

The concept of ‘*facción*’: nature, scope and incidence in journalistic and literary studies

El concepto de ‘*facción*’: índole, alcance e incidencia en los estudios periodísticos y literarios

O conceito de ‘*facción*’: natureza, âmbito e impacto sobre os estudos jornalísticos e literários

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ABSTRACT

Both literary and journalistic studies, considered separately, tend to cement their respective disciplinary fields on two erroneous premises, which this article calls into question in the light of the philosophy of language and hermeneutics: on the one hand, the one which distinguishes between ‘diction’ and ‘reality’; And on the other, that which distinguishes between the notion of ‘fiction’ and the misnamed ‘non-fiction’. Instead, the text argues that, unlike physical realities, human reality is entangled with dictions, as constantly shown by the discursive construction of social facts. And, above all, that the various clusters of testimonial and documentary tenor integrate the territory of the ‘*facción*’, a form of truthful—but ultimately configuring—mimesis, obsolete to the mirages that the so called ‘non-fiction’ summons.

Keywords: *facción*, factual word, truth, veracity, verifiability, verisimilitude, empalabramiento, representation, literary journalism, narrativity, rhetoric, linguistic turn.

RESUMEN

Tanto los estudios literarios como los estudios periodísticos, considerados por separado, suelen cimentar sus respectivos campos disciplinares sobre dos premisas erróneas, que este artículo pone en tela de juicio a la luz de la filosofía del lenguaje y de la hermenéutica: por un lado, la que distingue entre ‘dicción’ y ‘realidad’; y por otro, la que distingue entre la noción de ‘ficción’ y la mal llamada ‘no ficción’. En su lugar, el texto sostiene que, a diferencia de la realidad física, la realidad humana está enteverada de dicciones, como sin cesar delata la construcción discursiva de los hechos sociales. Y, sobre todo, que los diversos empalabramientos de tenor testimonial y documental integran el territorio de la ‘facción’, una forma de mimesis verídica pero a fin de cuentas configuradora, ajena de raíz a los espejismos que la sedicente ‘no ficción’ convoca.

Palabras clave: *facción*, palabra facticia, verdad, veracidad, verificabilidad, verosimilitud, empalabramiento, representación, periodismo literario, narratividad, retórica, giro lingüístico.

RESUMO

Tanto os estudos literários como os estudos jornalísticos costumam construir seus campos disciplinares em duas premissas equivocadas, que este artigo questiona sob a ótica da filosofia da linguagem e da hermenêutica, a saber: a premissa que separa “dicção” e “realidade” e a premissa que distingue os campos de estudo entre as noções de “ficção” e a mal acunhada “não ficção”. Este trabalho argumenta que, diferente da realidade física, a realidade humana está imersa em dicções, como nos mostra a construção discursiva dos fatos sociais. Além disso, também afirma que os diversos agrupamentos de sentido testemunhados e documentados integram o território da “*facción*”, uma forma de “mimesis verídica”, mas no fim das contas configuradora, estranha às miragens do falso culto evocado pela “não ficção”.

Palavras-chave: *facción*, palavra fictícia, verdade, precisão, comprovação, probabilidade, representação, jornalismo literário, narrativa, retórica, virada lingüística.

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One of the distinctive features of our time, dubbed 'postmodern' by Jean-François Lyotard in the late 1970s, is the proliferation of aesthetic and epistemically ambiguous forms of writing, characterized by the hybridization of genres and styles, in addition to by the blurring of the boundaries between the true and the false, the document and the invention, the verifiable and the invented. This was George Steiner's conclusion in 1967, when he published *Cultura y silencio* [Culture and silence]. Even more so, today, when the traditional promiscuity between literature and journalism has extended its frontiers to territories that surpass the press and the classical mass culture—studied since the middle of the 20th century by authors such as Roland Barthes, Umberto Eco, Edgar Morin or Román Gubern—I am referring to the media culture, with a predominantly audiovisual emphasis, reigning from the seventies to the time when I write, during the deployment of a postmodernity that already gives tangible signs of agony (Duch and Chillón, 2012). And also, of course, the incipient 'transmedia culture', which, for some years now, on the wings of ubiquitous digitization, is multiplying alloys and transfers between different media, and mutating modes of production, exchange and access to the contents, be they narrative, iconic or discursive.

Observable from the sixties of the twentieth century, the intensification of this secular promiscuity between journalistic and literary writing is undoubtedly one of the most significant manifestations of the subject that I propose to elucidate. There are, to show it, the celebrated New Journalism of Truman Capote, Tom Wolfe or Gay Talese; the European and Latin American neo-journalism trends, with Ryszard Kapuscinski, Oriana Fallaci, Günter Wallraff, Francisco Umbral or Gabriel García Márquez at the head; or the most recent journalistic-literary trends that have collected their witness, among whose cultists the American John Lee Anderson, the French Emmanuel Carrère or the Argentinean Leila Guerriero should be mentioned—without forgetting the New New Journalism baptized, with more opportunism than foundation, by Robert Boynton (Chillón, 1999; Chillón, 2014).

Today, however, it is observed that the promiscuous relationships between literature and journalism to which I have just referred do not occur only between these areas, but also among others affected by the same or a similar tendency. I think of the documentary

literature and the factographical prose of John Berger, Miguel Barnet, Bruno Bettelheim, Javier Cercas or Peter Weiss. Or in the cinematographic and television narratives, which so often flirt with the mingling of genres and styles in hybrid modalities such as docudrama, infotainment, reality shows or fictions sediciously "based on real facts." Or in some of the new and not so new trends of the comic and graphic novel, whose authors—Joe Sacco, Carlos Giménez, Alison Bechdel, Marjane Satrapi, Chester Brown—pretend to report facts or document realities. Or, finally, in the growing presence of the 'transmedia narrative', tending to blur the until recently rigid barriers between the different supports and media.

Thinkers and scholars as relevant as Arnold Hauser, Jürgen Habermas, Hans-Magnus Enzensberger or George Steiner, among others, have for decades discovered that this "hunger for reality" is one of the most prominent features of late modernity, a source from which, above all, emerge the very different modalities of verbal and audiovisual mimesis that oscillate between the desire for rigorous documentation and a kind of disciplined and responsible invention, put at the service of the understanding of "the facts". Coinciding with the beginning of postmodernism, in the mid-1960s, Steiner called this vast trend post-fiction, which is distinguished by aesthetic hybridization, of genres and styles, and also by epistemic hybridization, since in it tend to fade the clear frontiers between fiction and *facción*—often more presumed than real, no matter how common opinion insists on ignoring it.

