

**A QUIXOTIC AVATAR IN POST-FRANCOIST SPAIN:
GRAHAM GREENE'S *MONSIGNOR QUIXOTE* AND THE SENSE
OF BELIEF IN THE SECULAR MODERN WORLD**

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***Abstract:** The article explores the nature of religious and political belief in the secular modern world, as exemplified by Greene's 1982 novel, whose structure and themes are patterned after Cervantes's Don Quixote. Deeply engaged in questioning the Catholic faith, particularly after the Second Vatican Council, and the doctrine of communism in post-Francoist Spain, the novel, I argue, can be read as a satirical contempt for what is indisputably categorized as orthodox dogmatic belief. Both *Monsignor Quixote*, the eponymous protagonist of the novel, and Sancho, the former Communist mayor of El Toboso, are tormented with doubt, and it is precisely their mutual respect towards each other's beliefs that ultimately leads to their friendship and, by extension, to the reconciliation of two conflicting discourses.*

***Keywords:** dialogue, doubt, faith, friendship, Marxism, Roman Catholicism*

1. Introduction

Published in 1982, *Monsignor Quixote* is one of Graham Greene's most benign novels in terms of theme and characters. Although one of the "best and most amusing novels" (O'Prey 1988: 151), Greene's work marks a visible shift in style, which juxtaposes a realistic narrative with a foray into anti-dogmatic Catholic values upheld by the Spanish priest. In *Monsignor Quixote*, Greene's strong support for Christian humanism is "even more decisively central to the artistic, imaginative, intellectual, ethical and psychological world of the fiction than had been the case in most of the earlier 'Catholic' novels" (Holderness 1993: 262), which include *Brighton Rock* (1938), *The Power and the Glory* (1940), *The Heart of the Matter* (1948), *The End of the Affair* (1951) and *A Burnt-Out Case* (1961). By the same token, in his seminal book entitled *Graham Greene*, David Lodge (1966: 6) argues that Catholicism in Greene's fiction represents

a system of concepts, a source of situation, and a reservoir of symbols with which he can order and *dramatize* certain *intuitions* about the nature of human experience—intuitions which were gained prior to and independently of his formal adoption of the Catholic faith. (my emphasis)

Lodge's pithy remark enables me to consider the novel and its main characters as highly indicative of Greene's fictional imagination, on the one hand, and, more importantly, of his Catholic imagination, which often appears to be at loggerheads with the canon law of the Catholic Church. Mark Bosco (2005: 139),

who has written at length about the connection between Catholicism and the novelist's literary imagination, has cogently observed that the Roman Catholic dogma makes room for theological speculations or "intuitions" whereby the characters are seeking to become aware of the relationship between God and humanity, "while struggling to understand the paradoxical claims that are made on them by others". In crude terms, Bosco opposes Lodge's dramatization of subjective faith, which, in the case of Monsignor Quixote, is prone to uncertainty and doubt, to the rigid use of precepts imposed by the Catholic Church. For instance, when asked by the mayor whether he is not questioning the existence of Hell, Father Quixote answers straightforwardly: "I believe from obedience, but not with the heart" (Greene 1982: 75). Consequently, Monsignor Quixote's opinions and actions are the natural outcome of his humanitarian ethics, simplicity, kind-heartedness, tolerance and empathy, for "he dignifies failure by suggesting that those who fail are closer to God; he believes in human love as an expression of divine love; and he contends that hatred is the other side of love" (Hoskins 1999: 259).

Apart from the fictional treatment of Roman Catholicism, which has generally been considered by critics to be the natural extension of Greene's personal religious beliefs, *Monsignor Quixote* is a piece of fiction that owes a great deal to three major literary sources. The first, as evident from the title, is Cervantes's *Don Quixote*, which is immediately recognizable not only in terms of form and structure, but also in terms of character construction and development. Father Quixote confesses that he is descended from Cervantes's Spanish knight, a famed "fictional character" who attests to "his distinguished ancestry" (Greene 1982: 12). The second is the Italian author Giovanni Guareschi's *The Little World of Don Camillo*, a novel which foregrounds the relationship between Don Camillo, the priest of the Italian village of Bassa, and Peppone, the mayor of the town and leader of the Communist party. The third, which actually inspired Greene to write the novel, is Father Leopoldo Duran's book, *Graham Greene: Friend and Brother*, published in 1994. Greene and Father Duran made friends in 1976, when they began to travel across Spain and Portugal. Acting as Greene's "adviser in certain doctrinal matters and occasionally his confessor as well", Father Duran has revealed that "Greene conceived the idea for *Monsignor Quixote* during their visit to the burial site of the Spanish philosopher Miguel de Unamuno in Salamanca in July 1976" (Hoskins 1999: 260), an anecdote incorporated into Greene's picaresque narrative, modelled on the Cervantine one. In this context, Unamuno's *The Tragic Sense of Life in Man and Nations* is equally relevant philosophical text that stirred Greene's Catholic imagination out of which *Monsignor Quixote* came into being.

