

**Patrick Langan**

University Humanities Cheshire

@ plangan@legionaries.org

ID 0000-0002-6022-6488

■ Recibido / Received  
4 de octubre de 2022■ Aceptado / Accepted  
10 de octubre de 2022■ Páginas / Pages  
De la 233 a la 247

■ ISSN: 1885-365X

# The integration of narrative thinking and detective logic in Chesterton's Father Brown

La integración del pensamiento narrativo y la lógica detectivesca en el padre Brown de Chesterton

**ABSTRACT:**

The vast body of detective stories offers a model of how to integrate two complementary forms of thinking: logic thinking and narrative thinking. This article offers an hypothesis, created by Chesterton, in which Father Brown is a paradigm of the relationship between these two forms. Since the existence of logical thinking tools has been affirmed for more than two thousand years, this article focuses on the existence of narrative thinking tools specifically in the character of Father Brown. Demonstrating the existence of these narrative thinking tools is an important first step toward achieving an integration with logic. This article therefore represents a preview of further studies that are being done as part of the doctoral thesis: *How the Existence of Narrative Thinking in Chesterton's Detective, Father Brown, equipped him to know reality*. This article proposes that there is room for further study to actually codify these narrative thinking tools, just as Aristotle had done for logic. Also, it points to the possibility of a detective model of thinking, especially because detective stories continue to be so popular.

**KEY WORDS:**

Chesterton; Father Brown; Conan Doyle; Archetype; Narrative Thinking; Detective logic.

**RESUMEN:**

El vasto cuerpo de historias de detectives ofrece un modelo de cómo integrar dos formas complementarias de pensamiento: el pensamiento lógico y el pensamiento narrativo. Este artículo ofrece una hipótesis, elaborada por Chesterton, en la que el padre Brown es un paradigma de la relación entre estas dos formas. Dado que se ha afirmado la existencia de herramientas de pensamiento lógico desde hace más de dos mil años, este artículo se centra en la existencia de herramientas de pensamiento narrativo específicamente en el personaje del padre Brown. Demostrar la existencia de estas herramientas de pensamiento narrativo es un primer paso importante para lograr una integración con la lógica.

Este artículo representa, por tanto, un avance de los estudios que se están realizando como parte de la tesis doctoral: cómo la existencia del pensamiento narrativo en el detective de Chesterton, el padre Brown, lo equipó para conocer la realidad. Este artículo propone que hay espacio para estudios adicionales para codificar realmente estas herramientas de pensamiento narrativo; tal como había hecho Aristóteles con la lógica. También apunta a la posibilidad de un modelo detectivesco de pensamiento; especialmente porque las historias de detectives continúan siendo tan populares.

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**PALABRAS CLAVE:**

Chesterton; father Brown; Conan Doyle; arquetipo; pensamiento narrativo; lógica detectivesca.

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Two MODES OF THINKING

When there is a crime, investigators at the scene gather the evidence. The police interview witnesses and suspects. A small crime could amount to over a thousand pages of evidence but imagine if this evidence were neatly classified in a folder with color tabs. The Police Officer, wanting a search warrant, brings the thousand-page folder to a judge to obtain it. This folder in effect represents logical thinking. Normally the Police Officer must show probable cause in order to even get a warrant. The judge then takes the folder and looks at it. It is not that he doesn't want to read the warrant's thousand pages. In fact, he will read everything; but it is not yet intelligible. He needs a narrative to know what happened, or he cannot make sense of this folder of information. Otherwise, the evidence remains simply unintelligible. This is where two experts in psychology, L. Hawpe and J. Robinson, come into play: they mention the importance of narrative thinking in the courtroom).<sup>1</sup> In this example, there are indeed two modes of thinking, as J. Bruner has also affirmed:

There are two modes of cognitive functioning, two modes of thought, each providing distinctive ways of ordering experience, of constructing reality. The two (though complementary) are irreducible to one another.<sup>2</sup>

Here logical and narrative thinking are brought together. Such thinking raises further questions that should be answered: what is logical thinking and what is narrative thinking? For that matter, what in fact is logic? Is this based upon, and in reference to, Aristotelian logic better known as «classic logic?» Peter Kreeft defines this as follows, «When Aristotle wrote the world's first logic text, he was reflecting on what Socrates had already done, defining the principles of Socrates' practice.»<sup>3</sup>

Classic logic distinguishes three kinds of thoughts, that is, three «acts of the mind»:

1. Simple apprehension (i.e. the concept; man).
2. Judging (i.e. the judgement; man is mortal).
3. Reasoning (i.e. syllogism; Man is mortal. Joe is a man, therefore, Joe is mortal).<sup>4</sup>

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1/ Hawpe, L. and Robinson, J.: *Narrative Psychology. Narrative Thinking as a Hueristic Process (Ch 6)*, New York, Praeger, 1886, p. 124.

