

Snapshot and Wage Table

The Importance of Facts in the Reports of Hugo von Kupffer (1853-1928) and Max Winter (1870-1937)

Mario Huber (University of Graz)

1. Introduction

The main concern of this paper is to revisit and reevaluate the beginning of the century-long debate about ‘facts’ in German journalism, especially in the subgenre report. After the biased news coverage during the First World War, many journalists in the 1920s voiced their opinion on how to steer journalism ‘back on track.’¹ ‘Facts’ (‘Tatsachen’) and ‘objectivity’ (‘Sachlichkeit’) were the central terms in this debate on the virtues and goals of reporting. The theoretical and practical historic significance of this multi-faceted journalistic movement, which was often labeled as contradictory, is widely recognized by the scientific community.²

As a supplement to the existing research – which focuses on the accuracy of the depicted reality in those texts – I want to offer a new perspective on the specific purpose of dealing with facts and objectivity in journalistic works. For this, I will recapitulate the debate, based on theoretical texts written by its arguably most important representative, Egon Erwin Kisch (1885-1948). In the following, I want to show how journalistic objectivity can be framed as a strategic tool with ethical implications rather than as a norm of depicting reality. To this end, I will reach back to a paper by Elisabeth Klaus,³ who has already made this point about current journalistic practices. The proposed

1 For a small but relevant selection of theoretical texts and practical examples in the same vein cf. Schütz 1974.

2 A detailed summary of main talking points can be found in Haas 1999: 218–281 and Patka 1997: 91–111.

3 Cf. Klaus 2004.

new perspective will show that some of the observed contradictions in the discussion during the 1920s vanish if we differentiate between the purposes why facts came into play in the first place. From this point of view, the debate about facts is more a mixture of different goals than a cohesive theory about reality. Finally, I want to show that some of the (seemingly) new ideas in the 1920s can at least be traced back to professional demarcations at the turn of the 20th century. At this time, a countermovement to editorial journalism and the feuilleton gained ground and introduced new methods, such as a heavy reliance on eyewitness-accounts, into German journalism. Hugo von Kupfer's (1853-1928) city-based reports about the emerging metropolis Berlin and Max Winter's (1870-1937) social reports about the working-class environment in Austria-Hungary serve as prime examples for the emerging debate about facts.

2. The Debate about Facts in the 1920s

The term 'report' ('Reportage') has its roots in French and American journalism and came into use in the German speaking world at the end of the 19th century.⁴ Despite its widespread use and its prevalence in the journalistic canon, there is no universally accepted definition available but rather a 'catalog' of historically changeable requirements for its practical use.⁵

Michael Haller distinguishes between two lines of tradition which merged in the report.⁶ On the one hand, aspects of the literary travelogue, which focuses on the traveler and his experiences, can be found. Haller argues that many of the characteristics of the ideal report, i.e., documentation, authenticity, credibility, immediacy, and honesty, can be traced back to the ancient tradition of the literary travelogue. On the other hand, the journalistic eyewitness account also takes a prominent place in the report. Rather than focusing on the traveler/the reporter and his/her point of view, the main goal of the eyewitness account is to show events that would also take place without journalists reporting on them, e.g., war or natural disasters. This analytic distinction between subject-focused and object-focused traditions leads to the idea that the journalist has to be 'on site.' If he/she describes foreign countries or

4 Cf. Kostenzer 2009: 82.

5 Cf. Haas 1999: 237.

6 Cf. Haller 2020: 19–50.

other cultures or describes events that are closed to the general public, the aim is that the readers should be able to participate in what happened.⁷

By the 1920s, when it was only a few decades old, the report had already become the topic of a lengthy discussion among practitioners. Heavily influenced by American journalists, reports were widely regarded as a new and adequate way of depicting of the ever-changing and complex post-war reality.⁸ Despite the agreement about the genre per se, the beginning debate about permissible methods in its use, especially about the importance of facts, showed major fault lines between reporters.

Hannes Haas focuses on this debate in his book *Empirischer Journalismus* and highlights one aspect of the discussion. He shows that the question about the possibilities of the report in the 1920s is heavily intertwined with the photograph (or the 'snapshot') as a metaphor.⁹ He parallels the historic development with the rise of the cultural movement of the "New Objectivity" ('Neue Sachlichkeit'). In this multidisciplinary movement, authenticity, precision and objectivity were seen as absolute virtues and questions about the possibility of depicting reality were very popular. Photography promised to be an ideal implementation of this idea – and therefore it was used to offer (aesthetic) 'instructions' for other forms of representation such as the report.¹⁰

A prime example of picking up on this idea can be found in the theoretical texts of Egon Erwin Kisch.¹¹ The "reporter on the move" ('rasender Reporter'), who became synonymous with a certain very popular style of journalism, reflected upon the report and drew many comparisons to photography. This also includes the often-cited foreword of his collection of writings "The reporter on the move" from 1925:

7 Cf. *ibid.*: 34–35.

8 Cf. Haas 1999: 233–236.

9 Cf. *ibid.*: 262–265.

10 Cf. *ibid.*: 262. Even though the mentioned ideas about photography were compatible with (popular) contemporary concepts of reality and the relations between subjects and objects, it is worth mentioning that even at the time photographers or intellectuals like Siegfried Kracauer (1889–1966) already moved on to a far more critical view in self-reflection of the art form. (Cf. Knaller 2015: 82–87)

