Chapter Five

Quest for the Eden of Childhood

A stratified search for a social utopia, "a magical land of plenty where wine runs in rivers and pancakes grow on trees" (Elliott, Utopia 5) is not simply feasible in Greene, because of his fast-shifting focuses, locales, stances and values. Being victims of their own passions and environments, his characters often grapple with different modes of life to ensure their survival. Their quest involves different alternatives, and hence, Greene's works become records of their troubled consciousness. It is, therefore, pointless to go into his works straightaway for "a perfect society that exists now - somewhere - but not here" (Rhodes, Utopia 17). Again, in most instances, as Greene's psychological concerns override his social preoccupations, his main burden is with certain obsessions that govern man's actions rather than with this visible world.

However, a careful reading of Greene's novels reveals that he too has a wistful longing for a world of peace and perpetual joy. For the re-creation of Greene's desired world, one has to isolate, as also to relate, certain specific factors lying scattered in his
works. In his epigraph to his *The Honorary Consul* Greene himself writes: "All things merge in one another".

It is mainly through imagery that a writer lays bare his innermost likes and dislikes, observations and interests, attitudes and beliefs. Coleridge says:

... Images, however beautiful ... do not of themselves characterize the poet. They become proofs of original genius only as far as they are modified by a predominant passion; or by associated thoughts or images awakened by the passion. (Biographia 177)

The "predominant passion" of Greene that underlies the seething, seedy images that come crowding page after page in his novels, is his inordinate contempt for the world which he perceives as primarily evil. He faithfully depicts in his novels, the ugliness and the sordidness he encountered in the war-torn Western world, thereby projecting the physical, inner corruption of man. Collected and grouped together, these predominant images of fallibility, decay and death constitute what is popularly considered "Greeneland", a variant of Eliot's "Wasteland" and Dante's "Hell". For instance, in
his. It's A Battle-Field Greene visualizes the world as "hell in circles" (22) and a battle-field in which each separate battalion is fighting its own battle in happy ignorance of a general war. In The Heart of the Matter, for instance, he says nobody "could ever talk about a heaven on earth" (26). The sanatorium in which Rowe is confined in The Ministry of Fear is "... the conception of Hell presented by sympathetic theologians - a place without inhabitants which existed simply as a warning" (30). In The Power and the Glory, the Whisky Priest "carried Hell about with him ... Evil ran like malaria in his veins" (176). In Brighton Rock, "...hell lay about him [Pinkie] in his infancy" (87-88). Greene's is a "bitter universe in which the Devil is abroad utterly malignant and baleful" (Church 138).

Violence and death are the inevitable concomitants of this Greenian Hell and they always hover over the entire scene. In The Quiet American, Fowler, the journalist, while reporting on the Vietnam war, calls Death, the fourth major character of the novel. The Confidential Agent opens with the picture of the havoc caused by death:

The gulls swept over Dover. They sailed out like flakes of the fog, and tacked back
towards the hidden town, while the siren mourned with them: other ships replied, a whole wake lifted up their voices for whose death? (9)

In the same novel, Greene describes London blitz: "Nearer and nearer the guns opened up, but the plane pursued its steady terror ... But the bomb burst half a mile away: you could feel the ground dent" (21). In the Haiti of The Comedians, terror rides high and Death haunts frequently and swiftly in the night. Brighton Rock opens into a world of violence. "Hale knew, before he had been in Brighton three hours, that they meant to murder him" (1).

In England Made Me "happiness was an incidental enjoyment" (51). In The Lawless Roads Greene re-creates the "ravaged world" (15) of the tropical states of Chiapas and Tabasco, where during the anti-clerical purges of President Calles, the Churches were destroyed or closed, and the priests driven out or shot. In The Power and the Glory, Greene is again concerned with the Catholic persecution in Mexico. Modern war and international intrigues form the warp and woof of Greene's later novels written after 1936. A Gun for Sale was suggested by the nefarious activities and alliances
of war-profiteers and armament manufacturers even as The Confidential Agent by the Spanish Civil War; The Ministry of Fear by the atrocities of Nazi Fifth Column in Britain; The Third Man by the Penicillin racket in the war-torn, four-powered Vienna and Our Man in Havana by Big power intrigues in Cuba. In short, what Doctor Saavedra, the novelist, in Greene's The Honorary Consul says, is true of almost all of Greene's fiction, as "Assassinations, kidnapping, the torture of prisoners - these things belong to our decade" (57).

In such an infernal, nightmarish world given to violence and death, Greene's Man is just abandoned. Mr. Tench, the dentist, is utterly deserted in the godless Mexican State and what he experiences is "huge abandonment" (The Power 18). The Mexican father tells his wife: "We have been abandoned here. We must get along as best we can" (28). To Padre Jose, this world appears as an "abandoned ship" (29). There is no peace for him "in the whole abandoned star" (30). The Whisky Priest wants to be with his woman, thinking that if he left the State, "he would be having her too abandoned" (67). When the Whisky Priest is not recognized and arrested for possessing liquor, "In an odd way he felt abandoned because there was no sign of recognition" (136). In
Greene's tragic vision, every one living in Mexico is "going deeper every moment into the abandoned land" (157).

Compared with Greene, Jayakanthan is a more socially conscious writer. Hence, in novel after novel, he presents the various ills, both within and without human consciousness that beset man and is ever in quest of an ideal world for the peace and happiness of humanity.

However, the world that is found in Jayakanthan's works, is not as violent and hellish as the one in Greene. Jayakanthan does not strive after images to create a nightmarish world, which is not at all within the range and scope of the experience of either himself or his audience. His choice of imagery often points to a clue to where his sympathies lie. For, unlike Greene, Jayakanthan is writing to a limited audience many of whom read for the sole purpose of recreation. It may not be an exaggeration to say that in the regional languages in India, even the most literary writers feel compelled, at times, to cater to the taste of the generality of the audience, who cannot relish excessively done images or enigmatic symbols which pose problems of interpretation.
So, like many of his counterparts writing in Tamil, Jayakanthan too deals with the atrocities and violence inflicted by the rich, the sufferings of the socially oppressed, social problems like suppression of women, untouchability, caste-distinction, political injustice, disturbances, clashes and conflicts perpetrated in the name of religion.

