

# LITERARY JOURNALISM AND TRANSFORMATIVE COMMUNICATION:

proposal for the alignment of the new discipline with the growing trend of a communication transformative practice in social and human development

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**ABSTRACT** – This essay proposes a differentiated educational function for literary journalism as a discipline of its own and as a field of knowledge, attuned to the rise of new paradigms that are radically revolutionizing the way we understand reality. It suggests literary journalism to take a proactive role in empowering people through narratives focused on transformation and expansion of consciousness. It discusses the productive and destructive effects of mass communication messages. This proposal is akin to emerging initiatives such as constructive journalism and solutions journalism, which signal the rise of social consciousness regarding transformative communication both in legacy and new social media.

**Key words:** Literary journalism. Paradigms. New science. Narratives of transformation. Constructive journalism. Transformative communication.

## **JORNALISMO LITERÁRIO E COMUNICAÇÃO TRANSFORMATIVA: proposta de alinhamento da nova disciplina com as tendências crescentes da prática de uma comunicação transformativa no campo social e do desenvolvimento humano**

**RESUMO** – Este ensaio propõe uma função educativa diferenciada para o jornalismo literário enquanto disciplina própria e campo de conhecimento, sintonizada com a ascensão de novos paradigmas que estão revolucionando radicalmente o modo como entendemos a realidade. Sugere sua ação em prol do empoderamento das pessoas por meio de narrativas centradas em histórias de transformação e expansão de consciência. Discute o efeito produtivo e o destrutivo das mensagens dos meios de comunicação. Alinha essa função com iniciativas emergentes denominadas jornalismo construtivo, jornalismo de solução e outras ramificações, configurando a ascensão de uma consciência social em torno de uma prática de comunicação transformativa na mídia convencional, assim como nas novas mídias sociais.

**Palavras chave:** Jornalismo literário. Paradigmas. Nova ciência. Narrativas de transformação. Jornalismo construtivo. Comunicação transformativa.

**PERIODISMO LITERARIO Y COMUNICACIÓN TRANSFORMATIVA:  
propuesta de alineamiento de la nueva disciplina con las tendencias  
crecientes de la práctica de una comunicación transformativa  
en el campo social y del desarrollo humano**

**RESUMEN** – Este ensayo propone una función educativa diferenciada para el periodismo literario como una disciplina propia y como un campo de conocimiento, en sintonía con el surgimiento de nuevos paradigmas que revolucionan radicalmente la manera en que entendemos la realidad. Sugiere que el periodismo literario asuma un papel proactivo en el empoderamiento de las personas a través de narrativas centradas en la transformación y la expansión de la conciencia. Discute los efectos productivos y destructivos de los mensajes de comunicación masiva. Esta propuesta está alineada con las iniciativas emergentes que se denominan periodismo constructivo, periodismo de soluciones y otras que señalan el surgimiento de una conciencia social con respecto a la comunicación transformadora tanto en los medios convencionales como en las nuevas redes sociales.

**Palabras clave:** Periodismo literario. Paradigmas. Nueva ciencia. Narrativas de transformación. Periodismo constructivo. Comunicación transformativa.

The open challenge to scholars of literary journalism to embrace and build the modality as a discipline of its own, presented by editors John Bak and Bill Reynolds in *Literary Journalism Across the Globe* (2011) provokes in us all the need of an exploratory flight on distinct aspects of this vast territory.

This essay highlights one of these aspects, suggesting a direction applicable to the practice of a specific line of literary journalism, Advanced Literary Journalism, presented earlier by various means (Lima, 2009; 2013; 2014; 2017).

Advanced Literary Journalism contemplates the adoption of a transdisciplinary approach, in line with advancements in different areas of contemporary scientific knowledge. These advances mean a remarkable epistemological revolution is on the way. It not just deeply affects how we understand reality, but it also stirs important changes in how we act in this world.

Considering the fact that one of the pillars of literary journalism is people focused storytelling, this article puts in perspective a reflection about the role literary journalism can

play, regarding receivers of mass communication messages, on one hand. On the other, it relates to deep changes of paradigms currently happening in western society, as it relates to emerging trends of proposals - and journalistic practices - that respond to this contemporary phenomenon of the rise of social demands for a transformative communication.

## 1. Narratives, psychology, effects: an angle of perception

The first line of reasoning for this approach considers the potential effect mass communication (including social media) may provoke on receivers. Much has already been addressed on how mass media messages can cause impacts on the mental and psychic states of people. One of the pioneering scholars in this direction, in Brazil, was social scientist Dante Moreira Leite (1927-1976), also a pioneer of social psychology in this country, who died prematurely at 48 years of age, when he occupied the position of director of the Institute of Psychology at the University of São Paulo.

As a researcher, Dante Moreira Leite devoted attention to fiction literature, showing how narratives potentially influence readers' state of mind. This approach seems to me significantly relevant also for the field of nonfiction literature – literary journalism included – and for mass communication as a whole (Leite, 1987; Lima, 2009).

