

# THE NEWSLETTER OF THE IALJS

# LITERARY JOURNALISM

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## OBSERVANT VERSE

### *Reflecting on the poetic reportage of Walt Whitman*

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

Perhaps you've noticed that this year is the 200th birthday of America's iconic poet, the so-called "Good Gray Poet," Walt Whitman.



### PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Whitman's poetic masterpiece, *Leaves of Grass*, and especially "Song of Myself," contains a sweeping panorama of the people of Brooklyn and Manhattan, with a focus on the city sidewalks and the wide range of types of people he

had observed while writing, editing, and reporting for eight different newspapers. He strolled daily through the streets of Manhattan and Brooklyn, absorbing the

urban spectacle. I especially appreciate these urban sketches because they strike me as early, rough versions of literary journalism.

After all, Whitman declared that the poetry in *Leaves of Grass* was "literally photographed," and then in a notebook he said, "I am a poet of reality." And in "Song of Myself" he elaborates with another striking declaration: "I accept Reality and dare not question it. . . I believe in the flesh and the appetites/Seeing, hearing, feeling." Consequently, he both observed and wrote about what was common and everyday.

As Shelley Fisher Fishkin has noted in *From Fact to Fiction: Journalism & Imaginative Writing in America*, rather than simply mapping the surface of city life, Whitman "tried to chart its depths." Even in covering a fire, she says Whitman "was able to see, hear, feel, and imagine" the fire, providing a sense of being there.

So, I'm thankful for Whitman the iconic Good Gray Poet. But I also relish the writing of Whitman the young, hungry journalist and keen observer of city life who produced an early version of literary journalism. And, perhaps, the two parts of Whitman, poet and journalist, ultimately are inseparable.

## FUTURE IALJS CONFERENCE SITES

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

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 Sydney, Australia, 11-13 May 2023.

IALJS-19: University of California, Irvine, U.S.A., 23-25 May 2024 (pending).

IALJS-20: Belgium, 15-17 May 2025 (pending).

IALJS-21: Brock University, St. Catharines, Canada, 21-23 May 2026 (pending).

IALJS-22: Lisbon, Portugal or Cape Town, South Africa, 13-15 May 2027 (pending).

## DEADLINE FOR 2020 CONFERENCE SET

Submissions for IALJS-14 at the University of Copenhagen in Denmark, to be held in May 2020, are due on 1 December 2019. See Page 21 inside for more information.

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Picturesque 17th century Nyhavn Harbor in downtown Copenhagen is home to veteran ships, restaurants, pubs, and ice cream shop. Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons.

[WWW.IALJS.ORG](http://WWW.IALJS.ORG)

## 2019 IALJS ANNUAL CONVENTION IN PORT JEFFERSON, NEW YORK, HOSTED BY STONY BROOK UNIVERSITY

*Thoughts for moving forward.*

By Pablo Calvi  
Stony Brook University (U.S.A.)

For any future reference, imagine organizing IALJS a bit like a tug of war. You are the rope: between the organization and the hotel (you want to negotiate better fares, but the hotel wants more guests, higher room prices, and more commitment); between your school and the organization (the school can't afford much, but the conference needs what all conferences need); between your ideas and the ideas of others.



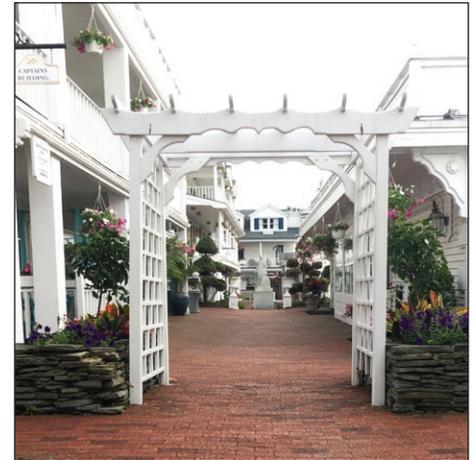
IALJS-14  
HOST

We took a few new steps this time around for IALJS-14: we chose a venue that was near—but not on—our campus. It was, we were told, an unconventional move. But, given the geographic positioning of our campus—strategically located in the middle of nowhere—Barbara (Professor Selvin) and I decided that Danford's Hotel and Marina would be a better place to spend a few days and talk about what we talk about than our brutalist enclave inside Melville Library. I am pretty sure we were right. The conference rooms at Danfords were big and accessible, Port Jefferson is a quaint town, and hosting the conference at the same place most people are lodged makes it much easier for the attendees to participate in the earlier panels, show up for the later ones, and use the conference venue as the launching pad to visit other places. Plus, something that a member mentioned to me in passing: It facilitates access to people who may have mobility

issues.

Another difference between IALJS-14 and previous conferences was its main theme: "The Literary Journalist as Naturalist." Unlike our directive board, I believe that the choice of a narrower, timely, important topic was a complete success (please expect a call for papers, for an anthology on the topic!). And that success was not only reflected in the high quality of work in progress submissions (26 proposals were accepted over a total of 28 submissions, all ranked between 3 and 5 on a 5-point grade scale, according to IALJS research report). The extremely high quality of panels and presentations was mentioned to me by many members during the four-day conference, and since. To highlight a few of the topics, conference participants gained insight into literary journalism's intersection with: the aesthetics of ecological change, advocacy journalism and narrative persuasion, coverage of death and destruction, and other forms disruption. As I read the news about the large swaths of the Amazon rainforest burning this August, in retrospect the timeliness of our topic feels ineluctable.

I believe the theme pushed us all to engage with current literary journalistic work, to understand a discrete section of a rich body of work, and to move past a certain repetitiveness—and tedium—we've all experienced after hearing for the thousandth time a presentation on Tom Wolfe. Yes, there were fewer full paper submissions (only one, compared to the 13 in Vienna, and 28 works in progress, vs. 54, also at IALJS-13), as was decried during our closing meeting. But that



Danford's Hotel & Marina in Port Jefferson, New York.

cannot be unilaterally attributed to the thematic approach. We would be a bit unfair—and non-scientific—if we didn't consider the other variables at play. For instance: the timing for the release of the call for presentations, or the novelty of this theme itself. Or the venue (Long Island is, with all its charm, much less appealing than Europe in any of its iterations). On the other hand, if, as an academic organization, we want to stay relevant and keep our fingers on the pulse of literary journalism and its latest developments, we should be a bit more open to incorporating and discussing the crucial topics of literary journalism today, pushing our members to look outside of a canon that was established half a century ago ... that is, unless we merely want to encourage the production of work that comes arthritic out of the gate.

I want to point out at a few exchanges that happened during our closing session, mostly regarding the governance of our organization. I have

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## IALJS CONVENTION

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learned that there's a new member on the advisory board. There's no clear mechanism to elect such members, and it preoccupies me greatly to see that the organization also seems to be skipping the due nomination process when installing directives, particularly to the executive committee. I don't recall having an open call for nominations in place since I've been part of the organization (May 2010) and, as far as I remember, the election process has been normalized as a top down selection since then. Let me copy and paste from our bylaws:

Section 2. It shall be the duty of the Nominating Committee to invite nominations and develop a slate of nominees from the Association's regular membership prior to the annual meeting, to present the slate at that meeting, inviting further nominations from the floor, and then to conduct the election of the officers and Executive Committee members. Nominations to the position of Second Vice President may be made from the floor of the annual meeting. Upon completion of the election, the nominating committee chair shall inform members of the name

of the winning candidates.

Section 3. Elections shall be held every two years at the annual meeting. Only members of the Association shall be entitled to vote in the election.

Section 4. A candidate for office shall be deemed elected if he or she receives more votes than those cast for any other contender for the office.

If the bylaws exist, and we have agreed to abide to them, we should. Nominations shouldn't happen behind closed doors. The nomination process should be open, clear, and properly announced, as well as the election.