It must add, however, that postmodernity has not only been distinguished by the mixture of genres and styles, both aesthetic and epistemic, which the post-fiction neologism tries to summarize, but by the notorious rise of theoretical consciousness about it—and, likewise, of the confused border areas where, always and not only in our time, the factious and fictitious dictations have been overlapped, either openly or covertly. This new consciousness is, in my opinion, an essential dimension of the subject we are dealing with, since much of the most perceptive contemporary thought—in the hands of the philosophy of language, semiotics, hermeneutics or new rhetoric, among other perspectives and disciplines—allows to realize that *all* genres of discourse, whatever their epistemic objectives, are without exception affected by at least three decisive mediations: first, its inherent *linguistic condition*;

second, its inveterate *rhetorical condition*; and thirdly, its not exactly universal, although very frequent, *narrative condition*, since it affects a huge amount of them. I will refer to all of them in more detail below.

I will say, however, that the extension of this theoretical consciousness is by no means foreign to the hybridizations between fiction and *facción*¹ that I have just mentioned. In the field of audiovisual documentary, for example, Andrew Jarecki offers in *Capturing the Friedman's* a double inquiry: from the outset, in the ambiguous and almost unfathomable psychological and moral backroom of the Friedman family and its paterfamilias, a computer teacher sentenced to prison for having maliciously abused of his students; and beyond it, a lucid reflection on the imprecisions, ambiguities and voids that all narration entails, as the amount of the verifiable facts is revealed insufficient to reach the truth—and the spectator understands that, in reality, the most common thing is to settle for a simple verisimilitude, since truth tends to move away the more we seek it. This is also the fundamental question that, *mutatis mutandis*, provokes the documentary by Claude Lantzmann *Shoah*, about the Nazi extermination camps, a disturbing reflection on the limits and possibilities that affect both the iconic image and the oral and written story to represent the “facts” that constitute the recent past.

To this same line of narratives that investigate such mimetic interweaves belong, let us say, novels of fiction as *The Real Life of Sebastian Knight*, by Vladimir Nabokov, in which the search for the homonymous protagonist goes away the more it lasts, as in a game of Chinese boxes devoid of purpose or end. Or that very postmodern genre called autofiction, whose authors—Philip Roth or Javier Marías, John Coetzee or Enrique Vila-Matas, Paul Auster or W.G. Sebald—create novelistic research about their own actual experience that are, also, inventive creations about the possible experience of all. Or the same *Tristram Shandy* and *Don Quixote of La Mancha*, so great also in this regard, as it is necessary to emphasize.

Although the origins of such a metanarrative inquiry can be found long before our time—there is the memorable meditation that Augustine of Hippo pours in *The Confessions*, just to go back to the fourth century—, there is no doubt that the last two centuries have encouraged its proliferation. Remember Luigi Pirandello of *One, none and one hundred thousand*;

or Miguel de Unamuno's *Mist*; or Fernando Pessoa, literally divided into a handful of heteronyms, even more so than the Antonio Machado of “Abel Martín” and “Juan de Mairena”; or that line of films that deal with the glassy confusion between what is credible and true, whether they are *Citizen Kane*, by Orson Welles, *Rashomon*, by Akira Kurosawa, *Vertigo*, by Alfred Hitchcock, *Persona*, by Ingmar Bergman, or *The Hunt*, by Thomas Vittenberg.

Not even the field of social sciences has escaped this general trend, so typical of the period we live, to document with praiseworthy mixture of scientific rigor and humanistic sensibility their case studies—and to question, therefore, positivism and the quantifying pandemic that afflicts them today. Cultivated in minority, though fruitfully, by sociology, anthropology, psychology or historiography, the so-called ‘qualitative methods’ resort to careful and often participant observation, as well as to the cultivation of oral and written stories, to weave their rigorous and evocative life stories, capable of combining methodical research, sensitivity and imagination in order to understand the quality of the experience—and not only its quantity—of the subjects and cases they study. There they are, to show it, the ‘factographies’ made by Studs Terkel (*The Man Who Confused His Woman with a Hat*), Oscar Lewis (*The Children of Sánchez*) or Ronald Fraser (*Blood of Spain: An Oral History of the Spanish Civil War*), among many other possible.

And this is not to mention, before time, of course, this large collection of texts of literary-journalistic lineage that offer a tacit or manifested meditation about the always problematic narrative representation of facts and situations that actually happened—other than delivering to the reader novels-reportage of impeccable journalistic and aesthetic invoice. I think of James Agee of *Let Us Praise Famous Men*, in John Hersey of *Joe is home now*, in K.L. Reich by Joaquim Amat-Piniella or in Truman Capote of *In Cold Blood*. But also in the reflections implied in Joseph Mitchell's *Joe Gould's secret*, or in *Jimmy's World*, Janet Cooke's controversial Pulitzer Prize; and in the very explicit ones that Arcadi Espada proposes in *Raval. Regarding the love of children*, or Janet Malcolm in *The Journalist and the Murderer*.

All these works eloquently illustrate, in my opinion, some of the main creative tendencies that the spirit of the present time encourages. Postmodern relativism, it is well known, has fostered normative relaxation and

the ironic, irreverent and desacralizing tendency, and consequently the hybridization of genres and styles; The deliberate or involuntary alloy of fiction and *facción*; the rise of superficiality, aestheticism and spectacularism, traits that are transversal to multiple spheres of culture; and, finally, the frequent transfers and mixtures between the different cultural levels—high, medium and low, once separated by rigid limits (Chillón and Duch, 2016).

At the same time, this ethical, aesthetic and epistemic relativism has extended awareness of the often blurred, promiscuous relationships between fiction and *facción* in any historical period, and especially in ours. Today we know that the threefold mediation to which I recently alluded—linguistics, rhetoric and narrative—always determines the totality of the genres of discourse, and therefore their fictitious and factitious aspects. Since this is a central question, I must make a parenthesis to present it, before continuing the exploration of the contemporary links between fiction and *facción*.