Moreira Leite postulated that narratives may generate two different results, in terms of its effect upon the psychological state of the reader. The first he called productive *thinking* and the second he coined destructive thinking.

When the reader of a fiction – or nonfiction journalism – story begins the process of reading a piece, there happens what is called a momentary imbalance or disruption of the mental and emotional structure of reality that is anchored deep inside the psyche of the individual. It is like a pebble thrown on the surface of a placid lake. It ricochets on the surface of the water, producing a disturbance, until it goes down and sit on the bottom, bringing quietness back to the lake. The surface goes back to the state of dynamic equilibrium in which it found itself before.

The psychological state of the reader, immediately before reading a story, is like the lake. The reader's psyche has

a certain structure of order and organization of the world, because of cultural, educational, social conditionings he or she was submitted to before, and as result of life experiences that fostered him or her as a human being. The beginning of the reading represents a momentary disturbance, as the reader takes a step or two out of his or her inner world and enters the subjective atmosphere the story conveys. Every story is composed by objective, material content – data, facts, actions, place and time, the environment, people – as well as by subjective elements. There is a reverberation, a subtle emotional resonance, a psychological atmosphere surrounding and interpenetrating a story.

Stories may cause momentary instability in readers' mind, as they may equally excite emotions and feelings. This is much so the case in literary journalism, since the implicit promise of this narrative art is to deliver more than just an information package on something. It promises the reader a symbolic and sensory journey of immersion into reality, an experience of living a specific adventure of discovery and understanding. This journey is anchored by the author, become alive by the real-life characters who stir the phenomena of projection and identification, and may be beautifully displayed by the narrative skills of the writer.

How is it so?

Unlike the classic narrative techniques of hard news journalism, which is built upon facts and upon a so called precise and accurate reporting of reality, literary journalism show reality in a most vivid sensorial way. It does not just tell a story. It goes beyond that. It delivers a full, symbolic experience of life. The author of literary journalism is as an ambassador, a guide and a mentor of the reader in this symbolic journey into the mystery of this domain chosen for this subtle exploratory excursion, aimed at delivering the reader both an intellectual and emotional savoring of reality.

That is why old narrative techniques such as the lead and the inverted pyramid of conventional journalism are replaced in literary journalism by sophisticated narrative resources such as life-status symbols, extensive dialogues, scene-by-scene construction, interviews of understanding, the autobiographical point of view in third person, flow of consciousness and other powerful devices.

Literary journalism seeks to reach the brain, the mind, the soul and the heart of the reader because its implicit grand purpose is to provide a full understanding of reality, the fullest possible the author can provide. The challenge is to help the reader to reorder his

or her inner codification of things and give this world some sense. Intuitively or not, great literary journalism writers of all places and times have known that the human creature understands, decodes and recodifies the world not by rational intelligence alone, but also by emotions, feelings, intuitions.

Each message carries along with explicit material content such as facts, implicit world views. Values, concepts, models of reference, beliefs and truths. No message is innocent. Every message has the power to contribute to conform and forge one's perspective to reality and this only exists in the mind and in the psychic world of each one of us.

Carl Gustav Jung (2012) brought to humanity the key concept of collective unconscious. He suggests that as part of our inner world, in each individual, there is a sophisticated set of elements – values, beliefs, codes of signification – which has its origin not in our individuality, but in the experience – and the introjected decoding of its meaning – of reality lived by the social groups to which we belong, by people with whom we identify with, by our ancestors, by humanity at large.

The experience of reality, in turn, is interpreted and recodified in the narratives authors deliver to us, according to their own visions. Reality, as such, does not comprise only the physical, biological, concrete, practical elements of truth. Reality is mainly the interpretative creations that happen inside the psychic world of the individual person. However, the interpretive creations result from a complex interplay between the effective experience of the individual, in the real world, and the inputs *he* or *she* receives from numberless messages that circulates in the great ocean of the collective unconscious where we all are also immersed.

This is the ocean of mythological narratives, for example, the allegories and metaphorical expressions of truths, beliefs, values and visions of the world that also inhabit the collective unconscious of all times, of all generations and all places. It is in this same ocean that travels the messages of mass and social media, journalism narratives being part of this multifaceted system present in the globalized civilization and digitally entangled civilization of our time.

Journalistic narratives, thus, portrays world visions, share these visions and have the power to influence the shape of reality which is processed in an interactive broadening interaction between the reader's psyche and the narrative subtle domain hidden behind concrete facts and data.

Returning to Dante Moreira Leite, it is important to consider that the reading of the world that narratives carry can be loaded with a positive vision and help one transform his or her concept of reality or may be contaminated by a pessimistic perspective, reducing the ability of the reader to see alternatives to crucial issues, to problems and conflicts that are the key driver of any dramatic story.

