

Orwell on Chesterton

The Urth list — 13 messages, 8 voices, 11 Jan 2005

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aqala at yahoo.com — 11 Jan 2005, 10:41

I think some of this list's subscribers will benefit from reading George Orwell's opinion of G. K. Chesterton:

-----quote-----

...political Catholicism. Its most outstanding exponent—though he was perhaps an extreme case rather than a typical one—was G. K. Chesterton. Chesterton was a writer of considerable talent who whose to suppress both his sensibilities and his intellectual honesty in the cause of Roman Catholic propaganda. During the last twenty years or so of his life, his entire output was in reality an endless repetition of the same thing, under its laboured cleverness as simple and boring as 'Great is Diana of the Ephesians.' Every book that he wrote, every scrap of dialogue, had to demonstrate beyond the possibility of mistake the superiority of the Catholic over the Protestant or the pagan. But Chesterton was not content to think of this superiority as merely intellectual or spiritual: it had to be translated into terms of national prestige and military power, which entailed an ignorant idealisation of the Latin countries, especially France. Chesterton had not lived long in France, and his picture of it—as a land of Catholic peasants incessantly singing the MARSEILLAISE over glasses of red wine—had about as much relation to reality as CHU CHIN CHOW has to everyday life in Baghdad. And with this went not only an enormous overestimation of French military power (both before and after 1914-18 he maintained that France, by itself, was stronger than Germany), but a silly and vulgar glorification of the actual process of war. Chesterton's battle poems, such as Lepanto or The Ballad of Saint Barbara, make The Charge of the Light Brigade read like a pacifist tract: they are perhaps the most tawdry bits of bombast to be found in our language. The interesting thing is that had the romantic rubbish which he habitually wrote about France and the French army been written by somebody else about Britain and the British army, he would have been the first to jeer. In home politics he was a Little Englander, a true hater of jingoism and imperialism, and according to his lights a true friend of democracy. Yet when he looked outwards into the international field, he could forsake his principles without even noticing he was doing so. Thus, his almost mystical belief in the virtues of democracy did not prevent him from admiring Mussolini. Mussolini had destroyed the representative government and the freedom of the press for which Chesterton had struggled so hard at home, but Mussolini was an Italian and had made Italy strong, and that settled the matter. Nor did Chesterton ever find a word to say about imperialism and the conquest of coloured races when they were practised by Italians or Frenchmen. His hold on reality, his literary taste, and even to some extent his moral sense, were dislocated as soon as his nationalistic [Nationalism as defined by GO and not the standard meaning] loyalties were involved.

[From NOTES ON NATIONALISM (1945)]

-----quote-----

My own opinion of Chesterton is much shorter:

A man so lacking in thought and intellect he converted to Catholicism when in his 40's.

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 11 Jan 2005, 10:58 · in reply to aqala at yahoo.com

Aqala:

I am a great admirer of both Orwell and Chesterton, and a man who is converting to Catholicism in his 40s, after a great deal (more than ten years) of thought. May I ask why you feel it necessary to post something so inflammatorially insulting?

--Dan'l

On Tue, 11 Jan 2005 10:41:52 -0800 (PST), aqala at yahoo.com

<aqala at yahoo.com> wrote:

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Andy Robertson — 11 Jan 2005, 11:08 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

I am a great admirer of both Orwell and Chesterton, and a
man who is converting to Catholicism in his 40s, after a
great deal (more than ten years) of thought.

Good heavens. May I congratulate you???

May I ask why

you feel it necessary to post something so inflammatorially
insulting?

--Dan'l

I must point out that the insults were Orwell's. He is right in one thing - after an early
efflorescence Chesterton decayed into (mostly) a stale polemicist who produced only the
occasional good thing. But it does not follow that his apologetics was simply bad (it wasn't) or
that he decayed because he became a Catholic.

stilskin — 11 Jan 2005, 11:16 · in reply to Andy Robertson

--- Andy Robertson <andywrobertson@clara.co.uk> wrote:
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follow that his apologetics was simply bad (it
wasn't) or that he decayed
because he became a Catholic.

