Abstract
The end of the nineteenth century witnessed several changes: the Industrial Revolution created new jobs, new ways of working, new ways of producing the newspapers. The social misery that was a consequence of these transformations soon became the object of interest of men who wandered in the cities, reporting the bad conditions of life of the poor who arrived to the modern urban centres. Lisbon, the capital of a once great empire, was no exception. Although it cannot be compared to London, the Portuguese city was also the stage for some technological development: new avenues were opened, piped water and sewages were built, electric lighting appeared for the first time in the country. The Portuguese literary journalists were privileged spectators of all these changes. Eça de Queirós or Jaime Batalha Reis lived in London for several years as diplomats and their collaboration with Portuguese and Brazilian newspapers was intense, providing the image of the great metropolis. But Paris was another case of reports about its way of life through the hands of Ramalho Ortigão or Guilherme de Azevedo. If these two European capitals were highly considered by the Portuguese writers / journalists, Lisbon was seen through the lenses of Fialho de Almeida, for example. Through the Portuguese literary journalists of the 19th we are able to understand the cities of the present.

Keywords: literary journalism, image, city, 19th century
Introduction

The city has changed along the time, from the first gatherings made possible by the Neolithic revolution to the current urban districts with millions of inhabitants. More recently, the nineteenth century saw deep changes in many aspects of society throughout the world. The development of innovative mechanisms and industries brought to light by the Industrial Revolution led to a change in the demographical picture of the countries, namely of England. The need of working hands in the cities made millions leave the small villages of the countryside towards industrial towns and cities that were not ready to receive them. Lack of sanitation in the crowded houses or outside them, open-air sewers, deficient public lighting, the exploitation of workers by the factory owners, children who did not go to school (school was only compulsory between 1876 and 1880 to children up to the age of ten) and who, consequently, contributed to the high percentage of crime and illiteracy – all these issues contributed to the emergence of places where misery and other social problems were the norm.

This century also witnessed the expansion of the press, due to technological progress and better economic conditions. The press quickly turned from political propaganda to true, factual information. Advertisement allowed this to happen, as the money paid by it contributed to the survival of newspapers and magazines without having any connection to political parties. The appearance of the telegraph in 1844 and of the cable telegraph in 1866 created a more and more global and updated journalism.

Compulsory education created more readers for this press that employed the newly created “reporter”, who was looking for facts in the manner of the scientist, the explorer or the historian; the reporter is a social investigator, and the consequence is a close association between Naturalism and journalism due to the examination of the world performed by these people. The need for a wide audience created a variety of information and information that could interest the readers. New Journalism emerges, with new techniques, such as the interview, multiple sources of information, eyewitnesses, description, dialogue. According to Marzolf,

by the end of the century, Europeans had examples of the ‘new journalism’ in their capitals, and the Americanizing style, with its stress on the news, in the extensive use of the interview, in the human interest story and the investigation reportage, had also influenced and modified the elitist and political press in those places (quoted in Traquina, 2007, p.48).

This type of texts “reads like a novel or short story except that it is true or makes a truth claim to phenomenal experience. [It has a] relationship to fiction but reflects a world of ‘fact’” (Hartsock, 2000, p.1). According to Tom Wolfe, “new journalists […] combined in-depth reporting with literary ambition: they wanted to make the nonfiction story shimmer ‘like a novel’ with the pleasures of detailed realism” (Kerrane and Yagoda, 1998, p.17).

Authors such as Dickens, Henry Mayhew, W. T. Stead or Jack London described the reality of the Victorian society in texts that Kevin Kerrane and Ben Yagoda call ‘Tales of the City’, whose aim was to “dramatize the reality of poverty, prostitution
and prejudice” (Kerrane and Yagoda, 1998, p.17). Henry Mayhew, for example, cofounded Punch in 1841 and in 1849 he became ‘Metropolitan Correspondent’ for the London Morning Chronicle. In his tales of the city of London, he focused on people whose lives were extremely difficult due to poverty, by giving vivid details and using the interviewee’s own words. As a result of his work, he published London Labour and the London Poor (1861-62). Jack London lived for seven weeks in the East End of London in 1902 and The People of the Abyss (1903) is the result of his immersion in the life of a huge slum. In his work he uses the techniques associated with realistic fiction (dialogue, scene construction, concrete detail) and the reporter’s subjectivity is present.

But W. T. Stead was the one who changed British journalism as editor of the Pall Mall Gazette in the 1880s. In terms of style, he introduced the bold type and the eye-catching headlines, popularised the interview but at the same time gave “details of atmosphere and descriptions of the interviewee’s appearance and mannerisms” (Kerrane and Yagoda, 1998, p.49). Sensationalist articles like “The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon” turned him into the creator of the ‘new journalism’, in the words of Mathew Arnold in 1887.

