

COLLECTORS OF DAILY LIFE: the literary journalist, the anthropologist, and their fieldwork

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ABSTRACT – Literary journalists and anthropologists conduct their fieldwork with similar tools and goals. Both use listening and observation to establish contact with the Other - the group being studied - and therefore identify, understand and interpret daily interactions and scenes. In spite of the similarities, their conduct in the field suffers interference due to the certain particularities of each one of them: production conditions, professional relations, social roles, methodological principles, professional ethics and the commitment to the final product – scientific research or literary reporting. In this article, we put forth a theoretical reflection about the similarities and contrasts between the fieldwork of literary journalists and anthropologists. At the same time, we reflect on what characterizes each of these professional researchers and their respective disciplines. For this purpose, we explore authors such as Harrington (2003), Martinez (2008; 2017), Lago (2010), Brandão (2007), Travancas (2002; 2014) and Gillespie (2012).

Key words: Literary journalism. Anthropology. Fieldwork. Reporting. Ethnography.

COLETORES DO COTIDIANO: o jornalista literário, o antropólogo e suas idas ao campo

RESUMO – Jornalistas literários e antropólogos vão a campo com ferramentas e buscas em comum. Ambos usam a escuta e a observação para estabelecer contato com o Outro – o grupo pesquisado – e, assim, identificar, compreender e interpretar relações e cenas cotidianas. Apesar das proximidades, a conduta de cada um deles em campo sofre interferências devido a particularidades carregadas na bagagem: condições de produção, vínculos de trabalho, papéis sociais, princípios metodológicos, ética profissional e compromisso com o produto final – a pesquisa científica ou a reportagem literária. Neste artigo, levantamos uma reflexão teórica acerca das conexões e contrastes entre o trabalho de campo praticado pelo jornalista literário e pelo antropólogo. Ao mesmo tempo, buscamos refletir sobre o que caracteriza

cada um desses profissionais-pesquisadores e suas respectivas disciplinas. Para tal, são explorados autores como Harrington (2003), Martinez (2008; 2017), Lago (2010), Brandão (2007), Travancas (2002; 2014) e Gillespie (2012).

Palavras chave: Jornalismo literário. Antropologia. Trabalho de campo. Reportagem. Etnografia.

COLECTORES DEL COTIDIANO: el periodista literario, el antropólogo y sus idas al campo

RESUMEN – Periodistas literarios y antropólogos van al campo con herramientas y búsquedas en común. Ambos usan la escucha y la observación para establecer contacto con el Otro - el grupo investigado - y así identificar, comprender e interpretar relaciones y escenas cotidianas. A pesar de las similitudes, la conducta de ambos en campo sufre interferencias debido a particularidades cargadas en el equipaje: las condiciones de producción, los vínculos de trabajo, los papeles sociales, los principios metodológicos, la ética profesional y el compromiso con el producto final - la investigación científica o el reportaje literario. En este artículo, levantamos una reflexión teórica acerca de las conexiones y contrastes entre el trabajo de campo practicado por el periodista literario y el antropólogo. Al mismo tiempo, buscamos reflexionar sobre lo que caracteriza cada uno de esos profesionales-investigadores y sus respectivas disciplinas. Con este objetivo, se exploran autores como Harrington (2003), Martinez (2008; 2017), Lago(2010), Brandão (2007), Travancas (2002; 2014) y Gillespie (2012).

Palabras clave: Periodismo literario. Antropología. Trabajo de campo. Reportaje. Etnografía.

1. Introduction

Mariza Corrêa (1945-2016) was an anthropologist and a professor at the State University of Campinas (Unicamp) for more than thirty years. She once stated in an interview that she had originally wanted to be a writer. Even though she graduated in journalism and worked for a number of different newsrooms, she had always fancied writing literature. One day, a friend and anthropologist, Peter Fry, told her that she did not need to be a writer or to have a degree in literature to be able to tell stories; she could write “literature disguised as anthropology” (Anpocs, 2006). Mariza followed her friend’s advice and became an anthropologist, but decided to incorporate elements of a writer and a journalist with her profession, mainly regarding how interviewees are handled and how to make her writing more straightforward, all of which help the reader to forget they are actually reading an academic text. The following paragraph is an example of this, taken from her work *Não se nasce homem (One is not born a man)*:

In 1958, a young woman, later referred to in medical literature as 'Agnes', with a feminine appearance and breasts yet possessing male genitals, sought out Dr. Robert Stoller and convinced him that she was 'a woman born (partially) in a man's body': she was so convincing that the medical team which the doctor belonged to agreed to operate on her, thus performing one of the first transsexual operations, something which is now commonplace to show in magazines and television soap operas. However, as we later discovered, Agnes was a decisive agent of her own transformation. She had been taking estrogen, which was originally prescribed for her mother, since she was 12 years old, gradually changing her body from a young boy into a young woman – a transformation which was essential towards convincing the doctor (Corréa, 2004, p. 6).

