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**Jo Bech-Karlsen
BI Norwegian Business School**

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Between Journalism and Fiction: Three Founders of Modern Norwegian Literary Reportage

Jo Bech-Karlsen
BI Norwegian Business School, Norway

The modern origins of literary reportage in Norway can be traced back to the second half of the nineteenth century and a time of uncertain generic boundaries.

In the ongoing effort to excavate the different traditions of literary reportage globally, Norway has its own history. To understand it I will examine three influential Norwegian reporters with origins in the nineteenth century: A. O. Vinje (1818-1870), Christian Krohg (1852-1925), and Knut Hamsun (1859-1952).¹ I have chosen them because they were innovative in their time and worked as reporters for decades. They have “survived”; they are still present in discussions of journalism in Norway, written about in textbooks and biographies, and admired as models. Indeed, we can consider them to be the founders of the modern Norwegian tradition of literary reportage, a term I use in deference to Norwegian and indeed Continental usage, as opposed to the American usage of literary journalism.

Vinje, Krohg, and Hamsun were not only journalists, however. They were also recognized *litterateurs*, writing fiction and poetry. Krohg was, furthermore, a famous painter. Thus, central to any discussion of their literary reportage is the influence of their literary—and artistic—sensibilities on their reportage.

Also central to any such discussion is what I call the “reality contract.”² Shaped through a slow, dynamic process, the contract is a fundamental agree-

ment between the journalists and their audience; everything they write should be true to what happened in that tangible, material world of phenomenon, or what we conventionally call reality.

The concept of a reality contract was neither clear nor defined towards the end of the nineteenth century, when modern Norwegian journalism began to emerge. Norman Sims writes of the American variety that literary journalists are still “engaged in a struggle to describe reality that has been carried on for more than a century.”³ The reporters a century ago were not yet considered “professional” in Scandinavia. For instance it has been documented that the author and Nobel Prize winner Knut Hamsun mixed reporting and fiction in 1885, in what literary researcher Monika Zagar labeled as a mixed genre, in which Hamsun combines journalistic reporting with a freely invented core [meaning “main” or “central”] story.⁴

This study will be explorative, and will build on existing research. It also accepts as a point of departure Zagar’s position that the Norwegian literary reportage is a genre mix of journalism and fiction during this period. Even if some of the mix seems to have been spontaneous and may be unconscious, there are signs of a more conscious use of genre mix, like in Hamsun’s travel book from the Caucasus (1903), *In Wonderland*, originally with the provocative subtitle *Experienced and Dreamed in the Caucasus*.⁵ Vinje also mixed poetry and reporting in his most famous travel book *Travel Memories from the Summer of 1860*.⁶ Krohg’s journalism was obviously influenced by his art—and it went the other way: his novels and art were influenced by his journalism. I will investigate the reportage of these author-journalists to see whether they tried to fulfill, or were even conscious of, the “reality contract” with their readers.

Literary reportage, which sometimes is simply called “reportage,” is often described as a modern genre. According to the Swedish literary scholar Per Rydén, the history of reportage is “short and special” but built on a “long and more common tradition.”⁷ He dates the first Swedish literary reportage to the 1880s. The German reportage researcher Michael Haller puts vital importance on what he considers to be the two classic main functions of reportage: the description of a journey and the eyewitness report.⁸

Bearing this in mind, Vinje, Krohg, and Hamsun wrote travel literature; it was on their journeys that they started to experiment with literary reportage, inspired by what they saw and sensed while travelling, and of course by new literary impulses like literary realism and naturalism. The history of modern literary reportage can be traced back at least to Honoré de Balzac and Émile Zola, who became models for more than these three Norwegians, for instance for the Swedish reporters August Strindberg and Ivar Lo-Johansson.⁹

They all were influenced by the literary movements in realism and later naturalism, and their writing was subjective, reflecting the strong personal essay tradition these writers were familiar with. These models had great impact on the development of the Norwegian and the Swedish reportage genre.¹⁰ The strongest impulse was a new interest in the accuracy of the reality portrayed, as opposed, for instance, to the usual romantic idealization of poverty.¹¹ Content was crucial for these reporters, but they also struggled to develop a new literary style to express this content. As Steen Steensen points out in his article in this volume, they moved in the direction of a modernist approach; the reportage became a “personal narrative.”

