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“Can you believe they put a man on the moon?” The Apollo Program. (3)

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TRAVEL JOURNALS FROM THE MOON. THE ORIGINAL REPORT OF THE MOON LANDING
THROUGH THE WORDS OF ITS PROTAGONISTS

Abstract

Apollo 11 mission ended with great success and the three astronauts, during the necessary quarantine period, wrote a detailed account of their extraordinary enterprise that will appear, as a diary, on the main American and European weekly magazines. It is a real journalistic revolution as, for the first time, special envoys are also the protagonists: Neil Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin, and Michael Collins create a live and direct story of their experience. This media choice fascinates readers and allows them to relive the most exciting phases of the mission without the mediation of specialist journalists. In this way, they can share memories and suggestions of the three astronauts in a direct way. The travel-literature, also called ‘Odeporic literature’, is indeed one of the oldest literary genres. It deals not only with the displacement in itself from one place to another, but also with the motivations, individual and collective processes inherent in traveling. It shows the events from the author’s point of view and therefore it has been mainly linked to explorations in the form of the so-called ‘travel diary’. This genre has always been a great success, but until that moment, had always had to be content with the science fiction. The space business and the lunar challenge represent a very important point for scientific journalism. Life and Time are the magazines that more than the others have had the task of coordinating the communication and dissemination of the event thanks to important collaborations that will be identified with the most widespread foreign magazines in order to share articles, photographic material and special contributions. Precisely, at the beginning of 1969, Life had already made contact with the most widely read magazines all over the world to sign exclusive agreements, investing a great deal of trust in the mission of NASA, especially in a climate that had not completely excluded the possibility that USSR could mark the lunar primacy. These collaborations will guarantee exclusive and unpublished services, encouraging the diffusion of inserts and attachments almost all over the world. Services purchased by foreign magazines have brought the readers even closer to space missions as they can appreciate the power of the lunar exploration with colour iconographic supports that, in many countries, were not appreciable in live television and in local newspapers.