I don't think Orwell crossed any kind of critical line
in what he wrote about Chesterton here; he seems to
attack him more on political than religious grounds
anyway. But it was clearly posted in the group as an
insult to certain members, though I can't claim to
understand why. I mean, the religious views of most
active members on this list are well known, as are
Gene Wolfe's. Is the poster implying that Wolfe's

novels have become increasingly stale and polemical as his religious and/or political beliefs have found a more overt expression in his writing?

=====

<http://www.sff.net/people/stilskin>

Russell Wodell — 11 Jan 2005, 11:52 · in reply to aqala at yahoo.com

If I remember correctly, Anthony Burgess invented the "Chesterbelloc," a straw man which British anti-Catholic critics used to routinely abuse. [No, I'm wrong: the term was devised in 1908 by A.R. Orage, so Burgess must have been citing him.]

A congenital non-Christian myself, in Ursula LeGuin's phrase, I am not really bothered by the fact that many of my favourite authors are/were Catholic: Muriel Spark, Evelyn Waugh, David Lodge. Most, like Wolfe, renegade Catholics, whose thoughts are anything but orthodox. Indeed, I suspect Wolfe is if anything a heretic by Roman standards, and certainly he is no propagandist like, for example, the Anglican C.S. Lewis.

Spark made the most concise defense in her first novel "The Comforters": "The True Church was awful although, unfortunately, true." This is meant satirically, but....

Myself, I think Wolfe's prose style would have delighted Orwell

Russell

----- Original Message -----

From: <aqala at yahoo.com>

To: <urth-urth.net at lists.urth.net>

Sent: Tuesday, January 11, 2005 10:41 AM

Subject: (urth) Orwell on Chesterton

I think some of this list's subscribers will benefit from reading George Orwell's opinion of G. K. Chesterton:

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Andrew Bollen — 11 Jan 2005, 13:06 · in reply to aqala at yahoo.com

aqala wrote:

I think some of this list's subscribers will benefit from reading George Orwell's opinion of G. K. Chesterton:

I've never read Chesterton before, but his "Lepanto" (below) surely is horrendously awful.

White founts falling in the courts of the sun,

And the Soldan of Byzantium is smiling as they run;

There is laughter like the fountains in that face of all men feared, It stirs the forest darkness, the darkness of his beard, It curls the blood-red crescent, the crescent of his lips, For the inmost sea of all the earth is shaken with his ships. They have dared the white republics up the capes of Italy, They have dashed the Adriatic round the Lion of the Sea, And the Pope has cast his arms abroad for agony and loss, And called the kings of Christendom for swords about the Cross, The

cold queen of England is looking in the glass; The shadow of the Valois is yawning at the Mass;
From evening isles fantastical rings faint the Spanish gun,
And the Lord upon the Golden Horn is laughing in the sun.

Dim drums throbbing, in the hills half heard,
Where only on a nameless throne a crownless prince has stirred, Where, risen from a doubtful
seat and half attained stall, The last knight of Europe takes weapons from the wall, The last
and lingering troubadour to whom the bird has sung, That once went singing southward when
all the world was young, In that enormous silence, tiny and unafraid, Comes up along the
winding road the noise of the Crusade. Strong gongs groaning as the guns boom far, Don John
of Austria is going to the war, Stiff flags straining in the night-blasts cold In the gloom
black-purple, in the glint old-gold.

Torchlight crimson on the copper kettle-drums,
Then the tuckets, then the trumpets, then the cannon, and he comes. Don John laughing in the
brave beard curled, Spurning of his stirrups like the throne of all the world, Holding his head up
for a flag of all the free. Love-light of Spain-hurrah! Death-light of Africa! Don John of Austria is
riding to the sea.

Mahound is in his paradise above the evening star,
(Don John of Austria is going to the war.)
He moves a mighty turban on the timeless houri's knees,
His turban that is woven of the sunset and the seas.
He shakes the peacock gardens as he rises from his ease,
And he strides among the tree-tops and is taller than the trees, And his voice through all the
garden is a thunder sent to bring Black Azrael and Ariel and Ammon on the wing. Giants and the
Genii, Multiple of wing and eye, Whose strong obedience broke the sky When Solomon was
king.

