ANNALES
UNIVERSITATIS MARIAE CURIE-SKŁODOWSKA
LUBLIN – POLONIA
VOL. XLII SECTIO FF 1-2024

ISSN: 0239-426X • e-ISSN: 2449-853X • Licence: CC-BY 4.0 • DOI: 10.17951/ff.2024.42.1.43-55

Selected Aspects of Space in Gilbert Keith Chesterton's *Manalive*[*]

Wybrane aspekty przestrzeni w *Manalive* Gilberta Keitha Chestertona

MONIKA SZYMCZAK-KORDULASIŃSKA
University of Szczecin, Poland
ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9462-0638
e-mail: monika.szym.kor@gmail.com

Abstract. The objective of the article is to analyse selected aspects of space in *Manalive* (1912) by Gilbert Keith Chesterton and present how they illustrate and convey the meanings of the novel. The analysis, which is based on a close reading of the text, draws on various aspects of spatial dimension and refers to the *topos* of the garden and Otto Friedrich Bollnow's selected terms formulated in his *Human Space*. The first part of the article examines the invading nature of the wind, as a result of which different spaces merge and which literally brings the character of Innocent Smith, who challenges everybody and everything around him. The second section is devoted to the garden space, whereas the third part shows the vertical movement that is connoted by the motif of height. The analysis demonstrates how the process in which the fossilised world of other characters is gradually transformed by Smith is further reinforced and reflected by the motif of space, including the main protagonist's renderings of space and changes in perspective. Smith, being the character who is the title "Manalive", in his playing with space, opens others to life.

Keywords: wind, garden, perspective, height, space

[*] Publikację tomu sfinansowano ze środków Instytutu Językoznawstwa i Literaturoznawstwa UMCS. Wydawca: Wydawnictwo UMCS. Dane teleadresowe autora: Instytut Literatury i Nowych Mediów, Uniwersytet Szczeciński, ul. Piastów 40B, bud. 5, pok. 101, 71-065 Szczecin, Polska; tel.: (+48) 91 444 26 67.

Abstrakt. Celem artykułu jest zanalizowanie wybranych aspektów przestrzeni w *Manalive* (1912) Gilberta Keitha Chestertona oraz zaprezentowanie, w jaki sposób ilustrują i przekazują one znaczenia zawarte w powieści. Niniejsza analiza, która jest oparta na bliskiej lekturze tekstu, odwołuje się do różnych aspektów wymiaru przestrzeni, toposu ogrodu oraz wybranych terminów Otto Friedrich Bollnowa, które są sformułowane w *Human Space*. Pierwsza część artykułu analizuje inwazyjną naturę wiatru, dzięki której różne przestrzenie zaczynają się przenikać i który to wiatr dosłownie przynosi postać Innocentego Smitha. Postać ta rzuca niejako wyzwanie wszystkim i wszystkiemu naokoło. Druga część tekstu poświęcona jest przestrzeni ogrodu, natomiast trzecia część skupia się na zbadaniu ruchu pionowego, który jest przywołany przez motyw wysokości. Analiza ukazuje, w jaki sposób proces, w którym skostniały świat innych bohaterów, stopniowo odmieniony przez Smitha, jest wzmocniony i odzwierciedlony w motywie przestrzeni, włączając w to, jak główny bohater traktuje przestrzeń i zmiany zachodzące w perspektywie. Smith, który jest tytułowym „Manalive" („Żywym człowiekiem"), w swojej grze z przestrzenią otwiera innych na życie.

Słowa kluczowe: wiatr, ogród, perspektywa, wysokość, przestrzeń

Gilbert Keith Chesterton always cherished playing with space and place. Wide or very close perspectives, vast spaces, vertical and horizontal axes, cities and the countryside – all these perform important roles in the author's writings, both fictional and non-fictional, sometimes enriching, sometimes just conveying or reflecting the meaning of the work. The city of London becomes the setting and an indispensable element of the plot in *The Napoleon of Notting Hill* (1904); upward and downward perspectives are to be found in, for instance, the Father Brown stories;[1] in *The Ball and the Cross* (1909), the two main protagonists tirelessly wander across vast spaces and visit a broad range of different places, from a summer-house, an inn, through the seaside to even a psychiatric institution. In the latter novel, the characters are described in a shop, on a hill, in a car or in a boat at sea – always covering long distances. In *The Ballad of the White Horse* (1911), Chesterton's epic poem, which occupies a special place in Chesterton's oeuvre, the main character, King Alfred, undergoes a kind of transformation which is reflected in how the king starts to handle space: "and then [he] starts walking; he traverses wastes, woods; now he becomes unstoppable, penetrating, vigorous, taking initiative. He is even called «the wanderer» (1, 183)" (Szymczak-Kordulasińska, 2022b). It is significant that many of Chesterton's iconic characters are in fact presented in such a way: as wanderers.

