Chapter V
SIN AND SINNERS IN THE FICTIONAL WORLD
OF GRAHAM GREENE

Greene as a novelist is seriously concerned with the
deterioration in the moral sense of man. He dwells on the
spiritual seediness of the twentieth century and studies,
as it were, the utilization of sin by grace, as
experienced in individual lives. This obsession with sin
and redemption is clearly seen in almost all his works.
He has classified his fiction into two categories, namely
‘the entertainments’ and ‘the novels’. The novels include
seriously narrated stories but the entertainments are not
entirely the ‘thrillers’ which the readers expect them to
be. There is, no doubt, an element of the usual
‘entertainment’ formula in all these entertainments but,
along with that, we can clearly discern an underlying note
of moral concern. The ideas of sin and saintliness,
damnation and salvation, companionship and alienation,
spiritual condemnation and the mercy of God—all these
aspects are woven into the ‘entertainments’ of Greene.
These elements are much more closely attached to the
three major Catholic novels of Greene Brighton Rock, The
Power and the Glory and The Heart of the Matter giving
to his works a religious overtone. There are very few
entertainments which totally dispense with moral concern or are out and out thriller literature.

Of the three authors discussed in this dissertation, the one who adheres most to the Christian concept of sin and the sinner is certainly Greene. The concept of sin in the Old Testament which was rigorous during the direct reign and intervention of Jehovah became quite diluted and lenient in the New Testament as has already been mentioned in the first chapter. Jesus Christ brought in the principle that the value of human beings is the most important point to be understood. The commandments, the laws and all the other related rules are to be put to use for the betterment of man and the redemption of his soul. The salvation of man is the basic spiritual intention of Christianity. Along with the salvation of a person, the mental and the physical well-being also is considered vital. Christ focused on the manifold progress of man, especially on the three levels—physical, mental and spiritual. He performed deeds out of love and kindness for the multitudes who came after him. He performed miracles curing the sick physically and mentally. But the most important Christian truth is that salvation would be given to all sinners who approached him. This kernel of the Christian teaching finds a prominent place in the novels of Greene. He is fascinated by the idea of
damnation/salvation of the sinner. Greene has pointed out the fact that all men are liable to commit sin. The Bible says: "They have all fallen away; they are all alike depraved; there is none that does good, no, not one."

This truth is again highlighted by Jesus Christ when he defends the branded sinners. He is compassionate to the prostitutes, tax-collectors etc., whereas he vehemently criticises the Pharisees, the Gentiles etc. Jesus Christ has stated: "Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the spirit will not be forgiven." So Christ particularly chides and derides those who have lost their purity of heart.

Murdoch and Compton-Burnett have obviously stressed this aspect in their novels. But the maximum significance is given to this principle in the works of Greene. It would be more correct to say that Greene presents this Christian principle in such a simple and straight-forward style that the message can be easily assimilated by the readers.

Herbert R. Haber has said that writers like Hemingway, didn't remember the next world but that for Greene, God has not died; rather the world at large has chosen to forget Him and for the most part, He has reciprocated in kind. The connection between this world
and the other world is an interesting subject to all believers. They try to place the life in this world on such a plane that it is suitably rewarded here itself or in the other world. This type of logical explanation is not found in the manner the characters of Greene are considered and judged. The reason for this is quite evident in the works of Greene. God and His mercy are too complex for any individual or any priest to limit within the confines of any religion of any belief. In the last section of his famous novel *The Heart of the Matter* the priest points out to Louise that he himself can know only about the unimportant things in the life of an individual, that is the sins. When Louise mentions that Scobie had been a bad Catholic (referring to his extra-marital relationship) Father Rank says: "That's the silliest phrase in common use." He affirms that both of them don't know anything about the mercy of God. This is exactly what Greene is driving at. He tries to shatter the complacency of the believers, who are basking in the smug satisfaction of conventionality. When we read his novels, we are reminded of the Pharisees in the Bible who were severely ridiculed by Jesus Christ for the store they set by the external appearances without a vestige of the goodness of heart. The essential element for a true Christian is purity of heart. The characters who are sticking on to the
outward conventions and rules do not care for the attainment of real goodness. Throughout the career of Greene as a novelist, in almost all his works, there is a group which comes under this category. Ida Arnold in *Brighton Rock*, for example, belongs to this group. They are personalities who are incorrigible. Greene believes that this is the worst group among the people we meet in our day to day life.

There is always a social awareness in all his novels. So he cannot tolerate this contented group of people. Only a person aware of his own defects can make an attempt to improve. The feeling that oneself is perfect would lead to more and more evil actions, naturally. These people turn out to be vigilant about the conscience of others. They are not bothered about their own conscience. They are eager to see the damnation of other souls. At the same time they don't care about or are not aware of their own impending doom and destruction.

Another interesting fact is that Greene prefers the sainthood and damnation of the individual to the indifferent condition of the modern man. In the modern scientific age man has the tendency to become colourless, odourless, and tasteless without any concern about himself or the others. This is a dangerous tendency. The zest
for life is essential and it can be maintained only in a thoroughly good or bad man. In the Bible itself the lukewarm group is derided by Jesus Christ: "I know your works, you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were cold or hot. So, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of my mouth." The lukewarm variety is the most deceitful and hypocritical group according to Greene. The primary urges, the base desires, the human tendencies etc. cannot be shed by an ordinary human being. So the lukewarm variety has naturally succeeded only in suppressing these urges to a commendable extent. Suppressing an emotion is more difficult and dangerous than the free expression of the same. So this type of people are not at all trustworthy. Greene detests this type of people as is clear from the views he expresses on them in his novels. Morton D. Zabel, in his essay on Greene, draws a connection between Brighton Rock and T. S. Eliot’s essay on Baudelaire. About the French poet, Baudelaire, Eliot states that sin took on a curious dignity and damnation itself seemed to him "an immediate form of salvation... because it at least gives some significance to living." Man can achieve an identity above the state of an animal only by accepting and acknowledging the moral good and evil. But this is different from natural ‘good and bad’ or puritan ‘right and
wrong' as Herbert R. Haber has pointed out. "... Graham Greene believes that ultimately from impurity will come purity, from demonism saintliness, from unbelief belief, from vice virtue and that is why his heroes often seem closer to demons than to saints."

