Heretics
A Cognitive and Rhetorical Analysis of the Concept of Strength in G. K. Chesterton's Essay Mr. Bernard Shaw

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Summary

In this thesis I give a cognitive and rhetorical analysis of G. K. Chesterton's essay Mr. Bernard Shaw. I demonstrate that the concept of strength is essential to understand the essay's polemic role. With blending theory and rhetoric, I analyse how Chesterton constructs meanings contained in the concept of strength, how he contrasts orthodox and heretical strength and how he attempts to persuade his reader. I argue that Chesterton attempts to subvert Shaw's heretical philosophy, employing perspectives from discourse theory to unpack the concept of strength by identifying their chains of equivalence, thus shedding light on the ideological struggle that takes place within the text. I clarify the message and intention behind Chesterton's essay and discuss the role of his ethos inside and outside the text and how it effects Chesterton's project of reviving Christian philosophy.
Preface

First I would like to thank my husband Bernt Ivar Utstøl Nødland for introducing me to the man I have spent the last five months with. I hope the reader of this thesis will enjoy making G. K. Chesterton's acquaintance as much as I did. I want to thank John Ødemark for mentoring my thesis in the early stages, my fellow EKUL-students for sharing this process with me and Magnhild Sletten and Callum Veale for being kind enough to proofread my thesis. Last but not least I want to thank Line Cecile Engh. She has been a reliable, thorough and encouraging supervisor and I have learned so much by her guidance. I also want to thank her for introducing me to Mark Turner. I was privileged enough to have a conversation with him regarding my thesis when he was visiting Oslo this spring.
“My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.”

2 Cor 12:9
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1 Introduction

It is a trivial statement to assert that a text's function is to communicate, it is not trivial, however, to ask how it is able to do so. I draw on cognitive theory and rhetoric in order to analyse how Chesterton communicates and constructs meaning in the essay *Mr. Bernard Shaw*. The essay is found in the collection *Heretics*, a rather confrontational name for a book containing essays mostly about Chesterton's literary colleagues. I will show that the concept of strength is essential to understand *Mr. Bernard Shaw's* polemic role. With cognitive theory, more precisely blending theory, I will demonstrate how Chesterton constructs a narrative which explains good and bad methods for obtaining strength. I refer to the ‘good’ and the ‘bad’ versions of strength as ‘orthodox’ and ‘heretical’, inspired by Chesterton's own terminology. I will explain these terms more closely later in this chapter. I analyse how he constructs these opposing concepts of strength and how he attempts to persuade his reader. At the end of his essay, it becomes apparent that Chesterton has built his narrative around the reader eventually having to decide between what is the right or wrong understanding of strength. I study this rhetorical process and address which devices he uses in order to convince his audience.

I want to answer how Chesterton is subversive in relation to George Bernard Shaw and his heretical philosophy. This is explored by perspectives from discourse theory, shedding light on the ideological struggle happening within the text. This lays the basis for a contextualisation of Chesterton's polemic project by clarifying how focusing on the concept of strength can reveal his perception of orthodox and heretical discourses within the essay.

‘Strength’ has several connotations and associations; the word can mean physical strength or mental strength. It is connected to both destructive and fruitful forces and is a concept that is highly relevant in human society. Concepts in general are packets of meaning. According to Reinhart Koselleck they are not narrowly defined linguistic expression; a word becomes a concept when the word takes up in itself the full richness of social and political context. It cannot be separated entirely from the linguistic aspect, because semantic change and social change are inextricably linked. Therefore, a concept retains multiple meanings. I will analyse the meanings contained in the concept of strength; the unpacking of this concept will clarify the message and intention behind Chesterton's essay.

In this thesis, I mainly build on Alen R. Blackstock's work on Chesterton and rhetoric, Leo Anthony Hetzler's research on Chesterton's early career, Michael D. Hurley's analysis of Chesterton's essay style, Hugh Kenner's analysis on Chesterton's use of paradox and Michael

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Shallcross' recent book *Rethinking G. K. Chesterton and Literary Modernism – Parody, Performance, and Popular Culture*. They emphasise the text's literary character as well as its historical context and Chesterton's reasons for writing.

In chapter one I situate Chesterton in relation to his historical context and existing scholarship on this subject. I elaborate upon his ideological and religious background and discuss the genre of my research object. In chapter two I explain the theories and methods which I employ to analyse and contextualise *Mr. Bernard Shaw*. I highlight the aspects from blending theory, rhetoric and discourse theory that I will use to show how Chesterton constructs the orthodox and heretical concept of strength, how he attempts to persuade his reader, and undermine George Bernard Shaw. Chapter three is a thorough close reading and analysis of *Mr. Bernard Shaw*. I demonstrate how Chesterton argues for orthodoxy and reveals the problematic consequences of heresy by drawing on cognitive and rhetorical perspectives presented in chapter two. In chapter four I discuss the constructions of orthodox and heretical strength through the perspective of discourse analysis and I identify the particular conceptual connections and alignments within the ideological struggle and the competing discourses.

**1.1 Introduction to G. K. Chesterton**

Gilbert Keith Chesterton born 29th May 1874, was an English writer, journalist, apologist and critic. By 1905, the year *Heretics* was published, he had gained great popularity; it was said to be difficult to find a paper which did not include one of his articles. He started his career as a journalist and literary critic, working closely with “the main movements of his time” as Leo Anthony Hetzler points out. From the beginning he seemed more interested in ideas than the actual books he was reviewing. When referring to a book he wrote about Robert Browning he admitted to have written not about him, but about topics as for example love and about himself. Chesterton had a strong political and religious interest which led him to attend meetings of Spiritualists, Nietzscheans and Socialists, especially from 1895 until 1900, but he was struck by the lack of connection between the lives members of the groups were living and their ideals. Chesterton had been sympathetic to socialism and thought it similar to primitive Christianity but through his inquiry the difference became more and more apparent to him. He questioned if socialism could motivate virtues, like

3 Hetzler, *The early literary career of G. K. Chesterton*, p. 80
5 Hetzler, *The early literary career of G. K. Chesterton*, p. 80
self-sacrifice, honesty, justice and dedication.\footnote{7 Hetzler,\textit{The early literary career of G. K. Chesterton}, p. 82-83}

Chesterton was baptised in the Church of England, raised Unitarian\footnote{8 Unitarian, protestants who believe God to be one person, opposed to the Trinity} to some extent, but has been accurately described as neo-Thomist by instinct.\footnote{9 Blackstock,\textit{The Rhetoric of Redemption}, p. 107} At this point his understanding of religion was not connected to a specific theology, but between 1902 and 1907 his believes became more and more in line with institutionalised forms of Christianity. He converted to the Catholic Church in 1922. At the time \textit{Heretics} was written he was consciously examining ideas from Christian theology and had begun arguing on its behalf.\footnote{10 Hetzler,\textit{The early literary career of G. K. Chesterton}, p. 103} In this period he also disassociated himself with imperialism and the more he became acquainted with practical politics the more he became disillusioned.\footnote{11 Hetzler,\textit{The early literary career of G. K. Chesterton}, p. 85-88} This lack of belief in modern politicians is a central theme in \textit{Mr. Bernard Shaw}. In \textit{G. K. Chesterton & Hilaire Belloc – The Battle Against Modernity}, Jay P. Corrin focuses on the political, social and economic aspects of Chesterton’s critique of modernisation. “Politically, Chesterton and Belloc proposed to restrain Liberal legislative proposals that were leading England further from the corporate ideals of medieval times towards the brave new world of state social control.”\footnote{12 Corrin, Jay P., \textit{G. K. Chesterton & Hilaire Belloc – The Battle Against Modernity}, Athens, Ohio University Press, 1981, p. xii} The attitude against state control is important in \textit{Heretics} and connected to the concept of strength. Chesterton's political views are similar to Catholic Social Teaching where human dignity, private property and distributing goods are important principles. The reason I mention this is because his political engagement was not an incidental phase of his literary career but formed the basis of a “philosophical assault on the evils of capitalist-industrial society, and indeed on the whole process of modernization itself.”\footnote{13 Corrin, G. K. Chesterton & Hilaire Belloc – The Battle Against Modernity, p. 201} Corrin claims that the politics of Chesterton is essential to appreciate his literary career.\footnote{14 Corrin, G. K. Chesterton & Hilaire Belloc – The Battle Against Modernity, p. 201-202} Chesterton himself believed that “No man ought to write at all, or even to speak at all, unless he thinks that he is in truth and the other man in error,”\footnote{15 Chesterton, G. K., \textit{Concluding Remarks in Heretics} in \textit{Collected Works – volume I}, San Francisco, Ignatius Press, 1986, p. 197} this meant that the ideology and philosophy communicated in art was indistinguishable from art itself. He was no supporter of art for art's sake and did not even see it as a possibility, art would always communicate belief. The moral approach to literature sees the function of true art and true criticism, as a way to evaluate the relationship between art and life with a focus on ideals and virtues. This was Chesterton's main occupation, and he spoke out against a movement away from this.\footnote{16 Blackstock,\textit{The Rhetoric of Redemption}, p. 95} The effort to “simultaneously educate and provoke his readers is evident throughout Chesterton's criticism and undeniably shapes
not only his rhetorical strategies but also the very nature of that criticism.” Ethical criticism is part of social and political criticism and is a concern for popular culture and democracy.

Dale Ahlquist speculates that the reason Chesterton has not become a popular subject for research is because he is difficult to fit into a category. He does not strictly keep to a specific genre, and because of the amount of works by him, researching him might be too overwhelming. It is not just as an author Chesterton seems to have been overlooked but also as a critic. He achieved fame with books about Robert Browning and Charles Dickens, but they are no longer popular. Alen R. Blackstock points out that Chesterton's few followers defend him against accusations of "slovenly scholarship, and stylistic theatricality", naming Graham Green, Marshall McLuhan, Dorothy L. Sayer's amongst others. This non-academic impression many have of Chesterton is not a coincidence, he himself did not distinguish between his journalism and criticism, but insisted that everything he wrote was for the common man. Even though he is not a well-known name within academia, he has an important position as an apologist for the Christian faith and has influenced writers like Jorge Luis Borges, T. S. Eliot and Agatha Christie. Sigrid Undset was inspired by him and translated on of his books, The Everlasting Man, into Norwegian.

Evelyn Waugh and Marshall McLuhan support Chesterton's claim that he wrote for the common man, because of his simple and clear language combined with references to common experiences. He is "addressing a large and friendly audience" pointing the finger but not necessary at the reader. In reality the typical Chesterton reader would be comfortably middle class, educated and someone who had time to listen to abstract discussion. Alen R. Blackstock differentiates between the common reader and the common man. Chesterton might have asserted he wrote for the common man, but in reality, he rather wrote for the common reader. The common man was instead an ideal. We shall later see how he uses this as a rhetorical device.

It seems clear that Chesterton was conscious of his use of rhetoric. In rhetoric there are different ways of writing for different audiences. Chesterton spoke about his audience belonging to two groups: “serious book-reading public” and the “more impetuous newspaper-reading public”.

Prompted by Aristotle, he deliberately tried to charm his readers. According to C. S. Lewis this

17 Blackstock, The Rhetoric of Redemption, p. 32
18 Blackstock, The Rhetoric of Redemption, p. 96-97
20 Blackstock, The Rhetoric of Redemption, p. 3
21 Blackstock, The Rhetoric of Redemption, p. 3
22 Ahlquist, Chesterton, G. K.
23 Blackstock, The Rhetoric of Redemption, p. 23
24 Blackstock, The Rhetoric of Redemption, p. 25
strategy did not mean compromising on the message, his humour was not “separable from the argument but is rather (as Aristotle would say) the 'bloom' of dialectic itself.”

His writings were a communal and political action. According to Hetzler, Chesterton was a “controversialist who wrote to convince and persuade.” Blackstock states that Chesterton's goal with his literary criticism was to redeem “both literature and its readers.” As a journalist with a public-school education he would have studied rhetoric thoroughly, and he deliberately connects his own work with classic and medieval sources. He would be in agreement with Plato's statement that “the desired effect of rhetoric is the improvement of the soul,” and used it deliberately for this purpose. With this in mind I find it particularly interesting to give a rhetorical analysis of an essay from Heretics, one of his most explicitly polemic books.

1.2 Heresy and Orthodoxy

Heretics addresses contemporary ideas and thinkers that Chesterton found problematic. The essay that I shall discuss is about George Bernard Shaw, a dramatist and socialist. A reason for Chesterton's confrontation with Shaw is that he believed him to have a great influence, no longer a mere dramatist, but one who had taken on the role of prophet or a “late-Victorian sage.” According to Chesterton, Shaw based his work on an inhuman philosophy and a discarding of moral ideals. Combined with progressivism this links Shaw to the Nietzschean ideal of the Superman. Chesterton objected to the abandonment of humanity favouring unrealistic ideals and to their implementation through force and state control.

In his introduction to Heretics Chesterton explains the difference between the traditional understanding of heretical and orthodox, and the modern understanding of it. In this thesis I will generally take a heuristic approach to Chesterton’s understanding of the modern and the traditional, pointing out aspects of his critique when relevant in my analysis of his essay Mr. Bernard Shaw, and piecing these together more thoroughly in chapter four. Chesterton himself did not define what he meant by these terms but rather showed their meaning by giving examples, leaving to the reader to make inferences.

Already when distinguishing between the heretical and the orthodox Chesterton gives an indication of what he means by modern. “In former days” the heretic would claim to be orthodox, and thus proclaim to be right. Heretical and orthodox, in the traditional sense, according to

26 Hetzler, Leo Anthony, The early literary career of G. K. Chesterton, p. 377
27 Blackstock, The Rhetoric of Redemption, p. 15
28 Cited in Blackstock, The Rhetoric of Redemption, p. 15
29 Blackstock, The Rhetoric of Redemption, p. 75
Chesterton, is nothing more than being wrong or right when it comes to, especially, philosophical questions in a broad sense. To a modern understanding labelling something or someone orthodox would practically imply their being mistaken. The heretic will boast of his heresy because it is associated with clear-headedness and courage, not necessarily because he believes it to be objectively right. The heretic will boast but will at the same time be disinterested in philosophy, says Chesterton, because in these modern times it is not really a thing which matters. Both heresy and the modern are associated with an attitude of relativism, arrogance and a lack of concern about philosophical truths. Two of his main antagonists in the modern world were the aesthetes and decadents. Chesterton rebuked their ‘flippancy’ because it was not humour but a sneering, snobbish attack.

