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THE CYCLE OF NIGHT AND DAY
IN *THE BALL AND THE CROSS* BY G. K. CHESTERTON

Maisie Ward, G. K. Chesterton's first biographer and friend, in her outstanding biography of the writer, quotes the words he put in his Notebook: "There are three things that make me think; / things beyond all poetry: / A yellow space or rift in evening sky: / A chimney or pinnacle high in the air; / And a path over a hill" (214). Although Ward refers to this note in the general context of Chesterton's imaginative skills, illustrating it with references to two short images of the sky taken from *The Ball and the Cross* (BC), it is truly remarkable how accurately this note applies to the whole world presented in the novel. In fact, all these three elements—the sky above, a pinnacle (also above) and a track across—form the spatial layout on which the plot is presented and within which meanings can be uncovered. There is, however, one more frame that seems to be even more fundamental than the one mentioned above: the cycle of night and day, which essentially sets the scene for the events described. The objectives of the article are to investigate the night and day pattern present in Chesterton's *The Ball and the Cross* and examine its significance.

The notion of cyclical time is often contrasted with the understanding of time as a linear phenomenon. The former, entailing the idea of "constant dying and then renewing" ("stałe obumieranie, a następnie odtwarzanie"; Lurker 161, my translation) is associated with ancient cultures, whereas the latter is related to the Judeo-Christian tradition (161). It is worth noting, however, especially when discussing Chesterton's novel having a Christian context, that the motif of cyclical time permeates biblical texts, as "[f]rom start to finish, the Bible measures time in terms of recurrence and repetition. That is, in fact, one of the prime biblical images for human and divine order, pattern and design" ("Time" 870). The ubiquitous presence of natural cycles of time in the Bible conveys the

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idea that “the great spiritual issues are resolved in the earthly flow of things” (“Time” 871). In the case of *The Ball and the Cross*, exploring the importance of the night and day cycle can provide additional contexts for interpretation, expose, or even reveal, the meaning of some scenes and help the reader to better understand the novel.

The Ball and the Cross was published in 1910¹ and belongs to the early stage of Chesterton’s writing. It tells the story of a never-ending duel between two Scotsmen: MacIan, who is a Highlander, monarchist and a Catholic believer, and Turnbull, a Lowlander, socialist and an ardent atheist. The duel is initiated by MacIan when in a shop window he sees an article which comes from *The Atheist*, edited by Turnbull, and which he perceives as blasphemous. In fact, both protagonists follow their respective values fervently, or rather fanatically, which is the reason why they are so persistent in continuing their fight. Indeed, they have to be really determined to do so, as everybody they come across who tries to interrupt them does not succeed. At the end of the novel, it turns out that while endeavouring to fight, they have gone through so many adventures that they have actually befriended each other. The plot also introduces two other characters featuring at the background of MacIan and Turnbull’s conflict, reflecting it at the same time: the old Bulgarian monk Michael, who stands for the religious and supernatural aspect, and Lucifer representing the scientific dimension. These characters appear both at the beginning of the story and in its final part.

It is interesting that when Chesterton worked on *The Ball and the Cross*, he was not yet a Catholic. As a matter of fact, he entered the Church only twelve years later, after the novel was published. As Maisie Ward writes, however, the question of potential conversion must have been a vital one at the time the novel came out, as when asked at that time if he was considering becoming a Catholic, the writer was to answer that “[i]t’s a matter that is giving me a great deal of agony of mind” (Ward 242). The critics also point to yet another issue that stands behind the novel: Chesterton and Blatchford’s polemics.² In general, it seems that *The Ball and the Cross* both records Chesterton’s inner questions

¹ It is worth noting that the novel started to be serialised in 1905 and 1906 in *The Commonwealth* magazine. The project was not completed, however, until the novel came out in book form in London in 1910 (Oddie 297). The New York book form edition comes from 1909 (Conlon 420). Ian Boyd notices that, although both novels are independent, *The Ball and the Cross* “directly” refers to Chesterton’s earlier work *The Napoleon of Notting Hill* (1904) (22). Benson comments that *The Ball and the Cross* should be read in the context of *Orthodoxy* written by Chesterton in 1908 (15). William Oddie suggests that it can be read along with *Heretics* (297–98).

² For details, see Gardener 38.

he might have struggled with (and also his convictions) before his full conversion and reflects the disputes he was carrying on with his opponents.

