

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE IALJS LITERARY JOURNALISM

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INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR LITERARY JOURNALISM STUDIES

FALL 2018

A DUE DATE AND FOUR NEW LEADERS *Welcoming new blood.*

By Thomas C. Connery
University of St. Thomas (U.S.A.)

As I am sure you know, now is the time to begin to think about your participation in IALJS-14, which will be generously hosted by Pablo Calvi of Stony Brook University. Pablo is a long-time member of our association and two-time winner of the Greenberg Prize for the best research paper presented at our annual conference.



PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Scheduled for May 2019, the annual meeting will be held at Danford's Hotel and Marina, a conference center in Port Jefferson, NY. We hope to see you there, and, remember, the deadline for submitting research papers, works in progress or panel proposals is December 1.

In association news, we are happy to announce the election of devoted members to a number of officer and chair positions. The position of Secretary, handling much of the association's correspondence, is now held by Jacqueline Marino of Kent State University (Kent, Ohio). She became a journalism faculty member in 2006 after more than a decade of writing nonfiction stories and essays for magazines, newspapers and alternative newsweeklies. A former editor at Cleveland Magazine, she is the author of a nonfiction book, *White Coats: Three Journeys through an American*

Medical School. She holds a master's degree from the prestigious Writing Seminars at Johns Hopkins University, and her work has appeared in the literary journal *River Teeth*, the Christian Science Monitor, and the Cleveland Plain Dealer, among other publications. Jacquie's current study subject is the evolution and audience reception to digital long-form journalism.

Mitzi Lewis of Midwestern State University (Wichita Falls, Texas) is now the Secretary/Membership of IALJS. In this essential role Mitzi oversees the member database which tracks the contact infor-

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mation of all our members and manages the association's member renewal process. (Note: We never release any member information to any third parties.) A member of the Mass Communication faculty for more than a decade, Mitzi has also worked as her university's director of the Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Assessment. Office. Mitzi also co-founded and currently produces *Teaching Journalism and Mass Communication*, a peer-reviewed, online, open-access journal focused on teaching journalism and mass communication in small departments.

The new chair of IALJS's Publicity Committee is Jeff Neely of the University of Tampa (Florida), which explains why all recent Calls for Papers/Proposals and association announcements have arrived in your e-mail inbox from him. Jeff has been published in a number of academic journals, including the *Journal of Mass Media*

FUTURE IALJS CONFERENCE SITES

The following future IALJS convention venues are confirmed and/or planned:

IALJS-14: Stony Brook University, U.S.A., 9-11 May 2019.

IALJS-15: University of Copenhagen, Denmark, 21-23 May 2020.

IALJS-16: Universidad Alberto Hurtado, Santiago, Chile, 13-15 May 2021.

IALJS-17: University of Gdansk, Poland 19-21 May 2022.

IALJS-18: University of California, Irvine, U.S.A., 11-13 May 2023 (pending).

IALJS-19: Belgium 23-25 May 2024 (pending).

IALJS-20: Brock University, St. Catharines, Canada, 15-17 May 2025 (pending).

IALJS-21: Lisbon, Portugal or Cape Town, South Africa, 21-23 May 2026 (pending).

DEADLINE FOR 2019 CONFERENCE SET

Submissions for IALJS-13 at Stony Brook University in Stony Brook, New York in May 2018 are due on [1 December 2019](#). See Page 6 inside for the CFP.

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WWW.IALJS.ORG

YES, THE 2019 IALJS CONFERENCE IS IN NEW YORK, BUT MAYBE NOT EXACTLY WHERE YOU THINK *Stony Brook and Long Island, however, offer parks, seafood, and a Revolutionary spy ring.*

By John Hanc
New York Institute of Technology (U.S.A.)

Excited about the prospect of an IALJS conference in New York? Looking forward to walking the High Line; riding the Staten Island Ferry, visiting the 9-11 Memorial?

Great! It's all there waiting for you—after the conference, that is.



CITY SIGHTS

Remember that there is New York, the city, and New York, the state. You will be in the latter, but most definitely not the former. Our host university is 55 miles east of Manhattan, in Stony Brook, a bucolic town on the North Shore of Long Island, a 125-mile-long appendage to the city that, geographically contains the New York City boroughs of Queens and Brooklyn.

But no self-respecting Brooklynite would consider him or herself a Long Islander. When we speak of Long Island, we're speaking of the two suburban counties east of it.

Confused? So were the Dutch and English settlers who colonized this area. They couldn't even agree on what to call the place for a century. In its early days, Long Island was often referred to as Nassau, in honor of the ancestral home of King William, the English monarch of the late 1600s who was actually Dutch. (Nassau survives as the name of the westernmost of Long Island's two densely populated



As a native,
I can tell you that
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counties: Suffolk County, of which Stony Brook is a part, is the eastern one).