It preoccupies me even more that, given this is an international organization, there's no clear push for equal representation (of language, of race, of gender). In terms of what pertains to my area of expertise, as the oldest member coming from Latin America, I resent the systematic lack of representation of the Global South (a problem that the advisory board has started to address with the incorporation of Matthew Ricketson, albeit not in a sufficiently transparent manner in my opinion), and of Latin America in particular, on the advisory board and the executive committee. I may be wrong here,

but I don't think there's one single member of the advisory board who can read—much less write—fluently in Spanish. It is impossible to be aware of the universe of vibrant literary journalism coming from Latin America—and Spain—without having access to this body of work in its original language. A similar problem arises with digital nativism. There's a great portion of literary journalism that circulates today on platforms that have little to do with paper. And that entire universe of work is virtually ignored by our advisory board.

One of the main takeaways from this conference is the tug of war between the way we have been doing things and a new way to approach our organization. The old ways have brought us where we are today, which is no mean feat. The new ones have yet to be tested. But if we want to continue to be a vibrant, relevant organization, which discusses the themes of our era and the journalism of our times, we need to look in places other than *The New Yorker* and *Esquire*. We should also aspire to a more diverse, global constituency, but also a more diverse executive and advisory boards. The plurality of voices in our membership should be echoed in our leadership, not just by simple tokenism, but with real

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From left to right: Ignacio Corona, Liliana Chávez-Díaz, Roberto Herrscher, and Pablo Calvi



From left to right: John Hanc, Lisa Phillips, Jeff Neely, Monica Martinez, and Mitzi Lewis

## 2020 ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN COPENHAGEN

*Denmark's ecofriendly capital is a favorite of culinary- and design-savvy travelers.*

*By Anne Kirstine Hermann, Roskilde University (Denmark)*

Once an industrial city with factories and shipyards dotting its landscape, Copenhagen has transformed itself into an environmental beacon aiming at carbon neutrality by 2025. Visitors immediately notice the three-lane-wide bicycle paths on the busiest streets of the city. And if they don't and stray onto one by mistake, they will soon experience the particular Danish flavor of road rage: city cyclists angrily ringing their signal bells. No less than 43 percent of Copenhageners commute to school and work by bike, rain or shine—and even if it snows.

Another testament to the city's commitment to a clean environment are several "harbor baths"—swimming zones established directly in the city's large harbor and canals—that are open from May to September. And then there is the ambitious recycling and garbage system, which includes a newly opened 280-foot-tall incinerator mantled by a year-round ski slope designed by renowned architect Bjarke Ingels.

Formerly one of Europe's quieter capitals, Copenhagen has benefited from the free movement of workers in

the EU and a flux of southern European youths going North in search for jobs. Over the past decade, the city, which is home to 624,000 people, has grown increasingly extroverted and enticing. In the traditional tenement areas, contrasts are commonplace. In the western neighborhood Vesterbro, the fashionable Meatpacking District and the red-light district are just steps apart. So are stylish restaurants and social housing projects in the northern neighborhood Nørrebro.

Particularly the restaurant scene has been thriving since in 2010 the city's most famous eatery, Noma, was first named the best restaurant in the world by *Restaurant* magazine (it currently ranks second). Today, several more affordable eateries offer the 'New Nordic' cuisine that catapulted Copenhagen into culinary stardom. But New Nordic, globally distinguished as locally sourced and creatively executed dishes, may be taken as a token of tastefulness in a broader term. From the moment you see the award-winning glass control tower and set foot on the teak-floored extension at Kastrup airport, you witness one of Europe's most distinguished design traditions.

Midcentury greats, most notably Arne Jacobsen, have somewhat eclipsed contemporary architects and designers. But if you take a canal tour – the best way to experience the city's landmarks—you can enjoy older gems like Our Saviour's Church, a baroque church famous for its helix spire and external staircase, and newer ones like the Royal Danish Playhouse and the Black Diamond, a modern extension to the Royal Danish Library. From the canal, you can also enjoy the architectural axis stretching from the domed rococo Marble Church through the courtyard of the queen's palace Amalienborg to the Copenhagen Opera House on the other side of the canal. The tour also pops by the tiny sculpture of Hans Christian Andersen's fairytale heroine the Little Mermaid. Despite her size, she is the city's biggest tourist attraction.

Being a kingdom, the Danish capital is home to several castles and palaces of which most are open to the public. Rosenborg Castle in the city center features royal art treasures, the crown jewels and royal regalia. On the other end of the spectrum, Freetown Christiania is home to makeshift houses, workshops, art galleries, organic eateries and music venues as well as the infamous "Pusher Street" where marijuana stalls openly trade their illegal goods. The area is open to tourists and usually friendly—just don't take photos if you wish to keep your camera. If you prefer high culture to cannabis, The National Gallery of Denmark houses the country's largest collection of art.



Christiansborg Palace – or just "Borgen", the castle – houses the Danish parliament and Supreme Court and is known from the award-winning drama series *Borgen*. Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons

# DEGREES OF FORGIVENESS

## *Why I've Changed My Mind*

By Norman Sims, University of Massachusetts Amherst (U.S.A.)

I've always taken a strong stand against including fictional passages in literary journalism, but my attitudes have changed a little bit for a certain few of these reporters. I still believe that contemporary literary journalism needs to be free of fiction, by which I mean made-



REFLECTIVE  
ESSAY

up stuff. Historical literary journalism varies a bit from that requirement.

I've always condemned such behavior. Making stuff up just isn't literary journalism. But after my first sentence condemning the practice, what's my second sentence?

Usually that second sentence is something like "Don't do it." I've been a little more forgiving than a few years ago, but only for a select group. This is why David Abrahamson and I decided to call my presentation for IALJS-14, "Why I've Changed My Mind."

Now my second sentence after condemning it is to ask why. To me, there are two types of writers who might include fiction that is presented as nonfiction: Frauds and Freaks. Forgive the terminology, but I like the Freaks better.

Frauds are writers on assignment who are using a narrative style and make up material for their reports. The world is complicated, and usually these writers do not have enough time to immerse themselves. Their stories might not end the way the writers want, or perhaps sources didn't give the perfect quote to complete the story, so the writer makes it up. Tracy Kidder once said that journalism is much

harder than writing novels because in novels you can make everything wrap up in the end. Real life does not cooperate. Yet this is not a common practice and pales compared to Fox News or a notable American political figure who earlier this month told his ten thousandth public lie in a mere twenty-seven months in office.

Here are some examples of the Frauds. Recently a narrative writer named Claas Relotius, working at *Der Spiegel* in Germany, got in trouble for fictionalizing. He got caught because he was traveling with another *Der Spiegel* reporter as they covered the immigration crisis in the U.S. and Mexico. The second reporter had suspicions, and he reported Relotius to management. These fictions are hard to catch when you're thousands of miles away and dealing with at least two language barriers and sources who have vanished. Relotius resigned after his many frauds were exposed.

Fact checkers are still lacking at a lot of publications, and they are the ones who prevent Relotius-type problems. The

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One of the hardest things to do is to tell an untruthful story and maintain it.

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Relotius case is similar to Jayson Blair's when he reported for the *New York Times*. The *Times* described Blair's fraud as the worst in the history of the paper: "He fabricated comments. He concocted scenes. He lifted material from other newspapers and wire services. He selected details from photographs to create the impression he had been somewhere or seen someone,



Claas Relotius was found to have fabricated stories for *Der Spiegel* in 2018. Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons

when he had not."

Michael Finkel, who also worked at the *Times*, created a composite character named Youssouf Malé in an article about working conditions on cocoa plantations in West Africa. Finkel's case has similar language barriers to Relotius, but what links them all together is that one of the hardest things to do is to tell an untruthful story and maintain it.

While the run-of-the-mill Frauds usually select their opportunities while working at a news publication, deceiving both the public and the editors, the Freaks do it for different reasons, and in some cases that makes them interesting. I call them freaks (sorry) because psychologically they may be in a different place. For example, Truman Capote fictionalized a few scenes in his book, *In Cold Blood*, that were both unnecessary and silly. One explanation is that Capote had a primary loyalty to fiction and felt that was the route to fame and glory, plus the rules for literary journalism had not really been developed yet. His remains one of the most-told stories. Jan Whitt just published a book about Capote.

