, in turn, develops a healthy respect for him. Ganga even dares to bring him home, despite the objections from her mother and brother. Soon, there is a wild gossip afloat that she has become his concubine to which she pays scant regard.
Nevertheless, when Ganga's brother hastens to arrange her marriage with Rama Retinam, a forty-year old widower (353), she flares up. What she has construed in her mind hitherto, as a mere friendship based on her earlier intimacy with Prabhu, now becomes an all-consuming passion with her. In anger, she asserts herself at home: "Yes! I love him! ... This is not a love that will easily die out or cloy. I am not prepared to leave him or lose him under any circumstances. I'll offer him everything, including my body" (373).

Ganesan visits Prabhu in his office and earnestly requests him not to interfere in Ganga's life again. Prabhu, whose love for Ganga is pure and selfless, feels only happy on hearing about her imminent marriage. Here, it is Rose's selfless, sacrificial love that can be considered for a comparison with that of Prabhu. At this juncture, Prabhu holds the key of Ganga's entire life in his hands. He can even ruin her, thereby, bringing about her family's damnation. Yet, without a second thought, he decides to give her up. He tells Ganesan: "I am more thrilled about this marriage than all of you. It is even more important than the marriage of my own daughter ... You know she is an angel" (383). Further, he adds: "It is only proper that I leave her
alone ... I have no regrets in this. I feel even proud" (386). Over the phone he informs Ganga in cryptic terms "We just cannot be in love with each other" (395). Later he even admonishes her saying that she should forget him and learn to live without thinking of him. He tells her "I think it is possible! It should definitely be possible" (398).

A great change comes upon Prabhu now. Coming face to face with the age-old institution of marriage, like Rose in Greene's The Living Room, Prabhu suddenly recognizes the values of human relationship as defined by a well-crystallized social structure, in comparison with which he finds his own personal bond of love less important and worth sacrificing. Nevertheless, such a realization dawns on him, primarily thanks to Ganga's exalted and exceptional devotion to him:

Now he considers with apprehension again and again of Manju, his unmarried daughter. His wife Padma now seems to him an angel. He submits himself totally to her ... He also thinks of her father often. (411)

This is indeed a case of caring and sacrificial love, as in the case of Greene's Rose; an essentially selfless feeling of holding oneself responsible for the happiness of the other partner in love.
However, Jayakanthan's novel offers an entirely different denouement. On being deserted by Prabhu, Ganga takes to excessive drinking. In fact, even Jayakanthan is not totally happy with what he has done to his protagonist. For, he confesses in his preface to the sequel of Cila Nēraṅkalil Cila Manitarkal, Gaṅkai Eṅkē Pōkīrāl: "I had left her at the close of the novel as a listless, neurotic, engaged in struggle against life's frustrations. But there was not even an iota of acceptance for such an ending, either on the part of my readers, or myself" (Gaṅkai Eṅkē 4).

In Gaṅkai Eṅkē Pōkīrāl, Jayakanthan gives a symbolic redemption to both Ganga and Prabhu. Forgetting whatever Ganesan has done to her, Ganga who is now quite well off, looks after him when he is struck by a paralytic stroke. Her mother and sister-in-law consider her now "as a god who has come to help us in our time of need" (57).

Two years later, Ganga runs into Prabhu who now looks like "as ascetic, known for his silence" (67). Prabhu is sorry to find that she has become a drunkard and she is shocked to hear that "he has no other faith except in God" (76). He has become now "a real gentleman" (80) in the strict sense of the term. Soon
Ganga gives up drinking and devotes herself to Santha, Prabhu's daughter, assuming "the responsibilities of a mother" (90). Ironically, her prayer now is, "these angels [the girls] should not be carried away by demons" (91) as it had happened in her own case.

In the mean time, having lost all his wealth in various business ventures (111), Prabhu takes off in his car with a view to committing suicide. Fortunately, he is saved in the nick of time, through his spontaneous love for a new-born baby, on the way, whose mother he is compelled to take to the hospital. The mother dies there, and the boy grows up under his care. He settles down in life in a distant place, works as a mechanic and ekes out his livelihood. He has acquired now "a saintly look" (187) about him, living as he does, a life of a devotee to God, and serves humanity in a spirit of utter detachment, totally abstaining himself from meat and liquor. It is at this juncture that Ganga joins him on her retirement. Both are now mature and old and they proceed on a pilgrimage to Kasi. Like the rishis, they also live on the banks of the Ganges, read and recite holy verses, and spend their days in prayer.