By choosing *Heretics* as the title for a book that deals with, mostly, the cultural elite, Chesterton is implying that they are misguided and mistaken in their metaphysical claims and perceptions. At the same time, he is being ironic, since he believes that the modern age would perceive people labelled as heretics, as being right. He is poking fun at the same time as criticising, thus seeking to destabilise the influence of heretics and restore orthodoxy, but in a polite fashion. Heresy should refer to a mistaken belief, and these mistakes should matter. The title itself, and the explanation in his introduction, is a declaration of war against modern sensibilities, in order to re-establish a search for objective truths as the most important quest of humanity. In my analysis I will employ these concepts on Chesterton’s terms; I will use orthodox and heretical in the sense of being philosophically right or wrong.

### 1.3 Literary Genre and Style

*Heretics* is a collection of essays; Chesterton explicitly refer to them as such in his concluding remarks. His essays are true to the definition, an attempt at exploring a subject at the same time as giving an argument. How he argues however has similarities to other genres and his writing style, although fitting into the broad framework of the essay, is very literary. He uses metaphor, analogy, parable and paradox, proving his claim by showing patterns, repeating “a single idea in a multitude of ways.” Michael D. Hurly points out that Chesterton's paradoxes have an aspect of beauty and atmosphere to them. His essays are not boring and dry, they engage and enchant. His playful associations could “lighten the tone of an essay” but could also irritate and estrange some readers.
Chesterton is a challenging writer to analyse. He writes in a seductive form and his manner of writing often colours what is written about him. In the introduction to Chesterton's *St. Francis of Assisi*, George William Rutler characterises Chesterton by comparing him to an oriental rug merchant “In the bazaar, he could fling open huge and varied patterns.”\(^{37}\) Miles Schmitt writes that his essay are like a colossal dinosaur skeleton and “glitters with goldleaf grammar.”\(^{38}\) Many critics seem to adopt Chesterton's abundant use of visual imagery; filled with so many rich tropes, the essays leave the reader with mental images and impression, not necessarily an explicit conclusion. This is also the case for the critics.

What is evident with Chesterton’s essays, especially in *Heretics*, is that he does not immediately mention his subject matter but starts by creating images and tells little stories to support his underlying point and eventual conclusion. The reviews gathered in *G. K. Chesterton: The Critical Judgements Part 1: 1900-1937* portray him as a circus director and his essays as acrobats standing on each other's heads to please the crowd. They point out that rhetorical tools like paradoxes is a characteristic part of his writing style and that he persuades his audience by entertaining them. Often his images are striking and idiosyncratic; Schmitt claims that “Chesterton had to shape his literary creation strange enough to shake some common sense back into men.”\(^{39}\) He wants the reader to look at the world anew and to do this, he first must get the reader to look.

I would suggest that Chesterton's essays have similarities to a sermon. First of all, because of his motivation; he sets out to preach, wanting to save both heretics and their audience from false beliefs. He tries to engage on a personal level, tries to explain why ontological questions truly matters and puts them in a practical context. In his essays he moves his reader in a deliberate direction, working “from light to shade, from humour to seriousness”\(^{40}\) as Hurly notes. He speaks from a conviction of a grand theory, unifying principles which are hidden, but which, by a combination of reason and literary intuition, can be retrieved to some degree.

In addition to the sermon and his playful manner of arguing, Chesterton's essays also bear resemblance to other genres, for example the mystery novel. There is perhaps no secret that he would go on to write crime fiction. Today he is most famous for his short stories about the Catholic priest and detective Father Brown. I want to point out that even his essays have something of the detective story about them. Chesterton's style is not that of syllogistic logic, rather he often uses literary authority and metaphor to determine truth value. Hurley calls Chesterton's method “the


\(^{38}\) Schmitt, *The Essay Style of Chesterton*, p. 73

\(^{39}\) Schmitt, *The Essay Style of Chesterton*, p. 73

\(^{40}\) See Hurley, *G. K. Chesterton*, p. 53
semi-sequitur surprise”, he is pushing ideas into unexpected relationships.41 Surprise is a rhetorical device; it is the reader herself who makes the connections and is surprised by this emerging of indirect meanings. His style Hurley claims has “roust the reader into life,”42 convincing them by entertaining them.

What is apparent in a good detective story is that satisfying surprise requires balance, the plot twist must be unexpected but not too unexpected, in order to do this the writer has to build up expectation which later is undermined. Aristotle describes this as the moment of discovery of the true nature of the protagonist's situation.43 In Chesterton's essay the real protagonist is the reader, it is she who will be confronted with the choice between orthodox and heretical strength. His narrative style guides the reader through a landscape and will at the critical point reveal the true nature of the modern situation. One way Chesterton ensures satisfying surprise is by something I have chosen to call false enthymemes. Enthymemes are rhetorical evidence with some of its premises implicit in the articulation and are based on plausibility.44 They are inherently ambiguous, especially when expressed as images, metaphors or analogies.45 The meaning of a metaphor and other rhetorical tropes changes according to context,46 Chesterton is able to create false enthymemes and then showing the real solution by changing the context. The reason I call them false is because Chesterton does not intend them to support his argument, but to create false expectations. Dorothy Sayers notes the importance of giving the reader all the clues but hold back on the detective's deduction. To ensure that the reader does not guess the conclusion a useful trick is to give misleading information to distract the reader.47 This we shall see, is what Chesterton does. Surprise “depends on specific linguistic and narrative structures that encourage us to make inferences,”48 it is a phenomenon dependent upon the way we think which he takes advantage of in order to puzzle and entertain. Chesterton encourages the reader to partly conclude many times during his essay, this is a complex way of distinguishing and piece by piece revealing his true opinion as he shows us how reality is not always what it seems. First tricking the reader into assuming one thing and then revealing the real answer towards the end as in a crime novel.

41 Hurley, G. K. Chesterton, p. 54
42 Hurley, G. K. Chesterton, p. 56
43 Tobin, Vera, Elements of Surprise – our mental limits and the satisfactions of plot, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 2018, p. 19-20
44 Kjeldsen, Jens E., Retorikk i vår tid – En inntøring i moderne retorisk teori, Oslo, Spartacus Forlag, 2006, p. 173
45 Kjeldsen, Retorikk i vår tid, p. 271
47 Tobin, Elements of Surprise, p. 23
48 Tobin, Elements of Surprise, p. 278
2. Theory and Method

In *Mr. Bernard Shaw* strength is an important point of negotiation. It is the central concept in the comparison between the modern, i.e., the heretical and the orthodox point of view. Blending theory, rhetoric and discourse theory are concerned with language and creation of meaning in verbal expressions. Like classical rhetoric, blending theory wants knowledge of the cognitive operations and conceptual structures based on a shared human nature. Both are interested in how we understand and how we are persuaded. Discourse theory surveys how meaning of language is negotiated within a social context. The three complement each other and provide a method for discussing the purpose of the concept of strength in Chesterton's essay. Using aspects from cognitive theory gives insights into questions regarding rhetoric; how the brain works is deeply connected to how we are persuaded. This reveal how his literary constructions functions rhetorically; and by drawing on discourse theory, the inferences revealed in the text are put into a historical context.

I hold that Chesterton constructed the concept of strength through metaphors, analogies and parable. By using rhetoric and cognitive theory I can study how these tropes functions as arguments, and how explicit and implicit meaning emerge from what Mark Turner calls ‘blends’ (see below). Chesterton attempted to sway his audience by engaging narratives, provoking epiphanies and his own character; because of this I will study how his ethos develops in the essay. Identifying strength as the focal point of Chesterton's conflict between heresy and orthodoxy allows me to determine what Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe calls ‘chains of equivalence’. These chains show how he constructs his network of ideas and claims, and which discourses he draws upon and which he resists.

2.1 Blending Theory

Chesterton uses eye-catching and vivid descriptions in his writing, and his essays are no exception. Actual images, like photographs for instance, might excite a strong immediate response, effectively triggering emotions. Verbal images, that is, written descriptions, has some of the same effect; they produce mental images fundamental to the human cognitive process. Turner claims that human minds are literary: we understand and construct meaning by thinking in stories and images. By combining familiar images based on bodily experience we are able to understand more complex matters; the linking together of these mental spaces is referred to as blending. Blending theory, a

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51 Fauconnier, Gilles and Mark Turner, *The Way We Think – conceptual blending and the mind's hidden complexities*,
form of cognitive metaphor theory, developed by Gilles Fauconnier and Turner, is a continuation of conceptual metaphor theory, which is interested in how we produce and communicate meaning by using metaphor.\(^{52}\) Recourse to metaphor is not random but corresponds to cultural context and to biological factors, like how the brain works and how we experience the world around us.\(^{53}\) One of the main methods in metaphor theory is analysing the construction of meaning through looking at source domain and target domain. For example, to give an explanation can be described as ‘shedding light’ on an issue. By using this metaphor, we claim that insight is like sight; light help us see things clearly. We experience the benefit of light physically and map this onto abstract ideas. Creating correspondence between a concrete source domain and an abstract target domain, is referred to as mapping.\(^{54}\) Chesterton does this, as we shall see, in *Mr. Bernard Shaw*; he uses metaphors with the source domain of games and war, to describe the target domain, politics.\(^{55}\)

Blending theory does not see mapping as unidirectional, but rather as multidirectional. Blends arise from several different input spaces, and the emphasis is on emergent structure not explicitly present in the input spaces.\(^{56}\) Blending gives us a system for understanding how we perceive our surroundings and gives us a valuable perspective on culture and how our language and our societies are formed.\(^{57}\) It uses mapping more generally, and includes analysing analogies, enthymemes, parables etc. in addition to metaphor.

Analogy is a central feature in blending – taking two different things and making connections between them, that is, integrating them. Comparisons are similarity established between items from the same category, while analogy is similarities created from different categories.\(^{58}\) Analogy, showing similarity by creating connections and integrating different things, play an important role in creative thinking, which is dependent upon the ability to “combining and recombining ideas in novel ways.”\(^{59}\) As Ilkka Niiniluoto argues “analagical arguments rely on the concept of similarity.”\(^{60}\) Although not that different from all forms of scientific reasoning analogy mainly serves a heuristic...

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\(^{55}\) Kövecses, Metaphor: A Practical Introduction, p. 22

\(^{56}\) Engh, *Om å tenke med kvinner i middelalderen*, p. 123

\(^{57}\) Engh, *Om å tenke med kvinner i middelalderen*, p. 123

\(^{58}\) Saha, *Metaphorical Style as Message*, p. 41


function. As I argued in chapter one Chesterton's style is highly heuristic, using analogy in different ways to show similarity and schematic patterns.

When using blending theory in the close reading of *Mr. Bernard Shaw* I will analyse which mental spaces are in play when Chesterton is explaining the true nature of strength. His use of analogy relates to how we compare different casual stories to recognize a pattern, a selection of sequences can be generalised to fit into the same integrated schema. An integrated schema consists of imagery and dynamic relation between elements with a certain structure. Turner describes this as image schemas with a “movement along a directed path.” The use and recognition of patterns, that one thing leads to another, is essential in understanding how Chesterton tries to persuade his reader. He demonstrates how schematic patterns reoccur by analogies and uses this as a rhetorical tool to show the generality of his claims. As we shall see he argues image-schematically by showing similar patterns in parallel stories rather than explicitly telling the reader what to conclude. This emergent meaning is referred to as inference in blending theory. Inferences are made on the basis of blending together different input spaces. Inferences are by nature tacit, inexplicit in the text. Related to inference I will employ the concept of false enthymemes as explained in chapter one.

### 2.2 Central Tropes: Parable and Paradox

In chapter one I mentioned the similarities between Chesterton's essay and a sermon. His analogies are often, but not always, elaborated upon and thus serves the same function as parables do in the Bible. In my analyses of Chesterton’s essay in chapter three, I will not be primarily concerned with pointing out the exact rhetorical figures in his work. Rather I will refer to his analogies as paradox and parable, analysing his general way of creating meaning by use of images. This is not just to indicate their genre, but to focus on their function. Chesterton’s parables consist sometimes only of a few words in a sentence, sometimes a whole paragraph and sometimes we find parables within parables. In *Mr. Bernard Shaw*, Chesterton argues by telling different parables with the same schematic pattern, and like the parables in the Bible, he often chooses input spaces which are common and accessible. Turners definition of parable is where one condensed story is projected onto another to construct meaning. In my understanding, a ‘condensed story’ includes images like metaphors, paradoxes and other linguistic and rhetorical figures, which operate by the same general pattern of input spaces and mapping: creating connections between dissimilar things. This way of thinking about parable opens up for an analysis where I am free to focus on locating which input spaces are in play and how they interact with each other and create image-schematic constructions.

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61 Niiniluoto, *Analogy and Similarity in Scientific Reasoning*, p. 293
62 Turner, *The Literary Mind*, p. 10
63 Turner, *The Literary Mind*, p. 5-6
Paradox is a common method of communication, because of human ability to activate apparently opposite mental spaces and blending seemingly contradictory inputs together in order to create new meaning.64 One cannot write about Chesterton without commenting upon his use of paradox. It is one of his main literary trademarks and earned him the epithet of both “prince and prophet of paradox.”65 The danger of discussing Chesterton's use of paradox is according to Hurley that “most critics who do so never get on to anything else.”66 I feel nevertheless obliged to address it since it will become relevant for my analysis of Mr. Bernard Shaw.

