G. K. Chesterton, The Development of Allegory

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Note concerning Footnotes:

All quotations from Chesterton's works are taken from the first cited edition and page numbers follow in brackets. For the sake of simplification, none of Chesterton's works are preceded by his name; the titles of the books of essays are abbreviated in the first citation and a list of abbreviations follows on this page. Wherever possible the date of all essays referred to follows the page number of the book from which they are quoted and with quotations from newspapers the date is followed by a note of the page and column of the entry.

Abbreviations of Chesterton's books of essays:

**Alerta and Discursions**: AD

"All I Survey": AS

*All in Grist*: AG

*A Miscellany of Men*: MI

*As I Was Saying*: AW

*Avowals and Denials*: ADD

*Come to Think of It*: CTT

*Fancies versus Fads*: FF

*Generally Speaking*: GS

G.K.C. as M.C.: GKM

*The Daily News*: DN

*Tremendous Trifles*: TT

*Uses of Diversity*: UD
Summary

All his life G. K. Chesterton felt that he was surrounded by a humanist world. The absolute human creativity implicit for him in the art and philosophy of the 19th century split into the twin evils of "impressionism" and "didactic rationalism". He believed that the individual human authority of these attitudes denied an external God; and insisted on the insanity of a solipsist view, which became a fundamental fear throughout his life.

In counteracting this fear he was initiated on a peculiarly individual artistic journey. Chesterton's primary concern was to find and express belief in an external, in order to assert the unity of his inspiration, life and art. As he searched for a stylistic mode he denied any permanent value in impressionism and rationalism, turning instead to ritual and simultaneously accepting the Anglo-Catholic church. In the process his three basic terms became religion, morality and expression. The last word is significant for it defines the role of the "mystic artist". The mystic artist must relate the divine to the human, the spiritual to material. His is not the role of the saint, the pure man with expression in life, or that of the great poet with his mythological imagination, or that of the philosopher communicating through discursive rationalism. Chesterton is trying to find a mode between discursive and symbolic writing and he discovers the closely related modes of fantasy and allegory. To avoid the dangers of human authority implied in fantasy he develops
the analogical function of allegory to indicate the presence of God. As the style is sophisticated it becomes his own unique form of the detective story: An expression analogous to and indicating the existence of, God's love.

The denial of absolute human communication is a dominant twentieth century concern. Chesterton's examination of fantasy is seen as a warning about the misuse of communicative media, and his development of allegory as an attempt to find a more suggestive and allusive mode of indicating identity.
Chapter I
Any serious study of G. K. Chesterton must express wonder and admiration not merely for the range but for the depth of his ideas. It has become a commonplace to allow, condescendingly, for the "superficiality" of journalism. There is a prejudice against believing that such quantity could produce much of quality, and criticism of Chesterton's work still suffers from this attitude. However, if one is willing to do more than merely skim the surface of his writing, a core of profound thought on the nature of his life and his era is revealed.

While for some the sheer volume of Chesterton's reading and writing would make impossible any individual thinking, for him it was the breath of life. It fed and nurtured his broad mind, provided him with a store-house of human wisdom which he applied to any subject at any time. He is the justification of personal journalism. Being moved continually by the slightest current of his time, he not only reflects its values but also its prejudices, yet here too, his greatness always allowed him to admit himself wrong - if he could be so persuaded. If he retained his prejudices it was for the same reasons that he retained his values. He fought for his beliefs and often won.

Chesterton's ability to keep the vast range of his interests constantly in view made him a man of amazing consistency and solid philosophy, whether he was speaking on politics, religion, art, science, history, sociology or psychology. While one is grateful for the experience of
such wholeness, it makes a critical study more difficult because one may neglect so much of integral importance by concentrating on one aspect. One may find for example that an attitude to a political event is firmly based in a reaction to a recent scientific discovery. With this caution in mind I will now turn to the subject of this thesis: the development of an allegorical mode of communication in Chesterton's art and criticism.

On assessing the literary background of the 1890's against which Chesterton's initial ideas were formed, we find a chaos of divergent styles and ideas: realism and romanticism, idealism and materialism, aestheticism and science. For our purposes the last two are probably the most relevant. Chesterton comes to label them impressionism and rationalism, and spends most of his life hunting them out in other people and avoiding them in his own life. In very general terms day-to-day existence in the nineteenth century had come under a surging wave of materialism and science. Science especially, doubly affected another important aspect of life, religion. Theories of evolution seemed at first to threaten belief in formal religion, and certainly weakened it. But further, science was ready to provide an answer in the determinism of sophisticated Newtonian physics. There was a growing dependence on mechanism, on the biological fact of heredity, on the inescapability of environmental influences. The determinist view also manifested itself in art, leading to didactic and realistic styles. Ultimately however, matter alone was unsatisfactory. All the confident
explanations in current sociology and anthropology did not stop a later generation of Wells and Shaw from seeking an inclusion of the spiritual in their natural religions.

Some people however, reacted against the unsatisfactory nature of determinist materialism by turning to an individual and personal ordering of the world, to a dependence on the interior self, on relative impressions. For art, this escape from matter made the concept of imitation abhorrent. Artists turned to modes that expressed ideas indirectly through the individual and sometimes obscure symbolism of the aesthetes, or modes that expressed feelings and senses of personal reaction in the work of the decadent movement.

The relative, personal control of these approaches fostered a sense of chaos which contained the beginning of the existentialist movement. The present Western world takes as almost second nature the concept of angst, absurdity and existential doubt. It also accepts as common-place the definite physiological response of nervous breakdown, which is based on fear of a vast unordered world that man appears to be the only one in any position to order. Late nineteenth century man did not have the present day tools for coping with the fear. And there was no Freud to assure him that the world was not his responsibility. In the 90's those searching for permanent order turned desperately to religions of any kind. The most popular were those that avoided the flat determinism of science: mysticism, theosophy, Rosicrucianism, and Anglo- and Roman Catholicism.
Men had to accept the spiritual to survive.

 Chesterton, born in 1874, entered a world without Freud. His family was Unitarian, with a definite agnostic streak. By the time the boy was in his teens he had already refused to accept the purely rationalist view that drained the world of "wonder". In face of the surrounding materialism he turned to art and there found the flux of impressionism, which by all accounts had an even stronger effect on him. He came to refer to it as solipsism, his madness, his lunacy, his constant fear. It did not take him long to turn to a form of personal religion to provide the necessary stability for his life. In Autobiography he says:

At a very early age I had thought my way back to thought itself. It is a very dreadful thing to do; for it may lead to thinking that there is nothing but thought. ¹

Not until 1908, when he wrote Orthodoxy, did he find in the Anglican Church the "thought that stops thought" ². However, in the 1890's he was not yet interested in organised religion and seemed to have a choice only between the ideological streams of rationalism and impressionism. As a result he was faced with the dilemma of depriving his vision of life of wonder or going mad. The young Chesterton set about to find a compromise, to explore and experiment with many different styles hoping to find one to communicate his individual vision. But before turning to his first literary

² Orthodoxy (Garden City: Image Books, 1959/1908), p. 34.
essays, we shall take a closer look at the nature of the
constant fear that was to underly these early years, for it
defines the nature of his personal religion.

Chesterton was reticent about the exact details of this
part of his life, thereby leaving it open to any interpreta-
tion. Dudley Barker's biography points us in a sexual sadistic direction\(^3\), Christopher Hollis towards satanism\(^4\) and
Maisie Ward towards a vaguely defined "madness"\(^5\). If we
follow the hints that he drops we find that Chesterton him-
self certainly thought of it as madness. An initial direc-
tion is indicated in the introductory poem to The Man Who Was
Thursday, a novel contemporary with the writing of Orthodoxy.
Chesterton here describes the background to his experience:

A cloud was on the mind of men
And wailing went the weather,
Yea, a sick cloud upon the soul
When we were boys together.
Science announced nonentity
And art admired decay;
The world was old and ended:
But you and I were gay. \(^6\)

The central section of the poem concentrates on references to
Whitman, Stevenson and Browning as his guides out of this
period in Autobiography (p. 94). Chesterton's critical

\(^3\) D. Barker, G. K. Chesterton: A Biography (London:

\(^4\) C. Hollis, The Mind of Chesterton (London: Holliid and

\(^5\) M. Ward, Gilbert Keith Chesterton (London: Sheed and Ward,
1944), p. 44.

\(^6\) The Man Who Was Thursday (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books
book, **Robert Louis Stevenson** was written contemporaneously with his *Autobiography*. It is generally accepted that this book contains many direct insights into his own early life that he could not voice in his autobiography. I would suggest that it also comments incisively on his own belief and style.

The study of Stevenson among the "pessimists and nihilists" of Paris is probably an account of Chesterton's own feelings, but the similarity between the two men goes further back than this. Stevenson is described as being deeply affected by the plunge from boyhood into youth. He too was bewildered by poetry's "apparently impossible position in the world of real living". Chesterton conjectures that it was the shock of Stevenson's abrupt plunge into adult life that turned him back to the pleasures of childhood; it was similar to the escape from the "morbidity" of Chesterton's own youth that is mentioned in *Autobiography* (p. 80). The exact nature of this morbidity appears most clearly in the short story "The Crime of Gabriel Gale" again written at the same time as *Autobiography*. The narrator of the story tells us that "a very large number of young men nearly go mad", that lots of boys "are bursting with a secret and swelling morbidity" (p. 120). He goes on to say that at that time

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7 See D. Barker's *G. K. Chesterton*, p. 55.
there comes a dangerous moment:

when the first connexion is made between the subjective and objective: the first real bridge between the brain and real things. It all depends on what it is; because, while it confirms his self-consciousness, it may happen to confirm his self deception. (p. 121)

If at this moment the boy begins to think that everything is within his own mind instead of outside it, he will believe that he can control it all, be God.

The "morbidty" of youth is only counteracted by the existence of an external, and for Chesterton that external can only be fully acknowledged through a belief in God. In the story in question the young man is abruptly pinned to a tree with a pitchfork so that he "learnt his human limitations sharply and instantly" (p. 125). We are told that there is no cure "for that nightmare of omnipotence" (p. 130) except pain, for that is the only thing man knows he would control if he could. It is the only answer to the heresy "which is to fancy that mind is all. It is to break your heart. Thank God for hard stones . . . " (p. 131). The logical point is that if one believes one can control everything but finds that things are not totally obedient to one's control, then objects seem to have a life of their own within one's mind yet separate from it. The self is divided against itself. The terror that results from the confusion of subjective and objective is similar to that of the narrator of Sartre's Nausea, who says "Objects should not touch because they are not alive . . . they are useful, nothing more."
But they touch me, it is unbearable"\textsuperscript{10}. Even Sartre's descriptions of the physical distortions he experiences are uncannily close to Chesterton's.

To return to Stevenson, we find that he reacts violently against the "suffocating cynicism" of Schopenhauer and Wilde; he refuses to go mad. His morbidity is dealt with stylistically by returning to the toy theatres of his childhood, "the peepshow of Skelt" (p. 95). It is impossible not to compare this with Chesterton's own fascination with the toy theatre. His father introduced him to them when he was a child, and many early essays are devoted to their charms. Its positive value for Stevenson lay, according to Chesterton, in the clear, clean and bright figures with their distinct form and colour. As opposed to the vagueness of "inspiration" Stevenson believed in "craftsmanship; that is, in creation" (p. 196). To other artists of the 80's and 90's the use of his precise figures was too much like a "Moral Emblem". But Stevenson needed this style because he had a specific message about the world, a belief in a specific God that demanded definite form. He gave the function of the mind dramatic, active expression in precise gesture; he used compact, exact hieroglyphics; and even his "impossible" characters were solid.

The use of these toy theatre figures also had a negative aspect, which Chesterton presents with sensitivity. The characters "are aspects or attitudes of man rather than men"

They are two-dimensional and thin, without any ability to communicate real life. These limits of Skeltery result from the paradox that:

the imperfection of the work is actually due to the perfection of the art . . . The real evil arises from his very passion of economy and severity. (p. 195)

Chesterton thinks that Stevenson simplified the complexity of life in the same way. When he looks at the "message" being expressed, he finds Stevenson revolting against the "spineless" pessimism by turning to the tradition that God is power, and he adds, that power is God. The critic rejects the concept as far too simple a belief for such an intelligent man, and because of it, the "message" is lacking when it comes. Despite Stevenson's belief in the need for moral responsibility in art as in life, he "did not quite understand the truth he stood for" (p. 200). Finally Chesterton links him with William Morris as men who understood the need for responsible art but lacked the philosophy to make the art valuable.

In Robert Louis Stevenson we see Chesterton in the last decade of his career looking back to his formative years as man and writer. As a man he is both demonstrating that God has to exist in order to counteract the morbidity and solipsism of the imagination, yet criticising an approach to God solely as power as naive and insulting to the intelligence. But Chesterton realizes that some approach is necessary. There is a definite need for God in a man who is anti-materialist yet also anti-pessimist and impressionist, because of the potential for madness. Similarly, while criticising...
Stevenson's use of emblem as over-simplifying the complexities of man, he can see the positive nature of the clarity, craftsmanship, and moral responsibility. Emblem may be limited but it starts in the right direction of action and solid expression as opposed to impressionism.

Yet where was Chesterton in the 90's to find this necessary God, this clearer style? It is essential to remember that the search for and inquiry into the nature of God" was not confined to religion. The intellectual aim of virtually every discipline of study in the nineteenth century was an understanding of man's relation to an unknown power. One discipline much concerned with the problem was sociology. During the 80's and 90's Herbert Spencer's Principles of Sociology, with its sections on Ceremonial Institutions and Ecclesiastical Institutions, was published; so was Frazer's Golden Bough, and much of Andrew Lang's work on myth and ritual in relation to society. The big issue at stake seems to have been whether religion was initially only a propitiation of the gods, or whether it was an act of belief in them. In other words, was it a social convenience or a necessary and inevitable mystical belief? Considering Chesterton's reading, interests and publishing house work, it is more than likely that he was exposed to their ideas and considered the same dilemma.

While these three theorists differ in their treatment of the central question, they all eventually point to agnosticism and science as the answer. Spencer saw religion developing because of sophisticating social structures.
Whereas ceremony was initially a means of submerging one's differences in the face of a propitiatory act to a god, it is now concentrated on social behaviour and propitiatory acts to other people. Yet although supernatural beings become unnecessary, Spencer still recognizes some "unknown" and proposes agnosticism as a way of dealing with it. Similarly Frazer sees religion as mainly propitiatory, but he adds that it is also partly belief in a power that controls what man cannot. Religion arose because the magical practices of early man apparently failed. Even though he sees a return to science as a man-controlled way of seeing the world through an understanding of natural order he acknowledges that the understanding may not be complete.

When Andrew Lang wrote his rebuttal of Frazer's theories he stressed that the act of divine worship was something intuitively performed by man. He goes on to say that this "pure" worship became overlaid by a belief in lesser divinities which had to be propitiated. This gradually weakened the initial concept so much that no true religious idea was left.

In each case it is the propitiatory act which is seen as weakening the agnostic belief. And in each case the propitiatory act is closely connected to formal religion. Even William James' Varieties of Religious Experience, written in 1904, which emphasized psychological rather than sociological aspects, makes the same distinction. In his view institutional religion is propitiatory and personal religion is true religion. James does however stress that
belief is a more solid experience than agnosticism. He emphasizes that through mystical apprehension one can come to direct contact with the unknown. Chesterton, coming from an agnostic background and surrounded by theories such as these, did not rush into formal religion. But, as we have seen, he needed a definite sense of an external God. It is a safe conjecture that at the end of the 1890's he was very close to James's concept of personal religion.

One point emphasized and re-emphasized by all these men was the intrinsic relation between art and religion. The connection was important to the social theorists because their concept of religion made communication essential. Not surprisingly, William James having less social interest, finds the relation of communication and art to religion less important yet still essential. What is interesting is that all also note the unsatisfactory nature of communication through art of the existence or propitiation of the God. Spencer says when the savage man thought resemblance the same as reality in his use of titles and badges, he was "confused". Frazer criticized the inability to distinguish between word and thing in religious rites. Examining the question more deeply, Lang suggests that symbols are necessarily weak because they lack special sanctity. He comments that true religious feeling can only be communicated in "prayers, hymns, and 'the dim religious light' of cathedrals"\[1\]. James believed that any attempt to verbalize a spontaneous belief will be philosophically inadequate

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and formulaic, he, along with Spencer, suggests music as a possible mode of communication, reinforcing an idea already made popular by Pater that music was the purest art.

A serious question results. If art is essentially tied to religious experience in that it relates it to man and society, how is it to do so effectively? The question is basically that which the older Chesterton asked of Robert Louis Stevenson and of himself as a young man. This is the point at which to look more closely at the artistic alternatives Chesterton knew under the names of impressionism and rationalism. In 1927 Chesterton recalls the role Oscar Wilde played in his youth as the representative of the Impressionist movement. He was the nihilism, pessimism and decadence incarnate. It is probably true to say that this was the general opinion. An "apology" for Oscar Wilde, published soon after he was imprisoned, intended to counter the accusations made against him. It provides a neat summary of his "image". There was a feeling that "Mr. Wilde was teaching something contrary to morality"12; "It is said that his love for beauty was a pose, that his books were immoral, that his influence on his friends was bad, and that his life was vicious" (p. 9); and that "the stories he wrote are, and were by himself intentionally calculated to have an immoral influence, on account of the wicked and false things said and done by the characters he presents to us" (p. 19). This view persisted into the Encyclopaedia

12 D. Young, Apologia pro Oscar Wilde (London William Reeves, 1895), p. 9.
Britannica of 1911, and Chesterton's appraisal of Wilde in The Victorian Age in Literature (1913) gives only grudging credit to De Profundis and Wilde's conversion.

It is useful to study Wilde from two perspectives, since Chesterton's alone is heavily prejudiced - although a more balanced view is complicated by Wilde's own statement that "I live in terror of not being misunderstood." For Chesterton, Wilde was indissolubly linked with Impressionism. His Autobiography presents his understanding of it through a discussion of Whistler. Impressionism:

illustrated scepticism in the sense of subjectivism. Its principle was that if all that could be seen of a cow was a white line and a purple shadow, in a sense we should only believe in the line and the shadow, rather than in the cow. (p. 91)

In the parody of Aestheticism in Greybeards at Play (1900) Chesterton presents the chaos to which this constant search for stimulants is reduced, if taken to its logical extreme. The poem ends with the aesthete realizing the aim of his art:

Then all was dark, lawless and lost:
I heard great devilish wings:
I knew that Art had won, and swept
The Covenant of Things. 14

Both views show the ease with which impressionism becomes solipsism since in them objectivity is lost. Wilde himself is connected to the "luxurious horrors of paganism" in the

Decadent movement. But these attitudes are given in hindsight, at a time when the writer has achieved some critical distance. It should be noted that in the early 1890's he was caught up into the idea, and found it to have more apparent basis than the "thin and third-rate" materialists.

From an even greater distance Wilde appears to have been a highly disciplined thinker. He may have had a rather naive attitude to life and his own style, or perhaps just less skill to pull off a Kierkegaardian deception. But he examined with extraordinary clarity the contemporary problems of art. It is ironic that much of the ground covered by Wilde was later explored by Chesterton, although with a different aim in mind. What would certainly have surprised him is Wilde's consciousness of the limitations of art. Rather than the impressionist telling someone he had never seen anything but a purple cow, Wilde would have said that the artist could never paint a real cow and therefore it was preferable to acknowledge the limitation by producing a cow obviously fictive. Chesterton's later distinction between truth and fiction pointed out that because the latter was man-made it was more congenial to the mind. This is a direct if unconscious echo of Wilde's declaration that exaggeration is necessary lest novels become "so life-like that no one can possibly believe in their probability."

Wilde foresees many of Chesterton's developments in "The Critic as Artist". The essay is filled with observations on the discipline of art. The essayist speaks of

the "spirit of choice" which generates the essential deliberate and critical faculty of art. The need for exaggeration is rephrased as a need for limits specifically to avoid "impressionism" and "rationalism":

by such renunciations [of actual imitation] they are able to avoid too definite a presentation of the Real, which would be mere imitation, and too definite a realization of the Ideal, which would be too purely intellectual. (p. 1031)

If one limits the direct communication of art, it reveals meaning. The idea is restated in the essay "The Truth of Masks" when he says that "costume is a means of displaying character without description". Wilde also stresses the value of the concrete nature of an image. An idea is not valuable unless it interacts with an image. The inter¬dependence of shape and shadow, form and mirrored form, lead to the image of incarnation to describe the process:

Truth in Art is the unity of a thing with itself: the outward rendered expressive of the inward: the soul made incarnate: the body instinct with spirit.

St. Francis is mentioned as being the first man to achieve this "transubstantiation" in which "form reveals". The concept explains Wilde's "parables". He apparently said to Andre Gide that "they don’t understand that I can not think otherwise than in stories". We shall see Chesterton

16 O. Wilde, "The Truth of Masks", ibid, p. 1078.
17 O. Wilde, "De Profundis", ibid, p. 920.
reflecting all these facets of Wilde later in his career.

Where Wilde can appear obscure and where he undoubtedly annoyed Chesterton, is in his early idea of the "improvement" by art of nature. There is a sense in which Wilde really means it; he genuinely preferred art to nature. However, its more profound meaning is that art finds forms and order for the potential chaos of nature and life; and insofar as one realizes that they are not nature itself this is valuable. Of course, when a man's art becomes a perversion of and substitute for nature this is suspect. But Wilde does fence his ideas in by saying that art is something very different from life and society. He points out that society demands action and therefore involves morals. Art, on the other hand, is contemplative and "immoral". Some confusion would have been avoided if he had called it "non-moral". While acknowledging in the "Critic as Artist" that life demands too high a price from him, which implies that he turns to art as escapism, he comes in "De Profundis" to a closer relation between life and art. He points out that art, being a union of body and soul, can help one find one's true self. Art aids one in discarding the possible and desirable goals of life for the real goal. Finally, however, with significant meaning in the light of Chesterton, Wilde condemns the fusion of life and art by saying that it should be left to journalists.

What encourages the substituting of man's art for nature is Wilde's concept of the relation between religion and art, which is highly ambiguous. A consideration,
especially of the Christian church, creeps into his work in
*De Profundis* which was first and partially published in
1905. Wilde speaks of the Church as possessing knowledge
and wisdom which is valuable in itself but which it does
not fully realize. In 1895 he is lukewarm about institu-
tional religion because of its dulling nature, yet he is
personally involved in his own religion. The separation
between God and man is acknowledged, but the issue is con-
fused by statements that all men have this dualism within
them, and that Christ was able to realize it most intensely.
It is Christ's ability to see the "wonder" in things that
Wilde takes as a type of his human function. The ambiguity
of these views leaves the creative power of man in question.
Can he by right of the divinity in himself, impose his
forms on nature? Or is the divine external to him, and
nature not under his governance? It was not unusual that
Chesterton in the 90's considered Wilde an exponent of a
theory which made man supremely divine and left the possi-
bility of solipsism wide open. And it is not surprising
that as Chesterton became aware of this danger he discarded
what he thought was the style along with the philosophy.

Chesterton's other alternative was rationalist or
didactic art. Possibly the greatest influence on this
stream of writing in the 90's was Tolstoy, although his
*What is Art?* was not published in translation until 1898,
and is itself slightly unbalanced. Far more popular and
persuasive, and not uninfluenced by Tolstoy, was Bernard
Shaw. It was during the 1890's that his plays were first
performed on London stages, and in 1898 the first collection of the plays with their prefaces appeared. We shall return to Shaw more fully later on. Here it is only necessary to recognize the elements in the prefaces which would have both attracted and repelled Chesterton.

Most appealing would probably have been Shaw's belief in the total interdependence of art, life and religion. This would have made impossible both crimes of impressionism, the isolation of art from reality, and the solipistic vision. Shaw however extends the interdependence to stress the essentially didactic nature of art:

No frontier can be marked between drama and history or religion, or between acting and conduct, nor any distinction made between them that is not also the distinction between the masterpieces of the great dramatic poets and the commonplaces of our theatrical season.¹⁹

The interdependence of life, art and religion makes necessary the moral effect of drama; and Shaw goes so far as to say that drama has to appeal didactically and to the intellect because the art of expressing feeling can only be performed by music. Initially the prefaces were written to help the actors understand the work intellectually rather than emotionally. Chesterton would have admired the plays for the sense of definite opinion which orders chaos. The preface to "Widowers' Houses" baldly states that, "It is a propagandist play - a didactic play - a play with a

purpose"\(^{20}\). But he may have felt slightly adverse to Shaw's serious regret that Shakespeare had no "intellectually coherent drama, and could not afford to pursue a genuinely scientific method in his studies of character and society"\(^{21}\).

Despite the intellectual intent of the drama, Shaw never forgets the element of entertainment. The prefaces try hard to persuade the audience that his plays are entertaining despite their didacticism. Imagination is insisted upon, as well as a certain "visionary" aspect which makes an ultimate definition of the art itself impossible. Yet he defends his introduction of logic by saying that drama had become so flaccid with mere imagination that logic gave "an overwhelming impression of coldness and rationalism"\(^{22}\) which we are led to believe is an unnatural reaction. Even though he claims to be "an advocate for stage illusion . . . I am only a realist in a Platonic sense"\(^{23}\), he goes on to emphasize that everything in his plays is taken from real life and that he tries to present it as such by destroying the conventions of normal "stage illusion".

Chesterton might have more appreciated the honesty of this logical stylistic approach if it were based on a philosophy which he could share. Because Shaw writes from real life the didactic aspect of his plays is dependent on what

he finds in life; and what he finds is contrary to any sense of "wonder". In one preface he defends his didactic approach solely on the grounds of his own negative vision:

It is not my fault, reader, that my art is the expression of my sense of moral and intellectual perversity rather than my sense of beauty. My life has been passed mostly in big modern towns, where my sense of beauty has been starved whilst my intellect has been gorged with problems like that of the slums. 24

Apart from the disagreement that Chesterton would have had with this "materialist" vision of the world, Shaw like Tolstoy, had a very relative view of philosophy and religion at this time in his life. While he admires the Pre-Raphaelites for trying to infuse a sense of religion into their work, Shaw says that the kind of religion does not matter. "There is only one religion, though there are a hundred versions of it" 25. Similarly, the stress laid on opinion as the essential aspect of style is explained by the statement that the quality of a book is not in "the opinions that it propagates, but the fact that the writer has opinions" 26. Stylistically Shaw provides Chesterton with tools he has no need for; they express a different, materialist world. From the religious point of view he can also help little, his own interpretation and understanding being entirely relative.

The two streams of Impressionist and Rationalist art

are widely divergent and Chesterton could belong to neither. He associated the Aesthetic movement with instability and chaos. While Wilde was trying to find a way out in the pursuit of concrete imagery and allusive expression, the fundamental assumption that man cannot exactly describe what he sees overshadowed the value of these advances. Although Chesterton eventually came to state this himself he was initially left with the idea of the artist as without definition and the man without order. However, those artists who appeared to be exponents of order had a stylistic approach which was coldly uncongenial, and a religious attitude too relative to provide stability. Chesterton was left anti-Impressionist because of existential doubt and the fear of madness, and anti-Rationalist because of his vision of "wonder". The same two elements in his make-up turned him almost necessarily towards a religion which is not agnostic, but personal and mystical. Yet when he wanted to express his religious belief, he could not verbalize it, since the available styles led back to Impressionism and Rationalism. Neither alternative offered a way out of the pessimism of the time, yet both had attractive elements. It is not surprising that Chesterton's journalistic and critical reaction to the period is confused and contradictory, or that his artistic efforts are primarily "nonsense" acting as an antidote to cynicism.
Chapter II
Throughout his career Chesterton's artistic work was always the experimental ground for his criticism. The short stories, poems and novels always contain the seeds for future developments in the criticism. But the major works of criticism in their conscious examination and expansion of the artistic ideas, seem to have been necessary to leave the way free for the artist to find new modes of expression. Chesterton's early artistic work from 1891-1900, apart from his religious and political poetry, consists mainly of exercises in nonsense. Except for the purposes of parody, Chesterton rarely uses nonsense after 1900, and "The Wild Knight" written in 1899, represents an attempt to find a new form for his serious literature. From 1900 to 1904, Chesterton is preoccupied with making a career for himself as a journalist and critic, and the artistic work is put aside. But it must not be forgotten that "The Wild Knight" contains serious formal obscurities that needed to be worked out and resolved. Many of the problems that it raises provide the matter for Chesterton's criticism of the intervening years; yet it is not until Robert Browning, his first major critical work, that they appear to have been even partially resolved.

Chesterton's criticism from 1898 to 1903, the year when he wrote Robert Browning, is a terrain criss-crossed with exploratory trails. But there is an overwhelmingly important concern motivating each excursion: the total relationship of man, mind and body, with life and with the inspiration of life
which is God. From the first piece of identifiable criticism we have by Chesterton it is apparent that his interest in art is primarily an interest in the way an artist experiences and expresses his vision of life. An important essay which attempts to establish Chesterton's own attitude to art, life and finally God, is found in The Daily News of 1902. "Art and the Churches" concludes with the observation that former ages were correct in:

conceiving religion as more important than anything, more important than art, more important even than morality. For morality is also a product, though a more spontaneous and healthy product than art, of a man's fundamental notion of what kind of a world he lives in. All the schools of morality have as a fact come out of some agreement about the government of things, and all art has come out of the exultation and excitement of that agreement.

A month later, in a column entitled "Shelley, Mr. Salt and Humanity" Chesterton goes even further to the roots and states that one's "fundamental notion" of the world is a product of the imagination. As long as one's:

imagination remains relentless and insatiable, so long it will produce religion, and morality and humanitarianism. Man, the moment he is man, must attempt to be the universe ... [which effort bears out] the old mystical saying that man alone among animals was an image of God.

It is at this radical point that all the conflicts in

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1 "The Ruskin Reader: Review", in The Academy, p. 523, 22/7/1895.
2 The Daily News (DN), 2/1/02, 6/1.
3 DN, 4/2/02, 6/1.
Chesterton's early work lies. Art is what separates man from the animals; it expresses his divine function. Through it man aspires to be the image of God, yet he must not blaspheme by trying to be God himself; this is the 'thought that stops thought'.

In the early comments on religion Chesterton implies that God communicates directly to man by giving him the power, the imagination to perceive God in the world around him and this "wonder" is the basis of his personal religion. Each man has a different vision of life, and organized religion is of correspondingly little value. An article on Yeats comments that the critic is pleased to see that people consider moral salvation possible, but adds that:

to believe for a moment that it is to be found by going to particular places or reading particular books or joining particular societies is to make for the thousandth time the mistake that is at once materialism and superstition.  

The point is made specifically against the Church in a column that indicates the distance that Chesterton was to travel in his philosophical opinions:

We do not care in the least in comparison what rites or what dogmas the Church professes; we do care very much that it should be a Church. The instant it is turned into a moral lecture room, that instant we desert it and walk into the nearest Roman Catholic or Salvation Army chapel.

However, the articles show him gradually shifting to a more

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4 "The Conversion of the Poets", **DN**, 13/6/01, 6/1.
formal religious attitude.

Slowly, the critic begins to study religion as a limiting structure. In March 1903 Chesterton says that religion is:

the view that the world, clearly examined, does point, with an extreme suggestiveness, to the existence of a spiritual world; of a world of agencies, not apparently produced by matter, capable to some extent, of controlling and inspiring, capable to some extent, of being known. 6

The author turns to religion as if it is a constant factor that he has so far neglected. Yet he turns to it as something that embodies the irrational, and contains no dogma. At this time he again condemns dogma, saying that:

we hear a rumour, we adopt it as dogma, but we do no more than that; we make that dogma so fixed that we can curse and abuse realities for falling short of it. ... Chaos is the characteristic of the way that we all learn, and while we learn from it we ought to remember that it is Chaos. 7

Yet barely seven months later, after a prolonged debate with Blatchford of The Clarion, Chesterton is declaring himself a dogmatic Christian. On December 19th, 1903 in a column titled "On Irrelevancy" Chesterton produces an early manifesto of his Christian belief. But it still reflects many of the conflicts of his philosophy. He now uses the phrase "mystical dogma" to express a strong feeling for commonsense. Yet there is a new strain. The writer also believes that a

6 "The Return of the Angels", DN, 14/3/03, 8/1.
7 "Chaos", DN, 9/5/03, 8/1.
human being called Christ stood to God "in a certain unique transcendent relationship which we call sonship". Life is seen to be logical and orderly only within these beliefs. The statement echoes an earlier point that by the "rejection of rationalism, the world becomes suddenly rational". These statements are only four months away from the extraordinary comment that, "Impressionism is but Christianity to a canvas". Chesterton is trying to bind together the conflicting desires for both personal vision and an external order.

Chesterton's personal vision depends from the beginning on the perception of the uniqueness of objects. Each thing achieves a new importance. An early review of a book on Velasquez notes that the "one lesson of all art, all philosophy, all religion, is 'This is a turnip. You have never seen one before'". This uniqueness arises from "a real intrinsic spirituality", which is the essence of an object. It is interesting that Yeats, reviewing a book on Velasquez, points out that admirers of Velasquez were anti-Pre-Raphaelite. In his praise for Velasquez's objectivity Chesterton shows that even as early as 1899 he has an intuitive understanding of the lack of substance in the Pre-Raphaelites.

Despite the insistence on the importance of physical matter Chesterton at this stage is emphasizing the greater

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8 "Two Great Tories", DN, 1/8/03, 8/1.
10 "Paints in a Paint-Box", in The Speaker as "Materials", pp. 507-8, 31/8/01.
11 Quoted from "My First Meeting with Oscar Wilde", in Oscar Wilde: a Collection of Critical Essays, supra, p. 11.
importance of the essence. An interesting essay called "Dreams"\(^{12}\) points to the "absolute unity of emotion" experienced in dreams. It goes on to attribute this unity to the feeling that while "material circumstances" may alter, the essence of an act or an object is preserved so that "existence betrays itself". The essence experienced is the unity of the object's "attitude to God". Consequently the appearance of an object has little to do with its value. A further essay on dreams makes this statement even more strongly. It says:

> The whole explanation is to be found in the conception that there is something mystical and undefined behind all things which we love and hate that makes us love and hate them ... Dreams give a great deal of support to this conception; in a dream a thing might have the substance of a pig, while retaining all the external qualities of a boiled cod.\(^{13}\)

The example is very close to the example of the purple cow used twenty-five years later to criticize the impressionists in *Autobiography*. It is not until he has written *Robert Browning* that Chesterton realizes the danger of this mental outlook.

The division between appearance and essence has serious implications for Chesterton's conception of morality. Morality is considered as the essence of man. It is the attitude to life generated by one's spiritual vision, of which one is mostly unaware. In that early article on Velasquez, we are

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\(^{12}\) "Dreams", *DN*, 24/3/01.

\(^{13}\) "The Meaning of Dreams", *DN*, 15/11/01, 8/3.
told that:
probably the only thing in us which is really
potent in art or morals is this self of which we
are unconscious. Probably it is only when a
trait or conception has become invisible to our-
selves that it becomes vivid to the world. And
in this wider sense of morality Velasquez is as
much a moralist as Mr. Whistler. 14

Mr. Whistler comes in for another round of applause much
later in "Two Great Tories" written in 1903. We find that,
"Whistler the painter gave what the healthy moralist gives
- hints" 15 Hand in hand with his commendation of the
"L'art pour l'art" movement for their expression of spont-
aneous morality goes a condemnation of didactic morality.
In "A Re-Issue of Tolstoi" that author is deflated as "a
small and noisy moralist" in the strongly felt statement
that:
the narrow notion that the artist may not teach is
pretty well exploded by now. But the truth of the
matter is that an artist teaches far more by his
mere background and properties, his landscapes, his
costume, his idiom and technique - all the part of
the work, in short, of which he is probably entirely
unconscious, than by the elaborate and pompous moral
dicta he fondly imagines to be his opinions. 16

The view is in pointed conflict with Chesterton's concurrent
beliefs that morality is to be praised for being something
definite. Critics who condemn painting for being "moral"
implying that they have specific meaning, are severely

14 "Velasquez and Poussin", p. 87.
15 DN, 1/3/03, 8/1.
16 DN, 24/10/01, 6/1.
chastised in "Literary Pictures of the Year". We must not forget that central essay "Art and the Churches". Morality is an "agreement about the government of all things"; and modern life is to be pitied for failing to realize its agreement into "a new philosophy of existence".

It is not surprising that many of the comments on morality coincide with those on art. As Chesterton points out in a review of Don Quixote, it is a book "the spiritual energy of which, as in all books, the story is only the product and the symbol." Again, we noted in "Art and the Churches" that art was generated by the excitement arising from an agreement about the government of life which is morality. Art is seen as an expression of that morality, that essence of man. Chesterton's article "A Re-Issue of Tolstoi" refines the concept by postulating a direct connection between the vision of life, at that time still with the emphasis on personal religion and ethics, and art. He suggests that:

the real distinction between the ethics of high art and the ethics of manufactured and didactic art lies in the simple fact that the bad fable has a moral, while the good fable is a moral.

In other words good art will present the essence of man in the work itself, while bad art will present the essence as something specifically told to us. It is on the basis that good art expresses morality within itself, that Chesterton

17 *The Bookman*, Vol. XVIII, April 1900-Sept. 1900, pp. 79-84.
claims art to be:
far more moral than anything else, insofar that
the colour of the whole character must pass into
its creation. A work of art is like a prayer,
no sin must be kept back in it, or it becomes
false. 19

He also notes that since the essence of man is his vision of
life, good art expressing this essence, can never be separa-
ted from life 20.

Just as it has been emphasized that morality is more
valuable if unconscious, so too is art. Poetry is described
as:

an animal thing, and the more spiritual for that;
it comes up from the deep chasm of the heart,
where the immemorial instincts sleep ... 21

The dislike for the conscious, the didactic, the philosophical
is the foundation for Chesterton's criticism of Tolstoy. The
author even goes so far as to praise Schopenhaufer for his
preference of the artist over the philosopher for:
a philosopher may live in a mere phantom universe,
a universe of symbols and generalizations, as
painted as the scenery of a pantomime. His stars
and spaces are more artificial, more the work of
his own hands, than the elf hands of the artist. 22

Another philosopher, Carlyle, is praised for writing best when
he writes as a poet, for poets cannot know the truth of their
own remarks 23. A hair's breadth away from this picture of the

19 "The Great Pessimist", DN, 7/6/01, 6/3.
20 "Literary Pictures of the Year", supra p. 112.
21 "Critics and Conversations", DN, 21/5/01, 6/1.
22 "The Great Pessimist", supra.
23 "A Re-Reading of Carlyle", DN, 26/7/01, 6/2.
unconscious artist is the decadent artist. He might seem to fulfill the conditions of a "god" artist for he employs no rigid lines in his expression; he swerves away from didactic forms. Yet to be an "artist in life" one must be mad; one becomes a "horrible fairy-tale of a man constantly changing into other men". It appears that the artist must walk a tight-rope between the conflicting tensions of control and spontaneity.

The conflict arises from the same source as the conflict in Chesterton's religious and moral attitudes. Broadly speaking, he is judging literature according to whether or not it expresses a God-inspired essence. The impressionists, or aesthetes and decadents appear to express no essence whatsoever, and the rationalists and didactics tend towards a man-made essence that stifles the God-inspired. Good art, in expressing a God-inspired essence, expresses a vision of life or a religion; and Chesterton here acknowledges the vital connection between religion and art. He tells us that the soul finding itself alone "in a terrible world, afraid of the grass... has brought forth poetry and religion to explain matters." The need for a ceremonial British Academy of Letters lies in the fact that, "Literature, like religion stands for the things that are eternal." Art expresses the limits with which religion counteracts madness.

26 "The British Academy", DN, 4/9/02, 8/2.
Most importantly, he states that:

Art is in many ways the religion of the cultivated class today. And it is the decadence of art when it is separated from the rest of life, just as it was the decadence of religion when it was separated from the rest of life.  

While Chesterton accepts that man wants to create because he is made in the image of God, he also sees that both impressionist and rationalist attempt to become God. They attempt to escape from the limitations of man by imposing their own ideas as the sole criteria.

Man is caught in what the author discusses under the title "The Conundrum of Art". When an artist expresses something he usually finds himself having to say what that thing is. In doing so he is bounded not only by his personal perception, but also by the very connotation of the words he uses. The conundrum of art is that "to define a thing is literally and grammatically to limit it, and this is to limit the illimitable."  

If an artist attempts to make his own definition the only acceptable one, he is assuming that he can create with the same perfection as God. He is limited by the fact that he cannot see his own limitations. However, in avoiding the limits of definition the artist may come perilously close to expressing nothing at all. Chesterton comments on Wagner's attempt to suggest rather than define, saying that we see, "precisely what Wagner saw, . . . but something which will never be expressed until the end of the world". Wagner may have succeeded in suggesting the

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27 "The Conundrum of Art", DN, 7/2/02, 8/2.
28 Ibid.
existence of something; but there are a multitude of artists who concentrate on the destruction of any definition rather than the suggestion of one. They create assuming that their art is justified in itself; that it alone is absolute because it alone is not connected with the vagueness of the external world. Chesterton condemns the idea stating that, "the notion that art merely as art can form a common bond and refuge is one of the poorest notions that was ever offered to insulted humanity". These artists attempt to be God by creating new worlds within their art. Yet:

to make art in this sense the heir and substitute of the great cosmic conceptions that have hitherto led the march of mankind is to make the whole history of man a bathos of quite incomparable meanness.

Both didactic and impressionist art denies the role of ultimate authority to God. Once more, the central essay "Art and the Churches" states:

In our time we find a great deal of religion in art. In former ages men found a great deal of art in religion. Religion was the orthodoxy of those days; art has become almost the only orthodoxy of these. They permitted art and literature because they glorified God.

Chesterton increasingly realizes that formal religion may provide a resolution to the conflicts within both his vision of life and his moral ideas. Concurrently he comes to assess literature not merely on its sense of God-inspired essence; but further on its expression of this essence within a form

\[30\] "Art and the Churches", supra.

\[31\] Ibid.
externally guided by religious belief.

The form of art receives more attention as Chesterton attempts to resolve the conflicts within his philosophy. He is able to state with confidence in "The Conundrum of Art" that essence is the most important aspect of art. We are told that:

Art has, of course, nothing at all to do with imitating the precise scenes of nature. So long as it produces the same emotion as that produced by a sunset on a sea-shore, there is no reason at all why it should not produce it by a story of prehistoric battles or a legend about the last mermaid.

Here lies the danger of which he gradually becomes aware: in any type of art the absence of insistence on form in style may lead to a separation of the essence from life and its inspiration. It becomes apparent that certain styles will be more conducive to expressing essence correctly than others. A further corollary is that artistic failure may come to indicate moral failure; good art is not only morally good but stylistically good. Chesterton at this time has certainly not organized his criticism quite so far, but a statement in the Bookman Booklet of 1903, Charles Dickens, points in this direction. Dickens is heavily criticized for a "comfortable" optimism that makes him play at being a despot with his characters. He will give a happy ending when a more profound optimism will allow the characters their own existence and their own tragedies. As an example, Micawber’s final life as mayor of an Australian town is called, "something more than an artistic blunder: it is a moral lapse; it is a
wicked and blasphemous thing to have done".  

What Chesterton is exploring in these early years is the danger inherent in different techniques. But underlying this is a fear that expression may not be possible at all. In a letter to his future wife on the death of her sister he says that "for real peace, no human words are much good except perhaps some of the unfathomable, unintelligible, unconquerable epigrams of the Bible", and after trying to comfort her anyway, asks forgiveness for "the verbosity of one whose trade it is to express the inexpressible".  

Another letter of September 1899 reiterates this fear. Chesterton notes that he was once a convinced "Rationalist", but that now he was persuaded of the "entire spirituality of things" he finds himself utterly unable to express himself.  

The first real awareness that Chesterton has of technical failure derives from his study of impressionism. That the author had a greater fear of a narrowing rationalist form than impressionism is indicated by his attempt to praise Velasquez's art not by denying the impressionism but by justifying details of the style. Velasquez is praised for avoiding "blatant materialism", and for using the undefined "only . . . to throw up what is defined". We have also seen that Chesterton's appreciation of Whistler's impressionism continues at least until 1903. However, quite soon

34 Ibid, p. 104.  
35 "Velasquez and Poussin", supra, p. 87.
after the Velasquez review one finds indications of a different tone. The critic of "Literary Pictures of the Year" imputes a boredom to "that Impressionist twilight in which there were no harmonies except between the greenest grey and the greyest green." The attack on the decadents points out that "the end of all this impressionism is that maddening horror of unreality." A later article notes:

a certain Impressionist quality - a vignetting as it were at the end. I would not call it incompleteness, but a shading and fading away, a twilight delicacy, like the foggy shadow of King Arthur riding to his doom.

In this case "incompleteness" would suggest potential completion, definition. Chesterton's point is that the intent of impressionism is to purposely leave things vague and undefined.

All other artistic techniques contain the potential for the failure so often met with in impressionism. Symbolism at its best is a form of mysticism. Shakespeare is described as a symbolist because:

he represents the mysterious mental connection between shapes and ideas which must finally defeat any purely technical view ...

This type of style is one that becomes important to Chesterton when he recognizes the need for fusing essence with appearance. It even becomes synonymous in his vocabulary for "poetry". However it is limited by its ever-present potential for becoming purely associative, random and

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36 Supra, p. 80.
37 "A Defense of Rash Vows", supra.
39 "Literary Pictures of the Year", supra, p. 80.
arbitrary. It is also a very personal technique that may become hinderingly obscure. A technique less open to failure in communication although correspondingly more limited in potential, is heraldry or emblem. An early article "A Defense of Heraldry" points out that there are:

real advantages in pictorial symbols, and one of them is that everything that is pictorial suggests, without naming or defining. There is a road from the eye to the heart that does not go through the intellect. 40

Later, being more aware of another aspect of emblem, the critic makes "A Plea for Philosophical Uniforms". He states that "physical and visible symbols" by which he means emblems, soothe the human spirit by making clear what fundamentals are being dealt with. 41 Pictorial symbols may not define verbally but they do limit to a specific shape. It is with this knowledge that the author warns:

Men go mad through a fixity of vision upon precisely those details and crude limitations that poetry tends to float in larger waters, to bathe in nobler lights. 42

Even emblem can be reduced to an importance generated only by itself and unrelated with an external life.

The only other technique Chesterton mentions in his criticism, and that very briefly, is allegory. He makes an interesting point that "portraits are allegories for the simple reason that all men are allegories, puzzles, earthly

40 The Speaker, 18/5/01, p. 184.
41 DN, 24/10/03, 5/1.
stories with heavenly meanings . . . "43. But the definition exists side by side with the observation that medieval dream allegories are devoid of any essential truth because they are obviously didactic and abstract in intent.44 Yet it is interesting that an early letter discusses allegory almost as an unartistic mode of expression. He speaks of making his future home "symbolic. Not artistic - Heaven - 0 Heaven forbid", and goes on to ridicule the aesthetes. What he wants "is to make a house really allegoric: really explain its own essential meaning. Mystical or ancient sayings should be inscribed on every object"45. But this line of inquiry is, for the moment, unpursued.

Quite probably Chesterton's increasing awareness of form is responsible for his growing dislike and eventual hatred of impressionism. It is perhaps significant that "A Defense of Penny Dreadfuls" of 1901, condemns sentimental or popular literature for accepting that all feelings are the same and seeking no new ways for expressing life;46 while the "Eulogy of Robin Hood" written in 1903 qualifies this position by praising penny-dreadfuls as an everlasting protest against the idolatry of art.47 The critic certainly comes to take a greater interest in journalism as a literary form

44 "Dreams", supra.
45 Quoted in M. Ward's Gilbert Keith Chesterton, p. 89; undated but probably 1930.
46 The Speaker, 16/3/01, pp. 643-9.
47 DN, 6/6/03, 8/1.
closer to life than "great art":

Great art is, indeed, the extract; it is the very essence of life. But extracts and essences are made for invalids.  

The same man a month later can celebrate Maeterlinck as the man glorifying "the inside of things at the expense of the outside." It should be emphasized that if there is a shift of opinion it is very slight. The form of a newspaper column necessitates a day to day assessment of one's ideas that will naturally yield vacillating and contrary opinions in a young mind exploring new terrain. Only a distanced overview can detect change; and if anything, what the reader finds is more of a shift in emphasis in the conflicts rather than a change. The roots of the author's acceptance of form can be found in a column written as early as 1901 called "Browning and his Ideal." Here he says that it is:

one of the curses of the criticism of poetry that it tends to detach the ideas of a poet from the forms by which he expresses them, which is like detaching the abstract idea of vegetation from all conceivable forms of vegetable.

Not surprisingly, it is in Robert Browning, the major critical work of 1903, that Chesterton attempts to resolve the artistic and therefore the moral and religious conflicts of his world.

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48 "A Good Miscellany", DN, 10/10/03, 5/1.
49 "The Inside", supra.
50 DN, 19/8/01, 6/2.
disagreement with the accepted opinion that Browning was primarily concerned with the ideas and not with the form of his art. His admirers said of him that "he was a philosopher and not a mere poet," while his detractors said that "he was not a poet but a mere philosopher." Chesterton argues that Browning was intellectually, "entirely unconscious and impulsive" (1), while any conscious concern was in taking "his own literary form very seriously" (44). He believes that the prevailing misinterpretation of the poetry was due to a misunderstanding of the poetic form. The early readers did not realize that apparent carelessness and obscurity in the work was a function of the meaning rather than a disregard for style. As a result they came on the one hand to emphasize the intellectual meaning despite the form, and on the other, to neglect any meaning the form might contain. Chesterton tells the contemporary reader to begin with an understanding of the interaction between the form and the meaning. He suggests that the techniques of style will reflect the function of the imagination. The imagination itself will directly present the vision of life that the poet holds. The reader will then perceive the soul rather than the mind of the man; he will be close to understanding the unconscious urges of the life, that are so much more valuable than the intellectual arguments that may be pursued.

Central to the critical interpretation of this book is Chesterton's discussion of the two main types of poet. The first is the poet speaking about a situation, which comes

52 For example see the discussion of the grotesque on p. 143.
close to the rationalist and didactic aspect of art. The second is the poet speaking from within a situation, a generation of immediate experience that can devolve into impressionism. A stanza of a poem by Goldsmith is used to describe the function of the poet as the vates, "the supreme and absolute critic of human existence" (169). Here the poet has total control over the material. Goldsmith is described as giving:

his own personal and definite decision upon it, entirely based upon general principles, and entirely from the outside. (170)

In contrast, two comparable stanzas from a poem by Burns express the "song of experience". There is no personal judgement within the poem; and the experience is completely beyond definition by general principles. The communication is "a bitter and confounding cry out of the very heart of the situation itself" (170). When the critic comes to Robert Browning's poetry he describes it in terms of a tension between the two. Browning attempts to find a truth beyond the purely didactic approach of personal rationalism, a truth made up of individual emotional experience within a situation. Yet he also attempts to be just and impartial to the experience as a whole, to a situation with its own intrinsic value.

The tension that Chesterton suggests is one between control and spontaneity. The poet who wishes to go further than the didactic denies himself absolute moral control. Yet Browning's aim at a "truth" implies a final morality beyond the individual. From another point of view the
decision to search for truth in spontaneous emotional responses may result in finding no stable moral. Yet to begin with a stable moral implies an unnatural limitation. It becomes apparent that Chesterton wants the reader to look to the interrelationship of form and meaning for a resolution to this tension. Despite the fact that Browning is constantly described as "unconscious", "natural", "spontaneous" and "impulsive", it is increasingly emphasized that the important balancing counterweight is the poet's consciousness of form, which provides a necessary moral control.

The examination of the tension begins with the poet's imagination. Browning perceives the importance of material detail in experience; but it is noted that this may lead to a total anarchy of the individual objects considered. The loss of control over an object allows it to become important only in itself rather than in its contribution to the whole. The isolation of detail makes it abstract by reducing it to a number or a sign. At this stage it can only convey the rational, and if it is stripped of its rationality there will remain no final value. In this way the detail degenerates into the impressionism of emblems with arbitrary meanings unrelated to the total experience. But Browning is also aware of the concrete reality of the total experience. The detail is constantly forced to function not as an emblem for an abstract idea to be intellectually appreciated, but as a metaphor which contains the meaning of the idea and causes an emotional response. The poet does not believe that "a flower is symbolical of life", but that "life, a mere abstraction is symbolical of a flower" (183). The perception that
experience demands feeling allows for the generation of emotional value or truth in a situation.

It is in order to emphasize the detail within experience that Browning develops the technique of the grotesque. The grotesque creates a new perspective on detail that wakes the observer up into a realization of its potential. The grotesque means "energy, the energy which takes its own way" (149). Chesterton observes that many aspects of the grotesque are similar to nonsense; and nonsense is a technique that, as we shall see, he understands well from his own artistic work. The effect of nonsense, and of the grotesque, is to remove the rational and habitual connotations of a situation. What remains is the essential force and value of that event, and this is the point at which nonsense makes its exit. The grotesque however builds back into a type of caricature. It gives the situation back the parts of its external being that are directly related to its essence; it gives shape to the fundamentals of the experience. Yet we find the shape and the recognized essence unexpected. The detail is released from its unimportant surroundings into a curtailed and grotesque form that emphasizes yet controls its meaning.

The use of the grotesque is partly responsible for a superficial obscurity in Browning that Chesterton discusses at the beginning of the book. The creation of new perspectives which are obvious to the author may also be too personal to be understood by an external observer. Of course, when

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53 Robert Browning, p. 149.
one does come to understand the perspective, its new vision will be all the more powerful for having been previously hidden. But obscurity as a technique in itself also functions in Browning's poetry. It is suggested that this obscurity is not due to the discussion of obscure subjects as in the work of Meredith; hence it must have more of a stylistic character. The root of it lies in the statement that:

It is well sometimes to half understand a poem in the same manner that we half understand the world ... There is a certain poetic value, and that a genuine one, in this sense of having missed the full meaning of things. (158)

This type of obscurity is being seen as an attempt to suggest the full value of an experience by a conscious avoidance of completeness. The poem "Childe Roland to the Dark Tower came" is used as an example of stylistic obscurity. The critic implies that the experience of all the details within the poem seem to add up to more than the situation can account for. He concludes that it is as useless to ask "What does it mean?", as it is to ask "What does anything mean?" (159). Life cannot be totally explained and we are foolish to ask for such an explanation.