Greene was thoroughly disillusioned with the world and he was disgusted with the true nature of man. His lack of faith in the perfectibility of man blights any Bible optimism concerning the expectation of goodness in man. In The Heart of the Matter, he says: "Point me out the happy man and I will point you out either extreme egotism, evil or else an absolute ignorance." Most of the important characters of Greene have faith in religion and this awareness of the presence of God provides a new meaning for all their deeds. Even the evil characters, in spite of their evil, are conscious of the grace of God and the possibility of attaining this grace if they switch over to the path of saintliness. Consequently good and evil become potent forces in their lives and they are never beyond the experience of the resultant tug of war. Even if they do not arrive at the arena of God's grace and glory, Greene succeeds in presenting to the readers the vulnerable aspects of such individuals. In the novel Brighton Rock, the priest says: "I mean a Catholic is more capable of evil than any one. I think perhaps--because we
believe in him—we are more in touch with the devil than other people." Pinkie, the main character in this novel, accepts damnation, fully aware of this fact. Even Pinkie who readily accepts damnation is presented by the author as one who may be accepted by God, who is thoroughly merciful and graceful. The ways of God are strange and not easily comprehended by ordinary men. Many critics point out that Pinkie is a character driven by forces beyond his control and that it is possible to view him as a victim—a victim of society, a victim of the terror of life. For the same reason it may be argued that Pinkie is a character who cannot be definitely brought under the category of the damned ones. One who becomes a victim of so many evil forces deserves the sympathy and understanding of the others. This is exactly what Pinkie could not win from his relatives, society etc. Because he can't get into a rapport with his dear and near ones from his childhood, angularities and psychic disorders become a part of his personality. This leads to his perversions, criminal mentality, brutal nature, and lack of affection for others including his lady-love Rose. The basic reason for and the background of the peculiar and inexplicable nature of Pinkie are clearly drawn by Greene. This serves in arousing a tolerable attitude towards Pinkie who is a criminal. Though Greene himself readily states that
Pinkie is a character who is damned, it is clear that Greene was so fond of him that he stresses the extenuating circumstances of his crime and presents him in a favourable light.

But the case of Ida Arnold is just the opposite. It is evident that she belongs to a class of individuals Greene detests thoroughly. Greene has felt a lot of disappointment about this category of men and he has expressed his anguish over the increasing materialistic attitude in the mind of the modern man. Hence he sees to it that these characters get the minimum of sympathy and understanding from the readers. He has presented such characters very relentlessly. Outwardly these characters remain perfect, without any fault. They are over-confident about their perfect condition also. But really they are far from pure, physically, mentally and spiritually. They are so keen in crucifying the ordinary, outwardly imperfect human beings that they never bother about their own glaring imperfections.

Characters like Ida Arnold in Brighton Rock never win the love and compassion of the society or of God. The purity of the mind is considered the greatest virtue and in the case of these individuals, they can never attain this purity of mind because of their 'ego'. Murdoch has
also mentioned about the egoistic state of man which hinders his spiritual growth. Greene also speaks about this 'ego' which makes a person totally unable to make an assessment about his own status, physically, mentally or spiritually. Such individuals will never attain spiritual progress. At the same time their condition moves from bad to worse and in effect there is a retardation or retracing of the steps on the spiritual path.

The disastrous effect of certain flaws in character upon the individuals is an interesting subject for Greene. He himself has stated that he had meant the story of Scobie to enlarge a theme which he had touched in The Ministry of Fear, namely the disastrous effect on human beings of pity as distinct from compassion. He had written in The Ministry of Fear the following lines as quoted by S. K. Sharma in his book: "Pity is cruel. Pity destroys. Love isn't safe when pity's prowling round." Greene had expected the pity of Scobie to turn into an attitude of monstrous pride. But the way of presentation Greene adopted brought Scobie into a favourable light. Scobie got the sympathy and compassion of the readers and his damnation is considered to be entirely due to the ruthlessness of his wife Louise. Louise can be taken as a character similar to Ida Arnold in Brighton Rock. She had no scruples in bringing her husband's soul to eternal
damnation and she takes a sort of vengeance and animal-like pleasure in it. The flaw of Greene’s characters like Scobie’s in The Heart of the Matter takes them along a deviant path. But this deviant path of the sinner finally leads to the saintliness which is coveted by any true believer. Thus the sin gets an exalted and totally different manifestation through his novels. At the same time, those with a puritanical and outwardly perfect attire turn out to be really damned in the eyes of Almighty. The conventional approach towards sin and sinners is overthrown by the skilful technique of Greene.

Scobie’s relationship with his wife Louise is also problematic. He feels: “The less needed Louise the more conscious he became of his responsibility for her happiness.” This statement is confusing. It reveals the conflict and contradiction between the physical and spiritual forces. Physically he had no more desire or attraction for his wife Louise. But spiritually he had the conviction that it was his responsibility ordained by God Almighty to satisfy and take care of his wife. Hence he tries to fulfill the command of God. This feeling of responsibility later on leads to his getting involved in a lot of complicated, shameful situations owing to this defect.
In the second chapter of this dissertation the personal and social aspects of sin were considered. It was argued that the personal aspect of morality is intended to teach people how to live good lives, living according to one's own choice but that the social aspect of morality stresses certain other aspects. Human beings when left free tend to be selfish. So social moralists believe that morality is needed to curb the base urges by issuing prohibitions. When considered from the personal aspect of morality there is no conflict between morality and rationality because both involve acting in accordance with one's own interest. When we consider Greene's characters from this point of view, we can see that they are 'moral' in their nature. In this perspective they are not sinners. They pursue what they consider to be a good life, acting in accordance with their own interest. This is true in the case of the characters portrayed by Murdoch and Compton-Burnett also. But when the social aspect of morality is considered, the dictates of self-interest conflict with the dictates of morality. Rationality is always connected with self-interest, so rationality and morality may conflict here. So when the characters of Greene, like Scobie, are studied in the light of the social aspect of morality, we have to infer that they turn out to be sinners. This is because, here
there is no scope for the pursuit of self-interest. The characters of all the three authors considered in this dissertation act according to their self-interest. Though Scobie might have felt pity and concern for his fellow beings including his own wife Louise and his lady-love Helen, when we apply rationality it can be seen that his deeds are dictated in the beginning by his personal interest. The special aspect of morality doesn't play a vital role in his life, and he doesn't concern himself with the principles which should be edifying to the society. Here it is relevant to quote the idea of Bertrand Russell about the connection between an individual and the society:

