The Dialectic of Contrarieties: Parallels in Chesterton and Milton

Kyle Winston Friedow

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THE DIALECTIC OF CONTRARIEDS:
PARALLELS IN CHESTERTON AND MILTON

BY

KYLE WINSTON FRIEDOW

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
Master of Arts
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THE DIALECTIC OF CONTRARIEDIES:
PARALLELS IN CHESTERTON AND MILTON

This thesis is approved as a creditable and independent investigation by a candidate for the degree, Master of Arts, and is acceptable for meeting the thesis requirements for this degree. Acceptance of this thesis does not imply that the conclusions reached by the candidate are necessarily the conclusions of the major department.

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Chapter One
Establishing the Connections

Gilbert Keith Chesterton wrote voluminously—essays, detective stories, novels, plays, and poems—between the years 1900–1936; several more volumes were published after his death in 1936. Because of his ability and reputation as a literary critic, Chesterton also wrote forewords and introductions in a great number of other people's works.

Chesterton is an important author who has been undervalued by critics and scholars. Chesterton has been criticized for being a Catholic apologist, for being an author of detective stories, and for being humorous and paradoxical. Yet a comparison of the work of John Milton and G.K. Chesterton demonstrates a serious level of content and subject matter which should earn Chesterton a favorable place in the canon. This first chapter will provide a short summary of Chesterton's life, expound upon the influence of Puritanism on the young Chesterton and his later view on Puritanism, and then establish Chesterton's familiarity with Milton's works. Information in this chapter was culled from Chesterton's Autobiography and Maisie Ward's Gilbert Keith Chesterton.
Chesterton's Life

Chesterton, born on May 29, 1874 at Campden Hill, Kensington, was baptized into the Church of England. Chesterton considered himself born to respectable parents of the English middle-class. Ward believes he was closer to his father than his mother (13). His father was described as a political and religious liberal; both his parents, in fact, were very liberal (Ward 16).

Maisie Ward described Chesterton as a boy who loved fairy tales. Then Chesterton, as a man, wrote and illustrated several fantasy tales. Chesterton's imagination began to develop early. In Autobiography, he relates that the first people he remembers are the statues that his father carved for his toy theater. Chesterton was fascinated by this theater and it greatly influenced his life (Autobiography 31).

Chesterton attended Colet Court, also known as Bewsher's preparatory school. Although not an official preparatory school for St. Paul's, a number of future St. Paul's students attended Bewsher's. Coincidentally, St. Paul's was the school that produced Milton, and Chesterton, later in his academic career, won the Milton Prize for writing a poem about St. Francis Xavier. However, Chesterton's scholarly journey did not begin so grandly.

Chesterton was considered a loner. He drew sharp distinction between school and home and considered his learning chiefly achieved at home.
At school, Chesterton doodled on his books and resisted instruction. Other students felt him to be bored or sleepy. In sports, the clumsy Chesterton was also excluded from the group. At times, he was the butt of practical jokes; however, the other boys had some respect for the boy who occasionally flashed brilliance and advanced moral character. Ward includes an example of Chesterton's morality:

One boy, who rather prided himself in private life on being a man about town, stopped one day in the passage and said solemnly, “Chesterton, I am an abandoned profligate.” G.K. replied, “I’m sorry to hear it.” “We watched our talk,” one of them said to me, “when he was with us” (23).

Chesterton always fit the bill of the strange looking genius. To compound his physical awkwardness, Chesterton usually appeared disheveled in his dress. This habit would remain with him his entire life and be exacerbated by his gaining a great amount of weight during his adult life. The main women in Chesterton's life—his mother, future mother-in-law, and wife—all tried to influence, to no avail, his grooming habits. Finally, his wife made do with what she had and began to dress Chesterton in his now trademark hat and cape.

As he grew older, Chesterton began a venture with a few close friends called the Junior Debating Club. The JDC, as it was called, allowed a forum for
advanced learning for its members. The club also produced a newspaper called
*The Debater*, that acted as a medium for their thoughts, ideas, and opinions to
reach outside the club. Chesterton acted as founder and club president during
his stay at school.

During his teens, Chesterton was an admitted agnostic but his
enquiring mind was always searching. Oldershaw, speaking for his schoolmates,
mentioned that Chesterton was looking for God (Ward 23). Despite some
physical and social retardation, Chesterton's scholarly ability began attracting
notice. After St. Paul's, Chesterton was off to art school.

The majority of Chesterton's art education was at the Slade School.
While studying art, he was constantly attending literary lectures and doing more
writing about art than actually practicing art. Chesterton took courses in
literature at University College, enjoying and excelling in them.

Chesterton realized that his love and future revolved around writing
and publishing and not art. For a short while he dabbled in spiritualism and
worked for a publisher named Redway who specialized in spiritualistic
publications. Chesterton soon gave up any interest in the occult and that
particular office. Young Gilbert began to scrounge for other writing jobs. His
goal? To earn a significant enough salary to marry Frances Blogg. As in his
grooming habits, so with his economics: Chesterton never worried about
money. His parents met all of his needs and he was able to exist and study as he chose. But he realized that he needed an income to be a husband and sought ways to turn his writing into a living.

Chesterton succeeded and he and Frances were married June 28, 1901. Gilbert also was becoming part of literary society. Besides childhood friends like Lucian Oldershaw (also his brother-in-law) and Edmund Clerihew Bentley, Chesterton began making and would continue to make literary friends all of his life. Some of his many acquaintances included Hillaire Belloc, Henry James, and George Meredith. Chesterton also recalls a time when he argued with Thomas Hardy in a publisher's waiting room. Chesterton's friendship and disagreements with George Bernard Shaw and H.G. Wells are also a matter of record.

The bulk of Chesterton's works were written between 1900 and his death on June 14, 1936. He works reflected the change in the man who espoused agnosticism early in life, and then became a Roman Catholic in 1922. After converting, Chesterton's fiction lost the flavor of the quest. Religion was no longer just allegory, but now actual commitment.

What Chesterton said about literary criticism is as applicable to him as it was to Charles Dickens in a passage which Maisie Ward excerpted from "Introduction to Old Curiosity Shop." The foreword states:
Criticism does not exist to say about authors the things they knew themselves. It exists to say the things about them which they did not know themselves. If a critic says that the *Iliad* has a pagan rather than a Christian pity, or that it is full of pictures made by one epithet, of course he does not mean that Homer could have said that. If Homer could have said that the critic would leave Homer to say it. The function of criticism, if it has a legitimate function at all, can only be one function—that of dealing with the subconscious part of the author's mind which only the critic can express, and not with the conscious part of the author's mind, which the author himself can express. Either criticism is no good at all (a very defensible position) or else criticism means saying about an author the very things that would have made him jump out of his boots (Ward 178).

Chesterton would have been surprised that scholars find Miltonic echoes and parallels in his work, echoes that suggest Chesterton is more than a popular writer and journalist.
Chesterton and Puritanism

Puritanism seems generally so much a part of Calvinism that it would seem unlikely a Puritan like Milton would have any influence on Chesterton. But Chesterton understood Puritanism and possibly was subconsciously influenced by it. What Chesterton thought of Puritanism is important in order to carry out the comparison necessary to this thesis. According to the *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary*, Puritanism identifies “strictness and austerity especially in matters of religion and conduct.” A young Chesterton openly questioned religion and was fun-loving and unreserved. Thus, it hardly seems possible that Milton would influence Chesterton or that there would be any similarity between the two. Yet parallel lines between the two writers can be seen in the way Chesterton’s family influenced him in a puritanical way, in Chesterton’s occasional words in favor of, or in defense of, Puritanism, and in Chesterton’s knowledge about Milton and Milton’s works.

Chesterton claims some Puritans among his ancestors. If not actual Puritans, they were at least people who in ways practiced a Puritan lifestyle. This lifestyle may includes a tendency towards parsimony and moral rigidity. In *Autobiography*, Chesterton makes reference to “my Puritan Grandfather” (94). Chesterton found the Puritanical streaks in his family ironic. He relates that when his grandfather was about eighty years old, Grandpa Chesterton would
wait in the rain while seven or eight full omnibuses went by. His grandfather would suffer rather than pay for a cab, although he could afford to ride everywhere in a cab. Chesterton felt this ironic behavior in people who would host great, gluttonous feasts (28).

Schoolmates also commented on the stalwart moral character of the young Chesterton: “His home and upbringing were felt by some of his schoolfellows to have a definitely Puritan tinge about them” (Ward 23).

Lucian Oldershaw, Chesterton’s friend and later his brother-in-law, felt Chesterton “to be a bit of a Puritan” (380). Ward intimates that the Chesterton family were not totally prohibitionist. However, Oldershaw produced a poem entitled “The Tea Pot” written by a young Chesterton who advances abstinence (380). Of course, Chesterton later modified this view of alcohol and quite often over-indulged.

Nevertheless, Chesterton did find occasion to defend, even in the shallowest way, Puritanism. In Autobiography, Chesterton gives the Puritan tradition credit for slowing the advance of “flashy finance and the mere antics of avarice” (26).

Chesterton also half-heartedly defended Puritanism against the tirades of his brother Cecil. Chesterton described Cecil as a “mutinous sort of pagan, a special enemy of Puritan” (Autobiography 197). To prove his half-heartedness,
Gilbert referred to the arguments with Cecil as to "say a word for Puritan religion, chiefly from a dim subconscious sympathy with any sort of religion" (Autobiography 197).

When Chesterton became a Roman Catholic, he spoke harshly of Puritanism. Chesterton takes English society to task by spewing, "[only] a stupid Puritanism had forbidden the English to show the hearty and healthy emotions the Spanish are allowed to show" (Autobiography 314). And then, "Puritanism is only a paralysis; which stiffens into stoicism when it loses religion" (Autobiography 315).

Chesterton's Knowledge of Milton's Work

Chesterton's The Man Who Was Thursday is a very complex novel that warrants numerous readings. He refers directly to Milton in The Man Who Was Thursday: "Over the whole landscape lay a luminous and unnatural discoloration, as of that disastrous twilight which Milton spoke of as shed by the sun in eclipse" (28).