A third and most important technique derives from the sense of the sum of the parts being greater than the whole. To examine this aspect, Chesterton turns to The Ring and the Book. The poem contains the by now familiar tension. It is "representative of all modern development" away from didactic external control; yet it contains an internally generated control. It is the method rather than the
intellectual idea of the book that directs one to the "centre of spiritual guilt and the corresponding centre of spiritual rectitude" (168). In the same way that Browning acknowledges the importance of detail, so he also acknowledges the importance of the individual point of view; and each point of view is considered to be morally valid. Chesterton points out that the application of this principle revolutionizes:

the old heroic epic, in which the poet decided absolutely the moral relations and moral value of the characters. (172)

The problem here is that the poet may end up with a moral anarchy on his hands. Furthermore, the same material facts being presented in such shifting perspectives, may "so change the whole world around us" that the experience would become totally unrecognizable and impressionistic. The resolution is found in the stylistic method that creates parts giving value to individual perspective, but never allowing it absolute truth. The absolute truth is only discovered when the poem has been finished; when the multiplicity of perspectives come under an overruling moral guidance. The partial truths accumulate into the whole experience, and the poet "makes it ultimately appear that Pompilia was really right" (173).

Chesterton's critique has so far examined the tension between Browning's artistic expression of spontaneity and control. The question now arises why the moral overview implicit in the control is necessary. The answer lies in a comparison of Browning with the impressionist poets. Both
he and they are agreed in the essential importance of the individual point of view; both accept the elusiveness of truth and the intangibility of justice. The difference is that Browning concedes a partial knowledge of an eternal to the individual, rather than no knowledge at all. He believes in the existence of a final truth and in an absolute yet mysterious justice. Chesterton sums it up in the statement that there is:

> a vital distinction between the mystical view of Browning that the blind men are misled because there is so much for them to learn, and the purely impressionist and agnostic view of the modern poet, that the blind men were misled because there was nothing for them to learn. (176)

The critic acknowledges that:

> It is really difficult to decide when we come to the extreme edge of veracity, when and when not it is permissible to create an illusion. (194)

Yet he personally believes that that decision has consciously to be made, and he congratulates the poet on making it.

Chesterton also acknowledges that once the decision is made "no one surely need be ashamed to admit that such a rule is not entirely easy to draw up" (194). Here again he congratulates the poet on having found an acceptable non-didactic form for moral control. Browning's mysticism is once more the major point in his favour:

> the great concrete experiences which God made always come first; his own deductions and speculations about them always second. (183)

The poet's attitude was "not founded on opinions which were the work of Browning, but on life which was the work of God"
(183). This mysticism implies a vision of life in which the man, Browning, always realizes the impossibility for him to understand himself intellectually, let alone the rest of the world. The form presents the vision. Browning allows each man to speak for himself; but no individual is allowed to be the whole situation. Even the situation itself cannot contain the significance of its parts. In the first place we recognize the incompleteness of man, and in the second the existence of some further potential which is complete. Both techniques demonstrate that while Browning guides and suggests he does not dictate. The ultimate humility is in the fact that the form reveals the poet's own incompleteness and imperfection; it is an acknowledgement of his own limitation that he only points to a fulfillment.

Having established that Browning failed neither on the side of the impressionists nor on that of didacticism, we must be aware of another aspect of him. Throughout the book Chesterton has carefully pointed out that Browning did not succeed by chance but by design. As an artist he opts ultimately for control. This is the reason for the critic's praise of the poet for trying to include the spontaneous, emotional truth; and for his acclamation of Browning for having succeeded in finding his own form of moral control. Browning's awareness of the incompleteness of man makes him quite conscious of the danger in didacticism. If a man is not perfect, his attempts at despotism will always contain some measure of fault and potential corruption. Chesterton interprets Browning's "Strafford" as an examination of despotism, which he calls:
a kind of disease of public spirit . . . the
drunkeness of responsibility. It is when men
begin to ground desperate in their love for the
people, when they are overwhelmed with the
difficulties and blunders of humanity, that
they fall back upon a wild desire to manage
everything themselves. (31)
The despot progresses naturally to "blasphemous and lying
assumption of Godhead" (51). If a political despot may so
develop, so may an artistic despot. Browning is shown to
be aware of the potential danger and to be consciously trying
to avoid it.

Similarly Browning is conscious of the dangers of
impressionism. His belief in the importance of individual
details makes him strongly aware of the violent energy to be
found in them. Chesterton tells us that:

if ever he who had the strongest head in the
world had gone mad, it would have been through
this turbulent democracy of things. (166)
The poet realizes that to give a heightened value to detail
is but a step away from a "desire to add a touch to things
in the spirit of man" (167), which is found in the poem
"Prince Hohenstein-Schwangau". Since man is not perfect,
his attempts at perfection will necessarily include some
touch of madness. The belief that man is able to complete
himself produces "maniacs, isolated in separate cells" (176).
The artist draws away from, and consciously controls the
potential insanity of this position. For Browning there is
an unavoidable belief in "a certain reality tangled almost
inextricably with unrealities in a man's mind". This reality
is the existence of God and the corresponding incompleteness
of man.

Browning's consciousness of God underlies his conscious morality and conscious form. In it Chesterton perceives the poet's unique resolution to the paradox that while man must strive after the divine to fulfill his humanity, he must never attempt to be divine. Throughout the book, but especially during the study of Browning's philosophy, statements have been made concerning the relationship of the poet to the act of creation. The reader is told that poetry is concerned with "primal and conventional things . . . it is original in the sense that it deals with origins." (99) Poetry "deals entirely with those great eternal and mainly forgotten wishes which are the ultimate despots of existence" (184). The basic understanding of life can only be communicated in poetry which "presents things as they are to our emotions, not as they are to any theory, however plausible, or to any argument, however conclusive" (184). It is in poetry:

as in music, [that] a note is struck which expresses beyond the power of rational statement a condition of mind, and all actions arise from a condition of mind. (185)

Since the vision of life is a perception of God's order, and since it is communicated best through poetry which reaches into the unconscious, any attempt to re-create God's plan, to imitate the divine, finds its medium in poetry. Chesterton says that the poet's greatest contribution is the recognition of this need in all men to be divine. It is:

the most beautiful of all the functions of a poet, that he gives men words, for which men from the
beginning of the world have starved more than for bread. (171)

When the poet gives men the words necessary for communication, he also determines the form that communication will take. The moral judgement involved in this decision reveals the vision of the poet himself. Consequently Browning's characters directly imitate the poet's own relation to the problem of striving to be divine. Chesterton finds that each character has a "definite and peculiar confidence of God" (187), which Browning gives them the power to express. While they may speak of many things feverishly and vaguely; of one thing they always speak with confidence and composure, their relation to God. (201)

To communicate their belief they are given brief moments of poetry in which Browning demands, personal poems, a moral direction which is an admittance of God. It is in this paradox that Chesterton sees the resolution of his major conflict: for Browning, the attempt to be divine through creation cannot be successful without the recognition of a divinity greater than oneself. The critic concludes his book by saying that with the poet's characters, as with the poet:

we have always this eternal interest, that they are real somewhere, and may at any moment begin to speak poetry. We are talking to a peevish and garrulous sneak; we are watching the play of his paltry features, his evasive eyes, and babbling lips. And suddenly the face begins to change and harden, the eyes glare like the eyes of a mask, the whole face of clay becomes a
common mouthpiece, and the voice that comes forth is the voice of God, uttering His everlasting soliloquy. (202)

Robert Browning is Chesterton's first major critical effort. In it we have seen him attempting to apply and reconcile the exploratory statements of his journalistic criticism. He found in Browning an example of his own conflicts. On an artistic level the tension between the didactic and the impressionist holds sway in Browning's work. An appreciation of the poet's achievement of resolution in a definite but not rigid formal control over spontaneous experience reflects Chesterton's slight shift towards form. The moral conflict which the artistic tension parallels is that between dogma and unconscious inspiration. Here the critic's emphasis on the consciousness of the poet in his application of formal moral control indicates another shift towards a sense of necessary consciousness in morality. On the most profound level, that of religion and the vision of life it expresses, Chesterton finds in Browning his own conflict between the necessity of attempting to express the divine and the blasphemy of believing that one can achieve it. The poet resolves the tension in demanding that the creator exist within the creation for any poetic fulfillment. This necessary absolute in art once more reflects an apparent tendency in Chesterton's early criticism. The shift of emphasis in the critical conflicts that we vaguely discerned is confirmed; and tentative resolutions have been reached from which new directions can be taken.
Chapter III
Chesterton's first major attempt at serious poetry was "The Wild Knight", written in 1899. As a work of art it contained many stylistic problems which drew criticism of the poet's obscurity. But it represents an effort to break away from the dominating forms of his early poetry and short stories. The largest factor in the incomprehension of the contemporary readers was a direct result of the poet's experimentation with a new form that was only partially successful. Now that we have looked at the tentative explorations of Chesterton's early criticism, perhaps we can find out why the experimentation was necessary in artistic terms, and why the stylistic obscurities arose.

Most of the early artistic efforts that have been published indicate a close intertwining between the artist's vision of life and a search for a specific technical means of communicating it. As one would expect from a man who quickly developed a perceptive critical faculty, the art represents a series of studies in the conventions of communication. In order to examine literary styles a large number of poems and short stories employ a personally adapted form of the techniques of nonsense literature. But there is a separate stream of purely religious poetry which is quite different in purpose. Significantly, the earliest examples of Chesterton's art that exist belong to this group of poems. On the whole they are not concerned with modes of expression, but with the vision of life itself. They are far closer to the original impulses and essence of man, and the very early work disparages the whole concept of art as a satisfactory
Within Chesterton's religious poetry there is a definite division in tone. One kind of writing is extremely negative in its aim and scope, while the other is positive, concentrating on the "wonder" of the world. The process of the negative kind works by nihilistically pointing out what does not exist. A poem of 1891 "Adveniat Regnum Tuum" functions most clearly in this way. The poem is a plea for the fulfilling of the prophecy "Thy Kingdom Come". In despair the young poet first asks "How long, oh Lord, how long?"; and then, "Will it ever come?" While he tries to put away his doubts by stating, "Yet bear we in our hearts the proof that God shall send the dawn", the proof turns into a further question, "The longing that this hand hath wrought shall not this hand fulfill?" The conclusion devolves weakly into an acceptance of the prayer "Father, They Kingdom come", only because the poet has found no real answer to his questions. There is an overwhelming negativity about this poem in its ignoring of free-will and human responsibility. It does not go so far as to imply that God should "make things better", but there is a denial of the power of resolution in man.

Man is portrayed as emphatically not pleading with God because of his human troubles. Line by line his possible weaknesses are denied. When we are finally told why the plea is made, the position is described in a juxtaposition of words that empty each other of meaning. The terms "noble weariness"

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and "holy discontent" are used to specify the source of man's longing, yet they function by default. We are told that the man is weary and discontented but not why. The fact that he is "noble", "holy", indicates a necessary persistence, but why is it necessary? The centre of the poem hints at "ghastly echoes of a dream", a "vision", a "glimmering promise", all of which represent man's "unknown home". Yet this home is vague and undefined, even as to what it will give man. All we are told is that it will not be a "toil", a "struggle", or "darkening care and clinging sin". It is "the good time yet to be" in which man will gain the prayer and song to yield him, presumably, a measure of free-will, which will then be superfluous.

The reluctance to define the motivations or desires also appears in the structure of the poem. The verse proceeds by couplets often grouped in four line sections. These sections are on the whole difficult to read because the subject and action are left until the end of each one. The reader ploughs through clause after clause before he finds to what they are related. The very similarity of the clauses lengthens the sense of waiting for a resolution. The first section of four lines proceeds with, "Not that ... /Not from ... /Not from ... /Goes ..."; the third group contains "Some glimmers ... /Some ghastly ...". Near the end of the poem there is a repetition of "Still ..." and an interminable "though through ... /Though we ... /Though in ... /Yet ...". Even within the pounding seven-beat rhythm of the lines, the only variety is in emphasizing the repetitive "Nots" and "Thoughs". The effect of the structure mirrors
the dilemma of the man: it creates suspense which is not satisfied. What is surprising in this poem of doubt is the running energy of youth. If man has no power, the poet is going to insist on despair with the heavy-handed grasp of a fatalistic cement driller.

Of course the poet is here a boy not yet seventeen years old. One should not expect either technical virtuosity or philosophical maturity. What is interesting is the consistency of the negative approach; the reluctance to describe the greatness that lies beyond his powers and the corresponding emphasis on human weakness. One year later we find the prize poem "St. Francis Xavier"², using many of the same techniques, but resulting in greater problems in accordance with a more complex idea. Man still has no self-will, he exists to play an "eternal lottery"; not to be in "vain". Against this, the poets ask what right the Church has to make a man a saint, since only God has the absolute power of judgement. But the situation is profoundly confused by the poet's own judgement. He denounces the Church as an "Enchantress" with "monkish myths". He denies that Francis Xavier's christian teaching did any good to people with a "ruder need"; he even says that Xavier was destructive in his imposition of his own religion, and he quenched "the light he could not see". The poet then goes on to concede that he may not be right, for no man can know how much of God lives in "the cant of many a fallen creed"; he also says that no man can know "how far apparent failure many succeed".

² Quoted by M. Ward in Gilbert Keith Chesterton, p. 557.
Having completely undermined his own judgements, he does not confirm those of the Church, but leaves the question unresolved.

The negative attitude to human judgements implies that divine judgements are possible and may be true. Here the poet is not concerned with validating God's judgement but emphasizing the impossibility of human judgement. The slow destruction of belief in the Church leads one to hope that "This then we say" may actually state something positive. The result is a series of repetitions of "God only knows . . ." that underscores man's inadequacy, and ends in a further repetition of "This then we say" followed by a further affirmation of human impotence. The positive aspect of the poem results in contradiction: since one cannot know the ways of God one cannot deny the potential truths in human judgement; yet one must not accept human judgement as truth.

There is a satirical factor in the negative side of these poems. By pointing to what the Church is not, Chesterton indicates the potential of what God is. When the sides are balanced the tension between the two critically comments upon their relationship to each other. "Easter Sunday", written in 1894, is an example of a poem subtly underlining the emptiness of the Church. Yet the poet is still reluctant to allow definite meaning. The conclusion is in the form of contradiction also found in "St. Francis Xavier". We are told that Christ might arise, if only to destroy the lies of the church and prove the priests ridiculous in their formalized worship. But we are left confused,

3 In The Clarion, 20/4/1895, 128/2.
for if Christ did arise even for this purpose, the justification of a Church that teaches his resurrection would exist despite the poet's denial of it.

A section of a poem quoted from a notebook of 1891 in Dudley Barker's biography of Chesterton shows an early attempt to clarify matters. Negations are still present, for the poem is again one of doubt; but there is a stronger emphasis on the positive existence of an unknown power. The poet distinctly separates the functions of inspiration and formal religion. It is evident that the doubt voiced in the poem resides in formal religion. Religion becomes a static ceremony invalidated by the passing of time; and one finds that most of the negatives accumulate around it. Inspiration, in contrast, is more elusive than negative; yet the man turns towards inspiration because the structures of his traditional existence indicated by religion are crumbling. Inspiration is not concretely described, but it is strongly suggested in the "Voice in the heart of man, imperative, changeless, blind". The potential contradiction present in turning to elusive inspiration for stability is resolved in the positive terms of hope that the poet uses when discussing it.

The division between formal religion and inspiration remains as important an idea in Chesterton's early artistic work, as it became in the criticism. Much of the elusive quality connected with inspiration is transformed into the positive process of Chesterton's "wonder" poems that we shall soon come to. But first it is important to note a

\[D. \text{ Barker, G. K. Chesterton: A Biography, p. 49.}\]
discussion of the division, related to different kinds of expression, which is found in "The Song of Labour" written in 1892. The poem is interesting because in it the negativity is juxtaposed with man's attempt to manifest inspiration. The lack of self-will found in the negative approach is in full contrast with a positive acceptance of responsibility; and "The Song of Labour" becomes an almost self-righteous statement of the importance of physical action as a direct expression of the inspiration of one's life.

The poem makes an important distinction between the images that describe the formalized life of religion and politics, and those describing the primitive inspiration of the labourer. The labourer is called "the voice of the human will" whose work is "real", while the priest and king "rest upon words". On the one hand "voice" is active and close to pure inspiration, as it was used previously in the "Voice in the heart of man"; "words" on the other hand, are more static and formal. The words of the labourer himself are "vague and frantic" yet "the High God heareth forever the voice of the work we have done". The idea is developed at the end of the poem, when the poet and painter are portrayed as not providing an adequate expression of Nature; while the labourer, because he is at one with Nature in his pure actions can "hear/The roar of the endless purpose".

It is apparent that throughout these early poems Chesterton is ideologically against form of any kind because it is potentially limiting. The belief is generated by a

5 The Speaker, 17/12/1892, p. 742.
spiritual division between inspiration and formal religion; and a human division between action which is direct and art which proceeds through a form. The apparent dismissal of art as a means of expressing inspiration is obviously undermined by the very fact that Chesterton has chosen to write poetry, not to mention the extreme formality of its presentation. It is possibly the implied frustration of his attempts to express himself adequately that makes the poems so negative. The positive process of the "wonder" poems, on the other hand, is quite simply a celebration of the incomprehensibility of the world rather than a lament for man's limited understanding. Technically it freely admits and manipulates rather than regrets man's inadequate expression. The process also depends upon a sense of free-will, and an overwhelming belief in the beneficent presence of a God.

An early poem which is religious in its discussion of man's vision of life is "By the Babe Unborn" from 1892. The techniques used are almost the opposite to the negative poems. Rather than using similarity and repetition to create a sense of waiting, the poet attempts to make the vision of the poem quite different from anything we would expect. Instead of talking about form he manipulates it so that it appears to shift and change. Rather than presenting a juxtaposition of dogma and inspiration, the poet creates in us the experience of inspiration that transcends dogma in its personal relevance. The poem attempts to refresh one's perspective and make one recognize the wonder of the world. The poet leads...

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6 Introductory to The Wild Knight and Other Poems (London: Grant Richards, 1900), pp. 2-3.
in with a normal point of view which gradually shifts its focus. When the perspective is radically changed in the third and fourth stanzas the poem becomes obscure. Yet, compare this method of anticipation with that of the negative process poems. Although Chesterton makes us wait, it is not for long; and we find a clarification rather than a vague irresolution at the end. The new perspective we have viewed is due to the imagination of an unborn child. Once this is recognized the obscurities are immediately clear, and we experience the surprise and wonder of realizing that it could make sense to look on the world in this vital way.

A similar poem included in The Wild Knight and Other Poems but written in 1894, is "The Donkey"7. While the babe's perspective startled because of its newness, the donkey's startles because of its difference. By being presented with an experience of a Donkey's imagination, wonder is again created in the reader, who suddenly sees the animal from a new perspective. However, while we experience a new imagination, it is reinforced what a limited one we normally use. The reminder of human inadequacy instead of contradicting the wonder, serves to emphasize the amazing perspective man could have in spite of limitation.

Two final poems, written in 1897, indicate further development in this positive poetry. "The Holy of Holies"8 is a short simple poem in which the poet uses the technique of perspective in a different manner. He does not obscure the vision through use of a different point of view, but

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7 Ibid, pp. 16-17.
8 The Speaker, 5/6/1897, p. 631.
tries to illustrate a fresh vision. At the beginning of the poem he questions whether even God can explain the intricacy of a flower. However, while still questioning, the poet realizes that he himself would never be able to understand a divine explanation. There is a potential contradiction in the method of questioning God in order to find out, yet realizing that one will never know. Here it is resolved into paradox. Because God is the only thing that can fully know the flower, the flower itself proves the existence of God; and the acceptance of the presence of God becomes sufficient explanation.

The other poem of 1897 "The Earth's Shame" is one of the most ambiguous of the positive poems. Whereas "The Holy of Holies" progresses to an acceptance of God, "The Earth's Shame" professes a specific affirmation of God. But the progression of the latter poem is through much obscurity. Initially the reader is deliberately confused about the hanging of a man that he witnesses. The horror that is created is then dissipated by the listing of things that are not afraid of the scene, and the list culminates in God. God's appearance does not explain the confusion but creates a sense of mystery in which all things are unified. There is no attempt to clarify the ambiguity; but rather than leading to frustration, and a sense of the impossibility for man to completely understand, the emphasis is on the omniscience of God. The process of the poem may underline the confusion of man, but it creates a positive belief in the absolute and

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just actions of God.

The two processes of expression in the religious poems show a rooted division in both thought and style. The negative process describes the weakness of man and the inadequacy of formalized responses used by the priest or artist. When it attempts to postulate a resolution in the ways of God working through man, it invariably results in contradiction. The "wonder" poems, on the other hand, indicate the amazing vision man may have despite his limitations, if he stays close to intuitive inspiration which is God. Their celebration of God's worldly presence is normally expressed in paradox or mystery that admits inadequacy but resolves contradiction by emphasizing the transcendent power of God. Both styles also find expression in the nonsense literature of the short stories and of a few poems. In the use of nonsense Chesterton goes further than a discussion of the vision of life itself to a study of the modes of communication for expressing the vision. Before examining the short stories, it is important to sort out the various techniques and meanings of nonsense literature; and to understand why it should provide a suitable medium for Chesterton's thought at this time.

The purpose of nonsense is first of all to disrupt the process of normal order, and second to impose an order on a vision of life that now seems chaotic. The two processes occur simultaneously since the nonsense rules are what make the ordinary rules appear chaotic. The ludicrous results are formed in the way the chaotic vision differs from normal experience. Yet the reader is also able to perceive the
essential reality on which both logics stand. The tension produced is in the constant attempts to bring the actual world within the limitations of the inventor. While the nonsense writer tries to make a world out of the pattern of his own mind, he is constantly aware of the fact that he is doing so. The consciousness of the process forbids him to ever reach completion, because it would be at that point that the limitations of his mind would collapse under the force of actuality. Consequently a great part of nonsense concentrates on the details of life the sum of which, as Emile Cammaerts points out, is never greater than the whole presented.\(^\text{10}\)

The disintegration of normal life proceeds mainly by separating it into parts than can then be shown to have no relation to each other. Many nonsense writers make up words that are similar enough in sound and appearance for us to accept them as normal, so that the recognition of their difference upsets the perspective of actual life. In an interesting comparison of Edward Lear and Lewis Carroll\(^\text{11}\) Elizabeth Sewell suggests that there are few verbs present in nonsense literature because verbs indicate relationships between things. Her book also notes that many nonsense books are illustrated, and suggests that the use of pictures concretizes an image to a specific interpretation, so that the usual associations cannot be made. The need for objective control on the part of the inventor also results in the

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use of few emotive words, because they have personal connotations that cannot be controlled. But each of these methods implies a logic on the part of the author. The invention of new words, and the drawing of pictures, contain within themselves the order of the writer's mind. The only way normal vision will make sense is to participate in the new kind of logic which is being used. There is no persuasion involved in the process. If the reader does not perceive the logic of the writer he will neither be able to accept its standards nor to believe that it has reduced the normal world to chaos. The purpose of nonsense is to offer the reader a logic which he can use to participate in the personal creation of another order. The more successfully he uses the logic the more able he is to control the events. The better the events are controlled the more obvious becomes the discrepancy between normal and invented logic, and the clearer the fundamental reality they share.

Within nonsense there are different attitudes to life. The person who invents nonsense is playing at being God as he creates his order. The purpose of the style depends on how he does so. He may want to convince us of his complete control; or he may want to indicate his limitations in the inadequacy of his logic. Nonsense can simply be a game. The object here is to keep within the personal rules invented, to assume complete control of them within their personal limits. The control of actuality becomes a fight with normality for the dominance of life. The purpose may be a parodic function where a situation of life is shown to exist by conventional rules that easily become nonsense and put up
little resistance. It may also consist of testing one's ability to control. Elizabeth Sewell suggests that Carroll was this kind of nonsense writer. She also says that he tries to forget that these are human rules that he is inventing. He puts the full force of his intellect into proving that he can control everything. It is when the writer actually believes that he is God that nonsense comes close to the effect of fantasy.

It is worth pointing out now how fantasy differs from nonsense. The fantasist also generates a world of his own, but it comes out of the actual world rather than opposing it. Fantasists can therefore function normally within the relationships of life. The major difference between fantasy and nonsense is that fantasy tries to become unconscious of the limitations of its vision. To succeed, it depends upon the creation of a whole so complete that actuality does not intrude. The reader, far from actively participating, has everything done for him. He passively accepts the view he is being persuaded of. Interestingly enough, fantasy also uses few verbs; but here it is a result of the relationships between things being constantly explained by the author. The new worlds and even languages he invents are understood in the context of the fantastic world, not against the background of reality and do not conflict with it. The control is not exercised over the content itself, so much as over the reader's reactions to it. Consequently, one does not see how the logic works, but merely knows that it does. The existence of the persuasive force makes possible the use of propaganda. The fantasist who believes that his vision is
the correct one also needs to persuade others of it. It is a power game in which only one person can play; everyone else is just an instrument for his manipulation. Both fantasist and nonsense-writer become insane when they genuinely forget that their created worlds are separate from actuality.

Another major use of nonsense is generally more serious. Since the logic invented tears away the normal standards, a situation could as in parody, be reduced to a non-existent basis. The situation may have no intrinsic or organic rules that resist all attacks by nonsense logic. However, where the logical reduction of a situation occurs to a fundamental basis which is unalterable and cannot be effaced, the nonsense has performed the function of pointing out the root value of a thing. What resists nonsense lies beyond logic in the realm of the mystic or non-rational. In this way nonsense operates as an extended form of paradox. It destroys normal relationships with its logical control in an attempt to uncover what is not controllable and therefore indestructible; it manipulates logic to show what lies beyond logic. This is probably what lies behind Elizabeth Sewell's statement that the nonsense of Edward Lear accepts God. If a nonsense writer is always making one aware of the ultimate limits of his logic he is also by implication aware of a further existence outside of his own. Rather than being an intellectual attack, Lear's nonsense is child-like. Its vagaries do not aim at creating a new world to destroy the standards of the existing one, but to test them. His nonsense is always humble, acknowledging his weakness; and it can never approach the insane, for it never tries to be God.
Chesterton uses nonsense in both the major ways, but tends on the whole to the more serious purpose. If we remember the important essay "Dreams", we can begin to understand why nonsense is such an appropriate form. The essay discusses the fact that in dreams details tend to take over, they become too important. Consequently art appears to be in opposition to dreams because art imposes a control over detail. Chesterton goes on to say that art's attempt to control the chaos of dreams is an incorrect understanding of what they generate. He points out that this chaos is necessary, that Biblical dreams are really great spiritual truths covered by "farcical mysteries" and "grotesque parables" seemingly without meaning. The dreams need an interpreter to get at their essence which lies behind the detail, but that the unordered detail is necessary to show that the external form is not important. The author then claims that great art alone correctly uses the technique of dreams by portraying a chaotic exterior to a genuine meaning. Both great art and dreams have an abiding unity of feeling directly related to the inspiration of God. The unity is the essence that lies beyond form. Nonsense can perform the function of reducing a situation to its basic inspiration, which in some cases does not exist. It is therefore technically highly suitable for a man who wishes to uncover the essential force behind a situation.

The negative process of Chesterton's religious poems can also be seen in the use of nonsense as parody. Here a method of logic is examined and applied according to the writer's own rules to test how far it fulfills what it says
it can fulfill. In the entertaining sketch "Half-Hours in Hades" written in 1892, Chesterton takes a look at the scientific method. The technique is similar to Lear's parody of cooking in Nonsense Songs, Stories, Botany and Alphabets. The idea is that a definition of a thing will help to understand and explain it. In this piece the narrator attempts to codify existing demons. The three sections examine definition, evolution and practical application of the basic information. Definition consists of the well-tested technique of taking words to their literal extreme. It is the main factor of Chesterton's nonsense logic. He plays around with the common or "garden" serpent and the "blue" devil. Both are illustrated according to a literal interpretation of the words describing their appearance. He seriously discusses the "Diabolus Paradisi Perditi" discovered by a Mr. J. Milton, giving it the physical characteristics of Lucifer in Paradise Lost.

The second section, on evolution, illustrates well Cammaerts' statement that parody is to literature what caricature is to art. Chesterton draws a series of simple figures side by side with a caricature of each of them that picks out the visual distinctions, and gives them another meaning by subjecting them to an odd artistic logic. For example, a man with handlebar moustaches and sabre-sword, becomes a devil with horns and tail. By the third section the logic of the writer has been learnt by the reader. He can appreciate the parody by applying the rules himself.

Consequently, when we come to the statement "The human race might well learn a lesson from these little creatures, and in fact it not infrequently does", we recognize the double meaning that we have been taught to observe in the literal interpretation. The sentence, in fact the whole speech, becomes ludicrous because of the discrepancy between the normal and the nonsensical. Finally despite all this scientific attempt to methodize and control, when an "experiment" is carried out it has to be performed by a witch. The use of the totally inexplicable ingredient "eye of the common newt or eft" is an attempt to define more closely what one puts in without explaining how or why it works. For Chesterton this is what remains of the scientific method. When reduced to its ultimate degree of definition it cannot explain why the thing exists. The irony that results from this attempt at a definitive demonology is that the essential evil of them escapes. It cannot be defined or controlled.

Chesterton's examination of modes of communication by nonsense is usually concentrated on forms of art. One parody of painting and words is found in "A Fragment" dated 1896. In this unfinished short story, the writer begins with illustrating his characters, that is, literally painting them. The first character is the Admiral. You are to paint him with water-colours (since the sea is where he belongs). His trousers are to be a strong prussian blue "leaving room for a great many gold buttons and gold stripes" (124).

14 Ibid, p. 76.
face is rather like an "eagle's or a lean parrot"s"; his:
hair and eyebrows white, and under them a pair of
eyes, for which you must consult the little slip
of directions they sell you with the paint box, to
find out what colours are commonly used to express
a look of suffering transfigured with immortal
hope. (124)
The writer parodies not only the claim of art to be able to
express the essence of a man, but also the claim of words.
If you don't understand the description, "a martyr of science,
a pilgrim of truth" an alternative logic says "no fool like
an old fool" (124). The picture of the Admiral becomes a
game of trying to decide who he really is underneath all the
inadequate description. The succeeding characters receive
less and less attention, for the reader knows the rules of
the game and can apply them himself. When it comes to the
action of the story we see that each character has his own
system of logic that is only useful to a limited extent when
trying to solve the problem of what is in the black box.
It is the character with common-sense who suggests that they
open it. The story ends abruptly as "a very, very tall thin
man" (131) rises out of the box. Significantly the tall
thin men of all Chesterton's stories, beginning with "A
crazy Tale", of 1897, represent the non-rational and non-
logical. It is this that lies beyond the comprehension of
the colours, words, and characters themselves.

The positive process of the "wonder" poems also finds
a counterpart in the serious nonsense that takes one to the
startling discovery of essence that lies behind artistic
structures. In "The Wild Goose Chase" of 1892,\footnote{Ibid, pp. 90-104.}
Chesterton makes a study of the use of metaphor. We have seen that in his early religious poems he admires the man of action far more than the artist because the inspiration of life is directly communicated. Here the author uses his nonsensical process of reducing a poetic form to its literal interpretation; the boy of the story acts out the literal meaning of images. The first example is the clue to the rules for the reader. The people of the village complain that one of the boys wouldn't "say boh to a goose" (92). The child thereupon goes and says "boh" to several geese, but only a wild one reacts by flying away. Our expectations are reversed. Normally we interpret the metaphor as meaning that it takes courage to say "boh" because the goose will attack you. All that happens here is that the boy frightens off one of the birds.

From this event, where the author has demonstrated the inadequacy of the literal saying because it results in a different meaning than we expect, the reader is left on his own. When the boy questions a series of birds in his attempt to find the wild goose that has run away, we only gradually realize what is happening. He says goodbye to the homely titmouse, is attracted to the society life of the peacocks from which the nightingale warns him. He meets an owl who cannot help him at all, and a mocking-bird, vulture and raven who try to discourage him. We begin to see that the birds all belong to phrases or sayings: "Proud as a peacock", "Wise as an owl", "Greedy as a vulture". Purely on the level of action he is working through the aspects of his life: rejection of home, temptation by society, discovery
of knowledge, scepticism and boredom. The potential nonsense in speaking to a lot of birds has shown itself to be meaningful as representative of his life. Consequently when one recognizes the verbal basis for the actions one is aware of the meaning of the words. The process is made explicit in the final section when the boy, now a young man, realizes that he has lost his youth in his quest for the wild goose. His whole life has been a "wild goose chase" that only ends with his death. The nonsense illuminates the essential origin of words by stripping them of their conventional use and exposing their real human value.

"The Taming of the Nightmare"17 was also written in 1892. The meaning is far more ambiguous than some of the other stories; and the confusion arises mainly from the structure. The young author is describing a nightmare about having a nightmare. On the external level the reader perceives both processes occurring; but within the story the boy having the nightmare is asleep. He is dreaming a nightmare and not consciously having one. Within Jack Horner's dream the author creates a series of nonsense experiences. The logic again follows the pattern of reduction to a literal level to expose the discrepancy with normality. The story begins with a strange goblin-like creature calling at Jack's window on a dark and windy night. The creature comes in, and tells Jack that he has been appointed by the local "Board of Good Faries" to find and catch The Nightmare. Jack experiences the apparent nonsense of the details quite

seriously, and then asks the creature its name. It is the Wind. The reader recognizes the nonsense in Jack's confusion of the literal with the normal. He participates in the awareness of a logic that has made the Wind appear as a ludicrous caricature and can see the discrepancy. Yet because of the discrepancy he can appreciate that the Wind as a name represents an essence which is poetic inspiration, partly through literary connotations and partly through emotional response. The result of the literal experiences of Jack is that he is taken to the suburbs of Creation as if it were a real place. Again the reader recognizes that this is what inspiration essentially leads to.

In Creation Jack first meets a calf who is singing an "impromptu rhyme of doubtful relevancy" (173). The boy doesn't understand it at all until the calf explains that he is a Moon-Calf sighing for his mother the Moon. Jack experiences the melancholy of the animal when he is told what it is; but once again the reader experiences the nonsense of the serious reaction. The essence of the Moon-Calf is recognized through the nonsense poetry it makes up, and again through a literary connotation with "Hey Diddle Diddle", the nursery rhyme that Edward Lear read and illustrated as pure nonsense-poetry.

Finally, the Nightmare is found. Appropriately Jack gets involved with it as such. He cannot stop following it, although it seems impossible to catch. When it is eventually cornered it must be wrestled with, as one tosses and turns in the throws of a bad dream. Once tamed the Nightmare takes Jack on magical adventures that cannot be explained. The
reader is conscious of the literal experience which results in an understanding of Nightmare. On the nonsensical level the horse is tamed and performs magic; on a normal level the nightmare becomes dream. Behind the experience lies meaning. In this land of creation the nightmare inspiration becomes imagination. At first it is wild and unruly, but when tamed it performs the function of a dream. It presents the unity that dreams give to random details. It is non-rational because it is the essential emotion that cannot be explained but that contains the inspiration which is man's attitude to life.

The participation in the logic of nonsense removes conventional meanings and leaves the essence. The process demonstrates the serious reservations that the young Chesterton has about form because it can be so misleading. All Chesterton's forms of nonsense essentially agree with the conclusion of the negative religious poems, that art, because of its form, is incapable of expressing essential meaning. Although nonsense was entirely appropriate to his needs at that time it sidetracked him from the valuable experiments with mystery and paradox in the positive religious poems. His nonsense, by its very method of demolishing artistic structures, defeats the aim of poetry or art by denying that they can communicate. Because the artist is handicapped by form Chesterton chose to destroy it, showing its meaninglessness. Yet this is similar to the paradoxical denial of, yet use of, form in the religious poems. Nonsense could not expose essence without form existing first, as a vehicle for communication. Further, and more important, nonsense is
a form itself that Chesterton had to manipulate very carefully, just because he did not want it to interfere with essential meaning. In this we see the paradox of the nonsense technique. It did not take him long to realize his position, and appreciate consciously what he had unconsciously been doing.

The concept of a necessary vehicle for communication and the care with which he had to control his nonsense led Chesterton to recognize that some forms could be more appropriate than others to express essence. While the examination of metaphors and words in his short stories led to a destruction of their conventional form, it also led to a reconstruction of their value as representatives for experience. The problem remains that the poet cannot demonstrate the value of words every time he uses them, so they lie constantly in danger of becoming conventional again. One sees Chesterton realizing that the techniques of expression come to define the relationship between the body of words and the essence. As a result the form begins to contribute to the communication rather than merely being a vehicle. Since some techniques will be more appropriate to convey some essences, the artist begins to have a conscious duty to a choice of form.

As this awareness grows Chesterton not only becomes willing to value words and colours, but also begins to discard the nonsense form. The process of stripping off the outside appearance of an object in order to see its essence becomes contradictory when form expresses essence. It is significant that Chesterton rarely uses nonsense for any other purpose than parody during the rest of his career.
The first book that he published, *Greybeards at Play* (1900), contains only one serious nonsense poem: "A Dedication". At least the first four stanzas of this poem had been written and illustrated as early as 1893\(^{18}\). The remaining three poems are parodies on pantheism, altruism and aestheticism respectively and many of his well-tried nonsense techniques.

While Chesterton continues to use nonsense in order to parody, his more serious short stories take on another form. The new approach is fundamentally different from nonsense. Rather than destroying the potential logic in words or situations to reach the essence behind them, he explores the logic of expression to assess its relationship to the essence. He is trying to find the best technique for expressing experience. About 1896 the author wrote "Homesick at Home"\(^{19}\) which was to provide him with the basic plot for many explorations of expression. The story opens with a paradox: "The shortest journey from one place to the same place is round the world" (233). White Wynd has become bored with his home; it is merely a house. "Prose had got hold of him: the sealing of the eyes and the closing of the ears" (234).

The story functions on two levels, the experience of the man within the tale, and the reader's external experience of his actions. In contrast to the similar two-fold structure of "The Taming of the Nightmare" the reader's understanding depends upon a recognition of the absolute value in the man's perception, not upon the value that results when the perception is shown to be limited making us depend upon the

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\(^{19}\) *The Coloured Lands*, pp. 233-238.
discrepancy in interpretation.

The author suddenly takes away White Wynd's ability to understand the normal associations between things. As we have seen, if this is taken to its extreme it is the basis for insanity, and when Wynd behaves this way his little girl thinks that he is mad. However, he does not have a nonsensical logic opposed to that around him, but no logic at all. In the progress of his journey Wynd forms relationships with objects. Because they are original experiences their force is overwhelmingly strong. The wind seems like a kiss of God. He himself feels gigantic when he realizes the incredible minuteness of dandelions. The author reminds us that everything depends upon perspective, "Every object is infinitely vast as well as infinitely small". (236) The personal appreciation of interrelationships between things is what gives all the objects a value in the man's mind.

White Wynd continues on his journey for many years when he suddenly comes to "the end of the world. Every spot on earth is either the beginning of the end, according to the heart of man" (237). The realization of White Wynd that it is personal experience of things rather than acceptance of them that discovers value, explains the initial paradox. The shortest journey is around the world, because unless one makes a conscious choice of experience to generate value one will never be able to appreciate the place where one stands. The reader should appreciate the paradox by experiencing the actions of White Wynd as he literally acts it out. The relations that are created are not nonsensical in opposition to the conventional. They are shown to be the necessary
experience that justifies the verbal expression. The verbal construction is shown to express meaning exactly, but it gains in value only if one experiences the meaning actually. The story examined the function of paradox and the relationships that validate it. We are shown that paradox contains meaning, but that the meaning must be personally experienced before paradox is valuable.

In 1897 Chesterton wrote a piece for the Slade School magazine *Quarto*\(^{20}\). The story, "A Crazy Tale", is a literal examination of the way words assume value. It begins with a potentially nonsensical stanza from "Hey Diddle Diddle", but the object is to demonstrate that what looks like nonsense may not be so when fully understood. The main character is one of those "tall spare" men who populate the non-rational sides of Chesterton's literature. He proceeds to describe an incredible experience whose meaning he has forgotten, to someone he meets whom he thinks will recognize the situation. The main point is that the speaker does not understand what has happened. He can only describe the actual events. It is left to the listener to make the associations.

The speaker's experience is described as travelling: along a road of portents, like undeciphered parables. There was no twilight as in a dream; everything was clear cut in the sunlight, standing out in defiant plainness and infantile absurdity. All was in simple colours, like the landscape of a child's alphabet, but to a child who had not learnt the meaning. (27)

Then he describes coming to the end of the world, looking down into the sky and seeing the face of a child looking up. The listener here tries to provide the word "pool" to explain that the man, as a child, had looked into a pool of water. Again, the speaker talks of a gigantic man lifting him up to the heavens and smiling a huge smile. The listener at this point forces himself to say against the fear of losing the "whole sane universe of custom and experience", "But it was a man - it was your father!" (23). To which the tall man replies "'So they said ... Do you know what it means?'" (23). Finally the speaker tells him about the woman he married producing a "little human creature", and of realizing that this was the great experience whose meaning he had forgotten. The listener recognizes the event of "being born", and says so. He is providing the words for the man's experience. Because the speaker cannot relate the experience and the word, the word has no meaning and the experience cannot be fully understood. The inability to understand the meaning of the colours and alphabet around him, prevents him from deciphering the portents. Because he cannot make the associations between things and meaning, he is insane.

But the author is describing a two-way process. On the one hand words are shown to be necessary for communicating meaning. They give form to and express experience. Without them one travels through life feeling intensely but understanding nothing. Yet the man who constantly lives within essence, and who cannot relate it with formal expression, is actively participating in reality. Without his experience the words would mean nothing. "A Crazy Tale"
comes down slightly on the tall man's side. Essence is still more important than form. He is after all the "new Adam", "with an intellect capable of performing a function never before conceived truly; thanking God for his creation" (31). The reader is also left in doubt as to the genuineness of his incomprehensibility. Is it merely a technique to wake people up to the significance of experience? Is it a personal denial of a form that will limit his appreciation? In these ambiguities lies a contradiction that will affect Chesterton's literature for several years. The gradual appreciation for the consciousness of form has introduced a conflict. Pure essence and experience may be best communicated through specific techniques. Yet, if these techniques define as they express the author is imposing a limit and control upon the essence itself. No longer will form only function to express the uncontrollable, form will limit and confine it. The conflict which the author will show arises from trying to find the positive contribution of these stylistic limits and controls.

In the transference of his technique of literal reduction from nonsense to exploratory modes, Chesterton has created a problem. Literal levels of words and shapes in nonsense expose the essence. In their structure they are ultimate forms of minute detail; they are static and closely defined, indicating logical relationships. Once one invests these levels with formal meaning they may stand for essence but only insofar as their limited structure is capable. The problem is visible when one looks at the two levels operating in so many of the stories. In "A Wild Goose Chase"
Chesterton goes from statically indicating the aspects of a man's life in animal figure, to an overall acceptance of the specific metaphorical value of the saying "a wild goose chase". Similarly in "The Taming of the Nightmare" the internal level is a jerky, unconnected series of static events; while the external level generates a complete understanding of the essence of a dream. The parts and details develop into the use of emblematic characters in, for example, "A Crazy Tale". The two men have specific functions that make them not valuable in themselves but as emblems whose interaction gives the whole story meaning. There would perhaps be little problem with the style if the author had continued to write stories primarily concerned with conveying one specific essence. However, as the writer tries to integrate form with essence, he is creating a relationship between the two that depends on the reader's experience. In "Homesick at Home" he explains the relationship to the reader; and it is partly the reader's lack of complete personal experience that weakens the acceptance of the paradox. A great deal of our comprehension of "A Crazy Tale" is lost in the necessity of viewing the speaker and listener as objects whose meaning has little to do with their individual value as humans because they are emblems. The attempt on the author's part to make the tall man complex as a person whom we can experience only results in ambiguity. The necessary change and vagary of a human being stand in direct conflict with the emblematic value.

An excellent story showing Chesterton's early grasp of the technical difficulties of portraying experience which is
essentially a process, and of an essence which is static, is "A Picture of Tuesday". Published in 1896, it was rewritten from an earlier date for The Quarto. On an external level the story is discussing the techniques of impressionism, realism and symbolism. A group of artists occasionally have "subject" days when one of them proposes antipode that the rest paint from. The artists include a symbolist Noel Starwood, who is described as "visionary" and "fiery-haired" (19), Staunton the realist has a "sense of humour" and an "aversion to egoists" (19). The one who proposes the subject is Plumtree the arbitrary impressionist. He has very little concern about the "subject" of any painting and suggests off-handedly a "picture of Tuesday". When the artists gather a week later we see what they have produced. Staunton has painted a humorous picture of his mother's "at home" day which occurred on Tuesdays. The impressionist gives us "an admirable little suggestion of gaslight in early morning" (21). The symbolist has painted a picture of God dividing the waters on the second day.

What is interesting is the way the symbolic painting communicates. At first it seems to fill the room. Its dense and complex harmony of colours are a kind of "gorgeous twilight" quite unlike the vagueness of Plumtree's "gaslight". The picture's colour is a labyrinth necessary to follow "keenly and slowly", when suddenly a vast human figure is perceived. The logic of the painter must be understood, and

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22 Chesterton notes this in a letter quoted in M. Ward's Gilbert Keith Chesterton, p. 66.
when the initial feeling of vastness is fused with the knowledge of the form it takes, the reaction is complete. The experience of the interrelationship of essence and form makes the man seem to "rise" with his back towards one, yet the overall response is definite and absolute: "It was a dark picture, but when grasped, it blinded like a sun" (21). When asked about the inspiration of the painting Starwood replies that he has to paint something felt as a reality. The reality is the essence, the inspiration of man. He cannot merely describe it, he must create an experience of it. He cannot limit this experience yet he must define it. Consequently there is a relationship to be perceived and incorporated into a response of feeling, before the experience and the definition are held in balance.

In the actual telling of the story Chesterton has, however, not used the symbol which might have led us to experience rather than just understand the differences in artistic method. The three artists are made emblematic from the very first mention of their names. Plumtree is Oscar Plumtree, reminding us of the aesthete Oscar Wilde whose art he represents. Patrick Staunton's name indicates the solidity and staunchness of his realistic position in its suggestion of "staunchness". "Noel Starwood" contains the combined sense of religious joy and the visionary striving of "Star". The things the three men say, the pictures they paint, indicate specific and definite attitudes to life that do not change. As emblems the attitudes stand for aspects of art. Staunton represents form, Plumtree essence, while Starwood is able to balance the two. It is interesting that
there are three of them. The classic duo of Chesterton's later work arises from Staunton and Starwood; but here, indicative of the early date of the story and Chesterton's less hostile view of impressionism essence alone still has a place. Only Plumtree the impressionist is credited with a genuine understanding of the symbolist's achievement.

It is a further point of interest that the author's style corresponds to none of the artistic styles discussed. This on reflection is a little odd. Initially Chesterton's religious poems moved away from the denunciation of form to emphasize the inexplicable value of things. Similarly, his short stories shifted from the destruction of form through nonsense to an emphasis on discovering the value of words by perceiving the essence they express. The author then explored the possibility of words contributing to the expression of value, and tried to find the best techniques. But the exploration was conducted from the intellectual and almost critical point of view; so that when Chesterton tries to put his ideas into practice he finds himself still trapped in the vestiges of nonsense that have become emblem. The use of emblem indicates that he still does not fully trust form to express essence. Emblem "stands for" an object, admitting the severe limitations of its communication. But when words become no longer merely a surface, he has to develop a technique that will stylistically create relationships between the words and the essence.

"A Picture of Tuesday" indicates an early awareness of the fusion of form and essence accomplished by symbol and the metaphors that make it up. Symbols establish a relationship
between the word and the object or situation, which the audience participates in. Because symbol creates an experience, the communication that results is concrete and the response is personal. The function of symbol leaves room for growth because of its experiential nature, so that form does not limit the essence. For Chesterton experience is paramount in discovering value; yet he also senses a need for definite expression of the essence if it is to resist distortion. The author has to decide whether the individual experience will provide sufficient comprehension, or if he must exercise a defining control over the words that will explain them. His awareness that symbolism can create experience, while generating a definite whole, lies behind Chesterton's experiments in "The Wild Knight". The poem is important for its attempt to fuse the author's vision of life with a means of expression. However, although he tries to create a work that resolves religious conflict between inspiration and form, and moral conflict between spontaneity and dogma, its success depends on the artistic resolution of definition and experience. Chesterton's attempt to break out of a closely defined emblematic form creates an unresolved stylistic problem. As a result we find an emblematic and symbolic level both working within the poem and coming into conflict with each other.

The most confusing aspect of "The Wild Knight" is that the title figure, although the most sympathetic character, is not only not the central figure, but also appears to be killed.

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23 *The Wild Knight and Other Poems*, pp. 119-151.
without adequate reason. From another point of view, the central figure Redfeather is the least memorable, and is left with an unsatisfactory ending. It is interesting that Redfeather, though weak symbolically, stands in the middle of the emblematic level. If we look at the poem purely as an attempt to define a situation, we recognize that each character stands for a specific essence. The prologue introduces the Wild Knight as a man of action, close to the direct inspiration of God. To him the churches are "babbling neophytes" (120) that hinder true vision. When the play opens we find the poet Redfeather echoing these sentiments as he sits astride the roof of the porch of a manor house watching the priests leave the chapel opposite. For him these priests are the emblems of corrupt and dogmatic religion which he hates. But they are immediately followed out of the Church by Lady Olive. Redfeather recognizes her as "the Truth" (127). She shows the pure and beautiful form of religious guidance. The Lady's presence expresses the value of the Church; and her religious belief is all that will protect her from the villain Lord Om.

Lord Om owns the title deeds to the Lady's house, and has threatened to throw her and her father out if she does not become his "paramour" (142). To protect the purity of Lady Olive, Redfeather challenges Lord Om to a duel, but Om refuses to fight and wins a coward's victory. In the soliloquy that follows we come to recognize Om as a representative of the chaotic side of inspiration. He describes himself as "Free of all laws, creeds, codes, and common tests, Shameless, anarchic, infinite" (144). However, Om's belief
that he is God rests on the assumption that there is no real God. When the Wild Knight appears and thinks Lord Orm is God, Orm's position is threatened because the Wild Knight's mistaken recognition implies that there is a true God. To remain in total control of his world Orm kills the Wild Knight. Abstractly stated, this means that man-made inspiration destroys true religious inspiration in order to preserve its power.

The emblematic level places Redfeather at the centre of the story because he is a poet. He has the artistic problem of balancing inspiration and form; of standing between the extreme but positive positions of Lady Olive and the Wild Knight. The problem here is that Redfeather is not a clearly defined essence. The closest he comes to explaining himself is in his reiterated praise of "The whole divine democracy of things" (136). Yet this is only a statement of his early position. At the beginning of the poem Redfeather is aware of the negative aspect of form but not of the chaos latent in spontaneity. He understands the chaotic element when he views Orm's attack on Lady Olive. But it is not until Redfeather has seen true inspiration destroyed by anarchy that he is willing to discard spontaneity by killing Orm. If he still saw the value in all things he would have tried to let inspiration and form co-exist. The poet must have changed from his initial position and come to think the danger posed by Orm greater than the danger in the dogma of the priests. Redfeather is left only with Lady Olive; and as he says, he is afraid.

The reader is left unsatisfied with the result, partly
because the poet as an emblem should have stood for an essence. However, to justify his killing of Orm he has had to change his essential position and on an emblematic level we are not told why. The level upon which growth and change is understood is the symbolic. He is supposed to be a "rake in process of reform" (147), yet we never see the development from which his decisions are made. The only clue we get is that his "divine democracy" can only function because of its natural order. When Orm appears he tries to reduce this order to chaos, and the poet recognizes a responsibility to control things so that they are not reduced to random anarchy. But the artistic imbalance that exists between the symbolic presentation of forces of spontaneity, and the emblematic form of Lady Olive and the priests, deprives Redfeather's choice of credibility.

The ending is also unsatisfactory because there seems to have been no meaning in the Wild Knight's death. Whereas our lack of personal response to Redfeather leaves him vague; our strong sympathy towards the Wild Knight makes his absolute rejection difficult to understand. Again it is the symbolic level in conflict with the emblematic that creates this obscurity, because the creation of experience through symbol is responsible for our personal reaction to all the characters. The Wild Knight is the most vital character in the whole poem. His actions are the only ones that appear to make sense even though they are the most unusual. The reaction is probably due to the fact that he is created almost entirely as a symbol. The prologue establishes him as a metaphor for a wild faith. In it he describes himself:
The wasting thistle whitens on my crest,
The barren grasses blow upon my spear . . .
Alone: most helpless, sweet, and blasphemous
The love of God. (119)

The man is ageless; he hears creeds wash away and sees shrines standing empty; but he loves God and that is all that matters:

. . . with the wan waste grasses on my spear,
I ride forever, seeking after God.
My hair grows whiter than my thistle plume . . .

. . . I ride,

Burning for ever in consuming fire. (120+1)

This is no defined external form standing for a specific value. The symbol creates the indefinable yet real presence of man's relationship with an unknown God. We do not understand the metaphors intellectually, we respond to them as a feeling, a sense of exhilaration and devotion somewhat desolate and alone. As a symbol he creates the experience of his actions which seem thoroughly justified if intellectually inexplicable.