11 This can also be found in the following texts: "Nature of the reporter" ("Wesen des Reporters", 1918), "Dogma of the infallibility of the press" ("Dogma der Unfehlbarkeit der Presse", *ibid.*) and "Reportage as an art form and a form of struggle" ("Reportage als Kunstform und Kampfform", 1935). (Cf. Kisch 1983a [1918], 1983b [1918], and 1983c [1935])

The time photographs below were not taken all at once. Subject and object were in different moods at different ages when the pictures were taken, position and light were very different each time. Still, there is nothing to retouch as the album is released today.¹²

Even in this short paragraph, many allusions to photography can be found: Kisch talks about “pictures” in an “album,” he reflects upon the incidence of light and reassures the reader that there was no post-processing involved. The recourse to these metaphors is linked to Kisch’s idea of a reporter with no bias and his absolute dependency on facts:

The reporter has no bias, has nothing to justify, and has no point of view. He has to be an impartial witness and to give testimony impartially, as reliably as his testimony can be given [...]. Even the bad reporter – the one who exaggerates or is unreliable – does an important job: because he is dependent on the facts, he has to get knowledge of them, by sight, by conversation, by observation, by information. (659)¹³

The quotes from Kisch’s foreword show how closely linked – by metaphorical comparisons with photography – the idea of the ideal reporter (or the ideal report) and the value-free handling of facts are. This connection is in itself not very problematic – and if this would have been the only remark upon the theoretical and practical framework of the report, the discussion probably would have ended soon. But there were not only dissenting voices, which we will talk about soon, Kisch himself also complicated the topic.

Based on his past discussions, in his lecture “From the practice of the local reporter” (“Aus der Praxis des Lokalreporters”, 1928) Kisch cites three requirements for reporters: objectivity (“Sachlichkeit”), a sense of social responsibility

12 Kisch 1978 [1925]: 660. “Die nachstehenden Zeitaufnahmen sind nicht auf einmal gemacht worden. Subjekt und Objekt waren in den verschiedensten Lebensaltern in verschiedensten Stimmungen, als die Bilder entstanden, Stellung und Licht waren höchst ungleich. Trotzdem ist nichts zu retuschieren, da das Album heute vorgelegt wird.” All translations by M.H.

13 “Der Reporter hat keine Tendenz, hat nichts zu rechtfertigen und hat keinen Standpunkt. Er hat unbefangene Zeugen zu sein und unbefangene Zeugschaft zu liefern, so verlässlich, wie sich seine Aussage geben lässt [...]. Selbst der schlechte Reporter – der, der übertreibt oder unverlässlich ist – leistet werktätige Arbeit: denn er ist von den Tatsachen abhängig, er hat sich Kenntnis von ihnen zu verschaffen, durch Augenschein, durch ein Gespräch, durch eine Beobachtung, eine Auskunft.”

(‘soziales Gefühl’) and the will to help the oppressed (‘Willen, den Unterdrückten zu helfen’).¹⁴ Photography and its metaphorical indifference can only be linked to objectivity, and the latter two requirements cover different grounds. As a result of this proposed combination, an aesthetic norm and broad ideas of social effectiveness are now heavily intertwined. The resulting inconsistency has not only been established with reference to Kisch. Helmut Weiß, for example, writes in relation to the photographic metaphor:

When it comes to reporting, it is important not just to take photographs, but with a specially selected lens. It is important to show reality as a whole by showing partial excerpts from it and especially the reality of social conditions. It is important not only to nail down the visible things and facts, but to uncover the connections, the contradictions, the background. Ultimately, it is about photographing things not in isolation, but in their concrete context [...].¹⁵

Weiß argues for using a specific lens for every single photograph. Ultimately, it depends on not photographing things by themselves but in their social context. But this expansion into a spatial dimension is not the only counterpoint. In direct reference to Kisch, Leo Lania (1896–1961) argues for a temporal extension:

Kisch only feels like a servant of the object. He is a master of the report, his eye is keen, his agility as great as the thoroughness with which he goes about his work. And yet it would be wrong to classify Kisch as a reporter. [...] It is not a superficial clinging to fact that distinguishes the reporter from the poet. [...] The reporter is on a fundamentally different level: the object is only important to him to the extent that it is generally important. And so, he positions himself to his objects not as a – superior or submissive – viewer, but as a spy, whether it is a prison, a madhouse, a mine, a factory.

14 Cf. Patka 1997: 103.

15 Weiß 1974 [1931]: 12–13. “Es kommt bei der Reportage darauf an, nicht einfach zu fotografieren, sondern mit einer genau zu bestimmenden Linse. Es kommt darauf an, die ganze Wirklichkeit zu zeigen, indem Teilausschnitte aus dieser Wirklichkeit, aus der Realität der gesellschaftlichen Verhältnisse gezeigt werden. Es kommt darauf an, nicht nur die sichtbaren Dinge und Tatsachen festzunageln, sondern die Zusammenhänge, die Widersprüche, die Hintergründe aufzudecken. Es kommt letztlich darauf an, die Dinge nicht als Einzelheiten abzufotografieren, sondern im konkreten Zusammenhang [...]”