Okay, so it's not New York City. Still, as a native who has been writing for 30 years about its history, sports and culture for the major regional newspaper, Newsday, I can tell you that Long Island does have its charms and they are considerable.

I hasten to add those delights do not include its central automotive artery—



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the traffic-choked Long Island Expressway, which has earned the nickname of the world's Longest Parking Lot—or the much-ridiculed “Lawng” Island accent. We shall also put aside the local delicacies, some of which you will likely sample during the conference. In addition to seafood, Long Island is known for its bagels, pizza and (until Asian Fusion took precedence) Chinese restaurants. It also boasts a vibrant wine and craft beer scene. Don't ask me, however, about a Long Island Iced Tea, because some believe it has nothing to do with Long Island, and besides, I've never had one.

A reminder: While the Long Island Rail Road is the nation's busiest commuter railroad (it moved nearly 90 million people a year, mostly to and from New York City), Stony Brook is a long ride—just under two hours to the LIRR's central hub of Penn Station. Modern Long Island was built for the automobile, and so you will likely need one to explore further than the environs of the university.

In surveys, residents routinely list its magnificent and diverse parks as one of the main reasons they live here. These include (on the South Shore), historic Jones Beach State Park, a colossally-scaled Art Deco masterpiece that still boasts one of the country's most pristine and spectacular oceanfront vistas. (Fun fact: Jones Beach was so widely known in its heyday that

expansion of the parks system. Sunken Meadow features a boardwalk, hiking trails, a golf course and lovely views of Long Island Sound. Closer still to Stony Brook University is Avalon Park & Preserve. This imaginative eight-acre nature preserve, divided into five distinct natural habitats, seeks to approximate the natural environment of Long Island's past, and is a wonderful destination for those seeking to stroll while contemplating the mysteries of literary journalism, academic conferences or both.

Some say the main cultural activity on Long Island is shopping—and there are plenty of emporiums to conspicuous consumption near Stony Brook, including the 130-plus stores of the Smith Haven Mall. But the truth is that many artists and writers have found sanctuary and inspiration in bucolic Long Island. Just a short drive from the university is the Long Island Museum, worth visiting for many reasons, but for art aficionados because it houses a fine collection of William Sidney Mount, a major mid-19th century American painter. Also in the vicinity: The quaint fishing village of Northport, where Jack Kerouac lived after the pressures of post-On the Road celebrity drove him from the Beat

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LONG ISLAND *Continued from previous page*

enclaves of Manhattan. The southernmost fringes of the town of Huntington—whose downtown boasts many cool pubs and restaurants—was once called West Hills, and was the birthplace of Walt Whitman, an inveterate Long Island rambler, who (according to one local expert on the poet and his perambulations) quite likely walked some of the roads around Stony Brook.

The new big attraction on this part of Long Island is actually about 240 years old: During the American Revolution, a network of spies operating from the towns of Setauket (adjacent to Stony Brook) and Oyster Bay (25 miles west along the North Shore), fed valuable military information, relayed from agents in British-held New York City, to General George Washington’s headquarters across the Sound in Connecticut. The stirring details of this operation—which involved code names, messages in invisible ink, and clandestine, midnight rides through the perilous swamps of 18th century Long Island—were not discovered until the 1930s, and more recently have provided fodder for a TV drama, “Turn.” The show’s popularity has turned the Spy Ring into

an industry, and while historians are still quibbling about the details, the exploits of the men and women who supposedly made up the Ring are told in museums and walking tours and “Spy Ring” festivals, in which costumed re-enactors tell you what their role in the Ring was (something the actual participants most assuredly would never have divulged). Worth visiting, should this part of Long Island’s history intrigue you, is Raynham Hall in Oyster Bay, the beautifully restored 18th century home of one of the ring’s main members. Raynham Hall is close to Theodore Roosevelt’s home, Sagamore

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Hill, also recently renovated, and which doubled as the summer White House during his presidency.

While New York may beckon you west after the conference, consider adding on a day or two in the other direction: Long Island’s East End, better known as “The Hamptons,” is a summer playground of the rich and famous that really heats up after the Memorial Day holiday weekend. The IALJS conference is two weeks prior to that; a perfect time to visit the beachfronts of the South Fork and the wineries of the North Fork—the two “tails” of fish-shaped Long Island that make up the East End. There is also fine dining, history and culture in abundance, plus Montauk, with its iconic Lighthouse, surfer beaches and party-town atmosphere.

