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## *Research Review . . .*

### Recent Trends and Topics in Literary Journalism Scholarship

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This survey of literary journalism scholarship published in print during 2016 is intended as a guide to recent trends and topics in the field rather than a comprehensive listing of all research and commentary. It focuses primarily on peer-reviewed journal articles and books. Some works may have appeared online before print publication.

#### BOOKS

##### Individual Author Studies

David Foster Wallace's narrative nonfiction continued to receive notice in 2016, notably with the publication of Lukas Hoffmann's *Postirony: The Nonfictional Literature of David Foster Wallace and Dave Eggers*.<sup>1</sup> Hoffmann spends considerable time delineating the differences between fiction and nonfiction, stressing how creative nonfiction exists on the borderland between the two while also looking at how the nonfiction work of both Wallace and Eggers, work that he describes as "postironic," looks to communicate directly with the reader. The book's largest argument is that we should attend more closely to the nonfiction writing of both Wallace and Eggers on its own, rather than reading it as secondary and primarily supportive of their fiction. To that end, his focus is on the "artistic value" of their nonfiction and the effects it has on readers.

In *Hunter S. Thompson: Fear, Loathing, and the Birth of Gonzo*,<sup>2</sup> Kevin T. McEneaney argues that Thompson, "America's most incisive and savvy

political commentator since H. L. Mencken" (17), has been largely under-recognized by academics because of his "complex sense of humor." Offering some biography, the book primarily focuses on analysis of Thompson's work, devoting most of its pages to Thompson's literary journalism and two full chapters to *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*. McEneaney draws parallels between Thompson and his literary influences—Fitzgerald and Hemingway among them—and places him in the tradition of such canonical Western writers as Virgil, Chaucer, Spenser, Milton, and Shakespeare, arguing that Thompson, like his forebears, achieved great originality by modifying traditional literary templates.

Jan Whitt's *The Redemption of Narrative: Terry Tempest Williams and Her Vision of the West*<sup>3</sup> focuses on the environmental writer and activist's significant and expanding oeuvre, situating her among writers with shared and varied concerns, notably T. S. Eliot, Ernest Hemingway, Tom Wolfe, and Roger Rosenblatt. While Williams has been a prolific writer—of narrative nonfiction and poetry especially, including works for children—Whitt's volume is the first book-length study of her work. Exploring themes frequently associated with Williams but going beyond them as well to address existential concerns, including the value of language, Whitt's book situates Williams as a writer whose work exemplifies the combined concerns of literature and journalism.

### National/Regional Studies

In 2016, two books were published that brought together writers with a shared national and/or ethnic identity while also demonstrating the great diversity in their work in terms of theme and style. Sue Joseph interviewed eleven of her "favourite" Australian writers for *Behind the Text: Candid Conversations with Australian Creative Nonfiction Writers*,<sup>4</sup> which is the first book to look at how Australian writers of creative nonfiction think about their work. Aware that Australia was not caught up in the international debates about what defined writing as creative nonfiction and literary journalism, Joseph set out to use her interviews to engage her writers with that debate. She quickly found that her interviewees lacked interest in narrowing their work to a pre-defined genre. The resulting book offers what Joseph terms the "unique Australian perspective" on the ongoing academic debate while also demonstrating the range of topics these writers find worthy to explore in their work, from war to national identity to the treatment of Australia's Indigenous peoples. Accompanied by photos by Hans Bool and Joseph's first-person accounts of her subjects and their settings, the book is itself a text of literary and journalistic text.