Vinje, Krohg, and Hamsun travelled extensively, and not only into the far reaches of their own country, Norway. They also travelled to other countries: Vinje reported from England, Krohg from Berlin, Paris, and Normandy, and Hamsun from America, Russia, and France.

This kind of travel literature (what is called in Norwegian “*reiseskildringer*”) belongs to the “long and more common tradition” that eventually led to Norwegian literary reportage in the modern sense. Many of these travel texts were partly fiction in the sense of freely invented material. Although we want to distinguish fictional from nonfictional literature, such distinctions have proved difficult to make in practice because the genre was based on a “double contract” with readers. The word is taken from a book published in 2006, *The Double Contract*, written by the Danish literary scholar Poul Behrendt. Basically, it means that the contract with readers is not clear because the boundaries between fiction and nonfiction are not clear.¹² Traditionally, he writes, the contract with readers was formed in one of two ways. One said that everything on these pages is true, it deals with something that really happened, and if necessary it may be confirmed empirically. That is the nonfiction contract: “That was the contract the documentary writers of the 1960s and 1970s made with their readers.”¹³ The other contract said that everything in this book is made up. That is the fiction contract. These two contracts “are to an increasing degree engaged in to fool the readers,” Behrendt states.¹⁴ What if the newspaper reportage appears to be fiction, with invented characters and places? The double contract makes, then, the established frames between fiction and nonfiction break down. Behrendt emphasizes that the double contract is not a genre; it is “an invasion and may in principle invade any genre.”¹⁵

Hamsun’s mix of fact and fantasy from 1885 was probably quite common during the long tradition, going back to the famous instance of the travel writings of Marco Polo. Evidence suggests it is doubtful whether Marco Polo had ever been in China.¹⁶ Thus, we should avoid talking about reportage

in this long tradition, and reserve the genre for the “short and special” cases, let us say from around 1880. It seems somewhat naive when John Carey presents all kinds of travel literature from Thucydides onwards, including Marco Polo’s stories from China, as reportage in his *The Faber Book of Reportage* from 1987. In the introduction to the book he insists that reportage must be true: it “must not be inward and fanciful, but pinned verifiably to the clockface of world time.”¹⁷ He also insists that “reportage must be written by an eyewitness” (even if he admits that not all the selected texts have been). Many of the “reportage” pieces in the book are a kind of travel literature with *more* or *less* fictional content. This mix of fact and fiction seems to have been commonly accepted during many periods in the history of travel literature. It is likely that this hybrid literary tradition influenced writers and journalists in the late nineteenth century, when they experimented with the new reportage genre. They did not know of anything else.

This starting point is important because we must assume there are elements of fiction in the early examples of literary reportage. I first realized how naive some text studies of reportage have been, including some of my own, when I read Monica Zagar’s exposure of Knut Hamsun’s journalism ten years ago.¹⁸ In 1885 he published “From an Indian Camp” based on travels in the United States that appeared in two parts in the daily newspaper *Aftenposten*. In Norwegian genre history, journalism researchers call these texts “observation-based reportage,” simply because Hamsun apparently used observation as his main method.¹⁹ However, Zagar has convincingly documented that these reports were partly fiction. Hamsun did not meet the Indians he is describing and “interviewing”; it is even doubtful that some of them had existed, and if they had, they died many years before Hamsun visited the actual area in Wisconsin for the first time in 1883. This, I wrote in 2003, should lead to other, additional methods in journalism genre research.²⁰ Textual analysis alone is not sufficient, because information given in the text may be false. We need more context and empirical evidence; at least we have to show something was *likely* to have happened in the way it is described. It is possible to make spot tests to verify fundamental facts. It is not enough to claim authenticity based exclusively on information given by the reporter in the text.

It is revealing that all three reporters have been compared with the American New Journalism movement by different Norwegian scholars. The New Journalism in the United States in the 1960s has undoubtedly been the most publicized example of literary journalism. And while American scholarship in the last twenty years has amply demonstrated that it was hardly new, nonetheless that period has often provided a point of reference from which much

Scandinavian scholarship drew for comparison. But as a point of reference we can now see that it is false given the more recent historical findings. That applies not only to the United States, but to Norway as well, as this article reveals, and most likely to other countries where literary reportage was largely ignored by the academy and *belle lettres*. Of course one salient difference from the American New Journalism is that in Norway in the late nineteenth century journalism and fiction still freely mixed.