On a formal note, the critics classify the novel in different ways. William Blissett, for instance, calls *The Ball and the Cross* “an allegorical romance that is also what might be called a theological farce” (31); Martin Gardner, similarly, depicts the novel as “a mixture of fantasy, farce, and theology” (37). John Coates enumerates “[p]hilosophical novel,” “novel of ideas” or “religious novel” as the terms potentially appropriate when describing the work in question (49). Coates also interestingly records that Chesterton’s contemporary critics had a serious difficulty with approaching the work as literature, accusing it of being “‘literary order—or disorder’ ... outside the rules” (Robert Lynd qtd. in Coates 49) and refusing “to test this book by the canons of the novel” (James Douglas qtd. in Coates 49). Additionally, Coates locates *The Ball and the Cross* within H. G. Wells’ idea of the novel, in contrast to Henry James’ rival concept of it.³ What might also be worth noting here is the fact that Chesterton preferred to think of himself as a journalist rather than a novelist, as in the *Autobiography* (A) he admits: “I could not be a novelist; because I really like to see ideas or notions wrestling naked, as it were, and not dressed up in a masquerade as men and women” (A 277).⁴

Regardless of any controversies the novel brought about at Chesterton’s time and of his low opinion of himself as a novelist, the author undoubtedly managed to “dress up” his ideas in *The Ball and the Cross* in the form of the characters and the world there presented. William Oddie, discussing the novel in the context of Chesterton’s development, remarks that “[t]he novel form ... permitted Chesterton the exploration of certain non-polemical and imaginative themes, themes which can be seen to reveal important aspects of his spiritual world at this period of his life; and in anything but a novel, it is doubtful that they would have been explored, in any literary sense, at all” (299). This certainly applies not only to novels, but to Chesterton’s short stories as well, to mention just the Father Brown stories. Besides, in all his non-fictional writings, the author proves his imaginative abilities, which is frequently commented on (e.g. Ward 214).

³ For an interesting overview of Wells’ and James’ opposing views on the matter, with references to Chesterton’s position, see Coates 51–56.

⁴ This conviction of Chesterton about himself as a writer is also referred to by William Oddie in *Chesterton and the Romance of Orthodoxy* when he discusses *The Ball and the Cross* (298).

In his writings, Chesterton employs the light and darkness theme, part of which is the night and day cycle, to a great extent.⁵ In *Orthodoxy (O)*, for instance, this cycle appears in the image of God's order He tirelessly gives to the sun and to the moon every day (*O* 263–64; Benson 20; Szymczak-Kordulasińska, *In Search* 122). In the case of the Father Brown stories, twilight and nocturnal settings serve many purposes, as they can introduce the theatrical (Szymczak-Kordulasińska, *In Search* 132), connote corrupted human nature (138) or form the background for spiritual meanings (144). Similarly, the evening and night scenes in *The Ball and the Cross* seem to be infused with deep, even mystical, senses, but the day time settings play some roles too. The references to the night and day time are so omnipresent and predominant in the novel that this cyclicity can be treated as the main, “fundamental” frame for the events.

The first evening scene⁶ which opens *The Ball and the Cross* and sets the background for the upcoming events is Professor Lucifer and the monk Michael's conversation in the former's airship when they are flying above London.⁷ The discussion comes down to the two shapes they see on St Paul's Cathedral: Is it the ball or the cross that is more valuable and enduring? Not surprisingly, the professor prefers the ball, which he calls “the only symbol.... So fat. So satisfied” (*BC* 41), in contrast to the cross that, in his words, is a “scraggy individual, stretching his arms in stark weariness” (*BC* 41). The monk obviously defends the cross, which for him represents the idea of “contradiction” (*BC* 42) and thus perfectly embraces human nature.

This evening scene, however, condenses many other meanings than only those literally referring to the title of the novel. Though this scene is set in the evening, it is interesting that the professor's equipment from the flying ship is clearly visible. Admittedly, the colours seem to be limited only to silver, white and blue (*BC* 37), but the shapes of Lucifer's “tools” are perfectly recognisable as they

were the ancient human tools gone mad, grown into unrecognisable shapes, forgetful of their origin, forgetful of their names. That thing which looked like an enormous key with three wheels was really a patent and very deadly revolver. That object which seemed to be created by the entanglement of two corkscrews was really the key. The

⁵ A detailed analysis of the issue of light and darkness in Chesterton's Father Brown stories, opening with an outline of this motif throughout philosophy, world mythologies, biblical tradition and literature can be found in Szymczak-Kordulasińska, *In Search* 121–44. It is preceded with a short overview of the motif in Chesterton's works, including *The Ball and the Cross* (121–22).