However, the Knight has to continually interact with the more emblematic functions of the other characters, and the contact undermines his symbolic value. His recognition of Orm as God is weakened by the style of Orm's character. We have seen that his soliloquy identifies him as chaos, believing himself God. However the soliloquy is not static, it is a self-persuasion. To begin, he merely discusses the possibility of a man "perfectly free and utterly alone", who would be so strong and wise that he would be a "lawless giant" (145). He then sets out "to prove I am that man" (146). Finally, in the act of burning the title deeds to Olive's house, he has proved to himself that he does not need human commitments to
back up his power. If he can discard his desire for Olive, and ignore Redfeather's challenge as bonds of human weakness, why does he feel threatened by the Wild Knight? The act can only be justified if the reader personally understands the metaphoric process of persuasion that Orm has gone through. It is only our awareness that Orm's anarchic role is not static, that lets us understand his fear that his fantasy will be destroyed by the Wild Knight. The soliloquy by itself may go some way to making the man a symbol; but the reader's constant awareness of the man's emblematic role makes his self-persuasion appear empty and forced, and his killing of the Wild Knight stilted and unnecessary.

The obscurity in style results from an inability to resolve the co-existence of metaphor which creates experience with emblem which defines it. We are left not really understanding the emblematic meaning of Redfeather's union with Lady Olive, because only a symbolic relation with the rest of the poem can clarify it. The symbolical career and death of the Wild Knight is further confusing because it has little emblematic function and therefore no definition. From a totally different perspective, Redfeather's inability to control without destroying inspiration indicates the author's own inability to let definition and experience exist side by side. They are in conflict and destroy each other's value. The conflict is one in the author's mind between conscious and unconscious control. His failure to resolve the artistic conflict reflects his failure on a moral and religious level. It shows itself in the opposing methods of the pure man of action and the man of guidance, between the spontaneity
of inspiration and the formality of the church. The poet within the poem opts for the only control he can see, that of destruction of the spontaneous, yet the author of "The Wild Knight" opts for conflict between the two. In the next four years we see the author as critic exploring these conflicts. He too comes to opt for control but only when the opposing factors can be both accepted. Finally in Robert Browning Chesterton discovered that it was not necessary to destroy spontaneity to control the "democracy of things". He can rather place experience and explanation in tension with each other.
Chapter IV
The resolution of the conflict between experience and explanation that Chesterton found in Browning's poetry, resided in balance: a balance between the conscious and unconscious control of form. But Chesterton soon realized that the resolution was peculiar to Browning; and he moved on in his criticism of 1904-07 to a further search for different modes of expression. Although he now travelled on a more defined path, it is important to keep in mind that during these years the central theme of the total interrelationship between inspiration, life and art, was being transformed into that of the interrelationship of religion, morality and expression. Just as there are theoretical confusions arising from this change, so the vocabulary constantly shifts and contradicts itself.

In 1904 he wrote a book on G. F. Watts. Initially the critic turned to Watts as a man he greatly admired for his opinions on art, his strong ethical commitment, and his sense of responsibility. As the book proceeds it is clear that he is troubled by the artist's style. Chesterton begins by saying that:

splendid as is the art of Watts technically or obviously considered, we shall yet find much in it to perplex and betray us, unless we understand his original theory and intention, . . . The great technical inequalities of his work, its bouts of stupendous simplicity in colour and design, its daring failures, its strange symbolical portraits, all will mislead or bewilder if we have not the thread of intention.¹

The problem is that he is looking for the formal resolution

that he experiences, yet dislikes the conscious and obvious technique of Watts. As the book progresses from a study of the intent to the style, Chesterton wades through a mass of contradictions before coming to recognize that the valuable communication of the artist is effected by his unconscious style.

The basic intention Chesterton attributes to Watts is his belief "that he is right". He has a need to teach "his internal message and destiny" to others. Watts viewed life as a complete whole and it was impossible to separate his art from his ethics. Art became the outlet for his didactic expression. The critic states that while the work has "a far more subtle and unnameable quality than the merely hard and didactic" (64), "it must not be for one moment pretended that Watts does not claim to teach: to do so would be to falsify the man's life" (64). Chesterton calls the artist's abundant confidence in his conscious vision "universalism". It culminates in the "one hard arrogant dogma that he never doubted even when he doubted Godhead: he never doubted that he himself was as central and as responsible as God" (66-7); and it is tentatively suggested that universalism may become too individual.

The critic goes on to examine the style in the light of intention. The universalism of Watts's conscious intent demands a universalism of style, a conscious, personal control over the form that is used. There is a shout of amazement from Chesterton as he realizes the artist's ambition. He notes that there always seems to be something missing in Watts's pictures. It is that "there is scarcely a single
example of the ordinary and arbitrary current symbol, the ecclesiastical symbol, the heraldic symbol, the national symbol" (59). The artist does this so that his art may not be relegated to the time contemporary with its painting. He has the arrogance to assume that his own symbolic shapes and forms will last longer and communicate more than the collected symbology of the western world. The critic adds that the attempt fails. Here he is concerned to make clear why the attempt fails, stating emphatically that it is not due to the allegorical style but the intent behind it.

Chesterton's discussion of allegory is an important consideration of a form of communication, as well as an explanation for his critical judgement of Watts. It picks up the point made in the article of 1900 that Watts's allegories are "puzzles, earthly stories with heavenly meaning". The word "allegory" is used as if it were to painting what symbol is to literature. Watts's allegories:

are not mere pictorial forms, combined as in a kind of cryptogram to express theoretic views or relations. They are not proverbs or verbal relations rendered with a cumbrous exactitude . . . they are not merely literary. (87)

The pictures are a system unconnected with the effects of words; painting is a language unique to itself. A colour sequence is not:

simply a symbol representing language. It would be another language . . . It would not be a symbol of languages, a symbol of a symbol; it would be one symbol of the reality, and language

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would be another. (93-4)

While literature and painting are different media they have similar limitations. Both are arts and more expressive than science. They have no one to one correspondences; and this contributes to their power, but also narrows their limits. Neither can be perfect media for expression. Chesterton says that the man who believes in the perfection of language:

knows that there are in the soul tints bewildering, more numberless and more nameless, than the colours of an autumn forest . . . Yet he seriously believes that these things can every one of them, in all their tones and semi-tones, in all their blends and unions, be accurately represented by an arbitrary system of grunts and squeals. (88-9)

Both literature and painting communicate only a part of the whole. Watts's painting titled "Hope" is an example. The title itself is "like any other word, arbitrary"; the philosophical meaning:

in the conscious mind of man, is merely a part of something immensely larger in the unconscious mind . . . [the word is] obviously a semi-detached, unfinished fragment of a certain definite pattern on the dark tapestries of reality. (97)

The picture itself communicates a part of the truth impossible to put into words. The title and picture are both symbols "describing another part or aspect of the same complex reality" (102). While neither perfectly expresses, both express more in the unconscious connections they establish than in their conscious application.

Where Watts fails in Chesterton's eyes, is in consciously thinking that he can perfectly express. Immediately all his pictures are limited to himself. The portrait of Hammon is
described as reversing the positions of allegory and reality. Watts has imposed his own idea of reality on it, not giving it the respect due to its actual existence. For this reason Chesterton calls him "platonic". He values his idea of the thing more than its actuality; he is a mirror reflecting from himself the values he alone perceives. Similarly, in the portraits of famous men, the critic notes that the sitters are not allowed to be themselves. The artist "does not copy his men at all: he makes them over again" (145) into the universal principle they represent to him. Ultimately Watts has attempted to paint such pictures "that no one shall be able to get outside them" (167). He does so by personally creating the principles by which he paints, and recognizing no limits in them for what he wants to say. This limits them to themselves entirely. The chaos the critic experiences looking at this conscious style is a result of their disregard for actuality.

So far Chesterton has discussed the artist's conscious intent and conscious style. However, as he points out in his study of literature and painting, each mode also communicates through its unconscious meaning, and this is finally what is found to be valuable in Watts' pictures. Unfortunately his failure to clarify this point leads to a series of apparent contradictions. Having stated that Watts is didactic - meaning that he has a philosophy to teach - he forgets the "subtle and unnameable quality" of Watts' worth, and later observes that to be truly didactic is to speak of facts. Art that does this is "inapplicable to the great needs of man, whether moral or aesthetic" (120). Having equated the
didactic with the purely rationalist, he has equated the teaching of a belief with the wish to convince. Since the critic admires the will to believe but not necessarily the enforcing of belief, he is at cross-purposes with himself. He also makes the error that occurred in "The Wild Knight" by equating arbitrary, anarchic impulse with spontaneous gesture resulting from inspiration. Elsewhere he considers inspired gesture the basis of ethical behaviour. What Chesterton is doing is trying to find a balance between the rigid form of the conscious style and the formlessness which he mistakenly thinks is part of the unconscious style. He makes similar contradictions when examining the "mystic and intuitive" link between ethics and art, and saying that there are genuine correspondences between "a state of morals and an effect in painting" (121). He concludes that all art communicates an intent. Whistler himself makes a "sharp and wholesome moral comment" in a streak of yellow paint. In placing the aesthetes with their relative standards along with Watts on common ethical ground, he undermines his earlier praise for Watts's unique ethical commitment.

The confusion lies in Chesterton's thinking. We have seen that he believed each man to be directly inspired by God. As such, each man's impressions are equally valid. But the critic has also stated that the artist has a personal responsibility not to leave confusion and vagueness about his inspiration. He is to clarify it through the use of form. Watts would seem to satisfy these criteria. Yet he appears to be condemned when he controls by form; and when he does not use it he is only on a par with the impressionists, who
have no absolute ethical commitment. However, the critic goes on to say that the real difference between Watts and the aesthetes is in the "nature of the technique". Considering the pains with which he has demolished the style of Watts's painting, it is at first hard to appreciate the value that difference will make. Here the division between the conscious and unconscious style is recognized and defined by the author and it partially resolves the confusion.

The last part of the book comments on an unconscious inspiration from an external source in the colour and line of Watts's style. These aspects are the techniques of the spontaneous man who has a definite belief in an external power. Therefore the style is not arbitrary unconscious formlessness but externally guided form. The techniques communicate directly and clearly to the viewer. Chesterton finishes the book saying:

I believe that often he has scarcely known what he is doing; I believe that he has been in the dark when the lines came wrong; that he has been still deeper in the dark and things came right . . .

His automatic manual action is . . . certainly a revelation to himself . . . his right hand has taught him terrible things. (169)

What Chesterton has found in Watts is that he cannot achieve an artistic balance consciously. His consciously spontaneous form results in impressionism and his controlled intent produces didactic rationalism. Both limit and sever the expression from actual things. Subconsciously, however, Watts communicates the inspiration of God, and this is his valuable moral teaching. There is an implication that this
"subconscious" style should really be conscious if the intent is to measure up to artistic responsibility. It is only because there is no conscious indication of God that the weight of maintaining the balance between spontaneity and control is thrown onto the human powers alone. Unfortunately the limitations of man make it impossible to sustain such a balance.

The thin line that man must walk between impressionism and rationalism is studied further in Heretics, written in 1905. In this major critical work Chesterton tries to assess some of his contemporaries. It is a book full of startling observations but little consistent argument. The form is shaped out of a collection of essays culled largely from his journalistic writings and given a framework in the first and last entries. While the form gives little direction, the difficulty with the book lies far deeper. The critic wants first to examine the superior qualities of contemporary didactic writers, whom he now calls "dogmatic", over the aesthetes and the scientists; yet he also wants to criticize the individual dogmas. The potential confusion is increased when the critic argues for the importance of the dogmatist's popular literary success; yet adds that he is not as interested in their "merely literary manner" as in their ideas. The essays as a whole create an unavoidable feeling that the criticism of the ideas originates in criticism of the literary style.

Ironically the confusion inherent in Chesterton's argument is both created and controlled by his wonderful critical confidence. If he feels something to be wrong in
any particular writer yet cannot rationally explain what it is, he invariably uses an amusing anecdote or phrase to create the "attitude" he wants. The reader is guided through the work not by consistent argument but by a marvellous sense of humour that certainly appears to go right to the heart of each matter. This method later becomes essential to Chesterton's style; it works by creating in the reader a response analogous to the writer's own. But whereas the later style is based on reasonable, if not rational argument, here the fundamental criteria are obscured. The humour makes possible an evasion of straightforward critical judgement. However this confusion is partially resolved by the broad structure of the work, which points out to the reader areas that Chesterton was later to explore.

Despite this problem Heretics does clarify the confusion between didactic and rational that existed in G. F. Watts by using the word "dogma". Dogma is presented as originating in the primal inspiration of the spontaneous man. An initial belief once defended, is defined, clarified and made dogmatic. Truths turn into dogmas the instant they are disputed. Thus every man who utters a doubt defines a religion. And the scepticism of our time does not really destroy the beliefs, rather it creates them; gives them their limits and their plain and defiant shape.3

The claim for inspiration lends much greater weight to the attack on the aesthetic art of the period, because it establishes a basis common to both dogmatist and aesthete. What each does with the inspiration becomes the question. The

difference between the two in Chesterton's eyes, is that the dogmatist has standards and the aesthete does not. He examines what literature has lost by discarding "the moralist and the philosopher" (17); and finds that the result is that the poet laureate, Alfred Austin, is "a mediocrity" (19), and that modern art has "produced only a few roundels" (20). The book ends by taking up this strand and stating that this mediocrity occurs because:

A man cannot be wise enough to be a great artist without being wise enough to be a philosopher. A man cannot have the energy to produce good art without having the energy to pass beyond it. (189)

It is the limitation that a man forces on himself that gives him the ability to go further, and Chesterton is arguing that a work based on dogma and ethical standards will be stylistically and artistically better because of the definitions the artist is aware of.

The central essays of the book examines specific proponents of aesthetic theories from the perspective of the separation of art and morals. It is important to remember that for Chesterton 'moral' means all god-inspired action. He begins by pointing out that Pater has no real conception of the nature of inspiration. To burn with a "hard, gem-like flame" is ludicrous to the critic for "human emotions are never hard and gem-like; they are always dangerous, like flames" (109). The aesthete's belief that emotion originates in self leads him to think that he personally can control it completely. He recognizes no external value in actual things because he invests them completely with his own. George Moore is criticized along with Pater because "his real quarrel
with life is that it is not a dream that can be moulded by
the dreamer" (129). Moore is so self-centred that he does
not even have the unconscious revelation of Watts. His
"self-consciousness of necessity destroys self-revelation . . .
Thinking about himself will lead to trying to be the universe"
which ambition will ultimately always fail. The critic con-
cludes that egoism cuts off revelation and genuine inspiration;
it is, "not merely a moral weakness, it is a very constant
and influential aesthetic weakness as well" (131).

The moral weakness derives from the separation of art
from external inspiration. Chesterton has always believed
that art is indivisibly connected with morality. It is the
human expression of a divine inspiration. The aesthetes
suggest that the two are mutually exclusive; but the critic
counters the idea by saying that:

the doctrine of the distinction between art and mora-

lity owes a great part of its success to art and
morality being hopelessly mixed up in the persons and
performances of its greatest exponents. (236)

Because the aesthetes assume that they have no morals and no
beliefs, they conclude that morality need not enter art.
Chesterton's view is that they are just unaware of the morals
they live from day to day. He thinks that the difference
between the aesthetes and the dogmatists lies in the conscious
awareness of the latter of inspiration and specific belief.
While similar to the aesthetes in always thinking themselves
right, they are willing to state their beliefs. They see
their position as central, yet as with Shaw, "it is not for
himself he cares. It is for the universal church, of which
he is the only member" (238). They have a bias against
other people's morality yet they are consciously aware of specific points of difference. However the case for the dogmatists is weakened by Chesterton's criticism of the dogmas themselves. He bases it in the one fundamental similarity existing between the aesthetes and dogmatists: the central role of the self.

The contemporaries Chesterton chooses to assess are Wells, Kipling and Shaw. Wells is praised for his continual growth; yet is condemned for

a denial of the possibility of philosophy itself. At least, he maintains that there are no secure and reliable ideas upon which we can rest with a final mental satisfaction. (81)

Kipling is praised for seeing the wonder of everyday life; yet is condemned for reducing courage, valour and belief to obedience, duty and discipline. Lastly Shaw is admired for his thorough and just consistency; yet is condemned for the belief that he saw things as they really were and that:

Every ideal prevented men from judging justly the particular case; every moral generalization oppressed the individual; the golden rule was that there was no golden rule. (61)

In each case the man in condemned for the personal and relative aspect of his work. The critic shows each dogmatist denying the existence of dogma; but this is no paradox, merely a failure to clarify vocabulary and thought. Chesterton fully respects each man for his conscious ethical standards, yet he cannot reconcile them with a growing conviction of the existence of an absolute moral standard. The final chapter asserts that if there is to be mental growth "it must
mean the growth into more and more definite convictions, into more and more dogmas" (285). Yet in the same chapter he says that he cannot justify the existence of a large number of dogmas, he can only admire the conviction behind them. While a perfectly tenable position, it is his failure to clarify the difference between relative ethics and absolute morality that is the source of the confusion. The essay on Wells concludes that:

It is not true that everything changes; the things that change are all the manifest and material things. There is something that does not change; and that is precisely the abstract quality, the invisible idea (84).

Kipling cannot understand the inspiration of a country because he belongs to none in particular; he is "the philanderer of the nations" (43). The criticism of Shaw points out that liberty consists of the freedom to make laws, and that laws have to be made for man is never completely explainable: "The truth is, that all genuine appreciation rests on a certain mystery of humility and almost of darkness" (65). The recognition of an unknowable absolute is the one thing lacking in the dogmas of these men, without it there is always the danger of forgetting the external and becoming impressionist.

Although the dangers are less emphasized than in G. E. Watts, the critic also relates the opinions of the dogmatists to scientific rationalism. Where the rationalists fail is in their unwillingness to admit that there is something that exists beyond their system; for, like the aesthetes, they are self-centred. In one essay Chesterton comments that,
"the man of science, not realizing that ceremonial is essentially a thing done without a reason, has to find a reason for every sort of ceremonial"; yet "like all the important emotions of human existence, it is essentially irrational" (145). He notes that paganism believed in total intellectual comprehension, but that after Christianity their "naked innocence of the intellect" was shown to be misleading. Christianity revealed the concept of mysticism and intuition. Similarly he observes that only with Christianity did novels arise; specifically with the Thomist assertion of free will: "Life is always a novel . . . a story has behind it, not merely intellect which is partly mechanical, but will, which is in its essence divine" (192-3). Although Chesterton carefully distinguishes between the rationalist who argues from pre-established rules, and the dogmatist who argues from personal belief, the similarity of their explaining ideas through logical argument brings them close together. Just as the dogmatist is always close to aesthetic impressionism, so also is he in danger of rationalism if he fails to acknowledge the unknowable absolute.

The dogmatists are not totally spontaneous because they have definite opinions, and they are not totally rational because of their belief in an unknown. Yet because they do not use a style which indicates consciously God the artistic balance devolves upon themselves and they are continually slipping off into one extreme or the other. Their conscious and unconscious styles are not as radically divergent as those of G. F. Watts. But their insistence on personal opinions and standards denies the admitting of their unconscious
external inspiration into their art. Finally, Chesterton's criticism of the dogmatists originates from a fault of their literary styles.

Despite Chesterton's stated intention of discussing ideas rather than literary form, the central group of essays does concentrate on style. If we remember the final acknowledgement of the value in Watts's unconscious communication that succeeded in revealing the inexpressible, the study of ritual and ceremony in Heretics is an inevitable development. Immediately the initial discussion of dogmatism finishes, Chesterton inserts a curious essay called "Christmas and the Aesthetes". It takes a look at both the Salvation Army and Comtism from the point of view of distinguishing between their aims and their methods. Of the Salvation Army he says that:

there is this difference between the matter of aims and the matter of methods, that to judge of the aims of a thing like the Salvation Army is very difficult, to judge of their ritual and atmosphere very easy. (94)

While disapproving of the philosophy of Comtism, he admires Comte's recognition:

that men must always have the sacredness of mummyry . . . He saw the falsehood of that almost universal notion of today, the notion that rites and forms are something artificial, additional, and corrupt. Ritual is really much older than thought; it is much simpler and wilder than thought. . . . everywhere the religious dance came before the religious hymn and man was a ritualist before he could speak. (96-97)

Ritual not only satisfied the need for conscious control by indicating an external standard in the form, but also
satisfies the need for spontaneous inspiration since the indicated external eludes rational comprehension.

The control tenet of ritual is that it attempts to get closer to absolute expression by acting directly rather than communicating in language. Chesterton's earlier anxieties over the imperfection of language in G. F. Watts are beginning to crystallize. Action, and dance, the artistic form of it, become important to expression. The following comment links them interestingly with the technique of paradox.

If he had ever felt himself the ancient, sublime, elemental, human instinct to dance, he would have discovered that dancing is not a frivolous thing at all, but a very serious thing. He would have discovered that it is the one grave and chaste and decent method of expressing a certain class of emotions. And similarly, if he ever had, as Mr. Shaw and I have had, the impulse to what he calls paradox, he would have discovered that paradox again is not a frivolous thing, but a very serious thing. He would have found that paradox simply means a certain defiant joy which belongs to belief. (232)

One of the last essays of the book specifically states that humanity is divided into conscious and unconscious ritualists, and that the conscious form is far more admirable because it indicates a choice of the will. The critic goes on to say that religious ritual is not "mere ritual; the symbols employed are in most cases symbols which belong to a primary human poetry" (248). In other words, they are not the secular, passing symbols of a white bow tie and tails required by the unconscious ritual of a dinner table. The use of
religious ritual is humbling. It admits the impossibility of perfect human expression. It admits further a personal weakness in the face of the mythical symbols of the world. It acknowledges the existence of an external power. Although the connection is never formally made, the presence of many essays on ritual in a book about dogma, suggests that ritual may supply what these dogmatists lack. Ritual acknowledges the unchanging in its formality, yet allows change in its admission of human limitations.

Although a discussion of ritual is present in the book, it is not a major part of Chesterton's argument. Fundamentally, what he is examining is the danger of aestheticism. While he confuses the issue by failing to differentiate between aesthetic ethics and dogmatic morals, the emphasis lies on the need to communicate beliefs as opposed to having a non-committal aesthetic attitude. What is admirable about the dogmatists is their control, their conscious communication of opinion that acts as an overall net against vagueness and irresponsibility. Chesterton likes them because they guard against the potential anarchy of the mind. One the whole however, the criticism is negative. It points out the curative effects of dogmatism and does not see it as preventative. The stress is on what it does not do, rather than what it does.

The negative approach of his criticism is also evident in Chesterton's newspaper articles written between 1904 and 1907. Yet they do clarify some of the issues by indicating a direction to his explorations during these years. In Robert Browning a careful use of form to maintain balance
between experience and explanation was accepted. The ensuing search for an adequate form shifts its requirement depending upon the developments in Chesterton's fundamental beliefs. Apart from the possible influence of his wife's Anglo-Catholicism the growing interest in dogma which occurs after 1903 is probably due to the important Clarion debate with Robert Blatchford. For a period of six months Chesterton was continually called upon to define and defend his beliefs. A result of the necessary process of clarification that had to be employed was a lessening in the number of essays making generalized comments about religion. Perhaps realizing that his own beliefs were not entirely definite, the critic turned instead to commenting on the aspects that he knew that he disliked. Modern religions are criticized for being negative, for concentrating on the virtues of avoidance rather than the positive morality of conscious attempt. He says, "The old religionist cried out for his God. The new religionist cries out for some god to be his". Further, a necessary result of having to clarify his position was the realization that he had certain beliefs that formed a dogmatic standpoint. The realization that he had certain beliefs that formed a dogmatic standpoint. The recognition of the inspirational nature of his personal dogma at first made him far more charitable to the existence of other people's. Although for some time he does not appear to differentiate between the value of personal ethics and of formal, organized religion recognizing an absolute morality.

4 "Spiritualism", in All Things Considered (ATC) (London: Methuen and Co., 1909), p. 204, 26/5/06.
Chesterton continues to consider the value of the actual world as imperative to morality. There is a need to guard against a self-centred standard of behaviour because it does not respect the existence of others. There is also no such thing as a private morality. The respect for everyone else's value ensures that "all morality is public morality." During 1906 a new note is sounded in an essay called "The Wind and the Trees". The form of the piece is parable. In it Chesterton denies the influence of merely material circumstances on morals. He says:

When people begin to say that material circumstances have alone created moral circumstances, then they have prevented all possibility of serious change. For if my circumstances have made me wholly stupid, how can I be certain even that I am right in altering those circumstances?

He adds that man not only has the right to recognize an external origin of moral standards, but also the duty to resist subversion of those standards by material demands.

In 1907 the ideas became more defined, and the critic moves away from purely personal ethics towards absolute morality. He notes that "a man's minor actions and arrangements ought to be more free, flexible, creative; the things that should be unchangeable are his principles, his ideals." An important column entitled "Tom Jones and Morality" criticizes the modern feeling that "morality is merely a matter of human taste - an accident of psychology." Rather, morality was

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8 ATC, p. 265, 27/6/07.
something external to man: "an actual avenging virtue which existed outside the human race". Not only is it external but also absolute; the critic speaks of "right as existing outside human weakness and without reference to human error". It must not be forgotten that between the existence of this absolute and human understanding lies imagination. He observes that "the power which makes a man able to entertain a good impulse is the same as that which enables him to make a good gun; it is imagination". While the function of the imagination is still to connect the divine, the moral and the human expression, it no longer operates by creating a balance between inspiration and explanation. Now it has to try to express both simultaneously.

The function of art as an expression of morality becomes unclear during this period because of the linguistic confusion between ethics and morals. All art, because it is created by people with individual opinions and standards may incorporate those opinions and reflect their ethical standpoint. But sometimes a person has an absolute moral standard in addition to his ethical commitments and his art may also contain a moral statement. The difference between the relative and personal basis for ethics and the absolute and external basis for morals, means that while all art may be ethical, not all art may be moral. Chesterton makes random attacks on various pieces of good literature which he feels are less straightforward than those of bad literature. At least the intent of

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9 Ibid.
10 Ibid.
11 "Humanitarianism and Strength", ATC, p. 225, 14/8/06.
the bad literature is clear, and one can see a definite moral. However the arguments are unconvincing. The poet is still the "man who can value passionately the things about him". It is the poet's faculty of imagination that takes him out of himself to appreciate life. The critic states that "the fault of all anarchists and most artists is that they lack imagination. They can only imagine their own little problem". As his consciousness of morality grows so does the theme of artistic responsibility. Concerning the "higher thing" or aim of art he says that it is:

a very awful and urgent matter whether a man put the right or the wrong thing highest . . . a salient example of this is the pursuit of mere art or beauty. The moment a man puts beauty higher than love Nero becomes a logical possibility.

Once more the year 1907 produces a more defined concept of the function of art. With the acknowledgement of an external authority, and an absolute morality, the artist has a highly responsible role. Art must establish limits to experience: "the principle which is most in danger of being forgotten in our time . . . is the fact that art consists of limitation; the fact that art is limitation". These limits are the human perceptions of the existence of an absolute. Art and religion are now connected in a far more specific way than they were in the earlier criticism. Both concentrate on detail which provides definition: "poetry and

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12 "Professor Bradley on Shakespearean Tragedy", In Chesterton on Shakespeare (Henley-in-Thames: Darwen Finlayson, 1901), p. 161, 22/12/04.
13 "The Problem of Problem Plays", supra.
14 "In Defense of a Parenthesis", DN, 10/6/05, 6/5.
15 "The Toy Theatres", TT, p. 150, 1907.
religion always insist upon the proximity, the almost menacing closeness of the things with which they are concerned"\(^{16}\).

Both are concerned with clarity of vision. Chesterton singles out romance as being similar to religion in that they both:

> see everything as it were foreshortened; they see everything in an abrupt and fantastic perspective, coming to an apex. It is the whole essence of perspective that it comes to a point. Similarly religion comes to a point — to the point.\(^{17}\)

Yet he is still concerned with inspiration. He says that romance also contains within itself the possibility of inspiration that transcends these limits. While medieval art "liked to have everything defined and defensible", romance "prefers to run some risks for the sake of spontaneity and diversity"\(^{18}\). The inspiration of art is as valuable as the limiting function. The key to literature is still the essence of the book, the creative inspiration that exists "before even the details or main features of the book"\(^{19}\). Even more strongly, the critic states that:

> literature is only redeemed from an utter triviality, surpassing that of noughts and crosses, by the fact that it describes not the world around us or the things on the retina of the eye or the enormous irrelevancy of encyclopedias, but some condition to which the human spirit can come. All good writers express the state of their souls.\(^{20}\)

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18 "Introduction to Dombey and Son", ACCD, p. 115, 1907.
20 "Introduction to The Old Curiosity Shop", ACCD, p. 50, 1907.
The function of art is to limit and inspire; but the author no longer looks for a form to balance the two, but for one that will combine them.

In 1905 the balance of the two aspects of experience and explanation is still present in Chesterton's concept of form. However, there is a far greater emphasis on the limiting role, which no doubt arises from his growing belief in dogma. Two essays written in 1905 indicate an understanding of the difference between the rationalistic and the dogmatic.

The early respect for heraldry is acknowledged to be ultimately too limiting since like other sciences heraldry depends heavily on the process of logic. It is a "combination of logic and fantasy, of mathematics and madness". The critic points out that logic is not a thing, not even an abstract thing; it is merely a didactic process. Logic and truth are not inevitably connected; their relationship depends not upon its perfection as logic, but upon certain pre-logical faculties and certain pre-logical discoveries, upon the possession of those faculties, upon the power of making these discoveries.

Rationalism is useful to dogma, but without the initial inspiration in dogma it is worthless. The second essay notes the importance of ceremony to express those truths that logical processes like speech cannot communicate.

We should never perform a ceremony of which we do not know the meaning. For when we speak of knowing the meaning of a ceremony, we really mean that we are able to express that meaning in words . . . These

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22 Ibid.
formalities ought to be reserved for precisely those spiritual or social exultations which cannot be uttered through the reason and the tongue.\(^\text{23}\)

The essay continues by saying that "ceremony begins where dogma leaves off". In the former essay logic and reason are not rejected insofar as they are useful, but Chesterton is pointing out that there are things they cannot express. Similarly in the second there is no rejection of dogma or humanly limited explanation of belief, only an acknowledgement that to communicate the inspiration behind it needs a ceremonial form of expression.

In the following year the reader finds an increasing anxiety over the arbitrariness of language as an expressive mode. Again a linguistic problem arises when Chesterton uses words like simile and metaphor, or symbol and fantasy interchangeably. However, the content of the essays is clear. In his column for the Illustrated London News the critic replies to a reader's question saying:

I thought of metaphor being dangerous because it was a good metaphor. I thought of metaphor sophisticating morals and confusing philosophy ... Nobody remembers that a simile is never quite right, that there is always some point where a simile is wrong.\(^\text{24}\)

Another essay notes that abstract terms are "really most concrete". They make no pretence to being the thing they represent, yet they stand for the closest that a man comes to representing that thing. The argument continues by observing

\(^{23}\) "On Toys and Other Allegories", DN, 7/1/05, 6/4.

\(^{24}\) 3/2/06, p. 2.
that metaphors are different.

There is no harm in these metaphors of course, if we know that they are metaphors . . . But when using them as absolute and abstract we get \[\text{sic}\] wrong.\textsuperscript{25}

A metaphor is the assumption of another identity that pretends to be what it represents. Since this is impossible in absolute terms, the meaning of the object represented will be shifted if one thinks of the metaphor as real. As a final example of the shifts resulting from expression in language Chesterton asks, "When a modern man makes a signature he makes something he hardly understands. He can write his name undoubtedly; but can he really read it?"\textsuperscript{26}

Chesterton at this time seems to have come to an impasse. He still acknowledges that an artist is exercising a divine aspect of his nature in creating. Yet it seems impossible for the artist to express without imposing his own arbitrary personal perception on the objects he discusses. The earlier references to ceremony indicated that it lay beyond "the reason and the tongue"; but the critic seems to be breaking through to a new conception of ritual. As we shall see in the critical work Charles Dickens, Chesterton arrives at the idea of the artist as one who uses forms of ritual to express himself, because ritual indicates both human limits and what lies beyond. The development into a full scheme of allegorical writing does not occur until 1912; but the essays of 1907 discussed here introduce the origins of the idea.

To understand "ritual" we should return to Chesterton's

\textsuperscript{25} "A Step of Progress", \textit{DN}, 7/4/06, 6/4.
\textsuperscript{26} "A Man's Signature", \textit{DN}, 3/3/06, 6/4.
respect for actuality. We find that it has become a bulwark against arbitrary expression. An essay on medieval illustrations observes that:

Plato held, and the child holds, that the most important thing about a ship (let us say) is that it is a ship. Thus, all these pictures are designed to express things in their quiddity. If these old artists draw a ship, everything is sacrificial to expressing the "shipishness" of the ship... Their pencils often go wrong as to how the thing looks; their intellects never go wrong as to what the thing is. 27

The important point is not to let personal perceptions of an object interfere with what it really is. The result of such interference is that the objects decay into the aspects one wants to see. In terms of form, "to see a thing in aspects is to be crippled, to be defective... This is the thing called 'impressionism'" 28. But what specific form one can employ to avoid this arbitrary nature still eludes him. He notes elsewhere that:

Mankind being half divine is always in love with the impossible, and numberless attempts have been made from the beginning of human literature to describe a real state of felicity. Upon the whole, I think, the most successful have been the most frankly physical and symbolic. 29

Such "material metaphors" make clear what they represent. Further they admit that they represent rather than become the object, and simultaneously communicate the limits of the

27 "The Grave Digger", DN, 26/1/07, 6/5.
28 Ibid.
29 "Introduction to the Christmas Books", ACCD, p. 106, 1907.
artist's expression. In an essay concerning the difference between clear and arbitrary symbols the critic uses a different vocabulary to observe:

all reasonable men believe in symbol; but some reasonable men do not believe in ritualism; by which they mean, I imagine, a symbolism too complex, elaborate, and mechanical.30

He goes on to point out that "religious forms are, at the worst, fables: they might be true. Secular forms are falsehoods; they are not true."31 By "secular" is meant images that are associative habits of speech employed instead of direct communication; they say one thing while meaning another. Religious forms express something that cannot be directly communicated; and they do not pretend to do so fully themselves.

The function of ritual is therefore religious. It enables man to express divine inspiration, but makes clear his human limitations. Specifically it makes necessary the use of obvious images that indicate rather than become objects. The writer must not impose his personal perception on the images; they must communicate for him. An important aspect is that the form does not balance inspiration and control but lets them exist simultaneously under an unknown external. One form that Chesterton turns to as an example is the fairy tale. Although there was a growing contemporary awareness of their importance he was one of the first to recognise that the tales were a kind of archetype for existence. The opinion stands out clearly against many

30 "A Dead Poet", ATC, p. 278, 30/11/07.
31 ibid, p. 279.
contemporaries who said that fairy-tales were anti-social and could pervert children. The critic praises them specifically because of their combination of rigid promises and unknowable magic. The "essence of fairyland is this; that it is a country of which we do not know the laws"; yet "it is a mark of the essential morality of fairyland ... that happiness in fairyland, like happiness anywhere else involves an object and a challenge". Appropriately, by 1907 the essayist is emphasizing that conditions of boundary. He comments that they accustom him:

by a series of clear pictures to the idea that these limitless terrors have limit, that these shapeless enemies have enemies, that these infinite enemies of man have enemies in the Knights of God, that there is something in the universe more mystical than darkness, stronger than strong fear.

Fairy tales are a form of ceremony, of ritual. One knows that they are not literally "true"; yet through their inclusion of boundary and magic they communicate the external inspiration for the laws by which they operate, and thereby validate the existence they express. However, these early forays appear to be only tentative solutions to the problem of the responsibility of the artist, as the reservations about them in *Charles Dickens* shows.

Coming to the year 1906 and the book *Charles Dickens*, we find Chesterton approaching the end of three years of critical struggle. The contradictions and revelations it contains illustrate the impasse he had reached concerning the

32 "A Fairy Tale", DI, 22/9/06, 6/5.
33 "The Red Angel", TT, p. 103, 1907.
nature of the artist, and some faint indications of a way out. The book splits Dickens's career into the now well-recognized early and late styles of writing. The early style is portrayed as a form of conscious fantasy, while the later is called an attempt at realism. The major element of the earlier style is exaggeration, which Chesterton calls "the definition of art"; and it forms the basis for Dickens's fantasy. Of Dickens's work as a whole the critic says that "Dickens did not strictly make a literature; he made a mythology". By mythology he means folklore, and the study of Dickens as a folklorist shows his growing interest in the fairy-tale as a form of ritual. He points out that contemporary fiction:

exhibits an abnormal degree of dexterity operating within our daily limitations; the other exhibits quite normal desires extended beyond these limitations. Fiction means the common things as seen by uncommon people. Fairy tales mean the uncommon things as seen by the common people. (p. 84)

The reader is told that fairy-tales can communicate the unknowable and indefinable by acknowledging limits in order to go beyond them. The critic also stresses the suggestion that folklore provides an instinct of something enduring beyond its episodes, "The characters are felt to be fixed things of which we have fleeting glimpses; that they are felt to be divine" (p. 86).

The presence of limitation and inspiration is transcended in Dickens's early works. Chesterton attributes the

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brilliance of the characterization to an ability to find the vast yet unchanging essence of a person; and then create the physical limits of a human being around it. The reader knows that the physical appearance of the character is connected to essence by the transcendent truth of his soul. For this reason:

Dickens was a mythologist rather than a novelist, he was the last of the mythologists and perhaps the greatest. He did not always manage to make his characters men, but he always managed, at the least, to make them gods. (p. 87)

The obviously fantastic exterior of exaggeration acts as an incentive to go beyond to the essence of the character. Yet because the external is peculiar to each character it leaves them free to be themselves. Chesterton notes that Dickens had trouble learning shorthand; he thought the symbols for words were arbitrary and despotic. However, he learned to master their physical appearance and communicate meaning through them although aware of their inadequacy. A similar relationship existed between his exaggerations and the essence of his characters. Although there is a necessary and active sense of personal creation, the consciousness of this fantasy constantly acknowledges the external and absolute truth that lies beyond it. Chesterton says that "truth alone can be exaggerated; nothing else can stand the strain" (p. 183). The fantasy performs a moral function by clarifying this truth. Its exaggerations are the melodrama of Dickens which:

appeals to the moral sense in a highly simplified state . . . The object of simplification in
melodrama is . . . the object of gaining a resounding rapidity of action which subtleties would obstruct. (pp. 182-3)

The standard behind the stories is vital. When commenting on "The Christmas Carol", the critic says that:

It has the same kind of artistic unity that belongs to a dream . . . it is a kind of philanthropic dream, an enjoyable nightmare, in which the scenes shift bewilderingly and seem as miscellaneous as the picture in a scrap-book but in which there is a constant state of the soul. (pp. 169-70)

In fantasy and its exaggeration Dickens ritualizes something he cannot fully express.

However, Chesterton warns that the incomplete recognition of the external sometimes misleads Dickens. Sometimes:

The surface of the thing seems more awful than the core of it . . . [The characters keep] something back from the author as well as the reader . . . They soothed the optimistic Dickens with something less terrible than the truth . . . These dark visions seem almost as if they were literally visions; things that is that Dickens saw but did not understand. (pp. 168-9)

When Dickens does not understand, the exaggerations can go too far. There are details which he endows with a demoniac life. The things seem more actual than they really are. Indeed, that degree of realism does not exist in reality: it is the unbearable realism of a dream. (p. 47)

When the author forgets that his fantasy is only fantasy, only a limit, he becomes despotic; and the objects he describes lose their connection with reality and truth. Similarly, the recognition of limits which leads Dickens to a taste for
literary frameworks can devolve into "room within room of some labyrinthine but comfortable castle" (p. 119). When he forgets the external truth and becomes despotic he tries to overcompensate his characters by making them too comfortable. The critic condemns this as a "mad-house of content" saying:

The more plain and satisfying our state appears, the more we may know that we are living in an unreal world . . . For the real world is not clear or plain. The real world is full of bracing bewilderments and brutal surprises. (p. 152)

He concludes that "something more than this is needed from the man who is imagining and making men, the artist" (p. 264). The disintegration into despotic fantasy destroys the truly creative function of the artist which always acknowledges the existence of an external inspiring absolute.

Having praised yet criticised the early style of Dickens, the critic moves on to the later style. The condemnation of realism in the later works rests on the statement that "Art copies life in not copying life, for life copies nothing" (p. 17). As Dickens becomes careful of exact construction in art, his wish to exactly construct reality grows. Chesterton bewails the fact that the novelist believed that realism was showing things "as they are", or reproducing. The critic's own view was that a communication of essence was as fully real as the artist could be, for all perceptions of appearance are only partial. He concludes that Dickens "denied his own divine originality, and pretended he had plagiarized from life" (p. 191). The author who does this forgets the boundaries of human expression and the
limiting function of art:

a touch of fiction is almost always essential to
the real conveying of fact . . . The perfection
and pointedness of art are a sort of substitute for
the pungency of actuality. (p. 193)

Any attempt to express life without the acknowledgment of
the illusion, will fail. As a result the realism of the
later work is seen as a falling away from the communication
of truth, even though the author becomes technically more
experienced and careful.

At this point the reader is faced with a serious prob-
lem. The creative side of Dickens was shown to become too
creative and degenerate into despotic fantasy. The imitative
side of Dickens was shown to fail because of the impossibility
of perfect reproduction. Yet, the critic condemns the
styles for what they say about the man not about the artist,
and therefore separates his judgement of the man from that
of the art. The idea is totally alien to all his thinking
and implies that there is one standard for art and another
for life. It may be because of this "unnatural" separation
that Chesterton demonstrates a definite sense of uncertainty
in Charles Dickens despite brilliant judgements of individual
aspects of Dickens's work.

Chesterton greatly admired Dickens's writing, yet
could not reconcile this with the fact that certain aspects
of the works left him distinctly uncomfortable. What the
critic condemns is the despotic fantasy and the realism, yet
he does not coherently explain why. From his comments it
is evident that he objects primarily to the assertion of
personal opinion to the exclusion of external authority, or
the assertion of an individual ethic over absolute morality. But Chesterton himself does not seem to be consciously aware that this is the criterion for his judgement. He admires the great artistic skill of the personally dominated work but dislikes the view of the world that it implies. Instead of realizing that this tension is a direct result of ethically based art, he assumes that there are two standards present; and makes his assessment of both work and man highly ambiguous.

In Robert Browning the tension between the external and the personal was that between dogma and inspiration. Now this tension can no longer exist because dogma has been shown to originate in inspiration. The two together form the basis of a man's behaviour. The distinction between morality and ethics was doubly unnecessary to make in Robert Browning because the form already acknowledged an external authority. But the failure to make the distinction resulted in the confusion of Chesterton's following critical works. In Watts Chesterton excused the conscious personal ethics by pointing to the clear, externally inspired, moral message of the unconscious style. Heretics criticized the dogmatists for not indicating in style the unexplainable external moral standard of their dogmas. Now in Charles Dickens we see that the critic separates art from life if the art only reflects personal standards. As a result he condemns the form of realism that claims personal authority, and applauds the folklore which admits the existence of an external authority and inspiration. But here as in the earlier books Chesterton's failure to clarify his meaning obscures the process of his thought, and the value of his work. It is the
purely ethical and personally controlled side of Dickens that is condemned. Yet the contradictions that this condemnation appears to make with the critic's appreciation for the personally controlled but also ritualistic earlier work that indicates external authority and moral standards, in many ways makes circumspect the judgement of his criticism. What should be noted is that the critic's stress on personal control as a means of avoiding impressionism has shifted to become a stress on the indication of external inspiration to avoid the personal despotic perversion of actual things. Furthermore the negative criticism of the earlier works is giving way to a more positive approach. Both changes are due to Chesterton's finding of a form which satisfies his expressive requirements.

Charles Dickens is also a document of personal exploration, and the fundamental question of an artist's responsibility to absolute standards is subtly, even unconsciously, established in the correlation between Chesterton's reference to himself as a critic and Dickens as an artist. The initial paragraphs of the book introduce us to Chesterton as critic. They are at first bewildering in their apparently unconnected discussion of the meaning of words. Not until one completes the book does one realize their full application. The critic begins by making the distinction between the unknowable absolute and the arbitrary.

Much of our modern difficulty, in religion and other things, arises merely from this: that we confuse the word "indefinable" with the word "vague". (p. 1) The difference between the two is that "indefinable" means "the first thing; the primary fact", the actuality, the
essence of an object. To some "God is too actual to be defined" (p. 1). While "vague" means loose, impressionistic, carelessly expressed. Having applied "indefinable" to the spirit, to a man, he now applies it to "the word"; "the word that has no definition is the word that has no substitute" (p. 2). The critic now goes on to apply the word "great" to Dickens; yet makes it clear that he cannot explain the term, he can only use it. It is doubtful that such a generous author as Chesterton would involve himself in this elaborate word-play merely to defend himself against having to explain himself. He appears to be making a general statement about his limitations as a critic. The limitations are exactly those he sees in the early Dickens who uses his original creativity to express a further essence that cannot be defined.

Chesterton recognizes a similarity between what he does and what the artist does. As he begins the criticism he says that to understand Dickens "We must recreate the faith of our fathers, if only as an artistic atmosphere" (23). Just as the artist uses art to express and recreate the experience of life, so the critic uses an art in criticism to express and recreate the experience of art. It is probably not coincidence, but more a natural association of thought that makes the critic speak of his own limits immediately after a chapter on those of the artist. The condemnation of the later Dickens who attempts to imitate life "in cataloguing the facts of life" (197), is followed in the next chapter by the statement that the critic cannot tell us everything and that he professes only to give "an opinion or a summary deducible from
the facts" (203). He clarifies his position by saying:

No catalogue, of course, can contain all the facts even of five minutes; every catalogue, however long and learned, must be not only a bold, but, one may say, an audacious selection. But if a great many facts are given, the reader gains a blurred belief that all the facts are being given. In a professedly personal judgement it is therefore clearer and more honest to give only a few illustrative facts. (209)

A more explicit correlation is made when Chesterton tries to finally assess his subject. He complains that criticism of a creative mode like art is a staggering responsibility similar to that of the philosopher or artist in his interpretation and expression of life (241). It is noted that the critic:

in attempting to decide whether an author will, as it is expressed, live, it is necessary to have very firm convictions about what part, if any part, of a man is unchangeable. And it is very hard to have this if you have not a religion or, at least, a dogmatic philosophy. (283)

If one continues the correlation between the artist and critic, the implication is that just as the critic must have some external religious philosophy, so the artist must have some absolute moral basis if he is to create valuable art.

Finally, Chesterton sees in Dickens both the positive and negative aspects of his own inseparably connected life and art. He knows that Dickens as creator "did not point out things, he made them" (242). In doing so he exercised his half-divine origins. Yet the criticism of the book has indicated the ease with which human desire for power takes over and attempts to claim creation purely for itself. Chesterton
instantly recognizes this as the first step towards solipsism and denounces it as a moral failure that negates the value of the art. In different words, it is the replacement of moral standards by ethical. The critic on the other hand only points out, and is never in danger of attempting absolute personal creation. The parallels the author constructs between himself as critic and Dickens as artist appear as an assessment of the critic against the artist. In all the things that Chesterton values most the two roles correspond. They differ only in that the critic does not presume to create ex nihilo, he has a permanent sense of his inadequacy in comparison to the reality he examines. The difference will become very important as Chesterton comes to see the potential despotism of the artist as more and more dangerous.
Chapter V
The poem *The Wild Knight* contained a radical divergence between Chesterton's style and the apparent meaning of his story. The style indicated a conflict between the conscious control of the writer through emblem, and the unconscious control that allowed for spontaneity within the form of metaphor. However, the content of the poem implied that spontaneity had to be destroyed completely in order to avoid the danger of anarchy and chaos. At the root of this division lay an inability to differentiate between a personal spontaneity advocated by Lord Orm, and an externally inspired spontaneity found in the *Wild Knight*. The author recognized the positive value of the *Wild Knight*, and the decision to destroy him is contradictory to that awareness. Yet the conflict in the style indicates an intuitive knowledge that something is unbalanced.

The early criticism shows Chesterton asking the artist to walk on a thin line between control and spontaneity. We have seen that the identifying of personal and external inspiration as one, left the artist in constant danger of slipping either into arbitrary impression or rational argument. The main discovery of the subsequent criticism was that control and inspiration were impossible to balance; human judgement alone could not do it. Once the critic begins to recognize an external authority he takes his first step in unravelling his ideas; he realizes that impressions may not be inspired, they may be personal only. Similarly didacticism may become personal despotism.
The existence of a self-centered basis of non-inspired work provided him with a partial solution. Previously the artist had verged on the blasphemy of being God if he tended to either impressionism or rationalism. Chesterton now states that while art is still an absolute necessity for a human being, it is only valuable if consciously inspired by God. The artist's recognition of the presence of God in the work will effect the balance between spontaneity and control, and the corresponding connection between essence and form. The idea is reached primarily in Robert Browning. One of the important conclusions of that work was that the style was instrumental in the necessary expression of the presence of God. Robert Browning becomes a landmark in Chesterton's work not only because it recognizes a necessity for the presence of God, but also because it initiates the search for an adequate style to fulfill that need.

Following close on Robert Browning is Chesterton's first novel The Napoleon of Notting Hill. Here the search for style is translated into a confrontation between the artist of the self and the artist of external inspiration. The message conveyed is that the conscious and unconscious control they exercise in emblem and metaphor respectively, can co-exist. Not only can they co-exist but also if they co-exist they create the ultimate form for human expression. Because emblem is personally based it may always lose the balance between form and essence. Yet despite the value of metaphor in its ability to communicate
external inspiration through experience, Chesterton does not entirely trust it because of its experiential character which is open to misinterpretation. Emblem is more closely allied to explanation. It is shown to provide the conscious control metaphor lacks, and metaphor the external basis that emblem does not have. However, in practice the two together do not make an adequate form. The author himself senses this and opts for conscious emblematic control over the whole novel, with the exception of a few sections which attempt to incorporate metaphor. He thinks that although metaphor is a more valuable form of expression it is also more dangerous if it fails. The novelist's expression is further stabilized by the extensive use of explanation to prevent misinterpretation of either form.

The novel takes place eighty years in the future when London is governed by a huge bureaucracy headed by a randomly selected despot. The action begins with the selection of a new despot, the artist Auberon Quin. He proceeds to enforce a personal joke on the town by re-instituting the old medieval boroughs, with all their customs and costumes. The bureaucracy is annoyed by this intervention, but because the joke does not interfere with the actual functioning of London they tolerate its existence. Ten years in the future however, a young man called Adam Wayne appears who takes the joke seriously. As provost of Notting Hill, he refuses to let the other London boroughs run a road through the centre of his territory. He bases his objection on patriotic dedication to Notting
Hill and is prepared to live up to the conditions of Quin's joke by fighting for the territory's freedom. Such seriousness infects the other provosts and a war breaks out, resulting in the victory of Wayne and the Empire of Notting Hill.

Chesterton's tight control renders the story highly schematic. The characters have obvious and clearly defined emblematic roles. Auberon Quin is the personal artist, the aesthete working from his own impressions and consciously controlling them. Adam Wayne is the artist dependent on external inspiration, and unconscious control through metaphor. The bureaucratic masses are represented by Barker, the non-artist, the man who cannot perceive any connection between expression and meaning. As an impressionist, the forms Quin thinks up are related only to himself. He does not believe in value that is not generated by his own ideas. Hence he sees no connection between form and essence. In fact he denies the existence of essence outside of his own perspective. The method of his art is to create emblems, or forms that stand for an object, and impose them on surrounding things. The mode is really a form of nonsense logic in that the intent is always to shatter the existence of "normal" logic; and it has the same effects. The first effect is that it disorients one's usual response to the object; and the second is that it defines the response in the terms imposed by the artist.

The novelist indicates both the positive and negative value in these effects. After Quin is made King, he receives Barker in an audience. Immediately, he asks for Barker's hat which is handed over. Quin then sits on the hat saying
that it is a "quaint old custom"\(^1\). Barker can see no logic in the nonsense. He cannot understand why Quin would want to create a "custom" and is soon reduced to frantic walking back and forth. The unrelated forms Quin creates have the parodic function of nonsense. They strip away convention in order to reveal essence, only to reveal that there is no essence. While the satiric intent is a valuable contribution, if it is not perceived as such, the method will cause frustration and disorientation. Barker cannot comprehend the satire; and as with most people, he assures himself that all is well by condemning Quin as a madman. Similarly the whole Charter of Cities is an invention on Quin's part that has a valuable satiric role; it is intended to jolt the bureaucracy into an awareness of how meaningless their roles are. Yet if the people cannot appreciate the intent, the disorientation of nonsense becomes purely arbitrary, unrelated, and therefore dismissed as chaotic, and the imposition of his definitions is objected to as despotic.

The disorientation by nonsense through emblem is intended by Quin to destroy convention. It assumes that there is no essence to be revealed, and that there is no absolute meaning. As a result the emblem is easily misunderstood and reduced to didacticism and impressionism. Quin appreciates the Charter of Cities in impressionistic

\(^1\) The Napoleon of Notting Hill (Beaconsfield: Darwen Finlayson, 1964/1904). p. 43.
terms. The gathered delegations from the London boroughs are merely a "roaring sunset of colour" (65). The King only notices that the colour red is missing; and the only relevance that the arrival of Adam Wayne's red-uniformed men has, is a satisfaction of a technical artistic desire. If however, the emblems stand for an essence which Quin does not believe, the disorientation reveals new aspects of meaning; and the imposed definitions become constructive forms within which to live. Wayne however, takes his red uniform seriously. He is not aware of the destructive satiric function of Quin's joke. The emblems become metaphors for him; they are inseparable from the inspiration of his life. He says "I would paint the Red Lion on my shield if I had only my blood" (72).