Marta Caminero-Santangelo's *Documenting the Undocumented: Latina/o Narratives and Social Justice in the Era of Operation Gatekeeper*<sup>5</sup> outlines the evolution of US anxiety about its southern border since the 1990s and the official actions that grew out of that anxiety to prepare for the focus of the book: Latina/o writers' response to those actions in fiction and especially nonfiction. She discusses how the Clinton administration's Operation Gatekeeper, begun in 1994 near San Diego, California, in spreading to Operation Safeguard in Arizona and Operation Rio Grande in Texas, served to create a border that was "reified into an 'imaginary' line with real material gravity, where crossing signaled criminal and life-threatening trespass"<sup>6</sup> for those on the "wrong" side of that line and has given rise to the nomenclature "illegal alien," which conjoins both violation and trespassing. The writers whose work she analyzes seek to challenge and reframe that identity, producing "counternarratives" that seek to create empathic responses to the traumas experienced by undocumented immigrants trying to navigate the border. While the book looks at both fiction and nonfiction, the first chapter focuses explicitly on literary journalism, and three and parts of four of the remaining five chapters focus on memoir and personal narratives.

### International Studies

Three books appeared in English in 2016 that, in varying degrees, focus on literary journalism as an international genre. In *Literary Journalism and the Aesthetics of Experience*,<sup>7</sup> reviewed in the Spring 2016 issue of *LJS*, John C. Hartsock probes concerns his earlier *History of American Literary Journalism: The Emergence of a Modern Narrative Form* (2000) had raised for him. His primary focus is on how "the aesthetics of phenomenal experience"<sup>8</sup> that emerge in what he prefers to call "narra-descriptive" journalism differ from either mainstream journalism or realistic fiction, and to probe that question he works with ideas developed by a range of international theorists, including Mikhail Bakhtin, Wolfgang Iser, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Viktor Shklovsky. As Richard Keeble notes in his *LJS* review, while the new book retains a "heavy American emphasis" (171),<sup>9</sup> Hartsock does discuss a number of European writers and devotes significant attention to Russian writers, including Nobel Prize winner Svetlana Alexievich.

David Swick and Richard Keeble's edited volume *The Funniest Pages: International Perspectives on Humor in Journalism*<sup>10</sup> takes a look at how humor has played a longstanding role in journalism over hundreds of years and across the globe. Bringing together an eclectic range of topics, from "News Mockery in the English Civil War" to "How John Diamond Used Humor to Tackle the Taboo Topics of Cancer and Dying" to "Twitter and the Revitalization

of Black Humor in Journalism,” the volume seeks to accord humor a more prominent role in scholarly investigations as well as in journalism pedagogy. The countries that writers and venues discussed are from include Australia, Britain, Canada, Chile, and the US.

Finally, a much-needed international approach to the volatile decade of the 1960s emerges in *Witnessing the Sixties: A Decade of Change in Journalism and Literature*, edited by Frank Harbers, Ilja van den Broek, and Marcel Broersma.<sup>11</sup> In eleven chapters and an Introduction, the contributors cover the convergence of journalism and fiction in the work of Australian, Dutch, Flemish, German, and US writers. The focus is on how individual writers such as Louis Paul Boon, Hugo Claus, Joan Didion, and Norman Mailer, as well as groups of writers—the New Journalists, the Flemish “Stenciled Revolution” Authors—sought to find new ways to capture the decade’s rapid social and political changes.

## ARTICLES

### Individual Author Studies

The Australian writer Helen Garner is the subject of Sue Joseph’s “Australian Literary Journalism and ‘Missing Voices,’” which appeared in *Journalism Practice*. Joseph examines the way in which Garner deals with the ethics of telling a story when key players will not cooperate to grant an interview.<sup>12</sup>

In *Literary Journalism Studies*, Christine Isager investigates the work of Danish literary journalist Morten Sabroe, who has been accused of following too closely the style of Hunter S. Thompson. Using rhetorical theory, she shows how Sabroe’s use of imitation, not unlike Thompson’s process of self-education, has led to an original, destabilizing perspective.<sup>13</sup>

Writing in *ariel*, Jeffrey Mather examines Joe Sacco’s *Footnotes in Gaza* from an architectural perspective. Mather argues that this context reveals how spatial and visual elements are used to convey conceptual ideas of history and politics.<sup>14</sup>