Although paradox is considered unique for his style, he is not writing isolated from other influences. It was popular with Oxford boys at the time, and common in writers we know he read. His style, amongst others, bears resemblance to Robert Louis Stevenson’s essays.67 Chesterton’s use of paradox is under the influence of the intellectual elite and inspired by Oscar Wilde’s rhetorical techniques. Paradoxically he uses stylistic devices popular with this elite in order to defend low culture against the high culture of literary modernism.68

Hugh Kenner divides Chesterton's use of paradox into three categories “verbal, metaphysical, and aesthetic, turning severally upon the Word, the World, and the union of the Word and the World which is Art.”69 A verbal paradox is only an apparent paradox because the contradiction is in the words not the things, it can be rephrased into a non-paradoxical sentence. It is used as stylistic device, alerting the reader and drawing attention, its object being entertainment and persuasion.70 Chesterton's paradoxes are in general idiosyncratic, unexpected and written in a light-hearted fashion. Humour is essential for the rhetorical effect of paradox.71

The metaphysical paradox is a real paradox, it is within the thing itself. The use of this in Chesterton rests upon an ontological persuasion, closely linked to the Christian tradition. Its object is exegesis and wonder, and to describe reality within the limited function of human language. An obvious example is the Trinity; the reason this seems paradoxical is because human beings does not have the ability to fully and precisely comprehend the complexity of being and the world as it is. The aesthetic paradox is more complex than the others, it contains the tension both within things and language, word and world. These two together creates a third kind of vital tension which is at

64 Fauconnier and Turner, The Way We Think, p. 84-85
66 Hurley, G. K. Chesterton, p. 58
67 Hetzler, The early literary career of G. K. Chesterton, p. 362
69 Kenner, Hugh, Paradox in Chesterton, London, Sheed & Ward, 1948, p. 18
70 Hetzler, The early literary career of G. K. Chesterton, p. 374-375
71 Hurley, G. K. Chesterton, p. 59
the centre of the concept of art. The aesthetic paradox is as I understand it emergent meaning created by apparently contradictory tensions between reality and language. Kenner describes it almost as something mystical, difficult to exemplify. To make this more comprehensible it is worth noting Chesterton's understanding of language. He did not merely use analogy as a stylistic device but believed it to be how we could describe the world. Literature is supposed to express the inexpressible. If we speak of God as father, shepherd, lion or lamb it is because he is “too actual to be defined,” by these metaphors one gets a poetical and aesthetic understanding. Kenner's division is interesting combined with blending theory because it supplies the tools to analyse how meaning emerges within a more complex narrative landscape, and how literature is able to communicate something indirect and inexplicit.

2.3 Rhetoric

I have already explained parts of the rhetorical aspect of my analysis in the previous section. Cognitive theory and rhetoric work together because they both are interested in how we understand and how we are persuaded, and they often overlap. Metaphors, analogy and parables are rhetorical tropes as well as used to create meaning. They have a distinct ability to create and hold attention, to please and to entertain, which creates an impression of significance and make them easier to remember afterward. Tropes and figures are imaginative ways of communicating which are effective and have a high impact on the audience. It can make matters seem important and move the audience's emotions which can be a very effective way of persuading. In addition, Chesterton uses these tropes in an image-schematic way, demonstrating patterns and allow inferences to arise from well-known stories and common experience. This has a rhetorical function because it is difficult to argue against a parable which only consists of established facts. The logic of the narrative is to give the impression that a temporal connection is a causal connection, as he does with image schemas. By this method the reader will be persuaded by demonstration of apparent necessity.

Rhetoric of narrative is all about recognition; it should be something that seems familiar but at the same time hold your attention. This balance is complex and personal, but rhetoric nevertheless tries to find some common ground in how this can be accomplished. One way Chesterton attempts to hold the reader's attention is by using aesthetics as rhetorical device. He has

72 Kenner, Paradox in Chesterton, p. 17-18
74 Kjeldsen, Retorikk i vår tid, p. 208
75 Kjeldsen, Retorikk i vår tid, p. 196
76 Tobin, Elements of Surprise, p. 280
77 Tobin, Elements of Surprise, p. 277
the ability to create atmosphere and beauty.⁷⁸ In order to make an impact the text has to be a place where the reader enjoys being and will voluntarily seek out. It should also be a place where the reader learns something unexpected. In Vera Tobin's book *Elements of Surprise*, she explore surprise as narrative and as rhetorical tool: “The machinery of surprise depends on leading us to reassess what we thought we knew in carefully orchestrated ways.”⁷⁹ I have already pointed out this as an important stylistic hallmark in Chesterton by showing how his essays have elements of the detective story to them. In order to create surprise within a text the writer has to present possibilities and then present the conclusion as an inevitable outcome. Paul Ricoeur argues that surprise has the ability to transform contingency into necessity.⁸⁰ Chesterton does this by stories within stories, allowing the reader to partake in the discovery of truth, instead of being passively told what the heretical concept of strength is. When we think we know something we are likely to think that the solution is obvious; in hindsight, aspects that were hidden now have the illusion of transparency.⁸¹ This way of arguing has a strong rhetorical effect, but of course it would not automatically convince a more sceptical reader not inclined to be persuaded by literary narrative.

Chesterton's role as crime writer creates credibility; not many readers distrusts the writer's solution to his own puzzle. In chapter four I will discuss how Chesterton constructs his ethos and what roles he adopts within the essay to demonstrate the importance of orthodox strength. Ethos is important when arguing by demonstrating plausibility.⁸² Breaking expectations regarding the readers attitude toward the writer is an effective way of strengthening ethos, the audience trusts the message more if the writer or speaker says something which they would apparently not gain anything by saying.⁸³ Chesterton gains trust by but spending the first part of his essay complimenting his heretic.

Persuasion through ethos is based on lasting emotion provoked by the speaker. I will argue that Chesterton uses his essay to improve his ethos also outside of his text, which effect how his audience reads his future essays. In modern rhetoric ethos is understood as a person's general image, it also includes humour and irony.⁸⁴ Chesterton entertains and surprises his reader attempting to portray himself as jovial. There is a tight connection between Chesterton's ethos and his message. He argues for humility both by demonstrating its importance by parable, and by his own attitude towards his heretic. Like Cicero and Quintilian, he does not seem to separate ethos and ethics and

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⁷⁸ Hurley, *G. K. Chesterton*, p. 61
⁷⁹ Tobin, *Elements of Surprise*, p. 15
⁸⁰ Tobin, *Elements of Surprise*, p. 278
⁸¹ Tobin, *Elements of Surprise*, p. 16
⁸² Kjeldsen, *Retorikk i vår tid*, p. 116
⁸³ Kjeldsen, *Retorikk i vår tid*, p. 128-129
⁸⁴ Kjeldsen, *Retorikk i vår tid*, p. 118
draws a connection between thinking right and speaking well.\textsuperscript{85}

2.4 Discourse Analysis

Because I am concerned with one main concept I see this as my centre point which everything else centres around or moves towards. In the beginning of Mr. Bernard Shaw strength is something underlying, unspoken, but simultaneously existing in an argumentative stasis. Chesterton has not started pulling or pushing toward a conclusion yet. According to Otto Alvin Loeb Dieter stasis is a metaphorical concept based on our understanding of forces and symmetry, it is a middle point in an argument, a point of tension between forces.\textsuperscript{86} In stasis the forces are in equilibrium, but if one force grows weaker, the other moves in and takes over.\textsuperscript{87} This is what Chesterton tries to accomplish, showing the weakness of the modern version of strength in order to regain lost territory for orthodoxy. Turner argues that stasis and proposition correspond metaphorically to places, whereas arguments are either described as pushing or pulling, throwing arguments of balance, losing ground etc.\textsuperscript{88} This rests upon understanding argument through the metaphor: rational argument is combat and Chesterton attempted to drive his opponent back.\textsuperscript{89} This point can be elaborated upon by discourse theory, especially in this case where I want to analyse this network in the context of struggle to define orthodox strength.

A broad definition of the term discourse would be “a certain way to understand and speak about the world, or specific parts of it.”\textsuperscript{90} There is necessarily a struggle within the discourse because of the unstable nature of language. The discourse is not closed off and static, at least not for long, and different discourses are continuously competing to achieve hegemony by having power to control definitions and the meaning of language.\textsuperscript{91} My understanding of discourse in this thesis is quite broad, in order to get a nuanced understanding of the interplay within and between different discourses. I understand discourse as a space of thought and force, which can be delineated and destabilised in different ways. Chesterton’s whole project with Heretics is about subverting something he perceives as the modern discourse, and make relevant other ways, and according to Chesterton, better ways, of thinking about different important concepts, in this instance strength.

This kind of struggle between ideologies is one of the main concerns for discourse analysis and will

\textsuperscript{85} Kjeldsen, Retorikk i vår tid, p. 117
\textsuperscript{87} Turner, Reading Minds, p. 106
\textsuperscript{88} Turner, Reading Minds, p. 108
\textsuperscript{89} Turner, Reading Minds, p. 117 and 120
\textsuperscript{90} Phillips, Louise and Marianne W. Jørgensen, Det diskursive felt in Diskursanalyse som teori og metode, Roskilde Universitetsforlag, 2008, p. 9
\textsuperscript{91} Phillips and Jørgensen, Det diskursive felt, p. 15
bring a new perspective on the essay and how Chesterton attempts to persuade by comparing the heretical and orthodox discourses to each other.

To use discourse theory as a perspective is useful because I want to map out how Chesterton is trying to fixate meaning within his text by crystallising an orthodox version of strength over against a heretical one, and by this to show how traditional Christianity is better than the modern alternative. His essay is an articulation within a bigger discourse; articulations are examined by asking which discourse or discourses it is connected to. I will analyse what evidence of discourses can be found within his text and how a struggle of definition can be identified within this articulation.

I have chosen to analyse the essay in light of strength, because the concept is both a nodal point and a privileged sign in the text, around which the other signs are ordered. It is also an element because it changes meaning when put into different discourses. The concept of strength is polysemic, because it changes meaning in relation to other words and contexts as I will show in chapter three and four. When strength is mentioned in context with Shaw it means something different than when mentioned as part of Christian tradition. Strength would be a nodal point in Christian discourse because it's meaning is somewhat crystallised, but in this particular essay Chesterton choses it as a point of conflict, perhaps because the concept of strength is so well established in Christian discourse. By contrasting it to strength as a modern ideal it becomes a point of conflict, an ongoing struggle within the text. The concept of strength in Mr. Bernard Shaw can be more accurately described as a floating signifier, “signs that different discourses struggle to invest with meaning in their own particular way.” You could say that Chesterton first tries to show how strength really is an element, a floating signifier, a concept open for re-evaluation in relation to the modern discourse. Second, he tries to turn the concept of strength into a moment through closure, demonstrating what strength actually is and banishing other understandings into the discursive field, which describes a space of potential meaning not actualised within the discourse.

In analysing the essay Mr. Bernard Shaw I am concerned with the subject Chesterton and his particular articulation. The concept of strength is a nodal point of identity, a master signifier as Lacan calls it. The structure of identity and establishing identity relationally, in this instance strength related to the orthodox and the heretical discourses, “takes place through the linking together of signifiers in chains of equivalence.” In the essay the identity of the heretic Shaw is

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92 Phillips and Jørgensen, *Det diskursive felt*, p. 40
94 Phillips and Jørgensen, *Laclau and Mouffe’s Discourse Theory*, p. 5
95 Phillips and Jørgensen, *Laclau and Mouffe’s Discourse Theory*, p. 16
established, the identity of the orthodox is demonstrated, and Chesterton's identity and function as a
writer and a prophet can also be analysed by identifying what chains of equivalence is created
within the text.

However, it is important not to lock the interpretation into only two discourses and try to fit
everything into this pattern. Just like with input spaces I want to strive to achieve a nuanced
historical analysis which can shed light on the most important discursive interplay happening within
the concept of strength in Chesterton's essay. I have a pragmatic attitude towards the methods I have
mentioned. Not trying to make the text fit into a rigid theoretical pattern allows a more nuanced
interpretations and opens for complex historical reflections.
3. Analysis of Mr. Bernard Shaw

In this chapter, I will argue that Chesterton constructs, deconstructs and reconstructs the concept of strength and uses this to argue for a specific ideology. I analyse how he demonstrates conflicting perceptions of strength through complex narrative, connecting them to different discourses and underlying philosophical principles. Strength, as all other concepts, we typically conceptualise of as packets of meaning, as explained in chapter one. These packets are active, changing and how we perceive meaning from them is complex. Chesterton attempts to reveal the true consequences of “the modern” mentality and of a heretical concept of strength, thereby convincing his reader to re-evaluate the foundation for contemporary politics and ethics. He tries to engage his readers through a combination of entertaining and lecturing. In this close reading, I will focus on how Chesterton creates ethos, how he structures his text and how he communicates his arguments. I examine the part George Bernard Shaw plays in the essay and how rhetorical and literary devices are employed to influence the reader.

Although Chesterton was criticized for merely pointing out what he believed to be wrong in Heretics, which was one of the reasons he went on to write an essay collection called Orthodoxy, there is much evidence in the text for which positions and perspectives he would perceive as orthodox. I will analyse how he presents and unwraps the conflicting perceptions of strength, and how he argues that the modern version of strength, epitomised by Shaw, is heretical.

3.1 Nostalgia and Progress

This is how Chesterton starts his essay about Shaw: “In the glad old days, before the rise of modern morbidities, when genial old Ibsen filled the world with wholesome joy, and the kindly tales of the forgotten Emile Zola kept our firesides merry and pure, it used to be thought a disadvantage to be misunderstood.” A lot happens in this sentence. At first glance, he evokes a feeling of nostalgia and scepticism towards the “modern” by the very phrasing: “In the glad old days, before the rise of modern morbidities”. He suggests a narrative, which, were it to end here, would be a tragedy.

It is common to think about historical development, whether at a global or local scale, as something that either moves forward or backward, in the right or wrong direction. This notion has repeatedly been expressed in ideological and religious discourses but is also a more general cognitive projection. In cognitive theory, this notion can be explained by a tendency to understand

96 Turner, The Literary Mind, p. 57
97 Chesterton, G. K., Original Preface in Orthodoxy, Peabody, Hendrickson Publishers, 2006, p. 1
events as actions and goals as spatial locations.\textsuperscript{99} When talking about progress or decline it is always with a certain object in mind and direction of movement. Chesterton invokes nostalgia to point out that we are not in a desirable place; humankind has taken a wrong turn or worked towards wrong goals. More subtly, he uses this parable because it is an established belief within the modern discourse; he is basing his argument on one of his opponent’s premises but being sarcastic.

Chesterton claims that progress is a meaningless term if it does not correspond to a positive goal. The same principle, we shall see, apply to the concept of strength. He points this out because it is not compatible with relativism, another of his issues with modernity; attempting to force the modern reader to refrain from at least one of these heresies. In \textit{On the Negative Spirit}, and earlier essay in \textit{Heretics} he states that:

\begin{quote}
We are fond of talking about ‘progress’; that is a dodge to avoid discussing what is good… The modern man says, ‘Let us leave all these arbitrary standards and embrace liberty.’ This is, logically rendered, ‘Let us not decide what is good, but let it be considered good not to decide it.’ He says, ‘Away with your old moral formulae; I am for progress.’ This, logically stated, means, ‘Let us not settle what is good; but let us settle whether we are getting more of it.’\textsuperscript{100}
\end{quote}

He points out the contradictory position of both being pro progress, but against deciding what is good especially when it comes to morality. This issue also becomes an important point towards the end of this essay.