G.K. Chesterton was familiar with Milton and his work. According to Maisie Ward, Mr. Bertrum, a member of the Junior Debating Club, read a paper on Milton and covered works including "L'Allegro," Comus, Paradise Lost, and Paradise Regained (30). The JDC, as a matter of habit, discussed the paper after it
was presented. On another occasion, the club members were discussing different types of devils portrayed in literature. Of course, "Mr. J. Milton’s ‘specimen’ is discussed" (Ward 40). The JDC produced a small newspaper called *The Debater*, for which Chesterton wrote numerous essays about literary figures including Milton.

Later, in an essay entitled "The Diabolist," Chesterton says of an acquaintance with a fellow idler at the *Daily News*: "For hours of the day he would talk with me about Milton or Gothic architecture" (Ward 45).

Chesterton quotes Milton concerning politicians, "to wave away the faintest suggestion that there could be any fiends rending the souls of our statesmen less erected, as Milton says, than the fiends of ambition or jealousy; ‘Heaven forbid that I should suggest that any English Prime Minister...’" (*Autobiography* 201).

Maisie Ward, in *Gilbert Keith Chesterton*, proves that Chesterton was familiar with Milton. Chesterton, in his writings, indicated a love/hate relationship with Milton and Milton’s works. Chesterton would refer to Milton as: “Milton and other irrational people” (*Collected Works* 143); “it [Paradise Lost is] on the whole too light and childish” (Ward 35); and “even the exceptions have exceptional moments when they are conscious of it: a Puritan like Milton in the
rustic reminiscences of ‘L’Allegro’” (Collected Works 148). These comments are hardly flattering.

But in the same books, Milton is supposedly as memorable as Shakespeare and Michaelangelo. Then he goes on to call Milton a “true artist” and describe himself as admiring Paradise Lost and “that Great Pamphlet,” Areopagitica. Chesterton’s definitive opinion of Milton was that “Milton did not succeed by his moral earnestness, but by his style” (Man Chesterton 637).

Chesterton summed up his feelings toward Milton by commenting, “That irritating person Milton—I can’t find a single bad line in him” (Ward 263).

Chesterton is conscious of conventions employed by Milton and incorporated them into his own uses. Technical and thematic parallels and echoes of Milton are frequent in Chesterton as the following proves.
Chapter 2
Technical Similarities Between Chesterton and Milton

Technical similarities between Chesterton and Milton include their use of inversion, conversion, and antithesis. This chapter demonstrates parallels in the authors' use of inversions, conversions, and antitheses, and how their use reveals both men's faith in God and Man.

Inversion—The Incarnation of God

Both authors believe in the ultimate inversion, the incarnation of God. Milton asserts God's inversion into man in "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity," beginning in line 11:

To sit the midst of Trinal Unity,

He laid aside; and here with us to be,

Forsook the Courts of everlasting Day,

And chose with us a darksom House of mortal Clay.

(Complete Poetry 63).
The Shawcross Edition quoted above includes a footnote after the word *aside* in line 12 which refers the reader to *Philippians 2: 6-8*. *Philippians 2: 5-8* of the King James Version reads:

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Milton thus poetically paraphrases Scripture as comparison of the passages quoted above demonstrates. In *John Milton: Poetry*, critic David Miller argues that for Milton it is not the Crucifixion, but the kenosis which is Jesus's supreme sacrifice: Milton would contend that the incarnation, the Son's becoming Jesus Christ, was a greater sacrifice. The inversion of ethereal spirit to *mortal clay*, or as scripture asserts, from immortal God to slave of death, is a more intense and surprising change than the change from man to God in the resurrection. The kenosis, a greater sacrifice, should cause men to praise the redemptive pathos of the Trinity and to lead a proper life.

Milton's incarnation of God has its antithesis in the inversion of Satan. Satan's reversal of position is a type of conversion, since he chose to disobey
God. But pride, the tragic flaw that plagues Satan, does not allow him to repent. In *Book IX of Paradise Lost*, Satan finds himself realizing that he is not all powerful and that he may have been wrong. Satan is now inverted from angel to demon, literally lower than a snake. Satan finds himself *constrained* by a beast, a lower life form. Ironically, a beast in the shape of a snake has trapped Satan, just as he is the snake in the Garden (*Complete Poetry* 425). The image continues later when Satan returns to Pandemonium expecting cheers, but his constituents are capable only of hissing (*Complete Poetry* 464).

Chesterton agrees explicitly with Milton and the Scripture about the incarnation of God. Proof is contained in the short Christmas poetry of Chesterton, especially in the poem “Gloria in Profundis” in *The Spirit of Christmas* selected and arranged by Marie Smith. Chesterton is alluding to an inversion and antithesis in the title. The title is opposite to “Gloria in Excelsis,” which is defined and explained as the following:

From the Latin wording of Luke 2:14, “Glory (to God) in the highest,” and used in Christian liturgy as an acclamation of praise in celebration of God’s Gift of Christ (Gentz 393).

*Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary* defines *profundity* as “intellectual depth...something profound or abstruse...the quality or state of being very profound or deep.”
Before even getting into the poem, Chesterton has alluded to the antithetical opposites, height and depth. The title foreshadows the poem by defining the physical parameters, i.e., from the height of God in “Gloria in Excelsis” to “Glory to God in the Lowest” in line 25 of “Gloria in Profundis.”

The poem immediately refers to the incarnation of the Son in the first two lines.

There has fallen on earth for a token

A god too great for the sky. (Christmas 93)

The “god too great for the sky” commonly would denote the Son, Jesus Christ, but Chesterton, who loved irony and paradox, wrote this poem on multiple levels; a closer examination of the line is justified. The letter g in god is not capitalized in the first stanza; however, it is properly capitalized in stanzas three and four. Chesterton may be referring to Satan as “the god too great for the sky.” The lower case g then refers to Satan as a false pagan god whose pride is “too great for the sky.”

The first lines are also reminiscent of Milton in Book IX of Paradise Lost. Milton states,

O Earth, how like to Heav’n, if not preferr’d

More justly, Seat worthier of Gods, as built
With second thoughts, reforming what was old!

*(Complete Poetry 423).*

Talk of earth being better than heaven is certainly not Puritanical. The true Puritan would believe Eden was Man's one chance at paradise on earth but Man failed. Now, the Puritan utopia would be a drab place that offers no opportunity for sin, so Heaven can be gained. This inconsistency on Milton's part suggests that men do not fit easily or well into categories. Milton is not a pure Puritan and Chesterton is not a pure Victorian and that is why this thesis is possible.

In stanza 2 of "Gloria in Profundis" Chesterton remains cryptic. The stanza asks five questions that can arguably be answered with either Christ or Satan. Stanza 3 openly refers to fallen angels and uses the key word *inverted*. This reference influences readers to interpret lines 23 and 24 as speaking of the fallen angels. The lines read:

Out rushing the fall of man

Is the height of the fall of God *(Christmas 93).*

Again, Chesterton has used capitalization to imply an ambiguous meaning. He set it up so we are thinking of the evil angels as falling; therefore the *G* should not be capitalized. But the fallen angels have already fallen to the bottom of Hell, i.e., "scaling the hanging mountain of Hell" in the poem. Since *G*
in *God* is capitalized, readers are returned to the idea of the incarnation of God and the nativity scene where the fall from God to Man is the greatest fall of all.

Line 25 is the most critical line of the poem. "Glory to God in the Lowest" is intentionally ambiguous. Marie Smith in her introduction to *The Spirit of Christmas* quotes Christopher Hollis who argues that the gist of line 25 is the paradox that "the Creator of the universe was a little baby" (*Christmas* 9). Smith and Hollis argue that Chesterton is referring to the incarnation. The line, if read superficially, seems blasphemous, just as the lower case *g* in line 2 did. In line 25, Chesterton gives us a capital *L* in *Lowest*, more proof that he is talking of true God and not blaspheming. It also suggests the conversion and inversion through which God passes. Milton indicates the Son chose to give up his Godhead in *Paradise Regained*. The Son was then inverted into Jesus Christ, a man. The inversion covered antithetical opposites from God to Man. This use of ambiguity suggests that Chesterton was a serious and complex author.

"Gloria in Profundis" is Chesterton's best nativity poem, but the other short poetry in *The Spirit of Christmas* is also packed with nativity scenes. In "The Wise Men," Chesterton writes that the wise men, or man in general, "Know all things but the truth" (*Christmas* 15), just as Milton's Adam was not told everything by Raphael, thus the need for the dialectic. In stanza 4 of the poem, Chesterton comments on the *Serpent* [Satan]. Near the end of the poem, the
child is born to defeat the serpent. The poem's theme is similar to the theme of
*Paradise Lost*, *Paradise Regained*, and "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity."

"The House of Christmas" is a poem that reaffirms the "God as lowly
man inversion." The "Child in a foal stable, where the beasts feed" (*Christmas 35*)
ranks the incarnate Son's life even below Man, a situation similar to that in
which Milton's Christ and Satan often find themselves. The Son was made Man,
a drastic inversion. The once powerful angel Satan is seen "constrained" by a
serpent [suggesting he is a lower life form]. And now again, Chesterton has God
occupying the living quarters of a colt. Living quarters are discussed in this
poem. Chesterton refers to Divinity's homelessness on earth, homeless because
he does not belong here. Chesterton's imagery also suggests that the Son will
return with Man someday "To an older place than Eden" (35).

Before moving on, the capitalization controversy in "Gloria in
Profundis" illustrates another Chesterton/Milton similarity. The lower case g in
god suggests a pagan god. Pagan gods, like Pan, are referred to in a number of Milton's and Chesterton's works. Writers and theologians use pagan myths as archetypal metaphors, a subconscious prompting of natural grace or innate Christianity.¹ Chesterton presented this argument for innate Christianity in an essay written in 1903 and incorporated into The Doubts of Democracy and quoted in Ward:

The story of Christ is very common in legend and literature. So is the story of two lovers parted by fate. So is the story of two friends killing each other for a woman. But will it seriously be maintained that, because these two stories are common as legends, therefore no two friends were ever separated by love or no two lovers by circumstances? It is tolerably plain, surely, that

these two stories are common because the situation is an intensely probable and human one, because our nature is so built as to make them almost inevitable... (198).