⁶ The actual sequence of the scenes discussed in the article can be found in table 1.

⁷ In the context of the opening chapter “A discussion somewhat in the air,” Coates mentions H. G. Wells' *The War in the Air* (59).

thing which might have been mistaken for a tricycle turned upside down was the inexpressibly important instrument to which the corkscrew was the key. All these things, as I say, the professor had invented; he had invented everything in the flying ship, with the exception, perhaps, of himself. (*BC* 37)

What is characteristic in the image of the tools is their “fantastic and distorted look which belongs to the miracles of science” (*BC* 37). It may be said that the tools lost their memory; they are unnatural and weird. This forms a striking contrast to the image of the monk, who lives in “a little stone hut and a little stony garden in the Balkans,” in “a mountain hermitage in the society of wild animals” (*BC* 38).⁸ It is significant that his occupation is “to detect ... fallacy” (*BC* 38), which in its nature has something distorted and inaccurate, just as the professor’s tools. What is more, the monk deals with “heresies” that have the characteristic that “nobody in the modern world was intellectual enough even to understand their argument” (*BC* 38), which suggests that he retains an intimate link with the past.⁹ This is also contrasted with the broken connection of Lucifer’s tools between their original purpose (their past) and how they serve now. It is most remarkable that the professor, so excited by the perfect shape of the ball, owns (and creates) tools so distorted, and the monk, supporting the complicated shape of the cross, delights in the simple and natural.

The evening scene exposes yet another aspect that also reoccurs in the second important evening and night setting: the movement upwards and downwards.¹⁰ It is Lucifer who seizes Michael and takes him from the earth into the air. The movement initiated by the professor is upwards (he in fact invented the flying machine), which is strengthened by what he says, having thrown Michael out of the machine after some time: “‘Yes, yes. I mount! I mount!’ cried the [p]rofessor in ungovernable excitement. ‘Altiora peto [I seek the higher things]. My path is upward’” (*BC* 44).¹¹ The monk’s way is exactly the opposite; when he explains, still in the air, which place he wants to reach, he “point[s] downward at Ludgate Hill” and says “I am going ... to climb up into a star” (*BC* 45). Thus,

⁸ It is worth noting that a reference to animals appears later on in Michael’s concept of man’s nature: “I say man is a quadruped who only uses two of his legs” (*BC* 42) and reappears in the narration of the opening scene a few times. Michael seems to perceive the animalistic aspect of man’s nature as something natural and indispensable.

⁹ The professor proves that himself when he comments on Michael’s one “retort,” saying that it was “entertaining ... in the narrow and deductive manner of the Middle Ages” (*BC* 38). Chesterton’s fascination with the Middle Ages (and the figure of St Thomas Aquinas, who was also occupied with identifying fallacies) resonates here.

¹⁰ On the issue of a vertical movement (the upwards and downwards direction and the opposite) in one of the Father Brown stories and its context, see Szymczak-Kordulasińska, *In Search* 153.

¹¹ Coates also draws the reader’s attention to these words of Lucifer (Coates 67).

for Michael the way upwards goes downwards, which precisely mirrors the tenets of the religion he represents.

Michael's reversed perspective revealed in the evening scene has also an additional dimension. Intriguingly, this old monk, with "white hair" (*BC* 37) and "white beard" (*BC* 38), in the second part of the scene becomes like a child.¹² When left by the professor on the top of the cathedral, he manages to go inside the temple and meets a man, probably a guard, who escorts him downstairs.¹³ The man, treating the monk as somebody mad, "suddenly [speaks] to him with a sort of eager and feverish amiability as if he were a child" (*BC* 48). It does not discourage Michael; on the contrary, when he finds himself in the street at last, "[h]e felt suddenly happy and suddenly indescribably small. He fancied he had been changed into a child again; his eyes sought the pavement seriously as children's do, as if it were a thing with which something satisfactory could be done" (*BC* 49). Finally, after everything he has just experienced, he is called, "perhaps, the happiest of all the children of men" (*BC* 50).¹⁴ The idea of becoming like a child as an indispensable value, characteristic of the mindset embodied by the monk, finds its full representation in the frame of the night scenery.¹⁵