Fortunately, researchers have followed in the footsteps of two of the reporters in this article: Jon Severud in Vinje's steps 150 years later, and Bjørn Rudborg and Ole Petter Førland in Hamsun's steps 100 years later. Through this retracing we can get closer to the reporters' conception of the truth of the reality they portray. There is also some evidence of Christian Krohgs' conception of reality, especially in Arvid Bryne's book *Christian Krohg: The Journalist*.²¹

A.O. VINJE

In 2010 it was 150 years since Aasmund Olavsson Vinje made his long journey from Kristiania (re-named Oslo in 1925) to Trondheim mainly on foot. It resulted in his most famous book, *Travel Memories from the Summer of 1860*.²² In the anniversary edition, the publishing house presented the volume as a "pioneer work in Norwegian journalism."²³ This view is based on the findings of several researchers who have described Vinje as "one of the founders of modern Norwegian journalism."²⁴ The scholar of rhetoric Jon Severud writes that Vinje's journalism "is pointing forward to modern feature journalism."²⁵ The journalism professor Thore Roksvold states that Vinje "uses modern techniques in complex observation-based reportage at least with the same perfection as the writers in the 1960s New Journalism tradition."²⁶ In the recently published *Norsk Presses Historie* (Norwegian press history), the book is described as "The first modern travel reportage in Norwegian journalism."²⁷ It is also defined as "an early example of literary journalism, with a distinct first-person narrator, humor, observation and narrative."²⁸ The literary researcher Jon Haarberg has shown *how* Vinje's journalism was literary in his book on the author²⁹: Factual events are given a literary structure and fictitious events are added. "How much of the reportage that is 'true' is an open question," Aina Nøding writes.³⁰

Haarberg relates the book to "subjective, humorous travel literature ("reiseskildring")" and "sociological reportage."³¹ Even while he still lived, Vinje was accused of "factual inaccuracies."³² For instance he tells how the glimpse of a beloved girl in a harbor prevents him from entering a ship: "And that was fortunate, because a storm in the fjord made the ship go under. I think they

all died. . . . The girl saved my life.”³³ The intent is humorous, and according to Haarberg it is freely invented fiction, inspired by the fact that there had been bad weather lately, and one man had died in the fjord. It is representative of the kind of humorous hyperbole Vinje engaged in. Another example is a story from a farm, where the pig disliked that the traveler borrowed its food dish. Haarberg shows that the same story had been told by another author earlier.³⁴ In some stories, he writes, “Vinje has simplified and adapted to the factual basis.”³⁵ But at the same time he states that these features of fiction in themselves do not create a breach with the factual basis from which they derived.

The purpose of Vinje’s journey was to witness the crowning of the new king, Karl XV, in Trondheim. There is no doubt that he was present at the crowning in Trondheim; he was at the time a famous man, and was observed and later even described in newspapers and books. Severud also confirms that Vinje had been to most of the places he writes about, and that he had even met most of the people he claims to have met. In many places there are still traces from his visits: pictures, guest books, and other textual material. In addition, Severud has met people who have heard stories passed through generations about Vinje’s visits. But he also indicates that Vinje describes places he did not visit, probably for various practical reasons, even if his plan had been to do so. These scenes were created, based on information from other sources.

Some of Vinje’s travel book is in the form of lyrical poetry, based on the reporter’s observations and emotions. It is done in such a way that the journalist in the text, as first-person narrator, bursts into song and lyrics that express his state of mind and heart. Moreover, Vinje uses poetic license to express himself. For instance, he describes a forest that bows down and kisses “this black river.”³⁶ But the river is brown, and the local people insist it has always been. But in this poetic manner, where Vinje personifies the forest and the river, black suits the picture better than brown. Vinje sometimes takes to this kind of poetic freedom.

At times, Vinje even uses some license in the circumstances of how the story is put together. In one chapter from Trondheim he compares two different craftsmen—the shoemaker and the baker.³⁷ He makes it clear that he did meet the shoemaker in Trondheim, and Jon Severud has even identified him.³⁸ However, it is more vague when and where he met the baker. It seems likely it is someone he had met earlier somewhere else, but he places him in this story from Trondheim because he needs him as a literary foil to make the comparison between the crafts. It is difficult to find concrete evidence for the existence of this craftsman, Severud concludes.

