



Clockwise: Portrait of Visconde de Taunay by Louis-August Moreaux (Imperial Museum of Brazil); Euclides da Cunha (Wikicommons); Hermano Neves (Wikicommons); Mário Neves (Wikicommons).

Voices in War Times: Tracing the Roots of Lusophone Literary Journalism

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Abstract: This essay takes a look at the works of four early literary journalists—Portuguese reporters Hermano Neves and Mário Neves, and Brazilian writers Visconde de Taunay and Euclides da Cunha—to trace the foundations of lusophone literary journalism, that is, reportage written primarily in the Portuguese language. Among the findings are that war reporting is not only a common topic in both traditions—as well as in the manifold traditions of literary journalism across the world—but that literary journalism in both Portugal and Brazil started with the subject of war, under several different perspectives—and, thus, that the shocking reality of the battlefield has played a role in the deeper humanization of journalism. The conditions of the wars that are covered vary deeply—a military uprising, a military campaign to suppress a civil uprising, a failed campaign in a frontier zone, and a major, multisided war. However, in all cases analyzed here there are clear social and political crises that have produced journalistic creativity and voice, reflecting a need to report in a more descriptive manner and with a more immersed—and immersive—approach. Most of the works analyzed in this study also had a major impact in the development of literary journalism in both Portugal and Brazil, and even as the reporting subjects changed from battlefields back into city life, the main interest in human drama has remained.

Keywords: literary journalism – literary journalism and war – Brazilian journalism – Portuguese journalism

Each literary-journalistic tradition, across every continent and in every country, has found its own way to combine genres of literature and journalism in a way that posits a great challenge for proposing a unifying definition of what literary journalism is. However, the myriad approaches and genres encompassed by the label of literary journalism have found some common ground in the topic of war. Armed conflicts between nations, civil wars, and revolutions have been featured in English-language literary journalism since its first appearance—in Stephen Crane’s reporting on the U.S. Civil War, in John Reed’s accounts of Pancho Villa’s revolution in Mexico and of the October Revolution in Russia, in Hemingway’s writings on the two world wars and the Spanish Civil War, among several other examples.¹

John S. Bak in 2016 noted the focus of such reporting is usually concerned with human tragedy and suffering during war,² be it from the point of view of the combatants and other people who actively participated in the war, as in Svetlana Alexievich’s 1985 book *У войны не женское лицо* (*The Unwomanly Face of War*), which tells the stories of Russian women who served in World War II as soldiers, cooks, and nurses, among other professions; or from the perspective of people who were not involved in warfare, but suffered its consequences nonetheless, as in John Hersey’s 1946 book *Hiroshima*, which follows the lives of six people in the days following the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima in August 1945.³

The tone of such stories frequently inclines toward pacifism by condemning the gruesomeness of war, usually preferring to follow in-depth stories of a handful of characters rather than larger groups. The focus on the individual experience, in the same vein as Victor Chklovski in his famous essay “Art as Technique” has noted about Tolstoy’s narrative in *War and Peace*, allows for greater empathy from the reader toward the characters and events narrated in a story.⁴ By uncovering the human faces of those who suffer and struggle to survive, focusing on individual struggles allows for telling stories of people for whom the reader is able to feel empathy. As noted by Bak, this means, in sum, that war coverage gives the reporter a golden opportunity to give voice to people who are silenced: “We cannot stop the wars, we cannot impede one nation’s encroachment upon another, we cannot fetter humankind’s relentless drive to subjugate its perennial other; but we can refuse to let those stories that interrogate such reviled acts remain in the margins of our collective histories.”⁵

This essay’s close look at the works of four early literary journalists—Portuguese reporters Hermano Neves and Mário Neves, and Brazilian writers Visconde de Taunay and Euclides da Cunha—traces the origins of lusophone literary journalism, that is, reportage written primarily in Portuguese. War

reporting was found to be deeply influenced by both Portugal and Brazil's literary journalism, as well as by the manifold journalistic traditions across the world, from several different perspectives. Thus, the shocking reality of the battlefield has played a role in the deeper humanization of journalism, kickstarting the development of literary journalism.

Brazilian Literary Journalism: Continuity among Interruptions

Before the emergence of literary journalism in Brazil, there were close links between literature and journalism in the country. Most fiction writers practiced some kind of journalism before or during their literary careers, and several Brazilian novels were first published as feuilletons in the nineteenth century. Though colonizers from Portugal began to appear in Brazil in the early sixteenth century, printing was prohibited in the country and would remain so until 1808, when the Portuguese Court moved to Rio de Janeiro to escape a French invasion. Shortly thereafter, the Brazilian Imprensa Régia (royal press) and the first Brazilian newspaper, *Gazeta do Rio de Janeiro*, which printed official announcements, were founded.⁶

Decades before the war reporting pieces that are the focus of this study were published, Brazilian literary journalism's history began in the 1840s with *crônicas*, a genre akin to the anglophone sketch, in which authors analyzed everyday-life aspects of the growing cities or commented on great happenings with a light or humorous tone. Among the early *cronistas* were romantic writers Joaquim Manuel de Macedo and José de Alencar. In addition, there was Machado de Assis who, by the 1870s, became the nation's finest writer, famous for his ironic and melancholic voice in a style heavily influenced by Lawrence Sterne and Xavier de Maistre. Then there came Olavo Bilac, Lima Barreto, and the modernists Mário de Andrade, Manuel Bandeira, and Antônio de Alcântara Machado. The genre is still practiced in newspapers and magazines, but for the most part is regarded as a minor production of authors best known for their work in fiction.