Montauk also celebrates its distinction as being at the very tip of Long Island, and one of the easternmost points on the continental U.S. A popular local bumpersticker in Montauk—“The End”—reminds us that, despite its status as a massive bedroom community for New York City, we are an island. And a long and interesting one, at that. I hope you’ll enjoy it! ♦



**ANNOUNCEMENTS AND
CALLS FOR PAPERS**

**8th International Conference on
Language, Literature & Culture
Brest, France, 6-7 June 2019**

Focusing on the aspects of language, literature and culture in any or all possible contexts, and employing interdisciplinary approaches to address the research problems with methods of and insights borrowed from multiple disciplines, “International Conference on Language, Literature & Culture” welcomes papers that deal with the question of identity construction and subjectivation through the prism of the struggle for recognition paradigm and intends to blur the limits of conventional discourses and approaches. You may participate as panel organizer, presenter of one paper, or observer. Submissions are open for 30-minute slots (20-minute talks + 10 minutes for discussion). All submissions to the conference will be reviewed by at least two independent peers for technical merit and content. The papers presented at the conference will be published in a volume.

A 300-word abstract and 5 keywords should be submitted as an email attachment to LLC2019Conference@gmail.com by March 25, 2019. In your email, please include your name, affiliation, email address, phone number, title of the paper, abstract, 5 keywords and a brief bio.

**8th ESPRit Conference 2019
Athens, Greece, 11–13 September, 2019**

The subject of the 2019 European Society for Periodical Research (ESPRit) Conference will be the visual culture of periodical literature, viewed in its broadest sense and in a comparative context. This approach is intended to encompass all visual aspects of periodicals, including typography, covers, format, illustration, fine and avant garde art, cartoons, advertising copy, photojournalism, fashion, portraiture, illustrated travel accounts and ethnographic studies, religious imagery, propaganda and all other dimensions of the visual culture of the printed page.

Proposals for 20-minute papers on any aspect of the visual culture of periodicals, of any period or region, are invited for the 8th Conference of European Society for Periodical Research (ESPRit), which will be held in Athens in September 2019. Accepted proposals will be grouped into broadly congruent thematic panels, normally with three speakers in each.

Proposals of around 250 words (references not included) for 20-minute papers and a short CV (no more than 200 words) should be sent to 2019esprit@gmail.com by 31 March 2019.

We also welcome proposals for joint panels of three papers. Please include a brief rationale for the panel along with an abstract and CV for each presenter.

PRESIDENT’S LETTER

Continued from page 1

Ethics, the *Newspaper Research Journal*, the *Journal of Youth Development* and *Youth & Society*. In addition to our annual conferences, his work has been presented at conferences of other learned societies such as the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, the International Communication Association and the Popular / American Culture Association in the South.

Last but certainly not least, Kevin Lerner of Marist College (Poughkeepsie, New York) has become the editor of *Literary Journalism*, the newsletter you

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are now holding. A media historian who studies the intellectual history of journalism, particularly through the lens of press criticism, Kevin has taught journalism since 2009. He has published his research in *Journalism History*, *American Journalism*, *Journalism: Theory, Practice and Criticism* and on the Nieman Lab website. Moreover, Kevin is also the editor of the *Journal of Magazine Media*, a peer-reviewed scholarly journal.

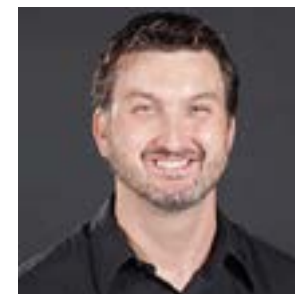
At the risk of too sanguine a metaphor, I have to confess that it is wonderful to be able to introduce this wave of bright new blood in our association. Obviously we are all volunteers, and it cheers my emeritus heart to see the future of IALJS in such good hands. ♦



Jacqueline Marino



Mitzi Lewis



Jeff Neely



Kevin Lerner

CALL FOR PAPERS

International Association for Literary Journalism Studies

**“Literary Journalist as Naturalist: Science, Ecology and the Environment”
The Fourteenth International Conference for Literary Journalism Studies (IALJS-14)**

**Stony Brook University
Stony Brook, New York
U.S.A.**

9-11 May 2019



The International Association for Literary Journalism Studies invites submissions of original research papers, abstracts for research in 9-11 May 2019. The conference will be held at the Stony Brook University, Stony Brook, NY, U.S.A. <http://www.ialjs.org>.

The conference hopes to be a forum for scholarly work of both breadth and depth in the field of literary journalism, and all research methodologies are welcome, as is research on all aspects of literary journalism and/or literary reportage. For the purpose of scholarly delineation, our definition of literary journalism is "journalism as literature" rather than "journalism about literature."

While the association hopes to receive papers related to special thematic topic, “Literary Journalist as Naturalist: Science, Ecology and the Environment,” in the interest of inclusiveness, please note that submissions on other subjects are warmly welcome. All submissions must be in English.