Vinje also makes his characters better and worse than they probably were for optimum dramatic effect. For instance he describes a former famous politician, now a rich farmer, as an anti-modern, reactionary, and evil man, and this contrasts with an endearing, self-sacrificing priest. “Literary Vinje needs this one-dimensional farmer figure as an antithesis to both his heroes of modernization and the poverty he observes,” Severud writes.³⁹

A.O. Vinje is famous for his so-called *tvisyn*, which in English would be something like ambiguity or ambivalence. Directly translated, to be *tvisynt* is to have a double sight. Vinje himself describes it this way: “to see at a glance what is right and wrong in the web of life, in a way that can make us cry with one eye and laugh with the other.”⁴⁰ It refers to a duality both regarding the object (right and wrong) and the observing subject (the ability to see two perspectives, to see the ambiguity). Vinje’s *tvisyn* becomes a method and a distinct literary tool in his journalism; it creates tension and uncertainty for the reader.

Vinjes’ ambiguity was reflected when he reached the goal of his journey, Trondheim. During the crowning ceremony, he met the rich and poor, the upper and lower classes, and he could not decide for himself which was more fascinating. He placed himself in the interval *between* the popular and the elite. His reportage from the ceremony reflects a unique perspective—his sight is not fixed on the crowning itself, but on everything that happens *around it*. It is not a news report but, rather, a literary reportage focused on human interest.

CHRISTIAN KROHG

In 1895 Christian Krohg interviewed the Norwegian lyric poet Sigbjørn Obstfelder.⁴¹ In his book *Christian Krohg: The Journalist*, Arvid Bryne writes that the interview “has most of the characteristics of the phenomenon [American] new journalism. . . . New journalism gives a fictional impression and uses literary techniques, just like Krohg demonstrates.”⁴² The poet was extremely embarrassed with the picture Krohg made of him; he claimed he was described as “a strange, unrealistic dreamer.” Both the text and Krohg’s drawing of him, Bryne writes, contributed “to giving the lasting impression of Obstfelder as a queer dreamer lost on the wrong planet.”⁴³ In his bitterness the poet worked five years on a text in which he murders Krohg in revenge, but it had still not been published when he died in 1900. Also, Krohg’s interview has something in common with Gonzo: it is brutally direct and can easily be read as disrespectful.

His main work of journalism is found in *The Fight for Existence*, published in four volumes from 1920 to 1921, and containing works from 1885

to 1918.⁴⁴ There are obvious connections between the artist and the journalist. First, he developed his famous literary portraits as an illustrator; while drawing people, he started to write down dialogue and characteristic details, and eventually he created what would become a strong and durable Norwegian genre: the portrait interview.⁴⁵

Second, he made impressionism his main journalistic method, both in reportage and portraits. We see it, for example, in 1898 when Krohg went to Normandy in France to write reportage while on a bicycle tour:

Onwards! Onwards!

The bicycle and I, we whizz through, we whizz past, we ring bells, we scorch around corners, we hurry, we whistle along, we speed downwards.

We enter a city. But we do not stop. Clusters of children in the middle of the street. We split them. We are attacked by a dog, we lose a pedal, we find it again.

Onwards, onwards!⁴⁶

The passage reflects an observation made by Georg Johannesen, professor of rhetoric, who wrote that “the God in Krohg’s journalism is the moment, a glint in his eye”⁴⁷ because of the rapidity of the fleeting movement *of the moment*. This is detected in the unrelenting motion of the active voice in the verbs “whizz,” “ring,” “scorch,” “hurry,” “whistle,” “speed.” Similarly, Holger Kofoed notes, “He grabs the living moment, the condensed universal and human in the situation, and in this way the text becomes alive.”⁴⁸ The description of bicycling illustrates Bryne’s observation that it is hard to see “where Krohg stops to be a painter and becomes a writer—or the other way around.”⁴⁹ Such is Krohg’s impressionism of the moment.

As a painter Krohg was originally a naturalist, eventually becoming a pioneer for impressionism. He made impressionism his main journalistic method, both in reportage and portraits.

