CHAPTER - IV

THE POWER AND THE GLORY

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The Power and The Glory is second novel of the Greens's 'Trilogy', published in 1940. It is based directly on the writer's first hand knowledge of Mexico. It is considered as one of the most artistic works of Greene, which one 'Hathordon Prize' in 1941_g

The novel is set in the primitive landscape of Mexico, during the time of political strife and religious persecution in 1920's. Greene is obviously realistic in his delineation of Mexico, with details of squalor and misery, lust and crime, violence and cruelty. He highlights on the place, by bringing to us, 'dingy prison cell'. "The place was very like the world: over crowded with lust and crime, and unhappy love: it stank to heaven....."

As an official reporter Greene visited Mexico in late thirties to report on it's Socialist revolution, especially on the oppression of the Catholic Church. Greene's experience of political and spiritual realities in Mexico resulted in Keener understanding of the meaning of faith. He found the persecution of the church under Called and Cardenas. He saw the devotion of peasants, praying in the priestless churches and attended the masses in upper rooms where sanctus bell could not sound for the fear of the police.

In Tabasco, Garrido Canabal who challenged God and made the state 'Godless', destroying churches, killing priests and prohibiting religious services. He was a great leader who brought about amazing reformation in agriculture but he had hatredness for 'alcohol' and 'religion'. He organised a great burnings of the statues of saints from the churches. The Red-Shirt, his private-army searched private homes for the statues of saints. Christian burials were forbidden, all religious observances were outlawed and cross-weavers were imprisoned. Priest could stay there only if they married.

Garrido Canabal was exiled to Costa Rica in 1935. He returned to Mexico in 1940 and died in Los Angels, California in 1943. The Godless state, he established and his rigorous persecution of priests and church gave Greene the material to create his Martyr - The Whisky Priest and he was himself the source of Greene's Lieutenant of police. So <u>The Power and the Glory</u> is the historical novel, creating vividly and convincingly, the atmosphere of immediacy, a period of past persecution.

The Power and The Glorry is a Mexican adventure-story. Developed on the theme of 'Flight and Pursuit'. It is the story of fugitive priest who is on run, under the fear of being arrested and is pursued by police. Lieutenant of Secular Government which has abolished religion, dismantled churches and out-lawed priests. Under the threat of the Government, some priests accepted matrimony, some were driven out, some gladly accepted

martyrdom. One of them is Padre Jose who renounced the religion and fulfilled the demands of the state, by breaking his vow of celibacy, marrying his housekeeper, a shrewish woman.

Another priest, who is nameless is the protagonist of the novel. He neither submits to the state nor renounces his vocation as a priest but keeps moving from village to village and secretly performs his religious duties. He has been declared as a 'traitor' to the state and a reward of seven hundred pesos is promised to any one, providing the information leading to his capture. His photograph is pasted along with Yankee murderer, a notorious bandit, who is wanted for his crime of robbery and murder.

The priest is ragged and wretched man. He has many weaknesses. He is notorious for drinking wine for which he is known as 'Whisky Priest'. He is sinned by begetting Child from his sexual relationship with woman, Maria. As a result he becomes the father of a girl, Brigitta. He is also cowardly creature who is always afraid of being arrested and tries to overcome it by drinking brandy.

The novel begins with the priest's intention to catch the boat to Vera-Cruz to avoid his capture. Just before the departure a boy arrives to fetch the doctor for his dying mother. The priest at once gives up his plan and decides to accompany the boy for administering the last rites to the dying woman, Even

though he knows that there is not another ship for the destined place. The priest misses that boat for the sake of his duty. He is described as 'the slave of the people like certain West African King'. Greene describes him - "He had tried to escape, but he was like the king of a West-African tribe, the slave of the people, who may not even lie down in the case wind should fail."²

After attending the dying woman, the priest comes under the shelter of Captain Fellow's family. Coral, the girl of the family, hides him in the banana store and lies the lieutenant who has been searching for the priest.

