

## Chapter II

### Mental Agony in *The Heart Of The Matter*

I suffer from nothing. I no longer know what suffering is. I have come to an end of all that too. Like all the rest. To the end of everything.

- Graham Greene, *A Burnt-Out Case*, 16.

T. S. Eliot's words from *Baudelaire*, regarding Man's salvation and damnation are remarkable with regard to the novel *The Heart Of The Matter*, where the protagonist undergoes severe inner conflict between these two realities: "It is true to say that the glory of man is his capacity for salvation; it is also true to say that his glory is his capacity for damnation"(Selected Essays, 377). The novel, *The Heart of the Matter* reveals Graham Greene's staunch belief in the Roman Catholic faith. It occupies a unique place in the fiction of Graham Greene. Like Greene himself, who was a Catholic convert, in this novel, the protagonist Major Scobie gets converted to Roman Catholicism in order to marry Louise. According to Roman Catholic faith and its teachings, regular receiving of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and attending the Holy Mass and Communion with God are very important. According to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, if a sinner goes to Communion in a state of sin, it leads to his damnation:

According to the Church's command, after having attained the age of discretion, each of the faithful is bound by an obligation faithfully to confess serious sins at least once a year. Anyone who is aware of having

committed a mortal sin must not receive Holy Communion, even if he experiences deep contrition, without having first received sacramental absolution, unless he has a grave reason for receiving Communion and there is no possibility of going to confession. (Catechism, 281)

*The Heart of the Matter* is the story of an exceptional personality, named Scobie, who has been presented to us as extraordinary, in his relationship with his wife Louise, with his mistress Helen, with a Syrian trader and merchant, named Yusef, and above all, in his relationship with God. The novel mainly deals with Scobie's attitude to his wife, to his mistress, and his attitude to God. Scobie is split within, between the forces of good and evil and no one can miss the mental agony in the character of Scobie. John Atkins describes Scobie as "a distorted reflection of his creator, a man who cannot disguise or hide his feelings" (159). This novel is supposed to have been written by Greene during a period of his distress, as we learn from his *Ways of Escape*:

Work was not made easier because the booby traps I had heedlessly planted in my private life were blowing up in turn. I had always thought that war would bring death as a solution . . . but here I was alive, the carrier of unhappiness to people I loved . . . what I really dislike of the book is the memory of personal anguish. As Scott Fitzgerald wrote, "A writer's temperament is continually making him do things he can never repair."  
(WE.124)

Greene also adds that like Major Scobie, the protagonist of the novel, he himself seriously considered suicide during this unhappy period.

This chapter is a parallel study of the problem of inner conflict suffered by Major Scobie, the protagonist of *The Heart of the Matter* with the inner struggle experienced by Samson, the Biblical model selected for the analysis. The characteristics of the fictional hero, Major Scobie of *The Heart of the Matter*, and the Biblical model, Samson are to be analyzed against their background, their profession and vocation. Their constant inner struggle will be discussed in this chapter.

This chapter proposes to analyze the mental agony and the spiritual conflict between good and evil in a secular character, Scobie, of *The Heart of the Matter*. The mental agony of the protagonist is the focus in the novel and the conflict between the individual and the Orthodox religious concept has been featured and analyzed along with the parallel study of the Biblical model, Samson. Both the internal and the external conflicts within the characters and their willingness to die for the sake of others and their own martyrdoms are discussed in the chapter. *The Heart of the Matter* is the story of a secular character, named Scobie, who is depicted as a sympathetic character in his relationship with his wife Louise, with his mistress Helen, and in his relationship with God. Scobie's mental agony is seen from Greene's own spiritual conflicts and religious attitudes. The Biblical model selected for the parallel study is Samson, who is the last Judge of Israel. God delivered Israel, the chosen people of Yahweh, from the hands of Philistines. Samson is used as the divine instrument for the purpose. While fulfilling the great task given by God, Samson suffers severe mental and physical pain and struggle. The critical assessment of Greene's protagonist, Major

Scobie and the Biblical model, Samson is done in the chapter with their background, their profession and the divine call.

As far as Samson's background is concerned, he is the last Judge in the history of Israel. God delivers Israel, the selected people from the hands of Philistines, by the mighty power God gives to Samson. He is one of the judges in the Old Testament, who has great physical strength and God raises him up for the sole purpose of beginning the deliverance from Philistine oppression. The process is completed under the leadership of Samuel, Saul, and David; but it really begins with the tremendous impact of Samson's physical power. While fulfilling the great task entrusted upon him by God, Samson undergoes a period of constant physical and mental struggle. He is of the village of Zorah and of the tribe of Dan, from the southern coastal lands called Dan, bordering the Philistine territory. He is the first Nazirite specifically mentioned in *The Bible* (Judg. 13.3-5, Num. 6.1-21), and the last judge after having judged Israel for twenty years. Samson's mother was barren, but suddenly the Lord appears to inform her that she will have a son who is to be dedicated to Him from birth (Judg. 13.3-14). He was to be a Nazirite from the womb. A Nazirite means a man completely dedicated to God. The Levites were selected by God to do His service, but a special provision was made for Israelites other than Levites to serve God. This was done under the provisions of a Nazirite vow. We read of it in the book of Numbers chapter 6:

And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When either man or woman shall separate *themselves* to

vow a vow of a Nazarite, to separate *themselves* unto the Lord; He shall separate *himself* from wine and strong drink, and shall drink no vinegar of wine . . . which he separateth *himself* unto the Lord, he shall be holy, *and* shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow. (Num. 6.1-5)

Samson is specially selected for the purpose of fulfilling God's will to save His own people from the rivals, who worship idol gods and goddesses. Samson is in fact an instrument of God, but later in his adulthood he gives up his vowed life and is afflicted by evil spirit.

Both Scobie and Samson are found weak in their personal life; but they were sincere and dedicated to their duty and at the end of their life, they may be said to have attained martyrdom. Scobie dies for the happiness and safety of others; whereas, Samson dies as the redeemer to Israel. The two characters selected for the observation and parallel study in this chapter, invite the attention of the readers into the depth of their constant mental agony before reaching the end. Graham Greene has depicted the mental agony of Scobie with utmost care and Scobie's character-sketch will give a real account of the same.

*The Heart of the Matter* is concerned with various themes like Catholicism, guilt, suffering, death and salvation. The novel focuses on the internal and external struggle of man for liberation. This study concentrates on the mental agony and the spiritual afflictions in the hero as well as in the author. According to Marie-Beatrice Mesnet, the setting of the novel is based on the personal experience of the author as has been originally recorded in a travel-book. In her book, *Graham Greene and the Heart of the Matter*, Mesnet says: "In *The Heart of the Matter*, he seems at last to

have

succeeded in delivering himself of the long contemplated theme of Africa” (28). Mesnet here emphasizes the divine process of salvation thus: “It was for this world that Christ had died: the more evil you saw and heard about you, the greater glory lay around the death . . . it needed a God to die for the half-hearted and the corrupt” (75). The process of conversion and repentance is described by Jesus in the parable of the Prodigal Son and his Merciful Father. The free will of the son, the abandonment of his Father’s house, the worldly enjoyment, the extreme miserable life, and his reflection on the past, his repentance and decision to confess his guilt before his beloved Father, the journey back, the Father’s generosity and love, etc., are the various steps to real conversion. The Church teaches us that only the heart of Christ, who knows the depths of his Father’s love, could reveal to us His mercy in a simple and beautiful way.

In this novel, while giving a psychological analysis of Scobie’s pity, Greene tries to point out how far Scobie’s actions based on pity can be justified by the Christian doctrine. O’Brien supports this observation in his study of the novel: “*The Heart of the Matter* is a novel about the progress of pity” (58). As Greene explains both evil and suffering in theological terms, Scobie is openly concerned with realities of salvation and damnation. Being a Catholic, he knows that he is a sinner, who is tormented by his constant awareness of sin. Greene seems to be interested in the interaction of the private and public lives of his characters and this dual tendency is depicted through Scobie in this novel. Thus Joseph Kurismmoottil observes in his book, *Heaven and Hell on Earth*: “. . . the dual tendency of Scobie’s personality is brought out convincingly in his reaction to his daughter’s death years ago” (105). John

Spurling in *Graham Greene*, is, in a way, right in comparing the author with the protagonist of the novel: “Greene’s own father died while he was in Sierra Leone. The news came in two telegrams delivered in the wrong order, the first saying his father was dead, the second that he was seriously ill. Scobie also in Sierra Leona, receives the news of his daughter’s death away in England in the same distressing way” (40).

In his introduction to *The Heart of the Matter*, Greene explains about his characters. Before he opens *The Heart of the Matter*, Greene says that he had no idea of Major Scobie in those days. It was a young north country priest, who instilled this idea into Greene’s imagination and inspired him to begin with the story. Greene does believe that man is not only doomed to sin but also capable of salvation. Marie-Beatrice Mesnet, in her book, *Graham Greene and the Heart of the Matter*, has asserted this: “he believes in the universality and inevitability of suffering and sin, in a world that weighs so heavily upon us that only the grace of God can lift the load” (5).

The major conflict in *The Heart of the Matter* becomes that of the individual against the orthodox religious concept. K. S. Subramaniam in *Graham Greene*, says: “it is in the blending of religion and modern psychology that Greene’s achievement lies”(9). Greene thus portrays the mental agony and the sense of guilt of Scobie in the light of the modern human psychology and the doctrine of the Catholic Church. Scobie’s suffering is pictured to be more of the mind than of the body. Thus suggests Subramaniam: “The suffering is the result of the evil lust which is an off-shoot of his pity” (71). Scobie, the hero of *The Heart of the Matter*, is crushed between the age of religion and the modern age and is caught between duty and desire. *The Heart of the Matter* challenges Scobie’s commitment to his job and his efficiency and policing

power. Scobie is quite aware of what his duty requires, and he believes that it is a vocation demanding discernment and a strong sense of justice. While responding to Helen Rolt's doubt about her stamp album, he replies, "That's my job. I'm a policeman" (HM. 140). Maria Couto asserts that "Scobie stands revealed as a man overwhelmingly conscious of his office in the sense of responsibility. The novel does not explore the ineffectiveness of his role as arbiter of justice" (80). Scobie wants happiness for others and solitude and peace for himself. He prays to God for his own death before causing and giving unhappiness to others. Perhaps people do not struggle too much for the happiness of others. From this novel one draws a sense of love and pity for the hero's predicament that is augmented by the simplicity and clarity in the writing.