He does not describe, he reveals – he doesn't show things as they are, but as they were and what will become of them [...].¹⁶

This and other critical remarks on Kisch's work (and the photography metaphor) have already been addressed by Michael Geisler. Kisch's idea of "objectivity," which is very closely connected to the aforementioned representation theory, is flawed from a constructivist point of view. Every journalistic text can only be an excerpt from reality which is selected by the reporter who is responsible for bringing the selected facts in a structured form.¹⁷ But facts remain facts, e.g., three different selections of facts by three different reporters in three different structured forms create three different factual narratives – none of them is objective in a strict sense, but all of them are factual and verifiable against reality.

Upon further consideration, there is not only a certain naiveté to Kisch's idea of "objectivity," which can be seen in the above and further by questioning what remains of the "authenticity" of the eyewitness from a constructionist perspective. But it is also in conflict with his other requirements. The most problematic fault line, I would argue, lies between objectivity and the social commitment of the individual. Every conscious acquisition of a social position is a political decision and can therefore no longer be called objective. In order to counteract social injustice, a reevaluation of the situation must take place. Although this reevaluation can have an (objectively substantiated) just society as its goal, it seems inevitable that a strong subjective position has to be inhabitant for a start.

To mention these concerns about the approach of Kisch, who is arguably representative and in the center of the entire movement in the 1920s, shows

16 Lania 1926: 5–6. "Kisch fühlt sich nur als Knecht des darzustellenden Objekts. Er handhabt die Reportage meisterhaft, sein Auge ist scharf, seine Beweglichkeit ebenso groß wie die Gründlichkeit, mit der er bei seiner Arbeit zu Werke geht. Und doch wäre es falsch, Kisch unter die Reporter einzureihen. [...] Es ist nicht Äußerlichkeit, das Haften am Faktum, wodurch sich der Reporter vom Dichter unterscheidet. [...] Der Reporter steht auf einer grundsätzlich anderen Ebene: Das Objekt ist ihm nur so weit wichtig, als es – allgemein wichtig ist. Und so nimmt er zum Objekt seiner Darstellung, mag es sich um ein Gefängnis, ein Irrenhaus, ein Bergwerk, eine Fabrik handeln, nicht die Stellung des – überlegenen oder unterwürfigen – Betrachters ein, sondern des Spions – er beschreibt nicht, er enthüllt – er zeigt nicht die Dinge wie sie sind, sondern wie sie waren und was aus ihnen werden wird [...]."

17 Cf. Geisler 1982: 62–74.

that the discussion quickly leads to a dilemma that either way requires dropping one premise. A report can be objective or endowed with social conscience – but not both at once.

I will now try to reframe the discussion by taking up an approach by Elisabeth Klaus. She focuses on different relations between facts and fiction and distinguishes not only “facts and fiction” but also “facts and truth,” “facts and knowledge” and “facts and reality.”¹⁸ For this paper, her thoughts on the relationship between facts and reality are most important. She picks up on the constructivist approach, which we got to know through Michael Geisler, and takes it further. No simple juxtaposition of facts could ever make sense if that juxtaposition is not consciously designed.¹⁹

Klaus asks what objectivity signifies (and implies) under these inevitable conditions and distinguishes three norms of objectivity.²⁰ First, objectivity can be understood as an aesthetic norm of depicting reality. This falls in line with the representation theory Haas has found in Kisch’s work and can be associated with the heavy reliance on photographic metaphors, etc. Secondly, Klaus also looks at objectivity as a strategic ritual, which shows, e.g., its dependency on the place of publication. Thirdly, objectivity can be understood as an ethical norm that means credibility and usefulness. This framework offers the opportunity to read Kisch’s three requirements in the context of Klaus’ second and third interpretation of objectivity in journalism. Thus, if we move away from the idea that facts and objectivity only mean an accurate representation of reality, apparent contradictions might be resolved. In order to show how the presented approaches – i.e., objectivity and the use of facts as a strategic ritual or as an ethical norm – look like in relatively unambiguous forms, I will refer to two historical examples. First, I will investigate Hugo von Kupffer’s texts, in which the strategic component becomes apparent. According to this, Max Winter’s work should serve to draw attention to the ethical dimensions of objectivity.

18 Cf. Klaus 2004.

19 Cf. *ibid.*: 110–111.

20 Cf. *ibid.*: 111–113.

3. Objectivity as a Strategic Ritual: Hugo von Kupffer

In order to better understand Hugo von Kupffer's innovations in dealing with facts, a brief look at the history of journalism in Germany is necessary. The late 19th century was dominated by editorial journalism. This term describes the institutionalization of journalistic work driven by technical innovations in the age of industrialization. Inventions such as the telegraph or the rotary press led to profound long-term changes in journalism. Not only that topicality and facts became an essential aspect of reporting. This was accompanied by a standardization of methodical and practical approaches, both in the form of 'tailored' texts with specific wording and in the incipient formation of departments, e.g., for politics, economy, or sport.²¹ However, what was neglected in this approach were personal statements by the reporting person and, most crucial, the newspaper editors remained in the editorial office and were not on site.

