IALJS-6 IN THE HEART OF EUROPE

The success of our annual conference in Brussels in May.

By Alice Donat Trindade, Universidade Técnica de Lisboa (Portugal)

We just completed our annual conference, IALJS-6, last month—and so are still resonant with the wonderful energies of these yearly meetings. Université Libre de Bruxelles, Manuel Couvreur, François Heinderyckx and Isabelle Meuret were this year’s hosts, and we are all indebted to them for the remarkable hospitality that they lavished on us.

The participants in this year’s conference turned it into another occasion for a community of scholars to discover both the degree to which literary journalism is a worldwide phenomenon and the quality of academic research it supports. Moreover, the IALJS-6 conference was an opportunity to bring together uniquely different experiences.

We witnessed how the voices of literary journalism speak in the languages of many peoples of the experiences of many societies. It was interesting to note that both the past and the future were represented in the work of the conference participants: from the Latin American nineteenth-century chronicles to the twenty-first-century developments in the emerging literary journalism realms of film, photography and graphic nonfiction. It all showed the ability of the genre to renew itself and evolve, as well as the progress our learned society is making in defining a true scholarly discipline.

On another note, the association’s annual business meeting voted to approve amendments of our Constitution and Bylaws. We now have a First and Second Vice Presidents, and we have added the chairs of the Liaison, Publicity, Conference Planning and Graduate Students Committees have been included in our Executive Committee. For the full text of our amended and approved charter, please see Page 23. In other news, Nancy Roberts of the University at Albany will join founding book review editor Tom Connery on the staff of our journal, Literary Journalism Studies. Now book review editor elect, she will take over at the end of this year.

So we have more hands to help, eager to contribute to the growth of an association that was initially the dream of the handful of people who gathered round our founding president, John Bak, in 2006 in Nancy, France.

Whether or not you were in Brussels this year, please make note that our next annual meeting is in Toronto in May 2012 at Ryerson University with Bill Reynolds as our host. We are all sure it will follow the path of all our conferences so far, a course of admirable growth in both diversity and rigor. Until then, please enjoy the newsletter and consider your next submission to the conference or the journal.

Brussels was truly wonderful, so please mark your calendar now for May 2012 in Toronto

FUTURE IALJS CONFERENCE SITES

The following future IALJS convention venues are planned. For more info, please see <www.ialjs.org>.

IALJS-7: Ryerson University, Toronto, Canada, 17-19 May 2012.
IALJS-8: University of Helsinki, Finland, 9-11 May 2013.
IALJS-10: University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, Minnesota, U.S.A or University of Oslo, Norway, 7-9 May 2015 (pending).
IALJS-11: NU-Q, Doha, Qatar, 19-21 May 2016 (pending).
IALJS-12: to be announced, 11-13 May 2017.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT FOR 2011

We are happy to be able to report that our association’s membership, as of 15 May 2011, includes a total of 117 members.

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WWW.IALJS.ORG
Inspirational. Congenial. These are mere euphemisms that don’t do justice to the moments lived by all of the evangelists on behalf of literary journalism at our 2011 annual conference. Six years have passed since that serendipitous meeting in Nancy, France—the original spark that ignited IALJS. And all through the subsequent years we have been witnesses to the growing interest that academics have in both the association and, most importantly, literary journalism itself. This year has proved no different. A total of 56 persons were on the IALJS-6 program. And in an attempt to accommodate the increasingly larger number of submissions and panel proposals that come our way each year, we have had, for the second consecutive year, to program parallel panel sessions.

As we heard underscored at our Friday Scholar’s Breakfast—newly entitled “Breakfast for Your Thoughts”—IALJS offers a welcoming international forum of like-minded spirits. Scholarly research, usually carried out in the loneliness of the academic world, is shared and discussed to the benefit of all. In fact, because it is informal in nature, with a friendly format especially intended for junior researchers, the breakfast provided

Text continues on Page 4

2011 IALJS ANNUAL CONVENTION IN BELGIUM
The Université Libre de Bruxelles hosts our sixth international conference.
By Isabel Soares, Universidade Técnica de Lisboa (Portugal)

ABOVE, CONFERENCE KEYNOTE JOHN PAULY IN CONVERSATION WITH NORM SIMS, WHILE THE IALJS-4 KEYNOTER RICHARD KEEBLE AND TODD SCHACK, BELOW, SHARE A SMILING MOMENT BETWEEN SESSIONS.

ABOVE, ISABELLE MEURET, THE CHAIR OF THE IALJS-6 HOST COMMITTEE, IN CONVERSATION WITH THE ASSOCIATION'S PRESIDENT, ALICE DONAT TRINDADE. THE GRACIOUSNESS AND EFFICACY WITH WHICH ISABELLE ORGANIZED EVERY ELEMENT OF THE ANNUAL MEETING WAS OBVIOUS IN THE APPARENT COLLEGIATE PLEASURE ENJOYED BY ALL OF THE CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS.
a wonderful opportunity for graduate students to share their intellectual experiences—as well as perhaps some of their career-related anxieties—with more senior researchers and faculty. The result is something special. If I had to stress anything particular that highlights the uniqueness of this session, it is this amazing possibility for younger members of the academy who are starting their careers to have an opportunity to interact directly with the “gurus” and top researchers in the discipline. It is clear that this is definitely an aspect that sets IALJS conferences apart from larger and perhaps less personal academic scholarly professional meetings.

As chair of the Research Committee, I have the privilege of organizing the research paper and work-in-progress submissions and the jurying process. Of course, one has to concede that not every submission is accepted for presentation. (Our overall acceptance rate was 60 percent.) Nor are all of them even legitimate attempts at bonafide academic work. Notwithstanding, I must admit that I was delighted to receive submissions from such improbable places as Georgia, Ghana and Iran. I think we can consider this a marker of the success of our still-young association. It never ceases to amaze me that the word is out there—and many people are listening to it.

Being a truly international association, the conferences of IALJS take pride in being international in scope. For the first time this year there were panellists from Japan and Italy sharing their knowledge with us. And, again, Latin and North America, Europe, Asia and Australia were so well represented that we even had a session that explored the possible transnational nature of literary journalism as a vehicle for storytelling about the human experience.

And speaking of human experience, one of the topics that stood out at this year’s conference was, as the session title claimed, “the possibilities of personal experience.” In a way, this said it all. IALJS-6 enriched minds with new ideas and our hearts with the warm glow of a very special collegiality.

We left the Université Libre de Bruxelles and our gracious host, Isabelle Meuret, looking forward eagerly to next year’s meeting in Toronto.

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**TEACHING TIPS** Continued from Page 28

explode before we could get everyone out. Those kids inside had to be terrified!” The first sentence is useful; the second sentence is not. Although it is highly likely that the kids would be terrified, the statement is conjecture. It lies beyond of the subject’s ken and weakens the perspective. Similarly, it is often best to reveal only as much as the subject can see—in effect, the subject’s panorama. It can be tempting to explain what lies in wait behind the tree, but if the subject can not see or sense it, the point of view will be weakened by inserting this information. If possible, it is better to omit or delay this revelation until the subject is confronted by it. It is this sort of meticul-
IALJS ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING
Minutes from meeting held at IALJS-6 in Brussels on 13 May 2011.

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

President Alice Donat Trindade called the 2011 annual business meeting of the International Association for Literary Journalism Studies to order at 3:35 p.m. and thanked Isabelle Meruet of the Université Libre de Bruxelles for her extraordinarily successful efforts as the host of IALJS-6. In her introductory remarks Alice also noted the increasingly global nature of both literary journalism as a genre and literary journalism studies as a scholarly discipline.