The novel is the story of damnation and salvation of Major Scobie, a middle-aged man who is serving as Deputy Commissioner of Police, in a British Colony in West Africa at the beginning of World War II. He has become a Catholic after his marriage with a devout Catholic woman, Louise. Scobie is so fair to everyone that his own boss, the police commissioner refers to him as 'Scobie the Just'. Over the years, though love has turned to pity, he not only pities Louise, but feels responsible for her unhappiness after the death of her child. As a policeman, Scobie finds it natural to feel responsible for the security and happiness of others. Though very pure and noble at heart, Scobie becomes corrupt out of pity for his wife and others. His wife Louise wants to go to South Africa for a holiday and for her passage he borrows money from a Syrian trader, Yusef, who is suspected to carry an illicit trade in diamonds. Scobie,



there after, is hauntingly blackmailed by Yusef. Unfortunately, Scobie's illegal activities lead to the death of his devoted servant, Ali. The greatest turning point in the life of Scobie comes at the requirement of his duties to receive the survivors of a British ship torpedoed by a German submarine during the World War II. These survivors include a young widow, Helen Rolt and, in the absence of his wife, Scobie falls in love with her, who happens to live in a hut near the house of Scobie. His wife, Louise returns unexpectedly as soon as she gets the information about this relationship. She then deliberately asks Scobie to accompany her to the Holy Mass and Communion. Being a Catholic, he cannot go to the Communion without confession and repentance, since it would mean damnation. Christ taught that the bond of Christian marriage is unbreakable and forbade divorce, saying: "What therefore God hath joined together let not man put asunder" (Matt. 19.6). We find in the Gospel, "Whosoever shall put away his wife and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if the woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery" (Mark. 10.11-12).

There is severe pain and unbearable conflict in Scobie's mind between his love for Louise and Helen, and his love for God. The only solution that he finds is to commit suicide in order to remain faithful to all the three - his wife, his mistress and God. Crowning all, he also has another intention of keeping himself away from anymore sins. Here, Greene portrays him as a hunted man, who actually dies in a state of mortal sin. Moreover, Scobie knows well what he is doing, and does it deliberately, with the full consent of his will. He commits the unpardonable sin of despair and thus, he is damned for sure. At the end of the novel, Greene insists through Father Rank,

upon

the

‘appalling strangeness’ of the mercy of God. Louise thinks that her husband is damned, but Father Rank holds out hope for Scobie: “For goodness’ sake, Mrs. Scobie, don’t imagine you - or I - know a thing about God’s mercy . . . The Church knows all the rules. But it doesn’t know what goes on in a single human heart” (HM. 272). As B. P. Lamba assumes: “Scobie’s love is a pendulum swinging between pity and responsibility” (30). Scobie is a good man, but his main weakness is that he cannot hurt those whom he loves. Alan Price comments: “The chief character in *The Heart of the Matter* (1948), Scobie seeks escape from a world that has become soiled and from the intolerable complications and demands of love that is hurting his wife and his mistress” (29).

The scene of the novel is a West African port in war time. Scobie, as a Deputy Commissioner of police, is one of the oldest inhabitants among the white officials. He likes the place as well as the people, in a peculiar way. As the novel opens, one finds that he has been passed over for promotion. In the words of John Atkins, “. . . he was a weak man who could not hide his weakness” (159). This failure for promotion ultimately leads him and his wife to humiliation and depression. In order to get out of this situation, his wife, Louise goes to South Africa. Scobie fulfils her desire by borrowing money from Yusef, a smuggler. As a result of this association, Scobie gets involved in the illegal trade of diamonds. Meanwhile, there comes Helen, an English bride, widowed in the ship-wreck. In her, Scobie sees his future mistress. He is also reminded of his dead child, when Helen was carried on a stretcher, clutching a stamp album, after being saved from the ship-wreck. Another moving scene which comes to

Scobie's mind is, the six-year-old girl at her deathbed. The child mistakes Scobie for her own drowned father. Scobie clearly identifies this girl with his own daughter who died at that age. Here, one finds Scobie's selfless love and pity. Like the whisky priest in the *Power and the Glory*, who prays for his daughter Brigitta, Scobie, unable to bear the heavy uneven breathing of this substitute child prays to God, "Father, look after her. Give her peace' . . . "Father, he prayed, 'give her peace. Take away my peace for ever, but give her peace'. The sweat broke out on his hands. Father . . . ." (HM. 125). Scobie's prayer is an offering of a man who stands naked before God with nothing in his hands, expressing his total surrender and belief in God.

Christ prayed for the mankind and while He was praying in the garden of Gethsemane, He sweated blood: "And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground" (Luke. 22.44). The unbearable sight of misery in the jungle hospital, especially that of the dying child who has survived forty days and nights in the open boat - "that was the mystery, to reconcile that with the love of God" (HM.121) - shakes Scobie and reminds him of his own daughter who died when he was away in Africa.

In this context, Gangeshwar Rai's words are relevant in order to identify Scobie's pity: "His pity reaches universal proportions and, like the whisky-priest, he comes to believe in the inevitability of suffering in the world" (48). Scobie realizes that suffering is inescapable and he says: "to be a human being one had to drink the cup" (HM. 125). Greene tries to show the human sympathy and understanding through this incident. Greene sees the agony of Christ in Scobie and shows his great anguish: "This sweat poured down his face and tasted in his mouth as salt as tears" (HM. 125).

Although Scobie is away when his own child dies, he is convinced of his Catholic faith and accepts the cup that he has to drink, as Christ asked the two sons of Zebedee, who were His would-be followers to share the suffering of Christ: “Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?” (Matt. 20.22).

Greene reflects his concept of suffering through Scobie: “He had been in Africa when his own child died. He had always thanked God that he had missed that” (HM. 125). According to John Atkins, “It became clear that Scobie is riddled with pity and a desire to help the victims of injustice. His pity is his weakness, for there is no place for it in the official routine” (159). This proves the real human predicament in the character of Scobie. Through him, Greene portrays the individual’s realization of moral responsibility as a Christian. Though he is a responsible man, his responsibility as a policeman, goes even beyond the law. Henry Donaghy, in his study on Greene suggests: “Major Scobie, is a virtuous man whose *hamartia* or tragic flaw, lies in the excess of pity he possesses” (55). Greene tries to show more psychological insight in the character of Scobie, throughout the novel. Scobie realizes that his sense of responsibility, the desire to carry the burden of others’ suffering, involves despair. It is as though he is aware of his own fate:

Despair is the price one pays for setting oneself an impossible aim. It is, one is told, the unforgivable sin, but it is a sin the corrupt or evil man never practises. He always has hope. He never reaches the freezing-point of knowing absolute failure. Only the man of goodwill carries always in his

heart this capacity for Damnation. (HM. 60)

According to Mesnet, Scobie is a weak character unable to face his responsibilities. In the novel, Scobie seeks to treat suicide, as an act of kindness and self-sacrifice. By his death, he justifies that he will be liberating his lover, his wife, and God from his sinful presence: “They are ill with me and I can cure them. And you too, God - you are ill with me . . . You’ll be better off if you lose me once and for all” (HM. 258). According to Kulshrestha, “He is a good man betrayed into evil by an obsession, ‘the horrible and horrifying emotion of pity’, which imposes contradictory obligations on him and brings him to an impasse” (98).

In the Holy Bible, we find that Samson was so fearsome to the Philistines that during his lifetime they avoided all invasions into the territory of Israel. Samson did begin the deliverance of God’s people from the hands of the Philistines. Before his birth, God set Samson apart for service to Him. God instructed Samson’s mother: “For, lo, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and no razor shall come on his head: for the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb: and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines” (Judg. 13.5). God began to work with Samson at an early age. And the woman bore a son, and called his name Samson: “and the child grew, and the Lord blessed him. And the Spirit of the Lord began to move him at times in the camp of Dan between Zo’rah and Esh’taol” (Judg. 13.24-25).

This Biblical model, Samson, is selected to make a parallel study with the protagonist, Scobie, the Police Commissioner, in Greene’s novel, *The Heart of the Matter*. There are several incidents that the readers may find comparable in the life

situations of both the characters. Being the first known Nazarite in the Bible, Samson is considered to be the chosen one for the liberation of Israel from the Philistines. While fulfilling the divine task of liberating God's chosen people, Samson undergoes, constant physical and mental struggle before he dies as the redeemer of Israel. The character selected for the parallel study, namely Scobie, has his constant mental agony till his death, similar to the same situations in the life of Samson.

There are various ways of judging this attitude. Cedric Watts, in *A Preface To Greene*, tries to render a hypothetical analysis of the possible reflections of God's thought process:

Perhaps, we may suppose, God thinks: 'Scobie was altruistic; he laid down his life for those he loved. Even though, formally, he was committing a mortal sin, I'll be merciful. He deserves salvation. Let him go to Heaven.' Or, perhaps God thinks: 'Well, Scobie was trying to be altruistic, so although he appears to be committing a mortal sin, I'll be lenient: I'll sentence him to Purgatory, not Hell.' Perhaps God thinks: 'What arrogance! A mortal presumes to be helping me, the Omnipotent, by destroying the life that I have given. What pride! To hell with him!'. (98-99)

Greene once said that *The Heart of the Matter* was about a man who goes to Purgatory; later, he disliked the self-pitying Scobie. George Orwell in his essay, "The Sanctified Sinner" observes: "This cult of the sanctified sinner seems to me to be frivolous, and underneath it there probably lies a weakening of belief, for when people

really believed in Hell, they were not so fond of striking graceful attitudes on its brink” (CCE. 107).