They rush in red and purple from the red clouds of the morn,
From temples where the yellow gods shut up their eyes in scorn;

They rise in green robes roaring from the green hells of the sea Where fallen skies and evil hues
and eyeless creatures be; On them the sea-valves cluster and the grey sea-forests curl,
Splashed with a splendid sickness, the sickness of the pearl; They swell in sapphire smoke out
of the blue cracks of the ground,- They gather and they wonder and give worship to Mahound.
And he saith, 'Break up the mountains where the hermit-folk can hide, And sift the red and
silver sands lest bone of saint abide, And chase the Giaours flying night and day, not giving rest,
For that which was our trouble comes again out of the west. We have set the seal of Solomon on
all things under sun, Of knowledge and of sorrow and endurance of things done, But noise is in
the mountains, in the mountains, and I know The voice that shook our palaces-four hundred
years ago: It is he that saith not 'Kismet'; it is he that knows not Fate; It is Richard, it is
Raymond, it is Godfrey at the gate! It is he whose loss is laughter when he counts the wager
worth, Put down your feet upon him, that our peace be on the earth.' For he heard drums
groaning and he heard guns jar, (Don John of Austria is going to the war.) Sudden and
still-hurrah! Bolt from Iberia! Don John of Austria is gone by Alcalar.

St Michael's on his mountain in the sea-roads of the north (Don John of Austria is girt and going
forth.) Where the grey seas glitter and the sharp tides shift And the sea folk labour and the red
sails lift. He shakes his lance of iron and he claps his wings of stone; The noise is gone through
Normandy; the noise is gone alone; The North is full of tangled things and texts and aching eyes
And dead is all the innocence of anger and surprise, And Christian killeth Christian in a narrow
dusty room And Christian dreadeth Christ that hath a newer face of doom, And Christian hateth

Mary that God kissed in Galilee, But Don John of Austria is riding to the sea. Don John calling through the blast and the eclipse Crying with the trumpet, with the trumpet of his lips, Trumpet that sayeth ha! Domino gloria! Don John of Austria Is shouting to the ships.

King Philip's in his closet with the Fleece about his neck

(Don Juan of Austria is armed upon the deck.)

The walls are hung with velvet that is black and soft as sin, And little dwarfs creep out of it and little dwarfs creep in. He holds a crystal phial that has colours like the moon, He touches, and it tingles, and he trembles very soon, And his face is as a fungus of a leprous white and grey Like plants in the high houses that are shuttered from the day, And death is in the phial; and the end of noble work, But Don John of Austria has fired upon the Turk. Don John's hunting, and his hounds have bayed - Booms away past Italy the rumour of his raid Gun upon gun, ha! ha! Gun upon gun, hurrah! Don John of Austria Has loosed the cannonade.

The Pope was in his chapel before day or battle broke,

(Don John of Austria is hidden in the smoke.)

The hidden room in man's house where God sits all the year,

The secret window whence the world looks small and very dear.

He sees as in a mirror on the monstrous twilight sea

The crescent of his cruel ships whose name is mystery;

They fling great shadows foe-wards, making Cross and Castle dark, They veil the plum'd lions on the galley's of St. Mark; And above the ships are palaces of brown, black-bearded chiefs, And below the ships are prisons, where with multitudinous griefs, Christian captives sick and sunless, all a labouring race repines Like a race in sunken cities, like a nation in the mines. They are lost like slaves that swat, and in the skies of morning hung The stair-ways of the tallest gods when tyranny was young. They are countless, voiceless, hopeless as those fallen or fleeing on Before the high Kings' horses in the granite of Babylon. And many a one grows witless in his quiet room in hell Where a yellow face looks inward through the lattice of his cell, And he finds his God forgotten, and he seeks no more a sign - (But Don John of Austria has burst the battle-line!) Don John pounding from the slaughter-painted poop, Purpling all the ocean like a bloody pirate's sloop, Scarlet running over on the silvers and the golds, Breaking of the hatches up and bursting of the holds, Thronging of the thousands up that labour under sea White for bliss and blind for sun and stunned for liberty. Vivat Hispania! Domino Gloria! Don John of Austria Has set his people free!

Cervantes on his galley sets the sword back in the sheath

(Don John of Austria rides homeward with a wreath.)

And he sees across a weary land a straggling road in Spain,

Upon which a lean and foolish knight forever rides in vain,

And he smiles, but not as Sultans smile, and settles back the blade... (But Don John of Austria rides home from the Crusade.)

