

FAULTY PERSPECTIVES OF TRUTH, FAIRNESS AND OBJECTIVITY IN LITERARY JOURNALISM:

SAGA OF ARTISTIC CREATIVE FAILURE FROM ARISTOTLE, PLATO, BAKHTIN AND BEYOND

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"If it was so, it might be; and if it were so, it would be; But as if it isn't so, it won't be. But if it isn't so, know how it should or not be. That's logic."⁽¹⁾

- Timothy J. Ross: Fuzzy Logic with Engineering Applications

An author often designs piece of literary art with his powerful, spontaneous, and naturalistic expressions that leads to the representation of clueless or pointless realities in literary journalism. In order to convey and reach intentional, relational, and occasional (incidental) truths that the author finds in various day to day events may not be of the readers' choice and may not be of his own. The present research argues about the 'subjective and objective referentiality' of the journalism that fails to reach the ultimate or eternal truth of the events with identification to traditional and historical ideologies and philosophies of the great Aristotle, Plato and Bakhtin in light of their own reflections on truths and its shadows. The research advocates, 'controversial truth and its shadows' in the linguistic version of a journalist. It is also subject to the 'reference worlds' and 'intentions' referred by its author. It deliberately puts forth the question about the present day journalism's failure in its portrayal of factual or actual truth. It dwells among the 'reference worlds' created out of sensical or nonsensical, sensically nonsensical or nonsensically sensical references within daily me expressions of the author. Even more it questions on the *truth, fairness* and

objectivity reflected in general sense and about the existence of truth in *muddy lines* of literary journalism in particular which seems to be illusory, impermanent and much times disguised.

Defining and Exploring Literary Journalism:

The researcher begins with the efforts to define the creative journalism. The sensitive historical investigation of the subject reflects that much has been done and much is to be done in order to define the literary journalism or creative journalism in its broader sense. The most celebrated academician Root has comprehensively defined literary journalism in his “Naming Journalism” as-

The expression of, reflection upon, and / or interpretation of observed, perceived or recollected experience; A genre of literature that includes such subgenres as the personal essay, the memoir, narrative reportage, and expressive critical writing and whose borders with other genres and forms are fluid and malleable. ⁽²⁾

Root, primarily, in his definition concentrates on the three modes of writing: “*expression*,” “*reflection*,” and “*interpretation*.” The introductory section of the definition provides a list of subgenres and qualifies the list claiming their “*disciplinary boundaries*’ that are arbitrary and in a state of flux. The fluid and *cross-disciplinary* nature of the genre has resulted with difficulties in their way of a clear definition. Rest of the part relies on modes, forms, or writing: expressive, transactional, and poetic prose. Expressive in order to express one’s views and attitudes. Secondly, *transactional* means to transfer information, or events in creative forms to represent a specific meaning of the real incident, or event.

Literary journalism offers an invitation to authors to write journalism in such a fashionable style, that journalism, as understood today, often is not so. The best piece of literary journalism always stresses on the *truth, fairness, objectivity* and *logic* in expression of the expressed proposition, but in a creative and trendier way. On the other hand, *creative*, is synonymous with *imaginative, inventive, non-imitative, productive*, and therefore, *unoriginal, unauthentic*, etc. With the promise of play of imagination in the word ‘*creative*’ or ‘*Literary*’, the world of literary journalism is *constructed, made* and *invented*, differs in many respects with that of journalism which is always not so the way it is.

Towards Logical Complexities:

“There are two worlds: the world that we can measure with line and rule and the world that we feel with our hearts and imagination. To be sensible of the truth of only one of these is to know the truth by halves.” ⁽³⁾

