

## Through Global and Gender Lenses: The IALJS and *LJS* at the End of the First Decade

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In 2015, Tom Connery invited me onto the host's panel in Minneapolis for a tenth anniversary discussion, "What Is Literary Journalism?" at the IALJS conference. I took that opportunity to crunch some numbers, with a view of assessing if the IALJS is truly international, and how *LJS* scrubs up through a gender lens. I was also hoping, with these data, to open a discussion about how better to reach into countries and communities which perhaps do not know we are here, according to our own mission: "The journal is *international* in scope and seeks submissions on the theory, history, and pedagogy of literary journalism *throughout the world*."<sup>1</sup>

### 2009–2014

At that time, I found we had published sixty-seven papers (not including extracts but including keynote speeches). This figure was from the twelve journal issues from Spring 2009 (vol. 1, no. 1) to Fall 2014 (vol. 6, no. 2). Seventy-three authors contributed to the sixty-seven papers. Of those seventy-three authors, forty-four, or 60.28%, were men and twenty-nine, or 39.72%, were women. Fifteen countries were represented but U.S. publication comprised 53.73% (thirty-six papers). Next was Canada at 11.94% (eight papers); then Norway with its special issue at 5.9% (four papers). The United Kingdom and Netherlands were next with 4.47% (three papers, each). Australia, Portugal, and South Africa each contributed 2.98% (two papers, each); with Argentina, Belgium, Cuba, Finland, Germany, and Ireland contributing 1.49% (one paper, each).

Capturing these data was by no means to criticize the journal, its editors or its scholars and writers. *Literary Journalism Studies* is an exciting and creative publication. It has collated and continues to collate a growing canon of scholarly work and opinions constellating literary journalism in its many guises; its editorial doors are open globally; and the more scholars internationally who know of it, the greater the spread of coverage. I am more than confident this



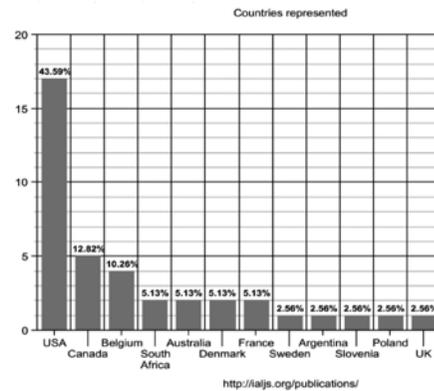
will happen throughout time, growing and gaining a foothold in the world of academia, positioning and privileging a field of study long overdue.

### 2015–Present

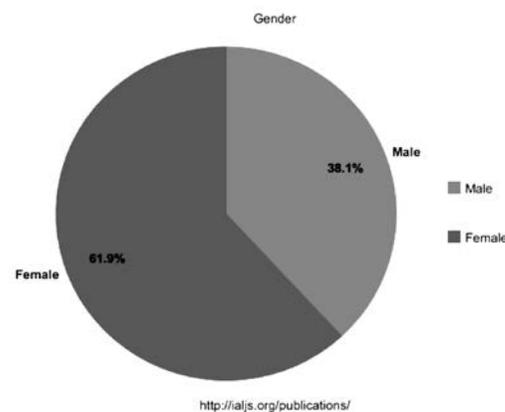
It seems apt to update these statistics here. There have been five issues since the 2015 capture of the figures, reported above. The five issues add a total of thirty-nine papers. Twelve countries are represented, and the United States, still with the greatest contribution of 43.59% (seventeen papers), dropped by approximately 10%. Canada again came in next, but with a greater percentage at 12.82% (five papers). Belgium was next with 10.26% (four papers). And then South Africa, Australia, Denmark and France with 5.13% (two papers, each); followed by Sweden, Argentina, Slovenia, Poland, and the U.K. with 2.56% (one paper, each).

So, what do these new stats tell us? To begin with, although a smaller sample, the percentage spread is greater. This is a good and sound move, making the *LJS* appear more inclusive to non-U.S. scholars and researchers, creating a space for welcoming a greater international diversity, with potential for more.

On the note of diversity, the current gender split differential is thoroughly laudable. In 2015, seventy-three authors had contributed to the sixty-three papers. As mentioned above, of those seventy-three authors, forty-four, or 60.28%, were men, and twenty-nine, or 39.72%, were women. In the five



issues since that first capture, and across the latest thirty-nine papers, there are forty-two writers: twenty-six (or 61.9%) are female and sixteen (or 38.1%) are male. This makes *LJS* vastly more female representative: So much so that perhaps our male counterparts soon will be asking for affirmative action.



### A Personal Perspective

Editor Bill Reynolds asks what *LJS* means to me; what *LJS* means to literary journalism scholarship; and what *LJS* means to my country's literary journalism scholarship. Through the IALJS and *LJS* I feel a part of a creative and generous tribe. We are peers, colleagues, and friends, and although several of us live more than twenty-four hours' flying time away from wherever the conference is held, it always feels like home when we are all together. We are writers and scholars and teachers, and I come away from each meeting intellectually nourished and somehow "heard," and bring everything I learn back to my classroom.

The journal itself is a repository of our growing scholarly canon—*LJS* gatekeeps, collates, and then publishes. Embryonic at first, now its traction is pronounced; and it grows from strength to strength, year to year, thanks to the tireless efforts of editorial staff in fighting for its academic status. It is clear from the stats above that it is a considered and equitable publishing site, attempting to be more considered and more equitable each issue.

Strangely, membership has somehow brought Australian scholars in this field together—we leave Down Under in order to gather somewhere else far away in the world and begin conversations, continued back home. In many ways, the IALJS and *LJS* have created their own microcommunity in Australia: We are proud to see our research side by side with scholars from around the world; we feel less geographically distant; and we feel part of something bigger, growing and gaining momentum. A diverse space full of imagination and passion I am ever grateful I stumbled across.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the founding members, every president since inception, our executive members, all *LJS* staff,<sup>2</sup> and the membership. It is an honor and a privilege to know you, to work with you, and to count you as colleagues and friends.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> IALJS, "Journal," homepage (emphasis mine).

<sup>2</sup> A particular thank you to book review editor Nancy Roberts, who ran a ten-page (!) review of my 2016 book *Behind the Text*, by Martha Nandorfy—a cogent, generous, and critically constructive review. Thank you, both. *Editor's note*: See Nandorfy, "The Implications of Genre in Nonfiction," 142–51.