Lusophone Literary Journalism

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A Special Issue

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Alice Trindade is associate professor with ISCSP, ULisboa, serving as vice-dean since 2012 and a member of one of its research centers, the Center for Administration and Public Policies, CAPP. Trindade is one of the founding members of IALJS and served as president from 2010 to 2012. She has most recently published on Portuguese language African literary journalism and the adoption by Angolan journalists of crónica as a tool for active citizenship and engagement, especially since the end of the Civil War in the early years of the twenty-first century. In 2018 she coedited with Andrew Griffiths and Audrey Alvés a volume, Literary Journalism and Africa's Wars, *part of a series edited by John Bak at the University of Lorraine.*

Portuguese is a minority language in Europe, yet it is a full-fledged global language. It is also a giant in terms of speaking community, whether as first or second language. At a glance, it is spoken by 3.7 percent of the world's population, and the combined geography of Portuguese-speaking countries occupies 7.25 percent of the earth's surface and generates 4 percent of the world's revenue.[1] These are impressive figures made all the more so if we bear in mind that there are currently 7,117 spoken languages in the world, twenty-three of which account for over fifty percent of the global population, according to the 2020 edition of *Ethnologue*, the authoritative repository of languages' status and statistics.[2] In the cluster of those top twenty-three most spoken, Portuguese ranks ninth, a position comprising both native and second-language speakers.[3]

Historical reasons explain the geographic dissemination of Portuguese from the westernmost shores of Europe to Africa, South America, and Asia. It was Portugal that kick-started the Age of Exploration in the early fifteenth century when, in 1415, on the pretext of waging a holy war against Islam in the North of Africa, the Portuguese Crown set out to conquer the city of Ceuta, today a Spanish enclave in Morocco. From then onwards, the spread of Christianity, the establishment of new trade routes, overseas exploration, and, later, colonialism spread the Portuguese language across oceans and continents. Navigation, trade, religion, and imperialism allowed the far reach of Portuguese. The same can be said about the spread of English, the language holding pole position in the *Ethnologue* ranking. However, "the expansion of England . . . was a conscious act of imitation"[4] of what Portugal and then Spain had accomplished: the creation of vast, profitable spheres of influence. By the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Portuguese had "spread as a tool of trade and international communication, i.e., as a lingua franca."[5]

Tarnished as it is, imperial history carried the languages of Europe across the globe as countries that included Portugal, Spain, Britain, and France amassed economic, political, religious, and cultural power over all continents. When, already in the second half of the twentieth century, formal imperialism met its epilogue with the independence of the former Portuguese colonies in Africa, European languages did not die out in the once-colonized territories. No great skills of observation are needed to verify that "the language map of the contemporary world has the same broad colours as the markings on the old ones showing the extent of the European empires. Spanish, French, Portuguese and . . . English are the linguas francas of the planet in the twenty-first century."[6] Globally, these language colossi are, today, the main binding ingredient uniting nations separated by oceans and a shared history—with many a dark chapter. The so-called language organizations such as the Commonwealth, the *Francophonie*, or the Community of Portuguese-speaking

Countries (CPLP), were created as peace instruments to promote harmony and mutual help among peoples whose primary common denominator is the use of a shared language even if not at the mother-tongue level. Indeed, a postcolonial paradox lies in the fact that European languages were given official status in once-colonized territories to serve as communication bridges between distinct, non-mutually intelligible, linguistic communities. Take, as paradigmatic, the case of Mozambique, where Portuguese enjoys official status, national languages include Shona, Tsonga, Chichewa, Makonde, and Lomué. Apart from these, there are a further forty-three dialects.[7] In this context, Portuguese acts as a communication facilitator, a contact language.

No longer, however, can a binary perspective opposing the language of the colonizer to that/those of the colonized be adopted. Addressing the issue of global languages, Crystal writes that "if there is one predictable consequence of a language becoming a global language, it is that nobody owns it any more. Or rather, everyone who has learned it now owns it . . . ."[8] Portuguese is hence owned by its millions of speakers in a geography comprising the nation-states of Portugal in Europe, Brazil in South America, Angola, Mozambique, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, and Saint Tomé and Principe in Africa, and East Timor in Asia. The language also has special status in Equatorial Guinea and in the territories of Macao in China and Goa in India. Because most of the countries that make the CPLP are south of the equator, Portuguese is the most spoken language in the southern hemisphere.[9] An extended geography such as this is further expanded in diasporas. In immigrant communities around the world, Portuguese is therefore the inheritance language, a link to countries left behind in pursuit of a better life.