1. The first of these mediations is the verbal language itself, according to the language philosophy of Wilhelm V. Humboldt and Friedrich Nietzsche, whose contemporary corollary is the 'linguistic turn', variously cultivated by authors such as Ludwig Wittgenstein, Hans G. Gadamer, Edward Sapir, Benjamin Lee Whorf, José María Valverde, John Searle or George Steiner, among others. According to this linguistic awareness, speech is not only a vehicle or instrument of transmission, capable of transferring ideas previously forged by the mind, but the sine qua non condition of thought itself, at least in its articulating and rational facets. Inescapably, what Gadamer called '*lingüística*' imposes its possibilities and its limits on any form of diction, and forces us to distinguish, qualitatively, the enunciation of the enunciated, the words of things and the events that they intend to refer, the tendency to the inherent order of the disorder and the discordance of "the existing" (Gadamer, 1977).

Regarding the question I am dealing with, I must add that linguistic conscience requires reconsidering, on different premises, two very intricate dichotomies².

- i. The first, which I will briefly mention, is the one that distinguishes between "diction" and "reality", and imagines the human reality in the likeness of the *physis* or reality of nature, as if it *were not*

also made of discourse, in the strict sense, and of semiosis, in the broad sense. By discourse, I understand, as linguistic turn, the statements and verbal statements that are their fruit, this is, speech acts capable of creating and transforming given realities, as John Austin and John Searle argued in a convincing way some decades ago in their essays on linguistic pragmatics. And by semiosis, the even broader and plural scope in which discourse is given, composed of the indices, signals, signs and symbols that constitute the cultural habitat of the human being, in all places and time.

- ii. The second dichotomy that I pretend to refute, very popular though conceptually flimsy, is the one that simply distinguishes between "fiction" and "non-fiction", and imagines that there are fictitious enunciations and statements that obey the sovereign imagination, on the one hand; and "non-fictional" utterances and statements capable of referring to reality in a reproductive, objective and therefore mediation-free manner. Its countless defenders tend to forget that what exists, in fact, are dictions that combine fiction and *facción*, fictitious and factitious. And they tend to forget, therefore, that the factitious statements that they call "non-fictitious" are characterized by the fact that they do not reproduce, but the represent reality, that is to say, an *empalabramiento* about it which is, at the same time, imitative (mimetic) and creative (poietic). Words do not reproduce things or facts—if by "things" and "facts" we mean entities that are alien to the discourse and prior to it—but represent them by saying them, and in doing so they transform them in several ways and degrees. Unable to grasp them and express them objectively, they are, on the other hand, very capable of making them, that is, of converting them performatively into objectification. It may seem a dizzying paradox, but to avoid it involves incurring in a major error.

In the light of the romantic philosophy of language, in short, postmodern thinking has revealed a reality proper to any historical period, and not just the present. That is, there is no qualitative and radical difference between fictitious statements and factitious statements, that is, between those statements based on the sovereign invention of what could happen, and those

based on reliable documentation of what happened, —or between poetry and history, to use the terms of Aristotle. What there are, in fact, are differences of degree and mode between the multiple variants of diction, in an arc ranging from the freest fiction to the most disciplined *facción*, since they are all affected by their shared linguistic condition.

2. The second of the mediations which postmodern consciousness notices is of a rhetorical nature, as well as of a linguistic one, since every act of speech —also the most deliberately *veridicente*— implies a metaphorization or *tropización* of the referred, a qualitative leap between the order of what things and events may be, on the one hand, and what we say they are, on the other. From the decisive research on rhetoric by Gustav Gerber and Friedrich Nietzsche in the nineteenth century to the most recent contributions by Charles Perelman, Roland Barthes, Paul de Man, Stephen Toulmin, Kenneth Burke, Paul Ricoeur or George Lakoff, one of the main sources of the aforementioned linguistic turn teaches us that “the real”, always unknown and elusive, is constructed as “human reality” thanks to the metaphorizing power —that is, *metamorfoseador*— of the verb. To think is essentially speaking, indeed, but then I must add that talking and thinking are rhetorical activities, as well.

Trope among the tropes, metaphor makes possible the decisive translation by means of which gross events are converted into images, words and concepts, that is, in virtual allusions of very different nature to that which they have at their origin. The discipline that the ancients called “rhetoric” has undergone an unexpected reevaluation in the last decades, despite the fact that still in the middle of the last century seemed it seemed surpassed by the advances of linguistics, semiotics and literary theory in its different branches. The main responsible for this rehabilitation, along with the already mentioned Kenneth Burke and Stephen Toulmin, was undoubtedly Chaïm Perelman (1969), heir and renovator of the Aristotelian Rhetoric along with Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca. But other prominent philosophers and linguists of our time have also been responsible for it, who have drawn attention to the decisive role that metaphors in particular, and tropes in general, play in the set of mediations that language entails. Today we know that any act of speech is rhetorical, from the novel and the poem to the tweet or journalistic headline. And of course they are, for better or for worse, each and every one of the works that make up fiction and *facción*.

3. The third of the mediations that modern linguistic consciousness has contributed to enlighten is of a narrative nature, since all speech acts with which we refer to stories —personal or collective experiences— must *represent* the temporal, spatial, and causal dimensions of experience, and entail one or another form of *storytelling*. According to the illuminating disquisition that Paul Ricoeur proposes in this regard in his already classic *Time and narrative*, ‘narrativity’ constitutes the essential, often unnoticed, canvas of any modes of discourse dedicated to represent the course of living, whether intentionally true or fabled; whether they are explicitly narrative —such as the epic, the story or the novel— or more or less veiled, such as journalistic explanation, persuasive argumentation or historiographic discourse (Ricoeur, 1987).

Like a material composed of a visible fabric and a hidden warp, it is the textual framework (‘mythos’) that makes possible the ‘concordance of the discordant’: first, the identification of some events or experiences among the many that a life span includes; and then, above all, their association with each other according to those configurator schemes that facilitate the different types of frames. It is not that narrative, as it is usually believed, is confined to the realm of fiction, invention or entertainment. What actually happens is that it constitutes the visible or invisible substratum of seemingly “objective” and “reproductive” forms of discourse, necessarily conditioned by the limits and possibilities that narrativity imposes. Think of the following genres and some of the earliest examples: historiography (*The Mediterranean in the time of Philip II* by Fernand Braudel) or the historical chronicle (*Insurgent Mexico*, by John Reed), literature (*The Gray Notebook*, by Josep Pla) or documentary (*The Gleaners and I*, by Agnès Varda), memorialism (*Los Pasos Contados* [Counted steps], by Corpus Barga) or argumentative or explanatory journalism (*Imperium*, by Ryszard Kapuscinski, or *The Neighbor's Wife*, by Gay Talese).