One morning, Ganga goes to the river for a bath. Prabhu who arrives on the scene looking for her, stands
helpless, even as she fatally slips and falls into the river which now becomes to her, her Mother, calling; "I am your mother ... come my child" (231). "It received her in a warm embrace and carried her away and 'Gangai' [Ganges] and Ganga had now become one" (231). While being carried off in the torrent, Ganga consoles Prabhu, her grief-stricken consort, with words, rich in symbolism and myth, stressing her own regeneration and redemption:

Do you think that the sacred water overflowing from the jug in your hands, is different from this tremendous deluge of the holy Ganges you see gushing before you? Why should you look so unconsolated on my behalf, like a bewailing child, without realizing this mystical law of nature, standing as you do on the sacred soil, the land where Gnana ("wisdom") ripens? (232)

She adds: "Sri Rama died in the river Sarayu; Sita was swallowed by the earth goddess and Sri Krishna died a victim of a wayward arrow. Like all these gods, I too have merged in the floods of the Ganges" (232).

The water in the jug which Prabhu pours out into the river, is said to be not in any way different from
the waters of the Ganges. This act is symbolic of the merger of the Jivatman ("individual soul") with the Paramatman ("God") of whom Sri. Sankaracharya and the Upanishads say: "but when I consider my Atman, you and I are one" (Atma Bodha 143). "Like bubbles in the water, the worlds arise from, exist in and dissolve into the Supreme Lord, who is the material cause and supporter of everything" (Parthasarathy 23).

Further, Ganga equates her own unexpected death with the unexpected deaths of the mythical gods and goddess Sita. It is said that "A fierce hunter, called Jara, mistaking Krishna for a deer, pierced him in the foot with a shaft" (Murdoch 134). The following mythical references has been taken from poet Bharathy:

   Jesus died nailed to the cross
   Krishna died by a sinister arrow,
   The adored Rama drowned in the river
   I won't die on earth, you see.

   (Mani, Bāratiyār 241)

Bharathy asserts in these lines, that death is only for the gods and not for him. Ganga too observes: "I have not departed to go anywhere else and, my Prabhu, I have not bidden farewell to you either" (Gaṅkai Eṅkē 232). Ganga's words symbolically suggest that she too
is deathless as she has already merged with the universal godhead.

The similarity in the name of Ganga and the name of the sacred river is significant. The Ganges ultimately becomes the mother of Ganga. In other words, the daughter enters the womb of the Mother. The novel closes thus: "Ganga, who is the representative of all my stories, past, present and future has now attained a sanctified fulfilment" (232).

Ganga, the women, is symbolized by the sacred river, the Ganges, which meanders through all endless ups and downs, drawing in her stride, impurities of all kinds. But while the impurities tend to float on the surface, the substratum remains pure and holy. This has been the strong conviction of a whole race of believers in India.

Rose, Ganga and Prabhu may be sinners to start with. But in the terminal vision of the artists, they all have an unmistakable, compelling strain of sanctity about them. The penetrating insights of both Greene and Jayakanthan enable their readers to perceive in a paradoxical manner, the curious underlying synthesis of the apparently opposed images of the sinner and the
saint, underlining the unflinching assertion of the abiding faith on the part of the authors in humanity.

In the same way, the Whisky Priest in Greene's *The Power and the Glory* and Rākṣī Śvāmī in Jayakanthan's novelette *Vilutukal* found in the collection *Pirālayam*, are god-men and, though they are utterly lost in sin, both the authors, out of their profound humanism, accord them religious sanctity, and even divinity, at the end.

Evil, which is a reality in the world does not spare even the great. And when such great souls succeed eventually in cutting themselves off from the clutches of their peculiar depravity, and die for a great humanist cause, they regain their essential greatness in full once again. Greene and Jayakanthan seek to locate such a weakness inherent even in god-men, and analyse the possibilities of their eventual growth to greatness, through their sacrificial humanist faith. François Mauriac expresses a similar idea in the following words:

The evil which the beautiful character has overcome, in itself and from which it has to sever itself, is a reality which the novelist must account for. If there is a reason for the existence of the novelist on
earth it is this; to show the element which holds out against God in the highest and noblest characters - the innermost evils and dissimulations; and also to light up the secret source of sanctity in creatures who seem to us to have failed. (133)