Greene does not find any final stay for his abandoned man in social and welfare organizations which relate themselves to simply mass-men, and ignore human individuality. In Greene's *Our Man in Havana*, Peter considers UNESCO as sacred, and devotes his whole life to its cause, even at the cost of his love for his wife. In other words, he is loyal to those who pay him, and indifferent to those who love him. Beatrice, his wife, therefore, falls in love with Wormold who is more humanistic than Peter. In a vehement outburst she says:

I don't care a damn about men who are loyal to the people who pay them, to organizations ... I don't think even my country means all that much. There are many countries in our blood, aren't there, but only one person. Would the world to be in the mess it is (sic) if we were loyal to love and not to countries? (189-90)
Here, Greene seems to suggest that more than social togetherness, man should cherish the principle of love at the level of the individual to start with. Greene's obvious preference seems to be agape which, in the words of Tillich, is "the will to self-surrender for the sake of the other beings" (Morality 12).

Like Greene, Jayakanthan also condemns people who function as mere slaves of organizations. He thinks that social organizations are very much needed and those who serve them must have respect, forthright honesty and integrity. Āti in Īswara Allā Tērē Nām who strives for the creation of a Gandhian ashram, has no occasion to have any difference of opinion with his high caste Brahmin wife. Thuraikannu, the social worker in Vālkkai Alaikkiratu, is god-like and his human interest is simply unfathomable. Both Āti and Thuraikannu are men moved by agape, willing to take up the cross for the sake of the suffering humanity at large.

Greene's attitude to organized religion is not much different from that towards other social organizations like the Church and its paraphernalia, which, according to Greene, deprive man of his essential humanity. In fact, Greene's conversion to Catholicism was more formal than profound. That is why, in his
works there is an air of casualness in his references to and reflections on religion. The image of Father Talbot, who failed to help Greene in the terrible moments of his spiritual quest in real life, recurs in his works, revealing his usual impatience with Catholic dogma and the Church's teachings. Greene's Brighton Rock, The Power and the Glory, The Heart of the Matter, The End of the Affair, The Living Room and The Potting Shed, reflect his essential distrust in the conventional religion. Greene also denounces conventional piety and the formal aspects of religion, because they tend to reject the essentials, namely, love for God and love for a fallible and suffering humanity. Faith, to Greene, is unconditioned and unconditional. It offers considerable freedom to Man and springs spontaneously and comes from the human heart "Shapelessly without dogma..." (Lawless 14). But Catholicism as such, does not admit of any loopholes. Speaking about the fate of Scobie in The Heart of the Matter, Wilshere says, "within the framework of theology he is damned" (Essays 132). The same yardstick, most certainly, is to be applied to nearly all Greene's Catholics who act against the will of the Church and commit "the unpardonable sin of despair" (Essays 132).
A reader of Greene's *The Quiet American*, is sure of finding Greene, along with Fowler, denouncing both God and all "isms", on seeing all the violence perpetrated by the so-called loyalists. To him, people are too worried about the hunger in their belly to think of Communism or God: "Thought's a luxury. Do you think the peasant sits and thinks of God and Democracy when he gets inside his mud hut at night?" (95). Like Fowler, Greene may at times, play with the idea of bringing about a fusion between Marxism and Christianity, prescribing it as a panacea for the suffering humanity. But such a fusion does not take place either in *The Power and the Glory* or in *The Honorary Consul*. In the former, as Adele King observes: "... the Lieutenant's dream of a 'new world' is false, because it ignores both the floods and torrents of the natural world and the corruptible nature of man" (41). At best, the Lieutenant can offer the people what is called authoritarian humanism, with a gun in his hand. In the latter, Greene, instead of aiming at a fusion, goes for a downright rejection of all brands of totalitarianism. The book offers neither a Christian message nor a Marxist solution. Father Rivas who carries a gun, is a lapsed Catholic, who dies a renegade in the eyes of the Church; and an outlaw in the eyes of the State.
Though Jayakanthan's religious convictions are not very strong, he does not totally turn against Hinduism. In fact, his Communist critics are angry with him mainly because of this reason. Jayakanthan also feels compelled to write in favour of religion as most of his readers are orthodox Brahmins, who are profoundly pious and religious. Gone are those days when Jayakanthan was known in this land only as a die-hard atheist. Readers of his recent novels Jaya Jaya Sañkarā, Āyuta Pūcai [Worship of the War Tools] and Īswara Allā Tērē Nām find him as a religiously inclined writer. In the former, he shows the Acharya as a religious head, endowed with a desire to provide a new dispensation under a benevolent dharma for the Brahmins. He says: "To me all are the same. I am rather more discontented with the renegade Brahmins" (Part One, 59). Jayakanthan even makes the Acharya permit the three children of Āti to enter the temple, despite the fact that they are untouchables. Āti's prayer to the Acharya is: "Yes, cast the new mould of Brahminism, destroying in the process all the vestiges of untouchability" (Part One, 62). It is Jayakanthan's strong conviction that the Hindu religion and its heads must come forward with open hands, to receive the socially ostracized sections of humanity,
thereby putting an end to all communal conflicts and clashes.

Ayuta Pūcai tells the story of an ascetic, a disciple of Ramalinga Swamigal, who is known for compassion, humanity and purity. He stands stoutly against all kinds of violence and preaches nothing but Arul ("God's grace") and the need for hard work. In Īswara Allā Tērē Nām, Jayakanthan makes his readers believe that all religious strifes in this country will come to an end, if all temples are converted into ashrams of the Gandhian type (215).

Like Greene, Jayakanthan does not condemn Communism or any other socio-political ideology. It should also be noted that despite his desertion of the Communist Party, Jayakanthan still holds dear the fundamental principles of Communism. As a matter of fact, one of his recent works is entitled Communism Törkuma? [Will Communism Fail?], in which he writes:

I belong to the community of believers who entertain very high hopes in the formation of a Communist society. As most of my friends were of the view that 'a Communist cannot believe in God', I have declared that I am an
outright atheist. What is the significance of
the epithet 'outright' here? It simply stands
for a dialectical approach, especially with
regard to the Communists who still believe in
God. (15)

However, it is certain that Jayakanthan is dead
against the radical kind of Communism which believes in
violence, class-hatred and class-war, as discussed in
the opening chapter of this thesis.