Intersections like these between anthropology, journalism and literature from the end of the nineteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth century helped to join together works from sociologist Robert Park (1864-1944), from *The New York World* reporter Nellie Bly (1864-1922), and from writer and journalist George Orwell (1903-1950). Using field immersion, interviews and intense observation together with a narrative writing that thoroughly describes and humanizes characters, these professionals conducted studies and reports capable of depicting landscapes, scenes and relationships of the daily lives in certain communities whether the urban outskirts of Chicago, the corridors of a psychiatric hospital in New York or hostels in Paris and London. Their techniques and texts were similar to what we know today as literary journalism, narrative journalism, *new journalism* or ethnographic journalism – this last example being most closely related to anthropological work. In this paper we shall use the term *literary journalism* and we will speak of these intersections between fields, looking to problematize their different uses and practices in work and research.

Travancas (2002; 2014), Harrington (2003), Rovida (2015), Lago (2010), Singer (2009), Seibt (2013) and Silva (2013) are some of the many writers who have conducted important analyses using analogies between literary journalism and anthropology. However, the discussions that revolve more around the products of anthropologists' and literary journalists' work – like ethnographic reports and literary reports, respectively – and less around the methods and practices employed by these professionals and researchers in the field, even though one is considered to be a result of the other. In this paper we shall look at the procedures for collecting material and at the experiences that came from the meeting of these professionals and researchers, and the communities they portray. Our goal is to

understand literary journalism and anthropology not as destinations, but as pathways, as practices and disciplines that have certain points of contact and certain differences.

For Martinez (2017), there are forms of literary journalism which can be found at certain points throughout history, leading up to a more concrete characterization in the mid-18th century. However, it was only in the 1960s and 1970s that this genre would be fully recognized, when North American authors such as Tom Wolfe, Gay Talese, Truman Capote and Norman Mailer started to publicize an immersive style of reporting that has come to be known as *new journalism*. Despite its long trajectory, Martinez believes that specialists on the subject are not in agreement with the definition of literary journalism, in Brazil and abroad. Not for nothing Martinez (2017) makes reference to the expression “you-know-it-when-you-see-it”, used by American journalist and professor Mark Kramer to describe the form of literary journalism, basically saying that you only recognize this genre when you run into it.

Even with the difficulties involved in elaborating precise concepts, many authors have discussed the characteristics and attributes spread throughout this style of journalism. Necchi (2009, p. 103) claims that literary journalism is characterized by its escape from “pre-formatted looks” and by its capacity to break from the “plain and heterogeneous views of reality”. He lists deep observation and immersion in the story that is being told as main elements of this practice, facilitating a rich collection of details and perceptions. Pena (2007, p. 48-49) adds to this by saying that it “enhances the resources of journalism”, loosening the grip on the *lead*, on facts and on what is new in order to achieve a broader view of the world – taking account of the established clipping. Thus, more than just a way of weaving together ideas and words, literary journalism is a way of perceiving, experiencing and understanding daily life, even though its title says more about its product – a journalistic text with hints of literature – than it does its practice.

Literary journalism differs from news journalism – mostly in large communication vehicles – not only in its final form but also in its collection procedures and information production, which generally involves reporters spending long periods of time doing fieldwork in the places and among the people they are portraying. Because of this, they use a whole different set of questions for producing their material, and tend to establish a unique relationship with their interlocutors (whether human actors or not).