The author calls Wayne a "dumb poet", a man who normally expresses his inspiration in action. But Wayne has been born into a world where the form for expressing his inspiration exists in the medieval emblems of Quin; and through them he can communicate his inspiration to other people. Wayne employs the emblems as metaphors by insisting that they are at one with the object they stand for. Metaphorical form re-creates experience by fusing the actual with inspired expression. It cannot be simply dismissed as arbitrary definition since it claims to contain essence within it, and it demands involvement in the experience on the audience's part. The positive aspects of his expression are that he creates an experience of essence and causes an individual reassessment of meaning. However, this
depends upon the success of communication. If the connection between form and essence is not understood, his expression will appear to lack inspiration and relapse into the dangers of rationalism and impressionism.

Wayne manages to momentarily communicate his inspiration to Quin. The full force of essence beyond his emblems at first disorients Quin, as his emblems disoriented Barker. He calls Wayne a mad man, just as he has been called mad. When he fully understands he is almost convinced of a view "so desperate - so responsible"(79); yet he will not allow himself to experience Wayne's essence. To do so would destroy his attempt at total personal control. The non-artist Barker is also an example of the negative effects of misunderstanding Wayne's art. Because the metaphors Wayne uses are based in actuality and create experience they cannot be merely objected to as despotic. They have a root in the external which means that if one experiences them one cannot dismiss them without dismissing the object they re-create. Rationally this cannot be done because one knows that the object exists. When Wayne insists on taking the Charter of Cities seriously as a metaphor for his patriotism, there is nothing Barker can do but become serious about it himself and agree to fight a war. Having acknowledged that this patriotism exists, Barker now has to experience it. However, he does not understand its meaning. The negative effects of Wayne's metaphors which necessitate involvement are far more serious
than Quin's arbitrary emblems that can be dismissed as chaotic. The experiencing of something unknown is frightening and terrible. The negative aspects reside in this potential for creating fear that destroys all sense of order. Once Barker comes to his understanding of Wayne's meaning he changes his habits but not his process of mind. For Wayne war was a metaphor for his patriotism; for Barker war becomes just another static event that must be gone through. Because he is a non-artist, once he has experienced he cannot understand that the metaphor is a metaphor, not a constant actuality.

The three men are portrayed emblematically by the novelist in that he does not change their basic nature. He himself curtails the negative effects of emblem by employing extensive explanations. The terms he uses do not ask for experience; the characters are presented to stand for modes of expression. Barker's "bleak blue eyes", and his favourite expression "speaking in the interests of the public", are constants that remain throughout the book. When he is described "flinging up his fingers with a feverish American movement" (45) or walking with "his frock-coat flapping like the black wings of a bird" (44), the observations do not create an experience of Barker. Rather, they indicate the attitude of the novelist to the character; they are subtle explanations on his part. Quin is portrayed in a quietly satirical vein. The author compares him to a child, except that a child
"would have been more intelligent" (21). When he proclaims the Charter of Cities he has to hurriedly leave "the platform, overcome by emotion" (53). The reader's reaction is an appreciation of the author's humour, of the point he is making behind it concerning Quin's external communication; he does not react to Quin himself. Similarly the chapter devoted to the "Mental Condition of Adam Wayne" carefully builds up an explanation for his perceptions, actions and reactions. For example it is spelled out to us that the reason Wayne's blood is stirred by the sight of fence railings, is that they were:

shaped at the top after the manner of a spear. As a child, Wayne had half unconsciously compared them with the spears in pictures of Lancelot and St. George, and had grown up under the shadow of the graphic association. (87)

The novelist presents his characters so that they cannot be radically misunderstood, and he makes sure that they continue to stand for the values that he establishes in them.

The conscious control extends to the tight structural movement of the book. The opening chapter establishes the "cheat the prophet" action which underlies the serial progression of the chapters. The novelist's contemporaries have dared to try to predict the future; and he ridicules this as impossible. The book presents a sequence of the three static modes of expression each succeeding the other.
The five sections of the book each contain three chapters that examine a point of view, show it in action, and lead to its change. For example section two begins with Quin's plan for the Charter of Cities; it is followed by his establishing it and then by the arrival of Adam Wayne. Section three first presents Wayne's state of mind, then shows him actualizing in it preparations for war, and finishes with the first battle. The sequence leads finally to the last chapter which is quite different in tone. It contains the union of Wayne and Quin, and elevates them from the pattern of meaning the novel has followed. The relation of the introductory poem with the novel also emphasizes the last chapter. Just as the poem enclosed the adult vision of "cold mechanic happenings" within the first and last stanza of the child's vision, so the adventure of the novel is enclosed. But the adult vision of the last chapter is radically different from that of the first. The author recognizes the inadequacy of the child vision in the central novel; by itself it is closely connected to the childish joke of Quin. Yet the adult vision of the first chapter is also inadequate. The union of Quin and Wayne is beyond the purely rational prophets predicting static futures, and insists on change. The control makes clear the recognition of the three static characters, the sequential structure culminating in union, and the significant difference in the function of the last chapter. However, a full appreciation of the value of
the novel is dependent on the individual response the reader gives to the metaphorical skill of the author.

In G. F. Watts, Chesterton says that style is at its best when it is shown to correspond with internal meaning. Unless it is purely a technical exercise there must be some connection between form and essence. Although the novelist recognizes the dangers of metaphor, he also realizes that it is necessary because it connects form and essence. At a few significant points he creates a metaphorical depth to the characters which yields a carefully confined transcendent meaning for the book. There are few consistent metaphors that become symbols, but there are metaphorically created actions and events. These are concentrated in the parts where the modes of expression of the characters come into contact. For them and the reader, experience is necessary because fundamental questions of self-expression are being evaluated. The questioning in the sections indicates the potential for chaos if there is no belief in an external; it presents the danger and fear that result from misunderstanding. As a result, the style is once more careful to include explanation with the experiential metaphor to ensure our comprehenson.

The first experience we encounter in the novel is that of Quin's process of mind. He is walking to work behind two men wearing frock-coats. The monotony of his daily routine is emphasized by a repetition of the word "dull" and the description:
through street after street, and round corner after corner, [he] saw only coat-tails, and again coat-tails. (17)

Suddenly, and the author adds that "he did not in the least know why", he noticed that:

Two black dragons were walking backwards in front of him. Two black dragons were looking at him with evil eyes. The dragons were walking backwards, it was true, but they kept their eyes fixed on him none the less. (17)

This is followed by the observation that, "The eyes which he saw were, in truth, only the two buttons at the back of a frock-coat". Then the metaphor is fused completely with the explanation:

The slit between the tails was the noseline of the monster: whenever the tails flapped in the winter wind the dragons licked their lips.

The reader experiences the initial surprise of the two black dragons, but is not allowed to feel it long in the presence of authorial explanation. However, the whole situation acts as a vivid re-creation of Quin's mode of expression. More than anything else it helps in understanding why personal control is so important to him. The experience is slightly unnerving for it separates the actual from the perceived. It is, therefore, the first step towards solipsism. Quin's use of emblem can be seen as an attempt to control the effects of this separation by consciously exaggerating it to the extent that it cannot possibly be accepted as real.
A more effective creation of metaphorical experience exists around Quin's first involvement in Wayne's reality - the war. The King is expatiating over lunch on the downfall of Wayne when he hears a noise. The scrabbling becomes increasingly louder until the fence beside his luncheon table is overturned by hundreds of retreating soldiers. As they run by him the King is overwhelmed by the speed, the colour, and the noise. He is "as in a dream" with no control over the events. The chaos of the retreat is suddenly arrested by the appearance of a figure in "flaming red" (118), with blood on his spear. Then the stream pours on again as the Notting Hill soldiers, the "masses of red", pursue their enemy. The reader is told that "The King had still little beyond the confused sense of a man caught in a torrent" (119), but is introduced to a more definite experience with the words:

Then something happened which he was never able afterwards to describe, and which we cannot describe for him. (119)

After the disclaimer the author proceeds to describe. First the King sees again "a flaming figure". The action is again arrested, but this time with increased suddenness. The pause is emphasized by a shift to another paragraph before we recognize this figure as Wayne, with "the red raiment of his office flapping round him like the red wings of an archangel" (119). As the image becomes metaphor, it is controlled by the note that the King "saw, he knew not how" that:
The great green trees and the great red robes swung together in the wind. The sword seemed made for the sunlight. The preposterous masquerade, born of his own mockery, towered over him and embraced the world.

The experience of it leads Quin to the knowledge that:

This was the normal, this was sanity, this was nature; and he himself, with his rationality and his detachment and his black frock-coat, he was the exception and the accident - a blot of black upon a world of crimson and gold.

Both Quin and the reader are swept up into an experience of Wayne's symbolic expression. The relationship between Quin and Wayne is clarified in that we genuinely feel, with Quin, that Wayne's communication is the more valuable, and are reinforced in this belief by the authorial explanation.

The rationalist Barker is never given a metaphorically contracted event through which the reader can understand the ordinary process of his mind. As a non-artist he makes no imaginative transformations between the actual and the perceived. However, his real experience of Wayne necessitates the use of metaphorical terms. After the defeat of the first battle, Barker tells a friend how it happened. He too, begins the account by saying that it was "like a dream" (121), and that he "can't describe", although he goes on to do so. Everything "seemed" like something else. The initial image of the army is that of an arrow, with himself near the tail. Then the streets take on a life of their own; they "dodged and bent so much
that the head of our line seemed lost altogether". As
the army went deeper into the streets something happened
that he "couldn't understand"; the streets gave him a
feeling he couldn't explain; he "felt as if things had
lost their reason" (122). Gradually, the arrow becomes
"a live thing, whose head had been struck" or "an electric
cord".

Behind the verbal imagery a rhythmic metaphor is
also building up. Barker begins with short statements
that explain; these slowly become longer, contain more
phrases and are occasionally sharply interrupted by short
interjections. The sense of interminable time is com-
pounded by the smooth repetition of words just before the
clash that starts the battle. Barker says:

We went round one turning, two turnings, three
turnings, four turnings, five. Then I picked
myself slowly up from the gutter where I had
been shot half senseless. (123)

After the first clash the rhythm speeds up, phrases are
shorter, and a variable repetition emphasizes action.
Barker then concludes his account abruptly, only adding
that now he understands Wayne's "atmosphere". The verbal
and rhythmic metaphors allow the reader to experience
personally Barker's disorientation and fear before he
understands. But just before the clash he explains that
something happening, such as fighting:

happens of itself, and you have nothing to do
with it. It proves a dreadful thing - that
there are other things besides one's self. (122-3)
The explanation of the essence comes before the experience so that the reader does not misunderstand. Another external perspective that guides the reader's reactions is that the friend to whom Barker is talking, is used to regulate the sense and movement of the experience by asking questions. Yet just as Barker gets caught up in the 'atmosphere' so eventually does his friend and the reader.

Chesterton has used metaphor at points in the book which demand the communication of experience. The understanding of Wayne's essence necessitates it. Yet the portrayal of Wayne himself in this way poses a problem. In Wayne's process of mind there are no explanations, and to add them falsifies the experience of him. However, the author knows no other way of safely presenting the external inspiration. The description of Wayne suffers from over-explanation even in events which are not metaphorical. At one point the novelist says:

> It is almost impossible to convey to any ordinary imagination the degree to which he had transmitted the leaden London landscape to a romantic gold. (86)

Yet he attempts to convey the feeling, and begins:

> It was felt most keenly at night, when London is really herself, when her lights shine in the dark like the eyes of innumerable cats, and the outline of the dark houses has the bold simplicity of the hills . (86)

He then cannot resist turning to explanation to clarify the images; and he destroys the reader's personal involvement. The fourth section of the novel is almost entirely
concerned with Wayne's inspiration and its effects on others. The author circumvents the dangers of re-creation of experience by placing the account literally in the hands of Quin, who becomes a journalist for the duration. Quin's reports of the fighting are never close to metaphor and are always controlled by his own limited impressions. Even when he is bleeding he conscientiously reports:

I write with some difficulty, because the blood will run down my face and make patterns on the paper. Blood is a very beautiful thing; that is why it is concealed. (148)

Quin's handling of the section and the novelist's emphasis on explanation slow the movement, and dull the response to these chapters. In contrast the final chapter of the novel is an earnest attempt to create experience without too much control; and it generates a feeling that defines and gives value to the story.

The chapter begins in the darkness before sun-rise with two voices speaking. The first says "all things are always the same". A different voice replies, "the world is always the same, for it is always unexpected" (187). The two voices carry on a dialogue concerning the value of Notting Hill, until the second voice states that it was important because he loved it. Here the novelist connects the two voices to bodies, adding that "with the voice a tall, strange figure, lifted itself out of the debris in the half-darkness" (188). The first voice suggests in opposition that Notting Hill was a joke; and at the same
time "a small figure seemed half to rise in the darkness". As the second voice continues by defining his serious attitude to Notting Hill, the night begins to lift. In the greyness a slight figure can be made out, and "the voice was more human" (189). The men continue to give their opinions and explain their positions; and when the first silver of a new day becomes visible, the two humans are revealed as Wayne and Quin. The constant references to the growing light counterpoint the growing understanding between the two men as Quin reveals his joke and Wayne his acceptance of it. Their explanation of each other and of themselves concludes with Quin's statement that "nothing can alter the antagonism - the fact that I laughed at these things and you adored them!" (191). But Wayne's inspiration, that found its form for communication in Quin's joke, recognizes the essential need for unity between the two men. The revelation comes to him simultaneously with the dawn; his "wild face flamed with something god-like, as he turned it to be struck by the sunrise" (192). He says, "in healthy people there is no war between us. We are but the two lobes of the brain of a ploughman" (192). In the now "blank white light", Quin agrees. The two join together and go off to meet the world.

The explanation of the differing positions of Quin and Wayne is placed against the rising sun. The dawn is carefully integrated with each step in the growing knowledge of the two men, even though the metaphor is never allowed complete rein. Chesterton spells out the meaning
of the two modes of expression. Wayne condemns Quin for his "child's games"; he states that he has "given them the seriousness of a crusade" because he was inspired with the external meaning God gave him. Quin points out that because it was a personally-centred joke, and because he cannot accept essence, he has a sense of "detachment, of responsibility, of irony, of agony" (189). Their union is of both child vision and adult vision; the social unity of satirist and fanatic, and the emotional unity of humour and seriousness. In restricting the amount of explanation and closely integrating it with metaphor, Chesterton completely changes the tone of the chapter. No other part of the book stands out quite so sharply; no other part is so open to the reader's own involvement and interpretation. The reader not only sees the intellectual value of a balance between conscious and unconscious control, but also experiences a personal value in it through the metaphor of the rising sun.

However, it cannot be forgotten that Chesterton does not trust metaphor. He allows it to exist only in tandem with explanation, which however necessary to the meaning, curtails the potential experience. The fact that the style is heavily weighted towards emblem indicates the extent of the author's anxiety. Chesterton seems to intuitively acknowledge that perfect human expression as proposed in the novel, is impossible in actual life. Small hints of another potential mode occur in the actions
of an incidental character, the President of Nicaragua. He pins the yellow of a mustard advertisement to his shirt, and stabs his hand to provide the red colour of blood, yellow and red being his national colours. The action is not emblematic, it does not stand for anything. It is not metaphorical, for it does not re-create experience. It seems more directly connected to pure inspiration yet is a definite, unmistakeable expression of patriotism. But the implications of his actions are not pursued. The Napoleon of Notting Hill suggests on one hand that the artist of pure inspiration only acts; if he is to communicate in any artistic language he needs a more personally inspired artist to contribute the form. The communication is shown to be necessary; and the personal artistic expression is invaluable on its own despite the potential distortions it may create because it attempts human definition.

Chesterton has tried to make a case for the balance between external and personal inspiration, to show the spontaneous inspiration receiving consciously controlled form. But he only succeeds in demonstrating that human expression is severely limited. In G. F. Watts which was also written in 1904, the critic indicated a similar division between conscious and unconscious or spontaneous form. There also he implied that the unconscious divine inspiration alone communicated value. We have seen in the previous chapter that in Heretics Chesterton was beginning to think that opinions are only valuable when they indicate a conscious belief in an external. This idea, as well as
the suggestion that ritual may be the best form for expressing the external, are both found in his next novel.

The Ball and the Cross was partially written in the same year as Heretics, and probably completed by 1906. In it Chesterton studies two men who both believe in something. One, Turnbull, has a reasonable basis for belief, centred finally in man and bounded by the limits of human understanding. The other, McLan, believes because of inspiration from an external divine source. Both are presented as necessary aspects of human belief but neither has an adequate form of expression to provide a unity between them. Turnbull is a journalist; he concentrates on the material facets of expression and is always in danger of losing the essence of the object. McLan uses symbol to communicate and is in danger of slipping too far from the actuality of the object. In either case imbalance results in communication centred in self. While they appear to be the same basic duo as that in The Napoleon of Notting Hill they are not. McLan is the externally inspired artist and Turnbull the personal dogmatist like Shaw. In Heretics it was the lack of Shaw's indication of external inspiration that made questionable his dogma; and this novel can be seen as an examination of the necessary fusion of the two aspects to gain precise communication. Further, there is a brief and not wholly successful study of a third character, Michael, and his mode of expression.

The style of The Ball and the Cross and the message about modes of communication, still run on different tracks.

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2 It was serialized in part by Commonwealth 1905-1906, with permission of J. M. Dent. The Library of Congress Catalogue lists a first American edition as being published probably in 1906.
Here however the internal meaning does illuminate and to an extent confirm the author's form. There is a total explanatory control exerted over the complete work until the end of the book. The end provides neither explanation nor experience, but uses a different mode that only partially succeeds. It needs the content to be fully understood. The story line begins with the journalist Turnbull printing some information disproving the divinity of the Virgin Mary. McIan, a highland boy come to the city, reads this and breaks the window of the newspaper shop for blaspheming. After being taken to court and bound over to keep the peace, the two men privately agree that their beliefs are so strong, they must fight each other to prove their point. The novel follows them from incident to incident as they are chased through the countryside by the police, while trying to find a place to fight. They end up in a lunatic asylum where Dr. Lucifer tries to destroy their belief by incarcerating them in solitary cells. The story is enclosed by a curious superstructure. The first chapter introduces the monk Michael, whom Dr. Lucifer is attempting to kill. He is thrown out of a space-ship to land on St. Paul's cathedral, and is then taken away to an asylum at the same time as McIan is breaking the window. Of course, the asylum is the same one that McIan and Turnbull end up in, and Michael reappears at the end of the novel to be mystically connected with Dr. Lucifer's downfall.

The conflict of the two main characters lies at the
root of the meaning. As a journalist and an atheist, Turnbull's expression concentrates on actual physical examples. They provide tangible proof for his belief when fitted in to human logic. The article which arouses McLan's anger is a carefully argued presentation of anthropological facts; the information is all verifiable in accounts of folk-lore meticulously gathered by scholars. Turnbull defends his beliefs by calling on Bradlaugh, Holyoake and Ingersoll, the searchers after human rather than divine explanations for life. The positive aspects of his expression are first, its respect for the material form of an object which defines and limits it, and second, its insistence on individual effort in using a logic to understand phenomena. However, the material may become so important that one forgets the essence that transcends limitation. Similarly, individual effort diminishes the value of an external authority, and personal explanation may supplant general laws that apply to all. In the asylum Turnbull has a dream that shows this happening. He is permitted to see the revolution that will finally destroy belief in authority, will establish the importance of the individual. To do this the revolutionaries have been ruthlessly massacring the population. Their need to establish their own freedom has made them forget the freedom of others. The ability of their minds to perceive limits has collapsed into a recognition of personal limits as the only definitions.

McLan's expression is essentially the opposite. He
justifies himself in terms of his knowledge of God. To do so he communicates symbolically. The reader is told that he walked on "the borderland between this world and another". He saw the sky as a symbol of the Virgin's robes before he realized it was the sky: "He thought of the daylight world as a sort of divine debris" (26). The value in his expression is that it continually pierces to the divine meaning of an object. For this reason he is impetuous, caring little for the forms of society; and he communicates intensely the external authority in which he believes. The drawbacks to his expression are indicated in a dream parallel to Turnbull's. He is allowed to observe the final establishing of external authority on earth. The dream shows the authority taken to extremes. Discipline for society becomes more important than individual justice. In terms of perception, the external authority overpowers the actual existence of the object. By seeing all things as only essence they all become one; but McLan realizes that each thing must be differentiated by its material existence which gives it individuality; just as individual justice is necessary to validate social law. Significantly, both dreams occur in the asylum's garden. The garden is a harbour of peace and perfection which contains lunatics who also believe themselves to be perfect. The denial of human limitation is the root of madness. Both Turnbull and McLan are shown in their dreams what would happen if they took their beliefs to the ultimate conclusion. Both their modes of expression

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are revealed as inadequate and needing aspects of each other.

The novel gives the impression that there is a constant see-saw of discussion between McNab and Turnbull which neither one wins. However, the argument is unbalanced; McNab is far more sympathetic. The basic parallels between the story and the framework equate McNab with Michael and the cross, and Turnbull with Dr. Lucifer and the ball. The first chapter concentrates on the negative aspects of Dr. Lucifer. His space-ship typifies the self-centred fancy of someone who believes that he is the centre of belief:

he had invented everything in the flying ship, with the exception, perhaps, of himself. This he had been born too late actually to inaugurate, but he believed at least, that he had considerably improved it. (8)

A definite distinction between science and religion is heavily weighted against science. The writer says:

the world of science and evolution, is far more nameless and elusive and like a dream than the world of poetry or religion; since in the latter images and ideas remain themselves eternally, while it is the whole idea of evolution that identities melt into each other as they do in a nightmare. (7)

Although Turnbull is a scientist, he does believe in actual identities; but this positive aspect is neglected. Our preparation for his appearance prejudices his arrival. But further, the final revelation concerns the existence of an external authority. Initially Turnbull does not even believe in the external, let alone try to find a form to
express it, so McIan has the edge from the start. The cross and the ball sum up the confusion. The central story of the novel attempts to show them in balance. Yet from the beginning the cross is more valuable, and at the end McIan says "the great terrestrial globe will go quite lop-sided, and only the cross will stand upright" (240-1). The discrepancy not only results in a failure of the symmetrical structure which supports the novel, but also represents a central confusion in Chesterton's thought. While supposedly admiring equally the opinions of the self and those of an absolute, he intuitively favours the latter. The problem is compounded by the recognition that McIan's opinions although favoured are expressed by a demonstrably inadequate form.

Chesterton realized that metaphor was too experiential to express absolute inspiration in The Napoleon of Notting Hill. The fear of didacticism and impressionism that result from the weakness led to a careful including of the explanatory in the experiential events. The rejection of impression turns the author closer to didacticism in the novel as it does in his criticism. While McIan's symbolism is definitely shown to be the more powerful mode of expression, it is counteracted with an unwavering conscious control by the author. No event of potential feeling or experience is allowed metaphor. When Michael is thrown out of Dr. Lucifer's space-ship he lands on the cross of St. Paul's. He will die if he cannot quickly find a way to get down, yet escape seems impossible. The novelist
begins to describe the event with the detached statement that the monk "felt as every man feels in the taut moment of such terror that his chief danger was terror itself" (16-17). The following explanation of why Michael decides to take a chance on escape is clarified to the point of tedium. There is even the observation that:

some will think it improbable that a human soul swinging desperately in the mid-air should think about philosophical inconsistencies. But such extreme states are dangerous things to dogmatize about. (17)

And the writer goes on to dogmatize. He ends this dull passage of vague philosophic ramblings with the statement, "Michael certainly could not have given any sort of rational account of this vast unmeaning satisfaction" (18). Many other incidents which seem ripe for metaphor have feelings which are too powerful to be re-created. They are only allowed conceptual communication with controlled interpretation.

The main artistic technique used in the novel is emblem, and the function of emblem as "standing for" something else, is painstakingly spelled out. Dr. Lucifer says to Michael, "What could possibly express your philosophy and my philosophy better than the shape of that cross and the shape of this ball?" (12) The ball is "reasonable", "inevitable" and "at unity with itself", as is rational science. The monk replies that the cross is a "collision", a "struggle" and as "irrational" as man himself. The two emblems exist throughout the book but never become symbols.
In the final sentence Turnbull's and McIan's swords lie "fallen in the haphazard pattern of a cross" (254). There is no experience generated, merely the recognition of the intellectual concepts that lie behind. The novel as a whole is constructed by the extensive emblem of the journey the two men take. It yields a highly rigid movement of one chapter for each event; one event for each place in the journey; and each scene always in the twilight of dawn or dusk, the time of change and indefiniteness. The landscape has an obvious relevance for each event. But the reader is consciously reminded that "their long and changing argument has taken them through districts and landscapes equally changing" (94). The hills were for Haeckel, the open plain for Catholicism. The emblematic journey stands rather obviously for the growth of the men's understanding, and the journey through life.

Just as McIan and Turnbull recognize their inadequacy when they reach the garden of human perfection and of madness, the novelist here too comes to terms with the inadequacy of his style. A mere balance between the two characters would leave open the potential dangers of each, but the monk Michael provides one answer for both. His miraculous walk through the flames of the burning asylum is a solid, acceptable fact to Turnbull even though it is not purely materialist; to McIan it is an actual representation of the power of God. Material and mystical expression fuse in the action. It is one form combining the two and delivering them from the dangers of balance.
The style of the final chapters functions in a similar way as Michael's walk through the flames. The garden and the asylum no longer stand for something, they are the actual. The dreams of Turnbull and McIan are unexplained but clear. They do not provide experience but indicate meaning alone. Similarly the cells that the two men are put into each have contents and shapes that the characters react to, but we are not given a full explanation. When McIan pulls a hook out of his wall we do not know why he detests it, or why it apparently releases the doors to the cells. Intellectual reasons could be found for the details but they would not be adequate. Similarly, experiencing the imprisonment leaves enigmatic the universal implications of the events. The style, like Michael's walk, is an actual event, in other words not emblematic or symbolic. It contains rational meaning and indicates an experience. Yet the full expression implies more than these aspects; it points to a meaning that we cannot fully understand, but that we can know: the existence of an external and absolute authority.

The indication of essence is Chesterton's definition of the process of ritual. However in a novel it must be transformed into its verbal mode of allegory which aims to indicate with little or no interference by the author personally. However, Michael is not a strong enough figure to carry the meaning. The author has constructed the novel as Michael's vision by beginning and ending the story with him. His character is established at the start. Although
the reader recognizes Michael in the conclusion, he is not sufficiently connected to a deeply-rooted meaning. The previously discussed confusion in Chesterton's use of the ball and the cross weakens Michael's effectiveness. The cross is the one external figure with which he is allied, and it loses its strength by being allied to the supposed balance between McLan and Turnbull, that is shown to be an inevitable imbalance. Yet Michael's role in the story clarifies his function in the style. Although neither he, nor the form he presents, completely succeed, the character is important as an initial attempt at a mode that Chesterton will develop and refine to his own expressive needs as he matures.

In the search for form Chesterton has examined nonsense emblem, symbol and material description. Behind these modes exists a growing recognition of ritual in the actions of the President of Nicaragua and the monk Michael. In The Ball and the Cross Michael is shown to have a unique expression of ritual that brings together the actual and the essence. In 1906, the critic further defines his idea through the appreciation of folklore in Charles Dickens. The folklore is based on the ritualization of aspects of people by exaggeration which transcends the separation of essence and form. The critic condemns the realism of the later novels although it is better art, because it tries to imitate where folklore does not. The control of folklore admits the limits of the artist because it indicates
meaning beyond him; yet the control of realism implies a confidence in self that denies limits. Folklore is ritual and externally based; whereas realism is centred in the self and open to misinterpretation. These different criteria and the modes they generate become the central theme of Chesterton's next novel.

The Man Who Was Thursday was written in 1907, the year of an increasing confidence in the essays. There is a force to the book not felt in the earlier work. It is not a joke, nor a disputation, but a clear expression of Chesterton's inspiration. The novel explores many modes of expression and shows them all failing. At the end ritual takes over to justify and provide meaning for the events. All other modes communicate essence as far as the human can see it, but are ultimately inadequate. However, the author states that despite their brilliant technique, they are not "better art", that any mode leading to potential anarchy and despotism is not only immoral but also inartistic. The novelist finally differentiates between morality and ethics. He refuses to accept that the artist can avoid moral responsibility and depend on a self-centred code of conduct.

The artist now has two essential roles: those of artist and critic that Chesterton looked at in Charles Dickens when comparing himself to the novelist. He must function critically in perceiving the essence of the thing, and creatively in expressing that essence. The division
must not be confused with that between the impressionist and inspirational, or didactic and dogmatic separations of the earlier novels. The two roles are not antagonistic, in tension or in balance. They are both part of the same process in one man. The emphasis of the book is on both interpretation and representation of essence by the artist; and is far more mature in its recognition of the complexity of the issues. The dual role of the artist seems to put Chesterton at ease. It necessitates admission of human limitation, yet allows for creation. The conclusion of both the content and the style is that ritual is the only form which satisfies both conditions, and that allegory is the artistic mode that expresses ritual.

The novel begins in a London suburb. The resident poet Gregory, presents himself as an anarchist, and is in the middle of holding forth when a poet of order Gabriel Syme, turns up. After an argument, Gregory takes Syme with him to a meeting of the English anarchists who are just about to elect him to their European Council. Syme first has to promise not to reveal anything to the police. Then he in turn makes Gregory promise not to reveal him to the anarchists, for he is a police detective. Putting the mutual secrecy to use Syme gets himself elected to the Council instead of Gregory. He becomes Thursday, the day of the week allotted to the English member. The European Council meets the next day under their president, Sunday. After the unexpected exposure of Tuesday as a policeman, the remaining anarchists plot the death of the czar who is
visiting France, and then break up. Throughout the central section of the novel Syme is involved in tracking down the individual members of the Council to try to halt the plot. One by one they are revealed as police detectives.

First he meets Friday, Professor Worms; together they expose Saturday, Dr. Bull, and all leave for France. When they reveal Wednesday or Ratcliffe, they find that Monday, the one remaining anarchist has got an army together to destroy them. They escape to the edge of the sea where Monday tries to arrest them in the name of the law, for he too is a policeman. Confused but relieved they return to England to find out who Sunday is. There is an absurd chase through London and the countryside which leads them to Sunday's house where they are looked after and feasted. The book ends with them asking why it all happened. Then Sunday disappears and Syme wakes up to find himself walking along a road talking to Gregory.

Sunday is the key to the meaning of Syme's experience. He is also the guide to the over-all meaning of the book. Sunday is introduced first as the leader of the anarchists: a powerful, intelligent man, commanding respect. It should be noted that at the beginning of the central section a similar figure is introduced as the head of the police force. He is unseen, always living in a dark room. Sunday by contrast, is almost "too large to see"⁴; he is enormous, "like a statue carved deliberately as colossal" (57). As Syme approaches him he is overcome by a sense

of "spiritual evil" that grows with face of Sunday. The sense gets stronger, and Syme is afraid that the face will grow so large it will be impossible to see, and he is reminded of seeing the face of Memnon as a child at the British Museum. Sunday's position as an anarchist is weakened in the central section of the novel when he himself begins the break-up of the Council by exposing Tuesday. When all the policemen are revealed, the third action begins and the reader meets Sunday once more. Syme asks him who he is. His only answer is that they can never know, only that he was also the policeman in the dark room. Each member tries to define him in his own terms, and each relates him in a different way to life. Sunday is seen as the two sides of man, the animal and the god. Finally he becomes a fusion of the two initial images of the seen and the unseen men:

the great face grew to an awful size, grew larger than the colossal mask of Memnon, which had made him scream as a child. It grew larger and larger, filling the whole sky; then everything went black. (191)

The answer to who he is lies in his last words, "Can ye drink of the cup that I drink of?" It is both enigmatic yet satisfying.

The shifting definition of Sunday parallels Syme's state of mind. In the first section he is sure that he is a poet of the law. He knows the difference between anarchy and order; between Sunday and the man in the dark room. Sunday however begins the process that exposes the policeman, exposes order. Paradoxically, Syme in continuing
these exposures, becomes an anarchist. At the moment of becoming an anarchist he is revealed as a policeman. Throughout the central section he attempts to make sense of the situation, and when all the men are exposed it seems that the meaning of things should be clear, but it is not. Without Sunday being defined, none of the members can be properly defined. The dual role of Sunday which the third section slowly clarifies, helps Syme understand why he had to become an anarchist. At the last he realizes that he will never completely understand Sunday or himself; but he can know of Sunday's existence and that it justifies his own.

Sunday's definition also parallels the style of the novel. The first section is filled with explanation on both the author's and the poet's part. There are many carefully placed images with isolated and detached significance. The whole is constructed to set up the opposing sides of order and anarchy, and the rigid division reinforces the definiteness of Syme's attitude to law, and Sunday's initial duality. In common with the confusion of the central section, the style transposes between impressionism and clarity within each exposure of the policemen. The final section is written as an allegory, allowing the characters to participate in ritual which eludes understanding but points to one external authority. The author's confidence, or perhaps trust, in his new mode helps him for once to create an integrated work. The message of his story and the function of his style are
very close to each other. Syme and the writer go through the same process of expression with the progress of events, and the events themselves illuminate the meaning of the expression.

The action of the novel begins with the establishing of roles for the poet of order and the poet of anarchy. Syme introduces himself as representing the law and respectability. He celebrates the achieving of goals, the glory of common things. The function of his poetry is to clarify and define. Gregory, on the other hand, tries to find the unusual, the out of place. He worships the unexpected and vague. Yet a curious fact of anarchy is the extraordinary organization that has to surround it in order to survive. The anarchists have been forced to create their own laws, act as their own despots, and have their freedoms seriously curtailed by themselves. By contrast, Syme's introduction to the man in the dark room at the police station, is quite informal. He is engaged with no questions asked, and acts as a free agent.

The author himself points out the paradoxical characteristics of the two poets. He introduces the anarchist poet by speaking of "his high, didactic voice laying down the law" (12). Syme, on the other hand, has "meek blue eyes"; and despite his passionate defence of respectability he was "at root a humble [man]" (18). However, the novelist provides a more important comment on the two men in his opening style. Both men are shown as definite; both use similar emblematic examples merely
interpreted from their own point of view. Their claim to full understanding makes both poets over-explain in these first chapters, and the author allows it. Gregory gets involved in a long definition of the anarchist plans; in return Syme states his case through extensive questions on the foundations of the anarchist movement. The action of the chapters is arrested by the very limitations that are being exposed in the characters. Neither man has a satisfactory outlook; neither the control nor the spontaneity they represent can succeed in isolation.

Within this first section a second point of stylistic importance originates. The novelist establishes certain random, rather fanciful images. Principally there is the dual presence of the colour red in the red hair of Gregory and his sister. Gregory is described as a "red-haired revolutionary" (13), yet his sister is described more positively for the "glory of her strange hair ran like a red thread through" (13). Syme's coming adventures. The dual role of "red" as belonging both to the revolutionary and his gentle sister, is not clarified and is even confusing. The mere repetition of the word in other contexts of brick or sunset does not help. There is also an important image of music which is connected to the red hair. The hair is "like a motive in music" in the book; and is closely associated with the barrel-organ that sets Syme's "heroic words . . . moving to a tiny tune from under and beyond the world" (18). The associative and ambiguous nature of these images is appropriate to the artistic
limitations of author and characters which appear in this section of the novel. As these limitations are broken down and explored, the images will come to form an integral part of the personal symbolic expression that results from a less isolated view of communication.

Syme's intended role within the police force emerges from a conversation with another policeman at the start of the central section. There is apparently a "purely intellectual conspiracy" (46) threatening the existence of civilisation. Syme is told that science and art are silently trying to destroy Family and State. The police are expected to "trace the origin of those dreadful thoughts that drive men on at last to intellectual fanaticism and intellectual crime" (47). These are the thoughts that "stop thought"; Gregory himself says that the anarchists want "'To abolish God'" (23), to make themselves the sole source of meaning for the world. This of course is Chesterton's solipsistic vision. Yet here he says that total despotic control to counteract it is just as bad. Syme must find another solution to come to terms with the "dreadful thoughts".

The growth into anarchy by the characters in the central section of the novel, is paralleled by a growth of more and more impressionism in expression. The process begins when Syme accepts the role of Thursday and steps into the steam-tug that will take him to his meeting with the Council. The transition from order to anarchy is stylistically one from explanation to impressionism, and
the novelist carefully combines the two aspects at the end of the first section. Syme feels as if he is stepping into "the landscape of a new planet", and the author explains that this is due to the decision to be Thursday, and partly due to "an entire change in the weather" (52). The "luminous and unnatural discolouration" of landscape is qualified by a specific comparison with the light of the eclipsed sun in Milton's poetry. But both the impression and explanation are transcended by the actual objects Syme carries with him: his food, brandy and pistol. They take on a "concrete and material poetry" (52), which conveys his true inspiration. The reader is told that, "this inhuman landscape was only imaginative by the presence of a man really human" (52). Syme can reach beyond impression to inspiration, and it is the growth of his ability to do so that we watch as he experiences and comes to terms with anarchy.

Significantly the first anarchist council member that Syme meets is the Secretary, or Monday, the pure intellectual at the root of the conspiracy. The other men on the council each represent different uses of intellect for the perversion of logic. Syme thinks on seeing them that:

Each figure seemed to be, somehow, on the borderland of things, just as their theory was on the borderline of thought. He knew that each one of these men stood at the extreme end, so to speak, of some wild road of reasoning. (64)

The members of the Council are all aspects of man; and Syme as the poet or definer, has to discover the meaning
that lies beyond their appearance. The only clue comes from Sunday when he exposes Tuesday. Tuesday is the one man who strikes Syme as "the common or garden Dynamiter" (59). He stands out as the obvious choice, the madman, the fanatic; but the whole man is a pose. The Russian peasant is a harmless Cockney business man with a little blue card that identifies him as a policeman.

However, it is the inspirational artist in Syme that initially proves most valuable in discovering the anarchists' identities. He immediately senses at this meeting that he is only getting an impression; he sees in each "a demoniac detail":

Each man had something about him, perceived perhaps at the tenth or twentieth glance, which was not normal, and which seemed hardly human. The only metaphor he could think of was this, that they all looked as a man of fashion and presence would look, with the additional twist given in a false or curved mirror. (60-1)

The initial mask of each man is established during this scene. Syme describes them as subjective notions that he tries to shake off, but: "The sense of an unnatural symbolism always settled back on him again" (64). The division between essence and form is clearly noted in the fancy of an:

old-world fable, that if a man went westward to the end of the world he would find something - say a tree - that was more or less than a tree, a tree possessed by a spirit; and that if he went east to the end of the world he would find something wholly itself - a tower, perhaps, of which the
very shape was wicked. So these figures seemed to stand up, violent, and unaccountable against the ultimate horizon. The ends of the earth were closing in. (64)

The feeling marks a process of apprehension that does not right itself until each figure is exposed. Syme counteracts the fear caused by separation of essence and form, when he hears the jangle of a barrel-organ. It suddenly recalls him to his source of true inspiration: the Church, the "common and kindly people in the street", his humanity. As he listens, the initial image the reader was introduced to is enriched:

The barrel-organ seemed to give the marching tune with the energy and the mingled noises of a whole orchestra; and he could hear deep and rolling, under all the trumpets of the pride of life, the drums of the pride of death. (70)

The image becomes a metaphor, rooted in the actual and conveying the real. Through it Syme controls the fear of the vague impressions around him and pierces to their inspiration.

The first exposure in which he is directly involved is that of Professor Worms. Here Syme only instigates the exposure because the Professor reveals himself by producing his little blue card, and only then does Syme produce his. The Professor's façade was as a propounder of German nihilism. On dropping his mask he reveals a realist. Realism stands at the beginning of a self-dependence that leads in the end to a denial of all authority. This is why his anarchic form is nihilism. When Syme is
in the process of discovering the true inspiration, his own impressions are distorted in a nihilistic manner. When he realizes that the Professor is following him after the Council meeting he becomes anxious and confused. The snow becomes "blinding and bewildering" (78). After a few attempts to escape the Professor he feels that the "philosophical entities called time and space have no vestige even of practical existence" (79). He is oppressed by a sky with "clouds of snow"; the nearby alleys seem "blind and featureless". The mood is expressed by the atmosphere of empty streets which:

was turned to a very queer kind of green twilight, as of men under the sea. The sealed and sullen sunset behind the dark dome of St. Paul's had in it smoky and sinister chaos - colours of sickly green, dead red or decaying bronze. (80)

Against this vague indefiniteness, the distortion of nihilistic perception, Syme suddenly notices picked "out in perfect silver the great orb and cross" (81). He counteracts the effects of the totally arbitrary images with the "symbol of human faith and valour" (81) and gains the courage to turn and face his pursuer. When the Professor is exposed, Syme:

had for a flash the sensation that the cosmos had turned exactly upside down, that all the trees were growing downwards and that all the 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. (85)
The peculiar effect of the Professor's perverted realism was conquered by the use of symbol which never claims total personal control; and which expresses the essence of the order for which Syme is fighting.

The Professor and Syme then go on to Dr. Bull's. Bull has been introduced as a doctor made hideously frightening by a pair of dark glasses. When they enter his building Syme calls it "the house of reason" (97). On the way up to the flat, the poet encounters the effect of numberless series of details. Passing identical windows on each floor, each present the same picture of the dawn, "From each the innumerable roofs of slate looked like the leaden surges of a grey troubled sea after rain" (101). It produces a "quality of cold sanity" unfelt before, "like the empty infinity of arithmetic" (102).

As the two men question Bull the impressions take on a quality of an "unbearable reality", even the colours of Bull's face and the pattern of his tweeds "grew and expanded outrageously" (104). To defeat this power of too rational detail Syme suddenly says to the Professor "I have an intuition" (105), an intuition started by the image of a woman's "red hair". The intuition is to ask Bull to take off his spectacles. On doing so Bull is transformed into a "boyish-looking young man, with ... an unquestionable breath about him of being very good and rather commonplace" (106). Syme's inspiration strips away the distortions of rationalism and frightening efficiency, to reveal the true basis of a practical and
orderly mind.

The fourth member to be exposed is the Marquis, or Wednesday. Once more the symbolic sound of a barrel-organ reminds Syme of his fight for Family and State, and he becomes responsible for the planning and executing of a duel which will end in exposure. The Marquis is disguised as a decadent. His clothes and manners indicate all the attributes of the aesthete and cynic. When he is finally unmasked he is revealed as Inspector Ratcliffe, a materialist with a huge dose of common-sense that the intellectual perversion of anarchy reduced to cynicism.

Before the exposure his material impressionism causes physical objects to take on an appearance and meaning that are alien to themselves. The poet is impressed by the "comic contrast" between the men dressed in funereal black and the wild flowers. The black hats remind him of undertakers in a farce, disturbingly different from the "spring flowers burning gold and silver". The detached vision is rapidly transformed once the fighting starts. The actual value of the flowers is made clear in "the love of life in all living things" (121). However, when several direct sword hits fail to draw the Marquis' blood Syme is overcome with "supernatural terrors" and "spiritual dread". The power of any man to wholly distort the actual makes the poet think he is fighting the devil. To bring himself back to inspiration the symbols of his personal life, of "the girl's red hair" (123), parade before him and he is again reminded of actuality. The final surge of his
fighting causes the Marquis to stop the duel and leads to his exposure.

The common-sense of Ratcliffe lets him naturally take charge of the band of policemen as they retreat from the army led by Monday. In the flight from the perverted logic of pure intellect Syme is overcome by the most dangerous impressionism of all, the doubt of his own existence. The policemen retreat into a wood "full of shattered sunlight and shaken shadows... Even the solid figures walking with him Syme could hardly see for the patterns of sun and shade that danced upon them" (132). The disorientation increases until Syme wonders:

"Was he wearing a mask? Was anyone wearing a mask? Was anyone anything? This wood of witchery, in which men's faces turned black and white by turns, in which their faces swelled into sunlight and then faded into formless night, this mere chaos of chiaroscuro... seemed to Syme a perfect symbol of the world in which he had been moving for three days... He felt almost inclined to ask after all these bewilderments what was a friend and what an enemy. Was there anything that was apart from what it seemed?... Everything only a glimpse, the glimpse always unforeseen, and always forgotten... He had found... that final scepticism which can find no floor to the universe." (133)

The poet pulls himself out of this doubt by sheer conversation; and it is dispelled by the appearance of a peasant cutting wood, who was "common-sense in an almost awful actuality" (135). Yet the confusion of identity experienced recurs as one by one the men the police think they can
rely on, turn face and help the anarchists pursuing them.

From Syme's perspective Monday is the last remaining anarchist. He is the intellect that provides the basis of anarchy. Yet from Monday's own perspective, he is the last remaining policeman, for he is philosophy that stops anarchy. The progress of Syme has increasingly isolated him from the rest of the world as he has defined the personal basis of the members' lives. Near the end of the chase Syme warns the Professor that he's becoming an anarchist, and Ratcliffe adds "Everyone is" (152). Syme has become an anarchist even though he thinks he is still a policeman. The paradox arises from the realization that the personal meaning he has uncovered has no absolute basis. Once the personal inspiration for the men's behaviour is clarified by Syme's poetic creation, it does not seem to help to define their lives. To avoid anarchy Syme must define with reference to an external authority which means interpretation as well as creation, and this he has increasingly ceased to do.

With every normal expectation reversed, on the edge of giving in to the insanity of the solipsist, Syme's personal symbols of the red hair and the barrel-organ are now useless to inspire him. He turns to a different mode of expression to counteract the impressionism of the intellect. At the last minute he picks up the old ecclesiastic lamp a helper had given him, and challenges Monday. By the allegorical meaning of "the cross carved on it, and the flame inside" (156), he tears away the intellectual scepticism of Monday to expose him as a
policeman; in the process he also exposes himself. Allegory is externally inspired rather than personally created alone. It cannot therefore degenerate into impressionism or rationalism, and includes its own interpretation. This final exposure casts off human intellect to reveal external authority for action; it casts off human expression to acknowledge that it is too limited to define man. The simultaneous exposure of Monday and Syme as both policeman and anarchist is the recognition of control and spontaneity as two essential elements in man. Further it is the recognition that they cannot simultaneously exist without the acknowledgement of an external authority and inspiration; and that this authority cannot be expressed through human symbol, but only through ritual in allegory.

It is important to realize that the creative nature of Syme's exposure in the central section of the book was necessary for him to understand his human limitations. In the final section his role as poet or definer is mainly interpretive in the light of these limitations. The last section shows the men trying to define Sunday because they realize that their personal meaning is not complete without him. Yet it is not until they become involved in the ritual he has created for them that they succeed, and Syme leads the way in the attempt. It is he who starts the totally absurd chase into the countryside.

The limits of man's understanding are underlined as each man tries to define Sunday while on the chase. Each definition is an aspect of man that is not understood.
For example, Monday thinks of him as like "protoplasm . . . the final form of matter" (173), which reminds him of all that human intellect originated in, and over which it has virtually no power. The common-sense Ratcliffe finds Sunday frighteningly "absent-minded" (174) with a unique element of "abstraction combined with cruelty". The simplicity of Tuesday, whom Bull found on the street after their return from France, accepts his limits, and says merely "I don't think of Sunday on principle . . . any more than I stare at the sun at noon day" (174). Syme begins to notice and interpret the pattern that defines Sunday only by negatives. He says that he first saw Sunday from behind and then from in front: "when I saw him from behind I was certain he was an animal, and when I saw him in front I knew he was a god" (176). Relating the pattern of negative definitions to his own experience he reaches the "secret of the whole world", that man always looks only at the back of things never at the front. Syme realizes that he has been exposing the back of people, the human nature. His great revelation is that he must search for the face, the god-like, the divine.

The revelation ends the chase, yet would not have been possible if the men had not been involved in it. The chase can be seen as performing different functions for every expressive level. As an action involving the council it is a ritual they must perform in order to understand Sunday. For Sunday it is an allegorical expression of the ritual. For Chesterton both allegory and ritual are themselves an allegorical expression of life. Rather
than an absurdity without logic, it is an enigma with an unseen logic and enigma is a central feature of Chesterton's allegory. Apart from the chase itself one of the enigmatic aspects is the dropping of notes for each man. They contain some application to the recipient, but every reader will get something different from them. For example, Syme's note reads:

No one would regret anything in the nature of an interference by the Archdeacon more than I. I trust it will not come to that. But, for the last time, where are your goloshes? The thing is too bad, especially after what uncle said. (164)

My immediate response was to see the contrast between Syme's occasionally ludicrous sense of form and ceremony and his neglect of practicalities. A simpler example is found in the note to Tuesday. As the supposed anarchist Russian peasant, or "red", his note reads, "The word, I fancy, should be "pink!"" (168). What is important, is that the notes have some relevance for each person, but one can never understand them fully.

A more important enigmatic and allegorical aspect is the use of clothes. The chase ends when a messenger arrives from Sunday to take the men to his house. Here the members are all given clothes which define them. This time their definition is not personal but absolute for Sunday's allegory does "not disguise, but reveal" (183). Monday's robe is black with a broad stripe of white down it, representative of the Biblical creation of light out of darkness. His love is for "the original and formless light" (184), the pure functioning of reason. Syme has
a peacock-blue dress covered with a golden sun, stars and crescents. Not only is he Thursday, the day on which the sun and moon were created, but also he is the one who wishes to break up the pure light into definable shapes. Each man has his appropriate gown, and Sunday himself is "draped plainly in a pure and terrible white" (186). He is the peace of God.

At the final ceremony all the animals and objects that have been encountered in the book are "imitated in some crazy costume" (185). Everything seems a masquerade until Sunday appears and "a frightful and beautiful alteration" occurs. The dancing then becomes "as absurd as Alice in Wonderland, yet as grave and kind as a love story" (187). The confluence of nonsense and romance in the ritual dance indicates Chesteron's understanding of allegory as without comprehensible logic yet with an absolute goal and authority. However, the appearance of Sunday leads the men to question why the Anarchic Council was set up; why they should have suffered. Again each question is appropriate to the aspect of human nature each member represents.

As they finish questioning, Gregory the true anarchist poet, reappears. It is after his accusation that the policemen are mere acceptors of the law, never having truly suffered, that Syme makes his last definition, his final interpretation of the action of the book. The men had to become anarchists, to suffer, to define themselves, before their function within and understanding of an external
system of order could become valuable. But when he questions Sunday, because it is important for his own value to know that Sunday too should have suffered, he is answered with the words "Can ye drink of the cup that I drink of?" (191) and Syme blacks out before the impossible knowing of God. Simultaneous with Gregory's appearance is the reintroduction of Syme's personal symbol of the "red hair". One again has the duality of Gregory's red hair which "shall burn up the world" (190), and the opposite force of his having "red hair like your sister". Yet just as the ambiguity and danger of authority and anarchy in man is explained, so the ambiguity and danger of the personal symbol is here resolved in face of an external authority. When Syme comes to it, it is as if his participation in ritual has strengthened his personal expression. Having defined himself in terms of an external he can use symbol with new clarity, and the novel ends with the "gold-red hair" of Gregory's sister.

The novel as a whole does contain an over-riding control by Chesterton. However, the control is constructed as ritual so that a lot depends upon the connections the reader makes with a meaning beyond the story itself. As with the previous novels, The Man Who Was Thursday takes place at twilight, the time of change. It is also enclosed, this time by a dream framework which is significant when one remembers that Chesterton believed dreams to present essence despite seemingly inappropriate exteriors. The movement is circular in returning from Syme and Gregory at
the start, to them in the last chapter. Yet here the movement does not lead to some projected human perfection of expression. It returns to the limited symbolic mode of man, showing it stabilized by participation in ritual. The parallels between the events and the style show that personal definition through understanding is linked with the human process of impression and inspiration. The ethical foundation of this understanding is not adequate to prevent the danger of anarchy or despotism. Instead definition must be approached through the knowledge of an external authority that is experienced in, and interpreted from the allegorical verbalization of ritual. The basis of existence will then be absolute and moral.

It is important that within the novel the ritual is given by the Christian God. Therefore the characters of the book can find it perfectly revealing. Because it is written by Chesterton the ritual cannot be perfect in the reader’s terms. It is humanly limited and intended to be so. The formal and obvious structuring of the book into three sections, the allegorical rather than symbolic function of the characters, and the absurdity of temporal and spatial relations, make this clear. Yet Chesterton has chosen a sufficiently strong allegory to present the meaning, in using the days of the week and their biblical interpretations. The weight of such figures transcends the limitations of the human expression, just as the ecclesiastical lamp transcended the ultimate danger of limited human understanding. Chesterton’s confidence lies in this
knowledge of having incorporated an external authority. The novel contains symbolic strength that lifts it to a new level of artistic involvement for the reader. Whereas an earlier Chesterton might have feared the danger in this experience, he can now trust to the reader's simultaneous exposure to ritual to stabilize the experience through the over-riding use of allegory. In his own terms he has both perceived essence in an acknowledgedly limited way, yet expressed it creatively and with moral responsibility as an artist.
Chapter VI
The first consistent background that Chesterton provides for his religious and philosophical beliefs is presented in *Orthodoxy*. In it he also states the primary aspects of his mature concept of art. Until writing *Orthodoxy* Chesterton has, in his critical work, concentrated on the negative parts of religion and art: what they should not be, rather than what they should be. Just as *The Man Who Was Thursday* exuded a new-found confidence because of his discovery of a satisfactory form, in this book we find at the root of all the ideas a positive recognition of a specific external authority. To satisfy the principles of his belief, Chesterton found that the authority had to be the Christian God within formal religion.

At the end of chapter four in *Orthodoxy* Chesterton outlines the five principles of his belief. The first is that since the world does not explain itself it needs a miracle to do so. The second follows logically: There must be someone to work this miracle, necessarily external to the world. The third states that the purpose of the world is beautiful; and fourth, man must have gratitude for the purpose by showing humility and restraint. Finally, the existence of "good" is a positive gift to man, and a thing to be saved. The only authority to satisfy all these beliefs for Chesterton was the Christian God. Christianity had half led him to and half reinforced his belief in certain dominant ideas. Because there is an external authority the experience of revelation becomes
possible. Since man cannot know himself by human means, identity is something that is revealed to him. This emphasizes the existence of a difference in kind rather than degree between man and God; man is both human and divine. It also makes possible the transcendence of the separation between essence and matter. We have seen all these ideas explored in *The Man Who Was Thursday*, and they have a direct bearing on the writer's changing concept of art.