The narrative is so ubiquitous, transverse to very different genres of discourse, that it is neither accurate nor appropriate to speak of ‘narrative journalism’ to refer to what the locution ‘literary journalism’ designates with more rigor and correctness. Much of journalism is narrative per se, even if the full spectrum of its possibilities is not, whether descriptive, expository, argumentative or conversational; the only one that deserves the appellation of ‘literary’, on the other hand, is distinguished by its connection with the plural literary tradition, and by its creative and innovative tenor.

DICTION, FICTION AND FACCIÓN

According to the linguistic turn and its corollaries, the locution 'non-fiction' is unfounded. It must be said, however, that the various genres and modalities that such a term encompasses are capable of producing, at best, plausible mimesis of 'the real', conformed according to the possibilities and limits that every diction imposes. This is so, to begin with, because they are subject to the threefold mediation already mentioned: they are linguistic, rhetorical and narrative, and therefore do not show events and things as they have been, nor can they re-produce them, that is, produce them as they were. It is only possible for them to re-present them retrospectively, trying to recover what has already been lost, by means of their mutation in another entity of a different nature: no longer actually occurrences, but linguistic and iconic virtualities that, in the course of communicative exchanges, are taken by plausible, realistic truths.

A specific case will serve as eloquent illustration. When Norman Mailer documents and writes his extensive novel *The Executioner's Song*, he does not offer his readers a reproduction or a copy of the imprisonment and execution of the killer Gary Gilmore, but a representation of those facts already occurred by the novelistically configured language. Let us pause for a moment to consider what has been said, and notice two nuances that, although transcendent, often go unnoticed. The first is that to represent means to present again, to make again virtually present what is actually and unrecoverable past, that is, something that already happened that no longer exists now and here, and that therefore cannot be anything other than 'present of the past', in the memorable terms of Augustine of Hippo: past made presence by way of the signs and symbols with which it is recreated. And the second, that to make present the absent is possible thanks to the mediation of words, suitable to mimic the *lingüística* of past actions and facts, since a great number of them are mediated by the verb and can, therefore, be expressed with relative fidelity by it, but much more limited and awkward in translating the non-linguistic aspects of those same facts and actions, that is, transubstantiating into verbal statements the body and matter, light and texture, desire and pain, warmth and coldness, strength and gesture.

Thus, Mailer offers the reader a recreation exclusively linguistic—and rhetoric and narrative, of course—of events and vanished situations that were in their origin language, but also other things. The same can be said of *All the President's men*, by Woodward and Bernstein; or *Picture*, by Lillian Ross; *The Gulag Archipelago*, by Alexandr Soljenitsin; or Michael Herr's *Dispatches*, to name a few examples of prestige among many others. The list could be uncountable, but increasing it would not alter the essential idea it illustrates.

In all these cases it is also possible to observe the decisive work that narrativity exercises. Allegedly 'non-fictitious', that is, devoid of imaginative dressings and adjusted to the events that happened, all these texts of documentary character and will be configurators, nevertheless, since thanks to their respective plots they make agree the discordant, and tie the dispersed threads of the facts by means of a storytelling. This is so because they identify and choose a handful of motives—actions, speech fragments, experiences—among the countless ones that an event generates. And then they sew them by means of argumentative plots that confer them meaning: origin and end, purpose and motive, context and course. Whether it is tacit or explicit, persuasive arguments as well as narrative arguments propose a plausible why, how and what, that is, an explanatory framework that illuminates the understanding of the configured story. The singular occurrence that breaks in is contextualized, endowed with meaning and converted into "fact" thanks to this pre-existing and generic framework; and the validity of such a framework, in turn, is sanctioned by the fact that has just occurred (Danto, 2014, White, 1987).

In order to illustrate this argument, it is worth to evoke the work of the *new journalist* Hunter S. Thompson in his novel-reportage *Hell's Angels*. In investigating the daily life of the celebrated peri-urban tribe in his novel, Thompson identified and selected ingredients of content—themes and motifs, semblances and descriptions, symbols and details—to a large extent different from those that the conventional press used to use back then, to the point of setting a story substantially different from that which orthodoxy spread. And, furthermore, he constructed a plot line—and a fundamental argument, it should be noted—by which he related the incidents and circumstances that he considered relevant, in an

unusual way although ultimately to be expected from an author who would end up writing *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*. Thompson completed his work of narrative *inventio* through the complex and problematic characterization of the characters, the naturalistic description of the scenarios and the conduction of the narrative through a narrator-protagonist point of view, who lived, viewed and told from within his own observer participation—which required, by the way, a much more complete and risky immersion than simple participant observation. The result was a splendid investigation of the Angels, deliberately groundbreaking and subjective, one of whose main virtues was its ability to unmask the false—and impossible—objectivity of orthodox journalism.

Be that as it may, the misunderstandings that the 'non-fiction' locution arouses are so great and frequent—and inexplicable in certain authors—that I think it is imperative to amend them. Even more so, at a time when it is often used with astonishing frivolity, even by experienced journalists and conspicuous scholars of journalism and media communication. To the traditional, gross division of cinema and literature into the categories of "fiction" and "non-fiction", omnipresent in cultural supplements, adds, since a few years, a vindication of the qualities of journalism and document—praiseworthy in itself—which endeavors to baptize the products whose value increases by means of locutions such as "without fiction", "better than fiction", "fiction zero" and others of similar coarseness. Justifiable when people who are not concerned with the subject treat the matter in a casual talk, such a slip is not when scholars and researchers are committing it; as if they did not know, at this stage of postmodernity, that the absence of fiction is an impossible fantasy; and as if they ignored, purposely or not, the illuminating contributions that linguistics, the philosophy of language, hermeneutics and semiotics offer on the subject of this relevant question.

This widespread and not at all innocuous conceptual mess led me to propose, a few years ago (Chillón, 1999), a new meaning for the Latin noun '*facción*', which I now try to outline. To start, it should be noted that '*facción*' means 'production' and 'complexion', at the same time. And I must add that, unlike realist or openly fantastic 'fiction'—modality of free diction of probative compromises—the '*facción*' is distinguished because in it the refiguration is disciplined by an imagination that

must respect referential requirements, as it happens in information journalism or audiovisual documentary. Such constraints include verifiability when it is possible, of course, but cannot be reduced to it since the raw positive data are not always raw, not at all; and because, in addition, when they are, they are often insufficient to give meaning to a story. Any narrative *empalabramiento* requires, in addition to its contest, the essential and often risky establishment of causal and temporal links, which must be considered plausible and abide by the principles of the most elementary reason. And it also requires, of course, the ethical commitment to refer to what happened as it is honestly believed to be, with due intentional veracity.