It is significant that like Greene, Jayakanthan too
does not make any attempt to bring about any facile
fusion between religion and Communism and prescribe a
remedy for the suffering humanity. In his Áyuta Pūcai,
he says in the preface: "I have neither faith, nor
respect in weapons of violence, whether they are small,
or large, capable of exploding the whole earth. They
cannot correct or win a single man. That kind of age is
gone forever" (4).

In the novel, religion is represented by a young
Swamiji who runs an Illam ("home") for the orphans. The
children in the home grow up, work hard and become
totally disciplined. "But for the yoga of hard work, we
did not devote ourselves to any meditation or ritual of
worship" (22). Soon three of the boys turn out to be Naxalites, leave the Ilam and indulge themselves in atrocities. One of them, Sudarvannan, later returns with a gun, and when he is about to be arrested, commits suicide, shooting himself. The ascetic in the novel is a pathetic figure who, after witnessing the scene sings:

I stand a mute tree
or rather statue
In the middle of
The evil and the good. (77)

The novel clearly illustrates that religion and Communism can never come to any reconciliation, as both tend to move apart, in principle and practice, in diametrically opposite directions.

Greene's profound sympathy and concern for the dying humanity is nowhere expressed more forcefully and vividly than in the following lines in his Journey Without Maps:

Today our world seems peculiarly susceptible to brutality. There is a touch of nostalgia in the pleasure we take in gangster novels, in characters who have so agreeably simplified their emotions that they have begun living again at a level below the cerebral. We, like
Wordsworth, are living after a war and a revolution, and these half-castes fighting with bombs, between the cliffs of skyscrapers seem more likely than we to be aware of Proteus rising from the sea. It is not, of course, that one wishes to stay forever at that level, but when one sees to what unhappiness, to what peril of extinction centuries of cerebration have brought us, one sometimes has a curiosity to discover if one can from what we have come, to recall at which point we went astray. (10)

In the same work Greene makes an earnest plea that the world must return to its past: "simplicity, instinctive friendliness ... and start again..." (192). He suggests that in the past "the sense of taste was finer, the sense of pleasure keener, the sense of terror deeper and purer" (224-25). The present civilized world appears to Greene as a "Chromium world" of heartless men given to monetary relationships. His plea, therefore, is that man must get "back to Africa" (Human Factor 122). In The Human Factor published in 1978, John Hargreaves, is utterly disgusted with the modern, busy, mechanical urban life. His conversation with his friend is worth quoting here:
'Sometimes I wish I was back in Africa'
'The Old Africa'
'Yes. You are right. The Old Africa'
'It's gone for ever'.
'I'm not so sure - perhaps if we destroy the rest of the world, the roads will become overgrown and all the new luxury hotels will crumble, the forests will come back, the chiefs, the witch doctors - there's still a rain queen in the north-east Transvaal'. (122)

The above passage is suggestive of Greene's own fascination for the simple, primitive life of Africa, where one has "to trust an intuition" (201). As Muller says in the same novel, it is "his spiritual home, the heart of darkness" (Journey 15). He adds:

'The heart of darkness' was common to us both. Freud has made us conscious as we have never been before, of those ancestral threads which still exist in our unconscious minds to lead us back. (251-52)

Our hellish, nightmarish world given to war and violence, Greene thinks, has invaded and destroyed our Eden of childhood, landing the entire humanity in
meaningless boredom. Therefore, he pleads, one must return to "Africa", symbolically speaking, a state of innocence, signifying a recapture of the creative sensitivity from a preternatural power.

Greene says that the "odd African fixation" or love for the Dark Continent came to him in childhood itself when he read Rider Haggard's King Solomon's Mines. The protagonists in the adventurous tales of Allain Quartermain and Sir Henry Curtis became his earliest heroes, as the ancient Gagool possessed his childhood imagination:

Gagool I could recognize - didn't she wait for me in dreams every night in the passage by the linen cupboard, near the nursery door? and she continues to wait, when the mind is sick or tired, though now she is dressed in the theological garments of despair. (219)

Gagool was a power of the same species as the supernatural powers in Africa, neither good nor evil, which Greene encountered among the bush-devils.

Later, it was in Africa, while lying extremely ill, that Greene discovered the right clue to the secrets of his lost childhood. That night he felt that he had made "an important discovery" (278) which was to him, nothing
short of a "conversion" (178). While in Africa, he felt that the time got suspended and that he had left behind in Europe all the hustle and bustle of Western civilization. As he passed through the "blank unexplored continent" (In Search of a Character 123), he discovered "a thing I had never possessed: a love for life" (Journey 206). He laments further how deplorably he had lost his childhood ability, and keenness to enjoy the simple and innocent pleasures of life. Being an adult now, torn by conflicts, and world-weary, his senses are overlaid with the superficial gloss of civilization:

It isn't gain to have turned the witch or the masked secret dancer, the sense of supernatural evil, into the small human viciousness of the thin distinguished military grey head in Kensington Gardens with the soft lips and the eyes which dwelt with dull lustre on girls and boys of a certain age (Journey 206).

Greene's lament of the loss of childhood and innocence almost recalls Wordsworth's lines in "Ode on Intimations of Immortality: "The glory and the freshness of a dream/ It is not now as it hath been of yore" (5-6).
Greene's Journey Without Maps was published in 1936, A Burnt-Out Case in 1961 and The Human Factor in 1978. For a period of forty-two long years, Greene had been entertaining the idea that somehow man's spiritual home is Africa, the unexplored continent, the heart of mankind. Hence, a close examination of Greene's A Burnt-Out Case is imperative, in order to study the implication of his call for retracing out steps back to our racial childhood.