2/ Bruner, J.: *Actual Minds, Possible Words*, London, Harvard University Press, 1986, p. 11.

3/ Kreeft, P.: *Socratic Logic*, South Bend, Indiana, St Augustine's Press, 2004, p. 11.

4/ *Ibid.*, p. 28. For more information on this subject, see Kreeft.

What then is narrative thinking? Hawpe and Robinson have argued that, «Narrative thinking is therefore a type causal thinking. The narrative thinking consists of creating a fit, between a situation and a story schema.»<sup>5</sup> They also suggest that when it is successful, the story-making is a coherent and plausible account of both how, and why, something happened. Expressed in a different way, this could imply the integration of these two modes of thought, or as the integration of Aristotelian logic and *Poetics* (how a story works). Although the word *narrative* and *story* can have different meanings according to their context, in this article the words *narrative* and *story* are used interchangeably.

## 1.2. NARRATIVE THINKING

Since logical thinking has been developed and codified now for over two millennia, the focus here will be on narrative thinking. Bruner says, «In contrast to our vast knowledge of how science and logical reasoning proceed, we know precious little in any formal sense about how to make good stories.»<sup>6</sup> What can be extrapolated from Bruner is that more scholarly attention has been dedicated to logical reasoning than to narrative reasoning. That said, it should not simply be accepted that very little is known about the forms, or structure, of story. This is important when examining whether the forms or structures used to tell a story are basically those same forms or structures that could be used in narrative thinking.

Clearly the important question to ask then is this: does narrative or story have a structure? To answer this question one must turn to Aristotle, von Balthasar and Chesterton. Without developing all the implications of their philosophical thought, it is nevertheless possible to support their lines of argument which affirm that narrative indeed does have a structure.

One may begin with Aristotle, simply because his work *Poetics* is the foundational study codifying the notion that story has a structure. His methodology proposes to inquire into the structure of the plot. Also he wants to understand both the number and the nature of each of these parts. Aristotle has already (assuming his logic was developed before his *Poetics*) grasped the deeper concept that logic has a structure. Now he wants to see if story has a structure, and wants to find out what it is:

I propose to treat of Poetry in itself and of its various kinds, noting the essential quality of each; to inquire into the structure of the plot as requisite to a good poem; into the number and nature of the parts of which a poem is composed; and similarly into whatever else falls within the same inquiry.<sup>7</sup>

Whereas Aristotle analyzed the structure of story in theater, more than twenty centuries later, von Balthasar does the same in his book, *Theodrama*. He is particularly interested in theater because of the audience. For him, audience is an important part of how a story works. His book does not just refer to theater as it is traditionally understood. He says, «Drama does

5/ Hawpe, L. and Robinson, J.: *Narrative Psychology*.

6/ Bruner, J.: *Actual Minds, Possible Words*, p. 14.

7/ Aristotle: *Poetics*, Pennsylvania, Penn State, 2000, p. 1.

not have to be written in five acts and in verse. It can take place on the market square and —why not?— experiment with new forms of expression in the cinema and television”.<sup>8</sup>

In the very preface of his book, he affirms that story has a structure. Indeed, it is von Balthasar who talks about a structured performance. He says, “What interests us here is the whole phenomenon of theatre: the sheer fact that there is such a thing as a structured performance and ultimately the actual substance of the play itself”.<sup>9</sup>

Returning to the author of Father Brown, Chesterton, he claims that story also has proportions. However, this cannot be deduced simply like a mathematical problem. In other words, in mathematics you can foretell the conclusion. Story, if you will, has more mystery to it. Yet as the thesis on which this article is based shows, story tools can help not only predict but anticipate the future. What is important here is that Chesterton is affirming the very existence of story structure and its difference from logic.

A story has proportions, variations, surprises, particular dispositions, which cannot be worked out by rule in the abstract, like a sum. We could not deduce whether or no Achilles would give back the body of Hector from a Pythagorean theory.<sup>10</sup>

### 1.3. DETECTIVE THINKING

To refer to detective thinking is to refer to these two modes of thinking integrated together. A detective uses both modes: he gathers evidence from the crime scene, he makes logical inferences, then he builds his narrative. However, the detective is also an example of how to integrate these within a whole. Every element of the storyline needs to match every element of the evidence. If not, he must explain the *loose ends*. To refer to tools, one is actually referring to thinking tools. A case can be made that narrative, just like logic, offers thinking tools. It is interesting to note that Aristotelian logic is called *Organon*, which in the Greek even means tool. He calls it *tool* because logic is an instrument that helps to develop the other sciences. The same terminology, the word «tool», is therefore in relationship to narrative.