### National/Regional Studies

The role of literary journalism techniques in fashioning black identity in South Africa during the 1950s is the focus of an article by Lesley Cowlings in *Literary Journalism Studies*. Writers for the magazine *Drum* are shown using these tools to describe township life.<sup>15</sup>

Alejandro Barranquero Carretero and Garbiñe Jaurrieta Barriain, writing in *Journalism Practice*, examine the emergence of what is known as “slow journalism” in Spain. They focus on a particular publication as an example of

a sustainable model based on long-form narrative and immersive reporting.<sup>16</sup> In *Journalism Studies*, Eleanor K. O’Keeffe examines the use of narrative techniques to encourage a certain kind of recall of the fighting in British regional newspapers after World War I. She describes how articles focused on specific military actions shaped a social and cultural view that reflected positive civic virtues.<sup>17</sup>

The fall issue of *Literary Journalism Studies* is devoted to an analysis of the francophone traditions of the genre. Amélie Chabrier writes about the courtroom journalism of Colette.<sup>18</sup> Paul Aron explores the work of a Belgian writer Marie Gevers.<sup>19</sup> Vanessa Gemis analyses the journalism of Simone Dever, who wrote under the pseudonym Marc Augis.<sup>20</sup> Guillaume Pinson’s contribution is a comparison of a work of French Canadian fiction to previous reportage by the author, Gabrielle Roy, and by others.<sup>21</sup> Marie-Ève Thérénty focuses on the work of Françoise Giroud and the specific technique of subjectification.<sup>22</sup> Mélodie Simard-Houde takes on the subject of colonial reportage in the works of Pierre Mille and Félix Dubois.<sup>23</sup> Laure Demougin reviews examples of Indigenous speech in the Algerian colonial press.<sup>24</sup>

### Historical Development

David Dowling analyzes the impact of the Iowa Writers’ Workshop on the evolution of literary journalism practice in *Literary Journalism Studies*. He contrasts the work and approaches of Tracy Kidder and John D’Agata to trace the development of a new style of creative nonfiction.<sup>25</sup>

Rebecca Roach, writing in *Textual Practice*, focuses on a series of interviews by the American journalist Louise Morgan to study topics such as privacy and the profession of writing during the 1930s. Roach is interested in the interview as a form of journalism and autobiography that creates a sense of access that is largely fictional.<sup>26</sup>

### Slow Journalism

Erik Neveu, writing in *Journalism Practice*, delves into the developing theory and application of slow journalism and suggests that the term is not as simple as it may first appear. Instead he argues that researchers need to recognize that the approach can be applied, and should be studied in distinct, if overlapping, categories.<sup>27</sup>

Also writing in *Journalism Practice*, Matthew Ricketson argues that slow journalism has been underappreciated for its contributions to public understanding of complex issues, a situation that he says is slowly beginning to change. His analysis focuses on the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and the American invasion of Iraq.<sup>28</sup>

In the same issue of *Journalism Practice*, Susan L. Greenberg turns her

attention to the importance of the editing process in producing slow journalism. In exploring the restrictions imposed by the editing process, she argues that such constraints can have both positive and negative consequences.<sup>29</sup>

An issue of *Digital Journalism* was also devoted to slow journalism. Mike Ananny raised the question of how fast, or slow, journalism should be. His analysis works across four related topics: work routines, platform paces, algorithmic computations, and regulatory issues.<sup>30</sup>

Benjamin Ball, also in *Digital Journalism*, proposes a process-based definition of slow journalism and argues that multimedia journalism occupies an ideal placement, since it can combine some of the best qualities of rapid and of in-depth reporting.<sup>31</sup>

A case study of a transmedia experience looking behind the scenes at the 2014 Winter Olympics is used by Renira Rampazzo Gambarato in *Digital Journalism* to argue that slow journalism may be best suited for new technology. The transmedia work, known as *The Sochi Project*, combines interactive documentary, print, digital publications, and an exhibition.<sup>32</sup>