This development was soon felt by many editors to be very restrictive. The feuilleton was perceived as a counter-movement to this and was set against the formal and content-related specifications of the aforementioned journalistic work method. Since the feuilleton was more concerned with ideological, cultural and moral issues, there was no pressure from being up-to-date and personal aspects could find their way into the texts.²² But in the end, it was this counter-movement to the editorial journalism that led to another counter-movement: the report.²³

Hugo von Kupffer is one of the most important figures when it comes to how the report was established in German-speaking countries. Von Kupffer, born in 1853, went to New York in the late 1870s and worked as a reporter for the *New York Herald*. He wanted to bring the American work methods to Germany, which basically meant the use of local reporters with focus on human interest stories and quick reports that relied on eyewitnesses.²⁴ When he became editor-in-chief of the newly founded proto-tabloid *Berliner Lokalanzeiger* (BLA) in 1883 he had the opportunity to put his ideas about modern journalism into practice.²⁵ Von Kupffer, who describes his own approach as "objective

21 Cf. Roß 2004: 82–86.

22 Cf. *ibid.*: 87–90.

23 Cf. Eberwein 2014: 125.

24 Cf. Mauch 2019: 249–253.

25 Cf. *ibid.*: 245.

sobriety" ('objektive Nüchternheit'),²⁶ relied on local reporters, which, as previously mentioned, did not exist in this form in the German-speaking world at that time. The reason for this tactic was to achieve greater reader loyalty. In the rapidly changing city of Berlin he saw a topic that interested readers and which (in theory and practice) subsequently led to a higher circulation and a better position for the newspaper in the advertising market.²⁷ This reporting, which was based on public taste²⁸ and deliberately wanted to be non-political, relied on facts to guarantee authentic news.²⁹ With a focus on current events, he tried to form an emotional bond with the reader. Therefore the "individual fates" of the "Berliner" played the main role in these texts – and not the "nameless masses."³⁰ The BLA soon gained ground as an everyday resource in the Berlin of the late 19th century and tried to meet the confusion of the emerging metropolis with the authentic description of the local reporter.³¹ However, this was accompanied by the greatest possible omission of political topics.³²

But von Kupffer not only relied on employees, he also wrote many texts himself. A collection of his reports appeared in book form as early as the late 1880s. Under the title *Reporter Forays* (*Reporterstreifzüge*, 1889, extended in subsequent editions), he published texts that had previously appeared in the BLA and were dedicated to everyday life in Berlin. There he combined the aforementioned reduced communication distance (locally and personally), the focus on vividness and an identifiable journalistic narrator, i.e., the local reporter, and a conscious distinction between reports, editorial journalism and feuilleton.

In his short programmatic preface to *Reporter Forays* he clarifies this approach.³³ He does not see his texts as assessable according to literary criteria but rather as documents of cultural and historical value which were not created at a comfortable desk but "drawn from nature" ('nach der Natur gezeichnet'). But von Kupffer not only distinguishes himself from the office journalists, he also does not want to see himself as a feuilletonist. His role models

26 Cf. *ibid.*: 253.

27 Cf. Michael 2016: 53–54.

28 Cf. Wurich 2019: 46–47.

29 Cf. Mauch 2019: 246.

30 Cf. *ibid.*: 262.

31 Cf. Michael 2016: 66.

32 Cf. *ibid.*: 64.

33 Cf. von Kupffer 2019b [1889]: 7–9.

are clearly the American reporters, who rely on eyewitness accounts and interviews. In this approach we already encounter the photo metaphor that would be so dominant in the 1920s: “They [his reports] should differ from the countless ‘pictures from Berlin’ just as an oil painting made with true or imaginary artistry differs from a raw snapshot.”³⁴

The program formulated in the introduction can be found throughout the book. In keeping with its apolitical orientation, it contains few value judgments and von Kupffer confines himself to observation. He sticks to what he heard and saw, chooses the themes according to the audience’s need for information. And this need for information is broad: Von Kupffer writes (among other things) about a solar eclipse, a remand prison, new nightclubs, the census, the municipal disinfection institute, an executioner, misspelled street signs, the water supply or meat inspections. In connection with the latter there is a nice example of how von Kupffer deals with facts in his texts. In “One Night at the Meat Inspection” he reports about the work that can be verified on the basis of the records:

Such a station diary is instructive. [...] Figures prove! Therefore, I want to give the reader the following figures: On April 4, 1890, the following quantities of meat were checked at inspection station I: 752 cattle, 873 calves, 301 muttuns, 658 pigs – income for the inspection 1131 marks – 52 meat inspectors employed, 16 samplers, 3 stampers, 4 veterinarians. – In the month of December 1890, the journal gives the following overall result: 5688 cattle, 4777 calves, 2272 muttuns, 5090 pigs. – Income 9479 marks 90 pfennigs. For the period from April 1, 1890 to January 1, 1891 I found the following result recorded: 50,450 cattle, 29,321 calves, 21,853 muttuns, 37,217 pigs. – Income: 72749 Mk. 20 Pf. – This is the result of the activity of a station.³⁵

34 Ibid.: 7. “Sie [seine Reportagen] sollen sich von den zahllosen ‘Bildern aus dem Berliner Leben’ ebenso unterscheiden, wie ein mit wahrer oder eingebildeter Künstlerschaft ausgeführtes Ölbild von einer unretouchierten Momentphotographie.”