In his preface to the collection *Pirālayam*, Jayakanthan seems to corroborate the same view. Greene, paradoxically, makes the protagonist of his novel a liquor-addict and calls him "Whisky Priest" (*The Power and the Glory* 60), who seems to subsist only on liquor. Once Captain Fellows asks him if he is "hungry" (38). The Priest replies: "A little. It does not matter ... If you would do me a favour ... A little brandy." (38) "What a religion", Captain Fellows says 'Begging for brandy. Shameless'" (38) Later, his daughter offers him "a bottle of beer ... and some food" (39). When she asks him why he is not afraid of police, he replies in words of characteristic irony: "A little drink ... will work wonders in a cowardly man. With a little brandy, why, I'd defy - the devil" (42). The conversation between an old man and the Priest bears out further that he is not at all ashamed of his drunkenness:

'Never mind. Anywhere to lie down'. 
'Can you give me - a little spirit?'
'Coffee, father. We have nothing else'.
'Some food'.
'Never mind'. (43)

The Priest takes liquor because it promises "temporary relief from fear, loneliness, a lot of things" (59). When the police come, he bites a raw onion to hide the smell of liquor.

All these words of reckless defiance do not mean that the Whisky Priest is without remorse. Often, he is touched by a feeling of contrition. In the village of Maria, when the latter tells him "I have saved a little brandy for you" (65) he is touched:

He thought: If I go, I shall meet other priests: I shall go to confession: I shall feel contrition and be forgiven: eternal life will begin for me all over again. The Church taught that it was every man's first duty to save his own soul. The simple ideas of hell and heaven moved in his brain: life without books, without contact with educated men, had peeled away from his memory everything but the simplest outline of the mystery. (65)
The whisky Priest has become also notorious for his acts of fornication. He had once an affair with Maria, and through her he fathered a daughter "Brigitta" (65) for "Once, for five minutes, seven years ago, they had been lovers" (68): "She had never used his baptismal name: to her it was just an incident, a scratch which heals completely in the healthy flesh: She was even proud of having been the Priest's woman" (68).

However, the priest is not without remorse. "He alone carried a wound, as though a whole world had died." (68) When the police come to the village, and when Maria tugs at him from inside the hut, and compels him to bite a small raw onion, "He bit it and began to weep" (73). Later, when Maria calls him "a bad priest" (70) and asks him: "What kind of a martyr do you think you'll be? It's enough to make people mock" (79), the Priest is touched deeply by a sense of his own inadequacy and unworthiness. He replies: I'll think about it. I wouldn't want the Church to be mocked" (79). Again, when Brigitta talks to him impudently, he, in spite of all his affection for her, thinks with a contrite spirit: "One mustn't have human affections - or rather one must love every soul as if it were one's own child" (82). To Francis L. Kunke1, the Whisky Priest
deserves salvic grace, because "He never abandons himself to win without a soul-tearing struggle, and he continually fights his bondage ..." (57).

What saves the Priest from damnation is his complete loyalty to his mission of "putting God into the mouths of men" (60). He even considers himself as a "slave of his people" (19) and their "servant" (45). He tells Coral that he cannot renounce his faith: "It's impossible. There's no way. I'm a Priest. It's out of my power" (41). "Like a birthmark" (41), his loyalty to God always remains with him. And so he feels that "It's my duty not to be caught" (40).

The Priest's sense of extreme humility, his love of humanity and selfless service to people, his suffering, his involvement in human misery, his total disregard for worldly possessions and his final readiness to pass into the trap kept by the half-caste, who is bent on betraying him to the police for money - all instil in the readers a reverence for the sinner - priest, and cultivate a more profound understanding of the mysterious transforming power of God's Grace, which once enabled even a penitent thief on the cross to steal himself into Paradise.
Greene accords a religious identity and sanctity to the priest through several literary strategies. For example, he hints at certain changes that inevitably come upon some characters who are in touch with the Priest. Thus Mr. Tench suddenly decides to write to his wife; Coral recovers her lost faith after meeting the Priest; Luis rejects the Lieutenant and his secular values; and a new Priest arrives in Tabasco to continue the work of God in the place of the Whisky Priest. Taken all together, these changes and incidents suggest the latent fact that the mysterious power of God's grace has already touched the priest, and saved him from damnation.

It is significant that Greene draws the attention of his readers to certain inevitable parallels from the life of the priest and that of Christ. Like Christ, what governs the Priest is his utter submission to the Will of God. His return by mule to Tabasco recalls Christ's entry by mule into Jerusalem on the Sunday before his crucifixion.

