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G. K. Chesterton's rhetoric in defense of the family: an analysis of the articles published in *The Illustrated London News* (1905–1936)

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ABSTRACT

This is an in-depth analysis of the style and rhetoric read in G. K. Chesterton's essays on the topic of marriage, divorce and the institution of the family, written for *The Illustrated London News* during the years 1905–1936. A journalist and writer, Chesterton introduced a persuasive defense of common sense during a time when our present-day cultural and social context was still in its formative phase. This, in conjunction with the uniqueness of his style and the structure of his argumentation, which integrates well with different forms of communication, render his rhetoric and ideas on defense of the family altogether relevant, topical and exemplary.

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Introduction

There may be exceptional people who would be happier without the Civil Government; sensitive souls who really feel unwell when they see a policeman. But we have surely the right to impose the State on everybody if it suits nearly everybody; and if so, we have the right to impose the Family on everybody if it suits nearly everybody (Chesterton 1987, vol. 28, 554).

The socio-cultural and political context in Europe in the last decades is marked by the tendency to propose and promote a new vision of the family, the nature of human beings, and the relation one has with oneself and with others. For this reason, it seems an interesting venture to review the work of a successful author who might be considered an example, a model for communication style and rhetoric, someone who defended with efficacy the nature of human relations as well as human freedom. This was the impetus behind the study of G. K. Chesterton's journalistic contribution (1874–1936) dedicated to the theme of the family.

The study of this English writer's work is particularly noteworthy given that he lived in a historical moment wherein England encouraged the freedom to divorce – in other

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words, during the initial and most profound alteration of the vision of marriage. Describing this period in *The Superstition of Divorce*, G. K. Chesterton writes:

It is exceedingly characteristic of the dreary decades before the War that the forms of freedom in which they seemed to specialise were suicide and divorce. [...] Other forms of freedom were being increasingly curtailed (Chesterton 1920, 31).

For Chesterton, allowing for the freedom – in the sense of free choice – to divorce was a decision that threatened the entire social order and the future of generations to come. It meant introducing a false freedom and the acceptance of one of the greatest causes of the family's destruction. This led to an ever-growing denial of true freedom and truth pertaining to what it means to be human. Marriage and the family are instead for Chesterton a guarantee of real freedom and respect for human dignity, and in his view, this freedom and dignity represent the single dimension wherein the human person truly exercises his or her creativity and finds happiness.

The vow is a voluntary loyalty; and the marriage vow is marked among ordinary oaths of allegiance by the fact that the allegiance is also a choice. The man is not only a citizen of the city, but also the founder and builder of the city. He is not only a soldier serving the colours, but he has himself artistically selected and combined the colours, like the colours of an individual dress (Chesterton 1920, 27–28).

The writing and rhetoric of our English author might serve as models to observe mainly for two reasons. Above all, as we have seen, he wrote – and not without success – precisely at the moment in which all the main ideas and visions on human life as we know it today were being formed. The second reason for studying the journalistic work of this author emerges out of his success, and the efficacious and persuasive style through which Chesterton expresses and defends the ideas that had become commonly thought of as 'old hat'. As Lauer (1991) observes, Chesterton was in fact quite famous but as an outsider, as all his life was given to combat pagan humanism. He himself converted to Catholicism and found himself among the minority in English society, but this did not deter his writing and speaking with great force and persuasiveness, bearing a message that too many was outdated and medieval. He was able to speak and write with effect, and he defended good sense and the pillars of society, such as the family, despite finding himself fighting against the current of modernity and fashion, and rejecting the so-called new and progressive ideas. Hence, I share Lauer's statement that 'G. K. Chesterton is alive and kicking today – in a way that most of his contemporaries are not – precisely because he enunciated clearly and forcefully the fundamental principles in the light of which issues, whether of today or of yesterday, can be confronted intelligently' (6).

Indeed, Chesterton arduously defends tradition for itself and fundamental principles, which were labeled 'traditional' in the pejorative sense. He, therefore, writes in *Orthodoxy*:

Tradition means giving a vote to the most obscure of all classes, our ancestors. It is the democracy of the dead. Tradition refuses to submit to the small and arrogant oligarchy of those who merely happen to be walking about (Chesterton 1909, 85).