On the other hand, the period that immediately follows the release of Euclides da Cunha's *Os Sertões*⁷ saw the emergence of the reportages from João do Rio (a pseudonym for Paulo Barreto), who, until his death in 1921, worked for several newspapers in Rio de Janeiro. João do Rio used many narrative strategies of the *crônicas* in his reporting, often incorporating investigative and narra-descriptive elements derived from Cunha's work, as he covered both the modernization of Rio and elements of the city's underworld, such as the religious cults that combined Catholic and African beliefs. Marcelo Bulhões in his 2007 book *Jornalismo e literatura em convergência* identifies two reporters from the 1920s as João do Rio's followers: Benjamin Costallat

and Sylvio Floreal; the first, also a fiction writer, focused on bizarre or tragic events, while the latter, based in São Paulo, was interested in a vast range of subjects, such as corruption, misery, the grand life, eccentrics, and tragic-comic stories, which he included in his book *Ronda da Meia-Noite* (Midnight shift).⁸

As noted, Cunha was a major influence on Rio's work. Cunha is considered by most authors and scholars as the first Brazilian literary journalist to write reportage instead of *crônica*. However, there is another earlier example of reportage in Brazil—in the work of Visconde de Taunay. Both Cunha and Taunay have written important books concerning war in Brazil, but Cunha—who worked in newsrooms and was involved with the *Academia Brasileira de Letras* (Brazilian Academy of Letters) is widely regarded as the founding father of Brazilian reportage, while Taunay, a romantic writer, fell into obscurity even within the field of literary criticism and has only recently been rediscovered. The reasons for elevating one and forgetting the other may have their political resonances, however, as Taunay's anti-Paraguay point of view may be regarded as undesirable under the current movement of integration among South American countries.

A Retirada da Laguna: A Song for Survival

Formerly a Portuguese colony, Brazil became independent in 1822. Rather than becoming a republic, it was then a monarchic empire ruled by a member of the Portuguese royal family—Don Pedro I, who in 1826 briefly became King Pedro IV of Portugal while he was still in power in Brazil. Due to the Brazilian political instability under his rule, during which there were several attempts at secession, and also due to political instability regarding the successions to the throne in Portugal, he abdicated and left for Portugal in 1831. The Brazilian Empire was then ruled by a handful of regents until 1840, when the first emperor's son came of age and was enthroned as Pedro II, who stayed in power until the coup that installed the Brazilian Republic in 1889.

One of the historical events that contributed to the Brazilian emperor's downfall was the costly 1864–70 Paraguayan War. In the early 1860s, Paraguay was an economically autonomous country and had a thriving economy. Since Paraguay was—and still is—landlocked, it looked for an opportunity to gain access to the Atlantic Ocean through river navigation by means of an alliance with the Blanco Party of Uruguay, which was politically unstable during this period. Brazil and Argentina, which held regional hegemony at the time and were manipulating other Uruguayan parties, became allies and dragged Uruguay along to suppress the Paraguayan expansion. For some time

it was believed that the war was the result of a manipulation by the United Kingdom, which had loaned a considerable sum to finance the war and allegedly feared the expansion of a nation which did not depend on British money, but this hypothesis has been debunked. There is now a consensus that the imperialism to blame is that of Pedro II's Brazil and Domingo Faustino Sarmiento's Argentina.⁹ The war resulted in the decimation of an estimated fifty-eight percent of the Paraguayan population.

A failed campaign during the war was recorded by Alfredo d'Escragno Le Taunay in his 1874 book, *A Retirada da Laguna* (The retreat from Laguna).¹⁰ The book was not originally designed for a lusophone public. It was first published in French under the title *Le Retraite de Laguna* in 1871 and later translated into Portuguese by the author himself. Best known for his noble title and *nom de plume* Visconde de Taunay (Viscount of Taunay), which was a promotion from the title of Baron received from the emperor two months before the country became a republic and nobility titles lost their meaning, the author's best-known works are his 1872 novel *Inocência* (Innocence) and the 1875 novel *Ouro Sobre Azul* (Gold on blue). While most of his output consisted of fiction, he wrote a travel book on the region of Mato Grosso—*Scenas de Viagem: Exploração Entre os Rios Taquary e Aquidauana no Districto de Miranda* (Travel scenes: exploration of the area between the rivers Taquary and Aquidauana in the district of Miranda), published in 1868. He also wrote a book on the speculative bubble and subsequent financial crisis in Brazil, *O Encilhamento: scenas contemporâneas da Bolsa do Rio de Janeiro em 1890, 1891 e 1892* (Encilhamento: contemporary scenes of the stock exchange in Rio de Janeiro in 1890, 1891 and 1892), published in 1894. There was also the posthumously published collection *Dous Artistas Máximos* (Two extraordinary artists) devoted to Brazilian composers José Maurício Nunes Garcia and Antônio Carlos Gomes. The article about Carlos Gomes can be regarded as an early profile, which is more evidence of Taunay's link to literary journalism.¹¹

