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Call for articles

Capturing stars: media, literature and celebrity

Deadline for submission of articles: May 15th, 2024

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According to Antoine Lilti (2014), modern celebrity culture emerged in Europe in the second half of the 18th century, in the wake of a first media revolution. In this perspective, the history of stardom is inseparable from the history of the press, especially from the 19th century onwards. In French-speaking Europe, this contributed to creating the framework of what is labeled as the "newspaper civilization" (Kalifa et al., 2011). From the 1830s onwards, dailies, magazines and other periodicals, cultivated a system of news based on the one side on the observation of the contemporary world and the recording of "things seen", provided by journalists, and, on the other side, on the visibility of individuals, provided by mediatized people (Heinich, 2012). In this system, public figures from the literary world occupied a key position, both as contributors to the press (Thérenty, 2007), and as such, as mediating figures, as well as celebrities whose lives were commented on and publicized. During the second half of the century, several significant media transformations influenced representations of stardom, heightening "the place given to the individual in information discourse" (Wrona, 2012). Such transformations included the invention of reportage and interviews, which emerged from the development of portraiture as a journalistic genre. This period also saw, in France, the emergence of celebrity newspapers, with *Le Figaro* or *Gil Blas* (Pinson, 2008) and, in North America, the birth of gossip magazines or "people" press, at the crossroads of society press and news magazine, which catered to readers' interest in celebrities in the fields of art, culture, literature, sports and politics (Ponce de Leon, 2002). In the twentieth century, and especially during the interwar period, photography reigned supreme: it was accompanied by columns and texts that borrowed from gossip or biographical accounts, when they aren't personal interviews with celebrities themselves. Teeming with scripts, postures and topical figures (metaphors of light and shadow, analysis of the fan/star bond mystique, scenography of "true success"), the celebrity press came to rely on the porosity between the intimate, the familiar (Marshall, 1997), the famous and the spectacular (Dakhliya, 2010), in a relationship that is both conflicting and complementary with audiovisual and radio media, as well as with the world of literature (Rannaud, 2022).

This is the premise on which the thematic issue "Capturing stars: media, literature and celebrity" seeks to explore the relationship between the written press, literature (seen here both as a social system and as a discursive resource) and the culture of celebrity in the transatlantic space (Europe-Americas axis), from the beginnings of the "newspaper civilization" to the contemporary revival of what might be called literary journalism (Meuret, 2012).

The history of periodicals and transatlantic media culture has enjoyed a renewed interest in recent years. In particular, developments in the literary and cultural history of the press, informed by the history of communication and the study of cultural life, have contributed to a major historiographical reshaping (Kalifa et al., 2011; Cambron dir., 2012 and 2019; Blandin dir., 2018; Hammill and Smith, 2015; Simard-Houde, 2017; Rannaud and Warren dir., 2021; Satterthwaite and Thacker dir., 2023). Similarly, the study of celebrity culture and the mechanisms for building and perpetuating a visibility capital (Gamson, 1994; Esser, 1999; Delporte, 2003; Gagnon, 2021; McDonnell, 2014; Tillier, 2022) are currently attracting much attention. The issue will cross these two current research trends, based on the premise that literature and the celebrity press systematically intersect, whether through the trajectories of actors in media systems, through the configuration of networks of shared meanings, or through the evolution of discursive genres and poetics at the crossroads of literary and journalistic systems. More specifically, we will seek to weave links between, on the one hand, our knowledge of journalistic poetics and, on the other, written and visual representations of public figures. We will also examine the co-presence, synergy or opposition of the various imaginaries of stardom, using a comparative approach to examine different practices, media and discourses on the same famed subject (Pinker, 2017), as well as confronting the different geographical areas that constitute the transatlantic space in media, literary and cultural dimensions. Contributions to the issue should therefore focus particularly on the writing of stardom, encountered both in the printed press and in literature, from the perspectives of literary, visual and media studies.

Suggested thematic entrances

By approaching stardom culture through the prism of printed periodicals and the writing and reading practices that characterize media culture, the issue pursues four main objectives:

- 1) Shed light on the different journalistic spaces (media, sections, genres, etc.) in which stardom is produced, mediated and received by the press;
- 2) Highlight writing strategies, themes and figures specific to celebrity culture in order to further our understanding of the modeling dynamics at work in a globalized journalistic space (Pinson, 2016);
- 3) Interrogate the trajectories of individuals evolving at the crossroads of literary life, newsrooms and the glamour of stardom, in order to better grasp the place of literary communication in modern media culture;
- 4) Identify fault lines, broader configurations and geographical, political and cultural specificities, in order to build a transatlantic literary history of celebrity based on newspapers, journals and magazines.

By placing case studies in dialogue with more systematic analyses, we will attempt to answer the following questions, among others:

- What journalistic mediums, practices and poetics are used by celebrity journalists to stage and narrate celebrities?
- How does the circulation of agents contribute to the circulation of literature in the journalistic field? What can literature say about stardom in the media?
- What scripts or motifs shape the star-making of individuals in the writings of the press?
- How do fiction and non-fiction intertwine in media representations of stardom?
- How do newspapers and magazines encourage the circulation, combination or confrontation of various representations and critical discourses on the phenomenon of celebrity?
- Is there a specific imaginary of celebrity in the media in France? In Canada and Quebec? Belgium? Switzerland? On the Iberian Peninsula? In Brazil and elsewhere in South America? How do transfer networks of culture and media (Thérenty and Vaillant eds., 2010) fuel regimes of visibility that are both distinct and connected?

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Submission instructions:

The deadline for submitting full manuscripts (between 30,000 and 50,000 characters, including footnotes and bibliographical references) is **May 15th, 2024** at slj@ulb.be or directly on the website: <https://revue.surlejournalisme.com/slj/about/submissions>. Please indicate in the title of your message the title of the issue to which you wish to contribute. Manuscripts may be submitted in English, French, Portuguese, or Spanish. Articles go through a double-blind peer review.

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