One of the most representative images that sets the scene for, among other issues, the motif of space in Chesterton's writings is his words coming from *Autobiography* and referring to the dynamics between space and its limits:

[1] I comment on the upward and downward movement in the Father Brown tales in *In Search of Truth* (Szymczak-Kordulasińska, 2018, p. 74, 151, 153). This motif is also widely employed in *The Ball and the Cross* by Chesterton (Szymczak-Kordulasińska, 2022a).

All my life I have loved frames and limits; and I will maintain that the largest wilderness looks larger seen through a window. To the grief of all grave dramatic critics, I will still assert that the perfect drama must strive to rise to the higher ecstasy of the peep-show. I have also a pretty taste in abysses and bottomless chasms and everything else that emphasises a fine shade of distinction between one thing and another; and the warm affection I have always felt for bridges is connected with the fact that the dark and dizzy arch accentuates the chasm even more than the chasm itself. (Chesterton, 1988, p. 40)[2]

The readers who are acquainted with Chesterton's writings can recognise this tension between the wilderness, which Chesterton vigorously enjoys and which he ceaselessly finds attractive, and the need for some framework structure that paradoxically enhances the great potential of the spacious universes that Chesterton's reader may experience on different levels, including philosophical or metaphorical ones.

The dynamics between vast space and some limiting frame is undoubtedly featured in yet another novel by Chesterton: *Manalive*. The novel, which was first published in 1912, tells the story of Innocent Smith, who, wandering through the world, reaches Beacon House, where he finds himself being accused of a number of crimes, including attempted murder, burglary and polygamy. It turns out, however, that all the charges against him are dropped because he broke into his own house, remarried his own wife and tried to threaten those who did not want to live. In his childlike simplicity, Smith seems to be mad, whereas he is the only character who truly loves life. Ian Boyd (1975, p. 55) notices that it is not Smith who is accused "but [it is – suppl. M.S.-K.] the people who are judging him who are on trial".[3]

Commenting on the reception of the novel, Maisie Ward (1944, p. 316), referring to Chesterton's words, remarks that "men not in love with life will not appreciate *Manalive*". As Iain T. Benson (2004, p. 25) acutely observes, the main protagonist's initials (I.S.) are used by the author "as if to heighten the fact [that – modified by M.S.-K.] he simply «is»". Smith also stands for "everyman" (Benson, 2004, p. 25). Some scholars point to the autobiographical dimension of the work, and Ian Ker (2011, p. 300) even describes *Manalive* as "the most autobiographical

[2] I refer to these words in *In Search of Truth* on several occasions, including in the context of Chesterton's love for a toy theatre (Szymczak-Kordulasińska, 2018, p. 105 and footnote 32). I also comment there on the philosophical dimension of this picture that is perfectly encapsulated in the remark by Dermot Quinn which I quote and which describes the writer as somebody who "was, at heart, a philosophical anarchist. He loved limits but not rules" (Szymczak-Kordulasińska, 2018, p. 105 and footnote 32).

[3] Boyd (1975, p. 52) names two issues which, he believes, are challenging in the work: they are connected with how the story is narrated and how the court operates.

of the novels he published".[4] Certainly, the Christian meaning, including the issues connected with conversion and mysticism, are also frequently touched upon.[5] Among various important motifs that appear in the novel, the one that is undoubtedly worth exploring is space. The objectives of this article are to examine its selected aspects and show how they reflect and further convey the underlying meanings present in the work.