So possibly every atheist is to some point a Christian and vice-versa, if Aquinas and others are correct—at least to prompting of natural grace.²

Inversion—In the Writers’ Lives

Both writers may have participated in some type of conversion or inversion in their own life. In The Complete Poetry of John Milton, editor John Shawcross arranges Milton’s poetry in a likely chronological order. The first section of poetry is entitled “Poems Written During School, College, and University Years (1624-32)” and the last two poems of the section are the famous companion pieces “L’Allegro” and “II Penseroso.” It has been speculated that these poems may have represented some exercise Milton performed while developing his poetic skill. The poems, if seen as autobiographical, show the choice of antithetical approaches to poetry—mirth or melancholy. In “L’Allegro” the narrator ponders life from a gay, energetic perspective of the world and poetry. The poem’s final couplet raises a question from the narrator:

These delights, if thou canst give,
Mirth with thee I mean to live

(Complete Poetry 110).

A careful reader easily senses the conditional “if thou canst give” and must question the value of “L’Allegro.”

In “Il’ Penseroso,” the narrator does not advocate denial or pain, but rather heightened awareness of the seriousness of life. Melancholy can produce joy or satisfaction in the face of the somber awareness of mortality. Milton ends this poem more dogmatically:

These pleasures melancholy give,
And I with thee will choose to live

(Complete Poetry 175).

The great works Milton produced in his career offer evidence that the two companion poems are somewhat self-reflexive. The majority of Milton’s work and theme is serious, concerning religion and government. One is hard pressed to think of any Milton work that is simply joyful or festive.

One should not assume that the poems are totally self-reflexive. Possibly the object of this discussion is to highlight and demonstrate Milton’s sense of dialectic or as he calls it in Areopagitica, contrariety—the sense that freedom, virtue, and meaning require meditation or choice of antitheses.
Joy and celebration are more common in Chesterton as he exudes optimism in response to the decadents. Chesterton's works are also more easily seen as self-reflexive, as it can be argued that he appears in many of them. Chesterton chose between antitheses—the optimists and the pessimistic decadents. He then converted into an inversion— from agnostic to Roman Catholic. Many of Chesterton's novels and short stories involve a quest, a quest for truth which might be equated with God, a quest Chesterton had already completed.

**Character Inversions**

This thesis chapter began by detailing the ultimate inversion, the incarnation of God, a motif shared by both writers. The chapter then examined certain areas of the writers' lives that contained conversions, inversions, and antitheses supporting the conclusion that Chesterton and Milton operate under the influence of dualism, as does all of western society.

It is expected that authors who experience types of inversions, would create characters that are also involved in conversions and inversions. Two other famous Milton character inversions are Satan in *Paradise Lost* and Samson in *Samson Agonistes*. Satan and Samson are two types of anti-heroes. Satan is a heavenly spirit that falls because of pride and freedom. Satan falls, but has the
choice to repent or rebel again. Satan chooses to rebel. He instigates a meeting of the fallen angels to be held in Pandemonium. Satan advocates gaining vengeance on God by a sneak attack on God's new creation—man:

Heav'n, whose high walls fear no assault or Siege,

Or ambush from the Deep. What if we find

Some easier enterprize [Man]? (Complete Poetry 280).

Samson, a man with a special birthright from God, suffers several inversions. Samson inverts from God's athletic warrior to the slave of the Philistines. He goes from sight to blindness [as did Milton] and finally, from despair to glory. This cyclic image is further manifested in the use of the Phoenix legend near the end of the poem. The Phoenix converts from ashes to life, to ashes again. Samson's triumph is paradoxical: "O dearly-bought revenge, yet glorious!" (Complete Poetry 617). Samson, who chose Grace and was redeemed, had the same freedom as Satan.

Milton's characters are more familiar to most casual readers because they are included in the literary canon of English speaking cultures as well as the Bible. Although not as well known, Chesterton provides his readers with unforgettable characters, and occasionally these characters are converted and inverted.
The most compelling inversion of a Chesterton character is Flambeau. Readers are introduced to Flambeau in “The Blue Cross,” the first Father Brown mystery. Flambeau, the master criminal, serves as Father Brown’s chief antagonist in The Innocence of Father Brown. Flambeau’s role can be expanded to say that he is the antithesis of Father Brown. Chesterton masterfully describes Flambeau through the eyes of Valentin, the great French atheist detective:

Flambeau was a figure as statuesque and international as the Kaiser. Almost every morning the daily paper announced that he had escaped the consequences of one extraordinary crime by committing another. He was a Gascon of gigantic stature and bodily daring; and the wildest tales were told of his outbursts of athletic humour.... Lastly he was known to be a startling acrobat; despite his huge figure, he could leap like a grasshopper and melt into the tree-tops like a monkey (Complete Father Brown 9-10).

Add the mind of a criminal genius to this man and you would expect to have a complete villain, a Shavian or Nietzschean superman. Possibly Flambeau parallels Milton’s Samson in respect to “athletic humor.” Flambeau had “turned the juge d’ instruction upside down and stood him on his head, ‘to clear his mind’” and “how he ran down the Rue de Rivoli with a policeman under each arm” (9). This
behavior is reminiscent of Samson stealing the gates of Gaza and placing them on a distant hill.

Contrast Valentin's description of Flambeau with the following description of Father Brown. It illustrates Chesterton playing on the fact that Flambeau and Father Brown are antithetical:

and a very short Roman Catholic priest going up from a small Essex Village...Valentin gave it up and almost laughed. The little priest was so much the essence of those Eastern flats: he had a face as round and dull as a Norfolk dumpling; he had eyes as empty as the North sea; he had several brown-paper parcels which he was quite incapable of collecting. The Eucharistic Congress had doubtless sucked out of their local stagnation many such creatures, blind and helpless, like moles disinterred. Valentin...could have no love for priests. But he could have pity for them, and this one might have provoked pity in anybody

(Complete Father Brown 10).

A list of each man's characteristics would include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Flambeau</th>
<th>Father Brown</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tall</td>
<td>Short</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acrobatic</td>
<td>Clumsy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brilliant</td>
<td>Dull</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great strength</td>
<td>Round dumpling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monkey</td>
<td>Mole or moon calf</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From the two character descriptions, a reader would expect that in a battle of wits or any other confrontation, Flambeau would easily vanquish Father Brown. A writer who loves ambiguity, paradoxes and inversions, however, does not gratify the reader’s expectations.

In “The Blue Cross,” Father Brown not only successfully safeguarded a valuable religious symbol, but tantalized Flambeau long enough for Valentin to pick up the trail, ingeniously laid by Father Brown. Thanks to the little cleric the police caught up with Flambeau. The short story ends with Valentin suggesting that he and Flambeau should bow to their master, Father Brown. The reader is not told what happens to Flambeau, but the master criminal returns in later stories in The Innocence of Father Brown.

Flambeau resurfaces in “The Queer Feet.” In this mystery, Father Brown is cloistered in an inn’s cloak room writing a letter. On the floor above him, the exclusive club, “The Twelve True Fisherman,” holds its annual secret club meeting and dinner. The members eat their special fish main course with rare silver forks shaped like fish. Flambeau has slipped into the dinner disguised as both a club member and a waiter to steal the club’s valuable silverware. Father Brown exposes him by figuring out the implications of the odd alternation of footsteps he heard in the long hall above him; the only logical explanation for a gentlemanly stroll changing into the fast pace of a servant
would be a man pretending to be both. Of course, this story hinges on the fact that formal attire of a waiter and a gentleman out for the evening is the same. Chesterton, champion of the common man, loved this type of paradox that stripped away the facade of money and social snobbery.

In the fourth story of *The Innocence of Father Brown*, Flambeau opens the action by stating “The most beautiful crime I ever committed...was also my last.” (*Complete Father Brown* 54). The events occurred at Christmas time when Flambeau came to a masquerade ball as a harlequin. The great criminal was entertaining the crowd when a policeman arrived, whom everyone thought to be another guest. The harlequin battered the officer unconscious, in what everyone thought to be an act. But in fact, Flambeau had stolen three large diamonds and had also disabled the police. His escape seemed imminent, except that Father Brown deduced that there was something abnormal about a policeman who would remain lying on stage during and after the supposed comedy. Father Brown realized that the downed officer and the missing diamonds might be linked together. Father Brown chased Flambeau through the garden. While chasing, Father Brown was sermonizing. Father Brown warned Flambeau that he was no longer the gentleman robber, since he had cast doubt on an innocent young man and assaulted an officer. Flambeau dropped the three large diamonds out of the trees to the cleric on the ground.
This Father Brown story is important for many reasons. It bills itself as Flambeau’s last crime, but it is also one of several stories in which the crime was shadowed by a performance of some kind. Art imitates life and crime imitates art. Chesterton is foreshadowing a sub-genre of post-modern fiction, what Stefano Tani had dubbed “the doomed detective.”

The doomed detective story focuses attention on the detective, the detecting process, and the outcome of the action. A recurring arch-rival is not needed for the detective since he is often his own antagonist. The doomed detective is often incapable of actually capturing and delivering the criminal to justice. The doomed detective may also not solve the mystery quickly enough to avoid further tragedy or he may not be able to solve the case at all.

Many parallels could be drawn between Chesterton’s detectives and Tani’s theory. The one germane to this thesis is Tani’s explanation of crime as art. Tani suggests that starting with Poe, the criminal is the artist, the poet. The detective may also be a poet, Poe’s was, but he is more critic than artist. Chesterton agrees in “The Flying Stars” as Father Brown tells Flambeau, “A common thief would have been thankful for the warning and fled; but you are a poet. You already had the clever notion of hiding the jewels in a blaze of false stage jewellry” (Complete Father Brown 63). The criminal is creativity that is held in check by the detective, scholarly reason.
After three stories, Father Brown has continuously outwitted Flambeau. The odd thing is that Father Brown never gets Flambeau arrested and imprisoned [another sign of a doomed detective]. Yet Father Brown is not a doomed detective because he is more concerned with getting Flambeau to confess and repent than with punishing him or exercising power over him. Father Brown, a near perfect detective, can only be doomed in the sense that he cannot totally defeat Satan and sin on earth. Chesterton needs a flawed detective, Father Brown's antithesis, to suggest balance.