A man’s needs and desires are not confined to his own life. If his mind is comprehensive and his imagination vivid, the failures of the community to which he belongs are his failures, and its successes are his success; according as his community succeeds or fails, his own growth is nourished or impeded.13

From this philosophical idea we can conclude that Greene’s characters do not have this type of association with their respective societies. If it had been so strong an association, Scobie himself would have consciously avoided
situations that created unfavourable repercussions in the society and the people connected with him. But once again we can affirm that, from the point of view of the personal aspect of morality, Scobie can never be branded as a sinner.

William Glasser has suggested that crimes and sinful deeds are necessarily due to a sense of failure in the personality concerned in most cases. So, the sinners and criminals, from the social point of view, should be considered failures and should be treated with kindness and understanding. Unable to establish their identity in the present society they resort to all kinds of perversions. Such a kind of understanding will arouse sympathy and tolerance in the minds of the readers towards the characters like Pinkie, in Brighton Rock.

Though Scobie doesn't succeed in the attempt to maintain the social aspect of morality, he had a great awareness about the other individuals around him. He always tried hard to accommodate them and compromise with them. As for his relationship with Fellows, the sanitary inspector "Scobie had done his best to like the man--it was one of the rules by which he set his life, to be a good loser." Similarly, he tried to find fault with himself for bringing about such a lot of unwelcome changes:
in the character of Louise. He detested her hypocrisy, snobbish nature, her patronage of strangers etc. Still he had the magnanimity to find out the fault or rather the responsibility for all this in himself. He was ready to love the human beings nearly as God loved them, knowing the worst in them. The love, understanding and the feeling of oneness which are essential ingredients in a nuptial knot had been lost for a long time in the relationship between Scobie and Louise. The futility of genuine and sincere relationship in a marital life is a major concern for Greene in this novel. He felt that the rudeness of truth would not suffice in the reality of every day life. "In human relations, kindness and lies are worth a thousand truths," he states in The Heart of the Matter through the thoughts of Scobie.

Greene has his own definite ideas regarding the different types of sin. For example, despair is considered an unforgivable sin in Christianity but Greene is of the opinion that the corrupt or evil man would never practise it. A thoroughly evil man always cherishes hope and he is optimistic about his prospects in this world as well as in the next world. "Only a man of goodwill can carry in his heart the capacity for damnation." This statement itself justifies the favourable attitude Greene has towards his characters who are branded as sinners and
evil men in the eyes of the readers or the society. The feeling of utter damnation is seen in the mentality of the protagonists of most of his famous and controversial novels. This approach itself shatters the conventional attitude of the believers and the religion, especially Christianity and Catholicism, about the doom and the damnation of a person. Damnation which is given a low status is elevated to a covetable position, because it is the privilege of a man of goodwill.

On an extreme level, when considered from the religious background, any form of earthly tie takes away man from his attainment of salvation or mukti according to Hinduism. About Swami Vivekananda it is said that in certain moods when we would be seized with a passionate longing to break all bonds and fly unto the Highest, he would say that his works and activities as a religious teacher and preacher were all vanity, and superimpositions upon his true nature. . . . Viewed from the highest standpoint, all work, even that of doing good to others, is no doubt Maya, a hindrance to personal mukti. But illumined souls like Vivekananda who belong, in the words of his Master, to the class of Acharyakotis or world
teachers, are born to take upon their shoulders the burden of a whole world. They care not for their own mukti, or for remaining merged in the bliss of the Absolute, though these are within their reach.\(^8\)

If such a statement is possible by a saint on a high spiritual plain, we can argue that Greene has tried to establish a relatively similar and equal spiritual level for the common man who is the protagonist of his novel. In spite of the mundane, earthly and commonplace activities Scobie is indulging in, his level of spirituality is superior to that of the other (common people). The reason is that he is ready to accept damnation for the sake of the happiness and satisfaction of others.

Another ground for attributing dignity and nobility to the characters of Greene is their capacity to endure suffering. The Christian teaching is based on the idea that suffering ennobles a person and alleviates the burden of sin. Though the sinners of Greene are ready to give up salvation and undergo damnation for the sake of the others, they have to suffer a lot in the process. In the life of Scobie, there is a lot of suffering. From the time he tries to adjust with the nature of his wife
Louise, he is suffering a great deal. Though he doesn’t love her any more, he doesn’t want to see her unhappy. He is very careful about her satisfaction and happiness. He does a lot of sacrifice to fulfil her wish to go away to South Africa. When the moment of separation comes for them, the anguish he feels is also noticeable. The parting scene (in the thoughts of Scobie) is described: “Everything had been unreal, but this suddenly was real pain, the moment of death...” In this context we might call to mind St. Paul’s description of the value of real love in the first letter to the Corinthians. According to this definition, Scobie stands justified in our eyes. He might have lost his outward attraction and the physical desire for his wife, Louise. But it cannot be interpreted as the absence of the real, lasting and enduring love.

The mode of suffering that Scobie undergoes is fascinating, on many occasions. For example, when he goes into the Catholic Church on the first Saturday of the month, as usual, to make his confession, he feels tired of his religion. He had tried to love God and he is not satisfied with the result. When the priest tells him to chant “five ‘Our Fathers’ and five ‘Hail Marys’ as penance, he does accordingly. He began to speak the words of absolution, but the trouble is, Scobie thought, there's
nothing to absolve. The words brought no sense of relief because there was nothing to relieve. Thus here, we see a man who is suffering because of the lack of sin. He feels that if there were sins on his part to be absolved and burdens on his shoulders to be relieved, he would have understood the grace of God better. Similarly, he could have got a closer association with God. Here also we see that Greene conforms generally to the Christian view. Christ openly declares that he has come into this world to redeem the sinners and not the perfect. He says: "For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners." He does not make Scobie a detestable sinner but one for whom the promise of salvation is not non-existent.