Trekking through several troubled spots of the world, Greene finally found his spiritual home in Africa. But, Jayakanthan has no real place in the world to offer humanity an ideal. Though, he went to several holy places as a pilgrim, he could not never totally forget life's miseries. In his non-fiction Pōnatum Vantatum [For all the Departures and Arrivals] he says:

I have enjoyed ecstasies of devotion in moments of meditation at the end of long pilgrimages to Dakshineswar, Rishikesh, and several other shrines surrounded by the beauty and holiness of Nature. However, all those were a kind of exalted, aesthetic experiences, utterly transient, as in a few moments of my departure from those places, such feelings and
experiences turned out to be mere illusions or
dreams, utterly dissolved in the miseries and
pains of the reality of the life surrounding
me. (33)

Pained by the sight of "the orphans begotten by
society having no right to live" (Tēvaṉ Varuvārā? 6),
Jayakanthan yearns for the birth of a new society like
the "Christians who expect the Second Coming of Christ"
(7). He adds: "Such a society will not drop from heaven,
ever ever dropped. Only man must create it, on his own
soil" (7).

Jayakanthan's creation of a "golden world" (Tēvaṉ
7) for Man, can be seen in his novel Oru Manīṭaṉ Oru
Vīṭu Oru Ulakam (1973). In the visualization of such a
world, Jayakanthan's inspiration from his mentor-poet
Bharathy cannot be denied. In his Gnana Ratham, Bharathy
everisages a Kirtha Yuqā ("golden Age") for the Tamils,
which can be identified with Shelley's idealistic "Happy
Earth". One may recall here the relevance of
Ragunathan's study of the subject, Bāratiyum Shelleyum
[Bharathy and Shelley].

That Jayakanthan proceeds to create an ideal
society for his people, becomes evident in the title of
the novel itself, which, when explicated, means "an ideal man, an ideal family and an ideal world". In the preface to the novel, Jayakanthan remarks that Henry, the protagonist, is a highly "idealistic" (5) and even "mystic" (5) character, but not unrealistic. In the novel, he strives to create a world which bears a close resemblance to Greene's Eden of Childhood depicted in *A Burnt-Out Case*. The two novels are, therefore, singled out here for a comparative study, to understand why and how the two writers want to take their readers deliberately back to an ideal, primitive, childhood world, where peace and happiness exercise their absolute sovereignty.

Querry, the protagonist in Greene's novel comes to the Congo, a backward place, completely crushed and sapless like a leper, bereft of all sensations. He is middle-aged, having had a lot of experiences in the civilized cities of Europe. Once he was a universally recognized architect, as someone enjoying considerable power over men and women. He had money and he was a "raging success" (113). Querry's "range of achievement extended from the latest Cathedral, a place of glass and steel, to a little white Dominican Chapel on the Cote d'Azur ..." (13). But now all that glorious past is
gone for ever, and he has come to a place from where he is "never going to return" (28). His flight from the West into the land of darkness, to seek asylum in a leproserie, deep in the Congo, is a sign of his rejection of all that represent the civilization of contemporary humanity. He looks upon himself as a veritable burnt-out case, a doomed leper, having "nothing. I want nothing" (16). He is desireless, totally dispossessed and he has come to the very "end" (16) of his life. In the Congo, he has no plans; he does not know what he should do: "I assure you there is nothing of interest in my case, I have retired that's all" (28-29). What he now wants most is peace, as he tells Dr. Colin: "Believe me I want peace as much as you do" (28).

Henry, the protagonist in Jayakanthan's novel, is a direct contrast to Greene's Querry in age, maturity, character, temperament and the predicament that surrounds him. To start with, he is a "foundling" (Oru Manitan 52), taken up from a railway carriage and brought up by Teresa, an Anglo-Indian woman and Sabapathy Pillai, an orthodox Hindu, who were not husband and wife, though they lived together (51). They give Henry as much freedom as possible, even the freedom
of not going through any formal education. They have for him "love ... enormous love" (55) and their only intention is to make him "a good man" (55). And he really grows up to be a lovable gentleman, imbued with great optimism, totally unaffected by the corrupting influences of city life.

Three days after the death of Sabapathy Pillai, Henry travels with just a bag in hand, and arrives at Krishna Rajapuram, a petty, backward, village in interior Tamil Nadu, to claim the properties of his foster-father. Though he has every reason to be lost in despondency over the demise of a lovable parent, having none else to help him in the new place, he has come here mustering enough confidence in himself. Unlike Greene's Querry, who had a glorious past and who comes to the Congo, totally crushed in spirit in quest of a new life, Henry is just an inexperienced youth "who has not worked in any capacity so far" (32). "He has not even fallen in love with any girl and danced with anyone" (133). But, in contrast to Querry, he is brimming with enthusiasm and actively participates in the life of a village where he lives as "a stranger" (22). If Querry is at the "end" of his life, Henry is at the threshold of it, seeking peace in a very backward village with which he is inextricably connected.
The Congo leper village in *A Burnt-Out Case*, is a new setting having not much in common with the usual violence and squalor of "Greeneland". For, its citizens, it has only lepers, "tsetse-flies" (9), "hot air" (10) and the mosquitoes which have "no pity for the thin man" (11). This is a clear indication that Greene in this work is trying to create a world, which is not at all marred by the values of the West. The Congo in the novel, is certainly not Conrad's Congo in his *The Heart of Darkness*, but as Greene himself says, in the dedicatory epistle: "This Congo is a region of the mind, and the reader will find no place called Luc on any map, nor did its Governor and Bishop exist in any regional capital" (5). In his *In Search of Character*, Greene says that the land is "a cure for the sick" (30). There is a leprosérie for the lepers, a seminary and a convent. Dr. Colin and the Churchmen who are missionaries, tirelessly work for man's physical and spiritual "cure".

Though the Congo is a place of "discomfort" (9) none seems to bother about any inconvenience there. The crew in the boat evade boredom with a game of *Quatre Cent Vingt et un* "wordlessly like a ritual mime" (11). The Captain, is found reading his breviary with a
fly-whisk in his hand to ward off tsetse-flies. The people work, laugh, make no complaints and live absolutely without any tension. "The laughter of the cooks went back and forth ... and it was never long before someone sang ..." (11). At the Seminary the fathers laugh like children and take interest even in very small things (14). "The laughter rose higher ... the game, like so many children's games, was about to reach an end ..." (14). The Priests "were not interested in the tensions and changing cabinets of Europe, they were barely interested in the riots of a few hundred miles away, on the other side of the river..." (14). The Priests are prepared to suffer for the sake of others and suffering is a part of their lives. When Querry says that he has come to the end of "all that" [suffering] (116), the Superior turns away from him without even curiosity, saying "oh, well, you know, suffering is something which will always be provided when it is required. Sleep well" (16). In short, though the place is a leper colony, the people living there are fun-loving, hard-working, and genuinely selfless.

