spy, Wilson, who covets Scobie's wife as well as his reputation for integrity; and Scobie tries desperately to condone his act of despair by seeing in it an imitation of Christ: "Christ had not been murdered: Christ had killed himself; he had hung himself on the Cross as surely as Pemberton from the picture rail"—a notion that turns up again after the suicide in *The Living Room*. All these items provide the reader, as planned, with a full measure of uncertainty about Scobie's conduct in this world and his chances in the next. It is suggested in the last lines that Scobie may really have loved God; and it is suggested that God may be the only being he did love. The night before he encounters the dying child and Helen Rolt, we hear Scobie murmuring the incomplete phrase as he falls asleep, "O God, bless—," and later, another incomplete phrase as he falls senseless and dying; "Dear God, I love . . ." Not even the reader, who knows more about Scobie than anyone else, can be sure of the objects of those verbs.

Psychology thus yields to a dark theology, the pity to the terror, the human sufferer to the secret cause. All we are meant to know is that we know nothing; that is the answer to Louise's question. Pinkie Brown almost certainly is damned, and he was without any doubt a vicious and wicked young man. The Mexican priest is almost certainly saved, and he was one of the most curiously sympathetic figures in modern fiction. We conclude, about Henry Scobie, in a purging sense of the unguessable nature of human conduct and divine intervention. In so far as they do constitute a trilogy, Greene's three novels reverse the direction of the greatest religious trilogy, *The Divine Comedy*. Dante's poem moves from ignorance to knowledge, from discord to harmony, from unspeakable darkness to overwhelming light. Greene's "trilogy" moves stealthily deeper into the darkness, moves through the annihilation of our confidence in human knowledge to an awareness of impenetrable mystery, moves from the deceptive light to the querulous nourishing obscurity. All the truth of things, for Greene, lies hidden in the darkness: whether of slum-ridden Brighton, of a squalid prison cell, or of a West African night of wonder and despair. Scarcely less mysterious is Greene's achievement of making visible in that darkness, and exactly by means of it, the unforgettable dramas of extraordinarily living human beings.

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Graham Greene

by François Mauriac

The work of an English Catholic novelist—of an Englishman returning to Catholicism—like *The Power and the Glory* by Graham Greene, at first always gives me the sensation of being in a foreign land. To be sure, I find there my spiritual country, and it is into the heart of a familiar mystery that Graham Greene introduces me. But everything takes place as though I were penetrating into an old estate through a concealed door unknown to me, hidden in a wall covered with ivy, and as though I were advancing behind the hero of a novel through tangled branches and suddenly recognized the great avenue of the park where I played when I was a child and deciphered my initials cut on the trunk of an oak on some former holiday.

A French Catholic enters the church by the main door only; he is interwoven with its official history; he has taken part in all the debates which have torn it throughout the centuries and which have divided the Gallican church especially. In everything he writes, one discovers at once whether he is on the side of Port-Royal or the Jesuits, whether he weds Bossuet's quarrel with Fénelon, whether he is on the side of Lamennais and Lacordaire or if it is with Louis Veuillot that he agrees. Bernanos' work of which it is impossible not to think on reading *The Power and the Glory* is very significant in this respect. All the Catholic controversies of the last four centuries unfold in filigree. Behind the Abbé Donisan of the *Sun of Satan*, appears the curate of Ars. Bernanos' saints, like his liberal priests and like the pious laymen he describes with such happy ferocity, betray his veneration and his hatreds.

Graham Greene, himself, broke, like a burglar, into the kingdom of the unknown, into the kingdom of nature and of Grace. No prejudice troubles his vision. No current of ideas turns him aside from that discovery, that key which he found suddenly. He has no preconceived notion of what we call a bad priest; it could be said that he has no model of saintliness in his mind. There is corrupted nature and omnipotent Grace; there is poverty-stricken man who is nothing, even in evil, and there is mysterious love which lays hold upon him in the thick of his ridiculous misery and absurd shame to make a saint and martyr of him.

The power and the glory of the Father burst forth in the Mexican curate who loves alcohol too much and who gets one of his parishioners pregnant. A type so common and mediocres that his mortal sins call forth only derision and a shrugging of the shoulders, and he knows it. What this extraordinary book shows us is, if I dare say so, the utilization of sin by Grace. This priest, rebellious and condemned to death by the public authorities and on whose head there is a price (the drama takes place in Mexico given over to atheistic and persecuting rulers), who tries to save himself, as indeed all the other priests, even the most virtuous, did, who in fact saves himself and passes the frontier, but who comes back every time a dying person needs him, even when he believes his help will be in vain, and even when he is not ignorant that it is a trap and that the one who is calling him has already betrayed him, this priest, a drunkard, impure and trembling before death, gives his life without for a single moment losing the feeling of his baseness and his shame. He would think it a joke if he were told he was a saint. He is miraculously saved from pride, complacency and self-righteousness. He goes to his martyrdom, having always in his mind the vision of the soiled nothingness and the sacrilege that a priest in a state of mortal sin is, so that he sacrifices himself on attributing to God all of that power and glory which triumph over what he considers the most miserable of men: himself.