Greene exploits one of the great paradoxes of Catholicism. On the one hand, it specifies mortal sins; on the other hand, it offers to such mortal sinners various means of avoiding entry to Hell. The first route is Confession accompanied by Contrition, and a sincere resolve not to sin again. Then the priest may absolve the sin, however grave. If an individual is dying, the presence of a priest, though extremely desirable, is not essential. At death’s door a mortal sinner might repent; and if the repentance is sincere, God’s grace might grant the sinner forgiveness as could be easily understood from the case of the thief crucified at the right side of Jesus Christ. According to Christian belief, the mercy of God has no limit. Greene’s belief is expressed through the confessor of Rose in the *Brighton Rock* that Pinkie may have been saved at the last moment by the ‘appalling strangeness of the mercy of God’: “He said, You can’t conceive, my child, nor can I or anyone . . . appalling strangeness of the mercy of God” (BR. 246). Greene seems to believe that even Pinkie with all his pride might have repented for all his sins and been forgiven by God during his fall from the cliff-edge to the sea.

Purgatory, according to Catholic belief, is a preparation for Heaven, and many sinners atone themselves by years of suffering in purgatory. It is an abode of purification, in which souls experience both the pain of loss and extreme pain of sense. The reader is led to consider what will happen to the protagonist in his after life: Does Heaven, Hell, or Purgatory await? God’s judgment of a soul may be far different from any that we human beings may expect. Greene’s view on this is

reflected in D. Parkinson's *The Graham Greene Film Reader: Mornings in the Dark*, "when he said on one occasion that Pinkie 'goes to hell' and on another occasion, 'I don't think that Pinkie was guilty of mortal sin'" (528). This idea is supported by Greene in *The Other Man*: "I don't believe in Hell; if God exists . . . I can't bring myself to imagine that a creature conceived by Him can be so evil as to merit eternal punishment. His grace must intervene at some point" (OM. 161). Greene thus portrays the mental agony and the sense of guilt of Scobie in the light of the modern human psychology and the doctrine of the Church. Scobie's suffering is pictured to be more of the soul than of the body. Subramaniam writes: "The suffering is the result of the evil lust which is an off-shoot of his pity" (71). It is apt to quote the philosophy of Buddha as mentioned by Kurismmoottil: "Desire is the root-cause of suffering, decreed Buddha. Love and pity are both expressions of a desire, and desire robs a person of freedom, desire is binding and Scobie would not be bound to a weak world" (104). Marie-Beatrice Mesnet comments: "The light of the infinite love of God is shed over all Greene's characters. Nowhere in the Scriptures is there a text that directly states that any man is consigned to the torments of Hell. What we do know with certainty is that the thief crucified with Jesus . . . was the first to whom the joy of heaven was promised" (108).

Scobie sacrifices his life for the sake of those whom he loves. Yet he makes a last attempt at prayer: "O God, I offer up my damnation to you. Take it. Use it for them" (HM. 225). Urbashi Barat states that suicide is not always and necessarily a defeat. She also justifies the suicide committed by Major Scobie: ". . . and Scobie identifies



himself with Christ as he kills himself so as not to cause others further pain . . . is not merely a means of escape; it is also the consequence of their opening themselves to suffering because they have known what it is to love” (29).

Greene believes in the mysterious power of prayer. The Holy Bible assures that faith can move even mountains: “Have faith in God. For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart . . . he shall have . . . What things so ever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them” (Mark. 11.22-24). We find the prayers offered by Greene characters are answered in different life situations. In *The Power and the Glory*, the priest offers a prayer for his illegitimate daughter, Brigitta, and the prayer is answered. In *The Heart of the Matter*, Scobie, overwhelmed with pity for the child – a victim from the torpedoed ship – offers a prayer to God, and Scobie’s prayer is answered: the child has the peace of death and a release from suffering and Scobie’s peace is taken away for the rest of his earthly career. This is the major turning point in Scobie’s life when pity deepens into horror. In *The End of the Affair*, Sarah offers an unusual prayer to God for the rebirth of Bendrix, her lover in his critical situation, and her prayer is answered in a miraculous way. In the play, *The Potting Shed*, when James is hanging dead in the potting shed, his uncle, Father Callifer offers special prayers to restore his life and he comes back to life. Greene often refers to the Catholic belief in miracles and feels that even though these may seem improbable to modern man, they are possible in Christian faith. In *The Achievement of Graham Greene*, Grahame Smith tries to justify the transformation within Scobie, regarding his salvation even after his suicidal end:

Scobie can see, feel and hear the suffering of Louise and Helen; in his internal dialogue with God he points out that he can't . . . Is Scobie saved in the split second as his body crashes to the ground or must the act of self-destruction stand as a final damnation? Who can say? My stress would fall on the nature of a man who dies with the word 'love' on his lips. Whatever moral errors and spiritual sins Scobie has committed stemmed from love . . . In loving God's creatures to such an extent, doesn't Scobie justify Father Rank's final judgement?. (102)

It is through Father Rank's final judgement – "I think, from what I saw of him, that he really loved God" (HM. 272) – that the readers understand and realize about the mysterious intervention of God's mercy.

Scobie's wife, Louise for whom he feels only pity and responsibility, urges him to allow her to go on holiday to South Africa, to escape the situation. In fact, Scobie is worried about his promise to Louise, that he would be able to raise the money for her. Though Scobie does not love his wife, his concern and pity for Louise is seen in the expression of Roger Sharrock: "Scobie, no longer loves his wife Louise who has become neurotic and irritable after the death of the child, but he feels pity and responsibility for her" (61). In order to make Louise happy, Scobie says: "If I could just arrange for her happiness first" (HM. 85). When she loses her hope in the promise of her husband, Scobie brings surprise to her: "'It's better just to give up', she said . . . 'I'm letting her know that I shan't be going.' He spoke rapidly . . . 'write and tell her that you can go' . . . She said, 'Ticki, please don't promise something which can't

happen . . .’ ‘I wanted to give you your ticket. A surprise” (HM. 97). Though Scobie wants to be faithful to his wife, the relationship between Scobie and Louise is an unhappy one and ultimately leads to failure. Mesnet refers to Louise’s neurosis: “Louise is a weak character, a neurotic unable to overcome her strong dissatisfaction and take her share of the load instead of making continuous demands on others and especially on her husband” (32).

In the words of Kurismmottil, “Louise’s scorn for her husband . . . in her view, is a chronic failure. Louise does not forgive her husband for not upholding her pride”(107). Greene pictures this unhappy relationship in a sympathetic manner. It is the scene of their lunch together before she leaves for South Africa which is remarkable for portraying their feelings:

They seemed to be sitting miles apart separated by a waste of dishes. The food chilled on their plates and there seemed nothing to talk about except, ‘I’m not hungry’, ‘Try and eat a little’, ‘I can’t touch a thing’, ‘You ought to start off with a good meal,’ an endless friendly bicker about food. . . .It seemed horrible to both of them that now they would be glad when the separation was complete. (HM. 100)

Mesnet also speaks of Louise, highlighting into her failure as a wife: “She is failure as a wife, and as a woman unattractive, disliked, alienating others by her patronizing attitude and her blunders, a pitiable creature unable to inspire love” (33).

Although Scobie has a Catholic wife, out of pity he falls in love with a nineteen-year-old girl, a pathetic young widow, who is brought to the colony as a survivor from a torpedoed ship. As a result, one finds that love is confused with pity in

Scobie's heart. As Paul O' Prey remarks, "Like Rose and the whisky priest (and Peguy), Scobie deliberately chooses to damn himself out of love for others" (82). The girl's misery makes Scobie feel more sympathetic. Though the victim is not very pretty, he cannot just stand and watch her perish and she is very grateful for his concern and sympathy. Out of pity, he begins an affair with Helen Rolt. He is blackmailed by the Syrian trader, Yusef, which results in the murder of his loyal servant boy, Ali. Thus says Wyndham: "the incorruptible man sees himself caught up in corruption" (19).

One may find an element of pride in Scobie's pity, for he distrusts God, doubting His capacity to save His own creatures. Even at the end, just before committing suicide, Scobie hears God's voice in silence asking him to keep his trust in God; but he feels hopeless, and unable to take a decision he responds: "No. I don't trust you. I've never trusted you" (HM. 259). De Vitis here justifies Scobie's act of suicide and compares it with that of Othello in Shakespeare's play, "Like Othello, Scobie loves not wisely but too well. The human entanglement in which he finds himself admits only one solution - suicide . . . Scobie may have killed himself, but he may have repented in the moment before death" (92).

Though Scobie is an unhappy person, he is very much concerned with happiness. There are mainly two remarkable moments in this novel when Scobie enjoys happiness. The first is just after his wife has left for South Africa when:

Scobie went out into the dripping darkness holding his big striped umbrella . . . except for the sound of the rain, on the road, on the roofs, on the

umbrella, there was absolute silence: only the dying moan of the sirens continued for a moment or two to vibrate within the ear. It seemed to Scobie later that this was the ultimate border he had reached in happiness: being in darkness, alone, with the rain-falling, without love or pity. (HM. 134-5)

One is reminded of Greene's own feelings in Liberia as he describes in his *Journey Without Maps*: "And yet all the time, below the fear and the irritation, one was aware of a curious lightness and freedom; one might drink, that was a temporary weakening; but one was happy all the same; one had crossed the boundary into country really strange; surely one had gone deep this time" (JWM. 132).

Scobie's second moment of happiness leads him to his own damnation. As he leaves the Nissen hut, having found and fallen in love with Helen Rolt, he feels happy:

They both had an immense sense of security: they were friends who could never be anything else than friends - they were safely divided by a dead husband, a living wife, a father who was a clergyman, a games mistress called Helen, and years and years of experience. He said, 'Goodnight . . . He walked away, feeling an extraordinary happiness, but this he would not remember as happiness, as he would remember setting out in the darkness, in the rain alone. (HM. 140)

Scobie's relationship with his wife Louise seems an unhappy one, ultimately disastrous. In a way, Scobie is an honest man who is corrupted by his sense of responsibility for the happiness of others and as a result he becomes himself an instrument that causes the pain.