Other evening and night scenes whose importance is fundamental for reading the novel are the dreams which both MacIan and Turnbull dream in an asylum and which provide them with invaluable insights that will change their attitude towards the principles they follow and the way they approach each other. The first vision is MacIan's, who during a moonlit night sets out for an airship with an unknown "old man" (*BC* 201). When they come closer to "one region of the sky where the hollow of night seemed darkest and which was quite without stars" (*BC* 203), MacIan is confronted with the vision tailored

¹² On Gardner's interpretation of this issue, see his article "Levels of Allegory" (43). He understands the monk as the Catholic Church: both old and very young. Additionally, Gardner points to the fact that in the novel Michael is called a "thing," which is the word used by Chesterton as the title of his book devoted to the Church (Gardner 43).

¹³ It should be noted that in this scene, the monk experiences a kind of epiphany; after the moments of terror when he was hanging at the top of the cathedral alone, he meets a man who only guards the place, but who for Michael becomes the most desirable companion: "A moment before he had been dying alone. Now he was living in the same world with a man; an inexhaustible ecstasy. In the gallery below the ball Father Michael had found that man who is the noblest and most divine and most lovable of all men, better than all the saints, greater than all the heroes—man Friday" (*BC* 47–48). The man is called a "beautiful solid man" and "the image of God in nickel buttons" (*BC* 48). The manner of describing this character evokes the ideal of the common man so appreciated by Chesterton.

¹⁴ The fact that Michael ends up in an asylum does not deny his wisdom.

¹⁵ In his simplicity and quest for truth, Michael resembles the Father Brown character. Both characters are often associated with the childlike (on Father Brown's and Chesterton's St Thomas's childlike qualities, see Szymczak-Kordulasińska, *In Search* 62–63).

precisely according to his own values and principles: St Paul's cathedral is deprived of the ball; the cross on the temple is guarded by sentinels "in complete armour of steel or silver, each with a naked sword" (*BC* 203); order and discipline are restored in the streets. Only when MacIan observes an old man being hit, does he realise that in this world "[d]iscipline" is "more important than justice to an individual" (*BC* 204). At this point, MacIan discovers the cruelty of the presented world, the falsehood of his guide and the menace hidden in his own views.

Significantly, the MacIan character is explicitly connected with the night time, as at the beginning of the dream scene, it is stated that he "was in the habit of creeping out into the garden after dark—especially upon moonlight nights" (*BC* 199).¹⁶ What is more, the moon for MacIan is somehow associated with the childlike.¹⁷ It is worth noting that when MacIan is introduced at the beginning of the story, he is described as "a man walking on a borderland, the borderland between this world and another.... [H]e understood the supernatural before he understood the natural" (*BC* 54). He is even called "a mystic" (*BC* 144). All these associations seem to draw him closer to the character of Michael, who also stands for the mystical and the supernatural. As a matter of fact, MacIan, similarly to Michael, makes his way downwards from the flying ship, of which he "dropped out" (*BC* 205).

Turnbull's dream is set in the evening setting. Analogically, he is also taken for an airship trip by an unknown man. The sequence of the pictures he sees is very similar to MacIan's. Firstly, it turns out that the cross is no longer on St Paul's Cathedral. Then, Turnbull sees the world in which people are eliminated because they are useless. Turnbull opposes this insane vision and jumps out of the airship (*BC* 215). In this movement downwards, he involuntarily follows Michael and MacIan. Both dreams turn out to be such an outright confrontation with the falsehood of the opponents' own ideas that after experiencing them, "for the first time in all their acquaintance, they shook hands" (*BC* 216).

Apart from the deeply characteristic night and evening scenes, conveying the meanings essential for the novel, there is a series of events that happen during the morning and day time, which are particularly important in the context of

¹⁶ Ian Boyd also underlines the importance of moonlit nights for MacIan and their discolouring effect (23). The moon that discolours and the theatricality of nocturnal settings in the Father Brown stories are discussed in Szymczak-Kordulasińska, *In Search* 132–37; the fact that the writer liked these settings very much is worth mentioning (137).

¹⁷ In the context of this scene, there are a few references to the childlike, when, for instance, the moon is described: "a naked and nursery sort of thing. It hangs in the sky quite solid and quite silver and quite useless; it is one huge celestial snowball. It was at least some such infantile facts and fancies ..." (*BC* 199).