Michael Herr fictionalized a couple of characters in *Dispatches*. Herr was going crazy when he wrote the book,

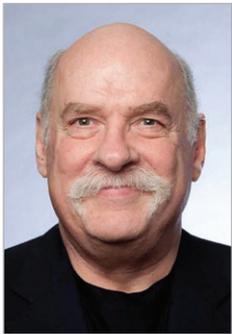
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# CHARLES DICKENS'S NONFICTION TRIUMPH

*Illuminating, with a long-past London street lamp, why reality always matters*

David Abrahamson, Northwestern University (U.S.A.)

**I**t might be best to begin with an acknowledgement of the long conflicted relationship, the tension, between nonfiction and fiction. Literary journalism scholars have examined this tension for decades, often reaching—or at least debating—the conclusion that there is always the risk that journalist’s imagination will undermine the claim of nonfiction to factuality. Or, further, that journalism will always pale in terms of merit or value in comparison to the novel.



## RESEARCH ESSAY

For example, there is the issue of *fiction corrupting non-fiction*; that is, when journalists, in the words of Walt Harrington, fail to “keep the non in nonfiction.” In December 2018, for instance, Ullrich Fichtner one of three Editors-in-Chief of *Der Spiegel* had to deal with “Spiegelgate,” a scandal centered on a story the magazine had published filled with made-up interviews and made-up invented characters. Identifying what he termed a “crisis in narrative journalism,” Fichtner warned, “We have to ask ourselves whether we became carried away with a storytelling focus that seduced authors into making stories better than they are.”

Another instance of the tension is the belief that *nonfiction suffers from limits compared to fiction*. As the *New Yorker*’s Nick Lemann wrote recently, “The relationship between fiction and nonfiction is like the one between art and architecture: Fiction is pure, nonfiction is applied. Just as buildings shouldn’t leak or

fall down, nonfiction has to work within the limits of its claim to be about the world as it really is.”

However, it can be argued that nonfiction need not be either corrupted or limited, and one can offer as a salient example what some have called one of the earliest pieces of literary journalism in English. Written by Charles Dickens in the mid-1800s, it remains a wonderful example of superb reportage. But first, there might be value in a brief biographical review.

Charles Dickens (1812-1870) was raised in stark poverty. The second of eight children in a poor family made poorer by his father’s failures as a civil-service clerk, his early life offered little security. When his father was thrown in debtor’s prison, Dickens, then age 12, was forced into child labor. Clearly, his childhood struggles had a lifelong effect. As one biographer wrote, “The poverty and anarchy of his early life stuffed his memory with strange things and people never to be discovered in Tennysonian country houses or Thackerayan drawing-rooms.” His experiences growing up became the basis for much of his later work

After brief service as a legal clerk, Dickens entered the professional world as a reporter for the *True Sun* and the *Morning Chronicle*, and soon became a parliamentary reporter for the *Mirror of Parliament*. According to contemporary accounts, “he was ranked high as a reporter for his accuracy, neat reports and the speedy transcription of his shorthand notes.” He served for a time as an editor at *Bentley’s Miscellany*, a monthly magazine, followed by his time as the founder and editor of a weekly magazine *Master Humphrey’s Clock*, a reporter for the *Daily News*, and founder, editor and essayist for two weekly magazines *Household Words* and, until his death, *All the Year Round*.

Even as his fiction writing took off while in his mid-twenties, Dickens stayed true to his journalistic roots. His lifelong professional commitment to nonfiction not only expressed his dedication to journalism, but also no doubt enriched his work as a novelist. It can be argued that he honed the many memorable characters to be found in his fourteen novels from experiences he encountered as a working journalist.

A good case in point is one quite wonderful article in Dickens’s weekly magazine *Household Words*. The periodical’s title, by the way, was drawn from the world-iconic passage in Shakespeare’s *Henry V*, the St. Crispin’s Day speech: “Then shall our names, familiar in his mouth as household words. . . be in their flowing cups freshly remembered.”

The article, “On Duty with



*Continued on next page*

Inspector Field," a 5,550-word piece published in 1851, is, in the argot of today's journalism, "a ride-along story." The narrator meets up at dusk with a senior London bobby, Metropolitan Police Inspector Charles Frederick Field, about to begin his nightly rounds of the city's desperately poor Victorian *demi-monde*—and then tags along. Written in a style that comports beautifully with the defining Simsiian aspects of literary journalism, the story opens:

*How goes the night? Saint Giles's clock is striking nine. The weather is dull and wet, and the long lines of street lamps are blurred, as if we saw them through tears. A damp wind blows and rakes the pie-man's fire out, when he opens the door of his little furnace, carrying away an eddy of sparks. Saint Giles's clock strikes nine. We are punctual. Where is Inspector Field?*

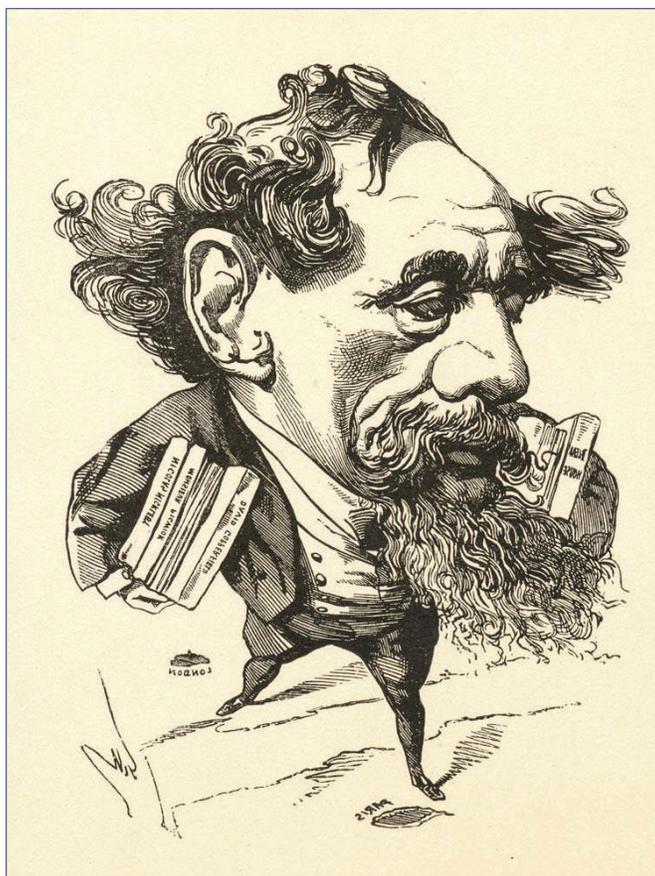
Once the inspector's rounds begin, cinematic scene setting, freighted dialogue and the deft use of the first person voice define his relationship with London's unfortunates. Upon entering the basement of a derelict building called the Rats' Castle, Field speaks:

*'Well, my lads! How are you, my lads? What have you been doing to-day? Here's some company come to see you, my lads! Take off your cap. There's a fine young man for a nice little party, sir!*

As the policeman rousts the impoverished crowd huddling in the dark recesses of the Rats' Castle cellar, the narrator continues:

*Inspector Field is the bustling speaker. Inspector Field's eye is the roving eye that searches every corner of the cellar as he talks. Inspector Field's hand is the well-known hand that has collared half the*

*people here, and motioned their brothers, sisters, fathers, mothers, male and female friends, inexorably to New South Wales. Yet Inspector Field stands in this den, the Sultan of the place. Every thief here covers before him, like a schoolboy before his schoolmaster. All watch him, all answer when addressed, all laugh at his jokes, all seek to propitiate him. This cellar company alone. . . is strong enough to murder us, and willing enough to do it; but, let Inspector*



*Field have a mind to pick out one thief here, and take him; let him produce that ghostly truncheon from his pocket, and say, with his business-air, 'My lad, I want you!' and all Rats' Castle shall be stricken with paralysis, and not a finger move against him, as he fits the handcuffs on!*

*Where's the Earl of Warwick? Here he is, Mr. Field! Here's the Earl of Warwick, Mr. Field! O there you are, my Lord. Come for'ard. There's a chest, sir, not to have a*

*clean shirt on. Ain't it? Take your hat off, my Lord. Why, I should be ashamed if I was you—and an Earl, too—to show myself to a gentleman with my hat on! The Earl of Warwick laughs and uncovers. All the company laugh. One pickpocket, especially, laughs with great enthusiasm. O what a jolly game it is, when Mr. Field comes down—and don't want nobody!*

The groveling, the false bonhomie and the underlying fear of summary arrest and imprisonment—in sum, the pathos—are vividly portrayed in the last sentence: "O what a jolly game it is, when Mr. Field comes down—and don't want nobody!" (As an aside to assist the reader, it must be added here that by the mid-19th century the rules of punctuation had not be fully formalized. Even more challenging, the use of quotation marks was considered somewhat optional. Deployed here, left out there. The erratic result in passages of dialog can sometimes be a bit tricky to follow in first reading.)