The International Association for Literary Journalism Studies is a multi-disciplinary learned society whose essential purpose is the encouragement and improvement of scholarly research and education in Literary Journalism. As an association in a relatively recently defined field of academic study, it is our agreed intent to be both explicitly inclusive and warmly supportive of a variety of scholarly approaches.

Details of the programs of previous annual meetings can be found at:

<http://ialjs.org/past-ialjs-conferences/>.

IALJS-14 *continued*

I. GUIDELINES FOR RESEARCH PAPERS

Submitted research papers should not exceed 7,500 words, or about 25 double-spaced pages, plus endnotes. Please regard this as an upper limit; shorter papers are certainly welcome. Endnotes and bibliographic citations should follow the *Chicago Manual of Style*. Papers may not be simultaneously submitted to any other conferences. Papers previously published, presented, accepted or under review are ineligible. Only one paper per author will be accepted for presentation in the conference's research sessions, and at least one author for each paper must be at the convention in order to present the paper. If accepted, each paper presenter at a conference Research Session may be allotted no more than 15 minutes. To be considered, please observe the following guidelines:

- Submission by e-mail attachment in MS Word is required.** No other format or faxes or postal mail submissions will be accepted.
- Include one separate title page containing title, author/s, affiliation/s, and the address, phone, fax, and e-mail of the lead author.
- Also include a second title page containing only the paper's title and the paper's abstract. The abstract should be approximately 250 words in length.
- Your name and affiliation should *not* appear anywhere in the paper [this information will only appear on the first title page; see (b) above].

II. GUIDELINES FOR WORK-IN-PROGRESS PRESENTATIONS (ABSTRACTS)

Submitted abstracts for Work-in-Progress Sessions should not exceed 250 words. If accepted, each presenter at a conference Work-in-Progress session may be allotted no more than 10 minutes. To be considered, please observe the following guidelines:

- Submission by e-mail attachment using MS Word is required.** No other format or faxes or postal mail submissions will be accepted.
- Include one separate title page containing title, author/s, affiliation/s, and the address, phone, fax and e-mail of the lead author.
- Also include a second page containing only the work's title and the actual abstract of the work-in-progress. The abstract should be approximately 250 words in length.

III. GUIDELINES FOR PROPOSALS FOR PANELS

- Submission by e-mail attachment in MS Word is required.** No other format or faxes or postal mail submissions will be accepted.
- Panel proposals should contain the panel title, possible participants and their affiliation and e-mail addresses, and a description of the panel's subject. The description should be approximately 250 words in length.
- Panels are encouraged on any topic related to the study, teaching or practice of literary journalism. See <http://ialjs.org/mission-statement/>.

IV. EVALUATION CRITERIA, DEADLINES AND CONTACT INFORMATION

All research paper submissions will be evaluated on originality and importance of topic; literature review; clarity of research purpose; focus; use of original and primary sources and how they support the paper's purpose and conclusions; writing quality and organization; and the

degree to which the paper contributes to the study of literary journalism. Similarly, abstracts of works-in-progress and panel proposals will be evaluated on the degree to which they contribute to the study of literary journalism. All submissions will be blind-juried, and submissions from students as well as faculty are encouraged.

Please submit research papers or abstracts of works-in-progress presentations to:

Prof. Tobias Eberwein, Austrian Academy of Sciences (Austria)
2019 Research Chair; e-mail: <tobias.eberwein@oeaw.ac.at>

Please submit proposals for panels to:

Prof. Rob Alexander, Brock University (Canada)
IALJS Program Co-Chair; e-mail: <ralexand@brocku.ca>

Deadline for all submissions: No later than 1 December 2018

Important note: Please be advised that it is a matter of IALJS policy that conference participants will be limited to presenting in no more than two conference sessions.

For more information regarding the conference or the association, please go to <http://www.ialjs.org> or contact:

Prof. Thomas B. Connery, University of St. Thomas (U.S.A.)
IALJS President; e-mail: <tconnery@stthomas.edu>

Prof. Rob Alexander, Brock University (Canada)
IALJS First Vice President; e-mail: <ralexander@brocku.ca>

Prof. Tobias Eberwein, Austrian Academy of Sciences (Austria)
IALJS Second Vice President, e-mail: <tobias.eberwein@oeaw.ac.at>

Prof. Bill Reynolds, Ryerson University (Canada)
IALJS Treasurer; e-mail: <reynolds@ryerson.ca>

Prof. Jacquie Marino, Kent State University (U.S.A.)
IALJS Secretary; e-mail <jmarino7@kent.edu>

Prof. Mitzi Lewis, Midwestern State University (U.S.A.)
IALJS Secretary/Membership; email <mitzi.lewis@msutexas.edu>

Prof. David Abrahamson, Northwestern University (U.S.A.)
IALJS Co-Founder; e-mail: <d-abrahamson@northwestern.edu>

Prof. John S. Bak, Université de Lorraine (France)
IALJS Co-Founder and Founding IALJS President; e-mail: <john.bak@univ-lorraine.fr>

SPECIAL NOTE:
Submissions from students are unequivocally encouraged.
A competitive Student Travel Fund has been
established to assist in funding student travel.
Applications will be available upon acceptance of submission.