*Heart**of the*

*Matter*, while it suggests Scobie's commitment to his job, also challenges his efficiency and competence. Scobie is quite self-conscious about what his work demands and he believes that it is a vocation requiring discernment and a strong sense of justice; so much so that, when asked by Helen Rolt how he knows about her stamp-album, he replies that he is a policeman. Gangeshwar Rai in his *Graham Greene: An Existential Approach*, says that, "Scobie is torn by a conflict of loyalties - loyalty to his profession, loyalty to his religion and loyalty to his innate humanism. He betrays his government and violates the rules of his church" (52).

Scobie's inability to break off his affair with Helen recalls the feeling of Pinkie in *Brighton Rock* having gone too far with no way back. Thus says Scobie: "He felt as though he were turning his back on peace for ever. With his eyes open, knowing the consequences, he entered the territory of lies without a passport for return"(HM. 199). Scobie's relationship with Helen sets in motion the attitude of a man trying to cover his tracks. Subramaniam refers to this view: "Greene has great faith in God's grace and points out in these Catholic novels that even the smallest act of faith or love is infinitely precious to God and will work for the salvation of the least worthy of us" (31). As he cannot persuade himself to put his own soul, he is unable to promise in the confessional to avoid seeing Helen again. He does not realize what others know and the extent to which he is being observed: returning one night from Helen's hut he meets a knowing Wilson: "Scobie, Wilson exclaimed and the man turned. 'Hullo, Wilson,' Scobie said, 'I didn't know you lived up here.' 'I'm sharing with Harris,'

Wilson said. . . . ‘I have been taking a walk,’ Scobie said unconvincingly, ‘I couldn’t sleep.’ It seemed to Wilson that Scobie was still a novice in the world of deceit”: (HM. 168).

Scobie’s human relationships are all based on pity. “He couldn’t shut his eyes or his ears to any human need of him” (HM. 187). His sense of responsibility moves away from “the beautiful and the graceful and the intelligent. They could find their own way. It was the face for which nobody would go out of his way, the face that would never catch the covert look, the face which would soon be used to rebuffs and indifference that demanded his allegiance” (HM. 159). His discontented wife and his pathetic mistress are the chief victims demanding fidelity. After swearing to preserve his wife Louise’s happiness, he accepts another and contradictory responsibility, his mistress Helen’s happiness. Scobie begins by pitying one woman and ends by pitying God. Meanwhile, this feeling of responsibility and pity troubles him and he wonders “if one knew . . . the facts, would one have to feel pity even for the planets? If one reached what they called the heart of the matter?” (HM. 124). If Scobie pities someone, it may be for the sake of a woman or for the sake of a child. It is found that Scobie is abnormally sensitive to the whims of women, giving too much respect for them, and is emotionally submissive to them.

According to the Catholic Church, Scobie is not permitted to have a mistress while his wife is alive. Therefore, he violates the commandment of the Church by committing adultery. Similarly, Samson, the Biblical model for the present analysis also goes against the traditions of Israel. Even before his birth, he is set apart by God for the Divine plan of liberating the Israel from their enemies. But, later in adulthood,

Samson is attracted to a young Philistine woman. According to Deuteronomy chapter seven, God had forbidden His people to marry the indigenous peoples of Canaan, because of their pagan religion: “Neither shalt thou make marriages with them . . . For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods” (Deut. 7.3-4). Here Samson goes to take a wife from the uncircumcised Philistines:

And Samson went down to Tim'nath, and saw a woman in Tim'nath of the daughters of the Philistines. And he came up, and told his father and his mother, and said, I have seen a woman in Tim'nath of the daughters of the Philistines: now therefore get her for me to wife . . . But his father and his mother knew not that it was of the Lord, that he sought an occasion against the Philistines: for at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel (Judg. 14.1-4).

God is behind this on the part of Samson. When Samson is on his way to visit the girl, an unusual incident takes place: “Then went Samson down, and his father and his mother, to Tim'nath, and came to the vineyards of Tim'nath: and, behold, a young lion roared against him. And the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and he rent him as he would have rent a kid, and he had nothing in his hand: but he told not his father or his mother what he had done” (Judg. 14.5-6). The significance of this event set the stage for a confrontation between Samson and the Philistines. Samson does not tell his parents of this event. He begins to employ some of this intelligence with an unsolvable riddle. His mind is used to fulfill God's intention, seeking an



occasion against the Philistines:

And after a time he returned to take her, and he turned aside to see the carcass of the lion: and behold, *there was* a swarm of bees and honey in the carcass of the lion. And he took thereof in his hands, and went on eating, and came to his father and mother, and he gave them, and they did eat: but he told not them that he had taken the honey out of the carcass of the lion. (Judg. 14.8-9)

Samson holds a feast to celebrate the marriage. This shows that his parents are wealthy. Then the Philistines asked him for the riddle: “And he said unto them, Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness. And they could not in three days expound the riddle” (Judg. 14.14). The Philistines knew they could not solve it without getting the secret out of his wife: “they said unto Samson’s wife, Entice thy husband, that he may declare unto us the riddle, lest we burn thee and thy father’s house with fire . . . he said unto her, Behold, I have not told it my father nor my mother, and shall I tell it thee?” (Judg. 14.16).

When Samson gave the riddle, he knew well that it was unsolvable. But it ruined the wedding feast. His wife was miserable, and plagued him incessantly for the answer. “And she wept before him the seven days, while their feast lasted: and it came to pass on the seventh day, that he told her, because she lay sore upon him: and she told the riddle to the children of her people” (Judg. 14.17). When the final day was at hand, the men of the city were present before Samson and said:

What is sweeter than honey? and what is stronger than a lion? And he said unto them, If ye had not plowed with my heifer, ye had not found out my riddle. And the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he went down to Ashkelon, and slew thirty men of them, and took their spoil, and gave change of garments unto them which expounded the riddle. (Judg. 14.18-19).

After Samson found out his wife had been given by her father to another man, he made this personal mistake of betrayal into a national dispute against the Philistine people:

And Samson went and caught three hundred foxes, and took firebrands, and turned tail to tail, and put a firebrand in the midst between two tails. And when he had set the brands on fire, he let *them* go into the standing corn of the Philistines, and burnt up both the shocks, and also the standing corn, with the vineyards *and* olives. (Judg. 15.4-5)

The destruction was far and wide. Who else could have thought of such an effective method of destruction? This was a massive loss of crops for the Philistines. The Philistines retaliated. “Then the Philistines said, Who hath done this? And they answered, Samson, the son-in-law of the Tim’nite, because he had taken his wife, and given her to his companion. And the Philistines came up, and burnt her and her father with fire” (Judg. 15.6). Samson now set out to deal with this murder. “And Samson

said unto them, Though ye have done this, yet will I be avenged of you, and after that I will cease. And he smote them hip and thigh with a great slaughter: and he went down and dwelt in the top of the rock E'tam" (Judg. 15.7-8). Samson knows this will lead to a serious impact on the enemies and so he finds protection in a secure place. Samson was indeed fulfilling God's purpose. He commented: "With the jawbone of an ass, heaps upon heaps, with the jaw of an ass have I slain a thousand men" (Judg. 15.16). Samson was more than a deliverer. "And he judged Israel in the days of the Philistines twenty years" (Judg. 15.20).

Thus one can conclude that love is the cause and final answer to evil. However, in Scobie, love plays a dangerous role. Instead of loving his wife, more faithfully, he tends to strengthen his affair with Helen: "My darling - I love you more than myself, more than my wife, more than God I think. I am trying very hard to tell the truth. I want more than anything in the world to make you happy. . . I love you" (HM. 181). Unexpectedly, Louise, who gets information from Yusef, about the love affair of Scobie with Helen, plans to return. Mesnet thus remarks: "His apparent fidelity to his wife was in fact already a betrayal" (72).

In addition to this, Yusef informs Scobie that Helen's boy is also in the Syrian's employ and that he is now in possession of a compromising letter that Scobie has written to Helen. For Louise, Scobie's outlook is transparent - "he has a terrible sense of responsibility" (HM. 79) and she has already known of his affair with Helen. Louise's control over Scobie intensifies upon her return from South Africa; in her desire to go with him to Communion, he feels "as though he were being urged by a kindly and remorseless gaoler to dress for execution" (HM. 247). She will not be put

off

easily

and

continues to pursue him: “. . . darling, let’s go to Communion together tomorrow morning.’ ‘If you want to ,’ he said. It was the moment he had known would come. With bravado, to show that his hand was not shaking, he took down a glass. ‘Drink?’ ‘It’s too early dear,’ Louise said; he knew she was watching him closely like all the others” (HM. 219). Even her appearance of cheerful acceptance seems to him like a deceitful mask: “Darling, she said, ‘if you aren’t well, stay where you are. I don’t want to drag you to Mass.’ But the excuse it seemed to him was also a trap. He could see where the turf had been replaced over the hidden stakes. If he took the excuse she offered he would have all but confessed his guilt” (HM. 223).

Scobie knows well that in human relations kindness and lies are worth a thousand truths. He involves himself in what he always knows is a vain struggle to retain the lies. “Don’t be absurd, darling. Who do you think I love if I don’t love you?” (HM. 58). In this way, Scobie certainly loses his peace just to make others happy. Maria Couto in her observation on this fictional character of Greene, expresses her view thus, “Scobie appears to lose control, in fact, to lose faith in the whole ‘act’ demanded of him by his profession” (75). The happiness that Scobie can enjoy is very limited. He realizes that his relationship with Helen is not authentic. Thus he regrets and reflects over the letter he has written to Helen: “Why did I write ‘more than God?’ She would have been satisfied with ‘more than Louise’ . . . He whispered, ‘O God, I have deserted you. Do not you desert me’” (HM. 181). Like Scobie in this novel, we find Samson in the Holy Bible loses his peace and the divine grace for the happiness

and safety of others. The following incident will give a true picture of Samson's personal weaknesses and how he goes against his vowed life.