This long, albeit abbreviated, contextualization not only illustrates the standing of the Portuguese language in the world but also provides solid ground on which to anchor a special issue of *Literary Journalism Studies* dedicated to literary journalism in the context of this language of Latin origin. What this journal and the conferences of the International Association for Literary Journalism Studies have abundantly shown is that literary journalism is an international occurrence that transcends languages and, at the same time, takes on distinctive features that accommodate and adapt to the languages in which it is produced. *Crónica* is an example: the form of literary journalism dwelling in the Spanish and Portuguese languages.[10] That is, language enriches literary journalism. The contribution of Portuguese to the genre is seen as *crónica*, the meaning of which is best understood from cultural and historical perspectives, all of which inform the articles that shape this special issue.

Addressing literary journalism in Portuguese from a historical standpoint, Isabel Soares analyzes the still relevant question of a parallel in Irish

self-determination. In her article, "A Vision of Empire: Irish Home Rule, the Scramble for Africa, and Portuguese Literary Journalism," she focuses on the literary journalism of Portuguese late nineteenth-century journalists Eça de Queirós and Batalha Reis, to show both how Irish self-rule was discussed in the British Parliament and how it was perceived by these Portuguese journalists as an exercise in imperialism by Britain. The articles written by Queirós and Reis not only provide an interpretation, outside an English discourse, of the question of Irish nationalism, self-rule, and government/occupation by a foreign power, they also constitute valuable historic sources, thus giving evidence of the rich, lasting nature of literary journalism.

In "The *Crónicas* of José Luís Peixoto: Landmark of Portuguese Literary Journalism," Rita Amorim and Raquel Baltazar focus on an internationally recognized Portuguese author whose fiction has been translated into twenty-six different languages. The youngest recipient of the prestigious José Saramago literary award, José Luís Peixoto also writes nonfiction and literary journalism, reviving the long tradition of Portuguese writer-journalists that dates back to the nineteenth century, as analyzed in the article previously mentioned and written by Soares. Peixoto is also a world traveler, but a twenty-first century world traveler who uses his *crónicas* to tell close-at-heart stories of family and friends, of life in small Alentejo villages. His characters are contemporary Portuguese people living their lives of joy and sorrow but feeling pride in their national belonging and appreciation of national qualities, dimensions often absent in *crónicas* that were written at other moments of Portuguese literary journalism.

Readers will be introduced to Raquel Ochoa, the travel writer/literary journalist Baltazar and Amorim discuss in their second article, "Of Wind and the Other: Literary Journalism by a Portuguese Female Travel Writer." Ochoa matches travel and wind, two words that often go together in traditional expressions in the Portuguese language, always carrying a meaning of wandering and wonder. The movement of air and the movement of people seem to go together, and Ochoa's writings reveal the attention and care the author uses to be as unobtrusive in her wanderings and observations as possible, in societies and of people that she guesses do not much appreciate the presence of foreigners. Possibly, from old memories of times past, some a long time ago, others not so much, when the presence of Europeans or North Americans was not good news in the Latin American countries she visited. Contact between a Portuguese writer and the geographic location of one of the strongholds of *crónica* in current times enables a collection of personal, delicate articles, from a female perspective.

Alice Trindade takes readers south of the equator and focuses on Angolan literary journalism: "Memory and Trajectory: *Crónica* in the Portuguese-Speaking World." A land of promise, vast in size and resources, Angola has

suffered colonialism, liberation, and civil wars that have turned the fate of its people into a much harder challenge to face. Two journalists worked in different eras: Ernesto Lara Filho wrote his *crónicas* in the late 1950s, just before Angola's war for independence, while Luís Fernando's *crónicas* cover the early years of the twenty-first century. Lara Filho was a talented writer and journalist who experienced the last years of Portuguese colonial domination in Angola and portrayed the tearing of fidelities and sense of belonging experienced by his countrymen in the late 1950s. Fernando, on the other hand, experienced the years of independence, the growing pains of a giant of southern Africa and the consequences of its position within a twentieth-century Cold War climate and its aftermath. Although Fernando's texts are more recent, the consequences of the events that lie in the past are still visible. However, despite hardship, his Luanda *crónicas* have the rhythm and joy of Angola mixed with Latin American influences. Again, the Latin American model is there, with texts portraying people on the streets, their beliefs and experiences, told from a perspective from within, by a journalist comfortable with his surroundings and sense of belonging.

