

Return address:

Literary Journalism Studies
School of Journalism
Ryerson University
350 Victoria Street
Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5B 2K3

In This Issue

- Patricia Poblete Alday et al. / Explore French Influences on Nineteenth-Century Chilean Press
- Lisa A. Phillips / Interrogates New Journalism's Gender Imbalance through the Work of Gloria Steinem and Gail Sheehy
- Siobhán McHugh / Focuses on the Podcast *S-Town* + Its Implications for Digital Literary Journalism
- Susan E. Swanberg / Uncovers Johannes A. Siemes, SJ's Estimable Influence on John Hersey's "Hiroshima"
- Isabel Soares / Delivers the Copenhagen IALJS-15 Keynote Address on Literary Journalism's Ecosystem
- Lisa A. Phillips / Interviews New Journalist Sara Davidson for SPQ+A



Published at the Medill School of Journalism, Northwestern University
1845 Sheridan Road, Evanston, IL 60208, United States

LITERARY JOURNALISM STUDIES

VOL. 13, NO. 1 AND 2, DECEMBER 2021

■ Narrative Podcast as Digital Literary Journalism: Conceptualizing *S-Town* ■

Literary Journalism Studies

Vol. 13, No. 1 and 2, December 2021



CRIME IN THE CITIES

NINETEENTH-CENTURY NARRATIVE JOURNALISM IN CHILE AND FRANCE

The Journal of the International Association for Literary Journalism Studies

The cover image, “Les Torments de J.
B. Troppmann,” c. 1870, is courtesy
dallica.ont.tr/Bibliotheque national et
universitaire de Strasbourg.
Cover design by Anthony DeRado

Literary Journalism Studies

Vol. 13, Nos. 1 and 2, December 2021

Submission Information	4
Note from the Editor	5
French Influences on the Nineteenth-Century Chilean Press: The Case of the Pioneering <i>Crónica Roja</i> , 1860–90 <i>by Patricia Poblete Alday, John S. Bak, Marina Alvarado Cornejo, Marcela Aguilar Guzmán, Roberto Herrscher, Aleksandra Wiktorowska</i>	8
“Every Year There’s a Pretty Girl Who Comes to New York and Pretends to Be a Writer”: Gender, the New Journalism, and the Early Careers of Gloria Steinem and Gail Sheehy <i>by Lisa A. Phillips</i>	76
The Narrative Podcast as Digital Literary Journalism: Conceptualizing <i>S-Town</i> <i>by Siobhán McHugh</i>	100
Under the Influence: The Impact of Johannes A. Siemes, SJ’s Eyewitness Report on John Hersey’s “Hiroshima” <i>by Susan E. Swanberg</i>	130
IALJS-15 KEYNOTE ADDRESS From within the Ecosystem: Notes from an Observer of Literary Journalism <i>by Isabel Soares</i>	162
SCHOLAR-PRACTITIONER Q+A Lisa A. Phillips interviews Sara Davidson	178
BOOK REVIEWS	193
<i>Fallout: The Hiroshima Cover-up and the Reporter Who Revealed It to the World, Literary Journalism and Latin American Wars, Poland 1945: War and Peace, Our Women on the Ground: Essays by Arab Women Reporting from the Arab World, Literary Journalism in British and American Prose.</i>	
Mission Statement	216
International Association for Literary Journalism Studies	217

2 *Literary Journalism Studies*, Vol. 13, Nos. 1 and 2, June and December 2021

Copyright © 2021
International Association for Literary Journalism Studies
All rights reserved

Website: www.literaryjournalismstudies.org

Literary Journalism Studies is the journal of the International Association for Literary Journalism Studies and is published twice yearly. For information on subscribing or membership, go to www.ialjs.org.

INDEXED IN ELSEVIER; SCOPUS
Member of the Council of Learned Journals

Published twice a year, June and December issues.
Subscriptions, \$50/year (individuals), \$75/year (libraries).

ISSN 1944-897X (paper)
ISSN 1944-8988 (online)

Literary Journalism Studies

Editor

Bill Reynolds
Ryerson University
Canada

Associate Editors

William Dow
American University of Paris
France

Roberta S. Maguire
University of Wisconsin
Oshkosh, United States

Marcia R. Prior-Miller
Iowa State University, Ames
United States

Book Review Editor

Nancy L. Roberts
University at Albany, SUNY
United States

Publisher

David Abrahamson
Northwestern University
United States

Advisory Board

Robert Alexander, John S. Bak
R. Thomas Berner, Myriam Boucharenc
Robert S. Boynton, Thomas B. Connery
Juan Domingues, David O. Dowling
David Eason, Tobias Eberwein
Shelley Fisher Fishkin, Leonora Flis
Kathy Roberts Forde, Brian Gabriel
Susan Greenberg, Roberto Herrscher
Tim Holmes, Sue Joseph, Beate Josephi
Richard Lance Keeble, Jacqueline Marino
Willa McDonald, Jenny McKay
Isabelle Meuret, Lindsay Morton
Guillaume Pinson, Josh Roiland
Norman Sims, Isabel Soares
Linda Steiner, Marie-Ève Thérenty
Alice Donat Trindade, Doug Underwood
Julie Wheelwright, Jan Whitt
Christopher P. Wilson
Sonja Merljak Zvodc

Designer

Anthony DeRado

Web Administrator

Nicholas Jackson

Editorial Assistants

Zane Charter, Helaina Dahl,
Claire Dupuis

Founding Editor

John C. Hartsock

Editorial Offices

Literary Journalism Studies

School of Journalism
Ryerson University
350 Victoria Street

Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5B 2K3

Email: literaryjournalismstudies@gmail.com



Published at the Medill School of Journalism, Northwestern University
1845 Sheridan Road, Evanston, IL 60208, United States

SUBMISSION INFORMATION

LITERARY JOURNALISM STUDIES invites submissions of original scholarly articles on literary journalism, which is also known as narrative journalism, literary reportage, reportage literature, New Journalism, and the nonfiction novel, as well as literary and narrative nonfiction that emphasizes cultural revelation. The journal has an international focus and seeks submissions on the theory, history, and pedagogy of literary journalism throughout the world. All disciplinary approaches are welcome. Submissions should be informed with an awareness of the existing scholarship and should be between 5,000 and 8,000 words in length, including notes. To encourage international dialogue, the journal is open to publishing on occasion short examples or excerpts of previously published literary journalism accompanied by a scholarly gloss about or an interview with the writer who is not widely known outside his or her country. The example or excerpt must be translated into English. The scholarly gloss or interview should generally be between 1,500 and 2,500 words long and indicate why the example is important in the context of its national culture. Together, both the text and the gloss generally should not exceed 8,000 words in length. The contributor is responsible for obtaining all copyright permissions, including from the publisher, author, and translator, as necessary. The journal is also willing to consider publication of exclusive excerpts of narrative literary journalism accepted for publication by major publishers.

Email submission (as a Microsoft Word attachment) is mandatory. A cover page indicating the title of the paper, the author's name, institutional affiliation, and contact information, along with an abstract (250 words), should accompany all submissions. The cover page should be sent as a separate attachment from the abstract and submission to facilitate distribution to readers. No identification should appear linking the author to the submission or abstract. All submissions must be in English Microsoft Word and follow the *Chicago Manual of Style* (Humanities endnote and bibliography style) <http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html>. All submissions will be blind reviewed. Send submissions to the editor at <literaryjournalismstudies@gmail.com>.

Copyright reverts to the contributor after publication with the provision that if republished reference is made to initial publication in *Literary Journalism Studies*.

BOOK REVIEWS are invited. They should be 1,000–2,000 words and focus on the scholarship of literary journalism and recent original works of literary journalism that deserve greater recognition among scholars. Book reviews are not blind reviewed but selected by the book review editor based on merit. Reviewers may suggest book review prospects or write the book review editor for suggestions. Usually reviewers will be responsible for obtaining their respective books. Book reviews and/or related queries should be sent to Nancy L. Roberts at <nroberts@albany.edu>

Note from the Editor . . .



Welcome to the first double issue of *LJS*. In these pandemic times, when it seems that anything can happen, here we are with the June 2021 and the December 2021 issues rolled into one.

The pandemic has played other jokes on us. The double issue is supposed to be thicker than it is, but three essays have been held for our next issue, scheduled for June 2022. This is because citation- and fact-checking duties have become trickier in the past couple of years. We cannot depend on getting the materials from various libraries we need to do our jobs in a timely manner, at least the way we reliably did before March 2020. This phenomenon is, I am guessing, familiar to many scholars in our community.

But enough whining—we have a most excellent issue regardless, and I briefly want to introduce the major research studies contained herein. The lead essay, “French Influences on the Nineteenth-Century Chilean Press: The Case of the Pioneering *Crónica Roja*, 1860–90,” written by Patricia Poblete Alday, John S. Bak, Marina Alvarado Cornejo, Marcela Aguilar Guzmán, Roberto Herrscher, and Aleksandra Wiktorowska, is by far the longest in the history of *LJS*, running sixty-seven pages. It is also the essay with the most bylines in the history of this publication.

I asked John Bak if he could provide a few details as to how this unusual research project came about. He told me that he discovered an agency in France called Evaluation-orientation de la Coopération Scientifique (ECOS). Judging by the name, it seemed the emphasis would be on the hard sciences, but John decided to give it a try anyway. The agency invites proposals for projects involving Latin American countries, and the proposals can be either bilateral or trilateral. John proposed a France–Chile–Argentina project at first, but things did not pan out with the latter country. Chile was game to collaborate, however, and Bak contacted Herrscher at Universidad Alberto Hurtado and Poblete Alday at Universidad Academia de Humanismo Cristiano, both in Santiago, and with the help of postdocs got the project up and running. In addition to this “monograph,” a “Transnational Literary Journalism Summer School” came from the project at Université de Lorraine late last May, shortly after the IALJS-15 Copenhagen conference.

The essay itself is a strange but wonderful dive into French and Chilean nineteenth-century crime reporting and how this form of reportage can be seen as proto-literary journalism. The French *faits divers* had an enormous, if belated, influence on Chilean reporting, even as some of the sensational reportages were toned down because of the specificities of the market, and you will just have to trust me that all the odd twists and turns in this global literary journalism story are worth the journey. I should be tipping my hat to all the scholars involved in this project, as this is the kind of work the discipline needs to both justify and expand its global reach.

Another area of research sorely in need of work, or at least revisiting, is the New Journalism. Lisa Phillips of the State University of New York New Paltz, United States, in her essay, “Every Year There’s a Pretty Girl Who Comes to New York and Pretends to Be a Writer,” has taken up the challenge of placing female New Journalists (besides Joan Didion, who needs no boost in recognition), in the same company as their much more heralded male counterparts. It is not necessary to name male names, except to say it was Gay Talese who spoke this essay’s titular words—words referring to Gloria Steinem, who was sitting in a cab with Talese at the time. In placing Steinem and Gail Sheehy in the larger context of the New Journalism’s aims, Phillips both critiques the sexism of the genre while expanding its scope.

Phillips also recounts the bizarre episode of *New York* magazine editor Clay Felker (Sheehy’s inamorato at the time) excising a crucial explanatory note at the beginning one of her investigative stories, thus opening her to the accusation of intentionally pulling a fast one on readers through her use of a composite character. Inexplicably, Felker chose to delete the note before publication, subjecting Sheehy to a blizzard of needless criticism and damaging her reputation. Over the course of her research, Phillips interviewed another New Journalist, Sara Davidson, and this excellent conversation comprises the Scholar–Practitioner Q+A for this issue.

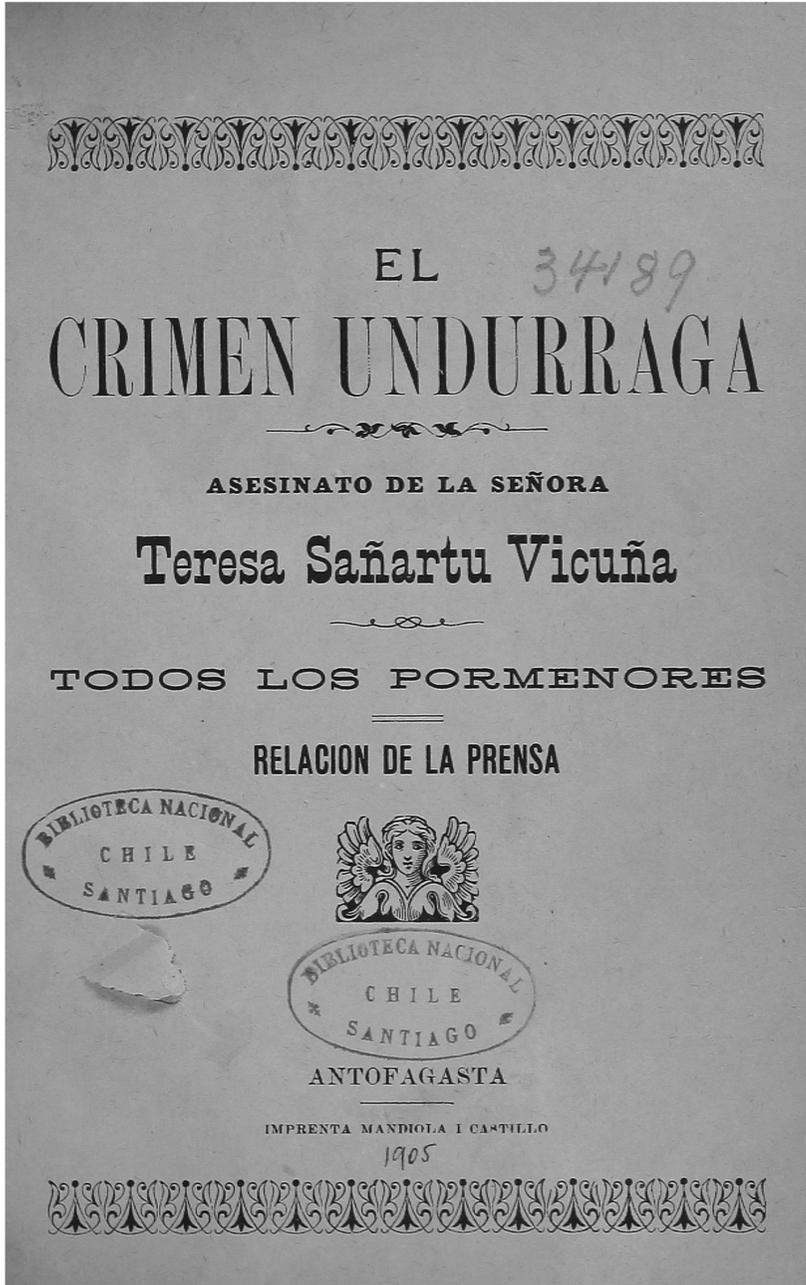
Yet another, newer focus of research is the relation between longform podcasting and literary journalism. I always point out to my graduate students that the skills they learn in my narrative writing class are portable and easily applied to other platforms. Siobhán McHugh of the University of Wollongong, Australia, shows just how solid that advice can be in her essay, “The Narrative Podcast as Digital Literary Journalism: Conceptualizing *S-Town*.” McHugh uses *This American Life*’s extraordinarily popular podcast as a case study to map how close the relationship between long-form podcasts and literary journalism actually is. Indeed, by mapping literary journalism characteristics, as identified by various scholars (Wolfe, Sims, Kramer, Boynton), onto podcasting, and by citing previous research into digital literary jour-

nalism (Dowling and Vogan; Marino, Jacobson, and Gutsche, Jr; Giles and Fitch; Dowling and Miller), McHugh shows how intertwined the two media really are.

Finally, Susan Swanberg of the University of Arizona, United States, takes another timely look at John Hersey's "Hiroshima" (referring to the original *New Yorker* article rather than the book). I say timely because not one, but two studies of Hersey have recently been published (*Mr. Straight Arrow* was reviewed in *LJS* 11.2, December 2019; and *Fallout* is reviewed in this issue, see page 195. What is so fascinating about Swanberg's research is how she has privileged the mostly unheralded work of Father Johannes A. Siemes, S.J., a major source for Hersey, and his influence on the Hersey text. I will leave it to the reader to ponder the reasons for and the extent of Hersey's absorption of Siemes's work into his own text.

Happy reading, and see you next issue with our spotlight on Danish cultural journalism, as well as essays on Middle Eastern literary journalism and Alexander von Humboldt.

— *Bill Reynolds*



French Influences on the Nineteenth-Century Chilean Press: The Case of the Pioneering *Crónica Roja*, 1860–90

Patricia Poblete Alday
Universidad Academia de Humanismo Cristiano /
Universidad Finis Terrae, Chile

John S. Bak
Université de Lorraine, France

Marina Alvarado Cornejo
Universidad Cardenal Silva Henríquez, Chile

Marcela Aguilar Guzmán
Universidad Diego Portales, Chile

Roberto Herrscher
Universidad Alberto Hurtado, Chile

Aleksandra Wiktorowska
Independent Scholar, Poland

Abstract: This study analyzes the beginnings and development of the Chilean crime or police story, later known as the *crónica roja*, a Latin American branch of contemporary literary journalism. While the held belief is that this new Chilean genre was influenced by the *fait divers* and the *chronique judiciaire* that appeared in nineteenth-century French print journalism, in fact, a more complex cultural mediation took place. After considering the particular historical and cultural features of both French and Chilean societies at the time, taking special note of their respective journalistic traditions and the manner in which the French press entered Chilean print culture, the study compares the narrative treatment of criminal actions reported in three Chilean newspapers, *El Chileno*, *El Mercurio de Valparaíso*, and *La República*, against *Le Petit Journal*, a popular French daily well known in Chile. The historical and comparative analysis shows that French *faits divers*

criminels and *chroniques judiciaires* share more similarities with the Chilean *folletín* crime books than with the country's more famous *crónica roja*. The reasons are twofold. First, the French texts' sensationalist tone and penchant for narrative detail did not have a place in the logic of the informative journalism that began imposing itself in Chile at the fin-de-siècle. It was a logic the Chilean *folletín* could largely ignore given its different editors, format, and target audience. And second, the Chilean press began adopting a moralizing and didactic tone in its *crónica roja* more in line with the rationale of its elite readership, which equated criminal activity with the lower classes, than with its growing populist audience, which favored these more sensationalist narratives.

Keywords: *crónica roja* – *fait divers criminel* – feuilleton – journalism and literature – crime reporting – Chile – France – the nineteenth-century press

Studies have shown that societies in the Southern Cone of South America were strongly influenced by French culture at the turn of the nineteenth century.¹ In Chile, this influence amounted to the early implementation of the French education model, which remained in place between 1842 and 1890 and had a direct impact on Chilean print culture. In her *Historia de la enseñanza en Chile* (History of education in Chile), Amanda Labarca demonstrates just how that French culture was disseminated, detailing the French literary canon to which Chilean students were readily exposed:

. . . in no other place were Musset, Victor Hugo, Lamartine, Balzac, and George Sand read as intensively as here [in Chile]. French was recognized as the language of wisdom, art and fashion, and France was the distinguished teacher where you should have gone to find the solution to the problems of these republics, daughters of their Revolution.²

This importation was promoted in large part by the Argentine intellectual, writer, and politician Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, who lived in Santiago de Chile between 1840 and 1852.³ For Sarmiento, as historian Alfredo Jocelyn-Holt states, “French ideas, fashion and literary trends were a model and an ideal for all other nations.”⁴ Paris had become the Promised Land for many Chilean aristocrats, especially its intellectuals, who had both the time and the financial means to travel abroad. When they returned home from the French capital, they brought with them ideas and materials that contributed to the expansion of Chile's fin-de-siècle cultural field, rendering it more auto-

mous from its colonizer and its Latin neighbors.⁵ Given the intraregional cultural and economic exchanges taking place in Latin America and quickly being incorporated into the late nineteenth-century global market, France, a country revered as much for its genteel culture as for its republican spirit, had superseded Spain as the most important foreign influence throughout the region.

While French literature and enlightenment philosophy constituted the highbrow elements of that importation, popular French culture, specifically its mainstream newspapers, also made inroads into Chilean print culture. Among these appropriations, the most visible was the *feuilleton* (*folletín* in Spanish), which began with the complete reproduction of original French novels and illustrations in the Chilean press, such as Victor Hugo's "El rey se divierte" (*El Progreso*, 1842), George Sand's "León Leoni" (*El Siglo*, 1844), Alexandre Dumas's "El caballero de Casa Roja" (*El Timón*, 1849), Eugène Sue's "El castillo del diablo o el aventurero" (*La Tribuna*, 1850), and Alphonse de Lamartine's "Proceso y muerte del mariscal Ney" (*El Mensajero*, 1854).⁶ Several scholars, including Gina Cánepa, Elizabeth Garrels, Hernán Pas, Carol Arcos, and Marina Alvarado Cornejo, have already studied this cultural importation to a great extent.⁷ But while they have examined the *folletín* from distinct literary or journalistic perspectives, no one has yet analyzed the aesthetic characteristics of this French medium's influence on Chile's print culture from a *literary journalistic* perspective. This study, therefore, seeks to complement the existing panorama of French influences on the development of the informative press in Chile by looking at how the nineteenth-century French *feuilleton*—and the *fait divers criminel* and *chronique judiciaire* that it appreciably influenced in the second half of that century—relates to the rise of the Chilean crime or police story known as the *crónica roja*, a Latin American branch of contemporary literary journalism.

Before proceeding, it is important to note that scholarly studies in Latin America traditionally apply the word *crónica* to texts written by the *Modernistas* and published in Hispanophone newspapers at the fin-de-siècle. Good examples are pieces about *flânerie*, literary texts that are considered as journalism merely because they appeared in a newspaper. On the contrary, this study, by comparison, asserts two premises that should nurture and enrich literary journalism studies: (1) the Latin American *crónica* must be understood primarily as a journalistic text that has its roots firmly planted, like the French *fait divers* and *chronique*, in narratives about daily events but that later, again not unlike its French cousin, transcended its interests beyond the ephemeral⁸; and (2) periodicals and newspapers are not just material containers of meaningful cultural content, but are influential actors *themselves* in the field of cultural mediation.⁹

These two premises buttress the structure of this study: The first is the specific socio-historical particularities of French print culture in Chile in the nineteenth century, especially in the latter part of the century, when both nations' presses were growing increasingly populist but for different reasons. From there, the study explores the narrative treatment of stories in Chilean newspapers that bear traces of the literary and journalistic aesthetics (including, but not limited to, those aesthetics that Tom Wolfe outlined in his essay that leads *The New Journalism*¹⁰) palpable in "viral" French *fait divers* press stories of the day, in particular sensationalist *faits divers criminels*, and *chroniques judiciaires* about crime.¹¹ Because scholarship on the *fait divers* as a transdisciplinary literary and journalistic genre is monolithic, and because the breadth of French influences on Chilean print culture is itself expansive, this study limits its focus to the development of and growing fascination with these crime stories in Chile. The growth was due in large part to the popularity of the French newspapers' serialized crime novels (*romans-feuilletons* and *romans policiers*) and *faits divers* of murder, mystery, and mayhem, the narrative arc of which had influenced Chilean writers over the years, but also to the varying degrees in which violence was perceived, confronted, and mediatized in both nations.

Police stories in particular present a clear tension between the two nations' journalistic systems: the old system, which was intellectual and ideological, and the new one, which is commercial and informative. This is readily seen on the *contextual* level because, as both nations' journalistic systems developed, the text became a cultural mirror through which their respective populations saw themselves evolving. Print media soon became a product for mass consumption, a means to inform, persuade, and entertain an increasingly literate body politic. The crime story played a central role in that development, though notably later in Chile than in France due to the time lag between both nations' governing aesthetics and literacy development among the lower classes who relished such stories. Crime stories, be they the *fait divers criminell/chronique judiciaire* or, half a century later, the *crónica roja*, not only directed readers' attention away from a daily diet of political discourse in both countries, but also satisfied the tastes of a new reading public, one characterized by an interest in the emotional over the rational.¹² Ironically, in their race to attract readers by offering more titillating stories of ghoulishness that echoed the fictional narratives of the French *romans-feuilletons* or the (semi) factual narratives of the *faits divers*, Chilean newspapers openly contradicted their original didactic and democratizing missions.

On the textual level, though, a comparison between the particular combination of literary and journalistic resources and strategies found in both

nations' crime stories reveals a substantially different story about how crimes and criminals were reported and represented. Owing to the gruesome, gothic nature of the events recounted, the crime story in both nations' presses adopted a narrative style typically absent in the textual economy of traditional news stories. Just like the *roman-feuilleton*, with which it shared restricted column space, the crime chronicle does include motives, identifies actors situated within specific roles with relative clarity, and constructs narrative arcs of suspense and climax. In fact, if the greatest distinction between the two mediatized genres was factual representation, the nineteenth-century line dividing fact (*chronique judiciaire/crónica roja*) from fiction (*feuilleton/follelin*) in both nations was frequently and intentionally blurred for readers, as much to inform them of their neighbors' private habits as to increase the sale of hard copies sold by street vendors instead of by subscription.¹³

And yet, curiously, the way the crime story reached its readers in France and in Chile differed in substantial ways. The reasons for this are twofold. First, the French texts' sensationalist tone and penchant for narrative detail—which had shaped the narrative development of the French *roman policier*, such as Émile Gaboriau's *L'Affaire Lerouge* (1867), and the (false) *chronique judiciaire*, such as René de Pont-Jest's *Le Procès des Thugs* (1877)¹⁴—did not have a place in the logic of the informative journalism that began imposing itself in Chile at the fin-de-siècle. That logic was one the Chilean *follelin* could largely ignore given its different editing style, format, and target audience. Second, the Chilean press began adopting a moralizing and didactic tone in its *crónica roja* more in line with the rationale of its elite readership who equated criminal activity more with the country's lower classes than with its growing populist audience, which favored these more sensationalist narratives. If sensationalist crime stories such as Jean-Batiste Troppmann's murder spree in France (in which a loner mechanic slaughtered an entire family over a period of weeks in August and September 1869 and was subsequently tried, convicted, and guillotined in January 1870), took so long to get established in Chile, it was because the country waited until the second half of the twentieth century to begin aligning itself with the logic and aesthetic choices of the growing middle and working classes, thus moving away from the aristocratic "good taste" that dominated the newspapers of the previous decades.

Admittedly, to single out any specific national influence on the development of another country's literature or journalistic production raises certain epistemological red flags and methodological reservations. Given Chile's evolving ties with Spain and France, let alone with countries in both Americas, such caveats are of particular concern in this study. And yet, both nations' varying responses to the omnipresence of violent crime reported in their dailies

evinces as much their cultural differences as they do their journalistic similarities. While changes in the French print media were vast and volatile throughout the nineteenth century and reverberated far and wide to the Southern Cone, local factors in Chile, such as its conservative milieu and its lack of a robust cultural market, were also responsible for demarking the limits of a transatlantic cultural mediation. The discussion that follows thus focuses on the literary crime journalism produced during the last third of the century when the Chilean press, sparked by various social changes, began its own transformation from a propaganda-ideological matrix to a modern-informative model.¹⁵

(Literary) Journalism and the Evolution of French Print Culture

As media scholars have pointed out, French literature became the bedrock of early French newspapers following the Revolution of 1789, when celebrated authors swapped their plumes for a printing press, and their recognizable writing styles filled both news and opinion columns. When Chile underwent its own revolution against Spain in the early decades of the nineteenth century, its press culture also experienced a major transformation; and France, with its proto-literary journalistic content, played no small role in this change. In their introduction to *Presse, nations et mondialisation au XIX^e siècle*, Marie-Ève Thérenty and Alain Vaillant note, “The prestigious ghost of revolutionary journalism will almost always haunt foreign presses in times of popular unrest and republican or anti-colonial insurrections (or often both, as in Latin America).”¹⁶

At the dawn of the Republic, the literate French population (largely, until 1840 at least, the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie) were hungry for



Le Petit Journal, August 28, 1866, page 1 (gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France).

legislative debate and political ideologies, so newspapers became the mouthpieces of various rival political factions. But, as Ingemar Oscarsson notes, these late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century French newspapers also carried the first appearances of the *feuilleton*, a central news genre which would, through the course of the nineteenth century, evolve into the *fait divers* and its many avatars, all forerunners to today's French and European literary journalism¹⁷: the *canard*, an early form of sensationalist fake news; the *chronique*, a timely news item that ranged from health and economic news to local and international crime stories; the *roman-feuilleton*, an often exotic serialized novel detailing mysteries and crimes of passion; and, much later, the *reportage*, a genre of in-depth "*chronique engagé*" about social injustice frequently told in the first person.¹⁸

These earlier *feuilletons*, which carried various French *faits divers* "mainly devoted to theatre programmes, literary news, [public] announcements etc.,"¹⁹ were at first in-octavo inserts within the larger in-quarto newspapers themselves. The *feuilleton* was added separately because the newspapers needed space for the debates and political commentary, and also because the *feuilleton's* news often came late in the day and thus halted printing and distribution to subscribers outside of Paris. And because the *fait divers* interested primarily Parisian readers, the *feuilletons* could be excluded from the papers sent to the provinces.²⁰ By 1800, though, the *faits divers* in the *feuilleton* inserts found their way directly into the pages of the newspapers themselves, often occupying the *rez-de-chaussée* (ground floor) of the front page just under a thin jumpline (*sous le filet*), and then continuing onto the second, third, or fourth page as necessary.²¹ It is this tradition of the *feuilleton*, and the later *roman-feuilleton* (serialized novels) which eventually displaced, "little by little[,] all the other rubrics, worldly talks, historical fragments, literary criticism, travel stories,"²² that are found in the major Parisian dailies throughout the nineteenth century, as well as in the continental newspapers a short while later.²³ The result of placing *faits divers* beneath news items and political commentary was that media information was being ingested differently than before. Over time, the style and content of these "hard" and "soft" news stories began blending, and the boundaries between fact and fiction blurred.

The French press shifted during la Monarchie de Juillet (1830–48) from being a political organ to a commercial enterprise, disseminating cultural and socio-economic ideas alongside political commentary. It was during this watershed period of the French press, when a newspaper format that would last up until World War I, Chilean readers and writers would have encountered and first brought copies back to Santiago de Chile and other cities. During France's Second Republic (1848–51), however, the *chronique* underwent

major changes, “losing [the] ephemeral nature” of a *faits divers* and “shifting towards a monolithic chronicle, centered around one or two important events.”²⁴ As Thérenty posits:

the chronicle of the Second Empire asserts its own identity: news is subjectively selected by the author, and this arbitrary selection no longer poses a problem. The chronicler sets down his own hierarchy of information. Finally, the chronicle adopts a more conversational tone, chatty even, as if in an apostrophe. It is intended to weave a strong emotional bond between the author and the reader, whose common sense is flattered.²⁵

It was this new journalistic voice and genre, one that was also developing in the United States and, later, in Britain with its “new” journalism, that would eventually migrate and take root in Chile, though the cultural “soil” was still vastly different from that found in France at the time—a fragile republic surrounded by formidable monarchies.

By the start of France’s Third Republic (1870–1940), French newspapers had become more affordable, and their readership varied. This greatly affected the Chilean press, which had looked to the French press for stories—and intellectual guidance. Evidence of this virality of French press articles appearing in Chilean newspapers, however, is still scarce, because countless early Chilean papers were never preserved in the microfilm archives of the Biblioteca Nacional de Chile. Moreover, much of what was archived has yet to be scanned and rendered OCR searchable, as French papers have been in Gallica, the digital library of the Bibliothèque nationale de France. But the Chilean practice of copying and translating texts from the Parisian newspapers is well known. The columns “Lectura Instructiva. De la infancia de la educación actual de las mujeres” and “Lectura Instructiva. Sobre la educación,” for instance, published in *El Progreso* on February 21, 1843, and January 31, 1844, respectively, are good examples of this practice. The first text was written by Aimé Martin (1781–1844), a French author from Lyon; the second, by Augusto Desrez, a French journalist and director of *Journal des connaissances utiles*. Later, Chilean newspapers such as Santiago de Chile’s *El Ferrocarril* even reproduced *faits divers* translated directly from French publications, such as *L’Économiste français*, *Le Correspondant*, and *La Nouvelle Revue*.²⁶

One specific example of these *faits divers* from the French press that had an impact on the development of the later *crónica roja* can be found in “Muerte horrorosa de un enano.”²⁷ This French *fait divers* about the tragic death of a circus dwarf eviscerated by several “tiger cubs” (feral cats, in actuality, whose fur was zebra striped to simulate tiger cubs²⁸) that he was taming in a cage, made its way, translated verbatim, into *El Ferrocarril* on September 23, 1882. The proto-*crónica roja*, for instance, provides the same graphic details

French readers would have read:

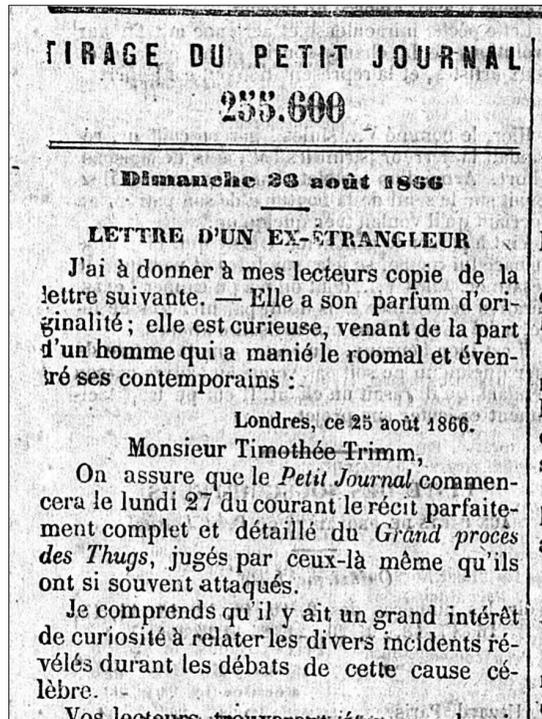
Immediately the other improvised tigers threw themselves on top of him, and before anyone could intervene, the poor dwarf lay on the ground, strangled, his eyes gouged out and his face completely disfigured.

When the corpse was removed, the wretch's features had no human form.²⁹

The gory details, including “gouged” eyes and “completely disfigured” visage, came directly from the story “Le Dompteur nain” (“The dwarf lion tamer”) first reported in *La Lanterne* on July 27, 1882:

In a second, all the other Lilliputian tigers were upon him, and before anyone could intervene, the dwarf, strangled, eyes gouged out, and completely disfigured, was dead. When the corpse, still shod in its soft boots and black coat, was removed from the cage, it no longer had a human face.”³⁰

The story, taken up in full and edited slightly, appeared a few days later in the *Journal des débats politiques et littéraires* (July 31, 1882), where the word “Lilliputian” was replaced with “improvised” to correct the initial error in referring to the tigers’ diminished size rather than the cats’ dyed fur.³¹ The Chilean story’s use of “tigres improvisados” signals its alignment with the *Journal des débats politiques et littéraires’* “tigres improvisés” instead of *La Lanterne’s* Swiftian allusion, “tigres lilliputiens,” which makes perfect sense, given that the *Journal des débats politiques et littéraires* was a paper popular among the French bourgeois, whereas *La Lanterne* was a radicalist paper whose anticlerical leanings would not have been well received in staunchly Catholic Santiago.



Le Petit Journal, August 27, 1866, page 1 (gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France).

LE PETIT JOURNAL

La table la plus féconde ait cessé de produire à l'âge le plus avancé de sa vie professionnelle. M. de Maistre a peut-être écrit à S. M. l'Empereur... M. de Maistre a peut-être écrit à S. M. l'Empereur...

Il n'y a rien de plus intéressant que de voir comment les hommes de lettres se comportent... Il n'y a rien de plus intéressant que de voir comment les hommes de lettres se comportent...

Le capitaine demanda qu'on ouvrit les portes pour se rendre au commandement... Le capitaine demanda qu'on ouvrit les portes pour se rendre au commandement...

On a constaté de plus, que depuis quinze ans... On a constaté de plus, que depuis quinze ans...

LISTE DES SOUSCRIPTEURS

Table listing subscribers with names and amounts. Includes names like M. de Maistre, M. de Voltaire, M. de Montesquieu, etc.

DEPARTS

On annonce pour le 1er septembre le départ de l'impératrice et de l'impératrice pour l'étranger...

Après l'été l'été a été un été des plus agréables... Après l'été l'été a été un été des plus agréables...

On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer... On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer...

On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer... On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer...

On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer... On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer...

On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer... On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer...

On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer... On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer...

On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer... On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer...

On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer... On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer...

On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer... On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer...

On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer... On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer...

On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer... On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer...

On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer... On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer...

On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer... On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer...

On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer... On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer...

On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer... On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer...

On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer... On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer...

On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer... On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer...

On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer... On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer...

On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer... On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer...

On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer... On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer...

On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer... On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer...

On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer... On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer...

On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer... On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer...

On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer... On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer...

On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer... On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer...

On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer... On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer...

On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer... On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer...

On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer... On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer...

On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer... On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer...

On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer... On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer...

On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer... On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer...

On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer... On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer...

On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer... On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer...

On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer... On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer...

On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer... On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer...

On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer... On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer...

On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer... On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer...

On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer... On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer...

On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer... On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer...

On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer... On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer...

On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer... On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer...

On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer... On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer...

On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer... On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer...

On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer... On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer...

On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer... On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer...

On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer... On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer...

On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer... On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer...

On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer... On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer...

On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer... On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer...

CURIOSITES DE L'HISTOIRE ET DE LA SCIENCE

Les ouvriers... Les ouvriers... Les ouvriers... Les ouvriers... Les ouvriers...

CORRESPONDANCE

De la défection de la magistrature... De la défection de la magistrature... De la défection de la magistrature...

ÉTRANGER

Il y a quelques jours, un Espagnol, nommé... Il y a quelques jours, un Espagnol, nommé...

LE FRANCO-COMTE DES THUGS

Depuis bien des années, des crimes atroces... Depuis bien des années, des crimes atroces...

On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer... On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer...

On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer... On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer...

On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer... On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer...

On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer... On a vu à Paris l'inauguration du chemin de fer...

While French readers might have had a primary interest in the dwarf's tragic death as a *fait divers* because it took place on French soil, Chilean readers would have been fascinated essentially with the story's bizarre and gothic nature, hence its inclusion among Santiago de Chile's local interest stories that day; that the story took place in France was, to them, arguably secondary at best. The topic's universality alone was enough to have effaced any specific cultural references. This was not always the case, however, as stories migrated from France across the ocean. To be sure, *fait divers* stories such as this one were written to "appease the need for the romantic and the sensational,"³² a trend growing in France ever since the popular *roman-feuilleton* and the *chronique*, once separate journalistic genres, began cross-breeding. This frontier between reality and fiction in the Chilean dailies at this time, unlike in the country's *Lira Popular* (the peoples' lyre),³³ was clearly policed, either in the section titles (poems, *folletín*, and so on) or just because the author pointed it out ("this is a true story"). When such viral hybrid stories did make their way into the Chilean press, they would have been understood only as factual. Two brief examples of this literary journalistic hybridization in France that, despite their common human appeal, were geographically pertinent are *Le Procès des Thugs* and the viral story of the gruesome Troppmann affair, which appeared in the pages of Paris's *Le Petit Journal* before finding a second life overseas.

A *chroniqueur judiciaire* for the Parisian daily *Le Figaro*, René de Pont-Jest serialized the fictional novel *Le Procès des Thugs*, based loosely on historical events, between August and October 1866, years before the famous French law of July 29, 1881, was enacted to prohibit judicial court chronicles, or *chroniques judiciaires*, from being anything but "fidèle," or faithful, to the facts in their reporting.³⁴ But unlike the way other novels were traditionally advertised in the press days before they were to appear, *Le Procès des Thugs* was announced as the lead on the front page of the August 27, 1866, edition as a *fait divers* "Letter" from a former apprentice "strangler" named Robinson to the paper's famed chronicler Timothée Trimm (the pseudonym of writer Léo Lespès). The "Letter" was based on a real story from India about a band of thieves and assassins who strangle their victims. Moreover, when it appeared the following day, the story was not placed in the paper's *rez-de-chaussée*, where the fictional *roman-feuilleton* normally appeared, but rather above the jump line, where factual news stories were placed. In fact, the story was presented as a journalistic text and even placed on page three under the column "Étranger," dedicated to foreign news items, bearing its title in full caps typical of the factual *chronique judiciaire*:

COURS SUPRÊMES DE CALCUTTA ET DE MADRAS

PRÉSIDENCE DE LORD WILLIAM BENTINCK

LE PROCÈS DES THUGS (ÉTRANGLEURS)

The *chronique* opens with an exposition that reads like a novel but which its readers thought at the time was nonfiction told with a literary flair:

For many years, crimes had been committed in Hindustan with incredible audacity. Important figures had disappeared; entire caravans had not reached their destinations without our knowing what had become of them; families and those concerned had turned hopelessly to the courts.

No corpse had been found, and although the name of the thugs was often mentioned, no one wanted to believe it. We attributed all of these murders, all of these disappearances, to the acts of ordinary highway robbers or to those of accidents, tigers, hurricanes, floods.³⁵

And it concludes on the next page, though teases the reader to return the following day for another installment:

We cannot recapture here the savage pride with which, in raising his chained hands towards the tribunal, he spoke in Hindi, that soft and harmonious language like Italian:

“I am the descendant of a royal race, and I swear by Kali that I won’t say a word unless my chains are taken off.”

The tiger cannot stand its shackles!

(*To be continued tomorrow*).³⁶

As Amélie Chabrier rightly notes, the story was presented in *Le Petit Journal* as a nonfictional *fait divers*, an official report or “*compte rendu judiciaire*,” but it was actually “une fiction déguisée” that would be published a decade later as novel.³⁷ The “ambiguïté générique” of the piece, she adds, where de Pont-Jest found “an original angle to speak again of a story already well known to the readership, but which he presents as an authentic narrative, told in the manner of a journalistic article,”³⁸ not only prompted the sale of more copies of *Le Petit Journal* but considerably blurred the lines between fact and fiction for its readers, especially given the fact that the second part of Dumas’s 1838 gothic novel *Pauline*, itself filled with dark crimes of theft and murder, was the *roman-feuilleton* that shared the pages of *Le Petit Journal* with de Pont-Jest’s story over the next couple of weeks.³⁹

While the events surrounding the crimes and subsequent trial of the

band of Indian assassins were (meant to be) taking place in the exotic clime of Calcutta, the real crimes and trial and execution of Troppmann—which Dominique Kalifa, Alain Vaillant, and Marie-Ève Théranty identify as having ushered in the “modern” *fait divers*⁴⁰—were happening now, in 1869–70, in the same city as its Parisian readers. It was an event so mediatized⁴¹ that it reached across the Atlantic.⁴² The Troppmann affair was a salacious news story that lasted several months in the press. The perpetrator killed all eight members of the Kinck family, burying the mother and the youngest children in a field near Pantin, in the northern outskirts of Paris. The event alone almost single-handedly made *Le Petit Journal* the most popular daily in Paris at the time:

On September 23, two days after the crime was discovered, the circulation of *Le Petit Journal* reached 357,000 copies. It increased to 448,000 copies on September 28, after the discovery of the corpse of Gustave Kinck. And this figure increased further in October and November.⁴³

The numerous *faits divers* based on the story, all written in a sensationalist prose worthy of Gaboriaus and de Pont-Jest, were signed by “Thomas Grimm,” the collective pseudonym of several *chroniqueurs* at *Le Petit Journal* who succeeded Timothée Trimm.⁴⁴

It was increasingly clear that French readers of the popular press were devouring gothic purple prose and that, to satisfy the demand, papers like *Le Petit Journal* were printing longer *fait divers* stories that followed events closely over several weeks or months, even serializing them like *romans-feuilletons*, which, in Troppmann’s case, may have led to the crime in the first place, since he admitted that reading the crime *feuilletons* of French novelist Eugène Sue had influenced his actions—a fact that would not have escaped the conservative Chilean editors.⁴⁵ As Laetitia Gonon writes in *Le fait divers criminel dans la presse quotidienne française du XIX^e siècle*, these readers:

turned more readily to the *faits divers* that they were used to reading, the writing of which was very similar to that of the serialized novels, which tend to broaden the readership of the dailies as well. It seems certain that the *roman-feuilleton* as well as *faits divers* were, above all, popular among the working class and women.

This influence of the *fait divers* on the paper’s literature (romantic, medical, philosophical) of the time is particularly interesting: the *fait divers* was indeed for these authors seen as a document that reflected reality, especially the criminal.⁴⁶

In short, as readers at this time grew impatient for more salacious stories of murder, political assassinations, executions, domestic violence, and other forms of nefarious crime, the dailies in France and, later, in Chile were all too

willing to supply them, but for different reasons, as will be discussed later.

Not long after the virality in France of these two mediatized events, Gonon continues, the *fait divers criminel* and *chronique judiciaire* parted ways indefinitely:

The *faits divers* appear in the last third of the newspaper The sections may change from one paper to the next, and you can never be sure to find exactly the same sections the following days—one of them being a counterpart to the *fait divers criminel*: the *chronique judiciaire*, which reports on a trial. If the motive is the same (the crime, and what follows) and the actors are identical (culprit, victim, witnesses, representatives of the law), we cannot, however, align the writing of the *chronique judiciaire* with that of the *fait divers*⁴⁷

Dominique Kalifa concurs, describing how the *chronique judiciaire* became “entirely independent”: “Entrusted to a court reporter, a journalist by trade, it was a genre in its own right, nobly written, the antithesis of the *fait divers*.”⁴⁸ That antithesis, Gonon adds, is evidenced by the chronicle’s interest in “the long process of the judgment,” and, if the story involves a heinous crime, the chronicle “deals with the crime well after it was committed”:

. . . it is studied, narrated, taken up again, interpreted by all those involved in the drama who have had time to refine their testimony. The *fait divers*, on the other hand, is generally written immediately after the crime, and it tells about or reports on the crime from the outside. It is without a doubt more accessible reading, and if the *chronique judiciaire* is a more noble genre, the *fait divers* is a genre systematically associated with the people.⁴⁹

In sum, short *faits divers criminels*, such as those that appeared each week in the columns of the popular daily *Le Petit Journal*, captured the immediate intrigue of a growing populist readership for sensationalism, while longer *chroniques judiciaires*, often lifted directly from the courtroom minutes, demonstrated how some of those same readers grew addicted to the real-life cliff-hangers of the *romans-feuilletons*, when court was adjourned and the story would be continued in the next day’s paper. Just as each installment of a *roman-feuilleton* would conclude with the phrase “*La suite à demain*” (“To be continued tomorrow”), as Gonon rightly notes, longer *faits divers criminels* and *chroniques judiciaires*—those, such as the first installment of “Thugs” discussed above, that would last for days or weeks in the press and appear in the pages of subsequent editions when more facts of the crime were uncovered—even began concluding their days’ entries with the phrase “*A demain des nouveaux détails*” (“New details tomorrow”), “*La suite à demain*” (“Follow-up tomorrow”), or “*À bientôt de nouveaux détails*” (“New details soon”) if the story was to be picked up at a later date.⁵⁰ Such is the case of the

chronicle “Le crime de la rue de Chazelles” (“The crime of Chazelles Street”), which appeared in *Le Petit Journal*, just above chapters thirteen and fourteen of Part II of Paul Saunière’s *roman-feuilleton*, *La Belle argentine*:

The Garins, who have owned this wine merchant catering establishment for ten years, are highly regarded in the neighborhood.

New details tomorrow.⁵¹

The popularity of both the *fait divers criminel* and the *chronique judiciaire* only grew with time. If the manner in which factual crime stories evolved, the reasons why they still appeal to readers arguably have not. For Gonon, their popularity lies in their function to make the unreal real for the reader. They confer on that reader an image of himself, as if looking into a mirror: “These *faits divers criminels* are often bloody, and they have spilled much ink.”⁵² That ink, of course, came as much from the chroniclers—and *cronistas*—themselves, as it did from their many critics and scholars. In *L’encre et le sang*, Kalifa provides perhaps the best answer as to how and why this genre fascinated readers, even after the nineteenth century:

At the dawn of the Great War, . . . the fervor for stories about crime became a real phenomenon of society. While the press was opening its columns up to various crime *faits divers* . . . , detective novels and detective films were attracting an increasingly larger audience, fascinated by a new imaginary made of bloody footprints and steps in the snow, tenuous clues and mysterious cryptograms.

At the heart of this craze, the reporter stood out as the incarnation of adventure and heroism. The writing of *fait divers* professionalized, and we began to see in the investigation a new way of interpreting the world.⁵³

One wonders, though, if certain French readers could distinguish between the two closely tied genres, discerning where fact ended and fiction began. It was a question that obviously troubled Chilean editors, which is why they chose not to reproduce *à la lettre* the French sensationalist *faits divers* in their own proto-*crónicas rojas*.

(Literary) Journalism and the Evolution of Chilean Print Culture

In Chile, the last three decades of the nineteenth century saw the ascent of liberal governments and constitutional reforms, which led to stronger political participation. The press was the preferred storyteller of these political battles, both the internal struggles within the political classes and their social effects. During the period between 1831 and 1841, when the police and judicial systems in Chile grew under censorship, freedom of expression was restricted, which of course served the interests of the ruling elite.⁵⁴ Here the role of the press was fundamental, because it worked as a platform for

the promotion of modern punitive ideas.⁵⁵ But relevant changes, such as the new Print Law of 1872—the third one in the nineteenth century and, without doubt, the most liberal, which helped consolidate public opinion⁵⁶—and growing literacy rates in the framework of new educational policies, changed Chilean print culture, providing new readerships for newspapers, magazines, and books.⁵⁷

France, too, as noted earlier, played a palpable role in the evolution of Chilean print culture. In addition to the cases already discussed of certain French stories having been copied, translated, and reprinted in Chilean papers, there is ample evidence of the reproduction of French illustrations.⁵⁸ As the number of French immigrants to Chile increased—from 1,654 in 1854, to 10,000 in 1912⁵⁹—it is only natural that they brought with them both French newspapers and French print culture in general, with its proto-literary journalistic bent. Moreover, French citizens themselves were sometimes included within the directive and creative circles of various Chilean newspapers, the earliest being Pedro Chapuis, who was editor and director of *El Verdadero Liberal* in 1827. Other names include: Z. M. Dauxion Lavaisse, collaborator with *El Observador Chileno*, August–November 1822; Bernard Péry-Etchart, owner of *El Mercurio* from 1838 to 1840; and Eugene Choteau, collaborator with *El Mercurio* upon his arrival in Chile in 1863.⁶⁰ Their presence no doubt increased the importation of French texts in Chile, which by 1910 had reached 76,207 units, almost fifty percent more than those imported from Spain.⁶¹ Decades later, from 1910 to 1930, the journalistic writings of correspondents Joaquín Edwards Bello (for Chilean newspapers *La Mañana*, *La Nación*, and *Los Tiempos*) and Augusto D’Halmar (for *La Unión*) maintained Chilean readers’ interest in Parisian news.⁶²

The closing decades of the nineteenth century thus witnessed both the modernization of the Chilean press and the professionalization of the writer. The development of new technologies, such as the telegraph, and the progressive influx of the U.S. media system led to the development of the “informative model” as a world trend, leaving behind the “doctrinal press,” which had been predominant in Latin America since the days of independence.⁶³ It is important to stress that the constitution of a “modern social communication system,” which occurred during this modernization period, reached all social and cultural strata and sparked the development of journalism as a legitimate business practice. Numbers show the transformation of the print system during these years: by 1860, there were only two important newspapers in Chile: *El Ferrocarril* in Santiago de Chile and *El Mercurio* in Valparaíso. Thirty years later, there were seven newspapers in Santiago and about fifty in other minor cities.⁶⁴ Likewise, if there were twenty-three print-

ing presses in the country in 1840 through 1850, that number increased to sixty-three in 1870 through 1880.⁶⁵ Moreover, typographers grew in number from 210 in 1845 (Chileans and foreigners) to 650 in 1875.⁶⁶ Finally, the number of regular publications (newspapers and magazines) rose from 193 in 1888 to 406 by 1902.⁶⁷

This widening of the cultural market produced a diversification and dispersion of new audiences and new “reading models”⁶⁸ in the Chilean press, which led to the newspapers’ earlier *mission civilisatrice* (civilizing mission) as enlightening the educated reader to now providing entertainment for the masses. Yet Chilean newspaper editors did not fully embrace this democratization of the press in terms of its wider, heterogeneous audience. For example, while advertisements were the first, and most evident, sign of this new, commercially minded, press paradigm, the editorial pages remained conservative in their illuminist, and elitist, logic. As Carlos Silva Vildósola recalls about Santiago de Chile’s *El Chileno*, one of the first examples of the popular press in Chile to abandon this positivist logic:

. . . as the newspaper contained the best information and its articles were totally free from partisan political pressure, and provided the most honest inspiration, they [the public] began to take it into account and read it and consider it all as one of the opinion forces in the country. The great newspapers never named us. They looked at us as the common enemy. Orthodox conservatives deemed us dangerous innovators and undisciplined. The ecclesiastical authority lived in constant anxiety, but we were protected by the personal friendship that each of us cultivated with that man of talent and great culture that was Archbishop Don Mariano Casanova. The liberals and radicals considered us a “picaresque sacristy,” as Roberto Huneus wrote in his book “Sursum Corda.” The public bought the newspaper and published advertising in it.⁶⁹

One of the most contested sites of this enlightenment versus entertainment debate in the media’s efforts to assert their mission and flex their muscles centered on the increasingly popular crime story, the *crónica roja*. Before 1896, Tomás Cornejo explains, the Chilean press published news in the following manner: on the front page were stories that carried the newspaper’s political position; the second page collected the events of the day (similar to French *fait divers*), including stories about violence. Whereas some of these crime stories emerged locally, several, including the Troppmann affair, arrived directly from France, more specifically from *Le Petit Journal*. And if no reference to *Le Procès des Thugs* could be located in the Chilean press from August through December 1866 (probably because the *chronique* had already been unveiled as a piece of fiction by the time the story reached Chile two months

later), several other Parisian crime stories imported from this period do appear. *La República*, for example, published fortnightly an unsigned chronicle entitled “Revista de París” (“Paris Magazine”), which offered Chilean readers a glimpse into French *faits divers*, including culture, fashion and crime reports.⁷⁰ In addition to the *Gazette des tribunaux*, a source for these crime reports was *Le Petit Journal*, as one article from November 1866 makes clear: “At his death, the *Petit Journal* wanted to show that these idlers, whom they [the French people] call useless, are necessary men, and are also the most precious instruments available to the circulation of values.”⁷¹ Most relevant here is the fact that the writer, and the editor, did not feel the need to elaborate on the French source, which suggests that Chilean readers were already quite familiar with *Le Petit Journal* as early as 1866.

Several days later, in another entry from the “Revista de París,” the *cronista* alerts readers to the growing importance of, and strange fascination with, French *choniques judiciaires* in Chile:

These judicial newspapers constitute the most complete repertoire that can be consulted when one wants to study the uses and customs of modern society. The only drawback is that the facts appear here as imaginary, as in serialized fictions, when on the contrary there is nothing more positive or more authentic. For example, here is a story that, if we did not see it recounted in long detail in the *Gazette des tribunaux*, would surely seem to us one of those fables invented by writers such as P[aul] Féval and [Pierre Alexis de] Ponson du Terrail, whose fertile imaginations do not know the limits of the implausible.⁷²

The warning was particularly apropos for, three years later, *La República* covered the Troppmann affair for the first time on February 17, 1870. The text, entitled “Los dramas judiciales” (Court dramas), in which the case was referred to as “El crimen de Pantin,” begins:

Until now we have refrained from talking about the famous and horrendous crime in Pantin, which has produced such profound emotion and great horror throughout the world, because the multiplicity of incidents, contradictions and the most adventurous conjectures usurped the place of truth. Today, we present for our Latin American readers the best account of the funeral tragedy that took place in Pantin: of the accusation record read at the hearing of the 28th by the imperial attorney, and in the debates of this terrible process, whose facts are hard to imagine and whose idea alone terrifies us, and of its incomparable criminal, who appeared before the jury (*Court d'Assises* of the Seine).⁷³

The entire text runs an unprecedented two full pages (five columns each) in *La República* and concludes with a dramatized verdict:

Troppmann has been sentenced to death.

This terrible sentence provokes applause that is later suppressed.

Troppmann remains motionless and greets the jurors unaffected.

He makes the passage from the courtroom to the Conciergerie in silence.

He enters his cell and does not show the same joy as the previous nights. He doesn't eat anything and just drinks a glass of wine.⁷⁴

While the editors at *La República* may have “refrained” from serializing the criminal *fait divers* as the French (and other nations’) press had done, ostensibly to protect its urbane Chilean readers from excessive exposure to fallacious information and tabloidesque details, they nonetheless splashed the story all over the paper’s front page, and then a ran a follow-up story a few days later.⁷⁵ By March 1870, the Troppmann affair had become a regular reference for the *cronista* of “Revista de París,” attesting not only to its ubiquity among Chilean readers but also to the Chilean press’ paradoxical (and hypocritical) agenda to secure the separation of enlightenment from entertainment-news stories in their dailies.

As a response to the growing interest in this kind of salacious information, newspapers increased the space for criminal reports, and soon the bigger and more important newspapers followed. From that point onward, important crime news had its own independent space on the first or second page.⁷⁶ Just as in France, then, this shifting print media context led to the progressive development of the crime story as a “natural” extension of the narratives that were traditionally linked to the lower classes, especially the new popular reading material that began emerging after 1866 (*Lira Popular*).⁷⁷ Unlike in France, though, the Chilean press tried to limit the new approach’s impact on that emerging reader out of deference to the nation’s conservative elite and its beliefs that the press’ role was to educate and enlighten a population, whose lower classes were gaining political traction.



Six members of the Kinck family, victims of Jean-Baptiste Troppman: (Top, left to right) Émile (16), Madame Kinck (40), Henri (14); bottom, left to right, Achille (6), Marie (3), Alfred (8), September 18, 1869 (Wikimedia Commons).

Chile's urbanization—including migrations from the countryside, industrialization, and overcrowding, especially in Santiago de Chile and Valparaíso—transformed cities into complex and menacing hotbeds for the proliferation of crime. Epidemics, prostitution, and various vices turned once popular neighborhoods into “a horrendous mix of misery and corruption,” which were seen as threats to society.⁷⁸ The Chilean press played a twofold role in criminalizing the lower-income and poorly educated sectors of society, instilling in its urbane readers the link between poverty and crime: explicitly, through the editorializing content of the newspapers, and implicitly, through the crime pages. Moreover, the arrival of modern criminology in Chile—especially through the ideas of Italian criminologist Cesare Lombroso—deepened the stigmatization of the lower classes. The statistical data available at the time ratified the prejudices of the elite, showing that most of the transgressions were committed by the poor.⁷⁹ Lombroso's positivist criminology attempted to define the dangerous classes as naturally different from the workers; the former presented as degenerate, the latter seen as useful.⁸⁰

Thus, the Chilean press of the period from 1880 shows the circulation of ideas linked to criminological determinism, not only in intellectual or academic circles, but also in various medical, legal, and scientific publications that explained and applied the Lombrosian principles to the Chilean context.⁸¹ And yet, the crime story, with its complex amalgam of sociopathy, sleuthing, and jurisprudence provided entertainment for working-class readers as much as it did fodder for the nation's aristocracy, who saw the stories as justification for their elitist attitudes. The *crónica roja* attempted to balance these contradictions: to educate and inform, it adopted a journalistic, plain style; to sell and entertain, it resorted at times to the literary gothic but nothing on par with the *faits divers criminels* in France. Given the strong influence of the aristocratic tradition in nineteenth-century Chilean society, then, the informative style in these *crónicas* (short phrases, lack of details, factographic) should be understood not only through the lens of a new journalism logic, but also as a way to maintain “good taste” and social order. The case of *El Chileno* illustrates these contradictions: though it was considered “the newspaper of housemaids” for its populist orientation, it was “cultured and ha[d] a refined style. Its short, clear, and precise articles were aimed at fulfilling the readers' demands, mostly people of modest means”⁸²

A “refined style” here does not imply a “fancy” but rather a “correct” style, grammatically speaking. Even though the target readership for *El Chileno* was the un(der)educated Chilean population, that did not mean the paper allowed its articles to be any less highbrow in recounting its lowbrow content, evidenced in a short piece from November 27, 1889, titled simply, “Crime”:

Laureano Gomez is the name of an individual who, on the night of the 24th, was drinking with four friends in a forest located in the rural sub-delegation 13 “Pudahuel,” near the Mapocho River. It is presumed that, during a dispute they had had[,] brought on by excessive drinking, the four killed Gomez, killing him so quickly in fact, with several blows to the head, apparently from a stone, that he was already a corpse even before they sent him to the General Cemetery. The police have taken precaution with the case in order to apprehend the alleged perpetrators of this crime.⁸³

As Joaquín Edwards Bello—one of Chile’s most famous *cronistas*—would write years later, in 1923, about the nation’s newspapers in general: “We are enemies of narrative writing in the daily press, which anyone can do, and that is a fact of life, but modern journalism cannot exist without police publications”⁸⁴

If the *crónica roja* helped turn beat reporters into well-known and respected journalists,⁸⁵ and a new social conscience, supported by a liberal editorial market, allowed these journalists to legitimize themselves within an intellectual sphere,⁸⁶ Chilean fin-de-siècle print culture nonetheless placed limits on the *crónica roja* that ultimately distinguish it from its French cousin. But, as history has repeatedly shown, any idea suppressed in one place sprouts up in another, and often in a state more virulent than its original. Such is the case with the rise of the Chilean *folletín*—understood not only as a serialized novel appearing daily in chapters, but also as a space for other more hybrid texts, both in matter and style, for which the articulating center was the presentation and debate of the modern circumstances of the new spheres of social, cultural, and political life in the country.⁸⁷

While French feuilletons were, at first, *fait divers* items published separately and later inserted into a newspaper following its print run and, later, serialized novels published within the newspapers themselves, these Chilean *folletines* were more nonfictional in nature, and the writer’s role was similar to that of an editor: select the facts, arrange the details, and provide rhythm to the narration. To be sure, Chilean newspapers published French style *romans-feuilletons* as well, even placing them, as the French papers had, in the paper’s *rez-de-chaussée*; in fact, many of them reproduced texts by French writers themselves, as described earlier.⁸⁸ But these nonfiction *folletines* were written (or edited) by Chilean writers, based on real criminal facts, and circulated independently as popular books. The idea behind these *folletines* was to collect the many ephemeral *crónicas rojas* that appeared in the newspapers—and which soon lined the bottom of many a bird cage or litter box—and piece together all their legal and gruesome details, thereby cementing the crime story within the nation’s psyche.⁸⁹ What the *crónica roja* could not do in Chile,

then, these *folletines* managed: namely, to deliver salacious, French-like *faits divers criminels* and *chroniques judiciaire*, in gothic narrative fashion, to eager Chilean readers, while remaining loyal to the doctrinal principles of education and enlightenment explicit to the early Chilean press.