While Christ stumbled under the heavy weight of the cross, the Whisky Priest's legs are not under his control, presumably the effect of fear or too much of brandy. "His life may recall Christ's, but he is too human, too weak" (Adele King 47).
Graham Smith comments that the Priest has "... the Christ-like acceptance of the lower depths of human degradation ..." (80). This is actually a spiritual dimension, which Greene consciously adds to the character of the Priest, in violation of all theological dogma that says only a saint in this world can continue to remain a saint in the other world.

Jayakanthan's *Vilutukal* tells the story of a Tamil Siddhar, Oṅkūr Swāmi, who lives in a thatched shed, under a big banyan tree in a remote village with three of his disciple Swamijis. He observes eternal silence; and laughs only under the influence of marijuana. Vaidyar Swamigal, an indigenous physician-priest, joins this fold when he gets cured of his venereal disease, attributing preternatural powers to the Swāmi. Having been cured himself, he resolves never to treat again any dissolute character in life.

Subsequently, a local prostitute approaches the Swāmi with the hope that he will heal her and bless her to have a child. When Vaidyar Swamigal turns a deaf ear to all her mute implorings, Oṅkūr Swāmi, in rage, observes a fast for four days. Little realizing the cause for his Guru's fast, the physician, out of sheer desperation, tries to commit suicide, when the former
breaks his silence to exhort him, saying: "Nobody is dirty and none is sacred" (Pirālayam 138), and appeals to him to cure the women with his medicines. At last, the physician obliges her and she is cured and becomes pregnant through a mad young man who lives in the same thatched shed. Finally, when she is in the throes of delivery, the physician takes her to a hospital and returns to the shed with the baby on the third day, the mother having been dead.

The Swāmi of Jayakanthan's novelette seems to invite a curious parallel with Greene's Whisky Priest. Jayakanthan categorically defends the humanity of the drug-addicted Swāmi, and his dissolute disciples and most unhesitatingly grants them a religious identity, despite their immorality and addiction to drugs.

Like the Whisky Priest, the Swāmi also totally empties himself. On his maiden visit to the village, he wears gold ear rings and jewels. When two villagers steel the jewels at night and are arrested by the police later, on the same day, the Swāmi who is very much hurt, refuses to take back his jewels. In Jayakanthan's words, "the Swāmi who lost his jewels in no time, won the hearts of the villagers too, in a jiffy" (104).
Soon after the jewel episode, the villagers build for him a thatched shed under a banyan tree, install him there as a deity and come in large numbers to worship him daily. "He has no likes and dislikes" (104). "He never raises his hands for food" (104). Only on repeated appeals, does he eat the food offered by the devotees. He would gladly accept whatever they offer at his feet, even if it were poison. "And the rustics celebrate their devotion to him, offering him a variety of liquors" (104-05). "Is he not beyond the boundaries of good and bad; pain and pleasure; 'this' and 'that'?" (116), asks the novelist at one point. "Incapable of harming anyone, he too would neither resist anything" (117). "There is a place in his presence for everyone, for a prostitute as well as a leper" (117). He is extremely simple and in looks, he is almost like a beggar. His humility and love know no bounds, as exemplified by his fast when the physician-disciple refuses to cure the prostitute. Even before he breaks his fast, at the end, he is seen "feeding Madhavan, the insane youth with his own hand" (138-39).

Mere confessions, contritions, rituals, rites and vows have no particular theological significance in Hinduism as in Christianity. Nevertheless, they are the
common heritage of the entire fallible humanity. As Thirumalai points out:

The temple - harlot in Jayakanthan's Vilutukal rebels against her inherited tradition, sanctifies her body and mind through a spiritual process and attains the stature of motherhood". ("Jayakanthan Nāvalkalīl Peṇkal" 61)

The prostitute turns over a new leaf in her life and becomes a seller of coconut juice" (Piricalayam 142), which is indeed "a stupendous transformation" (142) as far as she is concerned.

Greene, being a Catholic, some readers may expect to find in him a popularly acknowledged theological approach to faith in his fiction. Greene's Christian characters believe in God and they have great faith. In Jayakanthan too, there is an explicit emphasis on the importance of faith for people. Īnknūr Swāmi tells his physician-disciple once, referring to his medicines and holy ash: "... but people believe in their efficacy as they have to believe in something or other" (137). He adds further:

We, the god-men, are the right ballast to offer a balance for their barks ... Even as
the cartoids bear the weight of the tower, it is we who act as a visible source of faith for these householders. (137)

Just as Greene associates the Whisky Priest with Christ, giving him a stamp of religious sanctity, Jayakanthan accords a religious identity to Ēṅkūr Śvāmi, attributing certain preternatural powers to him. For instance, the Physician's medicine "gets spoilt during distillation" (110), but when he kisses the feet of the Śvāmi he "feels a divine sensation in his body" (113), and gets immediately cured of his incurable disease. Even the conception of a child through Madhavan for the prostitute who is cured of her diseases, is a 'miracle' attributed to him. It is also a preternatural event that, on the birth of her child, the Śvāmi breathes his last.