1. SPACE THAT IS INVADED AND THE TOPSY-TURVY PERSPECTIVE

The very opening scene of the novel brings the image of a fierce wind that briskly penetrates the country. It is deeply characteristic that the reader, following the raging wind, is being introduced into various spaces, both inner and outer, and finally arrives at and is closely familiarised with one of the main places that host the upcoming events – "a boarding establishment called «Beacon House»" (Chesterton, 2004, p. 264). Thus, the narration in the first paragraphs of the novel starts by describing an extremely vast space, goes through a series of places and finally focuses on a particular point: a building and its surrounding garden. What is more, it is through the wind that the perspective of perceiving the depicted space and places is being changed.

The initial vastness of space is visibly emphasised in the first sentences saying that "[a] wind sprang high in the west, like a wave of unreasonable happiness, and tore eastward across England, trailing with it the frosty scent of forests and the cold intoxication of the sea" (Chesterton, 2004, p. 263). The wind, therefore, draws a spatial layout that stretches across both vertical and horizontal axes – the wind blows "high" and from the west to east direction, "across England".[6] Additionally, going through forests and the sea, it snatches and further carries the "scent", and thus the elements, of both, which in fact means that different spaces start to merge and boundaries to blur.[7] All this suggests both the limitless scope of the wind and its unstoppability.

---

[4] The researcher evokes here laughter as a tool that Chesterton very often used in his writings and and nihilism, which the author faced when he was young.

[5] In this context, Lynette Hunter's reading of the novel in reference to the idea of Christian mysticism should be recommended. Hunter (1979, p. 102) summarises that "[t]he trial that takes place is a battle between the forces of pure intellect and those of Christian mysticism".

[6] The two axes also appear in *The Ballad of the White Horse* (Szymczak-Kordulasińska, 2022b) and in *The Ball and the Cross* (Szymczak-Kordulasińska, 2022a).

[7] It is important to note that in both cases, whether it is forests or the sea, the aspect of coldness is highlighted. In the case of woods, the adjective "frosty" (Chesterton, 2004, p. 263) is used to

Not only is the wind unstoppable, but it is also all-pervading, as it is said that it reaches "a million holes and corners" (Chesterton, 2004, p. 263). This characteristic of the wind can especially be observed in the portrayal of the private places being struck by the gusts. The first specific place that suffers from the wind's effect is a professor's room, where it scatters his papers. In the second house, it extinguishes a candle that a boy used when reading *Treasure Island*. In both cases, the wind endows the space with some unexpected aspect of reality and changes the perspective: the professor's papers suddenly appear "as precious as fugitive" (Chesterton, 2004, p. 263), whereas the boy is abruptly immersed in darkness, which, again, was something that he tried to counteract in the act of lighting a candle and, symbolically, in the very act of reading.

A change in perceiving and receiving the space around, as a result of the strong wind, is also present in the somewhat sinister description of mothers looking at small shirts hung on the line as if they were dead children. The wind also transforms "hammocks" on which girls throw themselves into "balloons" "show[ing – form modified M.S.-K.] [them – pronoun modified M.S.-K.] shapes of quaint clouds far beyond, and pictures of bright villages far below, as if [they – pronoun modified M.S.-K.] rode heaven in a fairy boat" (Chesterton, 2004, p. 263). Even "[m]any a dusty clerk or curate" going down a poplar path compares the trees to "the plumes of a hearse; when this invisible energy caught and swung and clashed them round his head like a wreath or salutation of seraphic wings" (Chesterton, 2004, p. 263). In all these cases, owing to the wind, the space around acquires some new quality, be it some imaginative dimension added, as in the case of mothers and curates, or this imaginative effect additionally strengthened by the reversed perspective – like it is with girls who now "see" villages from the position above, "flying" in their hammocks like in boats. One could even say that the wind opens, introduces and sometimes changes or reverses the space setting in the novel.

When the wind finally arrives at the boarding house that becomes the main setting for the upcoming events, the boundaries between different spaces are again transgressed. In the garden attached to the building, there are three men standing, guests of the boarding establishment, and two women quickly entering the house. Those three, Warner, Inglewood and Moon, when they start talking, witness "all sorts of accidental objects […] scouring the wind-scoured sky – straws, sticks, rags, papers, and, in the distance, a disappearing hat" (Chesterton, 2004, p. 269). The hat, compared to "a balloon" and "a kite" (Chesterton, 2004, pp. 269–270), falls on the ground near them and is followed by "a big green umbrella", "huge yellow

describe the scent, whereas when it comes to the sea, it is "the cold intoxication" (Chesterton, 2004, p. 263). This seems to suggest both the refreshing and the preserving character of the wind.