Secretary David Abrahamson distributed the minutes of the 2010 IALJS annual meeting at Roehampton University in London. John Hartsock moved the approval of the minutes, John Bak seconded and the motion to approve carried unanimously.

Treasurer Bill Reynolds gave an annual treasurer’s report. The current bank balance is $32,281.26, which includes $15,000.00 in interest-bearing savings instruments. The association has 117 members in good standing from 24 countries, with 60 percent from nations other than the U.S.

Research chair Isabel Soares reported that 26 acceptances from 44 submissions for IALJS-6, an acceptance rate of 59 percent. She also noted that we had submissions this year from Iran and Georgia. Isabel thanked the 2011 jury members for their work, as well as the members of the Greenberg Prize jury, which awarded the 2011 honor to Miles Maguire. In addition, she said that the IALJS-7 submission deadline is 1 December 2011 and that we may experiment with online submissions next year.

Program co-chair Rob Alexander reported on the variety of topics explored in the six panels programmed this year and noted that organizing the panels into three pairs of concurrent sessions seemed to again work well. He also suggested that we continue to include at least one panel on pedagogy.

Literary Journalism Studies editor John Hartsock reported that the journal’s fifth issue (Vol. 3, No. 1) had been mailed prior to the conference. He said he hoped to receive papers from IALJS-6 for consideration by the journal and that Roberta and Miles Maguire had joined the journal staff as associate editors.

Tom Connery, the IJS book review editor, reminded everyone that he is very open to suggestions for books of and about literary journalism to review, including books in languages other than English. He also noted that Nancy Roberts of the University at Albany will succeed him at the end of 2011.

David reported that, with Bill Reynolds’s invaluable assistance as co-editor, the quarterly newsletter, Literary Journalism, continues to prosper.

Graduate Committee co-chair Bill Reynolds reported that he and his Ryerson University colleagues are looking forward to welcoming IALJS next year.

Tobias Eberwein reported that the IALJS-6 “Breakfast for Your Thoughts” (née “Scholars Breakfast”) was enjoyed by all attended and that he hopes to develop a mailing list for the association’s graduate student members.

IALJS-7 Host Committee chair Bill Reynolds reported that he and his Ryerson University colleagues are looking forward to welcoming the association to Toronto next year. He also said that his administration seems to be quite supportive of the 17-19 May conference.

Joint programming was the next item on the agenda. It is clear that, in addition to our own annual conference, jointly sponsored sessions with other learned societies have become an important scholarly venue for IALJS members. It was also noted that such joint programming contributes to IALJS’s visibility and is a steady source of new members. David Abrahamson summarized the two IALJS sessions held at the Southeast Colloquium in Columbia, South Carolina in March, while Rob Alexander recounted the successful IALJS panel at the American Comparative Literature Association meeting in Vancouver in April. Mention was also made of two IALJS roundtable sessions this August at the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication convention in St. Louis, Missouri, which Josh Roiland has organized.

John Bak then outlined the IALJS seminar proposed for the biennial conference of the European Society for the Study of English scheduled for September 2012 in Istanbul. It was noted that participation in ESSE might alternate with AEJMC.

Under old business, John Bak reported that the scholarly anthology, Literary Journalism Across the Globe, that he and Bill Reynolds had edited from the presentations at IALJS-1 and IALJS-2 had just appeared in print; it was a very welcome announcement for the book’s contributors, many of whom were in attendance at the business meeting.

Under new business, proposed amendments to the IALJS bylaws were discussed. These included the creation of a new post of Second Vice President (who automatically succeeds to the post of First Vice President and thence to President) and the inclusion of Liaison, Publicity, Conference Planning and Graduate Student chairs as members of the IALJS Executive Committee. John Hartsock moved for adoption, Susan Greenberg seconded and the amendments were unanimously approved.

Isabelle Meuret was given one more warm and enthusiastic ovation for her wonderful work in hosting IALJS-6, and at 4:25 p.m., Alice called for a motion of adjournment, which was moved, seconded and unanimously approved.

Respectfully Submitted,

David Abrahamson, Secretary
International Association for Literary Journalism Studies

LITERARY JOURNALISM / SUMMER 2011 PAGE 5
In China, literary reportage is a genre that combines literature and journalism. Chinese historians of literary reportage trace the history of the genre back to the end of the 19th century and they believe that its Chinese term, *Bao Gao Wen Xue*, was translated from the German word *Reportage* in an article in 1930 introducing the work of Egon Erwin Kisch (1885-1948), a Czech reporter who wrote the book *Secret China* (1933) after he visited China in 1932.

Though similar to literary journalism, Chinese literary reportage is categorized as a genre of literature, and it is agreed by most scholars that the genre serves a political end. A critical nature is the soul of the genre.

Chinese literary reportage boomed in both the 1930s and 1980s. However, the genre has been declining since the 1990s. China began its conversion to a market economy in 1978, and with the market economy in full swing after 1992, individualism and materialism have dominated Chinese society since the 1990s.

Practitioners of literary reportage, like most people in Chinese society, were carried away by the commercial tide. Concerned only with money, many began fabricating stories and writing for anyone who paid them well. Though a few journals—including *Literary Reportage*, *Beijing Literature*, *Chinese Writers: Nonfiction*—still publish works of literary reportage regularly, the genre has lost its readers and influences.

Nevertheless, while literary reportage is declining in China today, some top newspapers are encouraging their reporters to experiment with a new kind of journalism that emphasizes literary techniques. They do not call this kind of writing literary journalism, but in my view they are much closer to literary journalism than Chinese literary reportage. A few examples from *Southern Weekly*, an influential newspaper in China, may show how literary journalism has been practiced in China today.

*Southern Weekly* is a weekly newspaper with a circulation of 1.6 million readers. Though based in Guangzhou in southern China, the newspaper targets well-educated readers throughout the entire country. And it is important to note that in a transitional society such as China, the newspaper has long been representative of media’s involvement in social reform and social justice.

The special issue of *Southern Weekly* celebrating the Chinese New Year may be a good example. It shows how the newspaper’s literary journalism is presented. Published on 3 February 2011, this special issue—entitled “In the Name of Father”—included the stories about 15 fathers. Each story was told in the first person by the father’s daughter or son.

For instance, sometime in 2010 the phrase “My father is Li Gang,” became the catchword on the Internet for the privileges possessed by the so-called “descendants of government officials” in China. The sentence was uttered with complete arrogance by the son of a deputy director of the public security bureau after his car ran into two female college students. One student died after the car accident, and the man was sentenced to three years in prison and a fine of 350,000 RMB (about $53,000). In the *Southern Weekly* special issue, the story of the incident was narrated by the sister of the student who was killed by Li Gang.

Other stories were narrated by a 17-year-old Foxconn girl who jumped off her dormitory building, the son of an officer...
One story, entitled “My Last Castle,” was about a 17-year-old Foxconn girl who jumped off her dorm building. Foxconn, an electronics company where she worked, produces iPhone for Apple. The girl, Tian Yu, jumped off from the fourth floor of her dorm building at 7:00 a.m. on 17 March 2010. She was the second of 12 workers of the company to jump off buildings from January to May 2010. Of all the 12 workers who attempted suicides, 10 died. The oldest one was 24 years old, but most of them were under 20. In less than half a year, why did so many young workers of the company commit suicide?

The story answers the question. Tian Yu was born into a farmer’s family. She was the oldest daughter and had one sister and one younger brother. After junior high school, she went to a vocational training school to learn accounting for three years—but failed to get a job after graduation.

