

RHODES JOURNALISM Review

RJR 32
September 2012

www.rjr.ru.ac.za

Editor

Anthea Garman

Tel: 27-46-6037125

Cell: 27-83-4095591

a.garman@ru.ac.za

Section Editors

Michelle Solomon (Media Freedom & Regulation)

the.red.marble@gmail.com

Vanessa Malila (Africa Rising)

v.malila@ru.ac.za

Sarah Jane Bradfield (Participatory Journalism)

sarahjane.bradfield@gmail.com

Nick Mulgrew (Literary Journalism)

nichmulgrew@gmail.com

Proofreader

Gillian Rennie

g.rennie@ru.ac.za

Designer

Brian Garman

b.garman@ru.ac.za

Administrator

Belinda de Lange

Tel: 27-46-6037107

b.delange@ru.ac.za

Publisher

The School of Journalism and Media Studies

Rhodes University

PO Box 94

Grahamstown 6140

South Africa

Tel: 27-46-6037100

Fax: 27-46-6037101

Annual subscription for 2013

R150 International

R100 Southern Africa

R50 Students

Special thanks to:

**The Open Society Foundation for
financial assistance**

Copyright

We consider the stories and photographs submitted to *Review* to be the property of their creators, we supply their contacts so that you can source the owner of a story or photograph you might like to reprint. Our requirement is that the reprint of a story should carry a credit saying that it first appeared in the *Rhodes Journalism Review*.

Cover pictures by Cedric Nunn

from the mid-career retrospective

Call and Response.

As we put this 2012 edition of *Rhodes Journalism Review* to bed, I'm also teaching a class of final-year Bachelor of Journalism students a course in long-form journalism. At the beginning we always face the questions of whether using literary (or narrative or fiction techniques) damages the 'truth'. By this point in their education

our students have been so well inducted into the thought processes of objective-stance, short-form (ie never anything longer than about 800 words,), don't say "I" journalism that they find the vistas opened up by another type and approach to factual story-telling extremely unnerving. But, as my colleague Gillian Rennie pointed out, perhaps the guiding question – when choosing a technique to tell a story – should be: "Does it do the *work* of the truth?" And that's the question our writers in the special section on literary journalism in this issue of *Review* seek to answer: Kevin Bloom travels Africa asking how to represent the new economic and social relationship with China, Billy Kahora engages Kenyan journalists in ways to document the violent aftermath of an election; a host of South African writers ask how the personal illuminates the political in a country still in rapid transition. It's a fitting time to shine a bright light on "the art of fact" (Kerrane and Yagoda's term for this form of journalism). Non-fiction publication is booming all over the world, and is flourishing in South Africa in particular. A host of new documenters/storytellers are expanding the spectrum of what can be said by using the eyes and lenses of the journalist to serve slightly different questions about the world we now live in (not so much "who" and "what" as "how" and "why").

We also bring you some reflections on the changing news media attitude to the once "hopeless" continent. "Africa is rising" is the new mantra and, in tune with the Highway Africa conference taking place at Rhodes University in September which dissects the new economic developments, their relationship to the news media and what they mean, we asked some well-positioned media people to think about that one and consider the implications for Africans.

Digital and social media continue to rock our world, so we take a foray into a post-audience, post-producer scenario

and get a feel for what it's like for media producers of multiple kinds (filmmakers, journalists, teachers, activists, democracy monitors) to cross the borders and work with very ordinary people to produce media of multiple types which speak about their lives and which help them make sense of politics at all levels. Citizenship as a real dimension of actual life, participation and voice are key drivers of the projects you'll read about on these pages.

And then there's the very necessary focus on media freedom, looming regulation and the questions provoked about journalism ethics and practices of accountability. South Africa is not the only country going through a tricky negotiation about how to get mainstream, privatised, commercial news media to lift their eyes from the bottom line (and in some cases untangle themselves from extremely questionable relations with politicians and other bureaucrats). As contributions from the UK situation (by Hugh Greenhalgh) and the Australia situation (by Julie Posetti) also show, figuring out how to regulate with a light, but directive hand, is a complex manoeuvre. The point is not to make the press accountable to the government, but to the people, and as yet we haven't figured that out with the finesse it needs. I like the way editor of the *Mail&Guardian* Nic Dawes understands the situation. He put it like this to a gathering of journalists in Cape Town in May (when the Menell fellows held their conference): the South African Constitution envisages a society of overlapping institutions of accountability and these "fundamentally licence and legitimise journalism and civic work". It is this "complex architecture" of institutions that we put our trust in to safeguard our democracy, our freedom and our right to voice our opinions and decisions. To dismantle this is to undo our democracy. But, Dawes also said, journalism that is not in a close relationship with justice, is a journalism that rapidly becomes irrelevant.

I've had to make some hard decisions to exclude from this 72-page *Review* stories that also deserve to be published. So I'd urge you to visit www.rjr.ru.ac.za for the extra bits that didn't make this edition.

Anthea Garman, Editor

Cedric Nunn