David Lebling — 11 Jan 2005, 13:30 · in reply to Andrew Bollen

From: "Andrew Bollen"

I've never read Chesterton before, but his "Lepanto" (below) surely is horrendously awful.

I wouldn't say it's that bad. Like Kipling, if you encounter it at a certain age, it's quite thrilling. It also works better if you recite it out loud; the alliteration and meter are stirring. Or at least I remember these impressions from when I was a certain age. Check out The Man Who Was Thursday, or a light dose of Father Brown if you want something by Chesterton that you might enjoy more.

On other current topics...

I'm not sure what aqala's point is, other than trolling, but Orwell could be impressively vituperative, an English literary tradition which shows no sign of slackening. We should probably be grateful that he never encountered Tolkien.

I don't recall the paeans to gun ownership and supply-side economics in Exodus from the Long Sun; however, Wolfe's comments on contemporary-ish politics are reliably conservative, but his works, to me at least, seem less than approving of corporate capitalism. I think he takes a more "traditionalist" position (akin to Tolkien's) than most of today's conservatives would find comfortable. He self-identifies as a "conservative Catholic," doesn't he? That's a far different beast from a "conservative Protestant," though they share some concerns, and a whole different phylum than a "libertarian," which is the predominant conservative strain in modern SF.

-- Dave, aka Vizcacha

Andy Robertson — 11 Jan 2005, 13:48 · in reply to David Lebling

I don't recall the paeans to gun ownership and supply-side economics in Exodus from the Long Sun; however, Wolfe's comments on contemporary-ish politics are reliably conservative, but his works, to me at least, seem less than approving of corporate capitalism.

There is no linkage between Catholic Conservatism and a support for "corporate capitalism". Quite the reverse. "Conservatism" in its origin stands for the conserving the traditonal rights of the little guy against the big guy who would enslave him, whether banker, lawyer or landowner: and the Catholic church was a pillar of this conservation and its one effective arm.

But you'll never understand if I call it Conservatism, because neither conservatism nor the Catholic Church are trying to conserve any of this today

Where do I begin?

I hate to say it, but I realise again just how very much Wolfe owes to Chesterton.

.

Andy Robertson — 11 Jan 2005, 13:50 · in reply to David Lebling

David Lebling writes:

From: "Andrew Bollen"

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I wouldn't say it's _that_ bad. Like Kipling, if you encounter it at a certain age, it's quite thrilling.

I loved LEPANTO, and I like THE BALLAD OF THE WHITE HORSE even better.

David Lebling — 11 Jan 2005, 13:55 · in reply to Andy Robertson

From: "Andy Robertson" <andywrobertson at clara.co.uk>

There is no linkage between Catholic Conservatism and a support for "corporate capitalism". Quite the reverse.

Which was precisely my point, if you read beyond the part of my message you quoted.

As for "Lepanto," I still get a bit of a thrill from it, even now, but nothing like what it did for me when I was about 15.

-- Dave, aka Vizcacha

Stanisław Bocian — 11 Jan 2005, 14:03 · in reply to aqala at yahoo.com

Tuesday, January 11, 2005, 7:41:52 PM, aqala at yahoo.com wrote:

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ayc> [From NOTES ON NATIONALISM (1945)]

ayc> -----quote-----

Orwell, Notes on Nationalism

<http://www.resort.com/~prime8/Orwell/nationalism.html>

The whole Orwell's essay is very interesting, even if the quoted fragment is wrong. (I presumed not to quote or comment the gratuitous insult of the poster). It is necessary to remember that Orwell were a truly believing socialist. He went to Spain in order to fight against Franco. Being an honest and extremely intelligent man, he, seeing communism in action, wholly repudiated it. His sympathies, however, remained the same - he had no patience for religion in general or Catholicism in particular.

The essay mentions some very interesting points, still relevant, even very relevant today. It has, however, a few flaws.

I am sorry to say that this essay shows that Orwell's rhetorical method remains still typically socialist - he defines a word, which usually means one thing, as quite another, and then accuses others of it. Here he defines nationalism not as a unreasoning support of one nation, but as a unreasoning support or condemnation of anything. (note

1) I would guess that Orwell means here something like "fanaticism."