And as he approaches the end, we see this mediocre sinner conform slowly to the Christ until he resembles Him, but that is not saying enough: until he identifies himself with his Lord and his God. Passion begins again around this victim chosen from among human derelicts, who repeats what Christ did, not as at the altar, without it costing him anything, on offering the blood and the body under the species of bread and wine, but giving up his own flesh and blood as on a cross. In this false, bad priest it is not virtue that appears as the opposite of sin, it is faith—faith in that sign he received the day of his ordination, in the trust that he alone (since all the other priests have been massacred or have fled) still bears in his hands, unworthy but yet consecrated.

The last priest remaining in the country, he is unable not to believe that after him there will be no one to offer the Sacrifice, or to absolve, or to distribute the bread which is no longer bread, or to help the dying on the threshold of life eternal. And yet his faith does not waver, although he does not know that scarcely will he have fallen when another priest will suddenly and futilely appear.

We feel it is that hidden presence of God in an atheistic world, that subterranean flowing of Grace which dazzles Graham Greene much more than the majestic façade which the temporal Church still erects above the peoples. If there is a Christian whom the crumbling of the invisible Church would not disturb, it is, indeed, that Graham Greene whom I heard at Brussels evoking, before thousands of Belgian Catholics, and in the presence of a dreaming apostolic nuncio, the last pope of a totally dechristianized Europe, standing in line at the commission, dressed in a spotted gabardine, and holding in his hand, on which still shone the Fisherman's ring, a cardboard valise.

That is to say that this book is addressed providentially to a generation that the absurdity of a crazy world is clutching by the throat. To the young contemporaries of Camus and Sartre, desperate prey to an absurd liberty, Graham Greene will reveal, perhaps, that this absurdity is in truth only that of boundless love.

The message is addressed to believers, to the virtuous, to those who do not doubt their merit and who have ever present in their minds several models of holiness, with the proper technic for attaining the various steps in the mystical ascension. It is addressed in particular to Christian priests and laymen, especially to writers who preach the cross but of whom it is not enough to say they are not crucified. A great lesson given to those obsessed with perfection, and those scrupulous people who split hairs over their shortcomings, and who forget that, in the last day, according to
the word of Saint John of the Cross, it is on love that they will be judged.

Dear Graham Greene to whom I am attached by so many bonds, and first of all by those of gratitude (since thanks to you, my books to-day find the same warm reception in England that they received in my own country, at the time that I was a happy young author), how pleasant it is for me to think that France, where your work is already loved, is going to discover, thanks to that great book, The Power and the Glory, its true meaning. That state which you describe, which tracks down the last priest and assassinates him, is indeed the very one we see arising under our eyes. It is the hour of the Prince of this world, but you paint him without hatred. Even the executioners, even your chief of police is marked by you with a sign of mercy; they search for truth; they believe, like our communists, they have found it and are serving it—that truth which demands the sacrifice of consecrated creatures. Darkness covers all the earth you describe, but what a burning ray crosses it! Whatever happens, we know we must not be afraid; you remind us that the inexplicable will be explained and that there remains a grating to be put up against this absurd world. Through you, we know the adorable limit to the liberty that Sartre grants to men; we know that a creature loved as much as we are has no other liberty than that of refusing that love, to the degree to which it has made itself known to him and under the appearances it has been pleased to assume.

The Force of Caricature

Aspects of the art of Graham Greene, with particular reference to The Power and the Glory

by Richard Hoggart

Admirers of Graham Greene usually reserve a special place for The Power and the Glory, the story of a priest’s flight through a land which has forsaken the Faith. I have in mind not so much specialists and critics as the large number of people who normally read few novels and yet are devoted readers of Graham Greene. Why should this novel be so highly regarded? Does it possess some typical qualities in stronger measure than Greene’s other books? Are the theme, the manner or the setting particularly attractive, and if so why?

Setting is always important and constitutive in Graham Greene, but in The Power and the Glory even more than elsewhere. The theme is indivisibly priest-and-land, his journey through a country against whose condition, simply by being what he is, he makes a charge. The land is given over to a “huge abandonment”; it rolls through time “like a burning and abandoned ship.” Variations on these phrases echo throughout the book. So far as this country likes to think itself modern, it has chosen the sterile progressivism of the police lieutenant; so far as it is what it always was, though now without acknowledging its condition, it is “a landscape of terror and lust.” Here the echoes are even more insistent: this is a world “of treachery, violence and lust,” of “violence everywhere . . . there no end to violence”; this is the land of the corrupt and cowardly Jeze, of the fang-toothed Judas (“they [the priest and the