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SUBMISSION INFORMATION

LITERARY JOURNALISM STUDIES invites submissions of original scholarly articles on literary journalism, which is also known as narrative journalism, literary reportage, reportage literature, New Journalism, and the nonfiction novel, as well as literary and narrative nonfiction that emphasizes cultural revelation. The journal has an international focus and seeks submissions on the theory, history, and pedagogy of literary journalism throughout the world. All disciplinary approaches are welcome. Submissions should be informed with an awareness of the existing scholarship and should be between 5,000 and 8,000 words in length, including notes. To encourage international dialogue, the journal is open to publishing on occasion short examples or excerpts of previously published literary journalism accompanied by a scholarly gloss about or an interview with the writer who is not widely known outside his or her country. The example or excerpt must be translated into English. The scholarly gloss or interview should generally be between 1,500 and 2,500 words long and indicate why the example is important in the context of its national culture. Together, both the text and the gloss generally should not exceed 8,000 words in length. The contributor is responsible for obtaining all copyright permissions, including from the publisher, author and translator as necessary. The journal is also willing to consider publication of exclusive excerpts of narrative literary journalism accepted for publication by major publishers.

Email submission (as a Microsoft Word attachment) is mandatory. A cover page indicating the title of the paper, the author's name, institutional affiliation, and contact information, along with an abstract (250 words), should accompany all submissions. The cover page should be sent as a separate attachment from the abstract and submission to facilitate distribution to readers. No identification should appear linking the author to the submission or abstract. All submissions must be in English Microsoft Word and follow the *Chicago Manual of Style* (Humanities endnote style) <http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html>. All submissions will be blind reviewed. Send submissions to the editor at <literaryjournalismstudies@gmail.com>.

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BOOK REVIEWS are invited. They should be 1,000–2,000 words and focus on the scholarship of literary journalism and recent original works of literary journalism that deserve greater recognition among scholars. Book reviews are not blind reviewed but selected by the book review editor based on merit. Reviewers may suggest book review prospects or write the book review editor for suggestions. Usually reviewers will be responsible for obtaining their respective books. Book reviews and/or related queries should be sent to Nancy L. Roberts at <nroberts@albany.edu>

Note from the Editor…

In August 2014 I drove from Toronto to Montréal for a couple of workshop sessions organized by Josh Roiland for the International Association for Literary Journalism Studies, held at the annual conference of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. There I listened to, among other fine presentations, Lesley Cowling of University of Witwatersrand, South Africa, deliver a fascinating talk on a journalistic enterprise called *Drum* magazine. Back in the 1950s, this black-readership periodical was the largest circulation publication in South Africa. Since its glory days, *Drum* has become a powerful cultural symbol and the subject of much scholarship. Yet the actual writing in the magazine has been discussed far less. When Cowling began to connect the dots between the South African black writers at *Drum* and the New Journalism writers of the 1960s–1970s I began to wonder whether or not I might be able to convince the presenter to expand her ten-minute talk into a major essay. There was an actual need for this work, because out of the reams of scholarship there did not seem to be much examination of the magazine's writing from the viewpoint of literary journalism.

I'm pleased say that Cowling's essay, as well as the accompanying photos, is everything I had hoped for. The author not only contextualizes *Drum* writers within the world framework of literary journalism, she also provides analysis to show how what Tom Wolfe came to call scene-by-scene reconstruction, status details, dialogue, and point of view were utilized by writers to depict the actual reality that black people lived.

When I saw that Cowling's work indeed would be prepared in time for this issue, I began to notice the possibility of publishing our most international collection of articles ever, with representation from Australia, Canada, Denmark, South Africa, Sweden, and United States. This, of course, was not part of the original design for this issue but it certainly looks good on an association that prides itself on having the "international" in its title.

As so often happens in our field, the subject of what is truth looms large in this issue. And strangely, author John D'Agata's controversial stance on the line between fiction and nonfiction (move the line when convenient, as in, when bending the truth suits the greater truth of the story one is telling, at least in the opinion of the author who, after all, gets to play god), plays a role in two of our essays. Lindsay Morton's "Rereading Code," which won the annual Greenberg Prize for best conference research paper at the tenth annual IALJS conference

in Minneapolis last year, takes another look at James Aucoin's essay, "Epistemic Responsibility and Narrative Theory" (2001), and Lorraine Code's book, *Epistemic Responsibility* (1987). Morton calls D'Agata and Jim Fingal's book, *The Lifespan of a Fact* (2012), a "playful case of epistemic irresponsibility" that highlights the role of Code's "knowing well" in verifying truth claims.

Meanwhile, David Dowling's history of the Iowa Writers' Workshop, which focuses on the nonfiction path, uses D'Agata and Tracy Kidder as examples of two quite different conceptions of literary journalism from different generations of writers. Kidder, author of *The Soul of a New Machine* (1981), which won a National Book Award and a Pulitzer Prize, was the first student at Iowa trained in nonfiction, and represents the New Journalism era. Kidder's relation to facts is pretty simple—don't make stuff up. D'Agata, who arrived at Iowa in the 1990s and now heads its nonfiction program, has a more complicated relationship with factual accuracy, and Dowling teases out these differences.

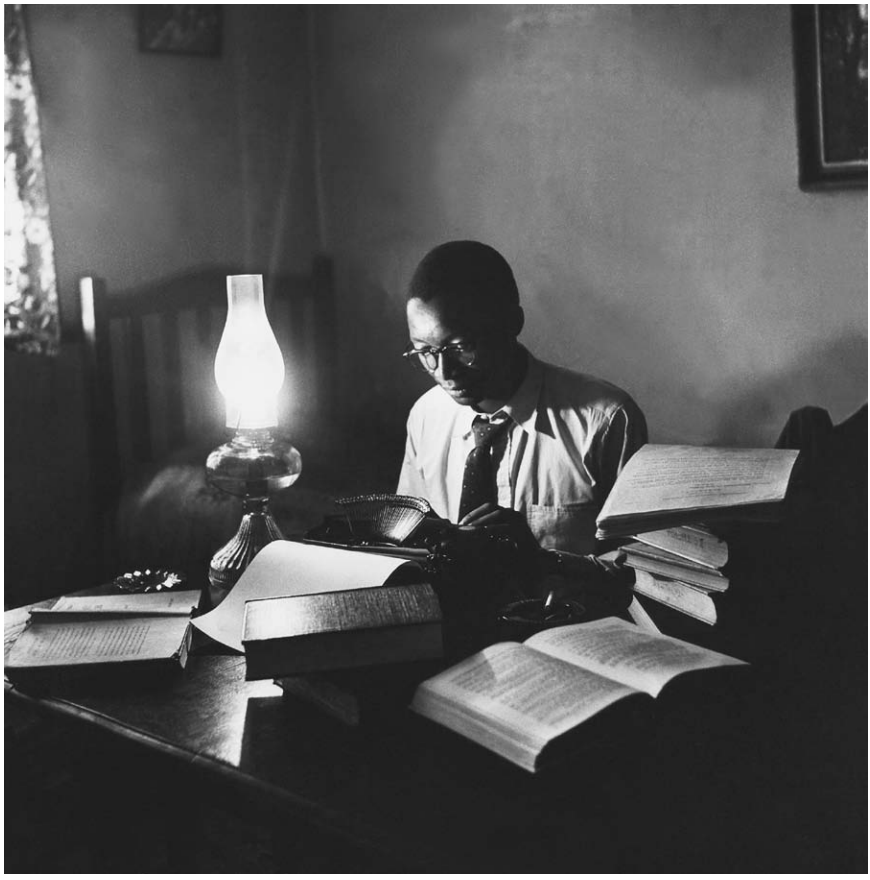
Over in Denmark, Christine Isager takes a look at Hunter S. Thompson's Gonzo journalism from the sideways angle of examining the work of her fellow countryman Morten Sabroe, who has never denied the deep impression Gonzo made on him. Sabroe, who has been known to look and write like his mentor, was ridiculed as a wannabe but over time seems to have won the respect of his critics and peers. Isager tells us why this has happened.

In our final essay, from Sweden, Cecilia Aare builds on the work of David Eason's seminal paper, "The New Journalism and the Image-world: Two Modes of Organizing Experience" (*Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, 1984), and more recently in these pages, Fiona Giles's and William Roberts's "Mapping Nonfiction Narrative: Towards a New Theoretical Approach to Analyzing Literary Journalism" (*LJS*, Fall 2014). Aare's ambitious theoretical model attempts to analyze the many variables at play between voice and point of view in literary journalism and reportage.

In a welcome new development, *LJS* associate editor Miles Maguire debuts his Research Review department with this issue. I hope to convince Maguire to make this valuable contribution to the journal, and to literary journalism scholarship in general, an annual event in these pages.

Finally, I have taken the liberty of occupying the Scholar-Practitioner Q+A space this issue with Vancouver-based nonfiction author John Vaillant. Known for his two bestsellers, *The Golden Spruce* (2005) and The Tiger (2010), Vaillant was inspired to try his hand at fiction for *The Jaguar's Children* (2015). He explains how a writer so used to getting his accounting of events straight manages to cross that truth boundary and what the differences in approach might be.

Bill Reynolds



Writer/philosopher Can Themba, 1952. Photo by Jürgen Schadeberg, www.jurgenshadeberg.com. Themba studied at Fort Hare University and then moved to the Johannesburg suburb of Sophiatown. He joined the staff of *Drum* magazine after winning a short-story competition and quickly became the most admired of all *Drum* writers.

The Drum office, 1954. Photo by Jürgen Schadeberg, www.jurgenshadeberg.com.
The overcrowded Johannesburg office housed most of *Drum*'s journalists and photographers. Schadeberg took the picture while Anthony Sampson directed it, showing (from left to right) Henry Nxumalo, Casey Motsitsi, Ezekiel Mphalele, Can Themba, Jerry Ntsipe, Arthur Maimane (wearing hat, drooping cigerette), Kenneth Mtetwa (on floor), Victor Xashimba, Dan Chocho (with hat), Benson Dyanti (with stick) and Robert Gosani (right with camera). Todd Matshikiza was away.

Echoes of an African Drum: The Lost Literary Journalism of 1950s South Africa

Lesley Cowling
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Abstract: In post-apartheid South Africa, the 1950s era has been romanticized through posters, photographs, a feature film, and television commercials. Much of the visual iconography and the stories come from the pages of *Drum*, a black readership magazine that became the largest circulation publication in South Africa, and reached readers in many other parts of the continent. Despite the visibility of the magazine as a cultural icon and an extensive scholarly literature on *Drum* of the 1950s, the lively journalism of the magazine's writers is unfamiliar to most South Africans. Writers rather than journalists, the early *Drum* generation employed writing strategies and literary tactics that drew from popular fiction rather than from reporterly or literary essay styles. The writing was confined to small and more ephemeral pieces, and the writers did not explicitly set out to break journalistic conventions or locate themselves in a literary political black press tradition. But the body of writing produced by the *Drum* writers of the 1950s had an emphasis on social context that is implicitly, but powerfully, political. A close analysis of the articles shows that novelistic devices such as scene-by-scene description, first-person point of view, the use of local lingo, the personal voice, and what Tom Wolfe called "status-life details" allowed the journalists to write township life into existence. This contributed to an "improvisation" of identity for urban black South Africans in the first decade of apartheid, and a new kind of literary journalism for the society.

The Johannesburg magazine *Drum* is widely considered to have been crucial to the development of black South African literature in the 1950s and 1960s, and to have created new imaginaries for black South Africans. "The *Drum* boys,"[1] a group of young writers employed in a rather ad hoc fashion by the magazine in its early years, began writing for an emerging urban black readership in the first decade of apartheid. Their lively articles

and chronicles of township adventures made them popular characters, as well as contributing to *Drum*'s commercial success. The magazine grew to be the largest circulation publication for black readers in South Africa, and expanded to include other regions in Africa.[2] It still exists today, under different owners, as a celebrity focused, human interest magazine for black readers, with one of the highest readership rates for a South African magazine at 2.3 million readers weekly.[3]

In post-apartheid South Africa, the "*Drum* era" of the 1950s has been romanticized as "the fabulous decade" through posters, photographs, a feature film,[4] exhibitions, and even television commercials. There is an instantly recognizable visual iconography associated with the era, which finds its way into fashion (T-shirts printed with *Drum* covers, for example), posters, advertisements, and even the South African version of the television format *Strictly Come Dancing*. The recent return and reburial of the remains of Nat Nakasa, a *Drum* writer who died in exile in New York,[5] and an exhibition event for Bloke Modisane,[6] who died in exile in Germany, has continued a project of memorializing *Drum* writers, their exploits and their often tragic lives. Many *Drum* journalists wrote fiction and autobiography after their stints at the magazine, writing that has found its way into scholarly discussion and the study of South African literature.[7]

Despite nostalgia for the era, the actual journalism of these writers is unfamiliar to most South Africans.[8] This is not unusual: as Richard Keeble notes, journalism "retains a precarious position within literary culture and academe,"[9] occupying a "lower sphere" than fiction and essays. The journalism of established writers is marginalized even as their work in other genres is acclaimed.[10] Journalistic work is also closely tied to the events of the day, which can render it irrelevant—or incomprehensible—to contemporary readers.

However, as Keeble argues, journalism is a crucial cultural field in which writers "self-consciously construct their public identities."[11] Journalism is also a place for the construction of collective identities. Magazines, Tim Holmes notes, are deeply implicated in the construction of identities because of their intense focus on readers and reader communities.[12] Such journalism, despite its lightweight appearance, tells us stories about culture that are "complex to read."[13] Magazines also provide a space for literary and creative forms of journalism, and for a focus on culture.

Much of the scholarship on *Drum* (as discussed below) has focused on the ways in which the magazine and its writers were engaged in an ongoing construction of a cosmopolitan urbanity for Johannesburg city dwellers, and the implications for literary and political culture. This was not a coherent project, but a mishmash of different approaches, undertaken through a

process of trial and error. Michael Titlestad has called this process "improvisation," arguing that local identity was constructed in the 1950s through improvisation in local jazz and in the writing about jazz in *Drum*.

> Through constructing relational pathways of meaning (often by weaving together the narrative "licks" of African American jazz narrative and the contingencies of apartheid experience), South Africans assembled identities that, in certain respects at least, eluded both the definitions and the panoptical technologies of the apartheid ideologues.[14]

These narrative improvisations have been described as an engagement with modernity, a kind of self-fashioning of identities and lifestyles in relation to a rapidly changing global environment.[15] Writing was not simply a mode of self-expression, but was a process through which Africans established themselves as modern subjects.[16]

Another area of discussion has been *Drum*'s relationship to the politics of the day. The *Drum* writers were criticized for a lack of seriousness and political engagement, and *Drum* was accused of not confronting the white establishment and the apartheid state.[17] Later assessments have pointed to the ways in which the writing served as social commentary, undermining apartheid and colonial narratives about black South Africans.

This essay turns the focus on *Drum* as literary journalism. It employs a close analysis to identify the narrative techniques the writers used to detail an emerging class of city dwellers. It examines the novelistic devices—such as scene-by-scene description, first-person point-of-view, the use of local lingo, the personal voice, and what Tom Wolfe called "status-life details"—that were favoured by the *Drum* writers, and considers the ways in which the specific workings of the writing contributed to *Drum*'s cultural impact. I argue that the writerly approach of the *Drum* journalists lent itself to the "improvisation" of black identity in the first decade of apartheid, and inaugurated a new kind of creative journalism for South Africa.

Drum, Sophiatown and "The Fabulous Decade"

Drum magazine began life at the start of the 1950s, a time of great contradictions in South Africa.[18] On one hand, countries throughout Africa were looking toward independence, a move that promised new possibilities for South Africa's people; on the other, the National Party had been elected in 1948, bringing with it the ideology of apartheid. "The impact of racial discrimination in South Africa changed both quantitatively and qualitatively after the coming to power in 1948 of Dr. Malan's Nationalist Party," Michael Chapman writes.[19] The slate of laws that were rolled out after the elections were draconian; they criminalized sex and marriage across races (1949),

categorized people into different race groups (1950), made it mandatory for different race groups to live in separate residential areas (1950), brought all black schools together under a state curriculum (1953), and made it illegal for race groups to share a wide range of public resources, like parks, swimming pools, benches, et cetera.[20] These laws were designed to control the movement of black South Africans and confine them to an unskilled underclass.

Despite the elections, the political mood at the outset of the 1950s was optimistic, with the African National Congress (ANC) spearheading a broad movement for change through protest action and civic disobedience. Es'kia Mphahlele noted that "people could say what they wanted to say and there were more political rallies than there had ever been before. People felt that freedom was just around the corner."[21] This promise was not realized. The killing of dozens at a peaceful protest in Sharpeville in 1960 marked the end of the decade, signalling that the apartheid system was to be viciously policed. The ANC and other political organizations were banned shortly after that and their leaders imprisoned. The 1950s, Lewis Nkosi notes, thus "spelled out the end of one kind of South Africa and foreshadowed the beginning of another."[22]

Another major feature of the 1950s was industrialization and increased migration to the cities. According to Rabkin, the "African" population of Johannesburg was about 136,000 in 1927,[23] and increased rapidly during the Second World War, due to a growth in manufacturing and related industries. A new urban black class was emerging, in Johannesburg and the range of linked towns of the Witwatersrand, where gold had been mined since 1886. Some black migrants retained strong connections to rural areas, but many settled down more or less permanently. This led to a demand for housing and the growth of shantytowns.

The city of Johannesburg was thus an outgrowth of migration, mining, and industrialization, a place described as rough and dangerous, and a hard environment for black people.[24] Nkosi, who came to it from Durban, described it variously as a city "conquered by big business and by Boer philistines, run by a gun-crazy police force and knife-happy African thugs, a city immune to all the graces of African tribal life and to the contemplative pleasures of European cultural life"; "dense, rhythmic . . . swaggering, wasteful, totally without an inner life"; and "a cruel unthinking environment."[25]

Africans could not own property, but were able to obtain freehold rights in certain parts of Johannesburg. In 1921, the area of Sophiatown—which was relatively close to the city center—was made available for freehold tenure for Africans. From the 1930s, there was rapid population growth in the area, which became overcrowded, and, according to Gready, was both a multi-

class and multiethnic community and a slum.[26] "By 1950 Sophiatown had a population of 40,000 people and a history which extended back almost fifty years."[27] Around it, Johannesburg's white residential suburbs were also growing, and Sophiatown was constantly under threat of removal to make way for development.[28]

In contrast to white Johannesburg, Sophiatown was a place where races could mingle, parties were held, and its shebeens, music, celebrities, and gangsters were the source of many of the *Drum* writers' stories. Rabkin calls it the birthplace of a new urban society,[29] and Gready compares it to St. Petersburg of nineteenth-century Russia, with its "gnarled" and "surreal" modernism.[30] Sophiatown, Gready argues, was strongly associated with the potential for the emergence of a black urban culture, and operated mythically in the black literary writings of the day as a symbol of cosmopolitan possibility.[31] Sophiatown has also been compared to the Harlem Renaissance and to Elizabethan England.[32] "Sophiatown in the Fifties offered unprecedented possibilities for blacks to choose and invent their society from the novel distractions of urban life."[33]

Most black publications in South Africa before the Second World War were owned by educated Africans, and expressed the political aspirations of African elites. The pioneers of the independent black press—John Tengo Jabavu, John Dube, Sol Plaatje, and R.V. Selope Thema—were also eminent figures in politics, and linked to the founding of the African National Congress.[34] In the 1930s, the growing black urban population appeared to offer a new market for South African business, and, drawn by the lure of advertising revenue, white commercial interests bought up these publications and developed new products aimed at black consumers.[35] The entry of white capital into black media in the 1930s was "cataclysmic"[36] for the sector, making the black press a "captive press." The white owners placed political restrictions on their black newspapers[37] and the economic conditions of the period shaped the type of journalism that black papers produced in particular ways.[38] However, commercialization also expanded the reach of the publications; "white chain ownership and corporate control transformed the black press into a mass medium of communication."[39] This era also saw the increased monopolization of the sector by a few companies.

By the early 1950s, a number of publications competed for black readers in Johannesburg. The weekly newspaper *Bantu World* was a didactic paper aimed at an educated elite, while the tabloid magazine *Zonk* had a mix of entertainment, sport, and crime. These publications succeeded in attracting significant readership and advertising revenue.[40] *Zonk* had been launched in 1949 by the director of a popular musical show of the same name. It was the

first black readership publication to make consistent profits over an extended period and, according to Manoim, the "first successful mass-circulation black magazine aimed at urban audiences."[41]

The *African Drum* was launched into this environment in 1951 by a former Springbok cricketer, Bob Crisp, who became partners with Jim Bailey, the son of a mining magnate.[42] The magazine aimed to serve a black readership with stories of tribal culture, religion, great leaders, worthy homilies, and intellectual essays, but it didn't do well.[43] After four issues, the magazine had a circulation of 20,000 and was losing money. At this point, Bailey brought an Oxford University friend from England, Anthony Sampson, to edit the magazine, and did some rudimentary focus group research among black residents of Johannesburg. They were told that black readers wanted sport, jazz, celebrities, and "hot dames."[44] "Tell us what's happening right here, man, on the Reef!" one man told them. A local businessman told them the problem was "the white hand": "*Drum*'s what white men want Africans to be, not what they are."[45]

The publisher and editor accordingly put a black editorial board in place, employed black writers, and changed the style and content of the magazine.[46] Sampson, in a memoir, wrote that they wanted *Drum* to have an African style "to capture some of the vigour of African speech."[47] Local jazz, popular in the townships at that stage, was an influence on the "African style" they were trying to develop for the magazine.[48]

The first black writer hired by *Drum* was Henry Nxumalo, an ex-serviceman with some experience as a journalist, who had been employed early on by Crisp.[49] He would prove highly influential in developing *Drum*'s style. The other *Drum* writers had not worked in journalism, and came with diverse backgrounds and skills. Todd Matshikiza, a friend of Nxumalo's and a musician, wrote music reviews.[50] Can Themba, a teacher, was employed after he won a fiction contest held by the magazine in 1952.[51] Arthur Maimane was a schoolboy from St. Peters Secondary School in Sophiatown (the school would produce a number of reporters for *Drum*) with a passion for American crime writing.[52] A young German photographer, Jürgen Schadeberg, took pictures for the magazine, and later trained Bob Gosani and Peter Mugabane as photographers. As the magazine's circulation grew, Casey Motsisi, Bloke Modisane, Es'kia Mphahlele, and others were employed. Lewis Nkosi and Nat Nakasa were relatively late additions, joining in 1957.

Without any particular philosophy for their writing, the *Drum* writers began chronicling everyday life in the black townships of Johannesburg. At first, the mix was tabloid and apolitical.[53] However, in the first year of publication, circulation was slow to pick up despite the bright covers, jazz, girls,

and crime stories. Sampson felt at the time that there was a "fog of suspicion" between *Drum* and its readers because it was a "white man's paper."[54] They needed to demonstrate a commitment to the readers, and the opportunity came when Henry Nxumalo pitched a story about the abuse of contract labourers in the farms of Bethal. Nxumalo and photographer Schadeberg posed as a visiting journalist and his servant in order to gain access to the farms. The magazine published an eight-page article outlining the abuses, and Nxumalo's account of what he had seen was bylined "Mr Drum." The edition sold out, and public response reached Parliament and local and international media. [55]

After this, *Drum* carried regular investigations, mostly driven by Nxumalo, who went to extraordinary lengths to put himself into situations that he could report on first-hand. These included courting arrest so that he could write about prison conditions and getting himself a job at the farm where a worker had been killed. Where possible, one of the photographers would record the situations Nxumalo had got himself into. "Mr Drum" became a celebrity in the townships, and his feats of investigative journalism—which mostly involved putting himself in harm's way in order to get a story—have rarely been outmatched in South African journalism. Despite this, his legacy is limited, possibly because of his early death, the banning of *Drum* in the 1960s, and because he did not leave a collection for publication in the same way as his peers. Although he had a plain, "reporterly" style, his exploits are remembered among older journalists, even if they haven't read the actual articles.

The magazines published in the 1950s, to a contemporary eye, seem a hodgepodge of advertising, letters to readers (appearing to be slightly self-conscious), coverage of American celebrities, excerpts from the work of established writers, profiles of eminent persons, short stories, picture stories, and pieces of journalism.[56] In this lumpy mix, the writing of "the *Drum* boys" stands out for its energy and sophistication.

Covering local music and its musicians and "songbirds" was a staple of the magazine. Todd Matshikiza developed an inventive style to write about jazz, so distinctive that it was given a name: "Matshikese."[57] Matshikiza was described as using his typewriter like a musical instrument, writing in a similar fashion to the way a musician would make music.[58] Michael Titlestad points out that the metaphor of Matshikiza's writing as spontaneous creative eruption overlooks the complexity such a style would have demanded from the writer.[59] As South African jazz took a global form from across the Atlantic and improvised it to create local forms, Matshikiza absorbed American lingo and referenced American jazz musicians in his writing to make a style all his own.[60]

Nxumalo and Matshikiza, as the earliest writers on *Drum*, were influential in opening up the potential for inventiveness in both reporting and writing. The ad hoc nature of the enterprise, due to the lack of media experience of the publisher and editor and a developing readership, allowed the publication to chart new territory. As other writers came into the magazine, there was the space for them to bring their particular styles to the stories. Maimane wrote serialized fiction in the mode of American hard-boiled detective stories, using local characters, events, and language. Other writers recounted their adventures in the shebeens[61] and clubs of Sophiatown, writing first-person stories on behalf of the characters they interviewed or offering their own opinions on an event or issue. The playfulness and variability of styles of the early *Drum* can be seen by an experiment the magazine took: having Matshikiza write about a boxing match and his sports writer colleague Maimane taking on Matshikiza's music beat.[62]

Drum sales rose from 20,710 in 1951 to 73,657 in 1955, making it the largest circulation magazine in Africa in any language.[63] Chapman attributes this success to the rise in the literacy rate of an urban black working class, the commercial nature of the publication, and the exposés and stories of the Sophiatown writers.[64] *Drum* was considered to be an authority on the lives of black South Africans and became a port of call for international visitors.[65] *Drum* also expanded into other African regions.[66]

The devil-may-care spirit of the *Drum* writers, however, became increasingly difficult to sustain as the apartheid structures bore down on South Africa and they confronted increasingly traumatic events. By 1956, the Sophiatown much chronicled by the *Drum* writers was dying, as the state started to remove residents to the dormitory townships set aside for them.[67] And in December 1956, Henry Nxumalo was murdered, apparently by an abortionist he was investigating.[68] His body was found near Newclare township, on the side of the road. He had been stabbed many times. Can Themba, who was called to the scene, described him as "lying on the green grass, one shoe off, one arm twisted behind, the head pressed against the ground, the eyes glazed in sightless death."[69] The crime scene told of a struggle, Nxumalo's bloody footprints marking the ground as he had apparently tried to escape.

In 1956, 156 leaders of the Congress Alliance were arrested for treason for holding the Congress of the People, at which they drew up the Freedom Charter, a document that spelled out rights for all South Africans. The trial dragged on for several years before the accused were acquitted. In 1960, police fired on unarmed protesters at Sharpeville, killing sixty-nine and injuring about 200. The National Party government declared a state of emergency for several months after Sharpeville. In this environment, *Drum* staff were con-

stantly harassed by police.

Drum saw a number of personnel changes over the decade. Anthony Sampson, *Drum's* first editor, returned to England in 1955, making way for Sylvester Stein. Stein left in 1957, and Tom Hopkinson took over in 1958. In 1957, Lewis Nkosi, who was working for a Zulu newspaper, joined *Drum*, as did Nat Nakasa. Can Themba was binge drinking and had become unreliable. Es'kia Mphalele went into exile in Nigeria in 1955. Others left—Maimane in 1958, Modisane in 1959, Matshikiza in 1960, and Nkosi in 1961—also going into exile. Nat Nakasa left on an exit visa in 1964 for the United States, where, homesick and lonely, he committed suicide. *Drum* was banned by the state in 1965, along with many of the writers it had published. It reemerged in 1968, but was eventually sold to a media conglomerate linked to the ruling National Party.

Drum in Global Scholarship

In the 1980s, many of the *Drum* writers of the 1950s were unbanned, releasing their writing back into South Africa's public domain.[70] Nicol describes the impact of this moment as history shifting beneath one's feet, revealing a "lost country."[71] There was a resurgence of interest in the *Drum* writers, most of whom were dead or in exile, but had managed to leave a significant body of work.[72] Since then, *Drum* has generated a large body of scholarship, emerging in such terrain as literature, journalism, cultural studies, African studies, history, politics, and gender.[73] "The magazine's impact on South African journalism, literature, gender configurations, African resistance, and urban South African culture has been documented and often lauded by various scholars."[74] This essay does not intend to review the many studies of *Drum*, but briefly outlines some key themes that have been raised in the scholarship.

The *Drum* writers were first taken up by literature scholars, who have argued that *Drum* was pivotal to the development of black writing in South Africa.[75] David Rabkin, in a doctorate at the University of Leeds in the mid-1970s, argued that *Drum* played a significant part in both "recording the formation of the new urban culture" and providing a platform for aspiring black writers.[76] The magazine provided one of the few spaces for black writers, not only by employing them to write for the magazine, as in the case of Can Themba, but also by publishing fiction writers, such as James Matthews and Peter Clarke.[77] Chapman, in the 1980s, argued that "the stories in *Drum* mark the substantial beginning, in South Africa, of the modern black short story."[78] The adoption of the *Drum* journalists by literature scholars speaks to the extent to which their work was constructed like fiction, rather than conventional journalism.

Despite the popularity of the publication, the *Drum* writers of the 1950s have been criticized over the years by black intellectuals for being shallow. Lewis Nkosi, in an obituary on his fellow writer, Can Themba, regretted the short-lived potential of the *Drum* generation. He wrote that Nat Nakasa's work was a light "breakfast column," apart from some flashes of brilliance. "Can Themba's actual achievements are more disappointing because his learning and reading were more substantial and his talent proven; but he chose to confine his brilliance to journalism of an insubstantial kind."[79]

Es'kia Mphahlele felt that *Drum* did not deal seriously with social issues, and that it was not in proprietor Bailey's interest to produce substantial content because of his investment in white South African business, especially the mines.[80] It is notable that *Drum* never did a story on conditions in the mines. Mphahlele resigned in anger when Bailey insisted on cutting the fiction section, which had been a standard feature of *Drum* for years, and, in Mphahlele's opinion, an important contribution to black cultural life. *Drum* has also been criticized as not taking a more militant stand against the apartheid state.

On the other hand, Chapman argues that "*Drum* was part of the socializing process of the '50s: it helped to record and create the voices, images and values of a black urban culture at the precise moment that Minister of Native Affairs [Hendrik] Verwoerd was setting out to render untenable any permanent African presence in the so-called 'white' cities."[81] He also notes that *Drum* recorded many of the political events of the decade, including the Defiance Campaign, the adoption of the Freedom Charter by the Congress Alliance at Kliptown in 1955, the trial of Alliance leaders for treason in 1956, bus boycotts, the rise of the Pan Africanist Congress, and the shooting by police of unarmed protesters at Sharpeville in 1960.[82]

Many scholars have subsequently taken the position that the *Drum* writers, in detailing everyday experience, showed quite powerfully the violent impact of the apartheid system on black South Africans. As Nkosi noted, "No newspaper report on Sharpeville could ever convey significantly the deep sense of entrapment that the black people experience under apartheid rule. It is difficult to imagine a mode of expression that would adequately describe this sense of malaise."[83] Gready has argued that it was in their journalism, rather than their fiction, that the *Drum* writers offered a compelling critique of apartheid.[84]

In the postcolonial moment, *Drum* has been characterized as offering alternative ways for black South Africans to imagine themselves. As Fanon has argued, colonialism and its successor forms locked black people into categories from which they could not escape, as their blackness immediately

identified them to white culture as different, as lesser. The impact of the Western gaze on African intellectuals confronted them with a painful self-consciousness that forced them to ask: "Who am I?"[85] The work of the *Drum* writers explored this dilemma; indeed, Gready notes that Bloke Modisane's autobiography is preoccupied with "the problems of identity and impression management necessary in the 'handling' of whites."[86]

Michael Titlestad has argued that the reportage in *Drum* "suggested and elaborated alternative versions of black modernity" and promoted "new possibilities for black self-representation," and that jazz was integral to that process.[87] If South African jazz, as it has been argued, was a hybrid cultural form that mediated the impact of industrial modernity on black people, then writing about jazz was a parallel process, which appropriated jazz in its own construction of urban identity, but also showcased it as a creative "fabulous" form of social life. (Significantly, Fanon refers to the emergence of bebop and other new forms of jazz in the United States as an example of the construction of authentic culture out of the context of black experience, rather than a resort to reified traditions or adopted Western culture.[88])

Drum also allowed its readers to imaginatively connect to black communities across the world, on the one hand, in Africa, on the other, in America. Even before it began circulating satellite editions in East, West, and Central Africa, *Drum* ran stories from across the continent and had correspondents in many territories, in pursuit of what publisher Bailey called a "Pan-African common market."[89] As Odhiambo notes, "Historically *Drum* is the first transnational popular publication in English to be published and widely circulated in Anglophone Africa in both colonial and postcolonial eras."[90]

> *Drum* provided a literary space through which an African imaginary of its place in a contemporary multiracial/racially segregated South Africa/Africa/the world, of its place in the post-World War geo-politics and global cultures and of Africa's troubled colonial 'present' and possible future independence could be articulated and dramatized.[91]

Odhiambo notes that *Drum*, in its African editions, allowed for a kind of "self-writing" by inviting letters, articles, and fiction from its readers, contributing to practices of reading and writing across the continent.

Studies of *Drum* have also noted transatlantic connections. *Drum* journalists were influenced by black American fiction, in particularly James Baldwin, Langston Hughes, Ralph Ellison, and Richard Wright, who evoked the life of Harlem.[92] Henry Nxumalo wrote to Hughes in 1953, asking him to be a judge in *Drum*'s first fiction contest.[93] This inaugurated a correspondence between Hughes and a number of the writers, especially Todd Matshikiza, Eskia Mphahlele, and Bloke Modisane, as well as Peter Clark, a regular contrib-

utor of fiction to the magazine.[94] Graham and Walters suggest that Hughes's "blues vernacular" style of writing—and his use of street language—was a forerunner to Matshikese.[95] "The notion of a genealogy of influence linking African-American literature and the *Drum* generation seems very plausible when we consider how many South Africans have claimed the Harlem Renaissance as inspiration and as a literary model."[96] The magazine also carried stories of American celebrities and showcased black American style in both stories and advertisements. Other areas of scholarship have concerned themselves with issues of representation, in particular, gender studies,[97] and visual and photographic representation.

Even though *Drum* is the most written about publication to come out of South Africa, its contribution to South African journalism is difficult to quantify. *Drum* stopped publishing for four years after being banned, and many of its pioneering journalists left the field. The increasing repression in the 1960s by the apartheid state destroyed the journalists of the "Drum school."[98] *Drum* became a memory of a bygone time, memorialized in the many anecdotal accounts of the magazine by its former editors, publisher, and journalists.[99] The physical disappearance of the writers, their work, and the magazine meant that the reporting and writing culture of 1950s *Drum* was not passed on to successive generations of black journalists, who worked for white-owned media conglomerates, in newsrooms restricted by white editorial directors. Their exploits were remembered, but not their actual journalism.

The Uses of Fiction in Journalism

Literary journalism often defines itself in opposition to conventional journalism.[100] Although both are involved in producing "stories," conventional reporting prizes information and factual accuracy, while literary journalism turns toward culture and the rich details of experience.[101] In 1973, Tom Wolfe argued that "the New Journalism" was a major departure from regular feature articles in journalism, because of its use of certain fictional devices to construct its stories. He also argued that the body of nonfiction these strategies were producing was overtaking the novel as "literature's main event."[102]

The *Drum* writers, on the other hand, did not define themselves in relation to journalism and to fiction as, for them, there was not a major divide between the two. Almost everyone on *Drum*—from owner Bailey and editor Sampson—was a publishing amateur with no experience in media. Most *Drum* writers found their way into journalism due to the social conditions of the time, which limited opportunities for educated black South Africans. With the exception of Nxumalo, none were professional journalists, and so had never been socialized in newsrooms and taken on journalistic profes-

sional identities. As John Matshikiza, son of Todd, points out in the preface to a collection of 1950s *Drum* articles: "The startling thing is that there is no real dividing line between the two styles of writing: the journalistic and the fictional."[103] Indeed, the writers showcased in the collection have stories in both modes, and there is no indication whether the story is fiction or nonfiction.

The *Drum* writers thus had no desire to expand the categories of journalism, reinvigorate nonfiction or to compete with novelists. Rather, their identities were governed by the society in which they lived, both the constraints of the state and the lively possibilities offered by communities such as Sophiatown. The writers' work, therefore, was to decide on the kinds of stories that should be told, and to tell them with as much verve and panache as possible. They did that in the mode of fiction. Just as Wolfe identified a certain fictional devices as defining the New Journalists of the 1960s and 1970s, a range of writerly strategies can be discerned in the writing of 1950s *Drum*.

Wolfe has listed four literary devices he says account for the immediacy and power of the New Journalism: scene-by-scene construction, natural dialogue, third-person point-of-view, and the use of status-life details.[104] Scene-by-scene construction is a way of telling the story by allowing it to unfold in scenes, like a movie. The use of colloquial (even irrelevant) dialogue in the scenes was good for authenticity and vital to characterization. Describing scenes from the writer's viewpoint and including dialogue is not far from traditional feature journalism. However, the New Journalism writers would sometimes write from the perspective of a character in the story, like fiction writers, in what Wolfe called "third person point-of-view." The fourth device—which Wolfe called status-life details—is descriptive detail that indicates something of the characters' "status" in society: "the entire pattern of behaviour and possessions through which people express their position in the world or what they think it is or what they hope it to be."[105] In addition to these four devices, Wolfe argued that the writers' voice in New Journalism was often lively, inventive, and colloquial, a marked departure from the reporterly style of serious journalism. [106]

Wolfe argued that the use of fictional devices in journalism required the writer to be close to the story, and spend a lot of time with the subject. The writer had to be present in order to describe scenes and dialogue and status-life detail, and sometimes this meant becoming a part of the story. Journalists use the first person and become characters in their own stories or write in the third person from the point of view of the characters. This mode meant that the writer could not take the explicitly impartial distant approach of the news journalist.

Here is Casey Motsisi writing about weekend-long parties that were held as money-making schemes in the townships, in a story centered on a character called Kid Hangover.

> A busty young girl in jeans slides a disc on the battered gramophone and some rockagers begin to dance while the Elvis of Presley accuses each and every one of being "nothing but a hound dog."
>
> Kid Hangover walks in and pats me on the back, then asks if I have been attended to. I put on my best midnite party manners and howl, "Waddya mean attended to? You crazy? Shake a leg boy, an give me half a dozen beers. I'm thirsty." I pay him thirty-six bob of hard-earned pennies. As it is I don't need all these beers, but there are janes around and a guy's got to make an impression.[107]

Motsisi goes on to lose his pay packet after yielding to the temptation to buy "hooch," and ruefully confesses that he allows Kid Hangover to borrow money from him at the next payday.

The extract demonstrates how the story unfolds by way of scenes, and how those scenes include descriptive details (busty young girl in jeans; battered gramophone), status-life details (the Elvis of Presley), and colloquial dialogue (shake a leg, boy). It is told in the first person, using a voice that is a mix of American slang, local English and township idiom, and making the writer into a character in the story. Motsisi is a participant in the story and in township life.

Many of the *Drum* writers' stories about urban life were of the same order. As Esme Matshikiza (wife of Todd) put it, "Of course there was resentment and bitterness and hatred at the circumstances under which we had to live, but at the same time, we had our lives to lead, which were very interesting lives, and it was fun."

Her husband, Todd, showed the life and the passions of the music culture in the writing style he developed, *Matshikese*.

> Attention please . . . attention!
>
> Folks, I present to you Johannesburg's brand-new Singing Sensation of the Year. Sizzling with Song. Full of beans and bounce. Dazzling with love songs and leaping with dream tunes. Ah! Every gal's dream boy and every man's "Wish-I-Waz-U."
>
> Folks . . . meet Mr SONGSATION—Gene Williams, if you like. But I give him to you now and forever more:
>
> Mister Songsation Fifty four.[108]

However, he could also make use of scene:

> The hall was chock-full of people. The hall was chock-full of music. It was good music from Peter Rezant and his famous Merry Blackbirds. I said to the fellow next to me, "What do you think of this fellow, Peter Rezant?" The fellow next to me said: "Man, firs' class."[109]

The "*Drum* boys" also used fictional devices to good effect in stories of dysfunction in the system. In a piece on violence on the trains used by black residents to commute to and from work, Can Themba uses scene-by-scene description and third-person point-of-view.

> Isaac had his pay packet in his inside coat pocket. Once on the train, he would press his right arm against the pocket every now and then to make sure the money was still there. But he would do it in such a way that nobody would notice anything, he hoped.
>
> Then he plunged into that throng. For him, there was no safety in numbers. He knew that in this crowd were pickpockets, gangsters, hard-boiled thugs, beat-up men and even downright killers. Of course, most of the people were just potential victims, but Lord, who's who?[110]

Can Themba often used third-person point-of-view in his stories, making characters out of his interviewees, as he does here, with Isaac. But he also moves from the story of Isaac to tell of his own experiences, putting himself into the story as a participant.

> We chanced a Dube train. It was packed, jammed like putty. On all sides, humans were pressing against us. In the passage, between seats, on seat-backs—humans. Four on three-man seats, three on two-men seats. Crammed. One women screamed for help because somebody pressed against her hard and her purse seemed to be sliding out of her pocket.
>
> At Phefeni Station, many people got off and we had some relief. As the train moved off, in a sparkling flash, I saw a man poised on the platform like a baseball pitcher. Then he flung a missile. Crash! It struck a window. We all ducked. It looked like somebody doing it just out of hatred. Maybe he had tried to rob people in an earlier train and failed.[111]

Nat Nakasa wrote an article on train overcrowding some years later, also as a participant:

> It seemed the end had come when we reached the fourth station from Dube. Those who were seated were simply picked up by other passengers and had to stand on their seats so as to make room for more people. When the train jerked unexpectedly, those standing on the seats swayed and fell on each other like mielie bags from a badly loaded lorry.

> "Fudwa!" (move!) cried a woman. "This is no time for romance, you," shouted the inevitable humorist.
>
> "Friends," yelled another clown, "this is a hint for those who are starting new jobs today. If the boss says take the scooter and go to Durban Street, he doesn't mean you must ride home to Natal. He expects you to come back in ten minutes."
>
> For a moment smiles replaced the grim expressions on our faces.[112]

In both pieces, the experience of taking a train is described, whether through first or third person.

The magazine often used first-person stories (sometimes confessional) from interesting characters, in this case, from a *tsotsi* (young criminal or gangster).

> The first time I got drunk, my friend and I decided to go and steal something. We went over to the Inanda Club. It was a Sunday afternoon and all the white people were watching the game they play with horses. We each had a six-inch knife.
>
> I saw some Africans working near the club house and said: "Hey folks, I'm looking for a job."
>
> They told me to come back the next morning and see the boss.
>
> As I talked to them, I looked in the door of the secretary's office and saw a lady's handbag and a grey sports jacket lying on a chair. I went in and took them.[113]

Although purporting to be a simple record of the interviewee's story, these first-person accounts seem structured in ways similar to other *Drum* stories. In this extract, a scene is laid out, with dialogue and descriptive details. Through the interview questions, translation (from vernacular into English), and writing up of the interview information, the interviews are constructed into small stories.

Henry Nxumalo, "Mr Drum," did not use the stylistic flourishes and lively language of his colleagues, but he also relied on fictional devices in his investigative features. Getting himself employed at a farm where a worker had been killed, he described his experiences in the first person, through scene and dialogue.

> After the supper, most of the labourers went away on bicycles. They said they were going to see their girls, or gamble. One, Mnguni, who was called Slow Coach, stayed behind with me. He showed me the compound, with small pot windows and iron bars like a gaol. I recognized it as the same place we had offloaded manure earlier in the day.

> I asked Slow Coach where the light was and he said there wasn't a light. I asked him about blankets and he said there weren't any. "You sleep on sacks here and cover yourself with sacks," he said. "Go next door to the store room and get some. But be careful—there's a ghost there. That was where Mapikwa was killed. One night Picannin, who cooks our food, was coming back to the compound from the village. He saw Mpikwa's ghost sitting on the box in the shanty where we have our food. He dropped everything and ran back."[114]

The story unfolds chronologically—and with careful detail—through his four days of work, a beating by the farmer, and his night-time escape from the farm, barefoot and without his pass. All Nxumalo's investigations recorded such abuses, and—letting the stories speak through their details—showed the ways in which the system exploited and assaulted black South Africans.

In some of the articles, the literary devices came together to create work of great emotional power. In the following piece about Christmas, Bloke Modisane combined a chronological progression of scenes with an attention to detail and a distant first-person narrator to sketch the day.

> Christmas Eve, which is also pay day, I come home laden with gifts, but before I reach home I meet a group of people in comic dress singing jazz or pop songs they have made up for the season. Women's bodies bulge disturbingly in men's attire, and men with painted faces and lips, wearing short dresses, walk with an awkward sway. I follow them aimlessly, lured by their song and frolic. I follow them along dirty twisting streets and through smelling back yards, walking into pools of stagnant water. But because I have lived all my life surrounded by this filth, I don't mind it much.[115]

The uneasiness of the imagery develops into scenes of nightmare:

> Cars speed wildly along the narrow streets, forcing us into the gutters. The stench from the gutter is laughed off as a woman pulls her foot out of the filth, and shakes off the mud by stamping her foot on the ground. Sometimes she swears at the driver. Somewhere along the way we find a little girl's body on the side of the gutter. She was unlucky. . . .
>
> We go up one street and witness a fight. Four hoodlums are stabbing one man. He tries to break away from them and run for it, but they stay with him, their blades sinking into his body until he falls. One of the four "heroes" kicks the fallen man in the face, and they walk off brandishing their blades and threatening to stab anybody who gets in their way. The sight of a man dying always fills me with horror. I get our group to walk off.[116]

After the laconic account of the day, his ending—on a dream that he will wake to another kind of Christmas one day—is unexpectedly poignant.