An appeal to nostalgia such as that we find in the opening of \textit{Mr. Bernard Shaw} is generally problematic as a rhetorical device, because the audience does not necessarily share the writer’s convictions. But before a dissenting reader can dismiss Chesterton as a bitter old man, he introduces both irony and a surprising observation. These devices often have a positive rhetorical effect, humour disarms the reader and an element of surprise distances him from subjective prejudice. Chesterton is in fact being ironic when comparing the present with the past. The “glad old days” refer to Henrik Ibsen and Émile Zola, who are known for their realistic and naturalistic literature, often with tragic endings. Instead of idealising the past, he is comparing it to something which is a romanticised tragic state. So when alluding to the past by saying that “genial old Ibsen filled the world with wholesome joy, and the kindly tales of the forgotten Émile Zola kept our firesides merry and pure,”\textsuperscript{101} he is being ironic, playing with the readers expectations of a merry fireside. This irony is light-hearted in tone and verbally clever, playing with colloquial phrases to construct something unexpected. This is less likely to provoke a sceptical reader too much, but rather spark interest.

\textsuperscript{99} Turner, \textit{The Literary Mind}, p. 39-40
\textsuperscript{101} Chesterton, \textit{Mr. Bernard Shaw}, p. 63
3.2 Chivalry and Ethos

Chesterton often uses irony, which allows him to criticise without seeming brutal or cruel and is, on the contrary, perceived as funny by his supporters and silly by his opponents.\textsuperscript{102} According to Jens E. Kjeldsen, there is a type of irony which is not aggressive and saves the face of both the writer and his opponent. It allows the conversation to continue without turning too antagonistic and polarized; this benefits the writer’s ethos as well.\textsuperscript{103} I have chosen to speak of this as “chivalrous irony”.

Chivalrous irony and playful humour is important when creating ethos, but so is creating and breaking expectations. Derived ethos is ethos derived from the action of communication, by the position which the speaker takes in relation to the recipients' expectations. A speaker might strengthen his ethos and credibility by going against the audience's expectations.\textsuperscript{104} In the opening sentence, Chesterton does this, he introduces the surprising observation that “it used to be thought a disadvantage to be misunderstood.”\textsuperscript{105} This puzzling statement creates suspense and momentum in the text, because it is not clear what he means: is it really no longer a disadvantage to be misunderstood? Further on I will demonstrate that the breaking of expectations is also interlocked with the overall structure of the essay. Instead of exposing Shaw, as one might expect when someone is challenging a heretic, Chesterton initially defends him against other accusers. Only afterwards does Chesterton show the reader why Shaw nevertheless is mistaken. According to Leo A. Hetzler this is a general hallmark for Chesterton’s writing style. Chesterton uses contradiction as a stylistic device, to startle and jolt the mind of his readers into re-examining their own attitudes and preconceptions.\textsuperscript{106}

In order to argue that it is no longer a disadvantage to be misunderstood, Chesterton begins by telling his reader a parable. “The man who is misunderstood has always this advantage over his enemies, that they do not know his weak point or his plan of campaign. They go out against a bird with nets and against a fish with arrows.”\textsuperscript{107} In order to explain something more complex, Chesterton creates a blend with input spaces of war and fishing/hunting. Chesterton often uses striking and sensory images, and this is no exception. “They go out against a bird with nets and against a fish with arrows” is a visual description. He depicts an absurd situation, but with commonplace elements, «they» are a group of people, who “go out against”, that is, attack or confront, a prey, but exchange the appropriate weapons.

\textsuperscript{102} F. W. Elias implies this in\textit{A Lack of Dignity} in \textit{G. K. Chesterton The Critical Judgements Part 1: 1900-1937} p. 109
\textsuperscript{103} Kjeldsen, \textit{Retorikk i vår tid}, p. 201-202 (Dannet ironi)
\textsuperscript{104} Kjeldsen, \textit{Retorikk i vår tid}, p. 127-128
\textsuperscript{105} Chesterton, \textit{Mr. Bernard Shaw}, p. 63
\textsuperscript{106} Hetzler, \textit{The early literary career of G. K. Chesterton}, p. 375-376
\textsuperscript{107} Chesterton, \textit{Mr. Bernard Shaw}, p. 63
To use concrete images but giving them a surprising twist is a common rhetorical technique. The role of images in thinking and remembering has been emphasised in rhetoric since *Retorica ad Herennium*, an important work on the topic of *memoria* in classical antiquity. In order to both remember and convey a message with exuberance, it is important to visualize. Modern cognitive science also supports this insight. Concrete images are easier to remember than abstract and they excite the reader. If you want to remember the words house, man and car, you would imagine a man driving his car inside his house, because unusual images are easier to remember than trivial ones. Chesterton’s parables often follow the three principles of *memoria*: the image should be concrete, surprising and dynamic. These principles are found in the parable of catching birds with nets and fish with arrows, them being concrete elements in a fantastical situation. This makes the text easier to remember and, in addition, it supports the writer’s ethos by again jolting the reader with an element of surprise. By using a familiar input space his and the reader’s perspective come together and by giving the reader a standard image schema, the reader is more likely to follow and accept the continuation of his reasoning.

3.3 Sequence and Parable

Chesterton attempts to persuade by narrative rather than by logical argument, this is explained in chapter two as image schemas. He uses fishing/hunting as input spaces which blend together with the input space of war, to support his general claim about being misunderstood. The underlying inference in both the fishing/hunting sequence and the war sequence is that if you are misunderstood your opponent will use wrong and ineffective weapons against you. Chesterton constructs his claims in form of parables and uses this as evidence for a partial conclusion that lays the foundation for the main conclusion which is not explicit until the end of his essay. In order to be successful in his demonstrations he chooses parables with a simple and one-sided interpretation. It is difficult to object to his claim that it is an advantage to be misunderstood in the context of fishing/hunting or war. To make connections between input spaces, they do not need to be of the same substance, but they must have the same structure. Throughout the essay seemingly independent spatial stories are integrated into one general story, to support the primary conclusion. Chesterton guides his reader towards an epiphany created by activating different input spaces, demonstrating their similar pattern and the necessity of their inference.

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108 Traditionally attributed Cicero or Cornificus
111 Kjeldsen, *Retorikk i vår tid*, p. 270-271
As explained in chapter two, this is a well-known aspect of human understanding; we look for patterns and try to generalise from a sequence of particulars.\(^{113}\) Using image schemas to point toward a general principle, we shall see, is typical for Chesterton’s strategy of persuasion. His parables are sequences which repeat patterns. He employs parables which are associated, not necessarily with the same substance but with the same structure, to create analogies which give rise to inferences in order to persuade the reader. With these parallel parables he puts forward his claims and demonstrates an aesthetic depth in his literary narrative, by the parables' complex integration. The emergent meaning created by the integrated image schemas are similar to his aesthetic paradoxes which also provoke an intuitive understanding.

To further show how it is an advantage to be misunderstood Chesterton maps this onto a third situation. He tells a longer and more complex parable about Joseph Chamberlain, a British politician, describing him as one of many “modern examples of this situation.”\(^{114}\) Already in the previous parable about fishing/hunting and the advantage of hiding your weak point or plan of campaign,\(^ {115}\) Chesterton has chosen words which not only allude to war, but also the realm of politics, for example “campaign”. This ties the sequences together on both an aesthetic and structural level. Chesterton claims it is not only an advantage to be misunderstood in war, but also in politics. This once again puzzles the reader. To prove this claim the input space of war is mapped onto the input space of politics. The phrase “his back against the wall”, alludes to a physical threat. Expressions like “He constantly eludes or vanquishes his opponents”, “his own city that has never deserted him”, “foes”, even “power” and “man of action” demonstrates the similarities between war and politics, and as the reader already likely has accepted, in war it is definitely an advantage to be misunderstood. To claim this in the case of politics is at first perplexing, but it soon becomes clear that the underlying issue and critique is that modern politics is a battle concerned with winning. First this claim appear idiosyncratic, but then it is recognised as the opposite. That politics is merely a game of rhetoric is an accusation as old as the art of rhetoric itself, something Chesterton would be aware of. This clarifies the nature of his critique towards the “modern”. The “modern” is not merely contemporary, but a discourse containing problematic aspects already recognised and criticised by philosophical authorities as far back as Plato.\(^ {116}\)

\(^{113}\) Turner, *The Literary Mind*, p. 18-19.
\(^{114}\) Chesterton, *Mr. Bernard Shaw*, p. 63
\(^{115}\) Chesterton, *Mr. Bernard Shaw*, p. 63

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3.4 The Chivalrous Mob and the Rhetoric of Underdogs

Chesterton describes how both friends and foes misunderstand Mr. Chamberlain to his advantage, believing him to be a “strenuous man of action” and “a coarse man of business.” The reality behind these interpretations of his character is, according to Chesterton, that he is an orator. He deceives his audience, and because of this, is successful. Chamberlain takes advantage of the same cognitive structure which historically has been very successful, that rhetoric is most effective when not perceived as rhetoric. He is not only a mere orator, but “an admirable romantic orator and romantic actor”**: he is performing a role and manipulating the crowd. Chesterton continues to use chivalrous irony. Even though he is accusing Chamberlain, he is at the same time, in a sense, admiring his talent.

Romance, Chesterton proclaims in another essay from *Heretics, Mr. H. G. Wells and the Giants*, is “a purely Christian product,” which is interlocked with the ideal of humility. Mr. Chamberlain, however, only shows a pretence of humility: “He has one power which is the soul of melodrama – the power of pretending, even when backed by a huge majority, that he has his back to the wall.” Even though this is only an act, it never the less indicates the effectiveness of humility, because Mr. Chamberlain succeeds by implementing this strategy. The reason for this, Chesterton implies, is a property found within the crowd, not the speaker: “For all mobs are so far chivalrous that their heroes must make some show of misfortune.” It is hypocrisy to take advantage of the effectiveness of a display of humility and use this as a political ploy, but in the spontaneous reaction of the crowd, there is genuine chivalry.

Chamberlain’s rhetorical device is according to Chesterton nothing new: “As for his bluffness and toughness and appeals to common sense, all that is, of course, simply the first trick of rhetoric.” Chesterton echoes Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar*, ascribing to Chamberlain the words of Mark Anthony: “I am no orator, as Brutus is; but as you know me all, a plain blunt man.” The mob demands the genuine and the humble and trust the plain blunt man more that the man in a position of power. Here, I suggest, Chesterton confronts the trope of the underdog. Karl G. Trautman defines the underdog as someone with noble ideals of equality and fairness but disadvantaged and expected to lose. Some scholars claim that the appeal of the underdog trope is

117 Chesterton, *Mr. Bernard Shaw*, p. 63
118 Chesterton, *Mr. Bernard Shaw*, p. 63
120 Chesterton, *Mr. Bernard Shaw*, p. 63
121 Chesterton, *Mr. Bernard Shaw*, p. 63
122 Chesterton, *Mr. Bernard Shaw*, p. 63
123 Chesterton, *Mr. Bernard Shaw*, p. 63
a psychological phenomenon which stretches across cultures and contexts. Chesterton implies that the same underlying principle of this trick of rhetoric is the same as the effectiveness of underdog stories. “Their hero must make some show of misfortune” in order for the hero's character to be believable and relatable, the same way an orator should be perceived as an ordinary man if he wants to be successful. The underdog effect is an impelling way to create ethos and to make the speaker seem trustworthy. The underdog assumes a leader position in relation to the audience, perceived as morally superior, usually in context with a shared enemy or danger. Chamberlain, like Mark Anthony, appears to be without extraordinary resources or power, fighting vigorously for a greater good. The story of the underdog is also a common narrative within Christian discourse. The story of Jesus relates to the concept by reversing standards, proclaiming the first to be the last, not to seek material wealth in order to obtain true wealth and so on. In chapter four I will come back to how the underdog trope is connected with Chesterton's own ethos and his general construction of orthodox strength by employing inversions between weakness and power.

It is typical for Chesterton to refer to well-known stories in order to further develop his own parables. In his essay about H. G. Wells, were he also elaborates upon the concept of strength, he refers to Jack the Giant-Killer, Achilles and Robin Hood – three other popular underdog stories. He uses intertextuality as a rhetorical device in order to make structural similarities in different narratives apparent, which makes it easier for the reader to recognize image schemas and intuitively accept his conclusion.

An advantage in using familiar images and stories is that Chesterton can combine these with his own ideas, seemingly confirming what the reader already knows, creating an experience of shared perspective. It is interesting that by doing this Chesterton is himself using “the first trick of rhetoric”. By using common stories, often myths and fairy tales, he positions himself as the common man. Chesterton becomes in effect the plain, blunt man; thus, he strengthens his ethos. He constructs his character as the opposite of the boasting and arrogant heretic, identifying as part of the crowd. As Shallcross notes: “Chesterton's demagoguery derives from a willed identification with the mob, a socio-political extension of the culturally populist standpoint.” This is important for Chesterton's image on the whole, a partly self-educated journalist. Here the rhetorical strategy in the essay resonates with the ultimate message of the essay. The central inference is that true strength is found in humility and this is spontaneously recognised by the crowd in stories of the underdog and by the crowd's reaction to the first trick of rhetoric. This inference is central for the further

126 Trautman, The Underdog in American Politics, p. 8
127 Shallcross, Rethinking G. K. Chesterton and Literary Modernism p. 64
development of his theory about the effectiveness of humility and the reality of human nature in connection to the concept of strength.

