
Miscellaneous

Álvaro Pérez Álvarez

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6936-4887>

alvaro.perezalvarez@ufv.es

Universidad Francisco de Vitoria

Submitted

October 28, 2024

Approved

June 19, 2025

© 2026

Communication & Society

ISSN 0214-0039

E ISSN 2386-7876

www.communication-society.com

2026 – Vol. 39 (1)

pp. 145-156

How to cite this article:

Pérez-Álvarez, A. (2026). New Journalism Before New Journalism? Manuel Chaves Nogales' Literary Journalism in *El maestro Juan Martínez que estaba allí* (1934), *Communication & Society*, 39(1), 145-156. <https://doi.org/10.15581/003.39.1.010>

New Journalism Before New Journalism? Manuel Chaves Nogales' Literary Journalism in *El maestro Juan Martínez que estaba allí* (1934)

Abstract

Tom Wolfe outlined the fundamental principles of New Journalism in a 1973 book of the same name. He observed that when one attempted to identify the origins of the movement, it was challenging to locate journalists who had engaged in similar pursuits, as they were primarily essayists, autobiographers, or, more directly, did not specialize in nonfiction writing (Wolfe 1973, 42). Nevertheless, several critics and writers have identified the Spanish journalist Manuel Chaves Nogales (Seville 1897 – London 1944) as an important precursor of the New Journalism. In this context, other academics have proposed that it might be more accurate to refer to this kind of journalism as “literary journalism”. This article employs a content analysis of Chaves Nogales' first nonfiction novel, *El maestro Juan Martínez que estaba allí* (1934), to ascertain the extent to which he was already utilizing the techniques that Wolfe deemed appropriate to the New Journalism and, if so, how we might categorize it. Chaves

Nogales had already employed the techniques of the New Journalism forty years prior to the publication of Wolfe's book. These included the use of scenes, the introduction of dialogue in its entirety, the third-person point of view, and the inclusion of significant details that reveal the personality of the story's protagonists. Considering the era in which he produced his work and the defining features of his journalistic heritage, it is fitting to regard Chaves Nogales as a paragon of the literary journalist.

Keywords

New Journalism, non-fiction, Manuel Chaves Nogales, Tom Wolfe, literary journalism.

1. Introduction

Manuel Chaves Nogales (Seville, 1897 – London, 1944) was a prominent journalist during the Spanish Second Republic. He published a substantial corpus of reports and non-fiction novels on local and European current affairs, conducted interviews with prominent political figures in Spain and abroad (from the President of the Spanish Second Republic, Manuel Azaña, to the Nazi leader Joseph Goebbels), and served as the deputy editor of the best-selling newspaper of the period, *Ahora*.

His work is replete with scenes, dialogues, and third-person point of view that align it with the style of American New Journalism (Pérez Álvarez, 2013). This assertion has been made by

numerous commentators. In her study of Chaves Nogales, María Isabel Cintas (2001, p. 77) asserts that his texts exhibit a structural similarity to the New Journalism genre that subsequently emerged. Similarly, Andrés Trapiello, a prominent Spanish writer, suggests that had there been as much interest in rhetoric during Chaves Nogales' era as there is currently, he would have been regarded as one of the pioneers of the New Journalism (2003, p. 206). The intellectual Antonio Muñoz Molina also proposes that although Wolfe appeared to be a highly original figure, Chaves Nogales was already engaged in long-form literary reporting (Uribarri, 2020, p. 42). This intellectual's perspective is informed by James E. Murphy's definition of New Journalism: "It is an artistic, creative, literary reporting form with three basic traits: dramatic literary techniques; intensive reporting; and reporting of generally acknowledged subjectivity" (1974, p. 16). This raises the question of whether Chaves Nogales can truly be classified as a New Journalist. The question thus arises as to why.

When Tom Wolfe published in 1973 his book *The New Journalism*, he asserted that the style of writing he was introducing was a novel phenomenon in the history of journalism, claiming that no previous author had employed it. He claimed that no previous author had employed this style. A comprehensive analysis of the writings of those who utilized these techniques long before the advent of New Journalism reveals that they can be classified into four distinct categories, as proposed by Wolfe: "(1) they weren't writing nonfiction at all [...]; (2) they were traditional essayist, doing very little reporting and using few if any of the techniques of the New Journalism [...]; (3) autobiographers; (4) Literary Gentleman with a Seat in the Grandstand" (Wolfe, 1973, p. 42). Since then, the research about New Journalism has not stopped.

Van Krieken and Sanders were able to identify 103 journal articles about narrative journalism between 1998 and 2017 (2021) despite "this genre currently lacks a fixed working definition and normative terminology, partly because it is an innovative genre that is still developing and resisting narrow definitions" (Roberts & Giles, 2014, pp. 101-102). Moreover, during Van Krieken and Sanders' study period, several significant publications on this subject emerged, including works by Bak and Reynolds (2011), Kramer and Call (2007), and Sims (2007), among others. Prior to 1998, several noteworthy contributions were made to the discourse on New Journalism. These include Jensen (1974), Murphy (1974), Webb (1974), Eason (1984), and Lounsberry (1990).