35 Von Kupffer 2019a [1891]: 180–181. “So ein Stations-Tagebuch ist lehrreich. [...] Zahlen beweisen! Daher will ich dem Leser folgende Zahlen geben: Am 4. April 1890 wurden an der Untersuchungsstation I kontrollirt folgende Fleischmengen: 752 Rinder, 873 Kälber, 301 Hammel, 658 Schweine, – Einnahme für die Untersuchung 1131 Mark – beschäftigt 52 Fleischbeschauer, 16 Probenehmer, 3 Stempler, 4 Thierärzte. – Im Monat December 1890 ergiebt das Journal folgendes Gesamt-Resultat: 5688 Rinder, 4777 Kälber, 2272 Hammel, 5090 Schweine. – Einnahme 9479 Mark 90 Pfennige. Für die Zeit vom 1. April 1890 bis 1. Januar 1891 fand ich folgendes Resultat verzeichnet: 50450

A connection between the purely reporting, fact-oriented approach and the conscious differentiation from the *feuilleton* can be found in a text about bars frequented by criminals:

Many *feuilletonists* have already descended into the so-called criminal cellars [...], they got the obligatory goosebumps, afterward threw away their kid gloves and sacrificed a sea of ink to all the beautiful phrases and fantasies about Berlin criminality. Since, as is well known, within the undemanding framework of this work, only what has been heard and seen is to be told simply and truthfully at the source, not 'feuilletonized,' so I really have to apologize for daring to venture on this much-trodden path at all. Well, my apologies: I'm not going to give you a general crook characteristic, I just want to tell you how a currently off-duty and, as he says, 'retired' criminal thinks and speaks.³⁶

As a brief interim summary, it can be said about von Kupffer's writings that facts are used as a strategic ritual. The texts are only marginally concerned with constructing an image of reality that is supposed to be 'more real' or 'more authentic,' although references to photography can also be found. The facts are primarily used to distinguish oneself from other media and reporting styles – with the *feuilleton* as the biggest adversary. With his strong belief in the truthfulness of the (American) report, he only describes what he has heard and seen, without critical opinion. To put it bluntly, one could say the facts only confirm that the reporter was there, nothing more. In comparison to Egon Erwin Kisch's three requirements, von Kupffer's approach fulfills all

Rinder, 29321 Kälber, 21853 Hammel, 37217 Schweine. – Einnahme: 72749 Mk. 20 Pf. – Das ist das Ergebnis der Tätigkeit einer Station."

36 Von Kupffer 2019c [1888]: 66–67. "Feuilletonisten sind schon viele in die sogenannten Verbrecherkeller [...] hinabgestiegen, sie haben die obligate Gänsehaut bekommen, ihre Glace-Handschuhe nachher weggeworfen und ein Meer von Tinte all den schönen Phrasen und Phantasien über das Berliner Verbrechen geopfert. Da bekanntlich in dem anspruchslosen Rahmen dieser Schrift nicht 'feuilletonisiert', sondern nur schlicht und wahr an der Quelle Gehörtes und Gesehenes erzählt werden soll, so muß ich mich eigentlich entschuldigen, daß ich überhaupt auf diesen vielbetretenen Pfad mich wage. Nun, meine Entschuldigung lautet: ich bringe Ihnen keine allgemeine Gauner-Charakteristik, sondern ich will Ihnen nur erzählen, wie ein augenblicklich außer Dienst befindlicher und, wie er sagt 'vom Geschäft zurückgetretener' Verbrecher denkt und spricht."

of them but has, due to its apolitical orientation, very limited “social responsibility.”

With a view to Klaus’ third interpretation of objectivity, Max Winter’s reports should now be discussed. These are less strategic than concerned with passing on useful information.

4. Objectivity as a Tool of Credibility: Max Winter

Max Winter, born in 1870, was one of the most prominent social reporters at the turn of the 20th century. Viktor Adler introduced him to the *Arbeiter Zeitung* in 1895, where he worked as a reporter and an editor (and later as editor in chief). Until 1934, when he had to leave Vienna because of his socialist political views and was therefore threatened by the Fatherland Front, he wrote about 1500 reports for the left-wing newspaper.³⁷ In addition to other political commitments, he also was vice mayor of Vienna for a few years after the First World War.

Winter was a political writer through and through and had little interest in commercial success. His approach to journalistic work can be summed up as “education and exposure” (“Aufklärung und Aufdeckung”).³⁸ Today, he is considered a forerunner of the historiography of everyday life and his great interest in scientific methods is repeatedly emphasized. The sociologist Isidor Singer (1857-1927), who worked on the social conditions in Bohemia, had an important influence on Winter’s work.³⁹ In his texts, Winter uncovers social circumstances, especially in the precarious milieu of the Austro-Hungarian Empire at the turn of the century. At the center of his research is a public that has so far been unrepresented. His focus is on the massive injustices that the workforce had to endure, combining macroscopic analyzes and individual observations with great methodological diversity.⁴⁰

In 1914, he published a three-part series of articles in the newspaper *Chemnitzer Volksstimme*, in which he presented his journalistic (and implicit political)

37 Cf. Haas 2006: 9.

38 Cf. Haas 1999: 247.

39 Cf. *ibid.*: 248. Winter even derived his working concept from Singer’s habilitation thesis, *Untersuchungen über die Socialen Verhältnisse des Nord-Oestlichen Böhmen. Ein Beitrag zur Methode Social-Statistischer Untersuchungen*, which was published in 1885.