Later in the night, Fields and the narrator enter a hovel at the back of a dismal alley to find:

*Ten, twenty, thirty - who can count them! Men, women, children, for the most part naked, heaped upon the floor like maggots in a cheese!*

Soon, a well-worn call-and-response takes place:

*Ho! In that dark corner yonder! Does anybody lie there? Me sir, Irish me, a wid[ow], with six children. And yonder? Me sir, Irish me, with me wife and eight poor babes. And to the left there? Me sir, Irish me, along with two more Irish boys as is me friends. And to the right there? Me sir and the Murphy family, numbering five blessed souls. . . They are all awake now,*

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## IS SATIRE STILL FACT-CHECKING?

*Ironic distance and subtle persuasion in the search for accuracy*

Chad Hegelmeyer, New York University (U.S.A.)

At IALJS-13, Kevin Lerner gave a paper titled “Reported Satire as a Form of Literary Journalism,” in which he examined an article in *Spy Magazine* that managed to simultaneously satirize Donald Trump’s braggadocio and do some real investigative reporting into his finances<sup>1</sup>. Kevin’s paper got me thinking more about satire as a literary mode with the potential to *inform*. Much of the political



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satire in the U.S. parodies news media (e.g. *The Onion*, *The Daily Show*, and the latter’s many spinoffs) and so has explicitly taken up this potential, reviewing the day’s news in a way that satirizes while taking special care to accurately report the facts. This has been the case since the early aughts when *The Daily Show* with Jon Stewart was—both ironically and sincerely—considered by many viewers as a source of news.<sup>2</sup>

But satire doesn’t *merely* inform; it corrects. It is, like literary journalism, a referential art, but one whose referent is also the butt of a joke. Samuel Johnson describes satire as “a poem in which wickedness and folly is censured.”<sup>3</sup> And like *post hoc* political fact-checking—that other emblematic tool of our contemporary political culture—satire’s targets have been primarily epistemological: deceit, hoaxes, and hypocrisy. Both fact-checking and satire have been regarded as symptomatic responses to the most troubling aspects of our political culture, as discursive or rhetorical tools on which we project both

hope (“Will satire save us in the age of Trump?”<sup>4</sup>; “Fact Checking is Now More Important than Ever”<sup>5</sup>) and anxiety (“Donald Trump is America’s Most Gifted Political Satirist”<sup>6</sup>; “Fact-Checking Won’t Save Us from Fake News”<sup>7</sup>). But is satire like fact-checking?

Contemporary forms of fact checking and satire developed in tandem in the post-9/11 political milieu as the aughts saw a steady expansion in both satirical news shows and *post hoc* fact-checking websites. In 2003, four years after Jon Stewart began hosting *The Daily Show*, the Annenberg Public Policy Center founded FactCheck.Org; the *Daily Show*’s first spinoff, *The Colbert Report*, followed shortly after in 2005; and the Poynter Institute’s PolitiFact.com launched two years later. Some fact-checking sites have also adopted a surprisingly satirical aesthetic. PolitiFact rates veracity on a scale called the “Truth-O-Meter” that ranges from “True” to “Pants on Fire!” and awards an annual “Lie of the Year.” *The Washington Post* Fact Checker uses a scale of one to four “Pinocchios.” (One Pinocchio represents “some shading of the facts” while four is reserved for “whoppers.”)<sup>8</sup>

If fact-checking has borrowed from satire, the reverse is perhaps even more pronounced. *Last Week Tonight with John Oliver*—a political satire show on HBO hosted by the eponymous *Daily Show* alumnus—builds entire segments around fact-checking. In one such segment, Oliver goes line by line through Donald Trump’s press conference about his decision to pull out of the Paris Climate Agreement, using checks of each statement of fact as points from which to make satirical jabs.<sup>9</sup> Discussing Trump’s claim that the Green Climate Fund “would likely obligate the United States to commit potentially tens

of billions of dollars,” Oliver clarifies the obfuscation in those words: “There is no enforcement mechanism in the Paris Agreement. The U.S. could just easily refuse to pay the bill, something Donald Trump has a *lifetime* of practice doing.” The satire follows from the checks, but the checks themselves are real enough and surprisingly granular (e.g. the U.S. has paid “three billion dollars” not “tens of billions of dollars”). At one point, Oliver even performs that most canonical of fact checks, correcting a proper noun: “It’s not called ‘the Green Fund.’ It’s called the Green *Climate* Fund. I know, but still.”

But as homologous as satire and fact-checking have become, I’d argue that they differ in two important respects. The first is a formal advantage that satire has over fact-checking. Fact-checking is supplemental to and dependent on the text that contains the inaccuracy it seeks to correct. And this peri- or paratextual status contributes to its occasional ineffectiveness, what Gérard Genette (writing about marginal notes) has described as “the disappointing nature of a ‘genre’ whose occurrences are by definition irregular, divided up, crumbly, not to say dustlike, and often so closely connected to a given detail of a given text that they have, as it were, no autonomous significance.”<sup>10</sup> Satire, on the other hand, operates through a form of ironic distance. (Northrup Frye, in a memorable phrase, calls satire “*militant irony*.”)<sup>11</sup> The satirist—rather than speaking from the margins or interrupting with a “well, actually”—asserts herself as a narrator in her own right, and one at a higher diegetic level than those she is satirizing. This formal quality is, I would argue, the reason that *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* was viewed as a source of news rather than mere satire of it. Stewart navigated the tricky discursive environments of the 24-hour cable news on behalf of his viewers; he could poke fun at Fox News

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Jon Stewart at the Rally to Restore Sanity and/or Fear in 2010  
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons

and CNN, perform the negative affects associated with consuming news media (like exasperation or outrage), and act as a check on and curator of the day's stories all in one. The pleasure of watching *The Daily Show* was in consuming the news as something almost pre-digested. Stewart's personality and position outside the story authorized him both to mediate and emend a world in which everyone—from the politicians to the TV pundits—was an unreliable narrator. And his identity as a comedic everyman enabled him to play the role of media outsider ("just a comedian") and media expert, souped up by a team of writers and producers who could seemingly consume a whole day's news cycle as well as vast archives of past footage. In this way, the show's curation seemed reparative, and the remediation that it provided became a helpful way not only to consume the mass of 24-hour cable news in a condensed (and more entertaining) way but to get a better idea of how that news might be biased, inaccurate, or misreported. Like a pair of reading glasses, the distorting lens of satire could be an appropriate corrective for the misrepresentations of politicians and the news media.

The second difference is that satire's *raison d'être* is not primarily epistemological but *moral*, its purpose not just to correct facts but to level judgment. As Arthur Pollard writes, satire "is always acutely conscious of the difference between what things are and *what they ought to be*."<sup>12</sup> In other words, it's a form that is fundamentally idealistic, even if its commitment to those ideals appears cynical. This allows satire to do things that normal journalism is (rightly) reluctant to, like explicitly denounce lies as lies rather than correct them as "false claims."<sup>13</sup> But satire's moral dimension can also be limiting; it only works if the audience shares its worldview and, in the case of political satire, its political vision. (How many climate change deniers watch *Last Week Tonight*?) It is thus susceptible to the slippage between how-things-are and how-they-should-be, one of the hallmarks of political discourse and discord.<sup>14</sup> Pollard claims that for the satirist "to be successful his society should at least pay lip-service to the ideals he upholds."<sup>15</sup> But this means that the areas of political rancor in which we most want to deploy satire are precisely the ones in which it is least effective. Satire is better at subtle persuasion than wholesale conversion, and when it comes to political issues that lack a broad-based consensus, we are perhaps better off adopting the objective distance of journalism than the ironic distance of the satirist.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> John Connolly, "All of the People, All the Time: How Donald Trump Fooled the Media, Used the Media to Fool the Banks, Used the Banks to Fool the Bondholders, and Used the Bondholders to Pay for the Yachts, Mansions, and Mistresses," 1 April 1991.