So, in their own way, both 'fiction' and '*facción*' recreate the possible and the existent—and their varied conjugations—thanks to the configurative work that the imagination allows. This is true of Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*, or Michael Ende's *The Endless Story*. But it is also—considering the necessary distinctions—as far as realistic tenor stories like *Madame Bovary*, *War and Peace*, *The Pacific* and *The Wire* are concerned. And it is also true—although not usually admitted—in terms of novels such as *The Shah of Shahs*, by Ryszard Kapuscinski, or *A man*, by Oriana Fallaci; in graphic novels of testimonial character like *Reportajes*, by Joe Sacco, or *Paying for it*, by Chester Brown; or in documentaries like *Inside Job*, by Charles Ferguson, or *Capturing the Friedmans*, of the already mentioned Jarecki.

It should be noted, however, that it is not possible for the human being to optically employ his imagination as pleasure or convenience dictates. It is rather that he lives with and in it: conceiving the world and himself, and starting from his generating faculty to elaborate figurations: contours, forms and trajectories endowed with meaning, aesthetic transformations that make intelligible the gross chaos of *acaeceres* and things. Strictly speaking, giving and realizing reality is equivalent to telling it, in relevant measure: to give and to be aware of it. And this is because the '*gnarus*', a Latin term meaning "he who knows", is a subject conditioned by his changing circumstances—here or there, during, after, or before—because of his adverbial, contingent, and perspective condition. A narrator who constructs his world from an unavoidable subjectivity, incapable of reproducing 'events' *objectively*, and yet very capable—here is the paradox—of achieving that his diction engenders a palpable '*objectification*',

inducing very concrete Effects. "In the beginning was the Word," says the beginning of the Gospel of St. John: 'objectivity' is a chimera; 'objectification', however, is a constant occurrence.

However, to deny that fictional dictions can reproduce or trace phenomena does not imply denying them the ability to produce true arguments, provided that we use such an adjective with sufficient caution. Opposite to natural events, so-called "facts" are in fact, as humans, always shaped by discourse, and also have a heterogeneous constitution: aspects that are often far from being verifiable or evident, and which can only be scrutinized in part, conjectured from the available evidence. I think it opportune to evoke, in order to illustrate this observation, the lucid reflections about the impossibility of objectively grasping the facts that the reporter and poet James Agee frequently interposes in *Let us now praise famous men*, keenly aware that his altarpiece of the Appalachians' poverty does not capture what it was, but hardly offers the reader a representation woven through words—and accompanied by the unforgettable photographs of Walker Evans.

Contrary to what common sense assumes and preaches, it should be noted that 'facts' are not *there*—material and tangible, such as mountains or rivers—because they are dialectical complexes of action and discourse, argumentative plots that give sense to rude *acaeceres*. Hence they tend to be refractory to any reductionism of a positivist character; thus they are social constructs and not simple things; and hence also, in the best of cases, they offer perspectives that can be observed, interpreted and sometimes measured from changing perspectives. It should not be forgotten, however, that the 'facts' are cultural events, triggered by very different motives and reasons, and not only natural events precipitated by physical causes and processes. Although it tends to be overlooked, this implies that establishing a fact depends on the understanding and interpretation of clues, as well as the gathering of evidence and the inference of evidence—which, incidentally, are often unavailable. "There are no facts, only interpretations," as Nietzsche wrote (Nietzsche, 2008).

The reader should recall, in order to clarify this reasoning, the tribulations of Truman Capote when writing *In Cold Blood*, probably aware that his strenuous work of observation, thorough interviewing, and

documentation was not enough to fill the abundant gaps in story; and also that, with disconcerting frequency, it became indispensable to use conjectures to reconstruct in a credible way, for example, the past vicissitudes of Perry Smith, or his circumstances and motivations. All this in spite of the fact that Capote, unlike James Agee's frank explication of subjectivity, conscientiously applied the procedures of composition and style of the realist novel in the manner of his admired Flaubert in *Madame Bovary*. All in order to offer in his novel-reportage that omniscient and impassive effect of extreme verisimilitude—although often questionable truth—that has been called 'recording angel' (Saavedra, 1999). Once again, it would be possible to invoke other significant examples, earmarked in the journalistic and audiovisual field, but increasing the inventory would not elucidate the matter better.

VERACITY, VERISIMILITUDE, VERIFIABILITY, TRUTH

If, now after what I have just argued, the appellations 'non-fiction' or 'without fiction' are shown as grossly misleading, one may ask what is the veridiction that factual narratives pursue—and which, in their most fortunate expressions they reach, in their relative manner. And to assume that, in order to answer such a fundamental question, it is indispensable to start from three related premises, of which I have been speaking. The first is that it is not founded to distinguish, dichotomically, between "reality", on the one hand, and "diction" and "fiction", on the other, since it forms an intimate part of the latter, as human and not merely *matérica*. The second is that there are good reasons to differentiate "fiction" and "*facción*", and to banish the crude locution "non-fiction", however used it may be. And the third, that there is no reason to disagree with the scientist and positivist '*doxa*', predominant in the West, which tends to confuse truth with simple verifiability, that is, the understanding of meaning with the obtaining of raw data.

As it is known, all factual narratives seek to refer events and situations that actually happened. The reportage, biography, historiography, memorialism or audiovisual documentary seek to account for them as they were, as Aristotle preached that it was typical of 'history'. It must be added at once, however, that

truthfulness is hardly an intentional quality, a praiseworthy pretension which is an indispensable requirement of the ethos of loyal communication, however much it may often be unprovable. At best, both the narrator and the reader or the listener wish to capture the "facts" without distortion; and this despite the fact that this attitude does not guarantee, in any way, that what is reported is consistent with what happened. It is not prudent, therefore, to take literally the nonsense of the delirious—who behaves in a very truthful and sincere way, no doubt—as Sancho Panza knew when Don Quixote confused with realities the fabulous monster that he imagined.

