

**Workshop Session Organized by the  
International Association for Literary Journalism Studies (IALJS)  
Held at the Annual Meeting of the  
Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (AEJMC)  
9 August 2015  
San Francisco, U.S.A.**

**8:30 am to 10 am**

**International Association for Literary Journalism Studies**

**Confronting the “I”: Literary Journalism and the First Person**

The aesthetics and processes of literary journalism permit and arguably privilege the first person point of view. While traditional newsroom practices generally require journalists to refer to themselves in the third person (e.g. “when a reporter walked into the room...”), in many works of literary journalism the “I” is on the page and part of the narrative – as gonzo, hometown boy/girl come home, memoirist with a reportorial itch to scratch, and various other personae. Sometimes the story involves the most intimate workings of the reporter’s body and mind, as in Nellie Bly’s *Ten Days in a Mad-House* and, more recently, in *Sarasota Herald-Tribune* reporter Justine Griffin’s “Cost of Life,” a richly researched multiplatform account of her experience as an egg donor. At times “first-person major” – when the “I” is at the center of the story – and at others “first-person minor” – when an observer/fact-finder “I” intrudes minimally on the narrative – the first person is a force to be reckoned with in literary journalism studies and journalism teaching practices. The first person can foster transparency of method and clarity of mission. Yet the first person, with its overt subjectivity, can also interfere with the traditional journalistic goal of seeking the truth and reporting it. The seminars at the 2015 AEJMC conference in San Francisco, CA (the home state of Joan Didion, whose work raises many of these issues) will examine and discuss the variety of issues (political, ethical, professional, pedagogical, thematic, etc.) related to the first person point of view in literary journalism. Is the Digital Age experiencing a first-person renaissance, or is the predominance of the “I” in the online world a scourge of click-baiting egoism and reader voyeurism? What does the first person enable and what does it shut down? How do we practice, teach, and critique first person journalism?

Research Panel Session I: **Literary Journalism: First Person as Resistance**

Moderating/Presiding: **David Abrahamson**, Northwestern

Panelists: The Tradition of First-Person Reporting in African American Literary Journalism

**Roberta S. Maguire**, Wisconsin Oshkosh

Historicizing Journalism's Subjective Turn: Reconsidering the Gendered "I" in Early-Twentieth-Century Women's Reporting

**Jane Marcellus**, Middle Tennessee State

Journeys of the "I" in James Baldwin and Barbara Ehrenreich

**William Dow**, American University of Paris

The "I" of the Beholder: Norman Mailer as Reluctant Reporter

**John Pauly**, Marquette

~~The Stranger in the Room: Nick Paumgarten's Profile of Billy Joel and the Problem of First-Person Minor in Literary Journalism~~

~~**Ben Heins**, MFA, Rosemont College~~

**10:15 am to 11:45 am**

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Research Panel Session II: **The First Person: Emerging and Enduring Forms of Literary Journalism**

Moderating/Presiding: **Mark Massé**, Ball State

Panelists: The Role of First-Person Point of View in John McPhee's Anthologized Reportage

**Mark Massé**, Ball State

The Humble First Personae in *The Atavist*

**Maria Lassila-Merisalo**, Post-doc researcher, University of Jyväskylä, Finland

Is It All About Me?: Susan Orlean's Circuitous Search for Self

**Jan Whitt**, Colorado

~~When Subjectivity Meets Impartiality~~

~~**Jo Bech-Karlsen**, Department of Communication and Culture,~~

~~BI Norwegian Business School~~

~~Putting Himself in Their Place: Jonny Steinberg, a Nonfiction Writer, and His Others~~

~~**Anthea Garman**, Rhodes University, Grahamstown, South Africa~~

~~Ibero-American "Crónica" and First Person Journalism: Ethical, Thematic, and Ontological Issues~~

~~**Moisés Limia**, Universidade do Minho, Portugal~~

**Noon to 1:30 pm**

**International Association for Literary Journalism Studies**

Research Panel Session III: **Teaching the First Person in the Journalism Classroom:  
Paradoxes  
and Challenges**

Moderating/Presiding: **Jan Whitt**, Colorado

Panelists The Dangerous Pedagogy of the First Person: Dealing with Black, White and  
Shades of Gray

**David Abrahamson**, Northwestern

Traveling with Twain

**Loren Ghiglione**, Northwestern

Teaching the First Person

**Lisa A. Phillips**, SUNY-New Paltz, chair, IALJS/AEJMC Organizing  
Committee

The First Character: Putting the Journalist in Journalism

**Bret Schulte**, Arkansas

~~Putting an "I" in Feature Writing~~

~~**Jacqueline Marino**, Kent State~~