

Literary Journalism Studies: Opportunity and Repository

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In 2008, at the third IALJS conference, I read a paper titled “*South: Where Travel Meets Literary Journalism*.”¹ By then, this was nothing more than the reflex of my latest incursion into the realm of literary journalism and my interest in bridging travel writing with this polyvocal genre of journalism. Far was I from imagining the future of that paper and of research in literary journalism, for that matter.

Literary Journalism Studies became a reality for the IALJS in the spring of 2009. John Hartsock was at the helm of the journal as its maiden issue saw the light of day. In his editorial note, he wrote not solely about the timeliness for such a journal but also insisted on the scholarly imperative to study literary journalism, “in order to illuminate aesthetic, critical, cultural, and historical contexts for not only students but society at large.”² For us, self-titled scholars of literary journalism, the journal was a thing of awe, a giant leap forward, an accomplishment. Therein was an article by Norman Sims with the most appropriate title of “The Problem and the Promise of Literary Journalism,”³ which, evidently, pointed towards the future. Right after that was an article on Portuguese literary journalism, as if to say that a door had been opened to new research horizons. “*South*”⁴ was published as a research article in that fine début of *LJS*. It is to this day one of the pivotal moments in my academic career.

Much has happened in the meantime. The journal has established itself as the specific forum for publication of literary journalism research. It has affirmed itself as a plural, international journal and has made its way to the restricted circles of indexation. A decade ago, research in literary journalism was scattered, scarce, and found mostly in books by towering figures such as Thomas B. Connery, Sims, or Hartsock. In addition, it was overwhelmingly anglophone and focused on the demigods of literary journalism that we know by heart: Capote, Wolfe, Mailer, Hersey—need I go further? Of course, I am not even approaching the gender issue.



When *Literary Journalism Studies* surfaced, the path widened, meandered, and bifurcated beyond measure. *LJS* not only became a place of opportunity for the publication of research outside the scope of the English language and (famed) U.S. literary journalists, it became a repository of accumulated, intergenerational, international knowledge. Because of *LJS* we have gained access to the limitless, borderless world of literary journalism, a world of infinite possibilities and thus infinite research ideas.

I am indebted and grateful to *LJS* for the opportunities it has given me and for being my first go-to when I am immersed in my own research projects. That it continues as relevant for the field as it has been, is my wish for the decades ahead.

Notes

- ¹ Soares, "South," Paper, IALJS-3.
- ² Hartsock, "Note from the Editor," 5.
- ³ Sims, "The Problem and the Promise," 7–16.
- ⁴ Soares, "South," *Literary Journalism Studies*, 17–30.