

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*