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- (c) Panels are encouraged on any topic related to the study, teaching or practice of literary journalism. See <http://ialjs.org/mission-statement/>.

EVALUATION CRITERIA, DEADLINES AND CONTACT INFORMATION

All panel proposals will be evaluated on the degree to which they contribute to the study of literary journalism, clarity of purpose, and the research timeliness of the topic. Submissions from students as well as faculty are encouraged. Examples of past panel topics include “Literary Journalism and War,” “Women’s Reportage and Public Memory,” “The Ethics and Politics of the Profile,” and “Reading True Stories: Undergraduate Experiences with Literary Journalism.”

Please submit proposals for panels to one of:

Prof. Rob Alexander, Brock University (Canada)
2018 IALJS-14 Program Chair; e-mail: <ralexander@brocku.ca>

Prof. Kevin Lerner, Marist College (U.S.A.)
2018 IALJS-14 Program Co-Chair; e-mail: <kevin.lerner@marist.edu>

Prof. Mitzi Lewis, Midwestern State University (U.S.A.)
2018 IALJS-14 Program Co-Chair; e-mail: <mitzi.lewis@msutexas.edu>

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Prof. Tobias Eberwein, Austrian Academy of Sciences (Austria)
IALJS Second Vice President, e-mail: <tobias.eberwein@oeaw.ac.at>

Prof. Bill Reynolds, Ryerson University (Canada)
IALJS Treasurer; e-mail: <reynolds@ryerson.ca>

Prof. Jacquie Marino, Kent State University (U.S.A.)
IALJS Secretary; e-mail <jmarino7@kent.edu>

Prof. Mitzi Lewis, Midwestern State University (U.S.A.)
IALJS Secretary/Membership; email <mitzi.lewis@msutexas.edu>

Prof. David Abrahamson, Northwestern University (U.S.A.)
IALJS Co-Founder; e-mail: <d-abrahamson@northwestern.edu>

Prof. John S. Bak, Université de Lorraine (France)
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IALJS SESSIONS AT AEJMC CONFERENCE IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

A workshop spread over two full panel sessions focused on the vexed relationship between literary journalism and truth

By Holly Schreiber

University of Maine (U.S.A.)

Although verifiable and fact-based reporting is a foundational element of journalism, the relationship between journalism and truth has never been cut and dried. Nearly a century ago, Walter Lippmann insisted that “news” and “truth” were not the same things, an observation that seems newly relevant in our present day. The rise of digital news has facilitated access and opened up new avenues of reader engagement with news, but it has also created a crisis of reliability, leading many to argue that we live in a “post-truth” era. Given this climate, what role does literary journalism play in the pursuit of “truth”? How have literary journalists responded to the public erosion of faith in the reliability of media sources? For practitioners and students of literary journalism, how do the realities of deadlines and limited economic and professional resources affect the pursuit of “truth” in a changing media landscape?

These issues and more were explored in a two-panel session, “Literary Journalism and Truth: Odd Bedfellows,” held at the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) Annual Conference on August 9, 2018. For a selection of summaries and highlights of the presentations on these panels, turn to the next page.

IALJS will hold another session at the AEJMC conference in Toronto, Canada on August 10, 2019. Please mark your calendars and watch for the upcoming CFP. ♦



Continued on next page

Selected IALJS panel presentations at AEJMC in Washington, D.C.

Continued from previous page

All Pain Is Anecdotal

Presenter:
Dr. Ronald R. Rodgers
University of Florida (U.S.A.)

Synopsis:

When tasked with teaching an undergraduate Journalism Studies course to seniors, I decided to cover many of the elemental issues and problems of journalism – but through the lens of literary journalism. I put together a course in which students explored literary journalism’s history, beginning with Defoe and read a representative collection of works of literary journalism and criticism of the discipline, while weighing how form and content work together to create great factual literature.

At the beginning of this experiment, I was still not sure how well the issues and problems of the act of journalism would cascade from a class focused on journalism as literature. But the class has been revelatory, both for my students, but also myself – sometimes startled by how short, guided reaction essays and then discussions about issues surrounding the act of journalism prompted cognitive dissonance and then new insights. For instance, exploring the “why” – that is the impulse for the discipline – led to an aphorism that has become a mantra for the class: “All Pain Is Anecdotal” – a maxim often employed in medicine about the difficulties doctors face in interpreting the

physical symptoms of their patients.