Nationalism usually means supporting a nation, right or wrong. Of this Chesterton was obviously not guilty. He was an English patriot, but he was opposed to colonialism and any aggression.

I have read a lot of Chesterton works, although not all. Orwell is right that nearly all of his work is in greater or lesser degree an apology of Christianity and Catholicism. He, since he was not persuaded by it, have every right to think Chesterton's cleverness laboured. I happen to think otherwise.

I have not seen in Chesterton's writing any support of Mussolini or French or Italian colonialism. He certainly condemned British colonialism, and can perhaps be excused for not criticising everything everywhere. He had also not very much time to criticise invasion of Ethiopia (note 2).

The essay, among many very true opinions, contains some which are frankly astonishing, eg the sentence immediately preceding the text quoted above. It has unhappily not been quoted by the first poster.

"Ten or twenty years ago, the form of nationalism most closely corresponding to Communism today was political Catholicism. Its most outstanding exponent -- though he was perhaps an extreme case rather than a typical one -- was G.K. Chesterton."

That unusual theory of Orwell explains, I think, his opinions about Chesterton. If Catholicism is a kind of communism, it is obvious that believers in it should be hunted and destroyed, or at least boycotted. I personally think Catholicism to be wholly opposed to Communism (I agree that it is not the point Orwell was making.)

As for "political Catholicism" - I again presume that he thinks about the movement in France associated with Charles Maurras and Action Fracaise. It is difficult to connect it with Chesterton,

however - Maurras was an agnostic most of his life, and supported the Church only as a necessary source of order in society.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Maurras

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Action_Fran%EA9Aise

Orwell makes also a few factual mistakes. Chesterton did not support democracy. He did support self-government, but it is not the same. His political theory was quite similar to Tolkien's, it could be described as anarchism, even sometimes monarchistic anarchism, with strong local self-government.

I also wonder whether Orwell did not confuse Chesterton with Hilaire Belloc, his friend. Belloc certainly supported Mussolini, of course only before the war. As he was a Frenchman, he certainly thought highly of France, especially so called "France profonde", which Orwell seems heartily to dislike.

As for the the Lepanto, I think it very good verse - but it is certainly enthusiastic.(note 3). I am also not sure that Orwell actually read it - because according to his theory Chesterton should think King Philip of Spain an ideal king - since he was a Catholic and a famous enemy of Protestants. If he did think so, he certainly hid it well.

- Note 1

"Notes on Nationalism

May, 1945

Somewhere or other Byron makes use of the French word *longeur*, and remarks in passing that though in England we happen not to have the word, we have the thing in considerable profusion. In the same way, there is a habit of mind which is now so widespread that it affects our thinking on nearly every subject, but which has not yet been given a name. As the nearest existing equivalent I have chosen the word "nationalism", but it will be seen in a moment that I am not using it in quite the ordinary sense, if only because the emotion I am speaking about does not always attach itself to what is called a nation -- that is, a single race or a geographical area. It can attach itself to a church or a class, or it may work in a merely negative sense, against something or other and without the need for any positive object of loyalty.

By "nationalism" I mean first of all the habit of assuming that human beings can be classified like insects and that whole blocks of millions or tens of millions of people can be confidently labelled "good" or "bad." But secondly -- and this is much more important -- I mean the habit of identifying oneself with a single nation or other unit, placing it beyond good and evil and recognizing no other duty than that of advancing its interests. Nationalism is not to be confused with patriotism. Both words are normally used in so vague a way that any definition is liable to be challenged, but one must draw a distinction between them, since two different and even opposing ideas are involved. By "patriotism" I mean devotion to a particular place and a particular way of life, which one believes to be the best in the world but has no wish to force on other people. Patriotism is of its nature defensive, both militarily and culturally. Nationalism, on the other hand, is inseparable from the desire for power. The abiding purpose of every

nationalist is to secure more power and more prestige, not for himself but for the nation or other unit in which he has chosen to sink his own individuality. "

- note 2

Short chronology of Italy's intervention in Ethiopia

On Dec. 5, 1934, a skirmish at Wal Wal (Ualval) involving an Italian garrison 80 miles inside the Ethiopian border was used by Mussolini as a pretext for demanding compensation and preparing for war.