Gladstone bag" and finally by "a figure like a flying wheel of legs" (Chesterton, 2004, p. 270) who turns out to be Innocent Smith, the main protagonist of the story. It is significant that not only different objects carried by the wind cross the garden walls and thus other characters' space, but it is also Smith himself who unexpectedly invades their world with all his power.

In the description of the first scenes featuring Smith, clear references to the topsy-turvy perspective appear. Running after the hat, Smith "flung forward on his hands, threw up his boots behind, waved his two legs in the air like symbolic ensigns […] and actually caught the hat with his feet" (Chesterton, 2004, p. 271). Here, both the position he takes and the way in which he seizes the hat are the opposite of what the characters might expect. When Warner's top hat is also blown away by the next gust, Smith, in the chase of it, dexterously climbs a tree, grabs it and suddenly

> appeared to fall backwards off the tree, to which, however, he remained attached by his long strong legs, like a monkey swung by his tail. Hanging thus head downwards above the unhelmed Warner, he gravely proceeded to drop the battered silk cylinder upon his brows. "Every man a king," explained the inverted philosopher; "every hat (consequently) a crown. But this is a crown out of heaven." (Chesterton, 2004, p. 273)

The upside-down viewpoint becomes, in fact, Smith's hallmark, always challenging other characters' usual or natural interpretations, behaviour or choices. In the situation mentioned above, the protagonist's words "Every man a king" also play a similar, provocative, role. Another scene that bears a very similar meaning connoted by the high, and to some extent also topsy-turvy, perspective is the one in which Smith invites his acquaintances for a picnic on the lodging-house's roof. First, however, he unexpectedly discovers in the ceiling of his room a kind of trapdoor, which, interestingly, is described as "dust-stained" and "disused" (Chesterton, 2004, p. 280). The very fact that Smith finds and uses something that has not been used for a long time points to his searching and penetrating nature.[8] And indeed, when he opens the hatch and goes out through it, the others see "the empty and lucid sky of evening, with one great many-coloured cloud sailing across it like a whole county *upside down*" (Chesterton, 2004, p. 281; italics – M.S.-K.). What is more, when Inglewood and Moon follow Smith and finally stand on the roof, they have an impression that "that they had come out into eternity, and that eternity

[8] It should be emphasised that the trapdoor directly leads onto the roof, so, as Moon also notices, there is no "loft" (Chesterton, 2004, p. 280). The closeness or merging of these two spheres – the dwelling and the outer space – which in fact still remain separate is worth noting.

was very like topsy-turvydom. One definition occurred to one of them – that he had come out into the light of that lucid and radiant ignorance in which all beliefs had begun" (Chesterton, 2004, p. 281). It may be summarised that all these, most often unexpected and abrupt, changes in the positions Smith assumes, and in the perspective that this entails, imply something entirely new, unpredicted or even the mysterious and the spiritual.

2. DANCING IN "THE GARDEN OF THE GOD"

In Chesterton's writings, the space in which the mysterious very often resides is the garden. Barbara Kowalik (2015, p. 19), analysing the motif of garden settings in the Father Brown stories, notes that "Chesterton's gardens are more often the *mise en scène* of death, both literal and spiritual, though they too can witness a moral rebirth". The wide range of this type of setting in Chesterton's detective stories[9] suggests that the writer endowed it with a special significance. Similarly, in for instance *The Ball and the Cross*, Chesterton locates in the garden two scenes that are crucial for the meaning of the whole story: MacIan's and Turnbull's dreams.[10] How central, revealing and meaningful the motif of the tree can be is meticulously researched by Deb Elkink (2015) in her study *Roots and Branches: The Symbol of the Tree in the Imagination of G.K. Chesterton*.