After staying at home with nothing to do for six months, she decided, like many of her peers, to go to the city to try to find a job. She left home a few days before Chinese New Year, because the train tickets were cheaper at this time. It was also a good time to look for a job because regular workers in the city often went to their home villages to spend the New Year. Her father gave her 500RMB (about $70) before she left. It seemed that she was fortunate. She found a job at Foxconn, a big company in Shenzhen in southern China, which produces iPhones.

On 12 February 2010 she moved into a dorm where eight girls lived. But she rarely saw any of her roommates because they were in different departments and had different working schedules. Her 12-hour-a-day job was to check the screen of iPhone, simply doing one thing, looking at the screen of iPhone to check if there were any defects. She checked one iPhone every 15 seconds.

After working for more than a month, she did not get her salary because her bank card was not ready. At this point, she had about 10 RMB (less than $2 dollars) with her, knowing almost nobody. She had also lost her mobile phone two weeks earlier when it was stolen from the pocket of her work clothes.

On the morning of 17 March, she was alone in her dorm, feeling cold and exhausted, with no money, no mobile phone, no friends. She got up and climbed to the fourth floor of her dorm building—and jumped off.

The story, “My Last Castle,” was written in first person. It began with: “In the eyes of most people, I died; but in the eyes of my father, I am still alive.” Then the story goes on to narrate how her father took care of her after she was seriously hurt. The story ends with her father’s words, “Tian Yu, it is good to be home. We are home now.”

Like the other 14 stories, in an artful way this story provides a deeper understanding of present day China. It is a place where the economy is booming and where people like Tian Yu are working overtime doing dull jobs for very low salaries. Farmers and their rural families, being the weakest group in society, have become the sad victims in both the process of China’s modernization and in the expansion of world capitalism. In the end, they have nothing to rely on but the traditional Chinese values, hard work and tolerance. ♦
Now that we have finally emerged from winter, I remember the long and sunny days spent in Turin last August, in the company of some of the happy few who joined the IALJS panel organized at the biennial European Society for the Study of English (ESSE) conference. The panel convened by John Bak and David Abrahamson, “History and Literary Journalism,” was devoted to studying the comparative approach adopted by historians and literary journalists when reporting facts. Both share a similar commitment to their tasks, i.e. to give an accurate representation of what actually happened. Yet while historians tend to hold on to facts, devoid of their emotive power, literary journalists are witnesses with phenomenological concerns.

It was quite a fascinating panel: I was intrigued by the diversity of works and authors studied, and the wonderful insight of all the participants. We traveled from The Congested Districts of Ireland to The Country Formerly Known as Great Britain, addressed muckraking journalism by American social reformers and were privileged to hear discussions of the Wilhelm Gustloff maritime tragedy, the Report from Spain written against Franco, as well as The Making of the Atomic Bomb and The Story of the Bataan Death March. While our case studies diverged temporally and geographically, it can be argued that all converged around two statements of possible fact.

First, literary journalists tend to focus on minor events within the larger frames of historical landmarks or, to put it differently, they seem to linger on facts that were overshadowed or even dwarfed by other major events. Literary journalists insist on investigating the experiences of minor characters and to expand the relevance of their “micro-histories.” This term comes from Italian microstoria, which is a discipline that aims to answer big historical questions by investigating small locations. To some extent, it is close to the historical narratives of “history from below.” Intriguingly enough, I realized that the microstoria school of thought was born in Italy, and more precisely in Turin, with the work of two outstanding historians, Givovanni Levi and Carlo Ginzburg.

Second, literary journalism usually has that special feel, or sensitivity, which...
Norman Sims asked whether there existed “subtle differences between historians and literary journalists that can be attributed to an emotional attachment?” We all seemed to agree that beside their cognitive approach to documents, as well as their narrativization and dramatization of events, literary journalists are willing to connect with the protagonists so as to experience the *hic et nunc* of their realities. Although it has been known recently for its car industry, Turin was first and foremost a magnet for intellectuals and *literati*: Cesare Pavese, Antonio Gramsci, Primo Levi, Umberto Eco and my favorite, Italo Calvino, all hailed or spent substantial time in this Piedmont-ese jewel.

I did not want to leave Turin without visiting two of its best-known museums: the *Museo Nazionale del Cinema* and the *Museo Egizio*, with its collection of Egyptian antiquities. Turin was the birthplace of Italian cinema before Cinecittà took over. The museum, located in the base of the towering *Mole Antonelliana* building, was definitely worth a visit. I was enchanted by the spectacular extravaganza of the place and left reluctantly after a few hours. The museum is a labyrinthine walk through the history of cinema, from the *Lumière* Brothers to the Hollywood studios. The whole place is simply magical.

As for the Egyptian museum, it houses an exceptional collection of 30,000 artifacts. Needless to say that I was mesmerized by the imposing sarcophaguses and the majestic pharaoh statues in the second-floor gallery, which I walked up and down several times. The historical twist of our delightful literary journalism seminar had perhaps inevitably led me to this journey back in time.

Remembering Turin makes me dream expectantly of our next ESSE panel in Istanbul in 2012. If there was any hint of sadness in my Turin sojourn, it was that I had to fly back to Belgium after a fabulous week in Italy for the start of the new academic year. The place had a special vibrancy. As a former royal city along the river Po, with its regal palace and princely avenues, its many art galleries, baroque monuments and unforgettable museums, Turin was the perfect showcase for our musings on literary journalism. Yes, I will certainly go back to Turin: to have another taste of its literary and artistic delicacies, and to sip a delicious chocolate and cream beverage, a regional specialty to be sipped at a *Al Bicerin*, a little café that, sadly, was closed for its annual summer vacation.

Turin’s architecture is impressive. Remains of its regal past—it was Italy’s first capital and the home of the House of Savoy—can be seen everywhere in the city.

PREVIOUS PAGE: THE GLOWING NEIGHBORHOOD OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TURIN IS DOMINATED BY THE SPIRE OF *MOLE* (ITALIAN FOR “SIZE”), ORIGINALLY A SYNAGOGUE, IT IS NOW ONE OF THE BEST FILM MUSEUMS IN THE WORLD.
THE “CULTURE PEG” IN INTERNATIONAL REPORTING

An exploration of the how the media shapes citizen understanding of the world.

By Miki Tanikawa, Sophia University (Japan) and contributor to the International Herald Tribune

When journalists report cross-culturally—writing for a national newspaper such as an American newspaper about another country or culture such as Germany, Saudi Arabia or Japan—they often make use of what is here described as the "culture peg." It is a way of making the subject matter interesting, readable and topical to audiences who may not be interested in overseas affairs. The use of the culture peg is widespread in international reporting, especially in features and soft news stories—a much more prevalent form of news today than decades ago (Patterson, 2000; Weldon, 2008; Tanikawa, 2009). However, this technique does not seem to be publically articulated by journalists nor is it defined in existing academic literature. The purpose of this essay is to propose and suggest a definition for the phrase. We shall attempt a ground-up construction of a theory based partly on my own experience reporting cross-culturally as a Japan correspondent for American newspapers and magazines, as well as years of observing foreign reporting in the American and Japanese media. This study is thought to close a hole that seems to exist in the existing news value and newsworthiness studies that have been a major area of inquiry in journalism studies. There, “news” has tended to be defined as hard news, rather than soft and feature stories and the theme of achieving cultural relevancy when presenting foreign news to the audience, which journalists perceive as critical components in their stories, seems to be largely absent. Prevalence of this technique also reveals the reasons behind journalism’s skewed focus on particular subjects and the resulting famine in covering other aspects of foreign societies. The following text provides a working definition of “culture peg” and its sister concept “culture link,” as well as some concrete examples and illustrations.