From the perspective of Spanish literature, the concept of New Journalism is not as new as it is often perceived to be. As Antonio Cuartero Naranjo elucidates, the fusion of journalism and literature is a phenomenon that antedates the advent of New Journalism. The authors who have employed this hybrid approach can be considered to be the forerunners of the New Journalism movement. Spain provides a multitude of illustrative examples, including the works of Manuel Chaves Nogales and Mariano José de Larra (2017, p. 53). We concur with Cuartero Naranjo's assertion that, prior to, during, and after the advent of New Journalism in the United States, there existed in Spain a corpus of texts exhibiting a quality comparable to that of the aforementioned works. It is therefore more precise to categorize this phenomenon as "narrative" or "literary journalism" (2017, p. 54). Additionally, Sebastià Bernal and Albert Chillón emphasize the necessity to examine the revolutionary and innovative aspects of the New Journalism (1985, p. 41). A substantial body of literature exists examining the origins and development of literary journalism in Spain. This literature demonstrates that journalism and literature have coexisted since the inception of the profession (Acosta Montoro, 1973; Chillón, 1999 and 2014; López Pan, 2010; Montesa, 2003; Palomo, 2000; Pérez Álvarez & Martínez Illán, 2020; Rodríguez, 2010; Rodríguez & Angulo, 2010). Indeed, even when viewed from an

Anglocentric perspective, Norman Sims posits the existence of a “century of literary journalism” (2007), and, according to Murphy,

It is clear that New Journalism is not new. What is now billed as a literary genre is the product of gradual development and a reflection of the times more than it is a radical innovation. It remained for the radical, iconoclastic decade of the 1960s to encourage its use. So what was new in the growth of New Journalism was not the utilization by journalists of different techniques, but greater promotion and greater use of pre-existing techniques (1974, p. 34).

2. Method

This article has two objectives. First, it seeks to elucidate why so many people connect Chaves Nogales with the New Journalism. Second, it endeavors to clarify whether, as the academic literature suggests, the advent of New Journalism in the United States is not really new. Texts of comparable caliber have been produced in Spain and other countries, and thus it is more precise to categorize this phenomenon as narrative or literary journalism rather than as New Journalism.

In order to ascertain whether Chaves Nogales can be defined as a prequel of the New Journalism, this research presents a content analysis of his non-fiction novel about the Soviet Revolution, *El maestro Juan Martínez que estaba allí*¹ (*The Master Juan Martínez Who Was There*), published in 1934. The objective is to compare and contrast the techniques of New Journalism (Wolfe, 1973) as employed by Chaves Nogales. If we consider that Manuel Chaves Nogales was employing the techniques of New Journalism when he wrote *El maestro Juan Martínez que estaba allí*, a mere forty years before the publication of Tom Wolfe's seminal work, we can posit that he may be regarded as a forerunner of the movement. In other words, this analysis will determine whether he can be excluded as a purported precursor of New Journalism.

The four variables of the content analysis are also the four procedures that Tom Wolfe identified as characteristic of the New Journalism: the use of entire scenes, extended dialogue, a third-person perspective, and details of the environment that provide readers with insight into the emotional state of the character. Subsequently, the content analysis entails identifying these elements throughout the 27 chapters of the non-fiction novel *El maestro Juan Martínez que estaba allí*. This study will examine whether Chaves Nogales employed the techniques of New Journalism in a consistent, systematic, and sustained manner. To this end, it will show some relevant fragments of all these procedures in different parts of his non-fiction novel and detail how they impact the narrative progression of his non-fiction novel.

Subsequently, if it can be demonstrated that Chaves Nogales employed those techniques and that he was never in contact with the Anglo-Saxon tradition of New Journalism, and furthermore that his work was written 40 years before the birth of that movement, it will also be proved that it is more accurate to refer to narrative or literary journalism when discussing the non-US journalistic tradition in general and Spanish journalism in particular. In essence, New Journalism would not be truly innovative, as its methodologies are merely an adaptation of literary techniques applied to journalism. These techniques had been employed in journalism for many decades prior to the 1960s. Therefore, Chaves Nogales would be considered a distinguished figure in the enduring tradition of literary journalism.

¹ The author of the article has translated all the fragments of the analyses book (in the 2020 edition contained in the *Obra completa* by Manuel Chaves Nogales, published by Libros del Asteroide) and all the books written originally in Spanish.

3. *El maestro Juan Martínez, que estaba allí*

El maestro Juan Martínez que estaba allí was first published in 1934. Initially, the work was serialized in the weekly graphic magazine *Estampa*, and subsequently, it was published in book form. Chaves Nogales provides a biographical account of the flamenco dancer from Burgos, Juan Martínez, during the years of the Soviet Revolution.