Jan. 3, 1935 - Hailie Selassie appeals to League Anglo-French agreement excluding Italy from Ethiopia

Oct. 2, 1935, Mussolini ordered the bombing of Adowa by planes and the beginning of the invasion of Ethiopia by Marshal Badoglio Oct. 3 who was authorized to use poison mustard gas and destroy civilian villages.

Oct. 7 - League declared Italy the aggressor

Nov. 18 - Leagues sanctions begin arms embargo, financial embargo, nonimportation of Ital. goods

Feb. 1936 - League could not agree on critical oil sanctions

May 5 - Italy occupied Addis Abeba - annexed all Ethiopia May 9

June 14, 1936, Chesterton dies.

I have met with opinion, (eg Paul Johnson in his history of the XX century) that ineffectual sanctions of the League of Nations did nothing for Ethiopia and caused Mussolini to ally himself to Hitler.

- note 3

Lepanto

G.K.Chesterton

White founts falling in the Courts of the sun,
And the Soldan of Byzantium is smiling as they run;
There is laughter like the fountains in that face of all men feared, It stirs the forest darkness, the
darkness of his beard; It curls the blood-red crescent, the crescent of his lips; For the inmost sea
of all the earth is shaken with his ships. They have dared the white republics up the capes of
Italy, They have dashed the Adriatic round the Lion of the Sea, And the Pope has cast his arms
abroad for agony and loss, And called the kings of Christendom for swords about the Cross. The
cold queen of England is looking in the glass; The shadow of the Valois is yawning at the Mass;

From evening isles fantastical rings faint the Spanish gun,

And the Lord upon the Golden Horn is laughing in the sun.

Dim drums throbbing, in the hills half heard,
Where only on a nameless throne a crownless prince has stirred, Where, risen from a doubtful

seat and half attained stall, The last knight of Europe takes weapons from the wall, The last and lingering troubadour to whom the bird has sung, That once went singing southward when all the world was young. In that enormous silence, tiny and unafraid, Comes up along a winding road the noise of the Crusade. Strong gongs groaning as the guns boom far, Don John of Austria is going to the war, Stiff flags straining in the night-blasts cold In the gloom black-purple, in the glint old-gold, Torchlight crimson on the copper kettle-drums, Then the tuckets, then the trumpets, then the cannon, and he comes. Don John laughing in the brave beard curled, Spurning of his stirrups like the thrones of all the world, Holding his head up for a flag of all the free. Love-light of Spain--hurrah! Death-light of Africa! Don John of Austria Is riding to the sea.

Mahound is in his paradise above the evening star,
(Don John of Austria is going to the war.)
He moves a mighty turban on the timeless houri's knees,
His turban that is woven of the sunsets and the seas.
He shakes the peacock gardens as he rises from his ease,
And he strides among the tree-tops and is taller than the trees; And his voice through all the garden is a thunder sent to bring Black Azrael and Ariel and Ammon on the wing. Giants and the Genii, Multiplex of wing and eye, Whose strong obedience broke the sky When Solomon was king.

They rush in red and purple from the red clouds of the morn,

From the temples where the yellow gods shut up their eyes in scorn;

They rise in green robes roaring from the green hells of the sea Where fallen skies and evil hues and eyeless creatures be, On them the sea-valves cluster and the grey sea-forests curl, Splashed with a splendid sickness, the sickness of the pearl; They swell in sapphire smoke out of the blue cracks of the ground,-- They gather and they wonder and give worship to Mahound. And he saith, "Break up the mountains where the hermit-folk can hide, And sift the red and silver sands lest bone of saint abide, And chase the Giaours flying night and day, not giving rest, For that which was our trouble comes again out of the west. We have set the seal of Solomon on all things under sun, Of knowledge and of sorrow and endurance of things done. But a noise is in the mountains, in the mountains, and I know The voice that shook our palaces--four hundred years ago: It is he that saith not 'Kismet'; it is he that knows not Fate; It is Richard, it is Raymond, it is Godfrey at the gate! It is he whose loss is laughter when he counts the wager worth, Put down your feet upon him, that our peace be on the earth." For he heard drums groaning and he heard guns jar, (Don John of Austria is going to the war.) Sudden and still--hurrah! Bolt from Iberia! Don John of Austria Is gone by Alcalar.