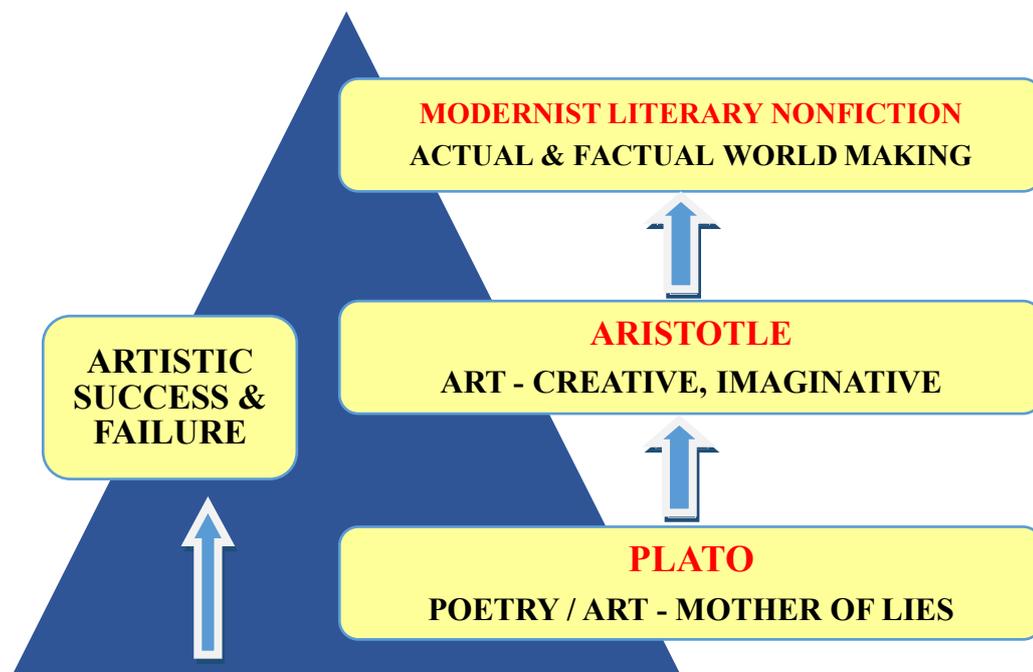
With salutation to the expressed proposition of Leigh Hunt, the research succeeds in flagging and sensitizing most of the critical issues in both journalism and fictive journalism. The sensitive insight into historical development of the concept and logical complexities in defining the truth, objectivity and fairness in the linguistic versions has resulted into creation of multiple possible and referential worlds. The illusory dilemma between the ways of Making and Breaking the fictional world could not be easily pinpointed. The same leads to the Platonic objections to

the poetry for its artistic imitative failure and runs through Aristotle’s defense of the lit and examines the notion of ‘truth’ developed and researched by Mikhail Bakhtin.

Artistic Imitative Failure: from Plato, Aristotle, Bakhtin and Beyond.

Platonic objection to poetry has concluded with great dissatisfaction and conclusion that poet should be banished from the *‘Ideal State’*. The philosophical extension to the same argument have raised questions about the representation of truth in the logical or illogical, logically logical, logically illogical, illogically logical and illogically illogical in present day columnist writings. The poet deceives the world with his imagination, emotion and lies. The poet imitates “shadow of shadows”, which is thrice removed from reality. To Plato, physical world is not an eternal reality. But it is an imitation of the reality in the mind of the Supreme. And the poet imitates this copy as the object of the world which is arbitrary, illusory and impermanent. Plato concluded that ‘poetry is thrice removed from reality’, it is being a mere ‘shadow of shadows’. Poetry, hence, is “the mother of lies”. And the poet beguiles us with his lies. Plato condemned poetry because the poet can have no ideal truth or idea of truth.

On the contrary, Aristotle’s *“Defense of Poesy”* tell us that art imitates not the mere shadow of things but the *‘Ideal Reality’* embodied in very object of the world. The process of artistic creation is a ‘creative process’. Art, not only recreates the original things not as it is, but as it appeals to the senses. It reproduces it ‘imaginatively’ and ‘creatively’ in their ideal state. Hence, the artist does not imitate the external world, but ‘creates’ the world according to his ‘own idea’ of it. Thus even an ugly object, when well-imitated becomes the source of artistic pleasure. This is so because of the imaginative coloring to reality in the process of poetic imitation. Let us see to understand and evaluate modernist journalism in different respects of the theories.



The traditional view conceives language as the medium of reproduction of a prior presence. It sees the world from different angles simultaneously which has made our view of

objects more complex, non perceivable and fragmented. As compared to modernist art and world view, realism seeks the value of neutrality where various possible viewpoints are formally combined. In order to represent an object a picture must be a symbol for it. Something must stand for it, and refer to it. However, a picture “never merely represent x, but rather represents x as an apple or represents x to be the something. Representing something always leads to difficulty. The world cannot be accurately or otherwise reflected in the mirror of language. According to Platonic condemnation ‘the actual’ representation of the ‘factual world’ is unattainable. But meaning is produced within the language. The core of the mimetic theory defines the work of art is always something “other” than the reality it aims to depict. According to Aristotle and modernists, to represent something other than something leads to artistic creativity. At the same time artistic integrity and coherence is unattainable because the author remains indulged in different worlds of words in a language and fails to reach at the final and ultimate truth it tries to reach. Hence, this artistic failure leads the work of non-fiction nowhere when added fiction to gain artistic pleasure.