MacIan and Turnbull's bonding with each other and their relationship with the world around. It should be mentioned, however, that the protagonists' first unfortunate encounter takes place in the evening time and is a natural continuation of the professor and the monk's excursion in the air. Michael, having come down from the top of the cathedral, hears a window being broken and comes across MacIan (*BC* 50). Additionally, the act of choosing swords and the first duel of the ideological opponents take place in the evening as well (*BC* 64–67). These facts suggest that the act of initiating a duel can also be classified as a spiritual or even mystical undertaking, difficult to understand and accept by others.

It might be summarised that MacIan and Turnbull's relationship, when they are wandering across the country, significantly develops during the day time.¹⁸ The morning after they manage to escape the police, having attempted to fight for the first time, they are "sitting on one of the barren steeps" (*BC* 76), at some distance from London, and observing the city. They discuss the picture of London spreading in front of them, how their duel is presented in the press and a further plan for their inevitable fighting. Let us note that all these issues concern them both, as the picture ahead as well as the matters they debate are shared by them equally. This impression is further strengthened by the presence of provisions, which, along with other things, "were tossed about like the materials of an ordinary picnic, here a packet of chocolate, and there a bottle of wine" (*BC* 78). Turnbull also adds that he "[has] the biscuits and the tinned meat, and the milk" and makes sure that MacIan has the chocolate and brandy (*BC* 81). In the end, they cross their swords, and MacIan bursts out: "I must kill you now.... Because I have begun to like you" (*BC* 83).

The next morning scenery in the plot follows quite a similar scheme. Being invited by Morrice Wimpey, an enthusiast of fighting, they visit his garden with "tall, fresh country flowers" (*BC* 102) and Turnbull is described as having "an early breakfast" and "[coming] out into the sunlight, still munching toast" (*BC* 102). What they share in this situation is their discussion with Wimpey uncovering the falsehood of his ideas. They also smash the statue of Wimpey's god, and after they chase its worshipper, they have an experience whose importance for the characters' relationship is particularly profound: they start to laugh together, which is the thing that MacIan "[has] never practised" (*BC* 106). This sequence of shared adventures is topped up when they both agree to stop at the nearest inn for a beer (*BC* 108). It is also at daybreak that the opponents reach what they think is an island, take out their food from a boat and spend the next week "eating, drinking, smoking, talking, and occasionally singing"

¹⁸ There are some exceptions which will be commented on in the next part of the article.

(*BC* 172). More favourable conditions to forging a relationship could hardly be imagined.

Other characteristic morning settings are to be found in the second part of Turnbull and MacIan's escape and pursuit of good fighting conditions. These scenes, interestingly, are very sensuous, loaded with colours. For instance, at sunrise, when they reach the seashore, the sea is compared to "a pavement of emerald, bright and almost brittle," whereas the description of the sky refers to white, scarlet and red and evokes gold (*BC* 142–43). The wanderers are surrounded by birds with their sounds and other animals. As the narration asserts, "[b]oth the men, according to their several creeds, felt the full thunder of the psalm of life as they had never heard it before" (*BC* 143). Though the characters differ in their final reaction to another garden setting, they also witness a similar explosion of colours, including white, gold, emerald, blue, purple, crimson, ruby and red (*BC* 180). Understandably, the garden displays a wide range of flower species: rhododendrons, laburnum, roses, clematis and syringa.¹⁹

As mentioned above, the evening and night settings also appear during the characters' shared wandering and are as if naturally interwoven with the day and morning settings. For example, the sunset setting forms the background when they are fleeing the police and come across Wimpey's summer house. They are about to eat and are interrupted by the owner of the place. The night time is also mentioned when their boat "drifted almost aimlessly all night" (*BC* 147) and when at the end of their mutual escape, they sleep in the wood (*BC* 178). Although these events as well, to some extent, contribute to strengthening the duellists' bond with each other, their role in this matter seems to be rather less important than that of those happening during the morning and day time. Especially as the other, more developed, scenes framed in the evening and night setting—Turnbull and MacIan's talk to "the old man" (*BC* 114–15), MacIan's infatuation with the young lady from a car (*BC* 126–32) and Turnbull's lively conversation with his beloved (*BC* 162–66)—seem to belong to the mystical and spiritual order: the epiphany of the ordinary man²⁰ and the epiphany of love. And it is in this mystical order that the final scene should be placed too. The moments of Lucifer's escape from an asylum and Michael's walk through

¹⁹ The sensuous in this scene is not limited to visual sensations only. Earlier, it is said, Turnbull and MacIan throw away their shoes to be as silent as possible when trying to quit a constable. The silence of the "pursued" is juxtaposed with "pounding and panting" of the "pursuer" (*BC* 179).