The author emphasizes a grave error of modern argumentation, namely the thoughtless rejection of anything traditional.

An imbecile habit has arisen in modern controversy of saying that such and such a creed can be held in one age but cannot be held in another. Some dogma, we are told, was credible in the twelfth century, but is not credible in the twentieth. You might as well say that a certain philosophy can be believed on Mondays, but cannot be believed on Tuesdays. You might as well say of a view of the cosmos that it was suitable to half-past three, but not suitable to half-past four. What a man can believe depends upon his philosophy, not upon the clock or the century. [...] It is simply a matter of a man's theory of things. Therefore, in dealing with any historical answer, the point is not whether it was given in our time, but whether it was given in answer to our question (Chesterton 1909, 135–136).

The critical thought of G. K. Chesterton is enormously relevant in that it puts one on the alert for the current tendency to attack *a priori* the principles and foundations set forth in the past. The author objects to the widely shared mentality that accepted the upheaval of principles under the banner of progress. For Chesterton, progress

should mean that we are always changing the world to suit the vision. Progress does mean (just now) that we are always changing the vision. [...] We are not altering the real to suit the ideal. We are altering the ideal: it is easier (Chesterton 1909, 195).

Therefore, as he states in *The Ball and the Cross*, the tendency of modern thought has very little to do with progress:

[...] free thought can never be progressive. It can never be progressive because it will accept nothing from the past; it begins every time again from the beginning; and it goes every time in a different direction (Chesterton 1910, 146).

The family, in fact, understood as a lasting and sacramental unity of man and woman, according to Chesterton simultaneously represents an ideal and fundament of society. The family is at the base of all of the civility, of all societies, and ensures a prosperous future. The institution of the family, in its union and authority, is the only salvation of society and is an undeniable foundation for future generations. In contrast to the ever-changing State, the family introduces and maintains the character of stability that provides the necessary spiritual and material health of human beings. For all these reasons the family cannot be replaced by any other form of union or authority. In the case in which the State appropriates to itself the rights and allowances belonging to the family, the result is totalitarianism (Kovalenko 2019).

The method of analysis of G. K. Chesterton's articles

Reaching a conclusion based on the exemplary quality of argumentation, or more generally the rhetoric used in defense of the family, is possible through close study of Chesterton's writing. I have analyzed his work that pertains to the themes of the family, marriage and divorce. My study focused on texts published in *The Illustrated London News* during the years 1905–1936 (Chesterton's collected works published 1986–2012) and according to an outline created to address the multifaceted style of this author (Kovalenko 2019). The study that led to the formulation of such a versatile outline pertains above all to the further development of the dichotomy between manipulation and persuasion. Chesterton is often accused of a propagandistic tone in expressing his ideas (Wills 2001), yet the scope of the present study is to identify

and demonstrate a journalistic style that produces writing that is effective, professional and exemplary, and it was, therefore, necessary to uncover those elements which distinguish the work of G. K. Chesterton from texts that instead seek to manipulate the reader.

The act of convincing means ‘to prove to someone something in such a way as to render it impossible to refute rationally’ (Santamaria 1996, 475). However, notwithstanding the argumentation that intends to bring the reader to reach a certain conclusion, the reader must always be given space and the chance to form his or her own conclusions. Thus, the *logos* as an argumentative element is not only intellectual but also involves the will that must be respected (Gil 2016). After consulting various texts written by Chesterton, I have come to the consideration of a precise characteristic that is found throughout and demonstrates the persuasive quality as non-manipulative – namely, the respect for human freedom and his aim of showing the truth of human life and the beauty this brings with it. Chesterton himself speaks many times in opposition to ideas that in his view are destructive as he seeks to safeguard the freedom and dignity of human beings. Many of Chesterton’s articles written in the defense of truth of human beings and society are a response to subtle attempts to manipulate and change the ordering of ideas such that the freedom of man would become restrained.