But genuine suffering starts when Scobie commits adultery with Helen Rolt. Though he has the explanation of pity and responsibility for all his actions, there is the element of human pleasure involved in the act. Through many indications Greene points out that Scobie gets a lot of the earthly pleasure from this association. "It seemed to him for a moment even then, before his tenderness and pleasure awoke, that he was looking at a bundle of cannon fodder." The thought comes into the mind of Scobie when he looks at Helen after the sexual act. Similarly, returning home, having forgotten the umbrella he thinks: "Standing in his own room with a
mosquito--boot in his hand, he thought wearily and drearily. In future I must do better than that.  

This shows that the sexual act committed by Scobie with Helen was not going to remain an isolated occurrence. He had decided that the relationship was to continue. It was true that he had the shield of responsibility and pity to excuse and justify this deed. But in his heart of hearts Scobie was aware of the human inclination, which had been a major force, that compelled him to this act. Benjamin Khan in his essay “The Christian Theory of Moral Obligation and Inclination” has discussed the difference between ‘obligation and inclination’. The former pertains to the higher nature of man and prompts him to do what is right and the latter pertains to the lower nature. Here Scobie can be seen succumbing to the base, human nature of inclination. He also commits the error of self-justification which amounts to a sin. But he gets relief and spiritual uplift through his suffering for the sake of his fellow beings and finally for the sake of God. Whenever he deviates from the right path, he is filled with anguish and he is beseeching God not to desert him though he had deserted God. When he returns again and again to the life of sin with Helen, we see that he suffers the conflict between the forces of vice and virtue. He wants to give up his deviant path and once
again accept God after confession and turn back to the right path. But he realises that he cannot turn a deaf ear to the needs of his fellow beings. "How can one love God at the expense of one of his creatures?" (217). This remark has two aspects. First of all, it throws light on the love of Scobie for his fellow beings which goes beyond ordinary human estimation. Even though he might have enjoyed the human pleasures when the relationship with Helen started, later on, he pursues this association only because of his feeling of concern and pity for her. There is a second aspect which focuses on the role Scobie tries to play in the life of other fellow beings. He identifies himself with the Saviour and tries to bring solace to all around him including Louise, Helen and the others.25

Because of the magnified effect of the feeling of responsibility Scobie is not bothered by the sins and wrongs committed by others to him.

Nobody understand him but he tries to understand others. . . . Never he feels bitter towards anybody, nothing angers him. . . . Instead of brooding over the sins of omission or commission of others--Louise, Helen, Wilson, Yusef, his employer; or even God--he thinks of
his own responsibility. This exaggerated sense of responsibility springs from his desire to protect others from the pain that he suffers, but nobody cares for his motives.

Scobie's suffering gains the maximum intensity towards the end of the novel. Until the arrival of Louise, he had only the duty to keep Helen satisfied. But when he hears about the return of his wife Louise, he understands that his responsibility is increasing. He wants to maintain the satisfaction of Louise without hindering the confidence and happiness of Helen. He cannot discard any human soul relying upon him. This is true Christian spirit in him. But he decides to accept his own damnation for the sake of others. He wants even God to be free from his pestering soul and to get out of His system. Therefore, without proper confession, he accepts communion. He does this with the firm conviction that his soul is eternally perishing. As a Catholic he firmly believes in the gravity of this sin he has committed. He had coveted solitude and peace for himself but in the attempt to bring happiness to others he deprives himself of the eternal peace. He suffers a lot because he cannot love his fellow beings as ardently as God loved them. The extent of his love for Helen makes it impossible for him to confess properly. He had to decide
that he would never go to Helen again because Father Rank expected such a promise from him. The most important step for a sinner is the act of contrition. The sinner would feel repentance only when he knows the value of his soul which is part of the Holy Spirit. But Scobie feels he and his soul are not as important as or more important than Helen and her happiness.

When Scobie is attending the Mass before receiving the Holy Communion, he feels the anguish terribly. He could make a decision even at the last moment to give up the sinful life and abandon Helen forever. He could surrender himself to the Grace of God. But the contradiction is that God is surrendering Himself into his power. He tries to excuse himself saying to God: "You can look after yourself. You survive the cross every day. You can only suffer, you can never be lost. Admit that you must come second to these others." Since he has the expert knowledge about the absolute ruin of his soul, as the moment of communion approaches, he feels that he is being suffocated in a closely tightening chamber. The damnation of his soul, which he is offering to God, is the most sanctified deed which he performs. The earlier acts (though motivated by pity, responsibility and concern for others) had kept him on a level with ordinary human beings. But this acceptance of the damnation with the
full knowledge of the consequences, when considered from his Catholic background, definitely elevates him to a high spiritual level which cannot be expected in ordinary men. Every time he pains his fellow beings—as when he thinks about abandoning Helen, when he witnesses the death of Ali, when he tries to escape the confession and communion. Louise advises him to do it—he identifies it with his own betrayal of God. For him, it amounts to killing God. Thus to avoid further mutilation of God's corpus, he decides to kill himself. He feels: "I carry suffering with me like a body smell."28

Before his death Scobie succeeds in his mission, that is to love all around him. He would never love successes, he could love only failures. Even God was accepting failure for the sake of Scobie. God was giving up the soul of Scobie to eternal damnation. Scobie had not been able to love Louise for a long time, as she had been a success throughout her life. But finally when he commits suicide before being promoted the commissioner, his list of the loved ones includes Louise also. This is the first time Louise accepts failure and hence Scobie can love her also. God admits His failure when Scobie commits suicide and thus his love for God also becomes complete. Even before deciding to commit suicide, the conflict goes on in his mind and he realises that God has to become a failure
by allowing him (Scobie) to be damned. Then only would his duty be fulfilled. Thus he accepts death and damnation and makes a vain attempt at the last moment to express his love for God: "Dear God, I love..."29 The utterance of these four words, in the intensity of pain, at the moment of death once again guarantees that Scobie's love of God was at the maximum level. We feel assured that all his actions stand justified because of this revelation.