*Orthodoxy* was written to discuss the "actual fact that the central Christian theology ... is the best root of energy and sound ethics". Chesterton not only included the celebration of life which he found in it, but also the fear from which it guarded him. The book turns the treatment of art in *The Man Who Was Thursday* into a philosophical discussion on the nature of man. It reaches a more clearly defined but identical conclusion. He begins with a study of the "madman", specifically the solipsistic kind who believes that he is the creator of and at the centre of the world. Formal religious authority is found necessary to stop this "thought that stops thought" (34), the absurdity of the situation man is reduced to when he is left with only himself to explain the world. The willingness he shows to actually state the existence of this fear is significant. The earlier avoidance of the underlying knowledge that it was present, was directly responsible for the negative approach to art and religion that he had previously taken. Chesterton

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1. *Orthodoxy*, p. 13
had been seeking to repress, rather than find a positive antidote or cure.

Here however, the celebration of life is his central concern, and it is summed up for him in the allegory of the cross:

the cross, though it has at its heart a collision and a contradiction, can extend its four arms for ever without altering its shape. Because it has a paradox at its centre it can grow without changing. (29)

Personally, he states that, "we want not an amalgam or compromise, but both things at the top of their energy; love and wrath both burning" (92). The doctrine of the church was intended to keep "seemingly inconsistent" things side by side. Virtue itself was a conflict between two ideas "hard to hold simultaneously". Not only are love and wrath, joy and sorrow kept together, but also the divine and animal of man, the essence and substance of things, and the idea and mode of expression. The external authority of God allows man to transcend the division; it allows him to transcend his limitations. To clarify his point Chesterton compares the Christian transcendent God with the Buddhist immanent God who allows man only to disregard his limitations.

Chesterton finds this positive joy in the formal, defined structure of the Anglo-Catholic church. An acceptance of the external authority of God meant that things existed outside himself; actual things were real. It also meant that man did not create ex nihilo. He used the
pre-existing material of each artistic language to express essence. Further, the existence of God makes possible a belief in ritual as a valuable mode of expression, for without God the built-in limitations of ritual would become dead ends. We have seen that in his own art he at first emphasized the role of control in order to conquer the changes of impressionism, and that this went against the grain when it was total. It weakened the structure of his books by producing a conflict between the stylistic and thematic meaning. The acceptance of external formal religion led to an expression of ritual through allegory that resolved this conflict. Similarly, the insistence on control in other people’s opinion weakened the strength of his criticism, because he often disagreed with the personal opinion while believing that opinion should be there.

Once he accepted external authority he had a positive basis for his criticism, and he could suggest the use of ritual in forms of fairy-tale, anecdote or allegory.

Much of the critical confusion that was caused by transforming the interrelationship between inspiration, life and art into one between religion, morality and expression has been clarified by 1907. It arose from the problem of differentiating between personal and external authority, between ethics and morality, and between the artist as solely creator and the artist as creator and interpreter. Orthodoxy shows that the differentiation has essentially been made. Chesterton discusses the moral function of man as necessarily found in an exercise of will.
But the term "will" is used to mean divine revelation in man. It also connects the religious belief with artistic expression. One exercises will not rationally, but "like an artist, saying, 'I feel this curve is right!'" (39). This does not imply a vague process of selection; it is a definite use of choice that "is an act of self-limitation" (40); it is an acknowledgement of an external authority that constantly reminds man of his limitations. The author goes on to define art:

Art is limitation; the essence of every picture is its frame . . . This is certainly the case with all artistic creation, which is in some ways the most decisive example of pure will. The artist loves his limitations: they constitute the thing he is doing. (40)

The whole basis for his attitude to religion and art is found in the analogy he uses to indicate the presence of God:

God was a creator, as an artist is a creator. A poet is so separate from his poem that he himself speaks of it as a little thing he has "thrown off". (78)

The positive value in Christianity is "the dogmatic insistence that God was personal, and had made a world separate from himself" (79). Just as he accepts that God is different in kind from man, so is the artist different from his art, because he cannot create the absolute reality that is himself. If man needs God to reveal his identity, then matter needs the artist to give it meaning. Just as a man is not the centre of the world, so art does not exist
in isolation. Man must be constantly aware of his human limitations to remain sane, and art must acknowledge limitations of its own.

What is here developing is Chesterton's concept of the mystic artist. The separated nature of the artist and art is conveyed most fully in the function of the mystic which lies at the core of his new positive attitude. The mystic can accept his limitations. If a man does not he is either damned or mad, he either makes a conscious or unconscious wrong moral choice. The author says that, "Mysticism keeps man sane" because it allows one separate earth and fairy land, whereas ordinary men live in the twilight between the two. He defines the twilight image of the earlier novels as a compromise rather than the necessary conflict. An early article on the mysticism of W. B. Yeats said, "true Mysticism will have nothing to do with twilight"; and in another essay: "Actuality is the keynote of Mysticism". Further, the separation between matter and essence is valuable in itself because it represents a relationship that indicates the presence of God. The role of the mystic is to perceive this relationship and communicate it so that others too can realize the existence of the divine.

The essential communication of the mystic leads directly to the role of the mystic artist. Chesterton's own conversion from personal to formal religion makes him emphasize the social function of communication. Without the communication of the relationship there will not only be no value given to

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3 DN, 6/04.
society as a whole, but also there will be no conception of the human limitation of the mystic. As a result, the presence of the divine which is the valuable aspect, may be lost sight of. The limiting process of expression will ensure that the mystic does not exercise too personal a control. Only in accepting the limits of expression does it become possible to transcend the division between mode and idea, to find identity of oneself and the object. The mystic maintains his artistic responsibility by insisting on the actual existence of the object in which he can only indicate divine presence. If he does not do this he will impose his personal perception on things; he will distort their meaning by making them become part of him rather than letting them remain separate. This was the definition given earlier to the degenerate fantasist, the failing Dickens.

In his idea of the mystic Chesterton is significantly different from ideas in the serious study of mysticism being carried out at this time. The main theory was that mysticism was totally intellectual or spiritual. William James, for example, says that "personal religious experience has its root and centre in mystical states of consciousness". He also believes that mystical experience is totally incommunicable to other people. Dean Inge, who led the Christian mystic movement, saw it as totally intellectual, "Christian Mysticism appears in history largely as an intellectual movement, the foster-child of Platonic idealism." In his

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view the mystic "makes it his life's aim to be transformed into the likeness of Him in whose image he was created". The experience is also thought to be too spiritual for normal utterance; and therefore without social value. Inge's views on religion were both anti-rationalist and anti-formalist, and in philosophy, anti-sceptical and anti-material. Chesterton of course insists on the material and actual aspect of the mystic vision, he also insists on its communicability and its social value. We can recognise here that his later annoyance with Dean Inge rested largely on the Dean's belief that Roman Catholicism, because institutional, was also anti-mystical.

However, Chesterton's idea is virtually identical with that of Evelyn Underhill, who expresses the attitude clearly thirteen years later, in The Essentials of Mysticism. Underhill conjectures the existence of three stages in mysticism, the physical, the mental and the spiritual. However, if one progresses up to the spiritual, it is always essential to return to the value of the physical. Similarly, although the mystic "appears to be independent of the general religious consciousness of the community", he needs both society and the Church for his own physical unity. If their physical existence is not in tune with his, he will be constantly in conflict between the spirit and matter. It will also become difficult "for him to avoid the disease of spiritual megalomania" which is exactly Chesterton's point about the dangers of the solipsistic view raising their heads if there is no social contact. Underhill notes the positive side as

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8 Ibid, p. 29.
well. The mystic experience revitalizes the Church if it is communicated, and the mystic is "a creative personality, consecrated to the great practical business of actualizing the eternal order in the temporal". Because he must mediate he is the highest form of creative artist; he must see things as they really are without personal distortion. Underhill also realizes that in mystical literature the words must not be confused with the things. They express, but are not, the truth.

In Orthodoxy Chesterton is very much concerned with the problem of expression. Symbols are condemned as of "cloudy value" when speaking of the infinite. Metaphor is useless unless it can convey a "distinct" idea. Finally he laments his own "unavoidable inadequacy, the attempt to utter unutterable things" (65). A later essay expresses his feelings this way:

there is something in all good things that is beyond all speech or figure of speech. But it is also true that there is in all good things a perpetual desire for expression and concrete embodiment . . . If the idea does not seek to be the word, the chances are that it is an evil idea.

According to the critic all true imaginative literature expresses the contrast between "the curves of nature and the straightness of the soul". The mystic therefore, has the problem of imaginatively creating a form that will communicate the separation. The forms Chesterton discusses at this time are the fairy-tale, the fable, song, dance and mumming.

9 Ibid, p. 38.
In each case the artist makes no attempt to create reality. Fairy tale sets reasonable limits, distinguishes between real laws of mental choice and mere physical repetitions, and depends on specific conditions. Fables use animals because man is "something too mysterious to be drawn". Mumming conceals the personality but reveals the person.

Each form does not pretend to be the object but to indicate it by analogy. The analogical function is the basis for all these forms. Analogy represents not only similarities but differences. The two things, image and object, lying side by side transcend each other because of the divine relation between them. It is important to see the relation of analogy to nonsense. Nonsense also places two things side by side. But it either insists on an intellectual, man-generated relation between the two, or denies that any relation exists. The analogical function separates the artist from his art by denying him full creativity. Yet it allows him to communicate the separation of matter and essence. Both limitations are transcended by the indication of the presence of the divine. Chesterton sees ritual as the fundamental analogy that relates man to God. As we have seen his own main verbal mode for expressing ritual is allegory. While he later develops a more sophisticated view of allegory, The Man Who Was Thursday contains the basic elements of concrete imagery, gesture and allusion in the enigmatic use of the notes, the necessary action of the chase and the absolute

13 "The Mummer", MM, p. 110, 30/12/11.
definition of the robes Sunday gives to the council.

Most people writing about mysticism at the turn of the century express the same discontent about the mode of communicating mystic experience, just as the social anthropologists were dissatisfied with the communication of social and religious ideas. The relationship between ritual and mysticism in Chesterton's work is closely connected to early anthropological ideas about ritual and religion. He sits in a central position between the personal religions of Inge and James and the social religions of Frazer, Spenser and Durkheim. Yet it is interesting that none of these people really explored in depth the fundamental problem of the communication of religions and mystical experience.

Inge himself agrees with James that mystical experience cannot be conceptualized, that language is poor, inadequate and misleading. Normally substance and symbol have an accidental connection, but in mysticism the connection becomes real. The observation is reminiscent of the note of both Spenser and Frazer, that savages could not separate between object and symbol. Inge goes on to say that the closest one can get to the fusion of the two is in sacrament. The need for sacrament "rests ultimately on the instinctive reluctance to allow any spiritual fact to remain without an external expression"\(^{14}\). While this is similar to Chesterton's own earlier statement about an object's desire for expression, Inge denies the experience of transubstantiation, and the idea of allegory\(^{14}\) W. Inge, *Christian Mysticism*, p. 254.
which says that "The world was supposed to be full of sacred cryptograms". His view of sacrament lacks the material and actual element that Chesterton is trying to incorporate, and he is therefore not faced with nearly as many expressive problems.

Émile Durkheim is far more thorough in trying to assess the forms of religious expression. But he begins his study with a quotation from Max Muller's *Physical Religion* which states that language and thought are of a different structure. Religious expression becomes a "deformation" of language by belief. Later he goes on to say that emblems are of fundamental importance in overcoming this deformity. Flags, for example, lose their representative function in battle and are treated as if they "were this reality [of the country] itself". In religion images are not illusions, "they correspond to something in reality" that connects the individual with society. Religious force, albeit social, "comes to be outside of the object in which it resides" and capable of transcending it. Further, Durkheim believes that social life is only possible with a vast system of emblems. It is not surprising that the first major mode Chesterton chooses is emblem. But whereas he comes to see this as potentially distortable, Durkheim does not interest himself in the actual manipulation of communication. It is not until Victor Turner's anthropological work of the 1960s that this is taken

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15 Ibid, p. 270.
17 Ibid, p. 270.
up again. The similarities of ritual communication that he observes are directly parallel to Chesterton's in the essential object and word interrelation, and the personal and social commitment. Significantly, when Turner examines the transitions between individual and social states he finds subtleties in the use of masks similar to those in the work of Chesterton, Yeats, Nietzsche and Wilde; but it seems that only Chesterton had really interested himself in the use of monsters, grotesques and mysteries that Turner also discovers.

It is the 1920s that produces more sophisticated studies of the modes of mystical expression. When we turn to these, however, we find them remarkably close to the ideas of Chesterton in 1908. Rudolph Otto's *The Idea of the Holy* begins with the now familiar statement that the holy completely eludes apprehension by concepts and is inexpressible. Yet he devotes much of his book to possible ways of communicating it. Since one cannot express by verbal symbol or phrase one must have an imaginative sympathy with a person's mind. He says that "the experience lives in reverent attitude and gesture, in tone and voice and demeanour... and in the solemn devotional assembly of a congregation at prayer." If the divine is to be expressed verbally it must be through negatives and analogies which "profess to indicate an object, which they at the same time contrast with another, at once distinct from and inferior to it." Otto also


22 Ibid.
examines what he calls a process of "schematization" where associative images become one with the idea. Interestingly enough he parallels this with romantic "sublimity", and indeed it is a close analysis of the function of symbol. Finally he says that pure but indirect expression is given through fear and grandeur, and pure and direct expression in darkness and silence. Analogy is impure and functions by "anamnesis" or a reminding of the divine. However Otto is concerned to preserve the irrational; to deepen rational Christianity with irrational thoughts. Chesterton is exactly the opposite. Where Otto finds irregularity in mystery and paradox, Chesterton finds order.

Evelyn Underhill again comes closest to Chesterton. The mystic has to use art to actualize the spiritual. Underhill proposes that there are two main ways in which this is effected: by description which appeals to the intellect, and suggestion which appeals to the imagination. Allusion is close to music in that it enchants rather than gives information. Description proceeds by comparisons which are "more valuable for their strange suggestive quality than for any exact parallels". In the process of examining each, many concepts found in Chesterton's criticism emerge. The descriptive writer tries to "represent in concrete symbols the objective reality known". He is "naturally inclined to visualization". By contrast the allusive writer tries to represent the "subjective feeling - state induced", using

23 Ibid, p. 63.
"negative language" and paradox. Underhill finds the allusive artist more successful in "putting us in communion with reality" than the descriptive artist, yet the latter "is more generally understood." However, Chesterton's later work uses both kinds of communication and tries to achieve both effects.

Of course, Chesterton is not only a religious man, but also an artist and critic primarily interested in the function of words, much more so than the average theologian, mystic or anthropologist. Having seen the tools that were available to him in contemporary discussions on religious expression, it is useful to look at the relevance of his ideas to contemporary currents in literature and art. There are two movements which gather force during the first decade of the century which are especially important: Imagism and surrealism. Both are remarkably similar to Chesterton in ideology and style. Yet their fundamental difference from him indicates the difficulty of what he was trying to do.

Imagism as a movement centred on the thought of T. E. Hulme. If we begin with Hulme's own ideas about the relationship of religion and art, we find that they are superficially identical to Chesterton's. "Humanism and the Religious Attitude" is based on a study of the Renaissance as an age without religious art because of the predominance of humanist emotion. Religious art springs from "a feeling for absolute values, which are entirely independent of vital

26 Ibid.
27 Ibid, p. 76.
things". He denies the value of imitative art and says that absolute ideas need absolute expression. In other essays he points out that since the Renaissance, philosophy has seen man at the centre of the world, and this is incorrect. "Romanticism and Classicism" postulates that the Romantics took man as god, with rationalism as the supreme logical power. Against this he places classicism which never "forgets this finiteness, this limit of man". Hulme sees the Romantic period as a humanizing of art into something organic and natural which is different from religion. The absolute nature of religion needs geometrical and mechanical imagery. Curiously he relates this to a primitive fear of the world which "results in a desire to create a certain abstract geometric shape, which, being durable and permanent shall be a refuge from natural flux.

There are great similarities between Hulme's and Chesterton's approach to art. They both insist on the need to see things as they really are; and to express them accurately, without the conventions of contemporary romantic art. Hulme says that:

In prose as in algebra concrete things are embodied in signs or counters which are moved about according to rules... Poetry... may be considered as an effort to avoid this... It is not a counter language, but a visual concrete one.

Hulme too emphasizes the need for limitation in art. He speaks of the need to impose order on impressionism, and of


29 Ibid, p. 120.

30 Ibid, p. 86.

the futility of rational argument even using the same vocabular- 
ary as Chesterton. However, the fundamental differences 
are huge. Hulme opposes to the idea of "man as god" the 
Indian concept of the futility of man. As an example of 
his ideal of modern religious expression he puts forward 
Epstein's sculptures. It is interesting that Chesterton, 
in 1929 writes an essay "On Mr. Epstein". In it he fully 
recognizes the religious content of his sculptures, but goes 
on to say that it is the wrong religion. It is also ironic 
that the very words Hulme uses to define his religion are 
echoed again and again by Chesterton when indicating the 
wrong religion. For Hulme, man must avoid thinking all 
things in his power by returning to the centres of external 
inspiration; "the result is that which follows the snake 
eating its own tail, an infinite straight line perpendicular 
to the plane". The basis for his religion is "most con- 
veniently remembered by the symbol of the wheel". 
Compare this with Chesterton's comment in a story from The Incredulity 
of Father Brown:

I've scarcely ever met a criminal who philosophized 
at all, who didn't philosophize along those lines of 
orientalism and recurrence and reincarnation, and 
the wheel of destiny and the serpent biting his own 
tail.

What Chesterton objects to in Hulme's philosophy, is that man

32 "On Mr. Epstein", Come to Think of It: A Book of Essays 
33 T. E. Hulme, Speculations, p. 34. 
34 Ibid. 
35 The Incredulity of Father Brown (Harmondsworth: Penguin 
is not totally dominated by fate; he has his measure of choice and free-will. While agreeing with some aspects of what Hulme says about art, he is against infinite abstraction, and the language of diagrams. It is, in a perverse way, a means of evading the exposure of human limits by choosing an abstract mode within the reach of man. Much later in his life, Chesterton is to review several books by people from the group which Hulme initiated, and entitle it "Nothing to Shout About".

He will admire Pound for the use of images more solid than abstractions, but condemn him for saying that a "better" world is beyond human realization. He will admire Wyndham Lewis for vaunting religion over materialism, and condemn him for a spineless, non-moral approach to satire. Finally he will ask what is the point of creating such good literature to express nothing but futility.

The surrealist movement is related to Chesterton because of a similar process of imagination rather than of conscious intellect. We have looked at Chesterton's solipsistic vision in depth; and we know from himself and others that his artistic talents while a student at Slade were often visual representations of the nightmarish tendency. Indeed several works reproduced in *The Coloured Lands*, especially the cover picture of a boy impaled on street railings, show it still in force. Jorge Luis Borges notes that:

> the powerful work of Chesterton, the prototype of physical and moral sanity, is always on the verge of becoming a nightmare. The diabolical and

horrible lie await on his pages. 37

Only in The Man Who Was Thursday did Chesterton have the confidence to discuss the vision, and the subtitle of that novel is "A Nightmare". The movement which manifests as a code of expression the fears of Chesterton, is surrealism. He had a surrealist frame of mind and spent most of his life trying to control it. C. H. Waddington points out that surrealism was a "solipsistic vision" that attempted to make actualities a creative act of the imagination 38. He also quotes Madge as saying that the surrealist hallucinations and dreams were conscious. The entry on surrealism in the Encyclopedia Britannica also speaks of it as an intellectual and "methodological" art form 39. But imagine what would happen if these hallucinations were uncontrollable, were an unavoidable part of one's approach to the world, and we come close to Nausea and G. K. Chesterton.

It is important that surrealist art functions by analogy. It uses the juxtaposition of two unrelated objects as an active mode of communication. Waddington speaks of Jean Brun stating that the discovery of surrealism was that "the word comme is a verb which does not signify telqu" 40. The fundamental function in Chesterton's ideas on communication is this active act of analogy. It is as if he took the analogical function which was at the root of his fears and turned it inside out to prove that fear impossible. Instead of seeing interminable analogies derived from his own mind,

40 C. H. Waddington, Behind Appearance, p. 82.
he views the world as full of analogies derived from God's mind. One is reminded of the observation in Robert Browning that Browning's mysticism:

was not of that idle and wordy type which believes that a flower is symbolic of life; it was rather of that deep and eternal type which believes that life, a mere abstraction, is symbolic of a flower. 41

Robert Browning made the man in more ways than one.

The closeness of Chesterton's views to the surrealist and later absurdist outlook is physically demonstrated by the interpretation imposed on The Man Who Was Thursday by a communist theatre group. Rather than treating the book as anti-anarchist they staged it as an anarchist play. Similarly the very structure of Chesterton's mystical style lends itself to an opposite intention. While he attempted to convey the existence of a divine presence in his work by indicating something beyond his expression, the fact that "something beyond" is only indicated leaves open the possibility of "nothing beyond" being indicated. In the examination of nonsense it became clear that the mode could be used to either indicate some real basis or nothing. Either way, it is not an ultimately satisfying mode because controlled by the rules of one man. Allegory allows the unknown to participate in the mode. It is not merely a technical conceit. For a mystic this makes the mode far more meaningful for God may enter into the work. Just so, for an absurd poet the mode may be reversed in intention by making it possible for an unknown to enter, but denying the possibility of its existence. In this way, the sense of "nothing" is made far stronger and more terrible. 41

41 Robert Browning, p. 183.
The path that Chesterton was trying to hold between these two extremes of total determinacy and total liberty was peculiar to himself and in 1908, only a few others. It was a path difficult to follow since both the extremes and the middle way had in common a rejection of the overwhelmingly current modes of symbolic and discursive communication in their impressionist and rationalist forms. Chesterton resolved his problem in finding in the mystic relationship with God which also contained a social function the concept of the mystic artist. There were others with similar approaches. We should remember Wilde's insistence on the use of the concrete form to express essence, and his belief in the importance of the mystical in revealing truth. Hopkins's coinage of the words "inscape" and "instress" reflect Chesterton's concern with the object's essence and one's response to it as it is. His concept of mystery as an "incomprehensible certainty" for a Roman Catholic, yet an interesting uncertainty for others, exactly parallels Chesterton's statement that Christian mystery should not mystify but reveal. Paul Valery's work not only agrees with the necessary social function of the mystic, but also points to the central aspect of mystical expression as separating yet fusing thing and instinct. Later on, men such as Jacques Maritain, the Abbé Brémond and David Jones were to expand upon this idea of the mystic artist and his modes of expression. However, that Chesterton would not have been able to nor prepared to recognize the contributions of these men, only underlines his difficulty at the time of writing Orthodoxy.

It is unavoidably noticeable that most of these people

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were Roman Catholic in practice or in tradition, and it is probable that Chesterton shares with them an element common to their Catholic faith. Whereas the secularization of Christian imagery has often been discussed with reference to the early twentieth century, it is important to recognize the vitality of its internal structure. The sacramental structure is still used for expressing the inexpressible, the beyond man, the mystic presence, whether or not it be the Christian God. In Chesterton's eyes the specifically catholic nature of authority allows for an energy in art which is not destructive because it breaks out from within specific limits and laws, yet it is satisfying and cathartic. The paradoxical nature of Christianity as he saw it, also makes language very important because misuse could destroy the tension of opposites that creates and transcends limits. Significantly Chesterton says that Catholic Christianity also makes possible the "living" of poetry, as if life itself were the highest expressive form.

The ideas about mysticism and the mystic as artist are inherent in Orthodoxy, but the sophistication that Chesterton was later to develop is not. While he has established the new positive approach for his religion and art, he still has to work out of his system the confusions of a decade. Significant changes are still to come in both his religious conversion and his development of allegory. There are two major aspects of art in Orthodoxy which are emphasized and still recall the direction of the earlier thinking: the necessity
for will in order to limit and control, and the need to pierce to the essence of a thing at the expense of its material covering. The points both arise from Chesterton's concluding statement on his belief that "personal creation [will] is more conceivable than material fate" (150). Even though he briefly points to Nietzsche and Tolstoy as examples of too great an intellect and will, this is not stressed. It is as though he were still not completely aware of the difference between personal will, and will inspired and controlled by belief in God.

However, in George Bernard Shaw and William Blake, the critical works of 1909 and 1911, he begins to concentrate heavily on the potential for will to become self-directed, not divinely directed. As he noted but did not fully examine in Charles Dickens, the limitations imposed may distort the essence of a thing and the communication degenerate into self-centred fantasy. Similarly his early praise for Plato as a man not dominated by the material is tempered a little in Orthodoxy when Plato with Emerson is used to exemplify human understanding, as against the divine understanding of the Church (88). In George Bernard Shaw a comparison with Plato is used to define Shaw as a human idealist to be commended for the fight against "materialism", but denounced for the neglect of material form that allows the personal perversion of the essence. It is important to note the relationship between these two shifting aspects of Chesterton's thought because they partially explain each other. As the author becomes more aware of the dangers of self-directed will, so the external form of things becomes important because it places
limits on human distortion. Orthodoxy introduces in a simple example the origins of Chesterton's growing respect for Aristotelian thought. He briefly mentions the necessity for the "μέσον" principle (92). Walking the "middle way" is impossible without recognizing the limits as to how far one can move either side. In later works he also becomes aware of Aristotle's appreciation of the material form of things as a positive limiting factor, not as the degenerate "materialist" viewpoint that he had previously understood it to be.

The critical work George Bernard Shaw discusses the two points, and the background provided for them clarifies Chesterton's changing attitude towards a positive belief. The first of the three categories under which Shaw is examined is "The Puritan". It is here that the central criticism originates. The puritan has a direct and personal relationship with God. His expression of the divine is intellectual, based on explaining things in the light of personal understanding which is for him absolute truth. His approach to objects is to perceive this absolute divine essence in them, making the appearance less important. On a political level Shaw the puritan is a republican. In a republic theoretically nothing lies between the people and the government. Democracy on the other hand uses the process of representative government which interposes a candidate between people and government. In his philosophy the intellectual confidence of knowing absolute truth allows Shaw to directly attack any problem. As a writer, his concern with the idea rather than the word makes him a precise logician in style.
Ultimately Shaw's love for art is also defined by the ability of a specific mode to communicate directly with him. Chesterton suggests that Shaw's appreciation of music is twofold. Firstly there is no limiting form between himself and meaning; and secondly music seems to convey the meaning precisely, and without distortion. Music apart, Shaw's awareness of the imprecision of other modes of art allows him to separate their fictions from reality. In this he is a mystic, caring more for morality than art. In Chesterton's view he cares more for the acknowledged limitations of art that will express morality in the relationships of things, than for creating art as an object only valuable to itself. However he is a "black and white" mystic, believing in his knowledge of absolute truth. While the critic gently reprimands Shaw saying, "But black and white are not the only two colours in the world"43, he adds:

Nevertheless, it is a good thing that the more austere method should exist separately, and that some men should be specially good at it. (158)

Shaw's specifically puritan background negates the most important value in Chesterton's central idea of Christianity: The holding of seemingly opposite forces in tension. It is where the critic examines the implications of the negation that he begins to adversely criticize his subject. The criticism is summed up in the discussion of paradox. There are two stated uses of paradox. The first indicates an apparent inconsistency, and the second a verbal contradiction. Shaw only uses the first:

His only paradox is to pull out one thread or cord of truth longer and longer into waste and fantastic places. He does not allow for that deeper sort of paradox by which two opposite cords of truth become entangled in an inextricable knot. Still less can he be made to realize that it is often this knot which ties safely together the whole bundle of human life. (182)

The second use, as a contradiction, demands belief; the first however, holds within it the potential for explanation on which Shaw insists. While Shaw believes in the sanctity of will to explain things, it is the sanctity of human will (199). Man's own divine capacity for creation and choice become in the end, higher than external authority. The result is that man's theories about things becomes more important than the unalterable "essence" of the things themselves. The progress of Chesterton's thought on this problem is very important. It is his first reasoned account of the difference between dogmatist and didactic. What was a confusion in Heretics is here examined and clarified. Shaw's paradox is shown to be wrong because it is the dominance of a personal opinion not externally inspired. Contradictory paradox however, contains the external in demanding belief. It is the simultaneous existence of inspiration and dogma. The fact that he has worked out the basis not only for his approval but also for his disapproval is a sign of the maturity of his criticism. The work Charles Dickens suffered badly from critical confusion; but here the opposing sides are placed in an understandable balance.
As a result of the belief in the sanctity of his own will, Shaw is capable of creating "his own vast and universal religion" (172); but only he belongs to it. The statement explains not only Chesterton's similar remark about Shaw in *Heretics*; but also ties in with a later comment that the Calvinist certainty of salvation leads to religious snobbery. Similarly although Shaw is a republican, he finds his own republic the best and the contribution of other individuals is lost. In philosophy he becomes his own absolute standard, which leads to anarchy in thought. His appreciation of music's lack of distortion is really an awareness that in music there is no need to affirm or to deny truth (99). He can relax his will because there is no need to explain, yet also no need to believe. The most influential effect is found in his writing. Chesterton notes that he is incapable of writing "problem" plays because he always has a need to explain. Because he has no tradition he cannot understand the function of symbol in relating to truth. It interferes with, rather than clarifies meaning. Because he does not believe in representative art he cannot interpret the allegory of fairy-tales. Finally, because he needs always to explain, he will tend to impose his own theories upon things whose "idea" or essence he cannot fully understand.

Chesterton's positive and negative criticism is considered neatly at the end of the book, and is directly tied to his comparison of Shaw with Plato. They are similar in their "courageous pursuit of ideas as far as

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they will go" (208). This statement generates the other points of comparison. Their "delicate inhumanity" results from an incredible confidence in their own human judgement. Shaw's confidence was valuable in so far as it did away with weaker attitudes, but quite apart from increasing the anarchy of thought, it also increased the "shallow confidence" of others and encouraged them to produce an over-confident charlatanism. The dislike of poets found in both arises from a hatred of distorting form coming between self and idea. It made Shaw create a plain writing style with no "mystification"; however, it also made him impose the theories of a logician on things he could not otherwise express. Finally there is their idealism which was based on the belief in absolute human understanding. In Shaw it produced his popularization of philosophy which improved the general contemplation of important issues; yet it also led to a belief in the perfectibility of man rather than the humble grotesqueness that Chesterton saw as the true situation.

The direction of Chesterton's criticism is towards assessing the value of Shaw as a mystic artist. The need for "black and white" mystics is that they completely separate the spiritual and material. However, as previously noted there is also a responsibility to communicate their understanding of the meaning of the separation which transcends the division. Just as Shaw often tends to separate too far between a thing and its essence, interposing his theory of it, so his style often does not communicate
adequately. Logic is not enough. Chesterton says that to communicate one must have a connection with people, a tradition, a ritual. The essays of this period continually mention the importance of a popular style, the use of a chorus to humanize a story\textsuperscript{45}, the genuine vitality in dialect and slang\textsuperscript{46}, and the role of the poet in expressing the ideas of the populace\textsuperscript{47}. Shaw only succeeds as a mystic artist when the characters of his plays are able to communicate with the people. This happens when his personal impressions of characters coincide with divine revelation. At these times one:

\begin{quote}
 can see shining and shaking through them at that instant the splendour of the God that made them and of the image of God who wrote their story. (216)
\end{quote}

The critic finds that the coincidence usually occurs when Shaw is for a moment emotional, and the iron control over his human will lapses slightly to admit weakness. Without this necessary admission of inadequacy mystic truth cannot be communicated, because mystic truth must indicate an absolute external authority.

Chesterton's interest in aspects of mysticism continues in the critical work \textit{William Blake}. One of the first points that is made is that Blake is Irish. The Irish, according to the critic, are logical. The second point he makes is that Blake is a mystic, "a man who separates heaven and earth even if he enjoys them both"\textsuperscript{48}. Not surprisingly the book

\begin{itemize}
\item \textit{"The Chorus"}, \textit{AD}, p. 252, 10/9/10.
\item \textit{"The Garden of the Sea"}, \textit{AD}, p. 210, 20/3/10.
\item \textit{"Three Kinds of Men"}, \textit{AD}, p. 149, 19/10/09.
\end{itemize}
takes the same critical direction as that on Shaw, Shaw also being a logical Irish mystic, and it attempts to assess the value of Blake as a black and white mystic artist. However, probably because he is speaking of a man whom he could not have known in the detail he knew Shaw, Chesterton places the emphasis on mysticism, what it is and is not, rather than on the personal factors that contribute to the kind of a mystic the subject will become.

The role of the mystic is carefully defined by distinguishing mysticism from the mysterious: a similarity that was previously noted with relation to Hopkins. Chesterton says, "No pure mystic ever loved mere mystery. The mystic does not bring doubts or riddles: the doubts and riddles exist already" (131). It is the mystic's function to clarify those riddles, to find and express the meaning of the relationship between the actual and the ideal:

Every stone or flower is a hieroglyphic of which we have lost the key; with every step of our lives we enter into the middle of some story which we are certain to misunderstand. The mystic is not the man who makes mysteries but the man who destroys them. The mystic is the one who offers an explanation which may be true or false, but which is always comprehensible - by which I mean, not that it is always comprehended, but that it always can be comprehended, because there is always something to comprehend. (132)

Arising out of the importance first of communication, and second of communication of reality connecting the essence and matter, are certain stylistic demands. Communication in art must be effected through a clarity and definiteness of colour and shape that makes the object being drawn unmistakably recognizable. The form of clarity is
however dependent upon the skill of the artist and the idea he perceives. Two drawings of cats may be unmistakably cats, but one may be a black cat with large eyes and the other a green cat with long whiskers. Chesterton refers to the medieval Christian illustrators as true mystics:

**Chiefly concerned to maintain the reality of objects.** For the highest dogma of the spiritual is to affirm the material. By plain outline and positive colour those pious artists strove chiefly to assert that a cat was truly in the eyes of God a cat... (135)

Mystic art is the opposite to impressionism. It puts what one knows above what one notices; and is also opposite to rationalism: What one knows is what one reasonably believes, not what one rationalizes intellectually.

Blake is a mystic in the primary sense of coming out "to teach rather than to learn". He tried in his elaborate organizations of ideas and energies to establish a meaning for relationships between all things. His art fits Chesterton's definition of mystical art because it concentrates on "the firm line" (17), and the critic suggests that what Blake would have hated most in art would be the vagueness of impressionism. His poetry also uses a definite form that fuses the material and the essence. Chesterton notes that in his own time allegory means "taking something that does not exist as a symbol of something that does exist" (141), but that when Blake uses an image like the lamb to represent innocence he really meant that there is "an eternal image called the Lamb", and that "eternal
innocence [is] an actual and even awful thing" (141). The images did not "stand for" innocence as an emblem would; it does not generate an experience of innocence as a symbol would; it presents innocence through pointing by analogy to its absolute existence. Chesterton elsewhere describes the allegorical function as producing "a moral value. It figures forth in emblem and enigma, the truth . . . "49. Because it acknowledges its own limitation in analogy to the eternal, it makes the enigma of the eternal more actual.

The importance of Blake's allegorical form is described in a passage that compares him with Beardsley. Beardsley is called a "decadent mystic" who produces effect by distorting either the appearance or the idea of a thing. Chesterton calls him "fantastic" (196). On the other hand, Blake produces effect by exaggeration of the appearance and idea which Chesterton calls true caricature. Caricature is a serious art for it attempts to "make a pig more like a pig than even God has made him" (195). By means of exaggeration which is his as it was Dickens' allegorical form, Blake transcends the matter and spirit division. While this use of allegory relates Blake to the medieval illustrators with their cats, Chesterton points out that the artist's affinity with them was more basic, for he with them "saw the image of God under all garments" (51). His greatness lies in his ability to make the concept of God actual, to portray the ideal as being "as solid as a giant" (66).

However, Chesterton finds himself at odds with other

aspects of Blake's art. Significantly, he ascribes these aspects as being due to Blake's insanity. Throughout the book there are references to artistic failures due to a forgetting of the material appearance of the object. These accumulate to testify to a breakdown in the mystic's material and spiritual duality and concentrate solely on the idea. The statement is made that Blake "held that what we call the ideal is not only more beautiful but more actual than the real" (149). A corollary was that the artist denied the authority in the pure existence of nature and material things. Since the ideal was more important than the physical, it was a short step for Blake to insist that "man as an image of God had a right to impose form upon nature" (162). It is revealing that Blake's factual God was also a "personal God", in the sense of Shaw's puritan God. Blake would be just as open as Shaw to all the mistakes arising out of a belief in absolute human understanding.

Blake's use of images in themselves does not prove his madness; it was essential for the production of allegory. But the one thing that testifies to his madness in the critic's eyes, is his allowing the image to conquer the identity of a thing, allowing it to take over his artistic function. Chesterton thinks that where he went wrong was "as an intellectual and not as a poet" (174). He applied his own ideas to external situations without seeking their own meaning and identity; he became a
"hard theorist", bowing to the law of his own "outlawed logic" (174). In doing so he ceases to be an artist; he disregards the enigma of life, and becomes "entirely, instead of only partially, separated from the people" (180). The process is an explicit example of what Chesterton fears for the mystic. As he exercises too great a personal control he attempts to avoid the existence of his limitations, to become God. Stylistically, he attempts absolute communication of the idea which is impossible since man cannot create *ex nihilo*. As a result his art fails. The corollary is also true: if art fails to communicate, it indicates a spiritual lapse. The social function of the mystic therefore guarantees his sanity.

The book *William Blake* reiterates Chesterton's belief that while the denial of "materialism" is valuable, the disregard of the material can lead to a thing being separated from its essence. The critic has also realized that the black and white mystic, who entirely separates heaven and earth, is peculiarly open to this disregard. He never allows the connection of the material and spiritual; only portraying them as existing simultaneously but not transcended. The material places necessary limits on the understanding of the essence by the mystic, and the highest spiritualism is to affirm those limits and that material. If the object is separated from its essence the idea becomes human theory forced onto identity, which is Chesterton's concept of degenerate fantasy: debased Platonism. Man
places himself in the position of God and either recognizes his failure and is criminal in continuing in that position, or he goes mad. The artistic question is still the original one: How far can man exercise his creativity without blaspheming and claiming to be God? But Chesterton has now gone a long way towards answering it.

The studies of Shaw and Blake express Chesterton's respect for, yet qualification of the powers of the black and white mystic; but also hint at another form of mysticism. He makes a statement in George Bernard Shaw that the English half-believe their fiction; yet the logic of the Irish makes them completely separate the two. William Blake contains a second statement about English mystics like Shakespeare and Keats, and Irish ones like Blake. The English mystics who are in Chesterton's view non-Platonic writers, fuse yet simultaneously separate the material and spiritual, whereas the Irish only separate the two. It is important to realize that the criticism of the Irish is here criticism of the Irish puritan. With this in mind we can turn to Irish Impressions in which the author describes in detail the Irish puritan. The puritan has "something in the mind . . . stronger than everything outside it". Yet since "that strange element of wonder, which is the soul of all the arts . . . depends upon the sub-ordination of the self to a glory existing beyond it" they cannot write poetry. In William Blake he notes that their traditions and allegories are intellectual, based on the law and the military; as such they may always lose their

50 Irish Impressions, p. 219.
traditional value and be reduced to mere logic. It helps to look at the description of the Irish Catholics in assessing the positive values that he seeks in the English mystics. The Irish Catholics, because they are subordinate to God, can write poetry. Their tradition is Catholic Christianity, a non-intellectual ritual which cannot be reduced to human logic alone. It always maintains vital traditional values and therefore cannot lose touch with the people. It is the use of Christian ritual which maintains traditional values and social communication, that Chesterton sees in the English mystics.

Chesterton has progressed from saying in *Orthodoxy* that allegory is necessary for adequate expression of external authority, to saying that ritual is necessary so that allegory is not debased into self-centred fantasy. Further, he states that the Catholic creed is the only one able to provide an authority that can transcend the limitations of both allegory and ritual in sacrament. But in Chesterton's eyes Christianity goes even further: Because it allows man to live poetry, the pure artist becomes the living man, the fusion of religion, morality and expression. His life is his art, it needs no material transformation. Yet, while this is possible in the life of a saint for example, Chesterton makes clear that it is not an avenue for the average man. It is also on this basis that Chesterton says that the greatest artists are unconscious of their symbols, what they take for granted is more

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51 "Introduction to Great Expectations", ACCD, p. 204, 1907.
important than what they say. Because they do not consciously control there is no danger of distortion through the imposition of individual theories. Yet the art would be careless and potentially immoral if there were no Christian sacramental background unconsciously present. The attitude causes him to call Milton:

an almost solitary example of a man of magnificent genius whose greatness does not depend at all upon moral earnestness, or upon anything connected with morality. His greatness is a style, and a style which seems to be unusually separate from its substance . . . In all this I am in a sense arguing against myself; for all my instincts, as I have said, are against the aesthetic theory that art so great can be wholly irreligious.

However, Chesterton realizes that mystics, who have a duty to communicate, are not pure artists and neither are they great artists. They must necessarily use the analogical mode of communication. Indeed he realizes that most people are neither pure nor great artists; and therefore most people have a responsibility to consciously control through a ritual which does not distort truth; most people have to exercise a critical faculty with the artistic to ensure the communication of their perception. Chesterton knows that he too is neither a pure nor a great artist. What he has is a totally unpretentious belief that he has some mystic knowledge to convey about the wonder of the world; and he has arrived, in his development of allegory to verbalize ritual at a mode which he thinks will convey this truth without distortion.

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Chapter VII
The idea that the pure artist expresses his meaning through living is one that Chesterton explores at length in the novel Manalive. He places the pure artist in tandem with the mystic artist. The former is unconscious of verbal meaning, expressing his identity through ritual actions. The latter is conscious of a need to find a mode to express the nature of identity, and communicate his understanding of it. Chesterton combines the pure artist who has no verbal obligations to society, and the mystic artist who must communicate analogically through sound, speech or matter. The two artists each assume one half of the duality of the artist found in The Man Who Was Thursday. The pure artist is primarily creative, while the mystic artist primarily interpretive.

The background of Chesterton's previous novels helps to explain the division between the artist and critic in Manalive. Early in his career we encountered the dissatisfaction with emblem which led to an inclusion of metaphor in The Wild Knight. A greater control over metaphor was exercised in The Napoleon of Notting Hill as if the author were aware of its potential power. The awareness was reflected in the parallel social actions he explored in the novel. However, the initial drive is there. Although emblem is unsatisfactory it is used because it directly stands for an external; it indicates the artist's limitations even if it lessens his power. To prevent emblem itself from being personally distorted
Chesterton attempted to use allegory in *The Ball and the Cross*. He tried to use the emblem with the enigma in the character of Michael, but failed because the allegory was not clear. *The Man Who Was Thursday* is exciting because one can sense Chesterton's recognition of the danger in playing with forms he has rejected as anarchic. The emblem of the first three chapters and the ritual of the last three encloses the danger of these anarchic forms. It is the ritual that provides the meaning in the book and the satisfaction.

However, it was Syme's critical side which finally interpreted Sunday's analogy and found meaning through the revelation at the end of the novel. The revelation also gave him an identity that justified the value of his own artistic symbols. The criticism of the intervening years until 1912 and *Manalive*, led Chesterton to see the Christian "living" artist as the only pure expression. What is important about *Manalive* is that it is a statement of the author's firm belief in his own need of verbal communication, and in his role of man as a literary artist and critic. It not only sets the pattern for all his later work, but also includes within it the root of his mature political, social and critical thought.

The novel is divided into two parts, each with five chapters. The first part begins with a group of people in a guest-house. Their community is suddenly interrupted by the arrival of Innocent Smith, an old school-friend of
one of the guests. His vast energy and unorthodox celebration of life turn the routine of the house into a series of hilarious games. Having spent a day with the guests, doing ridiculous things, Innocent proposes to one of the women. The proposal so annoys and worries a close friend that she sends for a psychiatric doctor to commit him. Soon after, she too is caught up in the wild spirit of the day which results in a rush of proposals, all the guests being paired off. However, the psychiatric doctor arrives with another doctor anyway. The first thing to happen is Innocent apparently shooting at the doctor. At this point a long discussion takes place about what they should do. The two doctors claim that they have evidence which would allow them to take Smith away and put him in an insane asylum. However, Michael Moon the other most prominent character in the novel, persuades them to hold a trial at the house. The second part of the book consists of Smith's trial on four counts, defended by Michael Moon and prosecuted by one of the doctors. The trial ends with his acquittal; but the novelist, rather than conclude in such an abrupt manner, finishes weakly on a sentimental note with advice to those about to be married.

Innocent Smith and Michael Moon are the two main characters. Smith is more simple a figure because he "is"; he always expresses a consistent identity. Moon, on the other hand, changes his position during the course of the
novel. The reader is introduced to Smith by way of a telegram which he sent to his school-time friend Arthur Inglewood. The telegram reads: "Man found alive with two legs"¹. The message is enigmatic, reminiscent of Sunday's messages to the policemen in The Man Who Was Thursday. As with those messages, this one is interpreted individually by each different character. The interpretations indicate a lot about the character in question. The psychiatric doctor Warner, who is briefly visiting at the beginning of the book, says rationally "Even a baby does not expect to find a man with three legs" (16). Significantly, when Smith appears tumbling over the garden wall he is "a figure like a flying wheel of legs, as in the shield of the Isle of Man" (17); the figure on the shield has three legs. From the start Warner has condemned himself by being too logical, by excluding the non-rational possibilities and trying to explain everything with his own human understanding.

Once Smith has arrived there are many details about him which we can place and interpret, but the novelist refrains from any direct explanation of the character. One of the first things Innocent says is addressed to Warner: "Always wear uniform, even if it's shabby uniform. Ritualists may always be untidy . . . It's the symbol that counts, old cock" (20-1). He is incredibly active,

running around the garden, climbing trees and leaping about after lost hats. His activity leaves him little time for words; his speech is broken, fragmented, only containing the words essential to suggest meaning with few articles and connectives. When he describes one of the guests he says, "magnificent, isn't she? Go close to her — hear military music going by" (28). The reaction is one of direct experience as if he actually hears the music; this is emphasized by Inglewood's response to the phrase which is less direct "the phrase about military music moved him queerly, as if he had heard those distant drums" (29).

Smith also speaks in rhyme; and one should note the importance of this to Chesterton. He says elsewhere that energy is an attempt at harmony; if we were "real enough we should all talk in rhyme". Later in his career the appreciation of song becomes a more sophisticated argument that rhythm is a moral description of similarity; rhyme itself is the perfect expression of dogma in that it communicates identity. When Innocent is asked who wrote his song he says "No one will ever write it" (43). It is his natural expression. At the end of the first chapter, in the act of handing a visiting card to Inglewood, the wind whips it out of his hand. The readers and guests are left without definite knowledge of his real name, and Inglewood's later attempt to discover it fail.

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3 FF, pp. 6 and 9.
On the morning after his arrival Smith begins to create practical jokes. He turns each person's hobby into an institution. In the end these "fictions returned upon themselves and were finished like a song" (38), except the joke about the High Court of Beacon. The Court was the idea of the failed-lawyer-cum-journalist Michael Moon. He makes it a "parody on the pompous anomalies of English law" (39). Although Moon throws off the idea "with the detachment of a political humourist, Smith really caught hold of it with the eagerness of an abstract philosopher" (39-40). Smith recognizes its potential as ritual, its serious meaning in practice as it pronounces justice. He argues for its traditional value which Moon degrades with a cold intellectualism. Despite the novelist's refusal to explain, we know from all the details and actions that Innocent is nameless, a ritualist, stripped of usual expression, very physical, and breaking all conventional habits and interpretations: much like Chesterton's qualifications for the pure "living" artist. It is not surprising then that when his name is found out at the end of Part One it is "Manalive" (85).

The identification made by Michael Moon lies at the end of a series of revelations. If one follows then they not only establish Smith's meaning but also define Moon himself. The reader is introduced to Moon as a cynical Irishman; he is a failed barrister and now a journalist.
The first clue to his character comes from his interpretation of the enigmatic telegram. He does not take it literally but immediately searches for a meaning beyond the superficial nonsense. The second insight results from his impulse to understand Innocent Smith when he appears. The impulse is preceded by a purely spontaneous remembering of two lines from Shakespeare which in the light of later incidents aptly represent Smith. While Warner says nothing and Inglewood feebly suggests that Smith must be his old school-friend, Moon is asking him what he does for a living, and what his purpose is (21). Later that night Moon and Inglewood end up on the roof of the house discussing their lives and the Irishman describes his initial state of mind as impulsive but "tame", caught by convention and habit, hugging a routine.

The day of practical jokes introduces the "triumph of crisis" (9) in the form of Innocent Smith. Crisis demands choice, and choice means exercise of will and discovery of identity. For Moon, the crisis is centred around the High Court of Beacon. The choice he has to make is whether he should take it seriously, as Smith does, or not. The course to this decision forms much of the first half of the novel. After Smith's proposal of marriage, Moon is asked what he thinks of him. He answers that Smith is sane while the rest of them are mad. He says, "Madness does not come by breaking out, but by giving in; by settling down in some dirty, little, self-
repeating circle of ideas; by being tamed" (44). Civilization's conventions are responsible for distortion of real boundaries and identity. When asked if what he has said is true, he replies, "Not literally true of course . . . only really true. An allegory, shall we say? a social satire" (45). Yet the fact of Smith's sanity is true, and needed to be verbally communicated through allegory to be understood.

Moon's next perception is that Smith is practical. He compares the effect of this knowledge to a ton of bricks being let down on his head. Smith's practical jokes were valuable actions that represented truth, that let the others wander "into a world of facts" (50). While Moon has been working this out, Smith's presence has also affected the other characters. They have all proposed to each other, and now in celebration they dance. At first each individual moves separately in "leaps and pulsations of objectless energy" (54), and then they dance together "half laughing and quite ritually" (54). Their dance is the expression of Smith's effect on them; a simple, physical ritual of joy. It breaks up suddenly when Dr. Warner re-appears to take Smith away.

During Warner's search for Smith, Moon expands humorously on what he thinks Smith is. He suggests that he is the embodiment of youthful inspiration, and that:

his innocence was too close to the unconscious of inanimate things not to melt back at a mere touch into the mild hedges and heavens. (58)
Although he is right about the unconscious innocence, the idea of Smith, he is verging on the mistake of thinking that Smith does not materially exist. When Innocent appears after shooting at Warner, Inglewood's reaction emphasizes the solidity of the man in a description reminiscent of the effect of mystic art. 

He:

had time to feel once more what he had felt when he saw the other lovers standing on the lawn — the sensation of a certain cut and coloured clearness that belongs rather to the things of art than to the things of experience ... All these [things] seemed unnaturally distinct and definite. They existed, like symbols, in an ecstasy of separation. (59)

While Smith's arrest is being discussed, Moon has been thinking. He has stood by the gate to the street, and now refuses to let the two doctors and Smith pass through. As if he too experienced Inglewood's feeling of wonder at the actuality of their surroundings, he suddenly recognizes the possibility of a real High Court of Beacon. He is now not just intellectually but "morally certain there's some blunder, or some joke, or some allegory" (73), beyond Smith's shooting at Warner. After much debate, he points out that Smith could have killed them all as they stood there talking, but he has not. The common-sense behind this remark "exploded silently underneath all their minds" (78), and they intuitively know he is innocent. The High Court of Beacon is initiated not to pass judgement but to inquire into the meaning of the man.
Before the trial begins Moon talks to Inglewood to convince him that he understands Smith. He says that he "began with an intuition", but now he is sure. The Irishman then proceeds with an extensive description of the function of analogy in allegory and ritual. The explanations start with hieroglyphics and likens them to riddles. They are both plain in colour and shape but the meaning eludes one. Dances are similar but even harder to understand. Moon has realized that Innocent speaks very little, "that all he really did was actions"; and says that he is figurative (83). Finally he comes to the conclusion that "Innocent Smith is not a madman - he is a ritualist. He wants to express himself, not with his tongue, but with his arms and legs . . . All other jokes have to be noisy - . . . the only silent jokes are the practical jokes. Poor Smith, properly considered, is an allegorical practical joker" (83-84). In understanding Smith, Moon has been performing the function of a critic; consciously explaining the meaning of the actions. This could not have been done if the intellectual process of understanding Smith had not been supplemented by the experience of wonder at the actuality of the world. What happens to Moon at his moment of crisis is a conversion, specifically a Christian conversion. In Orthodoxy the five tenets of Chesterton's belief only satisfied by Christianity, begin with the statement that the world is only explained by a miracle that reveals the wonder of the world. The others follow
necessarily from this. Moon experiences this wonder and is turned from an intellectual mystic into a Christian mystic. When this happens he is able to choose, and to find identity in the act of exercising externally inspired will. The ability to perform an act of will allows him to understand the concept of ritual, because they both involve a recognition of human limitation. He can therefore understand Smith and choose to express ritual through the allegory of law infused with the concept of Christian justice: to pardon a man even if guilty.

To summarize, Innocent Smith is man alive, the unconscious artist expressing meaning in living. He is the fusion of religion, morality and expression. He brought freedom to the people of the house because of the inspiration speaking through his actions. Chesterton notes in an essay that, "liberty is the god in man, or, if you like the word, the artist". His unconscious artistic role was to provide institutions or rituals to express meaning. Those without Christian ritual collapsed; the one with it did not. Moon at first is the puritan intellectual mystic explaining logically; but after his choice he becomes a Christian mystic admitting the non-rational and understanding religious ritual. His role is conscious; he is partly critic not pure artist, and he communicates his understanding of meaning and value through the conscious allegory of Christian justice.

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relationship of Smith and Moon can be clarified with reference to an essay called "The Thing". While Chesterton insists elsewhere that all good ideas seek embodiment, he warns against following form out of habit's sake. He says that:

The vitality and recurrent victory of Christendom have been due to the power of the Thing to break out from time to time from its enveloping words and symbols. Without this power all civilizations tend to perish under a load of language and ritual. Smith is the "Thing" that breaks out, while Moon is the mystic artist who tries to communicate through inspired allegory.