²⁰ Let us only refer to "the old man's" words: "I say a man's a man; that's what I say. If a man a'n't a man, what is he? That's what I say, if a man a'n't a man, what is he? When I sees a man, I sez 'e's a man" (*BC* 115). The character of "the old man" definitely evokes the Chestertonian ideal mentioned before: the common man.

the flames are also set at night. Seeing Michael, both MacIan and Turnbull, along with their beloveds, kneel down, which can suggest that the opponents finally find a common perspective.

In fact, MacIan and Turnbull's fight can be perceived as subordinate to that of Michael and Lucifer (Boyd 34–35), and both conflicts expose a wide range of theological, philosophical and also political (Boyd 21) issues. The relations between faith and nature, religion and science (*BC* 190), religion and politics (Boyd 30) permeate the characters' disputes and appear in the discussions they have on, for example, free will, virtue or even the difference between bloodshed and murder. MacIan and Turnbull are also confronted with Tolstoian and Nietzschean ideas. It should be underlined, however, that at the basis of MacIan and Turnbull's ongoing duel lies the reluctance of society to allow them to enter into conflict and discuss their opposing ideas; when they do that, they are accused of being "[i]ncurable disturbers of the peace" (*BC* 135). The real danger, thus, is not the fact that they have contradictory opinions, but that they cannot fight for them freely. As a consequence, the country is changed into one, big asylum, in which only some are doctors and the rest become patients (*BC* 232). At the same time, "striking a balance between the supernatural and the natural values" (Boyd 38), which is precisely revealed in the evening and night scenes featuring Michael or MacIan and Turnbull dreaming, is at the core of the novel's meaning (Boyd 38).

It might be summarised that evening and night scenes in *The Ball and the Cross* follow the patterns rooted in universal human experience and, what is also significant, in the biblical and spiritual tradition. These scenes overtly connote the insightful and the transcendental.²¹ In this context, the concept of the dark night of the soul should also be referred to. MacIan and Turnbull definitely go through a process of "purging," "inner struggle" and "overcoming the affirmation of oneself as the centre"; the duellists also seem to reach the point of "inner integration" ("oczyszczenie," "walka wewnętrzna," "przewyciężenie afirmacji siebie jako centrum," "integracja wewnętrzna"; Urbański 582–83, my translation) and to open themselves to the transcendental (Turnbull) or the transcendental beyond their schematic thinking (MacIan).

Maisie Ward writes that for Chesterton "time seems to have had no existence, or perhaps rather to have been like a telescope elongating and shortening at will" (240). Interestingly enough, in his introduction to *The Ball and the Cross*, Iain T. Benson points to a similar issue in the novel, where "day blends into day

²¹ For example, *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* states that "[r]evelatory appearances from God to people at night are a biblical archetype" and that "[n]ight is also associated with dreams that have momentous significance for people" ("Night" 595).

and distances blur and scenes change without a very plausible continuity” (20). It is indeed true that Chesterton plays with time in his works, just as he plays with space.²² He definitely tampers with time when the old man (the monk Michael) is called a child, important characters are surnamed Durand²³ or when at the end of the story, the characters are required to deny their past facts (*BC* 252; Boyd 36). It could be argued, however, that though he does not tailor his fictional world according to the clock, he refers to a higher, because natural, order of the night and day cycle.²⁴ This cyclicity connotes a kind of completeness in the characters’ shared experience.

This natural cycle seems to be yet another example picturing Chesterton’s concept of “the reverse and integrity,” so ubiquitous in the author’s fictional and non-fictional writings.²⁵ When referring to *The Ball and the Cross*, commentators use the idea of “symmetry” (Blissett 32; Coates 50), different “parallels” (Hunter 62) or “the reverse” (Szymczak-Kordulasińska, “Koncepcja”), and the cycle of the day and night embodies all these notions, serving as a frame for the development of the characters.²⁶ The night time predominantly offers the characters access to the supernatural, and verifies and corrects their ideological and spiritual perception; the day phase, on the other hand, retains the usual and the everyday dimension. This is reflected in the movement upwards and downwards in the air (in the evening or at night) and horizontal across the earth (typical of the day). The evening and night are especially potent in new insights changing man’s inner perspective, and the day time creates space for bonding with others and appreciating ordinary things and the world around. The ongoing duel seems to be man’s everyday reality, but it is only part of one’s natural rhythm and development.

