

## *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*