Consider two examples of tools as they apply to logic. First, an obvious one is a definition; simply put, clear definitions help one think. For instance, if two people are discussing something using the same word, but each has a different definition, what follows is confused thinking. In a synonymous way, it may be claimed that narrative thinking offers tools that can be drawn from the structure of the narrative. Another clear example is motive. A detective will find it hard to solve a crime without a motive. In a similar way, a storyteller will find it hard to write a story without a protagonist who wants something. As such, motive can also be construed as a narrative thinking tool.

These two modes of thinking may even provide insight into how Chesterton thinks. Does Chesterton combine both modes of thinking? Indeed, there is a real possibility that the combination of logic (he is a logical man) and narrative thinking are one of Chesterton's hallmarks. Maybe it is this integration of both modes of thinking that in fact gives him a nimble

8/ Von Balthasar, H.: *Theodrama*, San Francisco, Ignatius Press, 1988, p. 78.

9/ *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

10/ Chesterton, G.K.: *The Everlasting Man*, Tacoma, Angelico Press (Kindle Edition), 2013, p. 494.

mind. Maybe if he were to only use logic, he would be like a dancer with one leg. Logic and narrative thinking together provide many more combinations. As Bruner cautions, “Efforts to reduce one mode to the other or to ignore one at the expense of the other inevitable fail to capture the rich diversity of thought.”<sup>11</sup>

So in other words, it can be argued that a detective's approach is a model for integrating logic with narrative. Father Brown has been chosen as the exemplar for this, but why? Since there are many fictional detectives to choose from, why Father Brown? Firstly, because it is Chesterton himself who seems to use both modes of thinking. Secondly, because he wrote many articles in the detective genre, he was effectively becoming an expert —not only in writing— but in analyzing this genre. Thirdly, because he is searching for a new character that will be distinct from Sherlock Holmes; one who puts an emphasis on logical tools to examine the crime scene. Detectives apply both modes, but tend to emphasize one more than the other. It is Chesterton who came up with a character that put the emphasis on narrative thinking.

... but his emphasis on motive and character freed detective fiction from the copycat techniques of the rivals of Sherlock Holmes. The leading mystery writers of his day quickly embraced this new style of murder mystery. They began writing stories of domestic crimes with human motives, with a limited list of suspects, with obvious (though well-disguised) clues, and with an unlikely detective who solves his puzzles without relying on superhuman knowledge or intelligence. Indeed, whenever you think of the great detectives of mystery fiction's golden age —Hercule Poirot, Lord Peter Wimsey, Miss Marple, Ellery Queen, Philo Vance, or Nero Wolfe— remember their parentage. Remember that they had a father. His name was Father Brown.<sup>12</sup>

Finally, there is yet another reason for choosing Father Brown. At first, this might even seem anecdotal or circumstantial. As its creator, Chesterton was the first president of the Detection Club founded in 1928. This shows Chesterton's interest not only in the writing of detective stories but, in a broader sense, in the consolidation, development and care of the detective genre. Moreover, this demonstrates that he was respected by other detective writers in his own day, as M. Ward notes:

Membership numbers are small, with the leading detective novelists of the day generally included. When Anthony Berkeley in 1929 wanted to found the Detective Club, he wrote that it «would be quite incomplete without the creator of Father Brown.»<sup>13</sup>

## 2. The Link between Literature and Philosophy

Obviously, this article is about literature because Father Brown is a fictional character. At the same time, it is about philosophy (logic), because of Chesterton's use of narrative thinking tools in the fictional character of Father Brown. Therefore, one ought to ask: what is the link

11/ Bruner, J.: *Actual Minds, Possible Words*, p. 11.

12/ Ahlquist, D.: *The Innocence of Father Brown*, Chesterton.org/lecture-20, Chesterton University.

13/ Ward, M.: *Gilbert Keith Chesterton*, London, Aeterna Press, 2005, p. 443.

between the two? In other words, how do literature and philosophy fit together? What can literature offer philosophy and vice versa?

First, there is Aristotle's concept of imitation in the *Poetics*. Scott Myers says, «But I believe what Aristotle describes here [Poetics, chapter 1] is about the writer or artist capturing something of real life in the stories we create. Stories imitate aspects of human existence.»<sup>14</sup> In other words, art imitates reality; or what Greek philosophers called *mimesis*. It is in fact by virtue of a link, called the archetype, that storytellers are able to achieve imitation.