Four years prior to composing the book, Chaves Nogales encountered Martínez at a Montmartre cabaret and featured him as a central figure in the article “Los flamencos de París” (“Paris’ Flamenco Dancers”), which was published on March 18, 1930, in the graphic magazine *Estampa*. The article provided a detailed account of the experiences of Spanish flamenco dancers residing in France and performing in the cabarets of Montmartre. In Paris, the Andalusian journalist met Juan Martínez, who was regarded as the custodian of the traditional style of flamenco dance and was considered to be the sole practitioner who adhered to the established norms and conventions of the art form (1930, p. 10). In the text, the dancer reflects on the sadness he felt at the exile of flamenco and the lack of awareness among Spaniards of the art’s greatness, despite Martínez’s assertion that “there is nothing like it” (1930, p. 11).

While this reportage places greater emphasis on flamenco than on the lives of the *bailaores*, it offers a crucial insight into the character of Martínez as conceived by the journalist. Chaves Nogales advised that his text “translates” Martínez’s manner of speaking while maintaining fidelity to the meaning conveyed by the dancer. “He speaks in his own way, employing traditional images that are full of Gallicisms. However, during his international speech, which would challenge the sensibilities of an academic, I am able to discern his meaning. This is how I translate it” (1930, p. 11). The journalist conveys Martínez’s ideas through the nuances of his gaze and interpretation. It is likely that this approach was also maintained in *El maestro Juan Martínez que estaba allí*, where the author does not attempt to reproduce the phonetics of the *bailaor*, but instead maintains a certain Gallicism. It is therefore evident that this text is significant, as it demonstrates that for Chaves Nogales, the act of portraying an individual’s identity can entail the interpretation of their words while ensuring that their intended meaning is not compromised.

This translation work, in conjunction with reportage, is not markedly divergent from the prevailing perspective on the utilization of direct quotation. As Fernando López Pan notes, it is possible to modify certain details of a literal quotation and still present it as textual. Most newspapers are in favor of correcting grammatical errors, eliminating obscene or profane words, completing sentences that are half spoken but whose meaning is obvious, and eliminating redundancies (2002a, p. 102). In any case, López Pan also explains that literalness is the exception in direct discourse and that the possibilities of distorting the discourse referred to are considerable (2002b, p. 92). For this reason, Chaves Nogales’ willingness to acknowledge that he was not obliged to maintain the literalness of Martínez’s words without attempting to obscure their meaning is to be commended.

The veracity of Chaves’ work has been called into question by some authors. This issue remains a subject of ongoing discourse and is not easily resolved. Nevertheless, it is evident that throughout his career, Chaves demonstrated a clear distinction between factual and fictional narratives. A prominent illustration of this discernment can be found in his collection of Civil War stories, *A sangre y fuego* (*Blood and Fire*), published in 1937. In this work, Chaves acknowledged its fictional nature, recognizing the incorporation of elements drawn from reality and inspiration derived from his personal experiences as a journalist or from sources within his professional network (Pérez Álvarez & Martínez Illán, 2025).

However, it should be noted here that some of Chaves Nogales' works have generated controversy regarding their verisimilitude, especially *La defensa de Madrid* (*The Defense of Madrid*) (1938). Consequently, some authors have posited that Chaves could have returned to Madrid, from which he had departed in 1937, thereby becoming a direct witness of the defensive strategy employed by Republican General José Miaja. In collaboration with other close sources, specifically his brother Juan Arcadio, who had attained the rank of colonel in the Republican army, Chaves purportedly reconstructed the events (Cintas, 2011). However, this theory has been met with skepticism by other authors, who contend that Chaves' own account in *A sangre y fuego* acknowledges his departure from Madrid concurrent with that of the Government of the Second Republic: "Chaves Nogales goes to Valencia, and the narrator of *La defensa de Madrid* chooses to remain in Madrid with General Miaja and compose a book dictated by rhetorical omniscience" (Espada, 2011).

In his writings on the Soviet Union, he meticulously delineated the distinction between factual and fictional elements, as exemplified in his novel *La bolchevique enamorada. El amor en la Rusia roja* (*The Bolshevik in Love. Love in the Red Russia*) (1930) and when he worked the themes in a journalistic and, therefore, verifiable way: *La vuelta a Europa en avión* (*Around Europe by Plane*), published in 1929; *Lo que ha quedado del imperio de los zares* (*What Remains of the Empire of the Tsars*), in 1931; and the case under consideration, *El maestro Juan Martínez que estaba allí*. The fact that the publication appeared in a journalistic medium, the graphic magazine *Estampa*, and was accompanied by photographs illustrating the adventures of Martínez and his wife, Sole, serves to reinforce the truthfulness of the facts. As Trapiello contends, the book's nature aligns with that of a report (2007, p. xx), and Chaves' narrative, as recounted in the documentary *El hombre que estaba allí* by Daniel Suberviola and Luis Felipe Torrente, is characterized by an inclination toward truthfulness, likely stemming from a predilection for reality over fiction (2011, p. 138).