When they say that mankind shall be free at last, they mean that mankind shall commit suicide (Chesterton 1908, 62).

I subsequently analyzed the topic in opinion pieces, given that this is the genre whose characteristics correspond to the texts written by Chesterton for *The Illustrated London News*. This stage of the study allowed me to better understand the nature of this work and especially the appropriate amount of personal opinion permitted to the author in the field of journalism (Kovalenko 2019).

The next stage pertains to the identification and deeper study of the rhetoric, logic and socio-psychological elements in these works and the results of the examination of these areas. Following this analysis on a theoretical basis I was able to construct a diagram with precise criteria for the analysis of Chesterton’s articles, which regard the various layers of the texts and include selected logical, rhetorical and socio-psychological elements.

The first and second levels of analysis pertain to general data, the theme, and internal and external contexts. Here an examination of sub-themes also comes into play: the connection among them and their role in developing the main idea. The third level of analysis is the broadest and most complex. In this phase of the study, the following are observed: the premises (both implicit and explicit), primary and secondary arguments, objections to fallacies, the *ornatus* rhetorical structures, the figures that allow for the creation of images and, lastly, the relationships between different argumentation techniques (Kovalenko 2019).

In the fourth level of analysis of each individual journalistic text I looked at various aspects of communication and the role of the author in the text – namely, the strategies of presenting personal opinion, the mode of assessing sources and opponents, the choice of a descriptive lexicon, the tone and function of the text, its rhetoric structure, extension and accuracy. Lastly, the fifth stage of examination included the final

evaluation of the text. Here broader elements were studied, such as news values, frames and ultimately, on the basis of all the identified elements, the main idea communicated in each text was analyzed. The conclusions of these examinations, in turn, include the principle criteria of persuasiveness of the articles scrutinized (Kovalenko 2019).

Subsequent to the creation of the mode of analysis, or the formulation of a precise outline, a general consultation was made of all the articles contained in the eleven volumes of *The Illustrated London News*. A closer reading of the nearly two hundred articles that in various ways treat of the family and moral issues allowed me to choose which ones to submit to analysis according to the outline constructed prior. I selected thirty-one articles where the theme of the family (divorce, marriage) is the principal point, and thirty-eight articles whose attention to the family is secondary or appears in an argument. The latter are therefore given a less detailed review. In total, the analysis treats sixty-nine articles.

Such a detailed and complex study has led me to identify the particular dynamics that allowed Chesterton to be a persuasive journalist and author with a formidable capacity for rhetoric. On account of his particularly ironic style and choice of unusual and surprising arguments – furthermore reinforced by varying elements of communication (such as frame, eloquent lexicon, etc.) – his defense and critiques enjoy a certain effectiveness which renders Chesterton's work a model of efficacious rhetoric.

The most effective argumentation style

Through the systematic analysis of Chesterton's articles, one is able to infer that what at first seems to be a chaotic approach in terms of style, is in reality paradoxically quite systematic, and is particularly efficacious in that it presents a certain logic, or better, a precise dynamic that is used with considerable frequency.

Chesterton indeed often utilizes a technique that refutes what is commonly thought of as related and disassociates terms (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1989). The author often rejects concepts that prevail in society or the connections made within the arguments of his opponents. One manner of doing this is transforming a negative element into something positive, or rendering it as something essential. He does this frequently through his unexpected and surprising definitions. For example, in 'The New Woman' (Chesterton 1991, vol. 35, 198–202), when criticizing the common approach to education and domestic work, Chesterton calls education 'the mystery of the making of man':

And the science that is studied in the home is the greatest and most glorious of all sciences, very inadequately indicated by the word education, and nothing less, at least, than the mystery of the making of men (Chesterton 1991, vol. 35, 202).

Later in the same article, through the use of analogies upon which he often relies, Chesterton is able to present 'staying at home' and domestic work as an avenue of realizing the freedom of women, as something that is attractive by nature. Maternity is presented by Chesterton as an increase in status, the professionalism of a wife, and compares it to occupying a throne and the counselor who becomes judge.