In the next story, "The Invisible Man," two men need help and they say they are going to Flambeau: "His name's Flambeau, and though his youth was a bit stormy, he's a strictly honest man now, and his brains are worth money" (*Complete Father Brown* 70). It turns out that Father Brown has won himself a convert. Flambeau has converted from master criminal to legitimate detective whose intellectual capabilities are presumably worth paying for. But are they? Flambeau does not solve the case of "The Invisible Man"; Father Brown does. In the case of "The Honour of Israel Gow," Flambeau was working with Scotland Yard to determine if Lord Glengyle died an untimely and unnatural death. But Flambeau could not make head or tail of it and sent for Father Brown, who then did solve the case. In every case, Flambeau ends up crying something to the effect, "I will get some sense out of this...if I [have to] use the
tortures of the Inquisition" (Complete Father Brown 87). Besides the irony that the former criminal is the one thinking in terms of the violent inquisition, these outbursts demonstrate that Flambeau has neither the patience to solve the crime nor hear Father Brown fully, but quizzically explain it. The once great criminal has been inverted into a Herculean Dr. Watson. Flambeau becomes Father Brown's sidekick and appears in many more stories, but he is only important when his great strength is needed to batter a door or fight the criminals.

Supposedly, Flambeau made the right choice in converting, but he does not appear the better for it. Milton's Satan does not repent, chooses to attack God, and is justifiably condemned to Hell. Milton's Samson made the right choice and he was able to redeem himself in the eyes of the Lord. Father Brown learned of crime in the confessional and Flambeau lived his experiences and should, therefore, be an excellent detective. Possibly Chesterton is making a statement that Father Brown can comprehend evil and deal with it, but evil cannot become benevolent. Chesterton could be asserting that if you put the detective [good] and criminal [evil] on the same level, not allowing evil to break the rules, then good is easily triumphant.
Inversion—As Plot

Both authors use other inversions in their stories. One common inversion Chesterton and Milton share is the idea of Hell as inverted Heaven. Milton describes Hell superficially in Book I of Paradise Lost. Readers understand that Hell is below because the angels fell:

As far remov'd from God and light of Heav'n
As from the Center thrice to th' utmost pole.
O how unlike the place from whence they fell!

(Complete Poetry 253)

Milton recreates the creation of Hell in Book VI. when Raphael tells Adam of the war in Heaven. The Son of God was chosen to vanquish the revolting angels. The son:

into terrour chang'd
His count'nance too severe to be beheld
And full of wrauth bent on his Enemies

(Complete Poetry 385).

The provoked Son came into battle, but eased his aggression because “he meant not to destroy, but root them out of Heav'n” (Complete Poetry 386).

The Son drove the rebellious angels into a hole that the revolting angels fell into or threw themselves into, “Down from the verge of Heav'n,
Eternal wrath Burnt after them to the bottomless pit" (Complete Poetry 386).

Actually the pit was not bottomless, because after nine days of falling the fallen landed in Hell.

This scenario is well described by Milton. Chesterton does not develop the inversion of Heaven to Hell as graphically as Milton. Chesterton is not trying to deal with this inversion in the same scope Milton did. However, Chesterton makes powerful reference to the inversion in “Gloria in Profundis.” Stanza 3 paraphrases Milton's description in Paradise Lost. Chesterton, too, writes vivid and powerful poetry here. Alliteration, strong verbs, gerunds, and participles intensify the drama through sensory maps.

Chesterton even uses the word inverted and in line 19, he tips over a mountain and makes it hang, just in case readers miss the visual and spatial force of the imagery. Then the stanza's last two lines recount the nine days' fall of the fallen and imply a parallel by antithesis in the incarnation, i.e., the redemptive value of the fall or condescension of deity in the kenosis in Phillippians already cited in this chapter.

Chesterton exploits other inversions in his works. The inversion of Heaven into Hell and the Tower of Babel appear in his short story "The Bottomless Well," in which Chesterton retells an Arab legend. Sultan Aladin commands a pagoda to be built that stretches, not up to Heaven (which is what
the Tower of Babel was to do), but past Heaven to tower over it. The Sultan, proud as Satan, experiences the same result as the tower of Babel. Allah strikes the Sultan down with a thunderbolt. The thunderbolt strikes into the earth "boring a hole deeper and deeper, till it made a well that was without a bottom as the tower was to have been without a top. And down that inverted tower of darkness the soul of the proud Sultan is falling for ever and ever" (Knew Too Much 75).

The story also contains another inversion. The Great Lord Hastings is found dead at the mouth of this supposed bottomless well that is now a part of a golf course. Suspicion is cast on the young man who is with Hastings at the time of death. The young man, who is supposedly in love with Hastings' younger wife, was almost in shock over the death and the body.

Horne Fisher, while running through the clubhouse library, ran into a revolving book case and watched two coffee cups on it spin around. Later he correctly deduced that the young man is so aghast at the murder because it is a surprise to him. The young man is supposed to be the victim. When Hastings is poisoning the coffee, the young man spins the bookshelf while looking for a volume. The shelf revolved, inverting the cups and also inverting the role of murderer and victim. Of course, Hastings is walking his prey to the bottomless well, a convenient place to hide a corpse.
The motif of man's building a tower to heaven also occurs in Chesterton's essay, "On Gargoyles." Chesterton took the idea of man as inverted God one step farther when he asserted another inversion. In this inversion man is an inverted animal, specifically the ape. "On Gargoyles" tells the story of islanders who have their priest build a great tower to the sun-god. The priest chose only perfect building materials, for this tower was to be as "exquisite as sunshine itself" (Man Was Chesterton 3).

Although it was a beautiful man-made object, the priest said, "I have made a tower which is a little worthy of the sun" (Man Was Chesterton 4). After defending the island against pirates and other hardships, the priest realized that the sun was not the object deserving to be worshipped. The priest said, "I was wrong and they are right, the sun, the symbol of our father, gives life to all those earthly things that are full of ugliness and energy" (Man Was Chesterton 4).

So the priest set out to build a great Gothic Cathedral to God. Statues of all, especially the ugly, creatures of the earth are carved to be joined together as a unified magnificent tribute to God. Before the temple can be completed, the rich people of the island became riotous and several confrontations take place. During one altercation, the priest was knocked in the head with a rock. Amnesia set in and he didn't know what to do with the animal statues.
The priest took the statues and placed them into an erratic pile that stood fifty feet tall. The rich thought that it was wonderful. The pile was literal, quantitative art, better than a cathedral. The priest had lost the Gothic and Romantic Christian art [spiritual and symbolic] he was hoping for. Chesterton said: "I have to carve the Gargoyles, because I can carve nothing else; I leave to others the angels and the arches and the spires" (Ward 280). Chesterton leaves the angels for Milton.

The idea of man as inverted animal appears in this essay when the priest describes the pinnacle of his planned church: "the highest pinnacle was a monkey standing on his head with his tail pointing at the sun...and that symbol which was to crown it all, the ape upside down, was really Christian; for man is the ape upside down" (Man Was Chesterton 5).

**Antitheses**

The inversions can be classified by categories of antitheses. The two major categories of antitheses in Milton and Chesterton are Good versus Evil and Order versus Anarchy. In Milton's works, good is represented by God, the Son, and faithful angels; evil by Satan and his fallen angels. The same conflict occurs in Chesterton's short fiction. Father Brown, Horne Fisher, Mr. Pond, and even the converted Flambeau are champions of Good. Valentin, the atheist detective
who turns into a murderer and then kills himself, leads a great and varied number of villains. These distinctions are not as obvious in *The Man Who Was Thursday*, which is filled with dualism, but a special type. Dualism consists of *irreducible* parts, parts that can be broken down no further. The dualism in *The Man Who Was Thursday* continually confronts the characters and they must actively deal with the contrariety of it. If a man could synthesize Good and Evil, if there were no choice, his whole life would become a monotonous nightmare.

Another category into which Chesterton’s and Milton’s inversions and antitheses fall is Order and Anarchy. Milton implies a structured heavenly order to all the universe. Anarchy and chaos are the Hell created for the fallen angels, but it is also present on earth. Man has the choice of heavenly order or chaos and the great abyss. In *The Man Who Was Thursday*, Chesterton deals specifically with the fight for order against anarchy. Everyone, not merely the Philosophical Police, must choose. The evil that fuels anarchy is subjective. As Satan notes in *Paradise Lost*,

> The mind is its own place, and in it self Can make a Heav'n of Hell and a Hell of Heav'n

(*Complete Poetry* 257).

In two short stories, Chesterton deals with this special type of dualism. In “The Duel of Dr. Hirsch,” Dr. Hirsch needs an antagonist, but there is none.
Dr. Hirsch, who speaks to his followers from his balcony, eventually dons a disguise to appear in the streets below and shout challenges for "himself" to answer. Of course, it takes him a little time to appear on the balcony to answer the needed challenges. Dr. Hirsch needed an opponent so desperately that he manufactured one.

"When Doctors Agree" is the antithesis of "The Duel of Dr. Hirsch." The story revolves around a young intern and an old atheist doctor. The old practitioner convinces the young man to accept science as god. The young doctor eventually murders the old doctor because they became too much alike. The lack of duality, the old doctor robbing the young man of his choice, caused the intern to murder his mentor.

**Diction—Word Plays**

Another technical similarity between Chesterton and Milton is diction. Oddly, a poet of melancholy and a poet of optimism share the same language: word choice in one specific word play, and many similar uses of light, dark, and color imagery. Milton was not the merry punster and paradox peddler that Chesterton was, although both writers felt a moral responsibility to the general public. They had different views of how to achieve their literary intentions. Milton, a very intelligent man, thought that grave language accomplished his
end. Milton wrote *Paradise Lost* in blank verse as a response to Cowley’s *Davideis*, which was written in heroic couplets (Laflin 27). Milton felt that the absence of rhyme further dignified his message. As for Chesterton, Cyril Clemens asserted that:

Chesterton was one of the deepest thinkers who ever existed; he was deep because he was right; and he could not help being right; but he could not either help being modest and charitable, so he left it to those who could understand him to know that he was right, and deep; to the others, he apologized for being right, and he made up for being deep by being witty. That is all they can see of him (Ward 620).

Although Chesterton’s puns and paradoxes are numerous and well documented, he shares only one with Milton, a pun which plays the words *sun* and *Son* against each other. Neither Milton nor Chesterton pioneered this pun which pits the rising sun versus the rising Son, but both played with it. Milton used the pun in “On the Morning of Christ’s Nativity” by using *Sun* with a capital *S* three times. This usage not only implies personification, but divinity as well. It is possible that Milton was also alluding to a pagan personification of the sun and in using this ploy synthesizing paganism and Christianity. Chesterton also attempted such a synthesis. Chesterton, like Milton, believed that Christianity is
innate and evolves from paganism and pagan ritual. Both authors recognize the influence of myth. The pagan god Pan was alluded to in both Milton's "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity" and Chesterton's *The Man Who Was Thursday.*

Chesterton plays with the son/sun image in his essay "On Gargoyles." The priest built a monumental tower to the sun. Because this tower contained only that which was bright and beautiful, the priest realized his error: the monument should be built using not only the beautiful, but also, and especially, the ugly, as all creatures owe and pay homage to the Son and not the sun.