Conclusion

Lewis Nkosi has called the work of the *Drum* journalists "a writing scrupulous in the observation and description of the ugly facts of life in racist South Africa, a writing equally rigorous in the exclusion of self-pity, the crudely sentimental or maudlin in the presentation of the Self."[117] The grim stories of state brutality and societal violence were presented "in a cool sober prose in which they permitted themselves the luxury of a laugh."[118] The cool, ironic, playful prose of the *Drum* writers offered readers an attitude to take, an identity to occupy, a language they could use to describe their world, for more than a decade. And then it was gone.

In recent years, nonfiction has surged in popularity in South Africa.[119] Books of memoir, meditation, biography, popular scholarship, and journalism regularly outsell fiction, and writers as disparate as Antjie Krog, Jacob Dlamini, Rian Malan, Jonny Steinberg, and Mark Gevisser are valued for literary nonfiction. Some scholars have argued that the scholarship of the Wits History workshop, which used oral interviews to produce social histories (called history from below) has provided a precedent on which these writers can draw.[120] But it is noteworthy that all these writers practised journalism, and that some have drawn on material from their reporting to produce their books.[121] However, media in South Africa provide little space for this kind of writing, due to space and resource constraints, and practices of journalism that still privilege conventional reporting over literary journalism.

The intersection of a range of factors—the world of Sophiatown, urbanization, apartheid, the nature of *Drum* as a magazine, the constraints of the small black press sector, and the fictional tactics of the *Drum* writers—produced the *Drum* literary phenomenon and contributed to its impact. Successive eras of the black press in South Africa turned to activist modes of journalism. From the Black Consciousness–aligned reporters of the *World* newspaper of the 1970s, to the nation-building ethos of its successor paper, *Sowetan*, to the explicitly ANC-aligned, anti-apartheid newspaper *New Nation*, all made quite different contributions to black public life.

Creative forms of journalism do appear in South African journalism, but these are dispersed across a range of South African publications, and have never attained the critical mass of the journalism of *Drum*. Twidle points to the still divided cultural worlds of South Africans, and asks whether literary nonfiction has the potential to bring these worlds together.[122] Literary journalism, as part of the media, could play an even greater role. The *Drum* writers exist now as characters in stories of the past. But their writing and reporting skills have much to teach a new generation of post-apartheid journalists.

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Notes

1. See reference to "the *Drum* boys" in Can Themba, *The Will to Die* (London: Heinemann, 1972), 97. According to Nicol, "the *Drum* boys" originally comprised Henry Nxumalo, Can Themba, Bloke Modisane, Todd Matshikiza, Arthur Maimane, and Casey Motsisi. Mike Nicol, *A Good-looking Corpse: The World of Drum—Jazz and Gangsters, Hope and Defiance in the Townships of South Africa* (London: Minerva, 1991), 7–15.

2. See, for example, Tyler Fleming and Toyin Falola, "Africa's Media Empire: *Drum*'s Expansion to Nigeria," *History in Africa* 32 (2005): 133–164.

3. Mlenga Jere, "Portrayals of Men and Women in *Drum* magazine (South Africa) Advertisements," *Acta Commercii* 14, no. 1 (July 2014): 3, http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/ac.v14i1.231.

4. Tom Odhiambo, "Inventing Africa in the Twentieth Century: Cultural Imagination, Politics and Transnationalism in *Drum* Magazine," *African Studies* 65, no. 2 (2006): 160.

5. See J. Brooks Spector, "Fifty Years Later, Time for Nat Nakasa to Return Home," *Daily Maverick*, May 27, 2014, http://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2014-05-27-fifty-years-later-time-for-nat-nakasa-to-return-home/#.VVoMtlLD8VQ.

6. South Africa's Department of Arts and Culture in 2012 received Bloke Modisane's papers from Germany, where he had lived in exile, and placed them in the National Archives. In 2014 it held an exhibition and cultural event for him at the Sophiatown Heritage and Cultural Centre in Johannesburg.

7. The *Drum* writers produced the following books: Todd Matshikiza, *Chocolates for My Wife* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1961); Bloke Modisane, *Blame Me on History* (Johannesburg: Ad Donker, 1986); Casey Motsisi, *Casey & Co.: Selected Writings of Casey "Kid" Motsisi* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1978);

Es'kia Mphahlele, *Down Second Avenue* (London: Faber and Faber, 1971); Es'kia Mphahlele, *In Corner B* (Nairobi: East African Publishing House,1967); Lewis Nkosi, *Home and Exile* (London: Longman, 1983), Can Themba, *The Will to Die* (Johannesburg: Heinemann, 1972); and Nat Nakasa's work was collected posthumously in Essop Patel, ed., *The World of Nat Nakasa* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1975).

8. A number of articles from the magazine were anthologized in *The Drum Decade: Stories from the 1950s* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1989), ed. Michael Chapman, but they are a mix of fiction and journalism, and no distinction is made between them in the collection.

9. Richard Keeble, "On Journalism, Creativity and the Imagination," in *The Journalistic Imagination: Literary Journalists from Defoe to Capote and Carter,* eds. Richard Keeble and Sharon Wheeler (New York: Routledge, 2007), 2.

10. Ibid., 2.

11. Ibid., 3.

12. Tim Holmes, ed., *Mapping the Magazine: Comparative Studies in Magazine Journalism* (New York: Routledge, 2008), viii.

13. Ibid., ix.

14. Michael Titlestad, "Jazz Discourse and Black South African Modernity, with Special Reference to 'Matshikese,'" *American Ethnologist* 32, no. 2 (2005): 213.

15. Odhiambo, "Inventing Africa," 170.

16. Ibid.

17. See, for example, R.N. Choonoo, "The Sophiatown Generation: Black Literary Journalism in the 1950s," in *South Africa's Alternative Press: Voices of Protest and Resistance 1880s–1960s*, ed. Les Switzer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

18. For descriptions of South African experience of the 1950s, see Nkosi, *Home and Exile*; Nicol, *A Good-looking Corpse*, 1–6; and Modisane, *Blame Me on History*.

19. Michael Chapman, "More than Telling a Story: *Drum* and its Significance in Black South African Writing," in Chapman, ed., *Drum Decade*, 184.

20. Nicol, *A Good-looking Corpse*, 5.

21. Mphahlele quoted in Nicol, *A Good-looking Corpse*, 2.

22. Nkosi, *Home and Exile*, 6.

23. David Rabkin, *Drum Magazine (1951–1961): And the works of Black South African Writers Associated with It* (PhD diss., University of Leeds, 1975), 5.

24. Studies of Johannesburg and its townships can be found in Belinda Bozzoli, ed., *Labour, Township, and Protest: Studies in the Social History of the Witwatersrand* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1979).

25. Nkosi, *Home and Exile*, 12–13.

26. Paul Gready, "The Sophiatown Writers of the Fifties: The Unreal Reality of Their World," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 16, no. 1 (March 1990): 141.

27. Ibid.,140.

28. Ibid.,141.

29. Rabkin, *Drum Magazine (1951–1961)*, 3.

30. Gready, "Sophiatown Writers," 140.

31. Ibid.

32. See, for example, Titlestad, "Jazz Discourse and Black South African Modernity"; and Shane Graham and John Walters, eds., *Langston Hughes and the South African Drum Generation* (New York: Palgrave, 2010).

33. Gready, "Sophiatown Writers," 139.

34. See Tim Couzens, "A Short History of '*The World*' (and Other Black South African Newspapers) (paper, African Studies Seminar, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 1976).

35. Irwin Manoim, "The Black Press 1945–1963: The Growth of the Black Mass Media and Their Role as Ideological Disseminators" (master's thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 1983).

36. Shaun Johnson, "An Historical Overview of the Black Press," in *The Alternative Press in South Africa,* eds. Keyan Tomaselli and P. E. Louw (Johannesburg: Anthropos, 1991), 15–32.

37. Couzens, "A Short History of *'The World,'"* 12; Les Switzer and Donna Switzer, *The Black Press in South Africa and Lesotho* (Boston: Hall, 1979), 10.

38. Manoim, *Black Press*, 5.

39. Switzer and Switzer, *Black Press in South Africa*, 8.

40. See Manoim, *Black Press*.

41. Ibid., 63.

42. Accounts of the origins of *Drum* can be found in Anthony Sampson, *Drum: The Making of a Magazine* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 2005); Nicol, *A Good-looking Corpse*; Rabkin, *Drum Magazine (1951–1961)*; and Patel, *The World of Nat Nakasa.*

43. Sampson, *Drum,* 7.

44. Ibid., 7.

45. Ibid., 8.

46. Ibid., 10–21.

47. Ibid., 13.

48. Ibid., 13.

49. Ibid., 6.

50. Ibid., 13.

51. Ibid., 49.

52. Ibid., 16.

53. Ibid., 104.

54. Ibid., 22.

55. Ibid., 22–37.

56. This observation is drawn from the collected 1954 editions of *Drum*, held in the Cullen Library, University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

57. Sampson, *Drum*, 26.

58. Ibid.

59. Titlestad, "Jazz Discourse and Black South African Modernity," 217.

60. Ibid.

61. A shebeen is an informal bar or tavern.
62. Nicol, *A Good-looking Corpse*, 269–72.
63. Choono, "The Sophiatown Generation."
64. Chapman, *Drum Decade*.
65. Nkosi, *Home and Exile*, 21.
66. See Fleming and Falola, "Africa's Media Empire: *Drum*'s Expansion to Nigeria," for an account of *Drum*'s West African operation and Odhiambo.
67. Nicol, *A Good-looking Corpse*, 228.
68. Ibid., 9.
69. Themba, *The Will to Die*, 97.
70. Nicol, *A Good-looking Corpse*, ix.
71. Ibid.
72. See note 7, above.
73. Fleming and Falola, "Africa's Media Empire: *Drum*'s Expansion to Nigeria," 133.
74. Ibid.
75. Black writing, in the context of these discussions, is an inclusive term that refers to the groups categorized by the apartheid system as African, coloured, and Indian.
76. Rabkin, *Drum Magazine (1951–1961),* 1.
77. Ibid.
78. Chapman, *Drum Decade*, 183
79. Lewis Nkosi, "An Obituary on Can Themba," in Can Themba, *The Will to Die*, x.
80. Nicol, *A Good-looking Corpse.*
81. Chapman, *Drum Decade*, iii.
82. Ibid.
83. Nkosi, *Home and Exile*.
84. Gready, "Sophiatown Writers," 150.
85. See Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 2007); and Frantz Fanon, "The Fact of Blackness," in *Theories of Race and Racism: A Reader,* eds. Les Back and John Solomos (London: Routledge, 2000).
86. Gready, "Sophiatown Writers," 144.
87. Titlestad, "Jazz Discourse and Black South African Modernity," 211.
88. Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*, 176.
89. Odhiambo, "Inventing Africa," 158.
90. Ibid.
91. Ibid.
92. Gready, "Sophiatown Writers," 144.
93. Graham and Walters, *Langston Hughes*, 7.
94. Ibid., 26.
95. Ibid., 17.
96. Ibid.
97. See, for example, Dorothy Driver, "*Drum* Magazine and the Spatial Con-

figurations of Gender," in *Text, Theory, Space,* eds. Kate Darian-Smith, Liz Gunner and Sarah Nuttall (London: Routledge, 2005); Lindsay Clowes, "Are You Going to Be MISS (or MR) Africa? Contesting Masculinity in *Drum* Magazine 1951–1953," *Gender and History* 13, no. 1 (April 2001):1–20; Kenda Mutongi, "'Dear Dolly's' Advice: Representations of Youth, Courtship and Sexualities in Africa, 1960–1980," *International Journal of African Historial Studies* 33, no. 1 (2000): 1–23; Mac Fenwick, "Tough Guy, Eh? The Gangster Figure in *Drum*," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 22, no. 4 (1996): 617–632; and Mlenga Jere, "Portrayals of Men and Women in *Drum* Magazine (South Africa) Advertisements," *Acta Commercii* 14, no. 1 (July 2014), http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/ac.v14i1.231.

98. Craig Charney, "Black Power, White Press: Literacy, Newspapers, and the Transformation of Township Political Culture" (paper, African Studies Seminar, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 1993), 6.

99. As well as Sampson's account, *Drum: An African Adventure? And Afterwards* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1983), there is Sylvester Stein's *Who Killed Mr Drum?* (Bellville, South Africa: Mayibuye Books, 1999); Tom Hopkinson's *In the Fiery Continent* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1962); and Jim Bailey's four-volume history, *The Beat of Drum* (Braamfontein: Ravan Press, 1983). Photographer Jürgen Schadeberg, with Claudia Schadeberg and Jim Bailey, produced the film *Have You Seen Drum Recently?* (directed by Jürgen Schadeberg, 1989, Bailey's African Photo Archives: http://www.nytimes.com/movies/movie/191491/Have-You-Seen-Drum-Recently-/credits). See, also, Tom Hopkinson and Tim Couzens, eds., *Zimbabwe: The Search for Common Ground since 1890: From the Pages of Drum Magazine* (Lanseria, South Africa: Bailey's African Photo Archives, 1992).

100. John J. Pauly, "Literary Journalism and the Drama of Civic Life," *Literary Journalism Studies* 3, no. 2 (Fall 2011), 75.

101. Ibid., 77.

102. Tom Wolfe, *The New Journalism* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), 22.

103. John Matshikiza, preface, in Chapman*, Drum Decade,* xi.

104. Wolfe, *New Journalism*, 46.

105. Ibid.*,* 47.

106. Ibid., 46.

107. Casey Motsisi, "Kid Hangover," May 1955, reprinted in Nicol, *A Good-looking Corpse*, 216.

108. Todd Matshikiza, *Drum,* 1954.

109. Todd Matshiza, extract in Nicol, *A Good-looking Corpse*, 87.

110. Can Themba, "Terror in the Trains," October 1957, reprinted in Nicol, *A Good-looking Corpse*, 355.

111. Ibid., 357.

112. Nat Nakasa, "Must We Ride . . . to Disaster?" in Patel, *The World of Nat Nakasa*, 35.

113. "The Birth of a Tsotsi," November 1951, reprinted in Nicol, *A Good-looking Corpse*, 53.

114. Henry Nxumalo, "A Farm Called Harmonie," March 1955, reprinted in

Nicol, *A Good-looking Corpse*, 252.

115. Bloke Modisane, "Xmas and me," December 1955, reprinted in Nicol, *A Good-looking Corpse*, 299.

116. Ibid.," 300.

117. Lewis Nkosi, "Bloke Modisane: Blame Me on History," *Southern African Review of Books* 13–14 (1990): 11–13.

118. Ibid., 14.

119. For discussion of recent literary nonfiction in South Africa, see Nick Mulgrew, "Tracing the Seam: Narrative Journalism and Imaginings in South African Literature," *Literary Journalism Studies* 6, no. 1 (Spring 2014): 9–30; Hedley Twidle, "In a Country Where You Couldn't Make This Shit up? Literary Non-Fiction in South Africa," *Safundi: The Journal of South African and American Studies* 13, no. 1–2 (2012): 5–28; and Rob Nixon, "Non-fiction Booms, North and South: A Transatlantic Perspective," *Safundi: The Journal of South African and American Studies* 13, no. 1–2 (2012): 29-49.

120. Nixon, "Non-fiction Booms," 40.

121. Krog covered the Truth and Reconciliation Commission as a journalist for the public broadcaster, Malan drew on some of his experiences as a reporter for his book *My Traitor's Heart*, and Mark Gevisser had developed a following for profile writing in the *Mail & Guardian* before writing his biography of Thabo Mbeki, South Africa's second democratic president.

122. Twidle, "Literary Non-fiction in South Africa," 6.

Lorraine Code, author of *Epistemic Responsibility*.
Courtesy of Precision Photographic Services.

Rereading Code: Representation, Verification, and a Case of Epistemic (Ir)responsibility

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Abstract: In 2001 James Aucoin published an article that contributed significantly to the scholarship of ethics and epistemology of literary journalism studies. Drawing on the work of Lorraine Code, Aucoin combined a "responsibilist" approach to epistemology with narrative theory to establish standards for judging literary journalism's truth claims. This paper offers a re-reading of Code's seminal text, *Epistemic Responsibility*, arguing that Code's approach in fact upholds verifiability as a key criterion for epistemic responsibility in works of both fiction and nonfiction. Such a reading produces significantly different results when analyzing literary journalism's truth claims. It is the aim of this paper to follow through the implications of rereading *Epistemic Responsibility* as advocating the discipline of verification. John D'Agata's and Jim Fingal's *The Lifespan of a Fact* is used as a case study to play out some of these implications in the second half of this paper. This playful case of epistemic irresponsibility highlights some of the key issues around truth claims in literary journalism. It is argued that such cases have an important role in keeping the issue of "knowing well" central to the epistemic community, thereby contributing to the flourishing discussion around the responsible representation of reality.

In 2001 James Aucoin published an influential article that contributed significantly to the scholarship of ethics and epistemology of literary journalism studies. In "Epistemic Responsibility and Narrative Theory" Aucoin identifies two scholarly approaches in a thirty-year critical debate over literary journalism. He names Zavarzadeh, Hellman, and Heyne as scholars who have defended literary journalism as a genre of literature, and Sims, Connery, and Kramer among those who "have attempted to legitimize literary journalism as a genre of journalism . . . [and] have hinged their classification scheme on

the criterion of verifiability."[1]

Verifiability is a problematic standard for the genre, Aucoin argues, owing to three key reasons: "the mounting evidence from science and philosophy that denies the existence of a verifiable reality that can be described through logical-positivist empiricism and affirms that reality is socially and culturally constructed"; "the voluminous evidence that journalism constructs a truth that is based on culturally accepted conventions"; and "dominant narrative theory, which holds that any imposition of narrative is a moral act that results to some extent in a fictionalization."[2] Aucoin argues that literary journalism should not be subject to the discipline of verification, and therefore offers "a strategy of using narrative theory and epistemic ethics to judge literary journalism."[3]

The framework for applying the imperatives of epistemic responsibility to literary journalism offered in this article differs from that in "Epistemic Responsibility and Narrative Theory" in a critical way. Aucoin's position allows him to eschew the nonfiction/fiction distinction, argue against verification as a key characteristic of literary journalism, and read epistemologist Lorraine Code's chapter "Literature, Truth and Understanding" in *Epistemic Responsibility* (1987) as applicable to literary journalism. He uses, for example, Code's following statement to support his thesis:

> Where actual, historical events or characters play central roles in a work, one expects that the research has been done accurately; but there is no outright obligation upon writers, given the long tradition of poetic license, to tell things as they were rather than as they might have been. The onus is thus upon the readers to be sure that any claims they make are responsible.[4]

Aucoin uses this passage to support his contention that Ryszard Kapuściński—as a model literary journalist—is "situated as an independent moral agent, responsible for what he writes, and readers, as independent moral agents, must independently decide whether to believe him."[5] While this is undoubtedly a salient point within the context Aucoin creates, this paper suggests that Aucoin's reading of Code might be understood as incompatible with her overall thesis. If so, a rereading of Code's work might produce significantly different results. It is the aim of this paper to follow through the implications of rereading *Epistemic Responsibility* in this way, thereby contributing to the flourishing discussion around the ethics of "knowing well" in literary journalism.

Code has been critical of some aspects of her early work since its publication in 1987. She writes: "Despite my conviction that the central idea of *Epistemic Responsibility* is important and *right*, there are problems with the book, and some of the criticisms it has produced are well taken."[6] The primary issues include a tacit—or perhaps uncritical—liberal humanism that informs the

approach, "where questions of power and epistemic privilege do not figure, and an honest, well-meaning, transparently self-conscious epistemic agent who can make of her or his circumstances what she or he will is taken for granted"; as well as its "ambiguous relation to the metaphysical requirements of the Anglo-American epistemological mainstream."[7] As such, the following analysis proceeds with the acknowledgement of the limitations imposed by an approach that lacks engagement with questions of power, culture, and affect. Code's work has, however, been productively applied elsewhere to unpack issues arising from clashing epistemological traditions, epistemic privilege, and the role of affect in substantiating truth claims—all of which are central concerns for both scholars and practitioners.[8] The value of *Epistemic Responsibility*, then, is in theorizing a "responsibilist" approach to literary journalism to highlight and address issues that face practitioners in the range of choice available when representing their subjects and their worlds.

The first seven chapters of Code's book *Epistemic Responsibility* emphasize that the nature of the world and limitations on human cognitive capacity impose constraints on possible forms and content of knowledge. Code acknowledges that "there is considerable scope for freedom in making sense of the world," but that there are limits to "what kind of sense can *responsibly* be made of the world."[9] In the chapter entitled "Literature, Truth and Understanding," Code discusses the "truth value"[10] of a literary work. Code's remarks on historical novels (quoted above) cite the work of Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, George Eliot, and Leo Tolstoy as examples, which, Code notes, conform to the generic limitations of literary realism. The argument here is that when read in the context of the previous chapters, Code makes a distinction between the knowledge claims of fictional and nonfictive texts. The criteria she applies to "literary works" are verisimilitude, plausibility, and narrative coherence,[11] but, interestingly, where novels are historically situated, she is clear that verifiability is an epistemic imperative. In a discussion of George Eliot's *Middlemarch,* Code cautions that "the significance of actual events is a source of knowledge and is verifiable."[12] She argues:

> [W]e can check and compare accounts of the state of medicine at the time, of the machinations that led to the passing of the Reform Bill, of the development of the new journalism. . . . We can only *responsibly* claim to know either about the factual events or about the fictitious characters and the intentionally fabricated juxtaposition of the two if we have good reason to believe that the writer's treatment of both of the real events and of the unreal characters is a responsible treatment.[13]

While the onus to "know well" is on the reader here, when read in the context of a fiction/nonfiction divide, this passage casts novelists' and jour-

nalists' responsibility to truth-telling in a similar light. The key here is verifiability. While Aucoin's reading of Code is consistent with his epistemic stance toward the nature of literary journalism, this paper argues that there is value in maintaining the discipline of verification for the genre. Acknowledging this standard produces a significantly different reading of Code's work—and its subsequent application to literary journalism.

Foundationalism, Coherentism, and Responsibilism

Code's "responsibilist" approach differs from established epistemological traditions: foundationalist and coherentist. Foundationalists hold that there is "knowledge in the world which is so certain that no reasonable man [sic] could doubt it,"[14] and that this knowledge forms a foundation for all other types and systems of knowledge. For coherentists, on the other hand, the "source of evaluation and justification of a belief or knowledge claim lies in its relations with other beliefs or 'knowns' within a system; explanatory relations or relations of probability or logic might be taken into account."[15] The foundationalist and coherentist traditions are analogous to the traditions of literary journalism scholarship. Again, following Aucoin, scholars broadly fall into two categories when attempting to articulate standards for the genre: those who primarily employ narrative theory to articulate standards, such as narrative coherence and verisimilitude, and those who advocate the application of journalistic standards, such as accuracy and verifiable content, to works of literary journalism. Examples of those who perform literary readings include Hollowell, Weber, and Anderson, while scholars such as Lounsberry and Kerrane and Yagoda employ verifiability as a standard. Standards of verification can thus be understood as part of the foundationalist tradition, while narrative theory has a correlation with coherentist theories of epistemology.

These distinctions are important in light of Code's project. She acknowledges that foundationalism and coherentism "represent the best efforts of epistemology so far to approach 'the problem of knowledge,'" but also contends that enquiry is limited by the range of possible questions these approaches allow.[16] A complementary approach is necessary, Code argues, to widen the scope of epistemological investigation:

> [T]here are genuine choices about how to know the world and its inhabitants, choices that become apparent only in more complex epistemic circumstances—for example, in knowing other cultures, negotiating an environmental policy, assessing the significance of certain actions and policies, or predicting the implications of tests and experiments. Such circumstances, and others like them, occasion questions about epistemic responsibility. In doing so they broaden the scope of epistemology to include considerations of credibility and trust, of epistemic obligations and the legitimate scope of enquiry.[17]

In this passage, "choice" is a key term in relation to literary journalism. The range of possibilities available to practitioners in researching and reporting on other cultures, assessing significance of particular events and representing these in narrative form indeed necessitates considerations of credibility and trust. But in the same way Code argues for a multi-perspective approach to epistemology, an additional—complementary—mode of analysis is needed to those offered by literary theory and the discipline of verification for literary journalism.

This approach is particularly timely to theorize what is arguably a dominant feature of contemporary literary journalism. Historically, key literary journalists in the tradition of Kapuściński produced important texts that did not appear to place emphasis on journalistic standards of verification or attribution despite asserting their nonfiction status. But a new generation of practitioners—those producing their first works of book-length literary journalism between 2000 and 2010—appear to aspire to the highest standards of both correspondence and coherence. Critical reception has been mixed, but contemporary literary journalists such as Adrian Nicole LeBlanc (*Random Family*), Daniel Bergner (*Soldiers of Light*), Suketu Mehta (*Maximum City*), John Vaillant (*The Golden Spruce*), Rajiv Chandrasekaran (*Imperial Life in the Emerald City*), Andrew Westoll (*The Riverbones*), Dave Cullen (*Columbine*), and Rebecca Skloot (*The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*) demonstrate deep commitment to both literary aims and "traditional" journalistic standards such as verifiability, balance, and accuracy. In spite of increasingly blurred notions of truth and reality, these practitioners arguably operate under a modus that holds reality to be discoverable, and whose texts represent their best effort to accurately capture it. According to William Langewiesche this is a "new form of clean classicism"[18] and is quite distinct from New Journalists' emphasis on the apocalyptic zeitgeist of the 1960s and attendant "hysteria" of life in that era.[19]

In keeping with Code's rationale, an epistemological "responsibilist" approach opens the range of questions that can be asked of literary journalistic practice. It can also illuminate literary readings of texts where meaning and truth are as important as the events from which they proceed. Reorienting epistemic focus from end points to processes, Code encourages would-be knowers to engage in "Socratic dialogue" over their knowledge claims.[20] Cooper gives examples of epistemic questioning that could inform literary journalistic practice, such as: "Do I really know what I think I know?"; "Do I know enough to act as I do?"; "What don't I know?"; "What are the moral consequences of my knowing/ignorance?"; "Should I know more or acknowledge incomplete knowledge?"[21] Such questioning informs not just the practice but also the criticism of literary journalism. It emphasizes the choices

available to—and limitations imposed upon—practitioners in the way they represent reality, as well as their responsibility to "know well." Likewise, critics and scholars may ask these questions of practitioners to illuminate analyses, but they similarly have an obligation to know their subject well—well enough to judge as they do—as they also engage in a process of representing reality. This represents both challenge and opportunity when exposing literary journalism to an assessment of epistemic responsibility.

Although Code does not specifically discuss journalism, her philosophical approach is particularly apposite for this field. When differentiating her "responsibilist" position from a "reliabilist" approach, she acknowledges that for a person or their knowledge to be reliable establishes "a closer connection with truth and warrantability than responsibility can establish."[22] However, in her view, "a 'reliable' knower could simply be an accurate, and relatively passive, recorder of experience,"[23] whereas a responsibilist approach accounts for the degrees of choice with regard to modes of cognitive structuring, and the accountability that attends such choice. Here a parallel can be made with mainstream and literary journalism: the degree of choice available to a daily journalist when reporting an event is considerably less than that afforded a literary journalist. A daily journalist is more likely to be judged on her reliability according to established norms such as objectivity, whereas a literary journalist is not bound by the same rules of cognitive and narrative structuring, and arguably is more accountable to being epistemically responsible. As Code writes: "A person can be judged responsible or irresponsible only if she/he is clearly regarded as an agent (in this case a cognitive agent) in the circumstances in question. An evaluation of human knowledge-seeking in terms of responsibility is instructive precisely because of the active, creative nature of the endeavour."[24] Clearly, in an epistemic sense, responsibilism is just as binding on a daily journalist as reliability is on a literary journalist. The point here is that the range of practices open to literary journalists highlights their mandate to be responsible, whereas the regulatory effects imposed by objectivity standards emphasizes reliability.

The rationale behind Code's project in *Epistemic Responsibility* is summarized in the following passage:

> Different cognitive capacities and epistemic circumstances create situations where experience is structured, and hence the world is known, quite differently from one cognitive agent to another. Each time a moral judgment is made, then, two parts of a situation must be assessed: the way it is apprehended and the action that is performed as a result. The former, the apprehension, is a matter for epistemological assessment, and the moral dimension of the situation is crucially dependent upon this epistemic component.[25]

Conflating epistemology and ethics arguably has significant ramifications for the theory and practice of literary journalism. To the extent that they can be held apart for analytical purposes, ethics and epistemology should be evaluated separately to illuminate how ethical practice is dependent on a sound epistemic foundation. In the rest of this paper I use this rationale to (re-)examine some issues pertinent to the practice of literary journalism, before applying some epistemic principles to a particularly contentious example of epistemic *ir*responsibility.

"Knowing Well"

A starting point when assessing epistemic responsibility is to examine the conditions in which an individual can "know well." Code draws on Kantian philosophy when she asserts that the manner of an individual's structuring of reality "is dependent upon a knower's interaction with the world and will vary accordingly."[26] The epistemic responsibility of a literary journalist can then be characterized as a responsibility to interact with the world in a way that enables a practitioner to anchor the coherence of meaning to the correspondence of empirically verifiable reality. According to Code, it is not contradictory to claim that knowledge is created through active exploration, perception, thinking, and imagining, and that knowledge is objective.[27] She writes:

> Although there are many ways of knowing legitimately so-called, evidence strongly favors the claim that these are ways of knowing one real world. The patterns that can be selected are limited in practice by the necessity that they conform, to some degree, to this objective reality. To this extent, objects dictate the nature of the synthesis.[28]

Arguably, the idea that objective knowledge is discoverable by individuals underpins much contemporary literary journalism practice. Both anecdotal evidence from practitioners and current scholarship support such a contention. Literary journalist and scholar Mark Kramer, for example, reflects on evidence from his discussions with literary journalists suggesting that current practitioners share a tacit understanding with readers. This understanding is "so strong that it amounts to a contract: that the writers do what they appear to do, which is to get reality as straight as they can manage, and not make it up."[29] Such comments reflect a belief that reality is "discoverable," and that literary journalists are part of a shared reality that can be objectively known. Importantly, Kramer also differentiates between the New Journalists' project and contemporary literary journalism. He relates the expectations set by the dust jacket of Norman Mailer's *The Executioner's Song* (1979), which "bore the odd description 'A True Life Novel.' Although such truth-in-labeling doesn't

explicitly demarcate what parts are actual, it's a good-faith proclamation to readers that they've entered a zone in which a nonfiction writer's covenant with readers may be a tease, a device, but doesn't quite apply." He asserts that this category of expectations "[falls] outside the modern understanding of what literary journalism is."[30]

More recently, Keeble and Tulloch write that contemporary literary journalists "claim the real," a phrase that signifies "an assertion about truthfulness to verifiable experience, an adherence to accuracy and sincerity which practitioners assert are the crucial features that distinguish their narratives from 'fiction.'"[31] Keeble and Tulloch also acknowledge that this is problematic:

> A demand for realism can be represented as an essentially conservative concept, aimed at repulsing the twentieth-century postmodernist project in writing. . . . In these terms, literary journalism can be presented as a throwback to the idea of a stable text and stable reality that can be narrativised, a refutation of the pretensions of modernism in which eager journalists penetrate to "the quick of what's happening." But many writers would now claim, with David Shields: "Story seems to say everything happens for a reason, and I want to say, *No, it doesn't.*"[32]

It might be concluded that a "demand for realism" takes on different meanings for different practitioners. "Claiming the real" for some may mean representing "a phenomenal world that is fundamentally indeterminate."[33] But for others, a common reality is discoverable, and narrative form is alive to the possibilities of (re)presenting their discoveries.

"Responsibilism" and the Epistemic Community

An analysis of epistemic responsibility should take into account the extent of reporting, and assess the rhetorical situation of a practitioner according to knowledge potentially accessible at the time of writing. Code makes the point that beliefs are grounded because of what happens in the world: "the practical consequences of holding certain beliefs have considerable bearing upon the reasonableness [for an individual at a particular point in time], of holding the belief."[34] An associated point here is that literary journalists are not alone subject to the requirements of epistemic responsibility. The wider epistemic community also has a mandate to approach and analyze literary journalism in an epistemically responsible way. Literary journalists' immediate epistemic community may include, but is not confined to: their subject(s), their subjects' communities, fellow practitioners (past and present), critics, scholars, editors, publishers, policymakers, grant committee members, and, of course, readers. Given that such a community is likely to elicit a wide range of cultural, ideological, political, and institutional perspectives, Code again

stresses the need for a "responsibilist" approach that considers alternate epistemologies and ethical imperatives.

Code invokes the notion of a contract to explicate the function of an epistemic community. She writes:

> I do not conceive of an epistemic contract as an event which *creates* obligations but rather as a model for understanding the structure and workings of epistemic interdependence. . . . This model is useful in explaining the outrage that occurs when trust is violated. It helps account for the conviction that something tangible was violated and that the violator is thereby accountable. . . . . Legislation preventing false advertising shows that, in the public domain, it is not enough for such agreements to remain tacit. Our sense that it is reasonable to assume that people will provide accurate information, to the general agreement to do so, even where the law is not involved.[35]

Narrative theorist Gerard Genette similarly uses the term "contractual force" to argue that paratexts can be dynamic sites of negotiation for the truth claims of a text. Genette emphasizes that a reader is not bound to enter into an agreement about how to approach a text, but maintains "only that, knowing it, he cannot completely disregard it, and if he wants to contradict it he must first assimilate it."[36] Genette concludes that whether a reader accepts or rejects the negotiation offered, "one is better off perceiving it fully and clearly."[37] This is in fact a matter of epistemic responsibility. A reader may be "better off" for perceiving an author's intention, methodology and aims. But readers, and critics in particular, are also responsible for understanding the epistemic foundation of a work of literary journalism as they approach it and offer criticism or praise. Questions such as: "Do I really know what I think I know?"; "Do I know enough to write as I do?"; "What don't I know?"; and "Should I know more or acknowledge incomplete knowledge?" are equally applicable to the criticism as to the practice of literary journalism.

The question arises: Can literary journalists push boundaries in an epistemically responsible way? Code's responsibilist approach suggests that individuals not only can but also should eschew caution and conservatism at times in order to explore new possibilities. "There must be room," she argues, "within the larger sphere where good knowers *live*, for the Socratic gadfly and for those who take outrageous stances to keep the epistemic community on its toes, to prevent it from settling into complacency or inertia. . . . Catalysts of cognitive change play as vital a role in communities of knowers as do conservers of established practice."[38] While the New Journalism movement as a whole has been characterized as carrying out this role,[39] there are individuals in this comparatively conservative era who keep the epistemic community on its toes.

A Case of Epistemic (Ir)responsibility?

One example of two people playing out this role can be found in John D'Agata's and Jim Fingal's *The Lifespan of a Fact.* Published in 2012, the book's generic classification is "Literature/Essays," leading almost all reviewers to treat it as a work of nonfiction.[40] The publisher's website promotes the book as a reproduction of an essay by John D'Agata, accompanied by the correspondence between him and his fact checker, Jim Fingal. The dustcover of the book states: "[W]hat emerges is a brilliant and eye-opening meditation on the relationship between 'truth' and 'accuracy' and a penetrating conversation."[41] After publication, it emerged in an interview with the authors that the initial correspondence between D'Agata and Fingal took between six months and year, after which the idea of publishing a book was formed. *The Lifespan of a Fact* is thus not the original correspondence between Fingal and D'Agata, but a planned and constructed exchange based on their experience of the initial fact-checking process.

Silverman notes that one of the four reviewers he contacted regarding the book was aware that the exchange was created to attain and fulfil a book contract—that it is "by definition not a reproduction, since the book is primarily made up of text that did not exist prior to the authors embarking on a book project."[42] Interestingly, the one reviewer who "knew the book was not always factual" explained that one signal of its constructed nature was that "D'Agata has a real history of these sort of literary tricks."[43] This echoes Lawrence Weschler's injunction that readers need to be "intelligent" and "[follow] a person over years. Then you begin to get a sense of that writer, their voice. And you approach it as an adult encountering another adult in the world."[44] But this case highlights a problem in Weschler's position: D'Agata's other three reviewers have no less apparent claim to intelligence, and as none were familiar with his work, they read the publisher's blurb as a claim to nonfiction status. The hybrid nature of the genre assignation appeared to have been clarified by the blurb and publisher's website in this case, whereas both in fact misled their expectations. Is this a case of epistemic irresponsibility on the part of the authors (and/or publishers)? Or does it point out the epistemic responsibility of reviewers to know their subject—and practitioners—well? Are these two positions mutually exclusive?

The paratext enacts the issues raised by the content of the book in this way. The "character" in the exchange, D'Agata, is striving to create an essay that delivers a genuine experience with art. D'Agata's fact checker, Fingal, protests against replacing numerous verifiable facts with inaccuracies, such as "four" for "eight," "pink" for "purple," wind direction, the phase of the moon, and statistics on suicide. The latter is particularly pertinent, as the original

article recreates the last day of Levi Presley, a sixteen-year-old whose suicide is its subject. "D'Agata" here embodies the intellectually virtuous (knowledgeable) practitioner without displaying moral virtue. He argues that nonfiction is an inadequate term for what he is doing—creating a work of art—and not one that he would apply to his essay. D'Agata's refusal to capitulate to the expectations set by the term "essay" and the (verifiable) subject matter of his text is based on his intention to produce an experience for the reader that he claims is not dependent on factual accuracy:

> John: What the term "essay" describes is not a negation of genre—as "nonfiction" does—but rather an activity, "an attempt, a trial, an experiment.". . . An essay is not a vehicle for facts, in other words, nor for information, nor verifiable experience. An essay *is* an experience, and a very human one at that. It's an enactment of the experience of trying to find meaning—an emotional meaning, an intellectual meaning, a political meaning, a scientific one, or whatever goal that artist has set for the text.[45]

When Fingal suggests that D'Agata give readers "a wink or a nod"—or disclosure transparency—to signal his intentions, D'Agata responds: "I've been giving readers winks and nods for my entire career, Jim. I've edited anthologies, I've written essays, I've given lectures, I've taught courses . . . all about this issue. As some point the reader needs to stop demanding that they be spoon-fed like infants and start figuring out on their own how to deal with art that they disagree with."[46] This is clearly intentionally provocative, but it summarizes D'Agata's position: that nonfiction is a constructed category with which he fundamentally disagrees as it limits the possibility of creating a meaningful experience for the reader. Consequently, he does not feel bound to disclose factual inaccuracies to the reader, as he does not identify his work as nonfiction.

The exchange is entertaining, but the original article contains a twist as D'Agata acknowledges that he has replaced facts for rhetorical effect in order to imbue them with significance they do not inherently hold. After building a theme around the number nine, based on the (inaccurate) fact that Levi Presley fell for nine seconds to his death, the article finally reveals: "I think we knew, however, that he really fell for eight. . . . Sometimes we misplace knowledge in pursuit of information. Sometimes our wisdom, too, in pursuit of what's called knowledge."[47] D'Agata is not, here, reversing his position and demonstrating that accuracy is important after all. He is underscoring the point that whether facts are distorted or not, it is part of the human condition to imbue details with meaning, which, he believes, is ultimately a work of imagination. Facts, by this reasoning, become negligible, and D'Agata's commitment to his reader is to provide a greater truth than facts alone.

Underlying the arguments made by "D'Agata" in the exchange with his fact checker is a belief that is not explicitly dealt with by either the character or the author outside the book: that accurate facts cannot be artful. Interestingly, however, the epigraph of *The Lifespan of a Fact* is split over two pages that inform the text: "True words are not beautiful" and "Beautiful words are not true."[48] These two quotations can be read as opinion or factual statements, but it soon becomes apparent that these lines form the underlying premise of the book. Throughout the exchange, "D'Agata" makes it clear that the facts are not aesthetically pleasing to his sensibility; thus, he changes them to provide his prose with rhythm and style. It might be ventured, however, that while he felt the accurate facts limited his style, it could equally be the case that "D'Agata's" style might have changed to accommodate the facts. The premise that stylish prose cannot arise from verifiable fact is subject to opinion—or, perhaps, skill. As one practitioner writes,

> Like other literary journalists, I've found that, in fact, annoying, inconsistent details that threaten to wreck a scene I'm writing are often signals that my working theories about events need more work, and don't quite explain what happened yet. Not tweaking deepens understanding. And getting a slice of life down authentically takes flexibility and hard labor. [49]

The term "authentically" here might be replaced with "verifiably" in the context of epistemic responsibility. "D'Agata" also reminds "Fingal" a number of times that he is not a journalist, thereby excusing his lack of notes, attribution of sources, and gaps in his research. However, that he made an effort to base his essay on the phenomenal reality of Levi Presley's life and death, rather than making up an entirely fictional character, suggests that he is aware of the rhetorical power of nonfiction and that he intends to trade on it, regardless of the label applied.

In a later interview, (the real) John D'Agata reflected on the fact-checking process of the original article and writing the book, stating:

> I think I'm a little more willing to acknowledge that there is a line somewhere that one shouldn't cross, but at the same time, I would still insist that it's a line that only we as individual writers can draw, only we can determine where it is, but that we should look for it. We should be on the lookout for moments when we might be overstepping what's appropriate.[50]

D'Agata's words here reflect Code's injunction that "there is considerable scope for freedom in making sense of the world," but that there are limits to "what kind of sense can *responsibly* be made of the world."[51] Should those limits be acknowledged in works of nonfiction? The "D'Agata" of the text would argue not. *The Lifespan of a Fact* plays with questions such as these, but

particularly examines the following: "What are the moral consequences of my knowing and *not* telling?" Each "character" represents various viewpoints throughout the book, but "D'Agata's" main thrust is that moral consequences are negligible in art, and that epistemic defence and attempts at transparency belie the intention of the nonfiction narrator. One actual consequence of the ambiguous generic status of the book was that many reviewers incorrectly reviewed it as nonfiction. Interestingly, this is a point the real D'Agata was more willing to concede than his publishers. A wider consequence may be to discredit the genre, and, by extension, practitioners who carefully consider and negotiate their epistemic responsibility. This example also highlights that some practitioners may set out to intentionally provide their readers with false or misleading expectations. This may be to make a point—as D'Agata and Fingal do here—or in order to garner authority for their text that they have not earned through the research process. But finally, *The Lifespan of a Fact* does challenge boundaries. It has opened a discussion—not least among those who reviewed it as nonfiction—that amounts to an investigation of both practitioners' and critics' epistemic responsibility. D'Agata's approach exemplifies that of "the Socratic gadfly." Code observes that:

> [I]t is hard to accommodate this kind of thinker within a responsibility-based theory. No one is inclined to doubt their interest in *knowing well*; rather, the conceptual problem arises because such projects invite the paradoxical conclusion that it could sometimes be necessary to be epistemically *irresponsible*, at least in the eyes of the community, to be responsible. Epistemic rebellion, and seemingly outrageous thought experiments subversive of "received" discourse, cannot, therefore, simply be condemned as treacherous or dismissed as irrational by knowers who are responsibly and openly committed to making the best sense of the world (particularly if "best" can be aligned, to some extent, with "creativity" and "inventiveness").[52]

While this text has been used as an illustrative example, the intention has not been to hold up "D'Agata's" approach as an epistemically responsible one. It does, however, perform an important role in literary journalism's epistemic community. *The Lifespan of a Fact* illustrates several points central to this discussion: that literary journalists need to be epistemically responsible toward their epistemic communities; that epistemic communities must also maintain a "responsibilist" approach to practitioners (and works) of literary journalism; and that a "contract" arguably exists between members that can define the terms by which epistemic responsibility may be judged.

Conclusion

The "inevitable lag of the critic behind the artist"[53] has been a factor in the controversy surrounding literary journalism during the past five de-

cades—a state that is equally true of scholarship. The epistemic community has, at times, lapsed in its own epistemic responsibility, but more often the struggle has been to understand epistemological foundations on which pioneering practitioners base their texts. For Code, this struggle is vital for maintaining epistemic competence. Healthy epistemic communities are those that are self-critical, reflexive, and avoid "any easy calculus for assessing knowledge and belief claims." They cannot "provide a decision-making scale against which specific knowledge claims can be measured for validity . . . [o]ne could not responsibly write 'a guide for the recognition of responsible knowledge claims'."[54] As such, the value of Aucoin's application of Code's work to literary journalism is significant. This paper recognizes Aucoin's contribution to scholarship and practice while endeavouring to (re)articulate Code's approach to epistemology, redirecting the discussion to a responsibilist approach. As Code writes, "[s]hifting the focus of epistemological enquiry to a study of intellectual virtue and epistemic responsibility will enhance the confidence that can be lent to knowledge claims, even when absolute certainty is taken to be impossible."[55] Code's approach is arguably an important branch of scholarship for literary journalism studies—a branch that has the potential to enhance confidence in the genre's claims to represent reality both reliably and responsibly.

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Notes

1. James Aucoin, "Epistemic Responsibility and Narrative Theory," *Journalism* 2, no. 1 (2001): 6–7.

2. Ibid., 8.

3. Ibid., 5–6.

4. Lorraine Code, *Epistemic Responsibility* (London: Brown University Press, 1987), 214.

5. Aucoin, "Epistemic Responsibility and Narrative Theory," 15.

6. Code, "Responsibility and Rhetoric," *Hypatia* 9, no. 1 (January 1, 1994): 5; emphasis in original.

7. Ibid., 6.

8. See Lindsay Morton, "Evaluating the Effects of Epistemic Location in Advocatory Literary," *Journalism*, October 31, 2014, 1464884914554178, doi:10.1177/1464884914554178; Lindsay Morton, "Not My People," *Journalism Studies* 15, no. 6 (November 2, 2014): 774–88, doi:10.1080/1461670X.2013.857481; Lindsay Morton, "Where Are You Coming From?," *Journalism Practice* 9, no. 2 (March 4, 2015): 168–83, doi:10.1080/17512786.2014.906931.

9. Code, *Epistemic Responsibility,* 9; emphasis in original.

10. Ibid., 202.

11. Ibid., 201.

12. Ibid., 212.

13. Ibid., 212–213; emphasis in original.

14. Ibid., 3.

15. Ibid., 4.

16. Ibid., 7.

17. Code, "Responsibility and Rhetoric," 3.

18. Bill Reynolds, "A Metaphor for the World: William Langewiesche, John Vaillant and Looking for the Story in Long-Form," *Asia Pacific Media Educator* 1, no. 18 (December 2007): 66.

19. See Barbara Foley, *Telling the Truth: The Theory and Practice of Documentary Fiction* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986); John Hellmann, *Fables of Fact: New Journalism as New Fiction* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981); John Hollowell, *Fact and Fiction: The New Journalism and the Nonfiction Novel* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1977).