40 Cf. *ibid.*: 248–250.

program in quite some detail. Under the title "The local editorial office" ("Die Lokalredaktion") he described the procedures and goals of his approach. In his opinion, sufficient space ('ausreichend Raum'), extensive research ('Zeit für ausführliche Recherche') and a certain amount of courage for a conspicuous presentation of the events ('Mut zur auffälligen Aufmachung der Vorkommnisse') are necessary for effective social reporting.⁴¹

The reporter, who has to be on site, is also decisive for him. "The editorial board is only paper, life is outside,"⁴² he writes in one of the mentioned articles and is in line with von Kupffer and many others. But, as previously mentioned, his approach has less strategic (and market-oriented) reasons than that he is concerned with uncovering grievances. He consistently emphasizes how important the reporter's eyewitness account is to him and derives from this the possibilities of the socially transformative effect of his texts. Accordingly, he writes:

Invade everywhere, be curious yourself in order to be able to satisfy the curiosity of others, see everything with your own eyes and find out what you can't make sense of by asking experts. But never forget the personal interests with which the person questioned is tied to the matter and then assess, evaluate, apply the answer. Never be a know-it-all. First let yourself be taught by what you have seen and heard, observed and read, but then form your own opinion. (Ibid.)⁴³

And further:

Invade everywhere! Into the shelters for the homeless, hospitals, pubs, brandy shops, mines, state forests, factories, workhouses, tuberculosis shelters, police arrests, prisons. invade the mysteries of the lives of the factory and transport workers, the city and state workers, the vagrants and prostitutes; invade the farms and stables of the landowners and the

41 Cf. Winter 1914a: 1.

42 Winter 1914b: 1. "Die Redaktion ist nur Papier, das Leben ist draußen."

43 "Ueberall eindringen, selber neugierig sein, um die Neugierde anderer befriedigen zu können, alles mit eigenen Augen schauen und was man sich nicht zusammenreimen kann, durch Fragen bei Kundigen herausbekommen, dabei aber nie vergessen, mit welchen persönlichen Interessen der Befragte an die Sache gekettet ist und danach die Antwort einschätzen, werten, anwenden. Nie etwas besser wissen wollen, erst sich belehren lassen durch das Geschaute und Erfragte, Beobachtete und Nachgelesene, dann aber ein eigenes Urteil bilden."

welfare policies of Krupp and company; invade the emigrant ships and emigrant bureaus; get into people's cars, look into pots, measure and describe the living quarters, reach out and do the work yourself where it is necessary to research the truth. Never visit princes. But look everywhere, if possible unrecognized and unexpectedly, to make sure everything is right. If he does that, the reporter will bring home one sensation after the other, and above all he will be able to show how incapable today's society is of healing the wounds it inflicts itself on the body politic. [...]. As for people themselves, that's what they want to read about. (Ibid.)⁴⁴

This programmatic approach led to very clear political positions. To this end, Winter presented laboriously compiled facts in his texts, often arranged in tables, from which he then drew conclusions. An example for this is the text "Warehouse worker for a day" ("Ein Tag Lagerhausarbeiter") from 1900. After he went undercover and researched exactly how much the individual work brought in wages and discovered inadequacies everywhere, he came to the following conclusion:

I thought this calculation was useful so that the Christian gentlemen in the town hall, who for three years had left the demands of the warehouse workers untouched, would finally know what those poor devils have to perform for their shabby wages.⁴⁵

44 "Ueberall eindringen! In die Obdachlosenasyile, Krankenhäuser, Volkskneipen, Branntweinbuden, Bergwerke, Staatsforste, Fabriken, Armenhäuser, Tuberkulosenheime, Polizeiarreste, Gefängnisse, in die Geheimnisse des Lebens der Fabrik- und Verkehrsarbeiter, der städtischen und Staatsarbeiter, der Landstreicher und Prostituierten; eindringen in die Höfe und Menschenställe der Ostelbier und in die Wohlfahrtspolitik der Krupp und Konsorten; eindringen in die Auswandererschiffe und Auswandererbureaus; den Menschen in den Wagen steigen, in die Töpfe gucken, die Wohnpferche ausmessen und schildern, selbst arbeitend zugreifen, wo es nötig ist, die Wahrheit zu erforschen, nie Prinzenbesuche machen, sondern überall womöglich unerkannt und unvermutet nach dem Rechten sehen, und Sensation um Sensation wird der Berichtstatter heimbringen, und an allen diesen Sensationen wird er vor allem zeigen können, wie unfähig die heutige Gesellschaft ist, die Wunden zu heilen, die sie selbst dem Volkskörper schlägt. [...] Was die Menschen selber angeht, da lesen sie auch."

45 Winter 1988b [1900]: 13. "Ich hielt diese Berechnung für nützlich, damit die christlichen Herren im Rathaus, die schon seit Jahren die Forderungen der Lagerhausarbeiter unerledigt lassen, endlich wissen, was diese armen Teufel für den schäbigen Lohn leisten müssen."