Jayakanthan seems to state, towards the end of the novel, through the words of the Śvāmi that there is no difference between the 'filthy' (138) and the "holy" (138):

Hai ... filth - what is it? Didn't you say something like 'holy'? Can there be anything more filthy or dirty than ourselves? Tell me, holiness ... Alas! holiness. Go on, can you
call yourself holy? or this Swāmi holy? What is it, what is it that you often prate about as holy? (138)

Ironically enough, the child born to the one-time prostitute, is carried into the shed by the physician-disciple himself, who comments: "Here is one who has become a Swamiji right at his birth" (149).

Thus, there is an element of evil or depravity even in the so-called 'great' or 'holy god-men', figuring in Greene and Jayakanthan. Further, there is a pointed, almost 'deliberate' assertion, on the part of both, that what is most exalted or sanctified, quite inevitably shows traces of an element of evil or filth. Moreover, what one sees as opposites in 'logical' terms, is also intuitively perceived by both the writers as something synonymous. There is no facile dichotomy between evil or filth on the one hand, and sanctity or sacredness on the other. This clearly shows that both the writers transcend the boundaries of conventional theology and religion, for the sole purpose of establishing their humanist visions. The secret binding factor that integrates even the so-called 'profane' with the 'sacred', is the unique human penchant for love.
Being humanists, in the profoundest sense of the term, both Greene and Jayakanthan go to the extent of forgiving the adulterous, and accommodating them within a religious framework. However, Jayakanthan is more insistent upon the mutual forgiveness on the part of the erring couples than Greene. For the purpose of the present study, only Greene's Sarah Miles in The End of the Affair and Henry Scobie in The Heart of the Matter and Jayakanthan's Malathy in Ovvoru Kūraikkum Kīle [Beneath Every Roof] which have obvious religious implications are taken up for a detailed analysis.

In The End of the Affair, for about five years Sarah Miles "the adulterous wife of a passionless Civil Servant" (Hoskins 176), has been carrying on an affair with Bendrix. To start with, they have no belief in God: "We had agreed so happily to eliminate God from our World" (The End 56). But during an air-raid, Bendrix is knocked down unconsciously and Sarah, in despair, prays to God, "So I said, I love him and I'll do anything if you'll make him alive ..." (79).

Eventually, Bendrix is saved miraculously. Now, very often, she thinks of breaking her pact she had made with God. But it has caught her like a disease, and she avoids him altogether. When he tries to call at her
house against her wishes, she walks away in the rain in order to avoid him. Torn between human love and her supernatural commitment, she develops a death wish and soon dies of pneumonia. After her death, strange events happen; a small boy is cured of stomach pain and a rationalist preacher is cured of the strawberry marks on his cheek. At Sarah's funeral, it is said that she had been baptized a Catholic at the age of two.

Sarah's case is an instance of a supreme case of sacrificial love, again an aspect of Greene's humanism. It is only out of her intense love for Bendrix that Sarah, in a moment of extreme unction makes a bargain with God. God saves him and she stands by her vow because "another's life hangs by her word" (Couto 83).

In Greene's novel The Heart of the Matter, the sinner-saint paradoxical motif is related to a choice which Scobie, the protagonist, is compelled to make. During his wife's absence, motivated by pity and feelings of desperate loneliness, Scobie lapses into an illicit love affair with Helen, a young widow. He lies about it to Louise, his wife, and avoids going to the Church for Mass. However, to set Louise's mind at rest, he receives the sacraments even though he is in a state of mortal sin. Thus, an unbearable conflict arises in
him, because of his adulterous love for Helen and his marital vow. Consequently, he commits suicide in order to remain faithful to his wife, mistress and God.

Greene feels that theological interests should, in no way, undermine human goodness. To him, a narrow doctrinal approach is too inadequate to deal with the bewildering complexity of Scobie's life. Father Rank, at the close of the novel, rightly rebukes Louise for insisting too much on what the Church says: "The Church", he says, has "all the rules. But it doesn't know what goes on in a single human heart ..." (244). Father Rank who is deliberately brought into the story of Scobie "plumbs for" (Clancy 10) a "human answer" (10) for the dilemma of Scobie. It looks as if Greene validates Scobie on the ground that he has human love and a feeling of remorse. Scobie loves God it is true, but he loves human beings more.