Since the times of classic Greek theater, in ancient times, it is understood that the conflict is the dynamic driver of any good narrative. A story is actually the discussion of an issue, a question that is not exactly clear, but delivered in a narrative fashion. A conflict, as the axis of a narrative, must have enough power to attract the interest of the reader. The human mind does not like to dwell on situations, questions or incomplete visions. It is human nature to seek to bring wholeness to what is incomplete.

The conflict in narrative is the element that points, identifies and sets out clearly the problem that constitutes the heart of each story. The opposition and the dispute between characters, situations and circumstantial factors give life to the development of the plot. The monitoring of this unfolding and the possible arc of transformation of the protagonist – or of the protagonists – over time, are the narrative elements that sustain the reader's interest. If possible, the narrative eve provokes a catharsis.

In the language of Dante Moreira Leite, and doing free use here of his findings, the conflict in narrative is the factor that triggers the momentary dismantling of the world in the psyche of the reader. When the conflict is presented in the story, this disturbance of his/her inner world order stirs the intrinsic need for the reader to reorder his/her understanding of reality. This psychic unequilibrium makes the reader expect that the story grants him/her the benefit of catharsis. This does not necessarily mean a happy ending to a story, but the construction of something that makes sense and bring back ordering to the world. Something that expands your understanding of things and humanity. This reunderstanding is possible because every story has two sides: the plot – that refers to specific dated, identifiable circumstances and individual characters – and the theme – the archetypal motive that proceeds from the collective unconscious and maybe universal in nature, beyond time and place.

When I write this article, the FIFA 2018 World Cup in Russia is about to begin. The Globo TV network in Brazil is displaying on its most important news program, *Jornal Nacional*, a story a day on our

Brazilian National Team players. A single player per day, so all 23 of them are to be featured by the time the ball starts rolling in Moscow.

Each story has its specific plot.

Gabriel Jesus is the typical poor quarter boy who grew up playing soccer everywhere he could, even in places far away from home. Everywhere he went, he had to call his mother, tell her how he was doing. Now a young rising star in soccer, he celebrates his goals on the field by waving the typical gesture of someone doing a phone call and saying, "hello mom!". Paulinho is the poor boy from the outskirts of a large metropolis who overcame social marginalization through playing soccer, made it big in a top professional team in Brazil, then almost fell to ostracism by relocating to play in China, and again rose to grand style in Europe. Cássio is the young man from a rural area of the so-called deep Brazil who went through a long, tedious period of slow and anonymous climb in professional soccer, until finally he hit it big and reached five-star status.

The implicit universal themes of them all?

Overcoming. Jumping over hurdles, battling over the elements of destiny. The arc of transformation from defeat to glory. The road to success. The hero's journey.

To structure stories with such narrative qualities, the author naturally chooses the angles of perception that are familiar to him/her as a fruit of the cultural, social, professional and human circumstances in the past and present. In other words, how the author perceives reality is conditioned by his/her world view. How one sees the world and how one structures a narrative contributes for the reader to recodify and give meaning to reality. Or it may reach a deadlock, in which the reader finds only a cruel, pointless world.

If the option and the ability of the author are in tune with the first possibility, the narrative generates in the reader's psyche what Dante Moreira Leite calls productive thinking. If they are intertwined with the second option, however, the story begets a destructive thought.

The first empowers and enlarges the reader's ability to interpret it, to position himself/herself and eventually to act, in regard to the external world. The second closes the gates of perception, reduces understanding, makes the world darker, threatening, impossible. It shoots a feeling of powerlessness. Fear. Lack of self-confidence.

Unfortunately, a good part of contemporary fiction literature, as analysed by Dante Moreira Leite, as well as a significant portion

of the massive mass media production of our time tends to generate in the individual psyche and in the collective psychic field this destructive thinking.

An example of the cinematographic art associated with journalism: in the classic *The Passenger* - the 1975 production directed by the extraordinary Michelangelo Antonioni, the magnificent actor Jack Nicholson plays the role of David Locke, a disillusioned TV reporter in a mission in Africa, covering guerrilla forces. He is abandoned by his guide, his Land Rover jams in the sand. Locke falls into a deep existential crisis. He feels unhappily tired of everything. His marriage, his work, his life.

At a hotel in the middle of nowhere, Locke casually meets a stranger who tells him a bit about his life. Hours later, this man dies of a heart attack. Physically similar to the stranger, Locke sees a great opportunity to change his life entirely. He takes the dead man's passport with him and leaves his own behind, shifting identities. Then he flees to Europe, willing to become who he isn't, trying to bury for good his past and begin literary a new life.

An irony of destiny awaits him in Germany. He discovers his "new me" is actually an illegal arms dealer. Locke finds himself caught in a tragic trap. And then there is the anthological final sequence of the film, seven long minutes in which the camera does not focus on the central action, but on the surroundings of the small village square, out of the hotel room where the protagonist Locke commits suicide.