At the beginning of *El maestro Juan Martínez que estaba allí*, the dancer was situated in Constantinople when the First World War commenced. In pursuit of a more tranquil environment, he subsequently relocated to Kyiv. In this context, he is profoundly affected by the Soviet Revolution, which he directly experiences in Ukraine as well as in Moscow and Saint Petersburg. The travels through the country, as narrated by Chaves Nogales in the first person from Martínez's perspective, are interwoven with the author's reflections on the two opposing banks. As will be demonstrated, the Spanish journalist presents the story in scenes, incorporating complete dialogues and symbolic details from a third-person perspective. These elements serve to illustrate the experiences of Juan Martínez in Russia.

4. Chaves Nogales' New Journalism

4.1. Scene-by-scene construction

The narrative structure of New Journalism is based on the use of scenes. The work about Juan Martínez, who was present at the time of its publication, was released in 27 episodes that were later incorporated into the chapters of the book version. All these episodes are developed through scenes that are foreshadowed on several occasions in the titles and subtitles. Examples of such titles include "The Thief of the Corpses" (2020, p. 570), "So Was the March Revolution" (2020, p. 585), "The Military Had Fun" (2020, p. 635), and "When It Was Harder to Eat Than to Become a Millionaire" (2020, p. 707), among others.

The scenes facilitate the reader's immersion in the atmosphere of the time and provide a first-person perspective on the revolution. In Chaves Nogales, as in New Journalism, the journalists demonstrate the ability to observe scenes as they unfold in other individuals' lives.

The details of these scenes are crucial for comprehending the events that transpire (Weingarten, 2013, p. 154). As evidenced by Martínez's experience, the revolution followed him wherever he attempted to flee:

In the midst of it all, I was happy, because after what we had suffered in Turkey with the war, Bucharest seemed like a glory to us.... But one night we were dancing the tango so quietly, when suddenly the owner of the cabaret stopped the orchestra and approached the audience shouting:

“War! War! Romania has just declared war on Germany!” [...]

I left the cabaret sad. Clinging to Sole's arm and limping, I thought I was the only sane person left in the world.

“We have to leave,” I said to Sole. “The war is after us. I don't want to go through it again. It's all over here” (2020, p. 568–569).

Martínez was unprepared for the realization that the conflict had only just begun, as his subsequent destination was Russia. During the revolutionary upheaval, Martínez presents a dispassionate account of the events as they unfold: “The irritation of the Bolshevik commissars against the speculators grew every day. The penalties for clandestine trading became harsher, and it was not long before a man was shot because he had been caught buying or selling a basket of eggs. It was all for nothing. The harsher the penalties for speculators, the more expensive they became” (2020, p. 621).

Additionally, he illustrates, from his perspective, how the emotional state and sentiments of the populace underwent a transformation as a consequence of the conflict. For instance, in Kyiv, where the Bolsheviks had been vigorously opposed, the Russians were ultimately greeted favorably by the populace following the passage of the Poles through the city:

In the morning the people began to gather in Duma Square to celebrate the end of the battle. It was the first time that the people had sided with the Bolsheviks. They were greeted with cheers and applause, and the representatives of the city solemnly handed them the keys of Kyiv on a tray and made them the traditional offering of bread and salt. The Bolsheviks were cheered from the balconies, and everywhere, even in the houses of the bourgeoisie, there were red flags. This had never happened before. It was the first time that the Communists had been received in a friendly manner. Who would have thought that a few months ago! (2020, p. 738–739).

The events are conveyed through the reconstruction of a situation, the positioning of the reader within the context of the action, and the adoption of the perspective of the protagonist. This enables the reader to gain insight into the revolution through the protagonist's experiences. In essence, the chapters/scenes interweave the narrative, enabling the narrator to pique interest and sustain suspense. It is not uncommon for Martínez to conclude chapters with queries that he himself posed during the revolution or by establishing the context for forthcoming developments: “Where to go when there is peace? Where to go if there is bread?” (2020, p. 569); “What happened in Moscow? What happened to Sole?” (2020, p. 594); “We entered the corridor and stopped in awe. What Dantesque visions awaited us in this infernal cave?” (2020, p. 671). It is precisely this resource, the third-person point of view, that will be discussed in greater detail later on in this analysis.

4.2. *Record the dialogue in full*

As Wolfe argues, “magazin writers, like the early novelists, learned by trial and error something that has since been demonstrated in academic studies: namely, that realistic dialogue involves the reader more completely than any other single device. It also establishes and defines character more effectively and quickly than any other single device” (1973, p. 31). Chaves Nogales

was also aware of this fact, whether consciously or unconsciously. Indeed, 22 out of the 27 chapters feature some form of dialogue.

During the period of heightened tension that preceded the war, a baron accused Martínez of being a spy. Fearful of the potential consequences of this accusation, the dancer sought counsel from his wife:

“Be careful; he thinks we are spies, and it could be our undoing”.
Sole was also a little drunk:
“Who? That boring guy? This dirty guy knows that we are good people, that we are not spies.
And he wants to scare you so you won’t get in his way. You know that? So stupid! What he
wants is for me to make his face. He told me clearly!” (2020, p. 559).