²² The issue of space in Chesterton’s fiction is also rich and very interesting but goes beyond the subject of this article.

²³ The surname Durand is most possibly not accidental either; it “originally derived from the Old French word *durant*, which means enduring” (“Durand History”) and evokes duration, an important aspect of time. At the end of the novel, the father takes on a significant role.

²⁴ At this point, it should be mentioned that in the novel the reader will find some more precise time references. For instance, Turnbull and MacIan sail for at least two weeks before they reach what they think is an island (*BC* 169). In his dream, Turnbull admits that he “[has] known him [MacIan] for a month” (*BC* 211).

²⁵ The issues of “the reverse” and “integrity,” recurring in Chesterton’s writings, are discussed by Szymczak-Kordulasińska in “Koncepcja odwrotności i integralności w myśli Gilberta Keitha Chestertona” to a greater extent.

²⁶ Coates remarks that “*The Ball and the Cross* is, in fact, a striking subtle and complex account of spiritual, intellectual, and emotional growth” (77).

Table 1. The actual sequence
of the evening/night and morning/day scenes referred to in the article.

Evening and night scenes	Morning and day scenes
Lucifer and Michael argue in the airship	
MacIan smashes Turnbull's shop window and initiates the conflict	
MacIan and Turnbull choose their swords and fight for the first time; the police start pursuing them	
	Having escaped the police, MacIan and Turnbull sit on a hill, observe London and have a long talk
	MacIan and Turnbull meet the peacemaker and oppose him
MacIan and Turnbull come across Wimpey's summer house	
	MacIan and Turnbull smash Wimpey's idol and unmask the falsehood of Wimpey's philosophy; they laugh together and go for a beer to a local inn
MacIan and Turnbull leave the inn and meet "the old man"	
MacIan and Turnbull help the young lady in a car; MacIan falls in love with her	
	MacIan and Turnbull come to the seashore
	After drifting all night in a boat, they reach the land
Turnbull reveals his feelings to Madeleine Durand	
	After sailing for at least two weeks, MacIan and Turnbull reach what they think is an island; they take out food from their boat
Having escaped the police, MacIan and Turnbull sleep in the wood	
	Being pursued, MacIan and Turnbull come across a beautiful garden which turns out to belong to an asylum
MacIan and Turnbull have their insightful dreams in the asylum	
Lucifer escapes from the asylum in his airship	
Michael walks through the flames and both MacIan and Turnbull kneel down on seeing this	

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THE CYCLE OF NIGHT AND DAY
IN *THE BALL AND THE CROSS* BY G. K. CHESTERTON

S u m m a r y

Part of Chesterton's imagery that he often employs in his writing is the motif of light and darkness, which in *The Ball and the Cross* takes the form of the cycle of night and day. This cycle dictates a specific rhythm, which rules over both the ongoing duel and other events. Thus, the evening and night time is rather reserved for considerable and profound insights, found in, for instance, the opening and closing scenes and in all the events that reflect or decide about the characters' spiritual growth. The day time seems to contribute more to the development of the protagonists' relationship with each other and the world around.

Keywords: G. K. Chesterton; night; day; cycle; time; inner growth.

CYKL NOCY I DNIA W *KULI I KRZYŻU* G. K. CHESTERTONA

S t r e s z c z e n i e

Pojawiający się często w metaforze Chestertona motyw światła i ciemności, w powieści *Kula i krzyż* przybiera formę cyklu dnia i nocy. Cykl ten narzuca fabule określony rytm, który rządzi zarówno toczącym się pojedynkiem głównych bohaterów, jak i innymi wydarzeniami. Czas wieczorny i nocny jest raczej przeznaczony dla istotnych i głębokich refleksji, które pojawiają się na przykład w pierwszej i ostatniej scenie powieści oraz w trakcie innych wydarzeń decydujących o rozwoju duchowym bohaterów. Wydaje się, że czas dzienny bardziej sprzyja rozwojowi relacji łączącej ich ze sobą i światem zewnętrznym.

Słowa kluczowe: G. K. Chesterton; noc; dzień; cykl; czas; rozwój wewnętrzny.