In this way, literary journalism sets its own course, starting with the agenda it chooses and all the other stages of production it must go through. Perhaps it is in the fieldwork where its biggest challenge and biggest strength lie, because without a keen eye, attentive listening and careful collection of elements (structural and symbolic), there is nothing to be transferred onto paper. It is along these lines that Bak proclaims: “we should stop referring to literary journalism as a genre (Wolfe, Connery), or even as a form (Sims, Hartsock), and start calling it what it is: a discipline” (Bak, 2011, p. 18). Thus, the need arises to see literary journalism not as a genre trapped between journalism and literature, but as its own genre, capable of filling in the gaps left by other genres, yet surely influenced by them. For this reason, in this paper we understand literary journalist as a professional researcher with his or her own goals, strategies and forms of being in the field, and not as a middle ground between journalist and literate. As a consequence, we must bear in mind the work of anthropologists when reflecting on their practice.

For Oliveira (2007), the work of an anthropologist lies in the “capacity to uncover or interpret symbolic evidence” which helps towards understanding the Other (the main objective of the discipline, according to Oliveira) “whether it be constituted by a different society or by a social group far removed from the researcher which can later be intellectually redefined as one he or she belongs to” (Oliveira, 2007, pp. 9-10). Understanding this is mainly achieved by capturing the perspectives within the community which is being studied, or from the point of view of the “internal” (community), of the “native”, the “actor”. Therefore, collecting “symbolical evidence” (the forms of being, of living and interacting, of social and discursive practices) from local situations makes reflecting on universal questions of social life possible. Along these same lines, Lago (2010) states that fieldwork and the consequential experience with alterity is the basis for the organization of anthropology as an autonomous discipline. According to this author, the meeting between the anthropologist and the Other is so essential that it is often regarded as anthropology in itself, especially as it is the moment when contact between subject and object is realized.

Just as it is for literary journalists, the foundation and more symbolic methodology of anthropologists’ work involves forms of seeing, experiencing and understanding everyday life. This is its strategy for understanding the particular and universal forms that human beings

construct to organize their social lives. Both literary journalists and anthropologists are collectors of daily life. They are professionals and researchers who approach their field with a careful eye and an attentive ear to be able to collect structural and symbolic elements of common life, which includes scenes, scenarios, human and non-human relations, dialogues and forms of social and political organization.

2. Collection Strategies

Gillespie (2012) argues that literary journalists and anthropologists are similar in the sense that both sustain their works by incorporating periods of immersion in the community they are studying. This immersion period involves interviews and direct and participatory observation. Their fieldwork is a time-space of experience, of meeting, of collecting perceptions and producing knowledge. The planning, agendas and hypotheses in the field are tested as the Other takes form and reveals itself. At the same time, the proposal, once restricted to paper, makes contact with the “real” and starts to take shape. Fieldwork is then a new form of the idea where the research and the questions are re-shaped. Similar to reporters who do not give up when their story “fails” and look at why it failed in order to better understand it, anthropologists should always be prepared to re-think their investigation based on the references that their research subjects tell them. In this regard, both reporters and anthropologists produce knowledge out of contact and communicative experiences, challenging pre-designed concepts produced in labs/newsrooms.

In order that they take advantage of the experience in the field, both literary journalists and anthropologists need time. Different from news journalism, where reporters only need briefly visit the site of where an event took place, or even just hear about it via internet or telephone, professional researchers in literary journalism become familiar with the context in which they will depict. Gay Talese (1932-), for instance, invested ten years of field research into writing his non-fiction book *Thy Neighbor's Wife*, which explores the transformation of the sexual lives of Americans in the 1960s and 1970s. For anthropologists, immersion for long periods of time is even more common seeing as how many of them dedicate a large part of their careers to researching one community. Bronisław

Malinowski (1884-1942), considered to be the father of British social anthropology and remembered for his long expeditions investigating the peoples of Australia and and Western Pacific islands, defended the need for researchers and those being researched to co-exist with one another until the boundaries that exist between them collapse, although nowadays this breakdown of boundaries is seen as a utopia, sporadic or mediated contact is not enough.

Living in a village for the sole purpose of observing native life allows us to repeatedly observe customs, ceremonies and procedures, and gather together examples of their beliefs and the way they actually live. (...) Put in another way: there are many phenomena of great importance that cannot be learned or collected through questionnaires and analysis, and need instead to be observed first-hand. We call these phenomena the *imponderable* of real life. Within them are things like workday routines, aspects of bodily hygiene, how they cook and eat, the conversations and social life discussed around village campfires, the existence of strong friendships or hostilities and the affection and discontent among people, the subtle yet unmistakable way that personal ambitions and pride reflect on the individual's behavior and the emotional reactions of all around them (Malinowski, 1978, p. 31, emphasis added).

