

CFP: Active Voices: Global Literary Journalism and Social Justice

Paper abstracts are invited for an International Association for Literary Journalism Studies session entitled “Global Literary Journalism and Social Justice” to be held at the American Comparative Literature Association’s annual meeting at the Sheraton Seattle in Seattle, Washington March 26-29, 2015.

This session takes as its central concern an examination of the prominent place which a commitment to social justice has occupied in the global history of literary journalism, that is, of journalism *as literature*. From Nellie Bly’s “undercover” exposé of the Blackwell’s Island Insane Asylum to Henry Mayhew’s artful documentation of the lives of the London poor, as well as Svetlana Alexievich’s record of the voices of the victims of the Chernobyl disaster, and Elena Poniatowska’s influential accounts of the oppressed and marginalized in Mexico, literary journalists around the world have demonstrated a consistent desire to address with their stories the unfair distribution of wealth, rights, opportunities, and power. A key question to be considered is whether literary journalism’s combination of reportorial rigor with the narrative techniques of fiction make it a uniquely effective vehicle not only for delivering the facts of the lives of those marginalized because of class, race, gender, sexuality, or ability but of doing so in a way which provides readers with the possibility of an empathic engagement with those lives and with that engagement, the opportunity to change attitudes.

Possible topics include but are not limited to

- * from Rachel Carson to John Vaillant: the literary journalist as environmental activist
- * literary journalism as alternative media
- * crônicas and the quest for social justice
- * talking back: literary journalism and the activist critique of mainstream news
- * literary journalism: ethics, empathy, and change

If interested, please e-mail IALJS contact, Rob Alexander at ralexander@brocku.ca. The submission deadline for paper abstracts is midnight Pacific Standard Time, 15 October 2014. All proposals must be submitted via the ACLA website. Submissions by graduate students are encouraged.