<sup>2</sup> David Bauder, "Young Get Their News from Comedy Central," Associated Press, 1 March 2004. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/young-get-news-from-comedy-central/>

<sup>3</sup> Arthur Pollard, "Satire", *Critical Idiom*

*Reissued*, Florence: Taylor and Francis, 2017, p. 12.

<sup>4</sup> Jonathan Coe, *The Guardian*, 6 January 2017. <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2017/jan/06/jonathan-coe-will-satire-save-us-in-the-age-of-donald-trump>

<sup>5</sup> Luke Folb, *Huffington Post*, 27 March 2017. [https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/luke-folb/fact-checking-is-now-more-important-than-ever\\_a\\_21904446/](https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/luke-folb/fact-checking-is-now-more-important-than-ever_a_21904446/)

<sup>6</sup> Elspeth Reeve, *New Republic*, 16 June 2015. <https://newrepublic.com/article/122047/donald-trump-americas-most-gifted-political-satirist>

<sup>7</sup> Brooke Borel, *FiveThirtyEight*, 4 January 2017. <https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/fact-checking-wont-save-us-from-fake-news/>

<sup>8</sup> Glenn Kessler, "About the Fact Checker," *Washington Post*, 1 January 2017.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2019/01/07/about-fact-checker/>

<sup>9</sup> "Paris Agreement," Comedy Central, 4 June 2017. The segment can be found on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5scez5dqtAc&t=594s>

<sup>10</sup> *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. Jane E. Lewin, Cambridge UP, 1997, p. 319.

<sup>11</sup> *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays*, University of Toronto Press, 2000, p. 208. Emphasis mine.

<sup>12</sup> *Satire*, p. 12. Emphasis mine.

<sup>13</sup> See *The New York Times*, "Lies? False Claims? When Trump's Statements Aren't True," 25 June, 2018. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/25/reader-center/donald-trump-lies-falsehoods.html?smtyp=cur&smid=tw-nytpolitics>

<sup>14</sup> See Oliver Morrison, "Waiting for the Conservative Jon Stewart" *The Atlantic*, 14 February 2015: <https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2015/02/why-theres-no-conservative-jon-stewart/385480/>. See also Young, Bagozzi, Goldring, Poulsen, and Drouin, "Psychology, political ideology, and humor appreciation: Why is satire so liberal?" *Psychology of Popular Media Culture*, 8(2), pp. 134-147.

<sup>15</sup> *Satire*, p. 12.

## DEGREES OF FORGIVENESS

*Continued from Page 5*

probably suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, which affects both soldiers and reporters in combat situations. It was good stuff, but he was nuts, by his own admission. Ryszard Kapuściński probably had similar interesting reasons.

Many writers at mid-century believed for very good reasons that fiction was the superior form of writing and that one had to write novels in order to establish a serious reputation. Among those were writers who did not make up stuff for their nonfiction, such as John Hersey and Tom Wolfe. Hersey continued to write novels rather than following up on Hiroshima, and Wolfe later in life switched from writing nonfiction to the social novels

that he said fiction writers had abandoned.

Other motives are involved with the Freaks. It may be related to high-status (Capote, Herr) and low-status writers. It may have to do with status in the literary community, or psychological issues, or a genuine desire to tell something that they believe is true but can't document.

While I still condemn the practice, these Freaks are more interesting to scholars because they are a bit more complex. Cultural practices create status differences, and that may have included Capote, who felt fiction was the route to fame and glory. Or maybe mental health issues, as in the case of Michael Herr after he departed Vietnam and was trying to write his book, *Dispatches*.

With the Frauds, asking why they do it leads to quick answers. With the

Freaks, we end up investigating mental states and cultural or status surroundings at the time and circumstances of their writing. That's the same kind of thing we study if they don't make up anything. We can go beyond the surface without accepting the practices as okay.

I hope I have made sense of my feelings on this panel and that I did not destroy my reputation in the process. In fact, I haven't changed my mind about fiction in literary journalism. I've just become more forgiving in certain cases.

*Originally presented as part of the President's Panel, at the Fourteenth Annual Conference for Literary Journalism Studies, May 8, 2019, Stony Brook University, United States.*

## CHARLES DICKENS'S NONFICTION TRIUMPH

*Continued from Page 7*

*the children excepted, and most of them sit up, to stare. . . Who is the landlord here? I am, Mr. Field! says a bundle of ribs and parchment against the wall, scratching itself. Will you spend this money fairly, in the morning, to buy coffee for 'em all? — Yes, sir, I will! — O he'll do it, sir, he'll do it fair. He's honest! cry the spectres. And, with thanks and Good Night, sink into their graves again.*

It is after midnight now, but the night's tour of duty is far from over. Next up, a flop house:

*This narrow street, sir, is the chief part of the Old Mint, full of low lodging-houses, as you see by the transparent canvas-lamps and blinds, announcing beds for travelers! Steady with the flaring candle in the blacking-bottle, for this is a slushy back-yard, and the wooden staircase outside the house creaks and has holes in it.*

*Again, in these confined intolerable rooms. . . full of intolerable smells, are crowds of sleepers, each on his foul truckle-bed coiled up beneath a rug. Holloa here! Come! Let us see you! Show your face! There should be strange dreams here. What is the inscription, on all the discolored sheets? A precaution against loss of linen. We turn down the rug of an unoccupied bed and discloses it. STOP THIEF!*

*To lie at night, wrapped in the legend of my slinking life; to take the cry that pursues me, waking, to my breast in sleep; to have it staring at me, and clamoring for me, as soon as consciousness returns; to have it for my first-foot on New-Year's day, my Valentine, my Birthday salute, my Christmas greeting, my parting with the old year. STOP THIEF!*

At the end of the ride-along's night, dawn finally breaks over London's netherworld. Attempting a possible conclusion, contemplating the lessons or even the meaning of his night's journey on duty with Inspector Field, the narrator—clearly Dickens as reporter—shares a evocative insight

*The night has so worn away, being now almost at odds with morning. As undistinctive death will come here one day, sleep comes now. The wicked cease from troubling sometimes, even in this life.*

It was the Russian novelist Leo Tolstoy who defined the ability of Dickens, in both fiction and nonfiction, to fully render his fellow human beings and their condition. "All his characters," wrote the author of *War and Peace*, are my personal friends."



An illustration of Inspector field

## IALJS LAUNCHES GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE

*Growth brings questions on how we can be truly international*

By Rob Alexander, Brock University (Canada)



IALJS NEWS

In its efforts to expand and enrich the international aspects of its approach to literary journalism studies, the IALJS invites participation in its newly formed Global Engagement Committee.

In the 14 years since its founding, the IALJS has grown to the point where we now have members in every continent (except Antarctica).

As membership has grown,

however, so too has an awareness of the challenges involved in running a truly international association.

As its title suggests, the IALJS is an association with an international mandate. But that mandate involves acknowledging that our members come not only from diverse places around the world but are also the products of markedly different histories—academic histories, of course, but also cultural, social, and political histories. Those histories inform the topics on which our members choose to present, the approaches they take to those topics, and, most significantly for the GEC initiative, their expectations of what an international scholarly association devoted to this

subject should entail.

The Global Engagement Committee has been formed to gauge those expectations and from them produce suggestions for feasible ways we may further “internationalize” the efforts of our association.

Monica Martinez (University of Soracaba, Brazil) has kindly agreed to chair this committee, and I’ll be taking part as well. If you would like to be involved, either by serving as a committee member or by offering your ideas on ways in which the IALJS may meet the objectives outlined here, please send a note to Monica (martinez.monica@uol.com.br) or to me (ralexander@brocku.ca) by January 31, 2020.