Father Rank implies that if Louise can forgive Scobie, God can be no less forgiving. Scobie himself tells Helen: "And then against all the teaching of the Church, one has the conviction that love - any kind of love - does deserve a bit of mercy" (186). The Priest is brought in at the end, not to force our suspended
judgment into "positiveness and definiteness" (F.N. Lees, Scrutiny 37), but to present the doctrine of the Church as flexible enough to accommodate the redemptive power of a sinner's love and sacrifice. Greene's interest is, therefore, more clearly and emphatically, humanistic. It is worth quoting in this context, the words of William R. Mueller:

The ultimate test of any human action is whether it was occasioned by man's surrender of himself in love to others; the ultimate test of man's sanctity is his possession of the gift of agape, the gift to love others as God loves him. (151)

Traditional and pious Catholics may stoutly disapprove of what Greene is doing in the two novels, The End of the Affair and The Heart of the Matter. But it should be accepted that in these two novels, he is placing the individual, above the established authority of the Church, by questioning the dogmatic rigour of its teaching, particularly the doctrine of eternal damnation. Wilhelm Hortmann avers that Greene has inverted dogma to ease his own inner "spiritual tension":


Over the period of ten years from *Brighton Rock* in 1938 to *The Heart of the Matter* in 1948, the attempt to humanize one of the central doctrines of the Church with ideas and writings, that were at least in part, beyond the borderline of heresy, must have built up a spiritual tension in the author, which he could not endure forever. The point would have to come at which, he would have to decide where he stood in relation to the teaching authority of his Church. (69)

Jayakanthan's Malathy in *Ovvoru Kūraikkum Kīle*, strikes up a relationship with Raju, a mechanic, out of pity, for he has been doomed to live with a very ugly woman. They have their clandestine sexual trysts four or five times in a year. Soon, her conscience begins to prick her, but she finds none to confide her plight in. Her father, a very poor man, arranges after much difficulty, her marriage with Siva Guru Nathan, a young man living in the same complex. Now, there arises in Malathy, a great conflict between her love for Raju and her filial duty. She tells herself:

*You false woman! ... you try to conceal it like an innocent child. Are you going to*
marry another man and be close to him? What kind of an honest life, you can then lead? Is honesty only for others and not for you? ... What will you gain in leading a false life? (51)

Subsequently, with a heavy heart, she runs to her former teacher for advice, only to find that the old venerable lady is living with another man.

One night, Malathy goes to the terrace of the building complex in which she lives, to pick up the garments left to be dried there. In the terrace, young children are playing games and old men are playing cards in the moonlight. In the nearby Mariamman temple, there is some celebration, as a devotional song with the burden "My ecstasy is roused more and more as I contemplate on thy innocent face" (72) fills the air. Humming the same song, she goes to a corner in search of a garment. The song suddenly stops and she finds herself standing before Siva Guru Nathan sitting there, moving his head in tune with the rhythm of the song. She feels that a certain expression of milky innocence playing on his face in the moonlight, as if paraphrasing the essence of the song she has just heard, symbolic almost of a divine charm (73).
In such an entrancing movement, something in her urges her to muster enough confidence and confess everything to him. "Yes, she told him everything in the light of her inwardly burning, flaming feelings" (76).

As the Tamils consider conscience as the voice of God, what Malathy does here could be construed as a kind of 'religious' confession. Jayakanthan presents Malathy as a devotee, "Standing there expecting his judgment" (76). But he sends out a long column of mere cigarette puffs and "pooh-poohs her worn-out narrative" (76). His large-heartedness can be seen in his readiness to forgive her:

It's only after marriage that a common life begins for both of us, living under the same roof of love, truth and righteousness. It's the nobility of your character that made you recount the illusions of your past. I know only the strength of love derived out of a mutual trust can burn and light up every home after the marriage is solemnized .... (77)

Thus, Greene and Jayakanthan place individuals like Sarah, Scobie and Malathy above the established authority of the organized religion, on the ground that their hearts are capable of generating and exercising
a power of love which transcends all dogmatic, conventional considerations.

In Jayakanthan's novelette, the male protagonist assumes almost a divine status because of his magnanimity of spirit. Symbolically, his name, with its three parts 'Siva', 'Guru' and 'Nathan' when combined, stands for "the in-dwelling Lord", suggestive of him becoming almost the voice of Malathy's conscience, God's voice.