In addition to truthful, therefore, factual accounts must be verifiable: they have to represent events and things from what can be observed and verified in them. Whether persuasive or narrative, an utterance can be considered verifiable when it is based on evidence that can be empirically testable or logically inferable, if not on indisputable evidence. And precisely for this reason, despite what common sense often takes for granted, such a quality is usually a desideratum, rather than a feasible objective. In testimonial literature or information journalism, in documentary film or oral history we find countless prestigious stories that, however plausible and truthful, can only be verified in half or in small measure. Consider, as a mere illustration, in justly acclaimed reports such as *Honor Thy Father*, by Gay Talese, *Che Guevara: A Revolutionary Life* by John Lee Anderson, or Günter Wallraff's *The Undesirable Journalist*; or documentaries of undoubted merit and rigor, such as Patricio Guzmán's *The battle of Chile*, *The Disenchantment*, by Jaime Chávarri, or *Grizzly Man*, by Werner Herzog. To what extent are decisive details concerning the daily life of the mafioso Bill Bonanno, or that of Che, or that of the Turkish immigrant interpreted by Wallraff, or the last minutes of Salvador Allende, or the alienation of the Paneros, or the man of bears evoked by Herzog? Can the most rigorous, the most honored and meticulous of journalists, documentalists or historians report with fidelity all the vicissitudes and nuances that a story needs to have in order to make sense? And does the recipient—as reader, interlocutor, or spectator—assume with responsibility that a relevant portion of what he needs to take for granted cannot, in fact, in any way be taken for granted? These are deliberately rhetorical questions, needless to say.

This incomplete verifiability does not have to be due to shady motives, but rather to the fact that the evidence and the proof hardly cover, in most cases, a fragment of what must be known to give meaning to the story. Let us not forget that, in addition to the evidence and proofs, to achieve this requires multiple indications capable of supporting plausible conjectures—and of suturing, through credible causal attributions, the voids that the simple inventory of actions leaves behind. A narrative only makes sense if the identification of the experiences and actions considered relevant—via evidence, proofs or clues—is articulated through inferences that causally link them together, until obtaining a co-relation of incidents, consecutive and consistent, which we call narrative (Ricoeur, 1987; Danto, 2014; White, 1987).

According to Ortega and Gasset's well-considered reflection in *The Revolt of the Masses* and in *History as a System*—in the shadow of Wilhelm Dilthey—an event must be understood as a succession of isolated moments, each of which *skates* over the former, so to speak; such instants do not occur in a determined and necessary way, but relatively indeterminate and contingent, open to many possible trajectories; and it is only the narrative—the concordance of that discordance, in a lucid expression of Paul Ricoeur—that allows establishing apparently irrefutable causal nexuses where the the uncertain possibility actually reigns—or until the chance or chaos, in the more extreme case (Ortega and Gasset, 1987). Let us recall, in this regard, the initial bewilderment with which we almost all witness, in direct, the attacks of 9/11 in New York; the gradual tethering during the minutes that mediated between the impact of the first plane and that of the second; and the subsequent construction of a story mostly accepted during the hours, days and months after the attack, when what was in dispute were not, properly speaking, its tragic effects, but the sense with which it would be understood from now on.

Actually, resourcing strictly to evidence usually authorizes a narrow margin of certainty, as journalists and historians know, who, in addition to being honest, are seriously questioning their respective tasks. Not only because there are many ingredients of each story that are far from obvious—or likely to be proven, at least—but because what seems "obvious" never is from any perspective. Without exception, all factitious

utterances are subject to that law, since it is the three-fold mediation of language, rhetoric and narration that allows us to construct what we call 'facts'—provided that they are entities previous and independent of the *empalabramiento*, in the likeness of those that make up the *antehumano* and natural world, and which therefore lack human form: discursive, consequently. And yet "facts" are *facts*, socially and discursively constructed, and constructing them implies articulating evidence, proofs and clues in a configuration that makes sense; conferring *facción* to the knowledge by force incomplete that the subjects can obtain and to agree in the course of its exchanges; and, finally, to combine such ingredients by means of the imagination, according to argumentative plots inspired by the matrices that tradition offers (Chillón, 2007).

Whether scientific or journalistic, legal or historiographical, testimonial or documentary, the best expressions of the *facción* lack, in fact, that ability to reproduce with objectivity what has happened that it is usually attributed to them—with frivolous or naive unconsciousness, often—since they cannot be anything other than representations, nothing more and nothing less: mimesis that make what has already happened in the past virtually become present, through that triple mediation—linguistic, rhetorical and narrative—inherent in any discourse of *veridicente* spirit.

A TYPOLOGY OF DICTIONS

From the above follows a plausible typology of the diction, according to the ways and degrees in which the fiction enters it. Two different but related taxonomies derive from the premises I have just presented, alternatives to the orthodox ones: the first—which I outline now—orders the statements according to their gnoseological status, on a scale ranging from the highest referentiality to greater possible fable; the second considers its aesthetic status, and distinguishes its ideational (*'inventio'*), compositional (*'dispositio'*) and stylistic (*'elocutio'*). It is the first, however, the one that I will outline.

1. **Tacit diction or tacit fiction**, typical of the statements of *veridicente* spirit in which fiction is given in its minimal and unrenounceable expression, involved in the mere poetic work that, through metaphor and symbol, all enunciation imposes.
 - 1.1 **Documentary factual diction**, characterized by its intentional veracity and, at the same time, by its high verifiability. Ideally, it is characteristic of speech acts such as affirmation, verification, exposure and explanation; of journalistic and media genres such as information, chronicle, reportage and documentary; and as much of the conventional historiographic procedures as of the so-called qualitative methods—oral history, life histories, docographies, etc.
 - 1.2 **Testimonial factual diction**, characterized by its intentional veracity and, at the same time, by its scarce or problematic verifiability. It is the typical mode of enunciation of confessions and memoirs books, diaries, collection of letters, travel accounts, portraits and semblances and, finally, the so-called 'testimonial literature' in its entire spectrum.
2. **Fictitious diction or manifest fiction**, typical of the statements of a fable spirit, in which the explicit fiction is present in varying ways and degrees, added to the implicit that in itself occurs in all kinds of statements. The fictitious utterance may be implicit or explicit, intentional or not, but when it is knowingly devised, interlocutors must engage in a 'suspension of disbelief' pact, such as that which makes it possible for novels, short stories, dramas and films to be artistically effective. This type of diction is, in turn, divisible into three main modes:
 - 2.1 **Realistic fictional diction**, characterized by the distillation of a truth of essential experience through the exercise of the 'typifying generalization' and, in short, of the referential verisimilitude. This type of enunciation seeks to erect possible worlds through the mimetic

representation of certain real worlds (such as the Madrid of the Republic, the Chicago of the Great Depression or the Paris of the Second Empire) recognizable by the interlocutors — readers or spectators that hold them in high esteem. The story, the novel, the theater and the cinema of realistic and naturalistic nature offer countless examples of this, from Flaubert to Rossellini through Hemingway and Chekhov.