A Retirada da Laguna is an unusual piece because it was a biased depiction of the Paraguayan War from the point of view of one of the oppressive forces. Taunay participated in the war as a lieutenant in the Brazilian Army and wrote the narrative from the personal perspective of a combatant. The book was even dedicated to Emperor Pedro II, for whom Taunay manifests deep admiration and devotion. He repeatedly refers to the Paraguayans simply as being "the enemy." The narrative features a thirty-five-day mission to invade Paraguay and take a farm known as Laguna, the property of the president of Paraguay, Francisco Solano López. The farm is briefly taken, but the Paraguayan army vigorously retakes it and repels the Brazilians. The narrative

then follows the Brazilian army's struggle to retreat and survive among many difficult crossings of rivers and swamps, with a low supply of food and a rising number of combatants getting sick, while being attacked by the Paraguayans, who used guerrilla techniques to weaken their opponents. The strongest points of the narrative are in the struggles of the army to survive the crossings and in the characterization of its allies—particularly that of their guide, farmer José Francisco Lopes, who joined the war to free his family, which had been kidnapped by the Paraguayans. There are also a few Terena and Guaycuru Indians who volunteer to join the expedition because they considered themselves to be Brazilians. This is a meaningful step in the acknowledgment of the humanity of Indians in Brazil, who had been massacred since the beginning of the Portuguese colonization of Brazil.

Above all, however, is the gruesomeness of war and the struggle for survival. As the retreat progresses, the hardships the soldiers face increase exponentially. Chapter seventeen of the book, in which the expedition returns to the guide's ranch, provides a good example of this. As they near the safety of the ranch, in what should be a moment of relief and celebration, the soldiers' feelings give way to despair:

Dominated by so many and such dismal impressions, we gathered around Lieutenant Colonel Juvêncio's tent. Our attention was caught by his moans: he was also taken by the sickness! He was already unrecognizable, his voice different and frightening. Our first impulse was to run to the doctors' tent: we were returning from there when, next to us, an explosion sounded, followed by many gunshots from the enemy sentinels. It was the soldier on duty at the headquarters who had committed suicide: terrible cramps had assaulted him, so he freed himself from them. All those noises were heard by almost everyone, but Lieutenant Colonel Juvêncio did not wish to know their cause, and seemed even not to notice them. Seemingly being overtaken by a hallucination, his face began to shake. By his side, we were consumed by exhaustion, drained by so many shocks, and could barely fight off an overwhelming sleep, filled with nightmares, dismay and carnage.¹²

The overall impression is that there were too few resources and too many lives were wasted on the mission, with no gain from it. The expeditionary force was devastated by cholera. The number of the sick grew rapidly. The doctors were unable to treat all of them. The chapter includes a moment of terrible decision as the officers decide to abandon all the sick in order to move faster. Even the sick stop resisting after the decision is made, asking only to have some water while they lie on the ground, waiting for their deaths. The disease also claims Lopes's son, the last living member of his family. He is shaken to his core—so much so that he shows no emotion when he finally

sees his ranch again and dies shortly before the expedition sets foot there. More than celebrating the alleged bravery of the Brazilian army or accusing the Paraguayans of treachery, Taunay focuses on the horror faced by those who fight a war.

Os Sertões: A Positivist View of a Massacre

In the 1890s Brazil was in turmoil. Having deposed the emperor in 1899, the newborn Federative Republic of Brazil faced an unstable economy and was paranoid about restoration and secession movements—so paranoid that the government orchestrated the massacre of 25,000 people of the rural community of Canudos, in the state of Bahia, in the northeastern region of the country. The federal government mistook Canudos as a monarchist-funded army. While the political and spiritual leader of the community, Antônio Conselheiro, did indeed consider the displacement of Emperor Pedro II in 1889 as an act against the authority of the Roman Catholic Church—which crowned the monarchs—and the will of God, he did not intend to organize an uprising against the Republic. He was instead offering religious comfort and a safe haven for people who suffered from extreme poverty.

The most famous book, on the 1896–97 Canudos War, is also considered a major breakthrough in literary reporting in Brazil: Euclides da Cunha's *Os Sertões: Campanha de Canudos*¹³ was published in 1902 and is usually considered the first piece of Brazilian literary journalism. The author based the book on his work from August to October 1897 as a correspondent for the newspaper *O Estado de S. Paulo* when he observed the repressive actions by the Brazilian army against Canudos. In *Os Sertões* he not only chronicled the conflict, but also searched for ways of understanding and portraying the nature of the people of the backlands, with whom Cunha ultimately sympathized.

In addition to being a reporter, Cunha was also trained as an engineer and a sociologist. He differed from Taunay in that he never ventured into the realm of fiction—his only nonreporting work is a collection of poetry under the title of *Ondas* (Waves),¹⁴ published only posthumously. However, no other of his writings have the scope of *Os Sertões*. His other two books, both published in 1907, are less acknowledged by the critics and are not journalism—*Peru versus Bolivia* is an analysis of the litigation between Peru and Bolivia regarding their borders, written while he worked for the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and *Contrastes e Confrontos* is a collection of essays on the first years of the Republic, its foreign relations, and also the settlement of unpopulated Brazilian territory.¹⁵

The diverse nature of Cunha's work and his hybrid education made the writing of *Os Sertões* unique. In it, he tried to grasp the deeper roots of the

conflict. Instead of just collecting his newspaper reporting to publish it in book form, he rewrote the narrative from scratch, organizing his work into three parts—"The Land," "The Man," and "The Fight." Instead of a narrative depiction of events, the first two parts analyze, by means of studies in geology and anthropology, the backlands of Northeastern Brazil and the *sertanejos* (roughly, "backlanders") who lived there. The tone is charged with positivistic determinism, and Cunha attempts to establish a causality chain between the "arid" backlands and the "arid" people who inhabited the region. While characterizing the backlanders as primitive and prone to religious fanaticism, through his probing and descriptive passages, he makes it clear that the people of Canudos had no way to overthrow the Republic, or even establish an independent country. Their knowledge of the terrain was their only advantage in repelling the military expeditions sent against them.