The Chilean print scene during the second half of the nineteenth century, then, was a hybrid, incorporating “‘mixed’ newspapers, or ‘transition’ newspapers, which imported new elements from modern journalism but which also did not want to abandon entirely the literary elements that characterized the previous period.”⁹⁰ All of the *crónicas rojas* and *folletines* included in the corpus analyzed in the following section are drawn from these “mixed” or “transition” papers, but it is important to understand these qualifiers in all their complexity: differences were nonetheless vast and far-reaching, depending on the newspaper, their various sections, and their individual writers.

Narrative Characteristics in the French *fait divers* and the Chilean *crónica roja*

Given the proliferation of weekly and daily newspapers that appeared in both France and Chile throughout the nineteenth century, and the increase in crime stories that graced—or soiled—their pages, the choice of a corpus of proto-*crónicas rojas* and *folletines* to analyze poses a certain problem. In the case of the French press, Thérenty, among others, has identified 1836 as being the watershed year in French print media, with the birth of two commercially directed Parisian dailies, *La Presse* and *Le Siècle*.⁹¹ But the Chilean popular press (one that was fully aware of a populist editorial bent and not ashamed of it) was not yet established by 1836—and would not be for another century—complicating any comparative analysis between the two countries’ print cultures at that point in time. Instead, for the present study, a later Parisian paper, *Le Petit Journal* (1863–1944) was selected, not only because it was well known in Chile’s main cities, but also because its nonpartisan editorial stance, its accessible language, and its low cost catered to popular classes, making it ubiquitous on the French media scene. When Agustín Edwards created Santiago de Chile’s *El Mercurio* in 1900, for example, he cited specifically *Le Petit Journal* as one of his inspirations: “I would like for us to try the feuilleton, a format very popular here [in Paris] implanted by the *Petit Parisien*, the *Journal*, the *Petit Journal*, and other newspapers to increase their circulation.”⁹²

Le Petit Journal is thus representative of the press of its time due both to its massive circulation and its common practice of paraphrasing or even plagiarizing crime stories previously published in other media, some of them foreign. In the Chilean corpus, there were papers with similar tendencies:

El Chileno, one of the first popular dailies, founded in 1883⁹³; *El Mercurio de Valparaíso*, a serious daily founded in 1827, which followed the informative-commercial trend; and *La República*, a political daily founded in 1866, which showed its ideological origins in clearer lines. These Chilean newspapers, selected for their different editorial stances and readerships, provide a wide swath of crime reporting characteristic of *Le Petit Journal* that started to develop in Chile at the fin-de-siècle. Per the analysis that follows, the decision was made to widen the range in the Chilean press in the interest of comparing how, and how much, the narrative strategies of the French popular press were drawn upon in writing crime stories, according to the orientation of each Chilean paper.⁹⁴

A close examination of a selection of articles that appeared in *Le Petit Journal* during the three decades of modernization of the Chilean press can help identify the ways that transcultural mediation occurred between the two nations, developing narrative markers of a proto-literary journalism that have been identified in the literary journalism of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.⁹⁵ A close textual analysis reveals ten recurring narrative characteristics that are discernable in the way crime stories were reported in both nations' presses:

1. Continuity (stories continuing in successive issues, similar to *romans-feuilletons*);
2. Third-Person Point of View (complex perspective built as much from subjectivities of characters as from narrator);
3. Scene-Setting;
4. Dialogue and Testimony;
5. Reliance on Rumor and Supposition;
6. Elaboration of Dramatic Images;
7. Suspense;
8. Lateralization (sub-plots connected to main plot);
9. Narrative Awareness (for both journalist and reader); and
10. Moralizing Tone and Value Judgment.

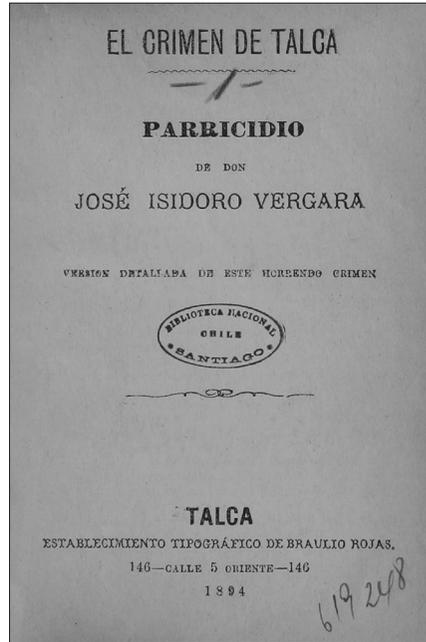
Most of these characteristics come from fiction writing, which suggests that the narrating of a criminal news item is privileged to help both the writer and reader make sense of the nonsensical, that is, to give order to a series of facts that defer or deflect meaning, and to lend sense to an action deemed antisocial or pathological.⁹⁶

1. Continuity

The first characteristic of the French corpus, continuity, appears in the Chilean papers more as a result of news in progress than as an editorial choice.

To be sure, there are plenty of stories in *Le Petit Journal* that roll over into the next day's issue—such as judiciary chronicler Victor Cochinat's "Le Parricide" in December 1867 through January 1868, and "Le crime de la rue de Chazelles" in February 1880—if only because the judicial proceedings related to the crime were adjourned at the end of a working day or details of a given murder were slow in developing.⁹⁷ But the press editors also understood the hook that serialized *chroniques judiciaires* provided for readers, who had been used to the strategy through the paper's *roman-feuilletons*. This can be seen in final tag lines to stories, such as "*La suite à demain,*" mentioned earlier, or in the division of the story into parts or "chapters." But, at other times, the proliferation of *fait divers* news on a given day or the prolongation of a particularly gruesome crime story was splayed over several pages on consecutive days that trumped even the inclusion of a serialized novel, as evidenced by the note: "The abundance of material forces us to postpone the rest of our novel *La Belle Argentinère*."⁹⁸ In certain French crime stories, as Gonon details to great extent, gothic facts were thus rendered more captivating than the fantastic fiction from which it drew many of its tropes.⁹⁹

In the Chilean press, however, continuity depended solely on the appearance of new facts, seen at the end of certain stories. As one *crónica roja* concluded: "As soon as we have more details of this event, we will communicate them to our readers."¹⁰⁰ Continuity as an editorial choice, considered as a commercial strategy to attract and captivate readers, is encountered only in the publication of independent *feuilletons*, which build a report of criminal deeds based on previous journalistic investigations. For example, the *folleto* (pamphlet) *Asesinato de Pancul* (Murder in Pancul), published in 1890, was constructed from news items that previously appeared in the dailies *El Ferrocarril* of Santiago de Chile and *La voz libre* of Temuco.¹⁰¹ Four years later, the book *El crimen de Talca. Parricidio de don José Isidoro Vergara* (The crime



Biblioteca Nacional de Chile

of Talca: The parricide of Don José Isidoro Vergara) was published, reprinting the stories that had earlier appeared in *La Actualidad* and *La Libertad*, both dailies from Talca, and from *La Lei* and *El Constitucional*, two Santiago de Chile papers.¹⁰² A third example is *El crimen Undurraga. Asesinato de la señora Teresa Sañartu Vicuña* (The Undurraga crime: The murder of Mrs. Teresa Sañartu Vicuña), a 1905 book about the murder of Mrs. Teresa Sañartu Vicuña that constructs its narrative from material in various Chilean dailies, including *El Mercurio*, *La Lei*, *El Imparcial*, *Últimas Noticias*, and *El Chileno*.¹⁰³ Such nonfiction reportage crime books were not (yet) popular in France, where crime stories based on *faits divers criminels*, such as Gaboriau's *L'Affaire Lerouge*, became fodder for short fiction and novels instead.¹⁰⁴

Although only a few comprehensive studies exist that focus on Chilean print culture in the late eighteen-hundreds, it is possible to infer from their forewords and editors' notes the measures editors took to continue exploring a story left incomplete or understated in a *crónica roja*. For instance, one declared objective of these Chilean *folletines* was to determine the *truth* behind a given murder, beyond, and sometimes even in opposition to, the judicial findings and the fragmented details published in the newspapers. In these cases, *folletines* served an ad hoc political role in Chile. This is evident in *Asesinato de Pancul*, in which the author accused judges, governors, and even policemen of inciting a journalist's murder, hiding evidence, and protecting the hitman.¹⁰⁵ A second declared goal was thus to sway public opinion: because newspaper readers risked growing preoccupied by a *crónica's* gothic details, the *folletines* had to "correct" their interpretation of the material. The role of the *folletines* at this point was thus interpretative and didactic: ". . . popular versions [of the criminal facts] are not the best guides for justice; as they are the product of a fanciful and excited imagination—because of the rare nature of their facts—they are generally wrong."¹⁰⁶ Contrary to French feuilletons, Chilean *folletines* not only provided entertainment but also strengthened ideological, that is, bourgeois values.

2. Third-Person Point of View

The second relevant characteristic of the French corpus is the use of the third-person point of view, which allows the writer to shift the story's focus between different subjectivities (those of the characters and of the narrator). This shows the early narrative command of French reporters, who were no doubt influenced by the *romans-feuilletons* of such master storytellers as Eugène Sue, Alexandre Dumas, Ponson du Terrail, and others whose works appeared in the daily papers. For example, in "Le crime de la rue de Chazelles," the story begins from the bakery vendor's point of view but quickly

shifts to the butcher's, the victim's own, her husband's, the doctor's, and a policeman's.¹⁰⁷ Also, in "L'assassin Couvelaere" ("Couvelaere, the murderer") the focus shifts from the narrator to a witness, and then to the victim's husband.¹⁰⁸ The technique has a narrative more than an informative function: the perspective of the witnesses helps set the scene and elicit the reader's emotions (horror, mainly). As Gonon writes, it is above all the "theatrical description of the crowd at the crime scene, who are the first to have discovered the victim," that enhances "the fictionalization of the *fait divers*" and makes it "possible to transcribe emotions and point of view."¹⁰⁹ The same technique occurs in the Chilean corpus. In the story "Horroroso crimen," for instance, the following exposition appears:

The police officers entered the room where, a few minutes later, they witnessed the saddest and most harrowing of scenes: two female corpses were laying on the ground, their faces completely demolished, shattered even, their heads, split with an axe, bearing traces of the blows of sticks, their dresses completely torn, and the older victim's throat crushed, as if somebody had tried to strangle her. . . .

After a moment of distress and shock, the guards understood that they had to look for the authors of this horrendous crime, the effects of which they soon witnessed, as they started to search for evidence in the house.¹¹⁰

While the French *fait divers criminel* and *chronique judiciaire* could articulate point of view through an enunciative, or declarative, mode—prefiguring one of Tom Wolfe's edicts for the New Journalism—narrative options for the Chilean *crónica roja* were not so liberal. Chilean texts recreated a witness's perspective, not necessarily to paint a vivid picture for the reader but, more restrictedly, to provide evidence for the subsequent judicial case. This explains why the *chronique judiciaire* could include emotional details (gestures, feelings) often in the opening lines, as Gonon notes,¹¹¹ whereas the *crónica roja* refused all references to pathos and focused instead on a story's facts, laws, and official statements. However, it is interesting to note that this eluded pathos strongly resurges in the independent Chilean feuilletons, evident in their reliance upon *apostrophe* (a direct address to an absent figure, such as the victim or the story's reader) and *ethopoeia* (the embodiment or impersonation of an absent person, such as the victim, to express his or her thoughts and emotions), as in this brief extract from *El crimen Undurraga. Asesinato de la señora Teresa Sañartu Vicuña*:

In the middle of her honeymoon, she discovered the man to whom she had given her heart and her destiny, with all the tenderness and purity of her heart, was a beast. A brutal and lascivious degenerate.

Horrified, she discovered that this poet with a delicate soul, who lulled her twenty-year-old imagination, was like a snake that sings before curling around its victims' necks.¹¹²

This resurgence may be explained in terms of format and function: a detailed story is much longer than a newspaper's *fait divers*, and its purpose is not to inform but, as seen here, to entertain, and now (to a lesser extent), educate.

3. Scene-Setting

Closely related to point of view but still serving a similar purpose, scene-setting is another of the most common tools in reporting on crime, in both the French and the Chilean press. The only noticeable difference, in narrative terms, is that the French relies here on the present tense, which stresses the immediacy of the dramatic event, while the Chilean press uses the past tense to provide a safe distance between the reader and the event. In the 1863 story, "Assassinat. Aliénation Mentale," for example, the present tense situates the reader inside the courtroom, as if the trial were just happening:

It is ten thirty and the court starts its session.

Early in the morning the room is invaded by the public, which is anxious to see the features of the accused.

The man is brought to the room. He is dressed in a sailor's uniform of the Imperial Navy. Two guards sit at his side.¹¹³

The effect here heightens the drama for readers, putting them in the same courtroom as the killer. In an 1890 example from the Chilean press, though, the reader is safely removed from the action through the use of the past tense:

In the aforementioned restaurant, owned by Francisco Neri—who lived with his wife Concepcion Neri—a man called Emilio Sacco arrived on Sunday and asked for two cigars. The owner replied that he did not have any, and for this reason, as it has been told, Sacco insulted him and forced the man to evict him from the premise. Before leaving, Sacco said in a loud voice and with a threatening tone: "tomorrow I will get even."¹¹⁴

Readers are distanced from the violent scene, preserving them from being directly affected by the criminal's actions. And yet, the Chilean *folletín* is like the French *fait divers criminel* in that it resorts to the present tense to emphasize drama, crudity, and sensationalism:

Mr. Vergara's corpse has, on the right side of the head, a wound wide and deep that split the skull to the brain. Apparently, the wound was made with a machete.

The throat shows signs of strangulation, as a large part of the neck is black and blue, and still bears the traces of a thin rope . . .¹¹⁵

4. Dialogue and Testimony

Point of view and scene-setting are further complemented using dialogue and testimony.¹¹⁶ If point of view and scene-setting provide an essentially narrative function to the story, dialogue and testimony supply “hard” information. Among the testimonies, it is common to include extracts of private letters, which help establish a motive for the crime. The use of this paratextual material is identical in the French and Chilean press. The differences appear in the relation to the judicial material (judicial declarations, pleas, lawyers’ arguments, and so on). In *Le Petit Journal*, for instance, several re-creations of trial scenes from the perspective of the reporter as witness appear, such as in the long, three-page story, “Assassinat. Aliénation Mentale,” from February 6, 1863, while in the Chilean press are found more neutral transcripts of the legal proceedings. This difference can be explained by the fact that the Chilean legal system did not establish oral hearings until 2001. Chilean *folletines*, however, did include judicial material, perhaps because writers had more time to prepare the texts and acquire official documentation with the help of friends and judicial sources (a normal practice in Chilean journalism until the judicial reform of 2001). *Asesinato de Pancul* and *El crimen Undurraga. Asesinato de la señora Teresa Sañartu Vicuña* both include transcriptions of several judicial texts, such as lawsuits and court decisions.

5. Reliance on Rumor and Supposition

The use of rumor and supposition is linked to the previous technique, dialogue and testimony. Rumors appear as leaks: unofficial information presented in formulas that protect the source, as in “it is argued,” “it was suspected,” “it is believed,” “some sources think,” “as it is known,” and so on. Suppositions are not expressed as information but presented as the paper’s position before the facts. These are marked by expressions such as “presumably,” “probably,” “arguably,” “maybe,” and the conditional “could have happened.” No substantial differences were found in the use and function of these elements in the French and Chilean newspapers. In Chilean *folletines*, however, because of the temporal distance between the event and its reporting, rumors are mentioned but as something minor or anecdotal: leaks are outflanked by the final truth, established by the judicial system and summarized in the *folletín*.

The first five elements discussed above generally show little difference between the French *fait divers criminel/chronique judiciaire* and the Chilean *crónica roja*. The noted differences between them are, at best, incidental. It is likely that the French genre had nonetheless influenced its Chilean counterpart, though to what extent remains conjecture. Further, extensive corpus

research is needed to justify any amount of influence or virality on the textual level, which is beyond the scope of this study. What does become apparent, though, is that in the remaining five elements, noticeable cultural differences between the two types of crime stories—their responses to violent crimes, for example, as well as their perceptions of the criminally minded, their presumed motivations in recounting crime stories, and so on—might render certain queries of influence and borrowings entirely moot.

6. Elaboration of Dramatic Images

For example, the sixth relevant characteristic, dramatization, is a technique designed to provoke emotion in the reader. Its use in these texts shows a preference for the construction of symbolically charged images, with an emphasis on exclamation marks and repetitions. One French example from “Le Parricide” reads:

An illness, a terrible illness, nailed her to a dirty bed in the prison hospital of Madelonnettes! There she was, spending the last days of her life, in the middle of the most atrocious suffering, and she was unable to sleep due to the tears that flowed from her eyes. Close to the funeral sofa, where the unfortunate woman trembled, as she had done in Frédéric’s dishonored bed, a ghost hovered ceaselessly, and the bedroom where she professed her laments resonated day and night with her desperate pleas. Louise was condemned by the doctors, but she could not die, and as soon as the evening shadows began covering the walls of the nursery, where she was constantly agitated, her sad companions came to her aid to hide her from her own terror.¹¹⁷

The excessive use of superlatives and other subjective adjectives are intended to sway the reader through emotive as opposed to logical means. The extract here could well have appeared in a *roman-feuilleton*.

However, in a Chilean example from 1871, a story entitled “Suicide,” the dramatization is less marked:

. . . Mr. Collet had ingested enough poison to burn his insides. At ten in the morning, after terrible agony, that unfortunate man exhaled his last breath.
His debts with mankind had been cancelled!
God would have not been so ruthless as to ask for His own.¹¹⁸

Pathos as a narrative technique is more common and extended in the French than in the Chilean corpus. In the former, pathos veers—and, in many cases, directly enters—into the terrain of morbid fascination. The Chilean press resorts to sobriety, and even modesty, to dampen the most spectacular elements of a crime, using ellipses and self-censorship: “Bernal added other details in which he can be considered as guilty as Salas, but we have preferred to silence them as a gift to the reader”¹¹⁹ By contrast, in the Chilean *fol-*

letín similarities again resemble the heightened drama of the French corpus:

When Mrs. Zañartu passed in front of her husband at the theater's entrance, he stepped behind her and, in a space of a few seconds, took a gun from his pocket and pointed at Mrs. Zañartu's head, reaching over one or two people that now stood between them. The shot, passing through the victim's mouth, hit her brain, and she fell immediately to the ground, leaning on her left side. The killer pounced on his wife's body and shot her again.¹²⁰

7. Suspense

The use of suspense marks the seventh applicable characteristic in the texts from the two corpora. Even if continuity contributes to this suspense, the fragmented nature of the narrative technique is a rhetorical device, not an editorial strategy, used to keep readers transfixed by one particular text. In the French corpus, the main literary element here is the *apostrophe*, that is, suspicion, which takes the form of a rhetorical question: "But then, if Lefebvre was not murdered . . . [a]re the Fayes then not murderers?"¹²¹ And again: "The culprit seemed to know exactly where to place his hand in order to find these valuable objects immediately . . . But who was the culprit?"¹²² Gonon understands this shift in perspective as a narrative means to draw the reader into the text:

The perspective changes . . . : for the journalist, it is no longer a question of just relaying an official statement to the reader that is principally informative, but also of coaxing him, by publishing that information at the request of the examining magistrate himself, to participate in the police inquiry, to become one of its auxiliaries.¹²³

Furthermore, extended narration is also found, building the drama punctuated by the rhetorical question, as in the following example from the story "Le Parricide":

Frédéric went to Nr. 129, in the house of games at the Royal Palace, the night after the bloody expedition to Versailles. Coincidence, which had played to his favor up to then, suddenly turned against him, and he lost all he had earned before.

It was a bad omen. Then he returned to his house angry and tired. A painful sleep was up to that moment his only punishment, and around three in the afternoon, after making sure he had placed a deadly instrument in his pocket, he left for Pont Neuf.

Where was he heading?¹²⁴

In the Chilean *crónicas rojas*, the suspense is more "cinematic," in the sense now commonly used for that term. In other words, it focuses on details that slow down the narrative action rather than heightening them:

When they reached the gate of Lima, two of the pursuers overcame their mates to explore the road. Near the estuary, the bandits had realized they were being followed, and they ambushed their pursuers amongst the trees: the two explorers were then separated from their team by a clever maneuver of the criminals, who attacked them from behind. An uneven fight ensued, and the result was clear enough from the start. After a few moments, in fact, one of them fell dead, struck by a bullet. The other one bravely defended himself in spite of the minor injuries he had received, and he was finally able to escape and join the rest of the team, which had remained behind.

Meanwhile, Don Juan de Dios Valenzuela, the owner of the premises, gathered the servants and neighbors to join the first party, which was chasing the bandits. The bandits, who were sure they were being pursued, hastily escaped and disbanded in different directions.¹²⁵

The intertwined or connected stories, rather than the sullied and gothic details, as in the French corpus, help keep the reader's attention. In the Chilean *folletines*, because of their extended textual space, the narrative action is slowed down even more, protracting the suspense. Chapter four of *El crimen de Talca* provides an excellent example of how the reader's attention is maintained with minimal information: the witness indecorously describes what he did, saw, and thought before arriving at the police station to give a deposition. This narrative arc crosses another, in which some local fishermen discover human body parts floating in the river. From here, the narrative rhythm is quickened: the corpse is found and the murderer exposed.¹²⁶

8. Lateralization

Closely related to the technique of adding suspense is the journalistic and narrative capacity to find secondary stories with human potential. Here called lateralization, the strategy merits further discussion. In the "Le Parricide" series, for example, two of the texts in the series are dedicated entirely to the subplot stories of the suffering and sacrifice of the lawyers involved in the case.¹²⁷ This is the only point on which the Chilean press differs entirely from its French counterpart: in the logic of the restrained, informative narrative, the recounting of criminal events focuses on the crime without venturing into parallel stories that frequently accentuate their gothic elements. That concise, objective style, which expresses itself in short lines and brief paragraphs, is found in fragments from stories such as this one, entitled "Salteo":

Fourteen outlaws stormed last night at twelve in the country house known as "El Carmen" as they fired their guns.

A poor man who tried to close the door was the first victim.

They tied his hands and feet and threatened with killing him if he did

not tell them where the money was.

The unfortunate swore he knew nothing and kneeled down to beg for his life.

One of the bandits, who was angry because he was getting nothing from this man, fired a gun at close range and killed him.

They looked around the house and found a woman hiding under a bed. They drew her out, maligned her, and, after she did not confess where the money was, stabbed her three times.

They committed these crimes for a miserable booty. They took only a few valuables and ten pesos.

Up to the moment, none of the bandits has been captured.¹²⁸

This rather dry, indifferent style is indicative of the informative paradigm of the modern Chilean press, as well as a token of the rational and didactic traditions that have characterized it since its inception. The informative nature of the modern press is reflected in the way *El Mercurio de Valparaíso* treats crime stories: it recites a list of facts, avoiding digressions and adjectives, such as those encountered in the French stories. That is why most of these *crónicas rojas* are short. For instance, consider a few examples taken from *El Mercurio*. The first example is taken from “Muerte repentina” (“Sudden death”):

A drunken man was carried at around eleven last night in a cart to the police office and was unable to state his name; this morning he was dead.

The corpse was taken to the local hospital to be identified by the city’s physician.

After writing the previous lines, we have received the following information: the deceased is a shoemaker of around forty years old by the name of Juan de la Cruz Díaz, married to Catalina Salvo.

This individual went out yesterday to sell the shoes he



El Mercurio, September 12, 1827 (Biblioteca Nacional Digital, Memoria Chilena).

had made during the week and never returned to his house.¹²⁹

And a second, from “Herido” (“Injured”):

Last night, the police arrested a man known as Antonio Arrieta, who stabbed his friend Pioquinto Vazquez, with whom he was having a good time, twice in the belly because he did not want to accompany him into his house to have a drink.

The wounded man was taken to the hospital, but it is not believed that he will survive.

The accused locked himself up in his house and it was necessary to tear down the front door to extract him and take him to prison.¹³⁰

Early *crónicas rojas* such as these, based on the dry, ideological press paradigm, are seemingly apologetic to their offended readers for having to detail such stories out of the necessity to educate society and prevent criminal activity from spreading. The publishers had yet to adopt the commercially minded press paradigm that unabashedly appeals to their readers’ appetite for blood and gore. As such, they are like the earlier French *faits divers criminels*, as Gonon describes them, in that they paradoxically had to entice their reader with gothic details in order to carry a higher message. If, however, for the *crónicas rojas*, that higher message was education and enlightenment (and palpable class bashing), for the *faits divers criminels* it was reassurance and familiarity with the fictional tropes about crime that readers had grown familiar with through their exposure to the *romans-feuilletons*.¹³¹

9. Narrative Awareness

The ninth element of comparative interest is the *cronistas’* awareness of their stories’ narrative impulses and the effects those impulses will have on their readers. These are writers under the clear influence of popular fiction, particularly novels of action or intrigue, many of which were published as feuilletons in Chile. This awareness is expressed in two different ways: first, by differentiating reality from fiction and, second, by supplying textual operators that mark the organization of the stories. In this first case, French and Chilean journalists distance themselves from the horrible deeds they are describing by declaring them to be unreal, almost fictive, in nature. Their reports on crime are presented explicitly as a *roman* (novel), which conveys both the stupefaction produced by a senseless act and the naturalism inspired by the French fin-de-siècle novel.¹³² Gonon writes of this paradox, “. . . naturalism will very often retrace the life of the most disadvantaged, extensively covered in the local interest column of the dailies, but at the same time claim as well a style or work directly opposed to that of journalists.”¹³³ “Let me tell you one of these real life novels,” Charles Dickens writes in a *roman-feuilleton*

for *Le Petit Journal* on February 1, 1863, long before Émile Zola penned *Le roman expérimental*, published in 1880.¹³⁴

It should be stressed that, in the Chilean case, only the first of these two explanations of a narrative awareness applies, where journalists infused their stories of daily life, suddenly disrupted by crime, with fictional references, so as to make them seem *less* real. A clear example of this can be seen in the series “Un homicida” (“A murderer”), published in *La Semana* between July and August 1859, in which the journalist avoids detailing the treason and infidelity in the story and focuses instead on criticizing the state as responsible for failing to educate the accused properly to control his wild passions.¹³⁵ Unlike in France and the French press, naturalism, “a scientific writing whose form would guarantee its effectiveness,”¹³⁶ had not taken root in the Chilean press, which was much more sparing and modest, probably due to the influences of the Catholic Church in Chile, which remained strong until the second half of the twentieth century.¹³⁷ According to historians of Chilean literature, the documentary nature of naturalism found its expression in *criollismo*, a regionalist literary movement that drew on rural experiences, unlike naturalism’s urban life stories.¹³⁸ Life in the cities, especially with respect to the growing middle classes, was instead the domain of the emerging mass media, covered to great extent in the crime or police sections of their papers. It is from this perspective that the Chilean journalist finds a relationship between a society in flux and fiction. This can be seen in expressions such as, “showing the courage of a Napoleon,” “similar to the appearance of the Comendador among the guests at the feast of (Don Juan) Tenorio,”¹³⁹ or, “In the neighborhood, that family had a reputation akin to that of the Owl, the School Master and the Lame in the Mysteries of Paris.”¹⁴⁰

With regards to the second explanation of narrative awareness, *textual operators*, the French corpus offers numerous examples of narrative construction, where the chronicler or *fait-diversier* openly plays with time in the story, tracing hierarchies within the available information, and stressing points of interest for the readers. The series, “Un cadaver vivant,” provides a good example of this from its opening lines: “We promised our readers to tell this story. It is definitely worthwhile. Its first chapter starts in 1877.”¹⁴¹ Gonon discusses at length the use of chronological versus narrative constructions of *faits divers criminels*, pointing out how writers alternated between past tenses—the more literary *passé simple* (a formal, written expression of the simple past) to the more oral *passé composé* (a more informal expression of the past or the past perfect)—to generate different effects on their readers, making them feel, as it were, that they were no longer passively reading a crime report but actively participating in a criminal inquiry.¹⁴²

For instance, in the story, “Une Femme sciée en morceaux,” from January 9, 1872, a horrific, albeit salacious story of a husband who killed his wife and sawed her into pieces, the anonymous author of the long *fait divers criminal* in *Le Petit Journal* repeatedly alternates between tenses (including the French *imparfait*, the past progressive tense) to actively situate the reader at different moments of the crime. Here, in a story for which the events took place a year prior to the *fait divers*, is told, in the far distant *passé simple* how factory workers found (*aperçurent*) the severed head of a woman in a nearby dam, but that it was seen, in the past progressive (*voyait*)—as opposed to the terminating tense of saw—that her body was dismembered, a grammatical distinction that sways the reader to move quickly past the chronological marker of the initial finding of the head and to the moment when he can linger for some time on the image the severed head produces in the mind.¹⁴³ Then, after a long digression, told mostly in the *passé simple*, in which the context of the murder is constructed, the author moves the reader closer to present time, anterior to when the wife was killed and when her body was later discovered but prior to the judgment in court. His use here of the *passé composé*, in “We looked for the origin of this fable but could not find it,” places the reader at the moment the crime was pronounced and up to the moment a sentence was passed.¹⁴⁴ Other examples include “Le Parricide,” where the writer explicitly relates that he will focus his attention on a secondary character, who had been ignored up to that moment¹⁴⁵; or “Le crime de la rue de Chazelles,” where the narrative reconstruction of the logic of the action is announced¹⁴⁶; or in “Assassinat. Aliénation Mentale,” where the narrator plays skillfully with time in the story itself, juxtaposing narration with testimonies and court documents.¹⁴⁷

The Chilean press, on the other hand, presents these textual markers more intensively and more frequently, particularly in the form of direct *apostrophes*, or asides, to the readers, or commentaries on selected stories. In the first case, the author talks to the readers in a direct or indirect way to force them to adopt an ethical stance toward the story, using expressions such as “my reader friend” or “anyone would believe/think that” The second case is apparent when the newspaper reproduces the story of a crime as told by another newspaper, through either direct quotes or paraphrase, ending with a brief, judgmental commentary. For example, in the text, “Gran asalto: 18 personas robadas,” the reporter of *El Chileno* paraphrases the information that had already been published in *El Independiente* and concludes with an editorializing reflection:

The robbers appear around our city in armed squadrons and with enough force as to get hold of the money which was honestly earned by 100 or more men. And the police neither suspect such a threat nor have the means

to go after the criminals! Millions of millions are used to build prisons like palaces, but the criminals live outside, in the free air, and the poor Santiago workers are at their mercy. All of this is horrible and absurd.¹⁴⁸

The same tone occurs in the Chilean *folletines*. Because *folletines* were based fundamentally on the compilation of recent newspaper *crónicas rojas*, the editor of these booklets took time to comment upon and evaluate not just the criminal case, but also the questionable work of colleagues' reporting on it:

In its edition yesterday, *La Lei* includes the great and sensational news story of the escape of the accused, Mr. Ismael Vergara. This kind of *canard*, distributed with irresponsibility and malicious intent, incites acrimony toward the accused, who, regardless of his responsibility as a criminal, has human rights, just like everyone else, and deserves respect and consideration for his misfortune.¹⁴⁹

10. Moralizing Tone and Value Judgment

This leads to the final characteristic of the two corpuses under analysis: the moralizing tone, which accompanies a value judgment meant to influence the reader. In the French corpus, there is a clear position taken in the face of the events being told—and toward the main actors of these events—as well as in the general ethical dilemmas hiding beneath the specific crimes. In the story “Le Parricide,” for example, the narrator feels terror before the dissociated and indifferent behavior of the murderer, who in the middle of the reconstruction of the crime says he felt hungry: “A tray was set, and at a table in the corner on which the blood was still red, Formage’s murderer was sipping his soup!”¹⁵⁰ And in “Un drame de famille,” the position is expressed without euphemism:

Maurice Bichon was a miserable, jealous, lazy, drunken, violent man. For two weeks, he mistreated his family, especially his unfortunate wife, who was esteemed by all. During the four or five years he had left the country, leaving his family behind, even when he worked nearby, he only appeared in Avesnes-lez-Aubert (north) to get drunk and to try to kill his wife, whom he stabbed on several occasions.¹⁵¹

This editorializing point of view is even more evident in texts such as “Le Duel,” which discusses the legal nature of this moribund aristocratic practice¹⁵²; “Exécution de Prévost,” which starts with the story of the sentencing of a murderer, after which the author insists on the need to abolish public executions as a first step to eliminating capital punishment altogether¹⁵³; and “La mort de Rollin,” in which ethical and penal responsibilities are questioned

when a homicide was dismissed by the courts since it involved a man who was already gravely ill.¹⁵⁴

In the Chilean case, though, this moralizing tone stands at the base of all its early crime reporting. The press had regularly worked with a kind of rational-ideological logic, but as the press opened up to a wider reading public later in the nineteenth century, it assumed a didactic approach as well. The inclusion of *crónica roja* had to be justified in terms of providing readers with a cautionary tale, and newspapers began pushing a moralist tone. This can also be seen, more explicitly, in the longer crime *folletines*. The supposed (or declared) interest of their editors was strictly informative and sobering, as evinced in this comment from *El crimen de Talca*, “. . . we would at least like our society to draw useful lessons from this episode, which inevitably reached the public eye.”¹⁵⁵ Or this one from *El crimen Undurraga. Asesinato de la señora Teresa Sañartu Vicuña*: “There are events whose coincidence seems prepared by a wise and provident hand to lead societies, in which they develop, to reflect morally on those events that, from time to time, force us to stop and contemplate the nature of social consciousness.”¹⁵⁶

In the same manner as the French press, criminal activity in the Chilean media is linked to characters of ill repute (prostitutes, drunkards, beggars, petty thieves), and the crimes themselves are presented as a direct consequence of their lower-class lifestyles, as Kalifa discusses at length.¹⁵⁷ Chilean *folletines*, on the other hand, tended to focus on high society crimes, such as the murderer of Teresa Sañartu Vicuña in *El crimen Undurraga*, or the parricide of José Isidoro Vergara in *El crimen de Talca*. Editors were conscious of their motives and of the success they would have in exposing crime among the nation’s aristocracy:

The author of the crime was a gentleman, and in these days, by singular coincidence, a humble broken man, who had murdered his wife a year earlier, was to be shot in the central jail. This coincidence fueled comparisons and, among commoners, cruel satisfaction.

Finally, a gentleman will meet the gallows!

Finally, it will be decreed that every Chilean is equal before the law!¹⁵⁸

Inherent in the social warfare played out in *faits divers criminels* and *crónica roja*—as studied by Kalifa per the French, and Sunkel per the Chilean press—lies the notion that, if the French press generally had faith in the state (perhaps even more so than in its increasingly populist reader) and in the legal/judicial processes that it surveyed daily, the Chilean press moralized so as to chastise the state and its institutions, and not its elitist readership. That, perhaps, marks the greatest distinction between the French and Chilean press at the time. Unlike Gaboriau’s inspector Lecoq in *L’Affaire Lerouge* (or Poe’s

Dupin earlier and Doyle's Sherlock Holmes later), whose deductive reasoning to solve crimes inspired French readers of the popular *roman policier* (and its ancestor, the *roman judiciaire*, many of which evolved from *fait divers*),¹⁵⁹ the police in these Chilean texts appear as incompetent, and thus subject to criticism. "Inaudita impavidez" ("Unheard of dauntlessness"), for example, exposes the issue by telling the story of an overweight policeman who is not only incapable of arresting three burglars but exaggerates the danger to which he is subject in order to justify his ineffectiveness.¹⁶⁰ In other texts, the newspaper reporters—by far the most critical of those analyzed here—slip in ironic statements, such as "[the female burglar] was meanwhile stationed as a watchwoman at some distance from the robbery in case a police agent should appear, *which, as the reader would probably imagine, never happened*";¹⁶¹ "After reading the preceding lines, anyone would ask: And where are the police?"¹⁶²; or, simply, "We recommend the police take action."¹⁶³

Conclusion

The historical and comparative analysis undertaken here between (proto-) literary journalistic texts in both France and Chile during the nineteenth century shows that French *faits divers criminels* and *chroniques judiciaires* share more similarities with the Chilean *folletín* crime books than with the country's more famous *crónica roja*. Two reasons for this have been argued: First, the sensationalist tone and narrative arcs of the French texts were out of place in Chile's informative journalism at the end of the nineteenth century. The French *faits divers* appealed to a different kind of audience at a different time in the country's history, which was not synchronous with Chile's development as a young republic. And though the Chilean press could not (yet) allow such salacious narratives into its pages, the Chilean *folletín* could largely ignore these protocols, given its different editorial stance, format, and readership. And second, the Chilean press had begun opting for a more moralizing and didactic tone in its proto-*crónica roja* that pleased its elite readership (which equated criminal activity with the lower classes) at the expense of its growing populist audience (which favored these more sensationalist narratives). Consequently, the gothic narratives encountered in the French texts really had a place only outside the mainstream Chilean press. It was only with the restoration of the popular press in the 1930s that the true *crónica roja* would find complete expression in Chile, finally making it similar in extension and intensity to the macabre examples of the nineteenth-century French *faits divers criminels*.

This time lag of about fifty years between the two countries' adoption of the approaches, however, should not be understood solely in remote geo-

graphic terms (it must not be forgotten that Southern Cone intellectuals visited Paris regularly). Rather, varying cultural and political ideologies were also factors that preoccupied both vulnerable republics. In fact, Chilean writers were familiar with the French *faits divers* and feuilleton, and even applied these genres' narrative strategies at times to their own stories, if only for different ends. This should indeed be considered as an influence, not merely as a copying, of the tradition in the French press of narrativizing criminal stories. "Influence" here is understood, instead, as a creative incorporation, one that nonetheless passed through local idiosyncrasies, policies, and epistemologies. As revered journalist Carlos Silva Vidósola once noted, Chilean journalism in the opening decades of the twentieth century was influenced not only by the press model developed in France, but also the models advanced in Britain and the United States. But "at the same time a serious, methodical adaptation was being made to meet the peculiarities of the country."¹⁶⁴ If the sensationalist crime story had taken so long to establish itself in Chile, it was because the country needed to wait until the second half of the twentieth century to experience a widespread, robust editorial market that began aligning itself more with the logic and aesthetic choices of the growing middle and working classes, moving away from the aristocratic "good taste" that dominated the newspapers of the previous decades.¹⁶⁵

The goal of this study was to move beyond cursory inquiries of similitude or dissimilitude between France's and Chile's early traditions in crime reporting in order to understand how and why the process of sensationalist crime reporting in Chile, evident in French commercial dailies such as *Le Petit Journal*, took so long to get established in the Chilean press. The incipient development of the crime story in Chile during the last decades of the nineteenth century clearly shows how, within the same text, two journalistic currents could coexist: the didactic-enlightened perspective that refused to disappear entirely, and the informative-commercial approach that seemed to be forced to justify itself, because it did not possess the cultural and symbolic weight of the other. In this sense, the Chilean crime story was born with a clear understanding of its inherent "inferiority." During its infancy, it hid this awareness by justifying its timid inclusions of the morbid and the macabre within a didactic aim that, as the decades passed, turned less deterministic and much more realistic.¹⁶⁶

Research for this article, developed as part of the three-year binational project, "CRÓNICA: Comparative Reportages: An Ontology of French Narrative Journalistic Influences and Dialogue in Chile and Argentina," was jointly funded by ECOS-Sud in France and CONICYT/ANID in Chile (N° C18H01/ECOS180053).

Journalist Patricia Poblete Alday holds a PhD in Hispanic American literature from the Universidad Complutense de Madrid. She studies the relations between journalism and literature in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries and has published several articles and chapters on this theme. She is professor at the Universidad Finis Terrae and the Universidad Academia de Humanismo Cristiano, Chile, where she is also director of the University Press.



*John S. Bak is professeur at the Université de Lorraine in France and founding President of the IALJS. He holds degrees from the universities of Illinois, Ball State, and the Sorbonne. In addition to having published several articles on literary journalism, he co-edited with Bill Reynolds *Literary Journalism across the Globe* (2011), and, with Monica Martinez, a special issue of *Brazilian Journalism Research* entitled “*Literary Journalism as a Discipline*” (2018). He heads the research project *ReportAGES* on literary journalism and war and was co-director of a three-year study on the French *fait divers criminel* and the Chilean *crónica roja*. As of 2022, he will co-direct a two-year project to study Franco-South African literary journalism from the Boer wars to today.*

Marina Alvarado Cornejo holds a PhD in literature, Universidad Católica de Valparaíso, and is a professor at Universidad Cardenal Silva Henríquez, Chile. Her research interests include the relations between literature and journalism in the nineteenth century.



Marcela Aguilar Guzmán is dean of the Communication and Literature Faculty, Universidad Diego Portales, Chile. She is a journalist and holds a PhD in communications from the Universidad Católica de Chile. She is the author of La era de la crónica, 2019, and editor and coauthor of Domadores de historias: conversaciones con grandes cronistas de América Latina, 2010.



Roberto Herrscher is a journalist and professor at the School of Journalism at the Universidad Alberto Hurtado, Chile. He is the author of Periodismo narrativo and Los viajes del Penélope.

Aleksandra Wiktorowska received a PhD in Construction and Representation of Cultural Identities from the Universitat de Barcelona in 2014. In addition to working as a journalist and an academic scholar, she is a translator from Spanish to Polish, with nine novels to her credit.



Notes

¹ Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, and the southern states of Brazil including São Paulo make up the Southern Cone, which is the region of South America covered by this study's research grant—N° C18H01 from ECOS Sud (France) and ANID (Chile). More importantly, it should be recognized that Chile was a captaincy until 1818 and not a viceroyalty as were Argentina (Virreinato del Río de la Plata, Buenos Aires), Mexico (Virreinato de Nueva España), Peru (Virreinato de Perú, Lima), or Colombia (Virreinato de Nueva Granada), whose early media infrastructures were better financed and thus more advanced than Chile's around the time of its independence. It is thus important to examine how the more disadvantaged Spanish territories, like Chile, managed to engender their cultural life by looking beyond the influences of their more affluent neighbors, as well as directly to those of Europe, namely France, which was at the forefront of republican enlightenment during the nineteenth century.

² Labarca, *Historia de la enseñanza en Chile*, 108–109: “. . . en ninguna parte leyeron más a Musset, Victor Hugo, Lamartine, Balzac y George Sand. El francés se reputó la lengua de la sabiduría, el arte y la moda, y Francia la maestra insigne a donde había que ir a buscar la solución de los problemas de estas repúblicas, hijas de su Revolución.” Unless otherwise stated, all translations from Spanish and French into English are our own. Italics have been added to English translations for terms retained in their original languages.

³ The Chilean government sent Sarmiento to Europe in 1845 to collect ideas from their public education system, and historian Benjamin Vicuña Mackenna traveled to Paris in 1853, also looking for new ideas to implement in Chile. See Sanhueza, “El viaje a París,” 208, 215.

⁴ Jocelyn-Holt, “La idea de nación en el pensamiento liberal chileno del siglo XIX,” 86: “las ideas, las modas y la producción literaria francesa constituyen un modelo y un fin para todas las otras naciones.”

⁵ Pierre Bourdieu understands the automation of fields, in this case the literary field, as a process that allows for the distinction of different spheres of knowledge in society thanks to the specialization of involved agents, the generation of distinction strategies, and the struggle between different positions. See Bourdieu, *Las reglas del arte*, 201.

⁶ Hugo, “El rey se divierte”; Sand, “León Leoni”; Dumas, “El caballero de Casa Roja”; Sue, “El castillo del diablo o el aventurero”; de Lamartin, “Proceso y muerte del mariscal Ney.”

⁷ See Cánepa, “Folletines históricos del Chile,” 248–58; Garrels, “El ‘Facundo’ como folletín,” 419–47; Pas, “La educación por el folletín,” 37–61; Arcos, “Novelas-folletín y la autoría femenina,” 27–42; and Alvarado Cornejo, “La sección folletín,” 53–71.

⁸ See Poblete Alday, “Crónica hispanoamericana actual,” 228–38; Poblete Alday, “Crónica narrativa contemporánea: Enfoques, deslindes y desafíos metodológicos,” 133–53; Poblete Alday, “Crónica narrativa contemporánea: Límites y abisimos,” 37–45; and Poblete Alday, “Monstruos posmodernos,” 249–58.

⁹ Bourdieu, *Las reglas del arte*, 289–320; Chartier, *El presente del pasado*, 27.

¹⁰ Wolfe, The New Journalism, part 1 in *The New Journalism*, 3–52.

¹¹ Digital humanities projects in French journalism, such as Médias 19 and Numapresse headed by Marie-Ève Thérénty, are exploring the textual virality of newspaper stories that first appeared in France before spreading across North America. While a complete study similar to these for Chile has yet to be conducted, the present study is designed to lay some initial groundwork. See Cordell, “Reprinting, Circulation, and the Network Author,” 417–45.

¹² Sunkel, *Razón y pasión en la prensa popular*, 80–127. The term *crónica roja* is the popular name attributed to sensationalized and morbidly fascinating crime reports only from the middle of the twentieth century onward. The kinds of fin-de-siècle *crónicas* being studied here were not properly *crónicas rojas* but rather their ancestors. The Chilean press needed at least three or four more decades—until the 1930s—before it developed the proper *crónica roja*. In this study, then, the term *crónica roja* is used for its similarity to these early crime reports, to show how they changed from short and modest factual reports to more detailed and morbid versions of the crime stories by the century’s end.

¹³ As in France, Chilean papers were first sold by subscription. Street sales were not started until near the 1880s. See Rojas Flores, *Los suplementeros*, 13–14.

¹⁴ Émile Gaboriau’s *L’Affaire Lerouge* was serialized from 1865–66 in the French papers *Le Pays* and, later, *Le Soleil* and was published as a book in 1867. René de Pont-Jest’s *Le Procès des Thugs* was serialized in the Parisian daily *Le Petit Journal* and was published as a book in 1877.

¹⁵ Ossandón B., *El crepúsculo de los sabios*, 97–98; Santa Cruz, *Prensa y sociedad en Chile*, 37–43; Santa Cruz, *La prensa chilena en el siglo XIX*, 131–39.

¹⁶ Thérénty and Valliant, *Presse, nations et mondialisation au XIX^e siècle*, 11: “Le fantôme prestigieux du journalisme révolutionnaire hantera presque toujours les presses étrangères, dans les périodes de troubles populaires et d’insurrections républicaines ou anticoloniales (ou, très souvent, à la fois républicaines *et* anticoloniales, comme en Amérique latine)” (italics in original).

¹⁷ Oscarsson, “Le feuilleton dans la presse française,” 434.

¹⁸ Thérénty, “Pour une histoire littéraire de la presse,” 633.

¹⁹ Oscarsson, “Le feuilleton dans la presse française,” 437: “Vers la fin de 1791, parut encore un supplément quotidien, tout particulièrement destiné aux programme de théâtres, ‘les spectacles.’ ”

²⁰ Oscarsson, 437–38.

²¹ Oscarsson, 446–47.

²² Queffélec, *Le Roman-feuilleton français au XIX^e siècle*, 12: “peu à peu toutes les autres rubriques, causeries mondaines, fragments historiques, critique littéraire, récits de voyage.”

²³ Oscarsson, “Le feuilleton dans la presse française,” 435.

²⁴ Thérénty, “Pour une histoire littéraire de la presse,” 633: “. . . elle perd son caractère d’éphéméride qui conduisait la chronique à partir de la nouvelle la plus importante pour aller vers des potins mineurs, mimant une sorte d’exténement de

la matière. On constate une évolution vers une chronique monolithique, centrée autour d'un ou de deux événements."

²⁵ Thérénty, 633: "De plus, la chronique du Second Empire revendique son caractère personnel : les nouvelles sont subjectivement sélectionnées par leur auteur et cet arbitraire ne pose plus de problèmes. Le chroniqueur fixe sa propre hiérarchie de l'information. Enfin, la chronique se vit de plus en plus ouvertement sur le mode de la conversation, de la causerie comme le montrent tous les indices de l'apostrophe. Elle est là pour tisser un lien affectif fort entre l'auteur et le lecteur dont on flatte volontiers le bon sens."

²⁶ Martín, "Lectura Instructiva. De la infancia de la educación actual de las mujeres," *El Progreso* (Santiago de Chile), February 21, 1843; Desrez, "Lectura Instructiva. Sobre la educación," *Journal des connaissances utiles* (Paris), January 31, 1844.

²⁷ "Muerte horrorosa de un enano," *El Ferrocarril* (Santiago de Chile), September 23, 1882, 2.

²⁸ The story appeared years later in the book *Les nains et les géants*, wherein Édouard Garnier provides the detail "de tigres minuscules, qui n'étaient autres que des chats aux fourrures teintes," or "tiny tigers" which were only "cats with dyed fur." Garnier, 256.

²⁹ "Muerte horrorosa de un enano," *El Ferrocarril* (Santiago de Chile), September 23, 1882, 2: "Inmediatamente los demás tigres improvisados se arrojaron encima de él, y antes de que nadie pudiera intervenir, el pobre enano yacía en tierra, estrangulado, con los ojos sacados y la figura destrozada.

"Cuando se estrajo el cadáver, las facciones del infeliz no tenían forma humana." (all *sic*: original text in older Spanish; hence, spelling differs from modern Spanish).

³⁰ "Le Dompteur nain," *La Lanterne* (Paris), July 27, 1882, 3: "En une seconde, tous les autres tigres lilliputiens furent sur lui, et avant qu'on eût pu intervenir, le nain étranglé, les yeux crevés, la figure arrachée était mort. Quand on retira de la cage le cadavre encore chaussé de ses bottes molles et de son habit noir, il n'avait plus figure humaine."

³¹ "Nouvelles Diverses," *Journal des débats politiques et littéraires* (Paris), July 31, 1882, 2: "En une seconde, tous les autres tigres improvisés furent sur lui, et avant qu'on eût pu intervenir, le nain étranglé, les yeux crevés, la figure arrachée, était mort. Quand on retira de la cage le cadavre encore chaussé de ses bottes molles et de son habit noir, il n'avait plus figure humaine."

Versions of the story, often reduced to just a few lines, kept reappearing in the French press over the next weeks: "Faits Divers," *Le Rappel* (Paris), August 3, 1882, 4; "Paris au Jour le Jour," *La Petite Presse* (Paris), August 4, 1882, 2; "Chronique Départementale," *La Charente* (Angoulême), August 10, 1882, 3; "Drames et Catastrophes," *Le Voleur* (Paris), August 11, 1882, 509; and "Télégrammes & Correspondances," *Le Gaulois* (Paris), August 12, 1882, 4.

³² Thérénty and Vaillant, 1836, 14: "satisfaire le besoin du romanesque et du sensationnel."

³³ A popular form of Chilean print media produced on cheap quarto and folio sheets by and for the masses during the second half of the nineteenth century, *Lira Popular*, like French *littérature de colportage* or English chapbooks, fused urban poetry, realia, and crude illustration to help diffuse the news, in versification, more quickly than the traditional press. *Lira Popular* is often termed “cord” or “string” journalism because it was affixed to a cord strung between two trees or poles.

³⁴ Audouin, “La chronique judiciaire,” 68–69.

³⁵ “Le procès des thugs,” *Le Petit Journal* (Paris), August 28, 1866, 3: “Depuis bien des années, des crimes étaient commis dans l’Hindoustan avec une incroyable audace, des personnages importants avaient disparu, des caravanes entières n’avaient pas atteint le but de leur arrivée sans qu’on sût ce qu’elles étaient devenues; les familles et les intéressés s’étaient inutilement adressés aux tribunaux.

“Aucun cadavre n’avait été retrouvé, et quoique le nom des thugs eût été souvent prononcé, on n’avait pas voulu y croire. On mettait tous ces meurtres, toutes ces disparitions sur le compte des voleurs ordinaires de grand chemin ou sur celui des accidents, des tigres, des ouragans, des inondations.”

³⁶ “Le procès des thugs,” *Le Petit Journal* (Paris), August 28, 1866, 4 (italics in the original): “On ne saurait rendre la fierté sauvage avec laquelle, alors, en élevant vers le tribunal ses mains enchaînées, il dit en indoustani, cette langue douce et harmonieuse comme l’italien:

—Je suis le descendant d’une race royale, et je le jure par Kâli, je ne dirai pas un mot si on ne me retire pas mes chaînes.

“Le tigre ne supporte pas les entraves!

“(La suite à demain.)”

³⁷ Chabrier, Amélie, “*Le Procès des Thugs: Cas unique de roman du prétoire,*” 87, 94.

³⁸ Chabrier, 93: “trouve un biais original pour parler de nouveau d’une histoire déjà bien connue du lectorat, mais qu’il présente comme un récit authentique, raconté à la manière d’un article journalistique.”

³⁹ Dumas, “Pauline,” *Le Petit Journal* (Paris), August 28 to September 14, 1866, 1, 2. On the eve of its serialization (August 27, 1866), the editors at *Le Petit Journal* announced that they would begin printing part two of *Pauline*: “Nous reprendrons demain le dramatique récit de M. Alexandre Dumas, *Pauline*, dont la première partie a eu un si grand succès dans le *Petit Journal*” (Tomorrow, we will resume printing the dramatic story by Mr. Alexandre Dumas, *Pauline*, of which the first part had had such great success in the *Petit Journal*), 2. It hardly seems coincidental that the editors resumed printing Dumas’s gothic novel on the same day that they would print the first installment of the (false) *chronique judiciaire*, “Le procès des thugs,” just above the jumpline. Also appropriate is the fact that, on September 15, “Pauline” was replaced by Turpin de Sansay’s “Le testament d’un bandit,” a clear echo of “Le procès des thugs.”

⁴⁰ Kalifa, *L’encre et le sang*, 11, cf. 20 (italics added): “[I]n 1869, the Troppmann affair ushered in the emerging popular press the era of the *fait divers*” (“en 1869, l’affaire Troppmann inaugure dans la presse populaire naissante l’ère du

fait divers”); Thérenty and Vaillant, 1836, 277: “The modern treatment of the *fait divers* in the press is traditionally dated from the sixfold murder of the Troppmann Affair in 1869. After this event, according to historians of the *fait divers*, the writing of the daily newspaper underwent a metamorphosis, new journalistic roles appeared (undervalued writers of *fait divers* became flamboyant reporters), literature itself (birth of the detective novel, evolution of the serial novel) came under pressure from new narrative writings based on retrospective construction and investigation (“On date traditionnellement le traitement moderne du fait divers dans la presse du sextuple meurtre de l’affaire Troppmann en 1869. Après cet événement, selon les historiens du fait divers, l’écriture du quotidien se métamorphose, de nouveaux rôles journalistiques apparaissent (le fait-diversier à la fonction peu valorisée est relayé par le plus flamboyant reporter), la littérature même (naissance du roman policier, évolution du roman-feuilleton) subit la pression d’une nouvelle écriture narrative fondée sur la construction rétrospective et l’enquête”).”

⁴¹ After months of legal proceedings, which preoccupied all of Paris, Troppmann was guillotined in Paris on January 19, 1870. The story that day in *Le Petit Journal* sparked sales of the paper that topped 600,000. For more on the mediatization of the crime, see Perrot, “L’affaire Troppmann (1869),” 28–37; Pierrat, “L’Affaire Troppmann ou l’invention du fait divers,” 27–34; Cragin, *Murder in Parisian Streets*, 37–38; Gramfort, “Les crimes de Pantin,” 17–30; Gonon, *Le fait divers criminel*, 15.

⁴² News of the Troppmann murders first appeared in major U.S. dailies, including New York City’s *New York Times* (October 18, 1869) in October, and then quickly spread around the country: Washington, D.C.’s *Evening Star* (November 26, 1869), the *Chicago (Illinois) Tribune* (April 19, 1870), and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania’s *Evening Telegraph* (May 31, 1870), to name a few. The story was so popular that it was picked up in smaller, local papers, including Lansing, Minnesota’s *Mower County Transcript* (December 30, 1869); Mineral Point, Wisconsin’s *Mineral Point Tribune* (February 24, 1870); and Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania’s *Columbian* (March 11, 1870), as well as on the front pages of smaller distribution French-language papers, such as Convent, Louisiana’s *Le Louisianais* (December 3, 1870; January 15, 1870) and Opelousas, Louisiana’s *Courrier des Opelousas* (January 22, 1870). So infamous was Troppmann in the U.S. press at this time that the Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania, *Columbian* would title its front-page article (picked up from the Canadian press) about convicted murderer John A. Munroe, “The American Troppmann.”

⁴³ Pierrat, “L’Affaire Troppmann ou l’invention du fait divers,” 34: “Le 23 septembre, deux jours après la révélation du crime, le tirage du *Petit Journal* atteignait 357 000 exemplaires. Il passa à 448 000 exemplaires le 28 septembre, après la découverte du cadavre de Gustave Kinck. Et ce chiffre augmenta encore en octobre et novembre.”

⁴⁴ “Thomas Grimm” was the collective pseudonym of several chroniclers at *Le Petit Journal*, of whom Henri Escoffier was the most prolific; and, as noted earlier, “Thimothée Trimm” (at times Thimotée) was the pseudonym of writer Antoine

Joseph Napoléon “Léo” Lespès. See Delaporte, *Les journalistes en France*, 56–57.

⁴⁵ Readers were not only fascinated with crime stories such as the Troppmann affair, but perhaps also acting them out for real on their own. That is what the *Charleston* (South Carolina) *Daily News* suggests in the deck on its front-page story about the affair from October 15, 1869: “The Effect of Reading Eugene Sue’s Wandering Jew—Seven Persons in one Family Butchered near Paris—The Motive of the Murderer—A Midnight Struggle—Finding of the Buried Bodies—Arrest of the Murderer—His Attempted Suicide, and his Confession.” The author concludes: “It is stated that Traupmann [*sic*], previous to his arrest, became acquainted with a man named Dourson, with whom he took breakfast. At this breakfast they had a philosophical discussion, in which Traupmann [*sic*] remarked that he had read the ‘Wandering Jew,’ and that he made the character of Rodin his ideal.” “The Great Paris Murder,” *Charleston* (South Carolina) *Daily News*, October 15, 1869, 1.

⁴⁶ Gonon, *Le fait divers criminel*, 23–24 (italics added): “Lorsque dans les années 1860 le journal devient financièrement plus accessible au peuple, ce dernier se tournera plus facilement vers les faits divers qu’il a déjà l’habitude de lire, et dont la rédaction se rapproche bien souvent de celle des romans-feuilletons, lesquels tendent à élargir eux aussi le lectorat des quotidiens. . . . Il semble acquis que le roman-feuilleton comme les faits divers sont avant tout une lecture populaire et féminine. . . . “Cette influence du fait divers sur la littérature (romanesque, médicale, philosophique) du temps est particulièrement intéressante : le fait divers se présente en effet pour ces auteurs comme un document rendant compte du réel, en particulier criminel”

⁴⁷ Gonon, 22–23: “Les faits divers apparaissent dans le dernier tiers du journal Les rubriques peuvent changer selon les livraisons, et on n’est jamais sûr de retrouver exactement les mêmes les jours suivants—l’une d’elles fait pendant au fait divers criminel : il s’agit de la chronique judiciaire, qui consiste à rendre compte des séances d’un procès. Si le motif est le même (le crime, et ce qui s’ensuit) et les acteurs sont identiques (coupable, victime, témoins, représentants de la loi), on ne saurait cependant entièrement rapprocher la rédaction de la chronique judiciaire et du fait divers”

⁴⁸ Kalifa, “Les tâcherons de l’information,” 581: “La chronique judiciaire restait, elle, entièrement autonome. Confiée à un ‘tribunier,’ qui était souvent du métier, elle était un genre à part entière qui relevait d’une écriture noble, aux antipodes du fait divers.”

⁴⁹ Gonon, *Le fait divers criminel*, 23: “La chronique judiciaire s’intéresse au long processus du jugement, et si elle traite du crime, c’est bien après qu’il a été commis, lorsqu’il est étudié, raconté, repris, interprété par tous les acteurs du drame qui ont eu le temps d’établir leur discours. Le fait divers, lui, est écrit généralement aussitôt après le crime, et il le raconte ou le rapporte de l’extérieur. Il est d’une lecture sans doute plus accessible, et si la chronique judiciaire peut paraître un genre noble, le fait divers, lui, est un genre systématiquement associé au peuple.”

⁵⁰ Gonon, 78.

⁵¹ “Le crime de la rue de Chazelles,” *Le Petit Journal*, February 11, 1880, 3: “Les

époux Garin, qui tiennent cet établissement du marchand da vins traiteur depuis dix années, sont très estimés dans le quartier.

“A demain de nouveaux détails.”

⁵² Gonon, *Le fait divers criminel*, 9: “Ces faits divers criminels sont volontiers sanglants, et ils font également couler beaucoup d’encre.” See also Thérénty and Vaillant, *Presses et plumes*, especially the book’s first part “La presse au miroir de la littérature,” 13–90.

⁵³ Kalifa, *L’encre et le sang*, cover (italics added): “A l’aube de la Grande Guerre, . . . la ferveur pour les récits de crimes devient un véritable phénomène de société. Tandis que la presse ouvre grand ses colonnes aux faits divers criminels . . . , romans policiers et films de détectives attirent un public de plus en plus large, fasciné par un nouvel imaginaire fait d’empreintes sanglantes et de pas dans la neige, d’indices ténus et de cryptogrammes mystérieux.

“Au cœur de cet engouement, le reporter s’impose comme l’incarnation de l’aventure et de l’héroïsme. L’écriture du fait divers se professionnalise et l’on commence à voir dans l’enquête une nouvelle manière d’interpréter le monde.”

⁵⁴ Pinto Rodríguez, “Proyectos de la elite chilena del siglo XIX (I),” 172.

⁵⁵ Castro Valdebenito, “Criminalización y castigo,” 96.

⁵⁶ Ibarra Cifuentes, “Liberalismo y prensa,” 301.

⁵⁷ Brunner and Catalán state that between the census of 1865 and that of 1875 the literate population grew from 17 percent to 22.9 percent; by 1885 it had reached 28.9 percent and in 1895 it had reached 31.8 percent. Illiteracy decreased from 83 percent (in 1865) to 60 percent (in 1907). See Brunner and Catalán, *Cinco estudios sobre cultura y sociedad*, 19.

⁵⁸ For instance, the *Almanaque Enciclopédico Pintoresco para el año 1860* reproduced illustrations by French artists, including Valeriano Foulquier, Henri Pottin, Eugène Forest, Alexandre de Bar, Gerard Pauquet, Françoise Auguste Trichon, Frédéric Lix, and Gustave Doré.