2.2 Mythopoetic fictional diction, characterized by the distillation of a truth of essential experience through the exercise of 'typifying generalization' and, in short, of self-referential verisimilitude, that is, not by its representative and mimetic tenor regarding recognizable and external to interlocutors' real worlds, but by their appeal to the inner experience of the imagination, the dream or the daydream. Such would be the case of the myth, the cult and the legend of yesterday and today; and that of the narrative, the novel and the cinema that cultivate the 'symbolist or expressionist realism' —Kafka, Calvin, David Lynch, Borges or Cortázar— or the fantastic without ambiguity —Poe, Lovecraft or Tolkien.

2.3 False fictitious diction, characterized by its deliberate search for lying, deception, misrepresentation, concealment, or, in short, any of the subtle nuances that mendacity and falsity include, so well expressed by Augustine of Hippo in *De mendacio*: "A lie is the premeditated utterance of an intelligible falsehood." In epistemological terms, the difference between fallacious fiction and artistic fiction is colossal —of quality, not of degree—, although some authors presume that this is a sophisticated variant of lies; big mistake: in art, the interlocutors know and enjoy the keys of the barter, while in lie and deceit one of them —at least— ignores that he is being sold a pig in a poke, or that they both pay a frank delirium. In fallacious fiction there is no pact of suspension of disbelief, therefore, but a conscious exploitation of the credulity of others, if not a shared swindle.

The proposed typology allows to refute two dichotomies, both common and barely founded. On the one hand, the one that distinguishes openly between 'fiction' and 'non-fiction', as we have already seen. On the other, the one that draws a narrow difference between 'reality' and 'fiction', based on the confusion between the ontic and epistemic spheres. However, it is clear from the current reasoning that such drastic dichotomies preclude the comprehension of the extent to which the different dictions are interwoven or allied; and, above all, that they eclipse the epistemic condition of the ontic, that is, the mixed nature —biological, material and also discursive— of that historical construct in which the 'mundus' consists (Jaspers, 2017).

In addition, the taxonomy I present has two important consequences. One is that it is not lawful to simply assimilate the categories of 'fiction' and 'falsehood', as is often done with excessive levity. And another is that the renewed notion of 'fiction' that I advocate for —constitution of diction, whatever their forms— is fully sympathetic to the generative power of worlds that only language possesses.

George Steiner explains it with proverbial eloquence in *After Babel*:

Language is the main instrument of man's refusal to accept the world as it is. Without that refusal, without the unceasing generation by the mind of 'counter-worlds' —a generation which cannot be divorced from the grammar of counter-factual and optative forms— we would turn forever on the treadmill of the present. Reality would be (to use Wittgenstein's phrase in an illicit sense), 'all that is the case' and nothing more. Ours is the ability, the need, to gainsay or 'un-say' the world, to image and speak it otherwise. (Steiner, 1980, p. 250)

The poietic faculty of the verb, its unequalled aptitude for making and creating meaning, is embedded in every *empalabramiento* of experience. Thus the same author elucidates in *Real Presences*:

Language itself possesses and is possessed by the dynamics of fiction. To speak, either to oneself or to another, is —in the most naked and rigorous sense of this unfathomable banality— to invent, to reinvent, the person and the world. The expressed truth is, logically and ontologically, "true fiction", where the etymology of "fiction" refers us immediately to that of "doing." Language creates: by virtue of nomination, as in the

naming of Adam to all forms and presences; by virtue of the adjectival qualification, without which there can be no conceptualization of good or evil; it creates through preaching, of the chosen memory (all "history" is housed in the grammar of the past tense). Above all else, language is the generator and messenger of tomorrow (and from tomorrow). Unlike the leaf, the animal, only man can construct and analyze the grammar of hope [...] I think this ability to say it and not say it all, to build and deconstruct space and time, engender and saying counterfactual—"if Napoleon had commanded in Vietnam"—makes the man a man" (Steiner 1992: 44).

Language itself possesses and is possessed by the dynamics of fiction. And its most precious fruit, the one we agreed to call "truth", is intertwined with it, however much the usual conventions push us to forget it. With all its lights and shadows, the postmodern age has fostered a lucid awareness in this regard, still minority but relevant. And it has done so at the same time that it fostered those tendencies to the hybridization, the mishmash and the promiscuity between fiction and *facción* that find in the literary journalism of yesterday and today one of its most significant exponents.

ON THE SUBJECT OF THE SEDICENT 'POST-TRUTH'

Since a few years, the use of the term 'post-truth' has abounded, a neologism that is added to the large list of those who currently abuse of the prefix 'post'. It is, in my opinion, an imprecise appellation, which in fact does not refer to a new phenomenon—the abuse of the varied panoply of linguistic mixtifications ranging from involuntary deception to paladin lies, through all sorts of sophisms and fallacies—although it does to the justified alarm raised by its strong boom in all areas of public and private discourse. In short, it is not true that these mixtifications are distinctive of the time we live in, unlike past times presumably characterized by the clear separation between truth and lie, and by the right use of the word; but what indeed is true, certainly, is the morbid intensity and scope of such abuses in our day.

The term 'post-truth' is therefore a symptom capable of illustrating the powerful corruption of the discourse that today runs freely, a serious ailment in which the West began to repair in fifteen years ago, when it was drawn into a war against the "Axis of Evil", which still persists, following the spectral "weapons of mass destruction". Encouraged by the ethical and political frivolity that a certain postmodernism supports, the disorder has taken on a pandemic look, and finds in

the current economic, political and moral debacle one of its favorite fields of action. Under the word "crisis"—a verbal sense of economicism that hides rather than reveals—there is a colossal bankruptcy of global and epochal reach that affects very different facets of the present: politics and religion, morality and ideology, education and customs. Every critical epoch often has a discursive correlative, and the one we now suffer carries with it an infectious grammatical crisis so ubiquitous that it tends to go unnoticed, since it compromises all aspects of public, private and intimate life. Naturalized by habitude, the infection has already become a pandemic, and is substantiated in two main ways: either as a systemic imbalance of language, or as negligent and even deliberate perversion of its specific uses.

Language impairment. From the outset, such a grammatical crisis manifests itself as a tangible and systemically induced breach of the faculty of *empalabrar* reality, and afflicts most of the citizens and those who instruct, inform or order it. The modulations of the common speech show that the lexical, syntactic and rhetorical indigence is at its widest, which carries along the lack of aptitude to decant a lucid, critical and articulated knowledge about the *res publica*; a significant reduction of the competition and mood that plural dialogue demands; and, finally, the proliferation of discursive pathologies—from anomie and mutism to desist and violence—that undermines the pillars of a complex, plural and open society.