20. Code, *Epistemic Responsibility,* 28–29.

21. Thomas Cooper, "Review Essay: Lorraine Code's Epistemic Responsibility, Journalism, and the Charles Stuart Case," *Business & Professional Ethics Journal* 12, no. 3 (1993): 86.

22. Code, *Epistemic Responsibility,* 51, in footnote.

23. Ibid.

24. Ibid.

25. Ibid., 69.

26. Ibid., 105.

27. Ibid., 107.

28. Ibid.

29. Mark Kramer, "Breakable Rules for Literary Journalists," in *Literary Journalism: A New Collection of the Best American Nonfiction*, eds. Norman Sims and Mark Kramer (New York: Ballantine Books, 1995), 25.

30. Kramer, "Breakable Rules," 24.

31. Richard Keeble and John Tulloch, eds., *Global Literary Journalism: Exploring the Journalistic Imagination* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2012), 7.

32. Ibid., 7–8.

33. John Hartsock, *A History of American Literary Journalism: The Emergence of a Modern Narrative Form* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2000), 51.

34. Code, *Epistemic Responsibility,* 41.

35. Ibid., 179.

36. Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 408–9.

37. Ibid., 409.

38. Code, *Epistemic Responsibility,* 56; emphasis in original.

39. See John J. Pauly, "The Politics of The New Journalism," in *Literary Journalism in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Norman Sims (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 110–29.

40. Craig Silverman, "*The Lifespan of a Fact* Blends Fiction with Nonfiction to Explore Nature of Truth," Poynter.org, March 5, 2012, http://www.poynter.org/latest-news/regret-the-error/164447/the-lifespan-of-a-fact-blends-fiction-with-nonfiction-to-explore-nature-of-truth/.

41. John D'Agata and Jim Fingal, *The Lifespan of a Fact* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2012).

42. Silverman, "The *Lifespan*."

43. Ibid.

44. Bob Garfield, "Lawrence Weschler on the Fiction of Non-Fiction: Transcript," *On the Media*, December 24, 2010, http://www.onthemedia.org/2010/dec/24/lawrence-weschler-on-the-fiction-of-non-fiction/transcript/?utm_source=sharedUrl&utm_media=metatag&utm_campaign=sharedUrl.

45. D'Agata and Fingal, *Lifespan*, 111.

46. Ibid., 110.

47. Ibid., 99.

48. Ibid., 7, 9.

49. Kramer, "Breakable Rules," 25.

50. Anne Strainchamps, "Transcript for John D'Agata and Jim Fingal on *The Lifespan of a Fact*," Wisconsin Public Radio, *To the Best of Our Knowledge* (2012), http://ttbook.org/book/transcript/transcript-john-dagata-and-jim-fingal-lifespan-fact.

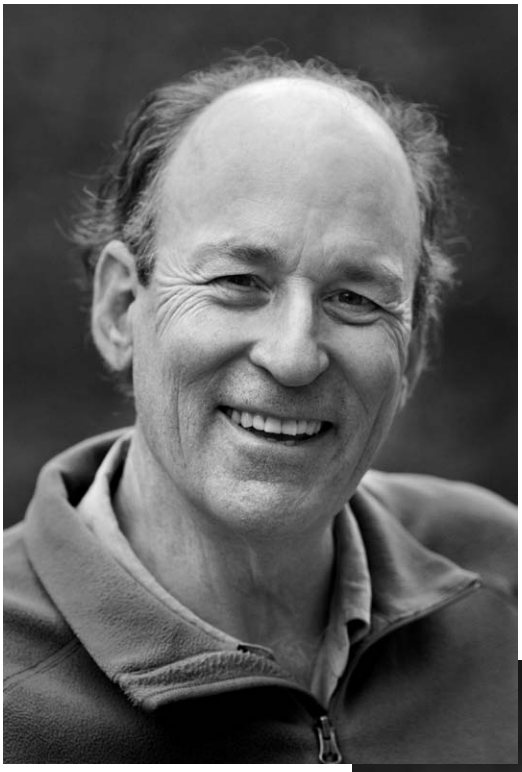
51. Code, *Epistemic Responsibility,* 9.

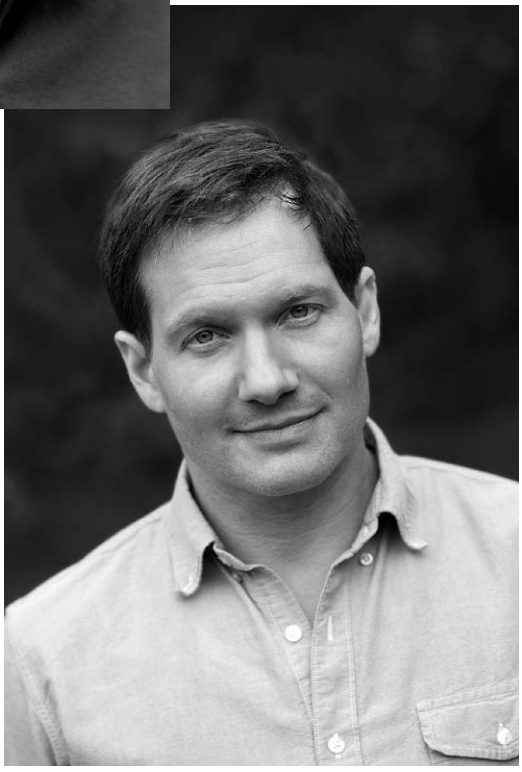
52. Ibid., 56.

53. Barbara Lounsberry, *The Art of Fact: Contemporary Artists of Nonfiction* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1990), xi.

54. Code, *Epistemic Responsibility,* 63–4.

55. Ibid., 67.





Above: Author Tracy Kidder. Photograph by Gabriel Amadeus Cooney.

Right: Author John D'Agata.

Beyond the Program Era: Tracy Kidder, John D'Agata, and the Rise of Literary Journalism at the Iowa Writers' Workshop

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Abstract: The Iowa Writers' Workshop's influence on literary journalism extends beyond instructional method to its production of two writers who alternately sustained the traditions of the genre and boldly defied them: Tracy Kidder, who forged his career during the heyday of the New Journalism in the early 1970s, and John D'Agata, today's most controversial author challenging the boundaries of literary nonfiction. This essay examines the key works of Kidder and D'Agata as expressions of and reactions to Tom Wolfe's exhortation for a new social realism and literary renaissance fusing novelistic narrative with journalistic reporting and writing. Whereas a great deal of attention has been paid to Iowa's impact on the formation of the postwar literary canon in poetry and fiction, its profound influence on literary journalism within the broader world of creative writing has received little notice. Through archival research, original interviews, and textual explication, I argue that Kidder's narrative nonfiction reinforces Wolfe's conception of social realism, as theorized in "Stalking the Billion-Footed Beast," in sharp contrast to D'Agata's self-reflexive experimentation, toward a more liberally defined category of creative writing. Norman Sims defended literary journalists' immersion in "complex, difficult subjects" and narration "with a voice that allows complexity and contradiction," countering critics who claimed their work "was not always accurate." D'Agata has reopened the debate by exposing the narrative craft's fraught and turbulent relation to fact. That unstable, highly contested struggle remains carefully hidden from view in the smooth veneer of Kidder's traditional aesthetic of literary journalism.

In his 2013 "Notes Toward a Supreme Nonfiction," Robert S. Boynton praised the power of MFA creative writing programs—fused with journalistic reporting methods—to instruct and inspire the next generation of literary journalists. "The workshop model," he argued, separates "those who simply love literature from those who want to learn how to write it," and "guarantees that one's work is read closely and consistently by one's colleagues and teachers."[1] Originally established at the Iowa Writers' Workshop, the model has since been widely copied by MFA programs and increasingly adopted by nonfiction writing programs such as Boynton's own in literary reportage at New York University. This approach has gained prominence because of Iowa's peerless reputation featuring names like Flannery O'Conner, Kurt Vonnegut, Robert Lowell, and Rita Dove.[2] The workshop's influence on literary journalism extends beyond instructional method to its production of two writers who alternately sustained the traditions of the genre and boldly defied them: Tracy Kidder, who forged his career under the influence of the New Journalism in the early 1970s, and John D'Agata, today's most controversial author challenging the boundaries of literary nonfiction. D'Agata's *The Lifespan of a Fact* (2012) brought a firestorm to the quiet prairie by violating the very standards of fact-driven journalistic narrative established by Kidder, his predecessor in the genre, fellow Iowa graduate, and 1982 Pulitzer Prize and National Book Award winner.

Whereas a great deal of attention has been paid to Iowa's impact on the formation of the postwar literary canon in poetry and fiction, the workshop's profound influence on literary journalism within the broader world of creative writing has received little notice.[3] Prompted by *The Program Era*, Mark McGurl's powerful exploration of the impact of the rise of creative writing programs on fiction, this study picks up where his leaves off by examining the development of nonfiction at Iowa from its inception in the early 1970s to the present. McGurl argues that Iowa's elite status brought it an outsized dominance over the publishing industry that directly shaped literary history. In particular, the regimented approach to creative writing instruction from the 1940s through the 1960s had a homogenizing effect on fiction writing, giving rise to the "workshop story"—formally rigid, depersonalized narrative adhering to the New Criticism. The New Journalism went the other direction, as in the "monstrously discursive" rhetorical sprawl of Tom Wolfe.[4] Kidder's early-1970s youthful imitation of Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood* marked the first nonfiction MFA thesis at Iowa boldly defying the workshop's notorious uniformity. By the 1980s, nonfiction at Iowa embarked on an era of experimentation with the craft that would lead to D'Agata's new sophistication toward literary journalism, one that arose out of changes in the pro-

gram itself that troubled and radically revised the conventions established by Kidder. Through archival research and original interviews with both authors, this research demonstrates that Kidder's narrative nonfiction functioned as a hinge between the New Journalism and D'Agata's current self-reflexive experimentation, a transition that helped develop a more liberally defined category of creative writing.

Despite the differences dividing them, both Kidder and D'Agata share an emphasis on the creative potential of nonfictional narrative according to a distinctly literary perspective, one that embodies Norman Sims's definition of literary journalism. Sims defended literary journalists' immersion into "complex, difficult subjects" and narration "with a voice that allows complexity and contradiction," countering critics who claimed their work "was not always accurate." Sims rebuked the contention that literary journalists cared more about stylistic flourishes than facts, more about writing than reporting, leading them to produce "flashy, self-serving [prose that] violated the journalistic rules of objectivity."[5] D'Agata has reopened the debate by exposing the craft's fraught and turbulent relation to fact. That unstable, highly contested struggle remains carefully hidden from view in the smooth veneer of Kidder's traditional aesthetic of literary journalism. How such different writers emerged from the same institutional nexus can be explained historically through changes at Iowa, ones that reveal an increasing sophistication toward the craft of literary journalism.

As the first nonfiction writer trained at Iowa, Kidder represents the earliest era, and D'Agata, who earned his MFA in 1998 and is the current director of the Nonfiction Writing Program, stands for the most recent. The aesthetic preferences of the program during each era had a shaping influence on their careers and the evolution of literary journalism. The following section details the expansive professional networks in the publishing industry for literary journalism that benefitted students in the postwar Iowa Writers' Workshop (1941–1960s) and set the stage for Kidder in 1972. The next considers Kidder's reliance on Iowa's vast professional network, particularly former journalist and Iowa faculty Dan Wakefield, to advance his career. Kidder's troubled first attempts to embody the New Journalism at the workshop were followed by his breakthrough magnum opus *The Soul of a New Machine*, which abandoned the flamboyant bravado of Wolfe and Hunter S. Thompson for a gentler aesthetic rooted in John McPhee and the fiction of F. Scott Fitzgerald. The final section treats D'Agata's provocative stunt, *Lifespan of a Fact*, coauthored by Jim Fingal, as the most recent iteration of creative nonfiction writing by an Iowa-trained writer, emphasizing his radical departure from and sharp contrast with Kidder's disciplined ap-

proach. A consideration of the generational differences reflected in Kidder's view of D'Agata concludes this study.

Magazine Journalism at the Iowa Writers' Workshop

The journalistic legacy at Iowa inherited by Kidder and D'Agata is deeper than one might suspect, despite the program's ostensible emphasis on the genres of fiction and poetry. Lucrative journalism was a mainstay of the program from its origin, both as a means of professionalizing students and providing them with much needed financial aid. Under Paul Engle, the program took a decidedly professional turn. Engle cultivated an expansive list of powerful connections throughout the periodical press that students regularly benefitted from. In addition to aiding in the placement of student work not limited to only poetry and fiction in learned, elite journals like the *New Yorker* and the *Atlantic* and glossy, high-paying venues like *Life* and *Esquire*, Engle's reach extended to figures who "have proven that nonfiction can be art," as one graduate said.[6] As creative writing professionalized through the mid-twentieth century, it joined forces with magazine journalism, especially through the workshop's influence, thus establishing its place in mass culture.

The workshop built its prestige "to ensure the maintenance of a literary elite," as Loren Glass describes it.[7] *Esquire* was thus the perfect sponsor for the conference on "The Writer in Mass Culture" since it shared the workshop's aim to foster a highbrow reputation for acclaimed literature while also reaching as many readers as possible on the mass market. Behind this promotional apparatus, the envy of most literary agents and publicists at the time, the workshop's curriculum offered training tailored to the rigors of the market, a "manner of publication without losing too much blood," according to Engle. This was "useful competition that at the same time freed [writers] from the imperatives of the marketplace."[8]

The workshop method, many point out, began with Wilbur Schramm rather than Engle. But under Schramm it bore little resemblance to the rigorous and often cruel peer critiques of student work that took place in the corrugated steel Quonset huts—leftover army barracks from World War Two—next to the Iowa Memorial Union on campus. Indeed, tales of tensions overflowing in this highly competitive environment describe one student blanching while absorbing insults and abruptly rushing out of class to retch on the shores of the Iowa River,[9] and another of an angry working-class Detroit poet delivering a savage blow to the face of his professor that shattered his glasses.[10] In a private letter, former student Edmund Skellings described an atmosphere in which "most of the social experience was an intense jockeying for status and position within the program."[11] The prior genera-

tion by contrast saw Schramm in 1940 leading his workshop sessions literally from his hearth, gathering students into the cozy confines of his home with Shakespeare, his giant sheepdog peacefully snoring by the fire, and his charming four-year-old daughter providing the entertainment.[12]

Engle frequently played the role of literary agent. Former student Charles Embree recalled how "one day at the beginning of class, Paul announced that he had surreptitiously sent a story by one of us to *Esquire*, and that the magazine had bought it." This, of course, immediately piqued the interest of his charges, now eager to learn who among them had been so lucky. Theatrically building suspense, "Paul waved a check in the air, as proof," finally revealing that Embree was the author, suggesting "the class adjourn and reassemble at [a nearby bar] for a party on *me*."[13] Embree obliged, delighted to be paid for his writing, on the one hand, and in a deeper sense, aware that his appearance in a reputable magazine trafficking in literary subjects would be a boon to his fledgling career. Engle's *Esquire* connections ran deep. In the 1961 introduction to *Midland: Twenty-five Years of Fiction and Poetry, Selected from the Writing Workshops of the State University of Iowa* he boasted, "The *Esquire Reader*, a collection of ten new writers of fiction, 1960, includes five who are either students or teachers at the fiction workshop."[14]

The workshop's devotion to magazine journalism was evident in its members' many publications for *Esquire* and venues like it. Their success was attributable to Engle's deliberate attempts to mold them into producers for high-end, mass-market journals as a key step toward professionalization. The workshop leveraged magazine writing according to a formula John J. Pauly identifies in which literary journalists "use their articles to capture a publisher's attention and win lucrative book contracts. In turn, the publishers use magazine articles to gauge the potential marketability of a writer's work." As a proving ground for the book publishing market, venues like *Esquire* ushered in serious realistic fiction from the workshop along with the New Journalism's in-depth nonfiction reporting by the mid 1960s, products that "increasingly look like a hand-made good in an age of mechanical reproduction, an expensive taste that only a few prominent publications can indulge," according to Pauly.[15] Readers had initially sampled literary journalists such as George Plimpton, Joan Didion, Truman Capote, and Thompson in outlets like *New York*, the *New Yorker*, the *Saturday Evening Post*, *Esquire*, *Harper's*, and *Rolling Stone* well before their first books appeared.[16]

The workshop produced more realistic narrative writing—precisely of the sort Engle so aggressively marketed to *Esquire*—than experimental fiction. As Mark McGurl's magisterial history of postwar creative writing programs demonstrates, "the dominant aesthetic orientation of the writing program has

been toward literary realism and away from experimentalism we naturally associate with reflexivity." McGurl explains, "programs like Iowa and Stanford . . . emerged from the richly descriptive regionalist literary movements of the thirties and have remained committed to some version of literary realism ever since."[17] The era of experimentation in nonfiction, however, emerged in the mid-1980s and reached unprecedented extremes in late 1990s when D'Agata earned his MFA at Iowa. The workshop in these early days actively resisted what Wolfe would later call "puppet-masters" who "were in love with the theory that the novel was a literary game, words on a page manipulated by an author."[18] Iowa alumnus T. Coraghessan Boyle reported that in a workshop run by the master realist John Cheever, he once started "making noises about 'experimental writing' and hailing people like Coover, Pynchon, Barthelme, and John Barth, but Cheever would have none of it." Cheever retorted that his own writing was experimental, however steeped in verisimilitude and the texture of writerly detail, and that "all good fiction is experimental," advising the youth, "don't get caught up in fads."[19]

Kidder at Iowa

In a recent interview with me, Tracy Kidder recalled the circumstance of his entry into the Iowa Writers' Workshop in 1972. "The workshop was kind of a refuge. I wasn't all that long back from Vietnam; I was kind of lost. My old professor, Robert Fitzgerald"—Kidder's undergraduate professor and mentor at Harvard, who had worked as a reporter for the *New York Herald Tribune*—"got me a sinecure there." Professional authorship by way of an Iowa degree was Kidder's response to his "family and the voice in my head at the time [that] said, 'why don't you go and figure out how to earn a living.'"[20] In an earlier interview, he described his move into the uncharted territory of creative nonfiction during his years at the workshop. He was the first student at Iowa to write literary journalism, whose generic ambiguity in the academy at the time lent him unique freedom and creative license other writers did not have. "One of the nice things about this kind of writing . . . when I was first trying my hand at it in the 1970s, was that it didn't really have a proper name. It wasn't part of the academy; no one was teaching courses in it." He relished the autodidactic nature of the pursuit, and "how you could sort of make it up as you went along," bringing a distinct "wildness to it."[21]

Some called his work nonfiction, which he claimed was too stark a word, one designating "the literature of fact, or factual writing." The other extreme, in his view, was the term "literary journalism," which overreached for prestige since "it takes a long time to know for sure what really deserves to be called literature." Thus for some material masquerading under the mantle of liter-

ary journalism, "it sounds a little pretentious, or at least premature, to slap that label on it." The definition he settled on at the time, which continues to define his work to this day, is "nonfiction writing in which not only the information, but the writing is important," especially the narrative "techniques of storytelling that never exclusively belonged to fiction," to which one could add the rhetorical devices and play with words that never exclusively belonged to poetry. Liberated by McPhee's claim that "no one makes the rules for everybody," Kidder unleashed his narrative creativity on his subjects that he painstakingly reported. His zeal for dogged reporting—he spent 178 days in a fifth-grade classroom filling 150 steno books with notes for his book *Among School Children*—drove his writing from the beginning.[22] But Kidder's first foray into the investigative world of nonfiction narrative was a disaster.

Kidder learned the craft of creative nonfiction through trial and error. His *The Road to Yuba City: A Journey into the Juan Corona Murders* was the culminating project of his MFA earned at the Iowa Writers' Workshop in 1974. Vietnam had provided enough wretched experience for one lifetime, making the process of investigating a murder for him "so disgusting" that he purchased the rights to the book from his publisher Doubleday in 1981. He vowed, "I don't want *The Road to Yuba City* to see the light of day again."[23] What went wrong? As his editor would later say, "Kidder's great gift is that he's not afraid of writing badly."[24] His capacity for retrospectively adjusting his writing according to his errors was essential in the achievement of *The Soul of a New Machine*, his next major project following *The Road to Yuba City*. Ethics were at the heart of his disgust with his first book, particularly his gross valorization of the mind of a killer, a tactic he found intolerable given his experience in Vietnam. "I wrote it in a kind of swashbuckling first person," he said regretfully. "I think my whole take on that disgusting murder case was wrong in retrospect."[25] Despite this fatal flaw, the book nonetheless established Kidder's signature immersive method of reporting, which is aptly illustrated in John Coward's portrayal of the author wearing rags and eating little while engaging in laborious twelve-hour days of fruit-picking from farm to farm to approximate Corona's itinerant life. He "immersed himself in the project, hopping trains to California, sleeping in flophouses, eating in storefront missions, and hiring out to thin peach trees, a job held by some of Corona's victims."[26]

Notwithstanding such uncompromising reporting methods, Kidder was new to the authorial role and had thus failed to realize his objective of spinning a harrowing yarn was complicated by his use of tone that might shed an implicit ethical judgment on his characters. This is especially true in nonfictional subjects. Thus, Kidder never forgave himself for his neutral casting of a

murderous figure—"the guy was guilty as sin," Kidder admitted—he deemed beneath contempt. The piece suffers from a first book's overzealous desire to generate riveting characters overflowing with charisma. As for the portrait of Juan Corona, a serial killer of more than twenty-five migrant farm workers in California during the early 1970s, Kidder concluded, "I just think it's too heavy handed."[27] The original owner's release of his rights to Corona's story first lured Kidder into covering an event that otherwise would not have attracted his attention. The dramatic circumstances that precipitated sudden availability of Corona's story may have artificially increased its value in Kidder's eyes. Given his inability to pay his own lawyer, Corona was assigned a public defender before attorney and entrepreneur Richard Hawk made an offer he could not refuse: free legal representation in exchange for the literary rights to the story of convict's life. Hawk indeed would have retained those rights and commissioned his story for film or print had he not been struck by the moral depravity and sheer ethical travesty of his efforts midway through preparations for trial. Abandoning his plea on behalf of Corona of not guilty by reason of insanity, Hawk fired the psychiatric experts on the case and relinquished his rights to Corona's life as a literary subject, enabling Kidder to seize the subject. Kidder found ready encouragement to do so from workshop director John Leggett, who was willing to grant him the latitude to write what would become the program's first-ever nonfiction MFA thesis.

If Corona's life story was too vile for Hawk, who could clearly see capitalizing on his life as a Faustian deal, it was certainly below Kidder to transform the grisly murders into an action adventure tale told in the first person as a garish and tawdry concession to the lowest common denominator of mass literary culture at the time. Kidder would never forget that lesson, and gravitated toward figures he could uphold for their humanity and nobility. Gifted, passionate, self-sacrificing individuals like Paul Farmer (a doctor with outsized virtue who established a clinic in Haiti) of *The Strength of What Remains* and Tom West of *The Soul of a New Machine* became his focus, who he could complicate by exposing their vulnerabilities and tragic flaws. His treatment of them, further, was tonally balanced; when he broached the topic of their reprehensible traits, he learned to distance himself and withhold his sympathy from the figure. This was crucial, Kidder later explained, because, the writer needs to signal to the reader that "I know this guy is beginning to make you feel uncomfortable. He's making me feel uncomfortable, too." Missing from *The Road to Yuba City* was precisely that ethical sensitivity seen in his dedication to the role of "everyman taking you along on this journey" and pausing to reflect on "what I think about my [ethical] discomfort and its causes," a technique central to *The Strength in What Remains.*[28]

Since the fiction workshop from 1972 to 1974, when Kidder attended, offered no formal courses in nonfiction writing, he found little in the way of guidance regarding the ethical nuances of nonfiction narrative. In my interview with him, he explained how nonfiction played a much more immediate and rudimentary role of a means of remaining in the program and thus preserving his authorial ambition: "I turned to nonfiction at Iowa not out of inspiration," but to "be a writer," since he "just wasn't turning out fiction." Terrified and blocked, the young Kidder "was intimidated by the wonderful writing my peers had been turning out." In retrospect, he acknowledged that nonfiction offered a way "to get out of my own head and look at other people's lives." Although he "had been a soldier in Vietnam," he "hadn't seen the world," which immersive journalistic reporting and writing offered. For him, fiction was almost "too solipsistic." His spirit of adventure drove him to "try something new and see how it works. No one was opposing me, and people were encouraging me."[29] Realizing he could not survive in the world of fiction, he ventured into long-form journalism and nonfiction narrative to save his career.

Kidder's turn to nonfiction in the face of his "creative well in fiction that was drying up" was prompted in part by Seymour Krim, who "was proselytizing for the New Journalism" at Iowa. Krim had been on staff in 1965 at the *New York Herald Tribune* with Jimmy Breslin, Tom Wolfe, and Dick Schaap, and became well known for his eloquent case on behalf of Jack Kerouac's place in American literature with his introduction to *Desolation Angels*. Eventually heading the workshop in the 1980s, the charismatic Krim was "a nonfiction writer at Iowa" who "*believed*" in that genre, exhorting fiction writers to "forget your stories of your dysfunctional families" and pursue literary journalism instead, despite the absence of nonfiction course offerings in the curriculum at the time.[30] Since the workshop was not offering any formal education in literary reportage in the early 1970s, Krim's directive applied to students' postgraduate careers, as their options at Iowa were limited to poetry or fiction until 1976, when the first nonfiction writing master's in English was established.

The lack of a nonfiction designation for his MFA degree did not deter Kidder. "Because of my own weaknesses"—feeling intimidated to produce fiction in the brutal, intensely competitive workshop environment, and knowing his well of creativity for fiction had dried up—"the degree was meaningless." He instead focused on professionalization, reasoning, "Who cares what degrees you have at a publishing house?" Unlike many Iowa MFAs during the 1970s—such as Stephen Wilbers, who went on to earn the PhD—Kidder deemed the publishing world more valuable than academia

in credentialing his professional career. Assuming the agent's role for him just as Engle had for the previous generation of workshop students, Kidder's instructor "[Dan] Wakefield got me through the door at the *Atlantic Monthly* and brought me the most significant contact of my life, a bright young editor named Richard Todd, who I am still working with today."[31] It was with Todd that he wrote three Vietnam pieces for the *Atlantic*, followed by *The Soul of a New Machine*, which brought him world fame.

Before receiving Todd's much-needed editorial guidance, Kidder lacked confidence in his own work at Iowa. The concentration of great minds there was overwhelming. "I was born in New York City and I thought Iowa City was one of the most cosmopolitan places I'd ever lived," he recalled. That sophisticated atmosphere made him reluctant to subject his writing to the scrutiny of his peers. Although he "presented fiction rather than nonfiction at workshop," he "didn't present very much," because he "got scared," he confessed. What was originally intended as a refuge proved to be an overwhelming pressure cooker of competition. "What was clear to me when I was there was that I was in *very* fast company," he said. Among the "incredibly talented people there, many were already accomplished and it was daunting; it was scary." He did not fit in, because he was "not particularly accomplished" and "pretty confused."[32]

"At a certain point Leggett said, 'You have to put something on a worksheet,' since I had been so harsh about other people's writing," Kidder recalled. Workshop sessions proved to be pointless attempts at resurrecting his fiction. He was "still trying to digest the fiction" he had "written on Vietnam" drawn from what he described as "a dreadful novel about the experience I didn't have in Vietnam."[33] The program's flexibility left room to escape this quagmire. "Everything was so loosey-goosey there, even Leggett said, 'We should call this the prose workshop.'" He thus capitalized on the early institutional configuration of the workshop as "a very informal place" in which "no one really cared as far as the requirements went" for the MFA. According to Kidder, "The counsel I got was mainly informal and didn't come in the theater of these workshops, which were really kind of like inquisitions."[34]

Although he refused to subject his work to the savage criticism of his peers in workshop sessions, Kidder could dish it out with zeal, joining in the sharklike feeding frenzy that consisted of "a dozen young writers in a seminar room, each with a copy of your story" hurling barbs that included "pretentious," "sentimental," "boring," and "Budweiser writing." His acute sense of the inferiority of his own work led him to envy and "disdain them out of self-disdain" and to say "harsh, dismissive things about other students' stories," which towered above his own.[35] Once his fiction finally appeared on the

weekly worksheet, those he had wounded relished the opportunity to avenge his cruelty. Leggett had seen this as something of a rite of passage; had Kidder not presented, Leggett is not likely to have loosened program protocol on his behalf to enable his completion of the degree. By allowing Kidder to submit a nonfiction MFA thesis, Leggett was the first director in workshop history (since 1936) to break policy restricting culminating projects exclusively to poetry and fiction. To do so, Leggett used his administrative authority as director to sign as his supervisor despite not actually supervising the project. In fact, no faculty had formally served as Kidder's thesis supervisor. Krim would have been the logical choice, but would not commit. What little faculty guidance Kidder received in the craft of nonfiction writing came from Wakefield.

Alleviating some of Kidder's fear and confusion at Iowa, Wakefield's class presented several limited opportunities to write nonfiction. As Kidder explains, "I did a piece about an Iowa football player and a wheelchair basketball team. Wakefield," the former sports correspondent for the *Indianapolis Star* and regular contributor to *Harper's*, the *Atlantic*, and *GQ*, encouraged him. It was not until Kidder inherited a coveted teaching fellowship at the workshop that he finally launched his embedded journalistic work in California for *The Road to Yuba City*. "At Iowa I had a teaching writing fellowship," he notes, "which Leggett handed to me, because the guy who was supposed to get it went absolutely mad. So I had this nifty job there," which provided him a living wage and tuition waver, freeing him to pursue his work on the Juan Corona murders. He "spent a lot of time flying to California. It wasn't so expensive then, and there were no security gates. It was a terrible book" that all this research culminated in, "but I learned a lot," he said. With his MFA thesis that led to *The Road to Yuba City*, Kidder added a second disaster to his other self-described failure—the unpublished novel he toted with him to Iowa about what he "didn't see in Vietnam" that provided fodder for his classmates at fiction workshop bloodlettings.[36]

Throughout the late 1970s, Kidder recalibrated his craft through indefatigable investigative work for *The Soul of a New Machine*. His writing drew from both Todd's guidance and his understanding of narrative technique learned through his active participation in fiction workshops at Iowa. The book's opening tableau of Tom West, the CEO of Data General, introduces the vital elements of his character we find played out in the ensuing narrative. The details of this portrait all dramatize his leadership qualities on display at Data General. Kidder's expansion of suggestive detail into rich symbolism functioned as a means of compensating for lack of data. "I worried and worried that I didn't know enough about [West], whose special vanity had been to make himself mysterious to me as well as to his team of computer engi-

neers." Todd advised that West could come to life "partly through suggestive external details, and partly through other characters' perceptions," a method he associated with F. Scott Fitzgerald's fiction. In the absence of facts, Kidder could discern character through such peripheral clues, assuring him, "That's all right. You can do a Gatsby on him."[37]

Kidder represents a transition from "Wolfe's outlandish scenarios and larger-than-life characters [that] leap from the page," as Boynton describes it, toward McPhee, the figure he cites most as the model for his writing. The hundreds of hardware computer engineers he interviewed for *The Soul of a New Machine* testify to Kidder's adherence to McPhee's insistence on "the importance of rigorous reporting on the events and characters of everyday life over turns of bravura in writing style."[38] Although the main figure of the book, Tom West, does appear cast in Ahab-like dimensions of supreme power and will, Kidder's language is relatively muted, as he submerges his ego while disappearing into his subjects, most of which he draws from the unlikeliest of places typically invisible to mainstream culture. The gentler, more nuanced approach of *Soul* represents a distinct turn away from Wolfe-esque boldness and the grisly gore of *The Road to Yuba City* that drove Kidder to renounce the project he began at the Iowa Writers' Workshop. In that self-consciously pretentious first attempt at Iowa to be "high minded at the time," Kidder confessed to me, "I was trying to write *In Cold Blood*."[39]

Kidder's capacity to shape real events into novelistic narrative derives from the long history of journalistic expression liberated from the shackles of the impossible standard of absolute reportorial objectivity.[40] To establish the firm presence of the reporter's experience and voice yet still adhere to the facts was Kidder's approach in *The Soul of a New Machine*. His seamless, well-mannered storytelling would transform throughout an era of innovation in the 1980s at Iowa that gave rise to D'Agata's radical renovation of nonfiction to show that "it can be as lyrical, as fragmented, as self-interrupting, and as self-conscious as the most experimental fiction or verse." His approach, as James Wood describes it, would be to "refuse to yield to the idea of nonfiction as stable, fixed, already formed."[41]

The Rise of Experimental Nonfiction at Iowa

D'Agata's emphasis on art in the space of nonfiction marks the latest stage in the evolution of the Iowa Nonfiction Writing Program (NWP). It was not until 1976 that a graduate degree program in nonfiction writing was officially introduced. But as Kidder's experience in the workshop suggests, a groundswell of interest in literary journalism at Iowa had surfaced by 1972 under the influence of *Herald Tribune* New Journalist Seymour Krim. Also

encouraging the development of nonfiction writers at Iowa in the early 1970s was workshop director John Leggett. As a former editor at *Harper's*, Leggett held a broader view of the publishing industry at the time than his predecessor, the poet George Starbuck, whose concerns were more limited to poetry and fiction. Enthusiasm for nonfiction, sparked by the New Journalism's rise to prominence in the mid-1960s, inspired a new surge of interest in college courses and the writing of nonfiction. Buoyed by the cultural prominence of the New Journalism and this rising popularity of nonfiction among readers and students, a group of six professors formed the Iowa nonfiction program in 1976, an all-purpose "Master of Arts in English/Expository Writing" geared toward students' professional interests. Some students earned the degree to pursue technical and business writing careers, while others prepared for occupations as professional authors and journalists in the magazine and book industries. The first MA/W degrees earned at that time included projects on the personal essay, film reviews, memoir, and literary criticism. Fiction and poetry no longer held a generic monopoly at Iowa due to the responsiveness to New Journalism by faculty such as Wakefield and students such as Kidder. The NWP now consistently takes the top spot in annual rankings of the more than 150 similar programs published in *Poets and Writers*.[42]

Carl Klaus, whose interest in destabilized authorial subjectivity appears in *The Made-Up Self: Impersonation in the Personal Essay*, made his imprint on the program when he assumed directorship in 1985. He established its exclusive focus on literary nonfiction, eliminating film reviews and literary criticism in the MA/W curriculum. Conventional memoir became reimagined as a reflective art under the radically aestheticized category of the essay. Klaus pioneered an emphasis on "the conflict between the expression of the literal truth and a striving for literary effect," especially how "the first person singular is invariably a *persona* whose existence depends on literary performance." His reinvention in the 1980s of the traditional memoir to absorb the "reportorial, scenic, experimental, meditative, informative," and activist elements of creative nonfiction encouraged the next generation of the 1990s to "recount stories in a poetic, figurative prose that results in a hybrid" known as the lyric essay.[43] D'Agata led that movement into the 1990s with a vision of the lyric essay as "taking the subjectivity of the personal essay" that Klaus's generation had developed and renovated, "and the objectivity of the public essay" associated with newspaper and magazine journalism, "and conflate them into a literary form that relies on art and fact," drawing extensively on the reporter's tools of observation, argumentation, and perception.[44]

In the 1990s, students read pioneers in the art of reflective nonfiction, including Montaigne and Swift, Didion and Orwell, Nancy Mairs and E.B.

White.[45] The program soon established a reputation for personal narratives marked by reflective meditative prose, drawing the ire of Iowa's journalism school, which alleged it was too introspective and thus blind to audience. But such charges were dispelled when the program transformed into the NWP and began publication of three leading journals focusing exclusively on nonfiction prose, *Creative Nonfiction* (1993), *Fourth Genre* (1999), and *River Teeth* (1999). Its star students, such as Jon Anderson, furthermore, had come from careers in journalism. Anderson recalls a chance meeting with Klaus in Iowa City at Prairie Lights Bookstore while he was still employed at the *Chicago Tribune*. He recalled how Klaus "more or less ordered me to pull together a collection of my *Chicago Tribune* columns and send them to him." He enrolled in the program, and "the rest is *City Watch: Discovering the Uncommon Chicago*, my first book," noting that "the dream of any journalist is to go deeper in their writing and the Nonfiction Writing Program helped me make that turn."[46] "Borders," Anderson's 1990 thesis, developed out of Bill Murray's course, The Literary Journalists, "which was aimed squarely at [attempts] to move beyond the flatness of contemporary feature writing and shape facts into a form that would, in the words of Tom Wolfe, look at experience through 'the eye sockets' of the people involved, speaking in their own voices, as if the narrator knew their thoughts or feelings." The course's objective, and inspiration of Anderson, aptly illustrates Iowa's obsession with closing the gap between subjectivity and object in literary journalism.[47]

D'Agata's epiphany as a student at Iowa in the late 1990s is telling of this trajectory toward the examination of perception itself. His instructor took his NWP class on a field trip to dissect eyeballs of cows, a gruesome task that had them fingering "a bunch of jelly and nerves" beneath which they discovered "a perfectly clear agate lens." Holding them up, they "could see through the cow's eyes." Then it dawned on him as to "how powerful and absolutely gorgeous perception really is. . . . But at the same time we all realized they were flawed and fundamentally different." He realized that "what we were seeing was something we'd never really be able to understand, but would nonetheless try to capture . . . for the rest of our lives as writers." Tellingly, through the realization of the radical discontinuities of vision, he came into being as a writer "exhilarated by the challenges of the craft."[48]

By D'Agata's entrance into the NWP as a student in 1996, the craft issues that dominated discussion focused on highly problematizing and questioning received static notions of the self in first-person narratives, particularly as a means of exploring creative boundaries. He was the leader in experimental forms of nonfiction at the time, reinventing the lyric essay as a nonlinear pastiche of interview transcripts, reportage, excerpted primary sources, and prose

notable for its subtle poetic lyricism. He graduated in 1998, four years after the NWP began offering an MFA exclusively in literary nonfiction. His MFA thesis, "Round Trip," was his attempt to write his version of Joan Didion's "At the Dam." "I loved that essay," he recalled, to the extent that "when I was younger I wanted to be that essay—not just to have written it but to be able to inhabit it, like drag, to feel its sentences so intimately inside me that the power of Didion's prose might somehow cause an infection."[49]

The issue of participant-observer balance was central to the formation of literary journalism in the works of Jo Ann Beard and Will Jennings. David Torrey Peters first wrote "The Bamenda Syndrome" for an MFA at Iowa in 2000, a piece that foregrounds his struggles with empathy and doubt in his reportage suppressed from "an earlier skeletal version" written "as though I were some detached journalist with complete faith in his own ability to collect the who, what, when, where, and why with calm professionalism."[50] Other issues central to the pursuit of literary journalism drove the best work produced during D'Agata's era, including Hope Edelman's, which emphasizes the complexity of narrative persona, and Michele Morano's, which experiments with the compression of time in narration. Morano's reflection on her composition process offers a powerful mediation on how the danger of "letting your imagination run off with real life" and straying from chronology and lived detail can be detrimental to the story's authenticity.[51] Her discoveries can be seen as an apt check on precisely the ethical transgressions of *Lifespan*.

D'Agata's influence on the program in the late 1990s bears his unmistakable concern for radical experimentation with the form. His prominence in the program traces back to his status as its first major author since the inception of the nonfiction MFA in 1994 and extends to his current position as its director. The perennial leader in graduate nonfiction programs, Iowa admits twelve students annually seeking the privilege of learning the craft under prominent faculty that have including Geoff Dyer, Mary Reuefle, Lia Purpura, and Bernard Cooper. Its alumni include National Book Critics award winner Eula Biss, known for *Notes from No Man's Land* and Yiyun Li, PEN/Hemingway award winner for *A Thousand Years of Good Prayers*. Many have gone on to teach in creative writing programs; NWP graduate John Price (*Daddy Long Legs*) is currently the director of the program in creative writing at the University of Nebraska. These powerful authors all build on the tradition originally set by Karl Klaus when he took over as director in 1985. Klaus was one of the original members of Iowa's Expository Writing Committee, which set the groundwork for the NWP. The NWP now reflects D'Agata's defiance of conventional journalistic categories by encouraging an active reconsideration of the status of facts and narrative perspective.

"I'll Be the Lamb"

John D'Agata's *The Lifespan of a Fact* shows a new sophistication in relation to the craft of literary journalism that first arose out of the NWP when he was a student there in the 1990s. The controversy about the book reflected the latest stage in the evolution of the NWP itself, suggesting the distance between its origins in Kidder's McPhee-inspired narrative journalism and D'Agata's experimentation influenced by authors such as David Foster Wallace. Wallace, like D'Agata, developed a complex philosophical system by which to reconfigure conventional journalistic reporting and writing, allowing for higher levels of literary expression. But when this pattern of radical reconfiguration of conventional reporting reached unprecedented heights with the *Lifespan* controversy of 2012, concerns surfaced about its impact on the program's student body, which typically drew figures like Jon Anderson from legacy media. "I'm afraid we've alienated traditional journalists from our program," said D'Agata's concerned colleague Robin Hemley, a former NWP director.[52]

The main concerns of that controversy align with the latest craft issues from the NWP pertaining to consciousness and perception. D'Agata seeks a "type of contingent truth" Josh Roiland associates with Wallace, one that acknowledges the consciousness of the reporter that filters the subjects presented on the page.[53] D'Agata's connection to Wallace runs deep. Wallace used his authority to help promote D'Agata's *Halls of Fame* (2003) with a blurb that praised him as "one of the most significant writers to have emerged in the last few years," claiming "his essays combine the innovation and candor of David Shields and William Vollman with the perception and concinnity and sheer aesthetic weight of Annie Dillard and Lewis Hyde."[54] D'Agata radically expands on what John Pauly describes as literary journalism's resistance to conventional journalism's unselfconscious reliance on "'facts' to justify their stories." In the process, he debunks the realism of nonfiction and its attendant "fact-fetish" to acknowledge that facts are deployed rhetorically. As such, he aims to "free the literary from its earthly entrapments" and in the process illustrate how "all writing is a matter of social negotiation."[55]

The Lifespan of a Fact details such social negotiation in D'Agata's struggle to maintain control—in many cases willfully defending what he knows are inaccuracies—of his story of sixteen-year-old Levi Presley's July 2002 Las Vegas suicide. His nemesis is his fact checker, Jim Fingal of *The Believer*, a journal specializing in nonfiction. The burlesque of D'Agata's egocentric author defending his original inaccuracies for the sake of literary effect plays off of the narrow rule-following Fingal through their contentious sophomoric email correspondence. The correspondence alternately functions as comic relief and

metadata set against the grim narrative of Levi's death and the trial faced by the youth's survivors in the aftermath. Justifications for D'Agata's alterations give way to other instances in the correspondence where Fingal aptly accuses D'Agata of sloppy reporting and laziness. The exchange dramatizes the tensions in what Jan Whitt calls "settling the borderland" of nonfiction. In that borderland, "news is not a collection of facts" nor merely "the recording of a source's words or chronological events," because "within human events, meanings propel other events and governing philosophies into relation with a particular community."[56]

Despite D'Agata's claim that he and Fingal had alerted readers through the media about the embellishment of the original correspondence to exaggerate their characters, many took it as authentic. If Wikipedia is any indication, the state of common knowledge on the subject currently calls it "a real-life exchange" that was a "heated seven-year battle" over "whether it is appropriate to change facts in writing that is both nonfiction and art."[57] Proceeding under this widely held assumption, Jennifer B. McDonald of the *New York Times Book Review*, for example, called D'Agata "a wolf in journalist's clothing, recklessly blowing off facts as if they were so much dandelion fluff antithetical to his stated purpose of essaying the Truth." This "self-appointed ambassador of the essay" was "playing God" while "inviting us down a slippery slope" into "hogwash."[58] The uproar drew extensive input from such influential commentators as Mike Daisey and Dinty W. Moore. Online discussion boards lit up with guardians of traditional journalism opposing the avant garde. "What concerns me," Moore wrote, "is that he has gone so public, so big, so 'in your face' aggressive about his lofty goals to create a new art space." Like McDonald, Moore made a one-to-one correlation between the condescending egomaniac "John" of *Lifespan* and D'Agata himself.[59] None of these critics, McDonald included, took exception to his immersive and painstaking reporting methods. McDonald actually praised how "he immersed himself in a place, got to know its people, consulted documents, recorded his impressions, [and] turned his material into a narrative."[60]

Jack Shafer of Reuters, a journalistic mainstay, came to D'Agata's defense, arguing that long before this "literary provocateur" had begun altering dates, fusing quotes, changing statistics to seek a truth but not necessarily accuracy, "Truman Capote was doing the same in his most famous work, 1966's *In Cold Blood*." Shafer highlighted the long history of readers spotting errors and inconsistencies with the historical record in Capote's book that he defended as an "immaculately factual" nonfiction novel. Immediately after the publication of *In Cold Blood*, Philip K. Thompkins published "In Cold Fact" in *Esquire,* exposing Capote's liberties with the historical record.[61] Capote

repeatedly denied mounting evidence and allegations for decades, often with brash arrogance. He insisted he was above stooping to petty distortions that might sully six years of painstaking researching and reporting for "a book, the point of which is factual accuracy," as he told George Plimpton. D'Agata, on the other hand, not only admitted, but also vigorously defended the method of adjusting existing facts in literary nonfiction as long as such alterations are noted to the reader, and that no facts are invented from scratch. "What separates D'Agata . . . from Capote is his candor in interviews about his manipulations," Shafer revealed, a point corroborated in my February 2012 email interview with D'Agata.[62] "Jim and I have been quite vocal about the constructed nature of our exchange, but I guess that's less interesting to some critics who just want to call me a jerk," he wrote, resigning himself to being sacrificed on the altar of traditional journalism: "So be it. I'll be the lamb."[63]

Shafer argues that D'Agata's project "is harmless" given his disavowal of traditional journalistic standards. The harm in Capote's book lies in its wide acceptance as a model of complete reportorial accuracy despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary that has since been lost to literary history or willfully forgotten. Admired for achieving such a compelling novelistic narrative while remaining firmly grounded in unaltered evidence, *In Cold Blood* "continues to be taught in journalism classes, is celebrated as a masterpiece, and I would guess it has been read by fifty percent of Americans who consider themselves educated," Shafer observes.[64] While "What Happens There," the essay reproduced in the center of each page of *The Lifespan of a Fact*, does not invent dialogue or fabricate scenes that did not actually occur, the exchange between D'Agata and Fingal went further.