3.5 Mr. Bernard Shaw, the Consistent

The antithesis of Mr. Chamberlain is introduced next: Mr. George Bernard Shaw, who is also “a standing monument of the advantage of being misunderstood.” Shaw is, like Chamberlain, misinterpreted by both supporters and opponents, but unlike Mr. Chamberlain, Shaw is perceived as an orator, without actually being one. In this part of the essay Chesterton picks up pace and the text overflows with short, rapid parables to describe Shaw’s character, with input spaces often interlinked and associated which each other and his previous parables. He answers the accusation that Shaw will “do anything to startle and amuse” by drawing on input spaces of war and circus: “far from his power consisting in jumping through hoops or standing on his head, his power consists in holding his own fortress night and day.” In order to show that Shaw is a serious and consistent man, Chesterton exchanges circus metaphors with war metaphors. He claims that the average Cabinet Minister, a nod to Chamberlain in the previous section, is “wild and whirling”, “jumping through hoops” and “standing on his head”, but not Shaw. Chesterton often repeats elements of his previous parables in a new context, thus elaborating on a story already known to the reader and developing his metaphors into complex networks. War is employed as a stable mental space, blending together with several others; this creates a perception of one comprehensive story. By self-referencing and referencing well known images and parables, he involves and unites his reader with his own perspective to attain the effect of revealing rather than telling.

Shaw's steadfastness is likened to both a fortress and a scientist, “rapidly and rigorously” putting to the test “everything that happens in heaven or earth. His standard never varies.” Chesterton claims that Shaw is feared by the weak-minded because of his quality as immovable, because he does not change his mind. Here weak is associated with inconsistent politicians, and apparently seen as something negative, while Shaw is portrayed in a positive manner. Chesterton often creates false enthymemes, as explained in chapter one (and two); in this context, his reader is lead to believe that immovable strength is positive, but Chesterton will later point out that this trait becomes tyrannical when not corresponding to actual reality and an orthodox concept of strength. Chesterton creates false expectations, so he can later reveal the real solution, strengthening his ethos and role as truth-teller. This structural characteristic is the reason that I compare his essays to crime

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128 Chesterton, *Mr. Bernard Shaw*, p. 64
129 Chesterton, *Mr. Bernard Shaw*, p. 64
130 Chesterton, *Mr. Bernard Shaw*, p. 64
131 Chesterton, *Mr. Bernard Shaw*, p. 64

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fiction and mystery stories. He introduces an image as if it were a clue, hinting first toward one interpretation and then announcing another one; the most likely suspect is seldom the killer.

Chesterton compares Shaw’s philosophy to a law which is consistently enforced. Shaw criticises socialists as much as individualist when they go against the underlying principle of following the law. Shaw dislikes patriotism in both the Irish and the English, because he dislikes patriotism in itself. The reason Shaw is perceived as an inconsistent orator is because he is too consistent. People may not know the underlying principle, but it is there. Chesterton shows this by two parallel parables: first, the story of the man who calls white wine yellow and white grapes green; second, the story of the Government official who calls white men pink. Because of their realism, they are perceived to be absurd; this explains why Shaw is seen as a circus director doing linguistic acrobatics. The men in the parables, and analogously Shaw, employ the word white in correspondence with an ideal of whiteness, and not as mere habit. At this, Chesterton concludes that truth is stranger than fiction, and that Shaw is not an orator.132

Chesterton creates a false enthymeme portraying Shaw as truth-teller, later we shall see that this is reversed. It is worth noting that, when demonstrating Shaw's consistency, the reader has not really learned anything about Shaw. By communicating his point in a simple parable, it is difficult to argue against his conclusion. The fact that yellow wine is usually called white and does not correspond to a general idea of white is not a controversial claim. Getting his reader to agree to this is fundamental for the further unpacking of the concept of strength. That truth is stranger than fiction will be an important part of the main conclusion of this essay, and the orthodox perception of strength.

3.6 Chesterton the Chivalrous

I argue that notions of chivalry inform not only Chesterton’s irony, but also structures the very essay Mr. Bernard Shaw. Up to this point Chesterton explains why Shaw's critics are wrong about him; Chesterton emphasizes his good qualities. Shaw is portrayed as better than the acrobatic orators of politics. Chesterton introduces Shaw in a good light before he goes on to explain why Shaw, nevertheless, is a heretic.

The structure of this essay resembles the standard way of arguing in scholastic, medieval philosophy. The ideal in scholasticism is the principle of presenting a matter from both, or all relevant sides, starting with the opposing side, before disputing and concluding.133 St. Thomas Aquinas for instance follows the pattern of first presenting the opposing arguments, and then

132 Chesterton, Mr. Bernard Shaw, p. 66
debating his own in light of these. Chesterton would go on to write a book about Aquinas and in the introduction refer to him as “my hero.”  

Although his essays differ in genre from the dialectic philosophy of Aquinas, Chesterton appears to be inspired by his technique; in several essays in *Heretics* he first starts with his opponents. He does not exactly present his opponent’s arguments per se, but rather creates an impression of character, usually by parables, and does not reveal his counterpoint until later. Chesterton often characterises his heretics in a positive manner, thereby showing the reader the opponent's contribution to the discussion he is orchestrating, before demonstrating why their world view is problematic by shedding new light on the characteristics previously given, as he is about to do with Shaw.

In his book *George Bernard Shaw* published in 1909, Chesterton accuses Shaw of not giving the best counter arguments in his plays, which makes it an unfair fight according to Chesterton: “Sometimes, especially in his later plays, he allows his clear conviction to spoil even his admirable dialogue, making one side entirely weak.” He adds: “I only mention this unfair dialogue, because it marks, I think, the recent hardening, for good or evil, of Shaw out of a dramatist into a mere philosopher, and whoever hardens into a philosopher may be hardening into a fanatic.” Because Shaw creates straw men to prove his point, rather than genuinely explore a certain problem within the dialog, Chesterton calls his work “propaganda plays.”

### 3.7 Seeing Things as They Are

While demonstrating Shaw's unchanging nature Chesterton includes ambiguous aspects which hint at something potentially problematic. “He is almost mechanically just; he has something of the terrible quality of a machine,” Chesterton says of him. Modernity portrayed as mechanical is a commonplace metonymy used to show an experience of alienation. Chesterton describes Shaw as a man apart from the world who gazes upon it from afar:

> a man with a definite belief always appears bizarre, because he does not change with the world; he has climbed into a fixed star, and the earth whizzes below him like a zoetrope. Millions of mild black-coated men call themselves sane and sensible merely because they always catch the fashionable insanity, because they are hurried into madness after madness by the maelstrom of the world

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136 Chesterton, G. K., *George Bernard Shaw*, p. 447
137 Chesterton, G. K., *George Bernard Shaw*, p. 447
138 Chesterton, *Mr. Bernard Shaw*, p. 65
139 Chesterton, *Mr. Bernard Shaw*, p. 66
A zoetrope is a wheel of life, a cylinder with images inside, and when it spins it creates the illusion of motion. It is a toy from 1830, an early motion picture. The description of the aloof Shaw raises several associations: is he a scientist, a flâneur, a prophet or a god? A man with a distant gaze, observing patterns unfolding, gives the impression that he might have a more objective view because he is not distracted by things like trends and circuses. Chesterton's portrayal seems continually positive because Shaw is not like the sheepish mob who can be swayed by trends or, with a previous parable in mind, manipulative politicians. At this point Shaw is the hero of the story combatting the relativistic “modern” world. This has a strong rhetorical effect because the reader expects Chesterton to be critical towards his heretic. In the situations where Chesterton is nevertheless applauding him, we are more likely to trust his judgement. He strengthens his ethos simultaneously as creating a false enthymeme. He is being deceptive at the same time as gaining trust, but it is done so subtly that the reader will not feel tricked only enlightened when the real character of Shaw is revealed.

If the reader follows Chesterton this far, she has already accepted that within the modern discourse it matters only to win social status and elections. This is portrayed as problematic. In the parable of the zoetrope people are apparently so far gone that they do not recognise the consistent implementation of principles and the negative aspects of modernity because they are more concerned with personal gain. In this parable the nature of the mob becomes more complex, people who call themselves sane just because they are following the latest trend, would fall short of Chesterton's orthodox ideal. The chivalrous mob is in no way only good. Implicitly he compares the world of trends with the world in the zoetrope, «hurried into madness after madness», a «maelstrom» – i.e., a driving circular motion – which Shaw from his fixed star is able to criticize with his fixed principles, unlike the relativistic masses or the politician who change their opinion constantly. Earlier, one might have noticed, by the introduction of circus as input space when talking about the orator, Chesterton hints at the mob's need for (bread and) circus, implicitly anticipating a point he will develop later, namely, the notion of the crowd as superficial and shifty. This is an example of Chesterton continually dropping clues which will later become important when put into the right context.

This development of the mob is an example of aesthetic paradox. Chesterton continually creates expectation and twists it into something that the reader does not expect, and not until you finish reading you will see how all the pieces fit together even though they apparently contradict each other. He creates a dense story based on analogies and imagery which follow an internal logic. In this case, he first describes the mob as chivalrous and then as sheepish followers of trend, which

140 Kjeldsen, Retorikk i vår tid, p. 129
makes them unable to see the big picture and care about ontological truths. They have an instinct toward chivalry and a tendency to be manipulated. Both of these are true in different circumstances and the placement of these narratives in the same text creates an understanding of the mob which are not easily formulated into comprehensible principles but are a more artistic insight into human nature. Chesterton's style has similarities to Hegelian dialectic, as Slavoj Žižek noted, but I agree with Hurley that his paradoxes are more colourful and atmospheric.\textsuperscript{141} They are better described in terms of aesthetic paradox, pointing out the tension between world and word in a manner which arouses implicit understanding.

I want to point out another structural aspect which is relevant to understand Chesterton's way of arguing. Up to this point, Chesterton has shown how Shaw is superior to the trendy and near-sighted crowd as well as to manipulative politicians and implicitly to modern relativism. Consequently, the only thing that remains for Chesterton in order to present the modern as inadequate and orthodoxy as a reasonable option, is to defeat Shaw since Shaw has defeated his other opponents for him. Because he uses chivalrous irony, parables, humour, elements of surprise and a chivalrous structure, we are more likely to trust Chesterton’s judgement and follow his reasoning. By creating suspense and anticipation in the text the reader is curious to know the main conclusion.

#### 3.8 The Heretic Revealed

Now comes the first turning point in the essay, with Chesterton announcing “in Mr. Shaw's realism there is something lacking, and that thing which is lacking is serious.”\textsuperscript{142}

Mr. Shaw's old and recognized philosophy was… that conservative ideals were bad, not because they were conservative, but because they were ideals. Every ideal prevented men from judging justly the particular case; every moral generalization oppressed the individual; the golden rule was there was no golden rule.\textsuperscript{143}

Shaw's consistency is less general as it might seem in the parables where input spaces of science and colours are used; he is immovable but especially when it comes to morality he supports a subjective judgement objectively. Here Shaw becomes part of the problem of modern relativism. In order to debate moral issues, one would need a common goal, or least a belief that there would be possible to discover objective facts about this subject, just as any other. Otherwise we are left with emotivism, persuasion through evoking feelings. A general claim can be tested and challenged, a

\textsuperscript{141} Hurley, G. K. Chesterton, p. 61
\textsuperscript{142} Chesterton, Mr. Bernard Shaw, p. 67
\textsuperscript{143} Chesterton, Mr. Bernard Shaw, p. 67
subjective preference cannot, it would not necessarily be changed by evidence as for example in
science, although one could, because of oratory (or whim), change one's mind. The problem with
moral relativism is that moral standpoints cannot be debated rationally, an ethics based on
individual preference is totalitarian by nature if it is imposed unto others. This totalitarian
preference of Shaw is relevant to the heretical concept of strength, because heretical strength is not
interested in truth, but domination.

In Shaw's ethics there are inconsistencies. As Chesterton points out, claiming that there is no
golden rule is itself a golden rule, and this remark is manipulative wordplay. Stating that there are
no objective moral rules, is in itself an objective claim. What Chesterton has argued simultaneously
as defending Shaw, has been the importance of recognising fundamental, objective principles.
Yellow wine and pink men are just white by a linguistic norm and not by a quality in the thing
themselves; but by agreeing to this, one also must agree to a principle of objective whiteness. With
this example he has demonstrated that human beings, to a certain degree, have a common
perspective and do share experiences which can be described as general philosophical claims. This,
Chesterton implies, should also be the case for ethics.

Previously, Shaw's inhumanity has been hinted at with parables containing input spaces of war,
mechanical justice, machine and his position as a distant judge. Even though he is not part of the
sheepish mob it does not necessarily follow that he sees thing as they really are. From a distance
everything would perhaps seem smaller than they are and therefore less important, as Chesterton
later claims is one major flaw with Shaw's position; he has exalted and alienated himself from the
world. Shaw has seemingly taken on an apocalyptical gaze, seeing the world beneath the veil, trying
to reveal fundamental truths; this means one of two things – either he is an orthodox prophet or a
heretic.

With the disclosing of the totalitarian golden rule, which is in reality, says Chesterton, an
“iron rule,” the heretic emerges as a central feature, revealing continuously new interpretative
layers of the parables already told and the clues already planted. Instead of Shaw being a silly writer
who amuses his audience by linguistic acrobatics he is portrayed as cold and merciless. Shaw is
deceptive and tricks his audience into false comfort; he inhabits traits of the orator, but the
consequences of his oratory seem more ominous than those of Chamberlain. A politician just wants
votes, Shaw turns reality upside down. “Mr. Shaw has never seen things as they really are. If he had
he would have fallen on his knees before them.” Shaw's perspective lacks, according to
Chesterton, connection to the real world. The right perspective is achieved through humility, not

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144 Chesterton, Mr. Bernard Shaw, p. 67
145 Chesterton, Mr. Bernard Shaw, p. 67
exaltation. This plot-twist has similarities to the mystery novel. The true nature of Shaw is revealed to us as the true identity of the killer would have been. Chesterton shows that, even though Shaw is perceived as a humourist, appearances can be deceptive; in reality he is promoting a dangerous ideology, “the religion of the Superman.”