There may be women who are uncomfortable in family life, as there have certainly been men who were uncomfortable on thrones. There are wives who do not want to be mothers, and there are lawyers who do not want to be judges. But, taking normal human nature and historic tradition as a whole we cannot be expected to start the discussion by assuming that these human dignities are not the object of human desires (Chesterton 1991, vol. 35, 200).

I would argue that the element that renders this way of breaking faulty molds and refuting the liaison of notions so persuasive is the way in which his claims are positively propositional, and involve both *pathos* (Retorica, II, 1) and *ethos* (Retorica, I, 8) as described by Aristotle. His benevolence augments the authority of the author and likewise the efficaciousness of his words because people tend to trust a kind tone – a positive and optimistic approach to framing questions is always more constructive in that it also provides the solutions (Gil 2016). Chesterton, in fact, appreciates the ordinary and respects the reader's intelligence, and he conveys a propositional vision despite the disdainful socio-political climate (Lauer 1991). Thus, even in 'Incompatibility in Marriage' (Chesterton 1987, 180–184) he does not say that incompatibility is not a proper excuse for divorce – rather, he uses in this case a kind of enthymeme and then a disassociated definition that leads to the claim that the incompatibility of spouses is actually a necessary, or essential, basis for the relation between man and woman.

If married people are to be divorced for incompatibility of temper, I cannot imagine why all married people are not divorced. Any man and any woman must have incompatible tempers; it is the definition of sex. It is the whole point of being married. Nay, it is the whole fun even of being engaged. You do not love somebody exactly like yourself (Chesterton 1987, vol. 28, 181).

In this way he makes proves the argumentation of those who support divorce to be insufficient and without fundamental principles.

As long as a marriage is founded on a good solid incompatibility that marriage has a fair chance of continuing to be a happy marriage, and even a romance (Chesterton 1987, vol. 28, 181).

The persuasive unity of themes

In addition to the dynamic of his argumentation style described above, in the articles of G. K. Chesterton one often notes another particular structure of argument that reinforces the effectiveness of his writing. I am referring to the repetitiveness or the circular nature of his ideas. Chesterton in varying contexts, articles and books repeats the same ideas but with different argumentative elements, which are always distinct, new and unexpected. Even within a single article, his arguments are constructed in such a way that all the reasoning, all the components, support or directly lead toward the main idea. This is evidence of his extreme coherency and also contributes to the persuasiveness of his ideas inasmuch as they are perceived as truth (if not simply objective), and ascertain and incontestable or inevitable. That is, he employs a system that one might call the 'hammer strategy' where the nails are his ideas. One of Chesterton's stories with the character Father Brown

is indeed called ‘The Hammer of God’ (Chesterton 1911). The definition of the hammer, however, mirrors not only the character but the structure and course of reasoning of the author.

An analysis of these articles shows that the structures of argumentation possess a particular efficaciousness. Yet the results of this research reveal that there are also other elements, pertaining to communication and social psychology, that strengthen the argument and significantly increase the cogency of his writings in defense of the family. It has in particular been shown that the very method of presenting the theme of the family represents one of the factors of the general effectiveness of the articles.

One of the particular aspects of his way of posing questions, as read in many articles, is the fact that Chesterton always begins with the current situation, but draws inferences from fundamental, general dynamics at the basis of individual, social or political problems that relate to every kind of reader. He later often returns once more to the particular dynamics (in the form of an example). The manner in which his reasoning unfolds is therefore frequently compared to the way in which scenes change in the film. For example, according to Chesterton, many social problems are caused by the fact that legislation (or other types of decision-making) are based on the study of extreme cases from which erroneous general principles are derived (violence in families, the possibility of divorce). Hence at the end of his book *The Superstition of Divorce* he notes in the form of a paradox that ‘the universal fallacy here is a fallacy of being universal’ (Chesterton 1920, 148). Divorce is hereby justified with the claim that there exist families that are deeply unhappy or troubled. To this Chesterton responds underlining the dangers of generalizations in ‘Mr. Darrow on Divorce’ (Chesterton 1991, vol. 35, 183–187):

They [free thinkers] never seem to consider whether the answer they give in some cases would apply to other cases; or whether the other cases would not upset their cases. [...] ‘A man gets tired’, he says, ‘of anything after twenty-five years. For instance, how many friends have you now that you had twenty-five years ago?’ [...]. For my part, I am happy to say that I have a very great many (Chesterton 1991, vol. 35, 184, 185).