What are the consequences of his impressionistic method for his concept of truth and authenticity to reality? When Krohg turned seventy years old, in 1922, the professional journal *Journalisten*’s interviewer characterized him as follows:

As a journalist Krohg is a sovereign, and thus he feels a sovereign contempt for facts. To be more precise—he has quite a special judgment of facts. Concerning important things, those which really matter, he is safe as a rock. Untruth is far from his character. In his characteristics of a person he is sharp as a knife, as a clean, well-disinfected knife. The features he gives his victims are those they have from his point of view. . . . But he does not give a damn

about all the small things. He has got a definite sense of what is important and is able to separate it from what is not.⁵⁰

The interviewer is focused on how true is Krohg's reliability. He characterizes his impressionism as selective and highly subjective, while praising Krohg's ability to differentiate between the important and the unimportant.

The bicycle tour of Normandy typifies the active kinds of journeys he took, reported on, and illustrated. It also reflects his willingness to push at more than just the boundaries of genres: The bicycle was such a novelty at the time that he had to engage a teacher (*le professeur de bicyclette*) to learn how to ride it. Then he started out on the French rural trails, most of them in better condition than the main street in Kristiania (again, today's Oslo). The result was eight bicycle reportages in *Verdens Gang* during the spring, the very first of their kind.⁵¹ That he was inspired to be literary is reflected in the fact that one of the reportage texts starts with a quote from Émile Zola—in French:

L'orange gronde, la vieille société va
Disparaître, une seule chose peut nous
Sauver: la bicyclette gratuite et obligatoire.⁵²

Later the quote is translated into Norwegian. In English it means, "The storm is approaching, the old society will go under; only one thing can save us: free and mandatory bicycle riding." Clearly, Krohg had an eye for ironic humor in his observations of the human condition.

I have found no indications that his story is not authentic. On the contrary, he traveled with famous Norwegian friends, who are characters in texts and illustrations, and they would probably have left indications if Krohg had invented characters and events. It is his subjectivity and determined selection that impressionistically colors *his* truth.

While the impressionistic artist influenced Krohg as reporter, the opposite was the case with his novels. They are clearly influenced not only by the painter, but also by the socially engaged journalist.⁵³ As I read him today, Krohg was an early social reporter, and wrote intentionally provocative texts about ordinary people he felt had been exposed to injustice. Often he only used one single source, and based on this source he accused people in high places of misusing power. Ethically and legally this method would likely not be acceptable today. But the way he was writing these texts brings to mind some of the stories about ordinary people in modern narrative journalism. This is reflected in his most famous novel, *Albertine*,⁵⁴ which deals with a controversial subject at the time—prostitution. The book is an attack on public prostitution, and an even stronger attack on corrupt policemen involved in the business. It was confiscated by the police the day after it was published,

but it still caused a heated public debate. “There is no doubt that the novel and the paintings [by Krohg] of Albertine played a crucial role for the abolition of public control and approval of prostitution,”⁵⁵ Bryne concludes.

The literary impulse in Krohg’s journalism manifested itself in still other ways. For instance, he wrote a play called “Pepper in the Eyes” that was published on the front page of *Verdens Gang*.⁵⁶ It was an attack on radical feminism, presented as a tragedy in three acts, and paraphrased Henrik Ibsen’s *A Doll’s House*.

KNUT HAMSUN

As noted, Thore Roksvold states that A.O. Vinje’s travel book from 1860 was “Norwegian new journalism one hundred years before Tom Wolfe.”⁵⁷ He adds that Knut Hamsun is “another example of a Norwegian new journalist from earlier times,” based on his Indian camp texts from 1885. Of course, Roksvold reveals here that his point of reference is the American New Journalism. Even more interesting is Hamsun’s travel book *In Wonderland* from 1903, based on a journey to Russia and the Caucasus in 1899. The intriguing original subtitle—*Experienced and Dreamed in the Caucasus*—invites further investigation: Is this reportage? What is fact and what might be fiction?