In line with Lodge's and Bosco's approach, my aim is twofold: to delve into the Roman Catholic way of thinking and acting of a 20th-century Quixotic avatar of Cervantes and to show that, notwithstanding the evident link between the Roman Catholic religious culture and Greene's literary imagination, *Monsignor Quixote* is a novel that cannot easily fall into the category of "Catholic" novels, according to Holderness, nor can it explicitly pass for political fiction, given the former mayor's communist beliefs endorsed by Marxist philosophy. In doing so, I will shed light on Father Quixote's religious views, moulded after Miguel de Unamuno's fideism, according to which true faith is the ultimate expression of uncertainty and despair, rather than reason. I will connect this aspect to Greene's satirical contempt for established dogmatic belief in the secular modern world, on the one hand, and, on the other, to the overarching theme of sympathy and friendship stemming from both characters' doubts and respect towards each other's opinions or beliefs.

2. Don Quixote as priest

Indebted to Cervantes, *Monsignor Quixote* is a novel whose plot lends itself to a simple summary. The Monsignor, an allegedly real descendant of the fictional Don Quixote, sets off on a journey to Madrid together with Zancas, the former Communist mayor of El Toboso, whose name is actually Sancho's surname in the first book of *Don Quixote*. Ludicrously elevated to the rank of monsignor after he fuels the Mercedes of a visiting curial bishop from Rome, who also enjoys the wine and horsemeat steak kind-heartedly offered by the priest, Father Quixote stirs up the anger of his obnoxious bishop who has long considered him insane and who grants him a respite, thus hoping to dismiss him as soon as possible. Replaced by Father Herrera, who, like the bishop, is a member of the rigid Spanish Church which had supported General Franco, Father Quixote and the former mayor leave El Toboso in a worn-out Seat 600, affectionately named Rocinante, after Don Quixote's horse. On their way to Madrid, where they are to buy a bib and purple socks, the sartorial emblems of a monsignor, the two protagonists gradually develop a friendship based on sympathetic conversations, accompanied by plenty of Manchegan wine, cheese, and sausages. In a series of serio-comic situations, Father Quixote sojourns in a brothel which he mistakes for a hotel, watches a pornographic film, hides a robber from the Guardia Civil, visits the Valley of the Fallen, where General Franco was buried, the University of Salamanca, where he admires the statue of Unamuno, and the house of Cervantes in Valladolid. Outraged by such actions, the bishop and Father Herrera manage to bring Quixote back to El Toboso, where he is now deemed as completely mad and imprisoned in his own home. Set free by Sancho, they travel to Galicia, where, scandalised by a procession in which the priests allow the statue of the Virgin to be covered in money, the monsignor interrupts the ceremony and is wounded by a censor thrown at his head. While driving towards the Trappist monastery at Osera in order to escape the furious crowd, the Guardia Civil chase them and shoot Rocinante's tires, leaving Quixote injured. Accommodated and looked after by Father Leopoldo, Monsignor Quixote enters the chapel with Sancho, Father Leopoldo, and Professor Pilbeam, an authority on Ignatius of Loyola, where he dies after administering deliriously the imaginary Eucharist to Sancho.