**Diction—Light and Dark Imagery**

Milton and Chesterton share similar diction in the imagery of light and darkness. Both authors use this convention mainly because of the religious connotations of *light* and *darkness:* light stands for God and Good; darkness stands for Satan and Evil. In "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity," Milton uses the word *light* six times and a form of the word *sun* five times. In the proem alone, Milton uses the word *light* twice, as well as *star-led, blaze, suns, bright,* and *fire.* Other words used signifying good in the rest of the poem include: *glimmering, glow, flame, enlightened, silver, gold, burning, rayes,* and *bright-harnest.* Antithetically, the fallen angels are slinking through the gloomy shade of twilight to the blackest fate. Milton's companion poems "L'Allegro" and "Il' Penseroso"
revolve around their imagery of light and darkness, although the symbolism here
is not good and evil, but mirth and melancholy. "L'Allegro" is an optimistic
poem where light imagery pervades. The poem starts by giving us the
antithetical views from the "blackest midnight born" (Complete Poetry 106). The
dark contains "horrid shapes, and shrieks, and sights unholy" (Complete Poetry
106). After ten lines of this dark, sinister imagery, the dawn breaks and
goddesses and Graces bring joy and laughter to the world. The woods and
nature are beautiful in the light of day. "Il' Penseroso" starts with a ten line
introduction that derides joy. As the narrative begins, melancholy is praised
instead of mirth. The woods at night seem less friendly. The seriousness and
the isolation of the woods (i.e., nature), at first intimidate, but gradually become
a teacher to man. The knowledge and experience man gains from nature allow
him to choose intelligently. The woods become an important part of the light
and darkness in other works, most notably Comus. The Lady chooses to take a
path through the perilous wood, a wood outlined in "the falling sun" (Complete
Poetry 125). The wood is wonderfully described by The Lady's Elder Brother:

Stoop thy pale visage though an amber cloud,

And disinherit Chaos, that reigns here

In double night of darkness, and of shades;

(Complete Poetry 133).
In the dark woods (nature), The Lady is set upon by a mischievous spirit that tempts her with earthly pleasures. This drama foreshadows *Paradise Regained*: A female stands tall against the dark woods, the Prince of Darkness, and Nature.

Chesterton plays light and dark images off each other in *The Man Who Was Thursday*. The book begins with a description of Saffron Park: the Park's red brick buildings were "as a cloud of sunset" (*Thursday* 1). This eeriness is further accentuated as "attractive unreality fell upon it about nightfall, when the extravagant roofs were dark against the afterglow" (*Thursday* 1). The nightscapes of Chesterton are important to his transitions. At the beginning of the book, the night is just coming on and Syme is just being drawn into a confrontation with evil. After a lengthy debate on anarchy, Syme is led by his adversary, Lucian Gregory, to the meeting place of the anarchist assembly. The meeting hall and the meeting resemble Pandemonium, the meeting hall of the fallen angels in *Paradise Lost*. Lucian is to be elected to the anarchist high council at the meeting, but Syme maneuvers so that he is elected instead of Lucian. After the meeting, Syme is led out the back door to a waiting tug that will transport him up the Thames to dock near Leicester Square. Upon leaving the hall, the characters encounter a "sudden blue and silver picture of the moonlit river" (*Thursday* 21). Syme has persevered through the blackest part of night and is
now blessed with a splendid skyscape. Readers learn how Syme became a member of the Philosophical Police. While walking and muttering madly about problems in England, he was approached and recruited by a police officer to battle the very problems that he had been complaining about. Syme was led into a building and was passed through four other officers before being finally shown “into a room, the abrupt blackness of which startled him like a blaze of light. It was not the ordinary darkness, in which forms can be faintly traced; it was like going suddenly stone-blind” (Thursday 27). After meeting the head of the Philosophical Police, Syme returns outside to a crimson night. Now on his way to try to fight anarchy, he is on the boat heading towards a new adventure as the day breaks:

When Syme stepped out on to the steam-tug he had a singular sensation of stepping out into something entirely new; not merely into the landscape of a new land, but even into the landscape of a new planet (Thursday 28).

Chesterton’s scene echoes one found in Milton: “Over the whole landscape lay a luminous and unnatural discoloration, as of that disastrous twilight which Milton spoke of as shed by the sun in eclipse” (Thursday 28). This reference suggests that Chesterton is not only familiar with Milton, but also directly influenced by him. *The Man Who Was Thursday* is filled with such twilight
and dawn landscapes and images as well as light and dark imagery and metaphor. An important light—dark reference from *The Man Who Was Thursday* concerns the flight of the Philosophic Police:

This wood of witchery, in which men’s faces turned black and white by turns, in which their figures first swelled into sunlight and then fading into formless night, this mere chaos of chiaroscuro (after the clear daylight outside), seemed to Syme a perfect symbol of the world in which he had been moving for three days (*Thursday 81*).

The passage poignantly points out that the men retreat into the chaos of light and dark, since according to *Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary*, chiaroscuro means: 1. pictorial representation in terms of light and shade without regard to color. 2. the arrangement or treatment of light and dark parts in a pictorial work of art.

The use of this type of art terminology reflects Chesterton’s wide range of knowledge and expertise. It also explains why Chesterton describes so many landscapes in his works. Landscapes and sunsets appear significantly in almost every Father Brown mystery story. Maisie Ward comments on the influence of art training on Chesterton:
He could now create in the imagination gardens and sunsets and sheer colour, so as to give to his novels and stories pictorial value, to his fantasies glow, and to his poetry vision of the realities of things (56).

Sunset is the time when Light and Darkness occupy the same sky. Symbolically it is the boundary between Good and Evil and Order and Anarchy. The sunset is the time when the detective and criminal coexist and do actual battle.

Chesterton is symbolically asserting man's obligation to choose. Milton, especially in Areopagitica and Paradise Lost, asserts that free will consists of choice, that reason is the basis of choice, and that dualism is necessary for meaningful choice: "that which purifies us is trial and trial is by what is contrary" (Areo 18). Then:

Many there be that complain of Divine Providence for suffering Adam to transgress; foolish tongues! when God gave him reason, he gave him freedom to choose, for reason is but choosing; he had been else a mere artificial Adam (Areo 25).

To Milton this informed choice is the essence of a human being.

Possibly Chesterton presents these battles between mortal men to foreshadow the coming main event of Christ versus the Antichrist, as the battle for Eden foreshadows Paradise Regained. That is why they meet when they do in
Chesterton's plots. Religiously, the sunset is on Calvary and implies the Easter sunrise.

Milton's and Chesterton's works abounded in light and dark images that helped them intensify the difference between God and Satan, good and evil, order and anarchy.

Diction—Color Imagery

An instance can be found where the work of Chesterton echoes Milton. In Orthodoxy, Chesterton writes:

I felt economical about the stars as if they were sapphires (They are called so in Milton's Eden): I hoarded the hills. For the universe is a single jewel, and while it is natural cant to talk of a jewel as peerless and priceless, of this jewel it is literally true. This cosmos is indeed without peer and without price: for there cannot be another one (Orthodoxy 64-5).

Chesterton thought a great deal of this metaphor to mention it and attribute it to Milton. He even adapted the metaphor to his own purpose in the Father Brown mystery story "The Blue Cross," when Father Brown preaches to Flambeau:
Reason and justice grip the remotest and loneliest star. Look at those stars. Don't they look as if they were single diamonds and sapphires? Well, you can imagine any mad botany or geology you please. Think the moon is a blue moon, a single elephantine sapphire (Complete Father Brown 20).

This reference to Milton prepares readers to expect other similarities between the two authors. The plots and themes of Milton's works mandated the use of the word red and red images. In both Paradise Lost and "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity," Milton is forced to deal with Hell, the battle for Heaven, and Apocalypse and the Judgment Day. In order to describe Hell in these poems, Milton had to use words like fiery, blaze, burn, sun, fire, etc. Again, these usages are already well developed by Milton scholars. However, the color red is much more crucial to the works of Chesterton and he uses it more effectively and symbolically.

Red is the dominant color in the works of Chesterton. In the first chapter of the Man Who Was Thursday, there are at least fourteen references to the color red and at least ten of those references are specifically about red hair.

3See, for example, Rosemond Tuve, Images and Themes: In Five Poems by Milton 3-73.
The anarchist poet of Saffron Park, Lucian Gregory, is described as having not only red hair, but "Dark red hair" (2). The trait ran in the family; Lucian's sister, Rosamund, also had red hair. [The significance of this trait will be discussed later.]

In Chapter II, Lucian leads Syme down into the cavernous meeting hall. As they are transported downward and enter the meeting room the atmosphere is described as "red subterranean light." They traveled down the "vaulted passage, at the end of which was the red light. It was an enormous crimson lantern..." (Thursday 9).

In Chapter IV, Chesterton provides exposition on how Syme was recruited for the Philosophical Police. Syme, the poet of law and order, was walking along under a dark red sunset. The red river reflected the red sky, and they both reflected his anger. The sky, indeed, was so swarthy, and the light on the river relatively so lurid, that the water almost seemed of fiercer flame than the sunset it mirrored. It looked like a stream of literal fire winding under the vast caverns of a subterranean country (Thursday 23).

The color red is apocalyptic and all of Chesterton's references to the "subterranean country" may allude to Milton's earth and Hell. The end of the
The world is to be signified by a blood-red moon, the red-hot lava of volcanos, etc....

_The Man Who Was Thursday_ has the red landscape of the Book of Revelation.

When approached and greeted by a uniformed police officer Syme shot back

"You fellows would call the end of the world a good evening. Look at that bloody red sun and that bloody river!" _(Thursday 23)._ Aside from the racy slang connotations, _bloody_ may have religious significance beyond its literal meanings.