Part One of Manalive was entitled "The Enigmas of Innocent Smith". Innocent's behaviour is an enigma figuring forth truth through his actions; and the chapters present the responses of all the characters to something that they do not completely understand. The second part of the novel is appropriately called "The Explanations of Innocent Smith". In it, the characters having recognized the existence of truth, try to assess what that truth is. The trial that takes place is a battle between the forces of pure intellect and those of Christian mysticism. The second doctor who represents the prosecution is a rationalist. He says that his "authority is based on masses of accurate detail . . . It deals with a region in which things can be handled and tested" (95-96). The restriction

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5 Ibid, p. 6, 14/1/11.
of his logic to merely human understanding is an example of what intellectual mysticism can be debased to. The prosecution evidence obscures rather than illuminates meaning. The epitome of this attitude is Dr. Warner. At the end of the trial he is described as a dead man, no longer alive to the things that make living worthwhile. Michael Moon, the defence lawyer, argues on the basis of "a fellow's religion" (95). As far as he is concerned all "facts" may be individually interpreted; the only absolute meaning for them must lie in referring to an external authority. In presenting his evidence Moon emphasizes the personal perspective to introduce a partially objective viewpoint by exposing the prejudice or personal limitation that is there.

Each charge revolves around an aspect of the Christian mystic. The first piece of evidence from the defence begins by saying, "a mystic is one who holds that two worlds are better than one" (103). The account goes on to present two points of view, that of ritual action and of allegorical explanation. The division underlines the point that without the actions the meaning would be valueless and vice versa. The initial charge is that Smith shot at the Warden of Brakespeare college; and the defence is that he did so not to kill but to wake the Warden up to the fact that he wanted to live. Primary in the mind of the Christian mystic is the worth of life, that makes suicide an ultimate sin. The second charge is
that he stole things from houses; and the defence shows that he only stole from himself. During the evidence it is noted that Innocent acted this way because he believed in the solemnity of revels, he was not:

a mere practical joker. His eccentricities sprang from a static fact of faith, in itself mystical, and even childlike and Christian . . . His creed of wonder was Christian by this absolute test; that he felt it continually slipping from himself as much as from others. (140)

He stole from himself because he needed to affirm the importance of the things he owned.

Having proved the value of life and things, the third and fourth charges prove the value of home and marriage. The third case produces four letters in evidence that he abandoned his home, but they add up to the fact that he left home in order to return. As he travels across the world he encounters points of view with which he argues and reestablishes his own beliefs. First he argues for revolution and the re-newal of life against the rationale of convention. Then he argues that the value of home is higher than that of the state. The third states that home is one place in which one worships one god, and that loyalty to it is more important than loyalty to many places and many gods. The final dispute says that the worship of home and its implied limits is more exciting than the worship of eternity. The prosecution says that the letters are "fairy-tales" (165), and so they are in that they communicate through allegory an absolute fact. The
last charge, of bigamy, is resolved by proving that Smith keeps re-marrying his own wife to keep the value of their marriage alive.

Moon's conclusion is that Innocent has a "spiritual power" to distinguish "between custom and creed. He has broken the conventions, but he has kept the commandments" (183) Although he seems to have broken tradition what he has really broken is outmoded habit. Because he is Christian and can "live" poetry, his life sustains true tradition. Moon's legal allegory expresses the meaning of the living ritual. The allegories of evidence used within the form of a trial are means of communicating his understanding of Innocent's actions. But, although the mystic can present the logic of the actions, a final acceptance of the justice of the pardon cannot be made without belief in the Christian creed. As he has said, it is only with reference to the external authority of God that the evidence carries absolute value.

The communication on a narratorial level parallels that within the story. Chesterton as a novelist avoids the use of symbol. The first half of the novel is a mixture of emblem and riddle. There are brief impressionistic passages to create a feeling of uncertainty, and longer descriptive sections about the actions of the characters, but they are not as dominant as the other elements. He uses emblem to establish the conventions from which the characters must be released. For example he
provides an extensive passage concerning the hats worn by the men and says, "their position, touching hats, was somewhat typical of them" (13). The names of the characters are indicative but not totally explanatory of their personalities; "Moon" is connected with the poet or the man who wants to express himself, Inglewood as a confused and shy human being. Even the titles are enigmatic: "The Garden of the God" is the fourth chapter heading, and we cannot know what "God" until the end of the book explains the meaning of Smith. The second part is a mixture of Moon's connecting descriptions and the evidence. All the allegories function on the narratorial level as well. Just as the allegories speak for Smith, so they speak for Chesterton. Here the title headings are explanatory rather than enigmatic: "The Round Road" contains the answer to the question, "why did the man abandon his home?", for the road leads him back again.

If we relate the ideas of the novel to the philosophy of the novelist, most of the concepts stated in Orthodoxy are apparent. Most important is the idea of revelation, that Moon understands only through some miracle suddenly happening to him. Together with this is the idea of identity, that man can only know himself if provided with revelation. Moon's understanding of Innocent is coincident with new knowledge, which he then has a responsibility to communicate. The revelation takes place in the first half of Manalive, and the communication of understanding in the
second. The division of the book reflects the mystic duality of essence or spiritual showing itself in material, and the human aspect relating to the divine. Just as the mystic must include both yet separate them, in the complete existence of the novel Chesterton has fused the essence with the material, the enigma with the explanation, yet kept them apart. The fusion is in the creed that lies behind the philosophy, just as the belief in the creed was the only basis for Moon's justification of Innocent. What should be noted, and will be expanded on later, is that Manalive is fundamentally the form for all Chesterton's detective stories. The detective story becomes an allegory for him to communicate through because it so clearly contains the elements necessary for his expression of Christian ritual.

The critical work The Victorian Age in Literature, extends the need for ritual expression in art into the fields of politics and society. Chesterton begins by examining what he calls the Victorian "compromise". The compromise consists initially of two forces: The middle classes coming to a compromise with the existence of the aristocracy, and the aristocracy deciding to recruit new members from the middle classes. The social expression which results has three evils: Puritan politics without puritan theology; constitutional patching up; and admiration for industrial wealth. In Chesterton's terms

6 The Victorian Age in Literature (London: Williams and Norgate, 1913), p. 31.
this meant limited intellectual thought, out-worn conventions, and a vulgar materialism dependent on the suppression of the masses. Ultimately it resulted in "the cheapness and narrowness of its conscious formulae; the richness and humanity of its unconscious tradition" (31). The statement denounced not only the Victorian style of living, but also their style of art.

The analysis of Macaulay is essentially an analysis of the Victorian compromise in action. It begins by saying that:

There were two Macaulays, a rational Macaulay who was generally wrong, and a romantic Macaulay who was almost invariably right. (31)

The rational Macaulay was the result of "dull parliamentarism" which festered a small and narrow consciousness. Politically he believed in the concept of progress, of things getting better. The attitude reflected the Puritan ideal of absolute human perfection, and tended to disregard tradition. He also advocated complete toleration which backed up the utilitarian theory of everyone with a perfect niche for maximum happiness, which is man-imposed fate and a debasing of puritan "pre-destination". On the other hand, the romantic Macaulay had a "festive antiquarianism", a greatness of mind that possessed a passionate love of history and tradition; and an enthusiasm for wild risks and great occurrences. In the event the small Macaulay conquered the great. He gave way to the presence of Benthamism which became the central Victorian philosophy,
containing no spiritualism or mysticism. (39)

Chesterton's study of Victorian literature which follows the analysis of Macaulay, discusses the attacks each author made on the utilitarian centre of Victorianism, and the failures that resulted, socially because they completely separated the masses from the government and artistically because they separated their matter from their style.

At heart, Chesterton presents the Victorian compromise as a perversion of puritanism. He justifies his discussion of the dominant creed in his introduction. "Mere chronological order", he says, "... is almost as arbitrary as alphabetical order" (8). Artists must be linked to their morals and creeds because "with other creeds they would have been, for literary purposes, other individuals" (8-9). The separation between matter and spirit, masses and government, began with the puritan creed. It is a personal creed where individual judgements and explanations are important because they reflect the inspiration of a personal God. Being identical with Chesterton's previous qualms about the Irish puritans, the ideas are open to potential despotism and distortion. The critic believes that whatever exists on the level of creed will manifest itself in life and art.

Chesterton felt that the puritan concept of being "chosen" leads to the existence of an aristocracy; the personal basis of the creed leads to a possibility of
political despotism that does not express the needs of the masses. Its worship of industrialism is worship of materialism without a profound spiritualism. It results in utilitarianism which seeks to improve only substance not spirit. Artistically, the purely intellectual control leads to a separation of the style from the content. It is potentially distorting; and since it does not communicate on a ritualistic basis to the masses, it creates an intellectual aristocracy. The art holds up the compromise in spite of its material attack on it. The separation between style and content indicates an intellectual aristocracy which sustains the idea of a political aristocracy that lies at the root of the compromise.

The central examination of the rise and fall of capitalism is indissolubly linked with a criticism of style. Chesterton was as convinced that puritanism was responsible for the rise of a capitalist aristocracy and that was oligarchical and oppressive⁷, as he was that it produced a literature communicating only by human rationalism. The book examines the Victorian prose, poetry and novels to point out how, in each case, the separated style and matter caused their failure. Among the men of letters, Chesterton finds that their intellect interferes too much. Carlyle's style has a sense of humour, and verbally considered the "French Revolution was more revolutionary than the real French Revolution" (21). But his philosophy had no humour

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at all; it remained "a heavy Teutonic idealism, absurdly aware of the complexity of things" (53). Ruskin "as an artist in prose . . . is one of the most miraculous products of the extremely poetical genius of England" (65). But the ability to do this came from an appreciation of medieval art without the more profound medieval morality. The result was that "he talked the most cold common sense about political economy, which was no business of his at all" (68). Dickens alone fused the two because "he had no abstractions" (87). He was forced to communicate his attack on the compromise with the realities he understood, and in doing so unconsciously communicated what was wrong far more effectively:

Dickens was a mob – and a mob in revolt; he fought by the light of nature; he had not a theory but a thirst. (81)

As a result his attack was the most successful.

The study of Victorian novels continues the idea of fusion being necessary for success. Eliot had humour and wisdom in much of her writing, but because she was a rationalist she could only "conjure up storms in the conscious" (108) mind, only satisfy the intellectual curiosity. The critic looks at Dickens and Thackeray as the two novelists of the period, but both, especially Thackeray, are condemned for pardoning too often. They do not insist on the judgement and limitation that might have broken the Victorian compromise. Among the poets Chesterton points mainly to Tennyson and Browning.
Tennyson he laments as a brilliant poet who "could not think up to the height of his own towering style" (165); he was a creature of the compromise and could not see beyond it. Browning is better off in that he at least had a profound philosophy that matched his grotesque and vivid style. But there is a reservation about his lack of knowledge on a broader plain, his concern for personal, at the expense of social truth.

The later Victorians withdraw from the attack on the compromise. Shaw and Kipling side with the material, neglecting the spiritual. The result is socialism in one case and jingoism in the other. Neither of which can succeed because they have no creed to sustain them. Finally it is Henry James who leads to what Chesterton wants to say. James has his thrill, "not so much in symbol or mysterious emblem as in the balance of interventions and protections between mind and mind" (229). Communication without the limitation of form is impossible; the body must be presented along with the mind for the mind to have meaning. The statement that "the presence of soul and substance together involves one of the two or three things which most Victorians did not understand - the thing called a sacrament" (228) sums up the criticism contained in the book. Sacrament is an admission of human limitation and an exercise of will; it also means using the tradition of the masses. The social statement of the book is that if one is closer to representing the masses, one must use a sacramental style; and if sacrament is used, there can be
no compromise because it implies that forces are kept in a tension. Therefore if the writer is closer to the masses then there can be no Victorian compromise. The sacrament to affect the communication in art is the use of allegory based on catholic ritual, and in politics, democracy.

The criticism of Victorian literature is a summary of Chesterton's development. The writers fail as artists when they do not use allegory and ritual, thereby failing to fuse matter and spirit; they fail as politicians because they are not truly democratic. Because they will not admit an external authority they are humanly limited; they cannot maintain the essential balance of differing forces, and are forced into compromise. The basic reason that they do not use sacrament is that they are puritan.

Chesterton notes elsewhere that the puritan principle was "the anti-sacramental principle . . . It applies equally . . . to art, to letters". It is interesting to note that such an interpretation is at the root of J. Hillis Miller's study of Victorian literature. He notes that the industrialization of man is a result of man re-creating the world in his own image. Then he goes on to say that the process occurred because a fundamental re-interpretation of the Eucharist by the Protestants, divorced man from "analogical participation" with the divine

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and replaced it by "modern poetic symbolism"^9 centred in man alone. In Chesterton's view if the Victorians had been Catholic Christians they would have accepted the existence of an external authority; the matter and the soul would have existed separately yet been fused in living. This would have made possible democracy and ritual, and destroyed the compromise. Chesterton's own changing religion parallels the political and artistic changes he would have liked to see. In his own case it led him from liberalism to distributism, and from emblem and metaphor to allegorical expression of ritual. However these points have been exaggerated to examine Chesterton's ideas. The personal basis of the judgements is hardly stressed at all in The Victorian Age in Literature. The book remains one of Chesterton's best works, indicating a critical balance and a peculiarly perceptive insight into the central Victorian writers. The balance derives from a balance in his whole life which was soon to break; but the critical tenets established here provide a constant platform for the work of the next ten years.

In The Flying Inn, written in 1914, Chesterton makes his personal fear of creeds other than Catholic the obvious basis for political and artistic degeneration. The opposing forces are Moslem against Christian, and East against West. Lord Ivywood, the antagonist, represents the result

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of an East and West compromise. The plot is weak, only existing to provide an excuse for the ideas. A Moslem called Amnon is shown rising in power from a promenade haranguer to Lord Ivywood's assistant under the pretext of bringing universal peace, but really as an infiltration for war by the East. Ivywood begins by closing down pubs and decorating his house in an Islamic manner. In reaction against the pub closing is publican Pump and his Irish friend Dalroy, just back from a war in the Middle East. The new law states that only where there is an inn sign displayed can alcohol be sold. So the two men travel across England, setting up their sign and distributing their supply of rum. The law also states that the government can grant special licences for signs, especially for aristocratic patronage. When the masses realize that they are being discriminated against they fight back. It is just in time, for the Eastern powers have invaded England. The sub-plot to the main action involves a woman, Lady Joan. She is an aristocrat but she loves the Irish Dalroy; and although tempted towards accepting Ivywood, she does finally choose the Irishman. The novel ends after the war with a picture of her happiness with Dalroy, and with Ivywood insane.

The characters clearly represent the major issues of Chesterton's belief. They are not "people" but emblems. Amnon stands for the creed of the Crescent that is based on "the principle of perpetual growth towards an implied
and infinite perfection. Under this creed symbolism is not allowed. Because the possibility of perfection exists nothing else will suffice. Since it is impossible for them to transcend human limitation, they will not submit to the humiliation of admitting it, and produce nothing which attempts representation. Ammon's expressive style is found in the speeches he makes. Their technique depends upon twisting the literal meaning or the sound of the words, denying their growth through the language. Lady Joan notes that:

in every case what he knew was a fragmentary fact. In every case what he did not know was the truth behind the fact. What he did not know was the atmosphere. What he did not know was the tradition. (111)

His habits and arguments are pointed in the direction of practicality and utilitarianism, never of ritual communication and spiritual needs.

Ivywood is a far more detailed figure, and develops to an extreme position under Ammon's influence. He begins with the creed of perfection and believes that he can create a better world. The author makes a rather obvious point about Ivywood's rejection of the medieval catholic chapel (100) as not doing the family any credit, implying again a puritan creed. The puritan and Islamic background both lead him to believe in the concept of destiny. As

As he grows more powerful, he develops a love of fate, a belief that he was destined to be great (286). This becomes a belief that he can be a Nietzschean Superman. The final page of the book presents Ivywood as totally insane because he believes he is God. Politically the man is an oligarch. It is he who creates the law that allows special licences for drinking to be given to the aristocracy. He makes the comment:

I do not pretend to believe in democracy, as you know; but I think it would be extremely unsettling and incalculable to destroy representative government. (260)

However, he is a complete despot. When he is faced with the possibility of argument from the House on one of his bills, he cunningly evades it, saying:

Debate is a most necessary thing: but there are times when it rather impedes than assists parliamentary government. (202)

The attitudes Ivywood takes are a logical outcome of his personal creed. They are the statements of a man who believes that he is the absolute standard.

As an artist Ivywood has the facility to speak exquisitely. The point is made that although he could make ideas "blossom into verbal beauty: yet his face remained dead while his lips were alive" (13-14). There is no connection between the physical man and the words he uses. Later on he is referred to as a poet who created "a poetry that never touched earth; the poetry of Shelley rather than Shakespeare" (118). It is an important
detail that links him with the Platonists rather than the Aristotelians in Chesterton's mind and therefore with the potentially self-centred fantasists, not with the material mystics. As he becomes more influenced by Ammon he is described not as a poet at all but as an aesthete, a man who does not care for limits (147). Ultimately he becomes the patron of "Post-Futurist" art in which there are no definite shapes because there can be no idols, and no sacramental allegories that admit limitation. The function of the art is to completely change. But as someone at the art exhibition suggests, "A thing that is changed entirely has not changed at all. It has no bridge of crisis" (235). The art manages to avoid choice, to evade acts of will, to deny identity; yet "this prime fact of identity is the limit set on all living things" (236). Because Ivywood denies limitation he fulfills Chesterton's definition of the madman and becomes insane.

The two protagonists are far less well-developed as characters, partially because they do not verbalize much, but also because Chesterton seems to be more concerned with the dangers of what Ivywood represents, than the strength of Catholic belief. Dalroy is our Catholic Irishman. He is described briefly as a "mixture of cynicism and quixotry" (12). He acts rather than speaks, and communicates mainly through song. He has a combination of the characteristics of both Innocent and Moon. His friend Humphrey Pump is the "kind" Englishman who communicates through gossip "so allusive as to almost amount to reticence"
The insistence on their non-verbal basis contrasts strongly with the continual use of words by Ammon and Ivywood. The same distinction occurs between two minor characters: the journalist Hibbs, who uses language the opposite of Innocent's where "everything come[s] to depend upon the conjunctions" (83), and the poet Wimpole who is converted to true poetry when he puts aside his preoccupation "with words rather than things" (174). The protagonists live ritual and communicate through actions, and finally oppose active war to Ivywood's written law.

One of the more important characters is Joan. She is the only person in whose temptations to Eastern mysticism is a conscious issue. Even though she is an aristocrat she is described as being very alive under the artificiality (96). At first she is tempted by the pure beauty of Ivywood's world of art, but then realizes that it has no humour. Her sense of humour is a significant characteristic because Chesterton allies it with man's humility because it can "dethrone him from his official dignity" 11. Joan is also tempted by the respect she gives Ivywood for his manifestation of will; but she comes to realize that it is human will and that it is operating on her, and no human being has the right to operate his personal will on another. Finally she is tempted by the courage of the hero until she recognizes that while heroism is good, hero-worship is not. Her growing knowledge of the immoral aspects of Ivywood's creed is an object-lesson in how we

11 "The Flat Freak", AD, pp. 200-1.
too should recognize the dangers; but the novelist leaves ambiguous whether she chooses Dalroy of her own accord, because the events of the book sweep her away with them.

The novel portrays the results of the creed of perfection and destiny. It leads to oligarchy, despotism, loss of tradition; to pictures with no shapes, no limits; and ultimately to madness. Against this is catholic Christianity, with its admission of limits, its humility, its mass power and tradition. The book is unsatisfying except as a crossword that fulfills Chesterton's ideas as we work out the puzzle. Stylistically it is very uneven, like a collection of individual short stories strung together by a weak plot. Ideologically the novel is also unbalanced. Although Chesterton gives dignity to the Pasha and Eastern culture, his extreme personal hatred of compromise makes the character of Ammon vile to the extent that one feels that the author's judgement has lapsed. Also the off-hand fusion of Moslem and Jew is totally dishonest. Chesterton knew that the Moslem tenet of perfection was an anathema to Judaism; yet he combines the two together as if they were one. The effect of this interference of personal feeling is to reduce the validity of his fear concerning potential political and artistic degeneration. He comes very close to doing what he is continually warning against, which is the imposition of his own view on a situation without searching for its true identity.
Chapter VIII
The years 1913 to 1923 yielded many books about historical, political and social criticism. These are similar to *The Flying Inn* in that they concentrate on demonstrations of the applied use of sacrament in all subjects. They also have a tendency to become too stridently personal, especially in their condemnation of Germany during the Great War. The loss in critical objectivity and calibre is probably part of the generally held hypothesis that Chesterton felt a necessity to take over the political and social criticism of his brother Cecil while he was away fighting even though his abilities lay in rather different directions. However, the books do bear out the solidity of his belief; and become interesting in the picture they present of the total interdependence of all aspects of his life.

The extent of the interrelationship of religion, morality and expression is profound. Rather than meticulous argument it is the consistency of detail throughout a vast expanse of writing that is incredible and convincing. The catholic faith is shown to be at the root of democratic and familial morality that stabilizes society. It is also shown to inspire the ritual and allegorical aspects of his expressive mode. As his personal philosophy deepens, we have seen the intimately related use of allegory become more defined in his artistic works. Yet his critical writing also contributes theory and example to the mode. Early in this central period of his life Chesterton had outlined the mystic quest of the critic: To find "the subconscious part
of the author's mind"¹, and to express intelligent response to it in words². He goes on to say that while the great artist may not consciously use a "philosophical symbol", all critics as mystical artists, have to recognize them:

There can be no doubt among sane men that the critic should be allegorical. Spenser may have lost by being less realistic than Fielding. But any good criticism of *Tom Jones* must be as mystical as the *Fairie Queene.*³

The ways in which Chesterton constructs this allegorical expression in his criticism are best illustrated with direct textual examples.

An early image can be found in the first chapter of *Alarms and Discursions*. The author compares his "fragments of fleeting journalism" to the "gargoyles of a definite cathedral". Even though he cannot connect the chaotic fragments, he places his trust in the unifying effect of the cathedral that contains them⁴. The analogy clearly points to the necessary power of God to make sense of his life; and functions expressively as the introduction to a collection of essays which also need overall guidance. The technique is found again and again in the books of the period. *Irish Impressions* is particularly full of analogy. It is always used when the author wishes to impress a feeling on his reader without which the factual background is

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¹ "Introduction to *The Old Curiosity Shop*, ACCD, p. 51, 1907.
² "The Sectarian of Society* *WJ*, p. 76, 11/5/12.
³ "Introduction to *Great Expectations*, ACCD, p. 204, 1907.
⁴ "Introductory: On Gargoyles*, AD,
meaningless. One clear example occurs when he wants to communicate his vehement dislike for the British Empire swallowing smaller states like Ireland and destroying her peasantry. He begins by saying that the Empire may disintegrate because it is only a combination, the peasantry will not because it is a community. The reader is then led explicitly to compare the attack on Ireland to "an attempt to abolish grass". Grass is imagistically related to the peasantry in straightforward terms of their equality, multiplicity, ubiquity and "power to return". But then the author leaves the peasantry behind and speaks only of the grass. He says that to fight grass is to fight God and that man can only:

so mismanage our own city and our own citizenship
that the grass grows in our own streets. And even then it is our streets that will be dead; and the grass will still be alive.\(^5\)

The image has been separated from the initial analogy, and in doing so has become enigmatic, more indicative of the spiritual consequences of the imperial attack. Analogies indicate the relationship between the spiritual and the material aspects of the discourse. Significantly, they are rarely directly connected with the text; the reader must search for any connections himself, although the initial guidance comes from the author. The images are never intrinsically made one with the meaning, but placed by its

\(^5\) Irish Impressions, p. 44.
side as if to suggest its identity not only by its similarity but also by its dissimilarity. Analogy functions by indicating not representing identity, yet because of this is paradoxically closer to identity.

In the newspaper articles this style may sometimes mislead. The power of the initial analogy, which one usually accepts, carries the acceptance over onto the content of the article which may be completely unrelated. This shows a potential for a dangerous imposition of personal will through technique, which Chesterton occasionally abuses. But the very separateness of the analogy from the content often prevents the danger from occurring. A more conscious use of analogy is found in The New Jerusalem of 1920. The book is filled with images such as the people's clothes, or the scenery which are given extensive and sometimes laboured analogical development to indicate the conflicting religions of the town. At one point he specifically states than an anecdote he is using is a "text" for an elusive truth. He describes the artistic appropriateness of the twisted olive tree as "analogous" to Christ's agony. Happily the later works come to use analogy more judiciously and more powerfully. Just as the allegorical expression of this period of Chesterton's life is found in the analogical function of the detective story, so analogical image, anecdote and parable are the necessary

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7 Ibid, p. 211.
and effective techniques for the allegorical expression of the writer's criticism.

The pervasiveness and consistency of Chesterton's allegorical expression indicate the stability of his philosophy. To understand either in a man so little given to general statements about himself, it is helpful to look at other theories of allegory and the basis behind them before going on to examine the more sophisticated theory Chesterton later develops. The subject of allegory is surrounded by a mass of confusions. Only in recent years has it received the serious treatment it deserves, which is probably indicative of a growing return to its use. It is becoming obvious that allegory is an extremely complex subject. To deal with all its manifestations is virtually impossible without doing serious injustice to many of its aspects. However, there are areas of consistency, one being the thirteenth to fifteenth century Christian allegory, which in its later years gets involved in the advances of Renaissance humanism. As it does, it changes not only the nature of its technique but also of its interpretation.

Etienne Gilson has said of Chesterton that he was a Thomist by natural feeling not learning; and indeed one might say that he was a late medieval allegorist by nature not learning. Isabel McCaffrey suggests that one of the main functions of medieval Christian allegory, "making

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8 E. Gilson, a letter to Father Scannell, 7th Jan. 1966, in the Chesterton collection of The Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, Toronto.
sense" of an object, is only possible if "an intelligible 'outer' world and a sense-making 'inner' world are aspects of a single divinely-designed universe." As we have seen, Chesterton has placed himself in such a world. The analogical processes that become possible are second-nature to his perception. Added to this is the position that Chesterton finds himself in, of being a Catholic in what he saw as a primarily humanist environment. Indeed he is far more conscious of using allegory as a severely restricting counter to artistic blasphemy than were the late medieval writers. They had an idea of the lengths to which humanist art could go as Sidney's "Apologie for Poetry" points out when arguing that the poet may create ex nihilo. However, as McCaffrey adds, Sidney does not press this point and balances it by mentioning Man's fall. By contrast, Chesterton felt that he was constantly surrounded on all sides by the potential insanity of humanist modes.

Chesterton's exploration of the modes of nonsense, fancy, emblem and symbol, and his reasons for rejecting them, portray a man intuitively picking his way through a forest underlaid with traps; yet he does finally reach an open landscape beyond. The open vision may not be as artistically and humanly interesting as that of someone caught say, in the noose of fantasy. But Chesterton is personally

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concerned with expressing the divine connection to the world, not with the world as an end in itself. His comments on other modes and final discarding of them are personal assessments he makes based on his own reactions. Yet he also acknowledges that if he were stronger of will, if he were more able to realize the divine part of his humanity, if he were less weak, these modes would be perfectly acceptable. His development of allegory produces a mode which prevents him from making the mistakes that he recognizes in these other stylistic approaches.

Many of the fundamental confusions in critical approaches to allegory seem to rest upon the interpretation of the word "metaphor", especially since C. S. Lewis's Allegory of Love. The traditional use of metaphor is that something can convey part of the experience of reality by being "like" it. Lewis himself seems to have meant "stands for", in other words, an emblem. If we begin with the statement that "every metaphor is an allegory in little" and go on to his definition of allegory as starting "with an immaterial fact . . . and . . . invent[ing] visibil[ia] to express them"\(^\text{12}\), metaphor seems to have a definitely emblematic function. This attitude is, as Lewis points out, based on a Platonic view of the world which says:

If our passions, being immaterial, can be copied by material inventions, then it is possible that our


\(^{12}\) Ibid, p. 46.
material world in its turn is a copy of an invisible world.\textsuperscript{13}

The process is based on imitation and similitude, not on analogy. Chesterton saw emblem as potentially distortable because one can personally impose a "visibilia" on an "immaterial fact" and pervert its true meaning. He too links the process with Platonism, which as we have seen, he comes to distrust because it may present the actual as valuable for its imitation of the invisible, rather than for its own reality.

Not many critics on allegory follow Lewis's use of "metaphor" to a logical end, although some appear to be aware of a potential problem. McCaffrey uses Lewis's vocabulary, but defines metaphor as analogy\textsuperscript{14}. Allegory: The Theory of a Symbolic Mode by Angus Fletcher, recognizes the danger, and throws out the word "metaphor" completely, straightforwardly, substituting for it "emblem"\textsuperscript{15}. The one thing that all these critics, including Chesterton, have in common, is a discarding of the use of "metaphor" as a word which, being "like" reality, can carry the potential of real experience. As such, it may be the basic building block of symbol, and symbol is a primarily individual and relative experience in which the writer relinquishes some control of the work to the reader. The critics agree that symbol is not controlled enough, not clear enough in meaning.

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid, p. 47.
\textsuperscript{14} Spenser's Allegory, p. 16.
to have anything to do with allegory which is supposed to portray truth. Similarly, this is the reason that Chesterton rejects symbol and turns to allegory.

However, if metaphor means "stands for" it can always carry the potential for unreal experience, for fantasy. Lewis does not specifically point this out, but he implies it in his critical work and carries it out in his fiction. He thinks that as opposed to symbol, which may generate many different responses, allegory is valuable because it only generates one. If a symbol creates only one response it is allegory. Lewis equates allegory and fantasy and says that they instigate a controlled unity of approach; but does not seem to differentiate between work that portrays a very personal attitude to truth and work which bases itself, as his does, on an external standard of truth. Gunnar Urang, in an extensive survey of the fantasy of Lewis and his contemporaries, reiterates the Platonic basis of fantasy and equates it with allegory\(^\text{16}\). The survey is flawed by a confusion as to whether allegory functions as a mode or as a genre. At first fantasy is placed between allegory and myth. When it is allegory it is less satisfactory, rather second class. But, allegory itself is shown to be either emblematic or mythical-fantastic. Again the mode only works if it is mythical, if it can be experienced. The distinction implies that allegory can be personally experienced if it is fused with fantasy. It need not be tied to an

absolute standard. This is what happens to Lewis' theory because it is not defined enough. Urging even goes so far, and it is quite alright for a Platonist to do so, as to say that allegorical experience may negate objective experience of the world. One may justifiably impose one's own idea on the world.

The problem in equating fantasy with allegory as far as Chesterton is concerned, is that fantasy is a supremely human genre. He sees it as a matter of invention, of literary technology. As such it persuades people into a specific response to experience, into a pattern of thought. The reader only has what is given, and what is given is limited to the man who invents. Unless the man inventing has absolute responsibility to others there will always be areas of distortion and perversion, even if unconscious. McCaffrey briefly touches on this aspect by saying that "phantasia" is based on the material body of man. It is irrevocably shackled to objects of sense "from which its second class images are derived." Fantasy implies an absolute poetic creativity. Angus Fletcher's fascinating analysis of allegory, also Platonist, gives allegory this absolute fantastic power. The essential step in his allegory is turning the sign of someone into that person and vice versa, which is man acting as God, creating ex nihilo. Significantly he also notes that the process is demonic and magical. For this very potential, Chesterton rejects

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fantasy. He doubted that any man could create responsibly without belief in the standard of an external authority. And he doubted further, that responsibility could be attained unless this external were included in the invention.

Another strand running through the criticism is the conceptual aspect of allegory. Quite often the idea is based on the belief that emblem cannot be distorted, and a definite code relating concepts to words is therefore possible. Lewis differentiates between a symbolic image which is "real" and an allegorical image which is acknowledged "fictional" and fixed\(^{18}\) by the writer. Because of this fixed quality allegory can be used to express conceptual details of absolute morality. Rosamund Tuve although acknowledging that "bad" allegory is only emblematic, does say that language is fundamentally conceptual. Therefore allegory can be used to express subtleties of concepts\(^{19}\).

Again, Urang distinguishes allegorical images which are rigid, abstract and not ambivalent, from the more fluid images of myth. Fletcher's use of emblem as the basis for allegory leads him to see the mode as an "encoding", a diagrammatic expression\(^{20}\).

The conceptual strand in allegorical theory is obviously the "support" for the idea of the validity of a fixed interpretation. However, if the emblem is not fixed, neither

\(^{18}\) The Allegory of Love, p. 45


\(^{20}\) Allegory, p. 178.
is the interpretation. Chesterton's initial experiments with nonsense logic showed him that emblems, conceptual figures, were not fixed in themselves; they needed something more to anchor them. In every critic above, the "something more" is understood if not pointed out. In some cases it is the presence of God, in others man alone. Yet except in the case of Tuve and McCaffrey the neglect of the implications of this "something more" closes the door on certain ideas about allegory that Chesterton opens.

We have seen how opposed Chesterton is to both the purely experiential or the purely conceptual. His view of allegory is peculiarly neither since it is based on the revelation of the divine. It is important to note how fundamentally different this is to current theories of language. Elizabeth Sewell, who has herself written much concerning the technique of nonsense, opens The Orphic Voice with a representative survey of a modern language dilemma which reflects a belief in a post-seventeenth century division between art and science. She points out that science is suffering from a language of logic that will not fulfill its needs. She also says that it finds poetic language inadequate. The basic thesis presented is that scientists do not understand the proper function of poetic language. In her eyes the choice is not between logic and mythology but "between an exclusive mythology which chooses to overlook the body's participation and an inclusive mythology which is prepared . . . to admit the body, the notion of the organism as a whole . . . "

she leaves one with only two alternatives: Prose, as an expression of experience disregarding the self, and poetry, as an expression of experience including the self. The duality she presents is one common to language philosophers of the early twentieth century. Wittgenstein's insistence on discursive "purity" and personal distortion, is an example. One finds Suzanne Langer specifically building her theory around the poles of discursive and symbolic language. But she finally proposes a middle-ground of non-discursive symbols which provide an analogue to logic and are conceptual.

In most cases, while the theories work well within their definitions, which is where they are supposed to work, they do not touch on the primary consideration of Chesterton who is searching for a form neither discursive nor symbolic because he wants to express the divine. Sewell rightly interprets Vico's insistence on myth as the ultimate human activity. Similarly Wittgenstein, at the end of his early, rather narrow Tractatus, says that discursive purity is only possible when discussing human knowledge of the world, not what is external to it such as ethics. Langer is also examining human communication when she speaks of discourse communicating the actual perception of the

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23 The Orphic Voice, p. 24
individual, and symbol communicating virtual experience. Yet even her discussion of ritual as the language of religion holds little in it similar to Chesterton's problem. She agrees with him that ritual is compulsive not propitiatory. She notes that ritual, like primitive expression, does not separate symbol from meaning; and that sacrament is the essential part of ritual because of this. But she attributes this to "naive thinking", to "externalized" fantasy, and to the dominance of the "idea" or concept in our lives. It is important to note that fantasy, although with a different authority from allegory, also lies between the discursive and symbolic. While Chesterton, along with Lewis, Williams and others, agree that sacrament is the only means of expressing the divine, they differ from Langer in accepting as a fundamental truth that sacramental transubstantiation is actual, not virtual. God is not a concept for them. As a result the verbalizing of sacrament becomes a far greater problem.

It is Chesterton's idea of the mystic artist and his wish to relate the divine to the world, that places him outside current theories of expression. Yet this is why, for our purposes, Tuve and especially McCaffrey are far more illuminating concerning allegory than the others. They speak, in the two books used, about a society which takes for granted Chesterton's aim of expressing divinity, but

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26 Philosophy in a New Key, p. 150.
which also accepts the restrictions on artistic form implied by the existence of that divinity. In an exploration into the supposed four levels of medieval Christian allegory, Tuve says that strict allegory "brings us to the view of what we ought to believe". Similarly McCaffrey states that allegory is based on a divinely ordered world. Belief in a divinely ordered world is at the root of Chesterton's Christian mysticism and his development of allegory. Chesterton's rejection of symbol, nonsense, emblem and fantasy is connected to their potential for man to act as god, to believe that he creates the world, to become insane. He is not saying that the modes are immoral in themselves but that they contain the potential for immorality. The function of images as "like" or "being" is dangerously close to absolute creation. This is why analogy which is "parallel to" an object is so important, for parallels never meet. Tuve agrees that "good" Christian allegory provides keys and indications. It is the suggestive and allusive, imperfect nature of allegory that is essential.

The mystic artist recognizes the impossibility of perfectly recreating his experience, yet he has a social responsibility to communicate. The analogical function of allegory is precisely suited to his needs. It is based on the need to verbally express, yet the knowledge that it is impossible to express exactly what one means. McCaffrey's study of allegory in relation to Spenser discusses the

27 Allegorical Imagery p. 15.
28 Ibid, p. 16.
problem not only with clarity, but also with an uncanny similarity to Chesterton. She says that her definition of metaphor as analogy:

is helpful because it includes both the idea of separateness between word and referent and the notion of the referent's inaccessibility without the word.29

The narrator provides an initial guide to the interpretation through the style he uses. Yet the inevitable inadequacy means that the reader cannot know exactly what is meant and must participate in his own interpretation of the words. To communicate "imageless though not inapprehensible"30 truth, the narrator must be consciously fictive. The style must therefore be obviously ambiguous, enigmatic and paradoxical. Plotlessness should be created by use of parataxis. Not surprisingly, these methods are virtually identical to those of mystic communication. McCaffrey also notes that the allegorist "by providing clues to unlock the allegory's secret truth . . . confesses his awareness of the fiction's lying fictiveness"31. Further, "by calling attention to the process whereby we understand the fiction itself, it sheds light upon the process whereby all understanding takes place"32. Chesterton too is concerned with the consciously fictive nature of allegory. It allows the mystic artist not only to create situations, but also to provide their

29 Spenser's Allegory, p. 31.
30 Ibid, p. 16.
explanations within them.

Another aspect of the Christian mystic artist was his separation of the material and the spiritual. Chesterton has noted that without the inclusion of human limits the separation led to the imposition of personal theory on objects. His anxiety about the potential idolatry of the imagination is taken up by McCaffrey. She points out that once a writer attempts to create static, fixed images, he is abusing his creative process: "imagination cannot be divorced from mutability without turning into its demonic form, idolatry"\(^{33}\). The allegorist deals with both the actual and visionary world, and needs limits and boundaries to avoid the idolatry arising from too definite a human expression of the spiritual in material terms. Again in words reminiscent of Chesterton, she says:

The allegorist incorporates within his fiction the two limits of art: the upward limit where fiction merges with transcendent reality in vision; and a downward or inward limit where fiction touches clumsy life at her stupid work . . . In allegory, the "philosophical" poet contrives to remind us continually of the boundaries, and therefore of the sources, of his poem.\(^{34}\)

This dual role of the allegorist makes it a most appropriate mode for the mystic to use.

Ultimately the Christian mystic and the Christian allegorist must communicate the presence of God to transcend the divisions between creation and interpretation, spirit and

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\(^{33}\) Ibid, p. 423.

\(^{34}\) Ibid, p. 80.
matter. The functions of creation and interpretation are at the root of Chesterton's ideas on the use of allegory by the mystic artist. Manalive, which presents them in terms of enigma and explanation, can be seen as a paradigm for the allegorical imagination as he sees it working. In the novel, the division is transcended by the acceptance of the Christian creed which underlies the actions of Innocent and Moon. It is interesting that McCaffrey's examination of Spenser's imaginative process is an exact duplicate of Chesterton's. Allegory is described as the unpacking of fallen state, which contains both enigma and explanation, both the creative and interpretive processes. She speaks of the creative function as synthetic, concentrating on the relation between fiction and the transcendent reality, and dependent on human imagination and intellect. The interpretive function is analytic, dealing with the fiction and interior reality of fallen man. Just as Chesterton emphasises the interpretive process, so Spenser is connected with the analytic function. The analytic is based on man's inability to express and depends on the transcending "unanalyzed transparency" resulting from the indication of God. McCaffrey even draws the same distinction between Spenser as an analytic allegorist and Milton as a synthetic. Chesterton used Milton as the example of a great poet abusing his powers by refusing to let in God; while Spenser was for him the ideal of the interpretive aspect of the mystic artist.
Chesterton would fully agree with the statement that Spenser finally "confesses; he prays; he reads the book he has not written". The concept of confession and prayer as the ultimate aim of literature becomes increasingly important in his own work. Further the idea that Spenser lets God write the book for him by constantly acknowledging him, was Chesterton's main belief about the responsible artist. The presence of God in the "unanalyzed transparency" of meaning is closely connected with a pervading image of Chesterton's later work: the stained glass window. Significantly the image is an explanation for the use of analogy. Because analogy does not try to be or to be like the object, it exists as a window through which to see the world. As such it is always limited. However, the limitation is transcended if light comes from without, through the window into the room. When God is indicated this happens, for his presence shines in through the work illuminating it with identity, showing that its limitations do not matter for an absolute exists beyond them. In The New Jerusalem he explains that the importance of Gothic windows is that they give shape, and "even light itself is most divine within limits". As a result the limiting form of analogy comes paradoxically closer to the identity of an absolute than any other mode. Eugene Vinaver comments that both Thomas Aquinas and Augustine note the same identifying power of analogy. Vinaver himself goes on to explain

36 The New Jerusalem, p. 51.
the process by saying:

Just as in the light of day that filters through the rose window of a cathedral and illumines the sanctuary, mystical reality becomes palpable to the senses, so in a composition which, for lack of a better term, we describe as developing two or more "levels", the need for ultimate conviction is fulfilled, the enriched concord achieved, and with it a total form.³⁷

Similarly C. S. Lewis observes that the glory of medieval art is "that we see through it; it is a pure transparency"³⁸. The window and specifically the stained glass window becomes an analogy for the transcending process of analogy. It expresses precisely the effect Chesterton intended to be produced when he employed the allegorical mode.

(ii)

Chesterton's theory of allegory as found in both his artistic and critical works, is a development he makes to fulfill his aim of expressing his personal beliefs. We have seen that his approach to allegory was virtually simultaneous with his approach to the Anglo-Catholic church. To an extent he applies the criteria of the theory to others; especially when he thinks that they fail in using their own style and therefore need guidelines such as those he has developed for himself. However, just as he avoids strict statements about literary theory, the development is not a polemic on style. He is an extraordinarily humble


man, and his ideas are only applied to those in whom he recognizes weaknesses like his own. He recognizes the existence of the pure artist and the great artist as men with different aims and achievements than his. Much of his critical work in the last decade and a half of his life is concerned with the relationship of man with religion and humanity, and with the expression of the mystic artist in comparison with that of the saint and the great poets.

In the biography of St. Francis, written in 1923, we find a refinement of ideas on expression. The book examines the life of a pure artist, a man "whose whole life was a poem". Yet St. Francis also acknowledges the mystic responsibility to communicate his divine experience. In the saint Chesterton examines the existence of the pure and mystic artist in one man. The result is a far more elusive work than Manalive, which separated the two aspects, yet it is also more straightforward and simple. The author connects the role of this combination to that of the great poet, comparing their modes of expression; and finally to himself as a mystic artist using allegory.

The biography begins by claiming that one must understand St. Francis both in body and soul. Other biographers have failed by emphasizing one part at the expense of the other. The humanist concentrates on the physical details missing the ascetical theology; while the devoted Franciscan

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ignores the actual existence of the saint's environment. For Chesterton the two aspects are essential to a life of St. Francis, because the saint saw religion as a kind of love affair, both spiritual and material. Without understanding this, one misses the whole meaning of his life. The spiritual and material duality is the basis for St. Francis' mysticism. He cannot be a materialist since he has to account for the hand of God. On the other hand he is not entirely spiritual; and here Chesterton distinguishes him from the "bad" mystics:

As a mystic he was the mortal enemy of all those mystics who melt away the edges of things and dissolve an entity into its environment. He was a mystic of the daylight and the darkness; but not a mystic of the twilight. (100)

To him the spirituality of birds and animals was an objective fact. In contrast to his later followers the Fraticellis whom Chesterton describes as "mystics and not men . . . they would not listen to reason" (180), St. Francis is supremely sane; and is so because he recognizes the external material world. The biographer denies the charge that the saint was mad by saying that "he was the very reverse of a dreamer . . . he was very emphatically a man of action" (46).

It is due to the physical aspect of the mysticism that the saint felt a responsibility to communicate. If something is purely spiritual it is easier to dismiss the possibility of verbalizing it. But St. Francis realized that things:
become more extraordinary by being explained
... The mystic will have nothing to do with mere mystery; mere mystery is generally a mystery of iniquity. (85-6)

Yet Chesterton stresses the immediate quality of the pure expression. The saint's art form is life; his expressions "were always acts and not explanations; and they always meant what he meant them to mean" (102). It is this different mode that separates him from the poet. Both saint and poet have a different approach to the divine. The poet's faith depends upon joy; but the saint's joy depends upon faith. As a result they tell different truths. The poet will experience a brief mystical vision a "brilliant levin-blaze", that emphasizes the wonder of things by its contrast with them, while the saint walks always in divine light "with an old familiarity" (86-7).

It is important to note here that Chesterton is making almost the same distinction between the mystic and the poet and using almost identical vocabulary to that of Abbé Brémond in his famous lecture on pure poetry published in 1925. But more important is that Chesterton is different from the Abbé. While Brémond acknowledges the similarity between mystic and poetic experience, he says that the object of poetry is "the real and not the true"40, the poet is united with things not God. Further he denies the social function of the mystic, saying that mystics cannot communicate. Chesterton, however, finds a connection between their experiences even if the emphases are

different. He comments:

this sort of poet does really praise creation, in the sense of the act of creation. He praises the passage or transition from nonentity to entity; there falls here also the shadow of that archetypal image of the bridge, which has given to the priest his archaic and mysterious name. (87)

Both mystic and poet must bridge the gap between God and the material world, even if the former does so to indicate God and the latter to indicate the divinity of things.

The difference in emphasis between poet and saint leads to a difference in expression. St. Francis' art does not exist to embody his spirit because his body is spirit embodied. As a result his whole life has "a sort of double meaning . . . All his action had something of the character of an allegory" (64). The inadequacy of verbal communication led him naturally to suggestion through "a passionate pantomime of gestures" (97). His elaborate politeness to animals was a "pious pantomime" to indicate the reverence for their maker; it was a "sort of divine dumb alphabet" (110). But when he did use language the effect "passed beyond words . . . to be completed by some ritual movement like a blessing or a bow" (105).

Chesterton as a mystic artist has the same overwhelming sense of inadequacy in writing about the saint. He speaks of the need for many signs and symbols to even hint at real meaning (74), the need to penetrate past the image to the idea (78). He apologizes for the use of a grotesque image, saying that no other would make "the fact clear" (79).
Several analogies are used, the longest being one about a man in a tunnel going so far down he eventually comes up; but the author adds "of the intrinsic internal essence of the experience I make no pretence to write at all" (83). He is reduced to using "short imperfect phrases" (90), and speaks best in "certain silent attitudes and actions" (129). However all this is better than the "madness of mythological explanation" that poets abuse and which dissolves history (158). Chesterton freely admits that the expression is inadequate, that the mode is suggestive and allusive rather than direct. However, in using it he has avoided falling into the potential mistakes of the poet, avoided distortion of the truth by indicating rather than stating it.

In the essays of 1920 to 1935 there is a preponderance on art and modes of expression. Particularly interesting is Chesterton's assessment of the different trends in contemporary art, which he forms out of his basic belief that the great artist and the mystic artist communicate different things in different ways. Taken as a whole the essays provide a remarkably stable picture of his ideas with only one or two minor vocabulary changes. The New Jerusalem points out again the division between the "divine purpose of a mystery" and the "human purpose of a myth". Religion is made really mystical by hiding a reality, "suggesting something that is redder than red"; but a mystic must never become a mystagogue and hide these mysteries in

41 The New Jerusalem, p. 80.
mystifications”43. The critic takes St. Joan’s individual communication with God as an example of a greatness rarely achieved. When this individual mysticism is left to itself it is "an anarchical and insane element in society"44. A mystic must communicate clearly; his expression should be public and serve as a bridge between the divine and the human.

Chesterton discusses the forms which expression should take for the mystic and the great artist if it is to become public, with reference to the limits of human creativity. He notes that true human creation is mythology, but that the mystic must deal in truth which is "not only stronger than fiction, but often saintlier than fiction. For truth is real, while fiction is bound to be realistic"45. The artist is different from the mystic artist, because the aims of art are different from those of religion. Art can only give "permanent expression to a passing mood" which it cannot be certain is an eternal truth. The only stable expression is created by religion, when "the truths are crystallized into a creed"46. The mistakes in art are made when it assumes that it alone has the "supreme spiritual

44 The Superstitions of the Sceptic (Cambridge: W. Heffer & Sons Ltd., 1925), p. 5.
45 The New Jerusalem, p. 229.
authority\(^47\); that artists have the right to become divine arbiters. However, art is valuable if it recognizes human aims and limits. Chesterton states that "in ultimate philosophy, as in ultimate theology, men are not capable of creation but only of combination\(^48\). He goes on to add that:

whatever be the nature of creation, it is certainly of the nature of translation; it is translating something from the dumb alphabet and infantile secret language in our souls into the totally different public language that we talk with our tongues.\(^49\)

The process of art as used by the mystic artist and the great artist, involves different modes of translation but one single public and social purpose.

The contrast between the ritualist and the fantastic as the extremes of expression of divine and human authority is strongly present at this time. The by now familiar properties of ritual are re-emphasized. There is no need to explain it because it explains itself, and that far better than "definitions or abstractions". It allows people to "express in gesture things that only a very great poet could express in words"\(^50\). Ritual is essential for expressing

\(^{47}\) "About the Censor", As I Was Saving (AW) (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1936), p. 32, 17/2/34.


\(^{50}\) "On Funeral Customs", GS, p. 103, 29/1/27.
some things, for it is the only way in which intense realities, such as marriage can be communicated. The mystery of ritual is best created through masquerade and mummeries. But the most powerful mode is silence, which acknowledges its powerlessness. As opposed to this is fantasy and utopian literature. In a comment on Barrie's "Peter Pan" he notes how easily fantasy breeds anarchy.

If Peter Pan:

had consented to march with the fraternity of his fellow-creatures, he would have found that there were solid experiences and important revelations even in growing up. They are realities which could not possibly have been made real to him without wrecking the real good in his juvenile point of view. But that is exactly why he ought to have done as he was told.

This kind of utopian literature he sees as repressive because its world is "ruled by one man: the author of the book". No matter how perfect he tries to make it, his world will be "despotic because it is a dream; and a man is always alone in a dream". The essential base for fantasy is sentiment; and sentiment contains the potential error of the mode. Sentiment allows itself to be affected by the associations


54 "On Broadcasting", GS, p. 27, 7/5/27.
of words rather than "the intrinsic idea in things"\textsuperscript{55}. What this leads to is self-indulgent feelings that neglect "something equally real"; in other words the feelings are not bad in themselves but in their exclusion of and imposition on other equally valid ideas. A fascinating article called "Magic and Fantasy in Fiction" judges the principles of fantastic fiction by distinguishing between miracle and enchantment. Fantasy need not be immoral or "demonic", but this entails a recognition of God. Unfortunately it is all too easy for fantasy to become diabolist, for the author to be a magician who is:

the Man when he seeks to become a God, and, being a usurper, can hardly fail to be a tyrant. Not being the maker, but only the distorter, he twists all things out of their intended shape and imprisons natural things in unnatural forms.\textsuperscript{56}

By contrast, the man who fully includes God, effaces himself, creates a miracle. Chesterton cites as an example of this the ritual of the mass, which is "God seeking to be a Man"; and in which man himself is powerless.

However, the mystic artist is a truer comparison to the fantasist, for he too has to deal with words. Chesterton initially sets up a contrast between the two by linking fantasy with philosophy and dehumanized history which sets the "Mystic materialism of the sacramentalist" against the "disembodied idealism of the pessimist"\textsuperscript{57}. The mystic,

\textsuperscript{55} "On Sentiment", GS, p. 82, 20/8/27.


\textsuperscript{57} "On the Writing of History", GS, p. 159, 23/6/23.
because he deals with matter and spirit, also deals with substance and symbol; each is essential to meaning. Many years later the critic comments on the sculpture of a war memorial saying that the artist had sculpted a Unicorn by forcing its absolute substance into her own design. But while she had "made something new out of the old Unicorn, . . . she had not made anything else except a Unicorn." This traditional mode makes new but does not distort. On the other hand, the same essay notes that negative abstractions are far more misleading than such "caricatures", for they "tend, of their nature, not merely to anarchy, but to nothingness". The fantasist tends to use diagrams and abstractions. He, like the dehumanized historian and philosopher, re-creates his own truths or what he "believed to be the truth". Far more trustworthy than plans and diagrams that try to be accurate, are pictures which "professed to be picturesque". The acknowledgement of artistic limitation is far more effective than the total human authority of the fantasist.

The sacramental mode of the mystic artist means that the very structures of his work are analogous to truth. Chesterton portrays this at work in Godfrey’s building of Jerusalem which he compares to an allegory. He notes that the timber involved "many of those mathematical that are analogous to moral truths, and almost every structural shape

58 *The New Jerusalem*, p. 35.
60 "On the Truth of Legends", *AG*, p. 151, 14/2/31.
has the shadow of the mystic mood. All images are shadows of the object they indicate. They are not shadows in the sense of being the idea in a lesser, imitative actuality. Images are actual shadows of a physical reality. Chesterton examines the process in a review of Eliot's book on Dante, and goes on to speak of the essential "irrelevancy" of Dante's images. The distance and dissimilarity that exists between them and the object, makes the object more real by emphasizing the impossibility of expressing it. Further, he suggests that many images are needed, none pretending to be the reality, because "It prevents the mere idolatry of one shadow in one mirror, as if it were the origin of all." Other techniques that he suggests for creating allegorical expression and avoiding direct representation are the old standbys of riddle, metre and rhyme which we encountered in Manalive.