What is particularly interesting about Winter's texts is the formal design. In comparison to von Kupffer, who, as the example above shows, incorporates his observed facts into the running text, Winter presents his in clear tables. In his text "In the realm of the Alpines" ("Im Reich der Alpenen", 1904) he presents the total wages of the workers involved in steel production:

Die Grundlöhne beim Hochofen betrugen: (The basic wages at the blast furnace were:)

Für (for) 2 Schmelzer (smelters)	à 4 Kr. 80 H. = 9 Kr. 60 H.
Für 2 erste Helfer (1st helpers)	à 4 Kr. = 8 Kr.
Für 2 zweite Helfer (2nd helpers)	à 3 Kr. 80 H. = 7 Kr. 60 H.
Für 2 Gleisputzer (track cleaners)	à 2 Kr. 80 H. = 5 Kr. 60 H.
Für 2 Schlackenpasser (slag passers)	à 2 Kr. 60 H. = 5 Kr. 20 H.
Für 2 Apparatwärter (operators)	à 2 Kr. 60 H. = 5 Kr. 20 H.
Für 2 Gasreiniger (gas purifiers)	à 2 Kr. 40 H. = 4 Kr. 80 H.
Für 2 Maßmacher (measurers)	à 2 Kr. 60 H. = 5 Kr. 20 H.
Für 2 Maschinenwärter (machine attendants)	à 4 Kr. = 8 Kr.
Für 2 Schmierer (greasers)	à 2 Kr. 70 H. = 5 Kr. 40 H.
Für 2 Pumpenwärter (pump attendants)	à 2 Kr. 80 H. = 5 Kr. 60 H.
Für 2 Kesselwärter (boiler attendants)	à 2 Kr. 70 H. = 5 Kr. 40 H.
Für 2 Fördermaschinen (conveyor operators)	à 3 Kr. = 6 Kr.
Für Gichtvorarbeiter (blast furnace foremen)	à 3 Kr. 80 H. = 7 Kr. 60 H.
Für 4 Gichter (blast furnace workers)	à 3 Kr. 60 H. = 14 Kr. 40 H.

Es hatten 32 Mann einen Gesamtgrundlohn von 103 Kr. 60 H. (32 men had a total basic wage of 103 Kr. 60 H.)⁴⁶

The superficial similarity between the reports by von Kupffer and Winter disappears on closer inspection. Winter has no interest in a simple depiction, let alone a photographic reproduction of reality. There are also no strategic claims aimed at customer reach and loyalty. His goal is to make a useful contribution – as in this example by making basic salaries visible⁴⁷ or, as in the previous example, by pointing out exploitative employment relationships. With regard to Kisch's basic requirements for the appropriate work of the reporter,

46 Winter 1988a [1904]: 157.

47 Cf. Riesenfellner 1987: 136.

Winter leans more towards social responsibility than von Kupffer. In his writing, facts are there to take a stand on workers' struggles for fair treatment – the kind of objectivity Winter cares about.

5. Summary

The question of the use of facts in journalism is nearly as old as the genre itself. On the contrary to what is often suggested, the possible answers are far from being unambiguous. If you take a step back from long-lived debate about facts in German-language journalism, different intentions can be identified. At first glance, they are obscured by the prevailing debate about the factual quality of the depiction of the texts. But even if all honest reporters stick to facts, not all of them are equally interested in “reality” but use it, so to speak, for further goals.

Both authors presented here are highly interested in facts. A closer look, however, shows that the reasons for this interest are very different. Considering Klaus' breakdown of the different reasons for the use of facts in journalistic work, the differences between von Kupffer's and Winter's intentions become evident. While von Kupffer is interested in the strategic use of facts in his reports to set himself and his newly founded newspaper apart from the rest of the market, Winter's approach focuses on the purposeful use of facts, i.e. their credibility and usefulness in the workers' struggle for fair treatment. Both emphasize the contextual value of facts including their presentation. With such a look at von Kupffer's and Winter's aims not only Kisch's statement on the debate about facts of the 1920s can be viewed in all its different contours. Also, the varied values that flowed into his three conditions for journalistic work and its only apparent contradictions emerge reframed.

Bibliography

- Bleicher, Joan Kristin (ed.) (2004): *Grenzgänger. Formen des New Journalism*, Wiesbaden.
- Eberwein, Tobias (2014): *Literarischer Journalismus. Theorie – Traditionen – Gegenwart*, Köln.
- Geisler, Michael (1982): *Die literarische Reportage in Deutschland. Möglichkeiten und Grenzen eines operativen Genres*, Königstein/Ts.