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM LITERARY JOURNALISM SESSION AT ACLA

By Rob Alexander, Brock University (Canada)

Comparative methodologies, graphic reportage, evolutionary linguistics, and new insights into John Hersey’s *Hiroshima* were the subjects of an IALJS-sponsored session at the annual meeting of the American Comparative Literature Association, March 7 - 9, 2019 at Georgetown University in Washington, DC.

The session, “Literary Journalism Without Exception: Reading and Writing Journalism as Literature Around the World,” aimed to broaden the frequent identification of literary journalism exclusively with the American scene, providing a forum to explore examples of writers from around the world who infuse their journalistic accounts with narrative techniques derived from literature.

Five scholars from four countries

presented papers and exchanged views in the single-day session.

Presentations included a dazzling survey of the daunting but crucial task of finding a conceptual and methodological framework for literary journalism studies capable of acknowledging the sheer variety of works, histories, contexts, and traditions around the world which may be identified with this diverse field.

John Hersey was the focus of two papers, one a comparison of *Hiroshima* with *The Great China Earthquake* by



R. Thomas Berner (Penn State), Rob Alexander (Brock University), Jeffrey Peer (The Graduate Center, CUNY), Isabelle Meuret (Université libre de Bruxelles), Arianna Bassetti (Queen Mary University of London).

Chinese journalist Qian Gang, the other, a fascinating discussion of the tensions between the common assumption of Hersey’s reliance on bare fact and his own claims that his style includes a variety of impressionistic elements.

*Continued on Page 19*

## CALL FOR PAPERS

International Association for Literary Journalism Studies

“Literary Journalism Across Media”

The Fifteenth International Conference for Literary Journalism Studies (IALJS-15)

University of Copenhagen  
Department of Communication  
Copenhagen, Denmark

21-23 May 2020



The International Association for Literary Journalism Studies invites submissions of original research papers, abstracts for research in progress and proposals for panels on Literary Journalism for the IALJS annual convention on 21-23 May 2020. The conference will be held at the University of Copenhagen in Copenhagen, Denmark.

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 are 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." The association especially hopes to receive papers related to the general conference theme, "Literary Journalism Across Media." 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/>

## 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:

- (a) **Submission by e-mail attachment in MS Word is required.** No other format or faxes or postal mail submissions will be accepted.
- (b) Include one separate title page containing title, author/s, affiliation/s, and the address, phone, fax, and e-mail of the lead author.
- (c) 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.
- (d) 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:

- (a) **Submission by e-mail attachment using MS Word is required.** No other format or faxes or postal mail submissions will be accepted.
- (b) Include one separate title page containing title, author/s, affiliation/s, and the address, phone, fax and e-mail of the lead author.
- (c) 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

- (a) **Submission by e-mail attachment in MS Word is required.** No other format or faxes or postal mail submissions will be accepted.
- (b) 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.
- (c) Panels are encouraged on any topic related to the study, teaching or practice of literary journalism. See [http://www.ialjs.org/?page\\_id=21](http://www.ialjs.org/?page_id=21).

#### 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. Lindsay Morton, Pacific Union College (U.S.A.)  
IALJS Research Chair; e-mail: [lmorton@puc.edu](mailto:lmorton@puc.edu)

**Please submit proposals for panels to one of:**

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

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

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

#### **Deadline for all submissions: No later than 1 December 2019**

**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>](mailto:tconnery@stthomas.edu)

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

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

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

Prof. John S. Bak, Nancy-Université (France)  
Founding IALJS President; e-mail: [john.bak@univ-nancy2.fr](mailto:john.bak@univ-nancy2.fr)

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

**CALL FOR PANEL PROPOSALS**  
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# T h e n e w s l e t t e r o f t h e i a l j s

approximately 250 words in length. A “Panel Proposal Template” and “Sample Proposal” are available at <https://ialjs.org/conference-information/>  
(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](mailto:ralexander@brocku.ca)>

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## **Deadline for all submissions: No later than 1 December 2019**

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

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

Prof. Jacqueline Marino, Kent State University (U.S.A.)  
IALJS Secretary; e-mail: [jmarino7@kent.edu](mailto:jmarino7@kent.edu)

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

### **SPECIAL NOTE:**

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established to assist in funding student travel.  
Applications will be available upon acceptance of submission.**

**TEACHING TIPS**

*Continued from Page 5*

the journalism major at SUNY New Paltz, where I teach.

**Introductory level: Read**

- Assign a current work of longform journalism that uses literary journalism techniques to show how character and story-driven reporting facilitates credibility and reader investment. I like to pick topics that are already on our students' minds and in the public conversation. Examples: "When Children Say They're Trans" by Jesse Singal in *The Atlantic*; "The Challenge of Going Off Psychiatric Drugs" by Rachel Aviv in *The New Yorker*.

**Introductory level: Do**

- Have students do a 45-minute observation in a public space on campus in which they write down only visible, tactile, hearable and smell-able details, without opinion, judgment or feelings. They then use their notes to write a short sketch of the setting that shows its unique character (H/T Dr. Rachel Somerstein).

**Intermediate level: Read**

- One goal in intermediate level feature writing and magazine writing courses is to get students to write about their subjects "in action" in a scene and what they have to do as reporters to make that happen. I love to teach *Rolling Stone* profiles because the strategizing is so overt. "A Trans Punk Rocker's Fight to Rebuild Her life," Alex Morris's profile of Laura Jane Grace, is framed by Grace getting a tattoo, an obvious set up for getting action into a story, useful for

students baffled by the concept. A subtler choice is "Portrait of an Artist as a Postman," Jason Sheeler's *Texas Monthly* profile of Kermit Oliver, an African-American postal carrier who makes paintings reproduced as Hermes scarves. Sheeler acutely observes Oliver's hermitic and tragic existence, to powerful effect.

**Intermediate Level: Do**

- Assign a profile that must include a scene of the subject in action. This fundamental assignment is probably familiar to many of you. I've been amazed in my 15 years of teaching journalism how challenging and unintuitive this "scene requirement" has become for

- \* Assign video supplements, which helps students see the power and necessity of spending time with their sources.
- \* Emphasize the power of feature/magazine/narrative writing, in process and product, as an antidote to the disembodiedness of digital life.

**Advanced Level: Read**

- In our Capstone Seminar in Multimedia Reporting, I assign a wealth of multimedia longform reporting in the legacy of *The New York Times*' "Snow Fall," which rely heavily on literary journalism and narrative techniques. A couple of favorites:
  - \* "The Shirt on Your Back,"

The screenshot shows a web page from Honolulu Civil Beat. The header includes the logo and 'Special Projects > The Harbor'. The main title is 'The Harbor' under the sub-header 'Special Report'. Below the title is a section 'ABOUT THE SERIES' with a paragraph: 'Hawaii has the highest number of homeless people per-capita in the nation. We spent months inside a unique homeless "village" on Oahu's west coast that more than 200 people have quietly turned into a home.' There are two images: one of a small wooden structure in a wooded area, and another of a tent at night. Below each image is a short article preview with a title and a byline.

a richly produced, immersive feature in *The Guardian* on the global clothing industry. \* "The Harbor," *The Honolulu Civil Beat*'s series on a homeless encampment on Oahu. The series is not as technically sophisticated or expensive as "The Shirt" or "Snowfall," which provides a more doable model for students.

**Advanced Level: Do**

- Students write a longform article (3,000-5,000 words) using Jack Hart's "3+2 structure of explanatory reporting": narrative + context + narrative + context + narrative. Students can't sustain this structure without powerful storytelling, strong central characters, and keen observation skills. In my course, students also produce multimedia supplements and data visualizations.

students—and thus how important! Students find it challenging to arrange to be in the presence of someone, which requires them to explain to their subjects why they need to "hang out" for a while and bear witness to some aspect of their lives. Some helpful tactics:
 

- \* Give students a theme for the profile. Recent ones I've used: change makers; people living on less than a living wage.

## INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR LITERARY JOURNALISM STUDIES ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING

*Minutes from meeting held at IALJS-14 in Long Island, New York on 10 May 2019.*

*Jacqueline Marino, Secretary  
Kent State University (U.S.A.)*

First Vice President Rob Alexander called the 2019 annual business meeting of the International Association for Literary Journalism Studies to order at 5:05 p.m. It was moved and seconded to approve the minutes from the 2018 IALJS annual meeting in Vienna, Austria, and the motion carried unanimously. Rob explained he was chairing the meeting because President Tom Connery could not attend the conference this year because of family circumstances. He said he hoped everyone was having a good time at the conference and noted that the organization has a lot to be proud of after 14 years.

