

Introduction . . .

Danish Literary Journalism: Arts & Culture

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The present three-essay section of *Literary Journalism Studies* puts a spotlight on literary journalism as performed in coverage of arts and culture in Denmark: What professional values, practices, and role conceptions are currently at play in this area? How does *cultural journalism*—traditionally defined by its specific *field*—overlap with *literary journalism*—traditionally defined by its approach—and what might be discovered at the intersections?

These questions are engaged, first, in a keynote essay by Nete Kristensen, who offers a tentative mapping and mirroring of the two paradigms. Kristensen writes as a specialist in cultural journalism in the Nordic region where specific media and culture policies are introduced as a distinct backdrop for the three studies. In her essay, “The Kinship of Literary Journalism and Cultural Journalism: Everyday Life, Interpretation, and Emotionality,” Kristensen conveys how a still broader conception of culture in media contexts more generally has moved coverage of arts and culture closer to literary journalism in terms of engaging everyday life matters rather than moving in more elite and/or more commercialized spheres. Moreover, the turns in contemporary journalism towards embracing both interpretation and emotionality are presented as good reasons to look more closely at cultural and literary journalism, the practitioners of which have traditionally—if each in their own traditions—stood out from mainstream journalism on account of taking exactly interpretative and emotional dimensions seriously.

Two different case studies by Christine Isager and Steffen Moestrup, respectively, follow up by taking a closer look at two contemporary Danish literary journalists who navigate the above-mentioned, intersecting terrains by toggling between the roles of cultural producer/artist and journalist within individual journalistic stories, as well as over the course of their careers.

Isager takes a cue from Kristensen in terms of considering the alternating or overlapping professional roles in the arts and culture sector by investigating how *de facto* familiarity with a subculture may—for better or worse—be transformed into a form of immersion journalism. Her essay, “The Passive-Responsive Journalist: An Offensive Case of Immersion in the Danish Film Industry,” looks specifically at the rhetoric of writer and cultural journalist René Fredensborg (b. 1972) who caused outrage in 2011 by exposing camaraderie in the Danish film and television business in a literary journalistic vein. The form of his reporting became an issue itself, which causes Isager to analyze Fredensborg’s peculiar blend of character appeals at the textual level. While subscribing to the generalized ethos of an engaged, responsive literary journalist, Fredensborg also adopts a number of Gonzo poses that were amplified in the magazine’s editing of his work and served to betray this same ethos in practice. This ambivalent style both of freelance career and

of literary reporting is identified as a “passive-responsive” rhetorical stance worth taking note of beyond the Nordic context.

Finally, Moestrup engages the work and career of Danish writer, journalist, and food critic Martin Kongstad (b. 1953). To capture the distinct literary journalistic features of Kongstad’s playful work across genres and media platforms, Moestrup argues for a *performative* approach to the study of what is more broadly referred to as persona-driven literary journalism. How the latter is flourishing among cultural journalists and critics was the topic of Moestrup’s doctoral work from which he here draws special attention to the four key analytical categories that are indicated also in the title of his essay: “Theatricality, Body, Voice, Spatiality: Applying Performance Analysis to Persona-Driven Literary Journalism.” Taking a performative approach enables a reading that is particularly sensitive to the cross-media literary quality and nature of Kongstad’s literary strategies that include, for instance, the use of multiple voices and presenting fictional characters alongside actual sources.

Early versions of these essays were presented as part of a panel on persona transformations across media and genres in Nordic literary journalism on arts and culture at IALJS-14 at Stony Brook University in 2019. Interested readers might also look up a third Danish case study by Rønlev and Bengtsson that originally formed part of this same panel and was developed for publication in *Journalism* (2020). Titled “The Media Provocateur: A Rhetorical Framework for Studying an Emerging Persona in Journalism,” Rasmus Rønlev and Mette Bengtsson’s essay engages the routes of so-called non-traditional actors, such as media provocateurs, (micro-)bloggers, and social media influencers, into journalism, that is, here too with the creative design and development of journalistic personas in contemporary media in focus.

With the boundaries of literary journalism becoming still more permeable, and its professional ideologies and practices arguably turning more mainstream, the present, joined perspectives from media studies (Kristensen), performance studies (Moestrup), and rhetoric studies (Isager, and Rønlev and Bengtsson) should point also to scholarly boundaries that might happily be transgressed in further discussions of these developments and their implications. While the specific area of arts and culture has not hitherto been at the center of attention in the practice and study of literary journalism, it is hoped that these studies point to a turn of attention worth making that might inspire further literary journalism studies of creative coverage of arts and culture in nations and regions beyond the Nordic.