In the 1960s, Tom Wolfe, Gay Talese, Joan Didion and others established the name to this type of writing: literary journalism, also known as new journalism, literary nonfiction or reportage literature, among other terms. However, there is a great difference between literary journalism and sensationalist journalism: the first tries to “provide insight into other subjectivities, while sensationalism attempts to reinforce the notion of the marginalized as Other in order to elicit a response of terror or horror” (Hartsock, 2000, p.100).

As Harrington says, literary journalism abandoned the objective news-voice in favour of multiple voices or a subjective voice. It used many novelistic techniques and concepts: detailed characterization, scene construction, dialogue, playful syntax, emotional intimacy, metaphorical language, irony and imagery. It shared the elements of timeliness and newsworthiness with mainstream journalism, but added permission to interpret facts, and focused on the ordinary person instead of the famous or the infamous (quoted in Swasey, 2009, p.11).

In Portugal, the end of the nineteenth century also witnessed changes in the geography of the capital city, Lisbon: new avenues were built and existing spaces were renewed, like the Public Boulevard (Passeio Público) or the current Liberty Avenue (Avenida da Liberdade). Living with the desire to change the political, social

---

1 The expression “literary journalism” was mentioned for the first time in 1907 in an anonymous article, “Confessions of a Literary Journalist”, published by the literary magazine Bookman. More recently, the work of scholars such as Norman Sims, Kevin Kerrane, Ben Yagoda or John Hartsock have made the expression “literary journalism” more predominant over all other denominations. In 2006, the creation of the Association for Literary Journalism Studies (IALJS) has helped the dissemination of scholarly research on the genre, most notably after the release in May 2009 of the first issue of Literary Journalist Studies, the association’s peer-reviewed bi-annual journal. In Portugal, the 2007 PhD dissertation of Isabel Soares, “O Império do Outro” (“The Empire of the Other”), marks the first attempt at cataloguing and recognising Portuguese literary journalism.
and cultural situation of the country, many Portuguese writers turned their attention to the city, namely Lisbon, Paris and London.

Having these factors in mind, this research is a result of a PhD dissertation that is about to be presented on the image of the city that a Portuguese writer transmitted in his literary journalism texts, Fialho de Almeida. The purpose of the work is to reveal the image of the Portuguese capital, comparing it to what other authors mentioned about London and Paris, cities that were models to these people.

The image of the city in the Portuguese literary journalism in the end of the 19th century

Fialho de Almeida (1857-1911), a doctor who loved books and writing, wrote abundantly in many styles (chronicles, short-stories and novels). This author with a new way of writing (spontaneous, direct, with rhythm and impressionist descriptions, as well as with new words) was a Portuguese literary journalist whose theme that is present in most of his writings is the city of Lisbon at the turning of the twentieth century, a city that he criticizes for its social and moral misery. The image of the places he depicts is influenced by theories he had studied: eugenics, the pathological criminology by Lombroso, evolutionism, Taine’s deterministic theory.

There are many aspects of Lisbon that Fialho de Almeida gives attention to but, unlike other literary journalists who write on the Portuguese capital (Gervásio Lobato or Carlos Malheiro Dias), most of his texts describe the poor areas of the city. Fialho says that Lisbon “is still today the sloppiest, the dirtiest and the most artificial of all the capitals of the universe” (Almeida, 1992-3, p. 44). The chronicle “Lisboa Velha e Lisboa Nova” (Old Lisbon and New Lisbon)\(^2\) depicts these two Lisbons that Fialho de Almeida knew. The old Lisbon was not the beautiful city for the rich, it was for the ones who could not afford a palace or a new big house. He describes the squares with trees that hide thieves, the tall, narrow and irregular buildings in steep streets, the sick women who did the house work, the shops with thousand goods and a nice smell, the ruined palaces, wandering dogs (Almeida, 1996, 11-13). The present is different. Now, the construction is made with the French style, not the Portuguese one. And these buildings and neighbourhoods are for the rich – judges, bankers, doctors. There is luxury in every detail, such as materials, objects or gardens. The way of dressing and the ideal of physical beauty also changed; in the author’s opinion, for the worse: men and women became shallow\(^3\).