In response to my question about how much, if any, of that correspondence had been invented, D'Agata confirmed it was mostly a constructed elaboration of an exchange that actually occurred. "But yes, it's a performance," he explained. "It's certainly based on arguments we had throughout the fact-checking process, but the exchange in the book is a bit of an exaggerated farce, to be sure. . . . In a book about the importance of construction in literature (be it in poetry, fiction, or especially nonfiction), our discussion of that argument was intentionally constructed."[65] D'Agata's deliberately deceptive presentation of that discussion is the book's Achilles heel. Unlike most facts D'Agata alters, which he discloses to the reader, the embellishment of the correspondence was not transparent. Readers interested in seeing that original exchange had no access to it. Archiving it online or including it in an appendix would have sufficed in the manner of his "Note to Readers" at the end of *About a Mountain* (2010), which details his precise departures from facts. Disclosure of the actual correspondence might have functioned as an

additional layer of self-reflexive irony by glossing or *footnoting a footnote*, a move worthy of Wallace himself given his endless fascination with the expressive potential of the footnote. Herein lies perhaps *Lifespan*'s deepest flaw: its failure to disclose the vast extent—so vast it dangerously bridges on outright fiction—to which the framing device of the email exchange between author and fact-checker was "constructed."

This stunt represents the latest and most reckless of D'Agata's signature moves designed to establish his nonfiction as art, a point he emphasizes in the "To the Reader" address of *The Next American Essay* (2003): "I want you preoccupied with art in this book, not with facts for the sake of facts."[66] In one sense, this prioritization of aesthetics evades responsibility to the factual record. In another, it resonates with the aim to "narrow the distance between subjectivity and the object, not divorce them," as John C. Hartsock has said of literary journalism's special access to intimacy that lends it its unique power to engage the reader.[67] Literary journalism's evolution toward narrowing the gap—rather than widening, as in conventional journalism—between subjectivity and the object has been an ongoing pursuit in nonfiction writing at Iowa.

Kidder on D'Agata

Our November 2015 conversation marked the first occasion that Kidder had heard of the D'Agata's *Lifespan* controversy, which he curtly dismissed as a mere "tempest in a teapot." He was also unaware that D'Agata had taken over as director of the NWP. Upon hearing it, he sarcastically quipped, "good luck with that," and bristled defensively, "at Iowa nonfiction is nowhere near as high-powered as the workshop in fiction and poetry."[68] His better judgment, instilled by McPhee's dictum that "nobody makes the rules for everyone," then softened him. "I have no beef with D'Agata, just a philosophical difference," he said, before adding, "you don't overtly lie" in the space of nonfiction.[69]

Despite being unaware of the 2012 controversy, Kidder nonetheless found another occasion to rebuke D'Agata in his 2013 book *Good Prose*, in this case for "fictionalizing" in *About a Mountain*. Kidder warns against "substituting made-up dates for real ones," noting "the large risk of fictionalizing is a loss of faith by both writer and reader." He takes D'Agata to task for his endnote to *About a Mountain,* which indicates to the reader that the narrative depicted "over a single summer" compressed his actual time there, which was much longer. This is "for dramatic effect only," and with full disclosure of "each instance" in the text. Changes in character names and the combining of "a number of subjects into a singe composite 'character'"—John Hersey,

Truman Capote, and long before them Henry David Thoreau have used both time compression and composite techniques—are also noted in the text.[70] Kidder elaborated on his published denunciation of this practice, alleging, "I think he's not writing nonfiction."[71] As McPhee taught him, "There's lots of artistry, but you don't make things up." Instead, Kidder suggests, the nonfiction writer should do his or her best "to reconstruct a story" and "chase after accuracy." The inevitability of subjectivity, he argues, does not mean that it should become a "disinhibiting drug" that "absolves them of responsibility."[72] In speaking with me, he was even more candid in his condemnation of D'Agata. "When you're telling stories you can do a lot of things with time," he said, "but I don't think you can overtly lie about something."[73]

D'Agata is not the first to have risked inaccuracy in the quest for intimacy missing from traditional journalism. Prominent literary journalists such as Jacqui Banaszynski and Gay Talese warn against the use of a tape recorder for the same reason cited by D'Agata—it can present a barrier to intimacy. Banaszynski argued that "a tape recorder can be as intrusive as a reporter's notebook." Further, the discrepancy between recorder and notes is unavoidable since "the notes I record are closer to proper grammar, though the person did not say them exactly that way." Talese goes further to suggest traditional reporting methods with notes and recorder obscure and often misrepresent the essence of the subject. "I do not use a tape recorder," he confessed, not because of laziness, but because it detracts from his access to "what the other person is thinking," and his own capacity "to see the world from that person's view." Like D'Agata, Talese is adamant that "The exact words people say don't necessarily capture their view, especially when you have a tape recorder working."[74]

Talese's objective resonates with D'Agata's project of "getting to know people, hanging out with them and listening to them" without the interference of recording devices or notepads. This process is integral to "making them into verifiable" rather than wholly invented "characters." D'Agata's radical pursuit of intimacy with his subjects through such immersive reporting techniques suggests a deeper core principle—paradoxically consonant with older approaches like Talese's—behind the comic hyperbole of his role as provocateur self-righteously defending "this genre [from] being terrorized by an unsophisticated reading public that's afraid of accidentally venturing into terrain that can't be footnoted and verified by seventeen different sources."[75] Despite glaring generational differences in their approaches to nonfiction craft, Kidder and D'Agata share a deep and abiding commitment to accessing human subjectivity through immersive reporting. Reflecting their respective generation's nonfiction at Iowa, Kidder's traditional data-gathering routines

that render polished narrative established the foundation for D'Agata's unorthodox reporting and writing that exposes the machinery behind the wings of the finished product. Aesthetic technique as a hedge against limited facts, even for Kidder, was essential to his craft. To "do a Gatsby," as he and his editor Todd called the essential technique that unlocked the main character of the work that would go on to win the National Book Award, was to engage in the novelist's art for a nonfiction narrative worthy of Fitzgerald himself.

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Notes

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Special Collections. Faculty and graduates of the workshop have won twenty-eight Pulitzer Prizes (including two recent ones, in 2005 and 2010) since 1947, in addition to numerous National Book Awards. Its sole Pulitzer and National Book Award for general nonfiction went to Tracy Kidder in 1982 for *The Soul of a New Machine*: "UI Pulitzer Prize Winners," http://www.iowalum.com/pulitzerPrize/.

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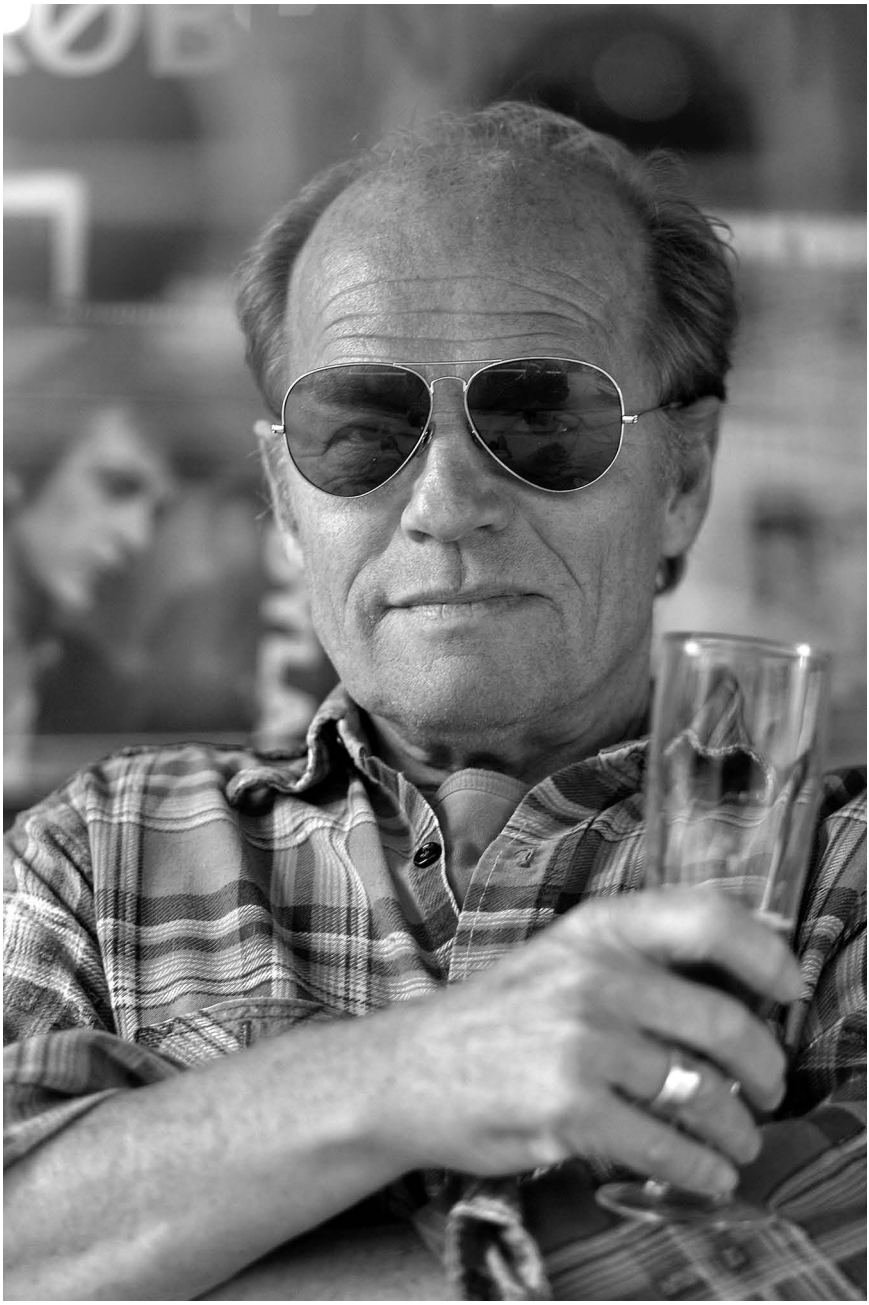

Photograph by Carolina Segre Høyer for the cover of *RUST Magazine*, May 2012.

Playful Imitation at Work: The Formation of a Danish "Gonzo Thingummy"

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Abstract: For decades, Danish author and literary journalist Morten Sabroe (b. 1947) has evoked Hunter S. Thompson's American Gonzo paradigm in his own work on a regular basis. The association with Thompson has enabled Sabroe's privileged position as a literary journalist and satirist, but it has also exposed him to ridicule, casting him as a Thompson wannabe or "Gonzo thingummy." This essay draws on rhetorical theory of imitation to explain how Thompson's own stylistic experiments and demonstrative perspective-taking have founded and invited the mimicry that would become a defining part of Sabroe's career and may not be so ridiculous. In rhetorical education, imitation of favorite rhetors and appropriation of features of model texts is assumed to strengthen both one's prose style and character by systematically developing a sense of perspective in practice. Thompson is known to have ventured into imitational exercises in his self-education as a writer, typing up passages from admired works in order to familiarize himself with specific structure and style. Sabroe's engagement of Thompson's work through allusion, pastiche, and translation adds up to a similar formative process, and the playful engagement of different discourses is as integral to his writing as it is to Thompson's. Examples of Sabroe's literary journalism are presented to show how he makes use of this dual and tentative way of writing to destabilize and intervene with media discourses and public images that weigh on politicians, on news journalists, and on Bob Dylan on tour in Scandinavia in 2005.

"Kurt," I said, "it's important that we meet the Danes unprejudiced. That we approach them with the neutral, objective gaze of the journalist. That we write about them as they are, and not as we see them."

"There is only one way!" he declared. "Colonic irrigation."

. . . .My days as a subjective journalist were over. I was the most unprejudiced and neutral individual to walk the earth even if I could hardly walk.[1]

More than any other Danish writer, Morten Sabroe (b. 1947) has shaped his literary journalism and persona with reference to Hunter S. Thompson's Gonzo paradigm.[2] For decades, Sabroe tempted ridicule by imitating Thompson's work on one occasion after the other. He has not been shy to pose in front of the camera wearing Thompson-style sunglasses and colorful shirts or to use drawings by Thompson's trademark illustrator Ralph Steadman in the cover design for collections of his own journalism.[3] As late as 2005 he wrote a straight pastiche of Thompson's *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* in Danish national daily *Politiken* when reporting that he was "somewhere on the outskirts of Gothenburg" on his way to a Bob Dylan concert in Sweden when his Viagra pills began to take hold and colored his vision blue.[4]

What is remarkable is the way Sabroe has proved able to turn a potentially pitiful or just silly status as an imitator or epigone into a professional ethos in itself, mainly as a cultural satirist. To understand this peculiar feat it is important to note that even by imitating Thompson, Sabroe has been imitating Thompson. That is to say, Thompson himself was a famous imitator, not just of admired authors and various contemporary discourses but also of himself; it has become a commonplace that his work ultimately "descended into self-parody," as William McKeen puts it.[5] The various forms of discursive mimicry kept his playful character development as a literary journalist in the foreground of his work, which may help account for its extraordinary appeal to colleagues across the world.

In an insightful reading of *Las Vegas*, Robert Alexander has shown how the formative process of the journalist is both a theme and a trope in Thompson's narrative.[6] Alexander connects the journalistic development of protagonist Raoul Duke to the motif of vision and to the various changes of perspective in the narrative, many of which are induced by specific drugs that each offer a way of dealing with Duke's alienation toward mainstream journalism. When Duke makes his famous remark: "I was, after all, a professional journalist, so I had the obligation to *cover the story*, for good or ill," he is demonstratively trying the rhetoric of conventional reporting on for size, without convincing himself or his readers of the fit.[7] As if to generalize this form of tentative mimicry, Robert Terrill has characterized rhetorical imitation as a discursive practice that is productively and self-consciously dual and "manifest in a faculty of perspective taking."[8] Indeed, Terrill recommends imitation as an educational paradigm that grows out of the classical rhetorical tradition, in which systematic engagement of other people's manners of writing and speaking fosters a self-awareness and becomes an integral part of civic education and character formation.

In this study, I take cues from Terrill and Alexander to argue that such

perspective taking as a factor in journalistic development has been reverberating in the transnational reception of Thompson's work, and I present the work of Sabroe as a striking case in point. Like Thompson himself, Sabroe has been presenting himself as a playful imitator, or "wannabe," who has tempted ridicule as a satirist and earned his credentials accordingly. Sabroe's literary journalism is, like Thompson's, an experimental practice performed by a journalistic character always in the making. Both can be said to cultivate imitation in a classical rhetorical vein and share a related vision of public discourse as dual and performative, which, in turn, makes public discourse open to interventions by literary journalists like themselves. In this sense, Gonzo journalism can be said to serve a civic function that is easily overlooked, as its immediate entertainment value tends to steal the picture.

Before turning to the work and career of Sabroe, I will briefly elaborate on the classical idea of imitation as a desirable civic practice and go on to connect it to Thompson's manner of developing his countercultural journalistic persona and style of writing.

Imitation in the Classical Tradition and in Thompson's

Imitation of discourse is today most often associated with either deliberate acts of plagiarism or mindless borrowing or aping. Yet, both classical and contemporary literature on the education of rhetors, whether these be speakers or writers, are mainly concerned with the ways in which systematic attention to other people's rhetorical practice may benefit not just your own practice but the formation of your character as an active citizen.[9] In the ancient tradition, main sources regarding this way of thinking about education are Isocrates (436–338 BC), Cicero (106–43 BC), and Quintilian (ca. 35–100 CE).[10] The latter wrote a twelve-book opus on the lifelong education of orators and devoted part of volume ten to a discussion of imitation. After pointing out a number of specific authors worth imitating, including poets, historians, and philosophers, Quintilian goes on to discuss the principles of imitation as such.

The reasoning goes that human beings have a natural and pragmatic impulse to imitate each other's practices when picking up skills in everything from agriculture to music, and Quintilian recommends that we practice this impulse systematically when learning to speak and write in civic settings. He warns readers, however, that imitation "should not be confined merely to words. We must consider the appropriateness with which those [model] orators handle the circumstances and persons involved in the various cases in which they were engaged, and observe the judgment and powers of arrangement which they reveal," and so forth from the level of invention to the

use of examples and stylistic features.[11] What is more, as "even great authors have their blemishes,"[12] Quintilian encourages close scrutiny of any given admired piece of work. Students should be careful not to "mould themselves on first impressions" and not imitate just one model.[13] Instead, they should read and imitate a variety of authors and to do it critically and selectively ("every student should realize what it is he is to imitate, and to know *why* it is good"[14]). Encouraged are close encounters with the prose and practices of various models so students become familiar with the inner workings of well-designed speech for specific occasions. A repertoire of examples is internalized by way of written and oral exercises and becomes a resource for adaption by the students in accordance with their own temper as they encounter new occasions and situations.

In Cicero's dialogue *On the Ideal Orator*, the remark is made that as a "kind of wit," imitation can be funny: "But we may only use it secretly, if at all, and in passing; otherwise, it does not at all befit a well-bred person."[15] The potentially ridiculous is also touched upon by Quintilian, who warns his readers, as mentioned, to imitate just *one* favorite example. He emphasizes that not even the best of orators, not even Cicero, can be the only example you imitate. He stresses that you have to harness your admiration, pick and mix models and particular traits for imitation so that you become independent and flexible and able to surpass your predecessors. "It is a positive disgrace to be content to owe all our achievement to imitation,"[16] he states, and "the mere follower must always lag behind."[17] On a personal note, however, Quintilian admits that, actually, Cicero's example is quite perfect and hard to resist even if it is too hard to compete with: "For my own part," writes Quintilian, "I should consider it sufficient, if I could always imitate him successfully."[18]

Terrill argues in 2011 that this classical paradigm, along with its simple and seemingly rather mechanical exercises, such as memorizing, translating, and paraphrasing, is still highly relevant today. He argues that such mimetic practices serve to cultivate a double perspective on communication in the student writer or speaker. It encourages students to shift between being an interpreter of the original text and a performer of their own text, which makes them aware of how texts are interrelated and how multiple perspectives might be adopted. This cultivation and recognition of duality, says Terrill, might serve as a valuable antidote to what he refers to as a "cult of sincerity," a naive belief that our words must be exactly one with our mind and that our options in terms of presentation and hence of perspective are not always multiple.[19]

To sum up, it is traditionally recognized that rhetorical imitation or mimetic practices grow out of admiration and can be competitive, educational, and potentially comical. Imitation must be eclectic, understated, and care-

fully transformed if imitators are to be taken seriously as great orators in their own right. Yet, as Terrill adds, such mimetic practices might serve to productively disrupt notions of sincerity and authenticity in public discourse. In the mimetic paradigm, "rhetorical performance [is] not assessed according to motivation, commitment, or feeling but the reponse it stirs in an audience."[20] It does not conceal its artfulness in the interest of creating trust but instead reveals its form and its intention to stir, and must be "assessed along multiple lines of effectiveness rather than the single point of authenticity."[21]

As for Thompson, to now make the leap from rhetoric in a broad sense to Gonzo journalism specifically, his self-education as a writer and journalist was informed by exercises in imitation. In fact, in terms of the classical tradition, Thompson set an example as a good student through selective, diligent, and close encounters with model texts. This part of his craft was "with him from the beginning," writes Jay Cowan, who notes that most people "know what they like when they read it. But they rarely know [as Thompson did] why the writer is able to deliver it."[22]

Thompson looked carefully into the why and how. As noted in several other biographies, he was not only "reading voluminously"[23] and "used to mark up pages of favorite books, underlining phrases that impressed him,"[24] he also practiced typing, word by word, work by favorite authors like F. Scott Fitzgerald and Ernest Hemingway.[25] In this manner Thompson got closely acquainted with their style of writing, and he is quoted by McKeen for accounting for his practice like this:

> I'm very much into rhythm—writing in a musical sense. I like gibberish, if it sings. Every author is different—short sentences, long, no comma, many commas. It helps a lot to understand what you're doing. You're writing, and so were they. It won't fit often—that is, *your* hands don't want to do *their* words—but you're learning. . . . I just want to feel what it feels like to write that well. . . . Basically it's music. . . . I wanted to learn from the best.[26]

It seems clear that Thompson was concerned with stylistic effect and the reading experience (more than, let's say, truth or news value), and he is reported to have enjoyed having his texts read aloud to investigate the response: "[S]omething Hunter watched for was how others read his funny lines and how the reader as well as the listeners reacted."[27]

Many sources testify to Thompson's experimental, imitative practice and to the fact that it wasn't "confined merely to words," as Quintilian put it. In terms of arrangement, for instance, Peter O. Whitmer offers a rather detailed account of how Thompson made an outline of *The Great Gatsby*, which eventually became integrated into his work on *Las Vegas*.[28] Also, Douglas Brinkley refers to Norman Mailer's *Advertisements for Myself* (1959) as Thompson's

"bible," and says that Thompson "later modeled *The Great Shark Hunt* on that weird book."[29]

At the level of style, Thompson's journalism is clearly performative. It appears quite obviously designed to be effective in the sense of stirring thoughts and emotion rather than to create an impression of trustworthiness or sincerity. A central factor in this design is a constant change of perspective. When Alexander tracks Raoul Duke's journalistic development, he focuses on the different visions that are brought about by the specific drugs that play such a famous part of Thompson's *Las Vegas* narrative. Alexander describes an overall development from the split perspective of the reporter high on ether in the first part of the story—he observes himself behaving terribly, "like the village drunkard in some early Irish novel,"[30] yet he is unable to control it—toward a more integrated perspective of the "private investigator" in the second part. In terms of such integration, LSD is presented as the drug of choice, iconic to the sense of community that characterized the acid culture of a (then) recent past in which a huge cultural wave peaked, rolled back, and left a mental high-water mark. This image is Thompson's and paraphrased here from a moving passage often referred to as "the wave speech."[31] In this passage, Thompson is, in Alexander's words, "compressing five or six years of history into a single image that fuses [his] personal experiences with those of a generation . . . an aesthetic consolidation consistent with the spirit Thompson attributes to San Francisco in the mid-1960s."[32]

It seems that a constant reinstallment of a split or dual vision is a key element in Thompson's practice. His way of toggling or oscillating between perspectives in his writing, comical and serious, alienated and integrated, offers a key to his appeal to other writers. Even though it would be hard to prove causality as such, this style may well be connected to his experience with close imitation of other writers' prose.

Of course, Thompson himself would become the one favored author for many a colleague and *Las Vegas* a "bible" that was read and reread with joy and is still leaving its imprint. Sabroe himself points out, in an essay from 2000 about his own practice as a literary journalist, that Gonzo journalism seems to work like a dynamic system of imitation. When, reluctantly, he offers some rules or guidelines for aspiring literary journalists, the first point he makes is concerned not only with imitation and its connection to both admiration and competition, but also with Thompson's above-mentioned personal practice of it: typing it in order to get a feel for its rhythm. Sabroe adds, "The best way to become inspired [as a literary journalist] is to read the ones you adore . . . read the very best. . . . That's the way language works, right; when it is really good, it is infectious. It makes you want to write the best you can."[33]

Quoting Sabroe here, I wish to stress that this study is not intended as an exposé of unwitting or illegitimate imitation practices, but to understand better a recognized dynamic. Thompson's journalism—participatory, subjective, and excessively stylized—is rarely discussed without an offhand comment about its almost ridiculously strong influence on the work of other writers and journalists,[34] and I hope that the idea and this analysis of imitation as a productive force might serve to qualify such remarks.

Sabroe as a Fan/Advocate/Practitioner

In Denmark, more than one writer has earned the title of Gonzo journalist in the course of time, but Sabroe stands out for having claimed (and occasionally rejected[35]) the title and kept attracting it in national media discourse for more than forty years.[36] Sabroe started his training as a journalist in the late 1960s and has worked for different Danish dailies over the years. He has also written fiction, and his first novel was published in 1976. He quickly established a name for himself as a highly subjective and stylistically excessive literary journalist. Even today, although he works and is mainly known as a fiction writer, he may still be introduced with phrases like "the indisputable enfant terrible of Danish journalism," "reckless and ill-adjusted," with Thompson singled out as his "idol."[37]

Even glancing at the covers of Sabroe's nonfiction books, edited volumes of literary journalism, and personal narrative essays, the Gonzo references are unmistakable. Ralph Steadman, whose "grotesquely expressionistic caricatures" (in Mosser's words[38]) illustrated Thompson's work from 1970 and onward, contributed covers to two volumes of Sabroe's nonfiction. The blotted black lines that characterize Steadman's drawings and lettering have become synonymous with Gonzo art.[39] Other covers of Sabroe's nonfiction books extend the style by using either expressive caricatures or some sort of blotted black font that echoes the Gonzo spirit of distorted reality.

When tracking the reception of Sabroe's work in Danish media discourse, it is striking how his journalistic development, including his emulation of Thompson, has been a public talking point, especially during the 1990s.[40] In the opinion pages of the tabloid *Ekstra-Bladet*, Sabroe was referred to as the silly mascot of the left-liberal broadsheet *Politiken*, where he worked at the time—he was "*Politiken*'s little Gonzo," "little merry Gonzo," or "little Gonzo thingummy," who was known to use vulgar and/or incomprehensible, affected language.[41] In Jakob Levinsen's 1994 book review, "The Man Who Wanted to Be Gonzo," Sabroe is characterized as a "*self-appointed* enfant terrible" and a wannabe who does not know his own limitations.[42] In the same article, however, the condescending tone softens within a paragraph or two,

and in general Sabroe is still more often assigned the plain title of "Gonzo journalist."[43] His 1998 translation of *Las Vegas* was generally praised for its fidelity, and helped to advance Sabroe's status from fan or disciple to a "great *declared* fan" or "leading Danish Thompson fan," still a somewhat dubious honour.[44] When creativity is being recognized in his work, Sabroe is said to be a Thompson disciple "with more house manners," "more Social Democratic," and he goes for being "soft and even caring in his journalism," in contrast to the "ruthless" Thompson.[45] Yet, ultimately, as we shall see, Sabroe is considered in a class by himself, able to demonstrate uniquely "sabroesque" qualities. He is praised for being "a notorious wit," yet both a serious and brave writer, and his writing is occasionally deemed so good that it is "demonic" and "dizzying."[46]

The development just sketched covers many aspects of rhetorical imitation. There is the aspiring writer's admiration (fandom), emulation, and competing (with an alert audience for the competition), and there is the comical side of imitation, parody, self-parody, and ridicule. Above all, there is long-term mimetic practice—a continuous, playful experimentation with Gonzo style and persona and a willingness to risk some missed shots and scorn along the way while giving the reading experience highest priority. This includes, as we shall see, determined efforts to destabilize political and media discourses, and this will be illustrated with some examples of Sabroe's Gonzo treatment of different public figures: first, his personal American idols, Thompson and Bob Dylan; then Danish politician (later prime minister) Poul Nyrup Rasmussen upon his appointment as leader of the Social Democratic party in 1992; then American president George W. Bush in 2004; and, finally, aspiring presidential candidate Hillary Clinton in 2007. It seems, interestingly, that the double perspective of the Gonzo journalist makes Sabroe especially sensitive to the dualities or duplicities of other public figures, who carefully self-create an image, only to watch it take on a life of its own. He recognizes all public appearances as performances and interacts with them by way of his literary journalism.

American Idols

The first of (so far) four published collections of Sabroe's journalism opens with three stories from his trip to Colorado for an interview with Thompson in the summer of 1990. Profiling Thompson on this occasion, Sabroe positions himself as a provincial, self-deprecating follower who struggles, like colleagues before him, to get the interview he has been promised. In one passage Sabroe is at Woody Creek Tavern, where he has been waiting at Thompson's regular table with Mary, one of Thompson's former writing assistants. When Thompson finally shows up, Sabroe goes to get drinks:

> I returned with the goods and sat down on the chair next to him. And stood up again with a jump as if I had sat on a rattlesnake.
>
> They looked at me. I looked at the chair. Thompson had put his green baseball cap on the seat. Under the cap were his sunglasses, the sunglasses he is famous for always wearing. They are, along with the baseball cap and the cigarette holder, indispensable props in his notorious self-presentation. . . .[47]

Sabroe's self-consciously star-struck pose in this story is disrupted as he accidently breaks the iconic sunglasses. Also, it is worth noting how the last, somewhat elaborate part of this passage reflects the way he has been responsible for familiarizing his Danish readership with Thompson's work and status. He also, like Thompson does so often, sets a scene that he himself is eager to enter as a character. His aforementioned translation of *Las Vegas* seems to have served to bring Gonzo journalism to broader public attention and facilitated an appreciation of Sabroe's own work. Also, it probably has served as an inspiring close study of Thompson's prose style in the spirit of classical imitation. Where rhetoric students in Quintilian's day would be asked to transform a Greek text into Latin in order to develop their dual vision of times and cultures, Sabroe was doing a similar exercise with Thompson's America and his own Danish scene.

Indeed, the following year, Sabroe produced a series of reports from the Danish countryside titled "Gonzo on Wheels," in which he intervenes with the contemporary cultural climate by distorting it in writing. After witnessing a blatantly racist episode on the harbor in Copenhagen, Sabroe decides to go on a road trip to look for the worst side of Danish national character:

> [O]n one of the most rainy Sundays in living memory, I called my psychologist, Kurt Acid Thomsen:
>
> "Kurt," I said, "the fat's in the fire."
>
> "Are you feeling paranoid again?"
>
> "I have been given an assignment. I have to find the evil side of the Danes."
>
> "Cool down, buddy," he said. "It had been different matter if you had to find the good side."[48]

So while the story is thematically grounded in Denmark, formal references to *Las Vegas* abound. There is the proud claim to subjectivity (see the ritual of colonic irrigation as guarantee of objectivity and professionalism quoted at the beginning of the essay); there is the first-person perspective and the exalted dialogue with a traveling companion whose profession is highlighted

as yet another ironic disclaimer of professionalism (with "my psychologist" Thomsen, a Danish variant of Thompson, of course, replacing "my attorney" Dr. Gonzo); the symbolic quest for the Danish national character replacing Duke's quest for the American Dream; and furthermore, antidepressants and anti-impotence pills replacing ether, LSD, and various other drugs in the trunk of Raoul Duke and Dr. Gonzo's car.

As mentioned above, anti-impotence pills of the blue Viagra variety are also there to distort Sabroe's vision when he follows Bob Dylan on tour from Gothenburg, Sweden, to Aalborg, Denmark in 2005 with a "long-legged secretary" as his made-up (or at least crudely sketched) sidekick. In this piece of reportage, another road story, Sabroe turns to close pastiche in the opening passage:

> We were somehow on the outskirts of Gothenburg when the pill took effect.
>
> "You're completely blue in the face," said my secretary. "Is something wrong?"
>
> "I don't feel very well," I said and looked out on the landscape that was blue as far as my eyes could see. "Maybe you should drive."
>
> "I can't, I'm polishing my nails."[49]

Later, we get a flashback to the narrator's doctor's office that echoes Raoul Duke's flashback to "the Polo Lounge of the Beverly Hills hotel."[50] Sabroe's doctor is reported to be concerned:

> "Do you realize that eighteen-year-olds are taking these?" he said. "That says something about the culture we live in."
>
> I lived in the same culture so I might as well take them. . . .
>
> I accepted the package and left. It was like carrying a gun. The pill I had been given would subtract forty years from my age. If I took all four pills I would be minus 102 years. The woman I met would go to bed with a man who was far from born.[51]

This account, in which Sabroe's narrator personifies in caricature a cultural obsession with youth, develops into a slapstick narrative. Sabroe tells the detailed story of how he hired the secretary (based on the way she said, "I love Dob Bylan"), while Dylan's concert receives a brief paragraph in which Sabroe likens Dylan to a moose with an inflammed throat ("'Dob is ill!' my secretary called out").[52]

This, of course, may above all qualify as silly but Sabroe shifts registers to put the crude comedy into perspective. He strikes a personal and historical

note similar to the one struck by Thompson in the aforementioned "wave speech." This note is heard in a passage concerned with Dylan's performance in Aalborg in which the theme of duality and public character formation is brought forward: "[Dylan] was painting sound pictures. He turned inwards towards himself and took the band with him. In there he took his song 'When I Paint My Masterpiece' literally and tried to paint something that would only be complete in the attempt."[53]

Here, to paraphrase Alexander on Thompson's wave speech, Sabroe compresses American Gonzo history into a single image that fuses Sabroe's personal experiences with those of a generation. Sabroe portrays an ageing man, Dylan, who is perceived to be burdened with an image he is unable to fill. Still, Sabroe celebrates the attempt by changing the tone and register as he does.

Furthermore, Sabroe softens his satire by dauntlessly drawing attention to his own lifelong attempt to enter Thompson's journalistic league from various angles. The humility and the comedy of his position as a Scandinavian admirer is highlighted by the circumstances, i.e., with Sabroe on Viagra (rather than acid) as an older (rather than younger) man and in Aalborg, Denmark (rather than in Las Vegas, United States).

Dylan's performance is characterized gloomily as a "shaman's preparation for death," but Sabroe makes sure to offer comic relief. "Everything is well and blue," he concludes in a different tone, with his blue secretary in the blue Jacuzzi back at his hotel. He reminisces, "This says something about the world we live in, my doctor said. Only he didn't say what."[54] With Dylan as shaman, this last remark about "my doctor" may even be read as a nod to Thompson, who liked to pose as a "Doctor of Journalism" without ever delivering any safe solution to the dilemmas of the trade. Gonzo journalism remains complete only in the attempt.

Political Clowns and Personal Distractions

As with Dylan and Thompson, Sabroe's Gonzo profiles typically facilitate both empathy and an amount of ridicule or even contempt for public figures and their fragile public images. Levinsen, the aforementioned reviewer who pronounced Sabroe a wannabe, still recognized Sabroe's portrayal of two top politicians as saying "more about the state of Danish politics than column after column of political analysis."[55] In fact, Sabroe's profile on newly appointed party leader Poul Nyrup Rasmussen, "The Man Who Was a Picture,"[56] is somewhat similar to the portrayal of the Dylan who failed to communicate with his audience. On the political scene, however, Sabroe shows less mercy in terms of recognizing "the attempt." While observing Nyrup in

action and interviewing him, he is amazed how much Nyrup speaks in clichés and awkward repetition—which Sabroe exposes as a stylistic tick by mimicking the political singsong. Also, Sabroe explicitly adds symbolic significance to the fact that when Nyrup's own mother is depicted with a portrait of her son in a newspaper profile, she does not hold up a private photo but the official political portrait of him. In this case, Sabroe's recognition of duality becomes mainly a condemnation.

When Sabroe is assigned to cover the American presidential election in 2004, he takes a different tack by intervening with the public image of George W. Bush as a notorious bad guy. In a short piece that precedes his actual reporting from the United States, Sabroe provokes thought and emotion quite systematically by way of style as he parodies and distorts the routine reactions he senses in his (liberal-left-leaning) colleagues in the field of political journalism.[57] The piece starts with a concerned dialogue between Sabroe and his wife—who is polishing her toenails and responding with overbearing remarks such as, "Okay, tell me . . . ," "Of course. . . ," "There, there, you'll figure it out"—when he shares his pain concerning his position in relation to mainstream journalism and public opinion of Bush:

> "Honey . . . I think I'm sick. . . . Everybody I know hates George Bush. . . . They never met him, never talked to him. And they have never listened to what those who have, have said about him. They just hate him. It's not just an ordinary, everyday, flat Danish hatred, no, it's a massive flaming hatred. It's almost international. . . . The thing is, there is just eighty days until the American election, and I still haven't learned to hate Bush with all my heart. What do I do?"[58]

The cure for this "illness," he decides, is hard exercise while listening to death metal in front of an enlarged poster of Bush with a Hitler moustache added. His alienation toward his assignment is ardent, and the text is fast-paced. Sabroe tries some magazines that might predictably be critical of Bush, but they disappoint him. First Bill Clinton ("I couldn't wait! Clinton would drag [Bush] through the mud") and then John Kerry state that they respect and like Bush Junior, and Sabroe can't believe what he is reading ("[L]ike junior! Like! Junior!")[59] In this case, duality is simply pointed out and never resolved.

Sabroe's journalistic development toward stylistic independence that I sketched above seems to culminate in 2007 with the publishing of his book *Du som er i himlen* (You Who Art in Heaven), ostensibly a journalistic profile of Hillary Clinton that would eventually evolve into an existential memoir about Sabroe's troubled relation to his own mother. Even before this derailing of the story occurs, he refers to his trip as an educational process and makes a

clear allusion to Thompson again, almost ritually taking sides against professional journalism: "[This was] not just a journey towards Hillary Clinton and all the Americans whose president she had the chance of becoming. I was going to see, if I couldn't learn something I didn't know already. I had the tools. *I was, after all, the most unprejudiced journalist in the kingdom*"[60] (emphasis added).

The meta-journalistic detour is a classic Thompson maneuver, but where Thompson would shift the focus away from the race tracks of the Kentucky Derby or the Mint 400 in Las Vegas to focus on his own role as an American and pose in flattened, cartoonish caricature as a product of the culture he has been assigned to portray, Sabroe turns much more introspective. He focuses on his maladjusted character not as a product of society, as Thompson typically would, but of his unique family background and upbringing. It becomes a matter of personal identity rather than of either professional or national ethos.

Readers and reviewers received the change of pace well. "Sabroe's best written act to date. Gripping Gonzo, goddammit!" said one reviewer.[61] The remark suggests that Sabroe's style had hitherto been dominated by mannerism but now appears authentic.[62] The widespread recognition ("Sabroe is knee-deep in praise"[63]) seems to be an effect of the way the book shifts from a playful and performative gear to a strongly confessional aspect that includes reflections on the life and death of his mother as well as a stroke he himself had recently suffered. The overall move in terms of self-presentation is from audacity to sincerity, a point previously made about the Danish conception of Gonzo journalism more generally.[64] It is important to add, however, that Sabroe makes this move with open eyes and yet continues to opt for the toggling between audacity and sincerity, in other words not turning away from the former. Performative awareness—including self-irony—prevails even at his mother's deathbed, where he reports how he begins to tell her a story, "quietly, tenderly, sincerely. / I said: You are floating on your back down a river, you're being carried like a leaf. The sun is shining, birds are singing. . . . She moved. Got up on her elbows slowly. . . . 'Would you please stop that!'"[65]

Imitating Thompson: Double the Trouble?

The story of Sabroe's peculiar career in Danish literary journalism as a self-aware wannabe may help us better understand Thompson's paradoxical appeal as a model for colleagues in the field of literary journalism more generally. Sabroe has been alert to dualities and mimicry in Thompson's work and the possibilities they extended to him. Though this study offers no evaluation of Sabroe's work but rather uncovers the dynamics and imprints of imitation,

it may give reason to reconsider the common idea that "there is only one true Gonzo journalist, and that is Hunter S. Thompson."[66] As McKeen points out, the "clownish exterior" that seemed to trap Thompson toward the end of his life and career was very much Thompson's own invention.[67] Indeed, by being excessive it has established a shared maneuvering room for other people's clownish approaches and sensibilities. Thompson's literary journalism is not necessarily true to a core idea or principle. Rather, it is an experimental practice performed in a style and character that seems not to have been meant to come together in the name of integrity or credibility. His playful change of registers continued to destabilize any established notion of what he stood for.

When Sabroe decided to imitate Thompson as closely as he has done, it is clear that he was asking for some level of scorn for being unoriginal. But as Terrill puts it when discussing translation as an exercise in close imitation, "the slippage between the original and the translation provides opportunity for invention."[68] In this light, the Gonzo school of imitation may be understood not as a corruption of true Gonzo ethos but a natural extension of it. Thompson's literary journalistic practice, which embodied key principles of classical rhetorical education—through habitual close reading-and-typing, perspective-taking, and a experimentation with stylistic effect—is decidedly playful and has been taken up as a an invitation in that spirit. While sustaining, to quote Terrill one last time, "the otherness, the strangeness, of the original,"[69] admitted admirers have been producing their own new Gonzo journalism in their own new contexts and always, as Sabroe's example shows, at their own peril.

Sabroe has experimented with Thompson's style through rhetorical "exercises" such as pastiche, allusion, and translation, familiarizing himself and his readership with Thompson's Gonzo journalism while tentatively developing his own version. He has inhabited Thompson's view and extended it in time and space to promote, provoke, and draw attention to dynamics in his local cultural context. The idea of a dual perspective, which pervades the Gonzo ecosystem as a whole, may help to make some sense of such persistent adoption and appropriation of another person's ethos and rhetorical moves. Thompson's moves are in fact multiple and offer ways of handling professional alienation in practice. If a writer were to pick just one model to imitate (ignoring the warnings of classical rhetorical educators), Thompson makes for a much more sophisticated choice than both his own and other people's caricatures have sometimes made it look. And to give a decidedly ambivalent critic the last word:

Upon reading the latest edited volume of Sabroe's journalism in 2006, reviewer Leonora Christina Skov celebrates the experience and is specifically

impressed and entertained by Sabroe's perspective-taking, noting that "Sabroe is actually able to give a bird's and a worm's view of himself in one and the same sentence."[70] Skov admits to envying Sabroe's byline and writing skills even if she is unable to recognize "that Hunter S. Thompson was God, or that Bob Dylan still is." On the other hand, in a backhanded recognition of the dynamics of imitation, she adds, "if [Thompson and Dylan] actually inspired Morten Sabroe to do this, they must be good for something."[71]

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Notes

1. Morten Sabroe, "Gonzo on Wheels" (1999), collected in *Undskyld. . . men hvor er udgangen? Udvalgte artikler fra en tvivlsom virkelighed* [Excuse Me . . . but Where's the Exit? Selected Articles from a Dubious Reality], (Højbjerg: Hovedland, 1999), 16–18. All translations from Danish are the author's.

2. The literature on Thompson's life and work as a Gonzo journalist is extensive. See, for instance, William McKeen, *Outlaw Journalist: The Life and Times of Hunter S. Thompson* (New York: Norton, 2008); Jann Wenner and Corey Seymour, *Gonzo: The Life of Hunter S. Thompson* (London: Sphere, 2007).

3. Morten Sabroe, *I svinets hjerte* [In the Heart of the Swine], (Copenhagen: Københavns Bogforlag, 1990); *En luder steg af toget* [A Hooker Stepped Off the Train], (Copenhagen: Tiderne Skifter, 1994).

4. Morten Sabroe, "På piller: På vejene med Dob Bylan, den langbenede sekretær og den lille blå pille" [On Pills: On the Road with Dob Bylan, the Long-legged Secretary and the Little Blue Pill], *Politiken* October 24, 2005, 1.

5. William McKeen, "The Two Sides of Hunter S. Thompson," *Literary Journalism Studies* 4, no. 1 (Spring 2012): 7. See also Jay Cowan, *Hunter S. Thompson: An Insider's View of Deranged, Depraved, Drugged Out Brilliance* (Guilford, Connecticut: Lyons Press, 2009), 90–91.

6. Robert Alexander, "'The Right Kind of Eyes': Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas as a Novel of Journalistic Development," *Literary Journalism Studies* 4, no. 1 (Spring 2012): 19–36.

7. See further in Alexander, "'The Right Kind of Eyes,'" 24.

8. Robert Terrill, "Mimesis, Duality, and Rhetorical Education," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 41, no. 4 (2011): 295.

9. George A. Kennedy, "Imitation," in *Encyclopedia of Rhetoric*, Thomas O. Sloane (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 381–84.

10. For further references, see, for instance, Kennedy, "Imitation," and Terrill, "Mimesis, Duality, and Rhetorical Education."

11. Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, transl. H.E. Butler (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), 10.2.27.

12. Ibid., 10.2.15.

13. Ibid., 10.2.16.

14. Ibid., 10.2.15 (emphasis added).

15. Cicero, *On the Ideal Orator*, trans. James May and Jakob Wisse (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 191.

16. Quintilian, *Institutio*, 10.2.7.

17. Ibid., 10.2.10.

18. Ibid., 10.2.25.

19. Terrill, "Mimesis, Duality, and Rhetorical Education," 298.

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid.

22. Cowan, *Hunter S. Thompson*, 72.

23. William Kennedy in Wenner and Seymour, 45.

24. Wenner and Seymour, 128.

25. McKeen, 41–2; Wenner and Seymour, *Gonzo*, 12; Peter O. Whitmer, W*hen the Going Gets Weird: The Twisted Life and Times of Hunter S. Thompson* (New York: Hyperion, 1993), 97, 177–78.

26. McKeen, 41–42. See also the quote by Porter Bibb: "You know, . . . I just like to get the feel of how it is to write those words," *Gonzo*, 12.

27. Cowan, *Hunter S. Thompson*, 99.

28. Whitmer, *When the Going Gets Weird*, 97, 178–184.

29. Wenner and Seymour, *Gonzo*, 435.

30. Hunter. S. Thompson, *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas: A Savage Journey to the Heart of the American Dream* (New York: Random House, 1971).

31. Thompson, *Las Vegas*, 66–8.

32. Ibid., 29.

33. Morten Sabroe, "Den litterære journalistik" [The Literary Journalism], *Vidensbase for Journalistik* August 29, 2000, http://130.225.180.61/cfje/VidBase.nsf/ID/VB00139974.

34. Bill Reynolds offers an exception to confirm the rule when he states that he turned out to have overestimated Thompson's influence on students: "[But up until 2009] I had avoided teaching Thompson's texts because colleagues had warned me of the magnetic pull his rebel persona might have on a certain student type": "On the Road to Gonzo: Hunter S. Thompson's Early Literary Journalism (1961–1970)," *Literary Journalism Studies* 4, no. 1 (Spring 2012): 53.

35. It is clear that the title of "our own" or "*the* Danish" New Journalist or Gonzo journalist has also been a professional straitjacket for Sabroe. In a retrospective essay in 2000, he refers to "the weird concept of 'synchronicity.' There was 'something in the air' at one and the same time" that made him experiment with his journalistic writing in a rock 'n' roll spirit in the late 1960s even before he started reading *Rolling Stone* magazine and, as he does readily admit, became hugely inspired by that ("Den litterære journalistik" [The Literary Journalism], *Vidensbase for Journalistik*, August 29, 2000: http://130.225.180.61/cfje/VidBase.nsf/ID/VB00139974. Again, in a debate piece in 2004 he claims to have written "like that" since 1969, "two-three years *before* Thompson came to Las Vegas" (emphasis added): "Hvor dum må en professor være" [How Stupid Is a Professor Allowed to Be], *Politiken*, March 17, 2004. And in 2006 in a feature article he states, that his "*first and only* attempt to do gonzo journalism has just failed" (emphasis added): "Kalder Don Ø. . . " [Calling Don Ø. . .], *Politiken: Kultur*, November 26, 2006, 2.

36. Several samples of Sabroe's work are included in a Norwegian anthology of Gonzo journalism. See Kjetil Wiedswang, ed., *Angst og bæven: Gonzo på norsk* [Fear and Trembling: Gonzo in Norwegian], (Oslo: Instit. for Journalistikk, 1998).