Krishna Rajapuram, the setting of Jayakanthan's Oru Manitan Oru Vītu Oru Ulakam is one of the most backward
villages in Tamil Nadu. It has also its share of "discomforts", to which people largely adjust themselves. For instance, they enjoy no regular transport facilities, and most of them are used to travelling by lorries. They are illiterate and uncivilized. "While bathing they had their turbans on their heads" (31). "They wore their dhoties either on their heads or used them to cover their whole bodies" (31). "Almost everyone carried a sickle in his hand" (31). They all have the bad habit of spitting sideways (31). When Henry sees such people he remarks with a hearty laugh: "This is the first village I see, do you know?" (31). "They'd try to discourage you in every effort, with their superstition; always look for some claim to exhibit their native pride and boast highly of themselves in everything they had" (127).

However, the villagers, after all, do enjoy enough compensation for all the inconveniences they put up with. Krishna Rajapuram is "a little beautiful village" (15) at the foot of a mountain and "its chief produces are vegetables and flowers" (15). When Henry comes there first "he sees it bathed in a rich green in the evening sunlight" (24). Jayakanthan's description of the place is poetic:
Henry enjoyed the rural novelty of every sight of the village that greeted his glance and his heart felt the thrill of an innocent child. Inhaling a chestful of the hearty village air he enjoyed looking at everything around: the half-naked villagers and their children; their poverty; their little, frivolous joys; their manners and behaviour; their conversations; the small households that stood around offering them shelter; their small huts with low, slanting roofs; and the gourds sprawling over them with their intricate twigs; the country chickens raking up the muck around; the cock surrounded by about seven, eight hens and ten, fifteen chicks, that came in his way and suddenly dashed away in fear, flying to the top of a low coping roof of a nearby hut and gave a magnificent clarion call mistaking the dim light of the evening for a daybreak .... (30)

Thus, wherever Henry turns, he finds nothing but a pastoral beauty: "The moon and the vast sky ... Oh! how simply lovely is everything! Even the well is so deep; Ah! the clear water there again is lovely, too!" (49).
Besides all these, the people whom Henry meets are also always happy, fun-loving, inclined to singing, extremely hospitable and hard working. The lorry driver Thuraikannu, whom Henry meets first, looks always cheerful: "Despite the angry expression in his face he was a happy person. However, there seemed to be no particular reason for his anger or joy" (10). "Like a child he [Thuraikannu] prattles something and sings imaginative songs" (16). For instance, he sings a song about a gypsy woman who had an affair with Kuppan, a local fellow, much to the merriment of the people travelling in the lorry. Deva Rajan easily becomes Henry's friend, makes him stay in his house, offers him food and provides him with all the help he needs to get back his properties. Out of sheer gratitude Henry says: "God has blessed me with a good friend right from the time of my arrival in the village" (50). Akkamma, Deva Rajan's sister treats him as "a brother" (40). Generally, in a village like Krishna Rajapuram, an Anglo-Indian albino is considered to be a low caste (34) and so people "look at him again and again intently as a curious stranger" (28). But, once they discover that he is a friend of Deva Rajan, a highly regarded teacher, they just smile and depart (28). Their petty family feuds, unjust Panchayat administration, and even the
caste-distinctions they make, do not in any way affect the normal, even course of life in the village. Of all the people of the village, the Panchayat President alone seems to be evil. He is arrested on charge of bootlegging and, subsequently, he commits suicide "out of a sense of shame" (310). Most of the villagers are hard-working farmers and they all join together in building up a house for Henry.

It should be noted here that in the case of Greene, the society changes the individual. Querry, who is found to be very much a product of a depraved society, undergoes a gradual change in the distant Congo village emulating the example of the others. In Jayakanthan, however, it is the individual who changes the entire society. Henry, placed among equally well-behaved but strange people, surmounts all the challenges he faces and succeeds finally in transforming the villagers into ideal men and women through his own noble example.

At first, Querry renounces his self-esteem and self-regard and achieves a tremendous sense of humility. Father Thomas acknowledges this: "you have a truly wonderful quality of humility" (135). To Dr. Colin, Querry says: "When I made something I made it for my own pleasure" (44). In his "rough and disjointed" (51)
notes he states: "What I have built I have always built for myself, not for the glory of God or the pleasure of purchaser" (51). He further tells Dr. Colin: "Self-expression is a hard and selfish thing. It eats everything, even the self. At the end you find you haven't even got a self to express" (46).

On the other hand, Jayakanthan's Henry is a personification of humility. One finds him at first in "dirty pyjamas", (19) "hair all dishevelled around" (19), "with down-cast head" (19) and wearing "terribly worn-out Havai slippers" (19). He is not a snob and has no inhibitions. He introduces himself, even to the poorest of the poor, in the village. He freely shakes hands with everyone and eats any food that is offered. His principle seems to be, "one should eat to satisfy one's hunger. That's all. And I consume everything that the humans eat" (41). Once he even comes forward to drink the porridge that had been cooked some three days earlier (172). He says: "I'll take tea or coffee or even simply do without anything" (119). He plays with birds (117). On another occasion, "he stands with folded hands before a village boy and salutes him" (139). No wonder, to all the people in the village in general, and to Deva Rajan in particular, Henry appears as "a genuinely very great man" (131).
After coming over to the Congo, Querry realises the need to love human beings. Once he had been totally indifferent to people and their sufferings, as he admits himself: "I wasn't concerned with the people who occupied my space, only with the space" (44). In his notes to Dr. Colin he writes: "Don't talk to me of human beings. Human beings are not my country" (51).

The first sign of Querry's change of attitude can be seen when he asks the doctor to give him some job. "I shall be glad to be of use" (29). He further pleads: 'Is there nothing simple I can do to earn my keep?' he asked. 'Bandaging? I've had no training there either, but it can't be difficult to learn. Surely there has to be someone who washes the bandages. I could release a more valuable worker'. (28)

Soon, he is "helping with the new hospital at the leproserie" (63). The priests say "we have better use for him ..." (71).