Then the priest reaches the village where his woman, Maria and daughter, Brigitta live. The villagers receive the priest warmly. Maria offers him brandy. There he baptises children says Mass and listens confession. Meanwhile the lieutenant enters the village in search of the priest. He interrogates all villagers and the priest too. But he can not recognise the priest as Maria comes for his rescue, declaring herself as his wife. Sensing the further danger Maria requests the priest to leave the place.

Taking a mule, the priest continues journey to his native, Carmen. In the course of journey he is joined by Mestizo, a cunning and treacherous fellow. He recognises the priest and is tempted by the reward seven hundred. He assures the priest not to betray but is not trusted by the priest. So he gets rid of him.

In the capital city, the priest enjoys drink-party along with Governor's cousin and Chief of the police. None can recognise him. But soon in his further journey, he is overtaken by the Red-Shirts and arrest him for the crime of possessing the liquor. He is taken to the jail and is fined five pesos for the guilt. Being unable to pay the fine, he has to wash filthy lavatories. Next morning he is released with the order of the Lieutenant who fails to recognise but gives him a monetary help.

Then the priest in the battered and exhausted state arrives to the captain fellow's house which is found empty. The priest being disparately hungry snatches a piece of meat away from starving dog. Here the priest is reduced to a near animal level.

"For a moment he becomes furious - that a mongrel bitch with a broken back should steal the only food. He swore as it - popular expression picked up beside bandstands: he would have been surprised in other circumstances that they came so readily to his tongue. Then he laughed. This was human dignity disputing with a bitch over bone."

In another village, the priest meets an Indian woman whose son is mortally wounded by the American gangster and is dying. The priest takes risky journey through the desert along with the woman, who straps the child on her back. They bury the body in the Indian cemetery. Across the boarder of the state he is sheltered and nursed by the American Lutheran brother and sister, the Lehrs. He is able to celebrate Mass, baptize children and hear confession openly. Thus he collects enough money to buy brandy and hire a couple of mule for further journey.

Then he prepares to leave for Las Casas but at his departure Mestizo reappears with the story that the American gangster is mortally wounded and desirous to give confession. Though the priest knows well that Mestizo will betray him, he decides to attend the dying man. Unable to neglect the duty, he goes with Mestizo. He reaches the American who dies without confession.

Soon afterwards the lieutenant and his men capture the priest. The Lieutenant promises the priest that he will be properly tried. Then the priest is taken into the custody and tried. He is proved guilty and sentenced to death.

Finally, the priest is shot down by the firing squad. The police Lieutenant might have satisfied performing his duty sincerely by capturing the priest. But on the same night a new priest knocks the door of the religious family, seeking shelter, which is promptly offered to him. The arrival of the new priest signifies that the religious faith is indestructible and unquenchable.

In <u>The Power and The Glory</u>, Greene presents a conflict between The Church and the state and finally asserts the vitality of the Church. At its

simplest level, the novel measures the pulls of tug-of-war between God and Caesar. The police Lieutenant, a representative of the state pursues the priest, a representative of religion. Ultimately Caesar seems to win, when Lieutenant gets the priest. But it is only an apparent victory. The real victory is God's as the priest is taken to Martyrdom and at the same time another priest arrives to carry the risk of religious faith.

The Power and The Glory is a 'pursuit story' - the story of man hunt. Two lines derived from Dryden serve as the epigraph for the novel and they expose the theme of pursuit clearly. They refer to hounds and death. The priest is always chased by the Lieutenant but at deeper sense, he is not only pursued by the hounds of state but also by the 'Hounds of Heaven'. Rose Benet points out the flight of priest.

"For the priest is anointed; he is not actually fleeing from God as the poet was in Francis Thompson's 'Hound of Heaven', he is fleeing from his fear, praying desperately his disloyalty to the greatest thing he knows with all mankind as it seems to him arrayed against him and no rest for the sole of his foot",4

In the course of handling the theme of 'Flight and Pursuit', Green presents the interplay of the opposites - The political versus religious, the dictator versus saint. The priest and the Lieutenant stand opposite as they have

antagonistic ideas to each other. Lieutenant is ruthlessly determined to eradicate the religion, while The Whisky priest, the sole remaining priest tries to continue the torch of faith. Inspite of the threat of law, he surreptitiously carries his duties. As a result he suffers physically as well as spiritually.

