

CHAPTER – VI

CONCLUSION

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C O N C L U S I O N

Though Greene and Golding, the two great ^{British} writers of this century, are committed to the task of reviving a religious sense to the English novel, and though their preoccupations are the same--portrayal of fallenness of man, they differ from each other significantly in their visions of the mechanism of evil and ^{of} the possibility of redemption. This can be made clear through a quick review of what has all been analysed in the preceding chapters.

According to Christianity, ever since the fall of the first parents, sin has become part of human condition. But Greene, though a fervent Catholic, does not write about evil being inherent in man and instead emphasizes only the social corruptibility of man in all his novels. Golding, on the other hand, though not a devout Christian, stresses the Christian concept of the inherent nature of evil.

Again with regard to redemption also, their approaches are vastly different. If Greene goes all the way out to redeem everyone of his sinners, Golding is much reserved. Greene stretches the all-embracing mercy advocated by Catholicism to such an extent that it soon begins to appear as his own humanism. In fact, his manipulation of Catholic

mercy is so liberal that it flabbergasted even the Catholics and offended the Church.

So, it could be decided that Greene, finding a convenient tool in Catholic mercy, eagerly made use of it to redeem his sinners, and that he did not compromise his artistic integrity for religious loyalty as was generally accused of.

Golding, true to his avowed lack of personal enthusiasm in any specific sect of Christianity, does not resort to any particular religious perspective with regard to redemption. He, in fact, is quite unChristian-like in having a firm hold on redemption.

It will thus be seen that though they drew their material from Christianity, they transfigured it considerably to suit their individual visions of fallenness of man and hopes for his future.

Basically, both are concerned with an exploration of human nature in the light of religion. It is truth--the truth about human nature--that they are after. They do not seek this truth exactly in any particular religion. Even Greene's much-talked-about Catholicism is only a tool that helps him in his exploration of this truth about human nature. As Hynes (1973) says, "For Greene, the truth is religious: not always specifically Catholic, or even

Christian in any exact doctrinal sense, but concerned with a vision of human life that postulates the reality of 'another world'. One could not construct a religion out of Greene's novels, and it seems unlikely that anyone would be converted by reading them, but they are nevertheless the novels of a religious man" (2).

Perhaps in his over-enthusiastic preoccupation with a sense of evil, Greene overburdens his so-called Catholic novels with Catholicism. The first of such novels, Brighton Rock, began as a thriller and grew after some time into a Catholic novel due to his predilection to make his two protagonists, Pinkie and Rose, Catholics and let them appear elite vis-a-vis the secular character, Ida. After portraying Pinkie as the very embodiment of evil, Greene extends mercy to him by bringing in the Catholic principle of 'the appalling strangeness of the mercy of God'. Though this is what he does--that is, extending mercy to the sinners--even in his earlier books called 'thrillers' like A Gun for Sale and The Confidential Agent, there he does it by enlisting our sympathy for the secular criminals and not by bringing in Catholic theology.

Because of such leanings towards Catholicism novel after novel during this phase, he came to be condemned by his fellow writers--not only by communist writers but also by writers who are believers.

Golding, on the other hand, makes only a sober use of religion, confining it to provide him certain myths, archetypes and parables for making allusions and drawing parallels and never allows it to overstep its limits in his creative activity. Hence, he has come to be recognized as a more successful religious writer than Greene. In this connection, Oldsey and Weintraub (1965) remark: "To some people it comes as a matter of some relief that a twentieth-century author [Golding] has once again--in a manner more austere than Graham Greene's--taken to writing extremely viable materials that deal with God, Original Sin, confession, the Holy Ghost, and Pentecostal flakes" (167).

While Greene judges the actions of fallen humanity in terms of Catholic principles, Golding explores them in the light of primitive impulses.

That Greene is troubled by the non-observance of Catholic principles is evident from his concern about the sacrilegious marriage of Pinkie and Rose (BR), the unpriestly conduct of the whisky-priest (PG), the adultery of Scobie (HM) and Sarah (EA), and the secular life-style of the fathers at the leprosarium (BC). Golding, on the other hand, is not concerned about the fringe religion and its rituals. He probes deep into the darkness that sits at the heart of man and impels him to indulge in wickedness as in the case of the bestiality of the boys (LF), the sexuality

of Sammy (FF), the prurience of Dean Jocelin (Sp), the egoism of Olly and Henry (Py), the promiscuity and violence of Sophy, the terroism of Toni, the subconscious sexual fixation of Sim, the pederasty of Mr Pedigree and the adolescent sexual compulsions of a saint-figure like Matty (DV), and the sadism of Wilfred and professional fraudulence of Rick (P'Men). All these sins portrayed by Golding fall under the universal category of irreligion, and not 'unCatholic' or even 'unChristian'.