⁵⁹ Fernández Domingo, “La emigración francesa en Chile, 1875–1914,” para. 17.

⁶⁰ Silva Castro, *Prensa y periodismo en Chile (1812–1956)*, 72, 84–85, 160, 227; Edwards, *Elogio de don Eliodoro Yáñez*, 82–83.

⁶¹ Subercaseaux, *Historia de libro en Chile*, 109.

⁶² For Edwards Bello, see Merino, *Prólogo*, 7–13; for D’Halmar, see Galgani Muñoz, “Paseo escritural de Augusto d’Halmar,” 77–101.

⁶³ For more on the evolution of technology and changing information models, see Mahieux, “Vers une pratique accessible.”

⁶⁴ Valdebenito, *Historia del periodismo chileno*, 68.

⁶⁵ Subercaseaux, *Historia de libro en Chile*, 66.

⁶⁶ Subercaseaux, 68.

⁶⁷ Subercaseaux, 97.

⁶⁸ Chartier, “Aprender a leer, leer para aprender,” 27: “modelos de lectura.”

⁶⁹ Silva Vildósola, *Retratos y Recuerdos*, 178–79: “Pero como el diario tenía las mejores informaciones y los artículos más libres de presión política partidista y la más honrada inspiración, comenzaron muy pronto a tomarlo en cuenta y a leerlo y

a considerarlo todos como una de las fuerzas de opinión que había en el país. Los grandes diarios no nos nombraron jamás. Nos miraban como el enemigo común. Los conservadores ortodoxos nos juzgaban peligrosos innovadores e indisciplinados. La autoridad eclesíástica vivía en constante zozobra, pero nos amparaba la amistad personal que cada uno de nosotros cultivaba con ese hombre de talento y gran cultura que fue el Arzobispo don Mariano Casanova. Los liberales y radicales nos consideraban una ‘sacristía picaresca’ como dijo Roberto Huneus en su libro ‘Sursum Corda.’ El público compraba el diario y avisaba en él.”

⁷⁰ As interest in French *faits divers* grew, several Chilean newspapers began publishing sections entitled “Revista de París.” This trend was no doubt fueled by a wider transmedia phenomenon of Hispanophone papers coming out of Paris, such as the weekly *El Correo de Ultramar* (The overseas post). *El Correo de Ultramar* (1842–1886), which eventually developed into *El Correo de París* (1886–1893), also carried a “Revista de París” *crónica*. See Cárdenas Moreno, “Mercedes Cabello de Carbonera en *El Correo de París*,” para. 4. For more on the French production of Spanish-language print culture during the nineteenth century, see Cooper-Richet, “Aux marges de l’histoire de la presse.”

⁷¹ “Revista de París,” *La República* (Santiago de Chile), November 10, 1886, 2: “A su muerte, el *Petit Journal* quiso demostrar que estos ociosos a quienes llaman hombres inútiles, son hombres necesarios, i son también los instrumentos mas preciosos con que cuenta la circulación de los valores.”

⁷² “Revista de París,” *La República* (Santiago de Chile), October 20, 1866, 2: “Estos periódicos judiciales constituyen el repertorio más completo que se puede consultar cuando se quieren estudiar los usos y costumbres de la sociedad moderna. El único inconveniente es que los hechos aparecen aquí como imaginarios, como ficciones novelescas, cuando por el contrario nada hay mas positivo ni más auténtico. Por ejemplo, hé aquí una historia que si no la viéramos contada con largos detalles en la *Gaceta de los Tribunales*, nos parecería seguramente una de esas fábulas que inventan los escritores como P. Feval i Ponson du Terrail, cuya fecunda imaginacion no conoce la valla de lo inverosímil.”

⁷³ “Los dramas judiciales. El crimen de Pantin. —Acta de acusación contra Troppman,” *La República* (Santiago de Chile), February 17, 1870, 1 (italics in original): “Hasta ahora nos hemos abstenido de hablar del famoso i horrendo crimen de Pantin, que tan profunda emocion i horror tan grande ha producido en todo el mundo, porque la multiplicidad de incidentes, las contradicciones i las mas aventuradas conjeturas usurpaban el lugar de la verdad. Hoi, que se presenta ante el jurado (Corte de *Assises* del Sena) ese criminal incomparable, cuyos hechos apenas son para imaginados i cuya idea sola nos aterra, hacemos a los lectores de la *América latina* la mejor relacion de la fúnebre tragedia de Pantin, cual es la contenida en el acta de acusacion leida en la audiencia del 28 por el procurador imperial, i en los debates de este terrible proceso.”

⁷⁴ “Los dramas judiciales. El crimen de Pantin. —Acta de acusación contra Troppman,” *La República* (Santiago de Chile), 2: “VEREDICTO. (por vía telegráfica). París, 30 de diciembre, a las 10 de la noche.

“Troppmann ha sido condenado a muerte.

“Esta terrible sentencia ha provocado aplausos que luego han sido reprimidos.

“Troppmann queda inmóvil i saluda a los jurados sin afectacion.

“Hace en silencio el tránsito de la sala del tribunal a la Concerjeria.

“Entra a su celda i no manifiesta la misma alegria de las noches precedentes.

No come nada i solo bebe un vaso de vino.”

⁷⁵ “El asesino de Pantin. Los últimos incidentes del drama,” *La República* (Santiago de Chile), February 23, 1870, 1–2.

⁷⁶ Cornejo, *Ciudades de voces impresas*, 93, 99, 102–103.

⁷⁷ Sunkel, *Razón y pasión en la prensa popular*, 80–88.

⁷⁸ Romero, *¿Qué hacer con los pobres?*, 10–11: “una mezcla horrenda de miseria y corrupción.”

⁷⁹ León León, “Por una ‘necesidad de preservación social,’ ” 56.

⁸⁰ Castro Valdebenito, “Criminalización y castigo,” 105.

⁸¹ León León, “Por una ‘necesidad de preservación social,’ ” 34: “[L]a circulación e interiorización de este nuevo saber criminológico ayudó no solo a construir discursivamente una nueva idea de lo que se debía entender por un criminal, sino además a respaldar “científicamente” una serie de prejuicios que reafirmaron los estereotipos sobre el carácter vicioso y degenerado de las conductas y acciones de los sectores populares urbanos, concebidos ahora como este “enemigo interno” que podía terminar por afectar la vida, seguridad y propiedad de los ciudadanos. En función de ello, se volvía necesario prevenir y defender el orden social vigente.”

⁸² Valdebenito, *Historia del periodismo chileno*, 69: “A pesar de ser un diario popular, consagrado a los intereses del pueblo, era culto y de estilo refinado. Sus artículos cortos y claros respondían a las exigencias de sus lectores, en su mayoría gente de pueblo”

⁸³ “Crímen,” *El Chileno* (Santiago de Chile), November 27, 1889, 2:

“CRÍMEN.—Laureano Gomez es el nombre de un individuo que en la noche del 24 se encontraba bebiendo con cuatro compañeros en un bosque que hai en la subdelegacion 13 rural ‘Pudahuel,’ a inmediaciones del rio Mapocho. Se presume que en una pendencia que hayan tenido por el exceso de la bebida, hayan ultimado a Gomez, pues este individuo fué enviado ya cadáver de dicha subdelegacion con varias heridas en la cabeza, al parecer de piedra, por lo que fué mandado al Cementerio Jeneral. Se han tomado por la policía las precauciones del caso a fin de aprehender a los presuntos autores de este crimen.” (all *sic*: original text in older Spanish; hence, spelling differs from modern Spanish).

⁸⁴ Edwards Bello, “El crimen del San Cristóbal,” 58: “Nosotros somos enemigos de narrar en la prensa diaria, que va a todas las manos, estos hechos de la vida, pero el periodismo moderno no puede prescindir de las publicaciones policiales”

⁸⁵ Ossandón B. and Santa Cruz, *El estallido de las formas*, 161.

⁸⁶ Ramos, *Desencuentros de la modernidad en América Latina*, 124.

⁸⁷ Alvarado Cornejo, “La sección folletín,” 57.

⁸⁸ *La Libertad* (Talca), 1866–1871, and *El Ferrocarril* (Santiago de Chile), 1855–1910, published texts by Alexandre Dumas, Charles Dickens, and Victor

Hugo. Eventually, fictional feuilletons were reprinted as books and sold separately in bookstores.

⁸⁹ *El crimen Undurraga, Dos cartas y dos vistas fiscales*, 5: “No deben esas cartas tener la vida efímera de lo que se escribe en la prensa diaria: hoy se lee y mañana se olvida.”

⁹⁰ Ossandón B., *El crepúsculo de los sabios*, 93: “. . . son periódicos ‘mixtos’ o de ‘transición,’ que incorporan lo nuevo del periodismo moderno pero que, a la vez, se resisten a abandonar los elementos ilustrados y literarios propios del período anterior.”

⁹¹ Thérénty, “Pour une histoire littéraire de la presse,” 626. See also, Thérénty and Vaillant, *1836*, 7–21.

⁹² Agustín Edwards, “Epistolary of Agustín Edwards, Mac Clure (1899–1905),” as quoted in Bernedo Pinto and Arriagada Cardini, “Los inicios de *El Mercurio* de Santiago,” 28–29: “Quisiera que ensayáramos con el folletín, un sistema que tienen implantado aquí [en París] el *Petit Parisien*, el *Journal*, el *Petit Journal* y otros diarios, para alcanzar mayor circulación” (italics added).

⁹³ Tomás Cornejo has studied the passionate crime and scandal as central topics at the core of the changes in the Santiago press, also focusing on the newspaper *El Chileno*, which he considers a model of modernization in the local press. See Cornejo, *Ciudades de voces impresas*, 79–124.

⁹⁴ Gonon, *Le fait divers criminel*, 77–95, 225–53.

⁹⁵ While the most celebrated set of narrative markers inherent to literary journalism is Tom Wolfe’s in *The New Journalism* (e.g., scene-by-scene construction, dialogue, third-person point of view, symbolic details/status life), 31–33, a number of scholars and practitioners since then—such as Norman Sims in his preface to *True Stories*, xvii–xxiii; Mark Kramer, in “Breakable Rules for Literary Journalists,” 21–34; Bernal and Chillón in *Periodismo informativo de creación*, 92–101; and Chillón, in *Literatura y periodismo*, 395–425, to name a few—have been expanding Wolfe’s initial literary journalistic criteria over the years. See also the introduction to Chillón’s *La palabra facticia*.

⁹⁶ See Barthes, “Structure du fait divers,” 442–51.

⁹⁷ “Le Parricide,” *Le Petit Journal* (Paris), December 2, 7–15, 17–19, 24, 31, 1867, through to January 1–2, 4–9, 12, 14–16, 18–19, 25, 1868; “Le crime de la rue de Chazelles,” *Le Petit Journal* (Paris), February 1880: February 10–11, 14–16, 18–21, through to March 1, 13, 1880.

⁹⁸ “Départements,” *Le Petit Journal* (Paris), February 19, 1880, 3: “L’abondance des matières nous oblige d’ajourner à demain la suite de notre feuilleton *la Belle Argentinère*.”

⁹⁹ See, for instance, Gonon’s first part, chapter 3, “Le détour par le roman-escape: la fictionnalisation du fait divers,” in *Le fait divers criminel*, 77–95.

¹⁰⁰ “Salteo,” *La República* (Santiago de Chile), December 9, 1870, 3: “En cuanto tengamos mas [*sic*] pormenores de este suceso lo comunicaremos a nuestros lectores.”

¹⁰¹ *Asesinato de Pancul. Datos referentes a este suceso*.

¹⁰² *El crimen de Talca. Parricidio de don José Isidoro Vergara.*

¹⁰³ *El crimen Undurraga. Asesinato de la señora Teresa Sañartu Vicuña.*

¹⁰⁴ Gaboriau, *L’Affaire Lerouge*. Despite its fictional narrative, Gonon describes the novel’s “*interdiscours fait-diversier*,” suggesting that behind every novel written at the time—in particular a *roman policier*—was hiding a *fait divers*. See Gonon, *Le fait divers criminel*, 251.

¹⁰⁵ *Asesinato de Pancul*, 7, 12.

¹⁰⁶ *El crimen de Talca*, 64: “. . . no son los mejores guias de la justicia las versiones del vulgo, casi siempre erradas e hijas de una imaginacion lijera i exitada por lo extraordinario del acontecimiento.”

¹⁰⁷ “Le crime de la rue de Chazelles,” *Le Petit Journal* (Paris), February 10, 1880, 2.

¹⁰⁸ “L’assassin Couvelaere,” *Le Petit Journal* (Paris), February 26, 1880, 3.

¹⁰⁹ Gonon, *Le fait divers criminel*, 90 (italics added): “Cette description théâtralisée, c’est tout d’abord celle-ci présente la foule au spectacle, avec les témoins qui les premiers découvrent la victime, et dont la fictionnalisation du fait divers permet de retranscrire les sentiments et le point de vue.”

¹¹⁰ “Horroroso crimen,” *El Chileno* (Santiago de Chile), October 10, 1890, 2: “Los agentes de policia introdujéronse a las habitaciones donde, a los pocos momentos, presenciaron el espectáculo mas desgarrador i lúgubre; dos cadáveres del sexo femenino yacían tendidos en el suelo, sus rostros completamente demudados, mas aun, despedazados en gran parte, heridos de hacha en la cabeza, con golpes de palos en el rostro, el vestido enteramente despedazado i la garganta de la mayor de las victimas parecia oprimida como si se hubiese tratado de ahorcarla. . . .

“Despues de un momento de espanto i asombro, los guardianes comprendieron que era necesario buscar cuanto ántes a los autores del crimen horrendo cuyos efectos presenciaban, i a la verdad empezaron el registro de la casa” (all *sic*: original text in older Spanish; hence, spelling differs from modern Spanish).

¹¹¹ Gonon, *Le fait divers criminel*, 67: “The *fait divers*’s introduction can also highlight the emotion of a population in the face of a crime . . .” (La Pn0 [introductory narrative sequence to a *fait divers*] peut également mettre en avant l’émotion d’une population devant un crime . . .”).

¹¹² *El crimen Undurraga. Asesinato de la señora Teresa Sañartu Vicuña*, 55: “En medio de su luna de miel ella descubrió que el hombre a quien habia entregado confiadamente su corazón i su destino, con toda la ternura i la pureza de su cariño, era una fiera. Un degenerado lascivo i brutal.

“Descubrió con horror que ese poeta de alma delicada, que habia arrullado su imaginacion a los veinte años, era como esas serpientes que cantan antes de enroscarse en el cuello de sus víctimas.”

¹¹³ “Assassinat. Aliénation Mentale,” *Le Petit Journal* (Paris), February 6, 1863, 2: “Il est dix heures et demie, la cour entre en séance.

“De bonne heure la salle est envahie par le public, avide de voir les traits de l’accusé.

“On l’introduit. Il est vêtu de l’uniforme de marin de la marine impériale.

Deux gendarmes prennent place à ses côtés.”

¹¹⁴ “Asesinato,” *El Chileno* (Santiago de Chile), June 5, 1890, 2: “A dicho establecimiento [un restaurante], cuyo dueño es Francisco Neri—que vivía con su mujer Concepcion Neri—llegó el domingo un individuo llamado Emilio Sacco, el cual pidió dos cigarros puros. El dueño del establecimiento le contestó que no tenía, i por esta causa, según se refiere, Sacco lo insultó hasta que lo obligó a que lo sacase fuera del establecimiento. Antes de retirarse, el despedido dijo en alta voz i en actitud amenazante: ‘mañana me la pagarás.’”

¹¹⁵ *El crimen de Talca*, 28: “El cadáver del señor Vergara presenta en la cabeza, al lado derecho, una ancha i profunda herida que le ha partido el cráneo hasta los sesos, inferida al parecer con machete.

“En la garganta presenta señales de haber sido estrangulado, pues se le nota una gran parte del cuello amoratado i aun conserva un cañamo delgado . . .”

¹¹⁶ It is important to point out that all these resources will be part of what a century later Tom Wolfe would mention as being the key strategies of the New Journalism. See Wolfe, *The New Journalism*, 50–51.

¹¹⁷ “Le Parricide,” *Le Petit Journal* (Paris), January 5, 1868, 4: “La maladie affreuse la clouait sur un lit immonde à l’hôpital de la prison des Madelonnettes! Là, elle passait les derniers jours qu’elle avait à vivre dans les plus atroces souffrances, et aucun sommeil ne pouvait s’approcher de ses yeux en larmes. Auprès de la couche funèbre où s’agitait l’infortunée, comme auprès du lit déshonoré de Frédéric, un fantôme veillait sans cesse, et le dortoir où elle se lamentait retentissait jour et nuit de ses cris désespérés. Louise était condamnée par les médecins, mais elle ne pouvait pas mourir, et dès que les ombres du soir commençaient à s’étendre sur les murs de l’infirmierie où elle s’agitait sans cesse, ses tristes compagnes venaient veiller tour à tour auprès d’elle pour la dérober à sa terreur.”

¹¹⁸ “Suicide,” *La República* (Santiago de Chile), February 23, 1871, 2: “. . . el señor Collet había tomado una cantidad de sublimato [*sic*] corrosivo que abrasaba sus entrañas. Como las diez de la mañana, despues de una agonía horrible, exhalaba aquel desgraciado su último suspiro.

“Sus cuentas con los hombres estaban canceladas!

“No habrá sido Dios tan implacable al pedirle las suyas.”

¹¹⁹ “Una última versión del crimen Breddin-Hoffmann,” *El Chileno* (Santiago de Chile), October 31, 1890, 2–3: “Bermal agregó otros detalles en los cuales aparece tan culpable él como Salas, pero preferimos silenciarlos en obsequio al lector . . .”

¹²⁰ *El crimen Undurraga. Asesinato de la señora Teresa Sañartu Vicuña*, 9: “En el momento de atravesar la señora Zañartu por frente a su marido, éste tomó rápida colocación a su espalda i en el brevísimo espacio de unos pocos segundos, cuando la primera apenas había dado un paso en el pórtico del teatro, sacó un revólver de su bolsillo i apuntó sobre la cabeza de la señora Zañartu, estendiendo el brazo por sobre una o dos personas que se interponían entre ambos. El disparo, lanzado a boca de jarro, dio en el cerebro de la víctima arrojándola al suelo instantáneamente, inclinada hacia el costado izquierdo. El hechor se avalanzó sobre el cuerpo de su esposa para seguir disparando su revólver.”

¹²¹ “Un cadavre vivant,” *Le Petit Journal* (Paris), January 1, 1880, 3: “Mais alors, si Lefebvre n’a pas été assassiné . les époux Faye ne sont pas des assassins?”

¹²² “L’assassin Couvelaere,” *Le Petit Journal* (Paris), February 26, 1880, 3: “Le coupable semblait avoir su parfaitement où il devait mettre la main pour trouver immédiatement ces valeurs. Mais ce coupable, quel était-il?”

¹²³ Gonon, *Le fait divers criminel*, 186: “La perspective change . . . : pour le journaliste, il s’agit non plus seulement d’être le relais d’une parole officielle uniquement informative, mais également d’inciter, par sa publication à la demande du juge d’instruction lui-même, les lecteurs à participer à l’enquête, à en devenir des auxiliaires.”

¹²⁴ “Le Parricide,” *Le Petit Journal* (Paris), January 5, 1868, 4: “Frédéric alla passer au 129, dans la maison de jeu du Palais-Royal, la nuit qui suivit la sanglante expédition de Versailles. La chance, qui jusqu’alors lui avait été presque constamment favorable, tourna brusquement contre lui, et il perdit presque tout le gain qu’il y avait fait précédemment.

“C’était un mauvais signe. Aussi rentra-t-il chez lui furieux et fatigué. Il dormit quelques heures de ce sommeil pénible qui avait été jusqu’à ce moment son unique châtement, et vers trois heures de l’après-midi, après avoir eu soin de mettre dans la poche de côté de sa redingote certain instrument dont il ne connaissait que trop l’usage mortel, il se dirigea vers le Pont-Neuf.”

¹²⁵ “Salteo,” *La República* (Santiago de Chile), December 9, 1870, 3. “Al llegar al portezuelo de Lima dos de los perseguidores se adelantaron a sus compañeros para explorar el camino. Cerca de un estero, los bandidos que habían notado que se les perseguía se emboscaron entre los árboles: los dos exploradores se vieron luego separados del resto de la comitiva por una hábil maniobra de los bandidos que los tomaron por la espalda. Una lucha desigual se trabó entonces entre los bandidos i los dos exploradores, lucha cuyos resultados no podían ser dudosos. Al cabo de algunos instantes, en efecto, uno de ellos cayó muerto, herido de un balazo. El otro se defendía todavía valientemente a pesar de algunas leves heridas que había recibido i logró por fin escaparse uniéndose al resto de la comitiva que había quedado un poco atrás.

“Entre tanto, don Juan de Dios Valenzuela, propietario también de esa localidad, reunía a los sirvientes de su fundo i a los de los vecinos e iba a ingresar a la primera comitiva que había salido en persecución de los bandidos. Estos, convencidos de que se les seguía la pista, huían a todo escape dispersándose después en distintas direcciones.” (all *sic*: original text in older Spanish; hence, spelling differs from modern Spanish).

¹²⁶ *El crimen de Talca*, 31–35.

¹²⁷ “Le Parricide,” *Le Petit Journal*, January 9–10, 1868, 4.

¹²⁸ “Salteo,” *La República* (Santiago de Chile), April 18, 1876, 3–4.

“Catorce forajidos penetraron antenoche a las doce a una casa en la chacara denominada ‘El Cármen,’ disparando balazos.

“Un pobre hombre que fué a atrancar la puerta, fué la primera víctima.

“Lo ataron de pies i manos i lo amenazaron con quitarle la vida si no decía el

lugar donde estaba la plata.

“El infeliz les juró que nada sabía i se les arrodilló para que no lo matasen.

“Uno de los bandidos, exasperado porque no obtenía nada de aquel hombre, le disparó un balazo a quema ropa i lo mató en el acto.

“Rejistran las piezas i encuentran a una señora que estaba escondida debajo del catre; la sacan de ahí, la maltratan i porque no confesaba donde estaba el dinero le asestaron tres puñaladas.

“Cometieron estos crímenes solamente para conseguir un miserable botín. Lo único que se llevaron fueron algunos objetos de poco valor i diez pesos.

“Hasta ahora no se ha capturado a ninguno de los malhechores.” (all *sic*: original text in older Spanish; hence, spelling differs from modern Spanish).

¹²⁹ “Muerte repentina,” *El Mercurio de Valparaíso* (Valparaíso), June 6, 1868, 3:

“Un ebrio, que fue llevado en carretón anoche a eso de las once al cuartel de policía y que no pudo declarar su nombre, amaneció muerto esta mañana en el calabozo.

“Fue remitido al hospital para que sea reconocido por el médico de ciudad.

“Escritas las líneas anteriores, hemos recibido los datos siguientes, hemos recibido los datos siguientes: El muerto es zapatero, como de 40 años de edad y se llama Juan de la Cruz Díaz, casado con Catalina Salvo.

“El individuo espresado [*sic*] salió ayer a vender zapatos que había hecho en la semana y no volvió más a su casa.”

¹³⁰ “Herido,” *El Mercurio de Valparaíso* (Valparaíso), August 1, 1868, 3:

“Anoche como a la uno fué conducido a la policía un individuo llamado Antonio Arrieta, que solo porque un compañero suyo llamado Pioquinto Vazquez, con quien se estaba divirtiendo, no quiso acompañarlo hasta más tarde para beber en su casa, le dió dos puñaladas, causándole otras tantas heridas de mucha gravedad en el vientre.

“El herido fué conducido inmediatamente al hospital, y se cree que no salve.

“El reo se encerró en su casa y fué necesario echar abajo la puerta para sacarlo y conducirlo preso” (all *sic*: original text in older Spanish; hence, spelling differs from modern Spanish).

¹³¹ Gonon, *Le fait divers criminel*, 57: “The text of a criminal *fait divers* is thus paradoxical: on the one hand, it wants to capture the horrendous nature of the crime, or even to insist particularly on what can make the crime odious, in order to attract the attention of the reader, who is fond of such atrocities; on the other hand, its influences this same reader’s understanding of the crime with textual models, narrative or not, that are often stereotypical” (“Ainsi le récit de fait divers criminel se tient dans un entre-deux qui peut sembler paradoxal: d’une part, il veut saisir le caractère affreux du crime, voire insister particulièrement sur ce qui peut rendre le crime odieux, pour attirer l’attention du lecteur friand d’atrocités; d’autre part, il conforte ce même lecteur dans l’appréhension du crime grâce à des modèles textuels, narratifs ou non, et la plupart du temps stéréotypés”).

¹³² One such novel is Émile Zola’s *Thérèse Raquin*, serialized in the literary magazine *L’Artiste* in 1867 and published as a book in 1868. It reflects Zola’s aes-

thetics, which he describes in the last section of his treatise, *El naturalismo*, “Sobre la novela” (About the novel), first subsection, “El sentido de lo real” (the sense of the real), 183–88. Notice how Zola anticipates Tom Wolfe by more than a hundred years. Zola writes, “Make real characters move in a real environment, giving the reader a fragment of human life: this is the whole naturalist novel” (“Hacer mover a unos personajes reales en un medio real, dar al lector un fragmento de la vida humana: en esto consiste toda la novela naturalista”), 183. Zola first described this perspective in his preface to *Thérèse Raquin*, 1868. See Zola, *Thérèse Raquin*, i–ix.

¹³³ Gonon, *Le fait divers criminel*, 229: “. . . le naturalisme va bien souvent retracer la vie des plus démunis, abondamment traitée par cette rubrique des quotidiens, mais revendique dans le même temps aussi un travail du style qui s’oppose à celui des journalistes.”

¹³⁴ Dickens, “Une assurance sur la vie,” *Le Petit Journal* (Paris), February 1, 1863, 1: “Laissez-moi vous raconter un de ces romans de la vie réelle.” See also, Zola, *Le roman expérimental*.

¹³⁵ González, “Un homicida” (A murderer), *La Semana* (Santiago de Chile), vol. 9, July 16, 1859, 139–40: “Un hombre dotado de pasiones ardentísimas pero cuyo espíritu no haya sido debidamente cultivado, rigurosamente hablando no es un criminal: mas bien es un demente, i castigarlo por homicida cuando solo obra impelido por la pasión, importa tanto como castigar el puñal de que se sirviera para ejecutar su crimen.” This story began in vol. 7 on July 2, 1859, and ran until vol. 12 on August 6, 1859. The second and the fifth installments were signed “Marcial González,” while the others just carried his initial “G.”

¹³⁶ Thérenty, *La littérature au quotidien*, 24: “. . . d’une écriture scientifique dont la forme même garantirait l’effectivité.”

¹³⁷ Urbistondo, *El naturalismo*, 17–20.

¹³⁸ See Latcham, “La historia del criollismo,” 7–55; Montenegro, “Aspectos del criollismo en América,” 57–95; and Vega, “En torno al criollismo,” 97–125.

¹³⁹ “Inaudita impavidez,” *La República* (Santiago de Chile), April 8, 1867, 2: “demostrando el valor e intrepidez de un Napoleon”; “como la aparición del comendador entre los convidados del festín de Tenorio.”

¹⁴⁰ “Siguen los robos,” *La República* (Santiago de Chile), April 9, 1867, 3: “La familia aquella gozaba en el barrio de una reputación semejante a la de la Lechuza, el Maestro de Escuela i el Cojito de los Misterios de París.”

¹⁴¹ “Un cadavre vivant,” *Le Petit Journal* (Paris), January 1, 1880, 3: “Nous avons promis à nos lecteurs cette histoire. Elle vaut vraiment la peine d’être contée. Son premier chapitre remonte à 1877.”

¹⁴² Gonon, *Le fait divers criminel*, 67: “The use of the verbal drawers [i.e., verbal tenses] themselves seems codified in these types of opening and closing clauses, and. . . with the passage from the simple past to the past perfect tense when the authorities appear in the story or the chronicle. . . . we shift from a story about the crime to information about the investigation” (L’emploi des tiroirs verbaux même paraît codifié dans ces types d’amorce et de clause, et. . . avec le passage du passé simple au passé composé lorsque dans le récit ou la chronique surgissent les autorités

. . . [o]n passe de la sorte du récit du crime aux informations de l'enquête . . .").

¹⁴³ "Une Femme sciée en morceaux," *Le Petit Journal* (Paris), January 9, 1872, 3: "Le 6 février 1871, des ouvriers aperçurent dans le barrage d'une usine . . . un tronçon d'un cadavre. C'était le buste d'une femme. On voyait que la tête et les bras avaient été séparés au moyen d'une scie."

¹⁴⁴ "Une Femme sciée en morceaux," 3: "On a cherché l'origine de cette fable, on n'a pu la découvrir."

¹⁴⁵ "Le Parricide," *Le Petit Journal* (Paris), January 6, 1868, 4: "Il y a dans cette histoire un personnage secondaire, Bertrand, que nous avons laissé de côté depuis quelques temps."

¹⁴⁶ "Le crime de la rue de Chazelles," *Le Petit Journal* (Paris), February 10, 1880, 2: "Mais il n'a pas été difficile de reconstituer le drama."

¹⁴⁷ "Assassinat. Aliénation Mentale," *Le Petit Journal* (Paris), February 6, 1863, 2.

¹⁴⁸ "Gran asalto: 18 personas robadas," *El Chileno* (Santiago de Chile), December 24, 1889, 1: "Los salteadores se presentan en los alrededores de nuestra ciudad en escuadrones armados i con fuerza suficiente para apoderarse del dinero ganado honradamente por 100 o mas individuos. I la policía ni sospecha la existencia de tal amenaza ni tiene medios para perseguir despues a los delincuentes! Se destinan millones de millones para cárceles palacios, pero los criminales viven al aire libre i disponen así antojo de la vida i ganancias del pobre jornalero de Santiago. Todo esto es horrible i absurdo" (all *sic*: original text in older Spanish; hence, spelling differs from modern Spanish).

¹⁴⁹ *El crimen de Talca*, 90: "La Lei en su edición de ayer, inserta la estupenda y sensacional noticia de la evasión del procesado, don Ismael Vergara. Semejante canard esparcido con toda malicia i con la más censurable lijereza, tiende a mantener una escitacion artificial í odiosa para un procesado que cualquiera que sea su responsabilidad como delincuente, tiene por su misma situación mas derechos que otros al respeto i consideración que inspira la desgracia en todo corazón bien puesto."

¹⁵⁰ "Le Parricide," *Le Petit Journal* (Paris), January 7, 1868, 4: "On monta un plateau, et, sur le coin d'une table dont le bois était rougi de sang, l'assassin de Formage prit un potage!"

¹⁵¹ "Un drame de famille," *Le Petit Journal* (Paris), January 2, 1880, 4: "Maurice Bichon était un misérable, jaloux, paresseux, ivrogne et d'un caractère des plus violents. Pendant quinze jours il a maltraité sa famille et surtout sa malheureuse femme, qui jouit, elle, de l'estime générale. Depuis quatre ou cinq ans il avait quitté le pays, abandonné sa famille, travaillant cependant dans l'arrondissement, et ne reparaisant de temps à autre dans Avesnes-lez-Aubert (Nord) que pour se livrer à ses habitudes d'ivrognerie et à des tentatives d'assassinat sur sa femme, à laquelle, à plusieurs reprises, il a porté des coups de couteau."

¹⁵² "Le Duel," *Le Petit Journal* (Paris), January 4, 1880, 1.

¹⁵³ "Exécution de Prévost," *Le Petit Journal* (Paris), January 21, 1880, 2.

¹⁵⁴ "La mort de Rollin," *Le Petit Journal* (Paris), February 2, 1880, 3.

¹⁵⁵ *El crimen de Talca*, 22: “. . . quisiéramos siquiera que nuestra sociedad sacara las lecciones provechosas que se desprenden de este acontecimiento que por la fuerza de las cosas ha tenido que ver inevitablemente la luz pública.”

¹⁵⁶ *El crimen Undurraga. Asesinato de la señora Teresa Sañartu Vicuña*, 24: “Hai sucesos cuya coincidencia parece preparada por una mano sabia i providente para conducir a las sociedades en medio de las cuales se desarrollan, a enseñanzas i reflexiones morales de esas que de cuando en cuando nos obligan a detenernos para contemplar el fondo de la conciencia social.”

¹⁵⁷ See Kalifa, “Les tâcherons de l’information,” 578–603.

¹⁵⁸ *El crimen Undurraga. Asesinato de la señora Teresa Sañartu Vicuña*, 69: “El autor del crimen era un caballero; i en esos mismos días, por singular coincidencia, se debía fusilar en la cárcel-penitenciaria a un humilde roto que un año antes había asesinado a su esposa.

“Esta coincidencia dio oríjen a comparaciones i en el ambiente popular se notó una especie de cruel satisfacción.

“¡Por fin un caballero iba a ser carne de patíbulo!

“¡Por fin se dejaría establecido el precedente de que en Chile la lei era igual para todos!”

¹⁵⁹ Queffélec, *Le Roman-feuilleton français*, 68–69.

¹⁶⁰ “Inaudita impavidez,” *La República* (Santiago de Chile), April 8, 1867, 2.

¹⁶¹ “Siguen los robos,” *La República* (Santiago de Chile), April 9, 1867, 3 (italics added): “[la ladrona] mientras tanto se hallaba de atalaya a alguna distancia del lugar del golpe de mano, por si divisaba a la distancia a aris arisc [sic] de policía, cosa que, como se figurará el lector, no aconteció.”

¹⁶² “Horrible hallazgo,” *La República* (Santiago de Chile), April 17, 1867, 2: “Leídas las líneas anteriores, a cualquiera se le ocurrirá preguntar, ¡i la policía!”

¹⁶³ “Robo,” *La República* (Santiago de Chile), May 14, 1867, 2: “Recomendamos a la policía actividad.”

¹⁶⁴ Silva Vildósola, *Medio siglo de periodismo*, 129 (cf. 45): “al mismo tiempo se hizo una adaptación seria, metódica a las peculiaridades del país.” See also, Silva Vildósola, *Retratos y recuerdos*, where he describes how, by 1900, both *El Mercurio* and *El Ferrocarril* began turning away from emulating the French press, which its editors had greatly once admired, because they no longer valued the French press’s sense of morality (“pero no estimaba mucho su moralidad”), 72. One of the reasons for this slighting of the French press can be found in the opinion of Alberto Blest Gana—a well-known Chilean writer and diplomat—on the French press, as Silva Vildósola notes in *Medio siglo de periodismo*: “He [Blest Gana] recognized its [the French newspapers’] wit, vivacity, and the existence of certain brilliant writers, but he did not admire its lack of morality” (“Le reconocía ingenio, vivacidad, celebraba ciertas personalidades de escritores brillantes, pero no estimaba mucho su moralidad”), 72.

¹⁶⁵ Subercaseaux, *Historia de libro en Chile*, 110–25.

¹⁶⁶ As to the possible continuation of this project, future researchers would be advised to 1) widen the corpus to be studied, with the purpose of further strength-

ening the current examples and determining fixed levels of influence; 2) continue investigating the crossroads between the social scientific and literary discourses applied to crime stories, as a new way to analyze the “aesthetics” of social scientific studies, especially in the field of criminology; and 3) deepen the links between the changes in urban life and the proliferation of crime stories in the local press.

Bibliography

- Almanaque Enciclopédico Pintoresco para el año 1860*. Valparaíso: Santos Tornero y Compañía, 1860.
- Alvarado Cornejo, Marina. “La sección folletín de la prensa chilena desde 1842 a 1900.” *Anales de Literatura Chilena* 19, no. 30 (December 2018): 53–71.
- Arcos, Carol. “Novelas-folletín y la autoría femenina en la segunda mitad del siglo XIX en Chile.” *Revista Chilena de Literatura* 76 (April 2010): 27–42.
- Asesinato de Pancul, El. Datos referentes a este suceso. El*. Santiago de Chile: Imprenta de la Libertad Electoral, 1890.
- Audouin, Corinne. “La chronique judiciaire ou le leurre de l’objectivité.” In *Chronique judiciaire et fictionnalisation du procès. Discours, récits et représentations*. Coordinated by Émeline Jouve and Lionel Miniato, 65–76. Paris: Éditions mare & martin, 2017.
- Barthes, Roland. “Structure du fait divers.” In *Œuvres complètes*. Vol. 2, 442–51. Paris: Seuil, 2002.
- Bernedo Pinto, Patricio, and Eduardo Arriagada Cardini. “Los inicios de *El Mercurio* de Santiago. En el epistolario de Agustín Edwards Mac Clure (1899–1905).” *Historia* (Santiago de Chile) 35 (2002): 13–33.
- Bernal, Sebastià, and Albert Chillón. *Periodismo informativo de creación*. Barcelona: Editorial Maitre, 1985.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. *Las reglas del arte. Génesis y estructura del campo literario*. Trad. Thomas Kauf. 4th ed. Barcelona: Anagrama, 2005.
- Brunner, José Joaquín, and Gonzalo Catalán. *Cinco estudios sobre cultura y sociedad*. Santiago de Chile: FLACSO, 1985.
- Cánepa, Gina. “Folletines históricos del Chile independiente y su articulación con la novela naturalista.” *Revista de Crítica Literaria Latinoamericana* 15, no. 30 (1989): 249–58.
- Cárdenas Moreno, Mónica. “Mercedes Cabello de Carbonera en *El Correo de París*: Lima en la prensa internacional decimonónica.” *Polygraphiques*, no. 10 (2019). Accessed November 11, 2020. <http://publis-shs.univ-rouen.fr/eriac/index.php?id=399>.
- Castro Valdebenito, Hugo. “Criminalización y castigo en la formación del Estado-Nación: la prensa chilena durante la reforma al sistema de prisiones (1832 y 1850).” *Revista Urutáguá*, no. 37 (December 2017–May 2018): 94–114.
- Chabrier, Amélie. “*Le Procès des Thugs*: Cas unique de roman du prétoire en France au XIX^e siècle?” In *Chronique judiciaire et fictionnalisation du procès. Discours, récits et représentations*. Coordinated by Émeline Jouve et Lionel Miniato, 83–96. Paris: Éditions mare & martin, 2017.

- Chartier, Roger. "Aprender a leer, leer para aprender." *La lectura en España*. Informe 2008: leer para aprender. Coordinated by José Antonio Millán, 23–39. Madrid: Fundación Germán Sánchez Ruipérez, 2008.
- . *El presente del pasado. Escritura de la historia, historia de lo escrito*. Ciudad de México: Universidad Iberoamericana, 2005. Accessed January 15, 2021. <https://www.uv.mx/tipmal/files/2016/10/R-CHARTIER-EL-PRESENTE-DEL-PASADO.-ESCRITURA-DE-LA-HISTORIA-HISTORIA-DE-LO-ESCRITO.pdf>.
- Chillón, Albert. *Literatura y periodismo. Una tradición de relaciones promiscuas*. Bellaterra: Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona/Universitat Jaume I/Universitat de València, 1999. See esp. chap. 14, "El estudio de las relaciones entre periodismo y literatura por medio del comparatismo periodístico-literario."
- . *La palabra facticia. Literatura, periodismo y comunicación*. Barcelona: Aldea Global, 2014. See esp. introduction.
- Cochinat, Victor. "Le Parricide." *Le Petit Journal* (Paris), December 2, 7–15, 17–19, 24, 31, 1867; January 1–2, 4–9, 12, 14–16, 18–19, 25, 1868.
- Cooper-Richet, Diana. "Aux marges de l'histoire de la presse nationale: les périodiques en langue étrangère publiés en France (XIX^e–XX^e siècles)." *Le Temps des médias* 1, no. 16 (Spring 2011): 175–87. Accessed March 9, 2021. <https://www.cairn.info/revue-le-temps-des-medias-2011-1-page-175.htm>.
- Cordell, Ryan. "Reprinting, Circulation, and the Network Author in Antebellum Newspapers." *American Literary History* 27, no. 3 (Fall 2015): 417–45.
- Cornejo, Tomás. *Ciudades de voces impresas. Historia cultural de Santiago de Chile, 1880–1910*. Santiago de Chile: Colmex/Centro de Investigaciones Diego Barros Arana, 2019.
- Cragin, Thomas. *Murder in Parisian Streets: Manufacturing Crime and Justice in the Popular Press, 1830–1900*. Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2006.
- Crimen de Talca. Parricidio de don José Isidoro Vergara, El*. Talca: Establecimientos Tipográficos de Braulio Rojas, 1894.
- Crimen Undurraga. Asesinato de la señora Teresa Sañartu Vicuña. Todos los pormenores. Relación de la prensa, El*. Antofagasta: Imprenta Mandiola i Castillo, 1905.
- Crimen Undurraga. Dos cartas y dos vistas fiscales, El*. Santiago de Chile: Imprenta de Enrique Blanchard-Chessi, 1905.
- de Lamartin, Alphonse. "Proceso y muerte del mariscal Ney." *El Mensajero* (Valparaíso), February 21–June 6, 1846.
- Delaporte, Christian. *Les journalistes en France (1880–1950): Naissance et construction d'une profession*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1999.
- de Pont-Jest, René. *Le Procès des Thugs*. Paris: Victor Bunel, 1877.
- Desrez, Augusto. "Lectura Instructiva. Sobre la educación." *Journal des connaissances utiles* (Paris). January 31, 1844.
- Dickens, Charles. "Une assurance sur la vie." *Le Petit Journal* (Paris), February 1, 1863, 1.
- Dumas, Alexandre. "El caballero de Casa Roja." *El Timón* (Santiago de Chile), July 25–September 6, 1849.

- . “Pauline.” *Le Petit Journal* (Paris), August 28–September 14, 1866, 1, 2.
- Edwards, Agustín. *Elogio de don Eliodoro Yáñez y bosquejo panorámico de la prensa chilena*. Santiago de Chile: Universitaria, 1933.
- Edwards Bello, Joaquín. “El crimen del San Cristóbal.” In *Crónicas reunidas I (1921–1925)*, 58–62. Santiago de Chile: Ediciones Universidad Diego Portales, 2008.
- El asesinato de Pancul*. See *Asesinato de Pancul, El*.
- El crimen de Talca*. See *Crimen de Talca. Parricidio de don José Isidoro Vergara, El*.
- El crimen Undurraga. Asesinato de la señora Teresa Sañartu Vicuña*. See *Crimen Undurraga. Asesinato de la señora Teresa Sañartu Vicuña, El*.
- El crimen Undurraga. Dos cartas y dos vistas fiscales*. See *Crimen Undurraga. Dos cartas y dos vistas fiscales, El*.
- Fernández Domingo, Enrique. “La emigración francesa en Chile, 1875–1914: entre integración social y mantenimiento de la especificidad.” *Amérique Latine Histoire et Mémoire. Les Cahiers ALHIM*, no. 12 (2006). Accessed July 6, 2020. <http://journals.openedition.org/alhim/1252>.
- Gaboriau, Émile. *L’Affaire Lerouge*. Paris: Émile Dentu, 1867.
- Galgani Muñoz, Jaime. “Paseo escritural de Augusto d’Halmar durante la Primera Guerra Mundial en París.” *Literatura y Lingüística* 38 (2018): 77–101.
- Garnier, Édouard. *Les nains et les géants*. Paris: Hachette, “Bibliothèque des Merveilles,” 1884.
- Garrels, Elizabeth. “El ‘Facundo’ como folletín.” *Revista Iberoamericana* 54, no. 143 (1988): 419–47.
- Gonon, Laetitia. *Le fait divers criminel dans la presse quotidienne française du XIX^e siècle*. Paris: Presses Sorbonne Nouvelle, 2012.
- González, Marcial. “Un homicida.” *La Semana* (Santiago de Chile), vol. 7, July 2, 1859, 99–102; vol. 8, July 9, 1859, 120–22; vol. 9, July 16, 1859, 138–41; vol. 11, July 30, 1859, 166–69; vol. 12, August 6, 1859, 185–88.
- Gramfort, Véronique. “Les crimes de Pantin: quand Troppmann défrayait la chronique.” *Romantisme*, 97 (1997): 17–30.
- Hugo, Victor. “El rey se divierte.” *El Progreso* (Santiago de Chile), November 10, 1842–March 12, 1853.
- Ibarra Cifuentes, Patricio. “Liberalismo y prensa: Leyes de imprenta en el Chile decimonónico (1812–1872).” *Revista de estudios histórico-jurídicos*, no. 36 (2014): 293–313.
- Jocelyn-Holt, Alfredo. “La idea de nación en el pensamiento liberal chileno del siglo XIX.” *Opciones* 9 (1986): 67–88.
- Kalifa, Dominique. *L’encre et le sang : récits de crimes et société à la Belle Époque*. Paris: Fayard, 1995.
- . “Les tâcherons de l’information: petits reporters et faits divers à la ‘Belle Époque’.” *Revue d’histoire moderne et contemporaine* 40, no. 4 (October–December 1993): 578–603.
- Kramer, Mark. “Breakable Rules for Literary Journalists.” In *Literary Journalism: A New Collection of the Best American Nonfiction*, edited by Norman Sims and

- Mark Kramer, 21–34. New York: Ballantine, 1995.
- Labarca, Amanda H. *Historia de la enseñanza en Chile*. Santiago de Chile: Imprenta Universitaria, 1939.
- Latcham, Ricardo. “La historia del criollismo.” In *El criollismo*, 7–55. Santiago de Chile: Universitaria, 1956.
- León León, Marco Antonio. “Por una ‘necesidad de preservación social’: Cesare Lombroso y la construcción de un ‘homo criminalis’ en Chile (1880–1920).” *Cuadernos de Historia* 40 (2014): 31–59.
- Mahieux, Viviane. “Vers une pratique accessible: la chronique latinoaméricaine pendant les avant-gardes.” *Amérique*, no. 48: “La chronique en Amérique latine XIX^e–XXI^e siècles” (2016). Accessed January 7, 2020. <http://journals.openedition.org/america/1487>.
- Merino, Roberto. *Prólogo to Crónicas reunidas I. 1921–1925*, 7–13. Santiago de Chile: Ediciones de la Universidad Diego Portales, 2008.
- Montenegro, Ernesto. “Aspectos del criollismo en América.” In *El criollismo*, 57–95. Santiago de Chile: Universitaria, 1956.
- Oscarsson, Ingemar. “Le feuilleton dans la presse française (1790–début du 19^e siècle): du supplément indépendant au rez-de-chaussée sous le filet.” In “L’Europe des Lumières.” Special issue, *Dix-huitième Siècle*, 25 (1993): 433–56. <https://doi.org/10.3406/dhs.1993.1941>.
- Ossandón B., Carlos. *El crepúsculo de los sabios y la irrupción de los publicistas. Prensa y espacio público en Chile (siglo XIX)*. Santiago de Chile: Lom ediciones, 1998.
- Ossandón B., Carlos, and Eduardo Santa Cruz A. *El estallido de las formas: Chile en los albores de “la cultura de masas.”* Santiago de Chile: Lom ediciones, 2005.
- Pas, Hernán. “La educación por el folletín: prácticas de lectura y escritura en la prensa latinoamericana del siglo XIX.” *Cuadernos Americanos* 151, no. 1 (2015): 37–61.
- Perrot, Michelle. “L’affaire Troppmann (1869).” *L’Histoire*, 30 (January 1981): 28–37.
- Pierrat, Emmanuel. “L’affaire Troppmann ou l’invention du fait divers.” *Chronique judiciaire et fictionnalisation du procès. Discours, récits et représentations*. Coordinated by Émeline Jouve et Lionel Miniato, 27–34. Paris: Éditions mare & martin, 2017.
- Pinto Rodríguez, Jorge. “Proyectos de la elite chilena del siglo XIX (I).” *Alpha: Revista de Artes, Letras y Filosofía*, no. 26 (July 2008): 167–89. <http://alpha.ulagos.cl>.
- . “Proyectos de la elite chilena del siglo XIX (II).” *Alpha: Revista de Artes, Letras y Filosofía*, no. 27 (December 2008): 123–45. <http://alpha.ulagos.cl>.
- Poblete Alday, Patricia. “Crónica hispanoamericana actual.” In *Diccionario de teorías narrativas 2. Narratología, cine. Videojuego, medios*, edited by Lorenzo Vilches, 228–38. Barcelona: Caligrama, 2021.
- . “Crónica narrativa contemporánea: Enfoques, deslindes y desafíos metodológicos.” *Literatura Mexicana* 31, no. 1 (2020): 133–53.

- . “Crónica narrativa contemporánea: Límites y abismos.” *Hispanérica* 47, no. 140 (2018): 37–45.
- . “Monstruos posmodernos: Figuras de la inmigración en el México contemporáneo.” *Chasqui: Revista de Literatura Latinoamericana* 47, no. 1 (2018): 249–58.
- Queffélec, Lise. *Le Roman-feuilleton français au XIX^e siècle*. Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1989.
- Ramos, Julio. *Desencuentros de la modernidad en América Latina. Literatura y política en el siglo XIX*. Santiago de Chile: Cuarto Propio/Callejón, 2003.
- Rojas Flores, Jorge. *Los suplementeros: los niños y la venta de diarios. Chile, 1880–1953*. Santiago de Chile: Ariadna Ediciones, 2006.
- Romero, Luis Alberto. *¿Qué hacer con los pobres? Elite y sectores populares en Santiago de Chile, 1840–1895*. Santiago de Chile: Sudamericana, 1997.
- Sand, George. “León Leoni.” *El Siglo* (Santiago de Chile), April 5, 1844–July 5, 1845.
- Sanhueza, Marcelo. “El viaje a París de Domingo Faustino Sarmiento y Benjamín Vicuña Mackenna: modernidad y experiencia urbana de dos flâneurs hispanoamericanos.” *Universum* 28, no. 1 (2013): 203–29.
- Santa Cruz, Eduardo A. *La prensa chilena en el siglo XIX. Patricios, letrados, burgueses y plebeyos*. Santiago de Chile: Universitaria, 2011.
- . *Prensa y sociedad en Chile. Siglo XX*. Santiago de Chile: Universitaria, 2014.
- Silva Castro, Raúl. *Prensa y periodismo en Chile (1812–1956)*. Santiago de Chile: Ediciones de la Universidad de Chile, 1958.
- Silva Vildósola, Carlos. *Retratos y recuerdos*. Santiago de Chile: Zig-Zag, 1936.
- . *Medio siglo de periodismo*. Santiago de Chile: Zig-Zag, 1938.
- Sims, Norman. *True Stories: A Century of Literary Journalism*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2007. See esp. preface.
- Subercaseaux, Bernardo. *Historia de libro en Chile (alma y cuerpo)*. 2nd. ed. Santiago de Chile: Lom ediciones, 2000.
- Sue, Eugène. “El castillo del diablo o el aventurero.” *La Tribuna* (Santiago de Chile), May 1, 1849–September 13, 1851.
- Sunkel, Guillermo. *Razón y pasión en la prensa popular. Un estudio sobre cultura popular, cultura de masas y cultura política*. Santiago de Chile: Instituto Latinoamericano de Estudios transnacionales, 1985.
- Thérenty, Marie-Ève. *La littérature au quotidien. Poétiques journalistiques au XIX^e siècle*. Paris: Seuil, 2007.
- . “Pour une histoire littéraire de la presse au XIX^e siècle.” *Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France* 103, no. 3 (July–September 2003): 625–35.
- Thérenty, Marie-Ève, and Allain Vaillant. *1836 : L'An 1 de l'ère médiatique. Analyse littéraire et historique de La Presse de Girardin*. Paris: Nouveau Monde, 2001.
- , eds. *Presse, nations et mondialisation au XIX^e siècle*. Paris: Nouveau Monde Éditions, 2010.
- , eds. *Presses et plumes. Journalisme et littérature au XIX^e siècle*. Paris: Nouveau Monde Éditions, 2004. See esp. “La presse au miroir de la littérature.”

- Tilleuil, Jean-Louis. "Enquête sociocritique sur *L'Affaire Lerouge* (1866), d'Émile Gaboriau." *Romantisme*, 127 (2005): 105–23.
- Urbistondo, Vicente. *El naturalismo en la novela chilena*. Santiago de Chile: Andrés Bello, 1966.
- Valdebenito, Alfonso. *Historia del periodismo chileno (1812–1955)*. 2nd. ed. Santiago de Chile, 1956.
- Vega, Manuel. "En torno al criollismo." In *El criollismo*, 97–125. Santiago de Chile: Universitaria, 1956.
- Wolfe, Tom. *The New Journalism, with an Anthology*, edited by Tom Wolfe and E. W. Johnson. New York: Harper and Row, 1973. See esp. Part 1, The New Journalism.
- . *El nuevo periodismo*. Trans. José Luis Guarnier. Barcelona: Anagrama, 1976.
- Zola, Émile. *El naturalismo*. Trans. Jaume Fuste. Barcelona: Península, 1972.
- . Preface to *Thérèse Raquin*. 2nd ed., i–ix. Paris: Librairie Internationale, 1868.
- . *Le roman expérimental*. Paris: G. Charpentier, 1880.

Periodicals and Newspapers

Chile

- El Chileno* (Santiago de Chile, f. 1883). January 1884 to September 1891.
- El Chileno* (Santiago de Chile). "Asesinato." June 5, 1890, 2.
- El Chileno* (Santiago de Chile). "Crímen." November 27, 1889, 2.
- El Chileno* (Santiago de Chile). "Gran asalto: 18 personas robadas." December 24, 1889, 1.
- El Chileno* (Santiago de Chile). "Horroroso crimen." October 10, 1890, 2.
- El Chileno* (Santiago de Chile). "Una última versión del crimen Breddin-Hoffmann." October 31, 1890, 2–3.
- El Constitucional* (Santiago de Chile).
- El Ferrocarril* (Santiago de Chile). 1855–1910.
- El Ferrocarril* (Santiago de Chile). "Muerte horrorosa de un enano." September 23, 1882, 2.
- El Imparcial* (Santiago de Chile).
- El Mensajero* (Valparaíso). "Proceso y muerte del mariscal Ney." February 21–June 6, 1846. (de Lamartin, Alphonse).
- El Mercurio de Valparaíso* (Valparaíso, f. 1827). October 1865–August 1868.
- El Mercurio de Valparaíso* (Valparaíso). "Herido." August 1, 1868, 3.
- El Mercurio de Valparaíso* (Valparaíso). "Muerte repentina." June 6, 1868, 3.
- El Progreso* (Santiago de Chile). "El rey se divierte." November 10, 1842–March 12, 1853. (Hugo, Victor).
- El Progreso* (Santiago de Chile). "Lectura Instructiva. De la infancia de la educación actual de las mujeres." February 21, 1843. (Aimé Martín).
- El Siglo* (Santiago de Chile). "León Leoni." April 5, 1844–July 5, 1845. (Sand, George).

- El Timón* (Santiago de Chile). “El caballero de Casa Roja.” July 25–September 6, 1849. (Dumas, Alexandre).
- La Lei* (Santiago de Chile).
- La Libertad* (Talca). 1866–1871.
- La República* (Santiago de Chile, f. 1866). April 1867 to April 1876.
- La República* (Santiago de Chile). “El asesino de Pantin. Los últimos incidentes del drama.” February 23, 1870, 1–2.
- La República* (Santiago de Chile). “Revista de París.” October 20, 1866, 2; November 10, 1886, 2.
- La República* (Santiago de Chile). “Horrible hallazgo.” April 17, 1867, 2.
- La República* (Santiago de Chile). “Inaudita impavidez.” April 8, 1867, 2.
- La República* (Santiago de Chile). “Los dramas judiciales. El crimen de Pantin. — Acta de acusación contra Troppman.” February 17, 1870, 1, 2.
- La República* (Santiago de Chile). “Robo.” May 14, 1867, 2.
- La República* (Santiago de Chile). “Salteo.” December 9, 1870, 3; April 18, 1876, 3–4.
- La República* (Santiago de Chile). “Siguen los robos.” April 9, 1867, 3.
- La República* (Santiago de Chile). “Suicide.” February 23, 1871, 2.
- La Semana* (Santiago de Chile). July 2, 1859–August 6, 1860.
- La Semana* (Santiago de Chile). “Un homicida” (A murderer), vol. 7, July 2, 1859, 99–102; vol. 8, July 9, 1859, 120–22; vol. 9, July 16, 1859, 138–41; vol. 11, July 30, 1859, 166–69; vol. 12, August 6, 1859, 185–88. (Marcial González).
- La Tribuna* (Santiago de Chile). “El castillo del diablo o el aventurero.” May 1, 1849–September 13, 1851. (Sue, Eugène).
- La voz libre* (Temuco).
- Últimas Noticias* (Santiago de Chile).

France

- Journal des connaissances utiles* (Paris). “Lectura Instructiva. Sobre la educación.” January 31, 1844. (Desrez, Augusto).
- Journal des débats politiques et littéraires* (Paris). “Nouvelles Diverses.” July 31, 1882, 2.
- La Charente* (Angoulême). “Chronique Départementale.” August 10, 1882, 3.
- La Lanterne* (Paris). “Le Dompteur nain” (The dwarf lion tamer). July 27, 1882, 3.
- La Nouvelle Revue* (Paris).
- La Petite Presse* (Paris). “Paris au Jour le Jour.” August 4, 1882, 2.
- Le Correspondant* (Paris).
- L'Économiste français* (Paris).
- Le Gaulois* (Paris). “Télégrammes & Correspondances.” August 12, 1882, 4.
- Le Petit Journal* (Paris). January 1863–January 1880.
- Le Petit Journal* (Paris). “Assassinat. Aliénation Mentale.” February 6, 1863, 2–4.
- Le Petit Journal* (Paris). “Départements.” February 19, 1880, 3.
- Le Petit Journal* (Paris). “Exécution de Prévost.” January 21, 1880, 2.
- Le Petit Journal* (Paris). “La mort de Rollin.” February 2, 1880, 3.

- Le Petit Journal* (Paris). "L'assassin Couvelaere." February 26, 1880, 3.
- Le Petit Journal* (Paris). "Le crime de la rue de Chazelles." February 10–11, 14–16, 18–21, 1880, through to March 1, 13, 1880, 2, 3.
- Le Petit Journal* (Paris). "Le Duel." January 4, 1880, 1.
- Le Petit Journal* (Paris). "Le Parricide." December 2, 7–15, 17–19, 24, 31, 1867; January 1–2, 4–9, 12, 14–16, 18–19, 25, 1868, 2, 3, 4. (Cochinat, Victor).
- Le Petit Journal* (Paris). "Le procès des thugs." August 28, 1866, 3, 4.
- Le Petit Journal* (Paris). "Le testament d'un bandit." September 15, 1866. (de San-say, Turpin).
- Le Petit Journal* (Paris). "Pauline." August 28–September 14, 1866, 1, 2. (Dumas, Alexandre).
- Le Petit Journal* (Paris). (Troppmann affair). August and September 1869.
- Le Petit Journal* (Paris). "Un drame de famille." January 2, 1880, 4.
- Le Petit Journal* (Paris). "Un cadavre vivant." January 1, 1880, 3.
- Le Petit Journal* (Paris). "Une assurance sur la vie." February 1, 1863, 1. (Dickens, Charles).
- Le Petit Journal* (Paris). "Une Femme sciée en morceaux." January 9, 1872, 3–4.
- Le Rappel* (Paris). "Faits Divers." August 3, 1882, 4.
- Le Voleur* (Paris). "Drames et Catastrophes." August 11, 1882, 509.

United States

- Charleston* (South Carolina) *Daily News*. "The Great Paris Murder." October 15, 1869, 1.
- Chicago* (Illinois) *Tribune*. April 19, 1870.
- Columbian* (Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania). March 11, 1870.
- Courrier des Opelousas* (Opelousas, Louisiana). January 22, 1870.
- Evening Star* (Washington, D.C.). November 26, 1869.
- Evening Telegraph* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania). May 31, 1870.
- Le Louisianais* (Convent, Louisiana). December 3, 1870; January 15, 1870.
- Mineral Point Tribune* (Mineral Point, Wisconsin). February 24, 1870.
- Mower County Transcript* (Lansing, Minnesota). December 30, 1869.
- New York Times* (New York City). "France; Confession of a Communist and Accomplice of Troppmann in the Murder of a Family." October 18, 1869.



Top: Gloria Steinem, Concert Building, Amsterdam, January 24, 1973, Wikimedia Commons.

Right: Image of Gail Sheehy by Bernard Gotfryd, October 16, 1981, New York City. Wikimedia Commons.



“Every Year There’s a Pretty Girl Who Comes to New York and Pretends to Be a Writer”: Gender, the New Journalism, and the Early Careers of Gloria Steinem and Gail Sheehy

Lisa Phillips

State University of New York, New Paltz, United States

Abstract: The core works that critics, scholars, and readers associate with the New Journalism are largely written by men, with subject matter that often privileges male sources and perspectives. Yet several women writers consciously embraced the reporting methods, style, subjectivity, narrative structure, and subject matter of the New Journalism, achieving levels of commercial success comparable to their male colleagues'. Despite these accomplishments, the legacy of female New Journalists remains tenuous, with Joan Didion being the only woman consistently seen as part of the core canon of New Journalism writers. Several others occupy a far less certain position. This analysis will address this question by looking at the process by which the accomplishments, writing style, and reportorial methods of two women journalists, Gloria Steinem and Gail Sheehy, connect them to the New Journalism, and the social and cultural forces that shaped their professional reputations and legacies. Both women were enormously successful writers who embraced the aesthetic liberties and goals of the New Journalism and found opportunity within the movement. Yet accounts of their early careers suggest that as women they were not free of gendered influences, which would affect not only the journalism they produced, but also how they and their work were perceived by audiences, the media world, and history. These hindrances have had a substantial impact on scholarly and popular understanding of the New Journalism and its legacy.

Keywords: New Journalism – women – gendered influences – Gloria Steinem – Gail Sheehy

The New Journalism has a woman problem. The core works that critics, scholars, and readers associate with the phenomenon are largely written by men, with subject matter—cars, wars, politics, motorcycle gangs—that often privileges male sources and perspectives. The cultural upheaval in the United States in the 1960s was slow to benefit female journalists, who were often limited to jobs writing for women’s sections in newspapers and women’s magazines or told they could not be hired for gender-related reasons, such as the possibility that they would have a baby. Some scholars have surmised that women were excluded from the “freedom and sense of literary experimentation”¹ of the New Journalism as the literary movement took hold in the United States in the 1960s and 1970s—combining the techniques of fiction writing with immersive reporting to push the boundaries of traditional journalism. Others call for scrutiny of the extent to which publications associated with the New Journalism gave women writers lesser assignments.² In fact, a number of female writers consciously embraced the reporting methods, style, subjectivity, narrative structure, and subject matter of the New Journalism, with several achieving levels of commercial success comparable to their male colleagues’. Despite these accomplishments, the legacy of female New Journalists remains tenuous. Joan Didion is the only woman who is consistently seen as part of the core canon of New Journalism writers. Several others occupy a far less certain position, at times allowed into the boys’ club of an anthology or discussed in New Journalism criticism and historical accounts, yet not definitively part of the core squad. Given the New Journalism’s powerful influence on literary journalism and place in U.S. and international cultural history, it is crucial to examine why female writers have largely remained on the margins.