37. Pia Andersen Høg, "Morten Sabroe," *Forfatterweb*. Updated by Signe Juul Kraft, 2013, http://www.forfatterweb.dk/oversigt/zsabroe00.

38. Jason Mosser, "What's Gonzo About Gonzo Journalism?," *Literary Journalism Studies* 4, no. 1 (Spring 2012): 88.

39. See, for instance, Ralph Steadman: *Gonzo: The Art* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1998).

40. See Christine Isager, "Hvem vil være wannabe? Gonzojournalistik på nudansk" [Who Wants to Be a Wannabe? Contemporary Danish Gonzo Journalism], in *Et løft(e) til journalistikken*, eds. Troels Mylenberg and Peter Bro (Odense: University of Southern Denmark Press, 2009), 137–49

41. "Dagens debat" [Today's Debate], *Ekstra Bladet*, August 30, 1993, 2; February 6, 1994, 2; August 3, 1994, 2.

42. Jakob Levinsen, "Manden der ville være gonzo" [The Man Who Wanted to Be Gonzo], *Berlingske Tidende: Magasin*, November 15, 1994, 5.

43. "Klampenborg Billeder" [Pictures of Klampenborg], report from the national news agency *Dagbladenes Bureau*, September 23, 1996.

44. *Weekendavisen: Bøger*, November 6, 1998, 11; *Aktuelt*, November 21, 1998, 17.

45. *Berlingske Tidende: Kultur,* October 27, 1998, 5; *Jyllands-Posten,* November 10, 1998.

46. *Politiken: Kultur*, October 9, 2007, 4; *Berlingske Tidende: Magasin*, 3, October 13, 2007; *Ekstra Bladet*, October 9, 2007.

47. Morten Sabroe: "En amerikansk legende med hjertet fuldt af had" [An American Legend with a Heart Full of Hate], in *I svinets hjerte* [In the Heart of the Swine] (Copenhagen: Københavns Bogforlag, 1990), 26–27.

48. Morten Sabroe, "Jagten på den store hvide røv" [The Hunt for the Big White Ass], reprinted in *Undskyld. . . men hvor er udgangen? Udvalgte artikler fra en tvivlsom virkelighed* [Excuse Me. . . But Where's the Exit? Selected Articles from a Dubious Reality], (Højbjerg: Hovedland, 1999), 14.

49. Sabroe, "På piller," 1.

50. Thompson, *Las Vegas*.

51. Sabroe, "På piller," 1.

52. Ibid.

53. Ibid.

54. Ibid,

55. Levinsen, "Manden der ville," 5.

56. Morten Sabroe, "Manden der var et billede" [The Man Who Was a Picture], *Information*, April 10, 1992. Republished at *Vidensbase for Journalistik,* March 18, 1999, http://130.225.180.61/cfje/vidbase.nsf/Links/Manden+der+var+et+billede.

57. Morten Sabroe, "American Pie: George den Dumme" [American Pie: George the Stupid], *Politiken,* August 22, 2004, 2.

58. Sabroe, "American Pie," 2.

59. Ibid.

60. Sabroe, *Du som er i himlen* [You Who Art in Heaven], (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 2007), 36.

61. Lars Bukdahl, "Hvem griber tårnspringerskens søn?" [Who Catches the High Diver's Son?], *Weekendavisen: Bøger*, December 10, 2007, 9.

62. Ibid.

63. Jeppe Bangsgaard, "Sabroe vader i anmelderros" [Sabroe is Knee-deep in Praise from Reviewers], *Berlingske*, October 15, 2007.

64. See Isager, "Hvem vil være wannabe?"

65. Sabroe, *Du som er i himlen*, 218–19.

66. Mosser, "What's Gonzo About Gonzo Journalism?," 86.

67. William McKeen, "The Two Sides of Hunter S. Thompson." *Literary Journalism Studies* 4, no. 1 (2012), 7.

68. Terrill, "Mimesis, Duality, and Rhetorical Education," 307.

69. Ibid, 303.

70. Leonora Christina Skov, Manden der faldt opad" [The Man Who Fell Upwards], *Weekendavisen: Bøger*, November 3, 2006.

71. Ibid.

Overreacting with Style: Danish Football According to Morten Sabroe

Over the course of his career as a writer and journalist, Morten Sabroe has used Denmark's performances in international football matches as occasions to "freestyle" his literary journalism. Danes invest much attention and emotion in the game of football, and Sabroe enters this energy field to process political or media issues stylistically. (It should be noted that here we are talking of what in a North American context is known as soccer.) The two examples presented here (translations mine) highlight Sabroe's aesthetic overreaction, so to speak, as he attends the matches. In the first column, Sabroe demonstratively allows his own dark mood about current national politics to taint and kill the spirit of the game for him (and the reader). In the second, quite the other way around, Sabroe challenges and refutes a dark rumor about match fixing by celebrating the purity of the performance that is being questioned.

In "A Very Limited View," Sabroe reports from Copenhagen in June 1993, when Denmark played a World Cup qualification match against Lithuania and won 4–0. Still, in Sabroe's self-proclaimed limited view, the Danes—mainly off the football field—steal the show as the match's ultimate losers. According to Sabroe's logic, Lithuania, the formal opponent in the match, is not even worth mentioning. The team becomes irrelevant to the scene because Denmark has internal affairs to deal with. Clearly, recent political events have ruined Sabroe's ability to enjoy the the game.

These events began when Poul Nyrup Rasmussen, after successfully challenging Svend Auken as head of the Social Democratic Party the year before, became prime minister in January 1993, five months before the match. Also, in June 1992, there had been a popular vote in Denmark that went against the Maastricht Treaty, or the Treaty on European Union. Six months later, in Edinburgh, Denmark's terms for accession were then renegotiated, and the country was granted four exceptions to Maastricht. On May 18, 1993, a new popular vote successfully endorsed the Edinburgh Agreement. This revised result provoked riots in Copenhagen, and police responded by opening fire on demonstrators.

In Sabroe's account, both the "regicide" in the Social Democratic Party and Nyrup's triumphant overruling of the original popular vote against European Union membership compounded the government's "bad breath and bad karma," and this foulness is now infecting the football arena.

In "A Match Fixed in Heaven," Sabroe reports from Euro 2004, when Denmark played a group match against Sweden in Porto, Portugal. The final score is 2–2, which means that Italy, another group member, is knocked out of the tournament. This gives rise to rumors that the two Scandinavian teams have been conspiring to that particular end. Sabroe's text serves to process these accusations. By portraying the good-natured attitude of the Danish and Swedish football fans before the match, and highlighting the divine elegance of the match itself, Sabroe assures readers of their legitimate right to celebrate the event.

However, the elaborate style of Sabroe's argument leaves us with a sense that perhaps he protests too much and is therefore, ironically, allowing a shadow of doubt to linger. After all, the story is based exclusively on Sabroe's subjective estimation of the situation, which his playful deployment of the first-person singular makes clear. — Christine Isager

A Very Limited View

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Bleak report on a football victory from upper level at Parken, where the enemy had no name.

Parken, Copenhagen. I am here! I am sitting high, high above the pitch on a red plastic seat! I got a ticket from a colleague yesterday! For the national game! For Michael Laudrup and Brian Laudrup and the whole great fever once again! Pulse 180 and throat inflated in a roar from the abyss! There is just one thing. It is printed in bold characters across the ticket: Limited. A 150-buck ticket, and you get limited view! It might as well have said, "This ticket is paid by the assistance office!" Upper level, Section C1, Row 13, Seat 3, the loneliest place in the world. With a brain sunk deep into the howling sea of the collective air horn.

The speaker has just announced, "Number 10, Michael Laudrup," the

red horns are screaming like bloodthirsty birds, and now the score is 1–0. I am drowning in fireworks smoke and erect Danish bodies. This is where I am writing from:

I woke up this morning with the most limited view I have ever woken up with in my life. When I cycled down Strøget around eight, the only person in sight in the pedestrian street was Bent.

Bent's view was at least as limited as mine. He bent over a garbage can as if he was looking for something or checking his own reflection on the bottom.

Bent was dressed in red and white, a walking Danish flag, and I know his name was Bent because his friend was yelling: "Bent, goddammit, you dirty pig!" Bent was resting both hands on the can and then he threw up everything he had in his belly in it, as if he was a legendary US pitcher. You know, the guy who tosses the ball in American baseball. Bent had already been kicking big bottles of our Our Beer the night before he was going to watch our boys fight for our country in our national stadium for our sake, O Denmark! And the score is still 1–0.

The Two Arenas

I cycled along and turned right at Højbro Square. By the howling airhorn, that was where it happened! Right by Christiansborg. I got an idea. I knew it was bad, but I couldn't let it go. I suddenly saw the two great arenas of our capital and of our country. The political arena and the sports arena. Christiansborg and Parken. Both populated with professionals, both turning into arenas for entertainment. With the quality of the entertainment best defined by the great wage differences. The poorly paid politician versus the overpaid football star. The political show, a second-rate show, even if it carried a great thought in its title: Democracy. No one in the kingdom would care to pay 150 bucks to sit in there with a limited view.

I had been in there and seen the last great show, the Union show, on May 18. I had been standing at the foot of the stairs leading from the hall to the first floor after the official result, when the prime minister came sweeping in as if he had just signed a million-kroner contract with Barcelona. I had seen how he and his party companions filled their suits with the political victory, which none of them that night realized was a defeat.

Defeat had been written in the cards they themselves had played, when—like brooding chickens after years of deprivation—they grabbed the power they had no basis for. When they took over, they became the bad-breath government.

The regicide at the party convention stuck to them. They had—no matter how reluctant we are to talk about that sort of thing in our country—blood

on their hands. They had—no matter how little we do talk about it—both bad breath and bad karma. They wanted power in order to become greater themselves.

And now the score is 2–0.

The Hollow Sense of Greatness

That night I was standing in the Social Democrats' quarters and saw Nyrup flushed with victory in a way I won't soon forget. You may call it a moment when truth marches. On that night, when Nyrup and those in the Social Democratic Party, who hitched themselves to the Union wagon as victors and became great by it, on that night they appeared fatefully like those who hitch themselves to a victory by the national football team. There is no basis for the sense of greatness. The only thing it can do is fill what is empty. Or what is nothing but insecurity and identity crisis. Hysteria erupts in an empty space, where it is thrown back from naked walls, only to double the hysteria.

Thus Poul Nyrup Rasmussen on that memorable night, where his sense of self was conditioned exclusively by appearances. Had there been something inside, we would have watched a human being as balanced as one may possibly be balanced in a world that is reeling.

And now it is half time.

The Price of Hysteria

I am writing this from my limited view. I am seated at upper level and my view is bloody bad. But yesterday, when my view was not as limited, I had read in *Ekstra Bladet* what Michael Laudrup had told the press:

This is too much. The hysteria over my comeback is massive. That I am back on the World Cup team can't possibly be front-page material several days in a row. That I can make a whole nation go crazy like this is frightening.

Said the man who is the object of this hysteria and might have let it fill him, if he hadn't been full of something else.

And now the score is 3–0.

The hysteria that seized the Social Democrats on that long night three months ago, when the new strongman placed himself as leader of the team, is not unlike the hysteria that seizes both the press and then the people, when the strongman returns home to lead our team. It doesn't take much for what is weak and insecure to feel great and powerful.

But inside the empty space of hysteria, inferiority lies in wait. It knows itself and knows that it is wedded to hysteria. It knows that when hysteria is crushed by defeat, it is alone. It knows that it is exactly like Laudrup said:

Frightening. If the boys lose, the nation loses.

There is nothing left but self-loathing.

And now the score is 4–0.

I don't know why I have been mixing politics with sports. It is not appropriate. And when I write that the victories won on the two great arenas of our capital are equally empty because there is nothing to them except the rush of the moment, I blame it exclusively on the fact that I got a ticket with limited view.

And what did I see, if anything? Not a damned thing, except for the future. It is, like Leonard Cohen sang, Murder. Just like the party—whose journey is now about to end—proved that it was, when it wanted power at all costs without wanting anything else.

Maybe it was that future Bent saw at the bottom of the garbage can on Strøget.

If he ever made it to Parken, though, he wouldn't have felt empty. With Denmark scoring four goals, the future was postponed indefinitely. But I wonder who we defeated?

The Football Freak: A Match Fixed in Heaven

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Good morning, this is Your special football conscience. The time has come for You to learn what is really going on in Portugal. While angry Italians—convinced that the match between Sweden and Denmark was fixed—throw eggs at the front door of the Danish consulate in Milan and threaten to puncture the tires of the consulates' cars, You will be able to read here what is really going on:

Of course the match was fixed. It happened an hour before it started, when Morten Olsen and the Swedish national coach Lars Lagerbäck received a call on their cell phones at the same time, and a deep, insistent voice said: "Listen, boys. . . ."

They listened very carefully, since they did realize who was calling and who was telling them:

"This match shall do honor to the game of football. It shall be one of the most intense matches the crowd has witnessed for a long time. The people who attend have traveled thousands of miles, they are bursting with expecta-

tions. You shall meet those expectations. Millions are watching your team play, you shall perform the very best you can."

Then he hung up.

Olsen and Lagerbäck looked up toward the sky to see whether they were able to spot Him. Then they went in to meet with their players and told them that they had to play football as well as they possibly could, so well that even God would be clapping his hands.

This was how that match was fixed. Not a word about results, only about quality. And this was how it was played. We were there and saw it with our own eyes. It was sensational, downright sensational. But before your special football conscience relates how it felt to be in there at Estadio do Bessa in Porto, while rain was pouring like waving silver curtains, I have to respond to an email I got from a reader in Painsville by Frowst in Southern Jutland.

Tractor operator B. Maltesen writes, "Why the bloody hell do you always write 'I' in your articles?"

This is a very difficult question. This is why I have passed it on to my secretary in Denmark. While she is investigating it, I have been out in the reception here at Pousada D. Maria to ask what "I" is called in Portuguese. It is called "eu." And as long as my secretary is not phoning me back with an answer, eu will, to make B. Maltesen in Painsville happy, be using that.

But now, for the match, that memorable match at Estadio do Bessa on Tuesday night, a match where all myths about archenemies were laid to rest:

Eu arrived at the stadium around 7 p.m., Portuguese time, after thorough research on one of the topics that occupied meu (that's Portuguese again) thoughts: The relationship between Danish and Swedish football fans. Did they hate each other? Did historical conflict between these countries mean anything to them? Was a rage simmering inside them, determined by age-long hostility between the two neighboring countries? Would the losers of the game fling themselves on the winners, blinded by hatred, and mangle them?

Aren't You excited to know the answer? Here it is:

The time was 5:45 p.m. when eu went into a café in the area around the stadium to buy a beer. The place was packed with Swedes in blue and yellow football outfits. Their mood was euphoric; the air was thick with great expectations.

Then the door opened, and two Danish football fans in red shirts from the Danish Football Association entered. They headed straight for a group of young Swedes, held up a Danish flag right under their noses and started singing to the tune of "Guantanamera":

"Pussy to-niight / We want some pussy to-niight / Pussy to-niiiiight / We want some pussy to-niiiiight…."

They kept doing this for quite awhile. The young Swedes were looking at them with some surprise. To be honest, like eu should be, it was an intriguing moment. Eu wouldn't bet a fortune that the two happy Danes would escape from the room alive.

When they were done singing, everything went quiet. Then the response came. All Swedes in the café bawled out to the same tune:

"Ball in the net / We want the ball in the net / Ball in the neee-et / We want the ball in the neeee-et . . ."

Afterward they drank a toast with the two Danes, and eu had mim (Portuguese) theory confirmed that all that talk about hereditary enemies is a thing of the past. Eu give you a couple of reasons:

These are two thoroughly civilized peoples, two of the richest in the world. They don't carry any social rage, and they don't relate to each other. After the Danes joined the EU, we have turned our eyes toward the south. Sweden is almost nonexistent to us. We only cross over when we go to the cottage for the weekend. We don't watch Swedish television, but CNN and MTV instead. There is no envy and no inferiority—there is nothing. We can't even admire them on account of great sports stars like Ingemar Stenmark and Björn Borg, since they don't have those anymore. They have dropped out of our consciousness, completely.

And now let me tell you what happened, when eu came into the stadium and was happy in earnest when eu saw who was seated next to me:

Blonde Stine from Århus, twenty-three years old. She had Danish flags painted on both her cheeks, and do You know what was painted on her arm? The Swedish flag! Because she met two Swedish girls when she was buying cigarettes. They painted it. And what does that tell you? Is that hatred?

Reassured for the second time, eu inhaled the atmosphere. The stadium was a sensational sight with the Danish and the Swedish fans.

"God, it's great to be here!" Stine yelled. "I love football! I played for ten years myself."

Eu was really nervous. There were too many yellow shirts on the seats. "Sweden! Sweden!" the cries boomed. It sounded like whiplashes. Then the game started; Stine was all nerves.

"Don't you get to pay less, when you're on the edge of the seat like this?" she asked.

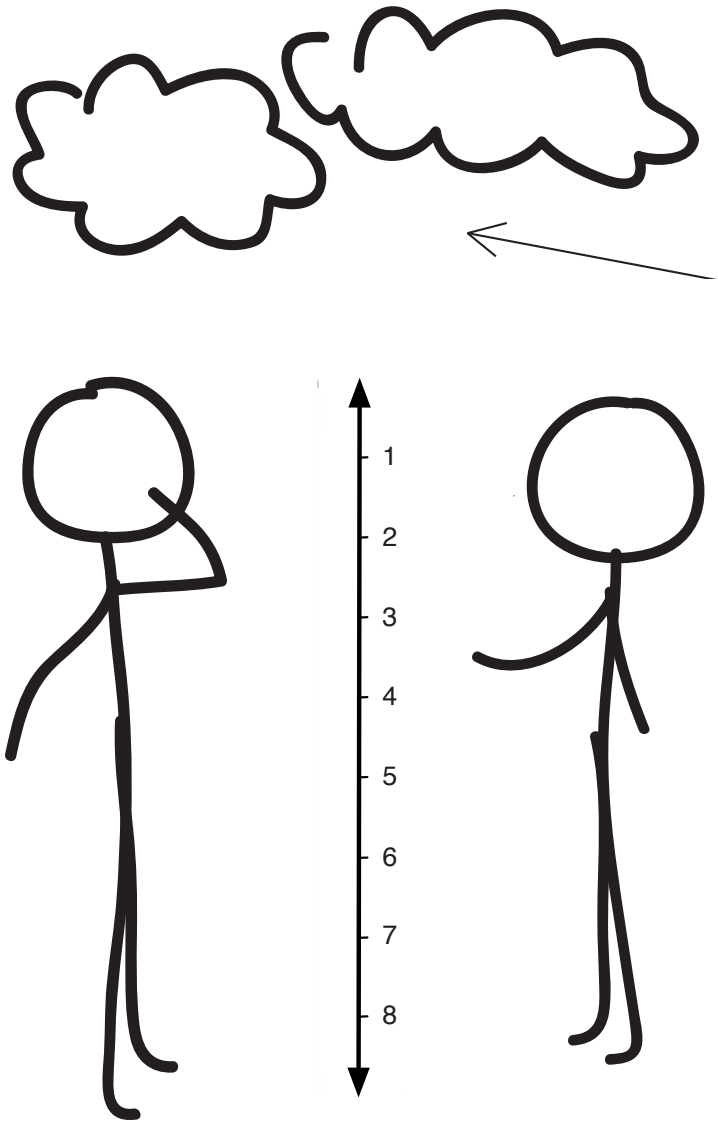
She stayed there for twenty-eight minutes. Then came Jon Dahl's goal. You would hardly call it a goal, for it was a strike of genius. Just before he hit the ball, he saw where the goalkeeper was, and then he sent it off in an arc that You would think God had designed. It was right there, floating, floating, and floating, and eu can tell You one thing: That ball was happy. It was

swelling with self-esteem and pride, because it knew it was meant to go in. It had overheard the conversation between God and the two national coaches, it knew that without it there would be no game, and now it did everything it could to float as divinely through the air as it could.

Gooooaal! And Stine jumped from her seat, and eu jumped with her, and if it wasn't for the fact that eu had just ordered a cup of coffee here at the pousada, and the waiter had answered, "Certainly," eu would think that eu was still hanging in the air in the stadium with all the others who couldn't believe their eyes either.

A goal like that can only be arranged with God. And a match like that can be played only if something greater than the twenty-two players on the field had a hand in it.

So now You know. That match was fixed, but not by those the Italians think fixed it. And since my secretary hasn't called back, eu will wrap up by offering my thanks for now, and in order for You not to think otherwise: Eu am ecstatic about being a Dane!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A Narratological Approach to Literary Journalism: How an Interplay between Voice and Point of View May Create Empathy with the Other

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Abstract: The aim of this essay is to present a model for analyzing the interplay between voice and point of view in literary journalism/reportage. The model can be used to nuance previous researchers' discussions about "subjective" and "objective" journalism. It also problematizes the reporter's special role as an eyewitness by highlighting how narrative techniques can create empathy with the Other and move the reader's gaze away from the reporter, away from the one who is witnessing. Using tools from classical narratology, I focus on the form of the texts. The tools help me investigate the narrator's as well as the characters' subjectivity and interpret the narrative's construction as an expression of a journalistic mission. I systematize variables such as the narrator's visibility, the relation between an experiencing reporter and a narrating reporter, the interplay between the experiencing reporter and other characters in the text, and in what way a level with a director (an implied author) can facilitate a comparison between various kinds of literary journalism. I also examine whether it might be time to abandon the theory that a first-person reportage is more subjective in general than a third-person reportage. I explore whether it is instead the narrator's visibility that determines the position of the text on a scale between "subjective" and "objective" forms. (Note: I have provided a glossary of terms at the end of the essay.)

In discussions about literary journalism, form and content are sometimes confused. This has created an unnecessary misunderstanding about what "objective" and "subjective" really means. In their essay "Mapping Nonfiction

Narrative: A New Theoretical Approach to Analyzing Literary Journalism,"[1] Fiona Giles and William Roberts clarify these concepts and problematize them by combining reasoning about the narrator's status (form) with theories about the reporter's way of comprehending and answering to the world (attitude: rational or romantic). They show that, even when a story is told in the third person, there are subjective approaches behind the illusory objective. Therefore, they argue that we should understand all kinds of literary journalism, regardless of whether the text is told in the third or in the first person, as being more or less subjective, although this subjectivity may be found on different levels in the narrative. They combine form and attitude aspects into a model, so that single texts can be placed along a sliding scale between subjectivity and objectivity.

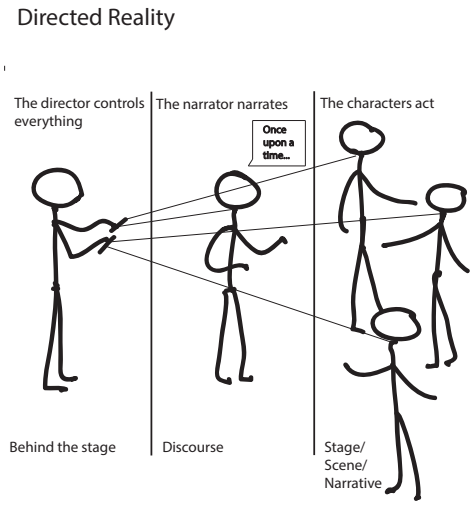
All of this is important, but more variables become visible when we choose to focus on the form and simultaneously highlight the differences between the reporter's and the characters' subjectivity, as well as between different types of narrative perspective. Further, in a model for reportage analysis, it can be useful to separate a creating instance both from the one who narrates and the characters in the story. In this essay, I will present such a model divided into six steps. A number of concepts from classical narratology will also be explained and, within the framework of the model, be tested on different reportages. In order to facilitate the reading, I have put together the concepts in a separate glossary. The connections between the most important of them are illustrated in figures 1–8.

The examples I analyze are mainly Swedish, but they will be related to internationally recognized correspondences. I will use the terms literary journalism and reportage interchangeably. The decisive factor is whether the text has been produced for a journalistic purpose and if the narrated events, at least partially, are represented in a scenic (mimetic) form. The word reportage will be used as in Sweden, where it designates the genre as well as a single text.

Step 1: A Model of the Basal Narratology of the Reportage

The picture conveyed in a reportage can never be anything but one of several possible versions; it is a directed reality. To emphasize the character of construction, I have put together a model of basic narratology within a reportage, where the narrative develops in an interplay between three instances: a director, a narrator (in a first-person reportage also a narrating reporter), and experiencing characters (in a first-person reportage, also an experiencing reporter).[2] The characters should be understood as those who are present on the scene, that is, they are part of the story. The narrator then becomes the one who afterward puts the experiences into words.

I have chosen to ignore how the real reporter has reacted in reality. Because of this, the creating instance will never be the same as the real reporter, but an implied author whom I have chosen to call the director.[3] Like the American narratologist Seymour Chatman, I imagine the narrator only to narrate, never to create. I also follow Chatman's model in that the creating instance (for Chatman, the implied author) determines roles and scenes and distributes the word among the narrator and the characters. The direction can shift from one text to the next and must ultimately be understood as a property of the text itself.



The model is particularly useful for studying the interplay between voice and point of view in a reportage. It may also help when you want to uncover meanings and strategies that are not explicitly visible. Finally, it makes it possible to directly compare the structure of a first-person reportage to a third-person reportage, since the two types of narrators are both assumed to be the director's creations.

Before I go on to apply the analysis model in its entirety, it is necessary to introduce a number of narrative concepts and explain why the established division into a more "subjective" and a more "objective" subcategory of literary journalism can be considered simplified and partially misleading.

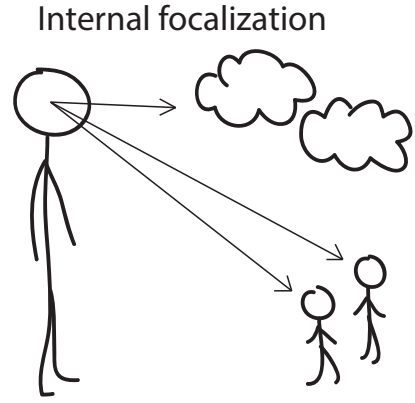
Step 2: Three Forms for Narration and Two Types of Narrators

Like many other scholars, Giles and Roberts base their model on David Eason's division of new journalism into two subcategories: Ethnographic Realism (ER) and Cultural Phenomenology (CP).[4] ER usually is based on reconstruction as a journalistic method and combines an omniscient third-person narrator with "objective" representation techniques influenced by social realism, according to Eason, who terms this form realism. CP makes the reporter's own "subjective " observations visible and combines a first-person narrator with a pronounced reflective and questioning approach, which is

directed both toward the reporter's observations and the status of the narrated text. Eason terms this form modernism.[5] However, a division like this only gives two answers to the question "How?" Either the story is told by an observing and discussing reporter in the first person or by a third-person narrator, behind whom a (subjective) reporter is assumed to hide. Such a rough division even on the form level misses what is actually going on in the text, read as a narrative.

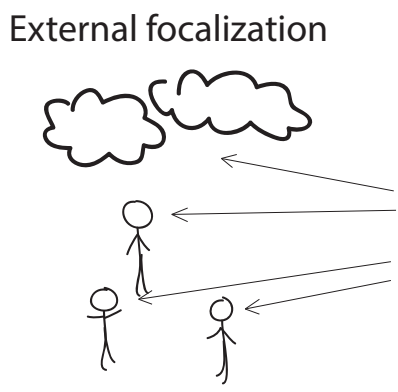
I also believe that Eason, for the "omniscience" he asserts is typical in ER, confuses different kinds of perspectives. "What gives the report its novelistic quality is the invisible camera eye of the narrator that can record all of the objective details of the scene, then move in and out of all the characters' experiences," he writes in the essay, "The New Journalism and the Image-World."[6] In fact, the term "camera eye" only corresponds to a strict seeing-from-the-outside perspective that makes the narrator not at all omniscient with access to the characters' interior. The reason for the simplification is likely that Eason, as well as Giles and Roberts, seems to think that only overall narrative perspectives exist and that they correspond to the type of narrator. Giles and Roberts talk about "first-person perspective" for CP and "third-person perspective" for ER. But within narratology, the nature of the narrator (first or third person) only answers the question, "Who speaks?" This should not be confused with perspective, which answers the question, "Who sees?"

In step 2 of my model I turn to the French narratologist Gérard Genette, who confirms that it is reasonable to imagine three basic types of narration and these types do not depend on whether the narrative is told in the third or first person, but rather on what the narrator knows. Genette defines three different forms of what he calls focalization—at internal focalization, the narrator seems to know the same as one of the characters. Here it is interesting to note that you can change the "he" or "she" used for this character to "I" without changing the narrative perspective. At non-focalization, the narrator seems to know more than any of the characters ("omniscient"). At external focalization, ("camera eye") the narrator only seems to know what is possible to observe



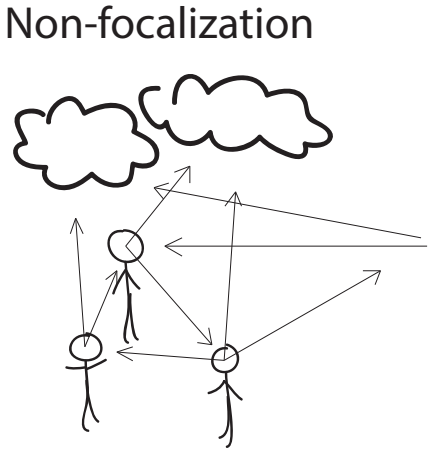
The narrative perspective emanates from inside one character

from the outside from a certain position or place, which prevents both an overview in time and space as well as insight into the characters' inner life.[7] Further, the focalization can be combined with two types of narrators: a homodiegetic, who is a character in the story and narrates in the first person, and a heterodiegetic, who is not a character in the story and normally, but not always, narrates in the third person.



The narrative perspective remains outside all characters

To understand how the narrative perspective may continually vary in a complexly told narrative (between distance and closeness, between "outside" and "inside" the characters), it is interesting to examine the interplay between the type of narrator (voice) and focalization (point of view). Internal focalization usually creates greater closeness than external focalization. Beyond that, changes in perspective may result in exciting effects. One example from American New Journalism is Jimmy Breslin's text from 1963 about John F. Kennedy's funeral. Jacqueline Kennedy's procession to the grave is described in a long passage. Here, the narrator is heterodiegetic; even though there is a single, nestled "us," the narrator himself is not taking part in the story:



The narrative perspective is non-restricted

> Yesterday morning, at 11:15, Jacqueline Kennedy started toward the grave. She came out from under the north portico of the White House and slowly followed the body of her husband, which was in a flag-covered coffin that

> was strapped with two black leather belts to a black caisson that had polished brass axles. She walked straight and her head was high. She walked down the bluestone and blacktop driveway and through shadows thrown by the branches of seven leafless oak trees. She walked slowly past the sailors who held up flags of the states of this country. She walked past silent people who strained to see her and then, seeing her, dropped their heads and put their hands over their eyes. She walked out the northwest gate and into the middle of Pennsylvania Avenue. She walked with tight steps and her head was high and she followed the body of her murdered husband through the streets of Washington.
>
> Everybody watched her while she walked. She is the mother of two fatherless children and she was walking into the history of this country because she was showing everybody who felt old and helpless and without hope that she had the terrible strength that everybody needed so badly. Even though they had killed her husband and his blood ran onto her lap while he died, she could walk through the streets and to his grave and help us all while she walked.
>
> There was mass, and then the procession to Arlington. When she came up to the grave at the cemetery, the casket already was in its place. It was set between brass railings and it was ready to be lowered into the ground. This must be the worst time of all, when a woman sees the coffin with her husband inside and it is in place to be buried under the earth. Now she knows that it is forever. Now there is nothing. There is no casket to kiss or hold with your hands. Nothing material to cling to. But she walked up to the burial area and stood in front of six green-covered chairs and she started to sit down, but then she got up quickly and stood straight because she was not going to sit down until the man directing the funeral told her what seat he wanted her to take.[8]

In the first paragraph, the scene is strictly seen from the outside, as by an invisible observer: external focalization. The many repetitions of "she walked" give an element of compulsiveness to the situation. Jacqueline Kennedy continues walking, for there is nothing else she can do, and the observer and the reader continue looking, for there is nothing else we can do. The contrast is strong between the stationary background and the widow, whose slow advancement represents the only motion in the scene.

In the second paragraph, the narrator has become omniscient, and the text is non-focalized, because the information here cannot be known just by watching the scene. The focalization shift moves the perspective a bit closer to the widow and formulates a kind of imagination, which is linked to "us," and includes the narrator and the whole of the American nation at this time. Here the narrator temporarily becomes much more visible than in the first paragraph.

Two sentences further on, in the third paragraph, something exciting happens. The narrator formulates a hypothetical thought: "This must be the worst time of all, when a woman sees the coffin with her husband inside and it is in place to be buried under the earth. Now she knows that it is forever." The following three sentences are written in what is called free indirect discourse (FID), which means that we now see Jacqueline Kennedy from the inside. "Now there is nothing. There is no casket to kiss or hold with your hands. Nothing material to cling to." FID is a kind of narrated monologue, which means that a person's thoughts or feelings are formulated directly, without any leading verb, but still—unlike in the complete interior monologue—stand together with a pronoun in the third person. We can also see that this passage is written in the present tense, unlike the rest of the text. Most likely we should not take it as if the narrator really is reading Jacqueline Kennedy's thoughts; rather, it is an expression for the narrator's attempt to catch the compassion of an entire nation. The perspective here is internal focalization. At this moment in the text, the reader can imagine seeing the coffin and the whole situation through the widow's eyes. A heterodiegetic narrator is the one who "speaks" in the text; Jacqueline Kennedy is the one who "sees." Voice and point of view are not the same.

And so, in the last sentence, we come back to external focalization, that is, seeing from the outside. Yet, because we just saw through the widow's eyes, we can now imagine even this moment—how she hesitates about whether she will sit down—from her point of view. Thanks to the sliding perspective, Breslin has accomplished a double projection of two perspectives, one from the outside and the other from the inside.

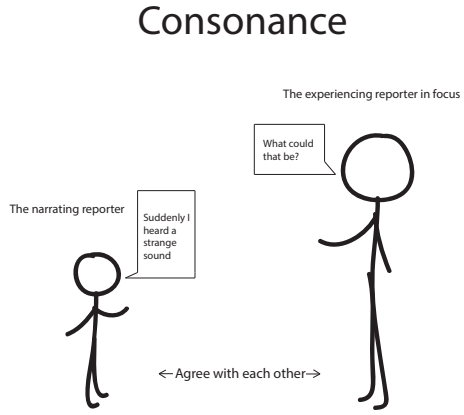
If we, with Eason's terminology, were to characterize the overall perspective of the whole scene "omniscient," none of these movements on the text's micro-level would become visible.

Step 3: Dissonance and Consonance

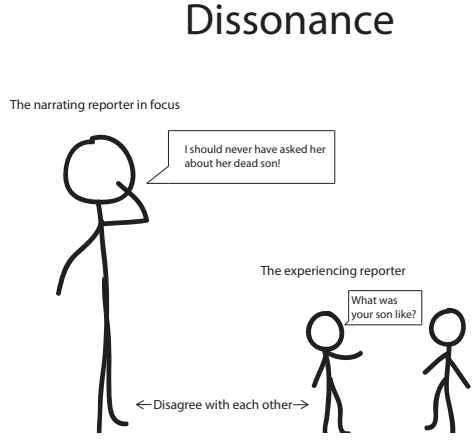
ACP text is based on observation, in the sense that the narrated events are not reconstructed but are based on and shaped as the reporter's own experiences. At the same time, the narrator constantly turns to the reader with different kinds of comments. The narrator discusses, sometimes questions her observations and her ability to represent them in a true way. Often, this so-called discourse dominates. It is the narrator's metalevel. (See figure 1 for the narrator's discourse and the characters' stage, which correspond to the observation.) In older forms of literary journalism, and even in some contemporary texts told in the first person, there is a clear focus on the reporter's experience and observation. Then, in return, the pronounced reflexive "CP

attitude" of the reporter is missing. This type does not seem to have a name in Eason's typology.

In order to clearly distinguish between the different forms, we can turn to the narratologist Dorrit Cohn. I have borrowed her idea to divide the self in a first-person narrative into an experiencing self and a narrating self, although originally the terms derive from Leo Spitzer, in his essay from 1922 about Marcel Proust. Cohn further thinks that consonance or dissonance exists within this split self, which can even be found between narrators and characters in third-person narratives. Consonance prevails if the narrator identifies himself to a great extent with his experiencing alter ego and the focus of the story lies in the perceived events, that is, the observation. The self becomes dissonant if the focus is on the ex-post perspective, while the narrator is revaluating, criticizing or otherwise distancing himself from his former self.[9]



By classifying homodiegetically narrated reportages after their degree of dissonance and consonance, we can easily distinguish texts with a focus on experience and observation from texts with a focus on narration and reflection. I suggest the designations consonant first-person narration and dissonant first-person narration. The latter corresponds to Eason's CP and includes New Journalism reporters such as Hunter S. Thompson, Norman Mailer, and Joan Didion. The former



corresponds to classical literary journalists such as Egon Erwin Kisch, John Reed, and George Orwell, for example, in his *Down and Out in Paris and London* (1933), and extends to a reporter like Günter Wallraff, in his *Lowest of the Low* (1985). This means that I include everything between texts where the reporter does not openly evaluate his experiences and texts that are more or less openly polemical. What they all have in common is consonance, that is, the narrator lacks a questioning attitude toward himself and his ability to narrate.

Let me introduce here two Swedish examples, one of each kind. In doing so, I will also start applying my analysis model. At this point it will be two-pronged; I will save the director's role for later. The first example is by one of Sweden's most well known female reporters of the twentieth century, Barbro Alving, who is usually referred to by her pen name, Bang. She is typical of the tradition where the reporter's observations are interspersed with comments that enhance the experiencing perspective, or, put another way, reinforce the internal focalization through the reporter as a character in the story. Bang's reportage depicts how in 1959 Ingemar Johansson of Sweden became the world heavyweight boxing champion. The narrator is portraying in the first person what the experiencing reporter could see. The scene takes place at Yankee Stadium in New York:

> A black brother in a white dinner jacket next to me was grey in the face of rage and was spitting right up behind the teeth, up against the beaten Floyd Patterson: Get up, you bastard! Fight, you bastard! A spray-painted blonde on the other side stood on a chair and screamed with a square mouth and tore off her pearl necklace so wildly that pearls splashed like tears in the grass, more can no woman do for the sport and Ingemar Johansson. A huge American marine howled like a foghorn right up into the air: a million dollars, a million dollars![10]

The experiencing reporter's observations on the scene are here seasoned with the narrating reporter's imagery and inserted comments ("spray-painted blonde," "splashed like tears in the grass," "more can no woman do. . . "). We can thus distinguish between the experiencer and the narrator, but there is no doubt that the focus is on the experience, on the moment, and the narrator plays quite well together with the experiencing reporter. Consonance prevails. This type of text has no name of its own in Eason's typology, because even though it is told in the first person, it lacks an explicit metalevel.

However, In Peter Fröberg Idling's reportage book *Pol Pot's Smile* (2006), continuous doubts are articulated on a metalevel in the narrator's discourse. Fröberg Idling's narrator tries to understand why a traveling group of Swedes didn't notice what was going on when they had been invited to visit Khmer

Rouge's Kampuchea. How could they ignore the mass murder that the country's population was subjected to by the regime? The experiencing reporter reads a lot, interviews one of the travelers and travels himself through Cambodia of today. From the outset you believe that the narrator will find a way to a clear truth, but the more the experiencing reporter learns, the more humble the narrator becomes. One scene has been named "The Mirror":

> Word-cunning conjurer, milk-skinned and male, I meet the gaze of the pyramid's vertiginous peak. A denominator's position. A traveller in a time that only exists in the people who lived it. What gives you—yes, you in the mirror there!—the right to travel uninvited here among their memories? What gives you the right to possess them and drag them into your wonderland? Word-conjuring meaning mincer? Yes, you, diction man, dictator.[11]

In the second sentence, we find the experiencing reporter who is on site, looking at a pyramid. In the rest of the passage, the focus is on the narrator and dissonance prevails, not only toward the experiencer but toward the narrator himself, who questions his identity so that the entire narrative function begins to sway.

In summary, with the help of the concepts of dissonance and consonance, we can transfer the division to homodiegetical narrators and easily see that "first-person," strictly narratologically, can mean different things, depending on whether it is the experience (point of view, may be found on "the stage," see figure 1) or the narration (voice, may be found in "the discourse," see figure 1) that is emphasized.

Step 4: The Narrator's Visibility—Decisive for the Subjectivity

I will now combine my model with the narrator's visibility. Giles and Roberts place ER in the middle of a scale between subjective and objective journalism. What is interesting here is that it only seems to be the reporter's attitude (romantic with respect to reproducing characters as thinking and feeling individuals) that affects the text in a subjective direction. In contrast, they argue that style in ER should be perceived as a "neutral, objective, presentation style"[12] and that "ER can be seen to operate in a typically mimetic manner."[13] This is a view shared by many scholars, since the "new realist" Tom Wolfe stressed the relationship with the narrative techniques, which were applied during the realism in fiction.

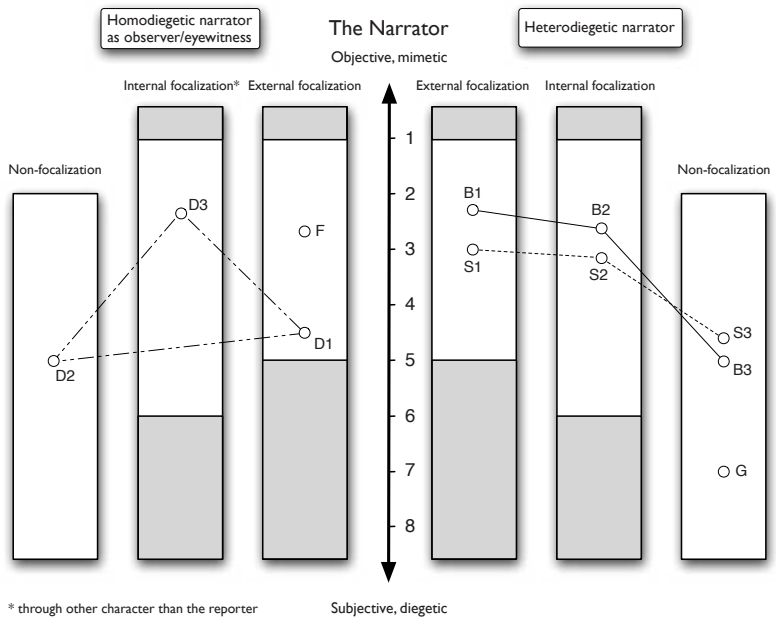
Should we therefore perceive the ER texts as generally more mimetic/scenic and therefore stylistically more objective than all forms of first-person narration? Let us examine Giles and Roberts's assertions closer. Mimetic and diegetic representation goes back to terms from Plato, where mimesis means to mimic/imitate, while diegesis means that someone is telling someone

something. To imitate an event directly, without retelling it in words, is possible in forms such as film or drama. In this sense, every text becomes more or less diegetic. However, an author can write in a way that imitates mimesis. This can be done in the form of "scenes" with action and dialogue. The reader may thus take part in external events, and often also in the characters' inner life, without any visible intermediary instance. The more an external perspective consists of pure observation, the more mimetic the representation becomes. From an internal perspective, the degree of mimesis will increase the more directly a character's thoughts and feelings are expressed. Here, the interior monologue becomes the most mimetic representation. Next comes the previously mentioned FID. With indirect discourse/representation, however, you can notice the traces of a hidden narrator in the choice of words. (Example: "She said that she felt happy" instead of "She said, I feel happy.")[14]

Chatman considers the narrator's visibility to be inversely related to the degree of mimesis. To demonstrate this inverse relationship he has established a scale, where the purest form of mimesis corresponds to a completely impersonal recording of external events. He names this type of representation "non-narrated stories." After that, he positions speech and thoughts that appear in the characters' own words, without any visible narrator, as "non- or minimally mediated." As soon as the narrator's choice of words can be glimpsed, although ever so indirectly, the narrative shifts to being formulated by a covert narrator. The narrator then becomes all the more visible as you approach the other extreme, pure diegesis, where the narrator appears as a person.[15] Translated into a reportage, the latter could mean that a reporter in the "I"-form tells a story that he is not a part of, but has received from others.

Step 5: The Narrator's Visibility Is Combined with Focalization

Figure 7 classifies two main types of literary journalism/reportage. It illustrates possible combinations between how visible the narrator is (the vertical axis) and how much the narrator knows in relation to the characters, and thus where the narrative perspective is based (the three columns each correspond to a form of focalization). The columns are not drawn according to all hypothetically possible combinations between focalization and the narrator's visibility, but should be primarily perceived to be an illustration of how different types of literary journalism can be grouped. To illustrate the connections in the figure, some of the reportage examples analyzed in this essay have been broken down into smaller parts, each of which is placed on an approximate position. I will return to this later.



The right field includes heterodiegetic narrators, who are not part of the story. This is where texts that Eason rates as ER are placed. I name this type reconstructed third-person narration (when the reporter has not been present in the reality and the scenes are built on reconstruction) and touched-up third-person narration (when the reporter has been present in the reality but has been edited out of the scenes in the text). In many ER texts you can find both types, for example, in the internationally famous Norwegian reporter Åsne Seierstad's *The Bookseller of Kabul* from 2002.[16] The reconstructed type dominates in Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood* and Pulitzer Prize–winner Isabel Wilkerson's *Angela Whitiker's Climb* (2015), while the touched-up type dominates in American Alex Kotlowtz's *There Are No Children Here* (1992).

The left field includes homodiegetic narrators, together with an experiencing reporter, who is only glimpsed in the story in the form of an observing eyewitness. This type is missing a name in Eason's typology. I call it dimmed first-person narration. Within this group you can find several reportages within author Stig Dagerman's *German Autumn* (1946).[17] Other examples can be found in the reportages of American reporter Martha Gellhorn. Within the group you may also find texts by several contemporary reporters,

and I will provide some examples later.

The vertical axis designates the narrator's visibility on a scale of mimetic ("objective") to diegetic ("subjective") narration. The points on the axis correspond roughly with Chatman's classification. Therefore: 1 equals physical movements are recorded entirely mechanically (external focalization) or inner monologue (internal focalization); 2 equals physical movements are recorded with a glimpse of the narrator's choice of words (external focalization) or Free Indirect Discourse (FID) (internal focalization); 3 equals the narrator's choice of words can be glimpsed a little more, that is, in the form of indirect discourse ("She said that she was happy"); 4 equals the narrator gives "stage directions" and the like, principally in a personal choice of words; 5 equals the narrator provides summaries and the like; 6 equals the narrator comments on the characters and the like; 7 equals the narrator makes generalizations and the like; and 8 equals the narrator comments on the narration (metalevel).