For the most part we do not first see and then define, we define first and then see. In the great blooming, buzzing confusion of the outer world we pick out what our culture has already defined for us, and we tend to perceive that which we have picked out in the form stereotyped for us by our culture.

—Walter Lippmann

This observation made by columnist Lippmann in the aftermath of World War I seems to get to the heart of the questions, concerns, and dilemmas that are on the minds of journalists working in a cross-cultural setting. Journalists reporting internationally often ask this question: how can one achieve readership relevance and get people to become interested in your foreign reports? What news should a foreign correspondent report for its home audience? What in the following essay is defined as the “culture peg” is an attempt by journalists to arouse that mental image people have about foreign cultures, and thereby to elicit their interest in the foreign event or phenomenon. In so doing, journalists are in effect leveraging what others think they know about the culture and/or country being reported.

THE FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT’S CULTURAL AND EPISTEMOLOGICAL CHALLENGES

Before defining the “culture peg,” it may be useful to further highlight the challenging environment that foreign correspondents find themselves in. Due to the cultural and epistemological gaps between his/her environment and the readership’s back home, it is difficult for the correspondent to find stories for his or her home audience. One of the only ways to overcome this is when, as already stated, something extraordinary happens. For the purpose of simplicity of argument, I will use United States newspapers as an example of the home news media that a foreign correspondent is working for, and countries such as Saudi Arabia, Germany and Japan as the lands from which the correspondent is

Continued on next page
reporting. Much of what is happening and making news locally in the correspondent’s assigned country (e.g. Saudi Arabia, Germany, Japan) will mostly not make its way into the American newspaper he or she is working for. Americans lack an appetite for foreign news, and recent research suggests that this is increasingly so in the past few decades (Hoge, 1997; Arnett, 1998; Kim, 2002). One possible exception is if the correspondent is reporting from a country with strong cultural, political or economic ties to the readership’s home country. In this event, there is a possibility of successfully arresting reader attention (Hester, 1973).

Where an average American newspaper reader would take an interest in, say, an abduction of a 5-year-old girl, school teachers going on a strike or results of a congressional election, it is understood that an American correspondent cannot write about similar, equivalent-scale events from Germany or Japan for his American readership. Unless, that is, the abduction was systematic and extensive on a scale not seen in the U.S. Or the teacher’s strike was so widespread that it was beginning to disrupt the national politics in that country. Or if, as will be discussed at length later, there is a German or Japanese cultural spin to the incident. For example, bandits in Germany kidnapping a child when they could not find the German sausages they were planning to steal and then demanding sausages as ransom. Or hundreds of right-wing Japanese teachers walking out of the classrooms because their World War II war-heroes were poorly portrayed in a history textbook. In these instances, the German sausage and the Japanese right-wing aspects function as the “culture peg.” (Important caveat: There have been no such incidents or reports from Germany or Japan. Some of the heuristic examples we will use are purely fictional, and will be noted as such.)

The hurdle of finding suitable topics being naturally higher for foreign stories, the correspondent has to search for something truly extraordinary to pass the minimum newsworthiness threshold. In this circumstance, the 1996 study by Shoemaker and Reese on news value can serve as a useful guide. It lists the following elements as criteria for newsworthiness: prominence/importance, human interest, conflict controversy, the unusual, timeliness and proximity. If the incident is that much more pronounced, paving the way for the news to qualify as “very” hard news—for example, the kidnappers abducted hundreds of children of the rich and famous—then it becomes newsworthy. Here the unusual (hundreds kidnapped) and prominence/importance (children of the rich and famous) factors have come into play, and the result is to make the matters newsworthy.

Incidents in foreign countries may also warrant coverage if there is a “news peg,” a development linked to the hard news event. For example, following the 2008 financial crisis many international news developments tied to the failure of Lehman Brothers were explored by U.S. newspapers. Similarly, both the news peg and the conflict factor create news stories out of Pakistan and Afghanistan. Interestingly, these include softer news stories (e.g. literacy rates rising among young women), where large news events provide a context for traditionally less important social developments.

THE CULTURE PEG EXPLAINED
Sometimes, however, the hard news element is absent, and a news peg is not available. If the correspondent wishes to write a feature story that, for instance, depicts the lives of the people or the society, the writer often resorts to the “culture peg.” For example, a correspondent in Saudi Arabia chose to report on the camel beauty pageant held in Riyadh. Please see <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/16/world/africa/16iht-journal.4.11147854.html?scp=1&sq=Camels%20and%20Beauty%20Pageant%20and%20Virgin&st=cse>.

This story from the New York Times draws readers in because the story is “pegged” culturally with an element or aspect that readers can easily associate with the Middle East: the camel. American readers would normally have a hard time identifying themselves with things Middle Eastern. But “camel” is one cultural object that they can easily relate to as something from the Middle East. The correspondent plays off that pre-existing notion in people’s minds as a way to connect the reader to the country/culture being reported. This reader pre-conception about a foreign culture, which the journalist attempts to engage, becomes the culture peg. The culture peg provides a point of cultural knowledge and connection between the reader and the country the correspondent is reporting from. Without it, the cultural and perceptual link would be absent, and such connectionless stories have little chance of getting read. As was so aptly pointed out by Lippmann 90 years ago, the only way people will have a feeling of a matter they do not experience is from the mental image they have of it, however feeble it might be. Journalists and the news media attempt to provoke interest by invoking that mental image—often a cultural stereotype—and take advantage of what others think they know about the subject matter.

Without a culture peg, writing about a typical beauty pageant in foreign countries would not fly for the same reason that American readers would not be interested in Japanese teachers going on a strike or a 5-year-old getting abducted in

Readers were drawn into the story because it was about something they easily associate with the Middle East: camels
CULTURE PEG  Continued from previous page

Germany. One could, however, write a story about a beauty pageant in Riyadh if the journalist focused on how it defies local conventions: people getting upset because women are exposing their bodies and blaming American influences for it (note Shoemaker and Reese’s conflict factor is also in play). One could write a story even if the pageant did not break local cultural conventions. If the contest is held with all the rigid local rules in place, having women wearing traditional robes on stage hiding all but their faces—and thus causing American readers to chuckle—it might then become a story.

Either way, there is a use of a culture peg. There is a culture peg in the first instance (a beauty pageant upsetting locals) because the reporter is playing off readers’ understanding of the Saudi or Middle Eastern culture as being too conservative to have a conventional beauty contest. The story plays off that reader preconception. The second instance (a pageant held in Saudi style) also pegs the story to people’s common perception about the culture: that women in the Arab world hide their bodies. And doing so—and thereby undermining the whole point of a beauty contest in the minds of many Americans—makes the story funny and interesting to readers.

One can perhaps realize here that such an approach to topic selection, seen from a local point of view, is extremely arbitrary—and perhaps unfair. In the case of the camel story, out of thousands of things happening in the country, the writer chose to zero in on the camel race only because that subject would click with his audience and attract interest. Focusing on matters where there are culture pegs often leaves the observing locals frustrated because of the skewed ways in which they end up being portrayed in the foreign media. Nevertheless, journalism cannot connect with readership if the readers cannot establish a mental connection with the subject matter at the cultural and perceptual level. Their mental image must be invoked when reading about cultures with which they lack first-hand experience. The culture peg plugs the hole by supplying readers with something they are familiar with—the mental image—something they can cling to, to establish a mental connection with an otherwise alien subject.