St. Michaels on his Mountain in the sea-roads of the north (Don John of Austria is girt and going forth.) Where the grey seas glitter and the sharp tides shift And the sea-folk labour and the red sails lift. He shakes his lance of iron and he claps his wings of stone; The noise is gone through Normandy; the noise is gone alone; The North is full of tangled things and texts and aching eyes, And dead is all the innocence of anger and surprise, And Christian killeth Christian in a narrow dusty room, And Christian dreadeth Christ that hath a newer face of doom, And Christian hateth Mary that God kissed in Galilee,-- But Don John of Austria is riding to the sea. Don John calling through the blast and the eclipse Crying with the trumpet, with the trumpet of his lips, Trumpet that sayeth _ha_!

Domino gloria!

Don John of Austria

Is shouting to the ships.

King Philip's in his closet with the Fleece about his neck

(Don John of Austria is armed upon the deck.)

The walls are hung with velvet that is black and soft as sin, And little dwarfs creep out of it and

little dwarfs creep in. He holds a crystal phial that has colours like the moon, He touches, and it tingles, and he trembles very soon, And his face is as a fungus of a leprous white and grey Like plants in the high houses that are shuttered from the day, And death is in the phial and the end of noble work, But Don John of Austria has fired upon the Turk. Don John's hunting, and his hounds have bayed-- Booms away past Italy the rumour of his raid. Gun upon gun, ha! ha! Gun upon gun, hurrah! Don John of Austria Has loosed the cannonade.

The Pope was in his chapel before day or battle broke,
(Don John of Austria is hidden in the smoke.)
The hidden room in man's house where God sits all the year,
The secret window whence the world looks small and very dear.
He sees as in a mirror on the monstrous twilight sea
The crescent of his cruel ships whose name is mystery;
They fling great shadows foe-wards, making Cross and Castle dark,
They veil the plume graced lions on the galleys of St. Mark;
And above the ships are palaces of brown, black-bearded chiefs,
And below the ships are prisons, where with multitudinous griefs, Christian captives sick and sunless, all a labouring race repines Like a race in sunken cities, like a nation in the mines. They are lost like slaves that sweat, and in the skies of morning hung The stair-ways of the tallest gods when tyranny was young. They are countless, voiceless, hopeless as those fallen or fleeing on Before the high Kings' horses in the granite of Babylon. And many a one grows witless in his quiet room in hell Where a yellow face looks inward through the lattice of his cell, And he finds his God forgotten, and he seeks no more a sign-- (But Don John of Austria has burst the battle-line!) Don John pounding from the slaughter-painted poop, Purpling all the ocean like a bloody pirate's sloop, Scarlet running over on the silvers and the golds, Breaking of the hatches up and bursting of the holds, Thronging of the thousands up that labour under sea White for bliss and blind for sun and stunned for liberty.

Vivat Hispania!
Domino Gloria!
Don John of Austria
Has set his people free!

Cervantes on his galley sets the sword back in the sheath
(Don John of Austria rides homeward with a wreath.)
And he sees across a weary land a straggling road in Spain,
Up which a lean and foolish knight for ever rides in vain,
And he smiles, but not as Sultans smile, and settles back the blade.... (But Don John of Austria rides home from the Crusade.)

Stanislaus Bocian

Andy Robertson — 11 Jan 2005, 14:09 · in reply to David Lebling

Yeah, I realised. Sorry Dave, I was addressing the list as a whole not you. My bad

From: "Andy Robertson" <andywrobertson at clara.co.uk>
There is no linkage between Catholic Conservatism and a support for
"corporate capitalism". Quite the reverse.

Which was precisely my point, if you read beyond the part of my message you
quoted.

Andy Robertson — 11 Jan 2005, 14:25 · in reply to Stanisław Bocian

Stanisław Bocian writes:

That unusual theory of Orwell explains, I think, his opinions about Chesterton. If Catholicism is a kind of communism, it is obvious that believers in it should be hunted and destroyed, or at least boycotted. I personally think Catholicism to be wholly opposed to Communism (I agree that it is not the point Orwell was making.)

Save that very fine essay, Sir!!! Bravo