The only thing is sure that journalism stands for understanding, clear understanding of *what has happened* and *what is being said*. In contradiction to this, fictional author intends to create a *life*. The enormous gap between any event and linguistic version of that event enriches the dilemma, between either the language *describes* the world or language *constructs* the world, either there is transcendental truth or there is no truth. Whosoever, says Rowling J K, may he be the author or reader, must be enough careful about the *truth*. Because, “*The truth, it is a beautiful and terrible thing, and should be treated with caution. There is nothing either fact or fiction, but thinking makes it so*”⁽⁴⁾. When put together, literary plus journalism it produces a synergy that attracts fiction and journalism writers alike. But the fiction writer’s power of storytelling and the journalist’s pursuit of facts cannot be equalized with each other. A journalist may write from the *inside out* but the fictionist always writes from *inside in* or *within*. Therefore, capturing *what matters* and mattering *what is captured* gets impressed with the shadows of facts with fancies and vice-versa. Hence, it is difficult to highlight the exact transgression line between fact and fancies between fiction and journalism. In order to tell a good, an interesting story and true story and not being involved in the story cannot be channelized in one genre of the literature. A writer’s independence to write according to his own delicious freedom and taste always leads him in complexities of ideas to recreate on *person’s vision* of the real world and what’s personally important to him. The distinction really doesn’t matter if the reader says who cares?. But it really does matter if the reader do cares. Therefore, the *voice of subjectivity* and the *voice of objectivity* affect the final and eternal impression of the truth on the mind of the reader. The same leads the reader in insolvable dilemma or illusion as, “*And those who were seen dancing were thought to be insane by those who could not hear the music.*”⁽⁵⁾.

The truth in creative journalism is always seen from angled and biased point of view. It’s difficult to reach the core or eternal truth of the events via creative journalism. Friedrich Nietzsche has aptly pointed out the illusory truth in creative journalism as- words and thoughts can never reach the ultimate truth via language. To him truth is purely mental, temporary and impermanent. It is a matter of coherence between ideas, belief and intellect. Beauty leads to goodness and goodness leads to truth. Truth is a critical preference between multiple choices to ideas and thoughts. Truth is polyphonic, multi-perspective, and plural. To Mikhail Bakhtin, no single statement or lonely voice can carry truth or any significance. The truth can reflect either from *inside within* and *outside without* the person. The authentic *self* cannot belong to the individual. Neither the statements of the minority group nor the statements of the majority group represent

the truthful truth. Collective truth and individual truth cannot be consensus or complimentary with each other. Hence, the author, reader and text cannot be either individually or unanimously be in complimentary to each other in depiction of their respective truths.

Literary journalism, therefore, proves to be the novel term for an old tradition of letting the objective and subjective ideologies, philosophies get together to describe the real and fictional world. The aim of it is to make readers experience that world, using the “I” as a guide. Sometimes the “I” becomes the main subject of the text and very active; at others, it’s a bit player presenting a larger truthful proposition. In short, discovering and developing new thoughts through the act of writing enables writers to leap beyond what’s verifiable by, ‘line and rule’ so that, ‘creative’ kicks in. You can’t force it, but ‘new truths’, ‘imagined truth’, ‘emerged truth’ or ‘versions of truth’ are open to play the game of imagination. Finally, the genre fills the gap between two worlds that is *fictive* and *factive* by transgressing the genres as asserted by Gerald N. Callahan as *Literary journalism fills a niche that will never be filled by either fiction or traditional journalism...About the things that happen to people in real time and ways those things change us a day or a decade later.*⁽⁶⁾ The author and the reader cannot come to any definite conclusion in a piece of journalism due to its ambiguous, illusory, temporary, and impermanent nature. And therefore it is apt to say-

Some knowledge is more incomplete than others

Some perceptions are more slanted than others!⁽⁷⁾

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