The incident we read of Samson's visit to the Philistine city of Gaza seems relevant in the Biblical context, which is also applicable to this novel. The Bible says nothing of the purpose of his visit, but whatever may be the reason, there in Gaza he encounters a harlot. "Then went Samson to Gaza, and saw there a harlot, and went in unto her" (Judg. 16.1). The only accommodations for visitors in alien cities were various inns. These inns always housed harlots and the Philistines were informed that Samson was at an inn: "*And it was told* the Gazites, saying, Samson is come hither. And they compassed *him* in, and laid wait for him all night in the gate of the city, and were quiet all the night, saying, In the morning, when it is day, we shall kill him. And Samson lay till midnight, and arose at midnight, and took the doors of the gate of the city" (Judg. 16.2-3).

Samson did not bother to break down the city gate. He simply ripped the entire structure from the ground and carried it away. Toward the end of the 20-year period as Judge, Samson becomes involved with another Philistine woman. Her greed and mercenary spirit finally caused Samson's death;

And it came to pass afterward, that he loved a woman in the valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah. And the lords of the Philistines came up unto her, and said unto her, Entice him, and see wherein his great strength *lieth*, and by what *means* we may prevail against him, that we may bind him to afflict him: and we will give thee every one of us eleven hundred

*pieces of silver.* (Judg. 16.4-5)

So Delilah kept on pestering Samson for the secret of his great strength but Samson never revealed the truth. At last being endangered by the rulers of the Philistines, she said to him, “How canst thou say, I love thee, when thine heart is not with me? Thou hast mocked me these three times, and hast not told me wherein thy great strength *lieth*” ((Judg. 16.15). With such pain and anguish, she urged him day after day until he was tired to death. So he told her everything. “There hath not come a razor upon mine head; for I *have been* a Nazarite unto God from my mother’s womb: if I be shaven, then my strength will go from me, and I shall become weak and be like any *other man*” (Judg. 16.17). Thus Samson revealed the secret of his great strength, giving himself up in the hands of the Philistines and invited his own disaster, without his knowledge.

As O’Brien suggests, “brooding over the disaster, Scobie feels the weight of all this suffering on his shoulders as a new responsibility” (67). When Scobie sleeps with his mistress Helen, for the first time, he expresses himself with sadness: “Was it the butterfly that died in the act of love? But human beings were condemned to consequences” (HM. 161). According to Lamba: “All his activities show that the method adopted by Scobie for attaining happiness for others and peace for himself are the very means that result in suffering for himself and ultimately destroy him” (30). Similarly we find Samson, the Biblical character breaking his vow and submitting himself to his enemies only for the happiness of others. After extracting the secret of

his great strength from the Philistine harlot named Delilah, the Philistines attack and ill-treat Samson in a severe manner.

When Delilah realizes that he has told her everything, she sends word to the rulers of the Philistines to come back once more, for, Samson has revealed the real secret to her. So the rulers of the Philistines returned with the silver in their hands. Having put him to sleep on her lap, she calls a man to shave off the seven braids of his hair, and so begins to subdue him, and his strength leaves him:

And she made him sleep upon her knees; and she called for a man, and she caused him to shave off the seven locks of his head; and she began to afflict him, and his strength went from him . . . the Philistines took him, and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with fetters of brass; and he did grind in the prison house. (Judg. 16.19-21)

It is not because of the hair that he lost his strength; but because of the part of the Nazaritic vow. The hair length was the symbol of that consecration. If the hair were cut the vow would be broken, and Samson could no longer receive God's intervention. Delilah had no intention of passing up the fortune offered to her.

The Philistines were not aware of the significance of the hair. They did not bother to keep it trimmed, as they saw he was no further threat. "Howbeit the hair of his head began to grow again after he was shaven" (Judg. 16.22). They now chose to make public example of him. "Then the lords of the Philistines gathered together to offer a great sacrifice unto Dagon their god, and to rejoice: for they said, Our god hath delivered Samson our enemy into our hand" (Judg. 16.23). They place Samson in their public stadium, where a huge crowd is present: "And Samson said unto the lad that

held

him

by the

hand,

Suffer me that I may feel the pillars whereupon the house standeth, that I may lean upon them. Now the house was full of men and women; and all the lords of the Philistines were there; and there were upon the roof about three thousand men and women, that beheld while Samson made sport” (Judg. 16.:26-27). Samson is utterly helpless without any strength to move about and calls out to the Lord like a miserable child. The prayer made by Samson at that depressed moment is so touching that the Lord answers him immediately:

And Samson called unto the Lord, and said, ‘O Lord God, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes’. And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars upon which the house stood . . . of the one with his right hand, and of the other with his left. And Samson said, Let me die with the Philistines. And he bowed himself with all his might; and the house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people that were therein. So the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life. (Judg. 16.28-30)

Samson was a powerful instrument of God to fight against the rivals of Israel and win the battle. One may observe that Samson is powerful and strong only when he is filled with God’s spirit and that the moment he violates his vows, the spirit of God leaves him. It should be noted well that Samson avenged himself of his blindness inflicted on him by the Philistines in and through his ‘suicide’ alone which was seemingly



endorsed by Yahweh the God, for becoming an instrument for the simultaneous mass massacre of the Philistines.

Scobie, in the novel becomes weak when he commits the sin of adultery and he cannot make a proper confession as he is not in a position to renounce it completely. Scobie's wife, Louise then wants to keep up his religious duties and asks him to go with her to Holy Communion. Being a Catholic, Scobie believes in the doctrine of confession. K. S. Subramaniam, in *Graham Greene: A Study*, gives a brief account of the sacramental grace:

The Catholics believe in the doctrine of Confession. The church enjoins every Catholic who has reached the age of reason to confess once a year . . . The sacraments are the channels through which the fruits of the Redemption are applied to the individual soul. They are thus the channels of divine grace. Each sacrament was constituted by Christ for a particular purpose and each sacrament imparts a grace. . . .This grace is called sacramental grace. (28)

The Church invites every Catholic to confess one's sins in order to receive the Sacrament of Holy Communion. No member of the Church is freed from his obligation to confess his sins. According to the Catholic belief, a person may confess his sins to a priest who is a representative of God on earth. If he is in a state of mortal sin, he should not receive Holy Communion. Sin, redemption, and grace are the three fundamental ideas in the Christian religion. Christianity teaches us that through Adam's sin man has cut himself off from supernatural life. Christ's crucifixion has, however, assured mankind of its redemption. Grace provides the essential means to

the

individual soul, giving it eternal life by the merits of the Redeemer. Greene often refers to these Catholic concepts in his works.

Maria Couto's words prove right in explaining the inner conflict of Scobie: "Scobie's poignant awareness of the consequences of his actions illustrates the religious sense with greater conviction than the academic elaboration of Scobie's guilt in relation to the sacraments of confession and communion and the matter of his suicide" (77). Being in a state of mortal sin, Scobie does not agree to confess his sins. For a Christian it is cock-sure that suicide is a definite way to hell, and Scobie is well aware of this. Further, committing suicide, he has also sinned against hope. Subramaniam's observation on man's faith and relationship to God is relevant in this context: "Sin and suffering are inevitable in this world from the point of view of the Christian religion. Greene's novels deal with the nature of sin, or guilt . . . that might redeem or absolve us from it. His novels arouse a profound sympathy . . . the most important thing in life is man's relationship to God" (10). According to Catholic doctrine, sin against hope is related to the loss of faith and thus is more serious than it is for anyone outside the Church. He can hope for salvation only by the divine mercy. Before committing the sin of suicide, Scobie feels depressed and thinks: "there is only one answer: to kneel down in the confessional and say, 'Since my last confession I have committed adultery so many times . . . to hear Father Rank telling me to avoid the occasion: never see the woman alone . . . And I to make my act of contrition, the promise 'never more to offend thee'" (HM. 219).

Scobie longs for inner peace and the grace of God. As Kurismmottil suggests:

“*The Heart of the Matter* is the innate sinfulness of man and his need of divine mercy” (123). Scobie is obsessed with the constant awareness of his sin that he cannot get rid of, as he cannot avoid the occasion of sin. B. P. Lamba remarks: “Scobie has lost all hope, since he can not escape from the sin” (46). But then, he realizes his religious duty and attempts to make an act of contrition. As he waits for Father Rank to go into the confessional, he prays: “O God convince me, help me . . . ‘O God’, he said, ‘if instead I should abandon you, punish me but let the others get some happiness” (HM. 220).

Scobie is a typical Greene hero who takes steps to satisfy his needs, and all he needs is “happiness for others and solitude and peace for himself” (HM.181). Scobie, however, has no chance for peace and happiness in this miserable world - they are always dreams of solitude, of quiet darkness: “being in darkness, alone with the rain falling, without love or pity” (HM. 135). Similarly, his efforts to arrange happiness for others result in suffering for him as well as for others.

The emotion of pity leads Scobie to deviate from his own way of life. The money he borrows for the passage of his wife puts him under an obligation undesirable for a Government servant. His affair with Helen involves him not only with human being but also with God. A voice within, the voice of God, pleads with him urging him to go on living:

I am not Thou but simply you when you speak to me . . . All you have to do now is ring a bell, go into a box, confess . . . It’s not repentance you lack, just a few simple actions: to go up to the Nissen hut and say good-bye. Or if you must, continue rejecting me but without lies anymore. Go to your

house and say good-bye to your wife and live with your mistress . . . One of them will suffer, but can't you trust me to see that the suffering isn't too great?. (HM. 259)

Scobie, thus goes to Father Rank to confess his sins. He presents his sinful heart before the priest and reluctantly agrees to give up his adultery. When Father Rank asks him to avoid seeing her, he thinks: "I am cheating human beings every day I live, I am not going to try to cheat myself or God. He replied, It would be no good my promising that, Father" (HM.259). Father Rank then says:

You must promise. You can't desire the end without desiring the means . . . I don't need to tell you surely that there's nothing automatic in the confessional or in absolution. It depends on your state of mind whether you are forgiven. It's no good coming and kneeling here unprepared. Before you come here you must know the wrong you've done . . . It's better to sin seventy times and repent each time than sin once and never repent. (HM. 221)

Though Scobie realizes his sinful state of mind, he is not ready to accept the advice of Father Rank, because, he does not want to hurt Helen by giving her up and so he cannot promise something that he is unable to do. In this situation, the priest refuses to give absolution. O'Brien observes:

Louise urges Scobie to come to communion with her on Sunday: We learn later that it is a test, for she suspects the truth about Helen. Scobie is now in

his last dilemma. He cannot go to Communion without Sacrilege, since he is in a state of mortal sin: he cannot be absolved of his sin unless he repents and breaks with Helen: At the same time, if he does not go to Communion, Louise will know the worst.(72).