Bjørn Rudborg and Ole Petter Førland travelled in Hamsun’s footsteps in 1999 some 100 years after him. They conclude that the book “is based on an actual journey with a lot of references to named places, descriptions of nature, and an authentic gallery of persons.”⁵⁸ But they say the book is “fictional and poetic” as well. They show how fantasy is inserted in travel descriptions. Hamsun explained these parts as feverish fantasies from illness on the last part of the journey. He mentions the fever twenty times in the book.⁵⁹ “May the fever be ‘the wonderland?’” Rudborg and Førland ask, and continue: “Is he in a state that weakens his consciousness, that gives him visions and hallucinations? Is the wonderland as much feverish dreams as factual experience?”⁶⁰

His translator Sverre Lyngstad adds, “Hamsun himself invites the readers’ skepticism in regard to the truth value of his book.”⁶¹ Lyngstad refers to an unusual scene between Hamsun and his first wife Bergljot who accompanied him on the journey. He finds her reading his travel diary. She tells him she believes neither in the reality of a certain police officer nor in her husband’s ride into the mountains, where he visits a herdsman and has a romance with the latter’s favorite wife. Rudborg and Førland also point at this ride on a stolen horse into the mountains as a potential dream and fantasy. Elisabeth Oxfeldt writes that Hamsun makes “us readers unsure about the status of the herdsman episode.”⁶² On the one hand the storyteller indicates it is something experienced, on the other he reports his wife reading his diary and

refusing to believe his story. Oxfeldt stresses that the “story is authentic but not true. The authenticity is reflected in the fact that the narrator apparently has his dreams and experiences on the very journey instead of inventing them after returning home.”⁶³ Thus the fantastical dreams did, in fact, take place while he was in the Caucasus. This reminds us of “logical fantasy,” going back to the Czech-German reporter Egon Erwin Kisch, which means to imagine something that happened at the location of a scene without benefit of firsthand observation.⁶⁴ But one important difference is that the fantasy is logical, in Kisch’s view, because it could be reconstructed according to how it happened.⁶⁵ Many modern reporters use that technique in the form of reconstruction after interviewing participants. In Hamsun’s case such a fantasy of events took place because he dreamed them.

“Hamsun clearly emphasizes and plays on the uncertainty of the genre,” Oxfeldt writes, with reference both to the main title and the subtitle of the book.⁶⁶ In that way she indicates that Hamsun deliberately entered into a double contract with his readers; he wanted to keep them uncertain. In this way Hamsun was pushing the boundaries of modernism, indeed.

However, dreams and fantasy do not dominate the book. On the contrary, Rudborg and Førlund accept its overall validity, even if Hamsun exaggerates here and there and sometimes they cannot find named places he refers to in the text. Hamsun worked on the book for years. This was at a time when he experimented with new forms, and one may imagine that he tried to build bridges between journalism and fiction by creating a new literary genre.⁶⁷ This genre is close to what we think of today as literary reportage. In the text Hamsun clearly shows how he is working with the facts. In many parts he describes his writing in the notebook, obviously to emphasize that everything is correct. He also goes into detail about his research work. Apparently he is well aware of the reporter’s role. The book was published eighteen years later than the text about the Indian camp, and one can speculate that his notion of the reportage genre is clearer than before.

Hamsun’s mix of genres also applies to his novels. Several scholars have emphasized the autobiographical and factual aspects in some of his novels. Petter Aaslestad claims that “the I narrator in Hamsun’s novels sometimes is closer to the factual Hamsun than we usually have supposed.”⁶⁸ The prominent Hamsun researcher, Lars Frode Larsen, argues strongly that *Hunger* should be read as an autobiography, not as a novel.⁶⁹ This implies that Hamsun had a broad notion of the literary concept that included both fiction and journalism.

His concept of literature was probably determined by the view in his own times in Norway. The word *sakprosa* (factual prose) is a Nordic invention

and was introduced in 1938.⁷⁰ The division between fact and fiction is older, but a *distinct* division was still not known in the years around the turn of the century—neither by authors nor readers.⁷¹ The works of literary history at the time when Hamsun started to write included both fiction and *sakprosa* (factual prose); it was all one literature.⁷²

CONCLUSION

Thus, these texts of Vinje, Krohg, and Hamsun are examples of an *early* literary reportage in Norway, even if they have fictional elements. It could not be avoided, since their models wrote in the long tradition of mixed travel genres that not infrequently included fictional elements. Yet we can see a new dedication to being more accurate and trustworthy with the facts, thus reflecting new ideals of an emerging modern journalism. It also illustrates how the concept of a reality contract with readers was being shaped through a slow, dynamic process. These three reporters were among those who started this process. It would be unrealistic to assume these early examples to be purely factual in this respect; they are attempts to do something modern, connected to a new interest in the reality of the material world around us, paralleling naturalism and realism in fictional literature. Krohg seems to be closest to the standards of modern literary reportage; he does not invent or fix stories like the two others sometimes do, but his impressionistic method simplifies and purifies his eye, sometimes to an extreme extent; he feels sovereign to pick details and characteristics he finds useful, even if others in society might be offended.