Even in the third part of the book, the strength of Cunha's narrative is in the description of sites, in evoking their aspect and mood, their essence at a given point in time. This is clear, for example, when the fourth expedition against Canudos enters a ranch where the first battlefield of the war took place:

The place was mournful. Everywhere cruel recollections came back: old, already washed-out rags from military uniforms, swinging from the ends of dry branches; old saddles, remnants of blankets and scraps of overcoats scattered all over the ground, among fragments of bones and carcasses. On the left side of the road, suspended on a tree trunk—like an old army uniform on a coat hanger—the decapitated corpse of Colonel Tamarindo, his arms hanging in the air, black gloves on his skeleton hands. . . . Under his feet lay his skull and boots. From the borders of the road to deep in the scrubland, there were other companions of misfortune: skeletons wearing dusty and tattered uniforms, lying on the ground, prostrated, aligned in a tragic formation; or off balance and caught on the bending bushes which, when swaying with the wind, gave them a singular specter-like motion.¹⁶

In this and other passages, the struggles and supposed heroics of the expeditions against Canudos were also confronted, through description, with the crude reality of the outcomes of war: death and destruction. For its subtle criticism of the war and of the Brazilian government, *Os Sertões* is now regarded not only as an important step in the development of literary journalism in Brazil, but also as the "Sacred Book of Brazilian Memory"¹⁷ that examines and discloses several truths about Brazil and its contradictions. These are noted in the opposition and disparity between the societies of the coast—the Brazil of *politicking*—and the people of the backlands—the social, real Brazil, despised and ignored by the elite.

This aspect would constitute one of the main differences from the war

reporting in Taunay's book: the ability to show, through description and narration, the inherent humanity in all sides of a conflict. This power of what Hartsock calls narra-descriptive¹⁸ techniques for conveying human suffering as well as human prowess, first shown in Brazil through this work, is what would make it a role model for early literary reporters such as João do Rio—even as the reporting subjects changed from battlefields back into city life, the main interest in human drama, remained.

Portuguese Literary Journalism: History and Crisis as Starting Points

To grasp the antecedents of Portuguese literary journalism one must keep in mind the country's troubled twentieth century, particularly its first half. In 1910 the Portuguese king was exiled and the monarchy that had lasted for almost 800 years came to an end, giving way to the First Portuguese Republic. This new regime quickly proved to be both economically and politically incapable of facing the challenges the new century would present, and public uprisings grew rapidly. In 1926 the Republic was toppled by a military dictatorship and by 1933 a new constitution gave way to a new establishment that would be called *Estado Novo* (New State). This new regime exercised pervasive and active censorship over media and tight control over freedom of speech while at the same time it promoted journalistic explorations to find new ways to communicate important news. This dictatorship would rule unquestioned, for the most part, until the Carnation Revolution of April 25, 1974, known today in Portugal as *Dia da liberdade* (Freedom Day).

Although there are some interesting examples of Portuguese journalism during the last decades of the monarchy, it is in the short lifespan of the First Portuguese Republic that some of the first forms of Portuguese literary journalism began to be seen. There are two particular narratives that will be analyzed here to better ascertain the origins of the genre. The first is a series of narratives by Hermano Neves, the first Portuguese reporter to be sent to cover the First World War. The second analysis will be of Consiglieri Sá Pereira's *A Noite Sangrenta* (The Bloody Night), a narrative bearing the title of the event which took place in 1921 and by which it would be known.¹⁹ Both narratives are connected to armed conflicts and subsequent social-political crisis, and while such a connection might seem coincidental, the origins of Portuguese literary journalism are ultimately connected to such events. Such a point of view is not at all groundbreaking. In fact, Lee Siegel in his 2016 *Columbia Journalism Review* analysis argues that this genre as a whole thrives in such times of social-political crisis, while considering different examples throughout the United States, such as Norman Mailer's 1967 *Armies of the Night*.²⁰ Indeed, this point of view seems to fit literary journalism as a journal-

istic expression that reports in a profound, humane, and immersive manner. Moreover, these three characteristics are key components for such a genre. Indeed, that being said, not all of Portuguese literary journalism originates from such impactful crises, nor is there any apparent reason to believe that without armed conflicts this genre would not flourish in Portugal. But the fact is that understanding this nation's history and context provides essential insights to understand how and why many journalists found that the best way to address this reality was to explore a different kind of journalism through an approach that can be called Portuguese literary journalism.

The First World War and the Portuguese Campaign in France

Of the many events that put the First Portuguese Republic (1910–26) to the test, Portuguese participation in the First World War was undoubtedly one of its defining moments. While this regime sought change from the previous rule, the fact is that this new governing power was similar to the fallen Monarchy, diverging mainly in ideological agenda and not in sociopolitical changes and much needed progress.²¹ Moved by a desire to (re)affirm its democratic power and place next to Europe's allied forces, among other factors, Portugal officially entered this conflict in March 1916 (although there had been clashes in its colonies in Africa since 1914). While the first Portuguese troops officially joined the fight in France only in February 1917, in Portugal's media the press had been reporting the conflict attentively since the beginning. Concerning news from abroad, Portuguese journalism in general was until then very much dependent on foreign newspapers and international agencies, which in part contributed to a stagnant printing industry and a lack of innovation in terms of national publications. But World War I contributed to changing the paradigm because, ultimately, a considerable number of Portuguese newspapers made the unprecedented decision to send journalists to report on site. From the many examples that could be considered, perhaps the most notable is the one that can be found in the pages of the newspaper, *A Capital*, the first Portuguese publication to send a reporter exclusively to cover the war.