Nevertheless, it is important to point out that the field being studied does not always markedly differ from the natural habitat of the anthropologist. Having said that, the Other is not always so culturally or geographically different either. It has been a long time since anthropology was a science that primarily focused on studying the ethnic, racial and cultural aspects of exotic communities, particularly from the Western caucasian point of view; it has now expanded to cover any population, including urban. The Other – and consequently, the field – might actually be within the institution where the anthropologist is working. In this case, the anthropologist appears as the Other in a production given by studying the denaturalization and producing misunderstandings.

A similar thing occurs in literary journalism: the field and the Other might be within the newsroom where the reporter is working. This determination of the research subject or the reporting subject does not deal with differences that may exist within a material, displaced from the bodies that produce the study or the report. The determination occurs through the work done or its social existence becomes recognized from it or by means of it. Having said that, the fields of literary journalism and anthropology only become fields and the Other only becomes the Other once they are have been seen through the lens of professional researchers. This involves

understanding the cultural and social differences in order to be able to work with these differences or in spite of them, moving closer to what is different or moving further away from what is naturalized as equal. A knowledge is thus produced, capable of bridging the gaps of understanding for what is incomprehensible, the same way that it allows to re-imagine what is understood as natural.

Here, each professional researcher uses techniques and procedures, taking into account subjectivity and the form of interacting with the Other. In order to facilitate working in the field, it is common for journalists and anthropologists to rely on the support of an “informant”, an individual who belongs to the community being researched and can not only establish points of contact between professional researcher and the Other, but who also offers an “inside look”, a guide between meanings and experiences found in the field (Rovida, 2015). This helps deconstruct the outside view of the professional researcher and break – as much as possible – the linguistic and cultural barriers, providing a space where mediation and social dialogue can take place, as stated by Cremilda Medina (1996), who works mainly with journalism. She believes that when journalists commit to observing, perceiving, interpreting and narrating the complexity of the “real”, they take on the role of a cultural reader. Medina describes this mission in four acts:

The journalistic act requires a subtle and indiscreet view of the cultural reader; a complex vision capable of collecting the socio-cultural polyphony and polysemy, and the dynamic relationship between the self and the other. The analytic act requires a broader mythic repertoire, as well as clarity for breaking away from the path. The expressive act mobilizes the narrator's competence; a fluency and regency of voices; precision, coherence and synthetic polysemy of the revealed word. The fourth and last principle guiding the proposition, after interpreting (deciphering) a certain situation, involves incorporating the process of social mediation for a new understanding of reality (Medina, 1996, p. 33).

Despite focusing on a journalist's work, the cultural reader as described by Medina contains aspects of anthropological work. Thus, the four acts start with fieldwork, and meeting the Other. It is in this time and space where professional researchers collect structural and symbolic elements – or, collect daily life – using slightly similar techniques and procedures, generally composed of direct observation, participatory observation and interviews, shaped according to the objectives and context of everyone's work. A part of

the collection process is registering these materials, which is usually done in video files, sound recordings and/or in the form of a journal (Singer, 2009). These materials later help to describe, interpret and comprehend the community being researched.

The structural elements correspond to forms of social, political and cultural organization of a particular community, and the symbolic elements relate to interactions and relations (between one individual and another or a community and a territory, for instance) which are not necessarily visible or set. Collecting these ingredients requires professional researchers to use the five senses in order to capture gestures, tones, temperatures and noises. In the following excerpt, Necchi illustrates which symbolic elements are essential for literary journalism and anthropology to perceive, as these elements help towards understanding new dimensions of relations between the Other and its environment.

Besides the seen and unseen (thoughts, feelings, emotions) it is described through effective fieldwork, through rigorous verification, through long interviews, through attention and incisiveness. A reporter's feelings can be understood when reading a story – it could be a blurry color, a hot wind, a nod of the head, a rough texture, an unexpected aroma, a sigh of freedom, an intermittent squeak (Necchi, 2009, p. 103).

