

## INTRODUCTION

Marie VANOOST<sup>1</sup>, Kate McQUEEN<sup>2</sup> and Lindsay MORTON<sup>3</sup>

This thematic issue of *Recherches en Communication* explores the interplay between journalism and experience in narrative and literary forms of journalism.

The double nature of such forms of journalism—as informational and experiential—has been recognized by leaders in the field for some time; as such, it is perfectly placed as rich field for investigation of how journalists and readers experience and process true stories. Pulitzer-prize winning reporter and journalism professor Tom French, for one, has described narrative journalism as an attempt to help the public understand news questions from within, by recreating what it feels like to live inside these news questions—be they healthcare, war, or natural disasters (personal communication, March 25, 2013). Similarly, writer and former director of the Nieman program on narrative journalism Mark Kramer explains that literary journalism “couples cold fact and personal event, in the author’s humane company,” allowing readers to “behold others’ lives, often set within far clearer contexts than we can bring to our own. The process moves readers, and writers, toward realization, compassion, and in the best of cases, wisdom” (Kramer 1995, p. 34).

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1 Marie VANOOST is a Lecturer at UCLouvain (Belgium).

2 Kate McQUEEN is a Lecturer at University of California Santa Cruz (United States).

3 Lindsay MORTON is an Associate Professor of English at Pacific Union College (California, United States).

Hence, one could say that the meaning of these journalistic narratives primarily lies in what narratologists call their experientiality, their “quasi-mimetic evocation of real-life experience” (Fludernik 1996, p. 12). According to Monika Fludernik (1996), experientiality refers to the way a narrative stimulates different cognitive parameters through which humans engage with real-life experience: embodiment, intentionality, temporality and emotional evaluation. By recreating felt experience and activating these parameters, narrative and literary journalism does not merely try to entertain or move us, but works to deepen our understanding of the news and the world we live in.

From a textual perspective, Fludernik (1996, p. 28) proposes that degrees of narrativity correspond with levels of experientiality. This calls for investigation about how texts invite readers to engage cognitively, emotionally, ethically and politically with narrative and literary journalism. Yet, following Marco Caracciolo (2014), experientiality can be understood not only as “the textual representation of experience” but also as “the experiences undergone by the recipients of narrative.” The latter also invites an exploration of readers’ actual responses to narrative and literary journalism.

Such research appears particularly relevant at a time leading media scholar Karin Wahl-Jorgensen characterizes as “unusually alert to the role of emotion in our conversations” (2019, p. 2). Wahl-Jorgensen offers a range of reasons for increased interest in affect in the media and its social/political consequences, including: the global rise of populist movements that rely on emotional appeals, a shift in the emotional climate of public discourse in response to global disenchantment with political institutions, the rise of confessional culture, and the popular valorization of emotional intelligence (Wahl-Jorgensen, 2019, pp. 2-3). We could add to this list the development technologies, such as virtual reality, that create new kinds of affective relationships with the public in which the notion of experience appears absolutely central.

This collective project explores how a range of narrative journalistic texts enact experientiality, as well as suggesting areas for future research. The collection begins with Lindsay Morton’s survey of past and present methodologies that attempt to answer the question: What are some qualitative differences between the experience of reading fiction and literary journalism? Morton uses the often cited but nebulous phrase “the power of the real” as a lens through which to investigate how different approaches might illuminate how readers engage experientially with literary journalism.

Kate McQueen offers a background on the history and theory of emotional appeals in literary journalism before turning to textual analysis of Swiss literary journalist Erwin Koch. Koch, a critically acclaimed journalist, is notable for the affective responses his writing elicits; McQueen investigates how his work produces physiological responses in so many of his readers.

Maitrayee Basu takes the work of Indian non-fiction writer and literary journalist Sonia Faleiro as a case study to investigate a range of experiential engagements. Basu's article problematizes the assumption that a textual experience of "others" results in increased ethical political action, as Basu contends that the discursively constructed author-figure is key in facilitating the cultural industry's stakes in the "empathy economy."

Moving from East to West, Mateus Yuri Passos and Arthur Brecchio Marchetto explore the writing of two seminal Slavic literary journalists—Hannah Krall and Svetlana Alexievich—in order to understand how they enact their unique perceptions of reality in their writing. The authors aim to study "the textual representation of experience" (Caracciolo, 2014) by analysing strategies employed by these journalists to create vicarious experience for readers within their literary journalistic texts.

With Thi Thanh Phuong Nguyen-Pochan's contribution, the focus switches from the written word to the television screen. Her essay explores the experience of collective communion created by some news narratives on Vietnamese television. Drawing on Fludernik's natural narratology (1996), Nguyen-Pochan develops a semio-pragmatic approach to study how such narratives create different kinds of mediating figures that encourage viewers to adhere to the values of a specific cultural community.

Stéphanie Le Maître then opens the study of experientiality in journalism to more innovative forms of journalism, such as digital narrative journalism. She analyses two longform multimedia productions from the French news websites *Les Jours* and *Le Quatre Heures*, investigating the kind of active experience that is offered to readers in digital media environments. She also considers newsgames and virtual reality journalism, before reflecting on how these new forms can reinforce the experientiality of the narrative.

Continuing the exploration of innovative forms of journalism, Angelina Toursel and Philippe Useille's contribution is concerned with immersive journalism and, more specifically, 360-degree video report-

ages. In their reflexive essay, the authors question the complex relationship between emotion, presence and transparency in such reportages. They draw on journalism studies, media archaeology, German Media Theory and philosophy in order to highlight the constructed nature of the experience created by the use 360-degree video in journalism and the way this experience relates to the notion of truth.

The editors would like to thank all of the authors and reviewers for their contributions. It is the editors' hope that this collection will act as a reference point for scholarship and stimulate critical conversations on the role of experientiality for both writers and readers of narrative and literary journalism—as well as the broader sphere of journalism.

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