The Whisky priest is on the run with lieutenant in pursuit. The priest is hunted while lieutenant is hunter. The hunter is superior to the hunted as far as their qualities are concerned. The hunter has force and character but the hunted has been reduced to drunkard and has fleshly weakness. The priest is believer and the representative of God-ridden world of religion while the Lieutenant is the atheist and representative of God-forsaken state. From this contrast, according to Kenneth Allot and Miriam Fariss, "Greene has established the antithetical relationship."

Through these characters, the antithesis has been posed between religion and materialism. J. P. Kulshrestha points out the contrast,

"The Lieutenant is the priest of an authorian humanism, which promises material well-being in this world instead of happiness in other. He does not drink, has no need of woman no sympathy for weakness of faith. As the Lieutenant with his secular 'mystique' is striving for the well-being of the people without humity, the priest with his religious mystique is striving for the same ideal with asceticism."

Lieutenant is willing to die to effect his ideas, - 'Justice and equality for the peasants'. His aim is to free his people from superstitions and the oppression of the church. He wants to destroy God's image on the earth. He openly denounces the priests and church. He blames villagers,

"You're fools if you still believe what the priests tell you. All they want is your money. What has God ever done for you? Have you got enough to eat? Have your children got enough to eat? Instead of food, they talk to you above heaven"

Lieutenant offers a new kind of Church, of which, he is 'ascetic priest'. His church is based solely on the material needs of people.

The Whisky priest, on the other hand is not devout as he suffers from 'Pride'. In the past, he was honoured with good dinner and fine wines. Yet, he is the last hope for religious people. He says 'Masses', for villagers, baptises their children and hears their confession. In adverse situation, he risks danger and responds to call of duty. His effort is to defend the image of God and continue the religious faith.

The encounters taken between The Priest and The Lieutenant are very much significant from thematic point of view. There are three encounters, arranged symmetrically, At first, the Lieutenant meets the priest in the Maria's village, where he interrogates the villagers and interrogates the priest too. But he

fails to recognise the priest because Maria comes for priest's help, declaring herself 'his wife'. At the second time, the priest is arrested for the guilt of possessing brandy. But again the Lieutenant fails to recognise. The priest is released by the order of lieutenant who also gives him five pesos monetary help. The <u>final</u> encounter occurs at the time of final priests arrest which takes place after the free and frank talk between the two antagonists. Here the pursuit motif ends and the mutual acknowledgement between the Lieutenant and the priest is established.

After the capture, the lieutenant assures the priest "I am not a barbarian, you will be tried properly for treason."

He even breaks his official codes and goes to fetch Padre Jose, to hear the priests last confession. He also smuggles some brandy into cell so as to make the priest's last night comfortable before his execution.

Finally the priest is tried and shot down. The lieutenant certainly has satisfaction of making the state free from Priest by executing the last priest. For a short while, he becomes victorious. At the same time, another priest arrives mysteriously and is sought refuge in the religious minded family. It clearly indicates that the secular state may go on shooting down priests in any number, the religious faith can never die. Thus the final victory is of the church. The

pious mother equals the priest with martyred Jaun and offers the pieces of handkerchief, soaked in his blood. Roger Sharrock remarks,

"Sinner becomes martyr and his blood fertizes the church so that another man with a suit-case is ready to smuggle himself into persecuted province and no doubt others him" (9)

The real victory of church is conveyed when the boy, Luis converts from the Lieutenant's party to the church's.