Reporter Hermano Neves, then twenty-nine years old, was working for this newspaper and in this capacity was sent to France in August 1914. Neves's reports, however, had to face tight censorship back home, a challenge often-times presented to the majority of Portuguese newspapers, especially during war times. By March 1916, the First Portuguese Republic enacted a law to exclude anything from news publications that might "shake" troop morale, leading to a direct fight against truth and moral pertinence. But a journalist's challenge to censorship began right there, on the battlefield, where the

Portuguese reporters were always accompanied by military officials who, besides playing the role of guides and interpreters, also served as active censors. While Neves reported mainly on the allied side and faced many challenges before seeing his reports published, interestingly enough it is also said that the German side was less vindictive and blue-penciled toward the media during this conflict. This situation famously led then former United States President Theodore Roosevelt, in January 1915, to issue a letter to the Foreign Office stating that the harsh conditions of the allied front for news correspondents, versus the more “welcoming” approach by the German front, would unavoidably contribute to the former’s propaganda campaign and ideological success overseas.²² Facing such challenging conditions, Hermanno Neves wrote several articles during various periods for *A Capital*: first, from September to October 1914, his “Cartas da Guerra” (Letters from war); secondly, in November 1915, his “Crônicas de Paris,” where he interviewed several French politicians and writers; and thirdly, in November 1917, his “Crônicas da Grande Guerra” (roughly: Essays on the Great War).²³ It is perhaps this third article that best represents Neves’s narratives and persona while ultimately demonstrating how his reports started to resemble a pertinent form of Portuguese literary journalism. Reporting from the front where he also served as a doctor (he had previously abandoned a promising medical career in order to become a full-time journalist), Neves’s reports evidence a heavy focus on war strategy and troop tactics, perhaps to escape censorship by not focusing on individual events, war chaos, and the growing number of casualties. And yet, there are also moments where the author lets his narrative abilities roam somewhat freely while he describes war scenarios, to depict as well as possible the growing tension and dangers of war. One example of this can be seen in his November 6, 1917, report, when he refers to a time when the Portuguese troops seek to take an enemy trench in no-man’s-land, the term commonly used in World War I to describe the land between two enemy trenches. Neves writes:

The time of the assault is near. By then it was no longer a secret, not for our men, nor for the enemy. . . . Across the trenches right next to no man’s land, quietly, here and there, a murmur starts to rise: Soon. . . . Suddenly, a word goes from mouth to mouth: Now! . . . Some run, others follow. . . . The first grenades start to burst . . . smoke bombs are launched, which force the first groups of prisoners almost suffocating to burst out. . . . [B]y rule, war has no room for unpredictability, before making an offensive . . . all hypotheses are considered . . . to the point of predicting, with a relative estimate, the number of casualties and the number of prisoners.²⁴

While the narrative very much depicts a controlled environment where the reporter cannot attempt to provide the exact number of casualties or in-

clude gruesome details, still found in Neves's narrative is a close immersion from which he tries to depict the battlefield (an approach he repeats, for example, in his November 13, 1917, article, while reporting an aerial combat). Neves and other Portuguese reporters during the First World War planted the seed for a more literary-oriented journalism. And yet, at the same time they were important pioneers in their field by justifying the need for national newspapers to have Portuguese reporters on site, slowly moving away from a journalism dependent on foreign news reports, at least in terms of foreign events abroad. It is interesting and very much apparent, at least in hindsight, the ways in which the First World War changed the Portuguese media overall, because many newspapers created new daily editions to address the conflict as more and more Portuguese journalists reported on this war. The impact of the First World War and the tragic Portuguese participation in this conflict further discredited the already troubled First Portuguese Republic. In December 1917, a military coup took over the Portuguese government, and the military officer Sidónio Pais assumed the role of dictator with a political message largely based on the promise of removing the nation from the bloody conflict. After one year in power, Sidónio was assassinated, and Portugal returned to the rule of the First Portuguese Republic. As the years passed, the country continued to plunge into a deep crisis, with social and political unrest becoming more and more common across the nation. This instability would ultimately lead to a bloody event.

The Bloody Night and the Last Years of the First Portuguese Republic

While Portugal tried to overcome the critical issues imposed by the post-First World War period, the governing First Portuguese Republic proved once more its inability to face growing financial and social challenges. The country experienced a disastrous bankruptcy and, as historian Aniceto Afonso puts it: “Só uma palavra define a situação portuguesa depois da guerra—crise” (“There is only one word to define the Portuguese situation after the war: crisis”).²⁵ One of the main reasons for the ineptitude in overcoming this crisis can be seen through the prevailing political instability: from 1910 to 1925 there were fifteen governments—only one of the eight ruling presidents fulfilled his political mandate—and by the middle of the 1920s there were few doubts that democracy had failed, and the country was drifting.²⁶ In 1917 a military officer by the name of Sidónio Pais took the presidency by force without the country having power to oppose it. While his rule was short (he was assassinated a year later, and the Republic resumed its rule), it was clear that the First Republic was unstable and inadequate. As a radical solution seemed to be more and more evident, there were several specific events

that mirrored the growing extremist and radical mindset at the time, but none more evident than the one that took place in Portugal's capital, Lisbon, on an October night in 1921.