According to Chesterton, this twenty-five-year claim, later referred to as the ‘dismal theory of differentiation’, is not tied to an initial argument of handling difficult cases. The author continues in the form of a *correctio* underlining the true meaning and consequence of making family struggles universal.

It is not an argument for unhappy people being divorced, but for all people being divorced. Or, rather, it is not an argument for being divorced at all, but an argument for not being married at all. The only argument for having a regular rotation, or change of partners, every fifteen or twenty years (Chesterton 1991, vol. 35, 185).

Another aspect of persuasiveness noted in the analysis of his articles is that Chesterton always makes reference to the element of solidity, a stability that is intrinsically tied to security and naturally desired by all human beings. He, therefore, utilizes this psychological factor to render his point more attractive, whereas the ideas he seeks to undermine are always presented as unstable, uncertain, untrustworthy and harmful. For him, the family is a fundamental institution that remains at the basis of all other institutions and is the actualization and guarantee of freedom and

dignity for human beings. Divorce instead introduces instability, insecurity and never freedom. In the articles written for *The Illustrated London News* one clearly observes that for Chesterton marriage and divorce are self-exclusive. Divorce is the legalization of the possibility of having disconnected partners. Seeing the family as an institution that lays the foundation for all others, fidelity to marriage ensures the good development of the whole of society. On account of the sequence of this argument, Chesterton transforms fidelity from a personal moral principle into necessary universal law.

[...] But above all it is to be found in that other fact, which is the father and mother of all laws as it is itself founded on a father and mother; the thing that is before all thrones and even all commonwealths. That fact is the family. [...] We can say that the family is the unit of the state; that it is the cell that makes up the formation. Round the family do indeed gather the sanctities that separate men from ants and bees. [...] If we are not of those who begin by invoking a divine Trinity, we must none the less invoke a human Trinity; and see that triangle repeated everywhere in the pattern of the world (Chesterton 1927, 60–62).

Chesterton is always able to efficaciously convey the importance of the family, its unity and the necessity of protecting it. One of the ways through which the author transmits this line of thought is when he places the problem in the context of the relationship between the individual and the State. In many articles (Chesterton 1986, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1991, 2011), for example ‘The Family and the Threat of Evil’ (Chesterton 1988, vol. 29, 441–444), ‘The Sentiment of Property’ (Chesterton 1989, vol. 31, 551–554), ‘On Private Property and Modern Education’ (Chesterton 2011, vol. 36, 89–92), or ‘The Institution of the Family’ (Chesterton 2011, vol. 36, 553–557), one notes that for Chesterton the State is changeable, unstable and not at all democratic inasmuch as it has assumed rights that ought not belong to it, and has limited private property. For this reason, only the family can be the bulwark of security. Therefore, the relationship with the State must unfold according to the ‘State-family’ dynamic and not that of the ‘State-individual’, for the individual alone without family and without private property is too weak to confront the State. Indeed, according to Chesterton, making divorce a liberty, as well as all other decisions that weaken the family, is simply an attempt by the State and powerful capitalist industries to more easily control people and restrain their freedom. It is worth noting that in many articles, such as ‘Socialistic Morality’ (Chesterton 1987, vol. 28, 499–502), ‘A Nightmare of Nonsense’ (Chesterton 1988, vol. 29, 58–62), ‘Socialism and the Nations’ (Chesterton 1988, vol. 29, 399–402), ‘On Altering Our Electoral System’ (Chesterton 1989, vol. 31, 119–123), etc., politics surrounding the family for Chesterton is one of the best criteria in evaluation of the State, governments and even various political systems.