However, in the context of communicating to the public, pain is not simply physical or mental but involves the lived pain of existence – the straits that people find themselves in – often through no fault of their own. By anecdotal is meant the narrative of others’ lives drawn from the writer’s immersion in those lives and the multiple depth interviews to the point of saturation bordering on a truth that reveals others’ lives. This is not unlike the surveillance methods of law enforcement and various security agencies known as pattern-of-life analysis, which has been defined as “The aggregation of data from a variety of sources to develop a profile of past and present human behaviour.”

Which is why I begin the class with a discussion of the synoptic method and a video summary of Akira Kurosawa’s Rashomon followed by a short lecture in which I argue two things:

1. John Howard Griffin was correct when he declared that statistics “cancel truth almost more than they reveal it.”
2. Neil Postman was correct to term the uncongealed atomized presentation of infotoids as “fragments” – and not news. Rather what rightly can be called news is informed by a journalism grounded in a synoptic rendering of reality through a deep soak in the diverse sourcing of a narrative to the periphery inclusive of the oft-margin-

alized. This is not so far-fetched given that an entire religion has been based on diverse synoptic account of one individual’s life.

I argue – and teach – that a reporting method that absorbs the multiform synoptic renderings of a narration leads to a journalism that is naturally predisposed to distill a truth – a semblance of reality – largely cleansed of received wisdom. That is, by blanketing an issue with tangential voices we are left, as Shakespeare would say, “the concord of our discord” – the middle way – that is certainly not The Truth nor a form of reality, but some outline of what is real, leaving us to conclude, as the Commoner in Rashomon who heard all the stories of a crime, “I suppose that is the truth.”

Notable quote:

“I suppose that is the truth.” – The Commoner in Rashomon

Key Figures and Works Discussed:

- Daniel Defoe as early example of the imposition of a new form
- “Rashomon in Nine Minutes” and the synoptic effect.
- John Howard Griffin’s Black Like Me and his argument that statistics “cancel truth almost more than they reveal it” and thus the need for narrative.
- Neil Postman’s “Amusing Ourselves to Death.”
- Eula Biss’s “The Pain Scale.”



- Stephen Crane’s “Regulars Get No Glory” and his disquisition on “a unit in the interesting sum of men slain.”
- Joan Didion on the need to be clean of received wisdom.
- George Packer’s The Unwinding: An Inner History of the New America as example of the synoptic method and reporting from the ground up
- Isabel Wilkerson’s The Warmth of Other Suns as example of the synoptic method and reporting from the ground up
- Hutchins Hapgood’s seminal essay “The Interview as a New Literary Form” and his concept of the “expressive individual” or the “expressive personality.”

Ethical and Methodological Transparency in Literary Journalism

Presenter:
Bruce Gillespie,
Wilfrid Laurier University (Canada)

Synopsis:

At the heart of literary journalism’s appeal is its narrative approach—its ability to draw readers into long, richly-detailed, character-driven stories in much the same way as a novel does. But the use of such an approach comes at the cost of ethical and methodological transparency. Whereas news reporters, for example, take great pains to provide clear attribution for all of the facts in their stories, literary journalists often omit such details in an effort to craft a more engaging, narrative experience that flows. The result is that readers, be they pleasure readers, students, or scholars, are unable to understand how a piece of literary journalism was created or the ethical and methodological choices the writer made in terms of, for example, using composite characters, conflating scenes or gaining informed consent from sources. This paper argues that literary journalists can and should learn from qualitative researchers in the social sciences about the importance of being more transparent with readers, particularly in book-length works where space is less of an issue. At a time when the public’s faith and trust in journalism is eroding, making this commitment is more important than

ever, and doing so will help literary journalists become more transparent with their audiences and enable the establishment of sets of common and best practices in the genre with respect to ethical and methodological choices.

Notable Quote:

If publishers don’t see value in providing space for greater detail, context and reflexivity about the ethical and methodological choices their writers make, then we scholars of literary journalism need to consider producing more research that dives into the methods and ethics of prominent works of the genre, akin to replication studies in scientific fields, to fill this gap.