Facing the backlash of the economic turmoil of 1920 and the highest inflation rate in Portuguese history,²⁷ more and more radical branches of the government sought for a tougher and more authoritarian rule. By March 1921, then-Prime Minister Liberato Pinto, abandoned the government and shortly afterwards was dismissed from his role as Lieutenant Colonel of the *Guarda Nacional Republicana* (GNR). His dismissal, due to acts of rebelliousness and criticism of the government, was highly criticized at the time by GNR and the Democratic Party. When in August 1921 António Granjo assumed for the second time the role of prime minister and with it the promise of a more conservative administration, a growing exasperation began to spread through the more radical divisions of government while at the same time several army and navy officials saw Granjo as unfit to rule. And so, in the early morning of October 19, a rebellion led by military officers broke out, and the elected government quickly proved to have no real power to oppose it. António Granjo resigned from his role as prime minister. Even so, several hours later, he was assassinated by the armed uprising that quickly spread, bringing bloodshed across Lisbon. During that night, from October 19 to the early morning of October 20, several assassinations of political and military figures took place, some of whom were considered heroes of the coup d'état that resulted in the First Portuguese Republic eleven years before. This event would be known in Portuguese history as *A Noite Sangrenta* (The Bloody Night).

Many journalists sought to report as much as possible the ensuing chaos and bloodshed created by the primary military instigators who moved around Lisbon in an army car taking prisoners from their private houses and later assassinating them. This vehicle would later be referred to as *A Camioneta Fantasma* (The Phantom Bus). Among these journalists, Consiglieri Sá Pereira focused on António Granjo's struggle in attempting to escape his assassins. With a discerning narrative and descriptive style, Consiglieri Sá Pereira's report is very much in line with what can be called, by the terms described herein, literary journalism. His narrative portrays the events with a human concern and attention to detail. Consider, for example, the moment when António Granjo is found at the house of Francisco Cunha Leal, a former military officer and a democratic politician, who decided to hide Granjo in hopes of ensuring his safety from those who sought to take the life of the deposed prime minister. Here is Sá Pereira's description of the encounter:

Suddenly, the bell rang. . . Cunha Leal moved to the door. When he opened it, he saw António Granjo. . . [Leal] felt honored in offering hospitality to

the deposed prime minister. . . . [Granjo] seemed more serene now. . . . But this period of calm did not last for long. . . . A neighbor came to warn . . . that soldiers and armed citizens swarmed outside the backyards. . . . Cunha Leal told this to António Granjo. He reminded him that among the rebels there were some who were his friends. They would respect him. . . . The siege of Cunha Leal's house intensified. . . . Cunha Leal told him: . . . only after seeing an official with more medals than I will I open the door! . . . At forty-five minutes past eight p.m. . . . the navy guard Benjamin Pereira appeared [at the house]. . . . It was his intention to avoid any bloodshed António Granjo would board the [military boat] *Vasco da Gama*, where he would stay for a few days, but never as a prisoner. . . . They were leaving. . . . [D]ownstairs a neighbor who was at the window . . . heard someone scream from the [army] bus: Hey everyone! Should we shoot him right here? . . . The navy guard warned: Let us go . . . to somewhere darker where there is no one on site.²⁸

This scene was the prelude to António Granjo's death hours later. Cunha Leal survived to tell the story because the officers had no quarrel with him, which is in part why this narrative is so descriptive and full of details. The Bloody Night took several lives that day and full investigation of this event is yet to be formally conducted, with many stories and details to be discovered. Consiglieri Sá Pereira's narrative describes the ordeal of only one of the victims, António Granjo, who in less than twenty-four hours resigned from his political position, was hunted down, hidden, and eventually found in a friend's house. He was then brought down to the pier with Cunha Leal and shot twice in the neck. Still alive, he was then taken to the infirmary where he met his end after being shot several times across his body with one his assassins even sabering his stomach. The Bloody Night is the result of a nation in panic, disillusioned by the promises of the First Portuguese Republic, and eager for a dramatic change. The change would come, at least politically, five years later, with the military coup of 1926, followed by the eventual rise of the *Estado Novo* (New State) and the Constitution of 1933, a pervasive and authoritarian regime that would last up until 1974.

Conclusion

There are several works from the 1910–26 period that reflect the voice of Portuguese literary journalism, besides the aforementioned First World War narratives of Hermano Neves for the newspaper, *A Capital*, and Consiglieri Sá Pereira's book, *A Noite Sangrenta*, published in 1924. But the two examples analyzed here are part of a paradigm that seems to best represent part of this genre's development in Portugal: a crisis both political and social that produced a journalistic creativity and voice, reflecting the writers' need

to report in a more descriptive manner and with a more immersed approach, while at the same time being able to distance themselves from conventional media. It would be unfair to state that all Portuguese literary journalism originated out of such turmoil, although its direct impact is undeniable. After the 1926 revolution Portuguese journalism would suffer a great blow as the subsequent dictatorship sought to watch over the media. Even if journalists had previously been under the passive and active censorship of the Portuguese Republic, the dictatorship presented harsher and more pervasive control during its almost fifty-year rule. Some examples of Portuguese literary journalism during this period stand out, such as Mário Neves's narrative on the Massacre of Badajoz during the first year of the Spanish Civil War²⁹ (Mário Neves is, interestingly enough, the son of Hermano Neves, the first Portuguese journalist considered here). And although journalism during this time frame was under the control of governmental censors, there were indeed many writers and journalists who sought to voice their opinions and insurgency under the radar—through literature or even through the use of concealed tricks in mainstream media, thus bypassing censorship. But that is another story that deserves its own analysis.