But this compromising attitude cannot be adopted for Louise. We see her only as a relentless lady who causes the damnation of her own husband though Greene himself has said in the introduction that it seems so because of the technical fault. Her faith and belief are confined to the outward appearances as in the case of an average Christian or Catholic. She is not inclined to see the soul of her fellow beings, even of her own husband saved. On the contrary, she wants to make sure that he is damned. Even Father Rank is taken aback by the ruthlessness in her tone. She reminds us of the class of the gentiles and Pharisees like Ida Arnold in Brighton Rock. When Scobie is, raised to the pedestal of an unholy saint, Louise remains a holy sinner.
Scobie had served his fellow beings throughout his life. He had done all the deeds for them, primarily out of his love and concern for them. It is natural that surely God loved Scobie and accepted his soul in Heaven. His service to man—reducing the pain of the others, satisfying those individuals dependent on him—had helped in simplifying the duty of God Himself. The simple philosophy of Christian belief is exhibited here. One who loves and serves the fellow beings loves God mainly due to the reason that serving mankind and helping them is actually taking up the work of God and relieving Him to a little extent of His own burden. Such a man can never be abandoned by God. So according to this argument also we can establish that Scobie has attained salvation.

Christ has said: "For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake, he will save it." Here Scobie lost his life for the sake of God and thus saved it.

The feeling of Greene towards the sinners is that of Christian togetherness as we have already seen. In his latest novel Monsignor Quixote, we get the feeling of 'oneness among the sinners,' which the Whiskey priest feels in The Power and The Glory. One day, when Quixote happens to spend the night in a brothel his reaction is "a
monsignor in a brothel. Well, why not? Christ mixed with
publicans and sinners. . . .

The idea of the 'brotherliness and togetherness' with the sinners is a
major theme of Christianity, which is highlighted by
Greene in all his works.

Another important dimension of Greene's concept is
the projection of the guilt feeling as in the case of
Scobie. But he has succeeded in presenting this very
convincingly, even from the viewpoint of the minor
characters. The undertaker mentioned in Monsignor Quixote
feels guilty and his conscience is extremely troubled.
The reason is that he has stolen the handles of coffins,
as is his usual practice. Monsignor Quixote thought that
he would certainly list it among sins against justice, the
category to which adultery also belongs. Father Quixote
consoles the undertaker saying:

Do you think God cares so much about a small
thing like that? He has created a universe—we
don't know how many stars and planets and
worlds. You have stolen two brass handles—
don't feel so important. Say you are sorry for
your pride and go home.32

Here the guilt feeling is presented as a form of pride.
This can be considered a psychological approach Greene
contrives to soothe the guilt feeling of a person. Another interesting approach we see in this novel is the idea that when the sin committed is theft the gravity of the sin had to be judged by the value of the object stolen—if it was equivalent to one-seventh of the owner's monthly wage it must be treated seriously, in the opinion of Father Heribert Jones. Yet another outrageous and unconventional idea is mentioned in the context of the film named *A Maiden's Prayer* which Quixote happens to see. Quixote's conviction about human love is shaken here. He had always identified human love with the love of God. But the sexual love he happened to witness in the movie puzzled him because he doesn't feel any physical urge. So he thinks: "Am I, he wondered, incapable of feeling human love? For, if I am, then I must also be incapable of feeling love for God. He began to fear that his spirit might be stamped, indelibly by that terrible question mark. . ." Thus here we see an unusual type of coordination of sexual pleasure or love with the love of God. Like the other typical characters of Greene we see Father Quixote bewailing the fact that he can't pray to resist evil when he is not even tempted. This prayer is similar to that of Scobie who finds nothing to be absolved before his state of sin. Here in this novel, again, we see the author condemning the concealed sinner.
and sins and exalting the proclaimed criminal or sinner who had the benefit of self-realization. As Richard J. Voorhees has stated, "if the people in Greene have any dignity, they derive it from their capacity to endure suffering, and their lives provide them with plenty of opportunity to test their capacity."

In the case of the acceptance of damnation, there is a difference between the attitude of Scobie, and that of Pinkie in *Brighton Rock*. Pinkie consciously and deliberately decides to do evil. He commits murder and other wrong deeds. He has purposefully resorted to this evil path because he has decided to reject grace and to damn himself. But we cannot brand Pinkie as a sinner because there are allowances to be made in his case. Even the priest remains hopeful about his soul, at the end of the novel. The technique adopted by Greene in the case of Pinkie and Scobie is different but dextrously he has raised both of them on to the platform of saintliness or at least on the path to attain saintliness. Pinkie, a gangster throughout, recklessly led the life of a criminal. He never acted according to his conscience, he never felt concern for the others. But there was the prick of conscience in his mind. He wanted to make his peace with God. Scobie's nature is entirely different from Pinkie's. He is always concerned about the others,
and takes up the responsibility for all those around him. He decides to give up salvation because the souls of the others are more important. But Greene's ingenuity has enabled Pinkie and Scobie to become embellished by the Grace of God. Thus his concept has widened enough to include all possible souls in the scheme of salvation.