If you assume a relationship between mimetic form and objectivity, then you can directly state that all third-person narratives need not be explicitly objective in form, since the visibility of the narrating reporter may differ. According to Chatman, a text becomes the most objective at pure external focalization, but few ER reports are told in that way. The previous Breslin example is pronouncedly scenic (imitating, mimetic). But let us place it in figure 7, so that B1 equals Breslin, paragraph 1; B2 equals ibid., FID sequence; B3 equals ibid., paragraph 2 (overall information plus the narrator's imagination). Then we will notice that it consists of three forms of focalization, of which the non-focalized passage is the most diegetic. Even where the focalization is external, you can find formulations that suggest a narrator, such as, "She walked with tight steps and her head was high."

A text that Giles and Roberts highlight as being typically ER is John Hersey's *Hiroshima.* Yet it is not represented in a purely scenical (mimetic) form but also contains indirect style ("She said that she was happy"), which indicates a covert narrator. Further, it contains summaries, single environmental descriptions and personal characteristics, where the narrator's choice of words can be glimpsed. All this affects the text in a diegetic, that is, subjective, direction. It should be placed into coordinates, varying between 2 and 5–6 on the axis, and thus varies widely in objectivity.

What, then, about texts that are mainly told by an omniscient narrator, that is, with Genette's terminology, in a non-focalized form? Swedish narratologist Eva Broman points out that in fiction, such a narrator is associated with the classic nineteenth-century novel. The narrator has not only unlimited knowledge of what has happened and what is to come, but also of every character's inner life. He also frequently demonstrates "his superior

knowledge and sense of judgement by commenting on the person's thoughts, feelings and actions."[18]

Within the third-person reportage, I can find texts where the narrator possesses different degrees of "omniscience." In an American ER text like Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood*, most of the time the narrator is both omniscient and clearly visible. A similar text is written by the Swedish reporter Jan Guillou. In 1977 he wrote a reportage about the West German Norbert Kröcher, who became famous for his plans to kidnap the Swedish minister of justice, Anna-Greta Leijon.[19] Guillou himself never met Kröcher but mapped Kröcher's life in detail, both in Sweden and West Germany, and then wrote a story in ER style. Here is a sample, marked with a G in figure 7:

> He was a terrified and unusually childish 22-year-old who came to Sweden in order to escape from his own fear of "acting"; a mythomaniac who would most rather be left alone with his dreams of fame and fortune at a pipe of hashish, a young man who could feel bad for fear of physical violence—this Norbert Kröcher stayed in Sweden when his wife Gabriele returned to West Germany where they would soon turn up in the terrorist business. The two girls saw him as a hopeless coward. When he said he wanted to stay in Sweden to rest and have some time alone, it did not just seem like an escape. This was exactly what it was.[20]

Certainly the narrator is not visible as an "I" in the section; neither does he comment on the narration, but he is otherwise a very visible narrator, who narrates in his own words throughout the text. There is not even a hint that the vocabulary was borrowed from any of the characters, yet the narrator seems to know more about who Kröcher is and what is driving him than Kröcher himself could put into words. He also seems to be able to read two Swedish girls' thoughts about Kröcher. Finally, he knows what will happen to Kröcher and his wife, Gabriele, in the future. This narrator must be situated close to the subjective pole of Chatman's scale. It is far from Breslin's representation technique, where the outside is depicted mainly as neutral and the inside perspective mimics the portrayed character's conceivable choice of words. Guillou's text is neither mimetic in the scenic way nor in reproducing a character's point of view. Instead, it is nearly as diegetic/subjective as the text by Fröberg Idling.

Another American example is Tom Wolfe's *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test* (1968). In *Fables of Fact*, John Hellmann points out how Wolfe, in the reconstructed parts of the story, has fashioned what he himself calls "the Hectoring Narrator," who turns alternately to the reader and to the characters with various comments such as: "I couldn't tell you what bright fellow thought of that, inviting Kesey," and, "That's good thinking there, Cool Breeze."[21] In this

constructed narrating instance Wolfe talks about himself in an I-form, even though he is not involved in the narrated events. He will therefore be something as unusual as a heterodiegetic I-narrator. Or more simply, despite some comments in the first person, this can be compared to third-person narration. This is because the "I" is not referring to the experiencing reporter, something that places the narrator in these parts at the subjective pole on the visibility axis. And yet Wolfe's texts are usually mentioned as stylistic examples of "objective realism," as is Capote's *In Cold Blood* and even Breslin's "It's an Honor." The reason for classifying such different texts similarly, as mentioned above, is that all types of third-person narration—or, more correct, all types of heterodiegetic narration—have been considered "objective."

Just like a text narrated in the third person does not have to be pronouncedly objective in form (the narrator becomes more visible), a text narrated in the first person does not need to be subjective (the narrator stays in the background). Consonance should move a text closer to the mimetic or objective pole, while dissonance should make the text more subjective. With such an interpretation, Bang's example becomes more objective than Fröberg Idling's, which can hardly be said to be told from the experiencing reporter's point of view.

A homodiegetically narrated text can also be written in a scenic (mimetic) form, together with the particular type of I-narrator, who is often covert. This is the type that I have termed dimmed first-person narration, illustrated in the left field of figure 7. From this special construction follows that the text is either not at all or only partly internally focalized through the reporter. Instead, the narrating voice is for long sections similar to a heterodiegetic narrator. We will have a result where the relation to other characters' subjectivity is of the same kind as in the right field. However, there is a difference. Literary journalism to the left of the axis focuses on the moment, the observation, in the form of external observation or other characters' inner perspective, even though omniscient narration sometimes occurs.

One example of this kind of narration is a reportage from 2013 by the Swedish reporter Magnus Falkehed. It is marked F in figure 7. The text is about luxuries as a growth market and opens with a scene from the French customs:

> The night is still dark and chilly when the French customs car drives in toward the mail terminal at Nice airport. A dozen customs officers with orange armbands gather for a crackdown on the logistics premises of a large courier service. In front of curious and stunned staff, they tear open package after package at the conveyor belt. . . .
>
> "Boss! Here I have something interesting," says customs officer Amélyne Beretta, who opens a big white package that has an address in China as the

> sender. From of the box she takes out a couple of handbags, some dresses, scarves and textile products. Everything is marked with logos from expensive brands like Hermès, Lancel, Louis Vuitton, Chanel and Gucci.[22]

The text is here externally focalized, that is, observed as by an invisible spectator. "The narrator" could in principle be replaced with a camera and a tape recorder, which only records the depicted sequence, but still not fully. The expressions "dark and chilly" and "curious and stunned" found in the first and fourth lines respectively signal some sort of personal narration; simply fragments of the reporter who was there in reality but has been edited out of the section. Interestingly enough, the reporter also announces himself as a single "we" a few lines further down, where he occasionally can be glimpsed along with the photographer. The result is a reporter role that can be termed *visible but dimmed observer*. In the scene as a whole we see an externally focalized narrative together with a visible "I"-narrator (homodiegetic). Narratologist Eva Broman emphasizes that in fiction this is an unusual combination, as narrators always have access to their own thoughts and feelings. She explains that the combination may occur in the context of a "hard-boiled" style due to "a psychological interpretation: the I-narrator's refusal or inability to render his own thoughts and feelings functions as a means of characterization."[23] This is hardly the case in a reportage, where a "clinical" I-narrator is not an end in itself. Rather, this form, which is quite usual in Swedish reportage today, has to do with the reporter's role as an eyewitness: to mirror events without exposing your own person.

The Compassionate Witness

So far this essay has solely discussed what can be observed in the reportage text. Now let us turn outward to examine in what way ideas about the journalistic mission could explain the narratological specificity of the texts. A reportage may be considered the reporter's personal account of reality. I consider an empathetic approach to be one of several driving forces behind the mission and will now outline a theoretical background for "empathy" in this context.

In many ways journalism and civilization are historically linked. Denis McQuail highlights this connection in *Journalism and Society*.[24] Among other things, he discusses what kind of self-image the press has in terms of the social role of journalism, including investigating, observing, and being a public voice, as well as being driven by idealism and standing up for common human values. Under the heading "Being of and for the People," McQuail mentions expressions that newspapers often use about this role: "Humanité; Labour; Tribune; Citizen; the People."[25]

The European reportage was born in London and Paris during the nine-

teenth century, close to the emergence of realism and, later, naturalism. An early reporter role, highlighted by the Norwegian media researcher Jo Bech-Karlsen, was the flâneur, often a writer who was strolling around among ordinary people observing and reporting with a personalized pen.[26] The flâneur had literary but also social ambitions that were closely connected to the naturalistic tendencies in literature—it was the writer's and the reporter's task to expose environments and report about people who previously had not been depicted. The poverty of the urban environment should be rendered with "scientific" accuracy in the details. John C. Hartsock and Michael Schudson, among others, have described a similar trend in the United States.[27]

As journalism became a separate profession, the eyewitness replaced the flâneur and thereby a set of professional ideals emerged. In *The Power of News,* Schudson declares the American 1890s to be "the age of the reporter." He gives the witnessing attitude no less than three names: the observer, the spectator, and the onlooker.[28] The journalism of the 1890s is highlighted by Hartsock, who considers the period to be the first flourishing era in the United States for what he names "Modern Narrative Literary Journalism." Among others, he mentions Stephen Crane as a reporter who attempted to engage with the Other. For example, Crane once spent twenty-four hours living like a homeless person. Hartsock describes Crane's reporter attitude as representative for those who wanted to "narrow the gulf between subject and object."[29]

The witness role has been stressed differently in different traditions; sometimes the reporter is both witnessing and taking part in the depicted events, and sometimes she is just on the scene to convey her observations. In the chapter "What Is a Reporter?" Schudson compares two American reporters to one another: the muckraker and editor Lincoln Steffens, born in 1866, and the foreign correspondent Harrison Salisbury, born in 1906. He finds their professional attitude representative for each respective journalistic era. Salisbury names Steffens's kind of reporter a crusader, someone who is animated by a passion for social justice and has a desire to "change the world" through journalism. He names himself a pilgrim, constantly in search of knowledge.[30] Steffens thought there was an absolute scientific truth about human beings and human behavior, a truth that it was the journalist's task to reveal. But even Salisbury was an idealist, though of another, more modern kind, Schudson asserts. Salisbury aspired to reveal falsehood—to get beyond the apparent, find the facts and get the answers. Not in general, but in each specific case. What unites them is a belief in journalism as a mission—in an individual (Steffens) or in a collective form (Salisbury). Schudson argues that both "define the range of possibilities to which a journalism of dedication and vision can aspire."[31]

Within Scandinavian reportage, the eyewitness tradition has been strong historically and often connected to a dedication to social issues, sometimes together with polemical commenting. This is noted in Steen Steensen's article in the *LJS* Norwegian issue.[32] Steensen comments on his colleague Jo Bech-Karlsen's genre definition, which emphasizes that a reportage has to derive from the reporter's personal experiences and that it has to be written in the form of a "personal narrative." Steensen names this approach "compassionate subjectivity." Let me broaden the definition further, so that it includes texts where the reporter has not personally been on location, but still has an attitude comparable with "witnessing."

Among later reporters, a compassionate ideal has remained alive, something that can be illustrated by a quote from Wolfe in 2007. He claims that it is every reporter's duty to ask himself: "What is it like to be one of these people?"[33] However, the witness idea also includes another important meaning: the reporter must not be personally involved. The compassionate attitude should be limited to a professional plane, much like an actor who cannot cry on stage, even though the play is tragic. Eason discusses this distinction in "The New Journalism and the Image-world," arguing the reporter must simultaneously keep an observer's distance and create closeness between reader and subject: "The distinction between lived and observed experience is a fundamental distinction for human-interest reporting." According to Eason, this distance may result in different kinds of narrative techniques, depending on whether the reporter is a realist or modernist.[34] Let me stress further that you will find an aesthetic distance in both cases. This is the distance of the director, something I will return to later.

Against this background, I now want to give my own interpretation of the eyewitness metaphor. It means that the reporter usually is coming from the outside and has a mission: to report about the reality and the people she meets. A reporter is never present on the scene—in reality or in the text—for her own sake. She must at the same time base what she is writing on her own experiences and in the text create empathy with people she meets. Certainly there are reportages where the empathy stays with the reporter, including some types of travel reportage and social reportage, where exoticism and estrangement construct a distancing screen. In this group I will place reportages by Ryszard Kapuscínskí. But even in such texts it is the reporter's intention to explain the world, although in the form of generalization. As I see it, the reportage as a genre always has an empathetic foundation; the reporter wants to understand and then to explain what he has understood (or, in a postmodern way, what he did not understand). The messenger himself is secondary. For that reason I do not interpret a reportage as "the story about the reporter's

encounter with reality," but as "the reporter's story about reality." This is irrespective of whether the reporter's meeting situation is fully visible, dimmed, edited out, or has never taken place. What transforms the text from self-narration to journalism is a matter of direction.

Now the time has come to put the lights on the person behind the stage, the director in my model (see figure 1). Through her the professional ideals being discussed can influence the text. Let me give some examples here of how the director, through different types of narrative techniques, can create empathy with the Other.[35] It will be interesting, then, to examine how the reporter's subjectivity, so to speak, can be "switched out" for the characters' subjectivity.

To Witness without Being Seen

When a reportage is based on secondary sources, the scenes have to be written in a reconstructed form. Then the narrative, of course, can adopt any of Genette's focalizations, together with a heterodiegetic narrator. But even when the real reporter has been on site, the director may have chosen to edit out the reporter of the text, and the narrator remains heterodiegetic. It is this type that I term touched-up third-person narration. Here, the reporter's observation may sometimes linger.

Breslin's earlier cited "It's an Honor" mixes both types of third-person narration. The story starts with a scene when the man who will bury John F. Kennedy is going to have his breakfast. This scene is of the reconstructed type. However, the reporter has probably observed (on television, I guess) the earlier quoted scene when Jacqueline Kennedy is proceeding toward the grave. Still, there is no sign of any observer, with the exception of a general "us." That means the touched-up type. A Swedish example, which is almost only written in the latter form, is the reporter Karen Söderberg's reportage from a refugee camp in Macedonia during the Kosovo war in 1999:

> It is Wednesday morning and everywhere hair care, haircutting and shampooing are going on. In a plastic tube four-year-old Deshira Berisha is standing just as God created her, getting her long hair washed. She alternates between shrieking and laughing, is caught in a towel by her father and gets her wet hair done by her mother, who rarely smiles. The other day a truck came with shampoo, soap and washing powder, so today everybody is taking the opportunity, says Asje Berisha. People have told her to cut her daughter's hair short, so it will be easy to care for, but she doesn't want to do that. What she wants, she says, what she is striving toward, is to have such a normal life so that Deshira can keep her hair long. Like she has always had it. That is why Asje Berisha is cleaning. That is why she's washing. That is why she's sweeping the street outside the tent. That is why she gets up every morning and gets dressed in the baggy clothes she gets in the camp.[36]

The text is initially written as if the scene is observed by an invisible observer, with external focalization (see figure 3). But, from the fifth line onward, the narrator wavers between being omniscient (non-focalized text, see figure 4) and indirectly referring to the mother as a source. However, we do not know to whom she is giving the information because there is no trace of the reporter. This strange construction does not really fit into the narrative form. But it is so common, at least in news articles, that newspaper readers rarely react.

In the last paragraph we seem to read the mother's thoughts, and the focalization becomes internal (see figure 2). The perspective is getting closer to her from the inside, but without FID. The repetition of "That is why" reinforces the empathy and consolidates the internal focalization. (This is the mother's knowledge, this is what she knows.) We readers feel that we do not want to cut our daughter's hair, either. Instead, we want our daughter's living conditions to improve. Like in the Breslin example, there is a division between voice (a heterodiegetic narrator) and point of view (the mother's). Behind the structure, we can imagine the director's idea of the eyewitness task, to witness without being seen. In figure 7 the example has been placed so that Söderberg, S1 equals paragraph 1; S2 equals ibid., paragraph 3; S3 equals ibid., paragraph 2.

Is it necessary with an absent reporter to evoke the reader's empathy? No. Even in a reportage where the reporter is visible as an "I," the empathy may end up with someone other than the reporter. This becomes possible in a homodiegetically narrated text, where the reporter is of the witness type while a character is internally focalized (dimmed first-person narration). For example, in 1946, Swedish writer Stig Dagerman wrote the earlier mentioned reportage series called *German Autumn* from postwar Germany. In one of the reportages the reporter walks around with a "Doctor W" among people who have fled from the Soviet-occupied eastern zone to Essen. Although it is damp and cold, the refugees are forced to live in sets of goods wagons without windowpanes. One scene begins, "I have come here together with a young medical officer." Doctor W stops in front of a seriously ill girl:

> Apart from when she coughs, the girl lies quite still. The poverty of the goods wagon: a ragged bed along one wall, a pile of potatoes tipped into a corner (the only provisions during this journey without a destination), a small heap of dirty straw in another corner, where three people sleep, and all muffled in the calm blue smoke from the ramshackle stove, which was rescued from one of Essen's ruins. Here two families live, six people in all. There were eight of them to start with, but two hopped off somewhere along the way and never came back. Doctor W can of course lift up the girl

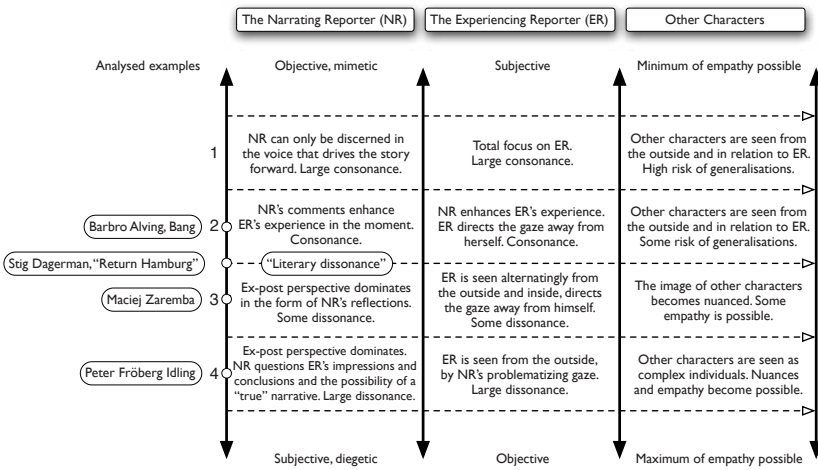
> and say how she is, he can carry her over to the light of the stove and declare that immediate hospital treatment is needed urgently, but then he must also explain how there are no vacant places in the hospitals and how the city's administrative bureaucracy is as usual considerably more slow-moving than death.[37]

Initially the reader sees through the eyes of the experiencing reporter. The narrating reporter reflects on what we can see. Then a sentence follows with background information that alters the perspective to non-focalized. After that, it is time for a more radical change in point of view. By using the hypothetical form ("Doctor W can of course," "but then he must also explain") the text switches over to being internally focalized through the doctor. The result is a representation form that carries with it a remnant of the narrating reporter's voice, but at the same time approaches FID. The information in this sentence can reasonably be known only by the doctor, which makes the change of perspective even stronger. We now see the ill girl through the eyes of the doctor. Dagerman has probably interviewed the doctor, but instead of reproducing his words as a quote the director lets us share the doctor's resignation. The result is a directed reality. The journalist's role as an eyewitness lies behind the double perspective. In figure 7 this text sample has been placed according to: D1 equals Dagerman "The Unwelcome," lines 1–5 (environmental description plus the narrator's reflection); D2 equals ibid., lines 5–7; D3 equals ibid., lines 7–11.

Step 6: Connections between the I-narrator, the I-experiencer and Other Characters

Let me now, in a final step, problematize my reasoning so far apropos homodiegetically told reportages (texts told in the first person by a reporter who has experienced the narrated events). In fact, this group is a special narratological case, which, according to my interpretation, is based on the eyewitness idea. If the narrator is of the dimmed observer/witness type, as in the Falkehed example, simultaneous external focalization will be possible. At the same time, other characters than the reporter can be internally focalized, as in the Dagerman example. If, on the other hand, a reporter in the "I" form plays a more pronounced role in the text, the focalization will be internal through the reporter (the reader will then experience the narrated events through the reporter's senses).

Figure 8 classifies homodiegetically narrated forms of literary journalism/reportage where the reporter is clearly present as an "I." Three vertical axes or areas are specified for the narrating reporter, the experiencing reporter and other characters. You may notice the vertical connections between them with regard to subjectivity, objectivity, and possible empathy. The lower part of the



figure, areas 3 and 4, corresponds to Eason's CP designation, dissonant first-person narration in my words, while the upper part, areas 1 and 2, seems to be missing a name in Eason's typology. I have termed this category consonant first-person narration. Four of the essay's analyzed samples have been placed at approximate positions.

In the figure as a whole, all texts are internally focalized through the reporter. Here, the narrator's visibility coincides with the degree of dissonance. However, the connections to other characters' subjectivity become considerably more complex than in figure 7. On the one hand, an emphasis on the I-character's perspective (consonance) indicates that the narrative portrays the experiencing reporter as more "objective," remaining faithful to the reporter's experience. Simultaneously, the scope is reduced for other characters' subjectivity, as the experiencing reporter is seeing them from the outside—something that increases the risk of generalization. Here, a narrating reporter can often be sensed by the kind of comments that enhance the experience without really questioning it, as in the quote from the reporter, Bang.

When the "I"-narrator's ex-post perspective is emphasized in the form of a questioning attitude (dissonance), the paradox occurs that reality is depicted as more nuanced, that is, more complex, and that empathy with other characters is thus given room to increase.

Consequently, dissonance here can become a tool to emphasize other characters' subjectivity. I want to stress that it must not be so; the narrator

can, of course, problematize in a way that in itself creates new barriers to approach the characters' own perspective. The connection is not unambiguous at this point. The conclusion would be that an increased dissonance between the narrator and the experiencer reduces the subjective space for the reporter as a character, but also provides an opportunity to increase the credibility of the picture conveyed. Fröberg Idling's formerly quoted reportage is an example of this. The more the text's narrator questions an unambiguous truth as well as his own narration, the more credible he becomes. Such a conclusion is in line with Steensen's "Humble I," and even with Swedish literary scholar Anna Jungstrand's concept "Rhetoric of Honesty."[38] Both stress that CP texts use dissonance as a way to establish the reporter's and the report's credibility. In my view, this means that increased subjectivity of the narrating reporter in CP texts reduces the subjective space for the reporter as a character, but at the same time offers the opportunity to increase the subjective space for other characters, and thus to create empathy with them. Right here we could formulate the narrative specificity of CP texts.

I will now discuss how this ambiguity is to be understood in two more examples of how the idea of a witnessing reporter may affect the subjectivity in literary journalism.

Dissonance Can Push Aside the Perspective

In a typical CP text, or dissonant first-person narration, the "I" is exposed to the reader. Even in this category, there are techniques to move the focus away from the reporter. One example is Swedish Maciej Zaremba's 2005 reportage on migrant labor in Europe, entitled "the Polish plumber." Here, Zaremba describes how people are driven from their homes to seek employment in another country, where they receive low wages. The reporter meets Anna, a woman who has commuted between her homeland Latvia and work on a Norwegian farm, for the farmer Fritiof, for four years:

> It is good working for Fritiof, says Anna. Everything is good except for the mountains. They are smothering her. Now she longs for the vaulted sky in Balvi. She is a trained secretary but a woman of fifty may not get such a job in Latvia. We speak Russian, the former Soviet colonial people's lingua franca. She is actually from Lithuania, she says. Then I ask for her name. It is hard to spell, Anna says: "Zet, a, r, e, m, b, a. . . . Do you want me to repeat it?"
>
> I swallow. Then I hand over my card. Before she has taken it, I feel the shame coming. Who owns a visiting card in Balvi? We have the same unusual last name. We probably stem from the same clan in Lithuania, that history started dispersing 600 years ago. Chance made her end up in the poor world and me in the rich world. And the first thing I do is drag up the

evidence for this distinction.[39]

In the first part, the focus is on what the experiencing reporter hears. But notice that the text, after the words "says Anna," is internally focalized through her. The next four sentences catch her point of view, of which "Everything is good except for the mountains" is FID. When she spells out her name, the perspective returns to the experiencing reporter.

In the next paragraph of the text, the emphasis is gradually transferred to the narrating reporter. Now it is his ex-post perspective that dominates. Since he is ashamed of his past behavior, a dissonance is established to the experiencing reporter (see figure 6). Yet, the remarkable thing is that the reader's attention does not stop with the narrating reporter. Instead, the dramaturgy highlights the woman's situation: not to rule over one's own life. The narrator's self-criticism opens up the possibility to empathize with Anna. The reflection moves the reader's attention away from the reporter, which is precisely the director's intention.

The construction is understandable when we realize that it is threefold. The dissonance becomes a tool for the director. It gives him the opportunity to stimulate engagement in the subject of the text, in some sense also to create empathy with the Other. If Zaremba's reportage had been an autobiography, the purpose of the passage may have been to tell an embarrassing story about how the reporter made a fool of himself. But now Zaremba has a journalistic purpose. Now the dissonance is used rather as a means to highlight, between the lines, the conditions for constant migratory labor—an expression of direction.

Many scholars argue that within CP texts it is the reporter himself who seems to face the reader and honestly disclose his doubts and his inadequacy in conveying a single, true picture. For example, Giles and Roberts write that this form of the New Journalism is "exposing the shaping presence of the reporter."[40] However, if you turn to Eason, he stresses that "modernist texts represent style as a strategy for conceiving as well as revealing reality."[41] It is simply a stylistic feature that the director represents both her narrator and her experiencer in a way that suits her artistic and ideological purposes. The Zaremba example clearly shows how a CP narrator is as much a construction as an ER narrator, something that may be obvious in an analysis model that separates the creating instance (the director) from the narrator's level (discourse).

Literary Technique in the Service of a Journalistic Purpose

Dissonance can thus be a tool to push aside the perspective and create empathy with someone other than the reporter. Even in consonant first-person texts, this is possible. The experiencing reporter then acts in an

empathetic manner, which enables the reader to feel the same as the reporter, and thus to empathize with the Other. This is partly the case in my next example. Primarily, however, here we have a dissonance that is of a different nature than in the reportage by Zaremba.

The example is taken yet again from Dagerman's *German Autumn*, this time to illustrate when the reporter is not so much an observer, but rather is playing a major role with the purpose to create empathy with the Other. In the reportage "Return Hamburg," the reporter travels on a crowded train to Hamburg. On board is also sixteen-year-old Gerhard, a boy who has fled from Germany's Soviet-occupied zone and dreams about going by boat to "America." In a scene before the train's departure, Gerhard asks the reporter for money for a ticket:

> If I work for the Americans? I explain everything to the boy in the worn-out military coat and cap—a cap of defeat, bashed in and pulled right down over his forehead. He just becomes more eager and reckless and says that I must help him. He looks at the American satchel as if it were a revelation, a victory satchel with full paunch and shining buckles. . . .
>
> I lend him money for a ticket to Hamburg. At least he will get as far as Hamburg; he thinks that ships leave Hamburg for America, ships to hope for.[42]

When the train arrives in Hamburg, the two go together for a while. The reportage ends as follows:

> We walk for a while in the cold, Gerhard and I. Then we have to part outside the hotel with the sign No German civilians. I shall go through the swing-door and enter a dining room with glasses and white table-cloths, and a gallery where in the evening musicians play from the *Tales of Hoffman*. I shall sleep in a soft bed in a warm room with hot and cold running water. But Gerhard Blume walks on, out in Hamburg's night.
>
> He does not even go to the harbor. And nothing can be done about it. Absolutely nothing.[43]

Here, the division between voice and point of view is more indirect than in Dagerman's "The Unwelcome." The text is consistently focalized through the reporter, and Gerhard is seen through his eyes. Nevertheless, the reader's empathy is directed against the boy. But why? The narrator's style is reflexive and problematizing. Yet this dissonance is not of the same kind as in the Zaremba example. It has nothing to do with the narrating reporter criticizing the experiencing reporter. Maybe it could be called literary dissonance, where the experiencing reporter's function, as a contrast, will be to highlight Gerhard's lack of freedom. The function is achieved through the interaction

between selection and style. The selection means that it is about Gerhard, in the story as a whole, that we learn something personal about him, not the reporter. The figures of stylistics, including repetitions and incomplete sentences, make the text pathos-filled. The metaphors "a cap of defeat" and "a victory satchel" emphasize the contrast of choices between the two main characters. The final scene turns into a crescendo over the fact that the reporter is as free to move as he wants, as Gerhard is limited by postwar politics and poverty. Overall, the result is a complex literary technique that is used in service of the journalistic mission to direct the reader's empathy away from the reporter, that is, away from the one who is witnessing.

Summary and Some Conclusions

Using tools from classical narratology, I have constructed a model for analyzing aspects of form in literary journalism/reportage. The model may be helpful to examine the interplay between different kinds of narrator (voice) and different kinds of perspective (point of view), as well as the manner in which objectivity and subjectivity should be understood within the narrative framework. In this essay I have also pointed out how a compassionate approach is one of journalism's professional ideals, often in the form of the reporter as an empathetic eyewitness. The analysis model further has helped me to problematize the witness role, by highlighting narrative techniques to direct the reader's gaze away from the experiencing reporter and toward the Other. Finally, I have tried to divide the entire scope of literary journalism into five categories.

A point of departure for my model has been that a reportage should be understood as directed reality. The director (implied author) is the creating instance and will play a key role. At a basal level, the narrative interplays between three instances: a director, a narrator, and characters. If the narrative is written in the first person, the narrator will be a narrating reporter, who must be kept apart from the experiencing reporter, who is one of the text's characters. Between these two, consonance or dissonance may prevail. In the first case the narrative focus will be on experience and observation, in the latter case on narrating and reflection.

Earlier divisions of literary journalism have kept texts told in the first person apart from texts told in the third person. Often, the narrative perspective has been considered to follow this division. A third-person narrative has also in general been considered to be the most objective. In a narratological context, however, the type of narrator coincides with neither the perspective nor the objectivity. I have chosen to keep the following three factors separated.

1. The answer to the question "Who narrates?" decides the voice and may

be either a homodiegetic narrator, who is a character in the story and who narrates in the first person, or a heterodiegetic narrator, who is not a character in the story and who normally, but not always, narrates in the third person.

2. The question, "How much does the narrator know?" may result in three answers, and it will be these answers that decide the perspective. They are: internal focalization (the narrator knows as much as one of the characters), external focalization (the narrator only knows what can be seen from the outside, "camera-eye"), and non-focalization (the narrator knows more than all of the characters together, "omniscience").

3. The objectivity, at last, depends on the answer to the question, "How visible is the narrator?" The basic rule is that when the narrator becomes the least visible, the narrative's form becomes the most objective, while when the narrative's form becomes the most subjective, the narrator becomes the most visible. "Subjective" in this context is connected to a diegetic presentation style, while "objective" is connected to a mimetic presentation style. The terms derive from Plato, and mean to retell a course of events in your own words, respectively to imitate, to represent in a manner so that the messenger/narrator seem to be invisible.

Eason's division of American New Journalism into two types, ER/realism and CP/modernism, has for a long time been one of the starting points for theoretical discussions about the whole genre of literary journalism. In order to better cover types that do not fit in Eason's typology, I have instead split a division into five groups. Each category may vary in objectivity, and three of them may vary in focalization/perspective. By "third-person narration" below, I mean that the narrator is heterodiegetic and normally narrates in the third person. The narrator may hypothetically even be a construction, which is not identical with an experiencing reporter but still names himself/herself "I" (as the earlier mentioned Wolfe example illustrates).

The five groups are:

1. Reconstructed Third-person Narration (The reporter has not been present in the reality. The scenes are built on reconstruction.) May be combined with three forms of focalization. May be anything between quite objective and very subjective. Corresponds to Eason's ER.

2. Touched-up Third-person Narration (The reporter has been present in the reality but has been edited out of the text. The scenes are built on observation.) May be combined with three forms of focalization. May be anything between quite objective and very subjective. Corresponds to Eason's ER.

3. Dimmed First-person Narration (The reporter has been present in the reality but can only be glimpsed in the text. The scenes are built on observation.) Derives from internal focalization through the reporter, but may,

in large parts of the text, be combined with external focalization, internal focalization through someone other than the reporter, or non-focalization. May be anything between quite objective and very subjective. Lacks a name in Eason's typology.

4. Consonant First-person Narration (Focus on the experiencing reporter. The scenes are built on observation.) Is internally focalized through the reporter. May be anything between very and quite objective. Lacks a name in Eason's typology.

5. Dissonant First-person Narration (Focus on the narrating reporter. The scenes are built on observation.) Is internally focalized through the reporter. May be anything between quite and very subjective. Corresponds to Eason's CP.

You could imagine an unusual type B of both 4 and 5 above. The 2015 Nobel Prize winner, Svetlana Alexievich, mainly writes in a monologue form so that the Other seems to emerge for the reader in a more direct style than those used in other types of literary journalism. The narrator is homodiegetic, although the "I" does not refer to the reporter, but to the character. The primary witness, the reporter-messenger, has been edited out of the text. However, we will find a highly active director behind the stage. This type of reportage becomes internally focalized through a character and is built on the character's observation, but at the same time also on the reporter's reconstruction, and ought to be possible in both a consonant and a dissonant form.

In this essay I have further discussed influences from the professional ideals on the narrative structures in the text. Every literary journalism text is built on the reporter's experiences, directly or indirectly. The form of a reportage, thus ought to be comparable to the form of an autobiography. In such a story the reader is empathizing with the I-character. So it may be even in a reportage told in the first person. But still not fully, I have argued. A reporter is never present on the scene—in reality or in the text—for her own sake. The reporter's professional role as a messenger or an empathetic eyewitness establishes narrative structures in the text that seem to differ from the structures present in other kinds of nonfiction narratives, told in the first person. In this essay I have illustrated how these structures move the narrative focus to either an issue or other people. This happens irrespective of whether the reporter's meeting situation is fully visible, dimmed, edited out, or never has taken place.

The narrative techniques for this may be studied on the micro-level of the texts. I have recommended to the reader to specifically take a closer look at the interplay between voice and point of view. An analysis of the shifts in this interplay will make the director's intentions visible, for example, concerning how empathy is created. In third-person narration, voice and point

of view are divided from each other, and the empathy becomes the greatest when a character is internally focalized. In dimmed first-person narration, another character than the experiencing reporter may be internally focalized, so that the reader's empathy will be directed toward this character. In consonant first-person narration a combination of selection, style, and rhetoric may create empathy with someone other than the reporter. Finally, in dissonant first-person narration, we will find the most remarkable construction. When the I-narrator's perspective is emphasized in the form of a questioning attitude (dissonance) the paradox arises that reality may be depicted as more nuanced, that is, more complex, and that other characters' subjectivity is thus given room to grow. Dissonance here may accordingly become a tool to create empathy with the Other. All together these ways of narration illuminate my conclusion: what transforms the texts from self-narration to journalism is a matter of direction.

Glossary

Literary Journalism/Reportage. In this essay, text that has been produced for a journalistic purpose and the narrated events are, at least partially, represented in a scenic (mimetic) form.

The Other. In this essay, a concept that is used in a broader sense than is otherwise usual. Here it refers to every person to whom the reporter refers.

ER/Realism. Termed by David Eason. Usually based on reconstruction as a journalistic method and combines an omniscient third-person narrator with representation techniques influenced by social realism.

CP/Modernism. Termed by David Eason. Makes the reporter's own observations visible and combines a first-person narrator with a pronounced reflective and questioning approach, which is directed to both the reporter's observations and the status of the narrated text.

Narratology. Studies the nature, form, and function of narrative.

Narrative. Story.

Voice. Belongs to the narrator.

Point of View. Even perspective. Belongs to the characters.

Discourse. The expression plane of narrative as opposed to the content plane of story.

Meta-level. The narrator is addressing the reader directly, with comments about the characters, the story, and the narrating process.

Homodiegetic Narrator. A character in the story who narrates in the first person.

Heterodiegetic Narrator. Not a character in the story who also normally narrates in the third person.

The Director (even The Implied Reporter). The creating instance "behind" the text.

The Narrating Reporter. The one who retrospectively explains what the Experiencing Reporter has perceived and sometimes even reflects on the event.

The Experiencing Reporter. The one who is present in the scenes and who experiences what is happening.

Consonance. Prevails if the narrator identifies to a great extent with her experiencing alter ego, and the focus of the story lies in the perceived events, that is, the observation.

Dissonance. Prevails if the focus is on the ex-post perspective, while the narrator is revaluating, criticizing, or otherwise distancing himself from his former self.

Focalization. Specifies the perspective or the "knowledge position" from which a story is told.

Internal Focalization. The narrator seems to have the same knowledge as one of the characters.

External Focalization. The narrator only seems to know what is possible to observe from the outside ("camera-eye").

Non-Focalization. The narrator seems to know more than all the characters together ("omniscience").

Diegetic Representation. The narrator retells a course of events in his own words. Results in a "subjective" form.

Mimetic Representation. The narrator imitates and/or represents in such a manner that she, the messenger, seems to be invisible. Results in an "objective" form.

The Narrator's Visibility. Illustrates how much the narrator may be seen/noticed on a scale between the least visible equals the most mimetic/objective and the most visible equals the most diegetic/subjective.

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Notes

1. Fiona Giles and William Roberts, "Mapping Nonfiction Narrative: Towards a New Theoretical Approach to Analyzing Literary Journalism," *Literary Journalism Studies* 6, no. 2 (Fall 2014).

2. The German narratologist Dorrit Cohn has inspired me to this, but the terms derive from Leo Spitzer in 1922. He divides the self in narrative fiction into an experiencing self and a narrating self. See Dorrit Cohn, *Transparent Minds: Narrative Models for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction,* 2nd edition (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1983), 143–53.

3. I have developed this concept from a term used by Swedish media researcher Bengt Nerman. See his *Massmedieretorik* (Stockholm: AWE/Geber, 1973).

4. Eason terms these two approaches for the New Journalism—see "The New Journalism and the Degree," 1984)—while Giles and Roberts use them for the whole scope of literary journalism. This causes certain problems, since some types of literary journalism do not easily match any of Eason's definitions.

5. The terms realism and modernism are mentioned by Eason in a recast version in 1990 by the earlier mentioned essay. See David Eason, "The New Journalism and the Image-World," in *Literary Journalism in the Twentieth Century,* ed. Norman Sims (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2008).

6. Ibid., 199.

7. Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980), 189–194.

8. Jimmy Breslin, "It's an Honor," *New York Herald Tribune*, November 1963, http://www.newsday.com/opinion/digging-jfk-grave-was-his-honor-jimmy-breslin-1.6481560.

9. Cohn,143–53.

10. Barbro Alving, "Dubbel mänsklig förnedring," *Vecko-Journalen*, no. 27, 1959, in Barbro Alving, *Klipp ur nuets historia* (Malmö: Gidlunds 1982), 274.

11. Peter Fröberg Idling, *Pol Pots leende* (Stockholm: Månpocket, 2008), 338. Trans. by Hugh Rodwell.

12. Giles and Roberts, 103.

13. Ibid., 107.

14. The American literary theorist Brian McHale grades seven forms for rendering an utterance, including the extremes: totally the narrator's choice of words and totally the character's choice of words. See Brian McHale, "Free Indirect Discourse: A Survey of Recent Accounts," in *Journal for Descriptive Poetic and Theory of Literature* 3 (1978): 249–85.

15. Seymour Chatman, *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1978), 166–69, 196–98. Even Genette has established an axis where the mimetic pole stands for a minimum of presence by a narrating instance and a maximum of "narrative information" while the diegetic pole stands for the reverse combination. See Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, 166.

16. See *Literary Journalism Studies* 5, no. 1 (Spring 2013), "The Return of the Humble 'I': *The Bookseller of Kabul* and Contemporary Norwegian Literary Journal-

ism," where this text is discussed by Norwegian media researcher Steen Steensen.

17. *German Autumn* is a treasure of Swedish reportage that has been translated into several languages. I recommend it highly.

18. Eva Broman, "Narratological Focalization Models: A Critical Survey," in *Essays on Fiction and Perspective*, ed. Göran Rossholm (Bern: Peter Lang, 2004), 67.

19. Norbert Kröcher was a West German left extremist who came to Sweden and robbed a bank. In 1977 he planned to kidnap the minister of justice, Anna-Greta Leijon. Guillou argued that Kröcher was not really "dangerous," but a mythomaniac who wanted to impress but subsequently got tangled up in his own lies.

20. Jan Guillou, "Gåtan Kröcher," in *Reporter* (Stockholm: Oktoberförlaget, 1979), 54.

21. See John Hellmann, *Fables of Fact: The New Journalism as New Fiction* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981), 104–5, where Hellmann discusses this form of metafiction.

22. Magnus Falkehed,"I lyxigaste laget," *DN Världen*, no. 25, February–March 2013.

23. Eva Broman, "Narratological Focalization Models," 65.

24. Denis McQuail, *Journalism and Society* (London: Sage, 2013).

25. McQuail, 22–4.

26. See, for instance, Jo Bech-Karlsen, *Reportasjen,* 2nd ed., (Oslo: Universistetsforlaget, 2002) 64–9.

27. John C. Hartsock, *A History of American Literary Journalism* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2000), chap. 2, and Michael Schudson, *Discovering the News* (New York: Basic Books, 1978), chap. 2.

28. Michael Schudson, *The Power of News* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 99, 108.

29. Hartsock, 59, 67–69.

30. Schudson, 99, 109.

31. Ibid., 109.

32. *Literary Journalism Studies* 5, no. 1 (Spring 2013).

33. Tom Wolfe, "The Emotional Core of the Story," in *Telling True Stories: A Nonfiction Writers' Guide from the Nieman Foundation at Harvard University* (Boston: Nieman, 2007), 251.

34. Eason, "The New Journalism and the Image-World," 195–99.

35. The Other is here used in a broader sense than is otherwise usual. Here it refers to every person the reporter is writing about.

36. Karen Söderberg, "Kriget i Jugoslavien: Rutiner håller kaoset på avstånd," *Dagens Nyheter,* May 16, 1999.

37. Stig Dagerman, *German Autumn*, trans. Robin Fulton Macpherson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 54; *Tysk höst* (Stockholm: Norstedts, 1947).

38. Steen Steensen, "The Return of the 'Humble I': *The Bookseller of Kabul* and Contemporary Norwegian Literary Journalism," *Literary Journalism Studies* 5, no. 1 (2013): 1, 61–80; Anna Jungstrand, *Det litterära med reportaget: om litteraritet som*

journalistisk strategi och etik (PhD diss., Stockholm University, 2013).

39. Maciej Zaremba, *Den polske rörmokaren och andra berättelser från Sverige* (Stockholm: Norstedts, 2006), 83.

40. Giles and Roberts, 106.

41. Eason, "The New Journalism and the Image-World," 199.

42. Dagerman, *German Autumn,* 102–103.

43. Ibid., 110.

New York City Skyline, December, 1941. Lower Manhattan seen from the S.S. Coamo leaving New York. Photograph by Jack Delano.

Research Review . . .

Recent Trends and Topics in Literary Journalism Scholarship

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This essay is the first installment of what we hope will be an annual survey of literary journalism scholarship. It is intended as a guide to recent trends and topics in the field rather than a comprehensive listing of all scholarship and commentary. The inaugural offering covers works published in English during 2015. It focuses primarily on peer-reviewed journal articles but also makes reference to books, book reviews, and Internet publications. Special thanks to Ilina Ghosh, Ryerson University, Canada, who provided research assistance.

The publication of Thomas Kunkel's biography of Joseph Mitchell[1] in 2015 (see page 172 for book review) received wide notice in major newspapers and magazines. It also coincided with several pieces of scholarship that provide important perspectives on Mitchell, his iconic status among practitioners of literary journalism, and the genre itself. If Kunkel took Mitchell's reputation down a notch by showing a wider pattern of problems with his reporting practices than had been previously documented, Harvard historian Jill Lepore went even further, calling into question the writer's standing as a model for literary journalists. Writing in the *New Yorker*, where she is a staff writer, Lepore shows that Mitchell's conclusion to what many consider his masterpiece, "Joe Gould's Secret," is factually wrong. She further suggests

that more thorough research by Mitchell would have revealed the truth, that Gould's "Oral History of Our Time" was real, not a figment of Gould's imagination. Based in part on archival research that turned up four chapters of Gould's written recordings of speech, Lepore concludes that Mitchell's pursuit of truth was far more artistic than journalistic. In both of the articles he wrote about Gould, one assuming the existence of the oral history and one declaring it a fraud, Mitchell seems to have been more intent on telling a good yarn than arriving at either the facts or the truth. "I don't think [Mitchell] was especially interested in reading the Oral History when he first met Gould. It made a better story in 1942 if it existed; it made a better story in 1964 if it didn't,"[2] she writes. Lepore's research also provides yet another possible explanation for the writer's block that emerged after the publication of "Joe Gould's Secret." It turns out that Mitchell had a secret as well, that evidence had been presented to him showing that Gould had been working on an oral history, large fragments of which did exist. Mitchell told one correspondent that he would like to use this information if he ever wrote another piece about Gould, which, of course, he did not.

The ambiguity that will continue to surround Mitchell's purposes, methods, and achievements is a natural extension of the ambiguity that marked the midcentury literary journalism of the *New Yorker* as described by Tamar Katz, an English professor at Brown University. Writing in *American Literary History*, Katz argues that *New Yorker* contributors, and preeminently Mitchell, forged a new kind of writing by mixing newspaper conventions with modernist concerns for subjectivity. Scholars of literary journalism may be put off by some of Katz's observations, such as referring to "the middlebrow status of this writing, which has made the genre negligible, even faintly embarrassing to critics." But her work is notable for the way that it credits Mitchell for a continuing influence on contemporary culture. She writes, "His writing influenced how current residents imagine the city and reminds us of the surprising ways that the intersection of middlebrow and modernist culture extends into a postmodern culture that critics claim has left them behind."[3]

Katz's essay is valuable for its analysis of Mitchell's technique and the role, and shortcomings, of the anecdote in literary journalism. For Mitchell and other *New Yorker* contributors the anecdote is a way of achieving intimacy and credibility, a way of uniting the writer's experience with that of the reader. But therein lies a danger—that the anecdote lapses into triviality or excessive individuality. The solution is to maintain a degree of ambiguity so that the "city's objects . . . yield supremely particular presence and gesture beyond themselves."[4] By resisting full definition, these people and places point to a layer of meaning and yet do not fully reveal its ramifications. Katz concludes

by connecting Mitchell to Joe Gould, arguing that the journalist's work has become an oral history of New York that serves as a way for readers to engage with urban experience.