In *The Sanctification of Don Quixote: From Hidalgo to Priest*, Eric Ziolkowski has minutely analysed the monsignor's identification with Don Quixote from a literary and religious perspective. According to Ziolkowski (1991: 1), Don Quixote has been employed over centuries as a "vehicle for religious expression" in a secular world in which the Quixote's *forma mentis* and *modus operandi* are no longer valid. The same is true for any quixotic character, since it is precisely their anachronistic ethical code that clashes with modern norms and conventions. In other words, quixotic characters are "vehicles" for social, cultural, religious or political reform, however idealistic it may be. In Greene's novel, Father Quixote passes for an old fool because of his simplicity, frugality, modesty, humbleness and, most importantly, because of his feelings of doubt and uncertainty, which fail to be in tune with the precepts of the Catholic Church. In the words of Mark Bosco (2005: 130), *Monsignor Quixote* has recourse to "a Catholic sacramentality uneasily situated within the corrupt and decadent descriptions of modern life". The monsignor has nothing of Don Quixote's fabricated magnificence, admitting that he would have liked to study at Salamanca, but "the standard there was beyond me" (Greene 1982: 23). He questions the existence of Hell and wishes that

everyone, Franco included, should go to Heaven. As a descendant of Don Quixote, the monsignor is, paradoxically, a real character who asserts his own identity. Greene uses this literary game in order to warn the reader about the novel's allusive structure, within which a "real" character like Father Quixote, in fact a mixture of fiction and reality, subverts traditional realism. Sancho, the ex-Mayor, says: "You know, father, you remind me of your ancestor. He believed in all those books of chivalry, quite out of date even in his day..." Quixote strongly objects, answering that "I've never read a book of chivalry in my life." Yet Sancho continues: "But you continue to read those old books of theology. They are your books of chivalry. You believe in them just as much as he did in his books." (idem: 34). Unlike Don Quixote, the monsignor is aware that certain ecclesiastical books contain absurdities, but they never shake his faith in God. When, for instance, Sancho ridicules Father Heribert Jone, a German moral theologian whose work "doesn't play a great part in parish work" (idem: 40), Quixote answers sympathetically: "I know that there are absurdities in some of my books as there were in the books of chivalry my ancestor collected. That didn't mean that all chivalry was absurd. Whatever absurdities you can dig out of my books, I still have faith" (idem: 85). Contrary to Don Quixote, who indulges himself into reading *Amadis of Gaul*, the monsignor comforts his mind with more liberal theological, devotional and ethical writers, such as St. John of the Cross, St. Teresa, St. Francis de Sales and St. Thérèse of Lisieux. What is more, Greene's Quixote makes his own decisions and choices when he decides to defend the statue of the Virgin against the Mexicans by imitating his ancestor or when he radically opposes his adventures to those of Don Quixote: "My adventures are my own adventures, not his. I go my way—my way—not his. I have free will" (idem: 141). Whereas the priest and the barber in *Don Quixote* burn the hero's books, the monsignor becomes "a prisoner, he thought, like Cervantes" (idem: 169) in his own room, where his books are left intact. In the end, Don Quixote comes back to his senses and, before dying, he declines Sancho's request to resume knight-errantry, since it is completely useless. As Murray Roston (2006: 274) suggests, Don Quixote's subtle remark, "There are no birds this year in last year's nests", is repeated by the Bishop of Motopo, who by this line "encourages Father Quixote to undertake a journey of faith". With his faith unaltered, the monsignor only wants to be accepted as a humble priest who never mistakes fiction for reality, but seems to be mad as long as he claims to be the descendant of Cervantes's famous knight, whose adventures, as perceived by the bishop of El Toboso, are recounted on "many disgusting passages which in the days of the Generalissimo would not even have passed the censor" (Greene 1982: 4). They may not have passed the censor because of Don Quixote's idealism, which left a legacy for many quixotic characters, among them being Monsignor Quixote, whose mission is to revivify faith in a "disenchanted" (Weber 2004: 30) world, in which the belief in powers superior to man has been waning. At the same time, the bishop of El Toboso may have been wrong, since, in Francoist Spain, Don Quixote acquired the status of a national hero, assimilated with his author who, serving his nation in the Battle of Lepanto, lost his left arm.