The Title of <u>The Power and The Glory</u> comes from Greene's Mexican experiences which give this world and the fictional world, he had created book to the creator. It is taken from Lord's prayer. "Thine is the Kingdom, the Power and the Glory." Both 'Power' and 'Glory' belong to Lord; who is Supreme Onnipotent and Glorious. In the novel the 'Power' relates to 'Secular Stage' of which the Lieutenant is representative and 'Glory' belongs to the priest, who even sinning is worthy of the salvation through the mysterious power of the God. The supreme divine authority is never challenged or doubled. Greene demonstrates that no one can destroy the emotional and spiritual life of man. The Godly power and His Glory are eternal and the religious faith is unquenchable.

The novel ends with an assertion of the continuity of religious power with the arrival of new priest. Greene presents that a man dedicated to God must live in the world.

Greene's pre-occupation with evil is linked with his religious consciousness. At surface level the novel deals with the conflict between the church and the state but at deeper level; it has more underlying theme, - the theme of 'Sin and Salvation or Damnation'. The central character Whisky Priest is 'Sinner' who commits fornication, drinks brandy, fears of arrest and has devilish pride. But he has unshakeable faith in God and religion and self sacrificing-nature, which can save him from damnation.

In the very opening chapter, the priest has been presented in ragged and wretched condition. His first impression is some what disgusting" a small man dressed in shabby dark city suit." further he is described, "He sat like a black question mark ready to go, ready to stay, poised on his chair. He looked disreputable in his grey, three day's beard and weak." (11)

The priest is addicted to drinking because of which he is called as 'Whisky-Priest'. He is habitual drinker always craves for brandy. In the opening chapter, he offers Mr. Tench, the dentist the brandy. In the deserted banana store of Captain fellows, he asks for a brandy, which horrifies the captain. He harshly

comment, "What a religion, Begging for brandy shameless." Coral, daughter of Fellows offers him beer but is not satisfied because he is 'brandy-lover'.

This weakness again of drinking drives him to involve in the drink-party in the capital city. He carries the bottle of brandy, though it is liquor-prohibitionist place. He is arrested for the Crime of possessing wine and sent to the jail. He introduces himself to the prisoners,

"God so loved the world,......my children you must never think the holy martyrs are like me. You have name for me. I am Whisky priest. I am here now because they found a bottle of brandy in my pocket",13

Unable to pay the fine of five pesos, The priest has to clean the filthy lavatories. He loves brandy excessively. He buys brandy from the money collected from his sacramental duties. In drunken state, he does not perform his duties properly. In one of the instances, he baptises the boy, giving girl's name.

Drunkenness leads the priest to other Sins. In intoxication state he commits fornication. He indulges in sexual act with a woman, named Maria and begets child. Greene describes the circumstance, "Just fear and despair and half a bottle of brandy and sense of loneliness had driven him to an act which horrified him." Again Green-describes the relationship between the priest and the woman as "Once for five minutes seven years ago, they had been lovers" 15

The priest is very cowardly person. He is fugitive, hastening from place to place and seeking shelter against law. He is always afraid of being arrested and tries to overcome it, by drinking wine The drink encourages the uinid priest to face danger. He tells Coral, "A little drink will work wonders in a cowardly man with a little brandy, why I would defy - the devil." He derives a temporary courage from the wine. Knowing this weakness, the lieutenant also leaves a brandy for the priest, before his execution.

The priest is the victim of pride. He is not devout priest, for he suffered from pride in his prosperous day when he was honoured with good dinners and fine wines. Christianity teaches humanity but the priest is proud and arrogant. The past memories haunt him and they come through his day-dreaming, half-sleeping condition. The same pride that objects him against to his submission to the state. Green describes

"If he had been humble like Padre Jose, he might be living now with Maria on the pension. This was Pride 'devilish Pride', lying here offering his shirt to the man who wanted to betray him."¹⁷

In predicament state, the priest considers himself inferior to Padre Jose, "Perhaps Padre Jose was the better man he was so humble that he was ready to accept any amount of mockery: at the best of times, he had never considered himself worthy of priesthood."

The Pride affects him to neglect to prayers, fasting, mass and the same pride is the cause of his fall. He presents Lieutenant, "I got careless about my duties. I began to drink, It would have been much better, I think, I had gone too. Because pride was at work all the time, Not the love of God. Pride was what made angels Fall."