A similar point about Mitchell's role in shaping New Yorkers' conceptions of the city is made by Fiona Anderson in *Shima: The International Journal of Research into Island Cultures* in an article examining preservationist attitudes toward the waterfront.[5] Mitchell's use of names is explored by Michael Adams in "'The Course of a Particular': Names and Narrative in the Works of Joseph Mitchell." Adams writes that for Mitchell "names are strangely significant: they are textual loci at which narratology, epistemology, and ontology enmesh."[6]

Nobel Laureate Svetlana Alexievich

In October 2015, the Swedish Academy awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature to a journalist, Svetlana Alexievich, of Belarus. Writing in the *New York Review of Books*, translator Jamey Gambrell calls Alexievich's work "a distinctive kind of narrative based on journalistic research and the distillation of thousands of first-hand interviews with people directly affected by all the major events of the Soviet and post-Soviet period."[7] Her reporting technique, as described in a *New Yorker* blog post, depends on hours of patient listening to her subjects to arrive at authentic memory. First come "the rehearsing of received memories: newspaper accounts, other people's stories, and whatever else corresponds to a public narrative that has inevitably already taken hold," writes Masha Gessen. "Only beneath all those layers is personal memory found."[8]

John C. Hartsock, in *Literary Journalism Studies*, notes that the new laureate's work will likely prove to be a fertile field for future researchers, since English-language scholars, of both literature and journalism, have paid little critical attention to her work up to this point. For his part, Hartsock emphasizes the literary aspects of her work, noting that "her literary values frame her examination" and that literary techniques are key to her efforts to assault and subvert the political order.[9] But others have not been as willing to acknowledge Alexievich as either literary artist or journalist. Writing in *Quadrant*, six months before the prize announcement, Michael Connor argues that Alexievich "appears to be an inspired interviewer, editor and assembler, but not a writer." He also questions whether her application of literary techniques has led her to cross the line from nonfiction into fiction. One example he gives is of the use of an incident, first documented in 1946, in which Germans tossed candies to children who had been thrown into a pit and were about to be buried alive. Connor counts three versions of this story and asks, "Is this genuine new Holocaust testimony, questionable oral history, or 'faction'?"[10]

Attention for Female Literary Journalists

The role of women in literary journalism received significant attention in 2015 in a wide range of venues. Marieke Dubbelboer, writing in *French Cultural Studies*, explores Colette's career in journalism, describing how the French author, best known for the novella *Gigi*, used an anthropological approach that was marked by a "sort of personal, participatory reportage."[11] In *Prose Studies*, Hilde van Belle examines *Back to the Congo*, by Lieve Joris, and describes how the author engages readers' aesthetic interests while simultaneously reporting on complex social conditions.[12] In *Journeys*, Mary Henes reviews the work of Freya Stark over a forty-year period and shows how her work at the *Baghdad Times* led to the publication of her book *Baghdad Sketches*.[13] A series of travel dispatches in London's *Jewish Chronicle* by Amy Levy, better known for her poetry and fiction, is the subject of a study in *Partial Answers: Journal of Literature and the History of Ideas* by Richa Dwor.[14]

Marcus O'Donnell, writing in *Journalism*, uses Rebecca Solnit's book *Savage Dreams* as a case study to develop an argument for a type of literary journalism he calls "polyphonic open journalism." He argues that Solnit's "writing pursues a range of open-ended associative strategies that create a choral effect rather than merely constructing a traditional prose argument or narrative plot" as "she moves from evocative to proclamatory to exegetical modes of writing."[15]

In spring 2015 *Literary Journalism Studies* devoted an entire issue to women and literary journalism. Guest editor Leonora Flis writes in her introduction about taking an approach that explores gender while making it neither too much nor too little of an issue. The collected essays "make gender an organic part of the analysis rather than a special mission or central characteristic."[16] Included in the special issues were essays by Roberta S. Maguire on Zora Neale Hurston;[17] Nancy L. Roberts on Meridel Le Sueur and Dorothy Day;[18] Bruce Gillespie on Edna Stabler;[19] Isabelle Meuret on Martha Gellhorn, Gerda Taro, and Andrée Viollis;[20] Sue Joseph on Margaret Simons;[21] Pablo Calvi on Leila Guerriero;[22] and Anthea Garman and Gillian Rennie on Alexandra Fuller.[23]

National Differences in Professional Values and Practices

Numerous scholars highlighted national differences in professional values and practices in 2015. Writing in the *Journal of European Studies*, Sandrine Boudana explores the way that political and literary traditions inform the work of French war correspondents and affect their view of reportorial detachment.[24] Hedley Twiddle, writing in *Research in African Literatures*, examines how the 1966 assassination of the South African prime minister set

off "a wide range of literary and artistic treatments: from memoir and micro-history to avant-garde fiction and filmic montage."[25]

Matthew Ricketson and Sue Joseph served as guest editors for the *Australian Journalism Review*, which published a special section devoted to literary journalism outside the Anglo-American tradition. Included were essays by Willa McDonald and Kerrie Davies on the role of narrative journalism in constructing cultural mythology,[26] Christopher Kremmer on truth claims in literary journalism,[27] Isabel Soares on Portuguese literary journalism,[28] Carolyn Rickett on Pamela Bone,[29] Patrick Mullins on the writing of political history,[30] Pablo Calvi on Jorge Luis Borges,[31] Marcus O'Donnell on David Marr,[32] Ben Stubbs on travel writing,[33] and Richard Lance Keeble[34] on the personal and political in literary journalism.

Transparency, "Slow Journalism"

Three articles in the April 2015 issue of *Journalism Practice* address matters of concern to scholars and practitioners of literary journalism. First, Lindsay Morton uses a book-length example of literary journalism, Dave Cullen's *Columbine*, to call into question the emerging reliance on transparency as a hallmark of credible journalism. "Measures taken to disclose sources, methods and motives can obscure gaps in a journalist's knowledge, and build a picture—or 'truth'—that is not necessarily justifiable, despite the evidence provided and processes used to attain it," she warns.[35] Morton believes that despite the associated pitfalls, transparency remains an important tool for journalists to use as they strive for authentication and validation and that literary journalists may well create models that could be adopted in mainstream journalism. A second article in that issue raises doubts about the extent to which transparency will be pursued across the profession. In that piece Kalyani Chadha and Michael Koliska report, based on interviews at six major news organizations, that journalists are "still grappling with the notion of transparency as a professional norm"[36] and seem to be settling into practices that serve to create the illusion of transparency without actually providing it. Also in that issue Megan Le Masurier explores the concept of "slow journalism." Although Le Masurier credits literary journalism scholar Susan Greenberg with coining the term, this essay makes only a passing reference to literary journalism, which Le Masurier seems to equate solely with book-length journalism. Le Masurier poses the question of whether slow journalism is just an elitist reaction to the hyper-speed production of news that dominates the mainstream media but rejects that formulation. Instead she projects that it will continue as an alternative form of discourse that operates alongside the more traditional types newsgathering that emphasize rapid reporting.[37]

Studies of Single Authors

Writing in *Journalism Studies,* Matthew Winston looks to the sports journalism of Hunter S. Thompson and argues that Gonzo allows for a more critical approach to the subject, highlighting its "exploitative, corrupt and negative aspects." Winston (see page 182 for a review of Winston's *Gonzo Text*) explores the ways that Gonzo contrasts with the conventions of covering sports, concluding that "the stylistic methods associated with Gonzo journalism facilitate a hybrid form of sports journalism which, though highly subjective, is nonetheless strongly tied to critical social and political commentary."[38]

Other studies in 2015 that focused on a single author included an essay in *Literary Journalism Studies* by Kate McQueen on German court reporter Paul Schlesinger. She describes how Schlesinger used literary techniques to raise the profile and prestige of the act of covering criminal trials and to demonstrate that "the reach of a politically neutral, literary approach can extend beyond empathetic engagement to concrete political change."[39]

Julien Gorbach, also in *Literary Journalism Studies*, turns his attention to Ben Hecht, the journalist turned playwright turned screenwriter. In this essay, Gorbach argues that Hecht's literary skill has been overlooked because of his success in Hollywood. Gorbach pays particular attention to an unpublished biography by Hecht of Jewish mobster Mickey Cohen and finds stylistic traits there that anticipate the New Journalism that would emerge decades later.[40]

Magdalena Horodecka, also writing in *Literary Journalism Studies*, analyzes Ryszard Kapuściński's *Travels with Herodotus* and shows how the journalist used the historian's words as a way of defining the work of the reporter. "In many respects, the historian seems to be Kapuściński's alter ego, a mirror in which the reporter not so much watches himself as is watched by the reader," Horodecka writes. "That is why the role of the other text in understanding oneself—the crucial idea of hermeneutics—is deeply present in *Travels*." [41]

This kind of juxtaposition is highlighted in the writing of Tom Wolfe by Michael Jacobs in another *Literary Journalism Studies* article. Wolfe's challenge in *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test*, Jacobs explains, was to present and explain Ken Kesey and his Merry Pranksters to a mainstream audience. "Wolfe's juxtaposition of Prankster perception with journalistic observation," Jacobs writes, "affords the reader the requisite number of perspectives to understand and even identify with the documentary subjects while cutting through the allegorical haze they create."[42]

Mark Heberle, in a chapter included in *The Vietnam War: Topics in Contemporary North American Literature,* casts Michael Herr's *Dispatches* as an example of "posttraumatic literature," a feature that distinguishes it, he argues, from "nearly all the canonical works of New Journalism."[43]

Writing in *Literature and Medicine*, Ralph F. Smith explores the evolution of the views of Charles Dickens toward sanitation reform as expressed in his journalism. Drawing on the flâneur tradition and other modes of expression, Dickens attempted to shift the political debate away from engineering solutions toward a recognition of the need for economic changes to lift common people out of poverty and alleviate the ravages of disease.[44]

George Augustus Sala, a Dickens contemporary, is the subject of Peter Blake's book-length biography. Blake describes the writing style of Sala as one that included literary flourishes while remaining accessible to a middle-class audience.[45]

From "Neoliberalism" to the "New Sincerity"

In an *American Literature* essay on Alex Haley and Hunter S. Thompson, Daniel Worden considers the interplay between literary journalism and the public sphere. Worden argues that Haley and Thompson helped to give rise to a style that can be termed neoliberalism, with a heavy emphasis on individualist, entrepreneurial, and consumerist behaviors that have disrupted the idea of politics as a collective activity. "Neoliberal style has also shaped creative nonfiction more generally," Worden writes, "from the memoir boom starting in the 1990s to the 'new sincerity' of contemporary writers influenced by David Foster Wallace."[46]

Truth, "Truthiness," and Trustworthiness

New perspectives on the line between fiction and nonfiction are presented in a pair of scholarly works in 2015. In a contribution to a book on unreliable narration and trustworthiness, Beatrice Dernbach examines the way that reliability in journalism is related to concepts of legitimacy and utility by considering cases in which individual journalists were criticized for reports that called reliability standards into question.[47] And in a *Prose Studies: History, Theory, Criticism* article, Annjeanette Wiese explores the way that "truthiness" fits into definitions of fiction and nonfiction, and argues for its role in hybrid texts as a way of forcing the reader to consider the distinctions between these categories in an effort "to say something true."[48]

A special issue of *CrossCurrents*, a peer-reviewed journal from the Association for Religion and Intellectual Life, is devoted to exploring the use of creative nonfiction in telling stories of religious experience, and specifically the tension between truth and non-truth. "Each of these works of creative nonfiction exists in the mysterious nexus between self and other, faith and doubt, ideology and experience, that is the stuff of religion today," writes Brook Wilensky-Lanford in her introduction to the issue.[49]

Laura Tanja King, in *New Writing: The International Journal for the Prac-*

tice and Theory of Creative Writing, takes a slightly different approach to the problem of separating fact from fiction by considering the way that travel writing is often poised between memoir and fiction, occupying what she describes as a "complex, delicate and problematic space."[50]

Poetry and Journalism Scholarship

Writing in the *International Journal of Media & Cultural Politics*, Cristina Archetti makes a case for using poetry as a methodological tool in journalism scholarship. "Not only can poetry complement traditional 'academic' texts by filling the gaps of the vivid details of the situated practices of journalism as they are lived in real life," she writes. "It also has far-reaching epistemological and ontological implications: it raises, in other words, fundamental questions related to what we assume the world where journalists operate to be, the role of imagination, sensory perceptions and emotions in everyday practice, as well as the very place of the scholar in the research process."[51]

Miles Maguire contributed "Literary Journalism: Journalism Aspiring to Be Literature," a historical overview of major themes in literary journalism scholarship, to The Routledge Handbook of Magazine Research: The Future of the Magazine Form*, edited by David Abrahamson and Marcia R. Prior-Miller (see page* 176 *for review).*[52]

Notes

1. Thomas Kunkel, *Man in Profile: Joseph Mitchell of the New Yorker* (New York: Random House, 2015).

2. Jill Lepore, "Joe Gould's Teeth," *New Yorker*, July 27, 2015, 55.

3. Tamar Katz, "Anecdotal History: the *New Yorker*, Joseph Mitchell, and Literary Journalism," *American Literary History* 27, no. 3 (2015): 480.

4. Katz, 476.

5. Fiona Anderson, "An Unhemmed Dress: Popular Preservation and Civic Disobedience on the Manhattan Waterfront from the 1960s–2010s," *Shima* 9, no. 1 (2015): 1–18.

6. Michael Adams, "'The Course of a Particular': Names and Narrative in the Works of Joseph Mitchell," *Names* 63, no. 1 (2015): 3.

7. Jamey Gambrell, Introduction to "The Man Who Flew," by Svetlana Alexievitch, *New York Review of Books*, November 19, 2015, 10.

8. Masha Gessen, "Svetlana Alexievitch's Nobel Win," Page-Turner (blog), *New Yorker,* October 8, 2015, http://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/svetlana-alexievichs-deserved-nobel-win.

9. John C. Hartsock, "The Literature in the Journalism of Nobel Prize Winner Svetlana Alexievich," *Literary Journalism Studies* 7, no. 2 (Fall 2015): 46.

10. Michael Connor, "Writers on the Foggy Frontier," *Quadrant Magazine* 59, no. 4 (April 2015): 70.

11. Marieke Dubbelboer, 2015. "'Nothing Ruins Writers Like Journalism': Colette, the Press and Belle Epoque Literary Life," *French Cultural Studies* 26, no. 1 (2015): 38.

12. Hilde van Belle, "An Image of Sheer Bliss: Stereotypes in Back to the Congo (Lieve Joris)," *Prose Studies* 37, no. 1 (2015): 21–32.

13. Mary Henes, "Autobiography, Journalism, and Controversy: Freya Stark's Baghdad Sketches," *Journeys* 16, no. 1 (2015): 98–118.

14. Richa Dwor, "'Poor Old Palace-Prison!': Jewish Urban Memory in Amy Levy's 'The Ghetto at Florence' (1886)," *Partial Answers: Journal of Literature and the History of Ideas* 13, no. 1 (January 2015): 155–169.

15. Marcus O'Donnell, "Walking, Writing and Dreaming: Rebecca Solnit's Polyphonic Voices," *Journalism* 16, no. 7 (2015): 936.

16. Leonora Flis, "On Recognition of Quality Writing." *Literary Journalism Studies* 7, no. 1 (2015): 8.

17. Roberta S. Maguire, "From Fiction to Fact: Zora Neale Hurston and the Ruby McCollum Trial," *Literary Journalism Studies* 7, no. 1 (2015): 16–34.

18. Nancy L. Roberts, "Meridel Le Sueur, Dorothy Day, and the Literary Journalism of Advocacy During the Great Depression," *Literary Journalism Studies* 7, no. 1 (2015): 44–57.

19. Bruce Gillespie, "The Works of Edna Staebler: Using Literary Journalism to Celebrate the Lives of Ordinary Canadians," *Literary Journalism Studies* 7, no. 1 (2015): 58–75.

20. Isabelle Meuret, "Rebels with a Cause: Women Reporting the Spanish Civil War," *Literary Journalism Studies* 7, no. 1 (2015): 76–99.

21. Sue Joseph, "Preferring 'Dirty' to 'Literary' Journalism: In Australia, Margaret Simons Challenges the Jargon While Producing the Texts," *Literary Journalism Studies* 7, no. 1 (2015): 100–117.

22. Pablo Calvi, "Leila Guerriero and the Uncertain Narrator," *Literary Journalism Studies* 7, no. 1 (2015): 118–130.

23. Anthea Garman and Gillian Rennie, "Alexandra Fuller of Southern Africa: A White Woman Writer Goes West," *Literary Journalism Studies* 7, no. 1 (2015): 132–145.

24. Sandrine Boudana, "'Le spectateur engagé': French War Correspondents' Conceptions of Detachment and Commitment," *Journal of European Studies* 45, no. 2 (2015): 137–151.

25. Hedley Twidle, "Unusable Pasts: Life-Writing, Literary Nonfiction, and the Case of Demetrios Tsafendas," *Research in African Literatures* 46, no. 3 (2015): 1.

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27. Christopher Kremmer, "The Longer the Better?: Calibrating Truth Claims in Literary Journalism," *Australian Journalism Review* 37, no. 2 (2015): 51–65.

28. Isabel Soares, "Pioneers and Millennials: Two Moments in Portuguese Literary Journalism," *Australian Journalism Review* 37, no. 2 (2015): 67–79.

29. Carolyn Rickett, "Bad Hair Days and the Good of Pamela Bone's Literary Journalism," *Australian Journalism Review* 37, no. 2 (2015): 81–93.

30. Patrick Mullins, "Chasing the Future: Journalists Writing Political History," *Australian Journalism Review* 37, no. 2 (2015): 95–107.

31. Pablo Calvi, "From Journalism to Literature: Borges, Critica and the 'Universal History of Infamy' as an Experiment in Democratic Dialogue," *Australian Journalism Review* 37, no. 2 (2015): 109–121.

32. Marcus O'Donnell, "David Marr's the Prince: Faith, Sex Abuse and Narrative Authority in Literary Journalism," *Australian Journalism Review* 37, no. 2 (2015): 123–138.

33. Ben Stubbs, "Travel Writing: An Exploration of Its Place within Journalism," *Australian Journalism Review* 37, no. 2 (2015): 139–149.

34. Richard Lance Keeble, "Afterword: Literary Journalism: The Personal and the Political," *Australian Journalism Review* 37, no. 2 (2015): 151–155.

35. Lindsay Morton, "Where Are You Coming From?" *Journalism Practice* 9, no. 2 (2015): 169.

36. Kalyani Chadha and Michael Koliska, "Newsrooms and Transparency in the Digital Age," *Journalism Practice* 9, no. 2 (2015): 227.

37. Megan Le Masurier, "What Is Slow Journalism?" *Journalism Practice* 9, no. 2 (2015): 138–152

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39. Kate McQueen, "Into the Courtroom: Paul 'Sling' Schlesinger and the Origins of German Literary Trial Reportage," *Literary Journalism Studies* 7, no. 2 (2015): 21.

40. Julien Gorbach, "Ben Hecht: The Old New Journalist," *Literary Journalism Studies* 7, no. 2 (2015): 90–117.

41. Magdalena Horodecka, "The Hermeneutic Relation between Reporter and Ancient Historian in Ryszard Kapuściński's *Travels with Herodotus*." *Literary Journalism Studies* 7, no. 2 (2015): 121.

42. Michael Jacobs, "Confronting the (Un)Reality of Pranksterdom: Tom Wolfe and *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test," Literary Journalism Studies* 7, no. 2: 133.

43. Mark Heberle, "Michael Herr's Traumatic New Journalism: *Dispatches*," in *The Vietnam War: Topics in Contemporary North American Literature*, ed. Brenda M. Boyle (London, England: Bloomsbury, 2015), 31.

44. Ralph F. Smith, "Narratives of Public Health in Dickens's Journalism: The Trouble with Sanitary Reform," *Literature and Medicine* 33, no. 1 (2015): 157–183.

45. Peter Blake, *George Augustus Sala and the Nineteenth-Century Periodical Press: The Personal Style of a Public Writer* (Farnham, England: Ashgate, 2015).

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47. Beatrice Dernbach, "(Un)Reliable Narration in Journalism: The Fine Line between Fact and Fiction," in *Unreliable Narration and Trustworthiness: Intermedial and Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, ed. Vera Nünning (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2015), 305–328.

48. Annjeanette Wiese, "Telling What Is True: Truthiness and Fictional Truths in Hybrid (Non)Fiction," *Prose Studies* 37, no. 1 (2015): 66.

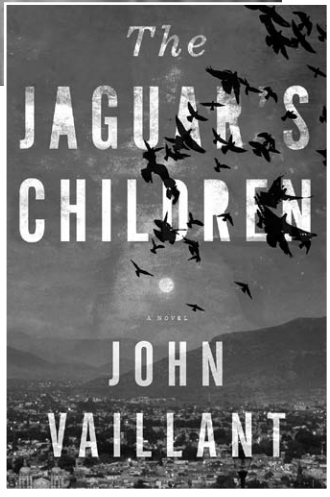
49. Brook Wilensky-Lanford, "Nonfiction Religion, Jumbo Shrimp, and Other Apparent Oxymorons," *Cross Currents* 65, no. 2 (2015): 165.

50. Wiese, "Telling What Is True," 66.

51. Cristina Archetti, "Bringing Back Emotion, Imagination and the Senses: Creative Writing in Journalism Research," *International Journal of Media & Cultural Politics* 11, no. 2, (2015): 240.

52. Miles Maguire, "Literary Journalism: Journalism Aspiring to be Literature," in *The Routledge Handbook of Magazine Research,* eds. David Abrahamson and Marcia Prior-Miller (New York: Routledge, 2015), 362–374.

John Vaillant. Photo: John Sinal



Scholar-Practitioner Q & A . . .

An Interview with John Vaillant

Bill Reynolds
Ryerson University, Canada

In 2005, John Vaillant became an overnight success. His first book-length work, *The Golden Spruce: A True Story of Myth, Madness and Greed*, sold well and won awards, including the Governor-General's Award for Non-fiction and the Pearson Writers' Trust Non-fiction Prize in Canada. Yet forty years of living and working various jobs had to pass before Vaillant could reach that plateau. Raised in Cambridge, Massachusetts, he studied creative writing at Oberlin College. Upon graduation, he spent the next decade and a half bouncing from job to job—fishing off the coast of Alaska, doing social work and playing blues guitar in Philadelphia, teaching English in the Czech Republic.

By age thirty-five, Vaillant thought it time to focus. He began writing features for the now-defunct *Sports Afield*, a working-class *Outside*. He pounded out story after story, 1998–2000, refining his style. The stories varied from pumpkin catapult competitions to a journey on an ice highway to Tuktoyaktuk, Northwest Territories, to entering an obscure competition called the Primitive Biathlon in northern Vermont. In 1998, Vaillant followed his wife to Vancouver where she was doing post-graduate work at the University of British Columbia. The next year he landed his first New Yorker feature, "The Ship That Vanished." And, in 2002, he wrote a travel piece for *Outside* called "Paddling in a Ghost World," about kayaking in Haida Gwaii off the coast of B.C. That's where he heard the story of the one and only golden spruce and its demise. He began reporting, researching, and refining a letter for the *New Yorker*. "The Golden Bough" told for the first time in long form the story of the radiant freak of nature tree and Grant Hadwin, the forest surveyor who chopped it down.

Vaillant signed a book deal with W.W. Norton in the United States and Knopf in Canada, and expanded it to an 80,000-word manuscript. Instead of profiling the alleged eco-terrorist who took a chain saw to the magnificent eco-miracle, he created four thematic poles—Hadwin, the golden spruce itself, the Haida people, and the forest in which the golden spruce sprouted and thrived against steep odds.

After the great success of *The Golden Spruce*, Vaillant wrote in a Facebook blurb, "I am fascinated by the ongoing collision between human ambition and the natural world. How we manage our collective appetites and ambitions will determine the fate of our children, our species, and much of life on this planet. This, I feel, is the story of our time, and I try to address it in all my writing." His celebrated book certainly fit the bill, but he needed to find something new. At the 2006 Banff Mountain Film Festival, in Alberta, he caught Sasha Snow's film, *Conflict Tiger*, which focused on a poacher, the Amur tiger who killed him and the man who tracked down the big cat. To Vaillant, it seemed to contain all the attributes he required for a deeply researched nonfiction story. Snow gave Vaillant the nod to pursue his own vision of the tale of the man-eating Amur tiger.

The result, *The Tiger: A True Story of Vengeance and Survival* (2010), was an eco-murder mystery that Vaillant has called a mixture of investigative journalism, social history, geography, and natural writing. It won British Columbia's National Award for Canadian Non-Fiction, and a translation was awarded France's Nicolas Bouvier Prize. The author became a 2104 Windham Campbell prize winner for his nonfiction.

Vaillant was then inspired to try fiction. The result, *The Jaguar's Children* (2015) became the catalyst for this Scholar-Practitioner Q+A, which focuses on how a nonfiction writer moves to fiction. The story, which could be ripped from headlines, is about a desperate group of Mexicans who pay unscrupulous coyotes to transport them across the border, inside a sealed water truck. On U.S. soil the truck is abandoned and Hector, one of the unfortunate souls, chronicles what happens inside the tank on a cellphone.

I called Vaillant in Vancouver on October 14, 2015, from Toronto.

Bill Reynolds: So you've just come home from Calgary Word Fest, where I gather you were reading from *The Jaguar's Children*[1]?

John Valiant: Yeah, I had two events yesterday.

Reynolds: Here in Toronto there are all these book launches going on right now—Ian Brown's *Sixty*, Siobhan Roberts's *Genius at Play*, her biography of the mathematician John Horton Conway, Trevor Cole's and Don Gillmor's latest novels . . .

Vaillant: Yeah, it's pretty intense. That's the beauty of releasing a book in January. It's a very quiet time.

Reynolds: That's when *The Jaguar's Children* was published—January 2015?

Vaillant: Yeah, I got scads of coverage because there really wasn't that much going on.

Reynolds: I remember reading lots about how it was your first novel. I guess that must have been a good talking point for various media.

Vaillant: Very generous. I was really floored at how things went in Toronto and it's partly thanks to our most excellent Random House publicist there.

Reynolds: And here you are, still working the book at Word Fest, all these months later.

Vaillant: Well, I took the summer off. One more push over the next month and then I'm probably going to get back to work.

Reynolds: I'd like to talk about the mechanics involved in moving from nonfiction to fiction, especially after you've published two such celebrated works of nonfiction. And it's funny, when a bunch of academics, including me, launched this project called the International Association for Literary Journalism Studies, in June 2006, the impetus was a conference held the month before, in Nancy, France, on the centenary of Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*.[2] In other words, we created a scholarly organization dedicated to the study of literary journalism, which is nonfiction, out of a conference dedicated to the centenary of a work of fiction.

Vaillant: Well, Sinclair's book is pretty close to the truth.

Reynolds: Oh yeah! I presented a paper on the differences between Ted Conover's "The Way of All Flesh,"[3] a magazine story about Conover working at Cargill Meat Solutions, a cattle slaughtering plant in Nebraska, and Sinclair's novel about the meatpacking district in Chicago 108 years earlier. I read a bunch of biographies of Sinclair and whatever else I could find and came to the conclusion that his methodology was no different from yours or mine when we're doing literary journalism pursuits.

Vaillant: That's true of a lot of fiction writers—a lot of them are really good reporters.

Reynolds: I'm sure there are others but there is one scholar, Doug Underwood, who has been banging at the gates of the truth barrier of nonfiction, trying to make it more inclusive, letting someone like Steinbeck, say, inside the gates, because he was a reporter originally and should be considered part of the canon.

Vaillant: David Simon, too.[4]

Reynolds: That expanded inclusivity is a bit radical for many of us—

making fiction writers part of the canon. We've had this back and forth, especially at the annual conferences, but ultimately many of us are rigid about that line. When I was reading Random House Canada executive publisher Louise Dennys's interview with you, on the Penguin Random House site,[5] I noticed a section where you laid down the law on the truth barrier—when you're doing literary journalism you really have to stick to the facts. Does that kind of an uncompromising position in the arena of nonfiction affect the research and reporting for a work of fiction?

Vaillant: Yeah, I'm arguing that even though it's fiction you could still bring some of that reporting skill and that knack for detail—almost as if you were reporting.

Reynolds: That's the feeling I got with *The Jaguar's Children*. It's so layered with exactly the kind of writing that happened to be in your two previous books.

Vaillant: In some ways it's certainly coming from a similar place. It is kind of armed—the muscles under it are still fact—but I'm not sure what you mean because the style is quite different.

Reynolds: How so?

Vaillant: Well, it's written in a Mexican English cadence so it's not the way I usually work. Put the sentences next to each another from *The Golden Spruce* and *The Jaguar's Children* and there's no comparison.

Reynolds: I don't think I was trying to make that claim. I was seeing it more in terms of the methodology of gathering information in order to write a story.

Vaillant: Yeah, the facts are the armature. The raw facts: A, B, and C, the color of this and the size of that and the distance to the other thing, are the wires under the artist's model, and then the clay you put over it really shape it and give it form. That could be fiction or nonfiction, so that the drama, if you will, the narrative shape of the facts, is what gives it that lively feeling. And that narrative shape could either be composed of an existing nonfiction narrative, or composed of one you've conjured up. And, typically, one you've conjured up is based in some way on pre-existing tales. It is certainly a grey area, but I still think there's a distinction.

Reynolds: Looking back, three books in, how would you characterize the difference in methodology between your third book and the first two?

Vaillant: The first two were really systematic. The process wasn't always perfectly linear, but it was systematic in terms of having to reconstruct events in a way that was coherent and logical, and that justified gaps, absences, and omissions. With fiction you're much freer. I needed to have a baseline of information that I could assemble however I wanted to. If there were holes I

could just make it up, or I could just check, depending on how I felt about it. There are many scenes in *The Jaguar's Children* that are conjured up out of whole cloth, based on my accumulation of experience both in Mexico and out of it.

Reynolds: Did you enjoy doing that?

Vaillant: Oh yeah, it's really fun. Well, not always fun. Sometimes it's quite appalling. When you follow a scene through, depending on the situation, it can take you to some really dark places. In *The Jaguar's Children* things get pretty grim inside the truck, and that's stuff I hadn't really thought about before or let myself into. But I said to myself, 'Okay, well, this much time has passed, this is where people are at, this is what would be happening physiologically, psychologically, so how do I convey that?' I was kind of horrified by what I came up with. At other times, certain kinds of childhood memories, say, it was really enjoyable to drop myself into the mindset of a five-year-old kid wandering to a mountain village noticing what he might notice and doing what he might do. But again, those are not scenes that I witnessed and recreated and they're not things that I did as a child but some weird and quite wonderful melding of the two. That's what a lot of fiction writers experience and what keeps them coming back.

Reynolds: So, for instance, you were down in Mexico for a while. Did you do a lot of observing, watching children play or whatever?

Vaillant: No, not at all. We lived in Mexico for a year so I saw a lot but I didn't go anywhere to commit research, if you know what I mean. There were things I wanted to see, like that scene where the grandmother is dancing with that flaming firework on top of her head in a basket.

I'd heard about people doing that and when I'd heard there was going to be this dance performed, I went to see that, but partly because another friend was going to go too and it was fun to be with her. We were all friends, she and my wife Nora and a group of us, so we all went. The place was so interesting and so different that everything you did was research. I happened to be living there anyway, but I would see new things that would surprise me every day. I had a notebook, a camera, and my memory, and I would talk things over with Nora and other friends. And I would say, "Why did they do that? Where did that come from?" Just by virtue of my own curiosity and that proximity to all these resources, was I doing research or was I just getting to know the environment better? There was a lovely blurring of that and it felt much less like work. After spending a year in a state of pretty heightened alertness, I'd gathered a huge amount of material just incidentally.

Reynolds: What year was that?

Vaillant: That was 2009–2010. And I went back for six weeks in 2011.

Reynolds: And so, when I visited you in Vancouver in February 2011 . . .

Vaillant: It might have been just between . . .

Reynolds: I think you had your idea at that point but it wasn't clear that day that you'd amassed that much raw material by that point.

Vaillant: I don't think I knew because I hadn't written much yet. I didn't know how much I had. At that point I had 10,000–20,000 words. I had some opening scenes but I'd also had potentially a year's worth of untapped experience and knowledge that hadn't been explored or exploited.

Reynolds: When I teach your book *The Golden Spruce* I often talk about the logger Earl Einarson. You once told me these wonderful anecdotes about how you had the presence of mind to record the sound of one of these massive old-growth trees falling—like a 747 jet taking off is how you put it—and also to time its being cut down, something like ten minutes to wipe out a 500-year-old tree. But even with this visceral understanding of what you were dealing with you felt unsure of quite what you had, at least until you were out of the field and in your writing room trying to process all of this information, listening back to recordings, transcribing. And suddenly you're saying, wow, I didn't know I had this great material. And that's when the Einarson "jewel of a quote," as you called it, jumped out. Back in 2005 you said to me, "The guy who's been logging for thirty years, who quit in the middle of high school, to have him say, 'Well, I guess it's kind of an oxymoron isn't it, to love something and then go out and kill it.' He was being so frank. The human dilemma right there—that's it! But I had to go into the bush to get it. To be standing there, the sawdust perfume in our nostrils and these huge carcasses lying all over the place and the saw rumbling away. He was so frank, unguarded, and real. That's the pivotal moment in the book—that's the point of the book. I don't feel like he was making an admission. I don't feel like I caught him out or anything. I felt like he was articulating a fact, one that he is more qualified to articulate than most of us. He's totally paid his dues and that gives it a kind of credibility for me."

Vaillant: It's almost like getting punch lines without the joke yet and then you write it and you're setting up scenes and you realize, *Oh my gosh, there's a perfect clarifying insight*, one that sums up the conundrum and the contradiction of being a conscious full-time logger. But that's also the human dilemma.

Especially at this time in history we're doing things that we know are actively damaging to the environment, yet we continue to do them. And we're doing it for all kinds of reasons—because we can make a living doing it, or because it's a hell of a lot easier than bicycling through a rainstorm. I remember being struck by that Einarson quote and thinking, *Well, I'll use that*

somewhere, but I didn't know where because I hadn't written it yet.

It was the same with all these things I was seeing in Mexico. I had no idea how they would fit together—I just knew I was impressed by them.

Reynolds: So it's your curiosity being tugged.

Vaillant: It's even just the enthusiasm for it, if this idea has more significance for me than it may for anyone else, this notion, for instance, that the word for water (*agua*) fits inside the word for Jaguar. I just thought that's a really heavy idea—that the stuff of life, water, fits within one of the most powerful spirit beings and living beings in Meso-American culture and nature. So I just thought I had to explore that idea and see how it goes.

Reynolds: It's a great way of tying in the jaguar finding and the dig and the truck. All these symbols start to mesh.

Vaillant: That's the hope and they in fact do: in Mexican culture, and all through Central America, these symbols work at every level, from the most prosaic, sports-team jaguar print t-shirts to the most mystical and demonic.

Reynolds: Comparing *The Jaguar's Children* to your nonfiction, how long did the agony of the writing take place? Was it pretty much the same, or were there significant differences?

Vaillant: It unfolded in a really different way. I went to a writer's retreat in April and May 2011. I was there for six weeks and I wrote a whole draft. It was a really messy draft—it had lots of problems and I spent the next two years with two editors fixing it. You know I never could have blown out a nonfiction book like that just because the details are so specific in nonfiction. Think of a novel as a watercolor and nonfiction as more done with a drafting pen.

Reynolds: Yes, some chapters in both *The Golden Spruce* and *The Tiger*, the history chapters in particular, of the logging industry in North America, of the Haida peoples on the northwest coast, and, especially, the environmental history of Russia–USSR, must have taken many, many hours of research.

Vaillant: Interestingly, though, the total time for each book is roughly the same—between two and three years. But I spent the time very differently, much more editing with the novel. More drafts, literally years of just trying to shape it. After doing that initial blast at the first.

Reynolds: A lot more fine motor sculpting, I guess?

Vaillant: Yeah, whereas with nonfiction you do that as you go. I wouldn't write three chapters at once. I would write one chapter and get it really clean and tight before I would go on.

Reynolds: Fascinating. So the contrast in *The Tiger* is probably more marked than in *The Golden Spruce*. What I mean to say is the really heart-stopping narrative about the stalking tiger taking its revenge on specific hu-

mans is chopped up with deep historical information packets. When you're pinned back into the narrative it takes on a deeper meaning each time you come back.

Vaillant: Well, that's the hope. That was tough for some people because it was a sort of Melville-ian approach. He could have written *Moby-Dick* in a lot fewer words and had a really thrilling whaling story. And you could have written *The Tiger* in fewer words and had a thrilling tiger story, but I don't think we live in a time when it's responsible to write those stories anymore. Part of why one writes a story like that—and why it's crucial to read it now—is to help understand our relationship to nature better because our relationship to nature is in serious crisis. The stakes are much higher now.

When there were 100,000 tigers, Jim Corbett could write a hair-raising tiger hunt story in thirty pages and you could read it and say, 'Wow that was really exciting,' and just move on. Now, when tigers are counted in the hundreds or very low thousands and there's a very lucrative market for the remaining population, it takes on a different meaning. Anyone writing about it would be remiss not to acknowledge that. Lots of people say how endangered tigers are and how we need to protect them. I didn't want to be as on the nose as that, more like: what does this animal really mean to us, and what significance does it have in our world, physical and spiritual?

Reynolds: Some of *The Tiger* was indeed tough going but so, hey, too bad, reader.

Vaillant: That's sort of how I felt. I hope when people get to the end of it they see why.

Reynolds: There's another dynamic at work in *The Tiger*. When you get to that final scene, there's such a rush to it. You withhold the narrative repeatedly, until at some point the reader begins to sense that the finale is going to be hair-raising. Yet you keep holding back, holding back. You're forcing the reader to learn how the tiger got to be in such a dire situation—the political reasons, all these other cultural reasons. When you finally hit that last scene there's such a tension release, the string having been drawn back as far as possible before the arrow is released.

Vaillant: I'm glad. Um, finally, the guy got to the point! It was one of those stories where you knew how it ends at the beginning. When I started writing *The Golden Spruce* I thought, what do readers know, or need to know, what can I arm them with so they get the deepest possible understanding from the next scene. And that's kind of how I think about it.

Reynolds: Let's switch back to the fiction side. You must have the same point of view for the reader's sake. You might say how much information do I parcel out and how long do I take doing it from inside the tank.

Vaillant: Yeah, that's Hector's dilemma. He's trying to share his world with us, presumably American strangers, and he realizes this is his last chance to say his piece about who he is and where he's from and what it means. That's how I rationalize all the detail he includes. Also, most people know so little about Mexico, especially southern Mexico, it's really almost like describing a remote state in India. There's a lot that you have to get across to somebody—a steep learning curve. That presents a problem in terms of having a natural feeling there, a flow, as opposed to a natural history lesson or an ethnographic lesson. I just figured Hector is who he is; he's going to tell it how he tells it. If it doesn't work, you have to blame the author rather than Hector.

I thought about that a lot. How much could I describe scenes out of context and have them have any meaning? To describe the scene with the grandmother with the basket on her head and the fireworks exploding off of it—it's kind of a neat spectacle to describe but it doesn't have nearly the meaning until you know that she's worshipping this little tiny aboriginal Mary figure. This strange eliding of indigenous and the imported Christian—that's where the dynamic tension is, that's what's makes it so interesting, but the reader probably isn't going to know that until it's described in some way.

Reynolds: Obviously, you considered logistics about how much information being parceled out, how much of a suspension of disbelief does the reader have to have to believe that the cell phone will stay alive long enough to dispense all of this information? Did you worry about stuff like that?

Vaillant: I gave it a huge amount of thought and it troubles me that that's even an issue at this point because if you read that book aloud it takes nine hours. Plenty of cell phone batteries can last that long. And there is a scene where he describes when he pulls the phone out of Cesar's pants he sees it has an aftermarket battery called the Mugen. That's a Korean super-battery. Those things last for days. And we know that he is husbanding the energy of the battery very carefully. I didn't want to say this in the book but nobody's better at conserving cell phone battery life than rural Mexicans because they have so few opportunities to recharge and they have to pay for the charge so they really know how to get the most out of it. It was a technical issue that I certainly considered but I thought I'd solved it with hours to spare. And the battery does die in the end.

Reynolds: I noticed you received a bit of guff in some reviews.

Vaillant: It's irritating. I take my nonfiction and technical details really seriously. To even suspect that I'd screw up like that, it's an insult. It's also carelessness on the part of the reviewer just to think it through. Look at the pages, how long does it take to read a page? Do the math. It's nine hours. It's trivial. The much greater issue is about whether you can send a signal out of a

sealed box. He thinks some of the first texts go, but he doesn't know. Nothing comes in.

Reynolds: He's sitting at one bar.

Vaillant: You can certainly get a bar, but if you get two bars it's working. And then there was this lightning storm and he lost his bars. So who knows what's going on out there. He's right in the middle of a technologically policed zone on the US–Mexican border so there's all kinds of other potential technical interference that could be going on. It's too bad that it has to be a topic of discussion but for some reason it is.

Reynolds: Do you find that happens often, people getting fixated on things that are beside the point?

Vaillant: People do when the real point is uncomfortable. It's much easier to retreat to technical details and pedantry and nitpicking when it's a horrific, tragic, gut-wrenching story and it's playing out over and over again. Right now, today in the *Guardian*, there's a powerful story about Altar, which is the town where Hector and Cesar get in the truck.[6] This wonderful young *Guardian* writer based in L.A. wrote it. He may have gone to Altar after reading *The Jaguar's Children* because the headline photo in that article is a mural painted in Altar of dead bodies inside a truck. The article is almost unreadable because the shit that happens to people there is so appalling. You can see why people don't want to look at it. You can see why people might want to fuss over, 'Well, would a battery really last that long?' I have two words for that, especially in the face of what the story is really about and what the real stakes are.

Reynolds: What were you like to be around when you were writing this going to these dark places?

Vaillant: One of the tasks of the writer, of any artist, is to plumb the depths of human experience, and also our own characters lead us to certain types of stories. I do think there are themes that link *The Golden Spruce*, *The Tiger* and *The Jaguar's Children*. It comes down to betrayal and isolation, abandonment and misunderstanding. Those are all themes that recur.

Reynolds: I came up with: There's something wrong with our hardwiring and we're just starting to understand what it is and we might be able to fix it in time. That's just from teaching *The Golden Spruce*.

Vaillant: Well, we were wired for a different set of challenges and technological resources. We were never made to have guns or feller bunchers[7] and now that we have them we do things that are really inhuman and unnatural. We've always been harvesters and we've always been killers but to do it on this scale is wolfish. Wolves are known for going berserk in sheep pens and slaughtering wantonly. Weasels, ferrets, and those kinds of predators do it too. Killer whales also, and I listed a whole bunch of species that have been prone to do

it. We certainly do but for most of our history we had technological limitations on us so we could only go so far. There's only so much you can do with a spear or a club.

Reynolds: And there weren't so many of us.

Vaillant: Yes, so that's what we're coming up hard against: harmonizing our inventiveness with the Pandora's Box of inventions and superpowers that it has unleashed. We're also saving lives on a scale never before imagined—look at what the absence of smallpox has done over the past forty or fifty years. You could say we've saved way more than we've killed. I'm sure that's true, by far.

Reynolds: Any other thoughts on the writing process between fiction and nonfiction?

Vaillant: At some level there's a certain level of intuition and creativity that's required of both. And so some of the same impulses, whether it's to compare a tiger to a piano or comparing a tiger to a basketball team as a means of understanding how it works—these are the intuitive creative moments that occur and you hope they're useful. Likewise, in fiction you're taking some of these same impulses and putting them on an even longer leash, so that you're really letting your imagination move more freely, and yet you have to keep it on some sort of a leash because it has to be narratively coherent and it has to feel authentic to that character or else you're going to lose the reader. So, for instance, if Hector suddenly grows a sixth finger or suddenly breaks out in a rash that looks like jaguar spots you might be pushing it. Somebody could probably pull that off but it pushes you into this other realm. Yet his interest and affinity for the jaguar still has to be expressed in one way or another. So you do it through the mask or his grandfather's dance, as opposed to other places your imagination might kick in. It's like you have these two powerful energies, one is literal and factual, and the other is fantastic. Another way to put it, the flag on the pole, what gives the flag its power and beauty is the fact that it's tied to a completely inflexible shaft. And then you blow into it. But the pole just standing there without a flag it's just kind of a fact without any beauty or energy or color to it. And a flag without the pole is just a heap of cloth lying on the ground. You've got to bind them together.

Reynolds: But surely you can do that with nonfiction as well?

Vaillant: You can with description but it's a shorter distance. You can go into a colorful, imaginative description of a mountain or forest or tiger, but you're going to have to, at some point, come back to what's really happening. If you get too flowery or too abstract you're going to lose the reader or irritate the reader. But if your hope is to write serious nonfiction then it's got to stand up to the rigors of expert analysis both literary and scientific. You really

have to be disciplined in the choices you make, and the freedoms you allow yourself, the indulgences.

Reynolds: You've said this is the golden age of nonfiction because so many writers have learned to employ effectively the techniques of fiction in a nonfiction context.

Vaillant: Yeah, I would hesitate to say it's *the* golden age. I would absolutely say it's *a* golden age. We're in a golden age of television also. And it's really exciting to watch this quality of storytelling married to heavy, relevant subject matter. It's the perfect combination, I'd say.

Reynolds: The score is 2–1, nonfiction over fiction. What happens now?

Vaillant: I've got another novel that I'd like to do. I started it before *The Tiger*. I've been taking notes on that all this time. It's a historic novel. I have misgivings about writing it because a historic novel feels indulgent to me. Things in the world are dire enough and there are enough unseen and unheard stories unfolding right now that need attention, so that if I have any kind of platform at all, I should be devoting my energy to the unseen and the unheard. That's not a conscious choice but it feels like a moral choice and it becomes conscious when I think about doing other things that aren't related to that, like a historical novel, which can certainly have contemporary resonance if you write it right.

I should put on the record that I don't really hold anyone else to that standard. It's really an issue I have with myself and how I spend my time—and how I spend the reader's time. When I read someone else's fiction that's not an issue for me. I just want to read a good story. I just want to make that clear, that there is no moral judgment implicit in this. It's something I wrestle with internally.