3. Doubt as the liaison between friendship and faith

Patrick Henry (1985: 68) has rightfully observed that "the word 'doubt' occurs with uncommon frequency in *Monsignor Quixote* and, in both parts of the

novel, it is clearly established that doubt is the natural state of the believer". Shortly after Father Quixote and his squire, the ex-Mayor Zancas, leave La Mancha, the former complains that "nothing seems safe any more" (Greene 1982: 44). Asked by Zancas whether his faith is safe, the monsignor "did not bother to answer" (ibid.). Seen as a liminal phase that suggests Quixote's contact with the crude realities of life, their departure is synonymous with each other's self-discovery endorsed by lively – and often humorous – conversations over wine and cheese. The two characters' witty dialogue allows us to view Greene's work as a novel of ideas, in which Greene "is considered to have secured a belated truce between the opposed ideologies of Catholicism and Communism, a creative rapprochement between spiritual loyalty and political commitment, religious faith and social obligation" (Holderness 1993: 265). Quixote, who asks the Mayor to call him "friend" (Greene 1982: 51), affirms that "it's human to doubt" (idem: 58) and, ultimately, in a Christian humanist manner, that "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" (idem: 59). At the opposite end, Sancho is haunted by Stalin's atrocities committed in death camps, claiming that "he very nearly killed Communism (...) just as the Curia killed the Catholic Church" (idem: 179). Moreover, Sancho's trust in Marxism as a solution to the problem of social injustice recommend him as "rational humanist" (O'Prey 1988: 146), who persuades the monsignor to read Marx's *Communist Manifesto*, just as Father Quixote encourages Sancho to read Father Heribert Jone's *Moral Theology*. This exchange of books is highly indicative of the necessity for a constructive debate, meant to engage both protagonists in interpreting, producing and negotiating meaning. The monsignor stresses Marx's morality and also his quixotic ideology reflected in Sancho – "It's the work of a good man. A man as good as you are – and just as mistaken" (Greene 1982: 126) – whereas Sancho recalls that, as a student at Salamanca, where they stop for a short time in order to admire Unamuno's statue, Unamuno's faith "kept me in the Church for several years with that half-belief of his which for a while I could share" (idem: 111). This is one of the crucial episodes in the novel, because Sancho, puzzled by Quixote's radical statement that echoes Unamuno's existentialist philosophy, – "There's only one thing you will ever lack – the dignity of despair" (Greene 1982: 112) – reminisces even better Unamuno's understanding of religious faith, which now troubles his conscience:

"Have I complete belief?" Sancho asked. "Sometimes I wonder. The ghost of my professor haunts me (...) I hear him saying, 'There is a muffled voice, a voice of uncertainty which whispers in the ears of the believer. Who knows? Without this uncertainty how could we live?'" (Greene 1982: 112)

The monsignor's "dream of a deepening friendship and a profounder understanding, of a reconciliation even between their disparate faiths" (idem: 66) materializes as a result of uncertainty as the foundation of moral qualities such as tolerance, empathy, respect and modesty. Travelling across a country that is subject to political transition in the late 1970s, which both protagonists paradoxically perceive as a timeless land – "How little Spain changes," the Mayor said" (Greene 1982: 108) -, Quixote and his squire embody "the modern believer's inevitable struggle in a rational world against uncertainty and disbelief" (O'Prey 1988: 147), theologically upheld in the novel by Catholic conservative clerics like the bishop of

El Toboso and Father Herrera, whose name ironically points to the Spanish noun *hierro* (“iron”). Despite the authoritarian canon of the Catholic Church, Father Quixote feels at ease with his companion, refuting, for instance, Sancho’s reading of the parable of the Prodigal Son through a Marxist lens. According to the Mayor, the Prodigal Son was “so disgusted by the bourgeois world in which he had been brought up that he got rid of his wealth in the quickest way possible - perhaps he even gave it away and in a Tolstoyan gesture he became a peasant” (Greene 1982: 60). Far from being persuaded by such an interpretation, Quixote – and readers alike – are able to understand that class is not a key issue in the economy of the novel and that “Sancho’s beliefs at the level of personal intention and practical goals constitutes a variant form of the orthopraxis that Greene, like *liberationist* theologians, claims as the true, if only, meeting place between Marxism and Catholicism” (Bosco 2005: 143; my emphasis). Quixote’s liberationist Catholic doctrine is at its best when he asks himself whether God is merciful or when he explains the Holy Trinity to Sancho in an ingenious way, with the help of wine bottles:

“Two bottles equal in size. The wine they contained was of the same substance and it was born at the same time. There you have God the Father and God the Son and there, in the half bottle, God the Holy Ghost. Same substance. Same birth. They’re inseparable. Whoever partakes of one partakes of all three.” (Greene 1982: 52)