What accounts for women’s tenuous foothold in the New Journalism? This analysis will address this question by examining the work and lives of two female journalists: Gloria Steinem (b. 1934)³ and Gail Sheehy (1936–2020).⁴ Their early career accomplishments, writing styles, and reportorial methods brought them into the New Journalism movement, yet gendered social and cultural forces kept them out of its core. Steinem produced groundbreaking journalism on the working conditions of servers at New York’s Playboy Club. The reporting made her famous, yet also confined her to a misogynistic pigeonhole that for years stymied her journalism career. Sheehy built a high-visibility career as a New Journalist, yet her reputation was shadowed by a widely misunderstood fabrication scandal that made her, in the eyes of critics, the ruinous Eve in the era’s idyllic garden of innovative immersion reporting. The place of Steinem and Sheehy in the history of the New Journalism is important to examine because both women were enormously successful writers who

embraced the movement's aesthetic liberties and goals and found opportunity within it. Yet as women they were not free of gendered influences, which would affect not only the journalism they produced, but also how they and their work were perceived by audiences, the media world, and history. These hindrances have a substantial impact on contemporary understanding of the New Journalism, its legacy, and its capacity to depict the social tumult of the 1960s and '70s. Moreover, the impact of those impediments is far reaching, affecting the teaching and study of literary journalism today.

Women and the New Journalism Canon

In 1964, Gloria Steinem shared a cab with novelist Saul Bellow and New Journalist Gay Talese on the way to a campaign appearance by Robert F. Kennedy, who was running for the U.S. Senate. Talese leaned across Steinem and said to Bellow, "*You know how every year there's a pretty girl who comes to New York and pretends to be a writer? Well, Gloria is this year's pretty girl.*"⁵ The moment, described in Steinem's *My Life on the Road* and depicted in Julie Taymor's 2020 biopic, *The Glorias*, gives a glimpse of the ironies of being a woman in the New Journalism era. A woman could share the same cramped space as male writers to cover the same material. But in doing so, she might end up sexualized and undermined by the assumption of lesser, ephemeral talent. Astonishingly, nearly fifty years later, Gay Talese would, at a writers' conference in Boston, stammer in response to the question of which women writers of his day inspired him the most, only to reply: "of my generation . . . um, none."⁶

Though Talese might be exceptional in his obliviousness, the role of women in the New Journalism has been dimmed from the outset. Tom Wolfe and E. W. Johnson's seminal *The New Journalism*, includes only two women, Joan Didion and Barbara Goldsmith, out of twenty-three writers.⁷ Jan Whitt argues this has led to a lasting impression of literary journalism as a largely male phenomenon.⁸ John Pauly asserts that scholars have settled on a core group of eleven authors who published work between 1960 and 1980: Norman Mailer, Gay Talese, Tom Wolfe, Jimmy Breslin, Truman Capote, Hunter S. Thompson, John Gregory Dunne, Joan Didion, George Goodman, Michael Herr, and John Sack.⁹ Norman Sims credits a smaller group of seven: Mailer, Talese, Wolfe, Capote, Thompson, Didion, and Herr.¹⁰ Both allow for additional women writers who were "associated with" the New Journalism because they wrote for publications considered central to it, including Steinem, Sheehy, Nora Ephron, Jane O'Reilly, Barbara Goldsmith, and Sara Davidson.¹¹ Whitt and John Hartsock have paid substantial critical attention to Davidson's contributions to the New Journalism.¹² In *The Gang That Wouldn't*

Write Straight, a popular history of New Journalism, Weingarten identifies Wolfe, Breslin, Talese, Thompson, Didion, Herr, and Sack as central,¹³ while also discussing Sheehy and Steinem's more peripheral, yet still important, roles in the rise of *New York* magazine, one of the seminal magazines of the movement.¹⁴ Didion is often the only female writer who is both associated with the New Journalism and included in anthologies, collections, and scholarly overviews of literary journalism.¹⁵ Though an investigation of the reasons lies beyond the scope of this analysis, Didion's work is without question quite different from both Steinem and Sheehy's, its power residing more in Didion's singular voice than in immersive reporting.¹⁶ These distinctions, though, exist comfortably among the male writers of the New Journalism: Thompson, for example, was more voice than reporter, Talese more reporter than voice. For this reason, the question of why certain female writers associated with the New Journalism era were not canonized is more urgent than distilling the exceptionalism of the one who was.

Crucial to this analysis is the understanding that the New Journalism is not only a literary genre¹⁷; it was in its time also a business move and, as Pauly puts it, "a form of cultural politics."¹⁸ Wolfe detailed the main criteria for a journalism that, as a literary genre, reads "like a novel" because it uses novelistic techniques: structuring the story scene by scene; making extensive use of dialogue; reconstructing the interior points of view of sources (which he calls "characters"); uses in-depth interviewing; and everyday "status details" to portray subjects' social reality.¹⁹ Other scholars and writers point out immersion reporting, the use of a distinctive voice, the potential use of a first-person point of view, and even a personal involvement with the subject matter as aspects of the genre.²⁰ As a business move, New Journalism's big, bold articles, portraying cultural and political upheavals that elicited a combination of intrigue and outrage, for a time boosted the magazine industry as it faced competition for advertisers from the rising medium of television.²¹ Writers benefited as groundbreaking articles often led to book deals, making freelancing financially sustainable and sometimes lucrative. As a form of cultural politics, the New Journalism sparked several controversies: Is it really "new"? How valid are its truth claims, particularly in an era when journalism placed a lot of stake in the idea of the unbiased fact? How could it establish credibility as writers overtly, and sometimes not so overtly, toyed with satire, fictionalization, interiority, composite characters, and other literary games along the border of fact and fiction? These questions prompted discussion of "what it means to be a writer and to be written about, what writers owe their subjects and readers, and by what habits society organizes its practices of public imagination."²²

Women writers participated in the aesthetic and commercial aims of the New Journalism and found themselves involved in the genre's cultural politics. They consciously embraced the art, craft, and stylistic expectations of the New Journalism. While the canon—a retrospective term—may precipitously tilt male, by the era's heyday it was not unusual for editors to actively recruit female writers, seeing them as key to audience building in a time of heightened interest in shifting gender roles and the so-called battle of the sexes.²³ Their work became central to the phenomenon's cultural politics, including the debates over objectivity and truth claims. Yet a close look at the work and lives of Steinem and Sheehy reveals that, in the hierarchy of influences, gender remained a hindrance that determined what they wrote about, their professional opportunities, critical reception of their work, and their legacy in the history of the New Journalism.

Gloria Steinem: “This Year’s Pretty Girl”

By the time Gay Talese called Gloria Steinem “this year’s pretty girl,” in 1964, six years had passed since 1958, the year she first arrived in New York seeking to become a writer. She spent the first year searching for a job. Despite her elite Smith College degree and the prestige and experience of a two-year fellowship in India, she could not find a position. After a stint at a nonprofit educational foundation in Cambridge, Massachusetts, she returned to New York City in 1962 to try again. Having in Cambridge met Harold Hayes, who was soon to become *Esquire*'s editor-in-chief, and Clay Felker, another *Esquire* editor, Steinem got an assignment to cover the contraception revolution for the magazine.²⁴ Steinem's story, “The Moral Disarmament of Betty Coed,” focused on young women grappling with the impact of contraception on sex, dating, and marriage, and was published in September 1962.²⁵ Steinem called it her “first serious assignment.” Felker quipped that Steinem caught his attention as a writer in part because she had “great legs,”²⁶ one of countless times in Steinem's career when reaction to her physical appearance would either catalyze or hinder her professional advancement.

The assignment was her first brush with the New Journalism movement then incubating at *Esquire*, the *New York Herald-Tribune*, and other publications. Henry Wolfe, an *Esquire* editor who had mentored Steinem, took a new job at *Show*, an arts and culture magazine, and Steinem started writing for it. At an editorial meeting, staff members discussed the opening of the New York Playboy Club. Steinem suggested the magazine send Lillian Ross, a writer Steinem greatly admired, to become a Playboy “Bunny”—a cocktail waitress in a revealing costume with a bunny tail and long ears—and write about it,

though Ross was too old for the idea to be practical. Male staffers suggested Steinem do it.²⁷ The result was “A Bunny’s Tale: *Show’s* First Expose for Intelligent People,” a two-part series on Steinem’s stint as an undercover Bunny, a job she landed using her grandmother’s name and social security number. Steinem had a keen eye for the ironies of Hugh Hefner’s rising empire. *Playboy* magazine had a million readers a month and an expanding franchise of Playboy clubs. The brand was enmeshed in Hefner’s philosophy, which was touted in monthly essays for his magazine, that the Playboy life fulfilled the liberating promise of the sexual revolution.²⁸ Steinem revealed that nothing could be further from the truth for a Playboy Bunny. The job entailed getting tested for venereal disease, pledging to follow restrictions on whom she could date and with whom she could be seen, wearing crippling high heels and a costume so binding it was difficult to breathe, enduring routine sexual harassment, and seeing her weekly salary chiseled away by myriad expenses, such as costume dry cleaning and false eyelashes, while the club took a mandatory percentage of the Bunnies’ tips.²⁹

“A Bunny’s Tale” might be more readily associated with the tradition of undercover muckraking journalism than New Journalism. Yet key hallmarks of the latter genre are there. The article is structured as a scene-by-scene narrative, written in first-person, diary-like entries, using an ironic, personal voice that gives the series immediacy and authenticity. Steinem notes, for instance, that one of the duties of the “Willmark men,” Playboy employees who pose as customers to catch violations of company policy, is to make sure that the Playboy theme song—“Just one more ornery critter/Who goes for the glitter”—is played “at the beginning and end of each musical show every evening. Like ‘God Save the Queen.’”³⁰ The scenes of her time on the job include deftly rendered portrayals of supervisors, co-workers, and clientele, and immersive descriptions of the hiring process, trainings, and grueling work shifts. The dialogue and status details reveal the routine degradation of the job, contrasting pointedly with the aspirational propaganda touting the glamour of the Playboy Bunny life:

A girl with jet black hair, chalky makeup and a green costume stopped at the door. “My tail droops,” she said, pushing it into position with one finger, “those damn customers always yank it.” The wardrobe mistress handed her a safety pin. “You better get a cleaner tail too, baby. You get demerits running around with a scruffy old tail like that.”³¹

“A Bunny’s Tale” clearly demonstrates what Hartsock calls the “anti-myth” intent of New Journalists, who “so often challenged nothing less than the shibboleth of the ‘American Dream.’”³² Nicolaus Mills points out that “Steinem was doing what many new journalists did in the 1960s when they

made their personal experiences central to the events they reported on. Tom Wolfe took this path in *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test*, Norman Mailer in *The Armies of the Night*, and Hunter Thompson in *Hell's Angels*.³³ Like these works, "A Bunny's Tale" caused a "What the hell?"-level stir in media circles and the public. The series led to a libel suit against Steinem, but it also created change. The Playboy Club eliminated the pre-employment physical and venereal disease testing requirement, and New York state launched an investigation of the business's liquor license.³⁴ Steinem, as her biographer Carolyn Heilbrun describes, "leapt into instant fame" with the media attention generated by the article.³⁵

Steinem's Post-"Bunny's Tale" Drought

Yet unlike Wolfe, Mailer, and others in the New Journalism canon, the unconventional style, boldness, outré subject matter, and high visibility of Steinem's "A Bunny's Tale" did not advance her journalism career. For years, she couldn't land serious journalism assignments, only offers to go undercover again as a sex object.³⁶ The constraints were so distressing that she returned a publisher's advance to turn "A Bunny's Tale" into a book, not wanting the venture to define her forever.³⁷ Most of the articles she wrote between 1963 and 1968 are lightweight and cater to the gender norms of the time, with regular bylines in *Glamour*, such as: "Funny Ways to Find a Man on the Beach," and "Who Has the Higher Morals I.Q., You or Your Mother?" Her most substantial pieces were celebrity profiles of James Baldwin, Saul Bellow, Truman Capote, and Jacqueline Kennedy.³⁸ The infamous cab ride to the Robert Kennedy appearance led to a roundup article in *Glamour* on young male politicians, the closest she could get to her ambition to cover politics and social justice.³⁹ "I wasn't allowed to write about politics or economics because that was for men—no matter how many ideas I submitted," Steinem said in a 1971 interview. "I had had more experience than men my age who were doing political work for papers. It's very rough. It's much rougher than I would have admitted at the time—and much more humiliating than I would have admitted at the time."⁴⁰

At this juncture, what happened to Steinem in her role as what Pamela Shoemaker and Stephen Reese call a "media worker" is useful to examine. Their approach to mass communication research asks: "*What factors inside and outside media organizations affect media content?*"⁴¹ Shoemaker and Reese have asserted there are five levels of influence: the individual media worker; media routines; the media organization; factors extrinsic to the media organization, also known as extramedia influences; and ideology. These forces interact with each other to shape how stories are told, how they are framed,

and who gets to tell them. They also influence what kinds of content are not produced: the subjects, ideas, events, and people that never reach the public eye, as “not everything ‘eligible’ to be mass media content actually gets into the media.”⁴²

As Shoemaker and Reese point out, media workers—their backgrounds, genders, belief systems, and views of their professional roles—are the first level of influence on media content.⁴³ As a media worker, Steinem had spent years trying to break into journalism, her gender excluding her from opportunities for staff jobs with media outlets whose hiring practices favored men. Eventually, freelance opportunities and mentoring from male editors who were open to fostering female talent led to opportunities at *Esquire* and then *Show*. Though Steinem did not yet publicly associate herself with feminism, as a woman she used her perspective to see the rise of the Playboy clubs—superficially a trend story about a novelty business—in a new way: with a keen eye for the financial and sexual exploitation of female workers initially drawn to the perceived glamour of the job. Her vision for the story aligned with other content influences. Steinem and her editors were essentially in alignment as media “gatekeepers,” those who decide what content and story structures should be in the public eye, with media routines⁴⁴ that supported her unconventional approach and controversial subject matter, albeit with male editors who likely tacitly recognized the salacious potential of having an attractive woman pull the stunt.

After the publication of “A Bunny’s Tale,” though, Steinem’s opportunities to produce serious journalism were stymied. Influences extrinsic to *Show* magazine, including press coverage from competing news outlets,⁴⁵ focused on the titillation of Steinem’s masquerade; *Playboy* itself frequently republished photographs of Steinem in her Bunny uniform, as if to mock her.⁴⁶ Steinem’s exposé put her future ambitions as a media worker at odds with the highest level of content influence: ideology, the “symbolic mechanism that serves as a cohesive and integrating force in society.”⁴⁷ The mass media embraced the story of Playboy Bunny Steinem, an attractive female reporter covering a sexy industry, as what Shoemaker and Reese call “deviant,” media content that is popular because it helps “maintain the boundaries of social order by showing what is approved and not approved.”⁴⁸ Essentially, Steinem faced a female journalist’s version of the Madonna/whore complex: She could either be stereotyped by continuing to pull versions of the same deviant stunt or submit to the longtime practice of gendered professional tracking that routed women toward lifestyle, “‘human interest’ or ‘soft’ stories,” while “political and analytical stories were assigned to men.”⁴⁹

The *New York Magazine* Oasis

The situation persisted until 1968, when Steinem became part of a group of writers, led by Felker, who started *New York* magazine, which would quickly become, as Steinem described, “the home of the New Journalism as practiced by Tom Wolfe, and . . . Jimmy Breslin.”⁵⁰ Though Felker was not a feminist, he was known for hiring female contributors to write on a wide variety of subjects. Out of twenty contributing editors on the masthead of the first issue, eight were women.⁵¹ Weingarten attributes Felker’s motivation to his mother, who left journalism to raise a family and regretted it. “Women . . . tend to have a more personal point of view about things than men, and I’m looking for an individual viewpoint first,” Felker said.⁵²

The emergence of *New York* magazine cracked the gendered constraints on what Steinem could write about, realigning her political reporting ambitions as an individual media worker with the agenda of her editors. Furthermore, as a journalistic enterprise, the editorial vision of *New York* saw the New Journalism’s aesthetics and methods as compatible with the perspectives of women writers, suitable to a wide range of subject matter. Within the first four months of the magazine’s publication, Steinem published three longform articles on politicians, with the New Journalism markers of scene structuring, dialogue, “status life” details, and a distinct voice: “Special Report: The City on the Eve of Destruction,” cowritten with African-American journalist Lloyd Weaver, on New York City major John Lindsay’s response to the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr.⁵³; “Trying to Love Eugene,” about the ambivalence of activists working on the presidential campaign of Eugene McCarthy⁵⁴; and “In Your Heart You Know He’s Nixon,”⁵⁵ on the final days of the 1968 Nixon presidential campaign.

Out of the three articles, “In Your Heart” stands out for its blend of Steinem’s forthright voice as a female reporter in the Nixon press entourage, disillusioned in the wake of the contentious Democratic primary, and her status detail-rich descriptions of Nixon fans, who chillingly remind her of her “high school mates—football playing, Negro-hating Hungarians and Poles . . . Could they have been flash-frozen since 1952?”⁵⁶ A pivotal point in the narrative (which, like “A Bunny’s Tale,” is crafted in the style of a diary) of the ten-day campaign is a scene of her interview with Pat Nixon on a flight from Denver to St. Louis. Pat Nixon parries Steinem’s questions with blandly evasive answers: “I’m always interested in the rallies, they’re so different. Some are outside; some are inside.” When Steinem questions Pat Nixon’s assertion that Mamie Eisenhower “meant so much to young people,” Pat Nixon finally breaks. As Steinem describes it, “the dam broke” in a lengthy, “not out of control” response, in which Pat Nixon insists that she never had “time to

dream” because her parents died when she was young, leaving her to scramble to support herself, then to support Nixon as he built his career. “I haven’t just sat back and thought of myself or my ideas or what I wanted to do. . . . I’ve never had it easy. I’m not like all you . . . all those people who had it easy.” After the plane landed, “Mrs. Nixon fingered her old-fashioned diamond ring for a moment, then, public smile re-fixed firmly, she patted my arm. ‘Now I hope we see you again soon; I really do; bye now; take care . . . I’ve really enjoyed our talk.’”⁵⁷

The interaction leads Steinem to acknowledge that as progressives embraced the promise of the Kennedys, the Nixons, as a couple, were in “a very special hell,” where the people who “had it easy” could “somehow pull gracefully ahead of them in spite of all their work.”⁵⁸ In this way, Steinem’s use of the “personal point of view” that Felker and the New Journalism era fostered shone a spotlight on a divide that would come to define the Nixonian politics of resentment. Steinem’s career would soon shift again, though: By the end of 1968, she started writing “The City Politic,” a weekly column more aptly categorized as opinion writing, not New Journalism. The column ran until she became a founding editor of *Ms.* magazine, which started as an insert in *New York* in 1971 and immediately gained a wide following as a stand-alone magazine.⁵⁹

Gail Sheehy: “A Little Girl Like You”

In 1963, the same year “A Bunny’s Tale” was published, Gail Sheehy landed her first New York City journalism job on the women’s page of the *World Telegram and Sun*. As an aspiring female media worker, she had to push back against organizational influences that were biased against women, convincing a skeptical male editor who, in her job interview, asked, “What makes you think a little girl like you from the boonies of Rochester can write for a big city daily?”⁶⁰ She got her start at the *Rochester (New York) Democrat & Chronicle*, working as a reporter to put her husband through medical school. Sheehy moved on to the Women’s Department of the *Herald Tribune*, where she filed articles that “violated the Chinese wall between news and fluff,”⁶¹ about antiwar protests, rent strikes, and underground abortion rings. There, Sheehy found professional support from editor-in-chief Jim Bellow, who encouraged the “gritty” stories Sheehy wrote. She trusted him enough to confess that she was pregnant, followed by a story pitch to use her condition to report on the shoddy state of the city’s maternity clinics.⁶² She found in Bellow the beginning of an escape from media routines and organizational biases that confined female reporters to fluff stories and pressured pregnant women to stop working. Sheehy’s subject matter still focused mainly on women, but she

could cover the more substantial issues in their lives. Sheehy also sought out Felker, then the editor of the *Herald Tribune* Sunday supplement, the precursor to *New York* magazine and widely credited for incubating New Journalism talent and style. Wolfe and Breslin, already admired for their portrayals of the “true textures of the city,”⁶³ were the stars of Felker’s staff. Felker also recruited and mentored women writers, including Barbara Goldsmith and Patricia Bosworth, and he would continue to do so at *New York*. Felker encouraged Sheehy to structure her articles as scenes. “Writing scenes was something I had done since I was seven or eight years old,” Sheehy wrote in her memoir, *Daring*. “But writing scenes as journalism? Clay had pushed me over the edge. . . . I liked it there.”⁶⁴

Sheehy joined Steinem, Wolfe, and Breslin on the roster of contributing editors when Felker launched *New York* magazine in 1968. When Robert Kennedy was assassinated that year, Sheehy had been working on a profile of his wife, Ethel; she’d spent time with the couple just hours before his death. She quickly recast the article as a scene-by-scene account of a campaign wife in the days running-up to her husband’s murder, contrasting Ethel’s sunny personality with the dark foreboding of life as a woman who “brought life into the world ten times and has watched it go out violently seven times from close range. Now it is eight.”⁶⁵ As was true for Steinem, so, too, for Sheehy: when she began working at *New York*, she found her personal professional ambitions aligned with the media routines and organizational influences. *New York* was a publication that embraced who she was and allowed for media routines—long deadlines, high word counts, immersive reporting practices, and narrative structures—that also aligned with the aesthetic values and commercial strategies of the New Journalism.

Redpants and the Missing Explanation

Sheehy’s output at *New York* was prodigious. She covered topics that ranged widely—from the Woodstock festival to commuting culture. She made her mark, though, by continuing to pursue gender-related topics, once relegated to soft-focused women’s magazines and newspaper sections. She treated them in a hard-hitting way, writing edgy pieces on the changing nature of family life and relationships in the cultural ferment of the times, with topics and titles such as “The Men of Women’s Liberation Have Learned Not to Laugh” and “Fractured Family,” a series about “bachelor mothers” and women who were childless by choice. She and Felker became, albeit at first in secret, New Journalism’s original power couple, conducting an on-again-off-again love affair; the couple would marry in 1984.⁶⁶

In 1971, Sheehy took on her boldest venture yet. Influenced by anthro-

pologist Margaret Mead, who mentored Sheehy while she was on a reporting fellowship at Columbia University, Sheehy became fascinated with the increasing visibility and violence of New York City's prostitutes. She saw them as fighters who boosted their profits by attacking and robbing patrons. For six weeks, Sheehy dressed the part in vinyl go-go boots and hot pants and immersed herself in her subject.⁶⁷ She pursued a comprehensive portrayal of the world of prostitutes, pimps, and johns, seeking the ethnographic realism that critic David Eason identified as an important mode of New Journalism and that characterized the expression of the genre in *New York*,⁶⁸ and for which the media routines provided the time and the support for writers to do immersive "saturation reporting." Sheehy's approach was also influenced by her media organization's expectations that she produce an attention-grabbing story with vivid scenes, a central character, and a clear narrative arc. Key to Sheehy's portrayal was a prostitute she shadowed, called "Redpants," who was aging, broke, and desperate. The woman's story, Sheehy believed, would give the account a plot arc with a beginning, middle, and end of a prostitute's life cycle. But before she could get Redpants' full story, the woman disappeared, fearful that other prostitutes would attack her for talking. Then, her pimp banished her to the Holland Tunnel. Sheehy turned Redpants into a composite character, using the accounts of other prostitutes to complete the story of Redpants's career. Sheehy explained her approach in a preface to the article, but, unbeknownst to her, the explanatory paragraph was cut before the magazine went to print.⁶⁹

Nine thousand words long and divided into two parts, "Wide Open City" was the cover story of the July 26, 1971, issue of *New York*.⁷⁰ Part II features the story of Redpants, providing a narrative spine and a source of pathos to a portrayal of a New York under siege from increasingly aggressive prostitutes and their predatory pimps, who provide inescapable temptation not only to the hapless married businessmen whose lust leads them into their lair, but also to the cops who are supposed to keep the streets clean of sin. The article softens its wizened main character in the glow of the lovelorn gaze of Bobbie, the Waldorf guard who sighs that she was once "the prettiest brown-skinned girl I ever seen on the street"⁷¹ and worries that she's "taken the wrong needle" when she disappears for too long.⁷² Redpants trusts him enough to toss him her high-heeled Guccis when she has to run from the cops, a hasty act of faith featured in the piece's opening scene and recapitulated at its conclusion. Sheehy's ethnographic approach informs her reporting throughout, with status details that underscore Redpants's fall from being one of the favorites of her pimp, Sugarman, to a homeless streetwalker who lingers all night at Grand Central Station: "Winter is a bummer. Her ankles swell up like

watermelons . . . She hangs around the train platforms, pretending to wait for her husband. When the GE Housewares Service Center opens, she stands outside the windows and studies the wives with their utilitarian haircuts, frowning over their toasters.”⁷³ The piece generated that much sought-after New Journalism buzz and got Sheehy a book deal. In a handwritten note to Sheehy, Tom Wolfe raved about her analysis of prostitutes as a “status group with six distinct social gradations.”⁷⁴

Then, the *Wall Street Journal* reported that Redpants was a composite character: “So the story was true, sort of, but then again it wasn’t. The reader, however, was not told any of this.”⁷⁵ When Sheehy confronted editors to point out that she had been completely transparent about the fact that Redpants was a composite, she looked at the published article again and realized the explanation she had written had been edited out. Months later, Felker confessed to Sheehy that he’d been the one to cut it, reasoning that, “Hell, the *New Yorker* is famous for stories by writers who used composite characters. Joseph Mitchell’s character sketches.” Sheehy was floored by this “most intimate betrayal.”⁷⁶

Gendered Consequences of Felker’s Deception

Sheehy continued to report on “the spread of a violent sexual subculture” in five more articles for *New York*. The series prompted social change in that the city cracked down on the landlords of prostitution hotels, leading the neighborhood’s police commander to comment that Sheehy “showed what a little girl with a lot of drive can do.”⁷⁷ *Hustling: Prostitution in Our Wide-Open Society*, the book based on the series, was turned into a television movie, *Hustling*, released in 1975, starring Jill Clayburgh.⁷⁸

Controversies over truth claims have always shadowed the New Journalism and include challenges to the veracity of Truman Capote’s reporting in *In Cold Blood* and attacks on Tom Wolfe’s clearly satirical stories about the *New Yorker*.⁷⁹ Yet the Redpants dustup followed Sheehy in a particularly gendered way, affecting her legacy in the New Journalism movement.

First, there is the matter of Felker’s deception. In his belated confession to Sheehy, he pointed to composite characters in the *New Yorker*—essentially, a literary journalism media routine that came to be considered unethical—to justify his sneak edit. Sheehy maintains that her chagrin over what happened dissolved as she continued to work on exposing the prostitution industry. Sheehy also allowed that, at the time, publications didn’t “offer explanations of a journalist’s methods or disclose much about sources.”⁸⁰ Yet the fact remains that Felker, as a powerful male editor, occupied a higher rung in the hierarchy of influences and did not abdicate it, for too long maintaining his

silence about his editing decision as Sheehy took nearly all the public punches for it. In *Hustling*, she disappeared Felker's role by using the passive voice: "An author's note . . . was dropped during printing and the story appeared in *New York* magazine without explanation."⁸¹

Felker's micro-gatekeeping move of deleting a paragraph would have a lasting consequence on Sheehy's place among the New Journalism writers. In the year immediately following the Redpants controversy, Sheehy was considered a principal figure of the New Journalism. Tom Wolfe's 1972 seminal *Esquire* essay on the genre, "Why They Aren't Writing the Great American Novel Anymore" describes Sheehy as an early practitioner of New Journalism techniques when they were at the *Herald Tribune*. The Arnold Roth illustration that accompanies the article and is titled "The Pursuit of Social Realism on the Field of Fame, 1972," depicts the leading writers of the New Journalism in a horse race after a fox that is labeled "Social Realism." Sheehy, the only woman depicted, is racing ahead the pack of authors, yet she is in the background of the image, not quite part of the pack and distant from the prey, which fellow frontrunners Wolfe and Talese seem on the verge of nabbing.⁸²

Perhaps the image was a kind of foreshadowing. Wolfe and Johnson did not include Sheehy on the roster of writers in their New Journalism anthology, published the following year. In later years, the Redpants controversy continued to come up in press and historical accounts, typically as a background cautionary tale for stories of subsequent journalistic deceptions. Sheehy writes that after Felker confessed to her, he contacted the editors of several publications that had covered the controversy to explain what he'd done, but his efforts were too late to gain much traction.⁸³ A number of accounts sustain the myth that the lack of transparency about the composite character was Sheehy's doing. Among these was a *New York Times* article written two years later that describes the incident as a concealed fabrication that Sheehy and Felker only later admitted to, as if they were equally responsible for the concealment.⁸⁴ It wasn't until 1981 that the *New York Times* reported Felker's last-minute edit.⁸⁵ Critical discussion of the controversy often fails to mention Felker's role.⁸⁶ In *The Gang That Wouldn't Write Straight*, published more than thirty years after the Redpants controversy and the most comprehensive recounting of the New Journalism era to date, Weingarten mentions neither Felker's responsibility nor Sheehy's explanatory paragraph, stating only that "editors had neglected to publish a disclaimer" regarding the composite character. He quotes Jack Nessel, who edited the piece, blaming the situation on Sheehy's ambition and Felker's adoration, essentially portraying Sheehy as an Eve-like figure offering forbidden fruit to her Adam: "I think Clay was in love with Gail from the start of their professional relationship,

and she was extremely willing to be molded by him . . . They played into each other's needs. If ambition could be incarnated, it would look like Gail. I've never seen any man or woman as ambitious as her." Of the mainstream media's view, Weingarten wrote, "Sheehy's gaffe was the beginning of the end of New Journalism,"⁸⁷—as if her ruination were not already enough.

Framing theory maintains that how messages are organized and structured—what information is emphasized and what is not—influences how audiences understand the messages.⁸⁸ The composite character of Redpants, certainly, is an example of framing to emphasize a narrative arc, providing audiences with both the drama of a tragedy—a prostitute's sad career—and, however contrived, a sense of closure about how that career ends. This same principle applies to the story of Sheehy's place in the New Journalism as Weingarten frames it. He portrays Sheehy as a kind of temptress-virago, her lover-editor too besotted to acknowledge her transgression and tame her, while colleagues grow wary, sensing that "Sheehy's vivid details were a red flag indicating that something was amiss."⁸⁹ This narrative erases not only the fact of Felker's misguided choice, but also what it might mean that he made it: the ways an editor—and, not incidentally, a romantic partner—can exert control over a woman perceived as exceptionally ambitious and how the result can disproportionately diminish her literary clout; no matter how far ahead, she still could not be fully part of the male pack racing toward a place in posterity.

Conclusion

Sheehy had a fabulous career, and Steinem is still enjoying hers. Sheehy wrote fifty stories over nine years for *New York*, making her the most prolific feature writer of the magazine's Felker era.⁹⁰ This was the first stage in a magazine writing career that would include high profile articles in *Vanity Fair* and other marquee publications. Sheehy published seventeen books,⁹¹ several of them bestsellers. *Passages: Predictable Crises of Adult Life*, published in 1974, was on the *Times* bestseller list for three years.⁹² Though Steinem's stint as a New Journalist was fleeting, she would go on to author ten books,⁹³ her identity as a writer entwined with her work as the longtime editor of *Ms.* and her identity as perhaps the globe's most prominent feminist activist and speaker. Both Steinem and Sheehy found early career opportunities in the media routines of the New Journalism, where the genre's emphasis on narrative-based story structures, distinct voice, and immersive depictions of the era's cultural upheaval supported the fusion of substantial reporting with issues that had life-changing impacts on women's lives.

Both women reported groundbreaking, high-visibility, high-impact stories that focused on vulnerable women in professions related to the sex indus-

try. Both women also had to cope with a publication aftermath complicated by gender bias. Steinem was trapped by a media culture that for critical years of her career would not let her move past stereotyped assumptions of female journalists and the titillation of her Bunny costume stunt, until she then found a home for her talents at *New York* in its debut years and a path toward the founding of *Ms.* magazine. As a newspaper reporter, Sheehy honed her skills as an intrepid journalist who stretched the limits of the professional ghetto of “soft news” typically assigned to women⁹⁴ to include hard-hitting social issues. Writing for *New York* allowed her to escape these overtly gendered constraints, yet her success was tainted by the Redpants composite character controversy. The framing of the controversy, in its immediate aftermath and in historical accounts, suggests that, even when the organizational routines of media outlets that published the New Journalism allowed for a more inclusive vision of what women reporters could do, gender still mattered greatly in women’s control over their stories, their professional images and, ultimately, their legacies.

Lisa A. Phillips, an associate professor of journalism and chair of the Digital Media and Journalism department at SUNY New Paltz, is the author of Unrequited: Women and Romantic Obsession and Public Radio: Behind the Voices.



Notes

- ¹ Chambers, Steiner, and Fleming, *Women and Journalism*, 47.
- ² Pauly, "The New Journalism, 1960–80," 156n6.
- ³ Gloria Steinem Papers, Collection, SSC-MS-00237, Smith College Library, Finding Aids, accessed February 7, 2021, <https://findingaids.smith.edu/repositories/2/resources/1006>.
- ⁴ Seelye, "Gaily Sheehy, Journalist, Author and Social Observer, Dies at 83."
- ⁵ Steinem, *My Life on the Road*, 138–39 (italics in original).
- ⁶ O'Connor, "Poet Verandah Porche Asked Famous Author about Female Writers," para. 8.
- ⁷ Wolfe and Johnson, eds., *The New Journalism*, 53–394.
- ⁸ Whitt, *Settling the Borderland*, 119.
- ⁹ Pauly, "The New Journalism, 1960–80," 149–50.
- ¹⁰ Sims, *True Stories*, 220.
- ¹¹ Sims, 220; Pauly, "The New Journalism, 1960–80," 150, 156n6.
- ¹² Whitt, *Settling the Borderland*, 133–42; Hartsock, *Literary Journalism and the Aesthetics of Experience*, 76–78.
- ¹³ Weingarten, *The Gang That Wouldn't Write Straight*, 6.
- ¹⁴ Weingarten, 214–15.
- ¹⁵ Kerrane and Yagoda's 1997 literary journalism anthology, *The Art of Fact*, includes seven women out of roughly sixty authors. Connery's *A Sourcebook of American Literary Journalism* has essays on thirty-five writers, including four women. In both volumes, Joan Didion is the sole woman included from the New Journalism era. See Kerrane and Yagoda, *The Art of Fact*, 9–11; Connery, *A Sourcebook of American Literary Journalism*, vii–ix.
- ¹⁶ Louis Menand and others note Didion's skepticism of interviewing and purposeful evasion of standard reporting techniques. See Menand, "Out of Bethlehem: The Radicalization of Joan Didion," 66–68ff.
- ¹⁷ Considerable critical discussion has focused on a much broader definition of the New Journalism of the 1960s and '70s. Nicolaus Mills referenced *Rolling Stone* editor Jann Wenner's description of journalism that is "on the line between underground versus above-ground press, between newspaper and magazine, between being a trade paper and a consumer paper, between dope and music." Mills, introduction to *The New Journalism: A Historical Anthology*, xvii.
- ¹⁸ Pauly, "The Politics of the New Journalism," 111.
- ¹⁹ Wolfe, *The New Journalism*, 23–36.
- ²⁰ Kramer, "Breakable Rules for Literary Journalists," 21–34.
- ²¹ Polsgrove, *It Wasn't Pretty, Folks, But Didn't We Have Fun?*, 11.
- ²² Pauly, "The Politics of the New Journalism," 125.
- ²³ See Polsgrove, *It Wasn't Pretty, Folks, But Didn't We Have Fun?*, 256; Weingarten, *The Gang That Wouldn't Write Straight*, 214–15. In an interview on March 3, 2021, Sara Davidson described her experiences trying to get a newspaper job after she graduated from the Columbia Graduate School of Journalism: "People would tell me: 'We're not hiring women, because we can't send you to a riot. We can't send

you to a fire. You can't carry heavy equipment'—if I wanted a TV job. They were very outspoken about not hiring women. But when I began writing for magazines, I did not run into that. I can't say that there were any barriers to me writing for magazines, which was the primo expression of the New Journalism. It was in *Harper's*. It was in *Esquire*. It was in the *Atlantic*. It was in *New York* magazine. There were a lot of women who were doing it, so I didn't feel that there was any barrier there. I applied for a job at the *New York Times* as a reporter, and they wouldn't take me. They never said why. They just said, 'A decision has been made on your case, and it's not favorable.' Yet, I could write for the *New York Times Magazine* and for the book review. It was this funny thing where with the strict journalism jobs, there was outright discrimination against women." Davidson, interview by Lisa Phillips, March 3, 2021.

²⁴ Heilbrun, *The Education of a Woman*, 84–95.

²⁵ Steinem, "The Moral Disarmament of Betty Coed," 97f.

²⁶ Pogrebin, "How Do You Spell, Ms.?" para. 17, 18.

²⁷ Heilbrun, *The Education of a Woman*, 104–105.

²⁸ Mills, "Gloria Steinem's 'A Bunny's Tale'—50 Years Later," para. 3.

²⁹ Steinem, "A Bunny's Tale," 99f; Steinem, "A Bunny's Tale, Part II," 66f.

³⁰ Steinem, 110.

³¹ Steinem, "A Bunny's Tale," 93.

³² Hartsock, *Literary Journalism and the Aesthetics of Experience*, 61.

³³ Mills, "Gloria Steinem's 'A Bunny's Tale'—50 Years Later," para. 6 (italics added).

³⁴ White, "A Bunny's Tale: Gloria Steinem's Shocking Expose"; Steinem, *Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions*, 29–69.

³⁵ Heilbrun, *The Education of a Woman*, 106.

³⁶ Heilbrun, 106.

³⁷ Heilbrun, 108.

³⁸ Heilbrun, appendix, 416–23, provides a list of Steinem's more than 100 articles published from 1957 to 1972 that include: "Funny Ways to Find a Man on the Beach," *Glamour*, June 1963; "Who Has the Higher Morals I.Q., You or Your Mother?" *Glamour*, November 1965; "James Baldwin: An Original," *Vogue*, July 1964; "Gloria Steinem Spends a Day in Chicago with Saul Bellow," *Glamour*, July 1965; "A Visit with Truman Capote," *Glamour*, April 1966; "Mrs. Kennedy at the Moment," *Esquire*, October 1964.

³⁹ Marie Ochs, office of Gloria Steinem, email to author, April 1, 2021. Steinem, "It's a Young Man's Game," *Glamour*, August 1965.

⁴⁰ Weber, "Gloria Steinem: An Interview," 76n, 80–81.

⁴¹ Shoemaker and Reese, *Mediating the Message: Theories of Influences*, 1 (italics in the original).

⁴² Shoemaker and Reese, 252 (italics in original). Somerstein, "'Stay Back for Your Own Safety,'" 746–65.

⁴³ Shoemaker and Reese, *Mediating the Message*, 63–102.

⁴⁴ For an explanation of how media routines are carried out in specific organi-

zations, see Shoemaker and Reese, 105–38.

⁴⁵ For a detailed explanation of extrinsic influences, see Shoemaker and Reese, 175–220.

⁴⁶ Wang, “That Time Gloria Steinem Went Undercover as a Playboy Bunny.”

⁴⁷ Shoemaker and Reese, *Mediating the Message*, 212.

⁴⁸ Shoemaker and Reese, 260.

⁴⁹ Schmidt, “Forgotten Athletes and Token Reporters,” 66; Melki and Mallat, “Block Her Entry, Keep Her Down,” 66; Somerstein, “‘Stay Back for Your Own Safety,’” 750.

⁵⁰ Steinem, *My Life on the Road*, 132.

⁵¹ “Contributing Editors,” Masthead, *New York*, vol. 1, no. 1, April 8, 1968, 4.

⁵² Weingarten, *The Gang That Wouldn't Write Straight*, 214–15.

⁵³ Steinem and Weaver, “Special Report: The City on the Eve of Destruction,” 32A–32H.

⁵⁴ Steinem, “Trying to Love Eugene,” August 5, 1968, 14–19f.

⁵⁵ Steinem, “In Your Heart You Know He's Nixon,” *New York*, October 28, 1968.

⁵⁶ Steinem, 23.

⁵⁷ Steinem, 35.

⁵⁸ Steinem, 35–36.

⁵⁹ “About Ms.” *Ms. Magazine*, <https://msmagazine.com/about/>.

⁶⁰ Sheehy, *Daring: My Passages*, 5.

⁶¹ Sheehy, 7.

⁶² Sheehy, 7–8.

⁶³ Sheehy, 12.

⁶⁴ Sheehy, 14–15.

⁶⁵ Sheehy, “Ethel Kennedy and the Arithmetic of Life and Death,” 34.

⁶⁶ Sheehy, *Daring*, 313–15.

⁶⁷ Sheehy, 139–46.

⁶⁸ See Eason, “The New Journalism and the Image-World,” 51–65. Eason cites frequent *New York* contributors Gay Talese and Tom Wolfe, as well as Sheehy, as writers in the “*ethnographic realism*” mode, 52.

⁶⁹ Sheehy, *Daring*, 139–49.

⁷⁰ Sheehy, “Wide Open City, Part I,” 22–26; Sheehy, “Wide Open City, Part II,” 27–36.

⁷¹ Sheehy, 28.

⁷² Sheehy, 36.

⁷³ Sheehy, “Wide Open City, Part II,” 36.

⁷⁴ Sheehy, *Daring*, 146.

⁷⁵ Pinkerton, “The ‘New Journalism’ Is Sometimes Less,” 1.

⁷⁶ Sheehy, *Daring*, 146–48.

⁷⁷ Sheehy, 149.

⁷⁸ Sheehy, 148–49; Sheehy, *Hustling*; Sargent, *Hustling*.

⁷⁹ Dennis and Rivers, *Other Voices: The New Journalism in America*, 15–50.

⁸⁰ Sheehy, *Daring*, 148.

⁸¹ Sheehy, *Hustling*, 22.

⁸² Wolfe, "Why They Aren't Writing the Great American Novel Anymore," 152–58f.

⁸³ Sheehy, *Daring*, 148.

⁸⁴ Breasted, "Two Interviews and Their Aftermath," 38.

⁸⁵ Friendly, "Disclosure of Two Fabricated Articles Causes Papers to Re-Examine Their Rules," A7.

⁸⁶ See Dennis and Rivers, *Other Voices*, 18; Gregory and Dorman, "The Children of James Agee," 998.

⁸⁷ Weingarten, *The Gang That Wouldn't Write Straight*, 275–76.

⁸⁸ Scheufele and Tewksbury, "Framing, Agenda Setting, and Priming," 11–12.

⁸⁹ Weingarten, *The Gang That Wouldn't Write Straight*, 276.

⁹⁰ Weingarten, 207.

⁹¹ Seelye, "Gail Sheehy, Journalist, Author and Social Observer, Dies at 83."

⁹² Sheehy, *Daring*, 234.

⁹³ "Gloria Steinem: Written Works," The Office of Gloria Steinem.

⁹⁴ Steiner, "Gender and Journalism," paras. 1, 3.

Bibliography

- Breasted, Mary. "Two Interviews and Their Aftermath." *New York Times*, July 23, 1973, 38. <https://www.nytimes.com/1973/07/23/archives/two-interviews-and-their-aftermath-discussed-research-public.html>.
- Chambers, Deborah, Linda Steiner, and Carole Fleming. *Women and Journalism*. London: Routledge, 2004.
- Connery, Thomas B., ed. *A Sourcebook of American Literary Journalism: Representative Writers in an Emerging Genre*. New York, Westport, and London: Greenwood Press, 1992.
- Dennis, Everette E., and William L. Rivers. *Other Voices: The New Journalism in America*. San Francisco: Canfield Press, 1974.
- Eason, David L. "The New Journalism and the Image-World: Two Modes of Organizing Experience." *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 1, no. 1 (March 1984): 51–65. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15295038409360013>.
- Friendly, Jonathan. "Disclosure of Two Fabricated Articles Causes Papers to Re-Examine Their Rules." *New York Times*, May 25, 1981, 7.
- Gregory, Charles, and William Dorman. "The Children of James Agee." *Journal of Popular Culture* (Spring 1976): 996–1002. <https://search.proquest.com/docview/1297363275?pq-origsite=gscholar&fromopenview=true&imgSeq=1>.
- Hartsock, John C. *Literary Journalism and the Aesthetics of Experience*. Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2016.
- Heilbrun, Carolyn G. *The Education of a Woman: The Life of Gloria Steinem*. New York: Dial Press, 1995. <http://archive.org/details/educationofwoman00heil>.
- Kerrane, Kevin, and Ben Yagoda, eds. *The Art of Fact: A Historical Anthology of Literary Journalism*. New York: Scribner, 1997.

- Kramer, Mark. "Breakable Rules for Literary Journalists," in *Literary Journalism: A New Collection of the Best American Nonfiction*, edited by Norman Sims and Mark Kramer, 21–34. New York: Ballantine Books, 1995.
- Melki, Jad P., and Sarah E. Mallat. "Block Her Entry, Keep Her Down and Push Her Out." *Journalism Studies* 17, no. 1 (2016): 57–79. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2014.962919>.
- Menand, Louis. "Out of Bethlehem: The Radicalization of Joan Didion." *New Yorker*, August 24, 2015, 66–73. <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/08/24/out-of-bethlehem>.
- Mills, Nicolaus. "Gloria Steinem's 'A Bunny's Tale'—50 Years Later." *Guardian*, May 26, 2013. Accessed February 7, 2021. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/may/26/gloria-steinem-bunny-tale-still-relevant-today>.
- . *The New Journalism: A Historical Anthology*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1974. See esp. introduction.
- Ms.* magazine. "About *Ms.*" <https://msmagazine.com/about/>.
- O'Connor, Kevin. "Poet Verandah Porche Asked Famous Author about Female Writers, Setting Social Media Ablaze." *Brattleboro [Vermont] Reformer*, April 8, 2016. https://www.reformer.com/local-news/poet-verandah-porche-asked-famous-author-about-female-writers-setting-social-media-ablaze/article_f7b-f9a23-39b6-56f7-99c6-e046f40ce757.html.
- Office of Gloria Steinem. "Gloria Steinem: Written Works." <http://www.gloria-steinem.com/written-works>.
- Pauly, John J. "The New Journalism, 1960–80." In *The Routledge Companion to American Literary Journalism*, edited by William E. Dow and Roberta S. Maguire, 149–62. New York and London: Routledge, 2020.
- . "The Politics of the New Journalism." In *Literary Journalism in the Twentieth Century*, edited by Norman Sims, 110–29. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990.
- Phillips, Lisa A. "Scholar-Practitioner *Q&A* . . . An Interview with Sara Davidson." *Literary Journalism Studies* 13, nos. 1, 2 (December 2021): 76–99.
- Pinkerton, W. Stewart, Jr. "The 'New Journalism' Is Sometimes Less Than Meets the Eye." *Wall Street Journal*, August 13, 1971, 1, 19.
- Pogrebin, Abigail. "How Do You Spell *Ms.*?" *New York*, October 28, 2011. <https://nymag.com/news/features/ms-magazine-2011-11/>.
- Polsgrove, Carol. *It Wasn't Pretty, Folks, But Didn't We Have Fun? Surviving the '60s with Esquire's Harold Hayes*. Oakland, Calif.: RDR Books, 2001. First published 1995 by W. W. Norton (New York, London).
- Sargent, Joseph, dir. *Hustling*. 1975. New York: Filmways Television.
- Scheufele, Dietram A., and David Tewksbury. "Framing, Agenda Setting, and Priming: The Evolution of Three Media Effects Models." *Journal of Communication* 57, no. 1 (March 2007): 9–20.
- Schmidt, Hans C. "Forgotten Athletes and Token Reporters: Analyzing the Gender Bias in Sports Journalism." *Atlantic Journal of Communication* 26, no. 1 (2018): 59–74.

- Seelye, Katharine Q. "Gail Sheehy, Journalist, Author and Social Observer, Dies at 83." *New York Times*, August 25, 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/25/books/gail-sheehy-dead.html>.
- Sheehy, Gail. *Daring: My Passages: A Memoir*. New York: HarperLuxe, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers, 2014. First published 2014 by William Morrow (New York). Page references are to the HarperLuxe edition.
- . "Ethel Kennedy and the Arithmetic of Life and Death." *New York*, June 17, 1968, 34–37. https://books.google.com/books?id=LLgDAAAAMBAJ&pg=PA3&source=gbs_toc&cad=2#v=onepage&q&f=false.
- . *Hustling: Prostitution in Our Wide-Open Society*. New York: Delacorte Press, 1973. <http://archive.org/details/hustlingprostitu00shee>.
- . "Wide Open City, Part I: The New Breed." *New York*, July 26, 1971, 22–26. https://books.google.com/books?id=BeMCAAAAMBAJ&pg=PA3&source=gbs_toc&cad=2#v=onepage&q&f=false.
- . "Wide Open City, Part II: Redpants and Sugarman." *New York*, July 26, 1971, 27–36. https://books.google.com/books?id=BeMCAAAAMBAJ&pg=PA3&source=gbs_toc&cad=2#v=onepage&q&f=false.
- Shoemaker, Pamela J., and Stephen D. Reese. *Mediating the Message: Theories of Influences on Mass Media Content*. 2nd. ed. New York: Longman, 1996. <http://chinhnghia.com/mediating-the-message.pdf>. First published 1991 by Longman (New York); third edition published 2014, as *Mediating the Message in the 21st Century* by Routledge (New York and London). Page references are to the 1996 edition.
- Sims, Norman. *True Stories: A Century of Literary Journalism*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2007.
- Somerstein, Rachel. "'Stay Back for Your Own Safety': News Photographers, Interference, and the Photographs They Are Prevented from Taking." *Journalism* 21, no. 6 (2020): 746–65.
- Steinem, Gloria. "A Bunny's Tale." *Show*, May 1963, 99f. <https://undercover.hosting.nyu.edu/files/original/5c9de8d1db51ced1395f6d6fa480ca24e872b76.pdf>.
- . "A Bunny's Tale, Part II." *Show*, June 1963, 66f. <https://undercover.hosting.nyu.edu/files/original/76f8961b4dcd8f809cd35f43da124b969ec06e3.pdf>.
- . "In Your Heart You Know He's Nixon." *New York*, October 28, 1968, 20–36.
- . "It's a Young Man's Game." *Glamour*, August 1965.
- . "The Moral Disarmament of Betty Coed." *Esquire*, September 1962, 97f. <https://classic.esquire.com/article/19620901103/print>.
- . *My Life on the Road*. New York: Random House, 2015.
- . *Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1983.
- . Papers. Smith College Libraries. Northampton, Massachusetts.
- . "Trying to Love Eugene." *New York*, August 5, 1968, 14–19f. https://books.google.com/books?id=ctYCAAAAMBAJ&pg=PA3&source=gbs_toc&cad=2#v=onepage&q&f=false.

- Steinem, Gloria, and Lloyd Weaver. "Special Report: The City on the Eve of Destruction." *New York*, April 22, 1968, 32F–32H.
- Steiner, Linda. "Gender and Journalism." *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Communication* (February 2017). <https://oxfordre.com/communication/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228613.001.0001/acrefore-9780190228613-e-91>.
- Wang, Evelyn. "That Time Gloria Steinem Went Undercover as a Playboy Bunny." *Dazed*, September 13, 2016. <https://www.dazeddigital.com/fashion/article/32834/1/that-time-gloria-steinem-went-undercover-as-a-playboy-bunny>.
- Weber, Ronald. "Gloria Steinem: An Interview." In *The Reporter as Artist: A Look at the New Journalism Controversy*, edited by Ronald Weber, 76–82. New York: Hastings House, 1974. The interview first appeared as "Gloria Steinem Looks at Newspapers," in *The Bulletin* of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, February 1971, 1, 12–15.
- Weingarten, Marc. *The Gang That Wouldn't Write Straight: Wolfe, Thompson, Didion, and the New Journalism Revolution*. New York: Crown Publishers, Random House, 2006.
- White, Abbey. "A Bunny's Tale: Gloria Steinem's Shocking Expose that Challenged Hugh Hefner's Playboy Empire." *Early Bird Books.com*. October 1, 2017. <https://earlybirdbooks.com/gloria-steinems-shocking-expose-that-challenged-hugh-hefners-playboy-empire>.
- Whitt, Jan. *Settling the Borderland: Other Voices in Literary Journalism*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2008.
- Wolfe, Tom. *The New Journalism: with an Anthology*, edited by Tom Wolfe and E. W. Johnson. London: Picador, 1973.
- . "Why They Aren't Writing the Great American Novel Anymore." *Esquire*, December 1972, 152–58f. *Esquire | The Complete Archive*. Accessed March 28, 2021. <https://classic.esquire.com/article/1972/12/1/why-they-arent-writing-the-great-american-novel-anymore>.



Brian Reed and Julie Snyder interviewed for the Revisiting *S-Town* Session at Vulture Festival, New York City, May 20, 2018. Image by Rhododendrites, Wikimedia Commons.

The Narrative Podcast as Digital Literary Journalism: Conceptualizing *S-Town*

Siobhán McHugh
University of Sydney, Australia

Abstract: Surveying the purposeful integration of multimedia technologies into longform online journalism, Jacobson, Marino, and Gutsche in 2016 described a new wave of digital literary journalism, marked by flagship works such as the *New York Times*'s 2012 "Snow Fall." Less attention has been paid to the implications for digital literary journalism of longform audio storytelling, which proliferated following the extraordinary success of the narrative podcast, *Serial*, in 2014. This study analyzes how key characteristics of literary journalism can be mapped to the Peabody Award-winning 2017 narrative podcast, *S-Town*, produced by the same organization that created *Serial*. *S-Town* examines the life and death of an eccentric genius, John B. McLemore, and the small Alabama community he has come to loathe. This analysis argues that host and author Brian Reed, in his revelatory seven-hour exploration of McLemore's complex psyche and insular environment, uses literary journalism techniques as identified by Norman Sims, Mark Kramer, and Robert S. Boynton, and conforms to a matrix Jacobson, Marino, and Gutsche adapted for their 2016 study of longform digital journalism. *S-Town* was downloaded forty million times within a month of publication, eclipsing by tenfold the response to "Snow Fall" and breaking records for podcast engagement. The narrative podcast form offers a new aural model of digital literary journalism, one that opens innovative possibilities to extend the genre's reach and impact.

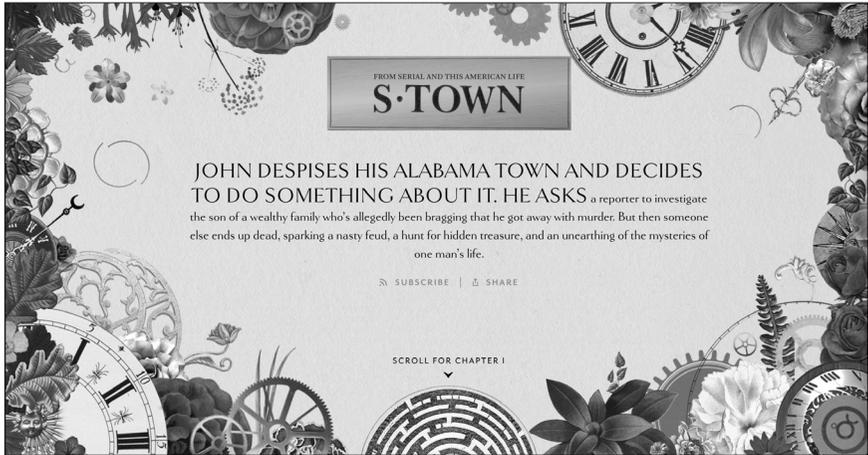
Keywords: Narrative podcast – digital literary journalism – audio storytelling – *S-Town* podcast

Since the 1990s, the digital era has heralded new transmedia iterations of literary journalism, a form that has also been described as “longform journalism,” “creative nonfiction,” “narrative journalism,” “narrative nonfiction,” and “literary nonfiction.” Twenty-six years ago, writer and academic Mark Kramer defended the term literary journalism:

As a practitioner, I find the “literary” part self-congratulating and the “journalism” part masking the form’s inventiveness. But “literary journalism” is roughly accurate. The paired words cancel each other’s vices and describe the sort of nonfiction in which arts of style and narrative construction long associated with fiction help pierce to the quick of what’s happening—the essence of journalism.¹

The year Kramer wrote those words, coincidentally, U.S. radio broadcaster Ira Glass quit his job at National Public Radio to launch his own show, *This American Life* (*TAL*), an hour-long format that eschewed radio staples such as authoritative news reportage, entertainment-focused talk, and music. Instead, each episode delivered a true story themed around three acts, with a deceptively casual introduction by Glass. His script was written to sound spontaneous and conversational—“So here’s the thing . . .”—without compromising substance, which at the time was a novel combination. On its website, *TAL* is described this way: “Mostly we do journalism, but an entertaining kind of journalism that’s built around plot. In other words, stories! Our favorite sorts of stories have compelling people at the center of them, funny moments, big feelings, surprising plot twists, and interesting ideas. Like little movies for radio.”²

The *TAL* formula has been a success. The show reaches 2 million listeners each week via 500-plus U.S. public radio stations. The podcast version is downloaded 2.8 million times per episode.³ *TAL*, and the record-breaking narrative podcasts it has spawned, *Serial*, in 2014 and *S-Town*, in 2017,⁴ grew out of Glass’s resistance to what he saw as the straitjacket of news journalism and its inviolable tenets of objectivity and the inverted pyramid.⁵ An earlier, 2013 iteration of the *TAL* website blurb, “the journalism we do tends to use a lot of the techniques of fiction: scenes and characters and narrative threads,”⁶ made explicit Glass’s interest in employing the literary journalistic approach. Though he rejected the term “literary nonfiction” (“It’s pretentious, for one thing, and it’s a bore”),⁷ Glass loved the kind of writing it espoused—so much so that in 2007 he published an anthology, *The New Kings of Nonfiction*, in which he brought together iconic literary journalism figures, such as David Foster Wallace, Malcolm Gladwell, Michael Lewis, and Susan Orlean, alongside emerging writers in the genre. In his introduction, Glass explained what drew him to their work: “They try to get inside their protagonists’ heads



with a degree of empathy that's unusual. Theirs is a ministry of love, in a way we don't usually discuss reporters' feelings toward their subjects. Or at least, they're willing to see what is lovable in the people they're interviewing."⁸ Such empathy is evident in *TAL*'s two spin-off narrative podcasts, as *Serial* host Sarah Koenig demonstrates ambiguous feelings about her main character, convicted murderer Adnan Syed, and host Brian Reed openly shares with the listener his fascination with *S-Town* protagonist John B. McLemore.⁹

Glass further recognized that, for all their diversity, his nonfiction "kings" were using two basic building blocks: the plot and the ideas lurking behind it. "Usually the plot is the easy part," he wrote in his introduction. "You do whatever research you can, you talk to lots of people, and you figure out what happened. It's the ideas that kill you. What's the story mean? What bigger truth about all of us does it point to?"¹⁰ In *TAL*, Glass articulates these subliminal, lurking ideas as connecting themes for his three-act episodes.

A decade before Glass's book was published, other longform storytellers started to marshal new forms to get across their own "bigger truths." Scholars mark the launch of Mark Bowden's story, "Black Hawk Down," as a milestone in multimedia storytelling.¹¹ Published in 1997 on the *Philadelphia Inquirer's* website, in serial form over twenty-eight days, with photos, animated maps, audio and video clips, and graphic drawings threaded throughout, it was an extended narrative account of a battle between U.S. Rangers and armed civilians in Mogadishu, Somalia. Described at the time as "what appears to be the largest newspaper story project ever published on the Internet," it was a "visually lush multimedia format" that broke new ground by providing "an enveloping sensual experience, as well as a fast-paced read."¹²

Innovative collaborations in online narrative journalism reached new heights in 2012 with “Snow Fall,” a *New York Times* production that created a riveting multimedia account of an avalanche, complete with “animation of snow drifting across a mountain and computerized flyovers of the story’s setting.”¹³



The story attracted 3.2 million visitors, won a Pulitzer Prize, and literally entered the lexicon: journalists began to ask, “Can we ‘snowfall’ this?” This question, posed inside newsrooms, signaled an intention to find captivating multimedia treatments for stories.¹⁴ The following year, writer Jon Henley’s “Firestorm,” published in the *Guardian*, combined video, audio, photography, and emergency rescue operations recordings, anchored by a written narrative spine, to tell the extraordinary story of how an Australian family escaped a terrible brushfire.¹⁵ As Fiona Giles and Georgia Hitch have noted, this work integrated multimedia features in the service of a literary journalism approach, deepening its impact.¹⁶ Other notable works followed. In 2014, Ta-Nahesi Coates’s “The Case for Reparations,” a masterful 16,000-word essay published in the *Atlantic*, interweaved archival photographs and video, contemporary audio and video, and interactive infographics as Coates set out his argument for why African-Americans deserve to be compensated for the discriminatory outcomes of slavery.¹⁷ In 2018, the *Oregonian* published Noelle Crombie’s “Ghosts of Highway 20,” a compelling interactive online feature. Its combination of video, photography, maps, and a text that included dialogue and reconstructed scenes told the story of a serial killer and the one woman who survived his predations.¹⁸

These critically acclaimed digital narrative works synergistically harnessed distinct strengths of several media forms. But in 2014, *Serial* demonstrated that technological wizardry was not a necessary part of successful digital longform journalism—its linear audio story alone managed to attract a huge audience. *Serial* was an episodic, twelve-part work of investigative journalism that examined the 1999 Baltimore murder of a schoolgirl named Hae Min Lee, delivered as a narrative podcast. Glass commissioned the story as a way of experimenting with podcast-first content that could sit independently of the *TAL* broadcast slot, which was constrained by limits on duration and explicit content.¹⁹ *Serial* attracted five million downloads in its first month alone and became the world’s most downloaded episodic storytelling podcast.

By 2018 it achieved 420 million downloads over three seasons.²⁰ This massive audience response spurred the *TAL* stable to experiment with another narrative podcast, *S-Town*, which launched in 2017.