Insofar as the great poet wishes to communicate divine truth he must use the modes of the mystic artist, even though he may only incorporate them into his own technique. We noted above that Chesterton felt that the great poet alone was able to put ritual into words. Reality can only be expressed in "gesture and artistic form." The great

61 The New Jerusalem, p. 235.
63 "On Free Verse", ADD, p. 189, 18/3/33.
64 See Footnote 50 above.
poet achieves the heights of expression when he, like the mystic, not only acknowledges the limits of his imagination but also incorporates those very limits into a positive mode. Chesterton thinks that the height of human creation is to evoke a new image, and images are of their nature things with "an outline, and therefore a limit". Great artists like Dante constantly approach the mystic vision in their use of images defined and separate from the reality they indicate. He also notes that "real imagination gives to an object a sort of ecstatic separation and sanctity" that conveys the divinity of their existence.

However, the poet is also concerned with myth and humanity. Because there may be no absolute standard behind his images they can be vulgarized; they "stand for strong impressions" only as "arbitrary and accidental" images. Chesterton looks at this potential debasement of a mode in heraldry. He notes that heraldry began as an art and "afterwards degenerated into a science". When it lost its primary function to relate man to his divine meaning, it still possessed the possibility of doing so, of becoming allegorical. But the loss of its mystic intent meant that it was for the most part accidental. Similarly the

67 "On Blake and His Critics", ADD, p. 132, 21/10/33.
69 The New Jerusalem, p. 102.
70 Ibid.
strength of myth which contains part of man's divinity by virtue of being his ultimate creation, degenerates into the popular and relative form of metaphor. Further, with the "mental relapse" into metaphor goes the substitute for reason, the cliche; and he recognizes that "in this fall of man's chosen symbols, there may well be a symbol of his own fall." Yet even here he differentiates between the poet and the fantasist for:

Mythology is simply believing whatever you can imagine. Propaganda is, more often, believing that other people will believe whatever you can invent.

In an essay of 1935, Chesterton finally has the strength to explain what he has been afraid of since the beginning of his artistic career. The author tells us of a book he has not written which was to deal with the substance of dreams. But, rather than the "nightmares of Freud" which produce "perilous stuff that weighs upon the heart", he was to have written a pantomime or parable of light nonsense. What he visualized was the solipsist state come true, the dreamer able to fully realize his dreams, the writer actually able to create a reality through metaphor. The intent was to "suggest how intolerable such imaginative omnipotence would really be. It would be like walking upon ever-sinking and shifting shingle." He goes on to condemn the modern

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71 "On the Mythology of Scientists", CTT, pp 134-5, 26/1/29.
72 "On Maltreating Words", GS, p. 139, 21/5/27.
73 "About Loving Germans", AW, p. 13, 5 and 26/5/34.
74 "About Mad Metaphors", AW, p. 3, 10/8/35.
author for discovering "in an omnipotence to which he has no claim, an impotence for which he has no cure". He adds that he himself has made the mistake of using metaphors as empty shells rather than concrete realities, and has mislead his readers dangerously.

Despite the fact that initially communication with society was to ensure personal sanity, the converse is true. An essential fault in personal authority and the solipsist vision is that it inhibits communication to a public. Just as we saw that communication with society was the test of the value of the mystic, so it is for the great artist. Where Chesterton most strongly criticizes modern art is in its lack of communication. Both mystics and great artists are included in his essentials of artistic expression that lead up to this necessary communication. All art limits itself by exposing its limits. To do so, consciously or unconsciously, it exaggerates. Yet the very presence of exaggeration allows for potential distortion. Art should be only "mildly mad or faintly absurd"\(^7\), and its proximity to the empty void must be carefully controlled. The aesthetic process functions by the principle of contrast because, just as exaggeration reveals the real outline of an object, the difference of an image from its reality defines the reality. Similarly, just as the form of exaggeration is unquestionable, so contrast is definite; neither makes pretence to represent the object, and both may then reveal

\(^7\) "On the Movies", GS, p. 57, 27/8/27.
its beauty. The presence of contrast also implies judgement, because one is assessing the relationship of object and image. As the critic points out in an essay on the comic contrast "Art can be immoral, but cannot be unmoral. Unmoral comedy is rapidly ceasing to be comic", or to be art. All art should have a purpose, a morality. It is not "mere moralizing" but a fruition, a goal, an answer. Modern art fails because it has no answers, it has nothing to communicate.

Chesterton's most extensive essay on modern art is an essay called "The Spirit of the Age". The spirit he perceives in the early twentieth century is one of movement. It results in sporadic or patchy prose, with poetry "cut up into isolated images". Neither can find goals or fruations; they must be serial not climactic. Just as we have seen him praise Pound and Wyndham Lewis for "making it new" and condemning them for writing with no hope or aim; he here praises the individual advances these men make, yet warns that in their "isolation is a certain irresponsibility about communal ideals". Elsewhere he notes the immorality of those who attempt a "soothing an insulated condition of intellect" that avoids all ethical committment. The poet

77 "On the Comic Spirit", GS, p. 176, 10/12/27.
79 "The Spirit of the Age", Sidelights, p. 188, Sept 1930.
80 Ibid, p. 189.
can only be great if he has a goal and communicates it. He is supreme among men because he "can say exactly what he means, and that most men cannot."\(^{82}\) The critic recalls his words about St. Francis and states:

> the other name of Poet is Pontifex; or the Builder of the Bridge. And if there is not a real bridge between his brain and ours, it is useless to argue about whether it has broken down at our end or his. He has not got the communication.\(^{83}\)

Another essay reiterates the example. The poet, like the priest, is a "builder of the bridge"; his claim is to cross between "unspoken and unseemingly unspeakable truths to the world of spoken words."\(^{84}\) But there is no triumph until the bridge is built, the word spoken, and "above all, when it is heard."\(^{85}\)

The criticism of all the major writers of this period and earlier, is based on the fact that they are not concerned enough about an absolute standard, an external goal. "The Spirit of the Age" condemns Pound for being abnormally individualistic; Joyce for the isolation of his mind in a secret language; Lawrence for being diverted from God by the chaos of his age. All are too relative, too individual and cannot communicate. What they have instead is an interpreter, a middleman. Chesterton abhors this phenomenon for two reasons. The first is that an interpreter interferes with the "awful obstetrics of art."\(^{86}\) The poet is

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\(^{82}\) "On Blake and His Critics, ADD, pp 130-1, 21/10/33.  
\(^{83}\) Ibid.  
\(^{84}\) "The Middleman in Poetry", Sidelights, p. 208.  
\(^{85}\) Ibid.  
\(^{86}\) Ibid, p. 209.
encouraged to believe that the poem is finished, is clear and can communicate because a literary sycophant says it is so. Second, one comes to depend upon the clique understanding one, rather than explaining oneself. This is a negation of the whole poetic process which is to describe the indescribable so that it is accessible to others; it is a throwing away of a responsibility which defines the role of the poet. The poet must include the role of the mystic artist for he must interpret as well as create.

There is another more serious implication arising from the loss of communication. Art with no fruition is an image with no reality. It becomes an idol. The process is implied in a review of a book about the Pre-Raphaelites, whom the critic links directly with the Aesthetes. He says that they tried "to make a short cut to mystical visions without really believing in mysticism." They worship the form of medieval art without understanding catholic philosophy. The same accusation is made of the Imagist poets "those singular idolaters," who gave the reader an image without an idea. Idolatry is the tool of the literary technologist, the fantasist; idolatry is a "danger to the soul" because it is a "worship of the instrument."

The point is that these artists lack what is necessary to communicate: A religious idea. Therefore they make a

88 "Revolutionists and Revivalists of the 19th Century", The Listener, p. 836, 14/11/34.
religion out of their art. True creation is found in poets such as Shakespeare, whose creation of an image reveals "a moral mystery". Significantly the image "is not only a speech, but a gesture". Similarly in Dante the images "are not to be worshipped"; there is an idea behind them all before which the poet falls in praise. Chesterton acknowledges that "every image is an idol" in one sense, and goes on to say that this makes it absolutely necessary that the images be religious. Yet he concludes by stating that if art is great art, in other words if it accepts its responsibility to communicate and does not degenerate into despotism or anarchy, it cannot fail to be religious; therefore its images can never be idols. "Religion is the sense of ultimate reality" and therefore art which expresses this reality, which assumes a mystic function, is religious. The only codicil he appears to add to this pronouncement is that controversial and unpopular art will be that which expresses a religious idea that is contrary to the fundamental religious feeling of the public.

The style that a man uses is seen to be intrinsically part of the truth he is communicating. Significantly, when we turn to The Everlasting Man, Chesterton's statement of faith after conversion to Roman Catholicism, we find it conducted on a basis of expressive modes. Orthodoxy, the

93 "On Mr. Epstein", CTT, p. 64, 15/6/29.
earlier statement of Anglo-Catholic faith, contained much that was relevant to the new positive approach to art and its relation to religion through the concept of the mystic artist. But it was a tentative exploration of an area which was most thoroughly traversed and mapped in the following two decades. In *The Everlasting Man*, published in 1925, Chesterton uses his now sophisticated understanding of expressive modes to examine the nature of his religious belief.

The book is divided into two parts. The first looks at man as a human being; it examines his modes of expression, principally myth and philosophy. The intent is to demonstrate the inadequacy of human expression in communicating religious meaning, yet to acknowledge its value as a human characteristic. The second part of the book attempts to uncover what religion is for the author, and along the way looks at potential modes for revealing it to others. The book begins by stating that "Art is the signature of man". Immediately the limitations of this are pointed out. Man may be "creator as well as creature", but his creations are reproductions of "things in shadow or representative shape" (35). The beginning of the second section notes that God also is an artist, but "the pictures that he made had come to life" (171). Chesterton's faith and sanity are firmly based on the belief that God created matter and that man only re-creates from it.

Having begun by defining man as an artist, Chesterton...
proceeds to examine the process of the imagination in fine detail. He starts with the image of the mind as a mirror, which he used in discussing Dante and which is an important part of his personal vocabulary. Again, he does not use the image to mean that man perfectly imitates the external in art. Rather it is a mirror because it can only reflect; yet it is unique for no other animal can even reflect nature. Things can only be seen "like shining shadows in a vision", but they can be seen. With a mind like a mirror "Man is the microcosm; ... man is the image of God" (36). The artist who does not acknowledge a specific God believes that through imagination he can touch "transcendental truths". He is a "natural mystic" who knows that some kind of presence is there behind nature and uses imagination as "a sort of incantation to call it up" (107). Chesterton suggests that the power of imagination lies in a suggestion of "sacramental feelings of the magic in material substances" (108), that myths and metaphors were a way of indicating some kind of "external soul" necessary to man's existence. As a result images are "shadows of things seen through the veil" (107); and work best when quite external to objects they represent. They always suggest something further than what they are themselves.

Myths are the grand works of imagination and poetry. They are to be definitely distinguished from mere diagrams. They should be judged by the guide of aesthetics or "feelings" (106), because they are not allegories or abstractions. However, they may be "images almost concentrated into idols"
(110) because they are always based on a human authority. Myths may be sincere in expressing the "real spiritualities" of life; but the sincerity is only that of art; it "is not sincere in the same sense as morality" (110). Any attempt to worship a myth as a religion becomes the foundation of human tragedy: Man worshipping himself and finding himself wanting. Chesterton links this with the fundamental process of imagination, saying that myth as a shadow:

reproduces shape not texture. These things were something like the real thing; and to say that they were like is to say that they were different . . . it is in this sense of identity that a myth is not a man. (117)

Further, there can be no definite priest bringing external authority; the religion of mythology is of a "dreamer and idealist" (120) desiring the effects of human authority. As a result, it is open to distortion, it is not absolute.

On this basis Chesterton argues that Christ must not be presented as a myth. He backs up his point by saying that the whole point about God is that he was something that primitive peoples knew existed but never spoke about. Human speech and its artistic forms cannot express God because of the inherent function of "like" in the imagistic process. But further imaginative speech is doubly unsuitable for religious expression because it can be rotted away by rationalism. Myths are fundamentally individual and human; they convey nothing about the unknown. There is always the potential for them to become false, relative stories opposed to the truth of God. At root they are the
impetus of paganism, which is the attempt to reach God by the imagination alone. Religion is a vision received through faith, but it is a vision of reality. Mythology can never be considered as "real"; it is one step removed from reality; it is only a shadow of reality.

However, the author is at pains to emphasize that if religion is not mythology, neither is it philosophy; and that mythology contributes far more to the expression of religion than does philosophy. Imagination, because of its recognition of the value of material and substance, does at least acknowledge an external. Philosophy tends to make diagrams and patterns out of religion that become totally internalized. Myths provide pictures which are valuable because they insist on physical objectivity, and a sense of interpretation because the aspects are not rationally controlled. Religion is "not a pattern but a picture", yet one must always remember that it is life, not just like life (240). Chesterton also states that in Christianity, philosophy and myth can be combined; the division between them is bridged by the incarnation. Again it is myth's carnality, providing an analogy to the incarnation, that makes it so valuable (178). But rather than either myth or philosophy explaining Christ, Christ explains them through the incarnation.

In order to express the presence of God man must turn to other modes. The author recognizes this as a problem but insists on its necessity. He does so by pointing out his understanding of Plato and Aristotle. Plato "anticipated
the Catholic realism" by insisting that ideas were realities (192). However, Plato unfortunately seems sometimes to imply that man is unnecessary if he conflicts with ideas. Aristotle went further; he "anticipated more fully the sacramental sanity" of body and soul. Just as the sacramental unity of idea and image is the basis of imagination, so the sacramental unity of God and word is the basis of religious expression. It is a human affirmation of the incarnation of God. Chesterton begins his examination of religious expression by looking at the allegory of the cross. The cross "does convey, almost as by a mathematical diagram, the truth about the real point at issue; the idea of a conflict stretching outwards into eternity" (138). He adds that the cross is only a figure while the truth "is abstract and absolute; though not very easy to sum up except by such figures" (138). The author turns for help to the Bible and notes that the Jews did not use images for God, nor the Greeks imagination (96). Only in The Book of Job does there seem to be an "early meeting of poetry and philosophy" (101), and this only communicates by providing greater mystery.

The absolute expression of God being impossible, Chesterton turns to the expression of the mystery that indicates his presence. This he finds in the New Testament which is itself centred around the mystery of Christ's incarnation, and leaves much "to be guessed at or explained" (191). Again the techniques used are gesture, "enigmatic silence", ironical reply, riddles, and fables. But the most important aspect is the use of a technique which piles
"tower upon tower by the use of the *a fortiori*" (203). He speaks of the three levels of the parable of the lilies of the field. Christ first notes the smallness and simplicity of a flower; he then suddenly expands its meaning to vast proportions; and just as suddenly shrivels it to nothing. The three degrees indicate a truly "superior mind" that can compare "a lower thing with a higher and yet that higher with a higher still", can think "on three planes at once" (204). A similar idea of "simultaneous happenings on different levels of life" (175) can be found in medieval art and the mystery plays, before the use of realism and perspective that heralded the Renaissance, entered painting and drama.

The use of different degrees of the comparative is the analogical function, but what is here important is that Chesterton continues by allaying the function to the sanity of man. The fact that Christ used analogy shows that he was without "megalomania". He indicated his divinity but without false pride. Significantly, the author adds that a man who claims to be God must either be God or be a madman. Since no one ever suggested that Christ was mad, he must be God. The corollary is that ordinary men who claim to be God are mad; and that the only way of avoiding this oneself and yet expressing the divinity of one's humanity, is to use analogy. The one event which eludes even analogy in Chesterton's eyes, is the crucifixion. The possibility that "God had been forsaken of God" (216), that Christ was mad, that there is no God, is too awful an extremity to convey except by "a sound that can produce a silence" (216).
The existence of the church is justified in a similar manner. The author suggests that if it had passed away as only another myth, it would have been conveying a myth "in which the mind struck the sky and broke" (276), for man cannot sustain the experience of being God without going mad. However, it survived; it did not pass away; therefore, it was not conveying a myth about insanity but a reality about God. The church is a messenger which does not dream or argue about the existence of Christianity but "delivers it as it is" (273). Its function is to guide the interpretation of the analogies that surround the mystery of God and Christ in the Bible. Because it does this the author says that the Catholic religion is the only thing that has remained stable and sane.

Chesterton's use of analogy throughout his work indicates his own need for stability and sanity. Analogy and the allegorical mode Chesterton uses it in, allow him to avoid the blasphemy of attempting to be God through his art. He recognizes his limitations at the same time as indicating his divinity as a man. The expression itself is essential for it unifies religion and morality with the writer. But further, the author says that self-expression is the only human act that justifies, by analogy, the concept of God's love (227). Self-expression through analogy is a limitation, a confession of humanity. It is a materialization and an attempt to link the divine and the human. Its indication of God is a prayer that God will transcend its limitation. Just so God's love is manifested through all these aspects in the analogy of himself, which is Christ.
Chapter IX
The three components of religion, morality and expression come together in the one art form in which Chesterton seems completely at home: the detective story. At the heart of the Father Brown stories is the theme of "mental and moral morbidity" that is mentioned in Autobiography, and which initiated and defined much of the subsequent development of religious and artistic ideas. We have seen the concept hinted at in Orthodoxy, as the fear which Christianity stopped with external authority, and resolved in The Everlasting Man by the acceptance of the Catholic faith and the use of analogy in allegory. In the Autobiography, Chesterton refers to the meeting with Father O'Connor in 1904 which provided him with an impetus that led to the Father Brown stories. The famous discussion about priests and confessions brought him "face to face once more with those morbid but vivid problems of the soul" and made him feel that he had "not found any real spiritual solution of them". The solution he found in turning to the Catholic church was based on the necessity for accepting external reality because of the existence of an external authority. The Father Brown stories can be seen as exercises by Chesterton as the mystic artist in facing the mental and moral morbidity armed with a sophisticated mode of allegory.

It is perhaps useful to briefly summarize the aspects of Chesterton's idea of the mystic artist to recognize the appropriateness of the detective story form. In accepting

1 Autobiography, p. 328.
the Catholic faith the artist accepts an external authority. As a result he not only creates, but because he acknowledges a power beyond him he also interprets. The interpretive process has to be through Christian reason or, as in the case of Shaw, it degenerates into personal despotism because of its relative basis. The artist expresses his creative, divine aspect most purely through action and ritual. He exposes his human side in material art which is here allegory. The allegorist is the critic or interpreter, performing the essential function of social communication. The critical process not only benefits society, but forces the artist to make an active choice in order to express, and thereby exposes his limitations.

Ritual is enigmatic while allegory attempts to indicate its enigma and present interpretation through analogy, in such forms as fable, parable or detective story. The analogical function of interpretation is through Christian reason, not rationalism or impressionism, philosophy or mythology, which are humanly based systems. The mystic artist is always aware of both ritual and allegory, of acting and communicating and their essential interrelationship. He is always creative and limited, divine and human, enigmatic and explanatory at the same time. The problem of simultaneously separating yet fusing these aspects is solved in the use of the degrees of analogy which in Christian allegory indicate God. The divine transcendence of the separation produces sacrament. The process is used in both The Man who was Thursday and Manalive in which the analogical
form separated yet fused ritual and allegory within the story through the final indication of God. In both cases the form for the search for meaning and expression is the detective story: In it the central character could employ Christian reason, and experience revelation. Yet the detective story also allows Chesterton to express through allegory the enigma of his own life. He also uses Christian reason and creates an experience of revelation in order to indicate the transcendent power of God.

To turn to the Father Brown stories and the mental and moral morbidity they challenge: The morbidity is based on the idea of the self as centre, without external authority. The result is either crime if the self-centredness is chosen, or insanity if it is unconsciously fallen into. The role of the detective is to expose the insanity and criminality to reason by being a mystic artist, someone who can identify with the act and find its external meaning. The result of detection for the criminal is confession; and Chesterton's general thesis seems to be that this morbidity can only be faced if there is a possibility for confession. The importance of confession is entirely in accord with his own statement that he converted to Roman Catholicism "To get rid of my sins". Confession can only exist if God does; and if God exists there can be no self-centredness. Therefore confession becomes a reaffirmation of God. When confession is expressed in artistic terms it is self-expression, communion, praying for the incarnation of

2 Ibid, p. 329.
divine meaning. What we perceive Chesterton expressing as an artist in his own right is the meaning of Christian ritual as he understands it. It is not surprising that while the earlier stories stress the function of Christian reason in solving the crime, the later emphasize its function in saving a man's soul.

Having drawn this thesis out of Chesterton's other major fictional and non-fictional works, it is necessary to turn to the isolated essays that he wrote specifically on the subject of detective stories before examining the Father Brown stories themselves. Although the discussion with Father O'Connor occurred in 1904 Chesterton has formed the basis for his ideas as early as 1901 when he contributes six essays to the Daily News on popular literature. Two of these specifically concern detective stories. The first discusses the expression of "the poetry of modern life" that the detective story uncovers. Chesterton notes that there is no stone or brick "that is not actually a deliberate symbol, a message from some man", and that the detective's job is to interpret the message of these allegories. Further he says that the police force is "romantic" because it attempts to reach a solution and a goal. The order it maintains shows morality as a "dark and daring" conspiracy. In the second essay the critic is examining the dangers of the form. Even at this early stage of his religious

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4 "The Value of Detective Stories", DN, p. 324, 22/6/01.
development he says that the ability of the old religions to make the world a mystery by seeking for a "nameless creator" has the "same kind of immediate and terrified intensity with which the nameless criminal is sought for in a detective story"\(^5\). However, both processes can mislead by emphasizing a false element of success. They encourage one to over-value the intellectual powers of man that lead to the answer, to worship the man not the divine. What should be the aim of a detective story is revealing "the heart of things", not showing off human techniques. The critical work on Robert Browning also links detection with religion in \textit{The Ring and the Book}. It states that Browning's poem:

\begin{quote}

is of course, essentially speaking, a detective story. Its difference from the ordinary detective story is that it seeks to establish, not the centre of criminal guilt, but the centre of spiritual guilt.\(^6\)
\end{quote}

It is important that it is from this observation that he expands his study of Browning's style which eventually starts him on his own journey to the discovery of a mode to express God. It is the concept of spiritual, not criminal guilt that will inform all the detective stories he is to write.

The next extensive essay connects the detective story directly with religious writing. He compares the detective story with religious writings and finds the latter wanting.

\footnotesize
\begin{itemize}
\item \(^5\) "The Danger of Detective Stories", \textit{DN}, p. 407, 13/7/01.
\item \(^6\) \textit{Robert Browning}, p. 168.
\end{itemize}
The "police novel" reveals the secret all at once, while theological literature tends to let the existence of God "leak out". Further detective stories are satisfying because one always knows that "the great problem will be solved". In 1930 he again picks up the point with reference to the necessary "fruition" of a book for "detective stories . . . must, after all, end by telling us who did it". The year 1907 also produces the following comment specifically on detective stories:

The purely imaginative man . . . would perceive the significance of things near to him as clearly as . . . (that) of things far off . . . The best and last word of mysticism is an almost agonizing sense of the preciousness of everything.

This is the first direct linking of the detective to the mystic artist and is contemporaneous with *The Man Who Was Thursday*. Two years later he notes that the detective story writer creates not only a mystery, but a puzzle. The story must not only be enigmatic but must indicate a solution. In *Orthodoxy* itself the author speaks of the church as a private detective with the aim of tearing the evil out of man. The church pardons the man when he faces his crime. This idea is continued in *A Short History of England*. He says that the Church created a machinery of pardon in opposition to the state's concentration of punishment: "It claimed to be a divine detective who helped the

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7 "Reading the Riddle", *DN*, 20/4/7, 6/5.
criminal to escape by a plea of guilty"\(^\text{10}\). Even *The Everlasting Man* contains the reference to priests dressing as priests compared to policemen, "as if we should be any more free if all the police who shadowed or collared us were plain-clothes detectives"\(^\text{11}\). A further link between the detective and the spiritual story is that in both "even the moral sympathies may be in doubt"\(^\text{12}\). The fact is a problem for the artist as much as it is for the policeman and the priest, for all have a social duty to carry out as well as an individual.

The same essay that connects the detective with the mystic also speaks of "a sublime and sacred economy" of their technique. The noticing of minute detail as significant is the basis for the detective method. In 1911 this leads to a distinction between the mystery story and the adventure story. The former deals with detection, is concerned with small things, domestic scenes not large events; while the latter concentrates on the crime itself.\(^\text{13}\) The same distinction is made in 1929 when the critic notes that adventure stories do not require the scrutiny of a central event that the detective story does\(^\text{14}\). After the Great War Chesterton begins to take a far greater interest in the techniques of


\(^{11}\) *The Everlasting Man*, pp. 11-12.


\(^{13}\) "The Domesticity of Detectives", *UD*, p. 24, 1911?

\(^{14}\) "On Detective Story Writers", *CTT*, p. 29, 17/8/29.
detective stories. One aspect that is mentioned is the need for economy, for keeping within the "classical unities". The intensity of the drama depends upon keeping within the limits of time and place. He continues this thread in an essay of 1922 which stresses the highly technical character of detective stories. The principles the technique rests on begin with the need for revelation and surprise. For this to be effective "the secret should be simple" and the length should be of a short story. The interest lies not in the intellectual working out of the crime, but in the meaning it uncovers. The value of simplicity and compression is high because the story is:

a drama of masks and not of faces. It is a masquerade ball in which everybody is disguised until the clock strikes twelve. We cannot really get at the psychology and philosophy, the morals and religion, of the thing until we have read the last chapter.

The implication is that to continue this "misunderstanding of fact" too long, is a dangerous procedure.

The later essays concentrate more on the moral basis and spiritual core of the detective stories. 1925 produces an essay with a long list of "DON'TS" for the detective writer. The main points that emerge are first, that the reader desires to be deceived; and second, that the character must do the murder, in other words there should be no extenuating circumstances in the use of professionals.

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15 "A Defense of Dramatic Unities", FF, p. 96, 17/1/19.
16 "On Detective Novels", GS, pp. 5-6, 15/8/22.
gangs, spies and so on. The intent is to avoid any fudging of the moral issue that murder is a sin. The idea is repeated almost ten years later in an essay of 1934. He states that detective stories need criminals, need crime, and must not "ignore the existence of sin". Because the plot is really moral the stories are concerned with conscience and acts of will. There must never be "that arbitrary gesture of self ablution and self-absolution with which some characters in modern stories conclude the confession of their lives". The emphasis is on the criminal's act of choice and the need to expose it. A year later he says that the murderer should commit his crime for reasons "immediately, though erroneously, satisfactory to his soul and his inner life". The act of will is at the root of the distinction between insanity and criminality. He condemns as heresy "the perpetual itch to describe all crime as lunacy". The criminal may have lost his innocence but he still has free-will. The insane has lost "more than innocence; he has lost essence"; he has lost the acknowledgement of an external authority. Crime is always a matter of choice, therefore the criminal's soul may always be saved.

While the criticism shows plainly how Chesterton viewed

18 "About Shockers", AW, p. 200, 28/7/34.
20 "On a Humiliating Heresy", CTT, p. 150, 14/9/29.
the subject matter and technique of the detective story, it
does not touch specifically on the methods of the detective
except in so far as he is linked with the mystic. To
examine his ideas on method we must go to the detective
stories themselves. The first collection of detective
stories that Chesterton publishes is *The Club of Queer
Trades*. The stories, while all centred on an event, are
really concerned with how the mind of the detective, Basil
Grant, works. The main plan of the short stories is
similar to the Sherlock Holmes story. We have a Watson in
the narrator. The action takes place out of a comfortable
batchelor apartment in central London; and is nearly always
initiated by a sudden arrival on the door-step of a mystery
that needs to be solved. However, the whole intent is to
reverse the Sherlock Holmes method of thought. The book
is not a parody but a demonstration of a different kind of
thinking. The rational is not satirized but merely shown
to be ineffective. The author speaks of the "fantasies of
detective deduction" that are worthless in the face of a
moral problem.

The first story sets up the lines along which the
remainder will run. The narrator is familiar, friendly,
appears trustworthy because he seems to expect us to know
things about the situation. But once inside the story he
is merely matter for Basil Grant to work upon. He provides
the "normal" response, carrying the reader into the event

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with ordinary eyes. When Basil Grant reveals the truth to him, we also experience it as a revelation. Grant himself is described as a poet, a man who needs people but who can do without them. We are also told that he was a judge who went mad on the bench. In the first case he forms an impression about a story and combines it with common-sense and impartial observation. It is impossible for him to explain how he feels, for he has no logic to his actions. He judges the "spiritual atmosphere" of the case. For him "facts obscure the truth" (22) so he follows his intuition until he discovers the solution. In contrast is Basil's brother Rupert who is a professional detective. He is rational in the Sherlock Holmes style and insists that "'It's a matter of fact!'" (22). Similarly his client, at the centre of the mystery, is "incurably sane" (16), rational, "perfectly clear and intellectual" (19). But neither Rupert nor his client can solve the mystery. The rational approach limits one's understanding to oneself. Basil Grant succeeds because he combines personal intuition with objective view of the characteristics of the event itself.

The remaining stories each show Basil Grant working out a particular problem in a particular way. All contribute to the sense of looking for the unique in a person, thing or event by insisting on the combination of intuition with common-sense, observation, objectivity, and knowledge of but not enslavement to facts. In each case the narrator thinks that Basil is mad until the event is explained,
which underlines the possibility for insanity if there is no reason to relate object to meaning. The final story gets to the heart of the mystery of Grant himself. We are told that he functions in this way because he is a moral judge. He explains that he disagreed with the objectives of state law operating "by a mean rule" (158) of fact. As a result he offered himself as a "moral judge to settle purely moral differences" (159). It is important that his powers, which are only briefly seen in action in one story, are only effective if the criminal chooses to observe them; they are not "coercive" but dependent on "the honour of the culprits". While the emphasis of the stories is undoubtedly on solving the crime, they also contain implications which will be developed later. The basic components of a moral judge, the free-will of the criminal, and the need for common-sense and intuition in reasoning out the answer, are all here waiting to take on different proportions.

The Father Brown stories themselves make up five books. Two of them are pre-war, 1911 and 1914; two of them are written during the period 1926 and 1927, and the last in 1935 a year before his death. This last, The Scandal of Father Brown, is one of the best examples of Chesterton at his worst and adds little to our understanding of him or his work. The remaining four however, constitute a fascinating summary of Chesterton practising what he preached. He has stated how struck he was by the idea of a seemingly innocent priest knowing as much if not more than the criminal. All the Father Brown books are essentially studies of the
relationship between the two men. The title of the first book is *The Innocence of Father Brown*, and indeed the initial story in it establishes the contrast between the priest's innocence and his vast knowledge of criminality. But rather than weakening the effect of the remaining stories by establishing the contrast so early in the book, it leaves open the possibility of exploring how this innocent mind works.

It is important to recognize that the narrator does not come out and say "this is how it works"; he does not impose a theory on his character. We are presented with events within which Father Brown thinks and acts, and we understand from these. There appear to be two basic facets of Father Brown's mind: the power of observation, and a knowledge of and sympathy with human nature. The second aspect is different with each human being. In one case the priest solves the murder by realizing that most people do not notice men in uniform such as postmen; they are so habitually accepted no one thinks to take them into account. In another he works from the impossibility of a constantly cheerful human nature. Yet this aspect is ultimately useless without that of observation, and both are necessary to make up Father Brown's process of reasoning.

The function of his mind is outlined with great clarity in the third story "The Queer Feet". Father Brown is locked in a room he has never been in before and is listening to

22 As D. Barker suggests in *G. K. Chesterton*, p. 196.
the sound of footsteps outside. The genius of the story lies in the fact that the narrator allows the reader just as many clues as Father Brown. This is the supreme test of the detective story, and the solution lies all in the mode of logic that interprets the evidence. First we find the priest with his perceptive senses just awakening. He catches himself "writing to the rhythm of a recurrent noise outside." He then becomes conscious of the noise and listens to it. After listening dreamily, he starts listening "intently." He becomes attentive "not merely listening, but listening and thinking also" (58). We then get an exact description of the steps as Father Brown hears them, yet he cannot understand the pattern they are making and his brain gets darker.

The narrator goes on to describe the priest's imaginative process, a "kind of vision" interspersed with rational attempts at explanation. The visionary aspect takes hold of him, maddens him, and surrounds him with a smell of evil, but he conquers it with rationality and tries to ignore the steps. Then the rhythm changes and Father Brown in frustration lets himself into an adjacent cloakroom which he was not supposed to enter. Here he sees the man of the footsteps. Just as he is handing the man his coat he suddenly gets an inspiration; he loses his head but "His head was always most valuable when he had lost it" (61). All his observations come together to provide the answer. The story is interesting because it emphasizes the two aspects of

\[\text{23 The Innocence of Father Brown} \ (\text{Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1976/1911}), \ p. \ 57.\]
rationalism and impressionism as both being part of an observing imaginative process. Yet it also makes clear that the final answer cannot be achieved except by inspiration of human knowledge. Both are essential to the process of reason.

One of the major concerns of the book is the relation in which the detective stands to the criminal. However, Chesterton first presents us with Father Brown in relation to the average rational detective. If we look at the initial story we find that the detective who is most closely examined is Valentin. Even the climax of the story in which Father Brown reveals his knowledge to Flambeau is more significant for what it says about Valentin. The climax is undoubtedly humorous in the contrasts it produces between the priest and criminal, but more telling are the contrasts between the methods of Valentin and Father Brown. We are introduced to Valentin as a "sceptic in the severe style of France" (9). The implications are made clearer in the discussion of his intellectual process. All his successes had been gained by "plodding logic, by clear and commonplace French thought" (11). He was supremely reasonable in the sense of rational, and because of this "he understood the limits of reason". Whenever he encountered irrationality he "coldly and carefully followed the train of the unreasonable" (12).

Valentin's lack is in failing to distinguish between rational reasoning and other forms; between his own logic and other people's. When he finds the criminal he still
does not understand that he has done so. The detective hides in the bushes while Father Brown, and Flambeau disguised as a priest, discuss reason. Yet because Valentin is so self-oriented in his attitude to reason he cannot recognize the theological mistake Flambeau makes in conjecturing that in other worlds "reason is utterly unreasonable" (24), and almost goes away empty-handed. Father Brown's reason is really based in a good common-sense understanding of people he has known. He can identify with the criminal and spirit away the cross that he wants to steal; but also prevent the crime by leading Valentin to the spot by a series of conscious mistakes. He is both artist in laying his criminal trail of evidence and critic in interpreting Flambeau's motives. Significantly, it is Valentin who says "'The criminal is the creative artist, the detective only the critic'" (12). Father Brown is the mystic who can combine both functions.

Both kinds of detective agree that the criminal is purely artist. Indeed the narrator himself calls Flambeau an "artist and a sportsman" (29). In another story Father Brown says "A crime . . . is like any other work of art" (72). Divine or diabolic, the centre of all art is simple; and the priest is able to solve the crime he is examining by piercing through the complicated exterior to this centre. Later on he briefly distinguishes between crime as artistically valuable and crime as degenerate fantasy. Artistic crime has much in common with a miracle which "is startling; but it is simple" (45). The power of miracles comes
"directly from God (or the devil) instead of indirectly from human wills" (145). While crime always assumes the human will as central, it approaches great art in the measure of external responsibility it acknowledges. Self-centred crime is always complicated and deliberately mystifying in its centre. Flambeau says that when he created a crime he took an artistic care to suit it to the landscape or season in which it was committed. Yet he was not a mystic artist working entirely from externals; he "always made up the story" himself and carried it out as quickly as possible (126). The most uncanny story of the book "The Sins of Prince Saradine" is based on the degeneration of one of Flambeau's original crimes into a "copy" that makes it an evil travesty of the original. Father Brown points out that the degeneration is inevitable because "no man had ever been able to keep on one level of evil" (91), and it is this observation which reforms Flambeau.

There is however, a big difference between Flambeau, the criminal who can say that without positive proof of an external he may as well be the centre of the world, and the man who really thinks he is the centre. The latter type is the madman, and the central example is Valentin himself in the second story "The Secret Garden". The reader is given his first clue to the situation when Valentin is described as "one of the great humanitarian French "free thinkers"" (30). In Chesterton's mind this is linked with the Age of Reason, the overthrow of the church, the assumption of the supremacy of man. Later Father Brown describes
him as mad because he would do "anything to break what he calls the superstition of the Cross" (52). Valentin was only aware of his own reason. He assumed the right to be God, to coldly judge others. When he committed a crime he did it without artistic inspiration. There was no wish to create something with an admirable centre, only something with disorder. Finally he commits the ultimate crime of suicide, which for Chesterton was terrible in its denial of the value of life, and was a crime against every other man alive. A subsidiary example of the madman is the anglican priest who kills his own brother for committing adultery. The reason he does so is that he sees his brother entering the woman's house as he prays from a high tower of his church. The narrator describes the view as "the monstrous foreshortening and disproportion, the dizzy perspectives, the glimpses of great things small and small things great" (189). Father Brown goes on to add that someone he knew, standing in such a place "fancied he was God" (190). It is because of this feeling that the other priest had taken the law into his own hands and killed his brother.

Significantly, almost every story contains an example of the horror of madness that Father Brown experiences before he can apply his reason and understand the criminal. In "The Queer Feet" the process of his observing contained the swing into impressionist horror. During another case he is sickened by a nightmare of his imagination, only recovering "his mental health by an emphatic effort" (103). Just before he solves the case he feels that "Thought seemed
to be something enormous that suddenly slipped out" of his grasp (123). The ambiguous image of mirrors occurs in the Saradine story. Here, because the mirrors are all meant to imitate and copy, they become purveyors of distortion that "torture" the priest, make the experience "like a dream" (162). He is "like a man in a nightmare"; "Somehow he had not seen the real story, but some game or masque" (167). The final story speaks of the moment of crisis "as if all reason had broken up and the universe were turning into a brainless harlequinade" (242). Father Brown has to personally experience the state of mind that believes it is central before he can go on to interpret the crime.

From this first book Father Brown emerges as the detective exercising Christian reason, the mystic artist, both creative and interpretive. The detection is directed to finding out the crime; but also, where possible, to getting a repentance from the criminal although this is not emphasized. The narrator presents the priest's mind rather than his character. At the start of each story an atmosphere is created for the situation against which Father Brown works. A case in point is "The Sign of the Broken Sword" which is almost entirely spoken by the priest himself, and has an oddly thin atmosphere very different from the rest of the book. He is viewed mainly as an allegory for the function of the Church not as a person. One character even accuses him of this saying that "All your church is but a black police; you are only spies and detectives seeking to tear from men confessions of guilt" (202). The effect is
increased by his abrupt departure soon after the crime is solved. However, this is in accord with Chesterton's intention not to dwell on the intellectual powers that reach the solution, but what the solution itself reveals. Explicitly or implicitly there is certainly a note of extending the meaning beyond the event to the human aspect of the participants.

It is curious that the second pre-war book, The Wisdom of Father Brown, tends to dwell mainly on the intellectual aspect of detection. While technically adept, the book is less humane; and the narrator is detached as if manipulating Father Brown almost mechanically. The emphasis on Father Brown's observations rather than his human knowledge is a progression indicated in the title of the book. There is one specific reference which is illuminating here. The narrator describes the priest on the verge of finding the solution to a crime. His face was frowning:

It was not the blank curiosity of his first innocence. It was rather the creative curiosity which comes when a man has the beginnings of an idea.  

The "creative curiosity" of the detective process becomes the subject of the book as Chesterton places Father Brown in opposition to other methods of detection. His role is to correctly interpret the assumptions others make, but not necessarily to apply them to the criminal. The direction of the wisdom is to the perception of truth behind the superficial detail, the mask or appearance

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of things. However, the aim of the process is also to demonstrate that all the other methods of logic have built-in assumptions that obscure the truth. The initial story, unlike those of the two previous collections, is not a prototype for the rest. It deals with a specific problem that some of the others follow up. The concern is with rational analysis, the criminologist versus Father Brown. The first story introduces the meticulous detective, surrounded by things "never allowed out of their place" (9). The man is organized, "rigid" and rational. When confronted by the mystery that Father Brown takes him to he at once says "it is best to look first to the main tendencies of Nature" (13). He begins by observing the chaos of the room and adapting every detail in it to fit his theory. Father Brown realizes the truth by waiting to perceive it, allowing the facts to yield their own answer. When he realizes the solution he tells the criminologist that he is a poet; his theory is a poem. He has created a crime, "How much more godlike that is than if you had only ferreted out the mere facts!" (21). The rationalist is limited by the limits of his own reason; he cannot solve the crime because he cannot see it as it is.

A similar example is found in the case of the lie detector versus Father Brown. The governor of a United States' state has just acquired a lie detector. He is sure that merely because it cannot lie it must therefore tell the truth. But a machine is limited to the man who uses it. It may give an impression of the truth but is dependent on
the interpretation of its results. As Father Brown points out, "How do you know you observed it right?" (85) The use of machines is even more dangerous because the man using them is more open to suggestion because he thinks them factual. Father Brown, with access to exactly the same facts, reads them for what they say not what he wants them to say. The detective cannot evade a personal responsibility in his interpretation, he too must choose not just select. The same kind of logic is found in the case of two journalists. Because of the literary and social preconceptions they hold when writing for their respective newspapers, they approach a case presumably for "factual" knowledge, but really with the intent to reinforce their prejudices. Father Brown on the other hand attacks the problem with impartial reason; he waited until he had received all the explanations before he acted.

One major assumption that Father Brown is fighting is that the appearance of a person or object exactly reflects its identity. The fear of the unknown is all too easily achieved if the connection between appearance and identity is not understood because it is not clear. A second theme in the book is that of impressionist analysis that is based on this mistake. In "The Man in the Passage" Father Brown and two other men think that they have seen a murderer. The two other men describe him with fear. The first is a "perfect" witness in his understanding of the court; yet he admits that his evidence is based on his "impression" (71), and has to modify some of his observations. The second,
by no means a perfect witness, is similarly open to the personal distortions of evidence occasioned by his strong emotions. Father Brown, in complete contrast, is absolutely objective about his evidence and can therefore interpret it correctly. The point is that each witness saw his shadow in a mirror, but only Father Brown recognized himself. The others were used to seeing themselves in mirrors (75), and to not thinking their shape strange. Therefore they assumed that an unfamiliar shape could not be theirs. Another example is found in the girl who looks through a window from the inside and reads "SELA" not "ALES" (93). She is disoriented because of her previous experiences, and assumes the unknown unquestioningly. Father Brown recognizes that she thinks she is going mad and corrects her misinterpretation. One of his roles is to help others by combatting superstitions that they fear with reason.

The root of the study of mistaken identity is found in "The Perishing of the Pendragons". The reader finds Father Brown on a boat. He is listening to "trivialities" about the house he is going to while trying to quiet his seasickness. A little later we are told that he "was clever in analyzing his own mystification" (124) and is trying to do so as they approach the house that is their destination. However, he gets more mystified as he gets closer to shore; he grows "a little fanciful" thinking that he is in a nightmare (127). On entering the house the priest and his friends try to interpret the carved symbols over the door but cannot, and his friends begin to feel the fear of
superstition. However, over dinner the priest begins to understand. He is being served by two servants in yellow livery and immediately thinks of the word "canary" although canary birds are not yellow:

The priest's instinctive trick of analyzing his own impressions told him that the colour and the neat coat-tails of these bipeds had suggested the word Canary. (132)

The explicit recognition of an associative process that obscures the truth is what leads him to recognize that a map which is purported to be of the Pacific is really of the river they sailed down. Knowing this he can interpret the symbols on the door and the trivial tales about the house in the light of the map, and avert a murder. It is the associative construction of the literary inventor that was intended to obscure meaning, but Father Brown's ability to pierce to essence revealed an identity far removed from the superficially accepted one.

The first group of stories examined the over-rational emphasis, and the second the impressionist emphasis in detection. The division is underlined by the action of an editor in "The Purple Wig". The editor is introduced in the process of editing. He is supposed to be unbiased, but we notice that the substitution of "supernatural" to "marvellous" and "Jew" to "Alien" are merely introductions of new prejudices on his part. The story shows him receiving a story about Father Brown from a reporter. The first letter he writes to him says that "Father Brown" is being altered to "Mr. Brown, a Spiritualist" (115) because
the public can accept the extremes of spiritualism more easily than those of religion. Yet when he receives the second installment, after Father Brown has logically solved the mystery, the editor rejects it on the materialistic grounds that the solution exposes a friend of the owner of the paper. He can accept the extremes of materialism and spiritualism but not the common-sense in between. The final story shows Father Brown in a personal crusade against a superstition that has arisen around someone being shot in a "weaponless" land. Knowing that no country would be without weapons for defence he works from there to discover that a certain army officer killed the man. He refuses to be caught by the material fact that there are no weapons, and the ensuing superstition about the death. Father Brown's method is to involve both aspects into Christian reason. However, while he has explained the crime itself he has left many small details unexplained. The situation leads to an interesting structural development: The extension of a second mystery beyond the crime.

The beginnings of the stories in the book are significantly different from those of the previous book. Rather than establishing an atmosphere to give substance to Father Brown's perception, they are descriptions of scenes and details that provide all the information necessary for the ensuing assumptions. The stories go on to follow these assumptions through, to solve the crime; as such the introductions are appropriate to the emphasis on technique. The endings however are unsatisfactory. They do not let
Father Brown just explain and vanish, but they go on to explain with reference to the social and moral problems of a second mystery. Quite often this second mystery seems to be more important in that it illuminates the meaning and value of the technical solution. But except for "The Man in The Passage" the second mysteries are difficult to perceive. Further they often appear to centre around a point of Chesterton's propaganda such as Jews, voodoo, machines and so on, not a purely human moral issue. As a result many of the stories seem weak, with little point; some such as "The God of the Gongs" are even careless and obtuse. Father Brown appears to be dangerously close to a purely mechanical character employing non-mechanical powers, just so that the author can create propaganda. It is important to remember that the stories are contemporaneous with The Flying Inn. They contain aspects of Chesterton's loss of balance that the novel also evidenced, and probably for the same stressful reasons.

Chesterton does not publish another collection of Father Brown stories until 1926 and The Incredulity of Father Brown. The book is probably the best collection of the five. In it the use of a two-part mystery is clear and effective. Father Brown solves each crime but then goes on to deal with the consequential human problems of those involved. It is interesting that the major group of detective stories he writes between 1914 and 1926 is The Man Who Knew Too Much. The central protagonist, Horne Fisher, solves all the crimes through a deep understanding of human nature combined with
observation; and he has much in common with Father Brown. The narrator describes him as a man with a "curious and almost transcendental sensibility to atmospheres". When he works a crime out he does so with a "mysticism" that makes him sound "almost as if two men were speaking" (86), himself and the criminal. However, Fisher can do no more than solve the crimes. Four murderers go free for political reasons; two are considered "good" because they have killed people outside the reach of the law; there is one suicide, and finally Horne himself dies. He is the official detective; he cannot save souls. The knowledge he has is "too much"; it is useless for it has no purpose. Fisher finally achieves vindication when he leaves "politics" and enters war. Finally he is effective by dying for others. Apart from Chesterton's propaganda purposes, the stories are used to show the ineffectiveness of merely solving a crime. He now fully accepts the need to portray his detective as going further to save souls.

The Incredulity takes its direction from the initial story. Father Brown is humanised, dealt with as a person relating to other human beings. The solving of the crime is still important because it allows the narrator to show the reasoning process at work, but it is incomplete without the concern for the criminal which follows. As a critic and an artist, the priest must first interpret and then re-express the crime. The functions come to be parallel with solving

the crime and helping those involved. In *The Wisdom* he solved the crime by finding a middle-way between yet fusing the material and the spiritual, the rational and the impressionist sides of the evidence through Christian reason. The process was purely his detective method. Here we have a far more complex situation because we are back to dealing with a relationship between the detective and the criminal. Chesterton is identifying the criminal as someone without this reason, off-balance between the material and the spiritual. The criminal is an artist without the necessary indication of authority and without the concomitant interpretive faculty. The priest's role is to be aware of the instability. He provides interpretation that allows for re-expression of the crime in the light of Christian reason, that subjects the acts to an external authority. The book portrays both the inadequate expression of the criminal that reveals him as such, and Father Brown's re-expression.

The initial story, "The Resurrection of Father Brown" not only changes the less personal atmosphere of the previous collections but also puts Father Brown in the position of potentially being the criminal himself. It makes necessary self-detection. The story places Father Brown in a South American mission where a journalist discovers him, and creates a mythical figure of him for the United States' press. After many stories, he is faced with the problem of how to kill him off. Later, we find out that the priest, in order to stop the stories agrees "to die and come to life again
like Sherlock Holmes". As a result of the publicity, the priest is also bombarded with testimonials, and one evening having written a testimonial for a wine-merchant called Eckstein, he has an intuition of evil. Despite a sense of physical oppression, his curiosity overcomes him. The narrator comments:

All his life he had been led by an intellectual hunger for the truth, even of trifles. He often controlled it in the name of proportion; but it was always there. (13)

He goes out to discover the source of his oppression and is attacked.

A young engineer in the village sees the attack and the rest of the story is given through his eyes. The technique is a clever move because the engineer, John Race, although an objective scientist, is very sympathetic to the following events. As Race watches Father Brown walk down the street he feels a sort of "morbid fascination" (15). He totally disagrees with Roman Catholicism but cannot help liking the priest. When he hears that Father Brown has just been killed a "prop gave way in his mind" (16), and he went home with a "singular sense of emptiness" (17). The next day Father Brown is to be buried and he goes along to watch the funeral ceremony. However, in the middle of the speeches the priest sits up in the coffin. The effect on Race is to make him feel that he had "burst out of the world of time and space, and to be living in the impossible" (20). To his further surprise, the first action of the priest is

to telegraph his Bishop to say that no miracle has occurred. After this, Race helps Father Brown home.

The following process of self-detection leads Father Brown to the conclusion that the whole event was staged. Someone had wanted to fake a miracle, and then discredit it to expose the Catholic church. The kernel of the story is that these people created a fiction for the priest to work within, a human manufacture of the semblance of life. Father Brown works it out by analyzing the things he has said to the journalist about his "fictional death", and the testimonial about the wine which turns out to have been drugged. When he awoke in the middle of the story, his interpretive faculty told him immediately that it was false. His awareness of an authority that had to be maintained, prevented him from the crime of pretending that he was a miracle. When he realizes the extent of the possible evil he thanks God for having saved him (22). If he had accepted the story, he would have accepted an imposition of human will, he would have been an artist without authority, a criminal. Race points out that it was "pretty practical psychology" (24) for the people to expect him to do just that. Most men would not have been able to interpret the intent so accurately, or resist breaking the illusion.

Central to the story is the creation of a false expression that Father Brown acts within yet manages to interpret before committing the crime. Similarly the remaining stories all concern the criminal as an artist who uses the wrong mode, and how Father Brown interprets for
them. Because the criminal is not a mystic artist he does not create or maintain the duality of Father Brown. The priest is able to solve the crime by recognizing that an expression does not have a clearly portrayed truth, and going in search of it. For example in "The Arrow of Heaven" an arrow is supposed to have been shot through a window, but really it has been stabbed into the man. Father Brown reaches this conclusion by correctly interpreting an analogy in a story about an Indian throwing a knife, not stabbing with it, while the others "missed the point of the story" (43). In another case a friend tries to connect the howling of a dog with the superstitious belief that it knew when its master died. On the other hand, Father Brown condemns the idea and says that the dog howled because a cane being thrown into the sea for him sank. The reason it sank was that it was a sword-stick and had recently been used to kill the man. He says that the dog could have explained the murder but the friend "made up his story for him" (70) because of a belief:

that's arbitrary without being authoritative . . .
It's the first effect of not believing in God that you lose your common sense, and can't see things as they are. (70-1)

The idea of a criminal who wants a curse or superstition believed occurs in three other stories, and Father Brown systematically interprets the truth behind them.

One story particularly interesting for its demonstration of Father Brown in the interpretive mode is "The Miracle of Moon Crescent". The criminal has reason to make the
murder seem like a miracle and tries to get the other partial witnesses to agree. He expects Father Brown to believe it because he is a priest, yet he disbelieves it just because he is a priest. Similarly the policeman and psychologist who interview the witnesses accuse Father Brown of being irrational. The former says that the priest is just propagating "miraculous stuff" (85). The latter asserts that he has manipulated the witnesses by a series of human impressions created by "a few restrained gestures; in an art or school of manners" (88). He goes on to state that:

there is not one man in twenty who really observes at all . . . certainly not one in a hundred who can first observe, then remember and finally describe. (88)

However, these points really argue Father Brown's case for him. Those who are too "spiritual" are the witnesses. The priest is quite objective and identifies the criminal by recognizing the man who started the superstition. A personal impression always causes too great an emphasis on either the spiritual and superstitious, or the material. This collection particularly points out the superstitious mistakes and the aspect of horror and madness that results. Father Brown is concerned with destroying the superstition for the sake of other people's sanity, by insisting on an external, common-sense perspective of reason.

"The Dagger With Wings" is a close study of another theme, the mind of the criminal artist. The case is introduced as one for either "a doctor, or a policeman, or
a priest", and the three aspects of insanity, criminality and evil are closely associated with the criminal artist. Apparently a man was being threatened by his step-brother over a court case, and Father Brown goes to see him to ascertain whether he is just over-anxious or if there might be a real basis for the fear. While he is there the step-brother supposedly appears outside and is shot by the brother. However, Father Brown has been attentively aware of a brief change of light outside the glass door. His mind is:

set dreaming on certain borderlands of thought, with the first white daybreak before the coming of colour, and all that mystery which is alternately veiled and revealed in the symbol of windows and of doors. (135-6)

The body is seen as one of the "simple extravagances of heraldry" (136), an allegory to be interpreted. Despite the brilliant surface of the brother's story of the fight Father Brown knows otherwise. The brother is really the step-brother, who had already killed the brother before the priest arrived.