One might add to the particular ways of presenting the main idea in Chesterton’s articles other effective strategies: use of sensitive *frames* and secondary themes. Framing directs the interpretation of the reader and adds to the ideas the characteristics and assessments which are necessary for argumentative purposes (Wolf 1995; Johnson-Cartee 2005). The perspectives adopted by Chesterton are sensitive in their tones and emotions – for example, freedom (the family included here) and slavery (here one would instead place divorce), justice and injustice, nonsense (stupidity,

sentimentalism, irrationality). And then there is democracy and the respect for women which are both topics that are always sensitive. Indeed, for Chesterton, as one reads for example in 'Woman in the Workplace – and at Home' (Chesterton 1991, vol. 34, 217–221), divorce and work outside the home are actually representations of a lack of respect for women.

Beyond the frames that direct the reader's interpretation, Chesterton employs the force of secondary themes. In particular, he creates abstract links that are nonetheless quite solid and demonstrate the precise interdependence of the various thematic elements. The most important bond is the formula of freedom that one grasps after a complex analysis of the different articles published in *The Illustrated London News*. For Chesterton, the freedom of the person is guaranteed and realized through the full and secure presence of family and private property. Private property is an inalienable right and ensures the security and stability of the family. For this reason, the author often affirms in his writing that the restraint or alteration of the concept of private property always indicates an attack on the freedom of the family.

Common sense plays a particular role in his arguments as well. The struggle for common sense contradistinguishes the protagonists in Chesterton's literary works (Casotto 2011), whereas in his journalism common sense is presented in the form of a category that includes reasonableness and intelligence. References to common sense are used in nearly all Chesterton's journalistic works subjected to our analysis. Common sense is quite a particular element – it is simultaneously a frame and an authority to which the author frequently appeals. It is also an element that has a deep emotive impact: it is an open category, a group to which anyone might belong but only once he or she acknowledges fundamental truths and a shared point of view with the author. After reading all the articles chosen for this analysis we have reached the conclusion that for G. K. Chesterton the entirety of the problem surrounding the destruction of the family is above all an intellectual problem and not simply a moral one. In other words, the lack of common sense is one of the main causes of the weakening of the institution of the family (Kovalenko 2019).

There are yet two other important factors, often linked intrinsically, that reinforce the efficacy of elements that are addressed above – namely, irony and paradox. They are both elements quite effective in arguments since they have a great capacity for gaining the attention of the reader and, at the same time, they make for a unique style which furthermore is difficult to contest (Ellero 1997; Mortara Garavelli 1994; Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1989). In the context of Chesterton's writing irony and paradox represent aspects of the study that are distinct and important in that the author uses them as principle methods in his arguments, or as elements that in a natural way enhance the persuasiveness of each of his works. Irony and paradox in Chesterton only seem to be irrational. In reality, the author with a rare ability employs them every time he means to take hold of the reader's attention, reawaken the conscience and imagination of the reader, revisit habitual reflections, reorient the direction of reasoning and depart from the tendencies of common thought, and more often than anything else, reactivate common sense. The paradox was one of the favored weapons of this author, and allowed him to render the truth more original and more attractive than any error. Indeed, for this reason, one

speaks of the ‘Chestertonian paradox’ as his capacity – rather unique among its kind – to glimpse unexpected parallels that permit him to present complex truths with a natural simplicity and therefore as incontestable (Ffinch 1990; Lauer 1991; Casotto 2011). And it is in this manner that the author explains the true cause for divorce:

They break the law, not because they are stronger than the law, but because the law is too strong for them (Chesterton 1987, vol. 28, 184).

Returning to the aspect of right sense of humor we must note that this also occupies an important place in his argument style and in the general effectiveness of the text. It is right when the author knows how to laugh at himself but not so much at others. That is, the author knows that at times he must not take himself so seriously and he is able to illustrate this fact for the reader (Gil 2016).

Journalists are generally the stupidest of men; I am a journalist, and it may be that I am suffering merely from stupidity (Chesterton 1986, vol. 27, 475).