What does Antonioni say about this highly acclaimed by movie critics everywhere, mainly because of the creative geniality of these final seven minutes? "I consider *The Passenger* my most stylistically mature film. I also consider it a political film as it is topical and fits with the dramatic rapport of the individual person today" (available at [www.sonyclassics.com/thepassenger/synopsis.html](http://www.sonyclassics.com/thepassenger/synopsis.html))

The category of thinking that this beautiful cinematographic work can generate? Destructive thinking. The unquiet state of mind that reality is cruel indeed. The individual person as a victim of society. The underlying idea that well, nothing can be done. No way out. Impotence.

It is clear that narratives can and should portray situations that reflect the dark alleys of society. People crushed by the inhuman machinery of this materialistic civilization and reductionist view of things we are enveloped within.

But here comes the real question: is this the only possible world view today? Is it so that there are no other options?

And another question, closely associated to the previous one: the real problem is not the presence in the media of narratives that put out *destructive thoughts*. The problem is the excessive presence and predominance of content that begets this feeling of powerlessness, contributing to the increase of psychological toxic garbage in our collective unconscious.

Fortunately, we are seeing now a growing effort towards self-understanding of the negative effects of media on people and society, as well as towards the development of innovative approaches, focused on the intention of producing transformative effects. Promising initiatives are happening, both in the industrial media environment and in the scholarly environment. Some of these initiatives rise from grass root communities of mass media professional, some others from scholarly studies supported by interdisciplinary approaches.

In the first case, it is remarkable the pioneering work of Images & Voices of Hope (<https://ivoh.org/>), founded in New York in 1999 as the center of a global community of journalists, documentarists, filmmakers, photographers and other professionals. The organization proposes to fulfill the mission of enhancing the potential role of media as agents of positive social and human impact on the world. Carries out this mission through educational programs, conferences and similar large-scale events, through a digital narrative channel, through resources and scholarly research – in partnership with the University of Oregon – centered on what is called restorative narrative.

In the scholarly field, recent initiatives emerge from approximations of journalism to the field of positive psychology, a differentiated psychological school, based on the pioneering work of William James, Abraham Maslow, Martin Seligman, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and Christopher Peterson, summarized in the article *The 5 Founding Fathers and the History of Positive Psychology* (Srinivasan, 2015).

Two highlights are *Innovating News Journalism Through Positive Psychology*, by Cathrine Gyldensted (2011), and the research report *Publishing the Positive*, by Jodie Jackson (2016).

Cathrine Gyldensted and Karen McIntire map these trends in their joint article *Constructive Journalism: Applying Positive Psychology Techniques to News Production* (McIntyre & Gyldensted, 2017), detecting four branches of constructive journalism: solutions journalism, prospective journalism, peace journalism and restorative narrative.

## 2. Journalism and the tethers of old paradigms

To put in perspective the rising of new proposals for the role journalism can play in the contemporary world and to open a door for the potential contribution of literary journalism in this regard, it is relevant to take a quick epistemological flight.

The prevalent world view in journalism, which puts out more *destructive* than *constructive thought* content, comes from the fact that this field is a subsystem of our civilization forged by values and mental models of reality consolidated on a large scale by the end of the 19th century. These paradigms result from the overwhelming prestige of science since Isaac Newton and from correlated philosophical currents such as Cartesianism, Enlightenment and Positivism. They established the deductive-logical method as the reigning method of perceiving reality. As an off-spring of this way of seeing, journalism inevitably inherited both the benefits and the ills of this legacy.

Journalism is seen here as a field of knowledge and as a cultural mean of understanding and interacting with reality. Understanding what is around you in the environment and what is your inner reality is a basic need of every human being, since the beginning of civilization. To read the environment, to know it and to respond to the demands of existence are crucial for the survival of individuals and the species.

Over time, humankind developed sophisticated instruments for this key function of interpreting reality. Four main ways were established, each one of them with its own codes and own methods, all facing the same higher purpose of knowledge. The path of traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples, of religion and of mysticism; the path of philosophy; the path of art; the path of science.

Of all these four options, science took the leading helmet as the way of knowledge *par excellence* in most parts of the world, thanks to the extraordinary advances of the European Scientific Revolution – the 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries – and the solutions science itself and its by-product, technology, brought to solve numberless problems society faced in this period marked by profound changes. Capitalism, urbanization, industrialization, consumerism, globalization, the conquest and colonization by Europeans of peoples and distant lands are all social, political, economic phenomena that set a new human-oriented landscape on the face of Earth. In this context and amid this dynamic

and cultural changing environment in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, modern journalism was born.

Such as most activities, professions and organizations that rise in this period, journalism also embeds in its founding conceptual basis, paradigms from these scientific oriented models of reality of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

What world is this that results from this science view of reality that constrain and narrows our perception?