This technique could well be seen as stereotyping. The culture peg refers broadly to the use of commonly known cultural objects or images associated with that country as a way to connect the audience to the target country. But it can be set at different levels and is not necessarily a stereotype. For example, a correspondent writing a human interest story in France might open a story with a description of a scene at a Paris café, sprinkling words like le petite déjeuner and café décaféiné to create an atmosphere unique to the scene. The story may have nothing to do with food or drinks. These word devices may also be seen as culture pegs, because they are meant to help the readers connect with the scenes of a foreign country in question.

So a culture peg can be the main topic of the story, as was the case with the camel story. Or, as in the Parisien café scene, it can be marginal bits and pieces sprinkled around to set the tone and create an image or feeling that makes readers think they are reading about that culture.

The following story about the real estate market in Poland would serve as another case of “sprinkling of words.” Please see <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/02/greathomesanddestinations/02iht-repoland.html?scp=1&sq=Poznan%20Poland&st=cse>. Early in the piece, in the second paragraph, there is a reference to “communist-era train sta-

The use of photos can symbolically remind readers of the culture that is being reported on

A SISTER CONCEPT: CULTURE LINK

A concept related to the culture peg is the “culture link.” Like the culture peg, the culture link also attempts to invoke reader interest in the country being reported at the cultural and perceptual level and thus establishes a link to the country where the readership is based. But culture link is an element that derives not from the country being reported (as is the case with culture peg) but from the country or

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CULTURE PEG  Continued from previous page

culture where the readers are based. For the purpose of discussion, it might be useful to work out some key concepts and terminology.

The country where the foreign correspondent is based would hereafter be called the target country or culture. The country or culture where the correspondent’s readership is based would be called the readership country or culture. As with the culture peg, the cultural element used in the story arises from the target country. This was the case with the aforementioned camel story.

The culture link does the magic of connecting the target country with the readership country thus making the readers feel close or familiar with the subject. But the culture link is a cultural element that stems from the readership country rather than the target country. Please see the following example: <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/12/business/glob/al/12iht-speech.html?scp=4&sq=miki %20tanikawa&st=cse>.

This is a story about how President Obama’s political speeches recorded on a CD have become a million seller in Japan. It became enormously popular in late 2008 and early 2009 because Obama’s speeches were easy to understand, even for the average Japanese who often have a hard time learning English. This was a newsworthy topic for a U.S. audience. Americans would take interest in this foreign feature story because the U.S. President is the subject in the context of a Japan story. If the one being portrayed was a British prime minister, Australian premier or a Japanese personality, it would not have been as interesting to U.S. readers. For an American audience, “Obama” provides a mental link between them and the target country, but it is an element that arises from the readership country not the target country.

This story also contains a culture peg: that Japanese are poor English speakers. As a result, the story plays off readers’ understanding that Japanese have difficulty with English and by extension difficulty learning the language, a point to which many American readers can perhaps relate. To provide another example, a story about young people in Japan forming a long queue the night before the sales launch of iPad in downtown Tokyo is an article with a culture link. The iPad is an American product and that enhances readership interest.

The culture link can be a crucial element even in hard news coverage. Previous newsworthiness studies have established that overseas developments where there is a U.S. involvement—such as the wars in Iraq, Kosovo and Afghanistan—are highly newsworthy for the American audience (Hester, 1974; Chang and Lee, 1992). While the culture link concept is not identified conceptually in these studies, one could argue that of all the wars and military conflict waging in the world, those with U.S. involvement (presence of an element of “America” in the news) is newsworthy to Americans because of the presence of a “culture link.” The media is selecting the news on the basis of the presence of “America” in the news.

Diagram 1 visualizes the function the culture peg and culture link play in the readers’ mind. The black arrows represent the culture pegs, deriving from the target country and being connected to the readership country. The white arrow shows the culture link arising from the readership country and being tied to the target country. A foreign correspondent attempts to connect and link the two countries— between which there may be a gaping cultural divide— by employing these devices from one country to the other and tying them tightly together, thus creating a solid mental connection in readers’ mind.

CONCLUSION

When hard-news elements are absent, international reporting often demands that journalists be highly selective with their topics in order to pass readership interest thresholds. Due to cultural and perceptual constraints on the part of readers, they often find themselves navigating through narrow confines of topical possibilities. The subject choices are narrow because the imagination of their readership may be relatively narrow concerning overseas countries and cultures.

Continued on next page
CULTURE PEG  Continued from previous page

As a result, the somewhat feeble “mental image” in the mind of the reader needs to be encouraged and, if possible, made more robust.

What I have described as the culture peg and the culture link are perhaps just two of the many possible elements that correspondents use to make their stories readable. But it is clear that many journalists on foreign assignment often do resort to these techniques—and often they succeed in capturing readership interest. However, the possibility of stereotyping, distorting images and misunderstanding of foreign cultures is high if journalists overuse the culture peg. It can result in over-reporting those events and developments that can be culturally pegged and under-reporting those that cannot be. Moreover, the possibility of distortion is exacerbated by the common problem associated with international reporting. When distortions occur in international reporting they are generally not redressed because there is little pressure to correct them (Louw, 2009).

If refined further, this preliminary study on journalists’ preoccupation with achieving cultural relevancy for readers might contribute significantly to the understanding of the mechanism of media’s foreign reporting, as well as how readers might contribute significantly to achieving cultural relevancy for readers (Louw, 2009). Because there is little pressure to correct reporting they are generally not redressed. When distortions occur in international reporting, they are generally not redressed because there is little pressure to correct them (Louw, 2009).

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ENDNOTES


2. What Shoemaker and Reese listed as “proximity” refers to geographic proximity but it may be interpreted to include cultural closeness and familiarity as it also discusses a “local angle to a national story.” (1996: 111)


4. This “pre-existing perception” seems to coincide with what Lippmann in the earlier chapter calls the “mental image” which journalists try to “arouse.” And people possess that “mental image” when that cultural image is “defined and picked out by your own culture,” as noted by Lippmann (see his first quote at the beginning of Chapter 1) unless one has a first-hand direct experience with that culture.

5. The following Associated Press story perhaps comes closest to the hypothetical story idea described here concerning a possible beauty contest in Saudi Arabia. See <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/30605691/s>.

6. One can surmise that, from a Polish point of view, a reference to “communist era” is unnecessary because the majority of the buildings standing today would have been erected during the “communist era,” unless there was a building rush in the last 20 years that eradicated the vast majority of old buildings in the city.

7. It is often the case that the culture link element is chosen and presented as something positive and comforting for the home audience as is the case here.

8. These two elements—culture peg and culture link—sometimes work together to strengthen the story appeal. To write about foreign cultures that readers generally aren’t interested in, such as Japan, it is often not enough to have a news peg and a culture peg. For example, if a Japan-based journalist is interested in writing about geisha (which is itself a culture peg for overseas readers), you not only need a news peg (a recent development linked to the subject), you need something more. For instance, the journalist might find and write about an American geisha (which actually does exist). In this instance, you have a culture link (an American being an actor/protagonist) as well as a culture peg (geisha). And when you have both, the gravitational pull for readers becomes stronger.

REFERENCES


Call for Submissions

*Literary Journalism Studies*

Published by the International Association for Literary Journalism Studies

*Literary Journalism Studies*, a peer-reviewed journal sponsored by the International Association for Literary Journalism Studies (IALJS), invites submissions of scholarly articles on literary journalism, which is also known as narrative journalism, narrative nonfiction, literary reportage, reportage literature, New Journalism and the nonfiction novel, as well as literary nonfiction that emphasizes cultural revelation. The journal is international in scope and seeks submissions on the theory, history and pedagogy of literary journalism throughout the world. All disciplinary approaches are welcome.

