

# M onatshefte

*für deutschsprachige Literatur und Kultur*

VOLUME 115 • NUMBER 2 • 2023

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### SPECIAL ISSUE

#### DER JOURNALIST ALS PRODUZENT.

#### WALTER BENJAMINS PUBLIZISTISCHE TEXTE UND DIE MEDIENLANDSCHAFT DER ZWISCHENKRIEGSZEIT

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#### **The Journalist as Producer: Mapping the Scene**

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Since the eighteenth century, literary authors have been dependent on journalism while also contributing to this field; these mutual links become particularly pronounced in the Weimar Republic, when many writers turn to journalistic writing to supplement their income and enhance their public profile. This essay sets out the vibrancy of the Weimar journalistic landscape, where the feuilleton, or review section, shaped public debate and where literary and cultural magazines offered authors unprecedented scope to publish ambitious texts for a wide readership. One of the most versatile and prolific such voices is Walter Benjamin, whose journalism is inextricably linked to his ‘serious’ large-scale projects. And yet his journalistic publications are rarely studied in their own right and even less so within their original contexts, where they form part of a network of authors, texts, and media. This special issue undertakes such contextual readings, looking at Benjamin’s strategic links both within the Weimar Republic and beyond its geographical and temporal borders. (CD/DW)

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**Der Journalist als Menschentypus. Walter Benjamin und der Professionalisierungsdiskurs um 1930**

This article reconstructs the professionalization debate about journalists at the end of the Weimar Republic. While journalism has been called into question as a profession since the rise of the press, its uncertain status, its lack of a binding institution, and the denial of public recognition created a strong need among journalists to explain and legitimize their professional identity as public knowledge producers. Around 1930, the social crisis along with the decline of the job market intensified this struggle. This article takes its cue from Walter Benjamin's observations of the German professions from 1930 and contextualizes them in the wider discourse in search of an accepted professional identity. By analyzing a wide range of sources (practical guidelines for the job search, self-reflective articles, encyclopedias, and others), this article shows how contemporaries developed the concept of the journalist as its own "human type" that could be distinguished from other professions and was based on essentialist biological and psychological assumptions. (HZ, in German)

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**Walter Benjamin and Ssofia Fedortschenko: Intercultural and Intermedial Aspects of a 'Failed' Transfer**

Walter Benjamin reviewed the book *Der Russe redet* by Ssofia Fedortschenko, a Russian nurse during WWI, in 1926 for *Die Literarische Welt*. This article discusses the review in three respects: 1) as an interrelated component of the journal's discursive embedding, 2) as part of the reviewed book's transfer across Europe, and 3) as an element in Benjamin's (cross-cultural) engagement with war reports and 'mediating' (Soviet) Russian affairs. Taken together, the three perspectives showcase how Benjamin interacted with forming discourses in *Die Literarische Welt* in 1926/7. He did so by working with intercultural and intermedial dimensions that both impacted and were impacted or reflected by the literary critic. (SB)

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**Benjamin in *i10*: Journalistic Networks, Exchange, and Reception behind a Dutch Multi-Lingual Avant-Garde Magazine**

Walter Benjamin published five articles in *i10*, a Dutch multi-lingual avant-garde magazine published from 1927 to 1929. Behind these contributions lies a rich practice of journalistic exchange. I explore the threads of this exchange in three ways: through a) the contents of the magazine; b) letters between Benjamin and editor Arthur Müller Lehning; and c) Benjamin's reception in Dutch newspapers in the late 1920s. Exploring Benjamin in this context, gives a sense of the multifaceted value for Benjamin of a new—and young—publishing venue. He brought his own network to the magazine, which benefitted him financially. He was, further, able to draw on the network behind *i10*, entering, at least by name, into Dutch literary circles. Analyzing Benjamin's work in *i10*

also gives a sense of the European discussions around new media and the arts and politics of Soviet Russia that took place when Benjamin was thinking and writing about the same subjects. (MP)