In the case of Brazil, this study found that proper literary reportage begins with war coverage, as evidenced by the two works discussed here, but, with few exceptions, the topic of war has mostly been abandoned in Brazilian literary journalism since the publication of *Os Sertões*. Due to the strict censorship imposed on the press during those times, there were no literary journalism pieces focusing on the two dictatorship periods the country faced throughout the twentieth century—Getúlio Vargas's Estado Novo (New State), (1937–45) and the Military Dictatorship presided over by several high officers from the Brazilian army (1964–85). Anti-dictatorship writings were mostly published in the form of literary fiction. There was also no reportage featuring the revolutions during the 1920s and 1930s. There were, however, books in which reporters tried to retell those stories decades after they took place: two of the most acknowledged examples are Fernando Morais's 1985 *Olga*, a biography of the German communist revolutionary Olga Benario Prestes, who took part in an attempted coup in Brazil during the Estado Novo³⁰; and Eliane Brum's 1994 *Coluna Prestes: O Averso da Lenda* (Prestes Column: The other side of the legend),³¹ which tells the story of the inhabitants of cities sacked and devastated by an uprising of military colonels in the 1920s.

The humanization of conflict, as accomplished in Euclides da Cunha's *Os Sertões* and various works of U.S. literary journalism, has inspired some works about foreign wars—Joel Silveira's pieces on the Brazilian missions in World War II,³² First Wave reporter José Hamilton Ribeiro's 1968 series of

reportages on the Vietnam War for the *Realidade* magazine,³³ which shifted to a more personal narrative of tragedy and recovery after Ribeiro accidentally stepped on a landmine and lost his right leg. There were also reportages in the 2010s by Patrícia Campos Melo and Dorrit Harazim³⁴ about the wars in the Middle East. But even in these examples of literary journalism, war and armed conflict are mostly treated as events that happen in lands that are far away from the readers' environments.

On the other hand, as noted before, war reporters had sown the seeds for writing on different topics regarding life in big cities, although frequently focusing on some kind of social tension or struggle. Even a story such as *Grã-finos em São Paulo* [Nouveau riches in São Paulo], written by Brazilian reporter Joel Silveira for the *Diretrizes* magazine in 1943,³⁵ would apply those same narra-descriptive techniques to chronicle the gossip and the different structures of the high society of São Paulo, as well as their bickering and mutual prejudices. War has taught lusophone journalism—just as it has other traditions—African, U.S. and European—the value of extensive description, of point of view, and of social analysis in order to better convey reality and human drama in reporting pieces.

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Notes

- ¹ Sims, *True Stories*, chaps. 2–3.
- ² Bak, “General Introduction to the ReportAGES Series,” ix–xiv.
- ³ Alexievich, *The Unwomanly Face of War*; Hersey, *Hiroshima*.
- ⁴ Chklovski, “Arte como Procedimento” [“Art as Technique”], 92–93.
- ⁵ Bak, “General Introduction to the ReportAGES Series,” xiv.
- ⁶ Romancini and Lago, *História do Jornalismo no Brasil*, 27.
- ⁷ Cunha, *Os Sertões: Campanha de Canudos* [The Sertões: Canudos campaign].
- ⁸ Bulhões, *Jornalismo e Literatura*, 113 (Unless otherwise noted, all translations are ours); Floreal, *Ronda da Meia-Noite*.
- ⁹ Bethell, “O Imperialismo Britânico e a Guerra do Paraguai,” 265–89.
- ¹⁰ Taunay, *A Retirada da Laguna* [The retreat from Laguna].
- ¹¹ Taunay, *Inocência* [Innocence]; Taunay, *Ouro Sobre Azul* [Gold on blue]. Taunay, *Scenas de Viagem* [Travel scenes]; Taunay, *O Encilhamento* [Encilhamento]; Taunay, *Dous Artistas Máximos* [Two extraordinary artists].
- ¹² Translated by Mateus Yuri Passos from the original: “Dominados por tantas e tão funestas impressões, nos reuníamos em torno da barraca do tenente-coronel Juvêncio. Chamaram-nos a atenção os seus gemidos: acabara a moléstia de o saltar também! Já estava irreconhecível e com a voz demudada e sinistra. Foi o nosso primeiro ímpeto correr à barraca dos médicos: dela voltávamos quando, junto a nós, reboou uma detonação, seguida de vários tiros das sentinelas inimigas. Era o soldado de plantão do quartel general que se suicidara; horríveis câimbras havendo-o atacado, delas acabava de se libertar. Ocorreram a todos estes ruídos sem que o tenente-coronel Juvêncio desejasse conhecer-lhes os motivos e até sem que parecesse percebê-los. Tomara-lhe, pouco a pouco, a agitação o caráter de frenética alucinação. Nós mesmos, ao seu lado, estafados pelo cansaço, esgotados por tantos sobressaltos, mal conseguíamos combater um sono acabrunhador, pejado de pesadelos, de desalento e carnificina.” Taunay, *A Retirada da Laguna*, 136–37.
- ¹³ Cunha, *Os Sertões*. There are two translations of the book in English: *Rebellion in the Backlands*, translated by Samuel Putnam, published in 1944, 1947, and 1957, by University of Chicago Press, and 1995, by Picador (London); and *Backlands: The Canudos Campaign*, translated by Elizabeth Lowe, published in 2010 by Penguin (New York).
- ¹⁴ Cunha, *Ondas* [Waves].
- ¹⁵ Cunha, *Peru versus Bolivia*; Cunha, *Contrastes e Confrontos*.
- ¹⁶ Translated by Mateus Yuri Passos from the original: “O lugar era lúgubre. Despontavam em toda a banda recordações cruéis: mulambos já incolores, de fardas, oscilando à ponta dos esgalhos secos; velhos selins, pedaços de mantas e trapos de capotes esparsos pelo chão, de envolta com fragmentos de ossadas. À margem esquerda do caminho, erguido num tronco—feito um cabide em que estivesse dependurado um fardamento velho—o arcabouço do coronel Tamarindo, decapitado, braços pendidos, mão esqueléticas calçando luvas pretas. . . . Jaziam-lhe aos pés o crânio e as botas. E do correr da borda do caminho ao mais profundo das macegas, outros companheiros de infortúnio: esqueletos vestidos de fardas poentas e rotas,