He is guilty of an unforgivable sin of despair that Christianity forbids. Greene describes, "Five years ago he had given way to despair - 'The unforgivable Sin' and he was going back now to the scene of his despair with carious heightening of the heart". ²⁰

Priesthood is the holy life, stands for piety, purity and virtue. True priest needs an abundant control over his motives and impulses, for which he is never touched by any Sins. A Roman Catholic priest has to take vow of celibacy and keep himself away from the lust but the Whisky priest is succumbed to the lust of sex and drink. Again he is physically coward and has devilish pride. So he cannot be a good priest. Urbashi Barat describes him, "The priest is a person. whose traits, If directly described could result making him caricature", 21

F.R. Karl analyses the priest,

"The Whisky Priest is as a devil ready for sainthood, full of selfpride, the Whisky Priest like a Greek hero is partially ennobled through suffering, doubt and self-realisation".²²

Whisky Priest honestly confessed that he is bad priest. He is haunted by feeling of his own desperate inadequacy and unworthiness. He is constantly reminded of the fact that he is not worthy for the role of priest. He tells Lieutenant 'There are good priest and bad priest, It is just that I am bad priest.'

F. R. Karl Critically remarks, "To confess people, to offer them moral solace, even to give absolution - All these are mockeries when given by a bad priest". When Padre Jose refused to hear the confession, the whisky priest decides to confess his sins to himself and also express the feelings of contrition. He confesses that "I have committed fornication, I have lain with a woman. I have drunk. I don't know how many times. There isn't duty, I haven't neglected, I have been guilty of pride and lack of charity."²⁴

He prayed in half light "O God forgive me - I am a proud, lustful greedy man. I have loved authority too much" He also expresses his act of contrition - "O God I am sorry and beg pardon for all my sins.....crucified.....worthy of thy dreadful punishments" His heart is now

full of remorseful feelings. He blames himself 'What an impossible fellow I am and how useless He thinks, 'I have done nothing for anybody, I might just as well never have died.

Due to his weaknesses, the priest is sure of being damned. He thinks that he is not worthy for sainthood or Martyrdom. He says to Lieutenant 'But I am not a Saint. I am not even a brave Man. He further says 'Martyrs are not men like him'.

The Whisky Priest has certain virtues which can redeem him. His unshakeable faith in God and in his duties, his self-sacrificing nature, his profound love for his daughter and to all beings are virtues enough to obtain the mercy of God; that only can save his soul from damnation. In the words of Anthony Burgess, "Priest is a ragged and wrebegetting child, he has fleshly appetites, he is cowardly. But he is vessel of divine and that is enough. He has power to change bread and wine into the body and the blood of Christ."²⁷

The priest shows an immense love for his daughter Brigitta - "The Sin', born out of his illicit relationship with Maria......His heart is full of fatherly passions and is ready to sacrifice anything for the sake of his daughter. He says her "I love you. I am your father and I love you. I would give my life, that is nothing my soul....my dear, try to understand that you are so important". 28 He even prays God for his daughter, "O God, give me any kind of

death - without contrition, in State of Sin - Only save this child"²⁹ At last before his execution He again Prays "O God help her, Damn me, I deserve it, but let her live forever". He prays not only for his daughter but also for Coral, for American gangster and for all.

The priest has great sacrificing nature and always takes troubles to relieve other's pain. He has strong faith in God and in his duties. He promptly responds to the calls of his duties. He has sense of inescapable vocation. He gives up his chance to escape and goes in the interior of the state. Again he willingly enters into the trap of Mestizo to hear the confession of dying Yankee Murderer. J. P. Kulshrestha remarks, "The Priests life becomes a series of missed opportunities, all because he feels bound to his callings". 31

He is only priest who takes risks for the sake of faith. He is the last hope amid hopeless people. Dazed with fatigue, hunger and lack of sleep, in fact, in a state of Semi-consciousness, he hears confessions of the villagers, baptises their children and says 'Mass' for them.