To encourage an international dialogue, the journal is also willing to consider publishing short examples or excerpts of literary journalism accompanied by a scholarly gloss about a writer not widely known outside his or her country. The example or excerpt must be translated into English. The scholarly gloss must be between 1,500 and 2,500 words long and indicate why the example is important in the context of its national culture. Together, both the text and the gloss must not exceed 8,000 words in length. The contributor is responsible for obtaining all copyright permissions, including from the publisher, author and translator as necessary.

E-mail submission (as an MS Word attachment) is mandatory, and submissions should be between 4,000 and 8,000 words in length, including notes. A cover page indicating the title of the paper, the author’s name and institutional affiliation, and contact information must accompany all submissions. The author’s name should not appear on the required 250-word abstract or on the paper itself, as all submissions will be blind reviewed. All submissions must be in English and follow the *Chicago Manual of Style (Humanities)*. Submissions will be accepted on an ongoing basis. Contributors of articles selected for publication will receive one copy of the journal. Copyright reverts to the contributor after publication with the provision that should the submission be subsequently republished reference is made to initial publication in *Literary Journalism Studies*. Please e-mail all submissions and/or related queries to:

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Editor, *Literary Journalism Studies*
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**BOOK REVIEWS:** The journal will include a book review section and invites short reviews of 1,000-2,000 words on both the scholarship of literary journalism and recent original works of literary journalism that deserve greater recognition among scholars. Book reviews are not blind reviewed but selected by the book review editor based on merit. Reviewers may suggest book review prospects or write the book review editors for suggestions. Usually reviewers will be responsible for obtaining their respective books. Book reviews and/or related queries should be e-mailed to Thomas B. Connery at <tbconnery@stthomas.edu>.
Literary Journalism across the Globe
Journalistic Traditions and Transnational Influences

Edited by
John S. Bak and Bill Reynolds

At the end of the nineteenth century, several countries were developing journalistic traditions similar to what we identify today as literary reportage or literary journalism. Yet throughout most of the twentieth century, in particular after World War I, that tradition was overshadowed and even marginalized by the general perception among democratic states that journalism ought to be either “objective,” as in the American tradition, or “polemical,” as in the European. Nonetheless, literary journalism would survive and, at times, even thrive. How and why is a story that is unique to each nation.

Though largely considered an Anglo-American phenomenon today, literary journalism has had a long and complex international history, one built on a combination of traditions and influences that are sometimes quite specific to a nation and at other times come from the blending of cultures across borders. These essays examine this phenomenon from various international perspectives, documenting literary journalism’s rich and diverse heritage and describing its development within a global context.

In addition to the editors, contributors include David Abrahamson, Peiqin Chen, Clazina Dingemanse, William Dow, Rutger de Graaf, John Hartsock, Nikki Hessel, Maria Lasila-Merisalo, Edvaldo Pereira Lima, Willa McDonald, Jenny McKay, Sonja Merljak Zdovc, Sonia Parratt, Norman Sims, Isabel Soares, and Soenke Zehle.

“This book makes a major contribution to literary journalism scholarship, with a pathbreakingly broad international focus and commendable attention to developing a conceptual framework.”

—Nancy Roberts, University of Albany, SUNY

John S. Bak is professor of American literature at Nancy-Université in France. Bill Reynolds is assistant professor at the School of Journalism, Ryerson University, Toronto.

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IALJS/SEC IN SOUTH CAROLINA

A pair of panels focusing on the promise of literary journalism.

By Joshua Roiland, Case Western Reserve University (U.S.A.)

This past March, while much of the U.S. labored under a prolonged winter, several members of IALJS migrated south to the balmy, palm-tree-studded city of Columbia, South Carolina, where they were joined by members from Portugal and China for the thirty-sixth annual meeting of the Southeast Colloquium, a regional conference of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication.

The School of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of South Carolina hosted the conference, and IALJS member Kathy Roberts Forde served as the tireless conference organizer and gracious host. Kathy also sat on a panel with other IALJS members Calvin Hall, Doug Cumming and Berkley Hudson at a concurrent University of South Carolina inaugural Symposium on Media and Civil Rights.

IALJS sponsored two different panels for the Southeast Colloquium, both under the banner: “Literary Journalism: The Promise and Perils of Change.” The Friday panel, entitled “Observe and Interpret: Literary Journalism and the Politics of Reform” featured David Abrahamson of Northwestern University, Aryn Bartley of Michigan State University and Josh Roiland of Case Western Reserve University. David talked about the role of literary journalism in the Arab world. Aryn discussed the various ways literary journalists serve as “citizen witnesses” for their readers. And I talked about the history of literary populism in the African American press.

The Saturday panel was entitled “A Humanizing Voice: Global Perspectives on Literary Journalism and Social Justice.” It included Lisa Barr, editor-in-chief of the journal Communications and Law, Peiqin Chen of Shanghai International Studies University, Mark Massé of Ball State University and Isabel Soares of the Universidade Técnica de Lisboa in Portugal. Lisa spoke about the political significance of Studs Terkel’s oral histories. Peiqin gave a revealing talk about the underground Chinese newspaper Nan Fan Zhou Mo (Southern Weekly) and its effects on social policy (please see Page 10). Mark discussed the profiles of faith activists he recounts in his own work of literary journalism, Inspired to Serve: Today’s Faith Activists. And Isabel traced the struggles for human rights in nineteenth-century Portuguese literary journalism.

Both the Friday and Saturday panels attracted a dozen audience members, and once again it is safe to say that the international scope of IALJS impressed conference attendees. There were three people in attendance at the conference from countries other than the United States; two were affiliated with IALJS and by the end of the weekend we had convinced the third person to join as well.

Further support came for the study of literary journalism from the work of Wilkerson, a Pulitzer Prize winning journalist formerly of the New York Times, who gave the conference’s keynote speech. Earlier that week, her book The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America’s Great Migration won the National Book Critics Circle Award. Before a balloon packed with more than 200 guests, Ms. Wilkerson began her talk by saying she was glad to see several panels devoted to literary journalism on the program. We were more than a little pleased that she then added that her book started as a work of journalism and of history, but that it was “informed by the idea of literary journalism.”

After the Friday session, we enjoyed a lovely dinner at one of Columbia’s best restaurants, Terra, where we luxuriated in southern hospitality and delicious regional cuisine such as shrimp and grits and fried green tomatoes. ◆
The international character of literary journalism was well represented at IALJS-organized sessions of the American Comparative Literature Association’s 2011 meeting, hosted in Vancouver by Simon Fraser University on March 31 to April 3.

With eight scholars from seven different countries presenting papers on French, Scottish, American, Turkish and Brazilian versions of literary journalism, the two panels confirmed the Call for Papers’ claim that literary journalism “exists in a variety of forms depending on the cultures where it is practiced” and is “irreducible to a fixed categorization.”

Papers offered a variety of exciting new ways of viewing literary journalism in its international dimensions—for example, as a “literature of urgency” or as a potent response to the “rhetoric of nationalism” which often prevails in international news coverage. Another participant noted that it is a genre which crosses not only geographical boundaries but also borders of race, gender and time.

Speakers also provided historical and current perspectives on the literary journalism of Brazil, Turkey and Scotland, as well as both an illuminating survey of the current state of the genre in France and the particular challenge being offered today by new French publications to the historical prejudice that journalism cannot, in fact, be literary.