Querry's humanist interest is seen when he goes into the forest in search of his servant Deo Gratias, whom he rescues after staying with him for the whole night. Querry learns the need to love humanity from Dr. Colin, who is always absorbed in skin tests and
mutilation cases, dutifully waging an endless battle against leprosy expecting no reward. Yet another source of inspiration in the place is the Superior who preaches that "when a man loves, he must be Klistian" (81). In realizing his usefulness to the people, Querry becomes cheerful and his "face was twisted into the rictus (sic) of a laugh" (59). Often he wonders how it all happened in his case, who could observe on an earlier occasion: "Human beings are not my country" (51). "How was it that he could sit here and now and smile with them?" (175). Parkinson rightly raises the doubt in his article: "What is it that has induced the great Querry to abandon a career that brought him honour and riches to give up his life to serving the world's untouchables?" (133). What has in fact, induced him is the innate compassion suddenly aroused in him by others around him, at the sight of those who "are all dying ..." (59).

In the same way, Jayakanthan's Henry is an embodiment of human love. His kindness has been, in fact, nurtured in him by his foster-parents. About Henry's home environment, Jayakanthan says: "He is the true, free product of that family that knew little conflicts or clashes, murmurs or greed" (63). His foster-father instils in him very noble ideals. Once he
tells him: "To go by considerations of caste or nationality is silly ... my child, it is love that is most important" (100).

Henry's foster-father's account of the love-life led by his own parents and others in the village in the past, makes a profound impact on his own view of life:

They all lived like children and preserved their child-like qualities till their death. They were not even aware of the so-called civilized world. Being strangers to civilization and lacking in elegance in conversation they lived like the fowls of the air and animals in the fields, in a happy harmonious world of perennial joy. They could boast of no great knowledge or pretence to intellection. Hence, they could lead a life of beauty and peace. (106)

This is astonishingly true also of the primitive world of childhood one comes across in Greene's *A Burnt-Out Case*. What Anais Nin says with regard to D.H. Lawrence in his "Lawrence's World" seems to have a great relevance to Greene and Jayakanthan. He "asks us to begin at the beginning of the world ... take each man back to the beginning of the world, as if each
had to settle it all for himself, begin his own world, find his god" (D.H. Lawrence 21).

As a lover of humanity, Henry does not make any distinction between the rich and the poor, the little and the great and becomes one with the villagers participating even in funerals (316). What is most attractive about Henry and what raises him to the exalted level of a god-figure, is his utter desirelessness. Out of sheer selflessness in his attitude towards Thuraikannu, his foster-father's brother, who is poverty-stricken, Henry comes forward to hand over to him all the properties, which legally belong to himself. He keeps only the old house as "a symbol" (225) of his relationship with Sabapathy Pillai, his foster-father. In fact, all the people in the village are taken aback by this sacrifice, the like of which they had never heard of in the past. Thuraikannu himself is so touched by this offer, that his heart melts in love for Henry, and he says with humility that he will function only as a mere caretaker of the properties.

Another instance of Henry's human interest can be seen in his treatment of the mad and naked girl who roams about the village. He offers her clothes, protection, food and even work and treats her with
utmost compassion, that for a time, she seems to recover from her lunacy.

Henry's love for his village brethren is so inspiring that Deva Rajan who is generally "an introvert and withdrawn" (12) person and who sometimes hates people (141) gets transformed in his attitude towards his place and people:

Deva Rajan laughed to himself recalling his own recent words to Henry, 'Nothing is interesting in this place!' 'What a thoughtless comment it was!'. He realized now only too well, how delightful and noble are the voices and conversations of men and women, their little quarrels and squabbles, moments of impatience and relaxation, passions and tantrums .... (156)

Greene's Querry draws inspiration, from the selfless doctor and the missionaries, to love the lepers and wash and bandage their wounds. Jayakanthan's Henry finds inspiration in his foster-parents to love, sacrifice and suffer for the sake of others.

If Querry works hard along with others in the seminary to restore the lepers, Henry too, while working
hard for the betterment of his people, stresses the need for working together. He says: "I feel joining together in a hard, common task is a nobler act of participation than mere group dances and carols" (350). Inspired by Henry's words of exhortation, Thuraikannu, sees harvesting as "a drama" and the harvesters as "dancers" (357). It is significant to note that the whole village is engaged in the construction of the house for Henry and even the mad Baby contributes to it her little share (360).

Greene's Querry learns the need to smile and laugh, and be happy from the natives who believe in Pendélé, the Eden of one's childhood. Soon after his arrival at the Seminary, one night, he walks alone into the forest, ... guided by the light of the moon and stars he came to a village. The people were awake; men were beating on old tins ... An old woman danced awkwardly ... he felt taunted by the innocence of the laughter. They were not laughing at him, they were laughing with each other .... (15)

Thereafter, Querry too laughs persistently even to the point of death and thereby regains his lost Edenic innocence and childhood joys and happiness. It is to be
noted that towards the end of the novel, he is "cured of pretty well everything, even disgust" (193). Rycker's grouse that provokes him to shoot at Query is just "He laughed at me. How dare he laugh at me?" (195). While dying, Query is laughing at himself. Rycker says: "He shouldn't have laughed" (196). After his funeral, Dr. Colin says that Query "had been cured" (198). "He'd learned to serve other people, you see, and to laugh" (198).