By the same token, he lambastes Father Jone’s moral theology, because it makes no reference to love, and prefers the Gospel of John, which never mentions “Hell”, and of St Mark, who mentions the word “twice in thirty-one pages” (Greene 1982: 58). Quixote is keen on St Francis de Sales due to his ample plea for the love of God, totally opposed to Jone’s insistence on mortal sin and punishment, and is surprised to hear about the absurd case-based reasoning practiced by Jone, for whom *coitus interruptus* is “one of the forms of onanism”, which “is not a sin if done on account of some unforeseen necessity, for example (it’s Jone’s own example) the arrival of a third person on the scene” (Greene 1982: 82). The funny remark is made before Sancho tells the story of Marquez, who hires a butler to knock at his bedroom door when, having sex with his wife, he feels unable to contain himself any longer. Hilariously enough, Marquez finds out that he has sinned, since Jone’s rule does not apply to planned interruptions. In a nutshell, the monsignor rejects “the sophisticated hair-splitting of theologians” (Roston 2006: 153), being inspired by liberal minds like St Teresa, St John of the Cross and St Francis de Sales, who promote Christian values like virtuousness and unconditional devotion. From a Marxist point of view, Father Quixote is the epitome of humility and simplicity, choosing a no-frills hotel in a poor area of Madrid, unlike his Communist squire who prefers exquisite restaurants and hotels, claiming that the Party never disapproves of such bourgeois comfort. He even establishes a speculative analogy between Marx and Cervantes, based on the relics of the past that have been replaced by a new socio-economic and spiritual order:

“Listen to this Sancho,” and Father Quixote took *The Communist Manifesto* out of his pocket. “The bourgeoisie has put an end to all feudal, patriarchal, idyllic relations... It has drowned the most heavenly ecstasies of religion fervour, of chivalrous enthusiasm, in the icy water of egotistical calculation” (Greene 1982: 122)

Apart from this unexpected comparison, Quixote shares Marx's opinion uttered by Sancho, according to which "religion is the opium of the people" (Greene 1982: 50). Metaphorically, religion is a tranquilizer for all those who suffer by being oppressed in an unfeeling world. Notwithstanding their beliefs and opinions on various theological or Marxist issues they discuss, Quixote and Sancho have doubts about the better future of mankind. "It's an awful thing not to have doubts" (idem: 81), exclaims the monsignor, and both come to realise that "there is still a long and painful journey for humankind to travel before their respective messianic dreams will be fulfilled" (Roston 2006: 149).

Doubt, which constantly eats away at both characters, allows Graham Greene to frame the question of faith against the certainty of well-established doctrinal belief by heavily relying on Miguel de Unamuno's fideism. For Unamuno, faith alone stems from the desire to achieve immortality and to acknowledge the existence of God. As long as the human mind cannot comprehend God through reason, Unamuno, influenced by Pascal and Kierkegaard, maintains that there is no epistemic certainty when approaching God and that doubt must be conjoined with faith. As Patrick Henry (1985: 74) has shown, "Unamuno proscribed not only all attempts to buttress faith upon reason but all claims that faith was only supra-rational rather than contra-rational". It is the will to believe that gives birth to hope born out of despair, which in turn gives rise to faith, and faith and hope together generate charity. Faith is a matter of volition, as father Quixote explains: "I want to believe that it is all true – and that want is the only certain thing I feel" (Greene 1982: 205). From Unamuno's perspective, Monsignor Quixote is a spiritual knight-errant, who follows in the footsteps of Cervantes's protagonist, described in *The Tragic Sense of Life in Men and Nations* as "a man of heroic despair, a hero of inner, resigned despair (...) Our Lord Don Quixote is the prototype of the vitalist whose faith is founded on uncertainty, and Sancho is the prototype of the rationalist who doubts his own reason" (Unamuno 1972: 133).

Based on subjectivity and instinctual faith, Unamuno's romantic vision in Greene's novel culminates at the close of the novel, when the injured Quixote is accommodated at Osera. Faith overcomes dogma, in that the monsignor, who is now in a coma, enters the chapel in order to perform, in a dreamlike state, a Tridentine mass in Latin, without paten and chalice, which runs counter to the vernacular Mass enforced by the Second Vatican Council, violating at the same time his bishop's interdiction to ever officiate the Mass because of his outrageous behaviour. The rebellious Quixote's celebration of the old Latin Mass – which is shortened and highly personalised, in accordance with his favourite parts of the religious service – stands not only against the conservatism of the Catholic Church, but also against "the church's attempt at modernization, for Quixote feels the vernacular has been unjustly mandated from Rome" (Bosco 2005: 145). More importantly, Greene subtly critiques the lack of dialogue and ecumenism promised by the Second Vatican Council, both illustrated by Father Herrera, with whom Father Quixote cannot share common views on religion, because he favours the new Mass. Greene's criticism also targets the Opus Dei conservative organization, founded in 1928 to support Franco's dogmatism.