The sense of humor is then a capacity that helps create the relationship of trust with the reader, guide tense situations, improve matters, while remaining open to criticism and widely different opinions. In a certain sense, humor favors the exercise of humility. Simplicity and humility, in fact, increase the authority of the author in that a text written in arrogance is only accepted by the reader with great difficulty (Gil 2016).

In most cases in Chesterton’s articles, irony itself represents a type of indirect argumentation that is very effective. Irony makes the written word more natural and ideas easier to understand. Furthermore, with irony, the author achieves a critique that is easier to accept and strengthens arguments that might otherwise be less convincing.

It may be, indeed, that all the flowers and festivities will now be transferred from the fashionable wedding to the fashionable divorce. A superb iced and frosted divorce-cake will be provided for the feast, and in military circles will be cut with the co-respondent’s sword. [...] Perhaps the old divorce breakfast will be revived; anyhow, toasts will be drunk, the guests will assemble on the doorstep to see the husband and wife go off in opposite directions [...] (Chesterton 1989, vol. 32, 437).

Conclusion: the combination of functions of persuasive elements

At the conclusion of the analysis of articles written by G. K. Chesterton for *The Illustrated London News* and dedicated to the family, we are able to identify a significant list of various logical, rhetorical and socio-psychological components that are particularly efficacious, some of which are discussed above. We have also reached a conclusion that his writing is persuasive not only on account of the utilization of these individuals, effective elements, but the persuasiveness of these articles is also guaranteed by the fact that many of these elements of argumentation simultaneously carry out multiple functions. For example, the illustrations that reduce matters to the absurd, or the construction of surprising analogies, or the definitions that contain double hierarchies, etc.

Suppose a murderer were to say: 'What can be more amiable and admirable than the human life lived with a due sense of its priceless opportunity! But I regret to observe that Mr. Robinson has lately been looking decidedly tired and melancholy; life accepted in this depressing and demoralizing spirit can no longer truly be called life; it is rather my own exuberant and perhaps exaggerated joy of life which I must gratify by cutting his throat with a carving-knife' (Chesterton 1989, vol. 32, 438).

In this example, one sees that in order to explain the irrationality of the causes of divorce (such as the absence of feeling or lack of respect), and to criticize the liberty of divorce in general, Chesterton provides an example that contains an analogy, a *reductio ad absurdum*, shows a contradiction and employs the frame of the institution. This example reaffirms in a figurative way the idea that the family must be guided by law as other institutions are. By means of analogy to the assassin who says he appreciates life but then takes it, Chesterton ridicules and emphasizes the contradictory character of 'good' intentions and the proponents of divorce who say they respect marriage by giving their approval of divorce.

One might add to the multifunctional character of elements another characteristic that enlarges the effectiveness of his articles and makes his style unique: the capable and successful combination of various elements of his arguments – or their positive reciprocal effect – that significantly influences the general efficaciousness of his work (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1989). In all of Chesterton's journalistic work, one reads a collection of techniques in his arguments that act in mutual support among themselves. The majority of individual argumentative elements serve multiple functions, containing both the rational and the emotional (often on account of irony) and jumpstart the imagination of the reader.

The analysis of Chesterton's articles written for *The Illustrated London News* demonstrates that the argumentation of this author unfolds through a perfect combination of reason and emotion and bases itself on truth and common sense, as well as on the human desire for happiness. The position he takes in matters of controversy is courageous, sincere, direct and firm, and he does not confuse tolerance with cowardice or with the limitation of freedom of thought and word. Chesterton, in fact, writes in a period when our epoch was in its early formation and when the ideas and ideologies that mark the current socio-cultural reality were just emerging. Reading Chesterton's articles, one becomes aware of the fact that herein are explanations for certain aspects of the current mentality, and in a certain way one reads the origin of modern thought insofar as what Chesterton is describing is pre-history to our present time. These aspects, together with the English author's capacity to construct dense and complex arguments composed of versatile and multifunctional elements, render the ideas of G. K. Chesterton quite difficult to contest and his style of writing truly exemplary.

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No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

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Alla Kovalenko was born in Ukraine and received a degree in Journalism from the Taras Shevchenko National University of Kiev. In 2014 she obtained a Licentiate degree in social

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