Scobie, with the knowledge of his own damnation, goes to receive Holy Communion. His mental agony is vividly described by Greene: “Father Rank came down the steps from the altar bearing the Host. The saliva had dried in Scobie’s mouth: It was as though his veins had dried. He couldn’t look up: . . . But with open mouth he made one last attempt at prayer, ‘O God, I offer up my damnation to you. Take it. Use it for them’” (HM. 225). As De Vitis assumes, “Scobie’s struggle with himself and with the God of the Catholic Church forms the basis of the conflict” (87).

In the words of Paul O’Prey, “the communion shows not only Scobie’s weakness but also Louise’s ruthlessness, for ironically, she knows of her husband’s adultery, and uses the sacrament as a weapon: either he will confess his sin to the priest and give up his affair, or he will be forced to make an open declaration of it” (84). Scobie’s suffering in purgatory is probably God’s merciful response to his desire for love. Gangeshwar Rai remarks that “the sense of suffering for others dominates all thoughts of confession repentance. Scobie’s conduct emphasizes the ethical way of existing” (50).

As Scobie receives Holy Communion, one finds that Scobie invites the eternal damnation, just to avoid the pain on Louise. At the same time, his love and sense of responsibility for Helen are so strong that he cannot end their affair. Scobie, in a way, invites eternal damnation, by receiving the Holy Communion, in a state of mortal sin,

like

Judas,

who

betrays Jesus after receiving the bread and wine from Him. Here, Scobie is shaken by a deep sense of horror by Louise's sudden return from South Africa and her insistence on receiving Communion, his being trapped into smuggling a package of diamonds, and being a half-conscious agent of his own native boy's murder. He is terribly shocked, and after that Scobie encounters God as the real living God, whose voice is heard from his own conscience. B. P. Lamba is of the opinion that, "Scobie is obsessed with the weight of his sin that he cannot avoid, as he cannot avoid the occasion of the sin . . . The sin of adultery and deceit, coupled with the sin of tacit murder of his servant, goads the protagonist to the mortal sin of despair and of suicide" (60). Scobie is also convinced that God is no longer an abstract or an ideal for contemplation, but who seemed to him a 'thou' to be faced. His affliction goes so deep that he has no other choice except self-slaughter to resolve the crisis. Like Judas, Scobie betrays God by the desperate offering of his damnation. Rogger Sharrock, observes thus:

His betrayal of God coincides with the final stage of his corruption as a policeman. Before delivering the diamonds he has come needlessly to distrust his loyal servant Ali: Yusef promises in ambiguous terms to draw Ali away and in fact has him murdered . . . When he finds the body under some petrol drums . . . he believes he is totally responsible on account of his lack of trust . . . and that this betrayal is intimately connected with his betrayal of God. (134)

Scobie, then realizes that his involvement with Yusef is worse than his sin of adultery. The breakdown of the policeman can be seen in his own awareness of his sinfulness: “He wiped the sweat off his forehead and he thought for a moment: This is just a sickness, a fever . . . The record of the last six months - the first night in the Nissen hut, the letter which said too much, the smuggled diamonds, the lies, the Sacrament taken to put a woman’s mind at ease” (HM. 245).

As Scobie goes out to find the corpse of Ali, he looks for the broken rosary and comes to see Ali at the end of it. On seeing Ali’s body, Scobie cries aloud: “He swore aloud, hysterically. ‘By God, I’ll get the man who did this’, He thought: I am the man. Didn’t I know all the time in Yusef’s room that something was planned? . . . like a broken piece of the rosary he looked for: a couple of black beads and the image of God coiled at the end of it” (HM. 247).

This tragic incident moves him to imagine his betrayal of God through Ali. Scobie’s inability to examine his own behaviour and his unwillingness to accept Wilson’s real identity, are part of his sense of irresponsibility that ultimately leads to the murder of his servant, Ali:

It seemed to Scobie that now or never he must ask what was Yusef’s plan, but the weariness of his corruption halted his tongue . . . ‘You must not worry, Major Scobie. I think your boy can be made quite trustworthy.’ He said with relief and hope, ‘You mean you have a hold on him?’ ‘Don’t ask questions. You will see. (HM. 244)

The irony of Yusef’s confident claim that Scobie will finally ‘see’ resounds firmly with the reader, for the murder opens Scobie’s eyes to his self-imposed blindness.

can

imagine the inner struggle of Scobie which damns him day by day. He realizes his failure and tries to compare the death of Ali with the death of Jesus. He feels that he is tormenting Christ by his sins and shows his intense love of God through this image of Christ: "Oh God", he thought, I've killed you: You've served me all these years and I've killed you at the end of them. God lay there under the petrol drums and Scobie felt the tears in his mouth, salt in the cracks of his lips. You served me and I did this to you. You were faithful to me, and I wouldn't trust you" (HM. 247). Scobie then probes into his inner cell of his heart where he sees nothing but darkness. He experiences his inner conflict between good and evil and reflects over his battlefield: "Scobie thought: if only I could feel pain; have I really become so evil?" (HM. 291). Kurismmoottil here asserts. "He has chosen the accused role of the Roman soldier which he must reply endlessly on holidays and feastdays - striking his God, piercing Him with nails and sword and spear. It would have been better were he never born" (121).

Scobie's inner struggle is between his belief and disbelief in a God, who does not seem to be human enough to let him express his love and sympathy to other human beings. This idea is stressed by J. P. Kulshrestha: "Scobie's predicament may be defined thus: he is tormented by his love of God because he cannot reconcile it with his love of human beings. The only way out for him is to kill himself but, as a Catholic he cannot do it without wounding God . . . Scobie believes in God and yet he can believe in no God who was not human enough to love what he had created" (104-



105). Thus we find the inner tension of Scobie to reconcile with his own compassionate self against the Supreme God, who allows mental pain in human life. As observed by Kenneth Allott and Miriam Farris, “the problem of reconciling the existence of suffering with an Omnipotent and merciful providence is now raised explicitly” (217).

God has given man free will and hence, it is man’s responsibility to make the right choice. He can spurn the call of God’s love and disregard the warning of His voice. But the nature of God’s love and truth is eternal and steadfast. In the Bible we find several characters obsessed with evil; but after their infidelity to God and man they use their free will to make the choice, which may lead them either to salvation or to eternal damnation. And some others are led to purgatory after death. Peter and Judas, the two disciples of Jesus are observed as two contradictory characters in the New Testament. Both of them betray Jesus one way or the other; but Peter develops a sense of sin and regrets over his evil action with a real contrite heart: “And Peter went out, and wept bitterly” (Luke. 22.62). On the contrary, Judas is found with a sense of guilt and never makes reconciliation before death, which leads him to eternal damnation. It is the intervention of Satan that makes Judas so cruel to betray Jesus, his Master. In *The Anchor Bible Dictionary Vol. 3* it is found that “the devil left Jesus for a season (Luke. 4.13) now to return, and through one of the Twelve, Satan will now bring the conflict between God and Satan to a decisive stage” (III. 1093). In the *Harper’s Bible Dictionary*, it is suggested that Judas “betrayed Jesus’ claim to be the Messiah, but his absence at the trial, when such witnesses were sought, refutes this . . . Upon reflecting over what he had done, Judas experienced remorse and sought to

undo

his

evil

deed;

but it was not possible. In sorrow he hanged himself” (514).

Greene believes that man has no right to judge one another or predict what is going on in a human heart. In utter depression and frustration, Judas threw away the thirty pieces of silver coins, the cost of the precious blood of Jesus.

Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood . . . he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself . . . it is the price of blood. (Matt. 27. 3-6).

Before betraying the Master, Judas went to the chief priests and made a bargain for the silver coins: “What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver” (Matt. 26.15). One may assume Judas’ betrayal as R. W. B. Lewis comments in *The Picaresque Saint*, “it is the supposedly decent and sensible fellow who acts out the treacherous role of Judas, and the dishonest or the dangerous man who is betrayed” (266). In Shakespeare’s *Othello*, one may observe how Othello makes a choice of evil in the famous temptation scene, kneeling before Iago, as a solemn expression of his total submission to the devil and denial of goodness in the person of Desdemona. His choice of evil is complete when he rejects Desdemona as a devil and accepts Iago as his lieutenant. At the end of the play, when Othello realizes that he has murdered an innocent and faithful wife, he kills himself in atonement for his sin. He takes up the full responsibility of his sin and

expresses his regret over the evil choice. In *The Heart of the Matter*, Scobie also makes an evil choice, killing himself with guilt feeling and taking up the full responsibility of sin.

In the Bible, we find a wise man selling everything he had in order to possess the precious pearl; whereas, Judas loses the precious pearl of Jesus, in order to possess merely thirty pieces of silver, which leads him to eternal pain and damnation. It seems Shakespeare has referred to the action of Judas when he says in *Othello*: “Perplexed in the extreme; of one whose hand like the base Indian, threw a pearl away” (Oth. V II 400). None of the fallen characters of Shakespeare avoids his responsibility for crimes, but instead, they admit it at least before they die.