The garden in *Manalive* can be approached from different perspectives. Firstly, it can be treated as a symbol, deeply rooted in the writer's imagination and employed by him in many contexts. It seems that many references describing the symbol of the garden that are defined in *Elsevier's Dictionary of Symbols and Imagery* definitely apply to Chesterton's use of this motif. Thus, it can be associated with "cultivation" and "fertility" (Vries and Vries, 2009, p. 252), as more obvious connotations, and with "the soul", "consciousness: ordered Nature, as the opposite of forest" or even a place "connected with the treasure-hunt" (Vries and Vries, 2009, p. 252), when discussing the less apparent implications. Naturally, in the case of Chesterton, the biblical associations should not be overlooked. According to *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, "the garden is one of the framing images of the total Bible story" (Ryken, Wilhoit and Longman, 1998, p. 315), and "[i]t signals nature at its best, romantic love at its best, human well-being at its best, spiritual reality at its best" (Ryken et

[9] Here, only some examples in Kowalik's categorisation can be mentioned, which perfectly illustrate the broad scope of utilising this motif in the stories: "island gardens", "seashore gardens", "country-house gardens" or "urban gardens" (Kowalik, 2015, pp. 21–22, 24, 27).

[10] Other gardens featured in the novel are enumerated by Elkink (2015, p. 81) and by Szymczak-Kordulasińska (2022a, p. 99).

al., 1998, p. 317). The issue of a moral choice is yet another dimension to which the Garden of Eden itself refers (Ryken et al., 1998, p. 316). But apart from all these connotations that are undoubtedly relevant when commenting on the garden in *Manalive*, this space can also be interpreted from the perspective of Otto Friedrich Bollnow's differentiation between the inner and outer space.

In *Human Space* (2011), Bollnow draws a strict line between the house and the world around. The house first connotes refuge, "security", "a general means of shelter, a hide-out" (Bollnow, 2011, p. 124), which then is specified as a place inhabited by people (Bollnow, 2011, p. 124). The outer space is contrasted to the other, as it is reserved for "activity in the world" and marked with "overcoming resistance and defending oneself against an opponent; it is the space of insecurity, of danger and vulnerability" (Bollnow, 2011, p. 125). As Bollnow (2011, p. 125) summarises, "[t]his double concept of inner and outer space is fundamental to the further structuring of the whole experienced space, indeed for human life as a whole". What is, however, interesting is the fact that between these two spheres, there are also "mediating structures that interpose themselves" (Bollnow, 2011, p. 126): these are the spaces that no longer belong to the inner area but they are not yet as challenging or threatening as the outer ones are. And this transitory stage is particularly relevant in the garden space in *Manalive*.

First of all, it should be underlined that, as mentioned above, the house which is surrounded by the garden is a boarding house and the main characters are boarders.[11] This means that it is neither their own house, nor their own garden, but these are the spaces within which they move and experience their meeting with Innocent Smith. The lodging-house plays a special role at the beginning, when Smith arrives and introduces his ideas into the lives of the others, and then when it will become the stage for Smith's trial. The garden seems to belong to these "mediating structures" defined by Bollnow (2011, p. 126). It also becomes a perfect place for characters who, for the time being, become a community and who do not have their own specified houses and homes. The space of the garden, in a way, starts to function as Bollnow's "mediating" area or even becomes "the inner space" itself, as it extends the space of the boarding-house. Additionally, the garden with its "hedge", "railings" and "gate" (Chesterton, 2004, p. 297) signifies a closed or even intimate character, which is typical of the house.[12] It seems that in the novel,

[11] Diana Duke makes an exception here.

[12] As far as the role and importance of walls are concerned, Bollnow (2011, p. 125) states that "[b]y means of the walls of the house, a special private space is cut out of the large common space, and thus an inner space is separated from an outer space. Man, who according to Simmel is generally distinguished by the ability to set limits and at the same time to overstep these limits, places these limits most visibly and directly in the walls of his house".

the garden's hedge takes on the role of the walls of the house, and this transitory nature of the setting reflects the process of development which the protagonists experience throughout the events. The characters need the space in which they still feel secure and which, at the same time, will open itself and will open them to new perspectives that the encounter with Smith brings.

The role of the house itself should certainly not be overlooked. The house becomes the place of the first significant transitions in the characters' lives. For instance, the shy Inglewood, who starts to excel in photography and "almost struggle[s – form modified M.S.-K.] against his own growing importance" (Chesterton, 2004, p. 286), displays his new outstanding pictures in the boarding house. Smith helps Diana and establishes "Smith's Lightning Dressmaking Company" (Chesterton, 2004, p. 287). It is in the building that the philosophy of the independent and self-sufficient house is discussed. It is also in the house that Smith makes others explore the nearby surroundings, saying: "I bet you've never examined the premises! I bet you've never been round at the back as I was this morning – for I found the very thing you say could only grow on a tree" (Chesterton, 2004, p. 291). From this point, the garden changes into the main *mise en scène* until Smith becomes the accused.