Later, when explaining to the police, Father Brown comments that the man "is a sort of monomaniac" (140). He is only interested in one crime and in doing it supremely well. Such a man is an artist with no social responsibility, and the priest continues by saying that:

this man had in him a very noble power to be perverted; the power of telling stories. He was a great novelist; only he had twisted his fictive power to practical and to evil ends; to deceiving men with false fact instead of true fiction. (142)
Because he is an artist "the mask must be to some extent moulded on the face" (145); he has to express himself at least partially. It is in the discussion of the philosophy that he establishes for his fictional character that he gives himself away. He believes that men are shadows of one reality, that at the centre "men melt into Man and Man into God" (138). His misinterpretation of religion as spiritual only, of man as only different in degree from God, indicated the basis of human authority which governed his life and his story. Through this discussion the priest is alerted to the falsity of the tale, and recognizes the truth of body's allegory. Having placed the demoniac magician under police authority, Father Brown goes home; and the description echoes the concern for his youthful fears in the other books of 1926 to 1927 when they mention that "some forgotten muddle and morbidity seemed to be left behind" (146).

In virtually every mystery what Father Brown is interpreting is a material medium of expression. The medium is usually verbal, as with his own words in the first story. We have seen him interpreting the analogy of the story about the knife, the heraldry of the dead body. One situation calls for the interpretation of a painting, one for the recognition of the "literary" quality of a man's supposedly spontaneous speech. Each mode leaves something lacking which Father Brown is sensitive to, and when he identifies it he can solve the murder. The next stage is to re-express the act in terms of authority to show the criminal the falsity of his belief in human will. In two cases he gets
a confession from the criminal by exposing him to the true basis of his act, as in "The Miracle of Moon Crescent" for example. The case of the monomaniac makes the verbal confession useless since he really believes that he has a right to kill. One confession is even set up as a lie, which will be found out later. Two events are left without resolution, one of which is an unaverted suicide. But the re-expression is not only necessary for the criminal but also for all those with whom he comes in contact. The imbalance of perspective he perpetrates must be corrected so that it does not influence others.

In connection with helping those around the criminal is an interest in sources of criminality which are not overt. The idea is found in the "media" programme of his own potential crime. If he had committed it he would have been a criminal, but so would the journalist and wine-merchant indirectly associated with the event. At one point he presents the facts of a case to an unofficial tribunal seeking the murderer of a friend. Father Brown tells them that this man has been killed and they condone the action. Yet when he reveals that the "murderer" they sought was really the friend, and that someone else killed the friend, they change their minds. Father Brown then condemns them. He says that their lawlessness in initially condoning invalidates their new call for law. The lawlessness was a result of personal desire and unless they were willing to forgo it for a standard of judgement in the law, they had no right to turn to authority afterwards.
Other stories are concerned with this aspect but one in particular is central. "The Curse of the Golden Cross" contains the fundamental background to the view of man's potential criminality; it also introduces for the first time the theme of conversion to Christianity as the only solid reform and safeguard. An archeologist named Smaill has discovered a gold cross with a fish on it. It is important because the design is realistic rather than merely diagrammatic. In the cave where it was found he also saw the fish carved on the wall, but he could not analyze nor understand its meaning. The case revolves around someone wanting to kill him because he owns the fish. The murderer sets up a scene based on a superstition, and the fact that it comes true is Father Brown's hint as to the perpetrator. However, when the priest returns to the scene of the crime the murderer has gone. The criminal is a "monomaniac" with only one aim in mind: To kill Smaill. Thinking that he has done so, he leaves. There will be no confession for him, since, as Smaill himself observes he is a "madman", incapable of accepting any external responsibility.

The real criminal of the story is Smaill himself. Before the actual attack on his life, he is guilty of assuming an unfounded greatness in walking into the trap that the lunatic had prepared for him. Not only does he do this but also he leads others in as well by virtue of their interest in him. Instead of turning to fact he allows the fiction of his greatness to exist. While he recovers from the near-fatal blow he receives his constant companion is
Father Brown. To him he recounts the strange "Byzantine patterns" of his dreams that continually faded away before the picture of the fish in the cave. Through the priest, he comes to see "a meaning in the picture" (122); he comes to understand the analogy that it is making. He realizes that the early Christians, the painters of the picture, were persecuted as he was being persecuted. Moreover, they had all civilization against them, and were being persecuted for a faith. In the face of such valid suffering he learns humility, comes to realize his limits and implicitly accepts Christianity.

In this collection Father Brown is a man relating to those who are off balance and without authority. As a mystic artist he has to interpret the words and actions of their crimes and help them re-express them in confession. He has to teach them to be mystic artists for themselves. Not only must they be creative but also interpretive. In other words he has to provide them with the authority that puts their personal will in a moral and religious perspective, and prevents insanity, crime and sin. The book is valuable for its own balance. The variety of cases each with a different emphasis portrays Father Brown reacting differently to the human beings in each one. The maturity of the author is reflected in his ability to develop the priest's character as an essential basis for the complex interaction between character and event. The reader perceives in him not only an analogy for the Church and the law, but also a human being trying to come to terms with the potential sin
in himself.

The following year, 1927, *The Secret of Father Brown* was published. Many of the concepts are the same, but they attain an even greater subtlety as Chesterton explores further aspects of the problem. The personal involvement implied in the first story of *The Incredulity* is made explicit in *The Secret*. Not only are the actions of Father Brown made clear, but also the artistic process of how he carries them out is examined. The fact is important because it allows the reader to contrast the priest's process with that of the criminal.

The direction of the book is organized by a framework of prologue and epilogue within which Chesterton as the author takes great care to express his own meaning. First, the images that it contains generate the stories in the rest of the book. But more than this, the prologue deals with his fundamental method of analogy. The study of it here illuminates the stories which follow in their concentration on the process of expression in both criminal and detective. Unfortunately, the framework is not an organic part of the book. While it certainly adds depth to the stories, it is an intellectual activity on the reader's part. As a result, the stories themselves, although interesting for their examination of the process, are mechanical in the centre. They become primarily valuable for their development of concepts rather than as literary short story efforts.

The actual organization of Father Brown's method is laboriously presented. It is similar in many ways to *The*
Wisdom but with a far more complex scheme to deal with more sophisticated ideas. The first story for example deals with a crime as seen by a policeman and an official detective. The policeman bases his judgement on his personal acquaintance with the neighbourhood; the detective bases his on objective observation. Both men personally interpret an account of the crime through a bias of their method. Father Brown, however, reserves judgement merely saying "something had happened". The priest uses a combination of human knowledge and observation to make up his common-sense approach to the crime. His vision is not limited in one way or another and he can therefore identify the criminal. Another schematic example is the third story which shows Father Brown mediating between the orderly detailed inspector, an occult Count, and a rational doctor by again combining all the aspects into common-sense.

However, the study of expression and interpretation is certainly valuable. In the prologue the reader finds an American asking Father Brown how he solves his crimes. In his own opinion he thinks that Father Brown differs from other detectives in "the absence of method" (10) more than anything else. Father Brown answers by saying "it was I who killed all those people" (11). A startled American tries to turn the statement into "a figure of speech" that means that the priest "tried to reconstruct the psychology" (11). Father Brown will have none of this; he denies that

he entered into a superficial identification and explains in more depth. Just as Chesterton himself distrusted expression through words because of the potential distortion, so Father Brown says:

"I don't mean just a figure of speech ... What's the good of words ... ? If you try to talk about a truth that's merely moral, people always think it's merely metaphorical." (12)

The priest literally gets "inside a murderer, thinking his thoughts, wrestling with his passions ... Till I am really a murderer" (13). Significantly he calls the process "a religious exercise", and indeed it is a ritual act of total surrender of personal identity to the object he wishes to understand. It is the action of the purely creative artist.

Then however, the narrator describes Father Brown's reflections on "that introspective style" (14). The priest looks into his glass of wine "like the glorious blood-red glass of a martyr's window". The cup becomes an analogy for "the blood of all men" with Father Brown plunging into it with the necessary "inverted imagination" of the criminal. The wine becomes the physical means through which he reaches the reality of all his experiences. It is "like a vast red sunset", "red lanterns", "a great rose of red crystal" and "a flame of wild red beard". The process of analogical identification brings the experiences to the man's mind and they begin "to form themselves into anecdotes and arguments" (14). Not only does the description indicate the analogical process of Father Brown's mind that results in the restricted
modes of anecdote and argument, but also it indicates Chesterton's own meaning. The over-riding analogy of the cup of wine for the analogical process itself links it with the communion sacrament of the Church. Analogy is a sacramental act of incarnation transforming between the ritual of identification with the criminal and the expression of the act.

The author tells the Father Brown stories through a complex allegorical mode, but Father Brown himself communicates with great difficulty. Indeed his attempts to express himself are often so literal that others misinterpret them. The main factor in his speech is that he is not metaphorical. When, in the first story he says "something had happened" he means it purely literally. The policeman and detective interpret it as a metaphor for something, and thereby involve their faulty personal judgement. "The Vanishing of Vaudrey" portrays Father Brown searching for a mode to adequately express the horror in the objective view he holds so that the truth does not create fear in his listeners. He does so by speaking "in parables" (110). Another story ends with a paradox as the only way to explain an action. A further one uses the analogy of the sacked English abbeys to explain the enormity behind a potential theft. Only in the final story does he explain himself directly, and that only after attempting to divert the explanation with an enigmatic analogy. In fact The Scandal of Father Brown, in so far as it can contribute anything further to our understanding, does so through its heavier emphasis on the inadequate nature of
Father Brown's communication. He knows that he cannot express absolute truth; that he attempts to do so is evidence of his humility. The use of parable, paradox, analogy and anecdote are all intentionally inadequate because he has to admit his human limits to indicate the truth.

As usual all the criminals are artists of one kind or another, but here we find an expansion of the idea of a Flambeau-type great criminal as opposed to a degenerate fantasist. "The Man With Two Beards" is solely concerned with differentiating between a reformed great criminal and a petty criminal. Michael Moonshine is the former, a kind of "Rob Roy or Robin Hood", who was "far too capable a burglar to be a murderer" (37). He had an exact artistic sense of balance in how far he would go. By contrast, the criminal of this story is a "rather brutal sort of businessman. He has no social ideal, let alone religion" (53). He killed in order to use the body as a stage property and "all sorts of fantastic finishing touches followed quite naturally from the primary fact" (53). He was so self-centred that the value of human life was purely in what it could yield him personally. Two further stories compare a thief who achieves his aim by creation of atmosphere and acting "very fine acting, for he was a very fine artist in crime" (72), and an actress who is also a murdress. Worse than a murdress, the actress is an egoist; she wants everything to revolve around her and she destroys those who stand in her way. The mystery of "The Red Moon of Meru" compares the Indian fraud who wants to be lauded for "the power of
mind over matter" (146), and the Christian thief. The latter acknowledges the value of the object he steals while the former sees it only as a means to his own greatness. A further tale concerns the murder of a man by a friend whom he is blackmailing. Both are artists, but whereas one is consciously plotting a self-centred "artistic revenge" (110), the murderer commits the crime in "self-defense" (108). The final story contrasts the totally controlled artist with the man who is trained to act just well enough to commit a murder and then breaks down.

The self-centred artists each try to create an impression to supplant reality. They are fantasists who do not want their crime to be discovered. They run away from the truth of their crime, or try to construct a façade that obscures it. The horror of crime comes from the obscurity that is created; and Father Brown's role is to pierce below the façade, the mask, or the distortion to reveal truth and destroy fear. The other type of criminal, however, is willing to acknowledge the crime; he is penitent, confesses his sin, and often reforms. The implication is that great criminals know that they lack interpretation and almost seek the law or religion as an audience. They would jeopardize their own lives to have their crime examined as a work of art. They create it for itself not for their own satisfaction as an artist. The epilogue of the book bears out this implication in the analysis Father Brown makes of the anarchist poet. He says that when he identified with this man he realized that he couldn't commit a murder or suicide
"because he wrote songs of violence. A man who can express himself in song need not express himself in suicide" (171). He has an audience for his thought in the event of his songs, he does not need to create a crime to express himself.

The point about the criminals is that they all in differing degrees, take their art to be final, to be a reality. Father Brown has to show them that it is not. When he succeeds in exposing the actuality to the criminal they have no recourse but to admit that their art shows their humanity and imperfection. They then need him to re-express themselves in confession. Whereas the law often imposes penance without the criminal truly confessing, with Father Brown there is always the possibility of true confession, penance and pardon. Here the last story is significant. The people involved show themselves ready to condone one crime but condemn another. As with the previous example of such a situation, Father Brown accuses them of having no absolute standard and therefore no right to appeal to one. They reply that "There's a limit to human charity" (168), and the priest answers by saying that only Christianity and Christian charity can overcome that limit. The law only forgives criminals who commit "conventions", only the church can forgive those "who do things really indefensible" (169). He then goes on explicitly to say that this is his role as a priest: To give the strength to confess, and then to pardon.

To summarize the ideas, we find in the detective stories the figure of the madman. For him, his actions are completing and absolute. He lies outside the social sphere
for he believes that he is the centre and source of the world. Being God, he has no external authority, he needs no audience, no necessary explanation and no confession. The "mental and moral morbidity" of life arises from the knowledge of this potential insanity. But the fear itself indicates that one is not mad, and here we pass to the figure of the criminal. The criminal act is also intended to be complete and absolute but the criminal always knows the potential limits of the crime. He sins by consciously assuming supreme human authority. Morally the act is evil because it has no social responsibility; it is entirely personal. Similarly as art the crime is wrong because it is created by a distortion of the object or event by personal will.

The criminal either avoids acknowledging the limits or subconsciously seeks an audience. The latter search is a realization of the existence of some external authority that makes interpretation of the creation essential. The venue is either law or religion. As pointed out, law is seen to be unsatisfactory because it mechanically imposes punishment. Religion provides confession which acknowledges God and the limits of man, thereby exposing the object as it really is and showing the social injustice of the personal view. The acceptance of Christian reason in confession provides the interpretative side to the creation and produces a balanced artist. It is significant that the epilogue to The Secret portrays a reformed Flambeau who is a balanced human being. He no longer needs the audience of half the police in the world to
admire his crimes, and only with hesitation and reluctance does he admit to the American who he is.

The third figure of the stories is of course the priest. His role is to become one with the criminal, to commit the act through ritual identification. Because he is the source of Christian reason he must not only interpret the crime but re-express it in terms of human limitation. Again if we turn to the epilogue we see that this expression is his own confession. He is terrified of the possibility of his own sin. He says to the American "You may think a crime horrible because you could never commit it. I think it horrible because I could commit it" (174). He acts as a detective not only because of the moral effect on the criminal but also because of his own potential for evil. Through the sacrament of confession, the act and its expression can be transcended by the pardon of God. But the priest is not only identified with the criminal; he is a human being in his own right. As such, Father Brown is a mystic artist whose own detective experiences must be expressed, and this he effects through the limited analogical forms of anecdote and parable. The telling of his story becomes an analogy of the sacrament of communion, which communicates the divine to the human through the incarnation.

What Father Brown becomes is Chesterton's idea of the function of Christian reason in life and the role of the Christian mystic artist. The use of Christian reason reduces the possibility of self-centred acts. It prevents madness and stops evil. The Christian mystic artist has a
responsibility to show how Christian reason may be employed, to teach those without it. If they cannot themselves interpret and create he must do it for them. While Father Brown and the process of his mystic reason and expression is the main level of the story, it also clearly functions on the allegorical levels of morality and belief. The detective story as Chesterton creates it gives one a picture with all the necessary evidence. It is an allegory of life in which man has to realize and act upon the significance of the clues he has been given. The author tells us that this is impossible without Christian reason, and the stories become an allegory of the function of Christian ritual in life. Both Chesterton and the priest, as mystic artists with an identifying analogical process, are constantly aware of potential sin; and their expression is a confession of that potential. Not only Father Brown's but also Chesterton's life and work function as an analogy for the sacrament of confession.

The Father Brown stories constitute both an interpretation and expression of Chesterton's philosophy. The Autobiography makes the connection explicit when, in its closing pages the author speaks of his life as "a romance and very much a mystery story". He says that the journey of his life has brought him the ability to accept the existence of sin as something to be grateful for, the knowledge that gratitude can only be reached by facing "the reality about oneself". Chesterton sums up his life saying:

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my morbidities were mental as well as moral; and sounded the most appalling depths of fundamental scepticism and solipsism. And there again I found that the Church had gone before me and established her adamantine foundations; that she had affirmed the actuality of external things; so that even a madman might hear her voice; and by a revelation in their very brain begin to believe their eyes.29

And concludes with:

This story, therefore, can only end as any detective story should end, with its own particular questions answered and its own primary problem solved.30

Chesterton's life is a romance and a mystery expressed through the analogy of a detective story. Just as Father Brown's telling of his experiences becomes an analogy for the sacrament of communion, so Chesterton's stories become a sacrament of communion between himself and his reader, in which he conveys the existence of the transcending power of God.

29 Ibid., p. 341.
30 Ibid., p. 342.
Chapter X
All his life Chesterton felt that he was surrounded by a humanist world. From the early excerpt on Christian Socialism in Maisie Ward's biography, to the extensive essay "Is Humanism a Religion?" of 1929, he indicates a serious concern with the dangers of human authority. The absolute human creativity implicit for him in the art and philosophy of the 90's split into the twin evils of the aesthetes with their hedonism and pessimism, and the didactic rationalists with their Nietzschean superman. The ideas hovered around his youth, all insisting on the insanity of a solipsist view. However, by 1925, the problem does not exist for him personally. In the foreword to the dramatised version of The Man Who Was Thursday he notes:

I can remember the time when pessimism was dogmatic, when it was even orthodox. The people who had read Schopenhauer regarded themselves as having found out everything and found that it was nothing. Their system was a system, and therefore had a character of surrounding the mind. It therefore really resembled a nightmare, in the sense of being imprisoned ... of being none the less captive because it was rather in a lunatic asylum than a reasonable hell or place of punishment.

He continues by saying that the world in 1925 is different; it may even be breaking up, but the destruction may let in some fresh air.

The result of trying to counteract the fundamental fear in his life initiated him on his peculiarly individual artistic journey. Chesterton's primary concern was to express belief in an external, and to assert the unity of

his inspiration, life and art. As he searched for a mode in which to do so, he denied any permanent value in impressionism and rationalism, turning instead to ritual and allegory. In the process his three basic terms became religion, morality and expression. The last word is significant for it defines the role of the mystic artist. The mystic artist must relate the divine to the human, the spiritual to the material. His is not the role of the saint, the pure man with expression in life; nor is it that of the great poet with his mythological imagination. Later he adds that the role is also different from the philosopher communicating through discursive rationalism. Chesterton is trying to find a mode between discursive and symbolic writing and turns to the use of allegory. Simultaneously he becomes aware of the mode of fantasy, and to avoid its dangers he develops the analogical function of allegory to indicate the presence of God. As the style is sophisticated it becomes his own unique form of the detective story: In expression analogous to and indicating the existence of, God's love.

The author insists that he is not an artist. His role is to communicate the divine; as such he is a mystic with an artistic function. He notes that the detective story is not great art², and says that his novels were:

not only not as good as a real novelist would have made them, but they were not as good as I might have made them myself, if I had really even been

trying to be a real novelist.\textsuperscript{3}

However, in 1932 he writes his last major work of literary criticism, \textit{Chaucer}. In this analysis of a great author Chesterton finds all the things he would have wanted to be if he had not been in the position of more fully realizing the dangers of humanism. Chaucer's work is tinged with the colours of humanism, but Chesterton argues that the writer's Catholic background provided a resilient safeguard against the dangers inherent in it. He is seen as a great poet for he can "measure the broken strength we call the weakness of man"\textsuperscript{4}, without himself being weak. To understand his ability to do so we are referred to his Roman Catholicism. Like all great poets Chaucer "was concerned with things" (31) yet his unique perception of their value was based on his awareness of actuality "of existence, of the fact that things truly are" (37). The recognition that one is alive is fundamentally religious and calls forth "a subconscious substance of gratitude" to God. Chaucer's religion allowed him to accept the overwhelming intensity of life as a glimpse of God's world, and communicate both its humanity and divinity in his art.

Chesterton bases his study of Chaucer on the recognition of both medieval and modern elements in his style. He says that the:

\begin{quote}
work begins with the purely rhythmic decorative style that possessed medieval prose and verse . . .
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{3} \textit{Autobiography}, pp. 288-9.

\textsuperscript{4} \textit{Chaucer} (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1932), p. 31.
It ends with . . . something suggestive of the realism of modern novels. (154)

Both aspects are found to be valuable because Chaucer being a Catholic, can use either without danger. On the medieval side we find Chesterton picking out points of style that he himself has used. There is the use of heraldry as a "system of symbolism" (66) conveying identity upon everything in Chaucer's work, and fulfilling an aspect of his mystic function. There is also his use of decoration which was like a dance, standing for order. Its rhythmical and recurrent pattern was "a perfectly correct and orthodox type of medieval moral theology" (157). The critic states that by "sheer moral imagination" (176) Chaucer turned the pattern into a portrait with concentration on the individual. In doing so he demonstrated the difference:

between an objective religion, worshipped as an object by the whole people, and a subjective religion studied as a subject only by the religious. (181)

The individual portrait and subjective religion are the aspects of a modern world which make novels possible. Further, the nineteenth century is the true home of the novel for during that time "liberal enlightenment" seemed to make the study of individuality not only possible but appropriate.

In Chaucer's time however, humanism was only just beginning to surface. Chesterton connects an "irrational humour" in the poet's work with the sixteenth century nonsense of Shakespeare. But he also notes that Rabelais in the sixteenth century seemed to need to break the bonds of
medieval logic; that Shakespeare's "wild fantasticality" would have been impossible for Chaucer who was still too much of a medieval man. The Renaissance did not have the "sense of how to balance a world" (237); and where Shakespeare has any number of mad people, Chaucer has none. Chaucer's background tradition did not allow him to "indulge a fantasy at the expense of everything else" (235), he was too aware of the order of the world. The whole Renaissance break with medieval tradition is seen as a search for truth at the edges of the human imagination, and that Chaucer had certainly no inclination to do that. The poet is seen as the embodiment of a deep rich turning point in history, religion, and literature; a man able to live in and use the best aspects of both worlds.

Chesterton's sensitivity to the issues involved can be most clearly appreciated in his images for different artistic approaches. We have already noted the use of the mirror and the shadow as the process of myth and symbol in The Everlasting Man. Just as myth can be of an ambivalent nature, so the image is ambiguous. In The New Jerusalem he speaks of the imaginative properties of the moon which is a "silver mirror for poets and a most fatal magnet for lunatics". The positive function of the mirror appears in the statement that the relationship of St. Francis to Christ was one of a "mirror" not a "light". The human imagination is only a

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5 The New Jerusalem, p. 247.
6 St. Francis of Assisi, p. 135.
partial reflection of the world, not a divine light shining on it. In the Father Brown stories mirrors are often definitely negative as in their distorting effect in "The Sins of Prince Saradine". A very early poem indicates this negative aspect in "The Mirror of Madmen", an early expression of a solipsist state. The negative effects are summed up in an essay on modern intellectual mystics. Chesterton states that when this kind of man said he thought a post wonderful, he meant that it was so not in its own existence but "inside, in the mirror of his mind". Since the mystic's mind was entirely made of mirrors:

glass repeated glass like doors opening inwards for ever, till one could hardly see that inmost chamber of unreality where the post made its last appearance. And as the mirrors of the modern mystic's mind are most of them curved . . . the post in its ultimate reflection looked like all sorts of things . . . 7

The critic concludes that even though "they were better poets than I", they only imagined the post; he saw it as it was, wonderful for its material substance. The point about the ambivalent nature of the mirror image is that it is linked to the human imagination. As a result it expresses both the heights and depths of the facets of human communication.

Chesterton also uses the image of the window, specifically the stained glass window in connection with the function of analogy. We find both the image for human imagination and analogy combined in the introduction to Chaucer's style in the novel, in other words in his modern work. In turning

7 "Wonder and the Wooden Post", The Coloured Lands, p. 160.
the pictures of the Decameron into the portraits of The Canterbury Tales Chaucer is the "creator of a cosmos", the poet as maker of a world even if only an unreal world (21), Chesterton goes on to single out two stories, "Sir Thopas" and "Chanticler" as important insights by Chaucer into his own method. Both are mockeries of great poets for "the best in this kind are but shadows" (21). In "Sir Thopas" the poet has recreated "the mystery of the relation of the maker with the thing made" (22); he has shown that no created object is more than a shadow of its creator. In doing so he has established the basic analogy of God being to man what man is to art. However in both these stories there is a mystical power. Both have:

the quality by which a very great artist sometimes allows his art to become semi-transparent, and a light to shine through the shadow pantomime which makes it confess itself a shadowy thing. (26)

Although Chaucer fully explores the human imagination, when he finally comes to assess its value he sees it as nothing before the divine light of God.

In an explanation for Chaucer's invention of the novel form, it is interesting that the process Chesterton observes is identical with that of C. S. Lewis in The Discarded Image and Marshall McLuhan in Through the Vanishing Point. Chesterton notes that the novel reverses the basic logic of storytelling; "the story-tellers do not merely exist to tell the stories; the stories exist to tell us something about the story tellers" (171). Lewis describes the medieval to modern transition as one from the telling "for
the sake of the tale\(^8\), to telling "valued only as an opportunity for the lavish and highly individual treatment\(^9\). Lewis also contrasts the medieval who will "feel like looking \textit{in} a picture, with the modern who "feels he is looking \textit{out}"\(^{10}\). Marshall McLuhan picks up this observation to develop his own definition of the difference. He notes that medieval man is without perspective; he is merely the spectator observing a picture. On the other hand, Renaissance man in creating perspective, placed the focus on the audience's point of view which he shares with the painter. It appears that he is looking out from himself to a reality in a painting. McLuhan goes on to add that this puts the audience in a passive position because he has to share the painter's perspective, and makes possible influence over other people's sight.\(^{11}\)

McLuhan follows his image right up to the 1900s. At this time he says that Seurat's pointillism created a sense of light behind the dots that made them cast a shadow directly onto the eye of the beholder. From this he notes that it is but one step to the re-introduction of interest in stained glass windows, where the light shines through onto the observer. It is important to differentiate this from

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\(^10\) \textit{Ibid}, p. 119.

Chesterton's stained glass window. His has no point of view at all. An observer watches the light illuminate the world and also himself, but there is no focus. An extensive exploration of the stained glass window image is found in *The Return of Don Quixote*, another book from the amazingly productive years of 1926 to 1927. A whole moral revolution is expressed through the contrasting techniques of illumination and transparency. Medieval illumination however marvellous, was man working to his artistic best by himself. It "is in its nature opaque" and must not be confused with the transparency of glass. The final revelation of the novel occurs when a character realizes that stained glass windows have to be seen from the inside; "Inside there was light and outside there was only lead" (293). This leads to her conversion to Catholicism, and later we are told that the signal of converted people is "that the lamp was lit from within" (309). It is important here to note a third image which is connected to human authority alone, to the pagan artist. An article on Thomas Hardy's work observes that there is in the work:

as in all work really belonging to a pagan world, this character: that all the light is shining on things and not through them. It is all the difference between the gaiety of an old pagan painting or mosaic and the burning clarity of a medieval window.  

Here the lamp is an image expressing purely human origin and

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implying that things do not even exist unless man chooses to notice them.

When the conclusion to Chaucer is reached it is not surprising that the medieval artistic connections are expressed in the following way. Chesterton states that medievalism contains both mystical faith and pagan vision, and "for a medieval man, his Paganism was like a wall and his Catholicism was like a window" (267). Chaucer's own light painted the walls very bright, but "contrasted with the window, they were still dark" (268). Indeed it would never ever cross the mind of any medieval artist that "the lightness of his mural decoration could approach anywhere near to the light of heaven" (268). The confession of inadequacy that this image contains provides Chesterton with his explanation for Chaucer's "rejection" of his work. However, the duality of the window and the wall, the stained glass and the lamp, also provides the critic with a basis for understanding the analogies, the thinking on different levels in Chaucer's work. Chesterton notes the influence of analogical thinking in Chaucer's religion, morality and art, and presents it as a stabilizing influence of mystic art linked to Thomist philosophy. The poet had the positive rationalism of Aristotle, the imaginative and pictorial Dante, but above all the mystical and moral St. Thomas. These are of course the fundamental elements in Chesterton's own life. He takes most of his philosophical ideas from a personal interpretation of Aristotle; his supreme poet is Dante; and finally the transcending faith of his life that stabilizes the ration-
alism and impressionism, is virtually identical with Thomist belief.

The conclusion of Chaucer is that the poet was able to combine the human aspects of communication with those of the mystic artist because he was grounded on a tradition of solid Roman Catholic tradition. Chesterton himself spent most of his life moving towards Catholicism. Significantly, only after his conversion does he seem able to appreciate the modern tradition of painters and writers that surround him. Only after 1925 when he is sufficiently confident of his own solution to the problems of his life, does he recognize similar problems in others. The root of Chesterton's concern is in "human authority" and its growth since the Renaissance resulting in a belief in absolute human communication. What is fascinating about his analysis is that many artists of the period cover exactly the same ground in their discussions of art.

We have already looked at the Imagist movement with Hulme's rejection of Renaissance humanism and representational art. Earlier still the influential French poet Mallarmé provides a veritable résumé of Chesterton's concerns with one major difference which emphasizes the ambivalent nature of the imagination. With regard to the medium of literature he agrees that description is useless to convey identity. Rather it needs:

evocation, allusion, suggestion. These somewhat arbitrary terms reveal what may well be a very decisive tendency in modern literature, a tendency
that limits literature yet sets it free.\textsuperscript{14}

The suggestiveness of the technique "shuns the materials in nature" for literature cannot imitate. Mallarmé is also concerned with the analogical communication of the mystic artist and notes in \textit{Le Livre}:

\begin{quote}
Man charged with divine vision has no other mode of expression save the parallelism of pages as a means of expressing the links, the whims, the limpidity on which he gazes.\textsuperscript{15}
\end{quote}

Creativity is to reveal the existence of objects. McLuhan notes that Mallarmé totally effaces himself because he thinks that the artist's job is "not to sign but to read signatures. Existence must speak for itself"\textsuperscript{16}. However, Mallarmé also thinks of the divine vision as one which he can create. Jacques Maritain notes Mallarmé's letter to Henri Cazalis in which he describes his preparation for writing as a struggle with and destruction of God. Significantly this gives him an "experience of the void" of nothingness, even a "faint hope in magic"\textsuperscript{17}. Mallarmé not only summarizes Chesterton's concerns but also provides an excellent example of the case with which his techniques could, as has been noted with the surrealists, adapt themselves to a diametrically opposed philosophy.

The medium of art, probably because it deals more

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\textsuperscript{15} S. Mallarmé, as quoted by M. McLuhan in "Joyce, Mallarmé and the Press", \textit{The Sewanee Review}, vol. LXII, no. 1 (Jan-March, 1954), p. 49.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid.
\end{flushleft}
directly with physical material, leads many early twentieth century painters to discuss the aspect of imitation. Picasso, for example, denies the existence of "naturalism" in art. Art and nature are different things that cannot express each other. Further, art cannot itself express any kind of reality; it "is a lie to make us realize truth"\(^{18}\). Similarly Klee notes that the artist deforms nature, that he cannot present man "as he is"\(^{19}\). Artistic creation is to provide other realities, not imitations. Hans Arp says in "Dadaland" that he "rejected all mimesis and description"\(^{20}\) as a deception by man's reason. He goes further to state that the idea of possible imitation arose because "The Renaissance taught men to arrogantly exalt their reason", and that modern technological developments of the Renaissance "have consecrated man to megalomania"\(^{21}\). Arp however, differs from Picasso and Klee by having reservations about not mistaking "himself for the Creator"\(^{22}\). The great English champion of early twentieth century art, Roger Fry, also condemns the idea of representative and imitative art as impossible. He says that modern artists:

\[
\text{do not seek to imitate form, but to create form;}
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\(^{19}\) P. Klee, from On Modern Art, quoted in The Modern Tradition, p. 68.


\(^{21}\) Ibid.

not to imitate life, but to find an equivalent for life . . . they aim not at illusion but reality. Fry goes even further back, to the thirteenth century, for the origins of representative art. All these aspects are, as we have seen, echoes of the rather neglected Oscar Wilde. A late essay by Fry also reaches agreement with Wilde on the mystic nature of aesthetic response, something which he notes is inexplicable.

The verbal impossibility of absolute communication leads most of the writers of this period to discuss the inadequacies of purely discursive and purely symbolic language. Coleridge provides a broad base for most of the ideas. On the subject of imitation he notes that "If there be likeness to nature without any check of difference, the result is disgusting . . . we are shocked by a falsehood." Art must attempt to portray the "internal and actual" that informs the external, and set out with an acknowledged limitation of its powers. The process of imagination which achieves this in literature finds itself swinging between the conceptual and perceptual. In his Lectures on Shakespeare he says:

as soon as (the mind) is fixed on one image, it becomes understanding, but while it is unfixed and

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wavering between (images)... it is imagination. The grandest effects of poetry are when the imagination is called forth, not to produce a distinct form, but a strong working of the mind, still offering what is still repelled, and again creating what is again rejected; the result being what the poet wishes to express, namely, the substitution of a sublime feeling for the unimaginable for a mere image.26

It is difficult not to see this as the basic movement of Joyce's triumvirate integritas, consonantia and claritas. One first apprehends the image, then analyzes its parts, and synthesizes it logically and aesthetically into the actual object27. T. S. Eliot notes the two aspects of logic and feeling and says pointedly that logic and philosophy must not be conscious nor feeling merely personal emotion, or the work will be dominated by human rationalism28 or impressionism29 and the object itself ignored.

The fact that the conceptual and perceptual are not open to current methods of analysis is brought out by Hart Crane in a defence of one of his poems. He says that verbal art "demands completely other faculties of recognition than the pure rationalistic associations permit"30, yet it

operates under other laws apparently logical to the poem. J. Middleton Murry's *The Problem of Style* indicates a similar judgement when it states that metaphor is not a logical comparison but "a mode of apprehension". Metaphoric language is quite precise, but it is creative not expository. The purpose is not to imitate or visualise but to crystallize, which is a process of sensuously articulating an idea. A parallel statement on symbol comes from Pound when speaking on Vorticism. He stresses the variable and undefinable nature of symbol which leads the Vorticist poet to depend "on the creative, not upon the mimetic or representational part in this work". Later in his career Middleton Murry develops ideas very close to Chesterton's. The poet comes to be seen as one who reveals reality through art. The awareness of the "finality and mystery of the object (is) not a particular art of literature but rather a type of the pure creative and religious activity of man". The activity is furthermore, "sacramental"; it recognizes not only the thing but also the divine in the thing. It is Auden who puts his finger directly on the power and weakness of literature when he states that:

The notion of writing poetry cannot occur to him.

[a child], of course, until he has realized that names and things are not identical and that there cannot be an intelligible sacred language.\(^{34}\)

Chesterton spends most of his life trying to find an approach to a sacred language.

Two artists closely associated with the same religious forces as Chesterton are David Jones and Eric Gill. They were both at the Ditchling community with which Chesterton was also connected. It seems unlikely that any one of the three would have been unacquainted with Jacques Maritain's *The Philosophy of Art*, translated by Father John O'Connor and published at Ditchling in 1925. The book has much in common with Chesterton's own ideas, and indeed Maritain's progress from atheism, to agnosticism, to Bergsonism, to Roman Catholicism is not unlike Chesterton's own life. Initially Maritain distinguishes between "doing" as the domain of morality, and "making" as the domain of art; but he goes on to say that because an artist labours he cannot help bringing morality to art. Chesterton makes the same distinction and conflation with regard to Chaucer saying that:

> in the moral sense, he despised many of the vices of many of the characters; but he did not in an artistic sense despise their emblems and externals, as unsuited to serious art.\(^{35}\)

He himself, with his conviction of unity between religion, morality and expression, could recognize a theoretical


\(^{35}\) Chaucer, p. 64.
distinction but insisted on a practical conflation.

Maritain points out that the artist cannot ask for religious fulfillment from art. If he does so he will go mad, and he cites Rimbaud as an example. The fault lies in taking art and the beauty of it as a final goal, which makes the artist "an idolater pure and simple." The image of a mirror is used to indicate the circumscribed ability of man; he can only express what his limited vision can see, and in his limited manner. Art cannot be reality; and "the art creator is he who finds a new analogue of the beautiful." Again the Renaissance is accused of originating the desire to pretend to the possibility of absolute creation, and it is connected to the idea of perfect imitation, as a false aim of art. Maritain views art as a "way of letting the clarity of the form shine out up on the material." Therefore creation is not ex nihilo; the artist re-creates from material created by God.

Eric Gill uses the necessary co-existence of doing and making to emphasize the craftsmanlike nature of art. He also notes that although truth and goodness are essential to art they "are not the motive of the artist," and therefore art cannot satisfy the religious and moral desires. While

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37 Ibid., p. 67.
38 Ibid.
truth and goodness are shown by reason and revelation, they are known as such "by the soul immediately. The knowledge is not attained by ratiocination, and is impatient of expression in words". This is of course a sculptor speaking. Elsewhere he condemns the use of imitation as "literary content". Further, art must not copy nature as the Renaissance theories dictated, otherwise he becomes a "critic" not a "creator". Gill ends his essay on "Art and Love" saying that "it is reality not verisimilitude that is the substance of Christian art". The reality is to be achieved by expressing the form or soul of something in matter; it is not achieved by being God but by a "collaboration with God in creating". An extremely interesting article written by Chesterton after a debate with Gill in 1933, shows him naturally agreeing that the Renaissance initiated rationalism and became the source of industrialism. Yet while he notes the collapse of Renaissance prestige and a rejection of the value of realism, he seems to realize that no art can avoid aspects of humanism and representation. His concern is not to demolish them but to

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40 Ibid, p. 234.
42 E. Gill, "Quae ex veritate et bono", ibid, p. 75.
44 Ibid, p. v.
lessen their danger.

Perhaps because he was both writer and artist, David Jones is far more subtle in his application of Maritain than Gill. Moreover although he never mentions Chesterton he is virtually an echo of every aspect of his ideas of the relationship between religion and art. He makes the point about *ars* and *prudentia* as being indissolubly linked by the action of man's free-will which chooses to create. He agrees that art is religious because it deals with realities and "the real is sacred and religious," but also that art is not religion. To be able to communicate the religious an artist needs sacrament as an incarnation of external meaning.

Pursuing the topic, he notes that modern culture is alien to the use of sacrament because technological culture is separating itself from art. As it does so creation becomes primarily human in origin and inventive rather than revelatory. It is the constant possibility for art to be propaganda for "any real formal expression propagands the reality which caused these forms and their content to be," that makes necessary the use of sacrament. Sacrament makes obvious that "the function of the artist is to make things *sub specie aeternitatis*." It is this interest in emphasizing the necessary inadequacy of man's expression because of

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46 Ibid, p. 158.
48 Ibid, p. 118.
49 Ibid, p. 120.
the dangers of technological literature that brings Jones so close to Chesterton.

A vast majority of early twentieth century artists were seeing the Renaissance as the beginning of a belief in absolute human communication that could not be realized. In reaction they were turning to other modes in attempts to find a more acceptable role for art. Chesterton however, was avowedly not considering himself as a creative artist. As a result his concern with the power of this creative aspect of man has a different emphasis. Rather than searching for a new mode alone, he is out to investigate critically the consequences, with the idea that not all men will be great poets able to handle the effects. A summary of much in his artistic attitude is contained in Gilson's Painting and Reality which is not surprising when one thinks of their close connections to a broad stream of Thomist philosophy. In a particularly applicable section of the book Gilson discusses the Platonic, Aristotelian and Christian effects on aesthetic theory. A brief look at the analysis will indicate why Chesterton was so afraid of the "creative" concept in modern art.

Gilson begins with the observation that the easiest answers to "what is paintable reality?" is Platonic50. If the reality of an idea is imitated in concrete actuality art becomes the material imitation of actuality, an imitation of an imitation. The situation makes it too simple to explain failure, for one knows one produces only an imitation. The

50 E. Gilson, Painting and Reality, p. 197.
Aristotelian philosophy implies that the artist follows the process of intellectual abstraction of a notion of species; he extracts from nature factors which tend to a type that nature never achieves. While this is creative rather than imitative, notions of types are difficult to generate and the concept of "copying" becomes supremely easy. This imitation of someone else's interpretation leads to conventional art, and often to a counter-revolution of individual and realistic art. Christian art however, is seen purely in terms of creation, of embodying an idea. Gilson suggests that this satisfied modern artists and they turned to the "creationist terminology" of Christian theology. It is certainly true that many artists did so, as is evidenced by those already mentioned. Gilson concludes by defining art as:

religious in its very essence because to be creative is to imitate, in a finite analogical way, the divine prerogative, exclusively reserved for HE WHO IS, of making things to be.

Obviously contained within the definition is the possibility of a real assumption of Godhead. This Gilson rejects as not often occurring. However, he himself notes not only Mallarmé's claim, but also the anxieties of Hans Arp and Jules Bréton. The fact that Maritain, Gill and Jones even feel the need to state that man cannot create ex nihilo indicates their awareness of the possible interpretations of

51 Ibid, p. 293.
52 Ibid, p. 394.
"creativity". Chesterton goes one step further with regard to his own artistic ideas personally rejecting the role of the great artist, and studies those who attempt the role but cannot maintain the tensions it involves.

In criticizing the concept of human creation in himself and others, Chesterton recognizes impressionism and rationalism as unbalanced human modes and personally develops allegory. As he does so he becomes aware of the existence of fantasy as based on human authority, and subjects the new and increasingly popular mode to an interesting examination. We have seen how close fantasy and allegory are in Chesterton's mind. They are both non-discursive and non-symbolic and therefore outside the sphere of great art. Both are based on authority; and both words are sometimes used interchangeably. However, it becomes very important for modern literature to be able to define and distinguish the two if, as Chesterton asserts, fantasy is the basis for literary technology and media propaganda, while allegory is the mode through which artists can achieve true greatness. The latter is a corollary of his belief that all great poets momentarily approach mystic art in their work in order to combine the human with the divine. Significantly, in Chaucer these mystic elements are seen as being developed under the guidance of St. Thomas Aquinas. Aquinas introduced Aristotle into medieval Christianity and hence introduced a startling emphasis on the medium of expression. This we find reflected in Chesterton's pursuit of form. Coincident with the emphasis is another belief that Chesterton
has always held: The total interrelationship of religion, morality and expression. In the light of such a belief fantasy cannot be separated from moral and ultimately religious concerns. It is a conscious attempt to impose human authority; and one must be aware of it and its difference from allegory in form and intent, to assess the value of its propaganda.

Chesterton's approach to fantasy is primarily negative because of his personal fears that tie it into crime, insanity and sin. However, his definition of it and concern with its effects, are virtually identical with Colin Manlove's conclusions in *Modern Fantasy* which is one of the few existing studies of the subject. The conclusions of Manlove's book deal with the effects of fantasy which are also Chesterton's main concern. He notes that fantasy "reappeared" in the nineteenth century due to the Romantic idea that, "the artist could create his own truth-systems which need have no empirical connection with our own". As a result, "the only basis in our reality thus became the creator not his audience". Chesterton, while thinking that fantasy appeared with the Renaissance and grew with the advance of humanism, would agree entirely with the other two statements. We have seen versions of them throughout his criticism, and they happen to sum up his idea of the solipsist position.

In Manlove's conclusion, the two statements led directly to the effects of fantasy. The fantasists' "delight in creativity" tempts him into over-contemplation.

of events, and an extreme self-involvement to the point of sentimentality and escapism. Chesterton made exactly this point in his analysis of "Peter Pan". Further, Manlove states that fantasists are "benign determinists who do not allow evil or free will full scope"\textsuperscript{55}. Again we find a precise parallel in Chesterton's dislike of authorial despotism which does not allow objects or readers their own reality. The result of such effects in Modern Fantasy, is that fantasists are:

often lacking in the unconscious creative imagination . . . that comes from the loss of oneself in experience and art alike.\textsuperscript{56}

This finds its counterpart in Chesterton's emphasis on the "unconscious" nature of the great poet, and the total self-effacement that allows one to present or indicate the identity of objects in great or mystic art.

The effects of fantasy make it a perfect mode for the personal manipulation of artistic media. In the five fantasies that Manlove examines, he notes that none of them actually succeed for it is impossible to stop some elements of reality intruding. However, as Marshall McLuhan has pointed out and as Chesterton was aware, advertising, journalism and electronic media such as films and radio can sustain the impression of false reality. There is absolutely no reason why fantasy should not be used to maintain a beneficial effect. Chesterton recognizes this, and McLuhan

\textsuperscript{55} Ibid, p. 260.
\textsuperscript{56} Ibid.
chooses to explore the positive potential of it after writing *The Mechanical Bride*. However, for Chesterton the dangers are so overwhelmingly present that he sees a personal need to avoid it completely, and finds a social role in examining it in others. The only way of ensuring the avoidance of fantasy is to use allegory. Implicit in allegory as he defines it is the indication of God, an external authority. The message of the medium becomes God's existence, authority and love.

In Chesterton's last major work we find him summarizing and explaining the interrelationship of his religion, morality and expression through a study of his "connatural" brother in philosophy\(^5\), Thomas Aquinas. Significantly, the book approaches an assessment of the saint by way of a comparison with St. Augustine. While the author is at pains to point out the positive aspects of Augustine, it becomes increasingly evident that Augustine has certain characteristics that Chesterton is anxious about. He speaks of Augustine as evolving from Platonist to Manichean to Christian; and that the association hinted of "the danger of being too Platonist"\(^6\), in his outlook. The Augustinian tendency is linked to the predominantly "spiritual or mystical" early medieval church. It should be noted that "mystical" in this book usually refers to the purely spiritual outlook. Ultimately, the tendency is linked up with Luther who was an

\(^5\) M. McLuhan, in the introduction of H. Kenner's *Paradox in Chesterton*, p. xiii.

\(^6\) *St. Thomas Aquinas* (London: Hodder and Stoughton Ltd., 1933), p. 89.
Augustinian monk. Chesterton sees his determinist view of Christianity as an understandable if not inevitable corollary to the Platonic element in Augustine.

St. Thomas by contrast, had a solid streak of reverence for material things. He stood up for the importance of the incarnation and of material reality. Chesterton goes on to define a Christian as someone who "believes that deity or sanctity has attached to matter" (41). In an example that harks back to the description of a flower as indicative of life in Browning's poetry, Chesterton compares Thomas with Augustine saying:

the Thomist begins with something solid like the taste of an apple, and afterwards deduces a divine life for the intellect; while the Mystic exhausts the intellect first, and says finally that the sense of God is something like the taste of an apple. (82)

The former process is analogical, and the latter symbolic. The difference also appears in the art of Eastern and Western churches. On the one hand the East has flat images or icons, it turns pictures into patterns; on the other the West always tried for "realistic pictures" (95). Eastern influence provided only abstractions however noble; they neglected the incarnation. The Western tried to portray incarnation no matter how imperfect; their Logos was not the Word, but "the Word made Flesh" (95).

As a materialist believing in the "Word made Flesh" Thomas also believes that the smallest and humblest aspect of the world leads to the "highest truth" (102). The whole
world is analogical for the existence of God. Therefore things are not only important but they also exist. For Chesterton this is the main philosophical question: Is reality real? (176) The answer St. Thomas gives is that if you cannot answer "Yes", there is really no point in even asking the question. Of course, the question is the central concern of Chesterton's early life and he adopts a similar resolution. The system St. Thomas devises is seen by Chesterton as a direct follow-up of the answer. The basic concept is in the "word Ens" which Chesterton finds untranslatable. But his very difficulties in conveying its meaning indicate that meaning. He observes that the English word "being" produces a:

different atmosphere. Atmosphere ought not to affect these absolutes of the intellect; but it does ... The very shape and sound of words do make a difference. (179-80)

"Ens" is the absolute existence of a thing. It asserts identity not only spiritual but also material, identity which is real.

The study continues with a discussion of the idea of form in "Thomist language". In his definition of form the critic gives a concise basis not only for his stress on the limitations of art, but also for what he most admires in modern art. He states that form "means actual or possessing the real decisive quality that makes a thing itself" (183).

Matter is the "mysterious and indefinite and featureless" element, while form is identity. Just as the sculptor knows that form is not only external appearance but the internal
actuality of himself and his sculpture, so the Thomist finds form and divine identity in every object. Chesterton sees Aquinas as an artist when he is a poet; and as possessing philosophy which inspires poetry like that of Dante. Here he incidentally clarifies the nightmare of his early story "The Taming of the Nightmare" by saying that poetry with only inspiration or "only wind", is poetry written before religion introduces philosophy and provides an external actuality. St. Thomas himself had "the imagination without the imagery" (182). However, his prose is described as "analogous to poetry" and "more analogous to painting", specifically that "produced by the best of modern painters, when they throw a strange and almost crude light upon stark and rectangular objects" (217). Chesterton allies this to the fact that painters "deal with things without words"; they do not get mislead by the common assumption that words are identities which is the basis for belief in absolute communication. The critic concludes that:

there is no thinker who is unmistakably thinking about things, and not being misled by the indirect influence of words, as St. Thomas Aquinas. (218)

The result of such an approach is finally again compared to that of St. Augustine. Aquinas concentrates on things, on form, because in contrast to the neo-Platonist mind which "was lit entirely from within", his mind has five windows of the senses through which the light outside shines on what is within (192). The introspective potential of the neo-Platonists is compared to the art of St. Augustine which has "a power over words in their atmospheric and emotional
aspect" (218). St. Thomas does not possess this ability but:

if he was without the higher uses of the mere
magic of words, he was also free of that abuse
of it, by mere sentimentalists or self-centred
artists, which can become merely morbid and a
very black magic indeed. (218)

Aquinas's method is analogical; as such it has an "elemental
and primitive poetry that shines through all his thoughts" and
indicates the true relation of the mind to real things out-
side it. The objectivity and otherness of things provides
the "light in all poetry", and Aquinas's recognition of it
makes him a:

great contemplative . . . the complete contrary
of that false contemplative, the mystic who looks
only into his soul, the selfish artist who shrinks
from the world and lives only in his own mind . . .
In the Thomist the energy of the mind forces the
imagination outwards, but because the images it
seeks are real things. (219)

Finally, he notes that "according to Aquinas, the mind
actually becomes the object. But . . . it only becomes the
object and does not create the object" (220). The philosophy
of St. Thomas emphasizes incarnation and material reality;
his life as Chesterton portrays it shows him venerating both
the physical and the spiritual. The result in his writing
is the use of analogy that, while similar to the best in
modern art, always indicates the existence of an external.
Unlike Augustinianism, Thomism cannot contain the potential
for fantasy either in its escapist or magical and demoniac
forms, for it insists on the authority of God.
Etienne Gilson, the noted Thomist scholar says that Chesterton in *St. Thomas Aquinas* was "nearer the real Thomas than I am after reading and teaching the Angelic Doctor for sixty years". That Chesterton was able to write it is an indication of how deeply St. Thomas's philosophy reflects his own. The differentiation between allegory and fantasy is no crude barrier erected to keep non-believers out and believers in. Elements of individual human authority are unavoidably present in every human being, in every human system. Chesterton finds these elements within the Catholicism he has embraced, yet they do not invalidate that religion, only make it necessary to guard against their dominance. This is perhaps what he contributes most in his development of allegory. While his analogical system becomes an indication of God's existence, authority and love, it begins with a simple respect for the objects that surround one. Even though Chesterton's allegory is specifically Roman Catholic, it is Catholic in another sense. In acknowledging the external reality of the world, it disclaims the possibility of absolute human communication and stresses instead the need to search for indicative and suggestive modes to express identity. The approach, as Chesterton himself points out, is a basic modern concern.

Chesterton's fear of insanity, fear of solipsism, set him off early in pursuit of an external authority, and in search of a form, an identity for himself in a mode of

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expression. The early critical and artistic work is full of explorations for a mode, and goes hand in hand with an exploration of religious ideas. The revelation of Christianity and the idea of the mystic artist verbalizing ritual, are achieved virtually simultaneously. However, it is evidence both of the continuing depth of his personal unease and of his humility, that he rejected the role of artist as potentially irreligious and immoral in such a humanist age. The ensuing development of the role of the mystic artist and of allegory expressed Chesterton's positive identity as one who related the divine to the human. The opposition of these concepts to fantasy and fantasists indicates his constant awareness of human weakness; and while recognizing that fantasy need not have a harmful effect, he considers it extremely dangerous. If an artist like Mallarmé whom McLuhan sees as an example of a predominantly modern phenomena in communication, is so ambivalent, one can see how the mode gave cause for concern in a man of Chesterton's nature. Indeed contemporary discussion of the effects of the mode have now become second nature. Yet Chesterton went further than mere discussion of the effects to attempt a solution, however imperfect. Just as in distributism Chesterton tried to find an alternative to what he saw as the political fantasies of fascism and communism, so in allegory he tried to propose an alternative mode of communication that avoided stylistic fantasy.

The basis for Chesterton's entire attitude is found in his personal statement of philosophy, essentially a restatement
of St. Thomas Aquinas, at the end of his Autobiography. He himself begins with the "pessimists" and "hedonists" of the 90s, criticizing them for their assumption of personal power. The lack of gratitude for life is a fundamental fault of their outlook. Gratitude makes necessary someone to be thankful to, and results in theology, acceptance of external authority and reality. Yet he also goes on to criticise those such as Bergson and Bernard Shaw who find their own personal theologies and become "monomaniac" (339). There is only one theology that will satisfy him, and that is the Christian interpreted according to the incarnationist emphasis of Thomist philosophy. Having established his opponents, those who acknowledge no god or only themselves as God, Chesterton concludes by trying to state his own positive purpose, "to serve justice". The final image in Autobiography is of "the Builder of the Bridge, [who] is called also Claviger, the Bearer of the Key" (343). This is, as we have seen, the mystic artist whose allegorical work builds a bridge between the human and the divine, and in self-expression provides the analogy for the existence of God's love.

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