Chesterton's personal judgement becomes more explicit as he directly accuses Shaw. The problem with Shaw's religion is that it is not based on reality but on Utopia and is in direct opposition to Chesterton's own belief. Shaw has “mocked at the faiths in the forgotten past” and “discovered a new god in the unimaginable future.” He set up “the most impossible of all ideals, the ideal of a new creature.” Chesterton uses “unimaginable” and “impossible” insisting on Shaw's lack of realism. Shaw is according to Chesterton longing for a future were the human ideal is not to be human. What this non-human is, Chesterton describes by parables. It is the monster from Mars, the wise man of the Stoics, the economic man of the Fabians, Julius Caesar and Wagner's Siegfried – all culminating in the creature he calls “the Superman.” He supports this claim by three parables with the same structure. Shaw idealises a demigod or mythical monster, thereby condemning humans as inferior because they do not have hundred hands, hundreds of eyes or infinite mental clarity. By these parables he tries to show that Shaw’s ideal human is a monster, something unnatural. Here Chesterton is positioning himself against a modern discourse described by multiple examples creating a heuristic understanding of what heretical strength is. It is conveyed by adjectives and narratives rather than plain definition. The reason for this, I suggest, is the rhetorical effect. By showing examples with the same causal pattern, which I refer to as image schema in chapter two, the reader is more likely to accept that the Superman is in fact anti-human. Chesterton believed that truth could be understood through literature, that there is a connection between the effectiveness of rhetoric and reality, just as he tries to demonstrate the effectiveness of humility in connection to strength.

Heretical strength, understood as means to achieve domination, is elaborated upon a few pages later, in Mr. H. G. Wells and the Giants, Chesterton links the Superman directly to Nietzsche by quoting “Man is a thing which has to be surpassed.” He compares the Superman to giants, who in the “wise old fairy-tales” are vermin. “If the Superman is more manly than men are, of course they will ultimately deify him, even if they happen to kill him first”. This points back to an earlier parable in the essay where he claims that mankind will always fight the total Utopia. If science and medicine succeeded in breeding healthy strong men, the first thing they would do, would be to

146 Chesterton, Mr. Bernard Shaw, p. 67
147 Chesterton, Mr. Bernard Shaw, p. 67
148 Chesterton, Mr. Bernard Shaw, p. 68
149 See for example The Ethics of Elfland in Orthodoxy
150 Cited in Chesterton, Mr. H. G. Wells and the Giants, p. 80
smash medical supervision. He also points out that if the Superman is just a better version of man than most men, how is the Superman different from the Saints?

Chesterton believes that the modern world is on the side of giants and this is what Shaw and Wells represents. This ideology is built on the false premise that you have to be strong to be brave, while in Chesterton’s concept of strength, you have to be weak to be brave and only the brave can be trusted to be strong.\textsuperscript{151} This strength is connected to faith rather than certainty. This Chesterton suggests being the nature of truth. In \textit{Orthodoxy}, the essay collection following \textit{Heretics}, he writes in the essay titled \textit{The Paradoxes of Christianity}, that in Christianity one does not merely “deduce logical truths, but that when it suddenly becomes illogical, it has found, so to speak, an illogical truth.”\textsuperscript{152} This is not a denial of logic, but an addition to it. Strength is dependent on humility and sincerity, not control and domination. Strength, for Chesterton, is to disdain strength, at least Nietzsche’s concept of strength: “A new commandment I give to you, ‘be hard’.”\textsuperscript{153} A hard human being is usually a dead human being, Chesterton points out, associating hardness to a corpse, taking the commandment literally for comic effect. Sensibility however, Chesterton claims, is the definition of life. In \textit{Orthodoxy} he writes “A stone is helpless, because stone is hard… hardness is weakness. The bird can of its own nature go upward, because fragility is force.” This comes together in a well-known chestertonian phrase “Angels can fly because they can take themselves lightly.”\textsuperscript{154} Here he uses common metaphors to show the general truth to his claim, again, it is hard to argue that his parables conflict with reality because they follow from such basic human experiences. This has a strong rhetorical effect, but the sceptical reader will just dismiss that this parable has anything to do with the real question. As eluded to before, Chesterton is a writer who either is described as a man with common sense or non-sense.

An effect of the religion of the Superman for the believer is according to Chesterton a sentiment of superiority, which “keeps us cool and practical”. It is “a habit of pedantic and fastidious comparison”, making the stronger man despises other things. Like Shaw who “keeps a lifted head and contemptuous face.”\textsuperscript{155} Chesterton uses these small parables to construct an understanding of Shaw’s world view as brutal and connected to a concept of strength which is controlling, totalitarian and arrogant, or as Chesterton politely puts it “not easily pleased”, using his chivalrous irony to mellow his accusations. The heretical concept of strength is demonstrated by Shaw’s character: he is no longer (if he ever were) George Bernard Shaw, but a personification of the modern and heretical.

\textsuperscript{151} Chesterton, \textit{Mr. H. G. Wells and the Giants}, p. 81  
\textsuperscript{153} Chesterton, \textit{Mr. H. G. Wells and the Giants}, p. 82  
\textsuperscript{154} Chesterton,\textit{Orthodoxy}, p. 325  
\textsuperscript{155} Chesterton, \textit{Mr. Bernard Shaw}, p. 68
3.9 Preacher and Prophet

As Chesterton reveals the heretical nature of Shaw, he simultaneously demonstrates the orthodox alternative. “The greater and stronger a man is the more he would be inclined to prostrate himself before a periwinkle.”\(^{156}\) A periwinkle is a tiny flower, associated with the Virgin Mary, purity, friendship, lasting love, honesty, truth and faithfulness. This pattern, or image schema, emphasising smallness and insignificance, is carried over into the next section. Here Chesterton suggests that Shaw should admire his own feet rather than being contemptuous toward “the colossal panorama of empires and civilisations” if he wanted to see “things as they are”. Chesterton picks up on a rhetoric strongly associated with St. Francis of Assisi, whom Chesterton would write a book about. St. Francis promoted an excitement for the small things in life and for nature, famously even preaching to birds. The dignity of man is linked with the dignity of nature, they are both a part of creation and are both willed by the creator. Chesterton was inspired by medieval ideals, his chivalry and belief in humility and humanity is similar to that of the medieval humanism described by R. W. Southern: “the power to recognize the grandeur and splendour of the universe is itself one of the greatest expressions of the grandeur and splendour of man.”\(^{157}\) Chesterton is in hindsight described as part of the Catholic revival of English literature. These writers were interested in the goodness in the world and the sheer holiness of creation.\(^{158}\) As I have shown, this aspect is important to Chesterton's understanding of both the world and of human beings. The chivalrous ideals of Chesterton are interlinked with his interest for Catholicism and of the Middle Ages. Chesterton identified it as “a healthy period when even the lost spirits were hilarious.”\(^{159}\) Humour he understood as a result of humility, a sort of enjoyment, another consequence of taking both oneself and the world lightly.

Now comes the second turning point in the essay. Chesterton takes explicitly on the role of truth-teller and prophet. He is the one seeing things as they are, he constructs the narrative whereby he is able to both reveal the consequences of heretical strength and postulate a better alternative. The difference between him and Shaw is that Chesterton looks upon a fixed star rather than placing himself on one, he alludes to general teaching with an ideal of objective knowledge, as you would find in Christian discourse. This perspective claims to see through both Shaw and reality with a true apocalyptical gaze. Unlike Shaw this does not cause him to see things as smaller than they are, but to notice the grandeur of everything, even in the smallest flower; the orthodox perspective on reality is to stand in wonder and amazement. “The truth is, that all genuine appreciation rests on a certain

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156 Chesterton, *Mr. Bernard Shaw*, p. 68
159 Cited in Ker, *The Catholic revival in English Literature 1845-1961*, p. 86
mystery of humility and almost of darkness.”160 This mystery is associated with inversions from Christian discourse, not just humility and exaltation, but also light and darkness. In the same way, true strength is achieved by accepting weakness as essential part of reality and of humanity. Here the narrative of the underdog once again resurfaces. Chesterton himself becomes the underdog, fighting the giants, that is, Shaw and the moderns. Chesterton becomes a character inhabiting the underdog attributes mentioned in chapter two: he has noble ideals of equality and fairness, but claims to be disadvantaged and expected to lose because he embraces humility and not brutality when challenging the “religion of the Superman”. Chesterton is in effect employing the first trick of rhetoric, presenting himself as a blunt man. He fights on behalf of the chivalrous and flawed crowd against the cultural elite. He does not want to change the mob (just improve them) realising that humans are in fact “beer-drinking, creed-making, fighting, failing, sensual” but still “respectable.”161 I argue, however, that Chesterton is not only an orator, he does really want to point out fundamental truths and the paradoxical nature of reality. He is a prophet using rhetoric in God's service.

His use of paradox, although connected with contemporary influences, is more than just a stylistic choice. Within Christian tradition the rhetoric of paradox is based on the belief that the nature of reality cannot accurately and completely be described by human language, and an attempt to do so, would seemingly appear paradoxical.162 Paradox is used in order to reach deeper meaning and to comprehend the apparent strangeness of human experience. Chesterton continuous to map Christian imagery onto new parables and demonstrates the continuous relevance for Christian ideals by juxtaposing it to the modern alternative. He reformulates well-known phrases from the sermon on the mount exchanging “blessed is the meek, for he shall inherit the earth,”163 with “blessed is he that expecteth nothing, for he shall be gloriously surprised.”164 Chesterton shifts to focus on light and “the victory of God” to show the functionality of humility. “Until we see the background of darkness we cannot admire the light.” He demonstrates how we perceive the physical reality by inversions and implies that this is the case for more abstract matters as well; as light is manifested through darkness, humility becomes victory. In addition to this, his parable of light and darkness also has the same implications as the parable about colour. Morality need fundamental principles, only if people see darkness, one could talk about what light is.

160 Chesterton, Mr. Bernard Shaw, p. 69
161 Chesterton, Mr. Bernard Shaw, p. 70
163 Matt 5:5
164 Chesterton, Mr. Bernard Shaw, p. 69
3.10 Weakness and Humility as Orthodox Strength

The consequence of Shaw's unrealistic view of humanity combined with the ideal of progress is to abandon humanity. Chesterton claims that progress is more important to Shaw than human individuals and tries to demonstrate the absurdity in this by parable: “It is rather as if a nurse had tried a rather bitter food for some years on a baby, and on discovering that it was not suitable, should not throw away the food and ask for a new food, but throw the baby out the window, and ask for a new baby.” The story of a nurse throwing a baby out the window maps onto Shaw throwing humanity out, exchanging it for Supermen. He is at the same time throwing out one baby in particular, Jesus, by getting rid of moral ideals, changing the ideal human from a holy baby, the embodiment of weakness, trust, humility and love, into a dominating Giant.

The clash between the ideal of strength in the religion of Superman and the ideal of strength in the Christian sense is concluded in a final parable. Here Chesterton tries to show the success and strength of humility and weakness.

All the empires and the kingdoms have failed, because of this inherent and continual weakness, that they were founded by strong men and upon strong men. But this one thing, the historic Christian Church, was founded on a weak man, and for that reason it is indestructible. For no chain is stronger than its weakest link.

This man upon whom the Church “was founded” is Peter, the man who was too afraid to admit to knowing Jesus the night he was arrested. “When Christ at a symbolic moment was establishing His great society,” writes Chesterton, “He chose for its corner-stone neither the brilliant Paul nor the mystic John, but a shuffler, a snob, a coward – in a word, a man.” This statement is a metaphysical paradox, but also an aesthetic one, it draws on a narrative, a romantic story which is comprehended through intuition, not only logic. In his conclusion the inferences come together as a necessary continuation of the essay's internal logic, and the reader now understands the real meaning of the clues Chesterton has planted throughout. Here he also places the Church in the underdog position, fighting against all odds but nevertheless prevailing. Thus he attempts to rouse the reader's amazement at the fact that the Church has managed to achieve this apparently impossible task.

165 Chesterton, Mr. Bernard Shaw, p. 70
166 Chesterton, Mr. Bernard Shaw, p. 70
167 Chesterton, Mr. Bernard Shaw, p. 70
4. Concept of Strength, Discursive Struggle and Ethos

Chesterton was from the beginning of his career resolute to “write against the Decadents and Pessimists who ruled the culture of the age.” He thought that relativism, rationalism, cynicism, materialism, nihilism, modern pride and dismissal of past traditions, was highly problematic; and therefore saw the need for an ideological struggle. Chesterton saw the rationalistic faith in science as a dangerous form of materialism, “leading ironically not to optimism about the future but instead to the cynicism and despair.” His resistance to these cultural currents is what makes up his critique of “the modern”. As just demonstrated, Chesterton gives the reader a list of aspects, and the reader comprehends “modern”, piece by piece, linking together signifiers, as explained in chapter two. The concepts “heretical” and “orthodox” strength are understood in the same way. The reader recognises them as nodal points within a discourse, understanding them by identifying signifiers in chains of equivalence.

In this chapter, I will focus on the clash of heresy and orthodoxy in Mr. Bernard Shaw with perspectives from discourse analysis. As I have argued in my rhetorical and cognitive analysis in chapter three, Chesterton constructs meaning and confronts ideologies with each other through a narrative structure with image schemas. Discourse analysis is helpful when looking at ideological struggles, and together with rhetoric and cognitive theory it provides a framework to examine how Chesterton persuades by constructing patterns on both the aesthetic and ideological level. By analysing the language Chesterton utilises when constructing image schemas, I unpack the concepts showing which chains of equivalence they contain, and how these nodal points are connected to the concept of strength.

Strength is a polysemic concept in Chesterton's essay. As explained in chapter two, strength is an element and floating signifier, changing meaning according to context. In his essay Chesterton demonstrates that different discourses are struggling for power of definition over the concept of strength, and that it changes meaning when put into a heretical or orthodox context.

Chesterton wants to destabilise the modern discourse, recreating space for the Christian discourse and convincing his reader to prefer the orthodox concept of strength, instead of heretical strength. I argue in this chapter that Chesterton attempts to convince his reader through a complexly constructed ethos.

168 Blackstock, The Rhetoric of Redemption, p. 61
169 Blackstock, The Rhetoric of Redemption, p. 25-26
170 Blackstock, The Rhetoric of Redemption, p. 25
4.1 Orthodox Strength and Christian Discourse

In *Mr. Bernard Shaw* Chesterton juxtaposes the heretical, proud and brutal form of strength with what is according to him a pragmatic, Christian strength based on weakness and humility. Speaking in paradox and parable is already an essential part of Christian discourse from the Gospels onward. The orthodox concept of strength is not just derived from a general use of paradox but is itself used in early Christianity. Through the cross the wisdom of God is understood as a mystery, the reversing of weakness into strength, death into life.\(^{171}\) Inversions in the New Testament, for example the sermon on the Mount, inspired use of paradox and reversals as an essential aspect of Christian discourse in the Middle Ages.\(^{172}\) As mentioned in chapter three, this has the same basis in Christian tradition as for Chesterton, a notion that language has a limited ability to utter philosophical truths precisely. Paradox provides an insight through intuition, not competing with rational thought but complimenting it. Within Christian discourse, the belief is that reason, given to human beings, is a tool to seek wisdom. Chesterton understood rational inquiry as a means to attain truth. He was positive towards a focus on dogma, and attempted to understand religious truths systematically and rationally, which became important within the Oxford movement, a reaction to the irrational aspects of the Victorian age.\(^{173}\) He did not see paradox as irrational, but beyond the rational. It was the modern relativists who were irrational, because they were just following trends and subjective notions. As explained in chapter three, Shaw's biggest offence is his relativistic morality.