\(^2\) Almeida, 1994, pp. 11-23.
\(^3\) See Fialho de Almeida, 1957. *Vida Irónica: Jornal d’un Vagabundo* (pp.300-301), for the ironic description of the men and women who stroll in this avenue.
In “Lisboa Monumental” (Monumental Lisbon), another chronicle, we have a vision of the whole city of Lisbon: the reality of the metropolis and how Fialho thinks it should be. Once again he dislikes the choices, made in the interests of politicians and rich people, not contributing to the progress of the country:

What barbarities, what donkey’s kick in good taste, what crimes of beauty, that grow without bit […]. And how the mediocre intellectuals, the non-progress of the rich, the ignorance and inaction of the rulers, even in the architecture of this poor Lisbon, summary of the kingdom, leave without trace, and will contribute hundreds of years […] to the setback of the land […] (Almeida 1960, 83).

In this text he mentions the new avenues, the harbour, Praça do Comércio, the Customs, the industrial city (a city with as much smoke as London). It is not by accident that he mentions London to refer to industry, because afterwards he describes the neighbourhoods of the workers, and they are very similar to Whitechapel, described by another Portuguese literary journalist, Jaime Batalha Reis.

---

4 Almeida, 1960, p.77-126.
Therefore, the Lisbon that abounds in Fialho de Almeida writings is a city of misery and decadence with the night as the mother of the unprotected, just like London. In the chronicle “De Noite” (At night), the author wanders in Lisbon at night and the vocabulary is related to death, suitable to the time of the day: “funereal lines”, “perspectives of burials”, “dying glows” (Almeida, 1994, p.121-122). Fialho describes the city after six o’clock, when the gas lights are lit and all kinds of people are in the streets: “women in a hurry, […] coal women and dandies, caps and top hats” (Almeida, 1994, p.122). For him, “the city has completely lost the bourgeois configuration that existed in the sun light, to become an indefinite necropolis of scary perspectives” (Almeida, 1994, p.122). The same idea is developed in another text when referring to Lisbon at night: “the city is at the mercy of tragic dreams, streets are bigger, houses are gloomier, trees are colossal with despair, and the bells forget to give the time, a deadly anguish drools from things, there are rounds of madness in the gas, vague sobs” (Almeida, 1957, p.4). Therefore, we can perceive a dual city, apparently without problems during the day and at night showing its other dark side. This notion of dichotomy is present also when the authors refer to London: the City, the heart of the British economy and of the wealthy, is side by side with Whitechapel, the dreadful neighbourhood of London.

At night, Fialho sees beggars, sick people, prostitutes, criminals. One of the unprotected is Sérgio, the main cello player at S. Carlos Theatre, who drank very much and now played his instrument at a café of bad reputation. To show the decadence of this place, Fialho uses negative vocabulary to refer to the people, to the drinks and to the objects: “admirers in shirts and clogs”, “the customers sit on wooden benches”, “squeak of enormous rats. On the walls, little paintings of women

---

5 Almeida, 1994, p.121-129.
offering the breasts for suction to those who watch them” (Almeida, 1992-1, p.84-85). The author also alludes to animals to describe these decadent people: the men who smoke and drink are “bovine”, the sound of chords is like “quacks of ducks, in a puddle” (Almeida, 1992-1, p.87).

Another example of decadence in this text is the case of a strong man who entered the “tavern of fado singers at Carreirinha” (Almeida, 1992-1, p.92) where Sérgio plays, with a very frail girl from the countryside who, with some wine, slowly stopped resisting the attacks of the man. It is a case of prostitution at Mouraria, a medieval neighbourhood of Lisbon where the moors were confined after the conquest of Lisbon by the first Portuguese king, D. Afonso Henriques, in 1147. This couple leaves the tavern and the “chase” continues: he tries to grab her, she continuously escapes and returns to his arms. This episode was seen by the author the way a reporter does, a flâneur who needs to wander in the city and expresses his emotions in the way of a short story – Fialho intertwines the two plans of action: the concert that Sérgio performs inside the tavern and the game of the couple that ends when the concert finishes. Because of these features (the presence to see the facts, the events in a decadent place with miserable characters, the two plans of action, the literary language), this is probably one of the best examples of Fialho de Almeida as a literary journalist.

The case of Manuel is also told in a way that is similar to a short story. Again we have Mouraria as background, the “filthy neighbourhood of the people” (Almeida, 1992-2, p.41), again we have the night, drink, poverty, diseases, crimes. This Manuel is a poor man, miserable as his friends: “poor night travelers of the streets, sleeping on the stairs, […] and eating on good days the food of some cat” (Almeida, 1992-2, p.35). In this story, Mouraria is better described:
There the buildings were slim, the stairs were sooty, light was gloomy. Dark muds silenced the noise of the steps, and hoarse voices came out of the houses, rumors of guitars of taverns, and discussions of the corners […]. At the doors, crushed with vice, the girls slept under gas lamps, crossed on the ground as dogs (Almeida, 1992-2, p.41).