Scobie here, throws away all that he had including his own life in order to possess damnation. Scobie feels that he is deserted by his wife, mistress and even by God. He feels that others suffer or die only because he exists, and when Helen asks about Ali’s death he says, “I didn’t cut his throat myself, . . . But he died because I existed” (HM. 249). In this situation, Scobie prays to God to kill him. Paul O’ Prey adds: “God enters the story almost as a character and becomes in turn a victim of Scobie’s pity, for Scobie’s final decision to kill himself is as much due to wishing to spare God” (84).

Readers may think that Scobie must decide between the conflicting claims of Louise and Helen but, he cannot take a decision without causing pain to one of them. B. P. Lamba is of strong conviction that Scobie loves God and man as the whisky priest does: “Scobie has a desire to do good and has innate love for God. He is willing to be damned himself for the good of others” (28). Scobie decides to atone for his sins

by

various means. As Grahame Smith suggests in *The Achievement of Graham Greene*, “Scobie betrays God in killing himself; Greene’s inner world is filled with painful conflicts, suffering and betrayal” (13).

Greene’s characterization is done in such a way to give the clear impression on the reader that Scobie, caught between the two women as well as God and unable to bear the sufferings of others, decides to commit suicide. In the words of Kurismmoottil, “Scobie’s proneness to disaster is portrayed sensitively and in a convincing manner” (112). Gangeshwar Rai reads the mind of Scobie thus: “The way he carefully plans his suicide and makes it appear a natural death so that his wife and mistress may not suffer, also confirms his love for man. He argues that by killing himself he will stop inflicting pain on those he loves - Louise, Helen and God” (51). Scobie utters the feelings of guilt through his painful words: “I can’t desert either of them while I’m alive, but I can die and remove myself from their blood stream. They are ill with me and I can cure them. And you too God - you are ill with me . . . You’ll be better off if you lose me once and for all” (HM. 258).

Laurence Lerner clearly remarks in one of his articles about Scobie’s inner struggle at the end of his life. According to him, Scobie hurts those he loves and he hurts God once and for all: “Scobie mistrusts God because he cannot shrug off his part in Helen’s happiness: the selfish action and the right action would, in his case, be the same, and he has to do the wrong compassionate action, even if it means giving up salvation” (222). Like Pinkie and the whisky priest, Scobie reflects the sinfulness of man and his thirst for the mercy of God. Scobie’s life is filled with misery and

suffering. As Lamba remarks: “Tormented by his love for God, he cannot reconcile it with his love for human beings. He loves God and yet cannot help feel outraged at the God who permits so much misery and pain in this world. His predicament attracts the ‘appalling strangeness of the mercy of God” (30).

David Pryce-Jones goes to the extent of comparing Scobie’s self-sacrifice with the suffering of Christ and says: “Scobie too will be crucified for the sins of others . . . demanding death as the price of release. He feels himself betrayed at all points” (81). As Lamba has pointed out, “Wilson is his Judas” (30). The author tries to show the reality that suicide was Scobie’s inevitable end. Critics have various opinions about Scobie’s act of suicide. O’Brien states: “Scobie offers his own damnation’ in order to save others, including God, from suffering” (78). Daphna Erdinast-Vulcan, in the *Graham Greene’s Childless Fathers* says: “Scobie is – like his God – offering love to anyone who may need it, to the whole world. Scobie’s conception of his God changes through his own ordeal of love and self-sacrifice. Christ becomes a real suffering being for Scobie, as real as. . . .” (53).

Scobie plans his suicide, to avoid hurting God and in such a way that neither Louise nor Helen will know about his death. Lamba observes: “Scobie has lost all hope, since he cannot escape from the sin” (46). Scobie’s inner conflict between good and evil can be seen here. Yusef is presented as the evil aspect of Scobie and Wilson is pictured as Judas in his betrayal. Mesnet affirms: “What he offers us is a tragic vision of man’s predicament. The fatality of evil, the power of grace – both forces are at war within him: he is torn between the opposed forces of his natural desires and the exigencies of his inner self – the man within” (109).

Greene's art of depicting Scobie's personal anguish and bewilderment against the fatal human predicament can be seen here. Addressing God, Scobie utters:

O God, . . . I've preferred to give you pain rather than give pain to Helen or my wife because I can't observe your suffering. I can only imagine it . . . I can't desert either of them while I'm alive, but I can die . . . I can't go on, month after month, insulting You. I can't face coming up to the altar at Christmas – Your birthday feast – and taking Your body and blood for the sake of a lie . . . You'll be better off if You lose me once and for all. (HM. 258)

Scobie feels that he is left alone with his sin. At the same time, he is happy to have a voice and that voice is the voice of God, who pleads with his loneliness.

And the voice of God tries to bring him out of darkness to the light. As he is obsessed with the weight of his own sinfulness, he cannot hope that he can be saved. He is certain that he has nothing to hope for and he says: "I love failure: I can't love success . . . He thought, even God is a failure" (HM. 254). The voice of God, here represents the power of good against the evil thoughts within Scobie. Here lies the real conflict between good and evil in a human heart. Patrick O'Neil, the editor to the *Great World Writer: Twentieth Century* explains the concept of good and evil in the novel, *The Heart of the Matter*, thus:

Greene's primary thematic concerns, the destruction of innocence and the struggle against one's dark nature, fall under his overarching interest in the eternal struggle between good and evil in this world. For Greene, good and

evil exist on a separate plane from mere right and wrong; . . . Major Scobie in *The Heart of the Matter* lies and commits adultery, . . . Scobie is a man consumed by goodness and the desire to do good. Greene recognizes that this kind of paradox exists, and he seems to believe that the struggle between good and evil operates on a higher moral plane than is found in the world of mere right and wrong. (502)

And the voice within him, asks Scobie to face any of the alternatives: “. . . to go upto the Nissen hut and say good-bye, or . . . go to your house and say good-bye to your wife and live with your mistress . . . One of them will suffer, but can’t you trust me to see that the suffering isn’t too great?” (HM. 259).

The readers may be right in their suggestion that Scobie should have made the fundamental option according to the teachings of the Catholic Church. It is contextual to add Josef Fuchs’ words in order to examine the choice made by Scobie: “In reality, it is precisely the fundamental option which in the last resort determines a person’s moral disposition” (*Christian Morality*, 30). But being a weak and sympathetic character, Scobie says, “I can’t make one of them suffer so as to save myself” (HM. 259). Even at the last moment of his life, as he falls unconscious he says aloud, “Dear God, I love” (HM. 264).

The readers can find the end of the novel with a conversation between Mrs. Scobie and Father Rank. Kulshrestha’s words are very relevant here:

Two contrasted views or judgements of Scobie’s ultimate destiny or destination are presented: one based on the moral legalism of ‘religiose’ human standards and the other on divine mercy. Through Father Rank,

Greene insists once again upon the ‘appalling strangeness’ of the mercy of God. Louise believes that her husband is damned; but Father Rank holds out hope for Scobie. (109)

Here comes Father Rank, to conclude the entire life of Scobie and says: “It may seem an odd thing to say – when a man’s as wrong as he was – but I think, from what I saw of him, that he really loved God” (HM. 272). His wife Louise also agrees with this view saying, “He certainly loved no one else” (HM. 272). Scobie kills himself out of pity for God and at the end of this novel one finds the author’s concern for the human heart against the judgement of the Church or other human beings. God’s grace works in mysterious ways. Father Rank, in the last part of the novel, *The Heart of the Matter*, tells Louise: “For goodness’ sake, Mrs. Scobie, don’t imagine you – or I – know a thing about God’s mercy

. . . The Church knows all the rules. But it doesn’t know what goes on in a single human heart” (HM. 272). Therefore, one cannot imagine that Scobie’s suicide damns him to hell. It is believed that in the last minute, God might have granted the inner peace and joy to this unpleasant man, who has suffered deeply. P. S. Sundaram’s question in the Indian Express consolidates this view: “Does the Church or anyone else know about God’s ways?” (*Indian Express*, 13 April, 1991).

In spite of all his spiritual conflicts and sorrows and misfortunes, Scobie brings himself with a great effort to say aloud, “Dear God, I love . . .” (HM. 313). As Sharrock adds, “From the depths of his consciousness, and most characteristically, from the depth of his isolation, he responds to the cry of suffering as he had done with



the human beings” (73). Gangeshwar Rai in this connection, suggests that like the whisky priest, “Scobie is angst-ridden and strives hard to be his real self. His anxiety springs from the conflict of loyalties which torments his mind as well as from an awareness of the absurd in life”(48). Scobie seems transparent about the nature of life in the world and knows well from experience that “no human being can really understand another, and no one can arrange another’s happiness” (HM. 81).

Therefore, one can be certain that Scobie gives too much of himself to others, as his every act is motivated by love or pity. Grahame Smith also emphasizes this idea: “Whatever moral errors and spiritual sins Scobie has committed stemmed from love, a love on which Greene has expended all his skill so as to make us feel it at the level of experience not statement” (102). Greene suggests that Scobie’s inability to examine his own behaviour, and his initial refusal to acknowledge Wilson’s identity, are the products of his own self-deception that ultimately leads to the murder of his servant, Ali without his knowledge: “It seemed to Scobie that now or never he must ask what was Yusef’s plan, but the weariness of his corruption halted his tongue . . . ‘You must not worry, Major Scobie. I think your boy can be made quite trustworthy.’ “He said with relief and hope, ‘You mean you have a hold on him?’ ‘Don’t ask questions. You will see” (HM. 244). Scobie is quite ignorant of the evil plan of Yusef, for the murder opens Scobie’s eyes to his self-imposed blindness: “Oh God, he thought, I’ve killed you: you’ve served me all these years and I’ve killed you at the end of them” (HM. 247).