In *The Power and The Glory*, Greene presents sinful life as a more difficult and complicated one than saintly life. The Whiskey priest realises that he could have attained saintliness more easily than damnation, more easily with a little self-restraint and a little courage. This viewpoint of Greene itself is entirely different from the existing religious idea about sin and saintliness. Sinful life is supposed to be easy and comfortable. But saintliness always demanded a lot of discipline, self-control, unselfishness etc. Here Greene has given an opposite picture about these two. Thus the desirability and elevated status of saintliness are tilted in favour of sin and damnation. Actually this new viewpoint regarding sin and saintliness doesn't overthrow the Christian concept. It only helps in giving a stronger basis to the Christian principle. Greene is driving at the fact that a real saint would never realise his own redemption and grace bestowed by God. Outward saintliness is easy with just a modicum of courage and self-restraint.
But when it comes to real saintly life, that is closely associated with the life of a sinner, the only difference is that the saint is constantly aware of his spiritually degraded condition and longs for salvation. But the sinner is not aware of his thoroughly deviated life and even if he is conscious about it, he is not craving to rectify it. About the life of a saint, St. Paul has stated:

I will all the more gladly boast of my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions and calamities; for when I am weak, then I am strong.35

The salvation of the soul is not the right of any individual but it is the gift and grace of God as stated in the Bible.

Marcia Baron has refuted the modern view held by Kant's critics who say that the perfectly moral person need not be governed by a sense of duty. She has ventured to establish that a perfectly moral person is governed partly, by a sense of duty.36 All the important characters of Greene like Pinkie, Scobie and the Whiskey priest are guided by their sense of duty to a great extent. Pinkie
who is resorting to the evil path, does so out of his perverted convictions that it is his duty. So we can realise that, even from a moralistic approach, they can be seen as adhering to the path of morality to a certain extent. At the same time, Greene has toppled the conventional fortress of morality and sinfulness adroitly.

The character Bendrix in the novel The End of the Affair is exactly opposite in nature to that of Scobie. Scobie is delineated as a person who can't bear the sufferings of others. He wants to see everybody happy. He is ready to give up his peace and happiness for the sake of the satisfaction of others. But Bendrix is exulting in the sufferings of others, especially in the misery of Sarah, whom he had loved very much. When he asks about Sarah to her husband Henry, he thinks: "I imagined in those days that any suffering she underwent would lighten mine, and if she were dead I could be free. I would no longer imagine all the things one does imagine under my ignoble circumstances. I could even like poor silly Henry, I thought, if Sarah were dead."37

Though he is separated from Sarah for a long time, he can't escape the feeling of jealousy which is burning him. He can recognise the goodness in others easily. When he gets acquainted with Henry, he understands that Henry
possesses 'the winning cards' and there is no reason that he should feel sympathy for Henry. The cards of gentleness, humility and trust are mentioned here. These qualities present in Henry make him vulnerable to the evil plotted by individuals like Bendrix. Henry is pictured as the epitome of innocence and goodness and this contrasts with the corrupted state of Bendrix. Bendrix has considered Sarah too beautiful in the beginning and so it had never excited the idea of accessibility in him. Their love for each other had been absolute, still he was jealous and bitter enough to see her damnation and the eternal destruction of her soul when the affair ended. Hence we can contrast his nature with that of Scobie. Scobie could love only failure, ugliness, helplessness etc. That is why he falls in love with Helen. Still he is not coarse enough to see any of the souls around him and dependent on him undergoing the remote possibility of doom and destruction. The true Christian spirit is discerned in Scobie, whereas it is not seen in Bendrix. Bendrix is victim to another sin, i.e. distrust of his lady-love. He couldn't believe that she was remaining faithful to him all the while, and when he became successful as a lover, his suspicion also started mounting. Sarah is another character representing yet another aspect of sin as depicted in the works of Greene.
She remains untouched by guilt feeling at the beginning of her affair with Bendrix. Even Bendrix got uneasy and agitated, seeing the child-like innocence of Henry. But Sarah was different. "Unlike the rest of us she was undaunted by guilt. In her view when a thing was done, it was done--remorse died with the act." Greene states that in that particular respect Sarah was a born Catholic, though she did not actually believe in God. Greene is pointing out the advantageous position enjoyed by the conventional believers which keeps them near to church but far away from God. But the change comes into the life of Sarah with the experience on the day of the Air-raid. She makes a bargain with God to get back Bendrix alive. God miraculously gives him life and thus Sarah is compelled to give up her love for Bendrix and turn to belief in God. For the life of Bendrix she prays to God, as described in her diary. "Dear God, I said... I can't believe. Make me... Make me believe... I love him and I'll do anything if you'll make him alive... and then he came in at the door, and he was alive..." For a moment the saintly nature of Sarah dominates her. Hence she prays for the life of Bendrix and her prayer is granted. The next moment her human base nature starts lamenting her worldly, physical loss. But within the narrow space of time, her soul is eternally fettered to
the Holy Spirit and she can never again retrace her steps. Once Sarah starts searching for God, His Grace starts slowly descending upon her and she is conscious about her sinful state. This is a qualification Greene has attributed to all his favourite characters already mentioned in this chapter. She is asking God:

... Where do you find this immortal soul they talked about? When do you see this lovely thing in me—in me, of all people? I can understand you can find it in Henry—my Henry, I mean. He's gentle and good and patient. You can find it in Maurice who thinks he hates, and loves, loves all the time even his enemies. But in this bitch and fake where do you find anything to love?  