After Syme is successfully recruited he returns to the crimson night which Chesterton clearly relates to Milton in _The Man Who Was Thursday_, "Over the whole landscape lay a luminous and unnatural discoloration, as of that disastrous twilight which Milton spoke of as shed by the sun in eclipse" _(Thursday 28)._ Chesterton also used red to characterize certain people. For example, red describes the anarchists throughout the book. The anarchists want to destroy mankind and the earth. The council secretary wears a red flower on his suit; the marquis had crimson lips; Lucian had red hair. The red-haired poet from Saffron Park returns at the end of the book, with his "red hair, like red flames, [which] shall burn up the world" _(Thursday 118)._ Indeed, Lucian Gregory is the real anarchist: Lucian (Lucifer) represents Satan. Connotations of Hell often include the color red. The devil is made up in a costume of red, standing on red-hot rocks with red flames crackling around. Chesterton alludes to Hell and Satan with the color red, but he may also be suggesting that the earth is
Hell. That would help to explain the red-laden landscapes in *The Man Who Was Thursday*. Yet Gogol, the police detective, and other characters who had red hair did not turn out to be the Devil.

Red is recurrent in the last few pages of the book where it also symbolizes passion. The book leaves us with the image of Gregory's red-headed sister, Rosamund, cutting roses. Her name, which means "rose of the world," suggests a red rose. Rosamund also represents one of the major preoccupations of Victorian England, sexuality. Syme notices her. In the beginning of the book, when Syme was the "law and order poet" he had not yet tried his values; he had not lived. After his existential quest, he understands suffering and love. Now there is hope that he will continue to really live and the affections of a red-haired beauty would be welcome. Evidently Chesterton understands the concept of redemptive sexuality.

Red imagery is continuously cropping up on the heads of the criminals and questionable characters in the mystery stories of Chesterton. As mentioned earlier, in *The Man Who Was Thursday*, Lucian (Satan) had red hair while Syme (the would-be Christ figure) had blonde hair. Chesterton reinforces dualism through this physical characteristic. In Chesterton's short fiction the following red-haired characters appear:
This list may be incomplete, but it suggests that hair color may be more than coincidental. Many times the red hair is a hint to the reader of the villain's identity. Red hair may suggest the lust and passion of Man, though often times the red hair also symbolizes the poet, the man volatile enough to be creative.

Antithetically, many of these red haired antagonists have blonde or white-haired protagonists. Some of Chesterton's main characters have
symbolically light hair, including Gabriel Syme, Horne Fisher, and Gabriel Gale.

From his short fiction comes the following list of antitheses to red-haired villains:

- **Story**
  - "The Flying Stars"
  - "The Wrong Shape"
  - "The Hammer of God"
  - "The Eye of Apollo"
  - "The Three Tools of Death"
  - "The Secret Garden"
  - "The Sins of Prince Saradine"
  - "The Absence of Mr. Glass"
  - "The Paradise of Thieves"
  - "The Fairy Tale of Father Brown"
  - "The Hole in the Wall"
  - "The Vanishing Prince"
  - "The Soul of the Schoolboy"
  - "The White Pillars Murder"
  - "The Tremendous Adventure of Major Brown"
  - "The Actor and the Alibi"
  - "The Vanishing of Vandrey"
  - "The Worst Crime in the World"

- **Light Hair**
  - James Blount
  - Mrs. Quinton
  - Norman Bohun
  - Wilfred Bohun
  - Kalor
  - Royce
  - Sir Aaron
  - Brayne
  - Prince Saradine
  - Maggie
  - Ethel Harrogate
  - the Priest
  - Heinrich
  - Chamberlain
  - Leonard Crane
  - Morton
  - Rev. Twyford
  - Morse
  - an old man
  - Mrs. Mandeville
  - Sir Arthur
  - Evan Smith
  - Woman in Scarlet

If red hair has significance, so do blonde and white hair. Usually these characters are good and benevolent. Of course, there are exceptions: in "The Hammer of God" there is fratricide, and the victim and murderer share blonde hair. Ironically, in "The Worst Crime in the World," Chesterton inverts his image by having a blonde-haired woman wear scarlet. This unpredictability mirrors
both life and a writer's necessity, especially a writer of serialized detective stories, where plots get too predictable.
Chapter 3
Thematic Similarities Between
Chesterton and Milton

In the last chapter, technical similarities were documented between Chesterton and Milton. This chapter serves to document the thematic similarities between the two authors. Most notably, Chesterton and Milton can be considered champions of free will. They also share, but occasionally differ in their interpretation of, Biblical parables. Finally, this chapter will comment on the writers' use of, and allusions to, three religious characters and symbols.

Thematic Similarities—Freedom

Chesterton and Milton share several thematic parallels. Most notably, Chesterton and Milton are the poets of free will. Milton's *Areopagitica* is a frequently cited treatise against censorship and the classical defense of the moral necessity of liberty, of conscience, and freedom to choose between contrarieties. Milton argues that "When God gave him [Adam] reason, he gave him freedom to choose, for reason is but choosing" (*Areo* 25). Printing should not be regulated because the book is not good or bad. "Read any books
whatever come to thy hands, for thou art sufficient both to judge aright and to examine each matter” (Areo 16). Milton justifies liberty of conscience: “I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and sees her adversary.... that which purifies us is trial, and trial is by what is contrary” (Areo 18). Bad books may serve truth by contrast or contradiction; vice and stupidity expose themselves by publication. “Since therefore the knowledge and survey of vice is in this world so necessary to the constituting of human virtue, and the scanning of error to the confirmation of truth how can we more safely and with less danger scout into the regions of sin and falsity than by reading all manner of tractates, and hearing all manner of reason? And this is the benefit which may be had of books promiscuously read” (Areo 18-9).

Milton argues that freedom to choose is a prerequisite to finding the truth. Many of the lines from Areopagitica reappear in some form in Paradise Lost. The issue in Eden is not the regulating of printing or man's choice concerning religion, but freedom to choose between good and evil.

In Paradise Lost, Milton has God explain “I made him [Adam] just and right, sufficient to have stood, though free to fall” (Complete Poetry 301). Adam and Eve disobey and eat the fruit, choosing evil and Satan over good and
God—but they are also choosing freedom and experience over ignorance and innocence.

Of course, man's choice is not the only choice in the book. The fallen angels choose to fall. God chooses to allow Man the opportunity to fall. The Son decides to intercede for man. The devil chooses not to repent to God, but rather to assault Man. Satan also assaults God and Man when Christ chooses good and truth over carnality, power, and possession in Milton's *Paradise Regained*. Since choice is a constant for man, choice pervades all literature. Milton, for example, chose to be a poet of melancholy rather than mirth in the contradictory poems “L'Allegero” and “Il'Penseroso.”

Chesterton is a poet of the quest. He is relentless in his pursuit of the truth whether it be religious, social, or political. In *The Man Who Was Thursday*, Chesterton presents readers with Gabriel Syme, whose character echoes and parallels the dialectic of Milton's *Areopagitica*. Before being recruited as a Philosophical Policeman, Syme was a “law and order” poet whose virtue was untested. In the novel, Syme makes a series of choices which lead him on a quest for truth which tests his basic beliefs. The book has been accused of being relativistic because it synthesizes all antitheses: subjectivity determines whether an action is right or wrong. The leader of the police and the leader of the
anarchists is the same person, Sunday. Their benevolence or evil depends on the person viewing them.

Chesterton’s life was his own quest. Chesterton was trying, testing, and questioning his belief in God. Chesterton demanded that faith be empirically and rationally tested, as any other proposition. His was a faith purified by trial, trial by contrarieties a la Milton’s *Areopagitica*.

Chesterton also made another significant choice. He became an optimist to avoid its antithesis—pessimism. Chesterton fashioned part of his philosophy in response to the *decadents* of the 1890's like Swinburne and Wilde. The decadents were artists who abandoned their public responsibility and produced art that was, from Chesterton’s perspective, a poor influence on society. The decadents were rebelling against Victorian moral earnestness and in turn Chesterton was rebelling against the amoral rebels. Chesterton believed that rebellion, in this case, was not destruction but rather a restoration.

With Chesterton’s mystery fiction, there is an implied continual choice. The choice lies with the criminal. The criminal need not steal or murder: it is his choice to do so. But without that choice, there would be no need of the detective, the priest, or possibly even God. Chesterton, a popular and effective essayist, often commented on freedoms and censorship in a vein similar to Milton. Ward noted:
saying he did not deny the peril [of liquor] but that all freedom meant peril—peril must be preferred to slavery. There were things in which a man must be free to choose even if his choice be evil (379).

And Chesterton echoes the original purpose of Areopagitica, which he highly valued, in a letter to Wells reprinted in Ward, "'I could not either tell a man to find a book good when he found it bad'" (412). And of course, the opposite is also true because the paradigm can be inverted. Milton wrote Areopagitica in response to governmental pressure. Chesterton also attempted to influence governmental policy. Chesterton appeared to testify before the Commission on Censorship. Ward summarized his testimony:

Chesterton declared himself to be concerned only with the good and happiness of the English people. Where he differed from nearly every other social reformer was that he believed that they should themselves decide what was for their own good and happiness (299).

Chesterton would not want to impose his will on other people. When accused of being out of date by a young writer, Chesterton was pleased. Ward relates he said to Edward Macdonald, "I like to see people refusing to accept the opinions of others before they've examined them themselves" (Ward 600). Ward further
asserts, “He [GKC] was the first person, I think, to see that Free Thought was no longer a youth movement, but old and even fossilized” (206). During the illness that took his life, Chesterton was usually too ill to have visitors. Edward Macdonald, not being warned away, visited Chesterton. After drifting away in a daydream, Chesterton made a statement that sums up his philosophy of life and validates this thesis: “The issue is now quite clear. It is between light and darkness and every one must choose his side” (Ward 650).

**Thematic Similarities—Religious Themes**

Some similarity of religious themes between Chesterton and Milton may be obvious by now. The Incarnation and the Nativity story have been previously covered in this thesis. Milton writes extensively of the story of Eden. Chesterton also deals with Adam, Eden, and the Fall. Chesterton, also an advocate of free choice, would not have been surprised that Man fell, since Man does not seem fit for paradise. According to Ward, Chesterton felt that “the best way to destroy a utopia is to establish it” (Ward 589). Milton is very austere in his works concerning the Fall. Chesterton also took his religion seriously and devoted some of his writings to the events of the Fall. Chesterton, however, was more Romantic about the subject. He realized the importance of the Fall, especially in societies that measure success against the ideal. Eden represents
an ideal that has affected all people. Chesterton sees the seed of reverse psychology in Eden, as Man ever since the Fall has been wary of doing what he has been encouraged to do. Ward comments on and quotes a Chesterton essay later included in *The Doubts of Democracy*:

Dealing with the Fall he uses one of his most brilliant illustrations.