It is characteristic of Jayakanthan's Henry too that "he laughs beautifully like a child" (42). He laughs and smiles and expresses his gratitude when others render him some help (43). When Deva Rajan invites him for a bath in the garden well, "he sprang up, jumping like a small, excited child, holding his palms close in a tight clasp" (43). At times, his happiness knows no bounds and he breaks into a merry song: One of his songs goes like this in Jayakanthan's own English:

I love to sing and smile
I love to walk a mile and
I am free from guile
Let cares disperse from me
Let anger spoil not me
Let sorrow fly from me and
I am free from guile. (48)

Henri often recalls the words of his foster-father, Sabapathy Pillai:

Often he used to stress only one thing he cared most in life. He would say, 'Henry, you have to practise in life only one dharma, and you know what it is. Be happy always - That's all, my child'. And you see I am always happy as he advised me. (51)

Greene's Querry tries to regain his childhood innocence and happiness by giving up women and sex. He tells Dr. Colin: "... there was a time when I was alive, with a vocation and a capacity to love" (46). Anne Morel, at eighteen, killed herself for the sake of Querry, who was then "a man of forty" (112). To Parkinson, he says: "There were plenty of women after Marie Morel as there had been women before her" (113). But now in his Eden "he had reached the end of his sex ..." (158). Querry now considers that "Love is planted in man ... even uselessly in some cases, like an appendix" (124). To one of the fathers he says: "Sometimes I think God was not entirely serious when he gave man the sexual instinct" (191).
Towards the end of the novel, Querry emerges in the eyes of the readers as an ascetic, the Indian equivalent for a yogi. His thoughts are always on Pendélé associated with "water" (58), "singing and dancing and games and prayers" (59) and children. Deo Gratias "a man" (53) who once tries to go there falls into water. He can succeed in going there, only when he becomes "a child" (58). During the festival when the natives sing a song, Querry himself feels that he has become "a child listening to them ..." (175). Their singing reminds Querry of "ancestral voices" (175) and "memories" (175) of childhood. Querry, while listening to the song, travels back in mind to his very childhood and exclaims "I am happy, listening, saying nothing" (175).

Querry now firmly believes that one has to be a child always if one has to be happy in the world. So he turns his face against change, progress and evolution. To the Superior he says: "We've grown up rather badly ... we should have stopped with the amoeba ... If your god wanted an adult world he should have given us an adult brain" (76). He is of the opinion that sex-ridden adults cannot even think as clearly as children do.
Querry treats Marie Rycker only as a child, despite all the moments of his temptation. "He found it impossible not to treat her as a child" (151). Later, when Rycker accuses him of having an affair with his wife, Querry replies "... but I have never gone in for seducing children" (169). When he finds her sleeping in a room he only "had the impression of a daughter who had come safely home, after a long visit to a foreign land" (181-82).

Jayakanthan's Henry learns from Sabapathy Pillai, his foster-father, about how his ancestors in the past lived like "children" (106) "in love and happiness" (106) and thereby made their life "quite peaceful and beautiful" (106). Deva Rajan learns the truth from Henry, that if one wants to be happy, one has to transform oneself into a child. He recalls: "How surprisingly delightful was every little thing when we were little boys? I feel delighted with you, only like that now. You are always like that ... like a child" (160).

Like Green, Jayakanthan also brings about, at the end, a discussion on mutability, progress and evolution. Deva Rajan asks Henry:
As for animals and other inanimate things, they, being non-social, bear no moral responsibilities with regard to social problems and social progress. But, man, being what he is, can never be like that. A life without conflicts [social] promises no growth for man. (161)

Henry too accepts the inevitability of change, progress and evolution, but what he wants more than "machines and electricity" (366) is "peace" (366) which he says man can hope to have, only if he retracts his steps to the world of the ancients who lived in all simplicity. He tells Deva Rajan that a day may come when civilization may spread to all villages, but he will be the last person to "desire it" (366). Like his ancestors he will drink the simply porridge, and live in a hut as a yogi.

Henry does not want to marry. "But ... but marriage is not at all a necessity to me" (366). He has no fascination for the naked Baby whom, if he wants to, he can easily seduce and spoil. But he looks after her and tries to bring her up with utmost compassion, calling her "an angel, a goddess" (327). In the preface to the novel, Jayakanthan says that, "this is the first novel from which I have kept out love and sex" (12).
Pendélé is a place for children, and it has nothing to do with God, religion and the Church. Querry shares the secular views of Dr. Colin, "the most sympathetic non-believer in Greene's works" (David Lodge 115). To Dr. Colin, he says, "If there is a god, let him be innocent ..." (A Burnt-Out 82). To Father Thomas, he says "I don't believe at all" (91). The Churchmen in the novel are more interested in buildings and finance, than in spiritual matters. It is very obvious in the novel that Greene ridicules Christianity through Rycker, the ex-seminarian. His lectures on Christian marriages "like the open doorway in the red-lamp district led invariably to sex" (65). The natives have their god Nzambi, but he has no power to cure the lepers. "He [Deo Gratias] half believes in Christ and half believes in Nzambi" (48). Evelyn Waugh's observation that Greene is "specifically faithless" (Michael Davie 779) in this novel is worth quoting here. As a matter of fact, in the works Greene wrote after A Burnt-Out Case (1961), he is found only as a lapsed Catholic with no faith. For instance, in Monsignor Quixote (1982) the Catholic priest and the Communist Mayor, assert their respective faith at first only in the end, accept that it is only human love which has
any relevance for the survival of humanity. Greene, in *A Burnt-Out Case* holds that all confusions in the world are caused by the professed values of religion and, therefore, one must uphold the "instinctive way of life" (Journey 193) which is the primary characteristic of children for a total "release" (193) from chaos.

Greene's *A Burnt-Out Case*, condemns the disciples of progress and civilization, "the Rykers of the world" (193) who ruin Querry's quest for a new world. Rycker proves himself to be a nuisance to Querry by imposing upon him, his spiritual and marital problems. He propagates "grotesque stories" (141) about Querry and brings into his life, Parkinson, a corrupt and vulgar English journalist who writes ridiculous reports about his presence and achievements in the colony. The "persecution" (141) of these two "fools, the interfering fools" (197) drives Querry desperate, and destroys his dreams of a new world - Pendélé.

Marie Rycker who has been all along posing herself as an innocent child also turns against Querry. When Rycker suspects Querry of sleeping with Marie, "seeking to escape from her insufferable husband" (Kulshrestha 139), she declares she is carrying only Querry's child. In exasperation, Rycker shoots Querry dead. Querry
falls down saying "Absurd ...this is absurd or else ..." (196) which, besides implying the absurdity of the human situation, confirms that all complexities and confusions in man's life are caused, only by the pious humbugs and meddlers of the civilized world.