In a concise and economical manner, the text allows the reader to gain insight into the characters’ frankness, intelligence, and the fear and tension that accompany the prospect of war. Additionally, it illuminates the actions of those who exploit the most vulnerable individuals in a context of conflict.

At times, the dialogues serve to elucidate the cultural dissimilarities. This is exemplified when, prior to departing for a dance, a prominent official from Tsarist Russia approaches him and states:

“You can’t go dancing”.
“Why not?” I asked him desperately.
“Because you’re indecent,” he replied. “You can’t dance in front of the Czar’s court in those
pants”. [...]
There was no excuse, no pretext. Whether you like it or not, I had to quickly take off my tight
pants and go out to dance flamenco in a pair of tails (2020, p. 577).

The conversations recorded in their entirety also explain the mood of the moment. When Martínez wants to travel to Moscow during revolutionary fervor; he has the following conversation with a railroad man:

“When is the first train to Moscow?” I asked him.
“There are no more trains, comrade,” he replied, slapping me on the back when he saw my
frightened face. “The trains are gone forever! Long live the revolution!” (2020, p. 584).

The Spanish journalist employs the resources at his disposal to demonstrate how people reacted to the revolution, what excited them, what worried them, what they suspected or feared, and to gain insight into their customs and moral values.

4.3. *Third-person point of view*

The narrative is presented from the perspective of a particular character, which is a notable feature of *El maestro Juan Martínez que estaba allí*. The significance of Martínez’s presence during the Russian Revolution lies in the experiences he underwent. In the opening passages of the narrative, Chaves Nogales presents the characters of Martínez and Sole, his wife, in a manner that allows the reader to become acquainted with them: “Martínez is flamenco, from Burgos, a dancer. You are forty-three years old, you have a shameless Jewish nose, and big black eyes like a Jerez donkey” (2020, p. 547); “she was very simple, very cheerful, and very good” (2020, p. 548). The narrative situates them in Paris during the 1910s, shortly before they receive an invitation from a businessman in Constantinople to perform in Turkey. At this juncture, Chaves Nogales records that Martínez “says on his own” (2020, p. 549), thus making the *bailaor* the primary narrator of the story in which he is the principal character. Similarly, Chaves Nogales employed this technique in his subsequent publication, the biography of bullfighter Juan

Belmonte, entitled *Juan Belmonte, matador de toros*. This demonstrates that the technique was not an isolated resource but rather a stylistic hallmark of the author. (Pérez Álvarez, 2023).

What matters in this non-fiction novel is Martínez's view of the revolution. He is intrigued by the unexpected, reflecting the perspective of an ordinary Spaniard. Like many of his compatriots, he regards the world with a degree of skepticism, as evidenced by his ambivalence towards revolutionary changes:

And we suddenly found ourselves in the middle of a Soviet regime. In each house, the tenants met and formed a committee. The Bolsheviks went from house to house and told the neighbors what to do. The neighbors' committee would meet and elect one of them as a housing commissar. Overnight we went from one world to another. The house was ours, the tenants'; there was no more landlord. No more landlord. I didn't really believe it, but it caused a lot of excitement among the neighbors. Everyone took what rooms he could, and although no one had them all, there were some who even took on the air of real owners, even if it was only of a bedroom (2020, p. 616).

Throughout the course of the work, Chaves Nogales persists in attempting to ascertain the identity of Martínez through an analysis of his statements. He is a restless, contemplative, and distinctive individual who possessed the ability to evade incarceration. For instance, at the outset of World War I, he was on the verge of departing Constantinople when authorities attempted to impede his journey by deeming him a potential threat due to his possession of a knife: "He got by with a little money. As things are almost always arranged" (2020, p. 565). He was also an idealist who defended his honor at all costs:

I have never resigned myself to being run over, nor have I been able to suffer without rebelling, even though it almost cost me my skin many times, this thing of the strong abusing the weak. It was common in Russia, and still is, without people ever reacting as they do in Spain. A dog is a dog, and when you step on it, it squeals, sir (2020, p. 599).

He was a dancer who sought to avoid any conflict with others. Consequently, while he was in Bolshevik territory, he complied with the prevailing system. However, should the city fall under enemy control, as occurred when he was in Kyiv, he readily accepted the new rulers: "We had to show our faces and ingratiate ourselves with the victors" (2020, p. 714). Martínez was an artist who survived everything, but he almost died of despair: "Had the bullets of the revolution and the civil war respected us, so that in the end we were silently struck down by the silent scourge of hunger? People seemed resigned to death. Neither the Bolsheviks, nor the Czechs, nor hunger, nor typhus mattered. It was all the same to us" (2020, p. 764).