It is a materialistic world and its reality is ultimately reduced to material bodies, namely the physical existence. Hence the belief, in journalism, that facts – and facts only – are the core of news. It is a concrete, fragmented world, divided into areas of specialization. Hence the editorial staff of a daily newspaper divided in different editorial sections of coverage. It is a simple, linear, logical world, tending to become stagnant and to lose capacity to change. Hence, the time focus of conventional journalism is reduced to the immediate now, therefore losing long term scope and failing to understand the dynamic undercurrent of factors and circumstances along time that make current affairs happen. It is a world inspired by a mechanical view of reality, as if everything that exists can be understood in the light of the laws of operation of machines. Under this view, human being is seen as no more than an improved machine. A machine is characterized by predictable behavior. A person taken as a machine is therefore subject to manipulation and control. It is a world of the empire of reason and logical thinking. A world where the phrase *I think, therefore I am*, attributed to René Descartes, is paramount. Hence, in journalism, the priority focus on the logical reading of events.

The problem is that this integrated set of paradigms imbedded in journalism is good to report on reality but does it so in a simplistic way. But the pursuit of literary journalism, however, is to understand reality in the most complete possible way. It is not enough to ascertain the facts. The approach needs to be phenomenological, systemic, holistic, integrated.

As these classical science paradigms began to be questioned along the 20<sup>th</sup> century by visionary members of the scientific community itself, new models of understanding reality emerged. In parallel, new methods of perception and research were introduced and tested.

One of the most important criticism concerns the limited vision of materialistic classic science such as established by Isaac

Newton's physics. Quantum physics came into play proposing revolutionary concepts, such as the multidimensionality of reality, the implicate and explicate order idea designed by David Bohm, for example. Reality is concrete and objective, but it is also subtle and etheric, say vanguard physicists like Fritjof Capra and Amit Goswami, two researchers who disclose to the world in a metaphorical language mind blowing findings laboratories are reaching.

These new paradigms are opening revolutionary new ways of knowing and understanding the human being. This is of paramount relevance for literary journalism as a discipline of its own, because the human creature is at the center of its interest. We should pay attention.

The emotional intelligence concept, proposed by psychologist – and science journalist – Daniel Goleman, is one of these new paradigms. Goleman bases his approach on modern neurology and emphasizes our wholeness as human beings who can learn and evolve not just through our logical, rational intelligence, but who also grow through our emotional and intuitive capacities.

Despite these and many other revolutionary advancements, however, the largest part of the journalism community remains stuck to a schematic and shallow vision of reality which is painfully inadequate to provide narrative responses that fast track changing society requires. Why?

The systemic approach can help us find some answers. Ludwig von Bertalanffy's General Systems Theory provides theoretical support to this pioneering book approaching the systemic view to journalism, *El periodismo impreso y la teoría de los sistemas* (Lima, 1991).

System, in a simplified way, is a set of interconnected and integrated elements which constitute a whole, in a dynamic process of action. A system is individually identifiable by features that characterize it. Under a perspective of space and place, the system is externally encompassed by the surrounding environment, which also is comprised by other systems. Complex interactions happen among them all. Internally, every single system comprises subsystems with specific functions, all connected to the main, catalyst function of the system. There is interdependence between everyone.

Journalism is a system in contemporary society that exercise specific functions that give it an individual identity and differentiate it from other systems. It is obviously different from the police system or the government or the transport system, for example. It is an open

system, which is highly vulnerable and easily influenced by external conditions of its environment. Journalism is tied to the interests, principles, goals and world views of external systems that give it support, such as political, business and ideological groups, for example.

In every established society, such as a country, there are world views placed in a central position in the governing environment of beliefs and values that populate its subtle dimension of reality. These paradigms give identity and direction to this organized entity. However, in parallel, on the outskirts of the system, there are other values, groups and competing paradigms battling to reach the center of the system and thus, expecting to rise to a position of power. If such a position is reached, these paradigms are to stir society to a new direction. This process is at the service of the renewal of society – and of the entire human civilization –, without which it fails to evolve and thus fades. The great civilizations also are born, develop, languish and perish. Growth and dissolution are part of the life cycle of nations and peoples.

We are now living a conflictual process of clash between old paradigms that still prevail and the new ones that strive to find a place of its own under the sun. To replace fossil fuels, biofuels. Wind turbines instead of hydroelectric plants. More important than the technological aspect, the big – and sometimes chaotic – shift underway in the contemporary world signal a great wave of numerous small/big correlated paradigms that are shaping the possibility of a future civilization that may become absolutely different from the current one. There is an underlying conflict of paradigms, in this dramatic theater of possible radical changes in contemporary society.

Where is the largest part of journalism, in this game? It is anchored in conventional old-fashioned external systems that give it support. It is committed to social groups moved by the old world 19<sup>th</sup> century paradigm that still reigns in the heart of contemporary civilization, despite cosmetic changes in this pyrotechnic disruptive society of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Newspapers do portray beautifully designed lay outs today, not so 100 years ago. The implicit world view behind its narratives is basically the same.

With respect to the human being and the individual person as a real-life character in stories, journalism remains trapped to a narrow, linear, simplistic view of reality. Even in literary journalism, many times the basis of approach is shy. In profiles, for example, it is common for the narrative to focus on the external world of facts and doings of the protagonist. The story of success and glory of the young

athlete who overcame poverty and odds and became a sport star. The businesswoman who broke prejudice and other social barriers and now controls a vast business empire where before only men led.