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#### **Benjamins zeitdiagnostische Rezensionstätigkeit zwischen Text und Kontexten. Exemplarische Analysen eines Spannungsverhältnisses**

This article focuses on the strategies and procedures of Benjamin's critical reviewing activity in its journalistic contexts. The subject of the investigation is his positive review of a bibliophile edition of Goethe's *Farbenlehre* from 1928. At the same time, he writes in *Einbahnstraße* that the medium of the book has become antiquated. How do these two opposing statements relate to each other? The study will examine this contrast in the context of debates in the *Literarische Welt*, in which Benjamin's review was published. The contrast suggests that new descriptions are necessary for Benjamin's role as reviewer. Benjamin writes his review not from a position of strong authorship, but rather as a 'journalistic actor' in critical debates. (KD, in German)

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#### **Writing at the End: Benjamin, Kraus, and the Image of Journalism**

Walter Benjamin's critique and interpretation of journalistic form may be understood against the background of the longer-running philosophical preoccupation with newspaper reading and journalistic writing. His own contribution to this tradition takes shape in large part through his engagement with the work of Karl Kraus, the Austrian writer who, for Benjamin, embodied journalism "in its most paradoxical form." As this article shows, the work of Kraus is treated as the model of an "originary" journalism, reminiscent of the *neue Zeitungen* circulating at the threshold of the modern age, chronicling a history grasped as continuous catastrophe. But the Ur-journalism modelled on Kraus does not stop at lamenting a world that has reached its fateful end; in Benjamin's rendering, it also turns every world-historical "now" into a "courtroom" where the present world both demands its liberation and prefigures the realization of this demand. (TV)

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#### **Walter Benjamin and the Networks of the *Frankfurter Zeitung***

The *Frankfurter Zeitung* offered an important if also often unreliable publishing venue for Walter Benjamin during the Weimar Republic. Many texts central to Benjamin's literary and theoretical corpus appeared in the newspaper's well-respected feuilleton, from the *Denkbilder* of *Einbahnstraße* and some of the vignettes of *Berliner Kindheit* to his essays on figures like Karl Kraus. At the same time, many of Benjamin's pieces, such as his essay on Bertolt Brecht's epic theater, sparked controversy among the feuilleton's editorial staff. With

Benjamin's frequent travels, letters written to friends and the feuilleton's editors thus provide an important paratext mediating such publications. This article uses computational methods to visualize (as a network) and analyze (as network metrics) Benjamin's correspondence networks with the editors of and other authors who wrote for the feuilleton of the *Frankfurter Zeitung* up to the end of the Weimar Republic. They show Benjamin's distance to German-Jewish intellectual communities and his distance to those associated with the newspaper, despite being highly connected with important individuals in the network. It concludes with the consideration that Benjamin's own thinking on networked phenomena offers a perspective on networks that allows for the difference within connection that describes his interactions with the networks of the *Frankfurter Zeitung*. (MH)

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#### Berlin—Paris—Marseille: Walter Benjamin and *Les Cahiers du Sud*

My article focuses on Walter Benjamin's long-standing relationship with *Les Cahiers du Sud*, a literary review founded in 1925 in Marseille by Jean Ballard. I argue that the support Benjamin's work received from Ballard and his colleague, writer and critic Marcel Brion, was integral to Benjamin's success and survival as an exiled intellectual in France in the 1930s. Benjamin's publications in the journal—"Hachich à Marseille" (1935) and "L'angoisse mythique chez Goethe" (1937)—are thereby analyzed within the context of his status as a transnational critic, operating at the margins of the media industries in both Paris and Berlin. By doing so, I examine the manner in which the collaborative work rooted in the network surrounding *Les Cahiers du Sud* intersects with Benjamin's wider conceptual concerns and his reception by a French readership, thus providing an alternative critical lens through which to view his journalistic endeavors as an émigré writer. (SC)

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