Symbolic collection is essential to fieldwork for both types of professional researchers, but so is discourse collection, which is conducted through interviewing. While anthropologists use in-depth interview techniques, scientifically verified and heavily present in the social sciences, literary journalists use strategies from journalism (looking for answers to previously prepared questions), but do so in a more in-depth, open and flexible way than what is commonly used in news journalism. In both cases, what is being looked for is an unprepared discourse given by the interviewee. Once again, they are looking to collect the common, the daily life, amongst the different available layers. For this reason the interviews, in general, do not follow a specific script and include a broad array of questions, which could translate into hours or days of work. Travancas highlights that the questions being asked should not restrict the researcher:

Initially, everything that is said is of interest and is important because it helps towards understanding the interviewee, the group to which he or she belongs and the logics of his or her culture. In this kind of interview, researchers do not attempt to question the interviewee, or judge discourse, attitudes, and choices. They just listen (Travancas, 2014, p. 21).

By the same token, Martinez (2008), speaking specifically about literary journalism, claims that reporters should act as comprehensive and active listeners – like American Joseph Mitchell (1908-1996) and Brazilian José Hamilton Ribeiro (1935-) did and do – capable of establishing a relationship of mutual understanding with the interviewee. She also highlights the importance of registering dialogues, whenever possible, that occur between members from the community being researched. They should be registered in such a way that interactions are depicted without any outside influence from the reporter. These are also valid guidelines for anthropological work.

Continuing with interviewing techniques and procedures, Silva (2013) explains that capturing everything that occurs within the environment (the space where the conversation is being held, the sound of the environment, the interviewee's body language, even the interviewer's emotional reactions) is just as important as asking questions and listening to the answers. Gonçalves and Medina (2018) add the concept of "relationship signs" (Medina, 2006) to this idea, indicating a shift from subject-object relationship to subject-subject, focusing on the journalist's capacity to produce mediation-authorship, which may include multiple voices from daily life and historical-cultural meanings.

According to Harrington (2003), journalists, over the course of their careers, learn to feel discomfort, pain and joy simply through the tone of someone's voice or their gestures. They also learn how to ask questions that others would never ask because they know that certain responses are necessary for creating a cadence, a texture, and an atmosphere to the story, as well as bringing out information that will bring the public knowledge, world views and pleasure from reading. For Harrington, these are some of the abilities that journalism can offer to anthropology. He even invites anthropologists to build the structure of texts which are hard to write, but easy to read, and in doing so, the author dialogues using a cultural repertoire of works.

(...) you must go way beyond constructing sentences well to rendering scenes, capturing action, selecting telling details, avoiding melodrama, shaping material without distorting it, not being too obvious, not being too obtuse, aptly balancing the particular and the universal, imposing themes that rightfully emerge from your reporting, structuring stories so insight emerges, action concludes, characters change, and tension is relieved. These are all writing challenges that carry great implications for reporting, and literary journalists have been wrestling with them for a long time, building on one another's work for decades. In 1939, James Agee (2000) wanted Let Us

Now Praise Famous Men to evoke the cadence of the Bible. The internationally famous World War II correspondent Ernie Pyle wrote stories with the cool rhythm of Hemingway. John Hersey (1989) modeled Hiroshima on Thornton Wilder's (1998) *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*. Gay Talese reported and wrote articles such as his famous *Esquire* profile of Frank Sinatra to mimic the scene-by-scene construction of a novel. Jon Franklin (1994), author of the influential literary journalism manual *Writing for Story* and a two-time Pulitzer Prize winner, borrowed the conflict-resolution short story form for his journalism (Harrington, 2003, p. 97).

In short, literary journalists and anthropologists should be aware of any perceptions and impressions experienced in the field, not only to capture the elements needed to understand that universe, but also so that, at the end of it all, they may share their findings.

3. To what does it serve? To whom?

If the similarities between anthropologists' fieldwork and that of literary journalists result from their primary tasks (observing and listening to the Other and the symbolic collection of daily life), the differences result from social roles, production structures and the distinct work conditions that each one of these professional researchers work under. Above all, one works with building scientific knowledge and the other works with journalism and information. One answers to its research institution and/or development agency, and is subject to the standards of and commitment to scientific productivity. The other must satisfy the journalistic company or publisher they work for (either as an employee or freelancer), and is subject to that media outlet's editorial line and mechanisms for collection. Both of their studies aim for social legitimacy and peer recognition from the scientific community or news mediums, and from the rest of society, whenever possible. These attachments inevitably find their way into the field and influence what happens in it, showing the fragility of the already highly problematized idea of neutrality, in both science and journalism. In the words of Travancas: "Anthropology and journalism produce discourse in certain conditions, and they are neither culturally nor socially neutral, despite the fact that they do not always try to emphasize this aspect. C. Geertz (1978) claims they are fictional ethnography, not due to being "false" but to being "something constructed" (Travancas, 2002, p. 3).