Performing his sacerdotal duties with unstinting dedication, in spite of the new ecclesiastical norms and his bishop's persecution, Father Quixote administers the Eucharist to Sancho, who kneels and feels the priest's fingers "like a Host" (Greene 1982: 250) on his tongue. Sancho, Quixote's "*compañero*" (ibid.), is now infused with faith – the outcome of their genuine friendship cultivated on their

travels: “Anything which will give him peace, he thought, anything at all” (ibid.). This is the moment which shatters the ex-mayor’s ideological certainties, urging him to ponder on his love for the monsignor and particularly on his potential spiritual transformation:

(...) an idea quite strange to him had lodged in his brain. Why is it that the hate of man – even of a man like Franco – dies with his death, and yet love, the love which he had begun to feel for Father Quixote, seemed now to live and grow in spite of the final separation and the final silence – for how long, he wondered with a kind of fear, was it possible for that love of his to continue? And to what end? (Greene 1982: 256)

Indeed, Sancho’s idea seems “quite strange”, because Quixote “took from the invisible paten the invisible Host and his fingers laid the nothing on his tongue” (Greene 1982: 250). It is, therefore, a symbolic ritual, and Sancho agrees with Professor Pilbeam in this respect. The professor, an American specialist in Ignatius of Loyola, is a “nominal Catholic” (Roston 2006: 154) who believes in fact, since his interest in the Spanish priest is purely academic. Their position is at odds with Father Leopoldo, a supporter of Descartes thanks to whom he leaped into faith. Leopoldo echoes Unamuno’s dismissal of Descartes’s methodical doubt – because it is *dubito* that leads to *cogito* without implying emotion – and tells the professor that fact and fiction are “so difficult to distinguish” (Greene 1982: 240). Much like the merging of fiction and reality in the case of the monsignor as a descendant of his ancestor Don Quixote, Father Leopoldo’s conclusion is a sceptical one: the Eucharist administered by Quixote remains a mystery which can only be understood through instinctual faith and unconditional love. Sancho’s rhetorical question, “And to what end?”, draws him closer to Leopoldo’s uncertainty regarding his love for Quixote, despite his preference for Marxist reliability.

4. Conclusion

I have argued that Graham Greene’s novel lies at the intersection of a few major literary sources, of which the most recognisable one – Cervantes’s *Don Quixote* – has been discussed in tight relationship with Greene’s creation of his eponymous hero, whose faith based on doubt and despair relies on Unamuno’s fideism. As a “knight-errant of faith”, to use the syntagm that gives the title of Holderness’s 1993 article, the monsignor’s spiritual discourse is counterpoised by the ex-Mayor’s Marxist certitude, until they discover that their firm agendas are thrown into doubt thanks to the friendly discussions they have on their journey across Spain. Respecting each other’s points of view, the two protagonists are symbolically united in faith and love at the end of the novel, when Quixote administers an invisible Communion to Sancho. For Greene (1982: 46), the Catholic dogma, along with the Marxist doctrine, are “protests against injustice” and the heroes’ exchange of ideas is never meant to ideologize one belief over the other, but to enable them to discover mutual affinities. I have read *Monsignor Quixote* as a journey of faith which challenges Roman Catholic conservative rules and “the technicalities of dogma” (Roston 2006: 155), on the one hand, and the idea of love as purely material. Michael Higgins (1992: 23) has rightfully noticed that “love, remembrance, Eucharist have replaced the ideological fixities and complacencies of the past, and certitude is never quite what it was”, foregrounding uncertainty as the spring of true faith. Far from being Greene’s “valedictory work”

(Hoskins 1999: 259), *Monsignor Quixote* adapts the Knight of the Sorrowful Countenance to a secular context, in which man's humanity to man is shunned by scientific rationalization, abstraction, and unquestioned certainties that trigger ideological disputes and wars of ideas.

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