All well and good, but if the purpose in literary journalism is to provide a narrative of understanding and to place the protagonist of a profile under the expanded light of a new meaning, to focus the story on the concrete, objective aspects of his or her doings only is to miss the boat. What about his or her being? What about the inner world of such a person, the source from where motivation and the strength to face the challenges of life sprout?

Hard news journalism goes on compromised with reductionist tentacles – and its deleterious effects – of the society of ego, this instance of the human psyche which is the basis of the internal source that looks to the world and conforms its vision of reality according to its partially valid parameters, but which are limiting and even dangerous. The exaggeration of sustaining our society based on values of ego brought us exaggerated individualism, gives us an excessive tribalism, generates the increase of xenophobia and intolerance, triggers the sharply competitive spirit of our era, alienates the human being, separates the person from Nature, generates the ignorance of the myopic vision of reality which does not respect the interconnectedness of everything that exists.

Hence the horrific society of plastic of our days. Harmful substances of this by-product of the petrochemical industry contaminate packaged food in the supermarkets, cause terrible hormone damage in the male population. Plastic straws, those of soda drinks and such, are polluting and contaminating the oceans at alarming speed, suffocate marine fauna, destroy life.

The predominance of destructive thinking narratives, naively or maliciously tuned with the interests of old paradigm social groups, reduce the scope of self-understanding – and thus reduce the possibilities of inclusive readings of reality. The excessive coverage of the dark side of the human soul – cruelty, violence, selfishness, over protection of one self in detriment of others – triggers fear, this dark engine of the ego, crystallizes the vision in a small and dingy stretch of reality. Ego makes interaction difficult, turns solidarity and compassion almost impossible, prevents the opening of perception to an integrated and comprehensive dimension of understanding.

Journalism would need to break current limiting paradigms

and embrace the new models of comprehension which are associated with the idea of evolution of consciousness and in which fits the concept of Self, given to the world by Carl Gustav Jung (2012). It refers to another instance of the psyche, capable of a comprehensive mode of perception and understanding of ourselves and of existence.

Frozen vices in journalism, generated by the greasy dust of old paradigms and related interests to which it adhered, do not bring us much hope. Most part of journalism, such it is today, is at the service of involution. It keeps consciousness at a low level of perception.

The problem is that those who resist Mother Nature efforts towards evolution – that is, towards raising the quality of perception to a higher level of integrated understanding of themselves and the existence at large – are not only freezing their path. They may also recede. Not to move forward and not to evolve is falling into dissolution and death. The menacing threat now is that this civilization of ours, founded on the false egoic pillars of dominant paradigms has reached a dangerous crossroads. It appears we must take a leap in quality that will drive us to a higher and amplified level of perception and action. Otherwise, the dreadful possibility of a total collapse of civilization as we know it becomes real.

The bridge to this territory of wise living necessarily comprises the empowerment of people and the expansion of consciousness of humans. One of the potential means to contribute to this awakening is communication.

The heavy commitment journalism made to 19<sup>th</sup> century paradigms make it unlikely that it has to strength and the will to untangle ties that would allow it to play a major role in the rise of a new universal mythology that is coming up by the horizon.

Mythology, here, is linked to the concept of myth as a synonym of deep meaning narrative. Transformative narrative. Consciousness expansion narrative. Narrative which guides the person to the center of his/her consciousness, where he can heal his/her alienation of himself/herself and where the discovery of the interconnectivity that unites everything that exists is possible.

Storytelling. The art of telling stories. The secret of literary journalism. It can exercise this art to claim a major role in this global planetary narrative challenge. Therefore, it is important that literary journalism cut its ties to hard news journalism and to literature. Hence the need to find its own independent space, from

where it can dialogue with all areas of knowledge of its interest, especially those related to the art of narrative. But it is not to be taken by none of them and it is to find its own set of differentiated functions and methods.

This article is like a manifesto for the exercising of one of these functions, among many possible: an educational function of self-knowledge, tuned with the process of expansion of consciousness currently happening, through the art of telling stories rich in inspiring transformation potential.

Each story will be told and shown as a chapter of the great myth of our time. The remarkable mythologist Joseph Campbell said that myths are not something of a distant past, lost in the folds of time. In the hectic modern world of today we continue to produce myths. Even though the quality of stories can be poor, compared to the epics of ancient times, perhaps. The heroes of the mythic narrative of our time are sport stars who replace Trojan warriors of ancient times, although it may also happen narratives of heroes of the majestic grandiosity of the human spirit as Nelson Mandela.

Mythic narratives are here among us, anyway. Mythical stories are happening at every moment in our globalized world of instant satellite broadcasting.

A trend that Campbell pointed out, however, marks a significant difference between this new line of mythical narrative that arise and the traditional line of the past. The hero of yesterday had, in general, a tribal scope of reality. Narratives helped him to gain a sense of belonging and meaning in that delimited territory of the world.