The choice of which object to study is one of the main factors influencing the fieldwork of anthropologists and literary journalists. While anthropologists scientifically justify their choices and the importance of their research, bearing in mind any potential social impacts it may have, literary journalists guarantee that their work is marketable, of public interest and of interest to the public (Neveu, 2006), trying to bring newness, whenever possible, even when the agenda has a “colder” and broader approach. What reporters do in the field is envision what the target public wants, whether as a concrete goal which can be verified through the sale of its product or through an editor’s projection. In that regard, Harrington writes:

Yet journalists remain committed to the idea that their ultimate allegiance is to readers. (...) As journalists, we don't justify what we do with reference to expanding a body of knowledge or developing predictive theories of society and human behavior. Indeed, the weakness of journalists, as Randolph Fillmore has said, is that they too rarely place the individuals they capture so well into a cultural context. We journalists justify what we do because the Constitution gives us the right to do it within laws governing people's right to privacy and libel. We focus only on discovering and recording accurate and meaningful description and understanding. We pander to the needs of 'story'. We do that because we are also entertainers. People don't have to come to our show. They don't have to read our articles. We must make them want to read our articles (Harrington, 2003, pp. 100-101).

In the face of all of this, it is reasonable to assume that, in general, anthropologists are more careful with their methodological questions while conducting fieldwork as this transparency is demanded by the scientific community. Both disciplines have certain essential norms and classic procedures for use in the field, but ethnography produces scientific work – even though nowadays this is questioned a lot due to discussions on the limits of representation (Ingold, 2011) – and literary journalism tries to distance itself from the objectivism of classic journalism, flirting with literature. Much of an anthropologist’s work and education – maybe too much – is based on methods and procedures, and their peers expect this of them. Little attention is given to how well the final product of their work will be able to dialogue with the public outside the circle of academia. On the contrary, hermeticism ends up being a cheap resource from time to time, occasionally produced unconsciously as an undesirable result of training, emulating knowledge and producing barriers that protect the author from further criticism.

For literary journalism, in most cases, only the final result of the whole work reaches the reader, leaving the reporter to choose whether to reveal, or not, the details of the production process. If the journalist and the media vehicle he or she works for have credibility with its readers, these readers will subconsciously understand that that particular report was written according to a solid methodology and ethical journalistic principles, even though these principles are not always taught throughout journalistic studies. In this regard, suggesting that journalism can also learn from anthropology, Harrington states that “Journalists are the junkyard dogs of ethnography. We aren’t trained in formal research methods or theories. (...) Many journalists have acknowledged a debt to their college introduction to anthropology classes, where they were introduced to the endless story possibilities embedded in people living their daily lives” (Harrington, 2003, p. 90).

Much can be taken from the excerpt above, where Harrington emphasizes the lack of methodological training in journalism, especially when observing average graduate programs in Brazil. Even though there are many possible points of contact between anthropologic methodology and the research practice of literary journalism, this dialogue is practically absent from curricula of both social communication and anthropology. This is because classic journalism developed its particular methodology based on standards of objectivity, impartiality and exemptions close to factual, news work. When we look at other types of texts, classic journalism tends to be more concerned with the esthetic quality of the final product, not reflecting on the idea that different and more humanistic research practices are equally relevant, including relevant to the content that is being produced.

Apart from the ethical questions between literary journalism and its readers and anthropology and the scientific community, another discussion emerges on the relationship between professional researchers (anthropologists and literary journalists) and the community being researched (the Other). First off, both journalists and anthropologists need to explain to their sources what the goal and methods of the work under proposal are, as well as obtaining their consent to use audio and images. However, in ethnographic reports, anthropologists use pseudonyms when referring to their interviewees in order to protect them as much as possible, but journalists have to provide the first and last names of their sources, with a few rare exceptions, in order that their report is credible with readers.