Like Greene, Jayakanthan, in sheer compassion for the sinful humanity, places an ordinary human being above religious orthodoxy, and makes an attempt here to accommodate the most depraved, granting her almost a saintly halo. Like Greene, he too, appreciates the need for contrition, and a change of heart on the part of the sinner, and stresses on the need for a more flexible attitude, on the part of the orthodox religious people, with regard to the sinful humanity which goes astray from time to time.

The most significant tenet of Jayakanthan's humanism is that the low caste people, who, out of sheer karma, are condemned as sinners for centuries, deserve a fair deal, and this is possible, only if the high caste
people, particularly the Brahmins, give up their age-old assumptions of superiority and instead, accept the message of love and tenderness to all.

Jayakanthan's novel Pirammēpatēcam is a landmark in this regard, where he inverts deliberately, the Brahminic orthodoxy that only a person born to Brahmin parents alone is a Brahmin, and asserts that "anybody who practises the dharma of Brahminism is a Brahmin and his birth in an inferior caste need not stand in his way" (58).

Sankara Sarma, an old Brahmin, is angry with his Brahmin brethren, "who have forgotten their Brahminic dharma and are steeped in idiocy in this Kaliyugā ("Evil Age")." He has failed in his duty as a father in not giving his daughter Maitrei in marriage, as he is unable to find a Brahmin consort for her. A Brahmin boy Seshadri, who is a staunch Communist and atheist, living in the next door falls in love with her. He calls himself the representative of a "New Veda" ("New religion" 23), namely, Communism which, according to him, is "Neo-Brahminism" (24). But to Sankara Sarma a Brahmin cannot be an atheist. For, an atheist is one who refuses to abide by the conventions and duties laid down by ancestors. He says: "A Brahmin is one who
continues to follow the mantra ("special message") given to him, continues to do his dharma, enhances his gnana ("wisdom") and serves humanity at large exercising his intellectual ability" (23).

But Seshadri defaults Sankara Sarma, on the score that he has not followed Manu's precept (Manu, the ancient Sanskrit law-giver) by not finding a suitable husband for his daughter even before she attained the age of puberty. Hence, he says there is nothing wrong if she marries him. The marriage takes place and Sankara Sarma brings home one Sathanantha Otuvar, a low caste youth, for he is a bhakta and an observer of all religious rites and duties. He teaches him the Kayatri mantra ("special message given to a Brahmin during the sacred-thread-wearing ceremony") and makes him wear the sacred thread and pronounces him a Brahmin.

In the novel Jaya Jaya Sañkarā, Jayakanthan once again deals with the question of defining who is a true Brahmin in the modern context. Here, Sankaran, the Brahmin boy adores Āti, a low caste boy, who saved him from drowning in the river. To him, Āti appears as "Lord Siva" (24) and "Sankaran worships the untouchable small boy as his god" (25). Later Āti marries a Brahmin woman who says that "he [Āti] is a better Brahmin
because of his knowledge of the Vedas and his dislike of money" (56). Sankaran, who later becomes, the Acharya, the religious head, says that one who has forgotten the Vedas and one who leads a purposeless life cannot call himself a Brahmin. Āti wants the Acharya to create "a new breed of Brahmins, in order to destroy the greatest of social evils, namely untouchability" (Part I, 62).

Jayakanthan's intention in these two novels is very clear. As M. Thirumalai says: "It becomes contingent on the part of those who abide by age-old conventions, when such conventions begin to disintegrate, they have to change their attitude also" (Tamil Malayala 214). Commenting on Jaya Jaya Saṅkarā, Veeraswamy says that it is: "a novel written on the basis of a principle, promoting people's emancipation" (Tamil Nāvel 291).

As a socio-spiritualist, Jayakanthan strives hard to find some accommodation within the dogmatic Hindu religious framework, for the socially and religiously segregated low caste people who are known as the untouchables. "These unfortunate people are segregated from rural community, dreaded as lepers and treated most contemptuously ..." (Gupta 25). This is very much the need of the hour as caste-oriented clashes
and conflicts are ever on the increase all over India in recent years.

In both Greene and Jayakanthan there is a deliberate humanist attempt to elevate even the obvious sinners to the status of saints. Both the writers question all repressive, dogmatic, religious and communal creeds and barriers, giving the representatives of the so-called sinful humanity an unmistakable religious or social approbation.