Key Figures and Works Discussed:

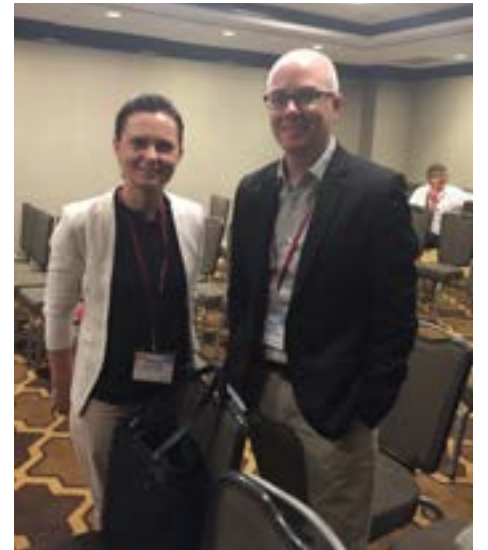
- “Among Schoolchildren” (Tracy Kidder)
- “Random Family” (Adrian Nicole LeBlanc)
- “Hiroshima” (John Hersey)
- “In Cold Blood” (Truman Capote)

“When a Picture is with 1,000 Words: Truth Claims of the New Digital Literary Journalism”

Presenter:
Jacqueline Marino
Kent State University (U.S.A.)

Synopsis:

Over the past 130 years, journalists using visual media, including literary journalists, have grown beyond visual documents of news to become increasingly cinematic, emotionally gripping, and immersive. Visual and literary journalism appeared on the same media platforms, sometimes even in the same publications, and were affected by the same business and social influences. Using examples from five major time periods, we traced some of the ways in which the craft of visual journalism—which now encompasses photo, video, and multimedia—has evolved, from recording visual “facts” to incorporating the techniques of narrative film, multimedia, and virtual reality to document the human condition, and how these techniques have often blended with American literary journalism.



Notable quote:

“Journalists are trying to figure out how virtual reality and other powerful new visualization tools can help their journalistic mission without sacrificing journalistic credibility. As they try to uphold widely accepted journalistic standards, including the idea that journalists should not influence the people, situations, or places they cover, filmmakers mix journalism and fiction in cinematic ways.”—Marino and Jacobson

Key Figures and Works Discussed:

- Jacob Riis
- Walker Evans
- W. Eugene Smith
- Diane Arbus
- Nonny de la Peña
- Alejandro González Iñárritu
- “Blackhawk Down,”
- “Snow Fall: The Avalanche at Tunnel Creek,”
- “The Displaced,”
- “Gone Gitmo,”
- “Carne y Arena”

Publication:

“From Magic Lantern Slides to Virtual Reality: Tracing the Visual in and around American Literary Journalism,” a chapter co-authored with Susan Jacobson (Florida International University, USA), in the upcoming *Routledge Companion to American Literary Journalism*.

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THE LIFESPAN OF A FACT Continued from back page

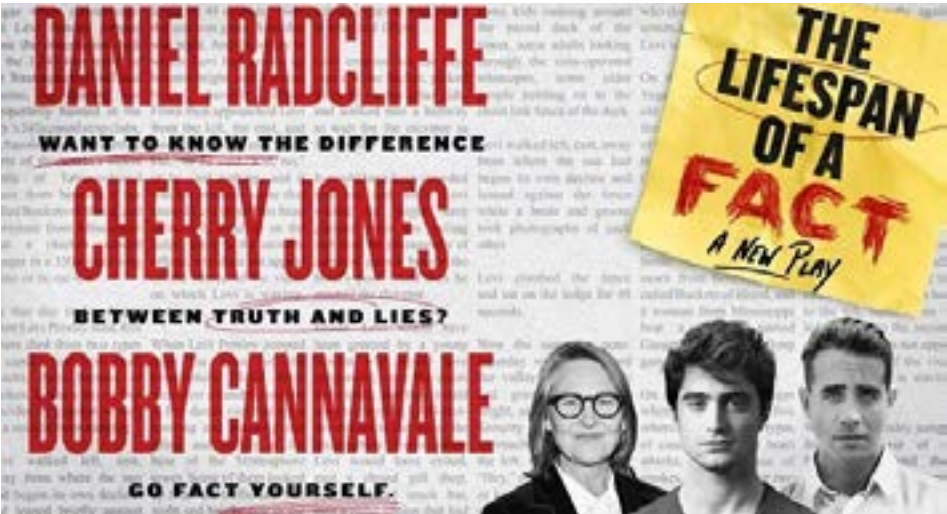
decided to make these changes to add to the rhythm and style of the piece, which complicated the genre of the essay. His style of writing follows the traditions of literary journalism by adding style to a real life event. Fingal, however, argued that the facts should not be changed to create drama because the facts give the true depiction of the very real dangers in Las Vegas. By turning the situation into a literary essay, facts are being misrepresented in favor of making a stronger, and potentially more meaningful message, something D’Agata argues is closer to the truth. The book version of Lifespan of a Fact represents the ethical debate between the power of taking

entirely through email. Furthermore, each of the lead characters has a monologue that leaves the viewer questioning what “truth” is even though both monologues are fictional and sensationalized. For Bobby Cannavale, who plays John D’Agata, one of the most powerful moments for his character is when he opens up and tells Fingal and Penrose, the (fictional) editor played by Cherry Jones, about his mother’s death. He explains that the chair that she died in technically should not have fit in the space that it was in, based on the “factual” measurements in the Pier One catalog. The audience later finds out that she did not even die in the chair, but that