Panelists included William Dow (American University of Paris), Kenneth Pratt (University of the West of Scotland), Norman Sims (University of Massachusetts, Amherst), Isabelle Meuret (Université Libre de Bruxelles, Belgium), Ömer Özer (Anadolu University, Eskiflehir, Turkey), Vera Hanna (Universidade Presbiteriana Mackenzie, São Paulo, Brazil), Pascal Gin (Carleton University, Ottawa) and your correspondent from Brock University, also in Canada.

This is the second time the IALJS has organized a panel at the ACLA. The first was two years ago at Harvard University. As in the past, participants enjoyed the sustained discussion made possible by the ACLA’s unique seminar structure. It would be very easy to get lost in a conference as big as the ACLA. This year upwards of 1,500 scholars participated in close to 180 sessions. Those sessions, however, are structured so that participants meet among themselves for two hours each day during the three days of the conference—or, in some cases, over two days. The result is a workshop-like atmosphere in which seminar themes may be developed, connections among different perspectives forged and scholarly collegiality fostered.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, a number of the session participants had not heard of the IALJS prior to the Call for Papers for the ACLA seminar. However, as a result of the Vancouver opportunity to meet and interact with like-minded colleagues, many expressed interest in taking part not only in future IALJS sessions organized through the ACLA, but also IALJS’s own annual conferences.
CALL FOR PAPERS
International Association for Literary Journalism Studies

“Literary Journalism: The Power and Promise of Story”
The Seventh International Conference for Literary Journalism Studies (IALJS-7)

Ryerson University
School of Journalism
Toronto, Canada

17-19 May 2012

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 17-19 May 2012. The conference will be held at the School of Journalism and Ryerson University in Toronto, Canada.

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: The Power and Promise of Story." All submissions must be in English.

The International Association for Literary Journalism Studies is a multidisciplinary 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.

Information on previous annual meetings can be found at http://www.ialjs.org/?page_id=33

Continued on next page
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).

*Continued on next page*
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. Isabel Soares, Universidade Técnica de Lisboa (Portugal)
20122 IALJS-7 Research Chair; e-mail: <isoares@iscsp.utl.pt>

Please submit proposals for panels to:

Prof. Rob Alexander, Brock University (Canada)
2012 IALJS-7 Program Co-Chair; e-mail: <ralexand@brocku.ca>

Deadline for all submissions: No later than 1 December 2011

For more information regarding the conference or the association, please go to http://www.ialjs.org or contact:

Prof. Alice Trindade, Universidade Técnica de Lisboa (Portugal)
IALJS President; e-mail: <atindade@iscsp.utl.pt>

Prof. Bill Reynolds, Ryerson University (Canada)
IALJS First Vice President/Treasurer; e-mail: <reynolds@ryerson.ca>

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2011 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) _____________

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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: __

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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.

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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:

Bill Reynolds, IALJS Treasurer
School of Journalism, Ryerson University
350 Victoria Street
Toronto, Ontario
CANADA M5B 2K3
CONSTITUTION

Preamble
In accordance with the scholarly, teaching and professional interests of its founding members, a new international learned society dedicated to the study of Literary Journalism is hereby created.

Article 1: Name and Purpose
Section 1. The name of the organization shall be the International Association for Literary Journalism Studies.
Section 2. The purpose of the organization shall be the improvement of scholarly research and education in Literary Journalism. To this end, members of the Association shall undertake the following objectives:
a. To foster scholarly research and inquiry in the field of Literary Journalism and related areas.
b. To enhance the subject matter of courses related to Literary Journalism and encourage the effectiveness of teaching at the undergraduate and graduate levels.
c. To promote a sense of public service, professional responsibility and freedom among practitioners of Literary Journalism and those in academe.
d. To stimulate close relationships between the researchers and teachers of these subjects and professional organizations and individuals.
e. To encourage the adoption and practice of high standards for scholarship and teaching of these subjects, and an adequate system of rewards and assurances for researchers and teachers to support such standards.
f. To increase the understanding and awareness among professional and academic personnel of the importance of Literary Journalism.
g. To attract to the study of these subjects a growing number of able students.
h. To plan a program to further the improvement of and the practice and advancement of Literary Journalism.

Article 2: Membership
Section 1. Membership shall be by individuals and by educational or professional organizations. Eligible individuals and organizations are those concerned principally with higher-education teaching and/or research in those areas listed in Article 1.
Section 2, and those in professional activities related to these subject areas.
Section 2. Membership classifications, qualifications, dues and privileges shall be defined in the bylaws.

Article 3: Officers
Section 1. The officers of the Association shall be as follows: President, First Vice President, Second Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. The principal officer of the Association shall be designated as its President and be chosen in the manner prescribed in the bylaws. The President shall perform the duties assigned to that position in the bylaws and such other duties as may from time to time be determined by the Association membership.
Section 2. The secondary officer of the Association shall be the First Vice President, who shall perform the duties requested by the President and shall serve as President should the principal officer be absent from annual meeting or otherwise unable to serve.
Section 3. The Second Vice President, the Secretary and the Treasurer of the Association shall perform the duties assigned in the bylaws and any others requested by the President.
Section 4. The officers, the Journal editor, the newsletter editor, the webmaster, the elected member of the Nominating Committee, and the research, program, membership, liaison, publicity, conference planning and graduate student chairs shall constitute the Executive Committee of the Association, which shall be vested with the authority to govern the Association and to direct its affairs. The President shall serve as chair of the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall have the power to fill vacancies pro tempore in its own membership. The outgoing President shall serve as an ex-officio, non-voting member of the Executive Committee for two years from the end of his or her term as Association President. The outgoing President shall not be counted in determining a quorum or in polling the Executive Committee by phone or e-mail.

Article 4: Dues
Section 1. The officers shall have the right to apprise the need for operating funds, from time to time, and, upon ratification of such proposal by a simple majority of the membership voting at any annual meeting, to raise or lower annual dues as a requirement for membership in the Association.

Article 5: Meetings
Section 1. Meetings shall be held as prescribed in the bylaws.

Continued on next page
Article 6: Amendments
Section 1. This constitution and its bylaws may be amended by the affirmative votes of two-thirds of the members participating in any meeting at which a proposed amendment or amendments is or are presented for action by the members.
Section 2. The President shall prepare and distribute the text of the proposed amendment or amendments at least two weeks before the meeting at which the amendment or amendments is or are presented for consideration and action.

Article 7: Promulgation
Section 1. This constitution and its bylaws attached shall become effective upon adoption by a two-thirds affirmative vote of those members voting.

Article 8: Dissolution
Section 1. The organization may be dissolved by a two-thirds vote of the membership present and voting at any annual meeting.

BYLAWS

Article 1: Membership
Section 1. Classification of membership: Regular members, who shall be faculty, staff or student members of institutions engaged in Literary Journalism education at the college undergraduate or graduate level, or persons in related professional activities who have an interest in Literary Journalism teaching and/or research.
Section 2. Funds of the Association shall be deposited with the Association Treasurer, who will provide the facilities of his or her office for their accounting. Other funds will be deposited in appropriate separate accounts.
Section 3. A regular member is one whose dues are paid in advance of the annual meeting.
Section 4. Only regular members are entitled to voting rights.