What such a disease puts in check is the health of coexistence and the sustenance of democracy itself, understood as an ideal whose ever imperfect but indispensable persecution must promote the public use of reason and its fruits: criticism and question, the difficult but desirable balance between heterodoxy and orthodoxy, the beneficial cultivation of responsible doubt, and the 'wisdom of illusion' which Nietzsche posited. The search for the integral and integrative civic virtue (*areté*) in the Greek sense requires decisively exercising the famous 'dare to know' (*Sapere Aude*) that the progressive Kant proposed as a currency of the Enlightenment. But towards such a desirable horizon, uniquely urgent in the current days, we can tend if the citizens enjoy the educational and communicative means essential for the realization of their human powers, instead of the methodical and obfuscating indoctrination that in fact they suffer. Today, as tomorrow and yesterday, women and men need to be socialized and welcomed, so that their innate fertility gives a fruitful harvest.

Perversion of speech. If the aforementioned dimension of the grammatical crisis concerns the generic drifts that we have experienced for decades, the second one is a much more ethical and pragmatic one, since it concerns the broad and diffuse territory in which subjects can exercise their will. Subjected to systemic deterioration, as we have argued, the *empalabradores* talents are also subject to abundant perversions and abuses, because it is the subjects, the groups and the institutions that possess the conditioned but effective freedom to exercise them, in addition to the responsibility of doing it virtuously, this is, with the self-love and rectitude that should inspire any coexistence. In this, it seems to me, is the marked uneasiness that the vague term 'post-truth' alludes to.

The corruption of public discourse is everywhere today, with so much force and so solvable effects that it is urgent to stop its contagion. The epidemic is manifested, on the one hand, in the shared negligence with which too many subjects express themselves and think — leaders and powerful people, of course, but also too many journalists and public communicators— and the damage it causes is proportional to the unconscious laziness that drives it. There they are, to illustrate it, lexical anemia and syntactic neglect; the lazy speech; the arrogant contempt of complexity and nuance; the saturation of topics and pet words. And, above all, the adoption of a speech that is sputtered, accommodating and feeble, given to obey all kinds of trends and sacrifice the beauty and verbal precision on the altar of the economist, technocratic and dehumanized neo-language to which we alluded, that falsely natural anti-style in which the 'instrumental rationality', that the thinkers of Frankfurt fought³, is embodied.

On the other hand, the perversion of discourse is in the hands of those who deliberately adulterate it for the sake of populism, messianism and demagoguery, cancers of any possible democracy and reason. There is a legion of leaders and spokespersons with ascendant audience

-pulpit or microphones, tribunes or platforms— that transgress the most elemental communicative ethics, unavoidable support of the loyalty and trust that the coexistence requires. With disdainful cynicism, they distort the certainties and recognizable probabilities, and confuse the resounding lie —deliberate enunciation of an intelligible falsity, as Augustine of Hippo wrote— with error or mistake. The fracture of the confidence that from such a desman results extends its gangrene to the whole society, and makes possible for shameless to conquer all. If the unethical mendacious of "all is worth" ends being natural and applauded, as so many persecute, then not only the understanding of each particular subject —and the consequent acts and decisions— is wronged, but also the capacity to *empalabrar* and to know that citizens and rulers need. And what in short is ruined is the foundation of communicability, coexistence and democracy, nothing less.

Since Humboldt and Nietzsche we know that the human being is such because he means and speaks, in the measure that he erects the whole civilization by means of symbols and words. And that the multifaceted discourse —with the verb at its top— is not merely a vehicle for the expression of what has already been devised without it, but a requirement of thinking and its fruits. Modern linguistic awareness teaches that understanding and *empalabrar* go hand in hand; and besides —although it is not easy to be aware of it— that the discourse is a reality-maker: of its facts, processes and circumstances, beyond the raw substance⁴. It shapes the facticity in which we live: the past and its memory, the present and its notion, the future and its anticipation. Hence the need to tackle its corruption: that 'post-truth' of which today, with founded concern, we speak so much and so awkwardly. And thus, above all, the urgency to rehabilitate Humanities in general and Enlightenment in particular, the heritage of wisdom that integrates the critical legacy of Humanism.

FOOTNOTES

1. The Spanish noun *facción*, whose semantic reassignment I have been proposing for years, should not be confused with the English composite neologism 'faction', which —at first, but misleading, glance- would be its homonym after the corresponding translation from one language to another. The result of the contraction of 'fact' and 'fiction', 'faction' alludes to this type of *veridicente* (truthful) writing, characterized by the application of procedures of composition and style of literary origin to the narration of facts and situations that actually happened, usually embodied in genres such as the novel-reportage, the novelized reportage, the novelized chronicle and other variants of contemporary literary journalism. On the other hand, the reassignment of the Spanish noun *facción* which I propose is a broad-spectrum epistemological category, symmetrically correlative to the traditional 'fiction'. And it alludes, therefore, to all forms of

writing and discourse that pursue the reliable representation of the actual facts -'facció'n' included, naturally. See, in this regard, Ronald Weber (1980), among other authors.

2. I think it is relevant to add that, although for decades I have defended the central postulates of the aforementioned linguistic awareness, I do not count myself among its most extreme supporters, those who consider that all mental activity –pure reason, aesthetic judgment and practical reason, Sensibility, intuition, emotion, feeling, onirism and reverie, unconscious included– is purely and simply verbal language. Rather, I maintain that, although mental life goes beyond linguistics, it plays a crucial role in it: through its conceptualizing and abstractive power, it articulates the above-mentioned dimensions, and in sum, it shapes the mind of homo sapiens as such. The position I adhere to, which might be called weighted, leads me equally to disagree with others with a different sign, which in the last decades have challenged the pillars of linguistic turn. Among them, the highly estimable ones of Steven Pinker, *The Language Instinct* (1994) and Paul Bogossian, *Fear of Knowledge* (2006).

3. See, in particular, the classic essay by Max Horkheimer *Critique of Instrumental Reason* (2002).

4. I refer in particular to the chapter *Hacer los hechos* [Doing the facts] of the treatise *Un ser de mediaciones. Antropología de la comunicación I* [A human being of mediations. Anthropology of Communication I] (2012), which I co-wrote with Luís Duch.

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