Martínez delineates the transformation in the political and personal circumstances. However, whereas others perceive a genuine shift in ownership, he remains skeptical about the veracity of this assertion. Martínez's perspective is valuable because he offers an objective, third-party viewpoint that is not influenced by any particular bias or allegiance. He is a neutral observer, which allows him to title a chapter "Red Murderers and White Murderers" without prejudice and to state that:

In order to make the people aware of the crimes committed by the Bolsheviks, the Whites brought to the amphitheater all the corpses collected in the Czechs' cellars, which were very many. But they were not satisfied with that, and to add to the horror they brought the corpses of all those who had fallen fighting in the streets, whites, reds, and even the Jews whom they themselves had murdered, and those of the Bolsheviks whom they had shot in the early hours of that morning in their own headquarters. They said, however, that they were all victims of the Czech (2020, p. 721).

The political distance allows Chaves Nogales, through Martínez's account, to present an objective account of the war and the atrocities committed by both sides. This includes the atrocities committed by the Czechs, as well as the massacres of the Whites. This is why he is also able to confess his reaction after being beaten by a Polish officer and picking up a piece of paper thrown over Kyiv by the Bolshevik forces, which read:

People, be patient; you will soon be free. Your brothers are ready to liberate you, and they will come and shed Liu's blood. Wait!" (2020, 734). That moment, Martínez recounts, "was the only time in my life that I felt like a Bolshevik. And the same thing happened to all Russians, whether they were revolutionaries or not. The tyrants from without made us prefer them a thousand times to the tyrants from within (2020, 734).

The third-person point of view that Chaves Nogales employs in the novel is intended to convey a journalistic tone. He does not attempt to find a balance between opposing viewpoints; rather, he strives to uncover the truth. Equanimity is not an intention; rather, it is a result. Therefore, it is not a neutral stance but rather a reflection of his liberal convictions and an honest approach to the profession he has chosen (Martínez Illán & Pérez Álvarez, 2019, p. 10). The use of the first person is in the service of information. The Spanish reader, the main addressee of the story, learns through Martínez's eyes about the changes that have taken place, the disputes and, in general, the misfortunes that have resulted from a civil war.

4.4. Recording of Symbolic Details

This narrative resource of the New Journalism has been "understood," according to Tom Wolfe. It consists, as he describes it, of "the recording of everyday gestures, habits, manners, customs, styles of furniture, clothing, decoration, styles of travel, eating, keeping house, models of behaving towards children, servants, superiors, inferiors, peers, plus the various looks, glances, poses, styles of walking, and other symbolic details that might exist within a scene" (1973, p. 32).

In *El maestro Juan Martínez que estaba allí*, such details elucidate Martínez's worldview, which is consistently characterized by a profound connection to flamenco. They also shed light on his status as a figure who was both a catalyst for and a victim of the revolutionary movement. For instance, during an impromptu performance for revolutionary forces, Martínez's foot began to bleed, underscoring the physical toll of his involvement in the revolution: "The blood came out of the open wound as I danced with more verve and courage than I had ever danced before. There is a reason you are a flamenco dancer. And Russians are very fond of *flamenquerías*" (2020, p. 576).

The symbolic details are woven throughout the entire book, serving to elucidate the character of Martínez. In addition to his expertise in flamenco, Martínez also demonstrated a proclivity for humor. Furthermore, the details selected by Chaves Nogales substantiate this assertion. For example, the *bailaor* recounts his foray into capitalism during the revolution, when he and a Jewish shoemaker created a "trust for the introduction and exploitation of the espadrille in Russia" (2020, 757). Although they did well, "the communist regime had not freed me from the grip of capitalism" (2020, p. 757), and the state kept much of his profit. What it could not confiscate was the company's account book, which he kept as a memento of what was "surely one of the first industrial enterprises undertaken after the Bolshevik deluge" (2020, p. 757).

The significant details introduced by Chaves Nogales ultimately help to understand the psychology of the characters, one of the most complex issues in writing a journalistic piece. What is interesting is that he achieves this in the style of Tom Wolfe: asking the character "about his thoughts and emotions, along with everything else" (1973, p. 32).

5. Conclusions and discussion

A detailed analysis of *El maestro Juan Martínez que estaba allí* shows that Chaves Nogales did not fall into any of the categories Wolfe denounced as incompatible with New Journalism. He was a journalist who asked questions, reported, and investigated to tell a factual, journalistic story. He was not, therefore, an essayist who used few of the techniques of New Journalism: as shown above, he used all of them. Even though he wrote in the first person, *El maestro Juan Martínez que estaba allí* is not autobiographical: it is a book that reads like a reportage. Finally, Chaves Nogales cannot be considered a "Literary Gentleman with a Seat in the Grandstand". He was an active journalist, defending his profession and talking about a distant country, yes, but with recourse to sources who experienced the events in the first person and with a certain knowledge of the facts, since he had already dealt with the Russian theme in two previous books (*La vuelta a Europa en avión* [Around Europe by Plane], in 1929, and *Lo que ha quedado del imperio de los zares* [What Remains of the Empire of the Tzars], in 1931), and, above all, he had visited Soviet Russia.