This analysis situates *S-Town* within the ecology of narrative podcasts and demonstrates how it meets the criteria for digital literary journalism. “Narrative podcast” here will be understood to mean an episodic, nonfiction, audio storytelling format that interweaves voice, music, and ambient sound recordings to create a layered audio experience with a narrative arc. Textual analysis of the seven-hour, 66,000-word podcast will be used, as will a contextualizing literature review of the origins of narrative podcasts and a discussion of literary journalism characteristics that, in 2016, Jacobson, Marino, and Gutsche adapted from Tom Wolfe’s 1973 analysis that leads his and E. W. Johnson’s anthology in *The New Journalism*. The analysis provides additional scaffolding from the work of Norman Sims, Mark Kramer, and Robert S. Boynton to identify how the *S-Town* podcast should be classified as a work of digital literary journalism.²¹ This study draws conceptually from three areas—radio production studies, literary journalism studies, and the emerging field of podcasting studies.

From Radio Documentaries to Narrative Podcasts

In 1933, the Scottish film documentary maker John Grierson famously defined a documentary as “the creative treatment of actuality.”²² It is a definition that maps well to the radio documentary/feature form, which dates back to the 1930s but still has much in common with narrative podcasts today.²³ Historic practice and principles embedded in the radio documentary/feature format in Europe, Australia, the United States, and elsewhere have been thoroughly analyzed by scholars.²⁴ They commonly frame the audio medium as temporal, enveloping, and able to trigger a rich imaginative response. Both radio and podcasting leverage the affective resonance and intimacy of the human voice.²⁵ But sound itself has its own potency: as sensory evocation, “a partnership between memory and imagination,”²⁶ and as a subjective force: “Sounds are embedded with both cultural and personal meanings; sounds do not come at us merely raw,” as Michael Bull and Les Back have pointed out.²⁷ The act of listening also needs to be considered in both radio and podcast contexts; as media studies scholar Kate Lacey has said, it raises “notions of embodiment, intersubjectivity, liveness, and sensory perception.”²⁸

Both exemplary narrative podcasts²⁹ and radio documentaries are built forms, as carefully crafted as a good film, though the process is far less documented. The journal *RadioDoc Review* was founded by the author in 2014 to fill that gap in scholarship; its board, comprising noted podcast and radio in-

dustry professionals along with audio studies scholars, is building a canon of the crafted audio storytelling form by identifying signature works and commissioning in-depth critical analyses by peers in the field.³⁰ Some film studies theory can also be applied to the form. French film theorist Michel Chion divides the audio (soundtrack) used in film into three categories: voice, music, and “bruit,” which literally translates as “noise” but can be taken to mean natural or ambient sound: the buzz of a café, a clap of thunder.³¹ Whether as film soundtrack or pure audio, the relational layering, timing, and placement of all three kinds of sounds—what might be termed the choreography of sound—viscerally shapes the impact a mixed end product can have on listeners.³² When visual distractions are absent, such as in the screen-less mode of podcasting, masterful sculpting of sounds is particularly effective. The alchemic mix can cause what British audio producer Alan Hall has called “creative combustion.”³³

Podcasts came into being in 2001, though the term “podcast” was coined only in 2004.³⁴ Podcasts were defined as any audio file made available as a Really Simple Syndication (RSS) format, which provides a standardized system for the distribution of content from a website to internet users. Early podcast content ranged from time-shifted radio programs and niche blog and chat formats to the odd celebrity show. Popular current formats in the United States range from interviews and panels to sophisticated audio fiction and crafted narrative nonfiction. Podcasts today are easily accessed using platforms such as Apple’s iTunes, Spotify, or Google Podcasts. Listenership is increasing year by year, with more than half of U.S. citizens surveyed having listened to a podcast by 2019.³⁵ Scholars, practitioners, and industry commentators have observed that podcasting has its own distinct characteristics despite its strong links to radio.³⁶ Podcasts are opt-in, meaning consumers deliberately choose to listen, often via headphones, on mobile devices. This immersive, curated listening predisposes a podcast audience to be attentive consumers (a mode that augurs well for longform content) compared to the more serendipitous listening afforded by radio.

Stylistically, podcasts have adapted to this mode of consumption and distribution. Freed of an institutional gatekeeper, the podcast host can adopt a more spontaneous and confiding persona than the detached, carefully objective reporting tone of most public radio.³⁷ For example, in one *Serial* episode, host Sarah Koenig and producer Dana Chivvis are returning from investigating the scene of the crime. As they drive past a seafood store, Dana says, “There’s a shrimp sale at the Crab Crib.” Such a throwaway line would be jarring in print, but in the immediacy of the audio medium, where the reporter is an inherent presence, Koenig makes the most of the incidental

chit-chat. “Sometimes I think Dana isn’t listening to me,” she reflects, adding a touch of humor and relatability to a dark topic.³⁸ Koenig basks in the story, forensically unpicking each new item of information and talking to listeners as though they are companions on the quest to solve Lee’s murder. This aligns with the sort of meta-reportage, subjectivity, and self-reflexivity that literary journalists from Norman Mailer (*Armies of the Night*) to Anna Funder (*Stasiland*) have long claimed and that,

as Mia Lindgren has pointed out, podcasters are harnessing to an increasing degree. “Listeners are invited to care about the journalist, and, by extension, the story,” she explains.³⁹ Glass approvingly notes this quality in the work of his “nonfiction kings”: “a lot of the power of these stories comes from the writers telling you step by step what they’re feeling and thinking, as they do their reporting.”⁴⁰

As David Dowling and Kyle Miller have noted, this willing transparency on the part of the journalist/host has become a lauded trope of narrative podcasts.⁴¹ Underpinned by solid investigative journalism and delivered in an episodic style that mimicked the cliffhanger endings usually associated with streamed web television series,⁴² *Serial* became popular with binge listeners, and the program’s success sparked a rush to emulate its form. Its most influential successor, however, came from within the *TAL* stable itself, in the form of *S-Town*, a story that was consciously conceived as an aural novel, with its episodes even described on the *S-Town* website as “chapters.”⁴³

The next section sets out why *S-Town* should be categorized as a work of literary journalism.

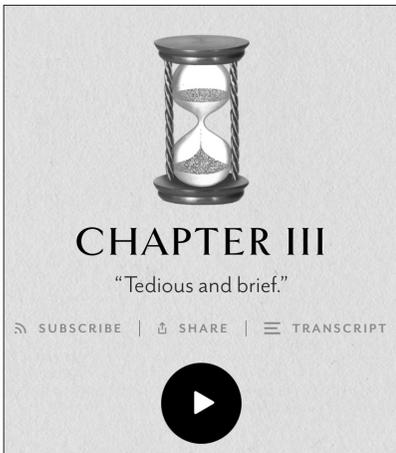
Adapting a Framework of Literary Journalism Theory for Podcasting

There is a dearth of scholarship analyzing longform radio or audio works as a form of literary journalism. Among the most pertinent is Miles Maguire’s 2014 study of David Isay’s radio documentary, *The Sunshine Hotel*.⁴⁴ Maguire compares this story of down-at-the-heel denizens of a flophouse—rendered in audio, newspaper, and book formats—to the work of *New Yorker* writer Joseph Mitchell. Maguire points out that this and Isay’s many other radio documentaries show “a deep concern for getting the facts right coupled with what might be called artistic techniques to heighten the audience’s



experience of those facts.”⁴⁵ He further likens Isay’s practice of spending extensive time with his subjects to what literary journalism scholars call immersion. But unlike the many literary journalists who place themselves squarely in the frame, Isay himself is an absent voice.

Mia Lindgren has traced the recent growth of personal narrative journalism and its particular affinities with the podcast form. She points to audio’s oft-noted capacity to engender intimacy and to develop an empathetic response in listeners. “Voice is the intimate key to audiences’ hearts. By listening to detailed personal experiences of ‘others,’ listeners become connected to the people whose stories they share.”⁴⁶ She argues that “personal audio storytelling is an emerging and popular genre in podcasting” that will evolve as a sort of post-radio format metamorphosed onto digital platforms, with new



production conventions and listener expectations.⁴⁷ Dowling and Miller reinforce that argument, proposing that immersive and subjective longform audio storytelling such as *S-Town* borrows from techniques associated with documentary cinema and the novel, creating a genre that is “adept and multifaceted in providing serious reportage, cultural critique, and probing psychological intrigue.”⁴⁸ In a recent case study, Ella Waldman situates *S-Town* at the crossroads of podcast studies and literary theory, examining the importance of

sound design and close listening to its narrative structure and impact.⁴⁹

Given the relative paucity of podcast-specific analysis of narrative audio journalism, this study instead analyzes *S-Town* through a framework that combines classic literary journalism characteristics as identified by Sims, Kramer, and Boynton, and a matrix modified for digital journalism by Jacobson, Marino, and Gutsche, from Wolfe’s original conceptualizing of the genre. Sims, in *The Literary Journalists*, describes the genre’s distinctive approach: “Literary journalism draws on immersion, voice, accuracy, and symbolism as essential forces.”⁵⁰ Sims later observed that literary journalists “triangulate differing stories, sort through participants’ memories, make judgment calls, calculate the structure of the story, adopt a point of view, and decipher the symbolism of details.”⁵¹ Kramer in 1995 offered pertinent concepts in “Breakable Rules for Literary Journalists,” on which the analysis will also draw.⁵² A decade later, in 2005, Boynton summarized literary journalism as “rigorously reported,

psychologically astute, sociologically sophisticated, and politically aware.”⁵³

As Jacobson, Marino, and Gutsche note,⁵⁴ Wolfe, in his essay that leads *The New Journalism*, explicated the four literary devices used to develop what he characterized as a new way of narrative storytelling: scene-by-scene construction, use of dialogue, point of view, and status life, or “everyday gestures, habits, manners, customs, styles of furniture” that reveal a character’s way of being in the world.⁵⁵ Jacobson, Marino, and Gutsche mapped Wolfe’s and other scholarly analyses of what constituted literary journalism onto a matrix more suited to digital narrative journalism:

- Scene [SC]
- Dialogue [DI]
- Characterization [CH]
- Dramatic Tension [DT].⁵⁶

The above abbreviations will be appended to examples that arise in the *S-Town* analysis that follows.

S-Town Podcast

On March 28, 2017, *S-Town* dropped online as a complete, seven-episode series. The podcast, which had been three years in the making, almost did not happen. The project began when the central protagonist, John B. McLemore, emailed *This American Life*. The subject line read: “John B. McLemore lives in Shittown, Alabama.” As *TAL* routinely received many attention-seeking emails, staff thought McLemore could be either a narcissist or a nut. Still, in his email he asked host Reed to investigate a murder, and a subsequent email provided a link to a related news story. Eventually, a year on, Reed rang him.

That phone call, relayed in edited form in the first episode, immediately revealed that McLemore was a remarkable character. Although he lived in “a crummy little shittown in Alabama, called Woodstock,” his interests had always been ambitious and wide-ranging: “Even when I was a kid in school, I didn’t want to hang around other kids. Because kids are talking about getting girls, or deer hunting, or football. Whereas I was interested in the astrolabe, sundials, projective geometry, new age music, climate change, and how to solve Rubik’s cube.”⁵⁷ [CH]

In the first chapter Reed says that when McLemore is not obsessively researching climate change, he is looking after his aged mother, caring for numerous stray dogs on his 124-acre property, tending a huge rose garden (displaying extensive botanical knowledge in the process), fixing antiquarian clocks, and building a vast maze. [CH] McLemore’s use of language is arresting. In a deep Southern drawl, he mentions a visit by the “Praetorian class”

(the police) and laments the “proleptic decay and decrepitude” of the area.⁵⁸ [DI] Reed reassures listeners he had to look up the meaning of “proleptic” (using a word or phrase in anticipation of its coming true) but succumbs to McLemore’s powerful personality and agrees to visit him. “It felt as if, by sheer force of will, John was opening this portal between us and calling out through it, calling from his world.”⁵⁹

Listeners embark, with Reed as companion-guide, on a story as tortuous as McLemore’s maze. In its evocation of place and attention to detail, the podcast is not unlike that first, famous “nonfiction novel,” Truman Capote’s *In Cold Blood*. On page one, Capote describes the denizens of Holcomb, Kansas, where his multiple murder story takes place: “The local accent is barbed with a prairie twang, a ranch-hand nasalness, and the men, many of them, wear narrow frontier trousers, Stetsons, and high-heeled boots with pointed toes.”⁶⁰

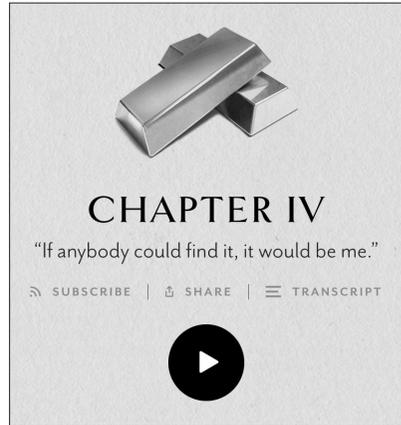
In *S-Town*’s first chapter, Reed introduces McLemore via this scene:

He’s a redhead, with red goatee and glasses, looks a bit younger than his forty-eight years, in ratty jeans and ratty sneakers, and a Sherwin-Williams T-shirt that he probably got for buying a can of paint at the hardware store. . . . He’s naming the plants all around us as we move—goldenrod, Russian sage, a climbing lady banks rose. . . .⁶¹ [SC]

When Reed moves on, he introduces McLemore’s young sidekick, Tyler Goodson, who is in the workshop sharpening a chainsaw “tooth by tooth.” This is another image redolent with symbolism, the potency of which is amplified by the steady click-click sound as Goodson wields the tool.

Still in chapter one, Reed’s overtly novelistic technique emerges—a style he has borrowed from Edward P. Jones’s book on U.S. slavery, *The Known World*.⁶² “If Tyler has his shirt on, you know he must be going to court. At least that’s what his mom will tell me one day.”⁶³ [DT] This simple device of inserting future tense sets up a narrative tension and foreshadows what lies ahead: a shape-shifting tale that leads deep inside a Southern Gothic landscape of tattoos and nipple-rings, bigotry and beauty, love and loss—the world of Shittown, Alabama, abbreviated as *S-Town*. In the vernacular of the podcast blurb:

John despises his Alabama town and decides to do something about it. He



asks a reporter to investigate the son of a wealthy family who's allegedly been bragging that he got away with murder. But then someone else ends up dead, sparking a nasty feud, a hunt for hidden treasure, and an unearthing of the mysteries of one man's life.⁶⁴

Voice and Subjectivity

As Kramer notes, "the personality of the writer, the individual and intimate voice of a whole, candid person . . . someone who has illuminated experience with private reflection, but who has not transcended crankiness, wryness, doubtfulness, and who doesn't blank out emotional realities of sadness, glee, excitement, fury, love" is "the defining mark of literary journalism."⁶⁵ In just this manner, the voice of narrator/host/author Reed anchors *S-Town*, literally and figuratively.⁶⁶ In chapter one, he shares his doubts about McLemore's credibility:

I'd say it's about this point that I ask myself, is John fucking with me? Is he just a bored guy who contacted me on a lark and never expected me to actually follow through? Is this murder not real and he knows it? It's not only the fact that he is right now pouring potassium cyanide into a bucket in front of me that makes me wonder this.⁶⁷ [DT]

In chapter two, Reed's stricken reaction to a phone call leads to the listener's learning the awful news that McLemore has committed suicide—by drinking cyanide. [DT] In chapter three, Reed, by now closely attached to the Goodson family, attends the funeral, where McLemore's mother, Mary Grace, is chief mourner. Reed says: "As Mary Grace speaks, Tyler's mom clutches my arm." Reed, through his sharp eyes and subjective view, continues to unpack the details of McLemore's life. When a cousin, Reta, appears and seems to be taking over McLemore's affairs, leaving Goodson in the lurch, Reed is shocked. "I don't think this was the clockmaker's intention," he says.⁶⁸ Goodson starts taking matters into his own hands, challenging Reta's authority by appropriating items on McLemore's estate that he claims are his own and searching for the gold McLemore is believed to have hidden, taking Reed increasingly into his confidence ("We got to find it, Brian").⁶⁹ But in chapter five, when Goodson gets rough with a man who has stolen a valued family heirloom and intends to "snip off" his finger as punishment, Reed is rattled. This is a response, he says, "which I find unsettling." Likewise, when Reta seeks to acquire some gold nipple rings McLemore had, Reed recoils: "Ugh, I'm just reeling from you saying they should cut his nipples off. Oh, Reta."⁷⁰

Reed steers listeners through shifting sympathies as he reveals further twists to the story, but everything is mediated through his deeply personal

voice. He uses a colloquial tone, an approach that is less available to print journalists, but standard for audio presenters: one that generates intimacy.⁷¹ Listeners learn a new aspect of McLemore's personality—that he had an intense though unconsummated relationship with a gay man named Olin Long. [DT] An email from Long leads Reed to investigate McLemore's sexuality, which is a matter of some ambiguity. In his first email to Reed, McLemore declares: "Me, I am 47, unmarried, sort of, ahem, like ahem—let's just say I might be a fan of David Sedaris, or in other words, I might know who Audre Lorde and Ann Bannon is, if you get the idea. Of course, that could get you killed around here."⁷² [CH]

Reed observes casually: "I took that to mean John was gay, though when we talked about it after, he told me that he'd gone both ways in his life."⁷³ Reed's subsequent, eleven-hour interview with Olin sheds considerable light on McLemore's repressed sexuality. [DI] In chapter six, making what Sims would say is "a judgment call," Reed reveals that McLemore had a sexual relationship with a married man, something McLemore had told him off the record. "It wasn't the fact that he had been with men that he didn't want recorded, but that he had been with this particular guy," Reed explains. Reed justifies including the information on the anonymized man as follows:

First, since John died, two other people who knew him well have told me the same information on the record. Also, John was very clear that he did not believe in God or an afterlife. So John, in his own view, is worm dirt now, unaffected by this. And lastly, what John disclosed, and where it led me after he died, helped me understand him so much more. And I think trying to understand another person is a worthwhile thing to do.⁷⁴ [CH]

Some commentators have wondered whether Reed had the right to make the podcast at all, given that McLemore had died without explicitly consenting to the podcast being about him, not the murder he first wrote to *TAL* about. The question was made more complex because McLemore was known to suffer from depression. Did mental illness affect McLemore's ability to consent? *S-Town's* co-executive producer, Julie Snyder, was adamant that McLemore was aware the focus of the podcast had shifted. "He knew that the story we were interested in was going to be about him and his community and his relationship with that community," she told the *New York Times*.⁷⁵

As for the question of whether journalists should describe only the life experiences to which their subjects have explicitly given consent to make public, the field of biography would be greatly impoverished, indeed reduced to mere public relations, if that edict were followed. Kramer offers insight on the responsibility of the journalist in interpreting a life. "Literary journalism couples cold fact and personal event, in the author's humane company."⁷⁶

While Reed is clearly partisan, warming to the Goodson family and wary of other residents of Bibb County, from the evasive town clerk to the racist denizens of Goodson's Black Sheep Ink tattoo bar, he is never less than humane.

Immersion/Rigorous Reporting

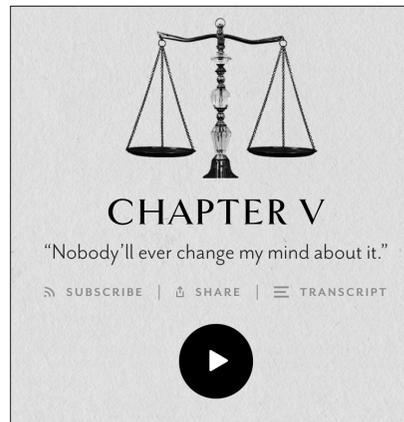
S-Town is rich in details that deepen the storytelling and lead closer to the truth, as Kramer advises.⁷⁷ Chapter four delves into McLemore's career as a horologist, as Reed tracks down the antique clock enthusiasts, clients, and colleagues who were on McLemore's self-penned funeral list. One, his old college professor, tears up as he shows Reed a personalized sun dial McLemore made for him. It had taken McLemore more than twenty years to complete.⁷⁸ [CH]

Among the unsavory people Reed introduces in Goodson's tattoo bar [SC] in chapter two is a six-foot, 350-pound, bearded man, wearing a John Deere hat, "whose name I never do catch, who tells me, quote, 'I'm so fucking fat, I don't care no more,' and lifts up his shirt to show me the giant words he has tattooed on his stomach—'Feed Me.'"⁷⁹ [DI] In showing that these rednecks and racists accepted McLemore, Reed deliberately complicates the view of his subject early on. The ambiguities will only deepen.

In Reed's longitudinal reportage and intensive interviewing, his characters take real shape. One night Reed meets the man named Olin in a motel and records a five-hour interview, followed by a six-hour session the next day. The conversations trace the nearing-sixty-year-old, former Air Force linguist's twelve-year relationship with McLemore and its sublimated sexuality. The edited interview is the spine of chapter six, introducing a little-known

aspect of McLemore's life, crucial to understanding the denouement in chapter seven. [DI, CH] Reed employs in-depth interviewing of the form practiced by many journalists, including Svetlana Alexievich, the first full-time journalist to win the Nobel Prize for literature. As John Hartsock has noted, "Hers is very much an immersion journalism. In her case it is an immersion into other people's emotional lives."⁸⁰ Similarly, Olin describes the unfulfilled yearning of one encounter with McLemore, when McLemore delivers flowers from his nursery to Olin:

I'm sitting there in a truck with John B. McLemore outside a doctor's office picking up my azaleas . . . I wanted to pull his shirt up, expose his belly,



and just kiss all over his belly around that red hair, just to that extent. And I wanted to do it slowly and sensuously . . . It was the hair, the skin, the intelligence, the—he was in a jolly mood that day.⁸¹ [SC]

Hartsock observes of Alexievich, “her subjects slowly open up emotionally as Alexievich earns their trust.”⁸² The same gradual uncovering happens with the characters in *S-Town* over the course of Reed’s numerous visits and phone interviews. Goodson’s portrayal begins to blur from tattoo entrepreneur, dedicated young father, and loyal defender of Mary Grace (his “mama”), to troubled ne’er-do-well who, burdened by the legacy of a violent, predatory father, struggles to accommodate the special place he holds in McLemore’s affections. [CH] McLemore committed suicide the day after Father’s Day, when Goodson and McLemore had gone fishing. It was an idyllic outing:

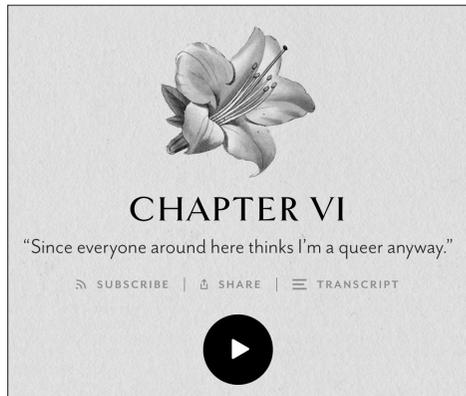
Tyler Goodson: He said, Tyler, you’ve just got to learn to just stop and take some time for yourself, and try to enjoy life . . . And hell, John can’t swim. I mean, hell, we wasn’t in no deeper water than about waist deep, and he wouldn’t go nowhere without me holding his damn hand like a kid. [Reed laughs] We waded up and down the river and stuff, and I was slipping over rocks finding some crawfish and hellgrammites and stuff, showing him. And he never done stuff like that before . . .

Brian Reed: Did it seem like he was saying goodbye?

Tyler Goodson: I don’t know. Hell, we spray-painted our damn names up there on the damn bridge.⁸³ [SC, DI]

But in an example of Sims’s triangulation of stories, the perspective constantly shifts: One minute on Goodson’s side, seeing Cousin Reta as a gold digger; but later, starting to see that

Goodson is crossing a line and that maybe Mary Grace would be better off with Reta. Nowhere is the visceral emotionalism Hartsock identifies from Alexievich’s immersion interviewing⁸⁴ more evident than in Reed’s distillation of McLemore himself. Reed captures McLemore’s ringing self-assessment: “I don’t just look at myself as a forty-nine-year-old, semi-homosexual atheist living in a Shittown full of Baptists in Buttfucksville, Alabama. I look at myself as a citizen of the world.”⁸⁵ [CH]



Reed records McLemore's blistering view of the townsfolk: "A bunch of fussing and fighting, snaggletooth, stolen trucks, meth labs, stabbing, hooping, hollering, and going to jail?"⁸⁶ And he gains McLemore's disarming admission that while on a recorded phone call to Reed, he has "pissed in the sink," as an act of environmental awareness:

Instead of wasting three or four gallons to flush the commode, I just peed here in the kitchen sink and used about one cupful of water to flush the sink. And I got a little short dick, but I got a pretty good aim, so I can usually aim right for the center of that damn thing without splashing everywhere.⁸⁷ [SC]

This descriptive scene acquires additional force, because it is followed immediately by the ringing of a phone. That sound has an inbuilt expectancy, as the listener naturally tries to guess the caller's identity. Tension ratchets upward until, finally, comes tragic news from Goodson's sister-in-law, Skyler. McLemore has taken his own life. The chapter's cliffhanger ending on this point marks an utterly unforeseen narrative twist. [DT] The next chapter opens with a reprise of the call, Skyler's reply this time artfully broken up by Reed's introduction:

Skyler: Has anybody called you?

Brian Reed: No, not that I know. I have a few missed calls, but don't think that they're from anybody down there. Why?

Brian Reed: From *Serial* and *This American Life*, I'm Brian Reed. This is Shittown.

Skyler: Well, we have some bad news to tell you.

Brian Reed: OK.

Skyler: John B. killed his self Monday night.

Brian Reed: Are you kidding me?

Skyler: No.

Brian Reed: Oh my gosh.⁸⁸ [SC, DI]

There is a certain artifice in how Reed has, as the reporter, recorded the sound of his own distress at the news: as an audio journalist, he would understandably have pressed "record" before he made a phone call to the community, but there is still a cool self-awareness in the technique, as he records his faltering voice and expression of sympathy. The effect is to position the listener as almost an eavesdropper on the scene, compelled to imagine what has happened. Here Reed is deploying what Lindgren describes as "sonic elements . . . to create accompanying inner imagery and experiences of intimacy."⁸⁹ The juxtaposition of the joking McLemore peeing in the sink with the terrible reality that follows delivers a savage gut punch.

This raises the matter of structure and a consideration of *S-Town's* aural format.

Structure

Kramer has emphasized that “structure counts,”⁹⁰ and *S-Town* executive producer Julie Snyder concurs: “we map out pretty detailed structures for every episode . . . *when* do you want to know something? . . . *where* are the places that you are going to have a feeling or a realization?”⁹¹ *S-Town*’s seven chapters have an individually delineated theme and a title that comes from inter-

view quotes. But Kramer also advises literary journalists to mix “primary narrative with tales and digressions to amplify and reframe events.”⁹² This, too, is abundantly clear in *S-Town*. In chapter five, for instance, Reed rings Goodson’s mother but instead finds Goodson’s grandmother, Miss Irene Hicks, on the end of the phone. This leads into an entirely new perspective on Goodson’s situation, as Miss Hicks details the nine felony charges against Goodson, then describes her troubled extended family’s situation. Besides supporting Goodson, she looks after a son named Jimmy who was brain-damaged after being shot. She also supports Goodson’s mother, who finds it hard to hold a job because of health problems. There are extended family members living with her and a dog about to have a litter of puppies, while Goodson and his children and pregnant girlfriend are living in their half-finished house. [CH] Reed wonders how she copes. “I just take my medicine and take my Bocelli,” she replies. [DI] That is Andrea Bocelli, the opera singer, soon to become a player in the story.

As John McPhee has observed, “Structure . . . is the juxtaposition of parts, the way in which two parts of a piece of writing, merely by lying side-by-side, can comment on each other without a word spoken. The way in which the thing is assembled, you can get much said.”⁹³ By harnessing the nature of the audio medium, this juxtaposition is amplified in *S-Town*. Reed layers voice with sound—in this case, music—to create a heightened meaning. In audio storytelling, sound itself is used as punctuation, or to set mood. A crow’s mournful call, a child’s laughter, a door slamming, these audio prompts can evoke affective responses in the listener.⁹⁴ Music can be even more potent. In chapter five, for instance, Miss Hicks muses again on Goodson’s behavior: “I can’t make up my mind whether to scold him or love him or something.”



Underlining her observation, the swelling opening bars of “La donna è mobile” immediately follow: the Verdi aria sung by, of course, Bocelli. With careful phrasing, the music lowers and Reed’s narration comes over it, reflecting on the conundrum of Goodson’s character, before Bocelli returns in full throttle and Miss Hicks “responds” to him with delight: “Oh, that man’s got a voice like an angel.”

This clever placement of music adds texture and pace, embellishing Miss Hicks’s torn feelings for Goodson. But it becomes masterful when Reed returns to the piece later in the chapter. This time, Goodson has been self-doubting his own moral character and concludes: “I wish I had a little better guidance,” an allusion to his father’s being a convicted sex offender. This segues back to the same Verdi aria where, over the opening phrase, Reed observes that Goodson’s erratic behavior has inspired some of McLemore’s most virtuosic rants. [CH] The music level dips and the soulful opera counterpoints McLemore’s baleful brilliance:

We ain’t nothing but a nation of goddamn, chicken-shit, horse-shit, tattle-tale, pissy-ass, whiny, fat, flabby, out of shape Facebook-looking damn twerp-fest, peaking out the windows and slipping around, listening in on the cell phones and spying in the peephole and peeping in the crack of the goddamned door, and listening in the fucking sheet rock. You know, Mr. Putin, please, show some fucking mercy! I mean, come on, drop a fucking bomb, won’t you?⁹⁵ [SC, DI]

With exquisite choreography, the music ends in a crashing coda that adds dramatic resolution. There is an audible sigh from McLemore, exhausted by his own tirade. Then, in a starkly contrasting tone, he mutters: “I gotta have me some tea.”⁹⁶

Substituting “listener” for reader leads to numerous resonances in this section of chapter five, between audio’s renowned ability to create pictures in the mind, with the listener as co-creator,⁹⁷ and Kramer’s vision of what the literary journalist sets out to achieve. “The writer paints sensory scenes, confides on a level of intimacy that stirs readers’ own experiences and sensations, and sets up alchemical interplay between constructed text and readers’ psyches. The readers’ realizations are what the author and readers have made together.”⁹⁸

Other structural aspects emerge spontaneously. Goodson’s Uncle Jimmy, brain damaged from a bullet lodged in his skull, is present at some gatherings. He expresses, in the form of verbal affirmations, his understanding of what is said. Those expressions provide sometimes sharp commentary on the unfolding events, as when Goodson is describing how McLemore promised he would leave him some gold. “Beaucoup and beaucoup of stuff,” intones

Uncle Jimmy.⁹⁹ These add a degree of aural symbolism to the deep symbology of the podcast series, discussed next.

Symbolism

Reed and his cast of characters are forever trying to decipher what Sims calls “the symbolism of details.” In chapter one, Reed and McLemore are briefly lost in McLemore’s maze—a telling start. “It actually has sixty-four possible solutions, depending on how you swap the gates around,” he tells Reed, foreshadowing the labyrinthine possibilities of this story.¹⁰⁰ McLemore also describes the “witness marks” on the old clocks he fixes: the imperfections put there by the horologists who have repaired the antique timepieces through the ages. It is a beautiful metaphor for the flaws that will be uncovered in the people of *S-Town* and the ways in which those flaws provide insight into the messy reality of human beings.

The clocks and their long histories also invoke McLemore’s troubled past. For all his brilliance, his life has been full of missteps—dropping out of university, closeted sexuality, ambiguous social attitudes, and a sense of doom about impending climate change. In the opening moments of the podcast, Reed cleverly intertwines both symbols: “I’m told fixing an old clock can be maddening. You’re constantly wondering if you’ve just spent hours going down a path that will likely take you nowhere.”¹⁰¹ The clocks and sundials—to which McLemore devoted so much of his time and skill—bear plangent mottos that further build the symbolic meaning. One, “tedious and brief,”¹⁰² provides McLemore’s epitaph. The potassium cyanide that will kill McLemore at the end of chapter two is introduced in chapter one as McLemore drunkenly foments a chemical reaction on a dime Reed supplies, from which the coin emerges as a gold-plated souvenir, a powerful allusion to transformation.

Tattoos take on increasing symbology through the series. Chapter two opens in Goodson’s tattoo bar with its pun-like name, Black Sheep Ink. [SC] He considers this place his “church.” One patron, Bubba, thinks of Goodson’s tattooing service as providing a form of therapeutic expression for *S-Town*’s white trailer trash. By the final chapter, though, the story is in much darker territory. McLemore has descended into a terrible depression, and the pain of extreme tattooing has become something between a BDSM ritual and an expression of his thwarted, perhaps fatherly, feelings for Goodson. [SC] With heavy irony, McLemore now calls his compulsive, masochistic tattooing sessions with Goodson “church.” He declaims the links: “Wild Turkey is the holy water. The little filthy-ass room is the sanctuary . . . the tattoo needles are the reliquaries.”¹⁰³ [DI]

The marks McLemore acquires are also symbolic. He has taken a switch

from the woods, had others beat him with it and then tattoo over the welts. The shocking, flayed imagery of his back is supposed to resemble the floggings found on a freed slave. Given Alabama's ardent pro-slavery history, the image is particularly loaded, reinforcing the many references to racial bigotry throughout the podcast, such as the name of the local lumber mill, KyKen-Kee, supposedly based on the proprietor's family initials and invoking the contraction KKK.

Above this landscape, hovering none too subtly, is the ghost of William Faulkner, denizen of this Southern Gothic landscape. His short story, "A Rose for Emily"¹⁰⁴ features a psychologically damaged woman who holes up in a decaying mansion with her parent and struggles against an oppressive society. On Reed's first visit, McLemore presents him with a copy as "bedtime reading," making an obvious connection to his own situation. The podcast takes this link further, resurrecting a 1968 musical adaptation of the story by the British rock group, the Zombies, as its theme song,¹⁰⁵ to close each episode in haunting harmony.

Sociological Awareness and Psychological Astuteness

S-Town displays a keen awareness of where McLemore's life and activities fit within the prism of Alabama and broader U.S. life. Goodson's tattoo bar doubles as a drinking club for "a collection of misfits, of self-proclaimed criminals and runaways and hillbillies."¹⁰⁶ Bibb County is ninety-five percent white, "and that is no accident," Reed reports.¹⁰⁷ It was the last place in the state to allow desegregation of schools, in 1967. Reed marvels at the openness of the bigotry, proclaimed right into his microphone. Bubba complains, "If you got a taxpaying job, you got to take care of some nigger's wife that's in jail because she's drawing a child support check."¹⁰⁸ [DI] Reclaiming a subjective voice, Reed says he is glad now that he took his wife's advice and made his Facebook page private before he visited *S-Town*. It has pictures of their recent wedding and, unlike Reed, she is Black. [DT]

The more Reed investigates and explores, the more nuanced his depictions of the people he meets become. [CH] In keeping with what Kramer says is the whole point of literary journalism's long immersions, Reed starts "to comprehend subjects at a level Henry James termed 'felt life' It leaves quirks and self-deceptions, hypocrisies and graces intact and exposed; in fact, it uses them to deepen understanding."¹⁰⁹ By the final chapter, Reed is clear-eyed about McLemore: "So much of the stuff John said he hated about Shittown—Harleys, tattoos, misogyny, and homophobia, racism, he said he despised it. But that stuff was part of him, too."¹¹⁰ [CH]

When Reta's husband dismisses Goodson as a criminal, Reed observes:

“That’s what Tyler’s been reduced to in their eyes. But this is what conflicts like this do to the participants—reduce them.” Goodson has his own crisis of conscience. Reed has been pressing him on his plan to mutilate the man who stole his grandfather’s gun. “I kept questioning Tyler, trying to understand why he thought this was okay, but nothing he said did quite make me understand. And I realized it was probably going to stay that way.”¹¹¹

As he is about to hang up, Goodson suddenly asks Reed, “Do you see me being a bad person?” Reed replies, “No, man, I see you as a complicated, normal person. You know, I disagree with some of your decisions. But you also—you’ve had a very different life experience than I’ve had.”¹¹² [DI]

Rather than offer simplistic truths, *S-Town* honors the unknowability of real life. Because of McLemore’s horological practice of fire gilding, he may have suffered from mercury poisoning, which would have affected his mental acuity. Perhaps his repressed sexuality added to the pressure he felt. And it is possible that he needed more of an outlet for his amazing intellect than could be found in the dedicated fellow horologists and friends who had held him dear over many years, before he withdrew from them.

McLemore’s suicide note, which with typical outrageousness he emailed to the town clerk, provides a deeply moving finale to the podcast. Reed, McLemore’s interlocutor-turned-friend, reads the note:

I have not lived a spectacular life. But within my four dozen plus years, I’ve had many more hours to pursue that which I chose, instead of moiling over that which I detested. I have coaxed many infirm clocks back to mellifluous life, studied projective geometry and built astrolabes, sundials, taught myself nineteenth century electroplating, bronzing, patination, micro machining, horology, learned piano . . .

But the best times of my life, I realize, were the times I spent in the forest and field . . . I have audited the discourse of the hickories, oaks, and pines, even when no wind was present.¹¹³ [SC]

This epic depiction of one man ends with Reed describing how McLemore’s great-grandfather, a notorious gangster, obtained the family estate by extortion and murder. His mother, Mary Grace, took to sitting on the land while pregnant with McLemore, rubbing her stomach and begging God to make her child a genius.¹¹⁴ As listeners now know, she got her wish. And in delivering the story of this mordant, self-destructive prodigy, Reed has elevated the art of audio storytelling to new heights. As the 2017 Peabody Award judges’ citation noted: “If ‘Serial’ launched the podcast as mass entertainment through a police procedural, its sibling successor, ‘S-Town,’ breaks new ground for the medium by creating the first true audio novel, a nonfiction biography constructed in the style and form of a 7-chapter novel.”¹¹⁵

Conclusion

The narrative podcast form, if executed to the highest standards, offers a new mode in which digital literary journalism can flourish—one exemplified by *S-Town*. Crafted audio storytelling has its own narrative principles, which apply the grammar and aesthetics of the audio medium to storytelling technique, paying particular attention to tone, texture, and temporality.¹¹⁶ These qualities can marry well with the characteristics of literary journalism, framed in the opt-in, on-demand ecology of digital journalism. *S-Town* displays abundantly the four characteristics of digital literary journalism devised by Jacobson, Marino, and Gutsche. Further, the materiality of audio allows for the actual *recording* of evocative scenes and dialogue, while characterization is forcefully achieved by a mixture of authorial observation and carefully edited interview excerpts. Dramatic tension is heightened by using structural conventions of crafted audio storytelling, including use of music and sound to amplify narrative arcs. The result is a powerful, affective work that deepens understanding and allows the listener “to behold others’ lives, often set within far clearer contexts than we can bring to our own.”¹¹⁷

Ultimately, *S-Town* delivers what Kramer describes as the epitome of what literary journalism can offer: “the process moves readers, and writers, toward realization, compassion, and in the best of cases, wisdom.”¹¹⁸

(Note: The author would like to thank the team at Literary Journalism Studies, in particular Associate Editor Marcia Prior-Miller and Editor Bill Reynolds, for editorial and fact-checking assistance.)

Siobhán McHugh is Honorary Associate Professor in Media and Communications at the University of Sydney. An award-winning writer, documentary-maker, and podcast producer, she has published four books of social history, including The Snowy—A History (New South, 2019), the first edition of which won the New South Wales State Literary Award for Nonfiction. Narrative podcasts she has co-produced have won six gold awards at New York Festivals.



Notes

- ¹ Kramer, "Breakable Rules for Literary Journalists," 21.
- ² "About This American Life," para. 1.
- ³ "About," para. 2.
- ⁴ Koenig et al., *Serial*, was launched in 2014; Reed and Snyder, *S-Town*, in 2017.
- ⁵ Hilmes, "The New Materiality of Radio: Sound on Screens," 53–54.
- ⁶ The descriptor has been removed from the current TAL website but can still be found on podcast platforms such as Podcast Planet. See <http://www.podcast-planet.com/storytelling/the-american-life/>.
- ⁷ Glass, introduction to *The New Kings of Nonfiction*, 12.
- ⁸ Glass, 10.
- ⁹ Koenig et al., *Serial*; Reed and Snyder, *S-Town*.
- ¹⁰ Glass, introduction to *The New Kings of Nonfiction*, 8.
- ¹¹ Jacobson, Marino, and Gutsche, "The Digital Animation of Literary Journalism," 530.
- ¹² Levins, "Largest Newspaper Web Series Ever?" 22.
- ¹³ Jacobson, Marino, and Gutsche, "The Digital Animation of Literary Journalism," 528. See also Branch, "Snow Fall: The Avalanche at Tunnel Creek."
- ¹⁴ Dowling and Vogan, "Can We 'Snowfall' This?" 209, 221.
- ¹⁵ Henley, "Firestorm."
- ¹⁶ Giles and Hitch, "Multimedia Features as 'Narra-descriptive' Texts," 81–83.
- ¹⁷ Coates, "The Case for Reparations."
- ¹⁸ Crombie, Nakamura, and Killen, "Ghosts of Highway 20."
- ¹⁹ Biewen and Dilworth, "One Story, Week by Week," 77–89.
- ²⁰ Quah, "*Serial* Season 3 Is the Podcast's Biggest Ever," para. 2.
- ²¹ Jacobson, Marino, and Gutsche, "The Digital Animation of Literary Journalism," 527–46; Wolfe, *The New Journalism*, 3–52; Sims, *The Literary Journalists*; Sims, *True Stories*; Kramer, "Breakable Rules for Literary Journalists," 21–34; Boynton, *The New New Journalism*.
- ²² Grierson, "The Documentary Producer," 8.
- ²³ Radio documentary and radio feature have different cultural and regional interpretations, but both refer to crafted audio storytelling formats. See McHugh, "How Podcasting Is Changing the Audio Storytelling Genre," 5–9.
- ²⁴ See for example, Madsen, "Radio and the Documentary Imagination," 189–98; Crisell, *Understanding Radio*.
- ²⁵ McHugh, "The Affective Power of Sound," 187–206.
- ²⁶ Street, "Poetry, Texas: Review 1," 6.
- ²⁷ Bull and Back, "Introduction: Into Sound," 9.
- ²⁸ Lacey, "Listening in the Digital Age," 13.
- ²⁹ Listing the awards is beyond the scope of this study. For examples, see the winners, in the storytelling/investigative category, of national podcast awards such as the British Podcast Awards, <https://www.britishpodcastawards.com/>; and the Australian Podcast Awards, <https://australianpodcastawards.com/>. See also the

winners of Peabody Awards for podcast, <http://www.peabodyawards.com/results/podcast/1/null/null/title/asc>; the podcast categories in the New York Festivals (Radio), <https://radio.newyorkfestivals.com/winners/List/0ba71550-d2a9-40b0-9885-f3912b179fa3>; and the newly created, in 2020, audio reporting category for the Pulitzer Prize, <https://www.pulitzer.org/prize-winners-by-category/631>.

³⁰ *RadioDoc Review*, 2014–present.

³¹ Chion, *Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen*, 208, 252.

³² British producer Alan Hall discusses these concepts poetically throughout the chapter, “Cigarettes and Dance Steps,” 126–37.

³³ Hall, 131.

³⁴ British journalist Ben Hammersley coined the term for an article in the *Guardian*. The first podcast artifact was a form of audio blogging, developed in 2001 by two U.S. innovators, Adam Curry, a video journalist at MTV, and David Winer, a tech innovator who invented the RSS (Really Simple Syndication) feed by which podcasts are distributed online. See Hammersley, “Audible Revolution”; Nuzum, “The Story of the First Podcast Feed.”

³⁵ Webster, “The State of Podcast Listening for 2021,” para 5.

³⁶ Llinares, Fox, and Berry, *Podcasting: New Aural Cultures and Digital Media*, 4–5; Spinelli and Dann, *Podcasting: The Audio Media Revolution*, 2.

³⁷ For example, transgender reporter Lewis Wallace was fired from the American Public Media show “Marketplace” in 2017 for rejecting an objective tone. See <https://medium.com/@lewispants/i-was-fired-from-my-journalism-job-ten-days-into-trump-c3bc014ce51d>. Wallace later wrote a book and created a podcast, *The View from Somewhere*, to examine the concept of objectivity. Robert Boynton reviewed the podcast for *RadioDoc Review*. See Boynton, “The View from Somewhere: A Review.”

³⁸ Koenig et al. *Serial*, Season One, Episode 5. <https://serialpodcast.org/season-one>.

³⁹ Lindgren, “Intimacy and Emotions in Podcast Journalism,” 11.

⁴⁰ Glass, introduction to *The New Kings of Nonfiction*, 7.

⁴¹ Dowling and Miller, “Immersive Audio Storytelling,” 170.

⁴² Biewen and Dilworth, “One Story, Week by Week,” 77.

⁴³ Lau, “Brian Reed on How One Novel Inspired *S-Town*’s Style,” para. 4, 5, 6, 7.

⁴⁴ Maguire, “Literary Journalism on the Air,” 47–64.

⁴⁵ Maguire, 51.

⁴⁶ Lindgren, “Personal Narrative Journalism,” 27.

⁴⁷ Lindgren, 37.

⁴⁸ Dowling and Miller, “Immersive Audio Storytelling,” 178.

⁴⁹ Waldmann, “From Storytelling to Storylistening,” 7–12.

⁵⁰ Sims, “The Literary Journalists,” 4.

⁵¹ Sims, *True Stories*, 16.

⁵² Kramer, “Breakable Rules for Literary Journalists,” 21–34.

⁵³ Boynton, “About the Book,” para. 1. See also, Boynton, introduction to *The New New Journalism*, xi.

⁵⁴ Jacobsen, Marino, and Gutsche, "Digital Animation," 536–38.

⁵⁵ Wolfe, *The New Journalism*, 31–32.

⁵⁶ Jacobsen, Marino, and Gutsche, "Digital Animation," 532. Coding for the present study is based on these authors' framework.

⁵⁷ *S-Town*, chapter 1, <https://stowndpodcast.org/>. See also Reed and Snyder, *S-Town*, <https://stowndpodcast.org/>.

⁵⁸ *S-Town*, chapter 1.

⁵⁹ *S-Town*, chapter 1.

⁶⁰ Capote, *In Cold Blood*, 3.

⁶¹ *S-Town*, chapter 1.

⁶² Jones, *The Known World*.

⁶³ *S-Town*, chapter 1.

⁶⁴ *S-Town*, chapter 1.

⁶⁵ Kramer, "Breakable Rules," 29.

⁶⁶ Brian Reed is credited here as *S-Town's* author, as he reported the story, gathered the interviews, and wrote the script he narrates. But it should be noted that crafted audio storytelling is usually a team effort, where producers in particular play a key role in designing and structuring the form. Julie Snyder, as executive producer, played a pivotal part in determining the creative shape of *S-Town*, as is acknowledged on the podcast's credits. See Reed and Snyder, *S-Town*.

⁶⁷ *S-Town*, chapter 1.

⁶⁸ *S-Town*, chapter 3.

⁶⁹ *S-Town*, chapter 3.

⁷⁰ *S-Town*, chapter 5.

⁷¹ See McAdam, "The Journey from Print to Radio Storytelling."

⁷² *S-Town*, chapter 3.

⁷³ *S-Town*, chapter 3.

⁷⁴ *S-Town*, chapter 6.

⁷⁵ Stevens, "*S-Town's* Treatment of Its Main Character Was Riveting. But Was It Unlawful?" para. 33.

⁷⁶ Kramer, "Breakable Rules," 34.

⁷⁷ Kramer, 34.

⁷⁸ *S-Town*, chapter 4.

⁷⁹ *S-Town*, chapter 2.

⁸⁰ Hartsock, "Svetlana Alexievich and the Nobel Prize for Literatures," 26.

⁸¹ *S-Town*, chapter 6.

⁸² Hartsock, "Svetlana Alexievich," 26.

⁸³ *S-Town*, chapter 3.

⁸⁴ Hartsock, "Svetlana Alexievich," 26.

⁸⁵ *S-Town*, chapter 7.

⁸⁶ *S-Town*, chapter 2.

⁸⁷ *S-Town*, chapter 2.

⁸⁸ *S-Town*, chapter 3.

⁸⁹ Lindgren, "Intimacy and Emotions," 13.

- ⁹⁰ Kramer, “Breakable Rules,” 32–33.
- ⁹¹ Snyder, “Speaking with *Serial*’s Julie Snyder,” 9.08.
- ⁹² Kramer, “Breakable Rules,” 32.
- ⁹³ Sims, quoting McPhee’s description from interview published in “The Literary Journalists,” 13.
- ⁹⁴ Hall, “Cigarettes and Dance Steps,” 127–29.
- ⁹⁵ *S-Town*, chapter 5.
- ⁹⁶ *S-Town*, chapter 5.
- ⁹⁷ See Biewen and Dilworth, *Reality Radio*, p. 2, para. 3, L16–17; p. 5, para. 2; p. 8, para. 2; p. 12, para. 4, L2–4; p. 230, para. 3; McHugh, “Memoir for Your Ears: The Podcast Life,” 106–10.
- ⁹⁸ Kramer, “Breakable Rules,” 33.
- ⁹⁹ *S-Town*, chapter 3.
- ¹⁰⁰ Indeed, false starts and misconceptions have become something of a trope in narrative podcasts, featuring in Nocera’s *The Shrink Next Door*; Goffard’s *Dirty John*; Barry’s *Jungle Prince*, and, inevitably, Koenig et al.’s *Serial*.
- ¹⁰¹ *S-Town*, chapter 1.
- ¹⁰² *S-Town*, chapter 2.
- ¹⁰³ *S-Town*, chapter 7.
- ¹⁰⁴ Faulkner, “A Rose for Emily.”
- ¹⁰⁵ The Zombies, *Odessey and Oracle*.
- ¹⁰⁶ *S-Town*, chapter 2.
- ¹⁰⁷ *S-Town*, chapter 7.
- ¹⁰⁸ *S-Town*, chapter 2.
- ¹⁰⁹ Kramer, “Breakable Rules,” 23.
- ¹¹⁰ *S-Town*, chapter 7.
- ¹¹¹ *S-Town*, chapter 5.
- ¹¹² *S-Town*, chapter 5.
- ¹¹³ *S-Town*, chapter 7.
- ¹¹⁴ *S-Town*, chapter 7.
- ¹¹⁵ Peabody, “*S-Town* (stownpodcast.org).”
- ¹¹⁶ McHugh, “Memoir,” 106–10.
- ¹¹⁷ Kramer, “Breakable Rules,” 34.
- ¹¹⁸ Kramer, 34.

Bibliography

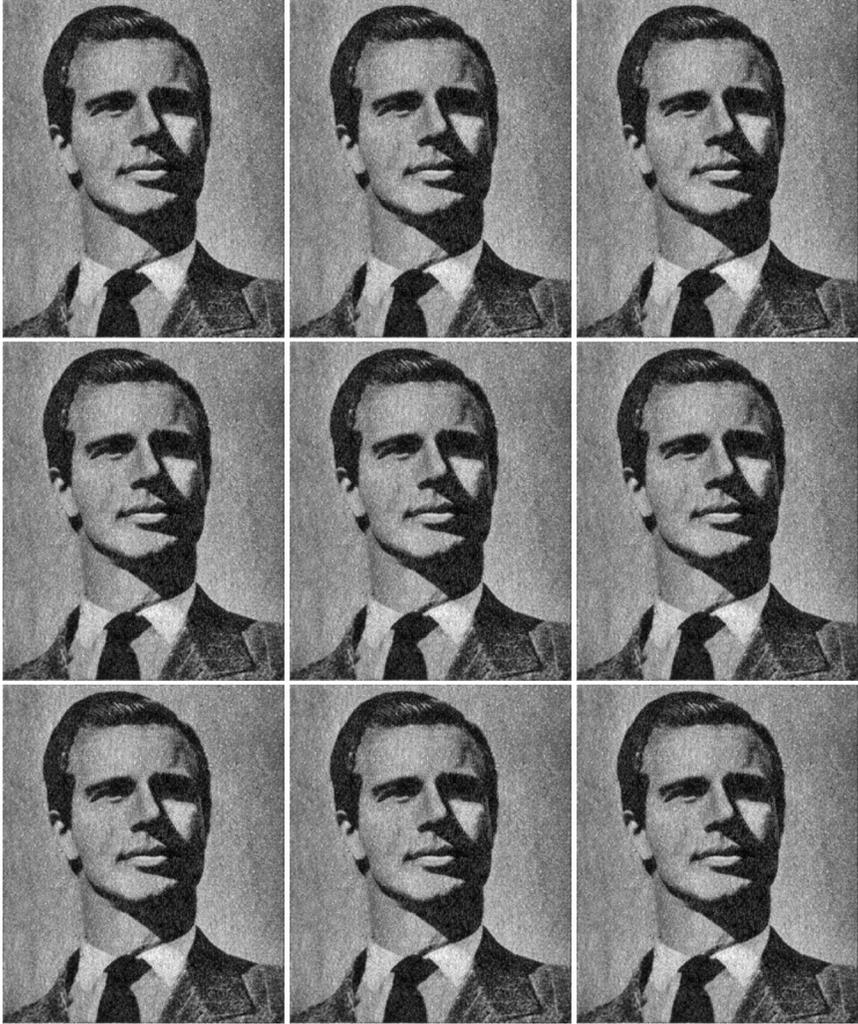
- “About This American Life.” *This American Life*. WBEZ Chicago. Accessed June 10, 2020. <https://www.thisamericanlife.org/about>.
- Barry, Ellen. *The Jungle Prince*. Podcast Audio. *New York Times*. 2019–. Accessed July 16, 2021. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/22/world/asia/the-jungle-prince-of-delhi.html>.
- Biewen, John, and Alexa Dilworth. “One Story, Week by Week: An Interview with Sarah Koenig and Julie Snyder.” In Biewen and Dilworth, *Reality Radio: Telling True Stories in Sound*, 77–89.

- , eds. *Reality Radio: Telling True Stories in Sound*. 2nd ed., rev. & exp. Durham: University of North Carolina Press, 2017.
- Boynton, Robert S. "About the Book." *The New New Journalism: Conversations with America's Best Nonfiction Writers on Their Craft*. <https://www.newnewjournalism.com/about.htm>.
- . *The New New Journalism: Conversations with America's Best Nonfiction Writers on Their Craft*. New York: Vintage, 2005. See esp., Introduction and Preface.
- . "The View from Somewhere: A Review." *RadioDoc Review* 6, no. 1 (2020). <https://ro.uow.edu.au/rdr/vol6/iss1/4/>.
- Branch, John. "Snow Fall: The Avalanche at Tunnel Creek." *New York Times*, December 20, 2012. <http://www.nytimes.com/projects/2012/snow-fall/index.html#!/?part=tunnel-creek>.
- Bull, Michael, and Les Back. "Introduction: Into Sound." In *The Auditory Culture Reader*, edited by Michael Bull and Les Back, 1–18. Sensory Formations Series. New York: Berg, 2003.
- Capote, Truman. *In Cold Blood*. New York: Vintage, 1965.
- Chion, Michel. *Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen*. 2nd ed. Edited and translated by Claudia Gorbman. New York: Columbia University Press, 2019.
- Coates, Ta-Nehisi. "The Case for Reparations." *Atlantic*, June 2014. <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/06/the-case-for-reparations/361631/>.
- Crisell, Andrew. *Understanding Radio*. 3rd ed. London: Routledge, 2006.
- Crombie, Noelle, Beth Nakamura, and Dave Killen. "Ghosts of Highway 20." *Oregonian*, December 2, 2018. Accessed June 10, 2020. <https://projects.oregonlive.com/ghostsofhighway20/marlene/>.
- Dowling, David O., and Kyle Miller. "Immersive Audio Storytelling: Podcasting and Serial Documentary in the Digital Publishing Industry." *Journal of Radio & Audio Media* 26, no. 1 (2019): 167–84.
- Dowling, David O., and Travis Vogan. "Can We 'Snowfall' This? Digital Long-form and the Race for the Tablet Market." *Digital Journalism* 3, no. 2 (2015): 209–24.
- Faulkner, William. "A Rose for Emily." *Forum*, April 30, 1930, 119–30.
- Giles, Fiona, and Georgia Hitch. "Multimedia Features as 'Narra-descriptive' Texts: Exploring the Relationship between Literary Journalism and Multimedia." *Literary Journalism Studies* 9, no. 2 (Fall 2017): 74–91.
- Glass, Ira, ed. *The New Kings of Nonfiction*. New York: Penguin, 2007. See esp. Introduction.
- . *This American Life*. Podcast audio. WBEZ Chicago, 1995–present. <https://www.thisamericanlife.org/>.
- Goffard, Christopher. *Dirty John*. Podcast Audio. *Los Angeles Times*, 2017–present. Accessed July 16, 2021. <https://www.latimes.com/projects/la-me-dirty-john/>.
- Grierson, John. "The Documentary Producer." *Cinema Quarterly* 2, no.1 (1933): 7–9.
- Hall, Alan. "Cigarettes and Dance Steps." In Biewen and Dilworth, *Reality Radio: Telling True Stories in Sound*, 126–37.

- Hammersley, Ben. "Audible Revolution." *Guardian*, February 11, 2004. <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2004/feb/12/broadcasting.digitalmedia>.
- Hartsock, John. "Svetlana Alexievich and the Nobel Prize for Literatures." *Literary Journalism: The Newsletter of the IALJS* 10, no. 2 (Spring 2016): 26–27. https://s35767.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Literary_Journalism_v10n2_Spring_2016.pdf.
- Henley, Jon. "Firestorm." *Guardian*, May 23, 2013. Accessed June 10, 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/interactive/2013/may/26/firestorm-bush-fire-dunalley-holmes-family>.
- Hilmes, Michele. "The New Materiality of Radio: Sound on Screens." In *Radio's New Wave: Global Sound in the Digital Era*. Edited by Jason Loviglio and Michele Hilmes, 43–61. New York, Oxford: Routledge, 2013.
- Jacobson, Susan, Jacqueline Marino, and Robert E. Gutsche Jr. "The Digital Animation of Literary Journalism." *Journalism* 17, no. 4 (2016): 527–46.
- Jones, Edward P. *The Known World*. New York: Amistad, 2003.
- Koenig, Sarah, Dana Chivvis, Emily Condon, and Julie Snyder. *Serial, Season One*. Podcast audio. WBEZ Chicago, October 3, 2014, to present. Accessed November 27, 2019. <https://serialpodcast.org/season-one>.
- Kramer, Mark. "Breakable Rules for Literary Journalists." *Nieman Storyboard*, January 1, 1995. <https://niemanstoryboard.org/stories/breakable-rules-for-literary-journalists/>. Accessed November 17, 2019. Republished June 1995 in Sims and Kramer, *Literary Journalism: A New Collection of the Best American Nonfiction*. Ballantine Books (New York). Page references are the Ballantine edition.
- Lacey, Kate. "Listening in the Digital Age." In *Radio's New Wave: Global Sound in the Digital Era*, edited by Jason Loviglio and Michele Hilmes, 9–23. New York and London: Routledge, 2013.
- Lau, Melody. "Brian Reed on How One Novel Inspired S-Town's Style." CBC, April 19, 2017. Accessed November 17, 2019. <https://www.cbc.ca/radio/q/blog/brian-reed-on-how-one-novel-inspired-s-town-s-style-1.4074169>.
- Levins, Hoag. "Largest Newspaper Web Series Ever? *Philadelphia Inquirer's* 'Black Hawk Down' at www3.phillynews.com/packages/somalia/nov16/." *Editor & Publisher* 130, no. 48, November 29, 1997, 22.
- Lindgren, Mia. "Intimacy and Emotions in Podcast Journalism: A Study of Award-Winning Australian and British Podcasts." *Journalism Practice* (2021): 1–16. Accessed July 27, 2021. doi:10.1080/17512786.2021.1943497.
- . "Personal Narrative Journalism and Podcasting." *Radio Journal: International Studies in Broadcast & Audio Media* 14, no. 1 (2016): 23–41. doi:10.1386/rajo.14.1.23_1.
- Llinares, Dario, Neil Fox, and Richard Berry, eds. *Podcasting: New Aural Cultures and Digital Media*. Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, an imprint of Springer International, 2018.
- Madsen, Virginia M. "Radio and the Documentary Imagination: Thirty Years of Experiment, Innovation, and Revelation." *Radio Journal: International Studies in Broadcast & Audio Media* 3, no. 3 (2005): 189–98. doi: 10.1386/rajo.3.3.189/1.

- Maguire, Miles. "Literary Journalism on the Air: What David Isay's Travels in the Footsteps of Joseph Mitchell Can Tell Us about the Nature of Multimedia." *Literary Journalism Studies* 6, no. 1 (Spring 2014): 47–64.
- McAdam, Alison. "The Journey from Print to Radio Storytelling: A Guide for Navigating a New Landscape." *NPR Training*, December 6, 2017. <https://training.npr.org/2017/12/06/the-journey-from-print-to-radio-storytelling-a-guide-for-navigating-a-new-landscape/#section2>.
- McHugh, Siobhán. "The Affective Power of Sound: Oral History on Radio." *Oral History Review* 39, no. 2 (Summer/Fall 2012): 187–206.
- . "How Podcasting Is Changing the Audio Storytelling Genre." *Radio Journal: International Studies in Broadcast & Audio Media* 14, no. 1 (2016): 65–82. doi: 10.1386/rajo.14.1.65_1.
- . "Memoir for Your Ears: The Podcast Life." In *Mediating Memory: Tracing the Limits of Memoir*, edited by Bunty Avieson, Fiona Giles, and Sue Joseph, 104–122. New York and London: Routledge, 2018.
- Nocera, Joe. *The Shrink Next Door. Podcast Audio*. Wondery and Bloomberg. 2019–2021. Accessed July 16, 2021. <https://www.bloomberg.com/features/the-shrink-next-door/>.
- Nuzum, Eric. "The Story of the First Podcast Feed." *Podcast News*, January 20, 2021. <https://podnews.net/article/first-podcast-feed-history>.
- Peabody. "S-Town (stownpodcast.org)." Accessed November 4, 2020. <http://www.peabodyawards.com/award-profile/s-town>.
- Quah, Nicholas. "Serial Season 3 Is the Podcast's Biggest Ever." *Vulture*, December 3, 2018. Accessed November 18, 2019. <https://www.vulture.com/2018/12/serial-season-3-50-million-downloads.html>.
- RadioDoc Review*, 2014–Present. <https://ro.uow.edu.au/rdr/>.
- Reed, Brian, and Julie Snyder. *S-Town*. Podcast audio. WBEZ Chicago, 2017–present. Chapters 1–7. Accessed November 27, 2019. <https://stownpodcast.org/>.
- Sims, Norman, ed. "The Literary Journalists." In *The Literary Journalists*, 3–25. New York: Ballantine Books, 1984. Also available online at <https://normansims.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/The-Literary-Journalists.pdf>.
- . *True Stories: A Century of Literary Journalism*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2007.
- Snyder, Julie. "Speaking with: Serial's Julie Snyder about Making Groundbreaking Podcasts." Interview by Siobhán McHugh. *Conversation*, December 15, 2016. <https://theconversation.com/speaking-with-serials-julie-snyder-about-making-groundbreaking-podcasts-70411>.
- Spinelli, Martin, and Lance Dann. *Podcasting: The Audio Media Revolution*. New York, London: Bloomsbury, 2019.
- Stevens, Matt. "S-Town's Treatment of Its Main Character Was Riveting. But Was It Unlawful?" *New York Times*, July 20, 2018. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/20/arts/s-town-podcast-lawsuit-john-b-mclemore.html>.
- S-Town*, Chapters 1–7. <https://stownpodcast.org/>. See also Reed and Snyder, *S-Town*.