We speak, he says, of a manly man, but not of a whaley whale. "If you wanted to dissuade a man from drinking his tenth whiskey, you would slap him on the back and say 'Be a man.' No one who wished to dissuade a crocodile from eating his tenth explorer would slap it on the back and say 'Be a crocodile.' For we have no notion of a perfect crocodile; no allegory of a whale expelled from his Whaley Eden (Ward 202).

The Fall continues to affect society, as people continually try to return to paradise by their own means. Chesterton felt that this type of over-reaction plagued the Victorian age:

There was much in Victorian ideas that I dislike and much that I respect; but there was nothing whatever about Victorian ideas corresponding to what is now called Victorian. I am actually old enough to remember the Victorian Age; and it was almost a complete contrast to all that is now connotated by that word. It
had all the vices that are now called virtues; a religious doubt, intellectual unrest, a hungry credulity about new things, a complete lack of equilibrium. It also had all the virtues that are now called vices; a rich sense of romance, a passionate desire to make the love of man and woman once more what is was in Eden, a strong sense of the absolute necessity of some significance in human life (Autobiography 143).

This treatment of human love indicates where Milton and Chesterton disagree about Eden. Chesterton remembers the Romance in Eden, while Milton seems ambivalent about the relationship between Adam and Eve: original sin overshadows original love and turns the story of Eden cynical. Chesterton would agree with the negative effects of the Fall. Chesterton stated, “It is only we, who have eaten the forbidden apple (or orange) who think of pleasure as a bribe” (Autobiography 48). An innocent child appreciates his treat. Not until Man becomes experienced does he realize that a price must be paid for pleasure. This thought carries interesting possibilities about the natures of pleasure and knowledge, but it further insinuates Chesterton’s Romantic view of Eden. The Fall represents Man’s transition from innocence to experience. Chesterton also continues the tradition of being playful with Satan. In an essay attacking the issue of “modern advertisement,” Chesterton refers to Satan as the first true
salesman, embracing the slogan “Eat more fruit” along with other forms of propaganda (Ward 506).

The Tower of Babel was a favorite topic and convention of Chesterton. As asserted earlier, the Biblical story demonstrated the inversion of the allegedly advanced human race. Chesterton and Milton understood the power of words and how disastrous it is when Man loses the ability to communicate. Milton alludes to this loss of speech in Book X of Paradise Lost. Satan returns to Pandemonium expecting a thunderous reception. Instead, the fallen angels can only hiss at him like the serpent he is. Chesterton, in a rare pessimistic [but humorous] observation, applied The Tower of Babel to his world. Chesterton observed that the League of Nations “came together to rebuild the Tower of Babel” (GKC quoted in Ward 635).
Thematic Similarities—Religious figures and Symbols

In his book *John Milton: Poetry*, critic David Miller argues that every Christ figure is also an Adam figure. To carry that point a step farther, isn't Adam symbolically every man? Those who believe in a "fortunate fall" might refer to Adam as their savior, since without his mistake, Man would not have an opportunity for redemption. If Adam is every man, doesn't this all refer back to free will? Man has the choice of Heaven or Hell, to stand or fall, and is in effect his own savior.

Milton and Chesterton believe in free will and in the trial and testing of virtue. Milton would assert that Adam needed the trial by Satan in order to appreciate and choose God and good. Adam's fall results from freedom exercised. As Milton portrays the action in *Paradise Lost*, Adam chooses to sin and live with Eve. By eating the fruit from the Tree of Knowledge, Adam was in a way choosing his own kind, Man not spirit. As Adam and Eve are banished from Eden, they are given the knowledge that they will produce descendants who will restore Mankind to Grace: Jesus Christ, unlike Adam, makes the proper choices.

God also has choices to make. If God is all-powerful and omnipotent, then He could eliminate the fallen angels and all that is bad and evil, but He does not. If man has freedom of choice, then every time Satan tempts, God tests.
In “On the Morning of Christ's Nativity” and *Paradise Regained*, the Son chooses to volunteer to be made man, and then suffer death. *Paradise Regained* begins:

I who e're while the happy Garden sung,
By one man's disobedience lost, now sing
Recovered Paradise to all mankind,
By one man's firm obedience tri'd.
Through all temptation, and the Tempter foil'd
In all his wiles, defeated and repuls't (*Complete Poetry* 517).

In *Paradise Regained* the Son becomes Christ and meets Satan, who tempts Him along the same lines that man was tempted. Christ refuses the wine, women, and shelter offered by Satan. But didn't Christ have the advantage of being the Son of God? Or after the Incarnation was He stricken with the same simplicity that struck Flambéau and Chesterton? Christ, faced with the first ever "damned-if-you-do and damned-if-you-don't" situation answers Satan, "Tempt not the Lord thy God" (*Complete Poetry* 570). Satan then falls [much like Man did] while Christ stands triumphant on the pinnacle.

Chesterton presents Syme as a Christ/Adam figure. Syme's first name is Gabriel, after the archangel. One of Gabriel's angelic duties is to vanquish the enemies of God, and Gabriel Syme tries to do the same. Syme is a "law and
order" poet railing against his anarchist family. But what is Syme doing? Nothing, except walking around huffing and whining. He is not doing anything constructive against the anarchists and he is becoming bitter against the police, government, and church.

Then Syme is given an opportunity. He is approached by a policeman and offered a job. [Not a regular job, but a job that calls for the saving of the world.] Given this Christ-like opportunity, Syme consciously chooses to save the world from anarchy and chaos. But can Syme even save himself? Syme's pride [Satan's tragic flaw], a feeling he can save the world, causes him to join the Philosophical Police.

Immediately, Syme has more choices to make. The dauntless anti-hero has pledged his word to the anarchist poet, Lucian Gregory, that he will not expose the anarchists or the Council of Days. Ironically, Syme makes a rousing speech to the anarchist assembly and is elected to the Council of Days. All along his adventure, Syme is confronted with the dilemma of breaking his word to Gregory, denying his commission as a law officer, and saving his skin. This behavior may echo Peter's betrayal at the trial of Jesus. Several times, Syme must restrain himself from approaching a uniformed officer and taking refuge. The first time he is tempted to do so is at the anarchist's breakfast. Syme looks down at the busy square from the balcony, upon what Chesterton refers to as
"the starry pinnacle of the commonplace" (Thursday 39). The pinnacle is similar to the one in Milton’s Paradise Regained. Syme is captivated by his feeling of power and superiority. As a man, he stands on the pinnacle ready to battle evil as the champion of the people. The street organ supplies his battle hymn. This behavior reverses Milton’s story of Christ on the pinnacle; Jesus stands firm and unshaken in his belief in Himself and God. Syme does not exhibit such faith; he is afraid of being tested.

These near failures by Syme prove his fallibility. Although he wishes to announce his position, he denies it. Jesus, when questioned, never denied being the messiah. Pleading nolo contendre before Herod got him crucified. The professor lays down his blue police I.D. card, probably analogous to the piscine of early Christians in Rome.

Syme’s world is shaken and Chesterton gives us the first real inversion. The actual first inversion would be Syme, the man of law and order, becoming Syme, Thursday on the Council of Anarchists. When Syme learns that he is not the only undercover detective, he feels:

the sensation that the cosmos had turned exactly upside down, that all trees were growing downwards and that all stars were under his feet. Then came slowly the opposite conviction.

For the last twenty-four hours the cosmos had really been upside
down, but now the capsized universe had come right side up again.... He knew simultaneously that he was a fool and a free man (Thursday 49-51).

Throughout the novel, Syme is aware of antitheses, but this is the first evidence that he is aware of inversion.

Dr. Bull, the man of science, lives in a skyscraper like the Tower of Babel. His name may be a play on the language of Babel, because it is all bull. Syme also claimed to want to pull down Sunday because Man should not be afraid of anything in the universe. What about “fear of God”? The exposed professor admires Syme’s optimism, but he approaches dismantling the council and arrest of Sunday in a pessimistic way. He is going to believe in something only if it is totally unbelievable. That great “leap of faith” is really the heart of religion whether one believes in God, Darwin, or the big bang; however, Man and earth were created, it is nearly impossible to believe. That is why optimists believe in God and pessimists, or as Chesterton considered them, decadents, believe in anything but God.

Syme describes the grey, dark night when checking on Dr. Bull’s apartment, which was compared to the Tower of Babel. Then comes a line religiously subliminal. “Syme had never seen any of the sky-scraping buildings in America, so he could only think of the buildings in a dream” (Thursday 53).
Chesterton, or any man struggling with the existence of God, may see God everywhere but not actually find him. Syme can know of America’s skyscrapers by just hearing of them. Much can also be said about humans not being able to see God directly. Chesterton and his character Syme are seeing God in a dream, as *The Man Who Was Thursday* is described on its title pages as being a nightmare—a nightmare because the book contains Miltonic contrariety and no dualism as the Philosophical Police and the anarchists are the same people. A nightmare is a nightmare because there is no dialectic. Syme and deWorms then confront Dr. Bull only to learn that he, too, is a detective. The professor refers to Sunday as One with a capital O. The reader understands it as a reference to the one God.

Syme’s next great attempt as a savior involves the attempt to intercept the Marquis. Syme has actively taken the leadership role. He feels that he has the best chance to delay, occupy, and survive an encounter with the Marquis. The duel to delay the Marquis is set. Although Syme is pursuing fear in order to eliminate fear, the fear will never be totally eliminated and in this novel, Syme fears Sunday and death. At the start of the duel, Syme reveals that the professor fears “tyrannic accidents of nightmare” and the doctor feared “the airless vacuum of science” (*Thursday* 73).

Chesterton goes on to categorize these fears:
The first was the old fear that any miracle might happen, the second the more hopeless modern fear that no miracle can ever happen. But he saw that these fears were fancies, for he found himself in the presence of the great fact of the fear of death, with its coarse and pitiless common sense (Thursday 73).

Syme becomes somewhat existential. The beauty of nature comes alive and like anyone unsure of an afterlife, Syme realizes that he loves life tremendously. Syme is sure that he is fighting the devil or one of the devil's appointed spirits. Of course, Syme is fighting a fellow police detective. This irony is completed by the arrival of a half-masked army led by Monday, another confused detective.