Manuel Coutinho and Mateus Yuri Passos cross the Atlantic with a common theme, war. Their contribution to this issue, "Voices in War Times: Tracing the Roots of Lusophone Literary Journalism," makes it clear that war and its manifestations have given the world acclaimed literary journalism pieces: John Hersey's *Hiroshima* and Martha Gellhorn's pieces on the Spanish Civil War are just two examples. Articles written in Portuguese by journalists Hermano Neves, a Portuguese World War I correspondent, and Brazilian author Euclides da Cunha's *Os Sertões: Campanha de Canudos*, a collected volume of his contributions to the newspaper *O Estado de S. Paulo*, are examples of war as a topic for literary journalism on both sides of the Atlantic. The Portuguese and Brazilian pieces were written about twenty years apart, but they both approach the events witnessed as social and political phenomena that must be understood in context, and not as simple expressions of belligerence among countries.

In her article, "Gender, Women, and Literary Journalism Studies: A Brazilian Perspective," Monica Martinez takes a closer look at the operation and power structure of the journalism business in Brazil and the uneven importance and place given to male and female authors, especially in this genre. Over the last decades, Brazilian newspaper and magazine newsrooms have witnessed a markedly misogynist structure, reflected in the choice, opportunities, and distribution of power granted to male and female journalists. The fact is that even this special edition seems to point in that direction, as most articles are about work written by men. Portuguese-language societies, and

Brazil that is specifically analyzed in Martinez's article, have reserved most editorial and management positions for men, who have the chance to choose and direct, leaving their female colleagues often in minor or less relevant (and underpaid) editorships, genres, and positions. The same seems to happen in the academic world, where male researchers and professors still hold positions considered to be of most importance. Moreover, Martinez provides a brief history of the relevance of literary journalism in Brazil, a journalistic expression that provides national and international readers the diverse reality of the largest Portuguese-speaking national community.

In contradistinction to the gender-biasedness of the historical record that Martinez explores, Alice Trindade and Isabel Nery interviewed Susana Moreira Marques, a well-known, contemporary Portuguese literary journalist whose book, *Agora e na Hora da Nossa Morte* (*Now and at the Hour of Our Death*) is the catalyst for the interview. Marques has had a distinguished career, both in Portugal and abroad, as she explains in the Q&A section of this special Portuguese language edition of *Literary Journalism Studies*. In the interview, readers get a sense of newness in literary nonfiction, which results in a delightful conversation at her home, shortly after she had her second child.

Literary journalism in Portuguese, heir to a long historic lineage, is thriving. With a projected speaking community of 400 million by 2050,[11] the prospects for the enduring global status of Portuguese suggest it will sustain the language's literary journalism traditions. Martinez expresses one of the difficulties this issue of *Literary Journalism Studies* seeks to address: in her words, and the subtitle of a section of her article, "The Language Bottleneck: Portuguese." May these contributions from Portuguese-language members of the IALJS help open literary journalism written and researched in this language community to the rest of the world.

Notes

[1] These data are available on the Portuguese Language portal of the University of Porto (Portugal) and are drawn from the 2012 study coordinated by Luís Reto, *Potencial Económico da Língua Portuguesa*, https://up.pt/portuguesuporto/o-portugues-no-mundo/. See Porto, Universidad.

[2] Eberhard, Simons, and Fenning, *Ethnologue*, "How many languages . . . ?" https://www.ethnologue.com/guides/how-many-languages.

[3] Eberhard, Simons, and Fenning, *Ethnologue*, "What are the top 200 . . . ?" https://www.ethnologue.com/guides/ethnologue200.

[4] Ferguson, *Empire*, 2.

[5] Ostler, *Empires of the Word*, 387.

[6] MacQueen, *Colonialism*, 157.

[7] Baltazar and Amorim, "Cidadania Lusófona," 194.

[8] Crystal, *English as a Global Language*, 2.

[9] Graciete Teixeira, of Portugal's Porto Editora, as quoted by *O Jornal*, May 5, 2020. See also, Porto, Universidad, Portuguese Language portal, https://up.pt/portuguesuporto/o-portugues-no-mundo/.

[10] Galindo and Cuartero Naranjo locate the *crónica* in a "latino" journalistic environment, and Soares contextualizes its Portuguese occurrence in the nineteenth century. See Galindo and Cuartero, "La Crónica," (unpaginated); and Soares, "Literary Journalism's Magnetic Pull," 118–33, respectively.

[11] Porto, Universidad, Portuguese Language portal, https://up.pt/portuguesuporto/o-portugues-no-mundo/.

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