Stuart Davis makes the case in *Digital Journalism* that slow journalism is a powerful alternative to mainstream approaches to covering the US–Mexico border. He identifies two complementary strategies, one based on ethnography and the other based on visualizations created from large datasets.<sup>33</sup>

The Dutch website *De Correspondent* is analyzed in *Digital Journalism* by Frank Harbers, who argues that its writers are openly subjective and yet rely on empirical approaches and transparency in telling their stories. Thus the website is said to be an example of slow journalism that works to combine both modernist and postmodernist approaches to truth claims.<sup>34</sup>

Slow journalism as a viable economic model for journalism is examined by David Dowling in *Digital Journalism*. His research focuses on four companies that have sought alternatives to display advertising as their major funding source.<sup>35</sup>

Teaching slow journalism in the classroom is one of the topics covered by Don Belt and Jeff South in their article in *Digital Journalism* about *National Geographic's* Out of Eden Walk. They show how this project, based on a trek around the world by a two-time Pulitzer Prize winner, used contemporary digital tools to convey an ancient story.<sup>36</sup>

### Digital Technology

Susan Jacobson, Jacqueline Marino, and Robert E. Gutsche, writing in *Journalism*, analyzed fifty long-form journalism projects that were produced on the web and argued that these works represent a new phase in the evolution of literary journalism. “Such digital storytelling encompasses

more than the fragmented, de-centered, hypertextual blocks of the Web and furthers the field’s understandings of the Web’s potential for dramatic and immersive journalism.”<sup>37</sup>

Writing in *Literary Journalism Studies*, Marino presented the results of an eye-tracking study of how a group of millennials read examples of digital literary journalism that included multimedia elements. A key finding was that participants in the study did pay attention to text and not just the photos and videos.<sup>38</sup>

In *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies*, Travis Vogan and David Dowling examine the way that ESPN built upon the literary journalism of its former star columnist Bill Simmons to develop its cross-platform brand. Based on research before the departure of Simmons from ESPN, this article highlights the importance and prestige of print traditions in the construction of a digital brand.<sup>39</sup>

### Ethics

Writing in *Journalism*, Lindsay Morton analyzes two books of literary journalism, Rebecca Skloot’s *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* and Adrian LeBlanc’s *Random Family*, from the perspective of epistemology, specifically the ways in which the authors make and support truth claims. The article draws on the concept of epistemic location developed by Lorraine Code.<sup>40</sup>

In *Literary Journalism Studies*, Morton further explores the matter of epistemic responsibility as envisioned by Code. Here she focuses her attention on what might be considered an opposite example, John D’Agata’s and Jim Fingal’s *The Lifespan of a Fact*.<sup>41</sup>

James Aucoin argues for a personal form of journalism as a way of achieving a higher level of ethical practice and epistemic soundness compared to the impersonal, objective approach. Writing in *Journalism*, he examines James Agee’s reflexivity in *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*.<sup>42</sup>

### Narrative Theory

The interaction between voice and point of view becomes a new way of considering the traditional split between objectivity and subjectivity in an article published by Cecilia Aare in *Literary Journalism Studies*. She calls into question the idea that first-person reportage is necessarily more subjective than third-person reportage.<sup>43</sup>

In *Genre* Marla Zubel focuses on two interwar movements, German New Objectivity and Russian Factography, to examine how the distinctions between object and fact can be blurred. The article discusses reportage by Joseph Roth, Ilya Ehrenburg, Siegfried Krakauer, and Walter Benjamin.<sup>44</sup>