## 2.1 THE LINK: ARCHETYPE

There is an important way in which story does this, through the link known as the archetype. What is an archetype? By definition it is «the original pattern or model of which all things of the same type are representations or copies: prototype.»<sup>15</sup> Archetypes are patterns of the mind, but also patterns of reality, and it is literature that helps unearth these archetypes.

Instead of studying Father Brown, one could follow a real life detective around, taking notes and asking him questions. Would that not make more sense than just reading literature? Possibly so, however, even if a real-life detective were studied, one would still have to unearth the archetypes for what he is doing. In other words, one must look for the archetypes of how a person thinks in order to figure out what really happened.

Northrop Frye is one influential twentieth-century literary critic and literary theorist who has written about archetypes. He posed this question: how can so many writers have common images, for example, the sea?<sup>16</sup> He goes on to say that the archetypes that literature gives us correspond to the order of nature: «It is clear that criticism cannot be systematic unless there is a quality in literature which enables it to be so, an order of words corresponding to the order of nature in the natural sciences.»<sup>17</sup>

C. Vogler describes the archetype in this way, «The archetypes are part of the universal language of storytelling, and a command of their energy is as essential to the writer as breathing.»<sup>18</sup>

## 2.2. SHERLOCK HOLMES: EXAMPLAR OF THE LINK

An examination of how archetypes can be used to link detective literature with real detective work is needed. For this, one must turn to Sherlock Holmes, and his creator, Conan Doyle. Because there are many examples, we will cite only a few.

Conan Doyle, who was a doctor, realized that police investigation methods in his era were insufficient. They relied solely on eyewitnesses and brute force (torture of witnesses).

14/ Myers, S: *Studying Aristotle's «Poetics»*, [gointothestory.blcklst.com/studying-aristotles-poetics-part-1-structure-and-imitation-d86c2ce32b00](https://gointothestory.blcklst.com/studying-aristotles-poetics-part-1-structure-and-imitation-d86c2ce32b00), 2013

15/ *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, [Merriam-webster.com](https://www.merriam-webster.com)

16/ Frye, N: *The Archetypes of Literature*, [kenyonreview.org/kr-online-issue/kenyon-review-credos/selections/northrop-frye-656342/](https://kenyonreview.org/kr-online-issue/kenyon-review-credos/selections/northrop-frye-656342/), The Kenyon Review, 1951

17/ *Ibid.*

18/ Vogler, C.: *The Writer's Journey*, Studio City, CA, Michael Wiese Productions, 2007, p. 24.

He wanted to apply the scientific method to crime scene investigation. The way for him to communicate this intuition was through his Sherlock Holmes stories. Holmes was his mechanism for educating people.<sup>19</sup> For example, Sherlock even inspired a manual for investigators written by Hans Gross that still remains an important book about crime scene investigation to this day.<sup>20</sup> A second example is the way in which Sherlock Holmes inspired the first forensic lab in 1910. This lab was created by Edmund Locard, an avid reader of Conan Doyle's books.<sup>21</sup> Locard formulated the basic principle of forensic science: *Every contact leaves a trace*. This became known as Locard's «exchange principle.»

Conan Doyle himself even used the skill he had given to Sherlock to solve a real life crime and to exonerate two men. H. Haycraft has similarly affirmed this: «Controverting the popular belief that fiction and fact are closely related, he took a successful part in two major cases: the Slater and Edalji affairs. His brilliant analysis of the in each case aided materially in preventing grave injustice.»<sup>22</sup>

These examples of the link between literature and real detective work lead to an important question: Why did Sherlock Holmes have such an impact on real life investigation and Father Brown did not? Could this be because today students study logic in school, often in the form of mathematics, so they could easily understand how Sherlock was thinking? That said, they do not study narrative thinking, because this field is only beginning to be understood. Maybe one day narrative thinking can be taught in high schools and in detective schools, but for now this remains something of a moot point.

### 2.2.1. Examples of the narrative tools used by Father Brown

This still begs the question: why in fact did Sherlock Holmes have such an impact on real life detective work whereas Father Brown did not? As stated above, this may be because we are only beginning to understand the notion of narrative tools. In fact, Chesterton wrote 52 Father Brown stories altogether. One of these stories has no tool because it is simply «pure intuition», the definition for which will be given below. In eleven of these stories, a tool he has used in a previous story is used again. In other words, the same tool is repeated. This means that Father Brown used 41 different narrative thinking tools.