The priest takes God as a the prototype, Creator of all beings. Greene conveys, "But at the centre of his own faith there always stood the convincing mystery - that we were made in God's image. God was parent, but he was also policeman, the criminal, the priest, the maniac and the judge.....",32

Priest's sacrifice for noble cause for keeping the religious faith, alive, certainly takes him to 'Martyrdom' or even to 'Sainthood'. The religious woman calls that the priest is not only 'Martyr' but is possibly 'Saint'. He is replaced by another priest to keep the light of religious faith burning. It is the great victory of religion over the state.

After Whisky Priest, there are 'Other Sinner' who also commit sins. They Padre Jose, Mestizo, American gangster, Couple in the prison and others.

Padre Jose is another priest who satisfies the state by renouncing his vocation. He breaks Celibracy by getting married. It is the Sin against Christianity and ultimately against God. The religious woman calls him 'despicable man, a traitor to God'. His marriage proves to be mockery. Greene describe, "He was just a fat old impotent man, mocked and taunted between sheets". Children ridicule him with the words of his wife, 'Jose, Jose, come to bed, Jose'. His wife has fed him and fattened and preserved him like a prize boar. He is too coward to continue the sacraments. He says, "Leave me alone, I am unworthy, can't you see? I am Coward." There is no respect anywhere left for him, in his home, in the town, in the whole abandoned star.

Mestizo or half-cast is the Judas who betrays the Whisky Priest for the reward of seven hundred pesos. He is thus villain responsible for the tragedy of the Priest. American gangster is notorious criminal, who is paralleled with Whisky Priest. Both are wanted for the state and there are rewards for their capture. He has already committed the crime of murder and bank-robbery but in the story he kills an innocent boy and is finally killed by police. He becomes an instrument of priest's capture. Among other sinners, - the Chief of Police and Governor's Cousin are corrupt. The couple in prison cell indulge in Sexual act. Maria has illicit Sexual relationship with the Whisky Priest and Brigitta, is the symbol of evil.

The plot of the novel is compact and well-constructed. It is episodic and consists of the succession of encounters but within these encounters concentration is focused on two characters - The Whisky Priest and Lieutenant. They have got paradoxical resemblance. The basic unit in the structure of the novel is the encounters, arranged symmetrically are important from the structural point of view. In the first meeting, the Lieutenant interrogates the priest but fails to recognise. In the second, the priest is arrested but once again is not recognised by Lieutenant. In the final meeting the recognition is complete and arrest of the Priest takes place. The Lieutenant's hunt for the priest generates the tension which gives dramatic value and excitement to the theme of the novel. The protagonist, the Whisky Priest is the centre of the plot, around whom other characters are centred. The element of parallelism is brought out between the characters of the Whisky Priest and other characters. The Lieutenant is firm

in his ideology like the Priest. The Martyred Priest, Juan whose narrated life resembles that of the priest. Mestizo betrays the priest as the priest has betrayed the state, his vocation and himself. The American gangster like the priest is criminal, wanted by the state.

The novel crystallises the theme of Sin and Salvation. Superficially the theme is the conflict between the church and the state but interwoven with this is the theme of evil which is worked out in the portrayal of the priest. The priest himself is aware of his Sin and becomes the detector of that Sin. His pursuit is self-realisation, self-revaluation. The device used by the priest for the detection of his guilt is introspection, psychological analysis and interiormonologues. Even the dreams point out his sub-consciousness and unconsciousmind. His past memories come through dreams, half-sleep condition and interior monologues. Greene employs his cinematic technique in The Power and The Glory also. The technique is at once intimately probing and detached, observing and recording but allowing the observed circumstances to have their own judgements. Greene's Camera moves from one scene to another and emphasises on the visual context of the action. Greene is extremely rich in creating contemporary scenes out of visualised particulars. In the beginning, the camera moves from street to the vulture, then through seed, and sordid place like banana-store, desert, prison-cell. Various scenes are presented through imagery and action

CHAPTER - IV

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