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### Notes

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- <sup>2</sup> Kevin T. McEneaney, *Hunter S. Thompson: Fear, Loathing, and the Birth of Gonzo* (Lanham, MD: Rowan and Littlefield, 2016).
- <sup>3</sup> Whitt, Jan, *The Redemption of Narrative: Terry Tempest Williams and Her Vision of the West* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2016).
- <sup>4</sup> Sue Joseph, *Behind the Text: Candid Conversations with Australian Creative Nonfiction Writers* (Melbourne: Hybrid Publishers, 2016).
- <sup>5</sup> Marta Camino-Santangelo, *Documenting the Undocumented: Latino/a Narratives and Social Justice in the Era of Operation Gatekeeper* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2016).
- <sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.
- <sup>7</sup> John C. Hartsock, *Literary Journalism and the Aesthetics of Experience* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2016).
- <sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.
- <sup>9</sup> Richard Lance Keeble, "Expanding the Horizons of Literary Journalism," *Literary Journalism Studies* 8, no. 1 (2016): 171.
- <sup>10</sup> David Swick and Richard Keeble, eds., *The Funniest Pages: International Perspectives on Humor in Journalism* (New York: Peter Lang, 2016).
- <sup>11</sup> Frank Harbers, Ilja van den Broek, and Marcel Jeroen Broersma, *Witnessing the Sixties: A Decade of Change in Journalism and Literature* (Leuven, Belgium: Peeters Publishers, 2016).
- <sup>12</sup> Sue Joseph, "Australian Literary Journalism and 'Missing Voices,'" *Journalism Practice* 10, no. 6 (2016): 730–743.

- <sup>13</sup> Christine Isager, "Playful Imitation at Work: The Formation of a Danish 'Gonzo Thingummy,'" *Literary Journalism Studies* 8, no. 1 (2016): 78–96.
- <sup>14</sup> Jeffrey Mather, "Perspectives on Palestine: Architecture and Narrative in Joe Sacco's *Footnotes in Gaza*," *ariel: A Review of International English Literature* 47, no. 4 (2016): 175–186.
- <sup>15</sup> Lesley Cowling, "Echoes of an African Drum: The Lost Literary Journalism of 1950s South Africa," *Literary Journalism Studies* 8, no. 1 (2016): 9–32.
- <sup>16</sup> Alejandro Barranquero Carretero and Garbiñe Jaurrieta Barriain, "Slow Journalism in Spain," *Journalism Practice* 10, no. 4 (2016): 521–538.
- <sup>17</sup> Eleanor K. O'Keeffe, "The Great War and Military Memory," *Journalism Studies* 17, no. 4 (2016): 432–447.
- <sup>18</sup> Amélie Chabrier, "The Appearance of a Court Column: Colette and the Famous Murder Trials of the Early Twentieth Century," *Literary Journalism Studies* 8, no. 2 (2016): 14–23.
- <sup>19</sup> Paul Aron, "The *Mille Collines* of Marie Gevers: From Reportage to Literary Text," *Literary Journalism Studies* 8, no. 2 (2016): 24–37.
- <sup>20</sup> Vanessa Gemis, "Occupation: Flying Parcel. Portrait of Marc Augis, Woman, Journalist, Author," *Literary Journalism Studies* 8, no. 2 (2016): 38–51.
- <sup>21</sup> Guillaume Pinson, "Towards a History of Reportage in French Canada: From the Beginning of the Twentieth Century to Gabrielle Roy," *Literary Journalism Studies* 8, no. 2 (2016): 52–63.
- <sup>22</sup> Marie-Ève Thérenty, "'An Hour of Our Life in the Mirror of My Mood': Innovations and Legacies of French Literary Journalism in the Work of Françoise Giroud," *Literary Journalism Studies* 8, no. 2 (2016): 64–74.
- <sup>23</sup> Mélodie Simard-Houde, "French Reporters, Real and Fictional Transmitters of the Colonial Ideology (1890–1900)," *Literary Journalism Studies* 8, no. 2 (2016): 76–88.
- <sup>24</sup> Laure Demougin, "Can the Indigenous Speak? The Speech of the Colonized in the Colonial Press in Algeria in the Nineteenth Century," *Literary Journalism Studies* 8, no. 2 (2016): 90–101.
- <sup>25</sup> David Dowling, "Beyond the Program Era: Tracy Kidder, John D'Agata, and the Rise of Literary Journalism at the Iowa Writers' Workshop," *Literary Journalism Studies* 8, no. 1: 52–77.
- <sup>26</sup> Rebecca Roach, "'How Writers Work': Interviewing the Author in Everyman," *Textual Practice*, 30, no. 4 (2016): 645–667.
- <sup>27</sup> Erik Neveu, "On Not Going Too Fast with Slow Journalism," *Journalism Practice* 10, no. 4 (2016): 448–460.
- <sup>28</sup> Matthew Ricketson, "When Slow News Is Good News," *Journalism Practice* 10, no. 4 (2016): 507–520.
- <sup>29</sup> Susan L. Greenberg, "Editing, Fast and Slow," *Journalism Practice* 10, no. 4 (2016): 555–567.
- <sup>30</sup> Mike Ananny, "Networked News Time," *Digital Journalism* 4, no. 4 (2016): 414–431.
- <sup>31</sup> Benjamin Ball, "Multimedia, Slow Journalism as Process, and the Possibility