When we take up the question of the source of evil, we find, as has already been mentioned, Greene giving importance to the social forces rather than to the individual nature. To Golding, the individual is first and foremost responsible for all his sinful actions though the social evil is as much there and certainly not to be discounted. According to Anderson (1969),

Golding is primarily concerned to trace back the travails of human existence to their source in human nature and to repudiate the idea that something other than man himself is responsible for failure. In thus fastening responsibility on man, Golding shares a view which we have noticed in the writings of Kafka and Sartre, though his findings are more pessimistic than theirs. It is

not nothingness that lies at the centre of man's being but an actively evil principle. (155)

And Golding himself has referred to this position of his in every lecture and interview. Greene, on the other hand, referred to the social conditions and their impact on the individuals only. Moreover, in almost all his books the squalor, seediness and poverty that abound modern life form a major preoccupation as we have seen in his Brighton, Mexican towns and countryside, the West African town of Scobie and the leprosarium in the Belgian Congo. Even a city like London is deceptive (CA).

In Greene, tensions and conflicts arise out of the individual's interaction with others. Or through an awareness of certain events of the past, especially of childhood. The psyche of his characters is conditioned by these extraneous factors. But in Golding it is the individual who of his own volition brings to the fore the primitive tendencies of evil lying buried deep in his subconscious mind. From out of his dark core, man projects evil on to the outside world. Golding has stated that "man produces evil as a bee produces honey" ("Fable", HG 87).

The mechanism of evil that we come across in Greene can be called *centripetal*, and that in Golding, centrifugal. The former works from the periphery towards the centre and the latter from the centre towards the periphery.

What we mean by these terms is not much different from what are implied by the theological terms: "sin by example"--a theory advocated by an ancient Christian monk, Pelagius (400 AD), which sounds contrary to the scriptures; and "sin by imputation,"--a theory advocated by Placeus (1596-1655) which claims that man is born in a state of corruption (Hoekema 154-57).

In Greene, we see his child, adolescent and adult characters to be the products of their ambience. They are all witnesses to the ambient evil which is manifested to them as seediness, squalour, poverty, sexuality, violence and various kinds of betrayals before they qualify into sin through what they do. Their latter actions very much *depend* ~~impinge~~ upon their earlier memories and life-styles.

If Raven (GS) is a hired assassin, it is the way society determined him to be. With an unhappy home and an orphaned childhood, followed by betrayals at each turn, he cannot be anything but only a hard-core criminal. Having received no love from any quarter, Else (CA) is driven to look for it from a prostitute and a stranger.

The poverty and misery of slum life cannot invest Pinkie and Rose (BR) with any nobility in Greeneland. As a protege of Kite succeeding to the leadership of the race-course mob, Pinkie cannot trust people. Naturally, mistrust

sends him on a course of murder. It is people like Hale who double-crosses him, Spicer who seems to squeal and Colleoni who tries to boss over that Pinkie is driven to a career of murder. In fact, like Raven, Pinkie once wanted to be a priest. It is society that had turned them into criminals.

Again it is society which corrupts Rose, Greene's symbol of innocence. Her explicit corruption starts with her coming into contact with Pinkie. Because of this corruption, she initially resigns herself to accept damnation through suicide and later becomes a deserter by defying Pinkie's suicide-pact. Her defiance is the result of the courage to face life which she gained through her marriage to Pinkie.

If the whisky-priest (PG) refuses to give up faith, it is born of his pride in priesthood which itself is a product of the importance that he enjoyed in the corrupt church during the heyday. His drunkenness is the direct offshoot of the prohibition enforced by the government. Consumption of liquor by itself is not spoken of as a sin in the Bible. It is only drunkenness which is sin. The priest is pushed to that condition of craving for liquor at any cost because of the policy of the Mexican government.

The official corruption and the immorality of man-woman relationship is at its peak in the colonial town of Scobie (HM). A corrupt administration refuses him promotion. His wife Louise feels humiliated and leaves him for South Africa. Meanwhile the war-ridden world torpedoes a ship and lands one of its passengers, Helen, in Scobie's life forcing him into adultery. And if he is reduced into a smuggler's carrier, it is the corrupt trade practices of the society that is responsible.