Although in the thesis on which this article is based, all 41 of these narrative tools are analyzed, this article will focus on just two, respectively known as: *from inside out* and the *unconscious desire*. The first choice, *from the inside out* (in *The Secret of Father Brown* – 1927), is made because it is the core of Father Brown's method, which he himself describes in this story. This is also the clearest link with how a story works; that is, viewing the protagonist from the inside out. Secondly, there is unconscious desire (in *The Flying Stars* – 1911) because on the one hand, motive is an easier narrative thinking tool to grasp; on the other hand, this story is chosen as it offers a fresh vision for motive, and because it shows these two levels:

19/ *How Sherlock Changed the World*, United States, PBS, 2013, E1 7:20.

20/ *Ibid.*, E2 14:56.

21/ *Ibid.*, E2 17:49.

22/ Haycraft, H.: *Murder for pleasure. The Life and Times of the Detective Story*, New York, Appleton-Century Company, 1941, p. 52.



the conscious and the unconscious at work. It too gives a better sense for the possibilities of these seemingly common thinking tools, such as motive.

In each story, the following elements may be identified:

- Angle: This basically means that the story is seen from the point of view of a specific story tool. There is no interest in examining the whole story, rather only the aspects of the story that highlight the tool.
- The Father Brown story itself.
- Robert McKee: His book *Story* is the manual used to describe the tools. There are many manuals but this one takes the approach of going to the substance of story. For instance, on page 3 he tells us: «Story is about eternal, universal forms, not formulas. ... *Story* is about archetypes, not stereotypes.»<sup>23</sup> He bases his book on Aristotle's *Poetics* and includes the advances in the understanding of how a story works over the last two thousand years.
- Comments from other authors about the tool; especially those from Chesterton himself.

## 2.3. THE SECRET OF FATHER BROWN (A PROTAGONIST: INSIDE OUT)

### 2.3.1. Angle



In *The Secret of Father Brown*, the tool that presents the protagonist from the inside out will be examined. This is not just a specific tool, it is also his method of investigation. This story in fact asks the question: does Father Brown have a method? Or is it just pure intuition on his part and therefore almost impossible to analyze or codify, and therefore difficult to teach others. This is an important point because the claim is being made that narrative thinking is not just intuitive. Intuition is often understood as the ability to acquire knowledge without recourse to conscious reasoning. In this story there is the implication that Father Brown is intuitive, and it is understood in this sense, yet here the aim is to show how he uses thinking tools to solve a problem. In other words, there is a methodology, namely reasoning, that one can learn from.

### 2.3.2. The Father Brown Story

The story begins with Father Brown who goes to visit his friend, Flambeau, in Spain. One evening they are outside a house, standing around a fire. The next door neighbor, Mr Grandison Chance, an American from Boston, shows up. He is the character who wants to uncover Father Brown's method. Mr Chance is good at asking questions; indeed he is relentless in questioning Father Brown. Recall that this story was written in the mid-1920s when America was still perfecting its administrative processes and methods that included, for example, the assembly line.

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23/ McKee, R.: *Story*, New York, HarperCollins, 1997, p. 3.



### 2.3.2.1. His method

Chance's line of questioning may be followed in the following dialogue between him and Fr Brown (with annotations below each excerpt):

**Chance:** «We are well acquainted' went on the stranger firmly, "with the alleged achievements of ... Sherlock Holmes, Nicholas Carter, and other imaginative incarnations of the craft."»<sup>24</sup>

It is interesting to note Chance's use of the word, *craft*. In this conversation, «craft» is not just something personal, that cannot be transferred to others, ...but rather something that can be taught. Chance is interested in the literal process, that which others can learn. He is interested in transferability. Now he wonders if Father Brown actually even has a method.

**Chance:** «Some have speculated, sir, as to whether the difference of method may perhaps involve rather the absence of method.»<sup>25</sup>

**Brown:** «Father Brown was silent; then he started a little, almost as if he had been nodding over the stove, and said: "I beg your pardon. Absence of method. ... Absence of mind, too, I'm afraid."»<sup>26</sup>

Father Brown does not accept that he lacks a method, because this would imply an absence of mind. Therefore, one may conclude from this that his way of solving crimes is not just pure intuition.

**Chance:** «'I should say of strictly tabulated scientific method,' went on the inquirer. "Edgar Poe throws off several little essays in a conversational form, explaining Dupin's method, with its fine links of logic. Dr. Watson had to listen to some pretty exact expositions of Holmes's method with its observation of material details. But nobody seems to have got on to any full account of your method, Father Brown..."»<sup>27</sup>

Here Chance is taunting Father Brown. It can even be imagined that Chance might also be a lawyer.