Drinking became a habit to Manuel, wandering in the night also, and with time, diseases appeared. The state of misery became worse and the author uses Taine’s deterministic theory\(^6\) to explain Manuel’s current situation - race, education and environment led to this moral decadence: “in this seclusion of the school, the boredom of life […] , the surmenage, the closure, the passive obedience, the bad food, etc., only increased in that illegitimate body, […] the factors that heredity had put in his teenage type” (Almeida, 1992-2, p.61). Gradually, he became weaker and died at the age of twenty-three.

When studying other Portuguese literary journalists, we can see that these images of night and misery are similar in other European capitals. Jaime Batalha Reis (1847-1935), an agronomical engineer with several political activities who travelled during most of his life, left us with the impressions of his longest journey: as a consul in Newcastle (from 1883 to 1898) and in London (until 1911), he wrote a series of chronicles for a Portuguese newspaper, O Repórter (1888) and for the Brazilian Gazeta de Noticias (1893-1896). These chronicles were named “Revista Inglesa”. There he describes a culture that was considered superior in many ways, but had negative aspects as well. The author says: “the whole Europe admires England. Even I, following the universal example, do it for over thirty years. What a great country! I

\(^6\) Taine 1866, iii-xix.
think all the time [...]. However, when you live in England for some years and you try to analyze the elements of the whole, you find, surprisingly, contradictory facts” (Reis, 1988, p.55).

Positive aspects are the education in public schools that creates true gentlemen and the fierce politicians, leaders of the greatest empire in the world. This strength and will to succeed wasn’t only learned in the public schools, but it came from the religious doctrine: the evangelicalism taught that work would make a better country and provide a better life after death. Therefore, work is a positive aspect of the British society, but its dark side is hypocrisy. Hypocrisy on Sundays, when families gather but do not show any sign of affection or emotion; when they cannot work but drink and gamble. Hypocrisy when they had the Angel in the House and the Magdalenes in the streets. Hypocrisy when they had the City and Whitechapel next to it. The duality is present in many aspects of London.

Whitechapel, a neighbourhood full of dark narrow alleys crowded with poor houses and miserable people, “the terrible neighbourhood of London” (Reis, 1988, p.99). It is the place where the travellers strolled, a labyrinth that was an initiation journey: by trying to reach its centre, discovering the different sides of the Other, they get to know themselves better. The place where Jack, the Ripper killed the prostitutes is thoroughly described by Batalha Reis in his chronicles, precisely because he went there and talked to the people. The readers of O Repórter had the acquaintance to this murderer, due to the fact that the author was in England during the crimes, which made him tell all the procedures of the police and of the criminal. No one can deny that England is an advanced society in industry and economy at this time, but there are theories such as Lombroso’s that defend that crime is the sign of primitivism and, therefore, degeneration. Even the figure of criminals was a primitive one, like Jack’s: “a short and frizzled moustache, [...] a cannibal-like mouth and small, live, scary eyes” (Reis, 1988, p.101).

Figure 5 – Drawing by Ana Luísa Rosa, based on Gustave Doré, Wentworth Street, Whitechapel
The poor prostitutes were Jack’s victims and they were also a source of pollution to the respectable society and of degeneration of the race through sexually transmitted diseases, like the syphilis, since there are physical and mental elements that pass on to the following generations. A number of Contagious Disease Acts intended to control the dissemination of contagious diseases, but in fact they only punished the women, and not the masculine vice, a vice that was accepted by the society. Also because of evangelicalism, the role of the Angel in the House was well defined: the middle-class woman should look after the house and the family and sexually she should only give pleasure to the husband and have children. And so prostitution was needed. And prostitution is a common theme between Fialho de Almeida and Jaime Batalha Reis, as an example of the decadence of these capitals.

But the duality of the English society existed also in the City, the centre of the world’s economy, the place where the respectable society was:

the figure of a huge fish or cetacean, with its muzzle heading to the Bank of England and to the Stock Exchange, as if preparing to devour these two centres of human wealth [...] This is the commercial centre of the world; it is through the offices of this street, it is through this shark that flows, as blood or excrements, all the gold of Earth (Reis, 1988, p.104).

The City is compared to a fish which dives into deep waters, and is therefore impure. The City is impure because of the gold that is the result of commercial activities. The idea of the monster is the chaotic and fearful figure that protects a treasure, and in fact, there are City descriptions that show us that everything is in a complete disorder. The monster also devours man and makes him worse, because in this case he loses the spiritual values and cares only for the material ones. That is why the centre of the world’s wealth is next to the centre of criminality. But Lisbon is also a “monster with scales” (Almeida, 1994, p. 124), where the hospital buildings are the brain and Rossio is its flaming heart from where the arteries go to the outskirts, “little islands of shadow, where vices sleep, and the poverty glimpses between misery and tavern” (Almeida, 1994, p. 125). Even today, Rossio is one of the central squares in Lisbon where people, means of transport and commerce merge and give the idea of disorder. The negativity of these two capitals is shared through the images of monsters, by giving the image of chaos.