The title of Chapter 11, "The Criminals Chase the Police," is an inversion. The undercover detectives see the mob as death and they still fear death. The police escape into the woods, which is symbolically an escape into Nature, which is an escape into God. Chesterton asserts this in a letter to Shaw: "'Nature (if one must use the anthropomorphic fable of Nature instead of the philosophic term God)’" (Ward 232).

Syme wonders, "may I ask...where on earth we are all going to?" (Thursday 81). This question is ironic foreshadowing. The ordeal our detectives are going through will not lead them to an earthly place. They keep making
choices to chase God but are actually running away from Him. Syme and the other detectives feel that they, through their own human physical efforts, can catch Sunday [God] and achieve Grace or return to Eden. This chase goes from foot, to cart, to horse, to motor car. Even with the wonderful motor car, the birth of the assembly line and the technical revolution, the detectives cannot outdistance their pursuers or gain any ground on Sunday.

After being trapped by the sea, Syme and everyone else realized there was no anarchist council. Everyone is a Philosophical Policeman, even Sunday. Sunday admits this: “There’s one thing I’ll tell you though about who I am. I am the man in the dark room, who made you all policemen” (Thursday 100).

Another Biblical aside occurs during the chase scene. Sunday keeps throwing slips of papers, containing gibberish remarks, to his pursuers. These notes tie back into the Tower of Babel imagery. The language confusion (the babble) kept man from building a tower to God just like these chase scenes will not bring man up to God’s level.

Finally, Sunday escaping in a hot air balloon is symbolic of the transcendental experiences that the Philosophical Policemen and the readers have gone through in The Man Who Was Thursday. Syme, the failed Christ figure, took his seat, the one to the left of the seat of God. In Heaven, Christ sits at the
right hand of the Father. It is another inversion that Syme, the would-be Christ is seated at the left hand of Sunday.

Lucian Gregory is an important character in *The Man Who Was Thursday*. He gives the story duality by being Syme's chief antagonist. The name Lucian Gregory is interesting. Lucian's and Syme's first names begin with G, Gregory and Gabriel, names that have some religious connotations. Gabriel, as explained earlier, is one of the most powerful angels. As for Lucian's name, Pope Gregory VII was a supporter of celibacy for the priesthood, who also engaged in sweeping church reforms. Pope Gregory was forced into exile where he died.

The two poets are alike, yet different: the difference between antagonist and protagonist is again, choice. If Lucian echoes *Lucifer*, Lucian becomes a Satanic, anti-Christ figure.

Lucian is introduced as "the anarchic poet" and his red hair reminds the reader of the red-devil and red-hot hell (not to mention Algernon Swineburne). The poet of anarchy welcomes chaos. Milton uses that very term to describe the void into which the Son drove the fallen angels. Lucian is essential to *The Man Who Was Thursday*. He propelled Syme into the anarchist's world and eventually into the Council of Days. Syme's promise to Gregory also allowed the novel's plot to run full course. Without Syme's keeping this pledge,
he might have alerted the police and then no chase would have been had, no developing drama, and no confrontation of contrarieties.

Lucian is incensed by Syme during their discussion. Pride and temper caused him to blindly divulge information to Syme [just as pride and temper caused Satan's downfall in Paradise Lost], information that produces another inversion. Syme is able to win election to the Council of Days. Syme, the Philosophical Policeman, is elected to a powerful position instead of the true anarchist.

Lucian is seemingly done with the action of the story, but he reappears at the end of the novel. He comes to stand in front of the days wearing a dark suit of clothes. Syme declares that here is the real anarchist and Lucian admits it: "'And there came a day,' murmured Bull, who seemed really to have fallen asleep, 'when the sons of God came before the Lord, and Satan also came with them'" (Thursday 118).

Lucian accuses the "seven angels of heaven" as having never lived or suffered. But Syme, having now lived and "descended into hell," questions Sunday, who replies, "Can ye drink of the cup that I drink of" (Thursday 120).

Sunday is the most intriguing character of the novel. He is intriguing because we actually see him only for a brief time before the climactic action of The Man Who Was Thursday. For most of the novel, readers have to rely on
second hand accounts, which vary, on who or what Sunday is. Astute readers will usually discover that Sunday and the police official who hires Philosophical Detectives are the same person. Now how can one person be both? But is Sunday symbolic or allegorical? Chesterton was asked this question in an interview which Maisie Ward includes in her book:

People have asked me whom I mean by Sunday. Well, I think, on the whole, and allowing for the fact that he is a tale—I think you can take him to stand for Nature as distinguished from God. Huge, boisterous, full of vitality, dancing with a hundred legs, bright with the glare of the sun, and at first sight, somewhat regardless of us and our desires (193).

This Chesterton explanation of Sunday is included in various other sources, but this explanation is unsatisfactory. There are many references to Nature [i.e., an assertion in this chapter on page 67 that equated Nature with God] in the book, but they don't add up to being Sunday. Fate or destiny would be easier to swallow. Sunday seems to most obviously be a dialectical or process theology version of God. His designation as the Sabbath, his parental attitude toward the council members, his super-human qualities, and his confession serve as proof. He confesses, "I am the Sabbath," and, "I am the peace of God" (Thursday 117). Sunday as a God figure only makes good sense.
The Man Who Was Thursday contains a failed Christ figure and a Satan figure. A God-figure rounds out the cast of this liturgical drama.

Christ figures occur in many other Chesterton works. The most familiar of his Christ figures is the famous detective priest, Father Brown. Father Brown appears in at least forty-eight stories in which he rescues or saves people, reputations, religion, and even entire nations. In contrast to Syme, Father Brown doesn't relish his role as a savior. Certainly he is happy to have the innocent cleared, the guilty exposed, and wrongs righted, but he doesn't aggressively impose himself as a savior.

This attitude was best illustrated in a story entitled "The Resurrection of Father Brown." The story's title implies certain relationships and invites comparison to Christ. The story centers on nine days [three times three, a religious number signifying closure] when Father Brown received world-wide press coverage and notoriety. He was stationed in South America on special orders, trying to help individuals own and work their own plots of land.

On his way to a late night meeting, Father Brown had supposedly been clubbed to death. The funeral, with all the pomp a poor South American country could muster, was held the day after the murder. With his open casket placed under a giant crucifix, several eulogies began. These speeches turned into political and religious argument between the two factions that Father Brown had
been brought there to mediate. Suddenly, Father Brown began to move in his coffin. To the amazement of all, he got up and immediately rebuked them for being silly and thinking he had come back from the dead. Father Brown then wired his Bishop not to endorse any false miracles that he may hear of in relationship with the strange, recent events. Father Brown deduced that his wine was drugged with a substance that induced a death-like coma, his murder faked, and his miraculous funeral staged to discredit himself and the Church. By not being part of the miracle, by not perpetuating a falsehood, Father Brown served himself and the Church. Theatricality does not serve religion. Brown prefers what Chesterton has already identified as the “starry pinnacle of the commonplace.”

Horne Fisher is another outstanding example of a Chesterton Christ-figure. He is a “fisher of men” and that image occurs in such short stories as “The Face in the Target” and “The Fad of the Fisherman,” where he literally does fish men and corpses. Fisher is an ultra-intelligent low government official who always comes to the aid of his family and England. Fisher’s relatives and friends include the Prime Minister and several cabinet or other high ranks in the government. They may not be as smart as he, but despite appearances, they are as hard working and loyal.
The exploits of Chesterton's Horne Fisher are chronicled in the short stories that comprise *The Man Who Knew Too Much*. Fisher is ultra-intelligent and in every story of the book; Fisher brings up the fact that he "knows too much" or "nobody knows better than I." This type of knowledge makes Fisher seem more like a deity than mortal man.

Horne Fisher always helps his family and saves England, but he does not aspire to personal glory or fame [like Christ, he is an unassuming savior]. In the case of "The Bottomless Well," Fisher realized that the murderer had accidentally murdered himself. By exposing Lord Hastings as villain, not victim, England's control and relationship with the Arabs would have been harmed. Horne Fisher participated in a cover-up because it was the best thing for England.

Fisher understands that some truths cannot be revealed and it is strange being in the position of the omnipotent being. All of the stories in *The Man Who Knew Too Much* lack specific mention of God except the last two stories. Possibly the reason is that Horne Fisher primarily serves in the realm of the city of Man, i.e., in the secular state. The reader might expect Fisher to be an atheist, since he seems to have overindulged at the Tree of Knowledge, but this is not the case. He is, in fact, reminiscent of Christ after his night in the garden. Horne Fisher, like Christ, is somehow privy to truth and resigns himself to his fate. "The Vengeance of the Statue," finds England in its darkest hour. Horne
Fisher and his family and friends are working hard to save England. But we soon learn that there is a traitor in their midst. The traitor is trying to steal plans that detail England's defenses and turn them over to the invading enemy. His uncle is the culprit and Fisher confronts him in the garden. During a sword duel, Fisher kills his uncle and as the dying man falls, he knocks a statue of Britannia off its pedestal and it crushes him for the Coup de Grace.

Fisher then takes the plans to their rightful destination. Fisher explains the events to his journalistic friend, Harold March. He then induces March to accompany him on a ride. The two take a day-long motor bike trip to the coast. Once there, Fisher leaves March and explains he has to go the last leg of the journey by himself and on foot. March watches as Fisher takes an awkward package off his motor bike and disappears into the brush. March watches Fisher reappear on a mound some two hundred yards away. Fisher was assembling a rocket stand. The rocket flared up and burst while Fisher shouts "'God save England!'... 'And now it is for God to save'" (Knew Too Much 189).

After the light of the rocket died out, artillery fire illuminated the area beyond. Fisher had given up the location of the enemy forces with his rocket. March looked in vain for Fisher to come back. But after the signal rocket fired, gunfire ripped the knoll Fisher stood on and his body lay next to the collapsed
rocket stand "and the man who knew too much knew what is worth knowing" (Knew Too Much 190).

**Thesis Summation**

This sort of theological and allegoric imagery and theme suggest a dimension of seriousness and significance in Chesterton's fiction which lift it above the level of mere popular culture. His moral view of art rejects the frivolous, amoral concerns of aesthetes and decadents and the privatization of form and culture. Chesterton is in the classic tradition of artist as priest and public man.
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