estirados no chão, de supino, num alinhamento de formatura trágica; ou desequilibradamente arrimados aos arbustos flexíveis, que, oscilando à feição do vento, lhes davam singulares movimentos de espectros.” Cunha, *Os Sertões*, 264.

¹⁷ Abreu, “Arqueologia de um Livro-Monumento,” 225.

¹⁸ Hartsock, *Literary Journalism and the Aesthetics of Experience*, 3.

¹⁹ Pereira, *A Noite Sangrenta*.

²⁰ Siegel, “In a Time of Many Questions,” para. 7; Mailer, *Armies of the Night*.

²¹ Ramos, Sousa, and Monteiro, *História de Portugal*, 583.

²² Simmonds, *Britain and World War One*, 234.

²³ Neves, “Cartas da Guerra” [Letters from war], *A Capital*, September-October 1914; Neves, “Crônicas de Paris,” *A Capital*, November 1915; Neves, “Crônicas da Grande Guerra” [roughly: Essays on the Great War], November 1917.

²⁴ Translated by Manuel João Coutinho from the original: “Aproxima-se a hora decisiva do assalto. Já n’essa altura não constituirá segredo para ninguém nem para os nossos nem para o inimigo. . . . [A]o longo das trincheiras em conexão imediata com a *terra de ninguém*, e, baixo, aqui e ali, murmura-se: Não tarda. . . . súbito, uma palavra passa de boca em boca: É agora! . . . Uns correm, outros seguem. . . . As primeiras granadas de 77 começam a rebentar . . . são lançadas bombas de fumo, que obrigam a sahir meio sufocados os primeiros grupos de prisioneiros. . . . [E]m regra, a guerra não comporta imprevistos. Antes de realizar-se uma offensiva . . . todas as hypotheses são ponderadas . . . a ponto de prever, com relativa aproximação, o número de baixas e o número de prisioneiros.” Neves, “A Barragem,” 1 (emphasis in original).

²⁵ Aniceto, *Grandes Batalhas da História de Portugal: 1914–1918 Grande Guerra*, 102.

²⁶ Page, *A Primeira Aldeia Global*, 253.

²⁷ Ramos, Sousa, and Monteiro, *História de Portugal*, 862.

²⁸ Translated by Manuel João Coutinho from the original: “Subito, um toque de campanha. . . Cunha Leal dirigiu-se pessoalmente à porta. Ao abri-la, deparou com António Granjo. . . .” 114; [Leal] “sentia-se honrado em dar hospitalidade ao chefe do govêrno demissionário. . . .” 115 [Granjo] “mostrava-se mais satisfeito. . . .” 118; “Mas êste periodo de acalmia pouco se prolongou. . . . Uma vizinha veio avisar . . . de que os quintais estavam cheios de soldados e civis armados. . . . Cunha Leal deu conhecimento do facto a António Granjo. Recordou-lhe, mais uma vez, que entre os revolucionarios havia quem fosse seu amigo. Respeitar-lhe-hiam. . . .” 119; “O cerco à casa de Cunha Leal apertava-se. . . .” 122; “Cunha Leal respondeu-lhe: . . . Sem vir um oficial com mais galões do que eu, não abrirei a porta! . . .” 128. “Às oito horas e três quartos apresentou-se [na casa] . . . o guarda-marinha Benjamin Pereira. . . . Estava na intenção de evitar qualquer desacato . . . António Granjo iria para bordo do [navio] *Vasco da Gama*, onde permaneceria alguns dias, mas nunca na situação de preso,” 134. “Iam partir. . . .” 137. “[L]á em baixo uma vizinha que se encontrava à janela . . . ouvia gritar na *camionette* [do exercito]: Ó rapaziada! Fura-se o gajo já aqui? . . . O guarda-marinha avisou: Vamos para . . . sítios mais escusos e onde não se veja gente.” 138. Pereira, *A Noite Sangrenta*.

²⁹ Mario Neves, *A Chacina de Badajoz*.

³⁰ Morais, *Olga*.

³¹ Brum, *Coluna Prestes: O Averso da Lenda* [Prestes Column: The other side of the legend].

³² Silveira, *O Inverno da Guerra* [The winter of the war].

³³ Ribeiro, “Eu Vi a Guerra.”

³⁴ Melo, *Lua de Mel em Kobane*; Harazim, *O Instante Certo*.

³⁵ Silveira, *Grã-finos em São Paulo* [Nouveau riches in São Paulo].

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