**Brown:** «Father Brown groaned. He put his head on his hands and remained a moment, as if full of a silent convulsion of thought. Then he lifted his head and said in a dull voice: "Very well. I must tell the secret. ... You see, it was I who killed all those people ... You see, I had murdered them all myself", explained Father Brown patiently... "So, of course, I knew how it was done... I had planned out each of the crimes very carefully", went on Father Brown, "I had thought out exactly how a thing like that could be done, and in what style or state of mind a man could really do it. And when I was quite sure that I felt exactly like the murderer myself, of course I knew who he was."»<sup>28</sup>

**Chance:** «Why, of course, if it's just a figure of speech and means you tried to reconstruct the psychology.»<sup>29</sup>

24/ Chesterton, G.K.: *The Secret of Father Brown. The Complete Father Brown Mysteries* (Gary Fisher), Kindle, 2013, p. 280.

25/ *Ibid.*

26/ *Ibid.*

27/ *Ibid.*

28/ *Ibid.*

29/ *Ibid.*



**Brown:** «No, no, no,' he said, almost angrily; "I don't mean just a figure of speech. ...I mean that I really did see myself, and my real self, committing the murders.<sup>30</sup> I don't try to get outside the man. I try to get inside the murderer. ... I am always inside a man, moving his arms and legs; but I wait till I know I am inside a murderer, thinking his thoughts, wrestling with his passions; till I have bent myself into the posture of his hunched and peering hatred; till I see the world with his bloodshot and squinting eyes, looking between the blinkers of his half-witted concentration; looking up the short and sharp perspective of a straight road to a pool of blood. Till I am really a murderer."»<sup>31</sup>

Father Brown is seeing the criminal from the inside out. He becomes the criminal. He uses this thinking tool to figure out who committed the crime. This is the tool, but is also the core of his method. This excerpt, in particular, is key to uncovering his interpretive method.

### 2.3.3. McKee

Robert McKee can help form an understanding of what Father Brown has said *from the inside out* and how this fits into the story structure. Where do these thinking tools come from? They come from how a story works. McKee give us the words to express these story tools. They may first be taken at face value and then they can be interpreted as thinking tools. In essence, the argument is that story thinking comes from story structure. Again, in order to understand the structure of this story, the character Robert McKee may be relied on as it is he who asks:

What is the *substance* of story? In all other arts the answer is self-evident. The [music] composer has his instrument and the notes it sounds. The dancer calls her body her instrument. Sculptors chisel stone. Painters stir paint. All artists can lay hands on the raw material of their art—except the writer. For at the nucleus of a story is a «substance», like the energy swirling in an atom, that's never *directly* seen, heard, or touched, yet we know it and feel it. The stuff of story is alive but intangible. «Intangible?» I hear you thinking. «But I have my *words*»... In fact, it's not. ... To understand the substance of story and how it performs, you need to view your work from the inside out, from the center of your character, looking *out* at the world through your character's eyes, experiencing the story as if you were the living character yourself.<sup>32</sup>

This is the link between Father Brown and McKee. Here it becomes clear that story is seeing the protagonist from the inside out. Indeed, story gives us the tools to see a character from the inside out. So many have talked about going from the inside out, it has almost become a slogan. But what tools may be used to make an interpretation from the inside out? The structure of story offers this set of tools. It is therefore the structure that helps a detective see the criminal from the inside out. And the tool that will be found in the next story is motive. Motive is another example of what gets inside the criminal's mind and heart.

This idea is further echoed in *The Writer's Journey* by C. Volger, who has claimed, «Stories invite us to invest part of our personal identity in the Hero for the duration of the experience.

30/ *Ibid.*

31/ *Ibid.*

32/ McKee, R.: *Story*, pp. 135-136.

In a sense we become the Hero for a while. We project ourselves into the Hero's psyche, and see the world through her eyes.»<sup>33</sup>

### 2.3.4. Chesterton

Chesterton's approach coincides with that of McKee. This becomes evident in a phrase like the following: «Yet the whole trouble comes from a man trying to look at these stories from the outside, as if they were scientific objects. He has only to look at them from the inside, and ask himself how he would begin a story.»<sup>34</sup>

An interesting connection can be made here with an article he wrote in 1902, *A Defence of Nonsense*, in which he says that logic is not enough to draw out the soul of things. There must be something else, some other way. Story thinking tools help one get to the soul of the person, to get from the inside out.