This monologue of Sarah with God Almighty, echoes the words of the Whiskey priest and Scobie who also thought about themselves in a similar way. We hear a similar prayer of the Whiskey priest: "O God, forgive me... I am a proud, lustful, greedy man. I have loved authority too much..." Sarah craves for the presence of a God with no relation to human beings. It was to be 'vague, amorphous and cosmic'. She doesn't want her body to be resurrected, because once again she is haunted by the
state of corruption she is in. Richard Smythe comes after
Sarah's death with the news that she was in the process of
becoming a Catholic. But Bendrix who is in a state of
bitter jealousy is having a tug of war with God for the
soul of Sarah. He was determined that if he was denied
the opportunity to live with Sarah, nobody, not even God
should become a success by attaining her soul. For this
purpose, he insists that her body should be cremated.
From her experience Sarah had gradually so grown in her
faith that finally she reached a stage when she would let
it go no further without accepting baptism and becoming a
Catholic. But she realised that she could never deny God
even for the sake of a married life with Bendrix, whom she
loved very much. She wrote in the letter: "I've caught
belief like a disease I've fallen into belief like I fell
in love." Thus here we see Sarah who receives God into
her being fully convinced of His presence. She understands
the helplessness of the sinner in herself who can't
discard the great intensity of the spiritual force which
has come searching for her. Thus the material pleasure is
sacrificed by Sarah and she accepts the will of God.
Sarah's experience is exactly opposite to that of Scobie
in The Heart of the Matter. Scobie abandoned God and the
heavenly bliss for the sake of his fellow beings. He
accepted damnation in order to stop the others and even
God suffering for his sake. But Sarah decides to abandon her lover for the sake of the greater love of God. However much she tries, she cannot shed the enchantment of the spiritual bliss which is enveloping her day after day. For the same reason we see that Greene has raised Sarah very soon to the position of a saint. We see the curing of the illness of the son of Alfred Parkis and the clearing of the marred face of Smythe. This sort of conversion to saintliness is seen only in the case of Sarah. Bendrix had resisted the belief in God, he had tried to rob Sarah for ever of her faith in a God and his love but all his attempts are futile. As the father in the novel finally said, there was nothing and no harm anybody could inflict upon her soul. Bendrix is vehemently trying to take away the soul and body of Sarah from God just because he believes in the presence of this supreme force. Towards the end, Bendrix starts slowly succumbing to the strength and force of the Almighty. He admits that he is too tired and old to learn to love and prays to God to leave him alone forever. This feeble protest is actually the proof of the final surrender of Brindrix to the supremacy of God. Greene upholds the principle of Jesus Christ that he wants the redemption of every soul and that God can never rejoice in the damnation of a single soul. We see that he has rendered
the concept of sin in such a manner that a holistic approach is made possible.

Bendrix is also an example of super ego which is a hindrance in the path of any individual moving towards the supreme light. The 'ego' causes a lot of pollution in the mind of a person and this sort of blemishes cover the surface of our inner mind and soul which prevents the spiritual light from impinging upon our soul. Bendrix considers himself the superior being once his affair with Sarah starts. He can't surrender his superiority to anybody, not even to God. Thus he is keeping away from the divine grace until he accepts his weakness and surrenders to God unconditionally. The presence of 'ego' is essential in any person. But the dominance of 'ego' prevents a person from viewing the realities with an impersonal outlook. He won't be able to analyse and comprehend the others impartially and unbiased. This defect in the nature of man is highlighted in the study of the novels of Murdoch also.

Because Greene has always focused on the grace of God bestowed on the sinful common man in his works, he has been compared to the seventeenth century Jansenists, somewhat heretical Catholics, who emphasised the completely mysterious working of the divine grace which
alone can save us from hell. Though man is depraved by nature, he cannot resist the grace of God. But Greene cannot be considered totally Jansenist in belief. He believes in the grace of God enveloping the sinful man definitely and devouring him in the sanctifying flame of purification. But he also considers man to be essentially good. There is a personal element of morality which is guiding the so-called sinner. These value-based deeds or actions which may be branded sins or crimes in the perspective of the society are not so in the eyes of the individual and ultimately to God either. The really depraved ones are denied salvation by God, in the works of Greene; Ida Arnold in *Brighton Rock* and Louis are some of them. Similarly we see that there are innocent and absolutely good characters like Rom in *Brighton Rock* who do not have the least corruption in them. Rose tries to resist the virtue which tempts her like sin because she longs for oneness with Pinkie. She shares the feeling of responsibility for the soul of Pinkie, as Scobie and the Whiskey priest feel for others around them. So she decides: "He was going to damn himself, but she was going to show them that they couldn't damn him without damning her too."

The framework of sin and saintliness in the novels of Greene has enabled him to a great extent in presenting
his characters from a psychological perspective also. The Whiskey priest in The Power and The Glory, for example, is conscious about his degraded condition. He can feel his humiliated position wherever he comes across the faith and ardent fervour of his poor people. This self-realisation keeps him always in the grace of God. He never neglects his duty even when he realises that a trap is waiting for him. Even after fulfilling his mission, his mind is filled with a sense of disappointment. He feels that he has to go empty-handed to God. Similarly all the major characters of Greene have a psychological appeal and dimension which is quite interesting.

Even in the works of Greene which are considered entertainments we can see religious overtones and references. We see statements similar to those we find in his major religious (Catholic) novels. For example, Mr. D in The Confidential Agent feels: “People were united only by their vices; there was honour among adulterers and thieves.” Here also the hero has got the feeling that the other people and their life and death would be more important than that of oneself. In the works of Greene existential philosophy is also pronounced and delineated in the characters through the pre-occupation with sin. Tomlin points out:
The Hebrew psalms reveal a point of view distinctly existentialist. There is the same consciousness of man's utter helplessness before powers outside his control, the same realization that his freedom comes through action and service, the same preoccupation with degradation and death. He adds that by a paradox, the psalms approximate in spirit less to the religious existentialism of Gabriel Marcel than to the nihilistic or atheistic existentialism of Jean Paul Sartre.

It is evident and widely accepted that Greene has been influenced by Christian principles and Biblical teachings. So naturally the existential element has also crept into his works. This special feature of the modern existentialist man is seen to a great extent in the characters of Greene mentioned especially in this chapter.

Sartre, who has no liking for the past, is a thinker morbidly aware of evil, even though he may not conceive it in conventional terms. Existentialist man, because he has been thrown into existence, has plumbed its depths. Even in his repudiation of values, the existentialist philosopher lives at the level at which the 'sense' of
values has become acute. Of Nietzsche we can say the same:

To be 'beyond good and evil' is to live in a moral void, and to live in such a void as Nietzsche knew, was to suffer a particular sort of agony, that of having 'neither God nor friend'. The agony was precisely to be aware of loss, as thirst becomes most acute in the desert. The more negative the philosophy, the more positive becomes its indirect message.47