Article 2: Meetings
Section 1. The annual meeting of the Association shall be held at a time and place specified by the Executive Committee.
Section 2. Special meetings of the Association may be called and held in connection with any plan or activity designed to carry out the stated functions of the Association, upon concurrence of a quorum of the Executive Committee.
Section 3. Decisions of the Association and its Executive Committee shall be by majority vote of members present and voting.
Section 4. At the discretion of the presiding officer, either Erskine May’s Parliamentary Procedure or Robert’s Rules of Order will be the manual for parliamentary procedure in meetings of the Association.
Section 5. Each regular member of the Association shall be entitled to one vote in elections, and to one vote on all issues or proposals presented at an annual or special meeting of the Association.
Section 6. The Executive Committee shall meet at least once during the annual Conference and at such other times as its membership shall determine. For purposes of conducting business of the Association, the President may present propositions to the Executive Committee and poll its membership by e-mail or phone. Such balloting shall constitute performance of the advisory function of the Executive Committee between annual meetings.

Article 3: Nominations and Elections
Section 1. The current First Vice President, who is the incoming President of the Association, shall, with consultation of a two-member Nominating Committee, present a list of nominees to the Association President prior to the annual meeting. One member of the Nominating Committee shall be elected at the previous annual meeting and one shall be appointed by the President.
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.
Section 5. Upon successful completion of an elected term of office as First Vice President, the holder of that office shall automatically succeed to, and possess all the rights and responsibilities of, the office of President. His or her term as
President will begin the day immediately following his or her election.

Section 6. Upon successful completion of an elected term of office as Second Vice President, the holder of that office shall automatically succeed to, and possess all the rights and responsibilities of, the First Vice President. His or her term as First Vice President will begin the day immediately following his or her election.

Article 4: Terms and Duties of Officers
Section 1. The President, First Vice President and Second Vice President of the Association shall serve for two years from the day after election at the annual meeting until the election at the annual meeting two years hence. They shall not be eligible to succeed themselves in office, although they may be re-elected to the office after a period of two years. They shall be responsible for planning and carrying out a program designed to accomplish the purposes of the Association. The Association’s Secretary, Treasurer, Journal editor, newsletter editor, webmaster, the elected member of the Nominating Committee, and the research, program, membership, liaison, publicity, conference planning and graduate student chairs shall serve for two years from the day after election at the annual meeting until the election at the annual meeting two years hence. They shall be eligible to succeed themselves in office.

Section 2. The President of the Association shall be the Executive Officer of the Association and shall administer its affairs, with the advice of the Executive Committee, including the appointment of any necessary committees. The President shall preside at all meetings of the Association and the Executive Committee, when present. He or she shall also preserve order, enforce the Constitution and perform all duties of a presiding officer. All contracts entered into by the association must be signed by both the President and the Treasurer.

Section 3. It shall be the duty of the First Vice President to carry out whatever tasks may be assigned to him or her by the President for the purpose of accomplishing the stated objectives of the Association. In the event of a vacancy in the office of the President for any reason, the First Vice President shall assume the title and duties of that office for the unexpired term until a new President is chosen at the next regularly scheduled election. The First Vice President shall preside, in the absence of the President, at meetings of the Association and/or the Executive Committee. In the event the First Vice President is unable to complete the term of that office, or succeed to the position of President, the Second Vice President shall assume the title and duties of First Vice President until the next annual Association meeting. The President will then name a new Second Vice President with the advice and consent of the Executive Committee. In the event both the President and First Vice President are unable to complete their terms, any member of the Executive Committee may convene a meeting of that body and elect Association members to serve as President and First Vice President until the next annual meeting.

Section 4. The Secretary shall take and keep the minutes of the Association annual meeting, all Executive Committee meetings and any other Association records, as well as perform any other duties requested by the Association President.

Section 5. The Treasurer shall manage the financial affairs and records of the Association, as well as perform any other duties requested by the Association President.

Section 6. The Association’s Executive Committee shall consist of the Association’s President, First Vice President, Second Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Journal editor, newsletter editor, webmaster, the elected member of the Nominating Committee, and research, program, membership, liaison, publicity, conference planning and graduate student chairs, and the Association’s outgoing President as an ex-officio, non-voting member. Members of the Executive Committee shall be elected at an annual meeting to serve a term of two years, from the time of the election at the annual meeting until the time of election at the annual meeting two years hence. In the event any member of the at-large membership of the Executive Committee resigns or is unable to fulfill the functions of the office, the Executive Committee shall fill the vacancy until the next annual meeting at which time an Association member shall be elected to serve the unexpired term.

Section 7. A quorum at a meeting at which all members of the Executive Committee have been invited to attend in person shall be five. For the purposes of conducting the Association’s business, the President may present propositions to the Executive Committee and poll all its members by e-mail or phone. Such balloting shall constitute performance of the advisory function of the Executive Committee between annual meetings.

Section 8. Any member of the Executive Committee who does not attend the Association convention may be removed from office upon a recommendation by the Association President and a majority vote of the members attending the annual meeting. Once a position is declared vacant, the members will elect another Association member to fill that unexpired term.
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I spent five years with my young children in what I call the “mommy tunnel” of life before I returned to university to pursue a master’s degree in creative writing. It was a demanding curriculum, comprised of a year of intense literary scrutiny, deconstruction, criticism and editing, as well as the never-ending writing and rewriting of chapters of my own manuscript.

As a former journalist and prospective novelist, it caused me to seriously contemplate the fine line that separates narrative nonfiction from creative writing. The techniques I had learned to produce better fiction undoubtedly improved my approach to writing nonfiction. Not all of the creative writing curriculum translates to journalism, but if I were asked to teach a course on the latter, there are two strategies I would borrow shamelessly from my master’s program: the small writing group and an emphasis on a meticulous point of view.

To some degree, writing narrative nonfiction is an exercise in vulnerability. The student who is cultivating the nuances of dialogue, scene setting and metaphor is by definition taking risks that reveal his or her individuality. A comfortable group dynamic is, of course, a basic precept of any writing class—the goal is to create a space in which students feel safe reading their work. For reasons of camaraderie and efficiency, however, I would divide the class into smaller workshop groups of no more than eight students each. Having done this, the groups would remain constant throughout the term, and the members would review each others’ material weekly. Within each workshop group, half of the members would submit copies of their work to the other members, who would be expected to read, edit and critique the material for the following week. In this same session, the four pieces of work that had been submitted for critique the previous week would then be read aloud. And after each reading, the group would begin a roundtable discussion of the piece.

This approach has several advantages. First, it creates a secure environment that allows for experimentation within the craft. Second, requiring fellow students to scrutinize the work of their colleagues encourages them to think objectively about form and content, as well as forcing them to deconstruct and edit a number of different styles on a regular basis. Third, it builds the confidence of the novice authors—sooner or later, they will trust the group to be firm but fair with their material. Fourth, the contract to present work for criticism is an individual responsibility to the entire group, not simply to the instructor. Having a commitment to seven other classmates reinforces the conviction that a journalist cannot wait for inspiration to strike. Good work has to be written to deadlines. Ultimately, this small workshop dynamic simultaneously not only cultivates writers and editors, but also fosters professional responsibility and trust between classmates.

Largely because it continues to haunt me whenever I write or read narrative nonfiction, the second technique I would employ in the journalism classroom is point of view. Before I took the creative writing course, I thought I had a thorough understanding of this technique. I did not. Of course, some aspects of the strategy for developing this perspective of narrative must be adapted to literary journalism. For instance, the student will not be manufacturing the thought process of her subjects. She may, however, ask a subject what he was thinking at the time of the incident and use his response as an interior monologue. Fine. But if she does this, she had better consider editing his comments so that they correspond to no more than his knowledge of the exterior action. For example, the subject might say, “I suppose I was worried the car would...” 

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