Like the 'literary' Louise, the civil-servant Henry (EA) is sexually lukewarm and circumstances plant Maurice, an atheist who has no moral scruples, in Sarah's life who will not leave her to her peace even after her surrender to God. It is the jealous love of Maurice which destroys her.

Even if Querry, a moral rake of the past, tries to turn a new leaf, he is surrounded by elements like Parkinson and Rycker who will see that he is destroyed and not allowed to change for ^{the} better.

It may be seen, thus, the forces of society act on the individual who is at the centre and cause sinful deeds. Evil operates concentrically in Greene.

In Golding, on the other hand, the mechanism of evil is reversed. It is always the individual from whom evil

proceeds and destroys others as well as the individual concerned. Evil operates centrifugally.

In *Lord of the Flies*, the island is an Eden. There is nothing to corrupt the boys. In fact, it is the boys who are the source of evil. They are not vessels of innocence. They render the island a burning inferno in the end. The worst is that they cannot accept a Saviour in their midst and finish off such a figure (Simon) at the earliest. The fear of beast lying at the psychic residua of man comes to the fore and projects itself as the variously-imagined beast while in reality there is no beast at all on the island.

Sammy (FF), in spite of the good counsels offered by the headmaster and the science-teacher Nick, impelled by his own uncontrollable sexuality, proceeds to espouse the cause of evil and destroys Beatrice. Unmindful of the commonsense apprehensions of the clerics and the technical reservations of the builder, Jocelin (Sp) persists with his monomania and brings about destruction. What he calls his vision of a spire is not a Vision. After all it is only the vision of his erect phallus lifted in prurience towards Goody Pangall. Maddened by his prurience, he brings about destruction in terms of life and property.

In *The Pyramid*, Golding lays bare the egoism of man who fails to make love to others. Olly and Henry are extremely

selfish *and* use Evie and Bounce respectively for their own ends. He makes the darkness that sits at the heart of man visible in *Darkness Visible* through the pederasty of Mr Pedigree, the sexual and violent predilection of Sophy and the terrorist tendencies of Toni.

In both Greene and Golding, the vision of fallenness of humanity encompasses the entire life of man from birth to death. The myth of childhood innocence as contemplated by the romantics is transposed. They use children as an objective correlative for the corruption of humanity as a whole. The adolescents and adults correlate their sense of evil to the phenomenon of evil which they had witnessed as children. Raven, Pinkie and the lieutenant in Greene's novels and Sammy and Olly in Golding's novels look back to their childhood experiences of evil. They were, as children once, only a witness to the evil around them. But later grew to be wicked themselves.

The important difference in their concepts of the origin of evil is maintained among children also. If Greene's children are either witnesses to or the products of social evil only, Golding's children are perpetrators of evil. We have, in Golding, child-characters who are both perpetrators of and participants in the human drama of evil like the boys (LF), Evie and Philip Arnold (FF), Sophy-Toni and Mr Pedigree's pupils (DV) in Golding.

Among the novels of Greene taken up for the present study only Coral and Brigitta (PG) are present as characters as such. Even these two characters do not show signs of their own innate sinfulness. They are evil only in the perspective of their respective parents. Whereas in Golding all the child-characters are active participants in the deeds of evil portrayed. One similarity between Greene and Golding in their portrayal of children is that they do not make their characters conscious of their evil propensities nor develop an ability of discernment and a sense of discomfiture.

The adolescents of both not only espouse evil knowingly in the form of violence and sexuality as in the case of Pinkie, Sammy, Olly, Sophy and Toni, but they also (at least a few of them like Pinkie [BR] and Matty [DV]) begin to show signs of an awareness of their evil deeds and natures, though they are helpless to stem them.

The adults of Greene find themselves helplessly drawn into evil and soon get habituated to it ^{whereas} those of Golding wilfully espouse it. The adults of both have the intellectual capacity to engage themselves in dialectics about their sinfulness as in the case of Mountjoy (FF), Jocelin (Sp), Sim (DV) and Barclay (P'Men) ^{created by} Golding and the whisky-priest (PG), Scobie (HM) and Sarah (EA) ^{created by} Greene.