The message of existentialism is incorporated into the works of Murdoch and Greene especially. But Murdoch has concentrated on the negative side of the life of modern man. Impersonal love is impossible for the man of the present age. Later on she tried to hold on to Christ and became closer to Christianity. In her world man is leading a lost life and it has become meaningless. But in the works of Greene, though the situation of man is the same, towards the end we see that he has been able to gain the purpose for which he is born into this world. Thus the existential philosophy is connected with the Christian philosophy. This gives a new dimension to his principles upheld through his novels. The reason is that man gets a new sense of purpose and a vision of the grace
of God which gives him an optimistic attitude. The type of novel written by Greene, Bellow, and Golding switches on from the existential style to the concept of God or good or virtue and invent its own religious images in an empty situation and "such novels are considered mystical novels by Iris Murdoch herself." In creating the mystical effect in his work Greene might have been influenced by the Danish philosopher and theologian Kierkegaard. Kierkegaard believed that the remedy for our ills and above all our itch for system-making was to turn our thought inwards, to cultivate an interior life and to realize our utter insignificance and helplessness in the sight of God. This idea is seen echoed in the works of Greene. The helplessness of man devoid of God's grace is clearly brought out here. The 'displaced person' as Kierkegaard points out, can find his proper place in the society and in this world only by returning to God. Greene has narrated the replacement of the displaced individuals through their ardent faith in God which gives meaning to their own existence. The faith in God gives them a concern for those around them and thus they find satisfaction in serving others. Thus the true Christian spirit is propagated through the novels of Greene. From the beginning of the novels we feel the proximity of God, but the characters enjoy free will and they make their
own choice in order to enter the grace of God or to deny it. Richard Swinburne has emphasised the 'inductive knowledge' God gives to man about the consequences of certain possible actions. Thus man has a substantial responsibility for their destiny and that of their fellow-beings. This has become true of all Greenian characters studied here; we get an inductive knowledge about their actions before they perform them. It is only out of their convictions that they do the actions. Most of them get into the grace of God and thus their lives attain the eternal meaning of existence.

In the novel A Burnt Out Case Greene expresses the dilemma of a person, Querry, who is mutilated and who has lost his self itself in the course of life. He is juxtaposed with the lepers and the other patients who are physically mutilated and in a ghastly condition. Querry's disfigured condition is that of the mind and the spirit. He can't feel even slightly moved by the pathos of those around. The feeling of pity is alien to him. His anguish in his state of abandonment is expressed through his strange dreams etc. Still any actions he does for anybody, even if it is without a feeling in it, gives him the attire of a saint. Even in his burned-out condition, his merit is that in his subconscious mind he is tormented by the lost grace of God and the privileges he had enjoyed.
as the true child of the Almighty. He is conscious of the harm he has done to many people and he is relieved that now he has retired from that sort of life. "I shall do no more harm, he thought, with the kind of happiness a leper must feel when he is freed at last by his seclusion from the fear of passing on contagion to another." The Christian belief and Christ are discussed in this novel as mythical elements, to a great extent. Here we see some resemblance in the philosophical discussions to the novels of Murdoch. But we can see that Greene succeeds in establishing the reality of Christianity, in spite of the scientific discussion about evolution between Querry and Doctor Colin. Similarly Querry stands as a crusader for the true spirit of Christianity. While all the other favourite characters of Greene are active sufferers, Querry remains a passive sufferer. Though he doesn't admit the Christian faith and concern for his fellow beings orally, these qualities are built into his constitution. So he dies a valiant death, having sacrificed his reputation and having much craved—for peace and solitude.

In his entertainment The Ministry of Fear, the character Arthur Rowe who had killed his own wife out of pity stands justified. This is made possible because though the law had taken a merciful view, Rowe himself had
taken a merciless one. The sense of pity had prompted him to do the sinful deed and ultimately it purges and purifies his soul of the burden. Along with the highly complex way of dealing with sins and sinners, Greene has a light manner (in some of his works) of dealing with some plain truth of daily life. For example Castle feels after telling a lie: "Simplicity was always best, just as it paid to speak the truth whenever possible, for the truth is so much easier to memorise than a lie." Greene himself has suggested that the character Raven, the killer, in *A Gun for Sale* had provided him with a sketch for Pinkie in *Brighton Rock*. Though they are outlaws, they have the sense of justice and hence they are pardoned by God and taken into His divine grace.

Thus Greene has made use of his ideas regarding sin and saintliness, as depicted through his novels, to encompass the whole world within the scope of universal love. The worst sinners, criminals and the failures have turned out to be saints and successes through his dextrous delineation on a firm spiritual foundation. There are only very few who are left out from the grace of God ultimately. They are those individuals who had been prudish, hypocritical and deceptive to an extent that even God couldn't compromise with them. Greene has succeeded in making use of the Christian concept of sin
and putting it into practical benefit. So the common man or the evil man who might have been considered insignificant and worthless by the society has gained access into the domain of God and His divine grace.

Here it is apt to mention the doctrine of Plato, which considers man a 'fallen creature'. Realizing his sorry condition, man strives to improve it; and he may, if supremely fortunate, arrive at true knowledge, as opposed to mere belief or opinion, by the technique of recollection or--to use Plato's term--'mimesis', which brings to birth the wisdom with which he was formerly endowed.
Notes

1 The Bible, Psalms 53: 5.
2 The Bible, Matthew 12: 31.
3 Qtd. in Herbert R. Haber, "The Two Worlds of Graham Greene," Modern Fiction Studies 3.3 (Autumn 1957): 256.
5 The Bible, The Revelation to John 3: 15-16.
6 Qtd. in Herbert R. Haber 260.
8 Greene, The Heart of the Matter 139.
14 Greene, The Heart of the Matter 22.


20 The Bible, Corinth. 13: 4-8.


22 The Bible, Matthew, 9: 13.

23 Greene, The Heart of the Matter 185.

24 Greene, The Heart of the Matter 186.


26 Sharma 104.

27 Greene, The Heart of the Matter 262.

28 Greene, The Heart of the Matter 296.

29 Greene, The Heart of the Matter 313.


32 Greene, Monsignor Quixote 116.

33 Greene, Monsignor Quixote 121.


38 Greene, The End of the Affair 51.
40 Greene, The End of the Affair 106.
42 Greene, The End of the Affair 159.
47 Tomlin E. W. F. 479.
52 Tomlin E. W. F. 274.