But why are the English different from what they show to the world and are not the perfect people that everyone believes them to be? The answer is in the fog. According to Taine, the climate is a factor that influences the character of a people: it hides, transforms and as a consequence the true character is revealed: “it is in the middle of the fog of London that you can understand the British character, their ways of living, all their sentimental manifestations” (Reis, 1988, p.46). He also says that in that fog we can see “all the coal, all the sulphur of combustions and putrefactions, all the hydrosulphurics, all the hydrocarbons, all the carbylamines, all the naphtalines, all the microbes, all the miasmas, all the plagues” (Reis, 1988, p.47). This quotation reveals the negative aspects of progress, all the chemicals and diseases caused by the Industrial Revolution. And although Portugal did not have the Industrial Revolution with the dimension of Britain, the pollution in the river Tagus is also noticed: “the
sulphurous water (...) is a disagreeable extract of a dead body, purging when you
drink it, tiresome when you see it, and fever-causing when you breathe it” (Almeida,
1992-4, p. 185). Once more, the capitals of great empires share the same images of
decadence.

Conclusion

All the mentioned elements characterise a decadent society, the Babylon heading to
the Apocalypse, with crime, corruption, prostitution. The image of Babylon appears
when Portuguese authors refer to the capitals of Lisbon, London and Paris. Although
the texts about the French capital city are mainly descriptive of buildings, of events
and of the Bois de Boulogne, Guilherme de Azevedo (1839-1882), a Portuguese
literary journalist, also witnessed the misery of the French capital, mentioning the
case of sixty-three families, living in workers’ houses, that lost their homes
(Azevedo, 2000, p.84). All the authors refer to the crimes committed in these places,
examples of the decadence.

Fialho de Almeida, a Portuguese writer who has lived in Lisbon most of his life,
gives account of the life in the capital of Portugal, a labyrinth, a «gloomy Babylon»
(Almeida, 1992-4, p.140). Jaime Batalha Reis, who was also a science man, shows
us the maze that is London.

In “Revista Inglesa”, Batalha Reis gives more importance to the dark aspects of the
metropolis than to the image of the shining London. The decadence in England is the
result of the capitalism and the fast way of life created by the Industrial Revolution.
After the peak of the Great Exhibition, the transformation brought by the coming
apocalypse is for the better, a renewal is waited. But before this renewal there is a
transition moment, symbolised by the fog. Fialho de Almeida also prefers writing
about the dark and miserable Lisbon, the metropolis of an empire that had its peak
during the Discoveries period (15th-16th centuries). According to Antero de Quental
(1842-1891) in his article “Causes of decadence of the peninsular peoples in the last
three centuries” (1871), the Portuguese decadence was caused by the Trento
Concilium, the establishment of Absolutism (cohesive and against freedom) and the
distant conquests that provoked economic problems to the country. Having this in
mind, only a socialist revolution would change the situation. Therefore, the
Portuguese authors of the late nineteenth century highlighted the decadent aspects of
the society, namely the situation of the education system, the bad housing conditions
and criminality. When in different countries, they describe what they consider
positive and an example to follow, but the reality proves different and it is not only
Lisbon that is decadent: Lisbon, London and Paris are Babylon, the city of the
Apocalypse. So, the Portuguese literary journalists write tales of cities, all with
elements in common: the misery in the old buildings, in the people who survive in
these districts, in the criminality that exists in all the capitals, which are monsters,
mazes and Babylon, the ultimate symbol of decadence.

A city is a living organism that evolves, and an example of it is the neighbourhood of
Mouraria, in Lisbon. Once a place of insecurity and crime, it is now one of the
typical districts of the Portuguese capital where a multicultural population lives
alongside with the local inhabitants who continue to preserve the traditions, namely
the fado. Also Whitechapel, in London, is now a multicultural district where the past
buildings are side by side with the modern ones and where we can find contemporary art galleries and street art, as well as traditional shops and street fairs. Therefore, to understand the cities in the 21st century one must know how they were in the past, how they have evolved, and in the cases of these two cities (London and Lisbon), neighbourhoods that were once miserable and dangerous are now multicultural and managed to associate past traditions with modernity.
References


**Contact email**: vandafrosa@gmail.com