- Street, Seán. "Poetry, Texas: Review 1." *RadioDoc Review* 1, no.1 (March 2014): 1–7. <https://ro.uow.edu.au/rdr/vol1/iss1/4/>.
- Waldmann, Ella. "From Storytelling to Storylistening: How the Hit Podcast *S-Town* Reconfigured the Production and Reception of Narrative Nonfiction." *Ex-centric Narratives: Journal of Anglophone Literature, Culture and Media* 4 (2020): 28–42.
- Wallace, Lewis. "I Was Fired from My Journalism Job Ten Days into Trump." *Medium* (blog). February 1, 2017. <https://medium.com/@lewispants/i-was-fired-from-my-journalism-job-ten-days-into-trump-c3bc014ce51d>.
- Webster, Tom. "The State of Podcast Listening for 2021: Podcasting Finds a Way." *Tom Webster* (blog). Accessed July 12, 2021. <https://webby2001.medium.com/the-state-of-podcast-listening-for-2021-podcasting-finds-a-way-b485c530c55a>.
- Wolfe, Tom. *The New Journalism: With an Anthology*, edited by Tom Wolfe and E. W. Johnson. New York: Harper & Row, 1973. See esp. Part 1, The New Journalism.
- Zombies. *Odessey and Oracle*. Date Records, 1968.



John Hersey, 1952. Photographer unknown. Wikimedia Commons.

Under the Influence: The Impact of Johannes A. Siemes, SJ's Eyewitness Report on John Hersey's "Hiroshima"

Susan E. Swanberg
University of Arizona, United States

Abstract: August 6, 2020, marked the passage of seventy-five years since the bombing of Hiroshima. It is fitting, therefore, to re-examine well-known, little-known, and forgotten details that influenced John Hersey's classic work of literary journalism, "Hiroshima." Hersey often noted that Thornton Wilder's fictional morality tale, *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*, inspired the plot device he used in "Hiroshima." Similarities between the two works include a catastrophic event, a focus on the handful of disaster victims whose alternating tales are woven together, and lingering questions about morality and decency. The connection to *The Bridge of San Luis Rey* is not the whole story, however. "Hiroshima" was also influenced by the reportage of a German Jesuit priest, Father Johannes (John) A. Siemes, SJ, versions of whose eyewitness account from Hiroshima appeared in *Time*, the *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, *Jesuit Missions*, a report by the Manhattan Engineer District, and other publications. The tone and diction of "Hiroshima" reflect the unadorned language of the Siemes report. Siemes, mentioned by Hersey in the last pages of "Hiroshima," also appeared in two U.S. propaganda films, *The Atom Strikes!* and *Tale of Two Cities*, recounting observations from his Hiroshima report. A published scholar, historian, and professor of philosophy at Sophia University in Tokyo, Siemes resided at a Jesuit novitiate on the outskirts of Hiroshima at the time of the bombing. This study explores the provenance of Siemes's eyewitness account, the nature of its influence on Hersey and "Hiroshima," as well as Hersey's relationship with fiction, nonfiction, and authorial boundaries.

Keywords: John Hersey – Hiroshima – Johannes Siemes, SJ – World War II – literary journalism

In his obituary of John Hersey, published in the *New Yorker* after the “Hiroshima”¹ author’s death in 1993, Hendrik Hertzberg praised Hersey’s “meticulous” reporting as well as his “clear, calm, and restrained” narrative about the bombing and its aftermath.² During his lifetime Hersey was known primarily by his written works, as he rarely granted interviews. In the years since Hersey’s death, his literary legacy has been carefully curated.³ Two major books about Hersey were published in 2019 and 2020—books that generally portray Hersey as a “straight arrow” or as a heroic reporter who revealed “the Hiroshima cover-up” to the world.⁴ These books on Hersey’s life and work—which, at times, border on hagiography—shape a view of Hersey that idealizes the author and minimizes controversies and complexities that influenced him as a writer.

This study examines the inspiration and sourcing of Hersey’s writing—with an emphasis on his most famous work—and argues a more nuanced view of the author as a writer who frequently struggled to find a literary style that fit the stories he wanted to tell. As he experimented with a variety of genres, he occasionally blurred the boundaries of authorship and the line between fiction and nonfiction—tendencies that would cause him difficulties from time to time throughout his literary life. Hersey’s blurring of authorial boundaries might also have contributed to the faded recollection of the Hiroshima narrative of Johannes Siemes, SJ, an important source of both facts and expressions included in “Hiroshima.”

Understanding how these tendencies had, and still have, an impact on Hersey’s literary legacy is critical to achieving a comprehensive understanding of Hersey as a writer. It is important to reflect on Hersey, not merely as a mythical figure, but as a real human being who despite a privileged upbringing, education, and working life⁵ faced substantial literary challenges throughout his career. He faced down some of these challenges and fell short on others.

Genesis of “Hiroshima”

“Hiroshima,” a classic work of literary journalism⁶ (some say an antecedent),⁷ remains a compelling nonfiction exposé of the aftermath of the bombing of Hiroshima seen through the eyes of six *hibakusha*.⁸ “Hiroshima” appeared in the August 31, 1946, issue of the *New Yorker*, filling its pages with an account of the horrifying experiences of people who survived as well as those who succumbed to the atomic bomb blast of August 6, 1945.⁹ The cover of the issue in which “Hiroshima” appeared in its entirety displayed banal scenes of men, women, and children swimming, cycling, playing tennis, flirting, and engaging in all the activities that would resume in the United States after the war ended.¹⁰

In *About Town: The New Yorker and the World It Made*, Ben Yagoda wrote that William Shawn, then editor of the *New Yorker*, suggested to Hersey the idea of writing about the Hiroshima bombing.¹¹ On the way to Japan and “confined to the sick bay,” Hersey apparently read Thornton Wilder’s *The Bridge of San Luis Rey* and liked the structure of the Pulitzer Prize–winning novel about five people who, bound together by fate, died in the collapse of a rope bridge in Peru.¹² In the novel, a Franciscan priest—witness to the bridge collapse—investigated the lives of the dead, hoping to discover how and why they became enmeshed in their shared tragedy.¹³ Hersey explored similar themes throughout his career, as he noted in *Here to Stay: Studies in Human Tenacity*.

Looking back, I find that in most of my storytelling, in both journalism and fiction, I have been obsessed, as any serious writer in violent times could not help being, by one overriding question, the existential question: What is it that, by a narrow margin, keeps us going, in the face of our crimes, our follies, our passions, our sorrows, our panics, our hideous drives to kill?¹⁴

In the framework of *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*, Hersey found a device for his story about Hiroshima, so he began to search for survivors who would tell him their tales. Once in Japan—having previously read at least one version of a report on the aftermath written by Johannes Siemes, one of a number of Jesuit priests who survived the blast—Hersey identified survivors of the bomb, interviewed them, then selected six and recorded their post-apocalyptic struggles in “Hiroshima.”¹⁵ Unlike the fictional character of Father Juniper, the storyteller in *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*, Hersey did not personally witness the event that joined the fates of his subjects. Hersey told the story of Hiroshima through the accounts of others—at least one of those accounts being Siemes’s published narrative.

Why the Backstory to “Hiroshima” Matters to Literary Journalism

John Hersey is easily the most visible and most renowned of a line of writers who have used some of the techniques of fiction writing to enliven their nonfiction. According to Nicholas Lemann, “Hiroshima” is “often called the first nonfiction novel.”¹⁶ For these reasons and more, reflecting on Hersey’s 1946 *New Yorker* story, the provenance of his sources for this famous nonfiction work, as well as Hersey’s relationship to fact, fiction, and authorial prerogative are all worth exploring.

The stylistic framework for “Hiroshima,” the derivation of which rests in part on *The Bridge of San Luis Rey* and in part on the reports of Hiroshima survivor, Johannes Siemes, SJ, was the most successfully applied and acclaimed of Hersey’s literary styles. Hersey did not, however, repeat the de-

tached, restrained style of “Hiroshima” in his later works. Lemann, in his 2019 article about Hersey, mused that “Hersey himself, oddly, used the technique relatively seldom during his subsequent career. He kept experimenting with form, but never as successfully.”¹⁷ Hersey, a consummate journalistic storyteller, appears to have been cursed with the yearning to be a novelist.¹⁸ This yearning is reflected in Hersey’s body of work, which meandered from reportage to fiction and back again.

Hersey’s chameleon-like literary style was not just the experimentation of a young author. An examination of the myriad prose styles Hersey used throughout his literary life suggests that his adoption of a new genre reflected, in part, his frequent reliance on plot or stylistic frameworks furnished by other writers or on scaffolds built from the true-life events of individuals whose stories he borrowed, fictionalized, and frequently enhanced. For example, *Men on Bataan* relied on the reportage of the Jacobys and Mydanses, who were *Time* and *Life* correspondents.¹⁹ *A Bell for Adano* relied on events in the lives of Frank Toscani and the citizens of Licata, Italy.²⁰ *The Marmot Drive* reads like a Hawthornesque allegory.²¹ *The Algiers Motel Incident* resembles (at least in places) a concatenation of police reports.²² As he planned each of these works and others in which he experimented with a new literary style, Hersey must have had grand visions, some of which fell short.

Blurred Lines

Hersey’s blurred boundaries were likely the result of the rewrite culture prevalent in journalism when Hersey was coming up through the ranks. Many journalists, especially those who wrote their stories based on the dispatches of others, grew accustomed to cannibalizing their source material—a technique that sometimes led to “borrowing” without sufficient attribution or acknowledgement.²³

In the second of his two Hersey studies, David Sanders noted that at *Time* magazine Hersey—“one of the anonymous young men writing ‘Milestones’ and ‘Miscellany’”—was routinely assigned the task of “summary and reduction” of materials provided by others.²⁴ Hersey’s beginnings as a journalist who developed copy from other writers’ materials—what some called a “rewrite” man—had a considerable impact on his craft and reputation.²⁵ Ann Fadiman writes that her mother (from whom Hersey had “borrowed” material) said *Time*’s method of having staff compose articles from correspondents’ files “ruined” Hersey.²⁶

Hersey repeatedly ran into problems when he rewrote from source materials authored by others. He was accused of plagiarism or copyright infringement at least twice, both times acknowledging his transgression and

apologizing (although some might say insufficiently).²⁷ *New York Times* writer William H. Honan noted that Hersey said the following about his alleged copying from Laurence Bergreen's *James Agee: A Life*: "I make a distinction between credit for the facts, which are public property and don't belong to anyone, and the expressions of a writer, which are another matter entirely." According to Honan, Hersey also said, "I don't believe my real offense in terms of normal practice is great. There's always a fine line between facts and the work of another writer."²⁸

Hersey ran into a distinct class of blurred-boundary problems with his fiction. He had a habit of modeling fictional characters on real-life individuals—often adding a whiff of scandal to the portrayal to spice things up for his readers. David Sanders writes that Hersey dropped one project—a novella titled "Sail Baker Dog"—because one of Hersey's models "was offended" when he read a draft of the work.²⁹ In 1946, while Hersey was in Asia working his way toward Japan, he was sued by Lieutenant Colonel Frank E. Toscani, the former senior civil affairs officer in Licata, Sicily, who had been the inspiration for Major Victor Joppolo in Hersey's *A Bell for Adano*.³⁰ Toscani alleged that Hersey's portrayal held Toscani up to public scorn and ridicule because it represented Joppolo/Toscani as having had an affair and having been removed from his post for defying his commander's orders—events that Toscani maintained had not occurred in real life.³¹ Hersey and Toscani are said to have resolved the suit over dinner at a restaurant named "A Bell for Adano."³²

At least twice, Hersey blurred the lines of fact and fiction by creating a composite character, a practice that has become verboten in journalism. A July 3, 1944, article in *Life* magazine titled "Joe Is Home Now" only partially revealed the creative process Hersey used to develop the story of an injured World War II veteran struggling to adjust to civilian life. "Joe Is Home Now" was presented as "in fiction form" but "based on fact."³³ Many years later, in a 1962 collection of his essays, which included "Joe Is Home Now," Hersey explained what this meant. Hersey combined pieces of his interviews of forty-three returned soldiers and "cannibalized" the facts in these interviews to create "one flyable airplane from the parts of several."³⁴

This did not fictionalize the account, Hersey maintained, as he had merely "dovetail[ed]" the accounts of a number of individuals.³⁵ Hersey argued, in effect, that by creating one Joe from many GI Joes he was protecting the privacy of the men involved, who were already vulnerable by virtue of their injuries.³⁶ Hersey writes that he also created a composite veteran for "A Short Talk with Erlanger," the story following "Joe Is Home Now."³⁷

Hersey's self-described "cannibalizing" of the life events of multiple

real-life prototypes in a supposedly nonfiction work is a noteworthy violation of the ethical stance Hersey took in his 1980 essay, “The Legend on the License.”³⁸ In this essay, Hersey focused energetically on Tom Wolfe’s *The Right Stuff*, Norman Mailer’s *The Executioner’s Song*, and Truman Capote’s “Handcarved Coffins,” accusing those authors in particular, as well as others who might try to imitate their style, of blurring fiction and journalism—putting journalism “in a very bad way.”³⁹ “The time has come to redraw the line between journalism and fiction,” Hersey wrote.⁴⁰ Where Hersey drew those lines, however, usually inured to his own benefit.

Hersey complained of the lack of ethics of the aforementioned writers while exonerating himself of equally troubling conduct. The blurring of fiction and journalism was wrong, Hersey noted—but he himself had created composite characters. “In fiction that *is* fiction, no holds need be barred,” wrote Hersey. “Novelists may introduce or disguise real people and real events as they choose.”⁴¹ In his own fiction, however, Hersey sometimes added scandalous character flaws to a portrayal patterned so closely on a real person that it offended and sometimes caused real-life problems for a still-living model.⁴² In “The Legend on the License” Hersey also absolved himself of the offense of lacking objectivity:

As to journalism, we may as well grant right away that there is no such thing as absolute objectivity. It is impossible to present in words “*the truth*” or “the whole story.” The minute a writer offers nine hundred ninety-nine out of one thousand facts, the worm of bias has begun to wriggle. *The vision of each witness is particular* [emphasis added]. Tolstoy pointed out that immediately after a battle there are as many remembered versions of it as there have been participants.⁴³

Hersey omitted from “The Legend on the License” the offense of borrowing too much of another writer’s work, although (as mentioned earlier) he had noted that facts were up for grabs, but a writer’s “expressions” were their own.⁴⁴ This raises the question of whether Hersey viewed Johannes Siemes, SJ’s written expressions regarding his experience of the Hiroshima aftermath as Siemes’s own or merely as reports consisting of facts available for cannibalization.

Who Was Father Johannes Siemes, SJ?

Few details concerning Johannes Siemes’s life are available, but a few facts regarding his life and scholarship can be garnered from his publications and from newspaper reports.⁴⁵ A short bio of Siemes, appearing on the dust jacket’s end flap of his 1968 book, *Herman Roessler and the Making of the Meiji State*, noted that Siemes was born in 1907 in Cologne, Germany; that

he first traveled to Japan in 1932; that he studied in Berlin and Münster from 1934 to 1939; and that he received his PhD from the Gregorian University in Rome.⁴⁶

Also noted in the bio was the fact that Siemes began working at Sophia University in Tokyo in 1940, where he was a professor of German philosophy and that he had authored a number of articles on German “philosophers and social thinkers,” including Friedrich Schlegel and Herman Roesler.⁴⁷ The latter, a German legal scholar and advisor to the Japanese Empire during the Meiji period, was a little-known source of advice on constitutional law during the writing of the 1889 Meiji constitution. Siemes’s articles and books about Roesler’s contributions to the establishment of a Westernized constitution in Japan brought increased scholarly attention to Roesler’s previously overlooked role in Japanese constitutional history.⁴⁸

By August 6, 1945, Siemes was an established philosophy professor at Sophia University, an accomplished historian, and a scholar with at least three published scholarly works to his credit. He escaped the firebombing of Tokyo by fleeing with a group of his students to a Jesuit novitiate in Nagatsuka, north of Hiroshima.⁴⁹ The report recounted his personal experience of the bombing, his description of a trek from the outskirts to the city center to rescue his fellow Jesuits, as well as his observations of the bombing victims he encountered on the way to the city center and back. As an historian, it would have been natural for Siemes to record coolly and clinically his observations of the aftermath. His account was not merely recorded testimony, it was an actual chronicle that Siemes sent to the Holy See for publication in the magazine, *Jesuit Missions*.⁵⁰ To produce that chronicle, Siemes processed his observations and developed a narrative. Multiple versions of Siemes’s narrative were published prior to the publication of Hersey’s “Hiroshima” in the *New Yorker*.⁵¹

Writing under the Influence

While plagiarism might be too strong a word for Hersey’s use of Siemes’s material to formulate and write “Hiroshima,” it is fair to say that he wrote while under the influence of the Jesuit—assuming a voice, style, and diction that in many respects resembled Siemes’s. In 2019, Nicholas Lemann wrote that in deciding Hersey should write about Hiroshima, both *New Yorker* editor William Shawn and Hersey “grasped that an on-site report on the effects of the first-ever atomic-bomb attack would be a monster story. That they were so obviously right obscures how unobvious the idea was at the time, which is why Hersey had the story pretty much to himself.”⁵²

Putting aside the fact that many accounts of the bombing and its effects

on Hiroshima survivors were censored by U.S. officials,⁵³ it is not accurate to say that Hersey had no competition on the Hiroshima story. The notion that juxtaposing a calm, unemotional chronicle of events with a narrative illuminating the horrific details wrought by the bomb was not new. Siemes himself used that approach in his own account, which was circulated in military circles, the mainstream press, and in popular and scientific magazines of the time.⁵⁴ In fact, a translation of Siemes's report was one of the first widely published English-language accounts of the bombing.⁵⁵ In addition to the appearance of Siemes's account in a variety of print media, the priest apparently spoke about his experiences to sailors on the H.M.S. Tyne in March 1946.⁵⁶

Today, Siemes's contributions to the "Hiroshima" narrative have largely been forgotten, in spite of the fact that Hersey derived both information and inspiration from Siemes—an actual eyewitness who personally experienced the bombing of Hiroshima and the devastation that followed.⁵⁷ One might say that Siemes was a literary muse in the writing of "Hiroshima"—an imperfect muse, as the records will suggest, but a muse nevertheless. Siemes's report helped Hersey identify sources (both major and minor) for "Hiroshima," including Father Kleinsorge, one of Siemes's Jesuit colleagues, and the heroic Reverend Tanimoto.⁵⁸ In addition, Hersey ended "Hiroshima" by quoting Siemes's devastating commentary on the ethics of using an atomic bomb.⁵⁹ The provenance of Siemes's report is, therefore, important to the "Hiroshima" backstory.

Interestingly, Hersey was not the only journalist who used Siemes's material. William Leonard Laurence, a *New York Times* reporter who was embedded for four months in 1945 with the U.S. War Department as the department's "historian" (while still on the payroll of the *New York Times*), used Siemes's material extensively in two books—without adequate acknowledgment or attribution in either.⁶⁰

Excerpts from a U.S. government interview with Siemes, which included the priest reading (in excellent English) from his recorded observations of the Hiroshima aftermath, appeared in two U.S. War Department propaganda films—*The Atom Strikes!* produced in 1945 by the Signal Corp's Army Pictorial Service; and *Tale of Two Cities*, an edited version of *The Atom Strikes!* produced in 1946 by *Army-Navy Screen Magazine*.⁶¹

Provenance of Siemes Reports

The first English translation of Siemes's eyewitness report, which was originally written in German, Siemes's native tongue, is probably the translation rendered by Yale physician Averill Liebow, who kept a diary recording his own experiences as a member of the Joint Commission for the Investigation

of the Effects of the Atomic Bomb in Japan.⁶² In his book, *Encounter with Disaster: A Medical Diary of Hiroshima, 1945*, Liebow recalled the circumstances under which he was asked to translate Siemes's report, alluding to the fact that this document "became a major source of material for John Hersey's masterful *Hiroshima*."⁶³

In *Encounter with Disaster*, Liebow describes having, at the request of Colonel Stafford Warren, translated Siemes's report on September 27, 1945, dictating it to "a remarkably skillful sergeant of General Farrell's Manhattan District Group [*sic*] who typed the translation directly as it was spoken."⁶⁴ Liebow noted in *Encounter with Disaster* that he read Siemes's story "spellbound and horrified."⁶⁵ A copy of the resulting typescript, hereinafter designated Typescript 1, is located in the Averill A. Liebow Collection, maintained by the Harvey Cushing/John Hay Whitney Medical Library, Yale University.⁶⁶

A second version of the Liebow translation (hereinafter designated Typescript 2) appears in Hersey's archives at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University,⁶⁷ and is in the same box as the *Time* magazine version of Siemes's report, a report that *Time* noted was "an extraordinary document, the first detailed account of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima . . ."⁶⁸ Typescripts 1 and 2 are quite similar. It appears that minor typographical errors in Typescript 1 were corrected in Typescript 2 and a slightly different font or font size was used in Typescript 2.⁶⁹ The way Hersey appears to have acquired Typescript 2 and the meaning and importance of certain markings on the document have not previously been described in detail.

Typescript 2 is accompanied by a memorandum signed by Richard Reeve, Commander of the United States Naval Reserve, from the Headquarters of the U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey (Pacific). The memorandum (hereinafter designated "Richard Reeve memorandum" or "Reeve memo")⁷⁰ is addressed to "All Divisions" regarding an "Eyewitness Account of the Bombing of Hiroshima," with notes as follows regarding the associated document:

The attached document was obtained by joint investigations of a U.S. Army and Naval Technical Mission, Japan.

This account was written by Father Siemes, S.J., Novitiate of the Society of Jesus in Nagatsuka which is approximately two kilometers from Hiroshima.⁷¹

The Richard Reeve memorandum, dated December 6, 1945, is marked "Restricted" at both the top and bottom. The location of folds and staple marks on both the memorandum and Typescript 2, suggest the memorandum was folded over and stapled to Siemes's report (Typescript 2). From the December 6, 1945, date on the Reeve memo, it appears Hersey could

not have obtained this version of the Siemes report until on or after December 6, 1945, more than nine months before the *New Yorker* published “Hiroshima.”⁷²

The classification of sensitive government documents within the United States military has been a work in progress for more than a century. The U.S. Army and U.S. Navy have revised their classification schemes occasionally, introducing inconsistencies between the two classification systems, particularly throughout the interwar years.⁷³ Both Army and Navy classification protocols, however, required distinctive markings and special handling of classified documents. For example, U.S. Army regulations promulgated in 1921 required that classified documents should be sealed within a cover document.⁷⁴ In 1935, the U.S. Army introduced the term “Restricted” (less restrictive than the “Confidential” category and not to be confused with “Restricted Data,” which was established pursuant to the Atomic Energy Act of 1946).⁷⁵ The “Restricted” category was applied to a variety of materials including those related to military defense research projects the U.S. government deemed sensitive. Army Regulation 850-25, dated February 12, 1935, provided a detailed description of the “Restricted” classification including the following:

Information regarding a “Restricted” project may be communicated only to persons in the military or naval service of the United States (including civilian employees) whose duties it concerns and to American citizens of undoubted loyalty and discretion who are cooperating in the work on this project.⁷⁶

In 1936, revised classification regulations brought the U.S. Army and Navy classification systems into some semblance of uniformity, which included marking restricted documents with the word “Restricted” at the top and bottom of each page.⁷⁷ As late as the publication of Executive Order (EO) 10290, issued in 1951, the classification “Restricted” was still in existence. Pursuant to EO 10290, restricted information was transmitted in “a sealed wrapper or envelope” and the pages were to be stamped or marked “Restricted.”⁷⁸

The Richard Reeve memorandum states on its face that it was obtained by the U.S. Army and Naval Technical Mission, Japan—a joint mission—and the letterhead on which the memorandum was typed refers to the U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey (Pacific).⁷⁹ The condition of the Reeve Memorandum is telling. The contents of the memorandum, “Restricted” notations at the top and bottom of the memorandum itself, and the marks suggesting that the memorandum had once been folded and stapled to the typescript all suggest that the document was intended to be handled with a considerable measure of secrecy. All of the foregoing supports the conclusion that, at some point, the Siemes report had been classified as a restricted document

which, pursuant to military regulations, would have curbed its handling and distribution.⁸⁰ Although there is no indication on the face of the Reeve Memorandum or Typescript 2 indicating that either document had ever been *declassified*, the fact that versions of the Siemes report were released to the press between September 19 and 20, 1945 (see following), suggests that, by those dates at least, some of the contents of the Siemes report might have been declassified.⁸¹

How a document labeled Restricted, with no indication on its face that it had been declassified, got into Hersey's hands is a mystery that might not be resolvable, although evidence exists that Hersey had at least one close connection to an individual associated with U.S. intelligence⁸²—a person who might have been able to facilitate Hersey's obtaining a copy of the restricted document.⁸³

Lingering Doubt Regarding Provenance of the Siemes Report

Although Liebow's diary entry asserts that he translated the Siemes report on September 27, 1945, there is lingering uncertainty regarding that date and other elements of the report, because between September 19 and September 20, 1945, news accounts, including quotations that appear to be taken from the Siemes report, appeared in mainstream newspapers distributed across the United States.⁸⁴ Perhaps Liebow misrecalled the date on which he translated the Siemes report, or perhaps there was another translation. There were certainly several variants of the Siemes narrative distributed widely to the public in the first year or so after the bombing of Hiroshima.

A number of newspaper articles published in 1945, for example, noted that Siemes had been "smoking an after-breakfast pipe at the mission in Nagatsuka and lazily looking out a window toward Hiroshima when disaster struck."⁸⁵ These details do not appear in either the Liebow translation or any of the many variants of Siemes's eyewitness report referenced herein. These "pipe-smoking" reports attributed authorship of the article using the phrase "By Father Siemes as Told to United Press."⁸⁶ As of this analysis, no sources establishing that Siemes was interviewed by a reporter from the United Press, beyond the attribution referenced above, have been identified.

Accounts regarding the discovery and distribution of the Siemes report also vary. For example, on March 22, 1946, the *Cincinnati Enquirer* reported that Major Gen. Arthur M. Harper of the 98th Infantry, Osaka, Japan, sent a copy of the Siemes report to the Rev. Celestin J. Steiner, SJ, President of Xavier University.⁸⁷ On May 19, 1946, the *Palm Beach Post-Times* reported that a copy of the Siemes account, "bearing the signature also of a U.S. Naval commander found its way to the *Post-Times* through Mr. and Mrs. E.N.

Castlen . . . to who [*sic*] it was sent by a son, Robert C. Castlen, who is with the UNRRA in China.”⁸⁸

War Times Journal, “a research centered website that covers all periods of military history and military science,”⁸⁹ archived on its website a version of the Siemes report titled, “The Atomic Bombing of Hiroshima, by Father Johannes Siemes.” Introductory remarks to this version of the Siemes report noted that Bishop Franklin Corley, a soldier who was part of the U.S. occupation and reportedly “one of the first American soldiers to enter the stricken city” of Hiroshima, encountered Father Siemes. According to the notes, Father Siemes gave Corley a typewritten copy of his report. Corley brought it back to the United States, “where it lay for fifty years.”⁹⁰

In his report, Siemes commented on suggestions that radiation from the bomb had lingering effects. Small but important differences exist between versions of his report in this regard. In Typescript 1, Siemes said, “[t]here thus seems to be some truth in the statement that the radiation had some effect on the blood.” But in *Jesuit Missions* he wrote, “[t]here cannot be any doubt but that the rays, whatever they were, had some effect on the blood.”⁹¹ Regarding allegations that the ruins of Hiroshima emitted dangerous rays, Typescript 1 quotes Siemes as follows:

[I]t was also noised about that the ruins of the city emitted deadly rays and that the central district would be uninhabitable for some time to come. I have my doubts as to whether such talk is true and myself and others who’d worked in the ruined area for some hours shortly after the explosions suffered no such ill effects.⁹²

Sometime after the bombing, U.S. occupational forces encountered Siemes, translated his report, and released a version (or versions) of it to the public. A newspaper article, appearing in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* on November 22, 1945, reported that the Siemes eyewitness account “was made public for the first time last night as the highlight of an address by Major General Leslie R. Groves,” commander of the Manhattan Engineer District that developed the atomic bomb.⁹³ This was a bit of hyperbole on the part of either Groves or the reporter, as excerpts from the Siemes report had already been released by this date.

A version of the Siemes report titled *The Day the Bomb Fell*, which appeared in a 1983 pamphlet published by the Catholic Truth Society, noted as follows:

. . . the text of the talk given by Father Siemes to the crew of H.M.S. Tynne in March 1946, and taken down in shorthand by a ship’s writer. One of the crew, Robert J. Bloomfield, then a nineteen-year-old stores assistant and now a writer and journalist, kept a copy of Fr Siemes’s talk, and has made it available for publication.⁹⁴

For a time, Siemes became a subject of exaggerated and, in some cases, inaccurate media attention. For example, a television drama about Hiroshima presented a diminished vision of Siemes's character to the world. And on August 4, 1990, long after Siemes had died, two Australian articles, one published in the *Sydney Morning Herald* and another in the *Age*, a Melbourne newspaper, mentioned (with no sourcing) that, four years after Hiroshima was bombed, Father Siemes "began to show signs of a manic-depressive illness that became more serious after 1958." The articles also noted, accurately, that Siemes died on Hiroshima Day (August 6) in 1983.⁹⁵

In 1990, NBC aired a made-for-network-television docudrama about the bombing of Hiroshima. Titled *Hiroshima: Out of the Ashes*, the movie featured the then sixty-one-year-old Max von Sydow in a surly portrayal of Father Siemes (who was thirty-eight years old on the day the bomb was dropped on Hiroshima).⁹⁶ The narrative arc of the movie—which, *Washington Post* staff writer Ken Ringle writes, was "[w]ritten, acted and directed with a restraint that makes it look positively alien on network television,"⁹⁷—included Siemes's purported evolution from a stern enforcer of doctrinal propriety before the bomb to an affectionate humanitarian after the bomb. As of the writing of this historical report, no evidence has been found that Siemes made such a transformation in real life. The screenwriter appears to have taken liberties with Siemes's life story, blurring the lines between fact and fiction.

Regardless of the path Siemes's narrative took as it made its way from real life to screen portrayal, versions of his Hiroshima account had circulated widely long before Hersey's "Hiroshima" was published in the *New Yorker*. The process of translating, transcribing, and distributing Siemes's own Hiroshima report might have altered some of the details, but the report's tone and tenor, as well as the events each version recounted, were similar. Hersey appears to have cherry-picked selected details from one or more of Siemes's reports and used them in his "Hiroshima" narrative.

The Siemes Report's Influence on Hersey's "Hiroshima" Narrative

It is undeniable that the Siemes report was a major source for Hersey's "Hiroshima" and that Siemes was himself an author and historian at the time Hersey became acquainted with the Siemes report(s).⁹⁸ A close reading of the Siemes report and "Hiroshima" reveals a multitude of shared details suggesting the degree to which Siemes's observations influenced Hersey's story. For example, both "Hiroshima" and the Siemes report describe Siemes and several Jesuit colleagues traveling from the Nagatsuka novitiate into the city of Hiroshima to rescue their Jesuit colleagues. Along the way Siemes and his companions encountered other bombing victims and saw firsthand the

condition of the city.⁹⁹

Most if not all versions of the Siemes report begin by describing “rumors” that “the enemy” (or “America”) had something special in mind for Hiroshima. “Up to August 6th, occasional bombs, which did no great damage, had fallen on Hiroshima. . . . There were fantastic rumors that the enemy had something special in mind for this city, but no one dreamed that the end would come in such a fashion as on the morning of August 6th.”¹⁰⁰ Hersey wrote that “a rumor was going around that the Americans were saving something special for the city.”¹⁰¹ Both Hersey and Siemes emphasized the time of the blast—although Siemes recorded that time as “approximately 8:14” while Hersey noted the time as “exactly fifteen minutes past eight.”¹⁰²

Siemes reported that the flash from the bomb resembled “the magnesium light used in photography”¹⁰³ and that “the whole valley was filled with a garish light, like a magnesium flash by a giant photographer.”¹⁰⁴ Hersey wrote that, according to one of his sources (not identified as Siemes), “the light of the bomb was reflected, like a gigantic photographic flash, in the corridor.”¹⁰⁵ Hersey also wrote that, according to Dr. Fugii, many of the people fleeing the city had horrible burns (likely flash burns from the explosion) even though few fires had started at the time.¹⁰⁶ Siemes also reported terrible burns on the procession of people he saw fleeing from the city.¹⁰⁷ Both Siemes and Hersey reported a strong wind or whirlwind in Asano Park, weather possibly generated by the fires that ultimately incinerated Hiroshima.¹⁰⁸

Of the many shared details, a noteworthy trio of incidents stands out. In both the Siemes report and in “Hiroshima,” a line of grotesquely injured soldiers supported themselves, on what both writers called “staves,” as they walked across the Misasa Bridge, while a group of severely burned horses stood on the bridge hanging their heads.¹⁰⁹ Both Hersey and Siemes also wrote about the mission secretary, Mr. Fukai, who refused to leave the burning city, evaded attempts by the priests to forcibly carry him to safety, and eventually ran back toward the conflagration, never to be seen again.¹¹⁰ A third shared incident involved a confrontation between the Jesuits and a group of Japanese soldiers who, hearing “a foreign language” being spoken among the priests, suspected that the clergymen were Americans.¹¹¹

Siemes and other priests from the novitiate on the outskirts of Hiroshima headed to the city to bring the Hiroshima-based mission priests, including Kleinsorge, to safety. Both Siemes (in his report) and Hersey (in “Hiroshima”) recounted the reunion of the two groups of priests in Asano Park as well as additional details about encounters the priests had with other bomb victims seeking shelter in the park.¹¹² Siemes mentioned an unnamed Japanese Protestant pastor who, with his boat, was the priests’ “succoring angel in this

difficult situation.”¹¹³ This unnamed pastor appears to have been the kindly “Reverend Mr. Tanimoto,” a main subject in Hersey’s “Hiroshima.”¹¹⁴

In a July 21, 1985, letter, Hersey answered the inquiries of Robert H. Donahugh, then director of the Public Library of Youngstown and Hahon- ing County, Ohio, regarding the inspiration for “Hiroshima.” Hersey wrote:

I arrived in Hiroshima in April, 1946, eight months after the bomb was dropped. I had earlier read an account of the bombing in a report to the Holy See by a Jesuit priest named Father Siemes, and my first move on arriving was to get in touch with the Jesuit mission in Hiroshima. There I met Father Kleinsorge, who spoke a smattering of English. He introduced me to Reverend Kiyoshi Tanimoto, whose English was good. And those two paved the way for my interviewing about thirty other people, from whose number I chose Mrs. Nakamura, Miss Sasaki and Drs. Sasaki and Fujii.¹¹⁵

In the same letter, Hersey mentioned the plot device already referenced— weaving the lives of a group of characters together—which he acknowledged he had borrowed from *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*. Hersey noted that he chose the six Hiroshima survivors he used “so that their various fates would keep touching one on the other.”¹¹⁶ Hersey also remarked that he realized the six individuals he chose did not represent a cross section of Hiroshima—suggesting, however, that their experiences were “representative of all victims of the bombing.”¹¹⁷

Siemes did not figure personally in the “Hiroshima” narrative until the end of the story, but the nature of his eventual appearance suggests that Siemes’s words held great importance to Hersey, who adopted one of the priest’s phrases (in italics in the quote that follows) as a “calling card” of sorts when Hersey signed autographs.¹¹⁸

Father Kleinsorge and the other German Jesuit priests, who, as foreigners, could be expected to take a relatively detached view, often discussed the ethics of using the bomb. One of them, Father Siemes, who was out at Nagatsuka at the time of the attack, wrote in a report to the Holy See in Rome, “Some of us consider the bomb in the same category as poison gas and were against its use on a civilian population. Others were of the opinion that in total war, as carried on in Japan, there was no difference between civilians and soldiers, and that the bomb itself was an effective force tending to end the bloodshed, warning Japan to surrender and thus to avoid total destruction. It seems logical that he who supports total war in principle cannot complain of a war against civilians. *The crux of the matter is whether total war in its present form is justifiable, even when it serves a just purpose.* Does it not have material and spiritual evil as its consequences which far exceed whatever good might result? When will our moralists give us a clear answer to this question?”¹¹⁹

Two important accounts that appear in “Hiroshima” but not in the Siemes report are worth noting, as they are unforgettable and oft-repeated illustrations of the stark horror Hersey described. In the account’s segment three, titled “Details Are Being Investigated,”¹²⁰ Hersey described Father Kleinsorge’s interaction with a group of twenty soldiers in the underbrush of Asano Park. Here the voice appears to be Hersey’s and Hersey’s alone as he deviated from his prior restrained narrative style to report a horrific incident. In this incident, Kleinsorge offered water to the group of soldiers, only then noting that:

they were all in exactly the same nightmarish state: their faces were wholly burned, their eyesockets were hollow, the fluid from their melted eyes had run down their cheeks. (They must have had their faces upturned when the bomb went off; perhaps they were anti-aircraft personnel).¹²¹

Hersey recounted a second vivid scene in the same segment, another scene not in the Siemes report. It was an incident where Kiyoshi Tanimoto, Siemes’s “succoring angel,” attempted to assist a woman into a boat when the skin of her hand and arm sloughed off like a glove.¹²²

Why Did Siemes Not Play a Larger Role?

Siemes was clearly an important source for Hersey. Why, then, did Hersey not feature Siemes as one of his primary subjects? While it is difficult at this distance in space and time to determine with certainty why Hersey wrote what he did—especially as he was reluctant to be interviewed about his writing—a few factors might have swayed his decision to feature Kleinsorge, in spite of the fact that Kleinsorge spoke only “a smattering” of English while Siemes was a fluent speaker of English.¹²³ Hersey’s choices regarding what incidents to report and what language to use suggest that Hersey might have cherry-picked details from the Siemes report.

It appears that fairly quickly after the bombing of Hiroshima, the U.S. military identified Siemes as a possible source of information who might refute a few of the most troublesome, post-Hiroshima accusations the United States was facing. After the bombing, the U.S. occupation faced rumors of lingering “rays” in Hiroshima, as well as the possibility of a dread disease affecting Hiroshima victims who initially seemed to be in relatively good health.¹²⁴ Siemes noted in one version of his report that he did not believe there were any such lingering rays or diseases in Hiroshima, as he and other Jesuits who had not been in the city at the time of the bombing but had ventured into the city later appeared to suffer no ill effects.¹²⁵ Siemes noted in his *Jesuit Missions* article that there appeared to be “relatively little hatred toward the Allies on the part of the people themselves, although the press has taken

occasion to stir up such feelings.”¹²⁶ Lastly, Siemes suggested in his report that the poor nutritional health of the population in Japan, the lack of adequate medical care after the bomb, and the lack of will or ability of the Japanese to organize rescue efforts, all contributed to the high death rate in Hiroshima.¹²⁷

These statements by Siemes were seized upon by the U.S. military, circulated to the public, and used to convince critics that complaints by the Japanese that many deaths were due to the aftereffects of the bomb were merely “Japanese propaganda.”¹²⁸ The fact that Siemes was featured in two U.S. propaganda films might also have influenced Hersey’s decision not to feature Siemes more prominently. Kleinsorge, on the other hand, suffered the effects of the bomb. His hospitalization was noted in “Hiroshima.”¹²⁹

Hersey understandably used his author’s prerogative to feature those individuals who best illustrated his narrative about the bomb and the horror of surviving nuclear war. It is also possible that Hersey did not want to feature Siemes because the priest’s story and his reports had, by then, already been published in multiple venues.

Conclusions

The factors that shape an author’s craft are usually more complex than they appear at first glance and are often more nuanced than affectionate biographers might suggest. That is the crux of the matter here. This essay reflected upon that complexity, on the choices Hersey made in composing his “Hiroshima” narrative, on little-known historical facts that shed light on Hersey’s authorial process, and on the tortuous path the Siemes report took before it reached Hersey’s hands and was subsumed within the Hersey legacy.

While authors, even of nonfiction, have considerable latitude when deciding how to frame their characters and hone their storytelling, it was not unheard of for Hersey, who bounced between journalism and fiction over his lifetime as a writer, to assemble the parts and pieces of reality that best suited his story. Hersey chose to minimize Siemes’s role in the evolution of the “Hiroshima” narrative. One explanation for this might have been concern that the complex provenance of Siemes’s eyewitness report had the potential to taint the message of “Hiroshima” with allegations of government influence.

Hersey minimized Siemes’s role in shaping “Hiroshima,” even as he cannibalized portions of Siemes’s report(s)—including Siemes’s restrained diction. Hersey thus filtered many of the people and places in “Hiroshima” through Siemes’s eyes but did not acknowledge the extent of the priest’s influence until the conclusion of the story, a fact that is difficult to understand given the author’s widely disseminated statements regarding the influence of Thornton Wilder’s *The Bridge of San Luis Rey* on “Hiroshima.”

Hersey's "writing under the influence" stretched journalistic mores just as important as the mores Hersey defended vociferously in "The Legend on the License." Despite the issues raised herein, Hersey's "Hiroshima" remains a well-written, terrifying, and critical vision of the consequences of surviving a nuclear holocaust. Hersey's existential battle over whether to be a novelist or a journalist and the boundary-bending this battle entailed has had an impact on his legacy, however, notwithstanding the careful curation of Hersey's literary reputation and the publication of two twenty-first century biographical works that largely portray Hersey as a heroic figure.

Rather than engaging in heroic mythmaking, Hersey scholars and biographers might consider that, while Hersey was a writer of tremendous range—with gifts, privileges, connections, and accomplishments beyond those achieved by most people—he was also an author who struggled with the boundaries between nonfiction and fiction. For example, Hersey sometimes had difficulty discerning the border between the factual component of a story and the creative expressions of another writer. Siemes, a scholar and a writer in his own right, deserves to have his contribution to Hersey's "Hiroshima" recognized. In this, the seventy-seventh year since the bombing of Hiroshima, it behooves all scholars, careful students of history, as well as those interested in the global impact of the atomic bomb to read or re-read both Hersey's "Hiroshima" and Siemes's narrative about the devastating event the author-priest experienced personally.

Susan E. Swanberg is a former scientist/attorney who teaches at the University of Arizona School of Journalism. She was a 2017–18 Udall Center Fellow and received the 2018 AJHA Rising Scholar Award.



Notes

¹ “Hiroshima” refers specifically to the *New Yorker* article, published August 31, 1946, John Hersey’s classic account of the bombing of the city of Hiroshima. Alfred A. Knopf published the story in book form later that year. Titled and referenced herein as *Hiroshima*, the book was published in a new edition in 1985, with a final chapter written forty years after the bombing. Page references are to the 1968 and 1985 Knopf editions.

² Hertzberg, “John Hersey,” 111.

³ Shorto, “John Hersey, the Writer Who Let ‘Hiroshima’ Speak for Itself,” online.

⁴ Treglown, *Mr. Straight Arrow*; Blume, *Fallout: The Hiroshima Cover-Up*.

⁵ Sanders, *John Hersey*; Sanders, *John Hersey Revisited*.

⁶ Wolfe, *The New Journalism*, 3-52; Wolfe, “The Birth of ‘The New Journalism’”; Kerrane and Yagoda, *The Art of Fact*; Hartssock, *Literary Journalism and the Aesthetics of Experience*.

⁷ Weingarten, *The Gang That Wouldn’t Write Straight*, 24.

⁸ The Japanese term “*hibakusha*” or “person affected by the bomb,” is still used by Japan’s atomic bomb survivors. See “75 Years On, Abolition Pleas from the Last Generation of Hibakusha.”

⁹ Hersey, “Hiroshima,” 15–68.

¹⁰ Hersey, see cover art.

¹¹ Yagoda, *About Town*, 185–86.

¹² Yagoda, 186; Wilder, *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*.

¹³ Wilder, 7.

¹⁴ Hersey, *Here to Stay*, viii; see Yavenditti, “John Hersey and the American Conscience,” 33n35.

¹⁵ Yagoda, *About Town*, 186–87.

¹⁶ Lemann, “The Art of Fact,” 68.

¹⁷ Lemann, 68.

¹⁸ Lemann, 68–69.

¹⁹ Hersey, “Thanks and a Dedication,” *Men on Bataan*, v–vi; Sanders, *John Hersey*, 23.

²⁰ Hersey, *A Bell for Adano*; Martin, “F. E. Toscani, 89, Dies,” 20.

²¹ Hersey, *The Marmot Drive*.

²² Hersey, *The Algiers Motel Incident*.

²³ Sanders, *John Hersey*, 23; Sanders, *John Hersey Revisited*, 2–5; Swanberg, “Borrowed Chronicles: William L. ‘Atomic Bill’ Laurence and the Reports of a Hiroshima Survivor,” 29–48.

²⁴ Sanders, *John Hersey Revisited*, 2.

²⁵ Bauman, “Rewrite Men Are Legends of Journalism History.”

²⁶ Fadiman, *Ex Libris: Confessions of a Common Reader*, 109–111; Hersey, “Thanks and a Dedication,” *Men on Bataan*, v–vi.

²⁷ Hersey, “Department of Amplification,” 54; Honan, “Hersey Apologizes to a Writer Over an Article on Agee,” 1; Mehren, “John Hersey’s *New Yorker* Mea

Culpa,” F1; Fadiman, *Ex Libris: Confessions of a Common Reader*, 109–11; Hersey, “Thanks and a Dedication,” v–vi.

²⁸ Honan, “Hersey Apologizes to a Writer Over an Article on Agee,” 1.

²⁹ Sanders, *John Hersey Revisited*, 5, 111n14.

³⁰ “\$250,000 Libel Suit Started by Army Officer against Author of ‘A Bell for Adano,’ Others,” *New York Times*, March 14, 1946, 27; “Echo of ‘Bell for Adano,’ Action against Author,” 1. As of the dates of these articles, Hersey had not been served with the lawsuit because he was in China. Lesley Blume writes that Hersey was apparently in China in spring 1946, preparing to head for Hiroshima. Blume, *Fallout: The Hiroshima Cover-Up*, 54–60. Hersey was not the only defendant in this suit. Several others involved with publishing the book, or producing a screenplay and movie based on the book, were also sued.

³¹ “\$250,000 Libel Suit,” 27; “Echo of ‘Bell for Adano,’ Action against Author,” 1.

³² Martin, “F. E. Toscani, 89, Dies,” 30. Court records and a *Michigan Law Review* article, however, indicate that the case against Hersey and several other defendants was dismissed on appeal. Price, “Torts: Right of Privacy: Invasion of Privacy through Fictional Works,” 1064–66; *Toscani v. Hersey* 271 App. Div. 445 (N.Y. App. Div. 1946).

³³ Hersey, “Joe Is Home Now,” 68.

³⁴ Hersey, “Strength from Without,” in *Here to Stay*, 107–108.

³⁵ Hersey, 107.

³⁶ Hersey, 107–108.

³⁷ Hersey, 107–108; Hersey, “A Short Talk with Erlinger,” in *Here to Stay*, 137–59.

³⁸ Hersey, “The Legend on the License,” 1–25.

³⁹ Hersey, 1.

⁴⁰ Hersey, 3.

⁴¹ Hersey, 1.

⁴² Hersey sent Toscani’s wife an inscribed, pre-publication copy of *A Bell for Adano*. She apparently became quite upset upon reading the fictionalized account of Joppolo’s involvement with an Italian woman. See “\$250,000 Libel Suit Started by Army Officer against Author of ‘A Bell for Adano,’ Others,” 27.

⁴³ Hersey, “The Legend on the License,” 2 (emphasis in original and added, as noted).

⁴⁴ Honan, “Hersey Apologizes to a Writer Over an Article on Agee,” 1.

⁴⁵ Johannes Siemes, *Hermann Roesler und die Einführung des Deutschen Staatsrechts in Japan* (Hermann Roesler and the introduction of German constitutional law in Japan); Johannes Siemes, “Hermann Roesler’s Commentaries on the Meiji Constitution” (1962): 1–66; Johannes Siemes, “Hermann Roesler und die Einführung des Deutschen Staatsrechts in Japan,” 181–96; Johannes Siemes, “Über Japans Verfassung” (*About Japan’s constitution*), 358–66; Johannes Siemes, “Hermann Roesler’s Commentaries on the Meiji Constitution” (1964): 37–65; Johannes Siemes, *Hermann Roesler and the Making of the Meiji State*; Johannes Siemes,

“Karl Marx im Urteil des sozialen Rechts. Zur ersten wissenschaftlichen Rezension von Marx ‘Das Kapital’ ” (Karl Marx in the judgment of social law: On the first scientific review of Marx’s ‘Das Kapital’), 376; Johannes Siemes, Review of *Nippon Seiji no Kijun* (Die Norm des Japanischen Staatslebens), by Yasuzō Suzuki, 269–71; Suzuki and Siemes, “Hermann Roesler und die Japanische Verfassung,” 428–53.

⁴⁶ Johannes Siemes, *Hermann Roesler and the Making of the Meiji State*, dust jacket, end flap.

⁴⁷ Siemes, dust jacket, end flap.

⁴⁸ Johannes Siemes, introduction to *Hermann Roesler and the Making of the Meiji State*, xi–xii.

⁴⁹ John B. [sic] Siemes, “Report from Hiroshima,” 30.

⁵⁰ John B. [sic] Siemes, 30–32.

⁵¹ John B. [sic] Siemes, 30–32; John A. Siemes, “The Atomic Age: Hiroshima Eyewitness,” 24–25, 40–44; John A. Siemes, “International: From Hiroshima,” 28; Johannes Siemes, “Hiroshima—August 6, 1945,” 2–6; John A. Siemes, “Appendix: Fathers Siemes’ Eyewitness Account.”

⁵² Lemann, “The Art of Fact,” 68. Ben Yagoda in *About Town* writes that Shawn said to Hersey in a cable, “NO ONE HAS EVEN TOUCHED [the Hiroshima story],” Yagoda, 186 (emphasis in the original).

⁵³ Brodie, “Radiation Secrecy and Censorship after Hiroshima and Nagasaki,” 842–64; Dickerson, “Atomic Legacies in Censored Print Newspapers and the Meaning of Nuclear War,” 9–27. After World War II ended, Japanese newspaper and radio outlets were suspended for a time. See, for example, “Jap Council to ‘Legalize’ MacArthur’s Orders,” *Neosho Daily News* (Neosho, MO), September 19, 1945, 1; Dickinson, “Mac Abolishes Jap HQ, Puts Censorship On,” *Knoxville News-Sentinel* (Knoxville, TN), September 10, 1945, 1; “Japanese Newspaper Suspended by Allies,” *Globe-Gazette* (Mason City, IA), December 26, 1945, 13; “Japanese Newspapers Are Suspended,” *Clovis News-Journal* (Clovis, NM), 6.

⁵⁴ John B. [sic] Siemes, “Report from Hiroshima,” 30–32; John A. Siemes, “The Atomic Age: Hiroshima Eyewitness,” 24–25, 40–44; John A. Siemes, “International: From Hiroshima,” 28; Johannes Siemes, “Hiroshima—August 6, 1945,” 2–6; John A. Siemes, “Appendix: Father Siemes’ Eyewitness Account.”

⁵⁵ John B. [sic] Siemes, “Report from Hiroshima,” 30–32.

⁵⁶ Johannes Siemes, *The Day the Bomb Fell, Hiroshima, 6 August 1945*.

⁵⁷ John B. [sic] Siemes, “Report from Hiroshima,” 30–32; P. [sic] Siemes, “Atomic Bomb on Hiroshima,” Typescript 1, MS Coll 28, Box 3, Folder 36, Siemes Manuscript, Averill A. Liebow Collection, Harvey Cushing/John Hay Whitney Medical Library, Yale University (Hereafter cited as P. [sic] Siemes, “Atomic Bomb on Hiroshima,” Typescript 1).

⁵⁸ John B. [sic] Siemes, “Report from Hiroshima,” 30–32; P. [sic] Siemes, “Atomic Bomb on Hiroshima,” Typescript 1; Hersey, “Hiroshima,” 15; see Hersey, *Hiroshima*, 2–6; Liebow, *Encounter with Disaster*, 82–83.

⁵⁹ Hersey, “Hiroshima,” 68; see also, Hersey, *Hiroshima*, 89–90.

⁶⁰ Laurence, *Dawn over Zero: The Story of the Atomic Bomb*; Laurence, *Men and Atoms*; see Swanberg, “Borrowed Chronicles,” 29–48.

⁶¹ U.S. Army Corps Pictorial Service, 1945, *The Atom Strikes!*; U.S. War Department, 1946, *Tale of Two Cities*, 1946.

⁶² P. [sic] Siemes, "Atomic Bomb on Hiroshima, Typescript 1; Liebow, *Encounter with Disaster*, 82–83.

⁶³ Liebow, 83.

⁶⁴ Liebow, 79–83, 82. "General Farrell" was likely General Thomas Farrell, Deputy Commanding General to Major General Leslie R. Groves, Jr., who assembled a team that investigated the Hiroshima aftermath. See Atomic Heritage Foundation, "Thomas Farrell." Groves appointed Stafford L. Warren Chief Medical Officer for the Manhattan Project. In September 1945, Warren traveled to Hiroshima to study the medical effects of the bomb. See Atomic Heritage Foundation, "Stafford L. Warren."

⁶⁵ Liebow, *Encounter with Disaster*, 82.

⁶⁶ P. [sic] Siemes, "Atomic Bomb on Hiroshima," "Typescript 1" is identified as the Siemes Manuscript in the Averill A. Liebow Collection, Harvey Cushing/John Hay Whitney Medical Library, Yale University.

⁶⁷ P. [sic] Siemes, "Atomic Bomb on Hiroshima, Eyewitness Account of P. [sic] Siemes," "Typescript 2," YCAL MSS 707 Box 37, File 14, is in the John Hersey Papers, Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Yale University (hereafter cited as "Typescript 2").

⁶⁸ John A. Siemes, "International: From Hiroshima," 28.

⁶⁹ P. [sic] Siemes, "Atomic Bomb on Hiroshima," Typescript 1; Siemes, "Atomic Bomb on Hiroshima, Eyewitness Account of P. [sic] Siemes." (The corrected proof of Typescript 1 is hereinafter designated "Typescript 2, and is, as noted in the preceding endnote, in the John Hersey Papers at the Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Yale University.)

⁷⁰ Richard Reeve, memorandum, December 6, 1945, YCAL MSS 707 Box 37, File 14, John Hersey Papers, Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Yale University. Interestingly, on the copy of the Reeve memo archived in the Beinecke Library there is a drawing of a hippopotamus, perhaps a doodle made by Hersey. Results of an internet search, using the keywords "Hersey" and "hippopotamus," included, as the top result, the online, *New Yorker* version of "Hiroshima," which contains an anecdote about a hippopotamus. See Hersey, "Hiroshima," online version. Perhaps the doodle was a reminder for Hersey to include the excerpt that follows, in "Hiroshima." This is, of course, pure speculation, but it is an amusing (and possibly accurate) interpretation of the doodle.

"At the Novitiate, the motherless Kataoka children were inconsolable. Father Cieslik worked hard to keep them distracted. He put riddles to them. He asked, 'What is the cleverest animal in the world?,' and after the thirteen-year-old girl had guessed the ape, the elephant, the horse, he said, 'No, it must be the hippopotamus,' because in Japanese that animal is *kaba*, the reverse of *baka*, stupid."

Hersey, "Hiroshima," 42; see also, Hersey, *Hiroshima*, 62.

⁷¹ Reeve, December 6, 1945.

⁷² Reeve, December 6, 1945.

⁷³ Quist, "Classification in the United States Prior to World War II," 27–31.

⁷⁴ Quist, 28.

⁷⁵ Quist, 29–31.

⁷⁶ Quist, 30.

⁷⁷ Quist, 31–33.

⁷⁸ Executive Order No. 10,290.

⁷⁹ Reeve, memorandum, December 6, 1945.

⁸⁰ See notes 74–77.

⁸¹ Reeve, memorandum, December 6, 1945.

⁸² Hersey's oldest brother, Arthur Baird Hersey, a Federal Reserve economist, served in the OSS (the Office of Strategic Services, the predecessor of the CIA) during World War II. He also worked briefly in Japan after the war. "Arthur B. Hersey," *Washington Post* [Obituaries], not dated; Personnel Files of the Office of Strategic Services, Arthur B. Hershey [*sic*], National Archives Identifier: 2175580, Container Identifier: 330 HMS Entry Numbers A1 224; "Alphabetical Listing of Members: [A–L]," *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, 40, no. 232, Part 2: 587. John Hersey also wrote in his May 6, 1946, dispatch to the *New Yorker* of his rather chummy relationships with U.S. intelligence officers. Hersey, "Letter from Peiping," 88–89. While these relationships are not proof that Hersey used his connections to access Hiroshima and/or restricted military documents, it provides tantalizing circumstantial evidence that Hersey's privileged access to Hiroshima might not have been merely a matter of luck.

⁸³ For additional information about classification and declassification of government materials during the relevant period. See Quist, *Security Classification of Information*, vols. 1 and 2; Wellerstein, *Restricted Data*, 2021; Executive Order 10290; 16, no. 188, Federal Register (September 27, 1951).

⁸⁴ "Severe Hurricane Hit Hiroshima after Bombing, Priest Reveals," *Journal Times* (Racine, WI), September 19, 1945, 2; "Hundred Die in Hurricane Caused by First A-Bomb," *Dayton Herald* (Dayton, OH), September 19, 1945, 22; "Windstorm, Probably Caused by Explosion, Hurlled Many into Rivers; Jesuit Found Center of City Razed; Rising Waters Drown Helpless," *Courier-Post* (Camden, NJ), September 19, 1945, 3; United Press, "Eye-Witness Says Atomic Bomb Caused Hurricane," *Neosho Daily Democrat* (Neosho, MO), September 19, 1945, 1; "Jesuit Missionary Was Nearby as Atomic Bomb Destroyed City," *Hanford Sentinel* (Hanford, CA), September 19, 1945, 7; "Jesuit Missionary Describes First Atomic Bomb Explosion," *Eugene Guard* (Eugene, OR), September 19, 1945, 1; "Hurricane Caused by Hiroshima Bombing," *Sheboygan Press* (Sheboygan, WI), September 20, 1945, 6; "Gale Followed Atomic Blast at Hiroshima," *Gazette* (Cedar Rapids, IA), September 20, 1945, 2; "Hurricane Hit Hiroshima after Atomic Bomb Fell, Eyewitness Priest Says," *Nevada State Journal* (Reno, NV), September 20, 1945, 7; "Jesuit Father Sees Blast at Hiroshima," *Santa Cruz Sentinel* (Santa Cruz, CA), September 21, 1945, 12.

⁸⁵ "Severe Hurricane Hit Hiroshima after Bombing, Priest Reveals," *Journal Times* (Racine, WI), September 19, 1945, 2; "Hurricane Hit Hiroshima after

Atomic Bomb Fell, Eyewitness Priest Says," *Nevada State Journal* (Reno, NV), September 20, 1945, 7; "Hurricane Following A-Bomb Blast Killed Many in Nagatsuka District," *Courier-Post* (Camden, NJ), September 19, 1945, 3; "Jesus Missionary Describes First Atomic Bomb Explosion," *Eugene Guard* (Eugene, OR), September 19, 1945, 1; "Jesus Missionary Was Nearby as Atomic Bomb Destroyed City," *Hanford Sentinel* (Hanford, CA), September 19, 1945, 7.

⁸⁶ See articles referenced in note 84.

⁸⁷ "Garish Light, Loud Explosion Filled Valley as Bomb Erased Hiroshima, Witness Says," *Cincinnati (Ohio) Enquirer*, March 22, 1946, 16.

⁸⁸ Pfister, "Jesus Priest Tells of Stricken Jap City of Hiroshima after Atom Bomb Blast," *Palm Beach Post-Times* (West Palm Beach, FL), May 19, 1946, 24.

⁸⁹ *War Times Journal*, <http://www.wtj.com>.

⁹⁰ Johannes Siemes, "The Atomic Bombing of Hiroshima, by Father Johannes Siemes," para. 1, 2.

⁹¹ P. [sic] Siemes, "Atomic Bomb on Hiroshima," Typescript 1, page 11 (unpaginated); John B. [sic] Siemes, "Report from Hiroshima," 32.

⁹² P. [sic] Siemes, "Atomic Bomb on Hiroshima," Typescript 1, page 11 (unpaginated).

⁹³ "Hiroshima Japs Got Doom Omen," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, November 22, 1945, 4, 14; P. [sic] Siemes, "Atomic Bomb on Hiroshima," Typescript 1.

⁹⁴ Johannes Siemes, *The Day the Bomb Fell, Hiroshima, 6 August 1945*.

⁹⁵ "God's Witness to the Atomic Apocalypse," *Sydney Morning Herald*, August 4, 1990, 45; "Atomic Dawn," *Age* (Melbourne), August 4, 1990, 176.

⁹⁶ Goodman, "Review/Television: Aftermath of the Hiroshima Bomb," C14; Johannes Siemes, *Hermann Roesler and the Making of the Meiji State*.

⁹⁷ Ringle, "NBC's 'Hiroshima': Horror without Hype," B1.

⁹⁸ Liebow, *Encounter with Disaster*, 82–83; Hersey, "Hiroshima," 67; Hersey, *Hiroshima*, 117–18.

⁹⁹ Hersey, "Hiroshima," 25–26; Hersey, *Hiroshima*, 43–48; John B. [sic] Siemes, "Report from Hiroshima," 31–32; P. [sic] Siemes, "Atomic Bomb on Hiroshima," Typescript 1, pages 4–7 (unpaginated).

¹⁰⁰ P. [sic] Siemes, "Atomic Bomb on Hiroshima," Typescript 1, page 1 (unpaginated); John B. [sic] Siemes, "Report from Hiroshima," 30. See published versions of the Siemes report referenced in note 53.