Then again, I just had a conversation with a guy last week, in the Great Bear Rainforest, in central British Columbia. He told me a nonfiction story that I think has legs long enough to be a book. I haven't had enough time to really burrow into it, but when he told it to me, I was going through my personal criteria for what a story needs to sustain a book and it was meeting a lot of them.

So that was exciting. I don't know about you but I have a hard time being between projects. At the same time I don't want to rebound into one just because I'm not feeling engaged enough. I really want to do something that has substance and purpose and resonance for me.

Reynolds: Looking at the work you've done so far, I can see how you'd wrestle with that.

Vaillant: If this nonfiction story looks feasible and salable then I would put the novel off. But another thought I'd had was to give myself a month of

uninterrupted and judgment-free time to just burrow into the novel and see how far I got. If I was still excited at the end of thirty days of writing, well, that would give me some information.

Reynolds: When I was at New York University for six months, in 2011, Ted Conover was teaching that semester. He was a little cagey talking about current journalistic projects but he told me something about his methodology. What he tries to do is to land an assignment at a magazine, *Harper's* say, and doing the feature-length version is his test to see whether he can write a book or not.

Vaillant: That's what *The Golden Spruce* was. The *New Yorker* story was basically a market test. I was less concerned about being able to write the story, but more, would anybody care? That was my real concern. Did anybody outside of the lower mainland of B.C. and the Coast give a damn? I couldn't bear to write it if that was the case—to go to that much effort, especially on a first book. But I agree with Ted wholeheartedly. It wasn't necessary for *The Tiger* because I knew that story was just a bomb waiting to go off. It was just such an incredible story. Everybody I showed the proposal to went crazy.

Reynolds: Thanks for the chat.

Vaillant: Thanks for your interest over the years.

Notes

1. John Vaillant, *The Jaguar's Children* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2015).

2. Upton Sinclair, *The Jungle* (London: Dover Thrift Edition, 2001).

3. Ted Conover, "The Way of All Flesh," *Harper's*, May 2013, 31–49.

4. David Simon worked as a crime reporter for the *Baltimore Sun* 1982–95. To date his most famous television program is the HBO drama, *The Wire*, which aired 2002–08.

5. http://hazlitt.net/feature/john-vaillant-and-louise-dennys-conversation.

6. Rory Carroll, "Altar, Mexico: How the 'Migrant Oasis' for Would-be Border Crossers Became a Trap," *Guardian*, October 14, 2015, http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/oct/14/altar-mexico-how-the-migrant-oasis-for-would-be-border-crossers-became-a-trap.

7. A feller buncher is a machine that can cut through trees, limb them and stack them in one motion.

Book reviews . . .

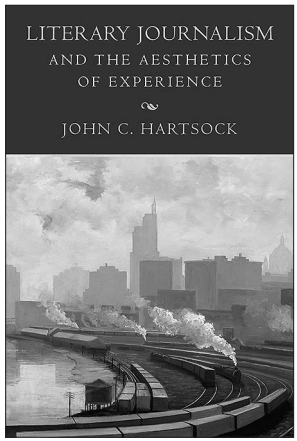
Nancy L. Roberts, Book Review Editor

John C. Hartsock. Photo: Tony DeRado

Expanding the Horizons of Literary Journalism

Literary Journalism and the Aesthetics of Experience
by John C. Hartsock. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2016. Paperback, 195 pp., $27.95

Reviewed by Richard Lance Keeble, University of Lincoln, United Kingdom



Since the publication of his seminal and award-winning *A History of American Literary Journalism: The Emergence of a Modern Narrative Form*, in 2000, John C. Hartsock has been pondering. That first volume, as he indicates in his introduction (5), raised more questions than he could then answer. In a range of journals (such as *Genre*, *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, *DoubleTake*) and book chapters over the years he has been grappling with the underlying issues and theories. This new and densely argued text is the fruit of all that reflection. And it succeeds wonderfully in opening up the literary journalism debate to completely original and exciting new fields of inquiry.

Writers over the centuries have tended to look down on their literary journalism. Indeed, since their emergence in the early seventeenth century in Europe's cities, particularly London, the "news media" (variously known as corantos, diurnals, gazettes, proceedings, and mercuries) have been associated with scandal, gossip, and "low" culture. While the term journalist emerged in France in the 1830s to refer to writers on periodicals (distinguishing them from writers of literature), the identification of journalism largely with newspapers and mass culture has had a profound impact on the sensibilities of men and women of letters. George Orwell, considered by many as one of the greatest UK journalists of the last century, constantly looked down on his journalism as "mere pamphleteering" and a lesser form of literature. On a basic level, journalism has provided writers with an income. Yet this very fact has reinforced journalism's position as a subliterary genre. For while literature is often seen as the fruit of "scholarship" and "inspiration"—hence pure, disinterested, and above market considerations—journalistic writing is viewed as distorted by the constraints of the market, tight deadlines, or word limits.

In contrast, Hartsock's text—which draws on an eclectic range of theorists, including Mikhail Bakhtin, Walter Benjamin, Friedrich Nietzsche, Wolfgang Iser, Hans Robert Jauss, and Victor Shklovsky—argues strongly that literary journalism (which he prefers to call "narra-descriptive journalism") is the *superior* genre (53). Fiction, he

says, exists in a "sovereign world" independent of phenomena. "In that sovereignty we detect a narrative closure" (55). Documentary or nonfiction narratives can never be "sovereign" in the same way. Their conclusions can only be temporary. To support this view, he cites, for example, John Hersey, who forty years following the first publication of *Hiroshima* added a new chapter after returning to Japan to find out what had happened to the survivors of the nuclear bomb attack. "When you finish reading a work of narra-descriptive journalism, you know at some level of consciousness or subconsciousness that of course the story does not end, people's lives go on, and that disrupts 'the illusion of the complete process,' as Jauss said of history" (56).

Hartsock's critique of the conventional inverted pyramid model of news is particularly original. It represents, he says, "a reversal of the complication-resolution litmus test of traditional narrative because of the emphasis in the lead on the resolution—the "breaking news"—before the story examines the complication that led to the resolution" (11). A more narrative approach engages readers imaginatively in the aesthetics of experience and the search for understanding, meaning, and insight. It begins the moment a narrative mystery or complication is posed. Hartsock even draws on the research into how the brain investigates the world by cognitive psychologists and neuroscientists to suggest that the understanding of "story" as narrative "empowers the reader imaginatively" (18). He continues:

> Associating itself with science effectively legitimized the "objective" model as the professionally correct model. But given what science is telling us, one must conclude that the "objective" model was not "scientific" despite the claims because it is not how the mind naturally inquires into the world. . . . the critical hegemony of "objective" journalism was constructed on a false premise (21).

Hartsock devotes a chapter to a fascinating analysis of the New Journalists Tom Wolfe, Sara Davidson, Truman Capote, Joan Didion, Hunter Thompson, and Michael Herr, where he combines close attention to the texts with some broad-sweep generalizations. The New Journalists, he argues, "challenged nothing less than the shibboleth of the 'American Dream': that mythic ambition—and concoction—that promises a happy ending" (61). Coming in the 1960s at a time of social and political crisis in the United States (with the civil rights movement, assassinations, the drug culture, and Vietnam War protests), "The New Journalism would uncover a growing psychic dread underlying the triumphalism" (69).

Perhaps more than any other work, Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood*, he argues, is about the symbolic birth of the mythic American Dream. On the day before the night of the murders, "exemplary sixteen-year-old Nancy Clutter bakes a cherry pie, the wholesomeness of which is another American mythic trope" (72). Hartsock continues (with his typical wit): "[L]ike that staple persona of American myth, Dorothy from *The Wizard of Oz*, Nancy Clutter could almost be expected to launch into 'Somewhere over the rainbow'—coincidentally also in Dorothy's Kansas."

Significantly, Capote focuses on the murderers, as Dostoevsky did in *Crime and Punishment*. "But unlike in the Russian *Crime and Punishment*, where there is redemption in the end, there is none in the American version" (73). But Hartsock is highly critical of Capote for inventing certain scenes: "[W]e detect Capote's inability

to resist his own mythmaking, and here in the effort to destroy a secular myth, it is done at the cost of building another false myth to create a false narrative unity" (ibid).

The whole notion of "subversive" politics and culture in advanced capitalist societies is problematic: to a certain extent those societies are strong since they are able to incorporate and appropriate such subversion. Capitalism, after all, carries its own self-critique as a dynamic form of legitimation. As Daniel Hallin outlined in his seminal study of Vietnam War coverage (1986), the dominant ideological sphere of consensus can incorporate serious critique (which Hallin defines as "legitimate controversy"). Hartsock here stresses the subversive role of the antimythic New Journalism, and yet that role would have been worth interrogating and problematizing far more.

Hartsock certainly over the years has expanded the horizons of literary journalism scholarship with his writings on Russian journalists. Here he takes a close look at the work of Anna Politkovskaya (whom he defines as an "expository polemicist") and Svetlana Alexievich ("a narra-descriptive journalist") (85). In another section, he examines in detail the literary reportage of Egon Erwin Kisch ("a Prague journalist of Jewish origin, writing mostly in German" (99), tracing its influence on writers as diverse as Frenchman Henri Barbusse, American communist Michael Gold, Bertolt Brecht, Hungarian Marxist philosopher and literary critic Georg Lukacs and the Chinese poet Emi Siao (103).

In a chapter toward the end of the book, Hartsock looks critically at some examples of more recent literary journalism: for instance, an article in the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, another in the *Sacramento Bee*, and detects "problems of narrative summary" in all of them. It is perhaps strange to see listed here Thomas Keneally's *Schindler's List* (*Schindler's Ark* in the United Kingdom), since this is unmistakably a work of fiction. His suggestion, then, that Keneally could have improved the work by interviewing a particular source "as part of the reporter's 'immersion' process" (144) seems all the more inappropriate.

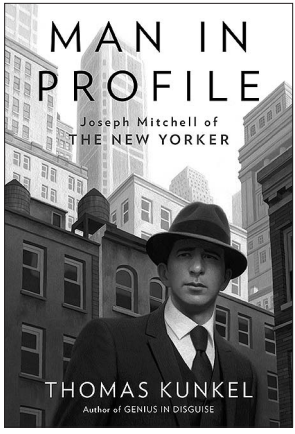
While Hartsock is a former editor of *Literary Journalism Studies*, the journal of the International Association for Literary Journalism Studies, it is striking how little reference he makes to the many contributions to that journal, which have significantly expanded the international focus and theoretical reach of the discipline. Significantly, he stresses that he writes as an American scholar and adds, intriguingly: "I say that in all humility and certainly not triumph" (7). There is, indeed, a heavy American emphasis in this text (reinforced by the beautiful and striking reproduction on the front cover of Hanssen's 1936 painting of a train yard in Minnesota). It might then have been good to end on a high, celebrating some of the wonderful contemporary manifestations of literary journalism across the globe.

Yet, in conclusion, the many insights in this rich, challenging, and often complex book will still make it a central text for international researchers for many years to come.

Defusing the Joe Mitchell Bombshell

Man in Profile: Joseph Mitchell of the New Yorker
by Thomas Kunkel. New York: Random House, 2015. Hardcover, 384 pp., $30

Reviewed by James Silas Rogers, University of St. Thomas, United States



Thomas Kunkel's *Man in Profile: Joseph Mitchell of the* New Yorker would have fundamentally altered the received understanding of one of the founding masters of literary journalism, even it hadn't contained a few bombshells about the genius' literary practice.

But it does: Kunkel leaves no doubt that at least some of Mitchell's practice, in some of his most stunning stories, was less scrupulously factual than we thought. The smoking gun is a 1961 letter from Mitchell to the *New Yorker*'s attorney about his profile of a "gypsy king": "Insofar as the principal character is concerned, the gypsy king himself, it is a work of imagination. Cockeye Johnny Nikanov does not exist in real life, and never did" (151). Ouch.

True, there is a measure of presentism in our disappointment—such techniques as composite characters, punching up the language in quotes, and rejiggering time to suit the narrative flow were not the big no-nos then that they are now. Even if we concede that these lapses were guileless, and further, appear to have been done with the approval of his editors, it's still a tough thing to hear. Mitchell's fans and devotees (myself included) are often guilty of hero worship; we all read Kunkel's biography and let out a collective wail of "Say it ain't so, Joe." A lot of us share the sentiment with which Michael Rosenwald titled his review in the *Columbia Journalism Review*: "I wish this guy hadn't written this book."[1]

I just can't let that happen, and, long term, I don't think many of Mitchell's admirers will either. For my part, I've made my peace with Mitchell's wonky sense of fact by asking if he really was writing journalism. George Core, in an underappreciated 1989 article on the *New Yorker*'s journalists, points out that these writers have always set out to move "the familiar essay toward fiction," and smartly reminds us that Mitchell always specifically "called his essays *stories*—not reports or essays or memoirs or something else—*stories.*"[2] We may need to think that Mitchell was doing journalism; but I'm not sure that the Mitchell of the *New Yorker* years thought that.

And if we can disable the disenchantment switch, there is so much to be grateful for about Kunkel's biography of Mitchell. Like many biographies, and probably for that matter, like many lives, the book follows a sort of triptych structure. Moving left to right, we open with a childhood and young adulthood, about which even Mitch-

ell's most devoted readers knew very little: the North Carolina years and his years as a beat reporter. Kunkel presents the young Mitchell as a virtual writing machine while at the *World-Telegram*, turning out superb features in short order, because, as he notes "in those salad days, Mitchell wrote quickly, and his acute mind allowed him to shape vast amounts of information into coherent narratives prior to sitting down at the typewriter" (72) and that "even for a New York–based general-assignment reporter, the range of his interests and assignments is astonishing" (76). The later slow, and then silent, writer has so much come to dominate our understanding of Mitchell that it is good to have Kunkel remind us he was not always so.

There is much else in Kunkel's retrieval of the early years that entices us. Among other things, we learn that a third of the population in Robeson County, North Carolina, where Mitchell was raised, were Native Americans of the Lumbee tribe. We also learn of Mitchell's sometimes challenging relationship with his father, a family drama about which there are virtually no clues in his published work. This, too, may be yet another tribute to Mitchell's humane sensibility: that although there is never a hint of self-display in his writing—still less any self-indulgence or confessionalism—his authorial presence is inescapable through his command of the material.

The most remarkable discovery in this portion is the knowledge that Mitchell had not only read but also interviewed the pioneering anthropologist Franz Boaz, and wrote a series of articles about his research. His reporting on Boaz was, Kunkel writes, "a kind of graduate level seminar in anthropology that caused him to rethink, as a reporter, why people are who they are and do what they do. It would be a career-altering revelation" (93). In this way Kunkel's book might also be read as an invitation to revisit much of Mitchell's writing—his work on gypsies, his study of the fish market, even his early reportage on burlesque dancers—as not only ethnographic in tone, but also by design.

In the center panel of this triptych is the Mitchell we all know: the author of one stunning story after another, an oeuvre of snowballing brilliance. For the most part Kunkel has wisely chosen to allow the published work to speak for the public man, devoting whole chapters to such jewels as "The Mohawks in High Steel" and "Mr. Hunter's Grave." Oddly (and perhaps only a matter of the materials available to Kunkel), "The Rivermen," a lyric 1959 study of the shad fishermen in Edgewater, New Jersey, that is also a bit of an ethnography, does not get the same attention; "The Rivermen" may well be Mitchell's most accomplished and ambitious work.

Far to the right are the years about which we have, until now, also known almost nothing: the span of heroic nonproduction from 1964 to 1996. In those thirty-plus years of nonpublication, Mitchell was a revered figure, but one at risk of being overshadowed by his own silence. People who had not read—or who in the days before 1993, when *Up in the Old Hotel* appeared—simply could not read, his *New Yorker* stories were nonetheless aware of the staff writer with the supposed extraordinary writer's block. Only J.D. Salinger and Ralph Ellison have attained equal celebrity for not writing (and although Kunkel doesn't mention it, perhaps it's notable that Mitchell would have known them both, and was in fact quite close to Ellison).

One of the factors that potentiates Mitchell's long silence and makes it distinct

from other authors who went silent is the fact that he made *not* writing the subject of his last and some would say (I wouldn't) his best book, *Joe Gould's Secret* (1964). But it is good to remember that Mitchell was always fascinated by the possibilities of not writing: in the opening sentence of his first book, *My Ears Are Bent* (1938), he explicitly introduces his misgivings about the profession of writer: "Except for a period in 1931 when I got sick of the whole business and went to sea . . . I have been for the last eight years a reporter on newspapers in New York City." In other words, at the age of twenty-three or twenty-four, Mitchell was uncertain about the merits of journalism. More important, Mitchell introduces, as a possible response to such doubts, the abdication of the writer.

Kunkel's biography makes clear that Mitchell was absolutely not inactive during these years. Still, one of the things that becomes clear reading *Man in Profile* is that there was something tragic about whatever it was that kept him from writing. Not tragic, in the sense of the works of genius that we missed: near the end of the book, Kunkel approvingly quotes Philip Hamburger who, when asked about his friend's output, would reply, "Why didn't he write more? Well, he wrote enough" (325).

I would concur with Hamburger and with Kunkel: we need to appreciate the brilliance that we have, rather than falling into something like Dwight MacDonald's snarky comment on James Agee, that no writer has ever been so fondly remembered for the books he never wrote.

But Mitchell's long silence is also tragic in the classic sense of tragedy, as being the inevitable outcome of an internal flaw. "Even allowing for all the external factors that impeded his writing expectations," Kunkel writes, "it was Mitchell who set things up so that there could be, in essence, only one outcome—failure" (299). Because he was convinced that his next project after *Joe Gould's Secret* had to be a full-blown book, and because his passion for note-taking, interviewing, and accumulating sources could never be satisfied, Kunkel concludes, "Mitchell had stepped into a trap, one largely of his own devices" (300).

It was not just that Mitchell had decided he had to write another full-length book. He could have written many books. But we can infer that he was not going to be satisfied with just a book: he seems to have still believed he needed to write a work of masterful inclusion. In discussing *Joe Gould*, Kunkel makes the connection, as others have, between Gould's nonbook and Mitchell's admission that as a young man he had fantasized about writing a novel as comprehensive as Joyce's *Ulysses*: "But the truth is, I never actually wrote a word of it," Mitchell realizes (*Up in the Old Hotel*, 692). Mitchell should have known by this point that writing a book, any book, is a taxing assignment, but writing a book that, as it were, includes everything, is an impossible one. But he never fully let go of that fantasy. Mitchell's admiration for Joyce, not just *Ulysses* but also *Finnegans Wake,* probably had a baleful influence on him—he remained susceptible to the dream of an encyclopedic work, even when he had firsthand experience of its impossibility in the example of Joe Gould.

A less global way in which this tragic flaw kept Mitchell from writing happened at the sentence level. Kunkel writes, in discussing Mitchell's style, that he prized "permanence, endurance, and beauty, whether those qualities came together in a care-

fully constructed cast-iron building or a Profile." He adds that Mitchell approached writing in structural terms, for which the basic building blocks were "long, languid sentences that built layer upon layer, achieving a satisfying richness—not dissimilar to many Southern novelists who were his contemporaries" (169).

That is exactly right. The problem is that such sentences demand an utter control of tone, pacing, sound, and detail, and that the longer those long, unspooling sentences go on, the harder it is to sustain such control. Mitchell could, and to an astounding extent did, pull this off—but not without extraordinary effort. One can only imagine the work that went into the opening paragraph of "The Rivermen," for example, where after three short sentences there are two that run to seventy-two and then ninety-eight words, respectively. They are gorgeous, downright gorgeous—but Mitchell clearly sweated blood to write them.

In the run-up to the release of *Man in Profile*, we were at last privileged to read previously unpublished Mitchell stories in the *New Yorker*. These new pieces show how inexorably Mitchell fell under the spell of the artful periodic sentence. He had taken on a counsel of perfection, believing that everything he wrote had to be a virtuoso performance.

Maybe it would be an exaggeration to say that Kunkel's book is a virtuoso performance. But it is an indispensable one. I remember making the point during a Mitchell panel at the IALJS gathering at Northwestern University in 2009, that you could read all the serious scholarship on Mitchell in a single afternoon. That will never be true again: Kunkel has opened a window, a wide window, on a remarkable writer. In the future, every research act on the subject of Mitchell will start with *Man in Profile.*

Notes

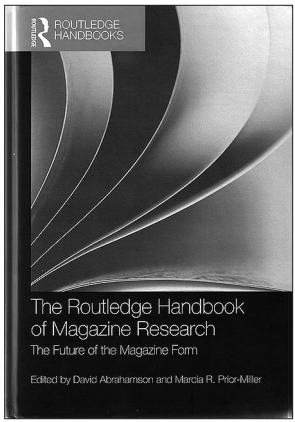
1. Michael Rosenwald, "I Wish This Guy Hadn't Written This Book, *Columbia Journalism Review*, July–August 2015, http://www.cjr.org/first_person/joseph_mitchell_new_yorker.php.

2. George Core, "Stretching the Limits of the Essay," in *Essays on the Essay,* ed. Alexander Butrym (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1989), 208.

Literary Journalism in the Realm of Research

The Routledge Handbook of Magazine Research: The Future of the Magazine Form
Edited by David Abrahamson and Marcia R. Prior-Miller. New York: Routledge, 2015. Hardcover, 650 pp., $205

Reviewed by Amber Roessner, University of Tennessee, United States



American author and journalist Tom Wolfe may not have had a grasp on the origins of the New Journalism, but he was certainly accurate in his assessment of the role of magazines in developing the style of literary journalism, writes journalism professor Miles Maguire in the *Routledge Handbook of Magazine Research: The Future of the Magazine Form* (362).

Maguire's anecdote is apt, and considering the role that magazines have played in "nurturing the style of journalism that mixed fact-based reporting with the use of a range of literary devices" (362), it is fitting to see a chapter on literary journalism in the Routledge volume. It is natural that the subject matter was not overlooked by the volume's lead editor, David Abrahamson, the founder of Medill's Literary Journalism Seminar and an eminent voice in the International Association for Literary Journalism Studies and this journal, *Literary Journalism Studies*.

Abrahamson and coeditor Marcia R. Prior-Miller did not relegate literary journalism to a single chapter; instead, references to the subject matter are sprinkled through the behemoth of a 650-page volume. In the insightful chapter by esteemed memory scholar Carolyn Kitch, "Theory and Methods of Analysis: Models for Understanding Magazines," the former magazine editor and writer at *McCall's* and *Good Housekeeping* refers to the intent of scholars of literary journalism to examine, in the "well-traveled" path of Raymond Williams, the genre's "structure of feeling." Furthermore, she defines the primary goal of scholarship in literary journalism as the examination of the form, the "aesthetic elements that align it with literature as a form of cultural production," and the "cultural insights that such writing contains, its mission of conveying not only facts but also [citing current IALJS president Norman Sims] 'feelings, emotions, and expectations—the consciousness behind events and actions that can provide reflexive cultural insights into other times and places'" (14).

Later in the book, in Part V's "Pedagogical and Curricular Perspectives," the topic is taken up once more when Kim Martin Long, a longtime professor of English, considers pedagogical approaches to teaching long-form writing. Despite shorter attention spans and the rise of digital journalism, Long contends that long-form

journalism is still thriving, citing the resurgence of narrative nonfiction as a prime example. Unfortunately, she does not share insights into how long-form journalism and narrative nonfiction have been integrated in the digital landscape, nor does she provide data about the resurgence of its popularity, but this may have been outside of the scope of her research agenda. Instead, she shares valuable resources for those engaged in teaching the subject matter. For instance, she provides examples of numerous texts, including Jack Hart's *Storycraft: The Complete Guide to Writing Narrative Nonfiction*, that provide insight into constructing the best "literature of our time" (467).

The bulk of the content surrounding literary journalism, however, is relegated to Chapter 22, Maguire's "Literary Journalism: Journalism Aspiring to be Literature." In the eight-page section, he provides insight into the history and current landscape of literary journalism studies. Maguire rightfully acknowledges that the discipline is still consumed with definitional studies, citing IALJS founding president John S. Bak's observation that "nearly every book on literary journalism in the last twenty-five years at least has begun with an introduction that defines or characterizes 'literary journalism.'" Maguire contends that the lack of definitional consensus has contributed to a number of concerns for the discipline, most notably the stunting of "theoretical scaffolding to help support criticism and scholarship" (363). Furthermore, he contends that the lack of a concrete definition creates a climate in which one struggles to determine not just the quality, but what should be included as literary journalism. Some scholars of literary journalism would disagree with the limiting effects that definitional debate has had on the discipline, instead pointing to the lack of consensus as a sign of the "dynamic nature" of the field. Certainly, it has spurred some scholars such as Nancy L. Roberts to search for the "missing links" of literary journalism and to encourage scholars of the discipline to consider "household magazines and newspapers; letters, memoirs, and diaries; epistolary journalism; religious tracts; travel writing; and social movement, muckraking, and African American periodicals" as early antecedents of literary journalism.[1]

Regardless of whether definitional concerns benefit or hinder the discipline, Maguire does a thorough job of mapping the landscape of literary journalism studies into definitional studies, process research, authorial studies, and media effects. As Maguire observes, the dynamic discipline encompasses studies of the ethical issues associated with literary journalism, such as Kathy Roberts Forde's *Literary Journalism on Trial: Masson vs. New Yorker2* to Pablo Calvi's and Thomas B. Connery's scholarship about the influence of literary journalism on Latin American and US cultures.[3]

Maguire concludes his chapter by considering the direction of future research in the discipline:

> Given the innovative and even experimental nature of much of literary journalism, it is impossible to predict the future of the form. . . . But it is possible to sense that the scholarship has matured and is ready to emerge into a new phase, one in which less attention may be paid to extending boundary lines or claiming individual writers . . . while more energy is directed to bringing new methodologies to bear and erecting the kinds of theoretical frameworks that will allow for deeper consideration and appreciation of the works themselves (368).

Maguire is accurate about the "foolhardy" nature of predicting the future directions of a discipline, but he is likely safe in his assessment that future studies of literary journalism will expand beyond the boundaries of definitional studies and authorial studies—though these studies will likely, in my opinion, remain a fruitful area of inquiry—into a rich realm of theoretical exploration.

In the last instance, as Maguire accurately observes, magazines have contributed much to the development of literary journalism. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that magazine professors would champion the genre in a handbook of magazine research. With that in mind, it is only fitting that Abrahamson and Prior-Miller's thorough and meticulously researched volume should find its way onto the bookshelves of professors, practitioners, and students at the undergraduate and graduate interested in the field of magazine journalism.

Notes

1. Nancy L. Roberts, "Firing the Canon: The Historical Search for Literary Journalism's Missing Links," *Literary Journalism Studies* 4, no. 2 (Fall 2012): 82.

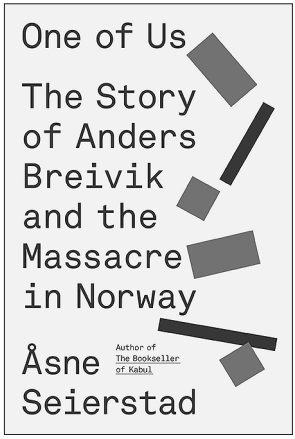
2. Kathy Roberts Forde, *Literary Journalism on Trial: Masson vs. New Yorker* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2008).

3. See, for instance, Pablo Calvi, "Buenos Aires, the Suburbs, and the Pampas," *International Literary Journalism*, March 2012, http://www.worldliteraturetoday.org/section/international-literary-journalism; and Thomas B. Connery, *Journalism and Realism: Rendering American Life* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2011).

Anders Breivik, the Massacre and Norwegian Identity

One of Us: The Story of Anders Breivik and the Massacre in Norway
by Åsne Seierstad. Trans. from the Norwegian by Sarah Death. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2015. Hardcover, 530 pp., $28.

Reviewed by Kate McQueen, University of Illinois, United States



On the afternoon of July 22, 2011, thirty-two-year-old Anders Behring Breivik drove to Oslo's government quarter, parked his van containing a self-made bomb outside the prime minister's office, and lit the fuse. As the bomb exploded and chaos ensued, Breivik set out for the island of Utøya, forty miles to the north, dressed in a homemade police uniform, and armed with an automatic rifle and a handgun. For more than an hour Breivik hunted down and shot teenagers who had gathered on the island for the ruling Labor Party's annual youth camp. In addition to the eight killed from the bomb blast, Breivik fatally shot sixty-nine people, and injured more than one hundred. The motive? To save Norway by beginning a war against "cultural Marxism," that is, feminism, multiculturalism, and the increasing presence of Islam in Europe.

This attack is at the heart of Åsne Seierstad"s book *One of Us: The Story of Anders Breivik and the Massacre in Norway*, published in Norwegian in 2013 and in English translation in 2015. The book opens with a heart-wrenching scene from Utøya, and a scrupulous sixty-two-page reconstruction of the attacks forms its weighty climax. Yet Seierstad's chronicle is much more than an account of a horrific and unprecedented crime. "*One of Us* is a book about belonging," she writes in her epilogue, "a book about community . . . it is a story about us" (523).

Seierstad takes her theme's radical inclusion seriously. This exhaustively researched book is multilayered and densely populated. Not one but three distinct narrative strands propel readers forward on the long march from Breivik's birth in 1979, through the attack and subsequent trial, and into the early days of the author's research.

The lengthiest of these strands tells Breivik's story. It is an evenhanded portrait of an intelligent but deeply troubled young man, whose unrequited search for admiration haunts every stage of his life. He spends an unhappy youth chasing first the approval of an emotionally unstable mother, then of gangs and graffiti artists. Later, he courts the regard of aspiring businessmen and youth leaders in Norway's right-wing Progress Party. Breivik becomes obsessed with the external trappings of success; he

undergoes a nose job, wears make-up and designer clothing, acquires a posh address, and pursues get-rich-quick schemes like selling fake diplomas. He even manages to land a deeply coveted invitation to the Freemasons.

In 2006, the strain becomes too much. Breivik retreats into a room in his mother's apartment, where he spends all of his energy playing World of Warcraft, often up to seventeen hours a day. Gradually he abandons gaming for the chat rooms of right-wing extremism, only to emerge five years later deeply delusional, the self-appointed commander of the (imaginary) "Norwegian anticommunist resistance movement." He rents a farm outside of Oslo, writes a rambling 1,500-page manifesto, and plans an attack intended to usher in a new world war.

Meanwhile, two other chronologically interspersed narratives offer a powerful counterweight to Breivik's tale. One follows three young friends from Troms—Simon Sæbø, Anders Kristiansen, and Viljar Hanssen—and the other Bano Rashid, a girl from a Kurdish family who had taken asylum in Norway during the Gulf War. We see these four teenagers come into the world, grow up among family and friends, and develop personal goals and political aspirations. And we see them die: Simon Sæbø, shot while helping others to safety, Rashid and Kristiansen killed while huddled alongside each other, his arm draped protectively over her. Of the four, only Viljar Hanssen survives the gunshot wounds, which rob him of an eye and a hand, but not his sense of humor. His brave and witty testimony against Breivik provides a rare ripple of laughter during the otherwise grim court proceedings.

What holds these personal histories together is the ever-present political story of contemporary Norway. Like most of its European neighbors, this small, homogenous country underwent significant cultural and social shifts in the later decades of the twentieth century. These changes—the growth of the welfare state, a demographic altered by guest workers and political refugees—are not simply a backdrop. Seierstad shows clearly the impact they have on the lives of her subjects, creating a generation of Norwegians large and diverse enough to include both Bano Rashid and Anders Breivik.

Seierstad's own place among her subjects is worthy of pause. This award-winning foreign correspondent, best known for her bestseller *The Bookseller of Kabul* (2002), admits that prior to the attack she considered her native Norway a refuge, not a subject of investigation. Taking a seat in the press box at Breivik's trial in April 2012, Seierstad found herself "knocked sideways . . . I was not prepared" (514).

One can only imagine, then, the anguish of writing this remarkable work of journalism. Seierstad's omniscient narration remains calm, deliberate, and authoritative, even in the most terrifying moments of the Utøya attack. Readers are spared nothing, not the soft feel of brain tissue beneath a shattered skull, not the taste of gunpowder following a bullet to the jaw, not the sound of a daughter crying into her father's phone seconds before her death. The only strain in Seierstad's steady voice comes from describing the gross ineptitude of the state and police in response to the ongoing threat: roadblocks not constructed, helicopters not called, police radios turned off, dinghies that sink, emergency phone services that failed as Breivik twice tried to surrender himself to the police.

Long before the shock of the attacks began to wane, Norwegians had to face the difficult question of what to make of Breivik. Was he a madman or a political terrorist? Was he a lone wolf or did he speak for a part of the nation, as he claimed? As the book's final chapters show, the Oslo District Court decided to accept Breivik's sanity and hold him responsible for his acts, but the impulse to reduce him to someone small, petty, and other, was hard to resist. "In many ways I find it repellant to write about Anders Behring Breivik," Norwegian novelist Karl Ove Knausgaard admits in the *New Yorker*. "Every time his name appears in public he gets what he wants, and becomes who he wants. . . . And yet we must write about him, we must think about the crisis that Breivik's actions represent."[1]

This is precisely what Seierstad's rich and engaging narrative journalism does: it demands that readers consider Breivik's attack from all aspects and contexts. The benefits of such a task continue to be relevant, even for current readers of this translation. Breivik may belong to Norway, but with the problem of homegrown terrorism expanding within the United States and Europe, the reminder becomes ever more urgent that those who pick up the gun and pull the trigger are, in fact, one of us too.

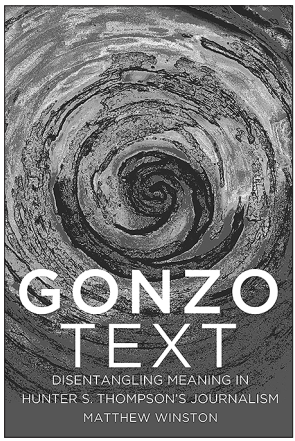
Notes

1. Karl Ove Knausgaard, "The Inexplicable: Inside the Mind of a Mass Killer," *New Yorker*, May 25, 2015, 30.

The Meaning of Gonzo (kind of, sort of)

Gonzo Text: Disentangling Meaning in Hunter S. Thompson's Journalism
by Matthew Winston. New York: Peter Lang, 2014. Hardcover, 199 pp., $89.85

Reviewed by Ashlee Nelson, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand



Matthew Winston, a tutor at the School of Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies, Cardiff University, wrote his PhD thesis on the stylistic elements and literary context of Gonzo journalism. His recent book, *Gonzo Text: Disentangling Meaning in Hunter S. Thompson's Journalism*, develops the earlier research and aims to provide "a critical commentary and a theoretical exploration of how Gonzo can be read as destabilising conventional ideas of journalism itself." The target audience for the work is "postgraduates and scholars in journalism, cultural studies and media and communication," as well undergraduates in the field of journalism studies.

Gonzo Text focuses on a set number of Thompson's works for analysis, primarily *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*, *Fear and Loathing: On the Campaign Trail '72*, "The Temptations of Jean-Claude Killy," "The Kentucky Derby Is Decadent and Depraved," and "Fear and Loathing at the Super Bowl." The author attempts to place Gonzo in the larger theoretical framework of journalism studies, using the texts for the specific traits of Gonzo they represent, such as drug use, politics, and sports writing. The book offers the concept of a singular "Gonzo Text," which Winston defines as comprising "the many texts (as in 'works', 'pieces' or 'articles') of Gonzo journalism" (3). This is a tricky venture, given the diversity of Thompson's works and the changeability with which he himself approached Gonzo. For instance, the notion of "Thompson-the-character" is applied to *Fear and Loathing: On the Campaign Trail '72* as equally as it is to *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* and does not take into account the distinctly different use of fiction in these texts, or that Thompson is not reporting as Raoul Duke in *Campaign Trail*.

Despite the claimed goals of the book, perhaps its use is as an undergraduate text. There is a relative simplicity to the writing style that would make it accessible to undergraduate students who wouldn't have a broader knowledge of Thompson or the New Journalism. As well, Winston's propensity for applying broader theoretical frameworks—such as the work of Barthes, Foucault, and Derrida—could prove useful as a tool for teaching students to apply these kinds of analyses to Gonzo. Indeed, large sections of the book are given over to broad commentary on theoretical frameworks and why Winston is using them. The book is as much an introduction to

applying theoretical frameworks as it is an introduction to Thompson.

Two large sections, "Getting Hold of the Drugs" (chapter 2), and "Reality Itself Is Too Twisted" (chapter 3), ostensibly focusing on Thompson's Vegas book, actually describe the cultural context in which he was writing. This is another good reason why the book might be a useful introduction. In both of these chapters a greater portion of the text is devoted to providing a theoretical framework and the positioning of drugs in society than to Thompson's work itself. Analysis of historical journalism is at the forefront of "Shallow, Contemptible, and Hopelessly Dishonest" (chapter 4), which focuses on political journalism of the 1800s and the role of objectivity in political journalism as a framework for comments on *Campaign Trail.* Unlike the previous two chapters, this section focuses on Thompson's work. Chapter 9, "What Sort of Journalist I Was," provides a brief overview of secondary sources. Chapter 5 attempts to frame Gonzo in the context of "edgework," while chapters 6, 7, and 8 loosely base their discussion on Thompson's sports journalism.

Stylistically, there are a few quirks. The lack of consistency in terminology throughout the book—gonzo journalism? "Gonzo journalism"? "Gonzo Journalism"?—is distracting, as is the occasional switch between "New journalism" and "New Journalism," or, even more jarringly, "'New' journalism." This is particularly apparent when Winston points out the significance of his decision to capitalize the word "text" in "Gonzo Text" but does not remark on the variable uses he has made of Gonzo journalism (3). Oddly, the author also uses the pronoun "her" when referring to "the author," as in "[i]n the examination of Thompson's writing practice, I have made reference to the implications of Gonzo journalism being considered as journalism, in terms of the possible place of the author in journalism, as opposed to her place in fiction. . . ." (19).

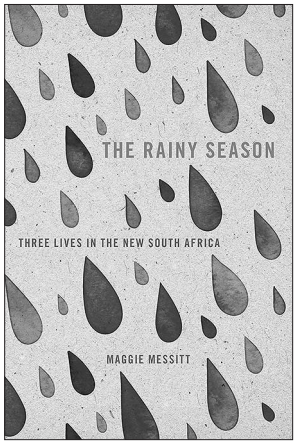
I wouldn't recommend this book to literary journalism scholars. The analysis of both Gonzo or Thompson is given in strokes too broad to provide a deeper understanding. In fact, scholars steeped in Gonzo writings may find themselves frustrated with some of the generalizations, while serious literary journalism scholars seeking to gain knowledge of Thompson would do better to turn to the man's work.

Gonzo is a tricky form to define. Winston's claim at the beginning of the book that it is Thompson's "own exuberantly drug-addled, subversive, subjective method of writing the story" (1). While one of the more popular views of Gonzo, this treatment lacks an acknowledgment at the outset of the complexities of the style. Winston at least acknowledges that his work "does not represent a 'complete' or 'correct' reading of Gonzo," and that his "treatment of Gonzo is, by its nature, selective, both in terms of the works on which I choose to focus my enquiry, and in the approaches to the Text which I choose to adopt" (16). One caveat is that the book's claims regarding both Thompson and New Journalism need to be scrutinized, as Winston does "not feel Gonzo journalism to be a part of the New Journalism." The book glosses over a number of nuances regarding both, and particularly the flexibility of the definition of either.

A Corner of South Africa Portrayed with Insight and Appreciation

The Rainy Season: Three Lives in the New South Africa
by Maggie Messitt. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2015. Paperback, 198 pp., $19.95

Reviewed by Rosemary Armao, University at Albany, State University of New York, United States



The Rainy Season, which plunges readers into the remote community of Rooibok in the South African village of Acornhoek, resulted from a remarkable immersion by author Maggie Messitt. She spent ten months in the tiny and seemingly ordinary place after a six-year apprenticeship reporting and living in South Africa. It's not the length of time dedicated to the project that stands out so much as the degree of difficulty it entailed. She collected her material here by disappearing into a place where she was foreign to residents in every possible way. They slipped in and out of three languages, only one of which she could use decently. They were poor and mostly uneducated while she holds an advanced degree from one private college and is working on a PhD in creative nonfiction from Ohio University. They are trapped in the developing world; she operates in the First. And not least, they are black and she white.

She succeeds, however, and ends up standing in for us. We see, hear, smell, and know Rooibok. While Messitt absents herself and is not a character in her book it's hard not to see her listening and watching, building trust, asking probing questions.

The book overflows with minute details. This feels rich and photographic when she is writing about women dressing for funerals and festivals, or the oppressive heat of an overfilled car on a sunny day, or a cement-brick wall falling down on workers. Some of her scenic descriptions are heartfelt but overwrought: "The escarpment that paints the sky like a city in the distance radiated. A deep line of bright pink laced the edges of the rocky, defined features and the tabletop of the mountains. . . ." It goes on longer.

Authentic sounds of the place ring from the book. She uses so many local words (*bakkie*, *muthi*, *sangoma*) that she includes a glossary. As in her descriptions, she almost overdoes the use of onomatopoeia (The sound of rain—"tho, tho, tho" (84); the sound of Regina's shoes—"squish-squash, squish-squash, squish-squash" (85); the sound of a cell phone—"Deedle dee dee dee. . . Deedle dee dee daaa. . ." (115). And her prose

mimics the cadence of rural Africa—slow, unadorned, repetitive, deliberative.

Messitt paces her narrative to the tempo of village life. For pages on end her three main characters get on with the regular stuff of life, keeping afloat and supporting relatives, coping with bad spouses, just staying alive. Early death from AIDS especially haunts this book as it does the village, with its seven funeral homes within three kilometers and eight cemeteries within a mile radius. Suddenly, while lulled, comes an explosion of scandal or revelation—a suicide, a disclosure of grotesque domestic abuse. Caught up, readers can get why *skinnering*, or gossiping, is vital to these strangers on the other side of the world.

Reading *The Rainy Season* is mesmerizing but difficult. Favorable reviews of it refer to a "multi-threaded narrative" intertwining the lives of three villagers of different ages, occupations, and genders who, in fact, have only distant connections to each other aside from their abode. Organizing all the threads here—three main characters; a handful of themes, including death, sex, and work; timely angles like the AIDS crises and political change in South Africa—had to have been a tall order. Messitt mostly holds it together, but you can see the effort she has put into structuring this work. Outlines should be invisible, but in this book they are not. Aside from the glossary, she gives us a cast of characters like a playbill, a map of the community, a prologue explaining what to expect, chronological chapters arranged by season of the year, under a series of rotating subheads (Thoko, Dankie, Regina), names that tell whose life is in focus at any given point in the book. Apparently for clarification, direct quotations are italicized.

The work still gets away from the author occasionally. On page sixty-eight she begins talking about "another cluster of women" at a funeral. Another? Readers with less than eidetic memory must look back four full pages to find reference to the first cluster.

Nitpicking reviewers might point out also that Messitt's love of metaphors that connect what she is talking about to Rooibok sometimes goes over a line and annoys. For example, spring gusts dance like children in the street (4) and tension builds "as thick as maize porridge" (44) and the young Thoko has eyes as wide as ripe marulas—which resemble lemons (19).

Put such minor irritations aside, and keep reading. Forgive Messitt small flaws in what is her first book. As someone who has traveled and lived extensively in north and eastern Africa, I confess that I felt a profound sense of déjà vu reading this book. What Messitt has produced provides insight and appreciation for Africa rarely available in the United States, where readers tend to favor stories about that continent's wild animals. She makes people come alive not as victims but as humans like us, with hopes, disappointment, and rare small triumphs. She makes you want to taste their home-brewed beer, to buy their woven tapestries, and to have your fate forecast by a healer armed with a bag of bones. In the final scene of the epilogue, where she finally comes forward into her story, that is what Messitt does.

Thoko, the healer, throws the bones for Messitt. And, out of respect for a foreigner who had tried to understand her and her neighbors, Thoko tells Messitt the whole truth—both the bad and the good—about life. You have the sense the two women already have told us.

Mission Statement
Literary Journalism Studies

Literary Journalism Studies is an international, interdisciplinary blind-reviewed journal that invites scholarly examinations of literary journalism—a genre also known by different names around the world, such as literary reportage, narrative journalism, the New Journalism, *nuevo periodismo*, reportage literature, literary nonfiction, narrative nonfiction, and creative nonfiction—focusing on cultural revelation. Published in English but directed at an international audience, the journal welcomes contributions from different cultural, disciplinary, and critical perspectives. To help establish comparative studies of the genre, the journal is especially interested in examinations of the works of authors and traditions from different national literatures not generally known outside their countries.

There is no single definition of the genre, but the following descriptions help to establish a meeting ground for its critical study:

• "The art and craft of reportage—journalism marked by vivid description, a novelist's eye to form, and eyewitness reporting that reveals hidden truths about people and events that have shaped the world we know." —*Granta*

• "Reportage Literature is an engagement with reality with a novelist's eye but with a journalist's discipline." —Pedro Rosa Mendes, Portugal

• "I think one of the first things for literary reportage should be to go into the field and to try to get the other side of the story. —Anne Nivat, France

• "A good reportage must not necessarily be linked with topical or political events which are taking place around us. I think the miracle of things lies not in showing the extraordinary but in showing ordinary things in which the extraordinary is hidden." —Nirmal Verma, India

• Literary journalism is a "journalism that would read like a novel . . . or short story." —Tom Wolfe, United States

Such definitions are not comprehensive and may at times conflict, but they should help to establish an understanding of this fundamentally narrative genre, which is located at the intersection of literature and journalism.

At the critical center of the genre lies cultural revelation in narrative form. Implicit to the enterprise are two precepts: (a) that there is an external reality apart from human consciousness, whatever the inherent problems of language and ideology that may exist in comprehending that reality; and (b) that there are consequences in the phenomenal world, whether triggered by human or natural agency, that result in the need to tell journalistically-based narratives empowered by literary technique and aesthetic sensibility. Ultimately, the emphasis is on the aesthetics of experience.

International Association for Literary Journalism Studies

The International Association for Literary Journalism Studies is a multidisciplinary learned society whose essential purpose is the encouragement and improvement of scholarly research and education in literary journalism (or literary reportage). For the purposes of scholarly delineation, our definition of literary journalism is "journalism as literature" rather than "journalism about literature." Moreover, the association is explicitly inclusive and warmly supportive of a wide variety of approaches to the study and teaching of literary journalism throughout the world. The association's web address is http://www.ialjs.org.

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