Nonsense and faith (strange as the conjunction may seem) are the two supreme symbolic assertions of the truth that to draw out the soul of things with a syllogism is as impossible as to draw out Leviathan with a hook. The well-meaning person who, by merely studying the logical side of things, has decided that 'faith is nonsense,' does not know how truly he speaks; later it may come back to him in the form that nonsense is faith.<sup>35</sup>

### 2.3.5. Agatha Christie

Agatha Christie, in her Detective Poirot novel *Cards on the Table*, defends the importance of the psychological elements in order to solve a crime. This book was first published in 1936, the year Chesterton died. Agatha also focuses on seeing the criminal from the inside out. In fact, she even links the word deduction with the use of a story thinking tool. «The deduction must be, therefore, entirely psychological but it is none the less interesting for that, because when all is said and done it is the mind of the murderer that is of supreme interest.»<sup>36</sup>

## 2.4. THE FLYING ATARS (UNCONSCIOUS DESIRE)

### 2.4.1 Angle

For a detective, knowing the criminal motive or desire is very important. It helps a detective to understand what is really going on and to evaluate the criminal from the inside out. Desire answers the question: what does the protagonist want?

Behind every story there is not just a conscious desire but a subconscious one. Of course, a subconscious desire can also mean a deeper desire because a person can slowly become

33/ Vogler, C.: *The Writer's Journey*, p. 30.

34/ Chesterton, G.K.: *The Everlasting Man*, p. 195.

35/ Chesterton, G.K.: *A Defence of Nonsense*, [Gutenberg.org/cache/epub/12245/pg12245-images.html#A\\_DEFENCE\\_OF\\_NONSENSE](https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/12245/pg12245-images.html#A_DEFENCE_OF_NONSENSE), 1902.

36/ Christie, A: *Cards on the Table*, 1936, Foreword.

aware of their unconscious desire. A. Macintyre, the moral ethicist, aptly describes the unconscious desire in terms of something lacking in ourselves that we do not understand and that we cannot put into words:

We should not, however, underestimate the extent to which we may on occasion be mistaken as to what the true object of some desire is, that is, as to what would satisfy it. And we should not ignore the importance of desires for that which we cannot as yet make it intelligible that we should desire. Desires sometimes point beyond themselves to some as yet unacknowledged, but felt lack in ourselves...<sup>37</sup>

### 2.4.2. McKee

McKee makes the distinction between conscious and unconscious desire even more clear in his description of the structure of story. He argues that since there are two desires —the conscious and the unconscious— a great detective has to try to spot both:

An unconscious desire is always more powerful and durable, with roots reaching to the protagonist's innermost self. When an unconscious desire drives the story, it allows the writer to create a far more complex character who may repeatedly change his conscious desire.<sup>38</sup>

Then how does Father Brown use unconscious desire in his attempt to understand the criminal's mind and to persuade him? The criminal in question here is Flambeau. In the first story, Father Brown is at Flambeau's home in Spain. The second story was actually written sixteen years before this. This is the story of the moment when Flambeau starts to change.

### 2.4.3. Father Brown Story

On the day after Christmas, there is a party that Father Brown is attending. It is in a large home and the guests put on a pantomime. During this occasion, the family jewels are stolen. Father Brown realizes that it is Flambeau, a criminal, who he has caught before in a crime. Father Brown goes outside and spots him up in a tree. Yes, he realizes that Flambeau is a thief, but for him it is not about the jewels. For him, robbing is an art form. In other words, the conscious desire is to rob the jewels, however, the art of getting away with it is his deeper desire. Father Brown appeals to this deeper desire that is within him:

But he swings, flashing and successful, from the short tree in this garden to the tall, rambling tree in the other, and only stops there because a shade has slid under the smaller tree and has unmistakably «Well, Flambeau», says the voice [Father Brown], «you really look like a Flying Star; but that always means a Falling Star at last.» The silver, sparkling figure above seems to lean forward in the laurels and, confident of escape, listens to the little figure below.<sup>39</sup>

37/ Macintyre, A.: *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2016, p. 12.

38/ McKee, R.: *Story*, pp. 194-195.

39/ Chesterton, G.K.: *The Flying Stars. The Complete Father Brown Mysteries* (Gary Fisher), Kindle, 2013, pp. 54-55.