Thus, A Burnt-Out Case is an eye-opener to the fact that Man has lost his innocence and happiness associated with his childhood, as both Greene and Querry have lost theirs, and Man today has become a victim of wars, violence, despair and loneliness perpetrated by persons like Rycker. It dramatises man's innate, upward yearning to return to the state of his childhood and the downward pull of the newly acquired human values in the name of civilization. Greene seems to say that, in spite of such a handicap, man still has the potential to aspire for a quest for the 'space' of his childhood, where he can be at least for the time being at peace with himself and the rest of humanity. It is pertinent to quote here Greene's own experience: "As my body continues on its journey, my thoughts keep turning back and bury themselves in days past" (Ways of Escape 7).

Jayakanthan's Henry is not a follower of any particular religion. He is free to worship any god and follow any religion and live with the people of any
caste. He says: "Still I have no (sic) any religion" (273). He is a mystic who can see God in all created things. "He looks like a swamiji who wanders about the country-side" (54). Akkamma, Deva Rajan's sister, says, "he has the resemblance of Jesus Christ" (66). The novel bears ample evidence to the fact that Jayakanthan is a critic of the institutionalized form of religion which, in fact, in recent times has become the chief cause of large-scale communal disturbances.

The principles and practices of Henry influence the other characters in the novel to a considerable extent. Thuraikannu says that "One need not have any religion and children must be left to live like children" (260). Deva Rajan is so much moved by the example of Henry that he introduces Henry to his wife as "My friend, philosopher and guide" (370).

At the end of the novel, the reader finds the whole village assembled in Henry's newly-built house, to observe the house-warming ceremony. Even the very old grandfather of Deva Rajan is there. Jayakanthan closes the novel in a symbolic language: "The entire village continues living in that house with all fanfare and merry-making" (375).
Through this impressive closing imagery, Jayakanthan suggests that the ideal home of Henry has the potential to expand into a world and into a happy home for all the people to live in, as members of one and the same family, forgetting sex, religion and God, and all other factors which alienate man from man. His vision in the novel transcends time and space and engulfs the whole of humanity. His is, in fact, a cosmic vision, a rare feat achieved by only eminent writers. "The merry-making and the drums" suggest joy, dance, mirth and peace assured for ever, for those who come under this idealist umbrella. The continuous tense in the sentence recalls almost a kind of "unravished" fixity, suggested by Keats for the idealized people engraved on his Urn.

Greene and Jayakanthan, prompted by their intense social consciousness and humanism, make a quest for an ideal home for man, "the city called peace of mind" (Human Factor 116), to save man from "the peril of extinction centuries of cerebration have brought us ..." (Journey 10). Greene had first-hand knowledge about the world of man's racial childhood during his Liberian trek, when he was filled with "a sense of nostalgia" (Journey 8).
Jayakanthan too was pained by numerous scenes of human misery and suffering around him, witnessing man's inhumanity to man. Hence, in many of his works, he is preoccupied with creating a world, ideally suited to human happiness.

Attention has been drawn in this chapter to Jayakanthan's avowed intention of creating an ideal home for man, along Gandhian lines. It may be argued that the world he has created in the novel Oru Maṇitāṇ Oru Viṭu Oru Ulakam, is not totally idealistic. For instance, Radhakrishnan says that "we cannot rule out the existence of people like Henry from life" (45).

In the creation of Henry, one may find traces of a Tamil Siddhar ("a practitioner of Siddhananta"), several of whom were personally known to Jayakanthan. In his novelette Vilutukâl, he has created Ōṅkūr Swāmi "who has stolen the hearts of all the people around" (Mohan Punāikatai 85). Henry also finds his spiritual kin in Gandhi who practised the principle of non-violence and recommended the ashram life for people. Viewed in this light, one cannot altogether put aside Jayakanthan's novel as a work on mere clichéd idealism and ideal humanism.
Despite the similarities between the ideal worlds visualized by Greene and Jayakanthan, their divergences cannot be overlooked. Basically, they have two different kinds of philosophy, whose points of emphasis show profound differences.

Interestingly, while Greene strives to make his Querry a practical Christian, Jayakanthan wishes to see his Henry as a practical Vedantin ("a practitioner of vedanta"). It is beyond doubt that Greene denounces Christianity and "pointedly ridicules many of the stock religious responses" (Stratford 144). In A Burnt-Out Case a new religious value, namely, the value of selfless suffering reveals itself for the first time in Greene's fiction. Dr. Colin puts it in clear terms:

Sometimes I think that the search for suffering and the remembrance of suffering are the only means we have put ourselves in touch with the whole human condition. With suffering we become part of the Christian myth. (122)

Querry becomes "part of the Christian myth" when he is wrongly accused and killed by Rycker. Querry's patience in his trials and death reminds one of the crucified Christ. It is this practical Christianity which has its
roots in the altruistic suffering depicted in *A Burnt-Out Case*, that makes it, in a sense a 'Christian' novel.

Through the depiction of Henry, Jayakanthan shows his acceptance of all religious sects, though at the end of the novel, Henry very much behaves like a Hindu. Yet whatever he has to perform under compulsion by way of cultural ritual during the house-warming ceremony "appears strange in his eyes" (372).

Through Henry, Jayakanthan tries to impress upon his readers his belief in the "Religion of Man" which has a certain universal connotation. To Jayakanthan, man himself regardless of caste, colour, or creed deserves to be worshipped. The underlying belief of this is, that love alone, is the fundamental principle which guides and governs the whole of humanity. Combined with this, Henry exemplifies the twin ideals of renunciation and service, much emphasised by Swami Vivekananda, Gandhiji and Christ. What is the most attractive trait in Henry, is his readiness to renounce whatever he has, and embrace a life of total simplicity. In short, the mystic tradition of the Vedic Religion and the Practical Vedanta preached by Swami Vivekananda continue to assert their validity even today, through characters like Henry.
Querry and Henry may be no Thoreaus, Leo Tolstoys, Gandhijs, Albert Schweitzers and Luther Kings. They are two ordinary mortals who embark themselves on a selfless quest for their Edenic childhood, simplicity, innocence and joy, having an ever-optimistic faith in the happiness of the people, a fact that renders some of the works of Greene and Jayakanthan as redoubtable antidotes to violence and philistinism growing rampant all over the globe.