The new line of mythological narrative that is emerging now, since the beginning of manned space travel, leaves the tribal mind set behind. What is emerging now is the much more challenging wide horizon of our planetary, integrated mythology. We are no more confined to the realms of our tribal territory. We are now members of the planetary family comprised by the whole humankind. We are all children of the stars.

Another key hallmark of this rising mythology is the narrative of the Great Awakening. The story of the stories of many of us who are breaking the veils that constrained our eyes to the confines of the walls of the aquarium where we live – our mental world forged by these now obsolete paradigms – and who now increasingly open all the senses to the wonderful discovery of the majestic ocean of existence where we all surf.

In addition to initiatives in the field of journalism, mentioned earlier in this essay, two emerging fronts are inspirational for literary journalism to devote a part of its storytelling art to this function of raising awareness.

The first concerns the emergence of initiatives that propose writing as a process of consciousness expansion. For a long time, it was believed that creative writing is an unconscious process driven by unknown forces that dwell in each one of us. These forces are related to our shadows. That is, to fear, depression, feelings of victimization or low self-esteem, insecurity, suppression of desires and traumas. The suffering, pain and internal unrest caused by toxic unconscious emotions generated by the ego, it was said, fed the creative act. It was good, if you intended to write.

But it could be bad or ineffective for the qualitative growth of the person in consciousness. This narcissist literature, entangled around the author's navel, could mostly generate only destructive *thought* effects. It little contributed to transformative processes that would elevated awareness, helping one, who knows, to ascend his/her consciousness from the ego level to that of the Self, this other organizing instance of the psyche – the subjective internal world of each one of us – that is an internal source of wisdom. It shows us the full dimension of our totality as individuals and simultaneously as partakers of the majestic integrated dynamic chain of all existence.

In the United States, writer, journalist and editor Mark Matousek facilitates workshops focused on personal awakening and enhancement of creative capabilities through what he calls transformative writing and self-inquiry (available at [www.markmatousek.com](http://www.markmatousek.com)). In turn, writer Albert Flynn De Silver proposes writing as a way of awakening, celebrating spiritual and creative freedom (available at [www.albertflynnndesilver.com](http://www.albertflynnndesilver.com)). In the United Kingdom, writer Julia McCutchen offers workshops and conscious writing courses for a creative life (available at [www.juliamccutchen.com](http://www.juliamccutchen.com)).

At these cases, these three writers base their approaches upon the know-how they are mostly familiarized with, as well as in their own personal experiences in self-knowledge. They put all this together to guide people, through writing, to an empowering process closely related to consciousness expansion. The implicit question of spirituality – understood not as a synonym of religiosity or mysticism, but as a synonym of the interconnectivity between all elements of

existence, – and the insight that we all may experience that we are not creatures confined to the reduced box of consciousness called ego – is all time present. There is no more separation between that which is transcendent and that which is mundane. Spirituality is not restricted to the church, the synagogue, the mosque, the temple or the Umbanda field. Spirituality is the presence of wholeness here and now. This presence is peace that gives meaning and power to life, say these experts. The path they offer for this journey is the art of writing.

The second front consists of professionals who are in fact researchers exploring new fields of knowledge, based on new paradigms, and then using communication to share their discoveries, on one hand, and to empower people, on the other, thus greatly contributing for the writing of this Great Awakening ongoing story.

One of the most exciting cases has the American bestselling author Lynne McTaggart as protagonist. Science and Technology reporter for many years, McTaggart became highly interested on covering cutting-edge advancements in neurology and other fields researching mind over matter issues. Driven further by a health challenge, she also began to follow revolutionary approaches in Medicine that were employing paradigms associated to the notion of multidimensional reality and unorthodox methods of healing.

McTaggart got herself immersed on studies of intentionality, the principle of a new science in the making at top universities as Harvard, Stanford and Yale. This principle suggests that mentally driven intentions are a powerful factor that joins subtle forces of Nature in co-creation of manifested reality, and that we can consciously participate in this process.

Excited by her discoveries, in the beginning McTaggart decided to use her talent of gifted reporter to write books and other means of communication to spread this knowledge. Her easy access to renowned top scientists and her sharp investigative spirit united to grant her writings a respectable solid credibility.

Later, she realized that writing stories on these issues was not enough. There would be much more that she could do as a mission she defined for herself, in order to serve people. She started to offer workshops and courses, in addition to design her own public researches and experiments, often in partnership with scientists. McTaggart ended up by developing her own method of activating conscious intentions. She coined it the *intention experiment*.

One of her most remarkable events comprised an intention experiment through internet real time connection among groups of people in Israel and Gulf countries, aimed at peace for Jerusalem. This was in 2017. These experiments, as any scientific investigation, are designed with well-defined goals, methods and procedures in mind. Data entry and analysis are carefully planned. McTaggart considers herself now an authority in intention, spirituality and the new science (available at [www.lynnemctaggart.com](http://www.lynnemctaggart.com)).