Treasurer Bill Reynolds reported that the current assets total \$80,190, which includes \$20,056 in an interest-bearing savings account and \$35,960 in certificates of deposit. The biggest cost continues to be the journal, approximately \$11,400 for the printing and mailing of the two 2019 issues of the journal. The organization's conservative fiscal policies continue, he said, and the organization is fiscally stable. As a representative of the newly formed Finance Committee, Jacqueline Marino agreed, noting that the decreased attendance at the 2019 conference didn't change that.

Membership Secretary Mitzi Lewis reported the association currently has 127 members from 23 countries. Forty-six percent are from the United States, and 54 percent from nations other than the U.S. Registrations for IALJS-14 are 65, slightly below the conference average of approximately 70.

Secretary Jacqueline Marino explained that she will take over more reminder duties from David Abrahamson in the coming year. She explained the organization is now registered in the state of Ohio. The process of switching registration from the state of Illinois was explained. In response to the treasurer's report, it was suggested that money saved on printing could be used instead for a travel fund, but it was explained

that the journal must be in print for tenure & promotion purposes for the membership. Associate Editors Miles and Roberta Maguire explained the journal is currently classified as "emerging" on the indexes and that it must publish on time to be established on the indexes. It is approaching that reality.

After a question about net assets from Matthew Ricketson, it was explained that, though some costs have gone up, the amount is about the same as last year. Sue Joseph asked to see the detailed financial report, which is available for any member who would like to see it. It was also mentioned that the newly formed Finance Committee, chaired by Alice Trindade, will also provide oversight.

LJS Editor-in-chief Bill Reynolds reported our journal is open-access and searchable, even though Google's search engine says the site is not secure. This is an issue with the server at Ryerson University, and he will be working on it when he gets back to his university in the fall.

Research Chair Tobias Eberwein reported a total of 26 acceptances from a total of 1 research paper and 28 work-in-progress submissions. IALJS-14 was the first conference built around a theme, which may have resulted in the lower number of submissions. However, the quality of the submissions were high. After a robust discussion, it was affirmed that IALJS will return to a "big tent" theme at future conferences. It was also affirmed after an airing of many opinions that any deadline later than Dec. 1 for submissions would imperil the research-review process. It was agreed that the 2020 Call for Papers for IALJS-15 will be distributed in early July.

Program Chair Rob Alexander gave the program report. There were 12 panel submissions, and they accepted 10. Only 12 panels for were received for the Vienna conference. Paris in 2014 was the only conference where they had a higher number of submissions at 15. Rob noted that the keynote speaker always gets a

moleskin notebook with the host city name embossed but doesn't have Matthew's at the moment. It will be sent to him.

Awards committee co-chair Willa McDonald said the John C. Hartsock Prize for the Best Article in Literary Journalism Studies was given to Lindsey Morton; the David Abrahamson Prize for the Best Article in the Literary Journalism newsletter went to Hendrik Michael. The Norman H. Sims and Susan L. Greenberg prizes were not awarded this year because of the lack of entries. Travel awards were given to four graduate students.

Host Committee Chair Pablo Calvi gave the annual conference report. He said it was a success, and everyone seems happy with the results. The membership applauded him for his excellent work.

Publicity Chair Jeff Neely gave the publicity report. He said the call for papers and works in progress will be going out earlier. He wants to have a centralized email address, such as "announcements@ialjs.org." This will help avoid confusion, so people will know he's not the point of contact for everything involving the organization. Jeff said he wants to actively recruit more members on that list by going through LJS authors and asking them to join.

LJS Editor Bill Reynolds said two of the biggest issues IALJS has ever done came out in the last year: the indigenous peoples issue and 10th anniversary issue. The next issue, Spring 2019, will be slimmer. It is being designed now and will be sent to the printer in about a week. The Fall 2019 issue is in production already with two research papers being fact-checked. Copy for the upcoming Portuguese literary journalism issue is in already. Book Review Editor Nancy Roberts said she is always looking for reviewers. Members should email her with ideas. She would like books from different

*Continued on next page*

countries and would encourage book review essays about a specific geographical area. Miles Maguire said he and Roberta identified eight books and 31 scholarly articles in print contributing to the body of literary journalism scholarship in 2018. These figures compare to seven books and 34 articles for 2017.

Newsletter editor Kevin Lerner explained that the newsletter went from quarterly publication to two issues per year. He said the contributions this year were terrific, and he is happy to help with the transition to a new newsletter editor. Bill said he is grateful to webmaster Nick Jackson.

Sue Joseph asked that “fall” and “spring” be removed from the newsletter’s title and be replaced by Vol. 1 (March) and Vol. 2 (September) in fairness to members in the southern hemisphere.

Tobias said graduate student participation in the conference was about 20 percent, which is average. He announced that the Graduate Student Chair post is open. If anyone has an interest, he asked that they let him know.

Host Committee Chair Christine Isager said plans are underway for IALJS-15 in Copenhagen, May 21-23, 2020. Roberto Herrscher spoke about the Santiago conference in 2021, which will be the association’s first in a Spanish-speaking country and will include panels in the local language. He noted that literary journalism is a major subject taught in his school so many students will participate.

Joint programming at upcoming conferences was then discussed: ESSE: University of Lyon, France 31 August – 4

September 2020; ACLA: Georgetown University, Washington DC 7-10 March 2019, Chicago 19-22 March 2020; AEJMC: Toronto 7-10 August 2019, San Francisco 6-9 August 2020.

With no old business, under new business, Secretary Jacqueline Marino congratulated five members for recently publishing books: Pablo Calvi, *Latin American Adventures in Literary Journalism*; David Dowling, *Immersive Longform Storytelling: Media, Technology Audience*; Kevin Lerner, *Provoking the Press: (MORE) Magazine and the Crisis of*

*Confidence in American Journalism*; Jan Whitt, *Untold Stories, Unheard Voices: Truman Capote and In Cold Blood*; and Susan Greenberg, *A Poetics of Editing*.

A motion to adjourn was called for at 7:50 pm, which was moved, seconded and approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Jacqueline Marino, Secretary  
International Association for Literary  
Journalism Studies



Treasurer and *LJS* editor Bill Reynolds (Ryerson University) and ombudsman David Abrahamson (Northwestern University) present their research on the President’s Panel titled “The Lightly Guarded Frontier: Nonfiction and Fiction” at IALJS-14, held in Long Island, New York, 9-11 May 2019.

## ACLA HIGHLIGHTS

*Continued from Page 7*

Participants also heard presentations on the graphic reportage of Zerocalcare, one of Italy’s most beloved comics writers and the metalinguistic contortions of Tom Wolfe’s final book, *The Kingdom of Speech*.

Panelists in this year’s meeting were Arianna Bassetti (Queen Mary University of London), Isabelle Meuret (Université libre de Bruxelles), Jeffrey Peer (The Graduate Center, CUNY), R. Thomas Berner (Pennsylvania State University), and Rob Alexander (Brock University, Canada).

This is the ninth time the IALJS has been a part of the ACLA’s sprawling annual conference.

Plans are currently underway to take part in next year’s meeting, to be held at the Sheraton Grand Hotel in Chicago, March 19 - 22, 2020. The session theme will be mobility and the place of literary journalism in a world in motion.

Please see the CFP in this issue of the IALJS Newsletter or the ACLA website (<https://www.acla.org/seminars?combine=literary+journalism>) for details.

## HOST'S REPORT

*Continued from Page 3*

intent and vocation.

If our IALJS is to thrive in the 21st century, it needs to become more diverse, intersectional and agile, and less focused on the past.

The foundations have been solidly laid down over these past fifteen years. Now it's time to start building on the strength of these deep roots, upwards and outwards beyond our comfort zone, where our work will matter most.