As Scobie examines the case of Ali, he feels regret over the evil act and tells that, the most trustworthy person is one who can never again speak. Ironically, this is

Scobie's self-perception as well; once dead, he feels he will no longer afflict God: "I can't go on, month after month, insulting you . . . You'll be better off if you lose me once and for all . . . It will be no use then sweeping the floor to find me or searching for me over the mountains. You'll be able to forget me God, for eternity" (HM. 258). Thus Scobie feels cheated by Yusef with the death of Ali, and so he undergoes great mental agony and spiritual conflict inside. Scobie's attitude to God, fluctuates from a plea to remain connected after he commits himself to maintaining the tie with Helen: "Oh God, I have deserted you. Do not You desert me" (HM. 181). But if he is frustrated by what he experiences as God's accessibility, Scobie still cannot see Him, as he admits: "I've preferred to give you pain rather than give pain to Helen or my wife because I can't observe your suffering. I can only imagine it" (HM. 258).

The omni-presence of God approaches him perennially like a silent observer which has emerged from the darkness: "the other voice . . . spoke from the cave of his body; it was as if the sacrament which had lodged there for his damnation gave tongue" (HM. 258). To Scobie, God has become his constant pursuer, continuously asserting his unseen but formidable power. Here, the most persistent manifestation of this abstract presence is what Scobie feels as the sudden movement of an external force which longs to reach him before he dies: "It seemed to him as though someone outside the room were seeking him, and he made a last effort to indicate that he was here" (HM. 265). Evelyn Waugh describes in the *Commonweal* about Scobie's willingness to die as an unjust demand of God: "To me the idea of willing my own damnation for the love of God is either a very loose poetical expression or a mad

blasphemy, for the God who accepted that sacrifice could be neither just nor lovable” (324). Though Scobie insists that his suicide results from his dislike to insulting God with his lack of contrition, the burning desire to be out of sight from God is also clearly revealed in his words. Gangeshwar Rai expresses his belief and justification regarding the death of Scobie thus: “There is something Christ-like in Scobie’s self-sacrifice. Christ had not been murdered: you could not murder God: Christ had killed himself. Scobie’s conduct appears to fulfill the Pauline doctrine of the extreme form of human love, a willingness to save others through one’s own damnation” (51). According to the Pauline doctrine of Christ’s love, God who is merciful, loved man even in the sinful state and saved us by the Divine grace. In his Epistle to the Romans, St. Paul says: “For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5.8).

In *The Heart of the Matter*, Scobie seeks to treat his ‘mortal sin’ of committing suicide, as an act of kindness and self-sacrifice, and tries to base it on a Biblical teaching. Thus says St. John: “If man says I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar, for he that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen.” (1John. 4.20). By his death, Scobie justifies that he will be liberating his lover, his wife, and God from his own sinful presence: “You’ll be better off if you lose me once and for all” (HM. 258). He continues with the monologue but later it has become a discussion with the other voice: “He stood with the gin bottle poised and thought: then Hell will begin; they’ll be safe from me, Helen, Louise and You” (HM.262).

a

Catholic, Scobie has to accept the punishment for his mortal sin of suicide. The teachings of the Catholic Church are categorical regarding the double consequences of sin: “Grave sin deprives us of communion with God, and therefore makes us incapable of eternal life, the privation of which is called the “eternal punishment” of sin. On the other hand every sin, even venial, entails an unhealthy attachment to creatures, which must be purified either here on earth, or after death in the state called Purgatory” (*Catechism*, 284). The forgiveness of sin and restoration of the lost spiritual union with God necessitate and demand the remission of the eternal punishment of sin, but the sinner must bear all the sufferings and trials and undergo the process of sanctification in order to attain the divine mercy. The convincingly spelt out words of K. S. Subramaniam about infinite mercy and love of God may be borne in mind:

In *The Heart of the Matter*, Greene attempts to reconcile the presence of evil and suffering in this world with the existence of an omnipotent and merciful providence in heaven. Scobie wonders how so much of suffering and evil could co-exist with the infinite mercy and love of God. He has, also, carried to its conclusion the implications of his own faith – the love and mercy and mystery of God. (24)

In his observation on Greene, A. A. De Vitis argues that Greene “personally has little belief in the doctrine of eternal punishment, the point that continues to perturb readers of the work. He points out that it is Scobie who believes in hell, that suicide is Scobie’s solution to save God from himself” (85). Similarly, Samson in the Holy

Bible dies in order to liberate Israel from the evil hands of the Philistines.

Samson was so fearsome to the Philistines that during his lifetime they avoided all invasions into the territory of Israel. Samson begins the deliverance of God's people from the hands of the Philistines as he accepts martyrdom. In the last moments of his life he makes a most heartbreaking prayer before God's merciful presence, willing to sacrifice his own life for a better cause of Israel's deliverance: "O Lord God, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes" (Judg. 16.26–30). Samson was himself willing to die with the Philistines. When he bowed himself with all his might, the house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people that were therein. Thus, the dead which Samson killed at his death were more than he destroyed in his life. This event was nothing but a national catastrophe for the Philistines. A large number of the leaders and wise men were killed in the destruction, and the political infrastructure of the nation was destroyed at this time. This tragedy hindered the Philistines from organizing and oppressing Israel for many more years after. The Philistines did not even attempt to prevent Samson's relatives from taking his body back home for burial. Samson was so awfully fearsome to the Philistines that during his lifetime they were compelled to avoid all invasions into the territory of Israel. Thus Samson became a powerful instrument of God, by being a redeemer to the Israel.

The readers cannot miss to observe the similarity of Samson's death as martyrdom and sacrifice as in the case of Scobie. Scobie's death appears to be merely a suicidal attempt but the intention behind it is the deliverance of others. Thus says A. A. De Vitis regarding the mental agony of the protagonist of the novel, "Scobie's

struggle with himself and with the God of the Catholic Church forms the basis of the conflict: Scobie's pity for suffering humanity forces him to suicide, the sin of despair. And according to the Church, this is damnation" (87). Regarding Scobie's love and pity Mesnet writes, "Pity is not a substitute for love; when separated from it, it is ultimately destructive, a negative sharing of a failure, whereas love is creative" (64). Scobie, out of love and pity, sacrifices his own happiness and pleasures of worldly life and is willing to end his life for the happiness of others, by accepting a kind of martyrdom, because the Catholic Church does not allow him to continue his sinful life. Scobie, in his deep agony expresses his inner self: "Despair is the price one pays for setting oneself an impossible aim . . . Only the man of goodwill carries always in his heart this capacity for damnation" (HM. 60). Scobie wants happiness for others and solitude and peace for himself. He even prayed to God to give him death before making others unhappy. De Vitis is of the opinion that "Scobie may have killed himself, but he may have repented in the moment before death" (92).

Before his birth, God set Samson apart for service to Him. During his lifetime he was dedicated to the purpose to which God had set him aside for delivering Israel from the hands of the Philistines. While he died an untimely death, his greatest success set the Philistines back again for a number of years. Not until Samuel was fully established as a prophet and judge could the Philistines invade Israel again. But at this time God intervened and the Philistines were defeated and driven back; because the last prayer offered by Samson was like a helpless cry of a child before God with a worn-out heart. And the prayer was answered and thus, Samson set the stage for both

Saul and David to bring about permanent deliverance from the Philistines. Both Scobie and Samson die for the deliverance of others. Regarding Scobie's suicide, Mesnet writes:

Others suffer or die just because he exists; and his suicide - his last lie - so cunningly concealed from Louise and Helen, is also his last act of pity for those he loves - Louise and Helen and God too - and to whom he can only bring pain. His final decision is made in the belief that the only way to spare God from further pain is to destroy himself altogether. (67)

Scobie has lost the sense of trust in God and appears to be unaware of the possibility of the divine mercy. Scobie also believes that his sin is too great for God to forgive. He is unable to keep his trust in the mercy of God and is painfully guilty of his sins. It is his guilt feeling that leads him to depression and ultimately to suicide at the climax of his mental conflict.

Scobie's mental agony depicted by Greene can be assumed as his experience of hell on earth, where he is purified and even converted at the last moment of his life: "O God convince me, help me, convince me. Make me feel that I am more important than that girl. . . Make me put my own soul first. Give me trust in your mercy to the one I abandon" (HM. 220). He is ready to take up any kind of punishments for the sake of others' happiness, "O God, he said, if instead I should abandon you, punish me but let the others get some happiness" (HM. 220). Scobie again pleads with God to kill him in his intense mental agony, "O God, he prayed . . . What a mess I am. I carry suffering with me like a body smell. Kill me. Put an end to me" (HM. 252). Greene

shows

his

profound love for man in this novel. Kenneth Lohf remarks, “The priest and Scobie arrive at saint’s appreciation of humility” (*The Catholic World*, 199). He also expresses his apprehension, “how evil can be changed into that essential and immutable goodness that is at the base of all substance” (199). Scobie represents humanity, where some are conquered by evil powers and get themselves ruined. Greene speaks with authority: “The Church knows all the rules. But it doesn’t know what goes on in a single human heart” (HM. 272).

Scobie is ready to suffer and even damn himself in order to save others from their sufferings: “I can’t make one of them suffer so as to save myself. I’m responsible and I’ll see it through the only way I can” (HM. 259). Samson’s deliberate self-killing has a meaningful dimension, where he is vengeful to the Philistines, but at the same time his personal weaknesses are forgiven and attained sanctification. Throughout this chapter, one may find a number of parallel situations in the lives of both Scobie and Samson. But at the same time, there are too many contrasting circumstances found while analyzing. Scobie is an ordinary layman in the Catholic Church and is not entrusted with any particular duty by God; whereas, Samson is specially called by God even before his birth, to be born as a Nazarite to fight for Israel against the Philistines. Scobie breaks his marital vow and commits adultery out of love and pity; similarly, Samson violates the divine rules and accepts a Philistine woman as his wife, which is a terrible offense against God. Both Scobie and Samson deliberately end their life on different intentions. Scobie ends his life for the peace and happiness of others and not to hurt and offend God anymore with his sinful life. On the contrary, Samson



ends his life to wipe out the race of Philistines and to save Israel from their rivals, so to fulfill his divine duty. The similarities and dissimilarities with the lives and deaths of Scobie and Samson as discussed in this chapter positively lead us to distinguish the kind of mental agony experienced by both of them as part of their purgatory and sanctification, in order to attain Divine mercy.