¹⁰¹ Hersey, "Hiroshima," 15; *Hiroshima*, 5.

¹⁰² P. [sic] Siemes, "Atomic Bomb on Hiroshima," Typescript 1, page 1 (unpaginated); Hersey, "Hiroshima," 15; *Hiroshima*, 3.

¹⁰³ P. [sic] Siemes, "Atomic Bomb on Hiroshima," Typescript 1, page 1 (unpaginated).

¹⁰⁴ John B. [sic] Siemes, "Report from Hiroshima," 30.

¹⁰⁵ Hersey, "Hiroshima," 19; *Hiroshima*, 20.

¹⁰⁶ Hersey, "Hiroshima," 21; *Hiroshima*, 32.

¹⁰⁷ P. [sic] Siemes, "Atomic Bomb on Hiroshima," Typescript 1, page 2 (unpaginated); John B. [sic] Siemes, "Report from Hiroshima," 30.

- ¹⁰⁸ Siemes, "Atomic Bomb on Hiroshima," Typescript 1, page 4 (unpaginated); Hersey, "Hiroshima," 25; *Hiroshima*, 47, 52.
- ¹⁰⁹ P. [sic] Siemes, "Atomic Bomb on Hiroshima," Typescript 1, page 4 (unpaginated); Hersey, "Hiroshima," 26; *Hiroshima*, 57–58.
- ¹¹⁰ P. [sic] Siemes, "Atomic Bomb on Hiroshima," Typescript 1, page 5 (unpaginated); Hersey, "Hiroshima," 23, 39; *Hiroshima*, 39, 73.
- ¹¹¹ P. [sic] Siemes, "Atomic Bomb on Hiroshima," Typescript 1, page 6 (unpaginated); Hersey, "Hiroshima," 30; *Hiroshima*, 63.
- ¹¹² P. [sic] Siemes, "Atomic Bomb on Hiroshima," Typescript 1, page 4–5 (unpaginated); Hersey, "Hiroshima," 24–25; *Hiroshima*, 47–48.
- ¹¹³ P. [sic] Siemes, "Atomic Bomb on Hiroshima," Typescript 1, page 6 (unpaginated).
- ¹¹⁴ Hersey, "Hiroshima," 15, 23; *Hiroshima*, 4, 24.
- ¹¹⁵ July 15, 1985, letter (on library letterhead) from Robert H. Donahugh, director of the Public Library of Youngstown and Mahoning County, to "Mr. John Hersey, 420 Humphrey Street, New Haven, Connecticut, 06511," and copy of July 21, 1985, response from John Hersey to Mr. Donahugh, YCAL MSS 707 Box 63, John Hersey Papers, Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Yale University.
- ¹¹⁶ Copy of July 21, 1985, response from John Hersey to Mr. Donahugh.
- ¹¹⁷ Copy of July 21, 1985, response from John Hersey.
- ¹¹⁸ Montini, "'Hiroshima': Hersey's Bombshell," *Arizona Republic* (Phoenix, AZ), March 25, 1993, 18; Montini, "The Bomb: We Are All 'Hibakusha,'" *Arizona Republic* (Phoenix, AZ), August 6, 1995, 8; Swanberg, "Crux of the Matter: Renewing an Acquaintance with John Hersey," 175–78.
- ¹¹⁹ Hersey, "Hiroshima," 68; *Hiroshima*, 117–18 (emphasis added).
- ¹²⁰ Hersey, "Hiroshima," 26–44; *Hiroshima*, 56–86. Segment subtitles that appear in the original *New Yorker* article are omitted from the online version.
- ¹²¹ Hersey, "Hiroshima," 33; *Hiroshima*, 68.
- ¹²² Hersey, "Hiroshima," 28; *Hiroshima*, 60.
- ¹²³ U.S. Army Corps Pictorial Service, 1945, *The Atom Strikes!*; U.S. War Department, 1946, *Tale of Two Cities*.
- ¹²⁴ Laurence, "U.S. Bomb Site Belies Tokyo Tales," *New York Times*, September 12, 1945, 1, 4; Burchett, "The Atomic Plague," 1–5.
- ¹²⁵ P. [sic] Siemes, "Atomic Bomb on Hiroshima," Typescript 1, page 11 (unpaginated); John B. [sic] Siemes, "Report from Hiroshima," 30–32.
- ¹²⁶ P. [sic] Siemes, "Atomic Bomb on Hiroshima," Typescript 1, page 11 (unpaginated); John B. [sic] Siemes, "Report from Hiroshima," 30–32.
- ¹²⁷ P. [sic] Siemes, "Atomic Bomb on Hiroshima," Typescript 1, page 3–4, 11 (unpaginated); John B. [sic] Siemes, "Report from Hiroshima," 30–32.
- ¹²⁸ Laurence, "U.S. Bomb Site Belies Tokyo Tales," *New York Times*, September 12, 1945, 1, 4.
- ¹²⁹ Hersey, "Hiroshima," 52–54; *Hiroshima*, 97–99.

Bibliography

- Age* (Melbourne, Australia). "Atomic Dawn." August 4, 1990, 176.
- "Alphabetical Listing of Members: [A–L]." *Journal of the American Statistical Association* 40, no. 232, Part 2, (December 1945): 587. Accessed January 5, 2021, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2279999?seq=1>.
- "Arthur B. Hersey." *Washington Post* [Obituaries]. Accessed May 26, 2021. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/local/2005/08/06/myra-webb-bradley-french-tea/3cb9314f-8254-4a1d-9a31-ab6907da3119/>.
- Atomic Heritage Foundation. "Thomas Farrell." Profiles. Accessed January 5, 2020. <https://www.atomicheritage.org/profile/thomas-farrell>.
- . "Stafford L. Warren." Profiles. Accessed January 5, 2020. <https://www.atomicheritage.org/profile/stafford-l-warren>.
- Bauman, Sam. "Rewrite Men Are Legends of Journalism History." *Nevada Appeal/Lahontan Valley News* (Carson City, NV), August 29, 2001. <https://www.nevadaappeal.com/news/2001/aug/29/rewrite-men-are-legends-of-journalism-history/>.
- Blume, Lesley M. M. *Fallout: The Hiroshima Cover-Up and the Reporter Who Revealed It to the World*. Victoria, Australia: Scribe Publications, 2020. Also published 2020 as *Fallout* by Simon & Schuster (New York). Page references are to the Scribe edition.
- Brodie, Janet Farrell. "Radiation Secrecy and Censorship after Hiroshima and Nagasaki." *Journal of Social History* 48, no. 4 (2015): 842–64.
- Burchett, Wilfred G. "The Atomic Plague." In *Rebel Journalism: The Writings of Wilfred Burchett*, edited by George Burchett and Nick Shimmin, 1–5. Port Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2007. First published in the *Daily Express (London)*, September 5, 1945.
- Cincinnati* (Ohio) *Enquirer*. "Garish Light, Loud Explosion Filled Valley as Bomb Erased Hiroshima, Witness Says." March 22, 1946, 16.
- Clovis News-Journal* (Clovis, NM). "Japanese Newspapers Are Suspended." September 21, 1945, 6.
- Courier-Post* (Camden, NJ). "Windstorm, Probably Caused by Explosion, Hurlled Many into Rivers; Jesuit Found Center of City Razed; Rising Waters Drown Helpless." September 19, 1945, 3.
- . "Hurricane Following A-Bomb Blast Killed Many in Nagatsuka District." September 19, 1945, 3.
- Dayton Herald* (Dayton, OH). "Hundred Die in Hurricane Caused by First A-Bomb." September 19, 1945, 22.
- Dickerson, Hilary. "Atomic Legacies in Censored Print Newspapers and the Meaning of Nuclear War." In Mays, *Legacies of the Manhattan Project: Reflections on 75 Years of a Nuclear World*, 9–27.
- Dickinson, William B. "Mac Abolishes Jap HQ, Puts Censorship On." *Knoxville News-Sentinel* (Knoxville, TN). September 10, 1945, 1.
- "Echo of 'Bell for Adano,' Action against Author." *Age* (Melbourne). March 15, 1946, 1.

- Eugene Guard* (Eugene, OR). "Jesuit Missionary Describes First Atomic Bomb Explosion." September 19, 1945, 1.
- Executive Order No. 10,290; *Federal Register* 16, no. 188 (September 27, 1951).
- Fadiman, Anne. *Ex Libris: Confessions of a Common Reader*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2000. First published 1998 by Farrar, Straus and Giroux (New York). Page references are to the 2000 edition.
- Gazette* (Cedar Rapids, IA). "Gale Followed Atomic Blast at Hiroshima." September 20, 1945, 2.
- Globe-Gazette* (Mason City, IA). "Japanese Newspaper Suspended by Allies." December 26, 1945, 13.
- Goodman, Walter. "Review/Television: Aftermath of the Hiroshima Bomb." *New York Times*. August 6, 1990, C14. <https://www.nytimes.com/1990/08/06/arts/review-television-aftermath-of-the-hiroshima-bomb.html>.
- Hanford Sentinel* (Hanford, CA). "Jesuit Missionary Was Nearby as Atomic Bomb Destroyed City." September 19, 1945, 7.
- Hartsock, John C. *Literary Journalism and the Aesthetics of Experience*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2016.
- Hersey, John. *The Algiers Motel Incident*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998. First published 1968 by Alfred A. Knopf (New York).
- . *A Bell for Adano*. New York: Bantam, 1946.
- . "Department of Amplification." *New Yorker*. August 1, 1988, 54. <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/1988/08/01/1988-08-01-054-tny-cards-000350665>.
- . *Here to Stay: Studies in Human Tenacity*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963. See esp. "Strength from Without," and "A Short Talk with Erlinger."
- . "Hiroshima." *New Yorker*, August 31, 1946, 15–68. Online version available at <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/1946/08/31/hiroshima>.
- . *Hiroshima: A New Edition with a Final Chapter Written Forty Years after the Explosion*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985. First published 1946 as *Hiroshima* by Alfred A. Knopf (New York). Page references are to the 1968 and 1985 editions.
- . "Joe Is Home Now." *Life*, July 3, 1944, 68.
- . "The Legend on the License." *Yale Review* 70, no. 1 (1980): 1–25. A slightly revised version appears in the *Yale Review* 75, no. 2 (1986): 289–314.
- . "Letter from Peiping." *New Yorker*, May 6, 1946, 88–89.
- . *The Marmot Drive*. New York: Albert Knopf, 1953.
- . *Men on Bataan*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1942. See especially, "Thanks and a Dedication."
- Hersey Papers. Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library. Yale University.
- Hertzberg, Hendrik. "John Hersey." *New Yorker*, April 5, 1993, 111.
- Honan, William H. "Hersey Apologizes to a Writer Over an Article on Agee." *New York Times*, July 22, 1988, 1.
- Japan Times*. "75 Years On, Abolition Pleas from the Last Generation of Hibakusha." *Japan Times*, August 6, 2020. <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2020/08/06/national/abolition-pleas-japans-last-hibakusha/>.

- Journal Times* (Racine, WI). "Severe Hurricane Hit Hiroshima after Bombing, Priest Reveals," September 19, 1945, 2.
- Kerrane, Kevin, and Ben Yagoda, eds. *The Art of Fact: A Historical Anthology of Literary Journalism*. New York: Scribner, 1997.
- Laurence, William L. *Dawn over Zero: The Story of the Atomic Bomb*. New York: Knopf, 1946.
- . *Men and Atoms: The Discovery, the Uses, and the Future of Atomic Energy*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1959.
- . "U.S. Bomb Site Belies Tokyo Tales; Tests on New Mexico Range Confirm That Blast, and Not Radiation, Took Toll." *New York Times*, September 12, 1945, 1, 4.
- Lemann, Nicholas. "The Art of Fact." *New Yorker*, April 29, 2019, 66ff. Published online as "John Hersey and the Art of Fact." <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2019/04/29/john-hersey-and-the-art-of-fact>. Page references are to the *New Yorker's* 2019 issue.
- Liebow, Averill A. *Encounter with Disaster: A Medical Diary of Hiroshima, 1945*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1970.
- Martin, Douglas. "F. E. Toscani, 89, Dies, Model for Hero of 'Bell for Adano.'" *New York Times*, January 28, 2001. Sec. 1, 30. <https://www.nytimes.com/2001/01/28/nyregion/fe-toscani-89-dies-model-for-hero-of-bell-for-adano.html>.
- Mays, Michael, ed. *Legacies of the Manhattan Project: Reflections on 75 Years of a Nuclear World*. Vol. 2 of the Hanford History Series. Pullman: Washington State University Press, 2020.
- Mehren, Elizabeth. "John Hersey's *New Yorker* Mea Culpa." *Los Angeles Times*, July 28, 1988, F1.
- Montini, E. J. "'Hiroshima': Hersey's Bombshell." *Arizona Republic* (Phoenix). March 25, 1993, 18.
- . "The Bomb: We Are All 'Hibakusha.'" *Arizona Republic* (Phoenix). August 6, 1995, 8.
- Neosho Daily Democrat* (Neosho, MO). "Jap Council to 'Legalize' MacArthur's Orders." September 19, 1945, 1.
- Nevada State Journal* (Reno, NV). "Hurricane Hit Hiroshima after Atomic Bomb Fell, Eyewitness Priest Says." September 20, 1945, 7.
- "*New York Times*. "\$250,000 Libel Suit Started by Army Officer against Author of 'A Bell for Adano,' Others." March 14, 1946, 27.
- Personnel Files of the Office of Strategic Services. Arthur B. Hershey [sic]. National Archives Identifier: 2175580, Container Identifier: 330 HMS Entry Numbers A1 224.
- Pfister, Ed. "Jesuit Priest Tells of Stricken Jap City of Hiroshima after Atom Bomb Blast." *Palm Beach Post-Times* (West Palm Beach, FL), May 19, 1946, 24.
- Philadelphia Inquirer*. "Hiroshima Japs Got Doom Omen." November 22, 1945, 4, 14. <https://www.newspapers.com/clip/41001456/the-philadelphia-inquirer/>.
- Price, Ira M., II. "Torts: Right of Privacy: Invasion of Privacy through Fictional

- Works." *Michigan Law Review* 45, no. 8 (1947): 1064–66.
- Quist, Arvin S. "Classification in the United States Prior to World War II." Chap. 2 in *Security Classification of Information*. Vol. 1, *Introduction, History, and Adverse Impacts*. rev. ed. Oak Ridge, TN: Federation of American Scientists, 2002. Accessed January 17, 2021. https://fas.org/sgp/library/quist/chap_2.html. See also, *Security Classification of Information*, Vol. 2, rev. ed. 2002.
- . "Classification under the Atomic Energy Act." Chap. 4 in *Security Classification of Information*. Vol. 1, *Introduction, History, and Adverse Impacts*. rev. ed. Oak Ridge, TN: *Federation of American Scientists*. Accessed January 17, 2020. https://fas.org/sgp/library/quist/chap_4.html.
- Ringle, Ken. "NBC's 'Hiroshima': Horror without Hype." *Washington Post*, August 6, 1990, B1.
- Sanders, David. *John Hersey*. New York: Twayne Publishers, 1967.
- . *John Hersey Revisited*. New York: Twayne Publishers, 1991.
- Santa Cruz Sentinel* (Santa Cruz, CA). "Jesuit Father Sees Blast at Hiroshima." September 21, 1945, 12.
- Sheboygan Press* (Sheboygan, WI). "Hurricane Caused by Hiroshima Bombing." September 20, 1945, 6.
- Shorto, Russell. "John Hersey, the Writer Who Let 'Hiroshima' Speak for Itself." *New Yorker* [Online], August 31, 2016. <https://www.newyorker.com/culture/culture-desk/john-hersey-the-writer-who-let-hiroshima-speak-for-itself>.
- Siemes, Johannes. See also, Siemes, John A.; Siemes, [John B., *sic*]; Siemes, P. [*sic*].
- Siemes, Johannes. "The Atomic Bombing of Hiroshima, by Father Johannes Siemes." *War Times Journal*. Accessed December 31, 2019. <http://www.wtj.com/archives/hiroshima.htm>.
- . *The Day the Bomb Fell, Hiroshima, 6 August 1945*. London: Catholic Truth Society, 1984.
- . *Hermann Roesler and the Making of the Meiji State*. Tokyo: Sophia University in cooperation with Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1968. See esp. Introduction and dust jacket, end flap.
- . *Hermann Roesler und die Einführung des Deutschen Staatsrechts in Japan*. Tokyo, 1962.
- . "Hermann Roesler und die Einführung des Deutschen Staatsrechts in Japan." *Der Staat* 2, no. 2 (1963): 181–96.
- . "Hermann Roesler's Commentaries on the Meiji Constitution." *Monumenta Nipponica* 17, no. 1/4 (1962): 1–66.
- . "Hermann Roesler's Commentaries on the Meiji Constitution." *Monumenta Nipponica* 19, no. 1/2 (1964): 37–65.
- . "Hiroshima—August 6, 1945." *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 1, no. 11, May 15, 1946, 2–6.
- . "Karl Marx im Urteil des sozialen Rechts. Zur ersten wissenschaftlichen Rezension von Marx' 'Das Kapital.'" *Der Staat* 11, no. 1 (1972): 376–88.
- . Review of *Nippon Seiji no Kijun* (Die Norm des Japanischen Staatslebens), by Yasuzô Suzuki. *Monumenta Nipponica* 5, no. 1 (January 1942): 269–71.

- . “Über Japans Verfassung.” *Der Staat* 3, no. 3 (1964): 358–66.
- Siemes, John A. “Appendix: Father Siemes’ Eyewitness Account.” In *The Atomic Bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki*, 1–29. Manhattan Engineer District, June 29, 1946. <https://www.atomicarchive.com/resources/documents/med/index.html>.
- . “The Atomic Age: Hiroshima Eyewitness.” *Saturday Review of Literature*, May 11, 1946, 24–25, 40–44.
- . “International: From Hiroshima: A Report and a Question.” *Time*, February 11, 1946, 26–28.
- Siemes, John B. [sic]. “Report from Hiroshima.” *Jesuit Missions* 20, no. 2 (1946): 30–32.
- Siemes, P. [sic]. “Atomic Bomb on Hiroshima,” designated “Typescript 1.” Siemes Manuscript. Averill A. Liebow Collection. Harvey Cushing/John Hay Whitney Medical Library, Yale University.
- . “Atomic Bomb on Hiroshima, Eyewitness Account of P. [sic] Siemes,” designated “Typescript 2.” John Hersey Papers. Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library. Yale University.
- Suzuki, Yasuzô, and Johannes Siemes, “Hermann Roesler und die Japanische Verfassung.” *Monumenta Nipponica* 4, no. 2 (July 1941): 428–53.
- Swanberg, Susan E. “Borrowed Chronicles: William L. ‘Atomic Bill’ Laurence and the Reports of a Hiroshima Survivor.” In Mays, *Legacies of the Manhattan Project: Reflections on 75 Years of a Nuclear World*, 29–48.
- . “Crux of the Matter: Renewing an Acquaintance with John Hersey.” Review of *Mr. Straight Arrow: The Career of John Hersey, Author of Hiroshima* by Jeremy Treglown. *Literary Journalism Studies* 11, no. 2 (December 2019): 175–78.
- Sydney Morning Herald*. “God’s Witness to the Atomic Apocalypse.” August 4, 1990, 45.
- Toscani v. Hersey 271 App. Div. 445 (NY App. Div. 1946).
- Treglown, Jeremy. *Mr. Straight Arrow: The Career of John Hersey, Author of Hiroshima*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2019.
- United Press. *Neosho Daily Democrat* (Neosho, MO). “Eye-Witness Says Atomic Bomb Caused Hurricane.” September 19, 1945, 1.
- U.S. Army Corps Pictorial Service. *The Atom Strikes!* 1945. Accessed December 28, 2019. <https://archive.org/details/AtomStrikes>.
- U.S. War Department. *Tale of Two Cities*. 1946. Accessed December 28, 2019, <https://archive.org/details/TaleofTw1946>.
- Wellerstein, Alex. *Restricted Data: The History of Nuclear Secrecy in the United States*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2021.
- War Department. *Safeguarding Military Information*. Army Regulations 380–5. Section: [General, Restricted Matter]. Washington, DC: War Department, June 10, 1939, sec. 1, para. 6–11. Accessed January 2, 2020. https://www.nsa.gov/Portals/70/documents/news-features/declassified-documents/friedman-documents/reports-research/FOLDER_057/41699469073880.pdf.

- War Times Journal*. Accessed August 3, 2021. <http://www.wtj.com>.
- Weingarten, Marc. *The Gang That Wouldn't Write Straight*. New York: Crown, 2005.
- Wilder, Thornton. *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*. New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1927.
- Wolfe, Tom. *The New Journalism, with an Anthology*, edited by Tom Wolfe and E. W. Johnson. New York: Harper and Row, 1973.
- . "The Birth of 'The New Journalism'; Eyewitness Report by Tom Wolfe." *New York*, February 14, 1972, 1–30ff. <http://nymag.com/news/media/47353/?Src=longreads>.
- Yagoda, Ben. *About Town: The New Yorker and the World It Made*. Boston: Da Capo Press, 2001.
- Yavenditti, Michael J. "John Hersey and the American Conscience: The Reception of 'Hiroshima.'" *Pacific Historical Review* 43, no. 1 (February 1974): 24–49.



Bhalki Machan reserve, August 19, 2014. Image by Satyamon1993, Wikimedia Commons.

IALJS-15 Keynote Address . . .

From within the Ecosystem: Notes from an Observer of Literary Journalism

Isabel Soares

CAPP, ISCSP, Universidade de Lisboa, Portugal

Good morning, afternoon, or evening, wherever you are in physical geography. From the “almost” post-apocalypse of Covid-19 and by the powers of Zoom, it is a great pleasure to be here with you in Copenhagen/the world.

Thank you to the International Association for Literary Journalism Studies for the invitation to deliver this year’s/last year’s keynote address. Taken as an honor and privilege, I experience it from the perspective of self-doubt and fear of embarrassment—to me and the association—and a genuine sense of not being able to play the part. The comparison with all my predecessors is unavoidable and so daunting as to be intimidating (pleonasm intended). The last time there was a keynote address, in the remote year of 2019 BC (Before Covid-19), Matthew Ricketson, also contemplating his part in this task and tracing the list of honorables before him, said:

I feel honored to have this opportunity. Looking at the list of previous keynote speakers, I noticed that one was from France, one from Norway, one from Portugal, and there were eight from the United States. I am the first keynote speaker to this conference from Australia, indeed the first from the southern hemisphere. That makes me feel good. But among my predecessors, ten were men and only two were women. That makes me feel less than good. Because whatever I bring to this conference—and I do aim to offer you something you’ll find useful—I know there are scholars in Australia who could well be standing here instead of me¹

Unlike Ricketson, I am not the first in anything. My country, gender, and first language have already been represented and that makes me feel good.

However, it is unclear to me whether I can offer you something you'll find useful, and there are several scholars in the world and here today "who could well be standing here instead of me," and that makes *me* feel less than good. I suppose I could talk to you about the specifics of Portuguese *crónica*, a variety of literary journalism found in the languages originating in the Iberian Peninsula and then spread around the world via historical circumstances and exchanges not always on the right side of human betterment. That, however, would be following the much-beaten track of discussing what constitutes literary journalism. Maybe I could talk about how literary journalism has looked at Covid, but we are still in the throes of pandemic trauma, and we—I, at least—need some distance before clarity settles.

Given two years to mull over this talk, and in this I am a first (take that, Ricketson!), I decided the only way out is walking in my own shoes even if that is a limp when compared to the elegant gait of the thirteen keynoters before me (there was no keynote at the first IALJS conference). Neither am I a renowned, towering academic, nor an award-winning practitioner of literary journalism, the hallmarks of previous keynoters. The only time I ventured into the writing of literary journalism, I did so timidly under the pseudonym with which I write novels, stories that are fifty percent nonfiction and fifty percent heightened reality. In that alias, I am Isabel Tallysha-Soares, an identity not to be confused with that of a corseted, more serious Isabel Soares, who does not want her academic work to be contaminated by any literary whiff. When I am in literary journalism research mode, I do so for limited audiences, to niche-oriented topics and, coming from a peripheral geographic and linguistic region, any contribution I might bring to the study of literary journalism will linger in the obscurity that so characterizes peripheries. Therefore, I bring no grandiose eloquence on research in literary journalism and no enthralling musings on life as a literary journalist. At best, I fall in the category of observer, sometimes participant, of the great ecosystem of literary journalism. Learning from both academics and practitioners, and having, by serendipity, landed on a vantage point from where to observe the ecosystem, this, ladies and gentlemen, is what I can offer you today: my observation.

In her Arthur Miller Freedom to Write Lecture, delivered at the PEN World Voices Festival on May 12, 2019, Arundhati Roy invited us to think about the place of literature in these troubled times that, little did she know, were about to get more troubled. Best known for her Booker Prize-winning novel, *The God of Small Things* (1997),² Roy is an essayist and a political activist whose nonfiction books she describes as "stories." Telling stories is her way to convey meaning and transmit an image of the perceived real. For Roy, her nonfictive narration presents:

. . . [D]ifferent kinds of stories, but stories nevertheless. Stories about the massive corporate attack on forests, rivers, crops, seeds, on land, on farmers, . . . US and NATO attacks on country after country. . . . stories about people who have fought against these attacks—specific stories, about . . . specific peoples’ movements, all of them being specifically crushed in specific ways. . . . [R]eal climate warriors, local people with a global message, . . . And yet, . . . consistently portrayed as villains—the anti-national impediments to progress and development.³

Roy’s words should be contextualized, as she was referring to her nonfiction books being used by Indian authorities as proof to build cases against political activists. However, as she further explained, these writings “sat at an angle to what is conventionally thought of as literature. . . , particularly among the taxonomy-inclined—because they couldn’t decide exactly what this was—pamphlet or polemic, academic or journalistic writing, travelogue, or just plain literary adventurism?”⁴ Were Roy to attend the more than a dozen conferences of the IALJS, she would realize taxonomy is one of our recurring topics of discussion when we let ourselves go in the prolific, seemingly never-ending and controversy-driven debate of how best to name the genre we study: literary journalism, nonfiction narrative, reportage, *crónica*? Were she to attend these conferences, she would probably be left with a sense that her nonfiction qualifies for what we term literary journalism. If she were to attend our conferences, she would understand that our field of studies is a hybrid journalism sitting at some “angle” of literature, often also posing for travelogue.⁵ If she were interested in discovering a bit more of our wars and struggles to find something as basic as a name, she would come across Richard Lance Keeble’s bold dispatch of the canon because “*all* journalism is worthy of attention as *literature*. So away with the canon, away even with the notion of literary journalism as a separate genre! And away with all those tedious debates about what precisely constitutes literary journalism that have dulled so many conferences over the years.”⁶

Were Roy a reader of our newsletters she would have read about our growing pains and some sense of “a certain repetitiveness—and tedium—we’ve all experienced after hearing for the thousandth time a presentation on Tom Wolfe.”⁷ It is always interesting to notice the feedback on the boredom of our conferences when it comes to discussing the academic standing of the canon, when the canon is begging to be done within a journalism we are still trying to name and that, maybe to our dismay, Lemann calls a “tiny subculture [of] journalism.”⁸ So fascinating to watch the obstinate, collective pull to study and move forward this exoticism of a journalism that sleeps with the enemy and refuses baptism. But basically, what Roy would discover is that

what interests us gathered here, remotely, is also what appeals to her as a non-fiction writer: a genre of reporting that is all about revealing reality through the personal, individual lense of the observer. As an observer, both in and out of the literary journalistic ecosystem, I find these pulls and pushes like tides in an ocean teeming with life, with currents and undercurrents, beaten by the occasional storm. In other words, amazing proof of life in the ecosystem

Searching for Life in the Ecosystem

From September 2019 to February 2020, the twilight of the BC era, I spent most of my academic time working on preparing a three-fold file to submit to a nerve-racking, almost medieval, two-day trial by jury called “The Habilitation.” This is the last rite of passage in Portuguese academe for those who nurture any hope of attaining full professorship. One of the requirements is that you write a book-length report justifying the field of study in which you wish your Habilitation to be granted. Usually what you prepare in these circumstances is a report of a class or seminar in which you have, over the years, developed your teaching and research. For the Kamikaze, this can also be the opportunity to open a new academic field. I went the full Kamikaze. Literary journalism is neither taught nor recognized as a subject in Portuguese higher education institutions. The only place it has a glimmer of consistent scholarly life in Portugal is at my institution, and the good, diligent people studying it there have all contributed to the 2020 Portuguese special issue of *Literary Journalism Studies*: Alice Trindade, founding member and first female president of the IALJS; Rita Amorim; Raquel Baltazar; and, more recently, Marta Soares (no relation to my Soares).⁹ Five people constitute the whole pool of Portuguese faculty interested in literary journalism as an academic field, and our institute is its small habitat. If I wanted to cry freedom for literary journalism to stand its ground as a fully-fledged academic field, I needed nothing simpler than to prove its existence. Ecology came to the help.

Considering journalism as a biosphere, the life-supporting stratum composed of earth, oceans, and atmosphere,¹⁰ we can proceed to identifying several of its ecosystems. An ecosystem is a physical environment composed of biotic, or living, and abiotic, or non-living, elements bound together by flows of energy and the cycling of nutrients.¹¹ There are marine, alpine, desert, coastal, larger, and smaller ecosystems all of which have unique characteristics and all of which communicate with one another by means of direct or indirect influence. For example, a reduction in phytoplankton in the Pacific basin due to an increase in surface water temperature in an El Niño year leads to decreases in fish stocks, thus affecting ecosystems as far apart as the equatorial Galapagos Islands or the sub-Arctic Bering Sea. In an ecological metaphor,

literary journalism can be a sub-system of the journalistic biosphere maintaining links and exchanges with other journalistic ecosystems. Journalists, researchers, and the public are among its biotic components, whereas abiotic components can be found in news outlets and platforms. The nutrients feeding this ecosystem stem from a rich smorgasbord of newsworthy material, and the energy flows responsible for the vitality and distinctiveness of the ecosystem are channeled in a narrative discourse that we also call literary.

Ecosystems can be broken down into more restricted life-enabling spaces known as habitats, places where an organism or community of organisms live, with all the transactions therein.¹² Focusing on a particular feature of the literary journalistic ecosystem, and its standing as an academic field, analysis was needed to determine its health and validity if we were to include it in the biosphere of journalism in the habitat of Portuguese academe. Prosaically, if I did not want to crash and burn in the Habilitation, the ecosystem had better be studied. First, observation was carried out pertaining to the local habitat, all materializations of literary journalism studies at the Institute for Social and Political Sciences of the University of Lisbon—and second, there was observation of the global habitat in which literary journalism occurs as course offerings at higher education institutions. When combined, these observations should draw a clearer picture of the life of literary journalism in academe and contribute to our better understanding of our place as researchers in this ecosystem and how far and wide it is spread.

If verifiable information is paramount in journalism, in science it is often shown by some means of quantification. To assess our local habitat, a simple method was used: to count all literary journalism-related publications by the five researchers at our institute between 2007 and 2020 (the start time chosen because the first PhD thesis about Portuguese literary journalism was awarded in 2007). In the thirteen years under scrutiny, forty-one publications were found, corresponding to an average of 3.15 publications specifically addressing literary journalism, coming out of our institute each year. Curiously, there were other quantifiable, literary journalism academic activities included in our observation of this period. Among them were the organization of the IALJS conference in 2008 and the submission of three research projects to the Portuguese Science Foundation and one to the European Science Foundation. Purposely, we left out participation in conferences because research presented on such occasions is not always published and, simply, because we could indulge in disregarding this indicator. In a school without a research line in literary journalism and without courses and students in literary journalism, we concluded that this local habitat was pulsing and ready for a next developmental stage. We needed now to observe the global academic habitat of literary journalism.

Because the main goal of our public discussion before the grand jury of the Habilitation was to attest to the validity of including literary journalism in the syllabi of communication studies courses, we needed to prove more than just the vitality of literary journalism research at our institute. There was a further, broader necessity of showing the maturity of this academic field. The technique used was benchmarking, by which means we intended to provide data on course offerings in literary journalism worldwide. This effort was possible in part by resorting to the ready supply of contacts stored in the IALJS LISTSERV with the assistance of its manager, Jeffrey Neely (University of Tampa), whom I now publicly thank. The thought was that the IALJS, as the sole learned society in literary journalism, could aggregate, by means of its members, a representative sample of the global universe of higher education institutions where literary journalism is part of the curriculum. On December 10, 2019, there were 876 email addresses in the IALJS LISTSERV, of which, according to Neely, an undetermined number were alternative contacts and/or inactive ones. An email message, that many of you here today may recall receiving, was sent to the LISTSERV on that date, asking members to respond to the following questions:

1. Name of university/country?
2. Name of literary journalism course?
3. Status of said course, mandatory or optional?

The introductory text to the email message asked for replies only from IALJS members who were teaching literary journalism at that moment and to further include such designations as “narrative nonfiction,” “literature of fact,” or “journalism and literature.” To strengthen our sample, while we waited for replies to the survey, independent research was carried out to find universities offering literary journalism courses—a metonym also encompassing curricular units, seminars, and programs, given that the cultural diversity of academe at the international level precluded standardized, matching denominations for units of teaching. This research was a basic Google search crossing the accepted designations of literary journalism with the words “university” and “course” in the languages of English, Portuguese, Spanish, and French. As in the case of the email survey, results of this search were taken into consideration only for current courses. Whether the courses were optional or mandatory was information used for a secondary study not under consideration today.

Setting aside email replies of respondents who had taught literary journalism in the past, those who were interested in teaching literary journalism in the future, and some who wrote but had not taught literary journalism,

there were thirty-four valid email replies. To these we added the information gathered from the parallel digital search, and the combined results show us an image of the university habitat where literary journalism was being taught at the point we compiled the data: January 7, 2020. Table 1 identifies the institutions, by continent and country with curricular offerings of literary journalism.

Continent	Country	Institution
Africa	South Africa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of the Witwatersrand (Johannesburg) • University of Cape Town (Cape Town, Western Cape) • Rhodes University (Grahamstown, now Makhanda, Eastern Cape)
North America	The Bahamas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of the Bahamas (Nassau, New Providence)
	Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ryerson University (Toronto, Ontario) • University of King's College (Halifax, Nova Scotia) • Concordia University (Montreal, Quebec) • University of British Columbia (Vancouver, British Columbia) • Université Laval (Quebec City, Quebec)
	United States	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of California, Irvine (Irvine, California) • University of California, Los Angeles (Los Angeles, California) • Ball State University (Muncie, Indiana) • New York University (New York, New York) • State University of New York Albany (Albany, New York) • State University of New York at Stony Brook (Stony Brook, New York) • New York City College of Technology (New York City, New York)

Continent	Country	Institution
North America	United States	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Massachusetts Amherst (Amherst, Massachusetts) • Boston University (Boston, Massachusetts) • Salem State University (Salem, Massachusetts) • Northwestern University (Evanston, Illinois) • University of Tampa (Tampa, Florida) • Towson University (Baltimore, Maryland) • Denison University (Granville, Ohio) • University of North Texas [now Midwestern State University] (Denton, Texas) • North Carolina Central University (Durham, North Carolina) • University of Maryland (College Park, Maryland) • Kutztown University of Pennsylvania (Kutztown, Pennsylvania) • University of Arkansas (Fayetteville, Arkansas) • Rutgers University (New Brunswick, New Jersey)
Latin America (South and Central America)	Argentina	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universidad Nacional de Tres de Febrero (Buenos Aires Province)
	Brazil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul (Porto Alegre, Rio Grande do Sul)
	Chile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universidad Alberto Hurtado (Santiago, Santiago Province)
Asia	United Arab Emirates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • American University of Sharjah (Sharjah)
	Qatar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northwestern University in Qatar (Doha)
	Turkey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Erciyes University (Kayseri, Kayseri Province)

Continent	Country	Institution
Europe	Belgium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Université Libre de Bruxelles (Brussels)
	Spain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (Barcelona, Catalonia) • Universitas Miguel Hernández (Elche, Valencian Community)
	France	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • American University of Paris (Paris, Île-de-France) • Université Paris-Est (Paris, Île-de-France)
	Netherlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Groningen (Groningen)
	United Kingdom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City, University of London (London) • Roehampton University (London) • University of Essex (Colchester) • University of Lincoln (Lincoln)
	Romania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Bucharest (Bucharest)
	Switzerland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Université de Genève (Canton of Geneva)
Oceania	Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Queensland (Brisbane, Queensland) • University of Technology Sydney (Sydney, New South Wales) • University of Wollongong (Wollongong, New South Wales) • Deakin University (Melbourne, Victoria)
	New Zealand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Victoria University of Wellington (Wellington)

Table 1: Curricular course offerings on literary journalism at higher education institutions, January 2020.

The first result shows that literary journalism is a university course subject in higher education institutions on all continents (Antarctica excepted). Fifty-three universities in nineteen different countries offer literary journalism courses. There is a blind area in the research, however. The search could not be conducted in languages impenetrable, and so an unknown percentage of potential survey respondents could not reply. In any case, the information compiled shows a thriving habitat, particularly because the first university

program in literary journalism in the United States dates only to 2003 at the University of California, Irvine,¹³ and the founding of the IALJS to as recently as 2006. These landmarks represent the coming of age of literary journalism as an academic field, reinforcing the notion that literary journalism has swiftly gained ground as an academic subject. And, with the launch of an undergraduate curricular unit in literary journalism at the Institute for Social and Political Sciences in Portugal in September 2021, a new country and a new institution has joined this habitat.

If, within the literary journalism ecosystem, the academic habitat is showing signs of vitality, we can also observe another habitat: that of the international scholarly association created as a hub for the promotion and dissemination of knowledge in literary journalism.

Life within the Habitat of IALJS

I might also have been invited for this role today because I am a repository of the collective memory of the IALJS. I have dedicated countless working hours to the association, been present in many pivotal decision-making moments and, because of the IALJS, repositioned my research from imperial studies—a politically correct way of saying colonial and post-colonial studies—to focus more closely on literary journalism. I am also a woman, a polyglot, a German-Portuguese hybrid, and an academic from a peripheral, non-Anglophone country, who pioneered analysis on the wondrous journalism that interests our community, in a language other than English and with authors far from what was the established, (in)famous canon in the early years of the millennium. I am, let us say, a figure of inclusion. When IALJS President Tom Connery invited me to give this keynote, he wrote me an email, dated May 10, 2019: “Giving the keynote would give you the opportunity to reflect and assess our journey to this point but also to perhaps even consider where we might go from this point in our history. I know your address would be interesting and perhaps it might even be provocative, if need be.”¹⁴

I don't know about provocation, but I would dread to contribute “dull” to this conference. Given my long standing in the association, immodestly, I think am well-suited to play its chronicler. However, what could be duller than presenting you the chronology of the IALJS?

At fifteen years of age, the IALJS is a teenager trying to understand its own self, testing limits and boundaries, having occasional outbursts of anger and yet, growing, evolving, maturing, and offering worthy ideas from fresh or unexpected perspectives. In this process, generational clashes are expected and unavoidable. Again, metaphors from the fields of biology can be used in relation to this organism.

Observing its growth, I have witnessed how IALJS has made its own breaks, managed to survive, been financially secure enough to sponsor awards and carve a path of quality standards, as epitomized in the indexing of its journal, and the number of submissions for both the conference and the journal outnumbering the slots available. This is all to the good, projecting to the outside world an image of smooth sailing and success. Backstage is, however, not so glamorous. Internally there has been discussion of the ways officers are selected and/or elected. Pivotal areas, such as the research, program, and awards committees go through straining peaks of work to ensure the regular pace of our annual conferences. Keeping a lookout on our finances involves assuming great responsibility, and I am deliberately leaving for last the roles of editors of the *Literary Journalism Studies* journal and the newsletter, the latter of which, once published quarterly, is now a biannual publication. Finding volunteers to fill these roles is challenging. I have been in many conversations giving invitations, just to hear polite refusals. By this I mean that the IALJS does not drink from an inexhaustible pool of potential officers. It lives on because of the generosity of those who are willing to put in the time and worry to deal with the problems that add to many other aspects of professional and personal lives. To point out what is lacking, what does not work so well is easy because it is visible. Life backstage seldom comes to the forefront and is seldom, if ever, publicly appreciated.

My words should not sound as criticism of any kind; they result from participant observation, an observation that leads me to other truths. For fifteen years we have all maintained this association—and by “we,” I mean the officers and all those who come to conferences, submit research, choose *LJS* and the newsletter as publication vehicles, who offer criticism and new insights. No harm derived from the newsletter having gone from quarterly to biannual. Quite the opposite, it now resembles more of a journal than a mere newsletter with news and events. If you look at the slate of officers, there are not many dinosaurs that were there in the moment of our Big Bang. I happen to be one, but I am leaving my remaining functions this year. More importantly, and to me, so worthy of praise is the fact that Covid did not wipe us out. Dedicated officers of more recent vintage have come up with the means for our gathering, our schedule of future conferences has not been broken, awards have progressed, and so has the journal.

Also, research has been shifting, and hasn't it always? We are ever more interested in new media, digital platforms, empathy and emotion, social justice, ecology, literary journalists as naturalists, and never have we been less than international or internationally focused. In my research for the Habilitation, I found there is a lot going on, as far as literary journalism teaching is

concerned, in places such as Romania and Southeast Asia, but the language barrier prevented me from including any findings. Literary journalism itself is also changing—just look at what LCB-Diplomatique is doing every week with the social media—by publishing only international literary journalism short pieces.

In a nutshell, can we do better? Can we include more women keynoters as Ricketson pointed out? Can we find ways to be even more international and inclusive? Can we look at more hidden peripheries? Can we do something to ease language obstacles for those who feel unheard or lessened because our working language is English? Can we devise any program, award, or grant for scholars in fragile economies? Can we learn from a Zoom conference model new ways to meet remotely, how to get to more places and people, or more flexible ways to meet? Can we find better or newer platforms to disseminate our profile as the learned society for literary journalism? Of course we can improve—and we will, as we always have. We are far from being what we started out as, in 2006. One needs memory to go that far. As a long-standing, patient observer, what I can say is, let the tides of this ecosystem ebb and flow, let the winds blow, for all of that constitutes our energy. The one true provocation I can incite is to look ahead and walk where the path leads us. Let contrasting opinions be heard and meet in the middle of bridges. Together we can. Thank you IALJS for being such a rich habitat. Thank you all. *Obrigada.*

(Post Scriptum: Two days after the delivery of this address, I received an email from an academic in Hungary who had heard me say there is the teaching of and academic interest in literary journalism in neighboring Romania. He asked me if I could facilitate contact with the fellow academic in Romania, which I gladly did. Again, proof of life in the ecosystem.)

Isabel Soares's keynote address was delivered on Friday, May 21, 2021, at the International Association for Literary Journalism Studies Annual Conference, IALJS-15, hosted virtually by University of Copenhagen, Copenhagen, Denmark.



Notes

- ¹ Ricketson, “Navigating the Challenges of Writing Book-Length Literary Journalism,” 116.
- ² Roy, *The God of Small Things*.
- ³ Roy, “Literature Provides Shelter,” para. 8.
- ⁴ Roy, para. 10.
- ⁵ Hartsock, *A History of American Literary Journalism*, 13.
- ⁶ Keeble, “Literary Journalism as a Discipline and Genre,” 93–94 (italics in original).
- ⁷ Calvi, “Thoughts for Moving Forward,” 2.
- ⁸ Lemann, “The Journalism in Literary Journalism,” 52.
- ⁹ See Soares and Trindade, eds., “Lusophone Literary Journalism: A Special Issue,” 6–13.
- ¹⁰ Thompson, *Britannica Online Encyclopaedia*, s.v. “Biosphere.”
- ¹¹ Editors, *Britannica Online Encyclopaedia*, s.v. “Ecosystem.”
- ¹² Editors, *Britannica Online Encyclopaedia*, s.v. “Habitat.”
- ¹³ Garcia, “Literary Journalism at UCI: The Backstory.”
- ¹⁴ Tom Connery, email message to author, May 10, 2019.

Bibliography

- Calvi, Pablo. “2019 IALJS Annual Convention in Port Jefferson, New York, Hosted by Stony Brook University: Thoughts for Moving Forward.” *Literary Journalism: The Newsletter of the IALJS*, 13, no. 2, October 2019, 2–3, 20. https://s35767.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/1910_IALJS_Newsletter-1.pdf. Accessed March 2, 2021.
- Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. “Ecosystem.” In *Britannica Online Encyclopaedia*. Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., February 3, 2020. Accessed September 23, 2021. <https://www.britannica.com/science/ecosystem>.
- . “Habitat.” In *Britannica Online Encyclopaedia*. Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., March 24, 2021. Accessed September 23, 2021. <https://www.britannica.com/science/habitat-biology>.
- Garcia, Lilibeth. “Literary Journalism at UCI: The Backstory.” *UCI News*. January 22, 2019. <https://news.uci.edu/2019/01/22/literary-journalism-at-uci-the-backstory/>.
- Hartsock, John C. *A History of American Literary Journalism: The Emergence of a Modern Narrative Form*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2000.
- Keeble, Richard Lance. “Literary Journalism as a Discipline and Genre: The Politics and the Paradox.” *Literary Journalism Studies* 10, no. 2 (Fall 2018): 93–94.
- Lemann, Nicholas. “The Journalism in Literary Journalism.” Keynote Address, International Association for Literary Journalism Studies, IALJS-10, St. Thomas University, Minneapolis, MN, United States, May 8, 2015. *Literary Journalism Studies* 7, no. 2 (Fall 2015): 50–59.
- Ricketson, Matthew. “Navigating the Challenges of Writing Book-Length Literary

Journalism.” Keynote Address, International Association for Literary Journalism Studies, IALJS-14, Stony Brook University, Port Jefferson, New York, United States, May 9, 2019. *Literary Journalism Studies* 11, no. 2 (December 2019): 114–35.

Roy, Arundhati. *The God of Small Things*. Random House: New York, 1997.

———. “Literature Provides Shelter: That’s Why We Need It.” Arthur Miller Freedom to Write Lecture presented at the PEN World Voices Festival on May 12, 2019. *Guardian*. May 13, 2019. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentis-free/2019/may/13/arundhati-roy-literature-shelter-pen-america>.

Soares, Isabel, and Alice Trindade, eds. “Lusophone Literary Journalism.” Special Issue, *Literary Journalism Studies* 12, no. 1 (August 2020).

Thompson, Michael B., “Biosphere.” In *Britannica Online Encyclopaedia*. Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc. Accessed September 23, 2021. <https://www.britannica.com/science/biosphere>.



Image by Benjamin D. Buren

Scholar-Practitioner Q&A . . .

An Interview with Sara Davidson

Lisa A. Phillips
SUNY New Paltz, United States

Keywords: New Journalism – women writers – first person – immersion

Journalist, novelist, and screenwriter Sara Davidson found her voice in the heyday of the New Journalism. As one of the few women regularly associated with the genre, she is credited with bringing an intimately personal perspective to bear, using the first-person point of view and including details of her own life in her work. She rose to fame in 1977 with the international best seller *Loose Change*,¹ the story of three women whose lives were shaped by the social revolution of the 1960s. Much of her writing is situated on the border between fact and fiction, combining literary techniques with rigorous reporting.

Born in 1943, Davidson grew up in Los Angeles and went to Berkeley in the 1960s, writing for the *Daily Cal*.² She attended the Columbia School of Journalism and then spent the first years of her career as a national correspondent for the *Boston Globe*, covering Woodstock, the student strike at Columbia, and the political campaigns of Robert F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon. While freelancing for *Harper's*, *Esquire*, the *Atlantic*, the *New York Times Magazine*, *Rolling Stone*, and other publications, she honed the art of immersive narrative journalism. She wrote about rock 'n' roll, the singles scene, polygamy, Israel, the back-to-the-land movement, radical feminism, and the search for a home in counterculture Venice Beach, California, during the real estate boom of the 1970s. Her influential collection, *Real Property*, was published in 1980.³ She is featured in *The Literary Journalists*, edited by Norman Sims.⁴

Since the heyday of the New Journalism, Davidson has continued to write books. Recent titles include *The December Project*,⁵ a dialogue with renowned Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi about death; and *Joan: Forty Years of Life, Love, and Friendship with Joan Didion*, a Kindle single.⁶ Davidson has written extensively for television and was the co-executive producer for *Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman*.⁷ She lives in Boulder, Colorado.

Lisa A. Phillips: You trained as a traditional journalist. How did you break free from that to become part of what we now recognize as the New Journalism?

Sara Davidson: It started out being called the New Journalism, and then later had different names: literary journalism or personal journalism. I went to get a master's degree at the Columbia Graduate School of Journalism after getting an undergraduate degree at the University of California, Berkeley, in English. I must tell you, I wasn't sure whether I wanted to go to journalism school or pursue a PhD in English—because I loved it. My faculty advisor in the English department said, "I can't encourage you, because women are really not welcome on this faculty." Out of the whole English faculty, there was one woman poet and that was it. That pushed me over the edge. I'm glad that I was pushed because I've had a wonderful experience as a journalist.

Columbia at that time was the primo place to go for, if you wanted to go into journalism. But we were trained as if we were going to work for the Associated Press, United Press International, the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, or one of the other big newspapers. We were brainwashed into learning you never say the word "I." At the *Times* they would write "this reporter" if they needed to say something that concerned them.

Phillips: They still do that.

Davidson: In the news articles they do, but then they've gotten a lot looser throughout the paper, particularly in the magazine section, the book review, or features. There's Taffy Brodesser-Akner's profiles in the magazine section, for example, in which she totally is there as a presence and giving her opinions all the time.

Phillips: At times she is as much a presence as her subjects.

Davidson: None of that was done in the 1960s. Even for magazines, if you were writing a reported story, you never said the word "I." There was this idea of objectivity. I later came to see that nobody is objective. You can assert that you are and take pains to show both sides of an issue, but nobody's objective. No matter how hard you try, it's really an elusive thing. Your choice of what quotes to use, what details you say, all reflect the individual's bias. My first job was with the *Boston Globe*. Then I started writing for magazines.

After having a number of proposals rejected, my first piece was for *Harper's*. My husband had a friend who was one of the editors there, and I was able to go and pitch a story to him. The story I proposed was going on the road with a young rock group. Now, this was the late '60s, when people didn't know that much about rock groups, what it was like to tour. The editor said, "You'll have to do it on spec, of course, which means we won't guarantee to pay you or buy it or anything, but you can try." I went on the road with the band Rhinoceros and took feverish notes. I mean, I was taking notes all the time. I struggled with writing it, then turned it in, and it was accepted. That was my first piece for a magazine.⁸

Phillips: Did you have a particular writer in mind as you transitioned into magazine work?

Davidson: Lillian Ross. She never uses the word "I." But her point of view is so clear by the details she chooses. You can tell if she's for or against what she's writing or what her opinion is just by the way she accrues details. Her work was my model for how to write a good magazine article. You wrote scenes, you wrote details, you did interviews, and you put it together. It was all about your eye, really. What you noticed. You learn more by watching somebody and spending a lot of time with them in what we called "shadowing," or intensive reporting. With the Rhinoceros article, I hung around the band for, I think, almost a month, on and off. I saw what happened, and I heard what they said. I presented a picturesque story about what it's like to be in your early twenties on the road as an aspiring rock group.

Then I did a number of pieces for *Harper's*, and they were pretty much all in that way. It's interesting, because I was recently asked to submit my *Harper's* profile of Jacqueline Susann,⁹ the author of *Valley of the Dolls*, for an anthology. I read it again, after—I hate to say—more than fifty years. I was shocked, because I never used the word "I," but it was so clearly a hatchet job. I picked details that made her look ridiculous, and her husband too. To tell you the truth, I was ashamed about it.

Phillips: What do you mean?

Davidson: They were such easy hits. She was promoting her novel, *The Love Machine*. Everything she and her husband said out of their mouths was ridiculous. I just wrote it all down and reported it. What startled me is I never said "I" in it, yet I clearly did not think much of her literary abilities. She would give quotes like, "I'm a today writer. The novel has to compete with television and the movies. It has to come alive quickly and be easy to read. When people tell you they couldn't put the book down, that is good writing."¹⁰ She and her husband were easy to make fun of. It was just everything they said, the way they operated, the way they dressed. I'm telling

you, afterward I was not proud of that piece, because it was a takedown. Afterward, I had a transition in my own life where I decided I didn't want to do that anymore. I only wanted to write about people that I respected, or I thought were interesting or doing compelling things. I didn't want to just go after somebody that was easy to make fun of.

Phillips: Who influenced you as you made this shift?

Davidson: Tom Wolfe was writing pieces that appeared in *New York* magazine, and before that, for the *New York Herald Tribune*. He was just breaking all the barriers. If he described himself, it was as the man in the white suit. He didn't say "I" either. But he had these pyrotechnic displays of word usage, this whole style. You just read him to read him. It was so enjoyable—it didn't matter what he was writing about.

Then there were those who were doing what I would call personal journalism. Joan Didion was the perfect example. Her voice was always the voice of "I, the writer, am talking to you, the reader, and here's what I want you to know, and here's what I want you to see, and this is what I did, and this is what I thought." She's giving her opinions about everything, and they're so brilliant. They hit home. You feel a sense of, "Oh, my God, she just put into words something I've felt but never been able to articulate." I was a big early fan. Luckily, I came to meet her through a mutual acquaintance. She became my mentor and my model. I was very close to her and her husband, John Gregory Dunne. I lived in Los Angeles, and they lived in Malibu. I spent a lot of time with her. When I wrote my first book, *Loose Change*, I had so much trouble with the introduction. I'd rewritten it twenty times—I just couldn't get it. I called her up, crying, and said, "I just can't do this. I don't know what to do." She said, "Come out here, and we'll look at it." It was six pages long. I'll never forget, she put all the pages on the table, three on top, and then three on the bottom, so she could look back and forth between the pages. My secret hope was she would read it and say, "Oh, it's fine. You're just torturing yourself." But she read it and then she said, "You're really having trouble with this, aren't you?" My heart sank. Then she made a few suggestions: "Let's move this here; maybe you could say this here." Somehow, she helped me make it work. That's how she and John would write their pieces. They would write little bits, and then spread them out on the floor and see what bits go where. They don't teach you to do that in journalism school.

Phillips: I found it fascinating to read *Loose Change* after reading the Rhinoceros profile and your other early magazine work that doesn't use the first person, because in *Loose Change* you bring the "I" back in as you recount your experiences of what it was like to report these pieces. In that way we directly experience your opinions, your point of view, and where you were at,

personally and professionally, as you shadowed your subjects. I'm wondering as you wrote *Loose Change* what that process was like. What did you come to understand about the role of the "I"?

Davidson: Because I admired the work of people who were using it, specifically Joan and John, I just transitioned to it. Nobody told me to. I didn't consciously make a decision. I have to tell you, though, the first times I did, I was so self-conscious. It was a big deal to break through that barrier. Then there was a point at which that's pretty much all I did. I was always in the piece. I got very comfortable with it.

I tried many times to write a novel because I was brought up to believe that real literature was novels. Journalists were in a lower echelon. Every time I tried, it never got published or just didn't work. When I first tried to write the novel that would become *Cowboy*,¹¹ I wrote with a character who was like me and named something else. All the characters were from my life, but they had different names. I took liberties with what they said and how I portrayed them. I finished a draft, and people close to me made it clear that it just didn't work. I said, "Well, I can't write it up as a personal piece, because it's about my ex-husband, and my current lover, and my children. Even if I were to get permission from my ex-husband and my current lover, how would the kids give permission?" I couldn't ask my children because they wouldn't know what they were agreeing to. It wouldn't be a fair thing to ask of them. I told this to the very good novelist Jo-Ann Mapson, who is a friend of mine. She said, "Look, write it as a journalist. Write it as if nobody's ever going to read it. You don't have to worry about anybody's feelings or their reactions. Then you'll sit down with your editor and a lawyer and figure out how you can publish it." So I did that. I'd spent probably a year and a half writing that first draft. When I just let loose and did it the way I wrote my other journalism, it was done in two months. Jo-Ann said, "It's only like 500 percent better!" I realized that my best voice, the voice in which I'm most confident, is when I am speaking as truthfully and as honestly as I can. I realized that my greatest power as a writer was as what I call the intimate journalist, where I am clear that I am telling you the story with my own prejudices and perspectives, and I'm being as honest as I can. I've never gone back and tried to write any other way.

Phillips: Why the intimate journalist? If it's your own story, why isn't it just the intimate writer, or the intimate human being?

Davidson: I was trained as a journalist to be observant and watchful. It's my intention to write as a journalist who speaks about what she's lived through, what she's known, and the people she's met.

Phillips: Given that "intimate journalist" is the term for how you're see-

ing yourself and the way you work, what is the most comfortable description of the resulting books when there is some degree of fictionalization?

Davidson: The bookstores don't know what to do with them. *Cowboy* was put in fiction. *Loose Change* was put in nonfiction, though people think it was a novel, and that was as close to journalism as I could come. I mean, I took a lot of liberties. For example, one of the characters told me that after her husband left, they had a big argument, and he didn't come back for months. I said, "Well, what was the argument about?" She said she didn't remember. I didn't want to just say they had a big argument, and he left. I wanted you to see the argument. So, I created an argument based on what I knew of her and him, and what I thought her voice was like and his voice was like. So, what would you call *Loose Change*? Would you call it nonfiction or fiction? What would you call it?

Phillips: You're asking me? You know, I thought a lot about this. Certainly, preparing for this interview, I read it like a memoir. You explain your process at the beginning of the book, and, to me, the most important part is the transparency.

Davidson: That's where I came down, and I was even more transparent with *Cowboy*. When you have changed names, when you have altered history, or put things in different order, you just have to acknowledge that and then you're off the hook. This is the best way I could tell the story. My friend Steve Wasserman, who was then the editor of the *Los Angeles Times Book Review*, said to call it a nonfiction novel, which was Truman Capote's term.¹² But when it made the *Los Angeles Times* bestseller list, they put it in the fiction list, even though it was published as nonfiction. I don't think there is a strict definition of what's fiction and what's not. But if you are going to be a literary journalist and call yourself a journalist, which I do, you have to try your best to tell the truth as you experienced it.

Phillips: One thing I wanted to ask you about is what it was like to be a female New Journalist. The way the New Journalism is often discussed, there's this core of male writers, plus Joan Didion. Then there are a number of women, including yourself, who in some accounts are considered prominent in the New Journalism and in some are not. You're not mentioned in Marc Weingarten's book *The Gang That Wouldn't Write Straight*,¹³ for example, though literary journalism scholars such as Jan Whitt and Norman Sims see you very much as part of that phenomenon, and your work is widely anthologized. Why do you think women have a less certain place in the New Journalism?

Davidson: At first, it was hard for me to get a job at all. After I graduated from the Columbia Graduate School of Journalism, people would tell me: "We're not hiring women, because we can't send you to a riot. We can't send

you to a fire. You can't carry heavy equipment"—if I wanted a TV job. They were outspoken about not hiring women. But when I began writing for magazines, I did not run into that. I can't say that there were any barriers to me writing for magazines, which was the primo expression of the New Journalism. It was in *Harper's*. It was in *Esquire*. It was in the *Atlantic*. It was in *New York* magazine. There were a lot of women who were doing it, so I didn't feel that there was any barrier there. I applied for a job at the *New York Times* as a reporter, and they wouldn't take me. They never said why. They just said, "A decision has been made on your case, and it's not favorable." Yet, I could write for the *New York Times Magazine* and for the book review. It was this funny thing where with the strict journalism jobs, there was outright discrimination against women. When I went to my first job at the *Boston Globe*, they wanted me to work in the travel section, which sounds romantic, but you read AP and UPI stories about travel and rewrote them. It was not the job I wanted. But it was supposed to start in September, and I graduated from Columbia in June. I wrote to the editor and said, "I can come to work earlier than September if I can just come as a general assignment reporter or do something else before I go to the travel section." I didn't let on about how I did not want to be a travel writer. He said, "Sure, come," so I went into the pool, and they liked the kind of reporting I was doing. When September came along, I did not move to the travel section. But that was a quirk. I snuck in the back way.

Phillips: What do you think women were bringing to the table that male New Journalists were not? And is that even the right way to think about it?

Davidson: I wouldn't think that way. I really wouldn't. We didn't feel we were in a separate category at all. We all read each other's stuff and talked about it. There was no feeling that the men were better than the women. It's only in retrospect that some idiots have decided who was in and who wasn't.

Phillips: What are the idiots getting wrong?

Davidson: I don't know. You'd have to ask them. I have no idea. I just can tell you that I did not experience any discrimination or any barriers as a magazine journalist. Thank God, you know, because I wouldn't be here where I am today, sitting here trying to write another book.

Phillips: How would you describe your contribution to the New Journalism?

Davidson: It's what everybody offers. Your "I" and your voice. You know, Nora Ephron used to say there are three key things in writing: Voice, voice, and voice.¹⁴ It's like real estate: location, location, location. You have a voice, and you don't work to get it. You just naturally have a voice. If I read a piece of yours, it wouldn't read like a piece by one of your colleagues. Capturing dialogue is also important. Scenes are important. When I was at the *Globe*, before

I even read Tom Wolfe's essay [in *New York*] on the New Journalism,¹⁵ I was doing what came to be called the New Journalism, in terms of selecting the description and the quotes that would make somebody come across. When I'm reporting, as I'm with my subjects, I'm constantly writing, capturing their sentences. You've got to write fast or you have a tape recorder or something. Capturing people's voices is incredibly important. I wrote a piece for *Esquire* about four women who had been key in the early days of the women's liberation movement.¹⁶ One of them was Kate Millett. Afterwards, she said, "You know, I was amazed. You got my voice, you got my speech, exactly as I said it." I said, "Yeah, I wrote it down." Dialogue is important, as is moving from scene to scene, rather than just describing overall what's happening.

Phillips: Covering faith and belief, whether it's a religious or a spiritual path or a movement, is a remarkable and difficult thing. One aspect of your work I'm really fascinated by, and from what I've read about your life, is there's this interesting tension between covering a subject and the pull either to believe in it or be influenced by it. Can you talk about that?

Davidson: I wouldn't say I'm a person of faith. I am a seeker. I'm a spiritual seeker. I've always been a seeker. I remember even at Columbia Journalism School, my best friend was asked, "What's Sara like?" and she said, "Sara is a quester." That word was a precedent to seeker. I define myself as a skeptical seeker. My mind just doesn't quit. Any time I hear any doctrine or any description of the afterlife by anybody, I say, "How do you know that? Maybe that's not true." My whole life has been a journey toward—I hate to use the words—self and self-awareness, self-improvement, trying to be a better person. I've had experiences through my life that you would call mystical, experiences of energy and awareness that are beyond what we normally call normal experience. I don't identify with faith, though, so I don't really understand your question.