As mentioned earlier, the garden of Beacon House is the place that is, in a way, transitory: it is a place that one could define as both the inner space and the space between the inner and the outer areas. What is characteristic, the house seems to be open to the garden and there is often an impression that these two zones, though distinct, are in fact inseparably connected. Undoubtedly, what the garden brings is again the vastness of space and diversity of sensuous experiences. When Smith opens the door leading to the garden, inviting Mary to follow him, the abundance of colours that the view displays is almost overwhelming.[13] The senses of smell, touch and hearing are also engaged when the garden setting unfolds. One should notice that senses are in fact something that enables us to be in contact and to experience the world around. Our senses are the bridges, the transitory paths between man's inner and outer spaces. It is precisely the role that the garden also assumes.

The Beacon House garden clearly refers to the vast range of connotations mentioned before. It becomes a mystical place, a place of abundance, fertility, nature and love. The first pair of characters that anticipates the latter association in particular is Innocent and Maria, when he "led her out on to the lawn as if for a dance" (Chesterton, 2004, p. 292). It is in the garden that Smith proposes to his beloved, as Rosamund

[13] "The west was swimming with sanguine colours" (Chesterton, 2004, p. 292), "shadows of the one or two garden trees" are compared to "arabesques written in vivid violet ink on some page of Eastern gold" (Chesterton, 2004, p. 292), slates are described as "burn[ing – form modified by M.S.-K.] like the plumes of a vast peacock, in every mysterious blend of blue and green" (Chesterton, 2004, pp. 292–293), whereas bricks are depicted as "red-brown" (Chesterton, 2004, p. 293).

reports. In the garden, Rosamund apologises to Moon for being nasty (Chesterton, 2004, p. 298) and Moon says he loves her. At this point, he declares that "for truth is in the garden to-night" (Chesterton, 2004, p. 299) and that their "real names are Husband and Wife" (Chesterton, 2004, p. 299). Also Inglewood takes Diana to the garden, where they join Michael and Rosamund and start dancing. Earlier, Rosamund plays the mandolin in the garden (Chesterton, 2004, p. 284). Because the characters were earlier struggling with their feelings for each other, the garden does become the space of their development and transition. It is in the garden that they start loving, being together, where they dance and touch the beloved's hand.[14] The very title of this subchapter, which is "The Garden of the God" connotes the biblical Eden, indicating the spiritual dimension of the garden space.

3. THE HEIGHT THAT OPENS THE TRUTH

The motif of height forms a kind of a frame image in the novel. In the opening scenes, when the wind finally reaches the boarding house, it is not accidental that both the location of the building and its name point to this motif:

> The flying blast struck London just where it scales the northern heights, terrace above terrace, as precipitous as Edinburgh. It was round about this place that some poet, probably drunk, looked up astonished at all those streets gone skywards, and (thinking vaguely of glaciers and roped mountaineers) gave it the name of Swiss Cottage, which it has never been able to shake off. At some stage of those heights a terrace of tall gray houses, […] a boarding establishment called "Beacon House," offered abruptly to the sunset its high, narrow and towering termination, like the prow of some deserted ship. (Chesterton, 2004, pp. 263–264)

A very similar description of Beacon House also appears just after the moment of Diana and Arthur's emotional and spiritual encounter when "they felt the place to be uplifted, they felt it also to be secret: it was like some round walled garden on the top of one of the turrets of heaven" (Chesterton, 2004, p. 302). The place where Innocent Smith appears with his revolutionary philosophy of perceiving the old as the new is situated at some considerable height. Also, the name of the boarding house, Beacon House, represents "warning for danger" (Vries and Vries, 2009, p. 354) and, one may add, hope and safety.[15] And indeed, the events that take

[14] This seems to be in contrast to the house, where, so far, the characters have rather functioned independently.

[15] For another interpretation of the name of the lodging-house, see Elkink (2015, p. 107 and footnote 6).

place at Beacon House can be interpreted as those bringing a kind of revelation, rescue and fulfilment.