Most definitions of reportage agree on two demands: 1. A reporter should use first-hand observation, and 2. the reporter should be present.⁷³ As far as the investigations tell us, all three reporters primarily satisfy these demands. These three reporters also satisfy my own definition of reportage: “The reportage is a personally told story based on the reporter’s own experiences in reality.”⁷⁴

NOTES

Unless otherwise noted, translations are by the author.

1. Many others are forgotten. I could have added one name, Camilla Collett (1813–1895). She was a “pioneer in Norwegian reportage journalism, not at least among women”, according to *Norsk Pressehistorie 1660–2010*, volume 1, page 335. But her career as a reporter was rather short: She published “sketches” from Berlin and Paris in the 1860s, but after 1868 she only published essays. Today she is remembered as an author of *belletristic* discourse rather than as reporter.

2. Jo Bech-Karlsen, “Literary journalism: Contracts and Double Contracts with Readers,” *Literary Journalism*, Vol 4, No 3 (2010), 6.

3. Norman Sims, *True Stories: A Century of Literary Journalism*. (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 2007), Preface xviii.

4. Monika Zagar, “Imagining the Red-Skinned Other. Hamsun’s Article ‘Fra en Indianerleir,’” *Edda* No 4 (2001), 392.

5. Translated to English by Sverre Lyngstad in 2004: Knut Hamsun, *In Wonderland* (Brooklyn, N.Y.: IG Publishing, 2004).

6. This is my translation of the title of Vinjes’ book *Ferdaminni fraa Sumaren 1860*. Only Hamsun’s book *In Wonderland* is translated into English. English titles and extracts from Vinje and Krohg have been translated by me.

7. Per Rydén. *Vår dagliga läsning* (Stockholm: PA Norstedt & Söners Förlag, 1981), 192–212. In Scandinavia, “reportage” by itself, without the adjective “literary,” mainly means the same as literary reportage. This is reflected in other Central European countries such as Germany, Poland, and the old Czechoslovakia.

8. Michael Haller, *Die Reportage* (München: Ölschläger, 1987), 8.

9. Jo Bech-Karlsen, *Reportasjen* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 2002), 64–75.

10. For those unfamiliar with the Scandinavian countries, one must in any discussion of Norway during this period refer often to Sweden not only because it was a neighboring country on the Scandinavian peninsula and the languages are similar, but because at the time both were ruled by the same king in what had been a united kingdom since 1814, much as England and Scotland were united in the early seventeenth century. That united kingdom would dissolve in 1905 when Norwegians elected their own king who was a prince from nearby Denmark.

11. Bech-Karlsen 2002: 64–65.

12. Poul Behrendt, *Dobbeltkontrakten*, (København: Gyldendal, 2006), 19–32.

13. Behrendt, *Dobbeltkontrakten*, 19.

14. Ibid.

15. Behrendt, *Dobbeltkontrakten*, 30.

16. Frances Wood, *Did Marco Polo go to China?* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1996).

17. John Carey, *The Faber Book of Reportage* (London, Boston: Faber and Faber, 1987), xxix.

18. Zagar.

19. Thore Roksvold, ed., *Avisssjangerer over tid. Studier i språk og sjanger* (Fredrikstad: Institutt for journalistikk, 1997), 58–60.

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20. Jo Bech-Karlsen, "Knut Hamsun som reporter." <http://cfje.dk/cfje.VidBase.nsf/ID/VB00547723> - (2003/2004): 18. Accessed 2 August 2007. 18.
21. Arvid Bryne, *Christian Krohg. Journalisten* (Oslo: Unipub, 2009), 7–20, 163–68, 207–17.
22. A. O. Vinje, *Ferdaminni fraa Sumaren 1860* (Christiania: Bergh & Ellefsen, 1861).
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