In the current climate of “fake news,” the importance of when to question what is presented as truth cannot be understated.

different, factual story for the magazine, or publish the story as is and agree with D’Agata to allow liberties to be taken in order to create a more impactful story. Yet, when the dialogue is over, the phone for her decision rings, the lights go dark, and the actors take their bows. In this manner, the writers are asking the audience to ponder their own conclusion and apply it to how they consume literature and the media. So maybe the playwrights were non-committal, or maybe they believe that asking the questions is more important than providing the answers.

In the current climate of “fake news,” the importance of when to question what is presented as truth cannot be understated. Despite their efforts to stay neutral, by taking so many liberties and altering the truth, they are making their argument clear—thus weakening the message of the play. By choosing to fictionalize the true story of Jim Fingal and John D’Agata, the playwrights are arguing that it is fair for a piece of literary journalism to stray away from the truth and depict something in a way that is not factual, if it makes for a stronger message. This view is dangerous in our society because it encourages confirmation bias by implying that fact can be altered to prove a point, a common theme in the partisan media today. The implications of the Broadway adaptation could have dangerous impacts on the view of literary journalism and the “truths” within it, but it does make for an entertaining show. But don’t take my word for it, think like Jim Fingal and fact check this essay you’re reading for yourself. ♦



liberties for the sake of literature and the importance of truthfully representing the facts of such a personal topic. In the Broadway adaptation, also entitled Lifespan of a Fact, written by Jeremy Kareken, David Murrell, and Gordon Farrell, the email argument between D’Agata and Fingal is stretched away from fact and toward literature, just as the original article was from the real story of Levi Presley. To someone who read the book, the play is ironic because it is difficult to debate the nature of truth in a play that has changed so many facts. For instance, the play takes place over the course of five days through in-person interactions among three people when in reality the process took the two men several years

he chose to say she did because it is a more powerful way for him to remember the moment. This argument adds to the debate that truth is relative, but it was not one that D’Agata made. For Jim Fingal, there is a moment where his character claims that it was possible that Levi Presley was not even a real person, but rather a character that D’Agata invented to make a point. This would also be a powerful argument, if it were real. While the liberties taken by the writers of the Broadway adaptation added drama, it contradicted the very purpose of the original, authentic, email conversation. At the end of the show, the audience is waiting to see what Penrose will do—side with Fingal and require a



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Continued on next page

FACTS, TRUTH, AND THE THEATER

What happens when a boy's suicide gets filtered through an essayist, a fact checker, three playwrights, and the actor who played Harry Potter?

By Jennifer Bradford
Marist College (U.S.A.)

A teenage boy kills himself. Can we ever know what happened? An essayist uses that boy's suicide as an occasion to meditate on the bleakness of



REVIEW ESSAY

Las Vegas. Has he uncovered something approximating truth? A young fact checker insists on the verifiability of fact. Does fact get us closer to truth? And if you take the book that asks (and attempts to answer) those questions and fictionalize it for a Broadway play, are we closer to or further from truth? As this story of the author and the fact-checker becomes more popular and more adaptations are created, the "truth" becomes murkier and the message becomes weaker.

The Lifespan of a Fact is a fascinating, oddball book created by combining an essay by John D'Agata about the suicide of Levi Presley, and email correspondence between D'Agata and Jim Fingal, the fact

Does "fact" get us closer to "truth"?

checker assigned to his piece. The central essay, originally titled "What Happens There," was not intended to be journalism, per se, but the issue of what should and should not be altered for literary perspective became a years-long debate between

the two men. Now, that book has been adapted, condensed, and fictionalized into a Broadway play, starring Daniel Radcliffe, Bobby Cannavale, and Cherry Jones. The stage has given the competing ideas of the collaborative essay a bigger audience than ever before, and the story drifts ever further from the reality of Levi's life and death.

When D'Agata started his essay, he had the story of a young man's heart-wrenching decision to jump off of the Stratosphere Hotel in Las Vegas, but when he finished he had an exposé of Las Vegas. Some details, such as where the world's oldest bottle of Tabasco sauce had been found, were altered to fit a narrative that harmlessly described the day of the tragedy; however, some details such as the number of other deaths in the city that day, could cause harm by fictionalizing the real death of another young man. D'Agata

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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE
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