Chaves Nogales is part of the Spanish journalistic tradition; he was one of those "periodistas de patas" ("journalists with legs") that the Spanish writer Pío Baroja distinguished from the "desk journalists" who never left the editors' room. A journalist, like the 19th-century Spanish journalist Mariano José de Larra, who was interested in the way the ordinary people lived and in the style in which the news was told. Somehow, Chaves Nogales' work proves that, as Jay Jensen points out, the New Journalism did not invent anything; they just used techniques already existing (1974, p. 26).

Be that as it may, Tom Wolfe himself acknowledges in *The New Journalism* that there are, in fact, not entirely bad candidates to be considered the forerunners of the New Journalism. There he quotes Orwell, "some (but not much) of Hemingway's 'reportages' [...] Several of the John Hersey's articles in the early 1940's" (1973, p. 45), among others. It does not seem unreasonable to suggest that, considering the above analysis, if Tom Wolfe had been familiar with the work of Chaves Nogales, and particularly his book *El maestro Juan Martínez que estaba allí*, he would have included the Spanish journalist among the examples of "not half-bad candidates" (1973, p. 45).

There is no doubt that Chaves Nogales was a journalist ahead of his time. He was a literary journalist and not a writer who wrote in newspapers, because he always defined himself as a journalist and did not pretend to be anything else. While the American writers of the New Journalism, such as Capote, Mailer, or Wolfe, sought to consecrate themselves as writers, and their works gave rise to the "non-fiction novel," Chaves Nogales owed himself to journalism. His way of writing also reflects his understanding of the profession as a service of information that the writer owes to the reader. The search for detail, the meticulous reconstruction of scenes and dialogues in his reportages were always aimed at finding the best way to convey his vision of reality. He used these techniques not only for stylistic reasons but, above all, out of professional rigor.

If Manuel Chaves Nogales can be said to have been ahead of the New Journalism, it is because he understood that to understand the psychology of a character, it was and is necessary to know him personally, to accompany him and see him in real life, and to create scenes. According to Murphy, "New Journalism is literary because of its application of the techniques of dramatic literature to nonfiction; it is journalism because it uses those techniques in news reporting" (1974, p. 36). From this point of view, there is no doubt: Manuel Chaves Nogales is a pioneer of the New Journalism, and this is probably the reason why so many people cite his corpus as an exemplar of New Journalism, despite the fact that, according to the prevailing norms of Spanish journalism, it should be classified as either literary or narrative journalism.

References

- Acosta Montoro, J. (1973). *Periodismo y literatura I y II*. Madrid: Guadarrama.
- Bak, J.S., & Reynolds, B. (Eds) (2011). *Literary Journalism across the Globe: Journalistic Traditions and Transnational Influences*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press.
- Bernal, S., & Chillón, A. (1985). *Periodismo informativo de creación*. Barcelona: Mitre.
- Cintas, M. I. (2001). *Un liberal ante la Revolución. Cuatro reportajes de Manuel Chaves Nogales*. Sevilla: Universidad de Sevilla.
- Cintas, M. I. (2011). Nota a la edición. In M. Chaves Nogales, *La defensa de Madrid* (pp.13-22). Sevilla: Renacimiento.
- Chaves Nogales, M. (2020). *El maestro Juan Martínez que estaba allí*. In *Obra completa. Volumen III (1931-1936)*. Barcelona: Libros del Asteroide.
- Chaves Nogales, M. (1930, March, 18). Los 'flamencos' de París. Montmartre, sede de la flamenquería. *Estampa*. Retrieved from <https://hemerotecadigital.bne.es/hd/es/viewer?id=b3924546-8ade-4265-a34a-5bdf2fb603de&page=10>
- Chillón, A. (1999). *Literatura y Periodismo: una tradición de relaciones promiscuas*. Barcelona: Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona.
- Chillón, A. (2014). *La palabra facticia. Literatura, periodismo y comunicación*. Barcelona: Aldea Global.
- Cuartero Naranjo, A. (2017). El concepto de Nuevo Periodismo y su encaje en las prácticas periodísticas narrativas en España. *Doxa Comunicación*, 25, 43-62. <https://doi.org/10.31921/doxacom.n25a2>
- Eason, D. L. (1984). The new journalism and the image-world: Two modes of organizing experience. *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, 1(1), 51-65. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15295038409360013>
- Espada, A. (2011, December, 12). El maestro Chaves no estuvo allí. *El Mundo*. Retrieved from https://quiosco.elmundo.orbyt.es/ModoTexto/salacolumnas.aspx?id=7857152&sec=El%20Mundo&fecha=24_12_2011&pla=pla_562_Madrid&tipo=5&d=1
- Jensen, J. (1974). The New Journalism in Historical Perspective. In C. C. Flippen, *Liberating the Media. The New Journalism* (pp. 18-28). Washington, D.C.: Acropolis Books.
- Kramer, M., & Call, W. (Ed.) (2007). *Telling True Stories*. New York: Plume.
- López Pan, F. (2002a). ¿Realmente he dicho eso? Algunas implicaciones éticas en el uso de citas directas en los textos periodísticos. In M. Codina (ed.), *Información, ficción, persuasión: ¿Es la ética una utopía?* (pp. 99-109). Pamplona: Eunate.
- López Pan, F. (2002b). Las citas en el periodismo escrito. Literalidad y objetividad a la luz de los estudios lingüísticos. *Comunicación y Sociedad*, 15 (2), 70-93. <https://doi.org/10.15581/003.15.36361>
- López Pan, F. (2010). Periodismo literario: entre la literatura constitutiva y la condicional. *Ámbitos. Revista Internacional de Comunicación*, (19), 97-116. <http://dx.doi.org/10.12795/Ambitos.2010.i19.06>
- Lounsberry, B. (1990). *The Art of Fact: Contemporary Artists of Nonfiction*. Westport: Greenwood.
- Martínez Illán, A., & Pérez Álvarez, A. (2019). El periodismo y la historia: Chaves Nogales y la Revolución rusa. *Arbor*, 195 (792), a510. <https://doi.org/10.3989/arbor.2019.792n2011>
- Montesa, S. (Ed.). (2003). *Literatura y periodismo. La prensa como espacio creativo*. Málaga: AEDILE.
- Murphy, J. E. (1974) The New Journalism: A Critical Perspective. *Journalism Monograph*, 34 (May), 2-15.
- Pauly, J. (2014). The New Journalism and the struggle for interpretation. *Journalism: Theory, Practice & Criticism* 15 (5), 589-604. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884914529208>
- Palomo, M. P. (2000). *Movimientos literarios y periodismo en España*. Madrid: Síntesis.