For instance, Rose and Prabhu get elevated in the esteem of the readers, because of their supreme capacity for caring for others. The Whisky Priest, Malathy, the prostitute and the physician-disciple are all saved, through the "appalling strangeness" of God's mercy. Ganga, an ordinary mortal becomes the sacred Ganges, thereby attaining beatitude. Sarah, Malathy and the prostitute take a vow before God and keep it till the very end. As for Scobie, his "human heart" earns him his salvation. Sankara Sarma boldly converts a low caste man into a high caste Brahmin and creates a new dharma for the Brahmins.

Greene's inspiration to employ the sinner-saint motif may have originated from the Bible and from the
life of Christ. Christ forgives the sinner-thief on the cross and tells him: "Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43). He tells the people who have brought before him a woman taken in adultery: "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her" (St. John 8:7) and he tells the woman: "Neither do I condemn thee: go and sin no more" (St. John 8:11). Also, when some people bring to him a blind man, he does not attribute any sin to him or to his parents. He says he is blind so that "the works of God should manifest in him" (St. John 9:3). John, the apostle, says that if any man sins then the advocate for him is "The Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1). The focus of Greene has always been on Christ and the Bible, and not on the man-made dogmas of the Church or any organized religion. Certainly, Greene does not want Christianity to be a religion of rebukes, judgements and curses. On the other hand, he wants people to develop a Christ-like spirit and a vision of love, mercy, kindness and forgiveness.

The fact that Greene continues to sustain this paradoxical motif doggedly, novel after novel, seems to suggest that he is perhaps trying to solve a personal problem. Passages from A Sort of Life, his autobiography, have been already cited to show how he
became a Catholic just to marry Vivien. Louis, in The Heart of the Matter, tells Scobie, her husband: "Ticki, I sometimes think you just became a Catholic to marry me. It doesn't mean a thing to you, does it? (16). It is important to note that Greene's religious conversion is not altogether irrelevant to literary considerations. But, it should not be allowed to weigh too heavily on all issues. Whether such a paradox has been fashioned by his mind due to a personal difficulty, or an inner "spiritual tension" (Hortmann 69), is probably a matter for further research. But as some critics have already perceived, the fact remains that, in Greene, "Orthodox Catholicism is denied in the name of 'humanism' ... " (Eagleton 109).

With Greene, the motif has also been the result of a social necessity, which he intensely felt during his sojourn in Mexico. In a Cathedral at San Luis Potosi, as he describes in his non-fiction, The Lawless Roads, he saw poor peasants, "Population of heaven" (44), having "aged, painful, and ignorant faces" (44) attending the Mass. They all preserved their faith, in spite of very severe religious persecutions raging on there at that time. It was in Mexico that Greene met also the real Whisky Priest: "... the hunted priest had
worked for so many years, hidden in the swamps and forests (114).

As a writer, Greene understands the mode of existence of the truly religious in an evil world. As a humanist, he just cannot put these people within the stereotyped Christian straight-jacket. Hence, he pleads for a greater degree of flexibility in respect of dialectical and ethical issues in the established Church, even as Jayakanthan makes a plea for a greater accommodation and acceptance for the low caste and the morally depraved in his call for "Neo-Brahminism".

The Tamil poet Bharathy's influence on Jayakanthan should merit some consideration in this context. Bharathy's lines which speak about deathlessness have been quoted earlier. Jayakanthan's reference to the mythical gods found at the close of his novel Gañkai Enkē Pōkira has already been traced to Bharathy. It is precisely through this reference that Jayakanthan attributes divinity and sanctity to Ganga. Again, it is said, "When Bharathy was in Pondicherry, he tried to convert a harijan ("low caste") by name Kanakalingam into a Brahmin by making him wear the sacred thread and giving him pirammōpatēcam" ("chanting of mantras") (Dhasan 167). Jayakanthan's Siddhars like Ōnkūr Swāmi
and Vilakku Swami who figure in his novel *Inta Neratil Ival*, have been modelled on Bharathy's *Siddhar*, Kuvalai Kannan, in whom "he found a god and guru" (Dhasan 187).

In Jayakanthan, the motif of the sinner who turns into a saint is perhaps a psychological need, for the justification of his own self-confessed weaknesses, fairly well-known to most of his readers. It has also originated from his intense socio-cultural concerns. As an artist, he craves for not only social recognition, but also religious sanctification, for the so-called morally depraved and the sinful. In his preface to the novel *Rishi Mulum*, he virtually argues against "the idiotic social and familial taboos" (10) which are being "preserved by religions and institutions" (10). With a view to demolishing outmoded creeds and values, he asserts: "Wherever restrictions and taboos are insisted upon, there should be a process of liberalization set in motion" (Mohan, "Jayakanthanin Cintanaikal" 60).