Their portrayal of sin as present among children, adolescents and adults perhaps serves to show that fallenness is co-existent with man from birth to death. Perhaps only when death is around the corner, man realizes his sinful nature and yearns for atonement with God. The death-bed repentance and a yearning for atonement with God ~~are~~ a recurrent pattern in Greene (whisky-priest, Scobie, Sarah and Querry even). Even Golding who normally eschews any such optimistic pattern, shows it in Dean Jocelin's case, how efficacious the attempt is remains uncertain though.

Generally, in Greene, every sinner is absolved and redeemed into a new birth before death as in the case of ~~the~~ whisky-priest, Sarah and Querry, or ^{is} assured of God's mercy at the time of death as in the case of Raven, Pinkie and Scobie or blessed with a bright future for the rest of the life as in the case of agent D. In this, he is guided not only by the Catholic principle of mercy but also by his own humanism. According to Seymour Smith (1986), "Essentially Greene is concerned with what in Catholic terms, is the idea of the mercy of God. . . [and] this idea functions in it [Greene's work] as human compassion" (295).

Whereas in Golding, there is either no hope as in the case of the boys, Sammy, Olly, Henry, Toni and her associates, or the hope appears blurred to the sinner as well

as to the readers as in the case of Jocelin. His saviour-figures are ineffectual. He offers no solution to man to get out of his mess. His vision of man looks constant. Samuel Hynes remarks in his article, "Grief, Sheer Grief, Grief, Grief," "[Golding's] vision has remained constant: man is fallen, evil is actual, suffering is certain, redemption is necessary but unlikely" (36).

But towards the later stage of his career, Golding ^{loosens} his grip on pessimism and offers some hope to his characters. In *Darkness Visible* (1979) which came after a gap of twelve years ^{following} ~~the~~ *The Pyramid* (1967) which denied anything more than a mere self-realization, we come across a host of characters (no less sinful than his characters in other novels) who are either redeemed into a new life as in the case of Sim, or given at least a faint hope for a new start as in the case of Sophy, or explicitly restored to His seat as in the case of Matty and implicitly in the case of Mr Pedigree. Even in a still later book *The Paper Men* (1980), we see Barclay give up his alcoholism and meaningless globetrotting and decide to settle down to peace though the absurdity of life brings about his end, as in the case of Querry in Greene's *A Burnt-Out Case* (1960).

In their preoccupation with evil, while Greene is satisfied with a portrayal of modern life with all its seediness, poverty and failures, Golding resorts to fantasy

and surveys every field that was open to him including religion. But when they approach the aspect of redemption, Greene resorts to a Catholic perspective and Golding to a realistic perspective. Catholicism can extend mercy even to the worst sinner. But reality does not reward a humanity that has become largely sinful.

Moreover, Greene is a humanist, too. Because of his profound love for mankind, he is benignly disposed to human evils and goes even beyond the permissible limits of Catholic mercy and offers them hope, at least in terms of the other life.

Golding is more a pragmatist. He does not want to wink at human wickedness and its consequence. If he takes a severe view of the consequences of sins, it is because he wants man to mend himself. Pardon under the pretext of religion will not help set right matters. He has a message for humanity that it cannot go on sinning, in the hope that it could find an excuse in the end.

It will be seen that their art is conditioned to a large extent by their visions. While Greene's remains one of conscious story-telling, Golding's rises to heights of conscious art in tune with the seriousness of his theme.

When we read Greene, we sit on the edge of the seat and become anxious whether the whisky-priest will escape at

last, whether Louise will stop bothering Scobie, whether Sarah will back back to Maurice and so on. But when we go to Golding, we sit back, read and reread to find out what he will dig out next from the human psyche and what use he is making of language and narrative patterns to bring out the darkness of man. The focus shifts from human-story to human-nature, and ^{how} art also rises to a higher plane.

Greene's art is simple and straightforward. His language is dotted with similies and synecdoches. His mode of writing may be termed metonymical. On the other hand, Golding's art is ^{more} complex. His diction is wide-ranging, language difficult and narrative varied and ^{sometime} incoherent. He visualizes man in terms of metaphors. His books are in fact considered as metaphors ~~of~~ various aspects of ^{the} human condition. His writing works on the principle of similarity in dissimilarity and vice versa, and hence his mode of writing can be termed metaphorical.

In spite of their common preoccupation with the fallenness of man, we have seen that they differ over many other aspects. The present study has attempted to establish conclusively that the mechanism of evil operates concentrically in Greene's novels and centrifugally in Golding's; and that Greene is optimistic with regard to the redeemability of man and Golding, pessimistic.