

Graham Greene

THE MAN

A BIOINFOGRAPHY OF

GRAHAM GREENE

One of the most widely read British novelists of the 20th century

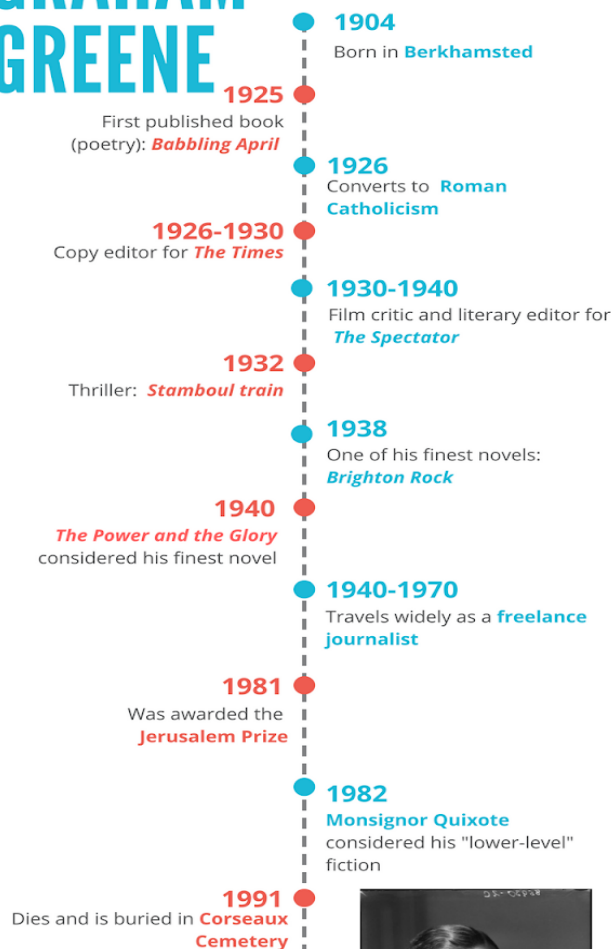


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Monsignor Quixote

ABOUT THE BOOK

STYLE

Some scholars have classified it as a very terse and dry book, however its prose is full of **humanity**. The whole novel is a long-running **dialogue** between Monsignor Quixote and Enrique Zancas, and the friendship that develops as a result of their road trip.

THEME

Again, scholars differ in their categorisation of the novel: is it a moral book? A book of ideas? A novel driven by its religious themes? A small tragedy? An elegy of innocence?

Maybe it's just a travelling symposium with a primary subject of **doubt**. Curiously enough, they are both men of faith (in their own ways), and doubt is the place where they meet. Thus, doubt becomes the natural human antidote to divine or ideological faith and **friendship** the supreme affirmation of humanity.

*"I cling to my old books, but I have my **doubts** too" (p.37)*

*"I hope - friend- that you sometimes doubt too. It's human to **doubt**" (p.38)*

"I believe what I told her (...) I believe it of course, but how is it that when I speak of belief, I become aware always of a shadow, the shadow of disbelief haunting my belief?" (p.143)

"Father Leopoldo when a young man had had no thought of becoming a priest. He had attached himself to Descartes without thought of where he might be led. He wanted to question everything, in the manner of Descartes, searching for an absolute truth, and in the end, like Descartes, he had accepted what seemed to him the nearest thing to truth" (p.171)

*"We must have something in common, father, or why do you go with me? I suppose - **friendship**?*

Is that enough?

We will find out in time" (p.27)

"It's odd, he thought (...) how sharing a sense of doubt can bring men together perhaps even more than sharing a faith. The believer will fight another believer over a shade of difference: the doubter fights only with himself" (p.38)

*"Isn't **friend** going a little bit far between a Catholic priest and a Marxist?" (p.32)*

"You drew me to you because I thought you were the opposite of myself (...) I was drawn to you because I thought you were a man without doubts" (p.149)

CHARACTERS

Father Quixote is a man of consummate humility and innocence, modest and generous. Sancho is his ideological opposite, both in beliefs and in temperament. It is only wine and cheese that unites them at first, but the bond that brings them together over time is **doubt**.

"No wine can be regarded as unimportant, my friend, since the marriage at Cana" (p.5)

"A little drunkenness has brought us together (...) It helps friendship" (p.115)

RELIGION

Even though Graham Greene always took great pains to defend himself from assumptions that he was a Catholic novelist, he is so. He is a Catholic novelist, and a wonderful one too. He is witty, often funny and sometimes sarcastic and critical in his comments of the Church and its organization.

"... and I pray to God that it may survive me". So many of his prayers had remained unanswered that he had hopes that this one prayer of his had lodged all the time like wax in the Eternal ear" (p.3)

"God save me from such a belief (...) Save him too from belief" (p.51)

"God can be hard of hearing (...) that must have been the reason why there were so many Masses said for the Generalissimo. For a man like that one you have to shout to be heard" (p.64)

"You think my God is an illusion like the windmills. But He exists, I tell you, I don't just believe in Him. I touch Him. Is he soft or hard?" (p.114)

"Father Quixote had reason to be afraid of bishops" (p.4)

"The bishop gave a curious sound - it reminded Father Quixote of one of Teresa's hens laying an egg" (p.137)

"Bishops, just like the very poor and the uneducated, should be treated with a special prudence" (p.139)

"I doubt if anyone is ever fully converted" (p.18)

"[The vodka's] wearing off even now. So does belief (...) Belief dies away like desire for a woman" (p.18)

"You're in the army of the Church, father. You can't refuse the badges of rank: purple socks and a purple pechera" (p.21)

"... in those days I still had a half-belief" (p.76) "Have I complete belief?" Sancho asked. "Sometimes i wonder (...) There is a muffled voice, a voice of uncertainty which whispers in the ears of the believer" (p.77)

"I'm not a Stalinist, but at least you know where you are with them (...) You can say, "I don't believe but I accept", and you fall into silence like the Trappists do. The Trappists are the Stalinists of the Church" (p.154)

"To gabble a few words and ask a thousand pesetas (...) you would see how greedy the priests are for the money the Mexicans have brought to these poor parts" (p.158)

Monsignor Quixote

TO TAKE TO OUR CLASSES

- Stay away from stereotyping

"Why are you always saddling me with my ancestor? (...) My adventures are my own adventures, not his. I go my way - my way- not his. I have free will" (p.114)

"I don't like anything that I cannot understand.

And what's that?

These ignorant villagers and their atrocious accents.

They're Galician, Sancho" (p.154)

How about having students identify stereotypes in the media (shows, movies, advertising)? They can record it and present the stereotype portrayed and any thoughts s/he experienced while watching it.

- Exchange literature - bookcrossing

"In return for Father Jone, I will lend you Father Lenin"

Why not set up a bookcrossing point at your school?

Set up a bookcrossing exchange with another school in Galicia

Establish a "reading buddies" programme where older students mentor the younger ones



- Address the positives of the opposite literature and respectfully note your concerns

"It's the work of a good man. A man as good as you are- and just as mistaken"

We can encourage critical thinking and critical reading even at primary level. Critical reading means that not only does the reader read to obtain the content knowledge (what information or message the author is sharing), but additionally, the reader has to read for a level of understanding through which he or she can evaluate the writing. Critical reading requires the reader to ask the hard questions: "Do I believe what I am reading?" "Does it make sense?" "Is the argument compelling?" "Is the evidence provided sufficient and credible?" "What is missing?" "What is most important?" "How does this fit with what I already know?" "How is this useful to me?" "What do I need to do with this information?"