The link between the motif of height and discovering truth is also maintained in other scenes.[16] When Moon and Inglewood stay on the roof, their conversation becomes deeply sincere and even wine tastes better.[17] Both Moon and Inglewood open up to each other and speak freely about themselves, their thoughts and experiences. In another scene, when proposing to Rosamund, Moon suddenly says: "I, for one, don't expect till I die to be so good a man as I am at this minute, for just now I'm fifty thousand feet high–a tower with all the trumpets shouting" (Chesterton, 2004, p. 300). Thus, in the moment of revealing his true feelings, Moon, calling himself "a tower", refers to the motif of height.

There is, indeed, something remarkable in this vertical axis. As Bollnow (2011, p. 59) puts it, "[i]t is the axis which links the three realms of space split into vertical divisions: the world of the supernatural, the underworld and the world of the earthly human". Moreover, it is this axis that "spatial orientation" is based on, as "[t]he first step towards structuring [it – suppl. M.S.-K.] […] is the experience of above and below" (Bollnow, 2011, p. 169). Bollnow (2011, p. 45) also quotes Kastner, who notices "that such a great number of miracles take place on mountains". It is at this point that the central scene in which Smith enters his own house through the roof, following this upward–downward movement, should be referred to. The true and spiritual dimension of the house (and also love) that is rediscovered by Smith, descending in his simplicity and humbleness, is, thus, further expressed.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Manalive by Chesterton, as Maisie Ward (1944, p. 316) accurately states, is "above all things a hymn to life". Innocent Smith, standing in the centre of the story, in Moon's words, "refuses to die while he is still alive" (Chesterton, 2004, p. 413). And indeed, his initials I.S. mentioned above and referred to by, for instance, Benson (2004, p. 25), perfectly reflect the title of the novel: Smith is "manalive", which means that he is the man who is alive. In his acts of "attempting" murder, breaking into his own house, remarrying his own wife as a new bride, he himself "refuses to die" (Chesterton, 2004, p. 413), making others appreciate life, what they have and

[16] This connection forms a contrast with those Father Brown stories in which there are crimes committed at some height (Szymczak-Kordulasińska, 2018, pp. 73–74). This issue would definitely need further analysis.

[17] Moon says that "this is about the thinnest and filthiest wine I ever uncorked, and it's the only drink I have really enjoyed for nine years" (Chesterton, 2004, p. 283).

whom they love. Following life, in the case of Chesterton's protagonist, who, interestingly, may be interpreted as the figure of the Fool (Boyd, 1975, p. 64), means that "[h]e has broken the conventions, but he has kept the commandments" (Chesterton, 2004, p. 414).[18] It is characteristic that when Smith strives to bring others to life, he does it "not with his tongue, but with his arms and legs" (Chesterton, 2004, p. 329). The main protagonist tirelessly moves and "wants to express himself" (Chesterton, 2004, p. 329) in space and through space. It seems that for him, the spatial dimension becomes a perfect tool, with which he conveys his seemingly insane messages.

In fact, every single aspect of space discussed so far proves to be highly significant for the overall meaning of the novel. Thus, for instance, the unpredictable and unstoppable blowing wind from the opening scenes of the work functions as a trigger of change; it becomes a force that challenges man's world, which is organised and curbed but at the same time fossilised. The topsy-turvy perspective which is first anticipated by the wind's fierce activity is something that the Smith character brings and with which he tries "to wake up" (Benson, 2004, p. 26) others or, possibly more precisely, wake life in others. Also the garden space, with its extremely vast connotations, becomes a space where the characters can experience life abundantly in its sensual dimension; it is in the garden where their relationships with others are symbolically brought to life and flourish. Finally, the importance of the height should not be overlooked in the context of acquiring a wide, different perspective and attaining the truth. Also, the meaningful act of descending and ascending, which is, for instance, present in Smith reaching his house from the roof, illustrates how to approach the things one possesses. The motif of height directly refers to the truthful and the spiritual. In general, what is perhaps especially interesting is the fact that on the basis of how Smith utilises space and how space is rendered in the novel, one may conclude that Smith's "IS" (i.e. "I.S." spelled as Smith's initials) assumes tirelessly active, not passive, involvement in the world around.