- Haas, Hannes (2006): "Max Winter (1870-1937). Leben und Werk", in: Winter, Max: *Expeditionen ins dunkelste Wien. Meisterwerke der Sozialreportage*, Wien, 9–13.
- (1999): *Empirischer Journalismus. Verfahren zur Erkundung gesellschaftlicher Wirklichkeit*, Wien/Köln/Weimar.
- Haller, Michael (2020): *Die Reportage. Theorie und Praxis des Erzähljournalismus*, Köln.
- Kisch, Egon Erwin (1983): *Gesammelte Werke in Einzelausgaben. Band 8: Mein Leben für die Zeitung. 1906-1925. Journalistische Texte 1*, ed. Bodo Uhse/Gisela Kisch, cont. Fritz Hofmann/Josef Poláček, Berlin/Weimar.
- (1983a) [1918]: "Wesen des Reporters", in: id., *Gesammelte Werke in Einzelausgaben. Band 8: Mein Leben für die Zeitung. 1906-1925. Journalistische Texte 1*, 205–208.
- (1983b) [1918]: "Dogma der Unfehlbarkeit der Presse", in: id., *Gesammelte Werke in Einzelausgaben. Band 8: Mein Leben für die Zeitung. 1906-1925. Journalistische Texte 1*, 208–216.
- (1983c) [1935]: "Reportage als Kunstform und Kampfform", in: id.: *Gesammelte Werke in Einzelausgaben. Band 9: Mein Leben für die Zeitung. 1926-1947. Journalistische Texte 2*, ed. Bodo Uhse/Gisela Kisch, cont. Fritz Hofmann/Josef Poláček, Berlin/Weimar, 397–400.
- (1978) [1925]: "Vorwort zum 'Rasenden Reporter'", in: id.: *Gesammelte Werke in Einzelausgaben. Band 5: Der rasende Reporter, Hetzjagd durch die Zeit, Wagnisse in aller Welt, Kriminalistisches Reisebuch*, ed. Bodo Uhse/Gisela Kisch, Berlin/Weimar, 659–660.
- Klaus, Elisabeth (2004): "Jenseits der Grenzen. Die problematische Unterscheidung zwischen Fakt und Fiktion", in: Bleicher, Joan Kristin (ed.): *Grenzgänger. Formen des New Journalism*, Wiesbaden, 100–125.
- Knaller, Susanne (2015): *Die Realität der Kunst. Programme und Theorien zu Literatur, Kunst und Fotografie seit 1700*, Paderborn.
- Kostenzer, Caterina (2009): *Die literarische Reportage. Über eine hybride Form zwischen Journalismus und Literatur*, Innsbruck/Wien/Bozen.
- Kupffer, Hugo von (2019): *Reporterstreifzüge. Die ersten modernen Reportagen aus Berlin*, ed. Fabian Mauch, Düsseldorf.
- (2019a) [1891]: "Eine Nacht bei der Fleischschau", in: id., *Reporterstreifzüge. Die ersten modernen Reportagen aus Berlin*, 175–181.
- (2019b) [1889]: "Vorwort", in: id., *Reporterstreifzüge. Die ersten modernen Reportagen aus Berlin*, 7–9.

- (2019c) [1888]: “Soldaten-Ede”, in: id., *Reporterstreifzüge. Die ersten modernen Reportagen aus Berlin*, 66–72.
- Lania, Leo (1926): “Reportage als soziale Funktion”, in: *Die Literarische Welt* 2, 5–6.
- Mauch, Fabian (2019): “‘Unretouchierte Momentphotographien’. Hugo von Kupffers ‘Reporterstreifzüge’ 1886-1892”, in: Kupffer, Hugo von: *Reporterstreifzüge. Die ersten modernen Reportagen aus Berlin*, ed. Fabian Mauch, Düsseldorf, 245–264.
- Michael, Hendrik (2016): “‘Wir Weltstädter!’. Handlungs- und Deutungsmuster eines neuen Journalisten am Fallbeispiel Hugo von Kupffers (1853-1928)”, in: *Jahrbuch für Kommunikationsgeschichte* 18, 51–77.
- Patka, Marcus G. (1997): *Egon Erwin Kisch. Stationen im Leben eines streitbaren Autors*, Wien.
- Riesenfellner, Stefan (1987): *Der Sozialreporter. Max Winter im alten Österreich*, Wien.
- Roß, Dieter (2004): “Fakten und/oder Fiktionen. Zur Geschichte der Beziehungen zwischen Journalismus und Literatur in Deutschland”, in: Bleicher, Joan Kristin (ed.): *Grenzgänger. Formen des New Journalism*, Wiesbaden, 74–99.
- Schütz, Erhard (ed.) (1974): *Reporter und Reportagen. Texte zur Theorie und Praxis der Reportage der zwanziger Jahre. Ein Lesebuch*, Gießen.
- Weiß, Helmut (1974) [1931]: “Schärfere Waffen für die Literaturfront – Kurzgeschichte und Reportage”, in: Schütz, Erhard (ed.): *Reporter und Reportagen. Texte zur Theorie und Praxis der Reportage der zwanziger Jahre. Ein Lesebuch*, Gießen, 52–58.
- Winter, Max (2006): *Expeditionen ins dunkelste Wien. Meisterwerke der Sozialreportage*, ed. Hannes Haas, Wien.
- (1988): *Arbeitswelt um 1900. Texte zur Alltagsgeschichte von Max Winter*, ed. Stefan Riesenfellner, Wien.
- (1988a) [1904]: “Im Reich der Alpinen”, in: id., *Arbeitswelt um 1900. Texte zur Alltagsgeschichte von Max Winter*, 151–163.
- (1988b) [1900]: “Ein Tag Lagerhausarbeiter”, in: id., *Arbeitswelt um 1900. Texte zur Alltagsgeschichte von Max Winter*, 12–29.
- (1914a): “Die Lokalredaktion I. Was ihr fehlt”, in: *Volksstimme* (01.07.1914), 1.
- (1914b): “Die Lokalredaktion II. Das Amt des Berichterstatters”, in: *Volksstimme* (02.07.1914), 1.
- Wurich, Marc (2019): *Urbanitätserfahrung und Erzählen. Berlin-Romane zwischen 1880 und 1920*, Baden-Baden.