It is important to mention that, in journalism, the Other is not always an average everyday character from daily life. Celebrities and politicians are depicted in literary journalism, especially in the kinds of texts that reveal the never-before-seen sides of public figures. Examples of this can be seen in the Brazilian magazine *Piauí* and the American *The New Yorker*. In literary journalism referencing sources is important, especially when covering public figures and understanding them in terms of their humanity, weaknesses and concerns. Being able to see the conflict in these subjects allows for the communication of complex histories from different points of view and developments over time.

While referencing sources in literary journalism is important towards verifying what is “true” and who the figures are (public or otherwise), this referencing only occurs in anthropology if the research subjects will not be placed at risk by doing so. This difference is related to basic questions which, when analyzed, allow us to assert literary journalism’s place in the middle. News journalism covers factual truths which, theoretically, could and should be verified by confirming what the sources had said. This is why it views what was said (and the data) as completely objective information, meaning any other contradiction would be seen as a falsification – a lie told by either the journalist or the source. For anthropology, the “who”, the one providing the information, is less important: what is important is analyzing if what was said or ascertained in a particular context allows for some kind of theoretical breakdown.

One last aspect for comparison is the range of depth achieved by fieldwork conducted by anthropologists and literary journalists. When an anthropologist conducts fieldwork with the goal of positing or questioning theories about a certain community, generating descriptive and interpretative scientific material, we expect that this anthropologist will dedicate a considerable period of time to living and collecting in the field, often meaning other projects are left for later dates, or even abandoned. It is not uncommon for anthropologists to spend years studying the same population or group. Overall, this length of time anthropologists commit to their fieldwork means they can immerse themselves in their work and explore their objects more extensively than literary journalists, who often have to deal with the pressures that come with deadlines– including for books – and realize many reports at the same time. Of course, this is an even bigger problem for journalists who work for newspapers, magazines or

sites. Those who write storybooks - Gay Talese (1932-) and Svetlana Alexijevich (1948-) are two examples – tend to take more advantage of spending more hours, days or years in the field.

4. Considerations

We identify, in this article, similarities and differences between fieldwork conducted by literary journalists and by anthropologists throughout the process of producing literary reports and scientific knowledge, respectively. We consider literary journalism not as a genre of text between journalism and literature, but as a practice that has built an independent pathway, with its own processes starting from choosing an agenda to handing in material. Without the proper fieldwork procedures (intense observation, listening and perceiving for understanding and establishing relationships with the Other) reporters are not able to produce a complex, deep, and narrative report – even though that report may be written in a simple language that the general public will understand.

By calling them collectors of daily life, we are describing literary journalists and anthropologists as professional researchers who are dedicated to observing and comprehending communities – including human and non-human actors – by collecting elements of everyday life, whether structural or symbolic. We noted that the similarities between these two professions are based on techniques for direct and participatory interviewing and observing – although not official methodologies of journalistic work – but the differences are much sharper in terms of the social functions of their professionals and ties to their respective employers or financial supporters, to their peers and to their readers. In both cases, the procedures applied in the fieldwork are unavoidably traversed by external ties and research objectives.

We believe that bridges connecting both areas can be mutually beneficial, providing an interdisciplinary pathway which could be explored in both communication and anthropology courses. There is also the possibility of creating intermediates for these intermediates: works that might possibly combine the reflexive and methodological thoroughness of anthropology with the artistic and investigative quality of literary journalism, and could make up works that advance anthropological knowledge while at the same time produce journalistic narratives that have a wide appeal to the public.

Lago highlights that anthropology can help build journalism capable of incorporating the Other in all its complexity, an ability that large companies and journalism courses in Brazil do not have. In the words of Lago, “Anthropology has much to teach us about understanding the Other. Not so much for being the locus for managing alterity as a social-scientific construct, but for having based in its field an old, extensive and deep reflection on limitations when confronting differences” (Lago, 2010, p. 169). In this regard, we believe that discussion intercrossed with anthropology can contribute towards consolidating literary journalism as a legitimate and independent discipline, recognized in academic circles as not only a sub-area of studies in literature or communication, but as a pathway with its own characteristics, practices and objectives. It is clear that this kind of maturation requires finding specific methodologies and theories; however, the inspiration that can come from having anthropology as a partner could lead to new pathways of investigation and practice for literary journalism.

Lastly, we would like to point out that other comparisons between literary journalism and anthropology will certainly appear if the focus of fieldwork is broadened (which is not the purpose of this paper) to empirically observe and compare motivations and the production, research and writing processes these professional researchers experience throughout their work.

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