

ACLA-26
(American Comparative Literature Association)
Seminar: "Literary Journalism in a Global Context"
Simon Fraser University
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Co-sponsor: International Association for Literary Journalism Studies

"Literary Journalism in a Global Context"

Seminar organizers:

Rob Alexander (Brock University, Canada)
David Abrahamson (Northwestern University, U.S.A.)

Literary journalism –"journalism as literature" – exists in a variety of forms depending on the cultures where it is practiced and is thereby irreducible to a fixed categorization. Albeit acknowledged as an originally and exclusively American genre, nonfiction writing always gained followers across the globe. While the *grand reportage* in France harks back to Joseph Kessel and Albert Londres, British writers Daniel Defoe and George Orwell were also fervent enthusiasts, just like V.S. Naipaul, Carlos Fuentes or Octavio Paz.

Literary journalists are often intrepid travellers who bring cultures in contact in their art. Therefore, a comparative analysis of foreign influences and multicultural variations helps reassess the genre and examine its underlying questions (fact vs. fiction, objectivity vs. subjectivity). This rapprochement serves as a fruitful terrain to explore the traditions of literary journalism and raise the awareness of a global canon rich in local heritages.

As a protean genre literary journalism further branches out into subcategories, like *gonzo journalism*, *new new journalism*, or *littérature du réel* and its renewed interest for the *fait divers*. Crucial is also the role of literary journalists in our virtual, technology-obsessed society. While they used to write from the margin, their subaltern voices are now heard with growing interest as they challenge fast news reporting or *churnalism* (Davies).

This seminar seeks to investigate the diverse forms, topics, origins, and developments of literary journalism in a comparative perspective. We are particularly interested in papers that discuss literary journalism across cultures and welcome all research methodologies and scholarly approaches.

Presenters:

Ömer Özer,
William Dow
Isabelle Meuret
Norman Sims
Vera Hanna
Pascal Gin
Kenneth Pratt
Rob Alexander