Introduction

The heart of the matter is written by Graham Green who was born on 2nd October the year 1904 in England. Graham Green went to a school where his father was the principal. His father being the principal of the school that Graham green attended, it resulted to him being mercilessly teased by his classmates. While in his teenage, Green underwent a mental crisis. So bad was the situation that he tried to make several suicide attempts after which he ran away from home. In reaction to the status of their child, Green’s parents sent him to London to have the services of a psychiatrist. The psychiatrist was named Kenneth Richmond, and he encouraged Graham to write. Kenneth Richmond also introduced Graham to literary circle that incorporated Walter de la Mare who was a poet. Bernard (2006)

It is from this background that Graham had his poetry skills and made him write the heart of the matter. The novel the heart of the matter is set in a small background in a British colonial outpost. The outpost is in Sierra Leone in Africa and it is during the World War II. The heart of the matter takes up and comments on the motivated subjects of espionage, adultery, love, war, and betrayal.

The core and the heart of the heart of the matter is, however, the moral dilemmas. The spiritual and psychological depth, plot and the political intrigues revolve around two basic moral questions: is suicide ever the right choice? Is it possible to make others happy? Henry who is a mysterious protagonist wonders of the death of Christ could be comprehended as an act of suicide as he allowed himself to be sacrificed. Prior to reaching the climatic decision of his own moral crisis, Henry is unable to make his poetry loving wife happy.
Characters in the novel

The main character in the novel is Major Henry Scobie who is a longtime serving police officer. Another character in the novel is Louise who is the catholic wife to protagonist of the novel Henry. Catherine Scobies is another character in the novel and she is the deceased daughter of Henry and Louise. Ali is a character in the novel and he is a longtime African servant of Henry.

Edward Wilson is a new inspector who is involved in secretly spying on the actions Henry. He is a character who is in love with Henry’s wife Louise. Wilson has a housemate who goes by the name of Harris. Yusef is of Syrian origin and is a local marketer and blackmails Henry after coming across a letter that reveals Henry’s love for Helen. Helen is a newly arriving widow who Henry takes as his mistress. Yusef has a catholic Syrian who is his main competitor and goes by the name of Tallit. Other catholic priests in the novel include Father Rank and Father Clay who reads about saints in Bamba. Graham (1948).

Main themes

The heart of the matter was viewed by Graham Greene as associating with the issue of pity. Greene is able to demonstrate this by portraying Henry the main character in the book as a man who is weak but has his good intentions doomed by his large sense of pity. In the prologue Greene says that he intended to have the story of Henry expound a theme which he had introduced in ‘The Ministry of Fear’. This covered the negative effect on human beings of pity as different from compassion.

In the introduction of the novel, Graham reveals that the novels can be viewed as a kind of examination of the experiences he had. Marie-Francoise (1993). These experiences were in Sierra Leone during the World War II where he had served as a MI6 operative. In the preamble of the novel, Graham reveals that the story of the novel arose from a yearning by him to compose a detective story where the principal character is ignorant of whom the detective is. Whatever personal feelings that and writings that Green may have towards the story, it is clear
to find strong presentation of the themes of failure.

By the end of the book, each and every character whether Henry or Wilson fails in achieving the ultimate goals that they had set. The ultimate sacrifice that is, suicide that Henry pays does to succeed in bringing the expected happiness to his wife. Henry also tries to cover up his infidelity but he is unsuccessful as the wife had known it all along. Wilson who also tries to pursue an adulterous affair with Henry’s wife is similarly not successful. This is seen at the end of the novel where Louise refuses to give in to Wilson’s advances after the death of Henry. Michael (2004).

The heart of the matter is, though, not just about failure. It is also about the price that everyone pays for individualism and lack of comprehending other people. Each and every character in the novel operates at lateral purposes which they reckon that everyone else understands. The characters in the novels also operate thinking that their actions are hidden from others, while in fact they are not.

The novel is also able to express and reveal the conflict that exists between the individual and the church. The fears of Henry are constantly put in the voice and context of religion. Henry has a pathological fear of taking communion after his wife returns. This is attributed to the suffering that he had as a result of the mortal sin that he had committed. Henry later suffers over the decision to commit suicide due to the theological damnation. It is particularly interesting to note the nature of the conflict. This is because the conflict is not a conflict of faith but rather has a basis on legalistic terms.

Conclusion
The heart of the matter can not be termed as a mystery or a high octane adventure. This is because the novel does not center and is not about an extraordinary event. It can therefore be termed as a story of an individual who had his character and faith put to the definitive test. At some instances, the plot of the novel had a slow pace.

Greene can, however, be considered as having done an extremely awesome work. This is portrayed in the ability of the novel to capture the vagueness of the human situation, as well as providing revelation to the inner demons that plague the readers. Through the heart of the matter, Graham is able to sum up the core of an interesting setting in a single book.

Reference:


Marie-Francoise (1993) The Other Man: Conversations with Graham Greene. London:

Simon and Schuster