Another inspiring case concerns Joseph Dispenza, a neuroscientist who uses his multiple talent to share knowledge resulting from transformative new paradigms. For example:

Our genes are as unpredictable as our brains. The latest research in genetics show that different genes are activated at different times – they are always in flux and can be influenced. There are genes that are prone to experiences that are activated when there is growth, healing or learning; and there are genes dependent on states of behavior that are influenced during stress, emotional excitement or dream (Retrieved on August 5<sup>th</sup>, 2018, from [www.drjoedispenza.com](http://www.drjoedispenza.com)).

Dispenza delivers his content through different means, including participation at events such as *The New history of man: the power to self-develop in extreme times*, a conference scheduled to happen in Mexico City the following month to the writing of this article. How does this event justify itself? “In the face of this crisis in health, at home and in love, the convergence of ancestral spiritual and timeless wisdom, along with the new science, is creating a genuine revolution in thought and in understanding, so radical that it can change the world” (Retrieved on August 5<sup>th</sup>, 2018, from [www.drjoedispenza.com](http://www.drjoedispenza.com)).

Dispenza joins other speakers of this new scientific *avant garde* popularization gathering that “Offers a compendium of ancestral wisdom and science, which breaks paradigms to reveal the birth of a new man’s history: revelations that change the way we think the human body, our limits, and, most importantly, our potential” (Retrieved on August 5<sup>th</sup>, 2018, from [www.drjoedispenza.com](http://www.drjoedispenza.com)).

The three speakers, says the presentation folder of the event,

describe discoveries that bury 150 years of conventional scientific knowledge. The exciting frontier of science as how the trinity of body, mind and spirit interrelate with biology, neurology, genetics and human potential, also illuminates the mechanism with which thoughts, perceptions and beliefs create the conditions in which we live and experience the

world through our body. The key: knowledge is power. The experiential knowledge of BEING, explained in this conference, empowers your life, your health, your future, freeing you from the limiting programs with which you were identified. How much better we get to know each other, the less we fear changes and others. When evidence does not support current history, it is time for a new one (Retrieved on August 15<sup>th</sup>, 2018 from [www.thenewhumanstory.com](http://www.thenewhumanstory.com)).

This immediate history in progress offers literary journalism a unique opportunity to render a noble service to humanity dissociated from the paradigmatic rancidity that froze conventional journalism.

The transformation of consciousness that at least a part of humanity can accomplish now is a vital and urgent necessity, if we want to revitalize the conditions of life on this planet. Our polluted Earth, contaminated, ignored, disrespected in its natural cycles, does not support much more the monstrous destructive actions on the environment caused by human ignorance backed by instruments of perception that alienate ourselves and separate us from the totalizing dynamic reality that envelopes us all and trans pass us energetically, as if showing us that our new journey requires that we learn to be co-creators of possibilities, in harmony partnership with Consciousness. This with a capital C, this presence of difficult definition, but which, suggest leading scientists, is the fabric that sustains life in all its forms and quadrants of existence in the universe.

To devote its rich narrative arsenal to simply cover the intricacies of this gritty policy of pathological profile that results from the narrow selfishness of our rulers? To employ art to describe the circus like world of show business in its poor beauty of fascinating appearance and empty soul? To focus solely on sport world celebrities and write shallow flight profiles that over time do not help people take wings and overcome their emotional dependency? When writing business people profile, concentrate only on their stories of greed, power of the little "I" and wild capitalism conquest?

It is too little for the glory of literary journalism.

It is better to plan writing the stories of this revolution increasingly less silent that help flourish here and there the Great Awakening. It is much worthier to write the profiles of these great, anonymous or famous pioneers ahead of their New Immediate History that is unfolding in our days. It is more valuable to offer readers meaningful narratives that impact their souls, ignite sparks of possibilities, stir the flame of transformation that gives them a new hope.

The means to do so?

On one hand, the accumulated narrative know-how derived from tradition of literary journalism built over time by so many distinguished writers of all times and places. On the other, new resources that are offered to the trade as instruments of expansion of the craft, such as The Hero's Journey as a method of structuring narratives, inputs from Jungian psychology, and tools as mind maps map and creative visualization of the Total Writing method, all incorporated to the Advanced Literary Journalism proposal.

The mapping of these new stories and their protagonists, the exercising of the singular narrative art of the trade, are two of the necessary means for literary journalism to embrace this communicative-educational function associated to the larger process of this Great Awakening. The third required action comprises the immersion of the writer in his/her own journey of inner transformation.

Only this way he/she will understand, through a process of empathy mirror reflection, the transformative process of his/her protagonists. Only this way will understand the great shift that is occurring in our time. Only this way will effectively exercise the true vocation that this craft makes happen.

To tell stories worth telling. Really. Stories that touch hearts and transform minds. And may, with luck and faith, contribute to make the world, probably a quantum better.

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