- Pérez Álvarez, Á. (2013). Manuel Chaves Nogales y el Nuevo Periodismo. *Ámbitos*, 23, 81–90. Retrieved from <http://hdl.handle.net/11441/66622>
- Pérez Álvarez, Á., & Martínez Illán, A. (2020). El periodismo en la biografía literaria en la España de los años 20: Pla, González-Ruano y Gómez de la Serna. *Humanidades: revista de la Universidad de Montevideo*, 7, 219–242. <https://doi.org/10.25185/7.8>
- Pérez Álvarez, Á. (2023). Serial Biography in Journalism: The Case of Juan Belmonte, matador de toros, by Manuel Chaves Nogales. *Dirasat Hispanicas*, 9, 177–191. <https://doi.org/10.71564/dh.vi9.93>
- Pérez Álvarez, Á., & Martínez Illán, A. (2025). The Spanish Civil War from Exile: Testimony and Fiction in *Heroes and Beasts of Spain* by Manuel Chaves Nogales. *Journalism Studies*, 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2025.2451297>
- Roberts, W., & Giles, F. (2014). Mapping Nonfiction Narrative: A New Theoretical Approach to Analyzing Literary Journalism. *Literary Journalism Studies*, 6(2): 101–117.
- Uribarri, F. (2020, November, 5). Manuel Chaves Nogales, la resurrección del gran cronista del siglo XX. *XL Semanal*. Retrieved from <https://www.xlsemanal.com/conocer/cultura/20201105/manuel-chaves-nogales-cronista-historia-del-periodismo.html>
- Rodríguez, J. M. (2010). The origin of modern studies about Journalism and Literature in Spain: the institutional contribution of the Gaceta de la Prensa Española (1942–1972). *Communication & Society*, 23 (2), 203–233. <https://doi.org/10.15581/003.23.36244>
- Rodríguez, J. M., & Angulo, M. (2010). *Periodismo literario. Naturaleza, antecedentes, paradigmas y perspectivas*. Madrid: Fragua.
- Sims, Norman, (2007). *True Stories: A Century of Literary Journalism*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press.
- Suberviola, D., & Torrente, L. F. (2011). *El hombre que estaba allí*. Salamanca: Libros.com.
- Trapiello, A. (2003). Prólogo: la dura realidad. In X. Pericay (ed.), *Cuatro historias de la República* (pp. 201–216). Barcelona: Destino.
- Trapiello, A. (2007). Preludios civiles de Chaves Nogales. In M. Chaves Nogales, *El maestro Juan Martínez que estaba allí* (pp. xv–xx). Barcelona: Libros del Asteroide.
- Van Krieken, K., & Sanders, J. (2021). What is narrative journalism? A systematic review and an empirical agenda. *Journalism* 22(6), 1393–1412. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884919862056>
- Webb, J. M. (1974). Historical Perspective on the New Journalism. *Journalism History*, 1(2), 38–60. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00947679.1974.12066727>
- Weingarten, M. (2013). *La banda que escribía torcido*. Madrid: Libros del K.O.
- Wolfe, T. (1973). *The New Journalism*. New York: Harper & Row.