On a final note, it should be mentioned that the theme of space, with which Chesterton's *Manalive* is immensely rich, is by no means exhausted, as there are still many aspects that are worth exploring. For instance, the motif of the wall is one of them. The theme of the house would also deserve a separate longer analysis. Although the figurative circularity of space in Chesterton's recurring motif of coming back home is often exploited in the novel's criticism, some further insight into its nature can still be provided. All these issues, it seems, directly refer to Chesterton's thought and ideas which he strived to embrace in his both fictional and non-fictional oeuvre.

[18] This issue is commented on by, for instance, Hunter (1979, p. 103) and Benson (2004, p. 27).

REFERENCES/BIBLIOGRAFIA

Benson, Iain T. (2004). Introduction. In: George J. Marlin and Richard P. Rabatin (eds.), *The Collected Works of G.K. Chesterton* (7, pp. 15–32). San Francisco: Ignatius Press.

Bollnow, Otto Friedrich. (2011). *Human Space* (Christine Shuttleworth, Trans.; Joseph Kohlmaier, Ed.). London: Hyphen Press.

Boyd, Ian. (1975). *The Novels of G.K. Chesterton: A Study in Art and Propaganda*. London: Paul Elek.

Chesterton, Gilbert K. (1988). *The Autobiography of G.K. Chesterton*. In: George J. Marlin, Richard P. Rabatin, John L. Swan (eds.), *The Collected Works of G.K. Chesterton*, *16*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press.

Chesterton, Gilbert K. (2010). *The Ballad of the White Horse.* In: George J. Marlin and Richard P. Rabatin (eds.), *The Collected Works of G.K. Chesterton* (10 Part 3, pp. 135–221). San Francisco: Ignatius Press.

Chesterton, Gilbert K. (2004). *The Ball and the Cross*. In: George J. Marlin and Richard P. Rabatin (eds.), *The Collected Works of G.K. Chesterton* (7, pp. 35–258). San Francisco: Ignatius Press.

Chesterton, Gilbert K. (2004). *Manalive*. In: George J. Marlin and Richard P. Rabatin (eds.),*The Collected Works of G.K. Chesterton* (7, pp. 259–419). San Francisco: Ignatius Press.

Chesterton, Gilbert K. (1991). *The Napoleon of Notting Hill*. In: George J. Marlin, Richard P. Rabatin, John L. Swan (eds.), *The Collected Works of G.K. Chesterton* (6, pp. 215–379). San Francisco: Ignatius Press.

Elkink, Deb. (2015). *Roots and Branches: The Symbol of the Tree in the Imagination of G.K. Chesterton*. Titusville, Florida: The Habitation of Chimham Publishing.

Hunter, Lynette. (1979). *G.K. Chesterton: Explorations in Allegory*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Ker, Ian. (2011). *G.K. Chesterton: A Biography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kowalik, Barbara. (2015). "The Whole Green Theatre of that Swift and Inexplicable Tragedy": Gardens in G.K. Chesterton's Father Brown Stories. *Anglica. An International Journal of English Studies*, *24(1)*, pp. 19–40.

Ryken, Leland, Wilhoit, James C., Longman III, Tremper (eds.). (1998). *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*. Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Academic.

Szymczak-Kordulasińska, Monika. (2018). *In Search of Truth: G.K. Chesterton's Father Brown Stories as the Medium of Moral and Philosophical Reflection* [Unpublished doctoral thesis]. University of Warsaw.

Szymczak-Kordulasińska, Monika. (2022a). The Cycle of Night and Day in *The Ball and the Cross* by G.K. Chesterton. *Roczniki Humanistyczne*, *70(11)*, pp. 91–104.

Szymczak-Kordulasińska, Monika. (2022b, September 11–14). *"Till the grass grew to be grass indeed / And the tree was a tree at last": The Making of King Alfred in* The Ballad of the White Horse *by G.K. Chesterton* [Paper presentation]. International Conference Medieval Fantasy Symposium IX, "Oft hope is born, when all is forlorn": Denying 'final defeat' in medieval and medieval-inspired literature, Koszalin University of Technology, Mielno-Unieście, Poland.

Vries, Ad de, Vries, Arthur de. (2009). *Elsevier's Dictionary of Symbols and Imagery*. Bingley: Emerald Group Publishing.

Ward, Maisie. (1944). *Gilbert Keith Chesterton*. London: Sheed & Ward.

Data zgłoszenia artykułu: 25.10.2023
Data zakwalifikowania do druku: 27.03.2024