



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.

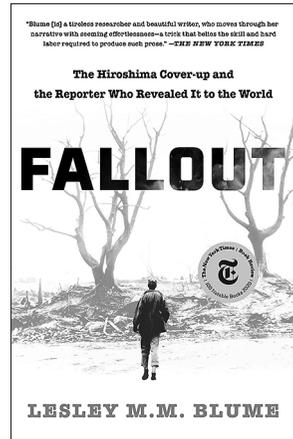
Reviewed by Susan E. Swanberg, University of Arizona, United States

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 Treglow’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

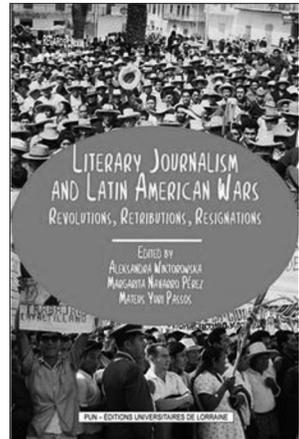
There is an undeniable need to expand the scholarly work on literary journalism beyond the boundaries of the Anglophone world, as new international authors and global traditions are added to the discipline's canon every year. With that growth comes a retrospective look, sometimes shy or understated, 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

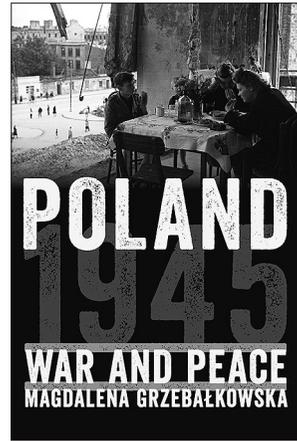
by Magdalena Grzebałkowska. Translated by John Markoff and Małgorzata Markoff. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2020. Photographs. Bibliography. Index. Hardcover, 336 pp. USD\$35.

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.

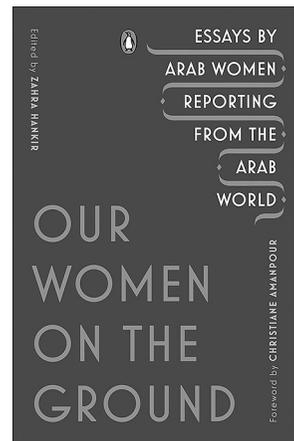
Reviewed by Manuel João de Carvalho Coutinho, ICNOVA Research Unit, Portugal

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

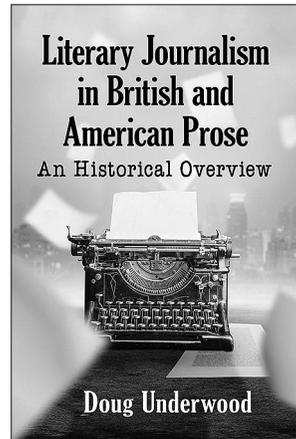
Building on his previous studies, *Journalism and the Novel: Truth and Fiction, 1700–2000* (2008) and *The Undeclared War between Journalism and Fiction* (2013), Doug Underwood here provides a massively detailed overview of the interlocking histories of literary journalism in the United States and the 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

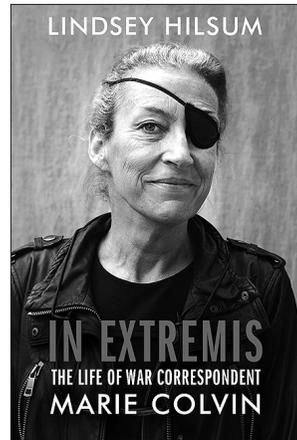
David Swick's review of Lindsey Hilsum's biography of Marie Colvin, published in the August 2020 issue of *Literary Journalism Studies* (212–15), is beautifully written. And it does well to highlight Colvin's brilliance and bravery as a war correspondent, her commitment to giving a voice to the voiceless, 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.