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<sup>32</sup> Renira Rampazzo Gambarato, "The Sochi Project: Slow Journalism within the Transmedia Space," *Digital Journalism* 4, no. 4 (2016): 445–461.

<sup>33</sup> Stuart Davis, "Slowing Down Media Coverage on the US–Mexico Border: News as Sociological Critique in *Borderland*," *Digital Journalism* 4, no. 4 (2016): 462–477.

<sup>34</sup> Frank Harbers, "Time to Engage: *De Correspondent's* Redefinition of Journalistic Quality," *Digital Journalism* 4, no. 4 (2016): 494–511.

<sup>35</sup> David Dowling, "The Business of Slow Journalism: Deep Storytelling's Alternative Economies," *Digital Journalism* 4, no. 4 (2016): 530–546.

<sup>36</sup> Don Belt and Jeff South, "Slow Journalism and the Out of Eden Walk," *Digital Journalism* 4, no. 4 (2016): 547–562.

<sup>37</sup> Susan Jacobson, Jacqueline Marino, and Robert E. Gutsche, "The Digital Animation of Literary Journalism," *Journalism* 17, no. 4 (2016): 527–546.

<sup>38</sup> Jacqueline Marino, "Reading Screens: What Eye Tracking Tells Us about the Writing in Digital Longform Journalism," *Literary Journalism Studies* 8, no. 2 (2016): 138–149.

<sup>39</sup> Travis Vogan and David Dowling, "Bill Simmons, Grantland.com, and ESPN's Corporate Reinvention of Literary Sports Writing Online," *Convergence: The Journal of Research into New Media Technologies* 22, no. 1 (2016): 18–34.

<sup>40</sup> Lindsay Morton, "Evaluating the Effects of Epistemic Location in Advocatory Literary Journalism," *Journalism* 17, no. 2 (2016): 244–259.

<sup>41</sup> Lindsay Morton, "Re–reading Code: Representation, Verification, and a Case of Epistemic (Ir)responsibility," *Literary Journalism Studies* 8, no. 1 (2016): 34–50.

<sup>42</sup> James Aucoin, "The Imperative of Personal Journalism: James Agee and *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*," *Journalism* 17, no. 3 (2016): 281–296.

<sup>43</sup> Cecilia Aare, "A Narratological Approach to Literary Journalism: How an Interplay between Voice and Point of View May Create Empathy with the Other," *Literary Journalism Studies* 8, no. 1 (2016): 106–139.

<sup>44</sup> Marla Zubel, "The Object or the Fact? The Political Aesthetics of Interwar Reportage," *Genre* 49, no. 3 (2016): 407–429.