### 2.4.3.1. The unconscious desire

Father Brown wants something more than to solve a crime, he wants Flambeau to change his life. This is his priestly side but it does not conflict with his detective side. He continues:

A common thief would have been thankful for the warning and fled; but you are a poet. You already had the clever notion of hiding the jewels in a blaze of false stage jewelry. And now, by the way, you might give me back those diamonds... The green branch on which the glittering figure swung, rustled as if in astonishment; but the voice went on: «I want you to give them back, Flambeau, and I want you to give up this life. There is still youth and honour and humour in you; don't fancy they will last in that trade. Men may keep a sort of level of good, but no man has ever been able to keep on one level of evil. That road goes down and down. The kind man drinks and turns cruel; the frank man kills and lies about it. Many a man I've known started like you to be an honest outlaw, a merry robber of the rich, and ended stamped into slime.»

Father Brown informs him of the inner dynamic of sin, that can only get worse and worse. Sin cannot easily stay at the same level. Father Brown explains that his downward steps into evil have already begun:

...Your downward steps have begun. You used to boast of doing nothing mean, but you are doing something mean tonight. You are leaving suspicion on an honest boy with a good deal against him already; you are separating him from the woman he loves and who loves him. But you will do meaner things than that before you die.<sup>40</sup>

These words of Father Brown's hit Flambeau hard: Then he drops the diamonds: «...Three flashing diamonds fell from the tree to the turf.»<sup>41</sup> Father Brown had touched on his deeper desire, his hidden desire. Flambeau dropped the jewels and disappeared over the treetops. He did not want his art to become evil. He did not want to leave suspicion on an honest boy who was being blamed for the disappearance of the jewels. Years later, Father Brown and Flambeau become friends and work on solving crimes together. In Spain, Flambeau with Father Brown, standing around the fire, would go on to say, «Only my friend told me that he knew exactly why I stole; and I have never stolen since.»<sup>42</sup> Flambeau is now able to express his deeper desire.

### 2.4.4. Chesterton

Chesterton touches on the very interesting ideas of recurring desire and recurring doubt. These are a search into the depths of the soul. It is a seeking. It is not just the question, what do I want? Rather, it is what do I really want, deep down?

So the mythological imagination moves as it were in circles, hovering either to find a place or to return to it. In a word, mythology is a search; it is something that combines a recurrent desire with a recurrent doubt, mixing a most hungry sincerity in the idea

40/ *Ibid.*

41/ *Ibid.*

42/ ÍD.: *The Secret of Flambeau. The Complete Father Brown Mysteries* (Gary Fisher), Kindle, 2013, p. 280.

of seeking for a place with a most dark and deep and mysterious levity about all the places found.<sup>43</sup>

The unconscious (deeper desire) is another important narrative thinking tool. In this case it was also the communication tool for getting through to Flambeau. Similarly, it proves that detectives have to be good communicators, too.

### 2.4.5. Voss

Chris Voss, an FBI agent and a hostage negotiator, explains how in a negotiation it is important to know not just what they want, but why they want it. This is yet another way of describing deeper desire: «... Don't get wrapped up in the other side's position (what they're asking for) but instead focus on their interests (why they're asking for it).»<sup>44</sup>

## 3. Conclusions (Further Investigation)

### 3.1. CODIFY

The goal of this article was to show the existence of the narrative thinking tools. In the future, someone could codify these tools like Aristotle did for logic. Narrative thinking tools are more mysterious than logical thinking tools. As a result, it is probable that any list will be less exhaustive than logical thinking tools.

### 3.2 DETECTIVE LOGIC

Crime normally implies investigators. Further investigation is needed in the area of detective logic, that, as has been argued, is the integration of logic and narrative; the essence of detective work. This is called detective logic because the modern detective is a living model of this type of logic. It is also a good name because, as already demonstrated, the detective genre continues to be successful among men and women alike. This is so that the public can grasp the concept of a story.

This logic is also more about the male-female divide. It is interesting to note these statistics: «the most popular movie genres among adults in the United States as of December 2018, by gender: [Crime is fifth most popular] ...Crime: Males 79%, Females 84%.»<sup>45</sup> This integrated logic could also be a basis for psychology. It could even help integrate interdisciplinary fields at universities: such as the humanities and sciences.

In a relativistic world, the detective (whether in reality or fiction) implies that there is a truth to be found and this enables a fresh look at relativism. Would a supporter of relativism agree

43/ ÍD.: *The Everlasting Man*, p. 215.

44/ C. Voss: *Never Split the Difference*, New York, Harper Collins, 2016, p. 11.

45/ «Most popular movie genres among adults in the United States as of December 2018, by gender», 2018, Statista.com/statistics.

that if there is a robbery in his home and he calls a detective, all he expects would be a list of opinions about what happened? In this case, would he accept that all truth is relative? Surely these are just the kinds of questions that Father Brown might ask.

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