In *Mr. H. G. Wells and the Giants*, the essay following that on Shaw, he continues to elaborate upon the concept of strength. The structure and style of the essay is very similar to that of *Mr. Bernard Shaw*, constructing his heretic as a hero before revealing his true nature. In the Shaw essay the paradox is that weakness leads to strength, whereas here humility takes a more explicit part of the unpacking of the concept of orthodox strength. Shaw is consistent in contrast to the problematic orators of modern politics, but in his consistency, he promotes a strength which is brutal. H. G. Wells on the other hand, is humble in contrast to the proud moderns. His heresy is materialism. He does not take into account the human soul, only material things.

Chesterton illustrates the fruitfulness of Wells’ humility by comparing his mental capacities to physical growth. “One can lie awake at night and hear him grow.”\(^{174}\) Wells' change of opinion is due to his personal development made possible by humility. Chesterton claims that Wells has gone from unconventional opinions to conventional opinions, moving closer to orthodoxy, because he is humble. He has advanced on a “solid road in a quite definable direction”, this proves his honesty.

\(^{171}\) Cameron, *The Rhetoric of Paradox*, p. 158-159  
\(^{173}\) Blackstock, *The Rhetoric of Redemption*, p. 88  
\(^{174}\) Chesterton, *Mr. H. G. Wells and the Giants*, p. 74
and that he is “no poseur.”\textsuperscript{175} The ideal of humility as strength is ingrained in Christian discourse. Caroline Walker Bynum discusses reversals of weakness and strength in the Middle Ages. In Christian, especially monastic writing, female weakness could be presented as an ideal, a sort of weakness that was humble and enduring.\textsuperscript{176}

This kind of strength, which I term orthodox strength, is a nodal point in both essays. Strength is here understood by identifying a chain of equivalence consisting of honesty, humility, sincerity, strength, courage and romance. It is also important that strength is useful, not just an accomplishment. Chesterton encourages the reader to follow tradition, and look for ideals of strength in common and popular stories which have lasted over time. He later made this point clear in \textit{Orthodoxy} stating that tradition is “democracy extended through time,”\textsuperscript{177} ensuring that humanity does not carry mere trends too far. This is one of the reasons he used fairy tales and myths as examples in his writing and why he alludes to Shaw not being a democrat because of his anti-traditional attitude. According to Chesterton Shaw is in reality supporting totalitarianism by moral relativism and progressivism,\textsuperscript{178} signifiers which interlink with the concept of heretical strength. Orthodox strength is democratic, in the sense that it is potentially achievable to all, unlike heretical strength which is relies on dominating others.

Strength through weakness and humility is associated with the underdog trope and bravery. The underdog is characterised by winning a battle, a fight, attaining social status or political power against all odds. One finds these narratives in Christian discourse as well, King David's fight against Goliath being the obvious example, but in the New Testament there is another figure, associated with some of the same ideals, but who is successful in a different way. In Corinthians, Paul says about the apostles: “We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are despised.”\textsuperscript{179} The idea of being fools for Christ, has been particularly central to Orthodox and Catholic tradition. Street performers, or, in modern terms Circus artists, as input space has long been used in order to explain the function of humility. Bernard of Clairvaux, who with St. Francis played an important role in emphasising Jesus' humanity in medieval spirituality,\textsuperscript{180} depicted his monks as playful jugglers, standing on their heads. The world judging them to be fools, humbling them, so God would see them as holy.\textsuperscript{181}

Chesterton uses the term explicitly when describing some of Charles Dickens' characters,
who were fools in the sense that they were humble, giving themselves away like a monk, a martyr or a lover: a foolishness which placed them above wisdom not below it. Chesterton's portrayal of the mob and the common man (the fighting, respectable drunk) in the conclusion of Mr. Bernard Shaw, has similarities to the holy fool. This figure held a permanent fascination for Chesterton and he himself was often likened a jester, playing with the “sense” aspect in nonsense. In Heretics he tries to demonstrate that funny is not the opposite of serious. Shallcross describes it as “buffoonery based upon moral elevation.” Similar to the underdog effect, the ridiculous monk can achieve the status of morally superior, but only if his ridiculousness is based on humility and because he loves and seeks God first, not his own personal success.

Chesterton argues for the effectiveness of humility by demonstrating the chivalrous nature of the crowd and the longevity of the Church. Humility, worship and weakness have throughout history made the Church strong. In the conclusion he brings in St. Peter which links together with his rebuke of Shaw's lack of worship of little things. In Chesterton's book on St. Francis he writes: “Any number of philosophies will repeat the platitudes of Christianity. But it is the ancient Church that can again startle the world with the paradoxes of Christianity. Ubi Petrus ibi Franciscus.” This means “Where Peter is, there is Francis”. Where the Church is (St. Peter is used as a symbol for the Church) worship motivated by humility is found.

In the two essays orthodox strength is aligned with weakness, lightness, playfulness, light, humility, a certain distancing from the self towards the community. The double nature of the crowd found in Mr. Bernard Shaw corresponds to Chesterton's conviction that humans have both a longing for good and an inherent sinful nature. Only by realising your own sinfulness or foolishness would you have a reason to seek something better than yourself. Humility has a transformative power and enables true community with God and with other people, and only through this community one can be strong. This is the motive behind Chesterton's belief in the common man and in democracy, and this is why Shaw's inhumanity, arrogance and state control are heretical. It destroys genuine community and true strength.

The problem with heresy is that it challenges the Church. If false doctrines are adapted it can make people abandon it, destroy it from the inside or create schism. Chesterton coins Shaw's heresy “the religion of the Superman,” where there is no room for a St. Peter or a St. Francis; his ideals are not only different from those of Christianity but in direct opposition to them.

182 Ker, The Catholic revival in English Literature, 1845-1961, p 83
183 Shallcross, Rethinking G. K. Chesterton and Literary Modernism, p. 62-63
184 Shallcross, Rethinking G. K. Chesterton and Literary Modernism, p. 61
185 Shallcross, Rethinking G. K. Chesterton and Literary Modernism, p. 63
187 Chesterton, Mr. Bernard Shaw, p. 67
4.2 The Problem with Heretical Strength

Shaw has in common with Chesterton's concept of orthodoxy a life-affirming optimism, over against the pessimism and hedonism of the present age.\textsuperscript{188} This makes him an antidote to the voices of aestheticism and decadence, who are portrayed as rich pessimists with good manners who care about art for art's sake, not fundamental truths.\textsuperscript{189} Nevertheless Shaw is a heretic. Humorously, Chesterton claims that the abiding religious persuasions are limited to Paganism, Catholicism and Puritanism.\textsuperscript{190} Shaw is a puritan, he has “a refusal to contemplate God or goodness with anything lighter or milder than the fierce concentration of the intellect.”\textsuperscript{191} He has no ability “to value or understand tradition” and shares the same intellectual weakness as Nietzsche, namely, the notion that a strong and great man would despise the small and the weak.\textsuperscript{192} He rejects according to Chesterton some very good things in life such as tradition, meat and beer (Shaw was vegetarian and a teetotaller). Shaw’s belief in the Superman is connected to the puritan tendency to “keep the soul at its highest pressure and speed”\textsuperscript{193} an overly intellectual way of contemplating God, rejecting all other ways to enlightenment, such as worshipping his feet, drinking and dancing.\textsuperscript{194} Chesterton tries to show how the Christian dogmas are not arbitrary nor authoritarian, but grounded on experience. Dogmas are not snobbish or elitist, but a communal tradition, like parties. Here he plays with the impression people might have of the Church as a serious institution and that dogmas are to be found in dusty books. He tries to make Christianity itself into “the ordinary man”, vibrantly alive and in Chesterton's description it takes on the role as underdog and protector of common customs.

Heretical strength is rationalistic, which would not be a problem if reality were reducible to mere science, but Chesterton tries to show, by exploring the consequences of heretical strength, that reality is more than scientific facts. Just as with Chesterton's orthodoxy, strength plays a central role to understand the religion of the Superman. In \textit{Mr. Bernard Shaw} Chesterton has created a dichotomy between the religions, basically demonstrating the bad consequences of heretical strength and the good consequences of orthodox strength. He attempts to persuade his reader by giving characteristics, and in order not to seem moralistic or judgemental and harm his ethos, he allows the reader to discover the dark side of the Superman step by step within the narrative. The chain of equivalence describing heretical strength contains distance, coldness, arrogance, brutality, totalitarianism, elitism, force, suppression and violence toward the weak, rationalism, egoism,
progressivism and inhumanity. It is a strength which results in death of the many and domination by the few. Several of these elements are biblical portrayal of evil. What Chesterton is really doing is not unveiling a brand new heresy but demonstrating that this heresy has always existed as a temptation and as a means to destruction and sin.

Just as Chesterton links orthodox strength with humility in the essay on H. G. Wells, heretical strength is linked to pride and materialism. Like Shaw, Wells is indifferent to human psychology. The most obvious fact about humans, according to Chesterton, is original sin,\(^{195}\) selfishness is a permanent possibility because of the self, not because of bad education or ill-treatment. He develops the theory of Wells’ inhumanity further by arguing against the total worldwide Utopia. Total agreement, control and order, is not something Chesterton recognises as good or realistic, but only possible when brutally enforced, if we did have a world state, people would try to make war upon it.\(^{196}\) This description is associated with and elaborates on Shaw’s iron rule. By repeating image schemas already demonstrated, and bringing new elements into them, he persuades his reader by showing the generality of his claim. Chesterton argues for a world with differentiation, he does not say rebellion is a good thing, just that it will happen: “The highest thing does not tend to union only; the highest thing tends also to differentiation,”\(^{197}\) and cites the Trinity as an example of this. The heretical concept of strength assumes that people are compliant and submissive to force, a prerequisite to a homogenised Utopia. This adds another characteristic to the chain of equivalence connected to heresy and modernity, control over the mob is idealised and necessary for the common good. As mentioned, Chesterton was critical towards collectivism, judging it to be inhuman and unsustainable because it was not based on reality but on forcing onto the crowd unrealistic ideals.\(^{198}\)

In *Mr. Bernard Shaw* the embodiment of heretical strength is the Superman, while in the Wells essay, Chesterton shows how the Superman is similar to giants. Heretical strength is built on the premise that you have to be strong to be brave, whereas according to Chesterton’s concept of strength, you have to be weak to be brave, and only the brave can be trusted to be strong.\(^{199}\) Chesterton reminds the reader that in the old stories giants were vermin.\(^{200}\) They were tyrants or monsters to overcome. If, however, as mentioned in chapter three, the Superman really is a better version of man than most men, how is the Superman different from a Saint?\(^{201}\) Implicitly he is asking why create a new religion, and if the Superman is merely a rebranded giant, the mob would be forced to choose between suppression or rebellion.

\(^{195}\) See Chesterton, *Mr. H. G. Wells and the Giants*, p. 77
\(^{196}\) Chesterton, *Mr. H. G. Wells and the Giants*, p. 77
\(^{197}\) Chesterton, *Mr. H. G. Wells and the Giants*, p. 78
\(^{199}\) Chesterton, *Mr. H. G. Wells and the Giants*, p. 81
\(^{200}\) Chesterton, *Mr. H. G. Wells and the Giants*, p. 80
\(^{201}\) Chesterton, *Mr. H. G. Wells and the Giants*, p. 81
4.3 Ethos: The Blunt Man, Prophet, Preacher, Detective and Fool

As we need a heuristic understanding of Chesterton's concept of modern, strength, heretical and orthodox, it is useful to analyse Chesterton's own role in his essay that way. He skilfully employs the art of rhetoric not as an end but a means, he wants to “alert the reader to the presence or absence of truth.”

Chesterton first creates ethos by appearing humble, his perspective, both on his heretic and the mob (a metaphor for humanity), is generous and gives a positive impression of his moral character and attitude towards his reader. With humour, irony and parable he demonstrates his literary skills and by showing the generality in his claim through image schemas creates ethos by demonstrating competence. These techniques has been important in rhetoric since antiquity.

He attempts to establish himself as a speaker of truth through a complex process whereby he both shares the perspective of his fellow “common reader” but contributes with what appears to be novel and idiosyncratic insights. First he portrays Shaw as a truth teller, but in the process of unveiling the concept of strength he takes on that role himself. He claims to see through modern society with an apocalyptic gaze befitting a prophet, and communicates this through parable and revelation, letting the reader participate in the process of unmasking the modern world by false enthymemes, resulting in a moment of realisation. Writing in this style, he emerges not only as prophet but has similarities to a crime writer or detective. He uses reversals to create an element of surprise, they create and break expectation. He startles and entertains his reader and persuades by evoking emotion and engaging narratives. In chapter three I have discussed how he constructs, deceives, unveils and surprises to create suspense by meeting and breaking the readers expectation. Michael Shallcross calls Chesterton's style rhetorical burlesque, he is constantly revealing or costuming, producing a “curiously equivocal striptease.” To be perceived as authentic and believable is often achieved through anecdotes and stories. The writer of a mystery novel is seldom mistrusted, the reader expects to have been given the right solution at the end of the story. Chesterton's style also has similarities to a sermon, he becomes a preacher by showing the reader the real consequences of heresy through a thought-provoking narrative, summed up by a sweeping statement about the Church.

Chesterton takes on another role which lends him a very effective rhetorical device; he employs humour combined with the underdog role. By using chivalrous irony and having a humble
and admiring attitude towards his heretic, he establishes ethos and creates a parody of Shaw without seeming malicious. Shallcross argues that Chesterton's relationship with Shaw resembles Max Beerbohm's relationship with Oscar Wilde, making caricatures of Wilde that both build him up and knock him down. He is fascinated by his heretic and emphaizes his humanity. He starts out defending Shaw by comparing him to modern politicians who are manipulating actors. Shaw, at least, is interested in fundamental, philosophical ideals. This attitude is compelling and gives the reader sympathy not just for Shaw, but also for Chesterton. His chivalrous parody of Shaw appears to be based on an admiration for Shaw and thereby based on humility because he puts himself in a position where he looks up to him. When Chesterton goes on to criticise Shaw, his ethos based on this attitude will follow, making Chesterton appear honest and trustworthy.