Phillips: In *Loose Change*, you wrote about covering the feminist movement and then you come home and wonder why you're cooking and doing the dishes.¹⁷ There were other moments like that, where you would go out and cover people who believed intensely in what they were doing and were passionate about what they were doing. Then there would be some sign of how you were either thinking about things in a new way or being influenced or reflecting on yourself and the way your life was in a new way. That's what I mean by the tension between covering something and being influenced by it.

Davidson: As a human, how would I not be influenced? When you meet somebody who's passionate about something, or has a deep experience, in my case, you're either going to wish you had that experience, because it sounds wonderful, or you're going to say, "That's not for me, I can't go there." There

are a lot of times when I couldn't go there. But I'm always longing for greater awareness, to be a better person, to learn about truth. There is no absolute truth, but you want to get closer to what feels like reality, the real truth.

Phillips: What are the challenges of covering people with deep convictions?

Davidson: I get in trouble. I wrote the first piece I did on women's liberation for *Life* magazine,¹⁸ which is the most establishment of all the establishment magazines. At this time, I was married to a well-known disc jockey and writer.¹⁹ When he [Jonathan Schwartz] was a bachelor, he did everything for himself. But the minute we got married, he did nothing. I did it all, because I thought that's what you were supposed to do. Then I do the article on women's liberation, about a group in the Boston area that was learning martial arts for self-defense. They were throwing each other and breaking boards. There was a lot of tension between them and me, because they said, "You're coming from an establishment magazine. You are our enemy. How do we know we can trust you?" It was very dicey. They sort of let me be there, but they didn't like me. At one point, the instructor yelled "bricks!" I was sitting on the side, and they all turned toward me and ran towards me. I thought they were going to pull me apart. But I was sitting right by a stack of bricks, and that's what they were after. They each took a brick and began pounding it with their fists.

Right before I went back to New York to write the piece, they said to me, "You're going to let us review this, right?" I said, "No." Then this whole argument began that I was working for the bourgeois capitalist press, and I was capitalizing on them for my own career advancement. If I really believed in the movement, I would show them the article and allow them to make requests for changes. I said, "That's just not how journalism works. That's not what I was taught at Columbia, that you submit your work to the person you've written about and let them make changes. That's PR. It's not journalism." They were shocked and offended. Basically, I came home, and I was a mess. I cried. It was just awful, to be attacked by all these people, some of them friends of mine from when I lived in Cambridge and worked for the *Boston Globe*. They all turned against me and called me names. They said I was using them for my own career advancement. That was true at a certain level. But I was doing my job. I knew that the role of the journalist was to tell the truth as best you could. You could not get the approval of your subjects so you could be writing something that they would be pleased with. More often than not, people were not pleased with what I wrote.

When I wrote about communes for *Harper's*,²⁰ I stayed in the shack that was built by the leader of the commune. He and his wife were living there with their two children, two young boys. They didn't believe in diapers. So

the kids were just wandering around, peeing on the floor whenever, and the whole house smelled of pee. It was hard to be there. I had to breathe through my mouth. I wrote in the article that they didn't believe in diapers. I said the house smelled faintly of urine, which was an understatement. Well, the wife hitchhiked across the country, found my number, called me, and said, "You wrote that my house smelled of pee, in a magazine that everybody's reading. You absolutely mortified me. I can't even show my face among my friends." I said, "Well, I'm glad you had a chance to tell me that." And she said, "Yeah, feels really good. You were a piece of shit." You know, this was the kind of reaction I was getting, and it would destroy me. There was another time when I was on a team of *Boston Globe* journalists covering the Republican convention when Nixon was nominated. I came up with the idea of following a delegate from the Boston area from the moment he [got off] the plane until the time he went back to Boston. I was with him the whole time. I wrote the story, which included descriptions of his drinking scotch and waterskiing. I was shunned by the rest of the reporters from the *Globe*. One of them said, "He's going to lose his job. His wife's going to divorce him. You just ruined that man's life." I said, "What? Because I wrote that he drank a lot of scotch, and we went waterskiing with people? I just told what happened." He said, "You don't do that." There was this agreement between the political journalists and the politicians. You've probably heard that they never wrote about all of John F. Kennedy's hanky-panky. It was just a code. You were friends, and there were certain places you didn't go.

I would go out and do the job and not hold anything back, and then I'd come home and be assaulted and be devastated and depressed and hurt. You develop a relationship when you interview someone. Already I can feel a certain relationship with you. I see who you are, I can sense how your mind works, and you're getting a sense of me. There's a relationship here now that there wasn't before. The more the journalist cultivates the relationship, the more they let down their guard. It's Joan Didion's famous line: "*writers are always selling somebody out.*"²¹ She spent thirty years explaining what she meant. What she meant is people don't see themselves the way somebody else does. If you truthfully say what you saw, you're going to hurt some feelings. Tom Wolfe said that "you have to believe that what you're doing is more important than . . . anything else."²² He meant that you have no obligations except to the truth as you see it. That was helpful. You know, I understood, but it would still hurt. I like to say that I lost at least one friend with every book I wrote. It didn't happen with *The December Project*, my book about Reb Zalman, and I don't think it happened with the book before that [*Joan: Forty Years of Life, Loss, and Friendship with Joan Didion*].

Phillips: You've talked a lot about how Didion has influenced you and mentored you. Do you think that you have influenced her?

Davidson: No, no. That'd be a big thing for someone to say. I mean, she's Joan Didion.

Phillips: What else should we know about your time in the New Journalism era?

Davidson: It was both exciting and terrifying to be a journalist in the '60s and '70s in New York. Suddenly the spotlight was on what we were doing. It was exciting because we were breaking new ground, and we all read and admired and helped each other. It was terrifying because I didn't have confidence that I could do it again and again. When you begin as a writer, at least for me, every time I had a new assignment, I was terrified I couldn't pull it off. I was tied up in knots. If you saw me when I was at my desk, I looked like I was in terrible pain, trying to pull out a transition and figure out where things would go. Now I know that once it's on paper, I can fix whatever the problem is, however bad it is, and the first drafts can be awful. But I didn't know that when I started out. What I always try to tell young journalists and young writers is to get it on the page. No matter how bad it is, just get it on the page. Because unlike an artist who has paint or clay or wood to work with, or musicians who have a scale and notes and sounds, you have nothing until you have put your words on a page. Just get out everything you think you want to say or talk about. Editing is the part I really enjoy. I used to hate it. But now I just love it. To me that is the real fun, when you really get to play, and you know you're making it better and better and better and better. One of the questions I asked Joan Didion was, "Do you always go through that fear?" She said, every time; it doesn't get easier. In my case it took twenty years, thirty years, for the terror of writing to leave. I wish I had gained that confidence and assurance much earlier, but I guess you have to go through what you do.

Lisa A. Phillips, an associate professor of journalism and chair of the Digital Media and Journalism department at SUNY New Paltz, is the author of Unrequited: Women and Romantic Obsession and Public Radio: Behind the Voices.



Notes

- ¹ Davidson, *Loose Change*.
- ² Popularly known as the *Daily Cal*, the *Daily Californian* is the “independent student newspaper and the paper of record for the city of Berkeley, California.” Accessed July 7, 2021. <https://www.dailycal.org/>.
- ³ Davidson, *Real Property*.
- ⁴ Sims, “Sara Davidson,” and Davidson, “Real Property,” in Sims, *The Literary Journalists*, 187, 188–212.
- ⁵ Davidson, *The December Project*.
- ⁶ Davidson, *Joan: Forty Years of Life*.
- ⁷ Sullivan, *Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman*.
- ⁸ Davidson, “Rock Style,” 53–62.
- ⁹ Davidson, “Jacqueline Susann,” 65–71.
- ¹⁰ Davidson, *Harper’s*, 65. See also, Davidson, “Jacqueline Susann,” in *Real Property*, 99.
- ¹¹ Davidson, *Cowboy*.
- ¹² Capote, “The Story Behind a Nonfiction Novel,” BR2.
- ¹³ Weingarten, *The Gang That Wouldn’t Write Straight*.
- ¹⁴ See Trachtenberg, “Nora Ephron on Writing, Cooking and Aging, Gracefully or Not”; and Hanks, “Tom Hanks Considers the Cosmos,” interview by Linda Holmes.
- ¹⁵ Wolfe, “The Birth of ‘the New Journalism,’” 1, 30–38, 43–45.
- ¹⁶ Davidson, “Foremothers,” 71f.
- ¹⁷ Davidson, *Loose Change*, 168.
- ¹⁸ Davidson, “An ‘Oppressed Majority’ Demands Its Rights,” 66–78.
- ¹⁹ Elsewhere, Davidson has discussed her marriage to Jonathan Schwartz, a New York radio host. See Warrick, “Love on the Range.”
- ²⁰ Davidson, “Open Land.” 1–11.
- ²¹ Didion, *Slouching toward Bethlehem*, xiv (emphasis in the original).
- ²² See Wolfe, “Interview with Tom Wolfe,” para. 4.

Bibliography

- Capote, Truman. “The Story Behind a Nonfiction Novel.” Interview by George Plimpton. *New York Times*, January 16, 1966, BR2.
- Davidson, Sara. *Cowboy: A Love Story*. New York: Cliff Street Books, 1999.
- . *The December Project: An Extraordinary Rabbi and a Skeptical Seeker Confront Life’s Greatest Mystery*. New York: HarperCollins, 2014.
- . “Foremothers.” *Esquire*, July 1973, 71f.
- . “Jacqueline Susann: The Writing Machine.” *Harper’s*, October 1969, 65–71. <https://harpers.org/archive/1960/10/jacqueline-susann/>.
- . *Joan: Forty Years of Life, Loss, and Friendship with Joan Didion*. Byliner, 2011.
- . *Loose Change: Three Women of the Sixties*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997. First published 1977 by Doubleday (Garden City, NY).

- . “Open Land: Getting Back to the Communal Garden.” *Harper’s*, June 1970, 240. <https://harpers.org/archive/1970/06/open-land/>.
- . “An ‘Oppressed Majority’ Demands Its Rights.” *Life*, December 12, 1969, 66–78. https://books.google.com/books?id=yFAEAAAAMBAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false. Table of contents gives title as “Militants for Women’s Rights,” 66D.
- . *Real Property*. Pocket Books, 1981. First published 1980 by Doubleday (Garden City, NY). See esp. “Real Property” and “Jacqueline Susann.”
- . “Rock Style: Defying the American Dream.” *Harper’s*, July 1969, 53–62. <https://harpers.org/archive/1969/07/rock-style/>.
- Didion, Joan. *Slouching toward Bethlehem: Essays*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008. First published 1968 by Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- Hanks, Tom. “Tom Hanks Considers the Cosmos, Nora Ephron, and a Man Dressed as a Shrimp.” Interview by Linda Holmes. *NPR*, October 19, 2017. <https://www.npr.org/2017/10/19/558292356/tom-hanks-considers-the-cosmos-nora-ephron-and-a-man-dressed-as-a-shrimp>.
- Sims, Norman, ed. *The Literary Journalists*. New York: Ballantine, 1984. See esp. “Sara Davidson” and “Real Property.”
- Sullivan, Beth, Timothy Johnson, Carl Binder, Josef Anderson, Philip Gerson, Arthur Seidel, Sara Davidson, et al. *Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman*. A & E Home Video, 2009.
- Trachtenberg, Jeffrey A. “Nora Ephron on Writing, Cooking and Aging, Gracefully or Not.” *Wall Street Journal*, August 19, 2006. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB115583387816438444>.
- Warrick, Pamela. “Love on the Range.” *Los Angeles Times*, March 22, 1966. <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1999-mar-22-cl-19667-story.html>.
- Weingarten, Marc, *The Gang That Wouldn’t Write Straight: Wolfe, Thompson, Didion, and the New Journalism Revolution*. New York: Crown Publishers, 2006.
- Wolfe, Tom. “The Birth of ‘the New Journalism’: Eyewitness Report by Tom Wolfe.” *New York*, February 14, 1972, 1, 30–38, 43–45.
- . “Interview with Tom Wolfe.” By Anonymous Interviewer. Chicago Public Library, October 31, 2008. <https://www.chipublib.org/interview-with-tom-wolfe/>.

Book Reviews . . .

Nancy L. Roberts, Book Review Editor

- Fallout: The Hiroshima Cover-up and the Reporter Who Revealed It to the World*
by Lesley M. M. Blume
Reviewed by Susan E. Swanberg 195
- Literary Journalism and Latin American Wars: Revolutions, Retributions, Resignations*
edited by Aleksandra Wiktorowska, Margarita Navarro Pérez, and Mateus Yuri Passos
Reviewed by Pablo Calvi 199
- Poland 1945: War and Peace*
by Magdalena Grzebałkowska
Reviewed by Beth Holmgren 202
- Our Women on the Ground: Essays by Arab Women Reporting from the Arab World*
edited by Zahra Hankir
Reviewed by Manuel João de Carvalho Coutinho 205
- Literary Journalism in British and American Prose: An Historical Overview*
by Doug Underwood
Reviewed by Richard Lance Keeble 208
- Response to Review of Lindsey Hilsum's In Extremis*
by Richard Lance Keeble 213



Lesley A. A. Blume. Photo by Kendall Conrad

Nuclear Shadows: Hersey's "Hiroshima" Revisited

Fallout: The Hiroshima Cover-up and the Reporter Who Revealed It to the World
by Lesley M. M. Blume. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2020. Paperback, 288 pp.
Notes. USD\$17.

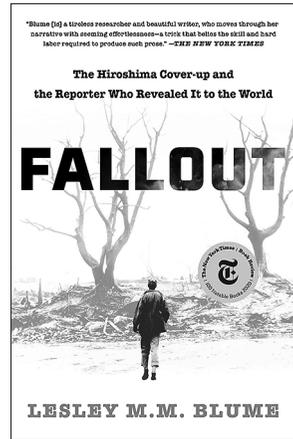
Reviewed by Susan E. Swanberg, University of Arizona, United States

The seventy-fifth anniversary in 2020 of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki reminded us yet again of the global and humanitarian impact of the catastrophic nuclear attacks that ended World War II. In her book, *Fallout: The Hiroshima Cover-up and the Reporter Who Revealed It to the World*, Lesley M. M. Blume—journalist, historian, and best-selling author—examined what she called “the backstory of how John Hersey got the full story about atomic aftermath when no other journalist could . . .” (5).

Fallout, published less than sixteen months after Jeremy Treglown’s *Mr. Straight Arrow: The Career of John Hersey, Author of Hiroshima*, is more circumscribed in scope than *Mr. Straight Arrow*, which was reviewed in this journal in December 2019. Where *Mr. Straight Arrow* focused on Hersey’s entire career as a writer, spanning his life from childhood to his last winters in Key West, Florida, *Fallout* focuses on the circumstances surrounding the reporting, writing, and the *New Yorker’s* August 31, 1946, publication of “Hiroshima,” which was republished as the book, *Hiroshima*, in November 1946.

That two major books covering aspects of John Hersey’s career would be published within a span of sixteen months is extraordinary. Even more extraordinary is the fact that Blume urges her readers to accept the premise that, while interviewing sources for “Hiroshima” almost one year after the bombing, the “Hiroshima” author was a “Trojan horse” (48–51) bravely evading the watchful eyes of Douglas MacArthur—the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP)—and General Leslie Groves, director of the Manhattan Project’s development of the atomic bomb (11, 26), as Hersey uncovered, then returned home, with suppressed truths about the suffering wrought by the atomic bomb.

. . . until Hersey’s story appeared in the *New Yorker*, the U.S. government had astonishingly managed to hide the magnitude of what happened in Hiroshima immediately after the bombing, and successfully covered up the bomb’s long-term deadly radiological effects. U.S. officials in Washington, D.C., and occupation officials in Japan suppressed, contained, and spun reports from the ground in Hiroshima and



Nagasaki . . . until the story all but disappeared from the headlines and the public's consciousness. (2)

As SCAP, MacArthur no doubt minimized, spun, and censored news about the deadly impact of the atomic bomb. It is also true that a few journalists were complicit in this process. Whether censorship was still as stringently imposed when Hersey arrived in Hiroshima in the late spring of 1946 is questionable, however.

It should be noted that several journalists arrived in Hiroshima well before Hersey and reported on the bomb's destructive force as well as the scourge of radiation sickness. These early reports were news reports, however—not the long-form narrative nonfiction Hersey and the *New Yorker* had in mind. Nevertheless, the existence of these news reports suggests that word about the bomb and its aftermath was getting out. Blume mentions several of these journalists in *Fallout*, but their work merits further discussion.

Australian Wilfred Burchett, whose writings were compiled by George Burchett and Nick Shimmin in *Rebel Journalism: The Writings of Wilfred Burchett*, was a *Daily Express* (London) staff reporter who wrote about the “Atomic Plague” killing people who had survived the blast, seemingly uninjured (26–27). Leslie Satoru Nakashima, who worked for the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, arrived in Hiroshima even earlier than Burchett. Nakashima's first Hiroshima story, which also reported the death and destruction left in the wake of the bombing, was filed with the United Press International wire service on August 27, 1945 (25–26). William H. Lawrence of the *New York Times* (not William Leonard Lawrence—the Manhattan Project's erstwhile “historian”) wrote in a September 5, 1945, story, headlined “Visit to Hiroshima Proves It World's Most-Damaged City” that many apparently uninjured people “lost 86 per cent [*sic*] of their white blood corpuscles, developed temperatures of 104 degrees Fahrenheit,” and finally succumbed after suffering bouts of vomiting, hair loss, and decreased appetite.

What Hersey did that distinguished his reporting from those who preceded him included the following: he authored a 31,000-word piece of narrative nonfiction; he engaged in immersive, in-depth reporting; he empathetically elicited detailed interviews from a number of individual survivors; he carefully reported the details of six survivors' post-war “status lives”; and he used dialogue effectively—all hallmarks of what is now called literary journalism.

Reporting from Hiroshima after the war ended was not an easy task for journalists. However, Hersey had many advantages. He had the backing of *Time* and the *New Yorker*, magazines that shared the cost of his travel to Asia. He had a positive relationship with the military establishment by virtue of his prior writings concerning Guadalcanal and Bataan—including a favorable portrayal of General Douglas MacArthur in *Men on Bataan* (56–59). Hersey also had connections that other reporters did not have or could not cultivate. Note, for example, Hersey's access to a version of a Jesuit priest's Hiroshima report that had once been in the possession of the military authorities (217n64b).

Because of Hersey's privileged access to Hiroshima as a *Time* and *New Yorker* journalist and his special status vis-à-vis the military, it is highly unlikely he had to

engage in subterfuge of any import to get his story. Once back in the states with his notes, Hersey wrote “Hiroshima” and then retired in secrecy with his *New Yorker* editors to polish the piece. According to Blume’s “backstory,” General Leslie Groves was provided an advance copy of “Hiroshima,” which he read and approved—after requesting a few changes. The nature of those changes might be lost to posterity, but it is clear the story ran with Groves’s seal of approval. Anybody who has read accounts of Groves’s tight hold on the Manhattan Project and his obsessive resolve regarding the speedy development of an atomic weapon will find it hard to believe that Hersey and his *New Yorker* editors could have deceived the irascible general (117–21).

A careful reading of *Fallout* reveals a few other instances of hyperbole. For example, Blume writes in the book’s introduction that “John Hersey later claimed that he had not intended to write an exposé” (1). Blume cites as her source for this assertion Michael J. Yavenditti’s 1974 *Pacific Historical Review* article, “John Hersey and the American Conscience: The Reception of ‘Hiroshima.’” It is not clear from Yavenditti’s article, however, whether Hersey made such a claim or whether Yavenditti was merely expressing his own opinion (Yavenditti, 42). Blume also occasionally uses phrases such as “Hersey felt . . .” and “Hersey worried . . .” to illustrate Hersey’s supposed internal dialog (9, 14, 72).

Hersey had, in fact, displayed courage as a war correspondent, and it likely took courage to venture onto the ravaged ground that had been Hiroshima, but these facts are only one part of the “Hiroshima” backstory. Hersey was a man of exceptional privilege who was granted numerous advantages throughout his life. Despite an ostensibly humble, early upbringing in China as the son of missionary parents, Hersey later attended Hotchkiss, a private prep school in Connecticut, where he was voted the most popular student in his class, and Yale University. While at Yale Hersey was inducted into Skull and Bones—an elite club that served as a cultural and social touchstone for the likes of *Time* cofounder Henry Luce and Secretary of War and Manhattan Project overseer Henry L. Stimson.

The narrative Blume tells in *Fallout* revolves around an image of Hersey as a valiant whistleblower, a covert David purging the military establishment Goliath of its atomic secrets and revealing them to the world. Hersey as hero is an attractive myth. It was, however, Hersey’s empathy towards his subjects that shone forth in “Hiroshima,” not the supposed stealth with which he allegedly evaded the authorities in post-war Hiroshima.

There are lessons to be learned from history’s tragedies, as Blume notes in the closing pages of her book. Will we as a people be amenable to those lessons, queries Blume, or will another catastrophe be required for us to appreciate the dangers inherent in nuclear conflict, mass dehumanization, and tyranny (182–83)?

Blume also notes that Sinclair Lewis’s novel, *It Can’t Happen Here* (published two years before Hersey became Lewis’s temporary assistant), “warned Americans that what they were seeing happen in Europe—the rise of toxic populism and of vicious government propaganda machines, the assault on truth and facts, the ascent of despotic leaders—could indeed happen in the United States . . .” (182). These words have even deeper meaning since the events of January 6, 2021.

Blume notes at the end of her book that the current assault on the free press in the United States is a “high-stakes” challenge that can be overcome only by actively defending the fourth estate (183). We have seen firsthand how the degradation of truth, facts, and evidence erode democracy. Hopefully, Blume’s intimation that each generation must experience its own catastrophe to learn the importance of the lessons of Hiroshima will not come to pass.

Blume’s detailed acknowledgments illuminate the comprehensive nature of her research and the persistence with which she must have pursued the many unpublished manuscripts, notes, and other materials to which she gained access. Despite the hyperbole that, at times, gets in the way of the story, *Fallout* is a worthwhile read and a major addition to Hersey scholarship.

Adding to the Canon of Latin American Literary Journalism

Literary Journalism and Latin American Wars: Revolutions, Retributions, Resignations edited by Aleksandra Wiktorowska, Margarita Navarro Pérez, and Mateus Yuri Passos. *Regards croisés sur le monde anglophone* (Different Perspectives on the Anglophone World) Series. Nancy, France: Presse Universitaire de Nancy-Éditions Universitaires de Lorraine, 2020. Paperback, 262 pp., 20 €; USD\$22.75.

Reviewed by Pablo Calvi, Stony Brook University, United States

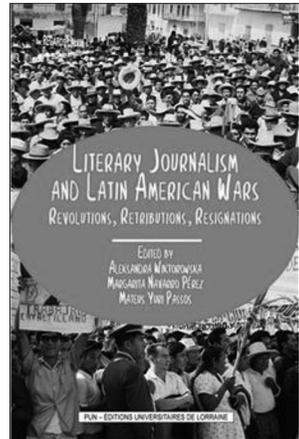
There is an undeniable need to expand the scholarly work on literary journalism beyond the boundaries of the Anglophone world, as new international authors and global traditions are added to the discipline's canon every year. With that growth comes a retrospective look, sometimes shy or understated, at what has been missed and needs now to be recovered or reformulated—productions and lineages that did not garner the attention they deserved on their own merit, in their own time.

A welcome effort as part of this restorative endeavor, *Literary Journalism and Latin American Wars* is the latest release in a series published by the Université de Lorraine: *Regards croisés sur le monde anglophone* (Different Perspectives on the Anglophone World).

This is also the third volume in the *Regards* series to explore literary journalism globally, with a specific focus on war. (The two preceding books are *Literary Journalism and Africa's Wars* and *Literary Journalism and World War I*.)

The series states as its mission the reconsideration of cross-disciplinary practices and methods. An inherently interdisciplinary practice, literary journalism is, through that lens, a good universe to observe and explore. As part of this effort, *Literary Journalism and Latin American Wars* proposes, in the words of the series editor, to “discern what . . . constitutes literary journalism on an international scale and how that writing affects our understanding of a given war and its impact on the people and nations involved” (xiii).

The book delivers on its promise thanks to the number and diversity of the authors it discusses, much more so than to the originality of its corpus and some of the central ideas that give form to the anthology. One of these ideas (full disclosure: it echoes and quotes this reviewer's work) references four core values of Latin American literary journalism (its political undertone, a progressive teleology, a sense of jour-



nalistic urgency, and its rejection of authoritarian regimes), and attributes them to the “bloodshed” that underlies the creation of “these [Latin American] nations” (3). The connection may tread on an oversimplification, if one considers that most of the Global North, especially the United States, has been built on the ashes of genocide, war, slavery, and plunder, while the literary journalism produced there rarely follows those same four principles. Despite this and a few other misfires, the book’s approach to the authors and their work is as valuable as it is necessary.

Literary Journalism and Latin American Wars is structured in eight sections, each one led by an excerpt of a work of literary journalism in its original language, followed by its English translation. After the original work comes a gloss that contextualizes the literary work and offers background on the writer. Finally, each gloss gives way to a critical essay deepening the reflection on the authors and their work. Out of the eight critical essays in the volume, six are in English and the last two are in Spanish.

Due to its structure, the volume allows for readers unfamiliar with the Latin American literary journalism tradition to take a deep dive into topics and events as dissimilar as the civil war in Syria, seen through the eyes of Brazilian journalists Sylvia de Arruda Botelho and Patricia Campos Mello, in an interesting section by Monica Martinez (17–34); or the migrant crossings from Central America and Mexico into the United States, as reported by Óscar Martínez, in a chapter by Patricia Poblete Alday (231–45).

Aside from its focus on Arruda Botelho and Campos Mello, Monica Martinez’s first section of the book projects laterally to gender and class divides in literary journalism in Brazil, bringing an extra topic of conversation to the fore: why is war coverage predominantly a male activity? Or, better, what are the aspects of war that women can reveal and explore with more clarity than can men?

Lilian Martins and Marcelo Bulhões’s section on Brazilian journalist Antonio Callado and his *Tempo de Arraes* (101) is especially interesting, vivid, and poignant. Virtually unknown in the Anglophone world, Callado is an extraordinary chronicler of the socialist organization of mill workers in the Pernambuco of the 1950s and a worthy heir to Euclides da Cunha’s tradition of reporting on peasant upheavals. Callado’s breach of the journalistic fourth wall and his technique of adding himself as a silent, yet present character—with opinions and a strong political point of view—during the organization of the peasant leagues, reveal an interest in describing the political guidelines that the central government was tracing in mid-twentieth-century Brazil, leading to a bloody war of extermination waged by the elites against the workers affiliated with the Brazilian Communist Party. The connections between journalism, politics, and opinion are as present in Callado’s work as in most of Latin America’s literary journalism before and after him.

A later section, Aleksandra Wiktorowska’s “Ryszard Kapuściński in Latin America, Latin America in Kapuściński’s Writing” (131–52), presents a vivid take on the Polish writer’s connections with the subcontinent and his blend of great writing, mythopoetic exaggeration, and a passion for the underdogs, at a time of violence, coups, and CIA interventions. Closely following Artur Domosławski’s biography, Wiktorowska focuses on the original work that Kapuściński chose not to translate

into English or Spanish and describes how the author used his reporting as source material for the development of universal narratives in the form of book projects. In his longer work, Kapuściński shies away from the specificity present in his reporting. He edits out particularities to commit to universal, trans-cultural storytelling.

The one salient note of disillusionment that readers of this volume may experience is brought about by the brevity of the anthologized excerpts, especially relative to the critical sections. To fully understand and enjoy excerpts of original work of literary journalism still unknown outside the Latin American world, it would have been valuable for the volume to offer meatier, more substantial translations of the chosen work, prioritizing authors who have not yet reached the bookshelves of the Global North.

With that in mind, *Literary Journalism and Latin American Wars* is an important addition to the introductory bibliography on literary journalism in Latin America, bringing to the table new names and references that will hopefully become part of a global canon in this field. Any such effort is not only laudable but deserves our full attention and support.

Caught in the Middle: Reportages on War-Torn Poland

Poland 1945: War and Peace

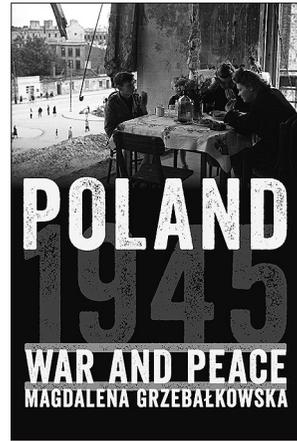
by Magdalena Grzebałkowska. Translated by John Markoff and Małgorzata Markoff. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2020. Photographs. Bibliography. Index. Hardcover, 336 pp. USD\$35.

Reviewed by Beth Holmgren, Duke University, United States

Ryszard Kapuściński (1932–2007) remains the most famous Polish writer of reportage (*reportaż*) for non-Polish specialists, but since the 1990s in Poland, the genre has attracted many talented authors, a great many more interested readers, and dedicated series publication by various presses. Consumers of reportage enjoy its potent blend of historical contextualization and literary stylization, and particularly value the genre's focus on individual human experience and testimony as expressed in interviews, correspondence, and memoirs. Given the genre's popularity, it seems a matter of course that a first institute of reportage (*Institut Reportażu*), established in Warsaw in 2010, now offers a certificate to those who complete a year-long program of ten intensive workshops in which well-published mentors train them in research, writing, and editing techniques.

Magdalena Grzebałkowska [Gzhe-bow-kov-ska] (b. 1972), roughly two generations younger than Kapuściński, became a *reporterka* the old-fashioned way, training on the job as a journalist for Warsaw's *Gazeta Wyborcza* (the Polish equivalent of the *New York Times*) and writing pieces for the paper's reportage section under the whip hand of her experienced, exacting editor, Małgorzata Szejnert. Grzebałkowska's third stand-alone book, *Poland 1945: War and Peace*, published in Poland in 2015, represents her most ambitious project to date and first book of new reportage—or, rather, eleven distinct reportages presented as chapters. *Poland 1945* won the 2016 Teresa Torańska *Newsweek* Award, *Gazeta Wyborcza's* Readers' Award, and the Tadeusz Mazowiecki Polish-German Journalism Award. It was also listed as a finalist for the prestigious Nike Literary Award in the same year. [See: https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/1945._Wojna_i_pok%C3%B3j]. Its English-language version, carefully, if at times too literally, translated by John and Małgorzata Markoff, appeared in August 2020.

Grzebałkowska credits her grandmother, to whom this book is dedicated, with determining her research-intensive, human-story approach in *Poland 1945*. The old-



er woman disabused her granddaughter of any sentimental notions about the war's neat, happy end— notions suggested by such popular images as Alfred Eisenstaedt's photograph of a U.S. sailor passionately kissing a female stranger on V-J Day in New York City's Times Square. Grzebałkowska's grandmother remembers only a meager celebration of the war's end in a displaced persons camp when she was seventeen, followed by her subsequent repatriation, along with her equally young husband, to be with her parents, who had just been forcibly relocated from their ancestral home in southeast Poland to the heavily bombed-out city of Gdańsk on the Baltic Sea. Grzebałkowska's great-grandmother wept as she greeted her daughter on the doorstep: "Why did you come back here, my child? It is horrible in this Poland" (7).

The pattern of Grzebałkowska's book entails displacing anodyne clichés and propaganda with the complicated testimonies of not-so-ordinary ordinary people. Following her grandmother's advice to do her homework, Grzebałkowska familiarized herself with several major academic histories about the war's immediate aftermath in Poland; interviewed roughly 200 people, almost all of whom were young eyewitnesses of the war's end; and pored over scores of published and unpublished memoirs (323). She gathered entries from the personal ads and public service announcements that appeared in assorted Polish newspapers printed in 1945, shaping these quotes into verbal and visual gates at the start of each chapter, alerting readers to the immediate historical context as they enter the reportage itself. Grzebałkowska also collected or gained permission to reprint the many photographs that fill this book. A large percentage of them come from personal archives, matching as much as possible individuals' meandering stories with their candid visuals.

Grzebałkowska's separate chapter-reportages cover an enormous swath of geographic territory, primarily because her country's borders were abruptly moved west under the terms of the Allies' peace treaty, even though Poland had fought alongside the Allies in the war. Stalin demanded that large sections of eastern Poland be formally integrated into the USSR as a future military buffer. The defeated Germans, in turn, were forced to cede their eastern territory to Poland in recompense. This meant that almost all of Poland was on the move as soon as peace was declared in May 1945. As millions of Polish citizens were repatriating from their places of slave labor in the former Reich, millions whose families had lived in eastern Poland for generations had to relocate to an unknown "Wild West" (79), slyly renamed "Recovered Territories" (30, 78) by the new communist government to convince uprooted evacuees that they were somehow coming home to what had once been Polish territory, albeit several centuries earlier.

Poland 1945 opens in the Recovered Territories with a reportage on the widespread looting of German property by Polish civilians, rogue bands of Soviet soldiers, the Red Army, and the new Polish government (11–30). The book closes with the twisted true-life story of a Polish woman reclassified as *Reichsdeutsch* during the war and finally reinstated as a Pole who had survived the January 1945 sinking of the *Wilhelm Gustloff*, a giant German passenger ship loaded with some 8,000 to 9,000 refugees (312) and torpedoed by a Soviet submarine (307–22). The chapters in between include a fragmented history of the residents and caregivers in the postwar

Jewish children's home in Otwock (163–97); frank accounts of the restoration of Warsaw from its grim postwar state as rubble-strewn cemetery into a bustling, city-wide, semi-legal marketplace (127–59); and horrifying, contradictory testimonies of villagers in eastern Poland who bore witness to the devastating hostilities that erupted from 1945 to 1947 between Ukrainian partisans, Polish units under the Red Army's command, and factions of the Polish Home Army (the underground resistance that pledged loyalty to the London Polish government-in-exile) (285–302).

In every chapter, Grzebałkowska's reportage pivots against expected outcomes and judgments. In some cases, this pattern plays out in her choice of subjects. Several reportages feature German protagonists, but Grzebałkowska's interviews led her to those who were beleaguered adolescent refugees rather than hardened Nazis. These young people's tormentors tend to be a faceless Red Army attacking all German targets, Russian soldiers who steal from them, Polish employers who exploit them, and Polish peers who humiliate them. In other instances, Grzebałkowska's pivot involves shifts in approach and tone. Her reportage on looting eschews condemnation of both petty and powerful thieves, instead taking its cue from her first interviewee, a polite, old Polish lady who remembers the seductive rush of casing out abandoned German homes when she was a reckless teenager in 1945 (18). Even as Grzebałkowska tracks the crazily mounting scale of the looting—from household furnishings carted away by Polish civilians to entire factories packed up and shipped east by the Red Army—her tone remains astounded (and sometimes bemused) rather than outraged.

Grzebałkowska's first-person narrator periodically admits her limitations vis-à-vis the unimaginable sufferings of her subjects, be they Jewish orphans who will never recover from their terrible childhood spent hiding from the Germans, or German civilians fleeing the Red Army across an iced-over inlet as Soviet planes bomb their path. As narrator, Grzebałkowska vents her anger mainly against chroniclers who have preceded her and deliberately falsified their reports. Such sinners include the Polish communist journalist who visited the "Recovered Territories" in 1945, exaggerating their available bounty and lying about the ease of relocating (71–73, 76–78), and the caretaker and chronicler of the Jewish orphans, who fabricated some of their stories while censoring such unseemly facts as the children's rape by their rescuers (175).

Of paramount importance to Grzebałkowska, the dedicated *reporterka*, is that the collector of individual testimonies relay them as accurately as possible, valuing them as both document and story. This she does, with concise eloquence, in every reportage of *Poland 1945*. As Grzebałkowska admits in the acknowledgements (amplified in the English translation), she most regrets not being able to feature all those whom she interviewed: "The stories of some I talked to have remained in my archives. I hope they don't resent me and that in the stories of others they will find their own. Maybe the purpose of my work was to remind us what our grandfathers and our grandmothers were not able to tell us? Or that we were not able to listen to them to the very end?" (324). Readers of *Poland 1945: War and Peace* will be gratified that Grzebałkowska at least relied on her grandmother as her primary consultant.

On Arab Women Journalists and Their Struggles

Our Women on the Ground: Essays by Arab Women Reporting from the Arab World edited by Zahra Hankir. New York: Penguin Random House, 2019. Photographs. Notes. Paperback, 304 pp. USD\$17.

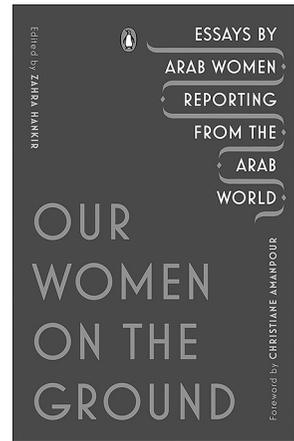
Reviewed by Manuel João de Carvalho Coutinho, ICNOVA Research Unit, Portugal

Our Women on the Ground stands out as an innovative book that focuses on women journalists (or *sahafiyas* [xiii]) of Arab descent working and reporting in the Arab world. The editor, Zahra Hankir, explains that the idea for this book first came to her when she was compiling a list of journalists working in the Middle East. She quickly noticed that the list was mostly comprised of men of Western descent (xx). Consequently, this book focuses on the stories of nineteen women journalists whose career choices, for the most part, were challenged not only by their societies and their families, but also by their male coworkers, peers, and colleagues who often did not treat them as equals. In this sense, the book is revolutionary: it gives voice to the passion that moved these Arab women to create a place for themselves in the Arab journalism world, where they still stand out. At the same time, this book also shows their continuing struggle to make their voices heard in a world that often treats their aspirations and ambitions with contempt and, at times, violence.

Our Women on the Ground is similar in structure to Wendy Call and Mark Kramer's *Telling True Stories* (2007), with each chapter written by a different journalist presenting her personal experiences, perspectives, and challenges while working as a journalist in the Arab world. With a foreword by Christiane Amanpour and an introduction by Hankir, the book contains nineteen chapters, each written by a different journalist and ranging from ten to seventeen pages. The chapters have been sorted into five sections, each with a one-word title to describe the focus: Remembrances, Crossfire, Resilience, Exile, and Transition.

Our Women on the Ground should be considered and analyzed not only by academics in gender and Middle Eastern studies, but also by those who study contemporary and literary journalism. Scholars of literary journalism will find that this book presents the voices of these reporters through heartfelt stories of personal experience and courage in the field.

Our Women on the Ground also can be a great tool for research or to analyze in



class, because it presents the words of experience and personal growth of literary journalists, news anchors, and photojournalists. The book offers a rare chance to discover the work of multiple Arab women journalists, an opportunity to hear their stories and struggles that may ultimately inspire a new generation. At the same time, these may motivate students and other readers to learn more about the Arab world and dispel misconceptions often depicted about it in media as continuously suffering afflictions and challenges, with rare glimpses of positive news or female representation.

It should be noted, however, that this book's most powerful essays can prove to be a challenge for some students because the journalists of *Our Women on the Ground* are not shy about sharing the struggles that come with their choice of profession. Photojournalist Eman Helal, for example, talks about being sexually harassed by a colleague when she was sent abroad to report on a story and her subsequent decision not to file a complaint, because doing so could dissuade her newspaper from sending other women abroad (114). In her essay, Helal also admits that another reason she did not file a complaint was because she was afraid the newsroom would not believe her. Journalist Lina Attalah discusses this issue in her chapter as well. When talking about her profession, she is not keen on recounting "the many stories of sexism, patriarchy, and oppression" she felt in the workplace for fear that those stories might "render [her] a heroic survivor" (49).

Our Women on the Ground strongly argues the importance of these journalists by telling the full story as they pave the way for others and claim their place in journalism. In a way, a parallelism can be established between these Arab women and the first women journalists in the Western world, as both groups had to stake their claim in media, often facing multiple challenges while fighting to overcome stereotypes and condescension, both inside and outside the workplace. It should be noted that while the Arab world is vast and diverse, encompassing twenty-two separate nations, in many of these countries there are still fewer opportunities and freedoms available to women, such as advanced education and job prospects. In this sense, it is quite common for Arab women to be ignored by Arab media and by Western media coming from the Arab world. The media's focus is on Arab men, while women for the most part are silenced and relegated to household chores and maternal roles with no room for other ambitions or expectations.

Our Women on the Ground argues that not only are these nineteen women journalists pioneers in the workplace, but they are also able to tell a different side of the story largely ignored in most media. While a substantial number of women in the Arab world would not be open or even allowed to be interviewed by men, much less Western men, that is not the case when they are interviewed by Arab women. In her introduction, Hankir is quick to point out that these women can use their gender to their advantage in a region where it is often seen as a disadvantage (xv). Indeed, an example of this perspective is Jane Arraf's chapter, in which she describes a tense moment where a mother is worried about her two daughters, Yasmine and Sabreen, who insist on going to school despite the troubling army exercises being conducted by U.S. soldiers outside. The mother does not feel comfortable sharing the situation with the soldiers, but she is comfortable doing so with Arraf, who immediately

tries to find a way to ensure their safety by talking with the platoon commander. Her description of the worried mother seeing her daughters leaving the house while clutching the plastic bags of schoolbooks is one of the many remarkable stories in this book (65–67).

At times, *Our Women on the Ground* can be heartbreaking to read but, overall, the book is uplifting. Students will be able to relate to the writers' frank discussions of their work and experience in the context of being female journalists. It is to be hoped that the book will be successful enough to warrant further study and a bigger investment in important stories such as the ones shared in *Our Women on the Ground*.

Spanning the Atlantic: Documenting the Roots of U.K. and U.S. Literary Journalism Traditions

Literary Journalism in British and American Prose: An Historical Overview

by Doug Underwood. Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 2019. Appendices. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Hardcover, 286 pp.; Softcover, 285 pp., USD\$55.

Reviewed by Richard Lance Keeble, University of Lincoln, United Kingdom

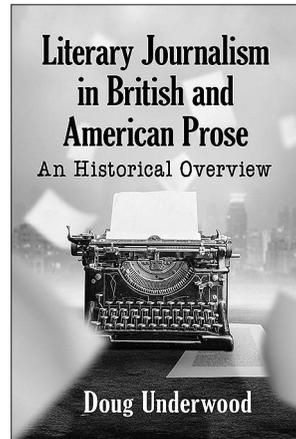
Building on his previous studies, *Journalism and the Novel: Truth and Fiction, 1700–2000* (2008) and *The Undeclared War between Journalism and Fiction* (2013), Doug Underwood here provides a massively detailed overview of the interlocking histories of literary journalism in the United States and the United Kingdom. As he comments: “American journalistic practices grew out of the press traditions of British colonialism, and the two traditions have been in ‘dialogue,’ so to speak, ever since the two nations parted ways” (4).

Underwood is indeed brilliant in dissecting the continuities between U.S. and U.K. literature and journalism. For instance, he observes:

One can see the British influences within the movement in the U.S. toward high art modernism illustrated early on in a figure like Poe, with his great admiration of the practices of the early 19th century British literary periodicals. . . .

. . . Ironically, Poe disdained virtually every aspect of the popular American publications of his time—the over-praised novel, the periodical article written to a “recherche” formula, the narratives of peril in cheap fiction and newspaper accounts—all the while borrowing from them in the creation of his own feverish tales of the isolated, the hyper-sensitive, and the criminally possessed personality. (84)

Underwood argues that the “inferiority complex of other American writers toward their British counterparts, combined with their contempt for some of their fellow American figures, [to make] canon considerations slow to take off on American soil. The first U.S. writers to be treated as canonical” included Washington Irving, Thomas Cooper, and William Cullen Bryant, who were later to be joined by Edgar Allan Poe, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Henry David Thoreau, Walt Whitman, and Herman Melville “. . . most of whom had at least dabbled in journalism).” Thus, in the early twentieth century, a few U.S. literary journalists



“came to be taken seriously” in the United Kingdom and throughout Europe, such as Poe, Mark Twain, Bret Harte, Upton Sinclair, Erskine Caldwell, and Raymond Chandler, with Theodore Dreiser’s *Sister Carrie* (1900) seen as a major advancement in the representation of women in fiction (85).

The depth and originality of the research is phenomenal. Take, for instance, the appendices. The first is a seemingly endless list of literary journalists (with their dominant styles of writing noted alongside their names), from Edward Abbey through Ada Leveson to Israel Zangwill and Jason Zengerle (201–29). I counted to 400 and was only at F. J. Furnivall (though D. H. Lawrence, who wrote for a range of popular newspapers towards the end of his life to earn much-needed money, is missed). Appendix 2.1 (231–36) features another enormous list covering literary journalists and their work that appears in anthologies—from Adams, Henry, *The Education of Henry Adams*, 1907; through to Wright, Richard, *Native Son*, 1940; *Black Boy*, 1945; *Eight Men*, 1961. A third appendix (237–45) lists literary journalists and their selected works in chronological order—starting with Sir Philip Sidney, *The Defence of Poesy*, 1579, but with only five from the year 2000 and beyond, ending with Elizabeth Kolbert, *The Sixth Extinction*, 2014. In addition, the Notes (247–263) provide further references and information.

Debates over the definition of literary journalism seem never ending. It is perhaps not surprising that Underwood’s lists are so long because he argues that the canon should be expanded to incorporate more narrative and discursive writing by authors with a background in journalism while suggesting that the opportunities literary journalism has offered women, minorities, and other marginalized groups need to be highlighted more. He thus includes book reviewing and the critical essay as forms of literary journalism. Book reviewing, he suggests, “for much of the past 150 years,” has been “treated as a step-child of the novel . . . and often cut out of the inheritance of the cultural acclaim lavished upon fiction writing since the mid-19th century” (18).

In his introduction, Underwood highlights the way in which many literary journalists up to the mid-1900s looked down on their journalism as a form of literature. John Stuart Mill was typical of many intellectuals who condemned journalism as a debased form of literature (and yet he wrote 450 articles for newspapers and magazines in his career). Underwood writes, “This attitude has been disputed in recent decades by historically, diversity, and feminist-oriented scholars who have revived interest in journalism, both ‘high’ and ‘popular,’ and have questioned the notion that journalism by once uncelebrated newspaper and periodical writers of the past should be dismissed as of lesser critical importance” (9).

Many of Underwood’s observations on individual writers and journals throughout the text are both concise and insightful. He notes that Joseph Addison, co-editor with Richard Steele of the *Tatler* and *Spectator* newspapers from 1709 to 1712, “was admired for the grace of his writing and the accessibility of his language” (25). But those journals, Underwood adds, were a mix of “gossip and social commentary, political satire, essays about manners and conduct, short narratives (often invented), innuendo and caricature, reprinted material, and reams of contributions from readers”—rather than news (31).

On the radical, trade-union based, unstamped (and therefore illegal), Chartist-supporting press of the first half of the nineteenth century—which was, in fact, far more popular than such establishment press as *The Times*—Underwood devotes only a few sentences and thus underplays their importance. Journals such as the *Poor Man's Guardian*, edited by Henry Hetherington (Underwood wrongly calls him Harrington), William Cobbett's *Two Penny Trash*, Feargus O'Connor's the *Northern Star*, and Charles K. Knight's the *Penny Magazine*, combined “jocular and picturesque writing, travel chronicles, and crime-driven narratives” along with “social protest themes packaged around class conflict and sensationalized entertainment formats, but soon found their political aims challenged by the ‘light news’ and consumer-oriented model of the conglomerate newspapers” (157–58).

By the mid-nineteenth century, literary journalism in Britain tended to be seen as the discursive essay. Cultural and political critiques were produced for general circulation publications of literary and political commentary by such figures as William Hazlitt, Charles Lamb, Thomas De Quincey, Samuel Johnson, Leigh Hunt, Thomas Carlyle, John Stuart Mill, Lord Macaulay, George Henry Lewes—and women, including George Eliot (Mary Ann Evans), Eliza Haywood, Charlotte Lennox, Frances Brooke, Mary Wollstonecraft, Christian Isobel Johnstone, Caroline Norton, Harriet Martineau, Margaret Oliphant, and others (10). In the United States during the same period, Margaret Fuller, James Russell Lowell, Henry David Thoreau, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr., and Edward Everett Hale produced a literary counterpoint to the growth of the Penny Press—as in James Gordon Bennett's *New York Herald*. But Horace Greeley, editor of the popular *New-York Tribune*, did attempt to promote “practitioners of fine and spiritualized writing” (11).

Chapter 4 is devoted to women, minorities, and other groups usually excluded from the traditional English-language canon. Among the women Underwood highlights are Susanne Haswell Rowson, Lydia Maria Child, Fanny Fern, Rebecca Harding Davis, Lillie Devereux Blake, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Ida Wells-Barnett, Victoria Earle Matthews, Zora Neale Hurston, and Sui Sin Far (Edith Maude Eaton) in the United States, and Christian Isobel Johnstone, Caroline Norton, Margaret Oliphant, Emily Faithfull, Mary Elizabeth Braddon, Dinah Mulock Craik, and Ellen Wood in the British Isles (90).

While covering African American literary journalists, Underwood stresses the ways they used the press and literature in their campaigns against oppression and for social justice. He highlights Frederick Douglass, who founded two newspapers, the *North Star* in 1847 and *Frederick Douglass' Paper* in 1851, in the face of considerable hostility (91).

The section on women journalists is also full of important insights. For instance, before the mid-1800s, women authors usually avoided signed authorship—to avoid male criticism and the stereotyping that accompanied publication by women—even in journals for and by women. Christian Isobel Johnstone became the first paid woman editor of a major periodical when she took over the running of *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine* in 1834, and yet pretended that owner William Tait was the “real editor” (94). In the United Kingdom, women's journals covered the major social, political,

and economic issues of the day and included the *Monthly Packet*, *English Woman's Journal*, the *Victoria Magazine*, the *Woman's World*, and the *Woman's Signal*. Underwood credits Eliza Cook, editor of *Eliza Cook's Journal*, with having “pioneered” the woman’s journal as “a forum for home life and self-improvement advice more than politics or public affairs, . . . her magazine . . . filled with jaunty articles about weddings, home furnishings, politeness in women’s language, reading material for families, and advice to mothers and children” (96).

A section on minority and LGBTQ journalists as critics and literary figures offers fascinating insights on a range of figures, including Richard Wright, W. E. B. DuBois, George Samuel Schuyler, and James Baldwin. This leads to a discussion of the legacy of Oscar Wilde: “Undaunted by his critics, Wilde filled out his public profile by becoming a fixture on the literary reviewing scene.” But he “found himself devastated, isolated, and forlorn when his literary dramatics were cut short by his sodomy trial in 1895, and his conviction and imprisonment served as a warning to Forster, Munro, and others to watch carefully what they divulged in their writings about their personal lives” (119).

Chapter 5, “The Ascendance of the Novelist and the Accommodation of the Professional Critic,” takes in Daniel Defoe, Jonathan Swift, Samuel Johnson, Henry Fielding, Tobias Smollett, and Dorothy Richardson. On the later work of Graham Greene, George Orwell, Aldous Huxley, Rebecca West, and Virginia Woolf, Underwood comments astutely:

Whether they felt good about this or not, fictional and non-fictional activities typically operated in an interconnected fashion throughout their careers, and their production of what came to be deemed literary journalism often cannot be fully disentangled from their activities as novelists, poets, and/or dramatists. (127)

But by the end of the 1800s, the novel, he argues, had come to be associated with “art” while journalism—even in its “high” critical, discursive forms—was “a notch below in prestige” (129).

A section titled Art and Artifice explores the ways in which sensational novels, romance writing, the narrative techniques of the industrialized newspaper marketplace, and W. T. Stead’s *New Journalism* intertwined. Many of the sensational novels, for instance, such as Charlotte Yonge’s *The Trial* (1863) were loosely based on reports in the Victorian press “revolving around false identities, social disguises, treachery[, murder,] and intrigues” (137). On the U.S. scene, Underwood argues that the tensions between the tradition of “fakery and fudging” alongside the professional rhetoric over objectivity “laid the foundations” for the *New Journalism* revolt of the 1960s and the iconoclastic reporting of Terry Southern, Hunter S. Thompson, and Michael Herr (139).

Another important section looking at the crucial role of humor in news and in British and U.S. storytelling discusses G. K. Chesterton, P. G. Wodehouse, and Evelyn Waugh in the United Kingdom (though Orwell is sadly ignored) and Washington Irving, James Kirke Paulding, and Nathaniel Hawthorne in the United States. On Twain, Underwood writes, his “populist and journalistic roots can be seen in the

way that he wove into his literature elements from what he had learned as a village humorist on his brother's hometown newspaper" (165). A later period of U.S. humor features Ring Lardner, E. B. White, Langston Hughes, James Thurber, Charles Bukowski, and Molly Ivins (166).

Chapter 7 examines the rise of university scholars such as George Saintsbury, F. R. Leavis and his wife Q. D. Leavis, Frank Kermode, Terry Eagleton, Richard Hoggart, Karl Miller, and Raymond Williams in the United Kingdom; Thomas Bailey, George Woodberry, Brander Matthews, Richard Watson Gilder and, more recently, Edward Said and Cornel West in the United States. Among the women listed are Judith Butler, Adrienne Rich, Elaine Showalter, Hélène Cixous, and Camille Paglia. Underwood argues that "the adoption of the peer review system in universities for publishing scholarly materials . . . had a major impact upon the declining role and stature of the literary critic writing for commercial publications" (174).

It is no surprise then that journalists—typically preferring to trust the "marketplace of ideas" and resistant to limitations upon freedom of expression—often have watched the growth of scholarly specialization with suspicion and protested that the plain-spoken language of the journalist-critic has been replaced with the in-group terminology of collegial fellow specialists. (175)

A former political and investigative reporter for the *Seattle Times*, the Washington Bureau of Gannett News, and the *Lansing State Journal*, Underwood is, without a doubt, a lover of lists. Hardly a page goes by without a list—of writers, books, topics, laws enacted—appearing. At best this can be highly informative—and perhaps inspire the reader to do more research into a relatively unknown journalist, just mentioned *en passant*—but it can often be exhausting.

Moreover, there are serious problems with the coverage of journalism training in the United Kingdom. Underwood says, "Even today journalism as an independent program of professional study is most prevalent at regional and polytechnic institutions in the U.K. where practical training is emphasized rather than research or scholarship about journalism" (81). But there are no polytechnics in the United Kingdom, these having been converted into universities by an Act of Parliament in 1992. Journalism undergraduate programs throughout the country must mix theoretical studies with practical assignments in order to fulfill the requirements of the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), while the growth of master's and PhD journalism programs shows the increasing importance given to research.

But these are minor quibbles. Underwood has produced a work of mammoth scholarship that should remain the seminal text in the field for many years.

Response to Review of Hilsum's *In Extremis*

In Extremis: The Life and Death of the War Correspondent Marie Colvin

by Lindsey Hilsum. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2018. Photographs. Index. Hardcover, 378 pp. USD\$28.

Originally published as

In Extremis: The Life of War Correspondent Marie Colvin

by Lindsey Hilsum. London: Chatto & Windus, 2018. Photographs. Index. Hardcover, 400 pp. £20. Page references are to the Chatto & Windus edition.

Response by Richard Lance Keeble, University of Lincoln, United Kingdom

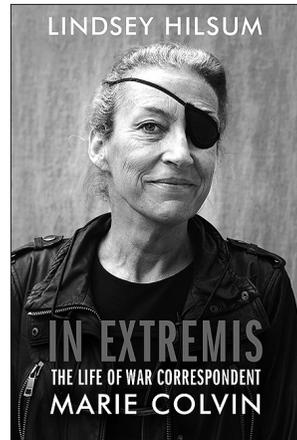
David Swick's review of Lindsey Hilsum's biography of Marie Colvin, published in the August 2020 issue of *Literary Journalism Studies* (212–15), is beautifully written. And it does well to highlight Colvin's brilliance and bravery as a war correspondent, her commitment to giving a voice to the voiceless, and her chaotic private life. But I feel some important aspects of both Colvin's reporting and Hilsum's coverage of it are ignored.

Swick highlights Colvin's initial weird and menacing meetings with Libya's Col. Gaddafi, but makes no mention of Hilsum's criticism of her handling of Gaddafi. For Colvin failed:

. . . to report in any depth on violations of human rights under Gaddafi, mainly because Libyans were too scared to talk. She knew that he played on foreigners' fascination with his outlandish clothing and appearance, and quickly saw through the myth of him as a desert Bedouin living in a tent, but she never investigated the political murders and disappearances of those who opposed him. (148)

In the lead-up to the 2003 invasion of Iraq, Colvin and her friend, Judith Miller, of the *New York Times*, became far too close to Ahmed Chalabi, head of the opposition Iraqi National Congress. And by reproducing Chalabi's lies to Western journalists about Iraq possessing Weapons of Mass Destruction (258), Colvin sadly played a part in preparing the way for that appalling, unnecessary, illegal conflict. Hilsum writes: "The previous year, Marie had written a long piece based on a videotaped interview with a supposed defector that turned out to be false" (258). Why did Colvin not see through the lies? "Maybe her sympathy for the underdog had blinded her" is Hilsum's answer (258).

Since 1986, Colvin had worked for Rupert Murdoch's *Sunday Times* (always



consistent in its rabid support for U.S. and U.K. military adventures) and was clearly prepared to do her boss' bidding. On one occasion, as part of the newspaper's relentless campaign against the BBC, she was asked to write a piece making fun of the corporation's celebrated foreign correspondent, Kate Adie—and how Adie, “in her desperation to secure a story, was driving her minder to a nervous breakdown.” Colvin did as she was told; “Adie never spoke to her again” (146).

There are also other glaring problems about the book that Swick ignores. Throughout, Hilsun's attempts to place the events Colvin covered in a broader political context are woeful, merely following conventional narratives. For instance, there is no mention of the fact that the 1986 U.S. attacks on Libyan targets incorporated a deliberate attempt to assassinate Gaddafi. Indeed, the notion of U.S.-led Western imperialism indulging desperately in a series of adventures (dubbed “humanitarian” in the dominant rhetoric) driven by the demands of a massive military/industrial/intelligence/media complex against largely manufactured enemies is nowhere considered.

Thus, the 1991 Gulf conflict, in which 250,000 Iraqi soldiers perished (according to Colin Powell, then-chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, writing in his memoir of the conflict, *My American Journey*), was solely the fault of “Saddam Hussein” and “his” August 1990 invasion of oil-rich Kuwait (128–29). In 1999, according to Hilsun, the Serbian conflict erupted after Serbian forces marched forty-five Kosovar Albanian farmers to a forest at Račak and shot them (186). To oppose the brutal Serbian rule, the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) began to fight for independence. No mention of the fact that the KLA was effectively a creation of the CIA, which funded, trained, and supplied it with weapons. And that the conflict was largely an attempt by NATO (in its fiftieth anniversary year) to establish a post-Cold War *raison d'être* (Hammond, “Reporting ‘Humanitarian’ Warfare,” 2000).

Hilsun's failure to acknowledge the role of intelligence in modern warfare is also striking. The CIA receives only a passing reference. Britain's MI6 is ignored completely until the last page (373) when Hilsun reports that its head (along with the foreign secretary) attended one of Colvin's memorial services—at St. Martin-in-the-Fields, off Trafalgar Square.

MISSION STATEMENT
Literary Journalism Studies

Literary Journalism Studies is an international, interdisciplinary blind-reviewed journal that invites scholarly examinations of literary journalism—a genre also known by different names around the world, such as literary reportage, narrative journalism, the New Journalism, *nuevo periodismo*, reportage literature, literary nonfiction, narrative nonfiction, and creative nonfiction—focusing on cultural revelation. Published in English but directed at an international audience, the journal welcomes contributions from different cultural, disciplinary, and critical perspectives. To help establish comparative studies of the genre, the journal is especially interested in examinations of the works of authors and traditions from different national literatures not generally known outside their countries.

There is no single definition of the genre, but the following descriptions help to establish a meeting ground for its critical study:

- “The art and craft of reportage—journalism marked by vivid description, a novelist’s eye to form, and eyewitness reporting that reveals hidden truths about people and events that have shaped the world we know.” —*Granta*
- “Reportage Literature is an engagement with reality with a novelist’s eye but with a journalist’s discipline.” —Pedro Rosa Mendes, Portugal
- “I think one of the first things for literary reportage should be to go into the field and to try to get the other side of the story.” —Anne Nivat, France
- “A good reportage must not necessarily be linked with topical or political events which are taking place around us. I think the miracle of things lies not in showing the extraordinary but in showing ordinary things in which the extraordinary is hidden.” —Nirmal Verma, India
- Literary journalism is a “journalism that would read like a novel . . . or short story.” —Tom Wolfe, United States

Such definitions are not comprehensive and may at times conflict, but they should help to establish an understanding of this fundamentally narrative genre, which is located at the intersection of literature and journalism.

At the critical center of the genre lies cultural revelation in narrative form. Implicit to the enterprise are two precepts: (a) that there is an external reality apart from human consciousness, whatever the inherent problems of language and ideology that may exist in comprehending that reality; and (b) that there are consequences in the phenomenal world, whether triggered by human or natural agency, that result in the need to tell journalistically-based narratives empowered by literary technique and aesthetic sensibility. Ultimately, the emphasis is on the aesthetics of experience.

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION
FOR LITERARY JOURNALISM STUDIES

The International Association for Literary Journalism Studies is a multidisciplinary learned society whose essential purpose is the encouragement and improvement of scholarly research and education in literary journalism (or literary reportage). For the purposes of scholarly delineation, our definition of literary journalism is “journalism as literature” rather than “journalism about literature.” Moreover, the association is explicitly inclusive and warmly supportive of a wide variety of approaches to the study and teaching of literary journalism throughout the world. The association’s web address is <http://www.ialjs.org>.

IALJS OFFICERS

Rob Alexander
President
Brock University
Department of English Languages
and Literature
St. Catharines, Ontario L2S 3A1
CANADA
w/+905-688-5550 x3886
ralextander@brocku.ca

Tobias Eberwein
First Vice President
Austrian Academy of Sciences
Institute for Comparative Media and
Communication Studies
A-1010 Vienna
AUSTRIA
+43-(0)1 51 581-3110, -3113
tobiaseberwein@oeaw.ac.at

Roberta Maguire
Second Vice President
University of Wisconsin, Oshkosh
Department of English
Oshkosh, WI 54901
USA
w/+1-920-424-0862
maguire@uwosh.edu

Lisa Phillips
Secretary
State University of New York,
New Paltz
Department of Digital Media
& Journalism
New Paltz, New York 12561
USA
w/+1-845-257-3573,
cell/+1-845-332-3562
phillipl@newpaltz.edu

John S. Bak, founding president, 2006–2008

