

environmental politics (Chapter 6: Symbols and Celebrities) and the potential for citizen agency and media engagement (Chapter 7: Environment and Engagement).

Lester writes in a clear and accessible style, and draws from an expansive review of theory and past research in an insightful and effective way throughout the book. She also does a nice job of providing examples of journalistic practice and media's role in the trade of symbols from around the globe, such as the *New York Times*' 'polar bear story' (Chapter 3) and the Sea Shepherd Society's use of ICTs in the Antarctic to gain news coverage (Chapter 5), to illustrate how news, though socially and culturally constructed, has real and significant consequences in our lives.

The author's richest interpretations of media's presentation of environmental conflict, however, are rendered through examples from Tasmania and Australia, which is not surprising given the depth of Lester's previous work in the region. For example, in Chapter 5 she details some of the strategies and media tools that activists have used to garner mainstream media attention in environmental conflicts relating to Australia and Japan, as well as for preserving the Tasmanian wilderness. These examples not only reveal the degree of sophistication and responsiveness that environmental activists and NGOs have developed in relation to media coverage and other opportunities, but also put into question the capacity of these efforts to achieve lasting gains.

Chapter 6, perhaps the most provocative part of the book, is devoted to trying to sketch out an understanding of how such lasting gains are thwarted versus the potential for environmentalists to better harness the symbolic power of images, events and people. Here again Lester draws from the Tasmanian wilderness, training her focus on the killing of 'El Grande', a giant, 350-year-old tree located in the Florentine Valley. The tree's plight is especially noteworthy because, despite its iconic resonance and the coverage of its death by the international press, Tasmanian news suppressed coverage and the forest service even removed the tree's name from its website – thus revealing 'the contest at the heart of environmental conflict for symbolic power' (p. 153).

Through such illuminating tales about the politics and practices of news media and their limitations and possibilities for covering the environment, Lester leads the reader to her conclusion that, yes, news media do in fact matter. She provides many reasons for why she thinks this is so, but at the center of her analysis is the notion that *ideas and images about the environment are political*. This central assertion and the path that she takes to arrive to it are what make the book an important contribution to the literature on media and the environment. But despite this contribution, what Lester remains concerned about, and where the book ultimately leaves the reader, is searching for a vision for how news media might do a better job of animating environmental citizenship.

Reference

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John S Bak and Bill Reynolds (eds)

Literary Journalism across the Globe: Journalistic Traditions and Transnational Influences
Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2011. 306 pp. ISBN 9781558498778

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Scholars such as Mitchell Stephens have long called for a global focus to the American-centric journalism history prevalent among US scholars. In his essay 'A Call for an International History of Journalism', Stephens illustrates his point with a 1679 edition of a London newspaper called *Domestick Intelligence* that hangs on his living room wall. Its publisher: Benjamin Harris. 'In other words, this newspaper was published by the man who would, eleven years later, publish America's first newspaper', Stephens wrote in *American Journalism* in 2000. 'And this is hardly the only evidence of the absurdity of delaying the start of the history of journalism, as we too often do, until 1690, when a newspaper first appears in England's American colonies' (2000: 98).

Stephens' point is that US journalism today and throughout its history has been influenced by the global industry of news production. Yet US scholars – and many of their international counterparts – specialize so narrowly that they are ignorant of even the most obvious international influences. 'Our narrowly nationalistic journalism histories', Stephens wrote, 'not only obscure crucial connections and lineages and ignore telling comparisons, they leave us unable to approach fundamental questions. We must internationalize our conferences, our journals, our graduate programs and our research' (2000: 100).

This observation has been equally true of literary journalism studies, a 'critically marginalized' field which had suffered the additional challenge of being the subject of the 'historical ambivalence of the journalism community' (Hartsock, 1998: 62). Thus, it is astonishing to see not only the growth of literary journalism as a field of study, but also the progress toward an international scholarship evident in *Literary Journalism across the Globe: Journalistic Traditions and Transnational Influences*.

This book is dedicated to the new International Association of Literary Journalism Studies (IALJS) and is being published just five years after the organization's founding in 2006. The text not only opens up the relatively overlooked field of literary journalism studies in the United States; it also privileges an international perspective as fundamental to this field of scholarship.

The 16 essays are divided into three parts. Part one addresses issues associated with defining the form and includes several essays from leading US scholars. John Hartsock explores the origins of European literary reportage in comparison with the literary journalism with which most US scholars are familiar. David Abrahamson questions the journalistic dimensions of globalization. And Norman Sims discusses the future of international literary journalism in today's media climate.

But the book's strength lies in the work included from leading international scholars. For example, Jenny McKay, the director of journalism studies at the University of Stirling in Scotland and one of the founding members of the IALJS, draws on her own educational experience to describe the invisibility of journalism as literature in the UK. Bill Reynolds, another IALJS founding member and an assistant professor at Toronto's Ryerson University, describes the differences in the form between Toronto and Vancouver. Like New York, Toronto's literary journalists tend to document wealth and power, while Vancouver's literary journalists are engaged in a relentless search for meaning.

This emphasis is continued in part two of the book, which features histories of the genre in the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, China, Brazil and Finland. These histories document independent developments of the genre in countries such as Spain, where

the form was first recognized in 1845 (p. 134), and Finland, where Gonzo journalism pre-dates the US form traced to Hunter S Thompson (p. 190). These essays also trace international cross-pollination of the genre, as in the case of Britain and Portugal at the turn of the 20th century (p. 118). Part three, the final section, further explores transnational influences by offering five case studies of 20th-century literary journalism in New Zealand, Slovenia, Australia, Poland and the United States.

This book is one of only three written in English that focus on international literary journalism (p. 18, f3). For instructors of literary journalism eager to go beyond the US canon of Wolfe, Mailer, Thompson, Didion and McPhee, the essays provide a pool of new writers to explore.

But it also opens up avenues of scholarship for scholars of literary journalism and history. These essays, for example, make visible areas of inquiry such as the literary reportage of the international communist movement, a largely unknown genre in the United States because of Cold War politics (p. 28). The essays also provide more material with which to reflect on reality boundaries as defined by Norman Sims (2009). These sometimes blurry lines between fact and fiction seem particularly interesting to explore in the context of early Dutch pamphlets (p. 105) or in the case of Slovenian journalists who used fiction techniques to avoid government censorship (p. 239). As the book's editor, John S Bak, argues in the introduction, these essays do much to advance scholarly conceptualizations of literary journalism from mere 'genre' and 'form' to pedagogically defined 'discipline' (p. 18).

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Bernhard Poerksen

The Creation of Reality: A Constructivist Epistemology of Journalism and Journalism Education
Exeter: Imprint Academic, 2011. 257 pp. ISBN 9781845402099

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The title of Bernhard Poerksen's book, *The Creation of Reality*, encapsulates an underlying contradiction in both journalism and journalism education that exist globally. As journalists are expected to discover, summarize and analyze phenomena objectively, the ambiguous nature of perception in the communication process blurs the distinction in reporting the 'facts'. In short, does *reality* exist in the dualistic sense the journalist's *objective* claim requires; or rather, is *reality* an interpretation of events that is created by the observer? Poerksen argues that journalism and journalism education can benefit from a constructivist approach to epistemology. He posits that constructivism can serve as a systematic program of 'irritation for both practice-oriented and also theory-based