Chesterton identifies with the mob both by defending popular tastes and defending the virtue of the mob itself. This ethos has been established in earlier writings as well. Before publishing Heretics he wrote a collection defending popular forms of literature and other undervalued things like slang and skeletons. He was drawn to the idea of democracy, comradeship and shedding light on so called “low subjects”. This ethos Michael Shallcross claims is derived from his interest in Walt Whitman and Samuel Johnson. Chesterton said he was “more inclined to believe the ruck of hard-working people… I prefer even the fancies of and prejudice of the people who see life from the inside to the clearest demonstration of the people who see life from the outside.” In this context he refers to the literary class which he is conscious of belonging, trying to distance himself from the cultural elite and rather be the representative of the common man.

Chesterton is a humble prophet, taking upon himself the role as holy fool. As explained earlier in this chapter, this was a figure Chesterton admired and something he did himself through inversions, turning reality on its head, orchestrating himself as an acrobat or a ridiculous monk by speaking in paradoxes and jokes. He appeals to the basic instincts of the crowd wanting to be a leader figure by entertaining them, drawing their attention. Or as Paul put it, “becoming a spectacle to angels and men.”

Chesterton is part of the modern world he is criticising, as well as reacting to it, and his use of paradox is an example of this. In a review from 1905 he is portrayed as belonging to the school of the “ultra-decadents”, a sarcastic remark because of Chesterton's critique of the decadents. The reviewer recognised the same excitement for beauty, just as Oscar Wilde he worshiped splendour,

208 Shallcross, Rethinking G. K. Chesterton and Literary Modernism, p. 60-62
209 Shallcross, Rethinking G. K. Chesterton and Literary Modernism, p. 64
210 Shallcross, Rethinking G. K. Chesterton and Literary Modernism, p. 56-57
211 Chesterton, Orthodoxy, p. 251-2
212 Cited in Engh, Gendered Identities in Bernard of Clairvaux's Sermons on the Song of Songs, p. 266
but included the normal and the lowly as well. Chesterton worships everyday life, the small and the ordinary, as well as the extraordinary. Like St. Francis he gave much attention to the small things, putting everyday items in a new setting through language, making the reader notice splendour in everyday life. Hurly says about Chesterton's essays: “The virtue of surprise is pragmatic without being purely aesthetic: it connects with his mystical ambition – which is also a hardheaded political ambition – to show the world in its true strangeness, for its ugliness and its beauty.” Chesterton does this on many levels, as I have previously noted, he refers to well-known stories. This creates a suspension based on familiarity and certainty rather than lack of it, by hearing a well-known story evokes emotion in the reader and reminds them of their own personal experience. When we recognise a pattern it creates excitement because we already think we know what he is about to tell us. He does try to persuade mostly through emotion and aesthetic intuition.

Blackstock identifies Chesterton's criticism as being impressionistic, romantic expressionistic and pragmatic.

Chesterton's essay bears resemblance to what Francis-Noël Thomas and Mark Turner call classical style: it addresses “an intelligent but nonspecialist reader,” thinking it possible to present a significant conclusion to a general audience clearly and simply. Hard questions are presented as if their answers were inevitable and are written in eye-catching style, described as “a sparkling display.” The writer does not persuade by argument but presents to the reader his perspective as it were natural and trivial. The classical writer is to be judged according to what he says, not his social position; his motive appears not to be personal gain but presenting truth as a common benefit. Even though there are similarities between Chesterton and classical style there are also differences. Chesterton's ideal is not aristocratic, he thinks that truth can be perceived through the unrefined. Although truth is not a common property amongst everyone, it can be comprehended through common sense according to Chesterton. Truth is not distant from everyday life and human experience. In classical style people have potential and can with discipline and effort achieve it.

Chesterton writes from a Christian perspective where achieving potential is not see as an accomplishment, but a gift from God, complexly interlocked with discipline and a selfless

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214 Hurley, G. K. Chesterton, p. 56
215 Tobin, Elements of Surprise, p. 40
216 Blackstock, The Rhetoric of Redemption, p. 35
218 Thomas and Turner, Clear and simple as the Truth, p. 16
219 Thomas and Turner, Clear and simple as the Truth, p. 28
220 Thomas and Turner, Clear and simple as the Truth, p. 31
221 Thomas and Turner, Clear and simple as the Truth, p. 16-17
222 Thomas and Turner, Clear and simple as the Truth, p. 45
devotion motivated by love, not to attain success.

4.4 Deception is the Best Form of Defence

From Mr. Bernard Shaw we remember that it is an advantage if your opponent does not know your battle plan. I have argued that Chesterton implements his own advice by persuading through false enthymemes and taking the role of detective. The last point I will argue in this thesis is that Chesterton is, by defending Shaw, in reality defending himself. He constructs himself as Shaw's antithesis (at the same time as showing resemblance to him). In Mr. Bernard Shaw, just as in their personal relationship and in their public debates, he demonstrates “a complex interplay of similarity and difference.” That he is arguing on behalf of his own ethos is never addressed directly, but it is nevertheless a result of how he defends Shaw's credibility in the beginning of the essay.

Misinterpretation is a central theme in Mr. Bernard Shaw, and Chesterton knew what it was like to be misunderstood. Paradoxes were attributed to him which he did not see as paradoxes and witticisms, but as a serious judgement. His critics accused him of rambling and talking nonsense, and his literary style was met with appreciation but also scepticism. A main point in Chesterton's essay is that Shaw is not a mere acrobat, he might be entertaining, but he is also consistent, employing rhetoric based on principles and not by whim. When he argues against Shaw being a mere charming orator, entertaining the audience with paradox and making reality stand on its head, it functions to improve his own ethos and to build his character outside of the text. Chesterton argues that he does not change his principles according to occasion, but that, like Shaw in the parable about the man calling white wine yellow, he reasons from a fundamental ideal. Because this is an important point there is also another parable with the same schema. Here Shaw is a skilful swordsman, he attacks so fast that people believe he has ten swords, but in really he is just aiming very straight with one. Chesterton demonstrates that just because someone perceives you as an orator, does not mean you are one. A juggler and jester can also be right.

More importantly this defence also affects the image of the Church and the Christian discourse. I have previously mentioned how Chesterton attempts to put the Church in an underdog position to strengthen its ethos, he also wants to address that the reason for a negative attitude towards the Church is that Christianity also might be misunderstood. Chesterton tries to demonstrate how the Church inhabits the values and experiences which is necessary to survive as a good community. In Orthodoxy Chesterton sums up several points from Heretics. He speaks about

223 Shallcross, Rethinking G. K. Chesterton and Literary Modernism, p. 61
224 Hetzler, The early literary career of G. K. Chesterton, p. 371-372
225 Hetzler,The early literary career of G. K. Chesterton, p. 109-111
226 Chesterton, Mr. Bernard Shaw, p. 66

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orthodoxy as a thrilling romance, not safe or rigid as it might seem from an outsider's perspective. He explains changes within the Church as physical movements, swerving left and right to avoid obstacles. Just as Shaw as swordsman can be perceived as having several swords, it can also be the case that he has one very good one and is an excellent fighter. It is this kind of continuity and consistency he recognises as trait of the Church. Not truth as simple, totalitarian and towering, but complex, underlying, omnipresent and chaotic. The essay is an attempt at demonstrating the moral superiority of Christianity over the modern heretic.

227 Chesterton, Orthodoxy, p. 305
Conclusion

In this thesis I have drawn on blending theory and rhetoric, to analyse how Chesterton constructs contending concepts of strength in the essay Mr. Bernard Shaw, to oppose what he refers to as the religion of the Superman, promoted by Shaw. Chesterton employs analogies, parable and paradox: image schemas which show a repeating pattern and which convince by demonstrating the generality of the function of strength. Commonplace input spaces are blended in his parables, independently they often have a one-sided interpretation, integrated with each other and the overall structure of the essay, they create new emergent meaning. His literary narrative evokes interest and intuition. He attempts to charm and entertain his reader by using chivalrous irony, humour, witticisms and utilises visual imagery. He uses idiosyncratic statements and sometimes fantastical parables to hold the reader's attention. Chesterton employs surprise as a central rhetorical device by breaking with the reader's expectation; he startles and alerts his audience thereby making them re-evaluate their own preconceptions. By creating false enthymemes (which he later revokes), he guides his reader in the wrong direction before he takes it upon himself to explain the real situation, and surprises his reader by revealing “the real truth”. Chesterton tries to get the reader to realise by themselves the true nature of the heretical concept of strength, before he reveals an alternative orthodox concept of strength which he portrays as more desirable. This makes his conclusion appear natural and necessary. – It is almost as if he tries to lead the reader to an epiphany.

The concept of strength is essential to understand Mr. Bernard Shaw's polemic role. Chesterton's narrative revolves around presenting a heretical concept of strength and an orthodox one, drawing on Christian, especially medieval, Christian discourse. His essay is motivated by an ideological and religious mission to destabilise the modern discourse and demonstrate the importance and relevance of Christianity. Chesterton constructs the concept of strength in a heuristic manner, giving the reader examples of heretical strength and orthodox strength, thus an understanding of what they entail, rather than giving definitions. By using perspectives from discourse analysis, I have been able to identify which chains of equivalence Chesterton constructs within his essay in regards to strength. In his narratives, he introduces their characteristics and demonstrates the difference between orthodox and heretical strength by looking at their function and consequences. He tries to persuade his reader by both showing their underlying principles and ultimate goals. He creates a struggle between ideologies by contrasting heretical and orthodox strength. Heretical strength is aligned with: pride, selfishness, and brutality; it is materialistic, mechanical, totalitarian, unconventional, dominating and relativistic when it comes to morality. It supports prioritising progress over human beings, it fosters an impossible ideal and implies that to
be strong is to be more powerful than others. It is concerned with social status, arrogance, it is
distant, cold and is associated with iron and hardness. It is puritanical, pessimistic, decadent,
rationalistic, intellectual, homogenised, elitist, suppressive, tyrannical and Utopian. It defends
egoism, control, giants, Nietzsche's Superman, monsters, and is indifferent to human psychology.
Chesterton points implicitly to socialism and other popular ideologies he is worried will misguide
people and take the place of religion. By portraying heretical strength as the evil tyrant of fairy
tales, apparently revealing the true nature and real consequence of Shaw's ideology, he tries to
prompt his reader to oppose this ancient threat when presented to it in contemporary literature and
politics.

In his construction of Orthodox strength he draws on Christian discourse. This is not obvious
at first because Chesterton always addresses “the common man” and his ideals are presented as
common ideals. The chain of equivalence connected to orthodox strength is humility, weakness,
selflessness, and gratefulness. This humble attitude makes a person amazed by everyday life and
fast to worship also small things. Orthodox strength is democratic, constructive, conventional,
common, honest, sincere and courageous. It ensures longevity, stability and fairness. It is associated
with romance and is potentially achievable for all. To be strong is to recognise your own weakness;
it is at the heart of the tropes of the underdog and the holy fool – tropes that Chesterton uses
extensively, albeit implicitly and indirectly. This concept of strength is dependent on love, chivalry
and optimism. It is based on paradoxical inversions and common experience. It is connected to a
concept of the traditional, to Jesus, Christianity, the Church, the cross and the Saints and to rebelling
against unjust tyrants. This construct of orthodox strength is also deeply connected to the way
Chesterton attempts to persuade his reader. The rhetorical devices he uses, which are connected to
humility and chivalry, are compatible to the ideology he promotes which is understood as part of the
concept of strength itself. This is essential to his demonstration of the effectiveness and utility of
humility and orthodox strength.

His essay, I argue, carries influences from different genres. The use of paradox was popular in
essays amongst his contemporaries, but it seems that he employed paradox in a way which was
unique to his style. His use if paradoxes and inversions draw on Christian discourse and has a long
tradition as part of religious rhetoric. The structure of his text bears resemblance to scholastic
dialectic because he starts out by presenting his opponent and reacting to his propositions.
Chesterton creates ethos by defending his heretic against accusations of mere oratory. He attempts
to gain the reader's trust by employing an attitude of humility towards his subject matter, an attitude
which is intimately linked to demonstrating the effectiveness of humility. As mentioned, he uses
analogies and parables as in a sermon and in religious writing, appealing to emotion and personal
experience. In his narrative he unveils his main point piece by piece as in a crime novel, giving false interpretations of clues and revealing the solution only at the end of his essay. Chesterton is narrator, detective, prophet and performer, employing that first trick of rhetoric on several levels through being an underdog and holy fool. He himself performs “the common man” only talking “common sense” to appeal to the sympathy of the reader. By his many references he also seems to have given this matter a great deal of thought, and the reader gets the impression that he is presenting a thorough analysis of strength. He demonstrates competence by his reflections and his literary talent. He draws on Christian traditions and is inspired by religious dogmas; his essay is an attempt to destabilise the modern discourse and demonstrates the need for opposing heretics. In my thesis I have not tried to turn him into a systematic philosopher, but rather demonstrating the depth and coherence in his essay, despite its humorous and chaotic style. I have been interested in analysing what he is doing in his essay and why.

Even though his style is quite literary and indirect there is no doubt what his message is, namely, that the right, but also useful concept of strength is to be found within Christian philosophy. The effect of his style seems to be that the reader either accept this conclusion and are amazed by his literary skills, or the reader does not, and perceive him as a silly orator. This is why I argue that Chesterton's defence of Shaw really is a defence of himself. His ethos is not only dependent upon the effect of the underdog trope and of literary entertainment, but upon the reader recognising the underlying principles in his arguments. Not all paradoxes are mere witticisms, Chesterton tries to demonstrate that paradox are not inconstancies but describe a complex reality. You can be funny and right at the same time. Chesterton's defence of Shaw is a defence of himself and it is also a defence of the Church. He tries to destabilise the modern discourse by presenting Christian philosophy in a new way, attempting to get the reader to see the message of traditional values in a new light and understand it's relevance. In Mr. Bernard Shaw the Church itself is the underdog trying to protect the common man against tyrannical Supermen and giants.
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