*Brooklyn, August 8, 2019*

—  
The final draft of my text reached the newsletter editor on August 8th. Between then and now, my words have made the rounds among IALJS leadership. How do I know? After reading my piece for the first time, the editor decided to ask a member of the IALJS leadership to respond to my plea. I agreed to share the text with the express request that, if there was a response, I would be able to react to

it.

On page 11, Rob Alexander has formulated what I believe is the first response to my text: the creation of a "Global Engagement Committee." My reaction to his proposal: it's too little, too late.

A change in our approach to leadership at IALJS should start from the top, and we have the mechanisms to implement it. Creating a Global Engagement Committee in an international organization feels a bit like creating a subcommittee for swimmers on a swim team—it's inherently redundant. "International" is literally the first word in the name of this association. More egregiously, it does the opposite of what my text asks of our organization: it siloes diversity instead of integrating it into the fabric of our governance. The flaw in this approach is evident right at its first step: Who will determine the membership for such a committee?

In order to create true global representation, we need to start by respecting our bylaws, which ask for transparent elections. If we are feeling a

bit more daring, and want to add room for more representation (say ... the four continents Rob describes in his letter, or some other formula that allows for us to include some of the voices that have been ignored until now), maybe we should create a committee to reform our governance, one in charge of reworking the bylaws to make them more inclusive — a committee elected through an open and fair process, with the mandate of fostering different types of representation.

A few days ago, while discussing changes to the Journalism curriculum at Stony Brook, a professor (standing member of the school ... but also of the old guard, plain and simple) argued against the incorporation of a "Global Journalism" course as part of our core curriculum: "I have traveled to a lot of places and I've always been told that American journalism is the best." I joked with a colleague that we should emblazon this motto on our school letterhead. I really hope we don't need to adapt it at IALJS too.

*Brooklyn, September 29, 2019*



**JOIN US  
FOR  
IALJS-15  
IN  
DENMARK**

*See next page for  
registration details.*

<b>2020 IALJS CONVENTION REGISTRATION FORM</b> <b>21-23 May 2019</b> <b>University of Copenhagen</b> <b>Copenhagen, Denmark</b>				
<b>1.a. PRE-REGISTRATION FEES (MUST BE POSTMARKED ON OR BEFORE 31 MARCH 2020)</b>			Please indicate the applicable amounts:	
Current IALJS Member – \$120	(rate for those already having paid their 2019 dues)			
Current IALJS Member retired – \$100	(rate for those already having paid their 2019 dues)			
Student – \$5	(rate for those already having paid their 2019 dues)			
Student – \$30	(Includes a one-year IALJS membership)			
Non-IALJS member – \$170	(Includes a one-year IALJS membership)			
Spouse/Partner – \$50 (This fee is required only if a spouse will be attending scheduled research sessions and/or panels)				
<b>1.b. REGISTRATION FEES POSTMARKED AFTER 31 MARCH 2020</b> (Note: Meals & special events may not be available to those who register after 31 March 2020)				
Current IALJS Member – \$155	(rate for those already having paid their 2020 dues)			
Current IALJS Member retired – \$135	(rate for those already having paid their 2020 dues)			
Student – \$30	(rate for those already having paid their 2020 dues)			
Student – \$55	(Includes a one-year IALJS membership)			
Non-IALJS member – \$205	(Includes a one-year IALJS membership)			
Spouse/Partner – \$85 (This fee is required only if a spouse will be attending scheduled research sessions and/or panels)				
<b>1.c. ON-SITE REGISTRATION – \$180 for IALJS members, \$230 for non-members (includes a one-year IALJS membership). NOTE: Meals &amp; special events may not be available to those who register on site.</b>				
<b>2. SPECIAL EVENTS:</b> Please indicate the number of meals required next to each item below				
		Number of meals needed:	Regular	Vegetarian
Conference Banquet (Friday evening)	Number attending x \$60			
<b>Make registration checks payable to “IALJS”</b>		<b>TOTAL ENCLOSED:</b>		
Please return completed form with a check or bank transfer payable to “IALJS” to >>>  To register on-line via PayPal, see “Conference Payments” at <a href="http://WWW.IALJS.ORG">WWW.IALJS.ORG</a>	BILL REYNOLDS, IALJS Treasurer School of Journalism Ryerson University 350 Victoria St., Toronto, Ontario M5B 2K3 CANADA Tel: +01-416-979-5000 x6294 Fax: +01-416-979-5216 reynolds@ryerson.ca	For a reservation at the convention hotel, More information will be forthcoming shortly.		
<b>3. REGISTRATION INFO</b>				
Name:				
University				
School, Department				
City, State, Zip, Country				
Phone				
E-mail Address				



## 2020 IALJS Membership Form

Please fill out form and return (by mail, fax or scanned e-mail attachment) with dues payment to address below.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Title (Dr., Prof., Mr., Ms., Mrs., Miss) \_\_\_\_\_

University \_\_\_\_\_

School/Department \_\_\_\_\_

Work address (street, city, state/province, country) \_\_\_\_\_

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Phone (include intl. code) Home \_\_\_\_\_ Work \_\_\_\_\_ Cell \_\_\_\_\_

Fax phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

Area(s) of teaching/research interest \_\_\_\_\_

**Membership Categories:** The annual IALJS membership coincides with the **calendar year** (no pro-rating is available). Members receive the *Literary Journalism* newsletter, the *Literary Journalism Studies* journal, all IALJS announcements and conference CFPs.

- Please check category:
- US\$ 50: Regular Member (Faculty member)
  - US\$ 50: Associate Member (Professional member)
  - US\$ 25: Student Member (Master or Doctoral level)
  - US\$ 25: Retired Faculty Member
  - US\$ 75: Library or Commercial Journal Subscription (annual)
  - US\$100: Sponsoring Member (to support the IALJS general operating fund)

**Please Note:** Because your IALJS membership dues are apportioned to various publication accounts, as well as for operating expenses, the U.S. Postal Service requires that you sign off on this procedure. Please sign below.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### PAYMENT METHODS: PayPal/Credit Cards or Check:

#### 1. PayPal and Credit Cards:

Payments may be made via PayPal (and credit cards). Please see "Membership Payments" at <http://www.ialjs.org>. Please also fax completed form (above) to Bill Reynolds, IALJS Treasurer, School of Journalism, Ryerson University: +01-416-979-5216.

#### 2. Make Check Payable, in U.S. Funds only, to "IALJS"; please mail check with completed form to:

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# AGAINST SPLIT PERSONALITY PEDAGOGY

*Teaching literary journalism reporting techniques across the journalism curriculum*

By Lisa A. Phillips, SUNY New Paltz (U.S.A.)

If you're reading this article, you're likely already engaged in the teaching and study of literary journalism. But you probably also teach classes other than literary journalism, which can lead to a phenomenon I call "split personality pedagogy."



TEACHING  
TIPS

Split personality pedagogy goes something like this: In the morning you teach an introductory reporting class, your focus on urging students to get the details of a press conference right and

developing a clear, concise and pithy prose style. In the afternoon, your upper level literary/narrative/magazine journalism students feast on the richer fare of Didion, Hunter S., Rachel Kaadzi Ghansah, and John McPhee, inspiring them to explore new ways of approaching their own writing and reporting.

There are good reasons to make what at first feels like a clean divide between a.m. and p.m. It's difficult to teach the fundamentals of writing and reporting. You have to get students to tackle the verbosity that comes from years of misguided notions about good writing. An elective in literary journalism, typically later in a student's academic career, can come

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across as the reward for a job well done, for understanding the rules well enough to consider what it means to break them.

Early in my journalism teaching career I went with the split personality

approach. It felt safer, the variables under control. But after a while it began to feel intellectually dishonest. I wasn't reporting or writing in the inverted pyramid, third person omniscient straightjacket. Most of what I read wasn't written that way, either. Certainly, the best journalism I was reading was not written that way.

We are better off from the start teaching students that journalism is a constellation of genres and styles, with literary journalism among the brightest stars. Literary journalism is foundational to what journalism is. Teaching it throughout the curriculum helps students see journalism as intellectual inquiry and an endeavor that has the capacity to humanize news and information.

The following are what I hope will be a useful set of "read" and "do" tips for infusing an undergraduate journalism curriculum from the introductory to advanced level with the study and practice of literary journalism. The tips are based on

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