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The Forgotten Anita Daniel

Anita Daniel (1892-1978), born in the Romanian university town of Iași, was a Jewish woman raised by a wealthy family. Growing up bilingual in French and German, she traveled consistently and often visited Switzerland. After the First World War, she began her writing career in which she catered to the public's appetite for lighthearted content that highlighted contemporary inventions. She spent time in Berlin during the 1930s and she was the editor of multiple magazines in the city.¹ She wrote for German and German language magazines in both Germany and the United States that were well known during their years of publication but are no longer as culturally significant, such as *Die Dame*, *Uhu*, and *Aufbau*.² Although she was a prolific writer at the time, much of her work is now forgotten. This raises the question of how many other significant writers, who belonged to marginalized groups such as Jews and women, have been forgotten.

Although Anita Daniel wrote many articles throughout her thirty-year career, the GHDI website only includes one of her texts, a composition titled, *Sex Appeal: A New Catchword for an Old Thing*. Much of her written work is not available online and is only accessible through purchasing books. The information that is available on her is found in the description of her book *Mondän ist nicht mehr modern*, which highlights the intricacies of her long writing career.³ For this book to be accessible to those who do not speak German it must be translated. Much of her written work was in German and must be translated. The *Weimar Republic Source Book* translated many pieces of German text to make them accessible to English speakers. In the descriptions for the book, it is stated that the book contains primary sources that were previously unknown to historians and/or were never translated into English. "Sex Appeal: A New Catchword for an Old Thing" is one of those texts that up until the sourcebook's publishing in 1995 was not accessible to those who did not speak German.

¹ "Anita Daniel" *New York Times*, June 19, 1978. <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/anita-daniel/docview/123662714/se-2>.

² Daniel, *Mondän ist nicht mehr modern*.

³ Daniel, *Mondän ist nicht mehr modern*.

“Sex Appeal: A New Catchword for an Old Thing” delves into the emergence of the term “sex appeal,” as a new concept, distinct from traditional notions of beauty. This term originated in the United States but became internationally recognized, in a similar manner to “flirt,” “dancing,” and “cocktail.”⁴ Daniel explains how while in the past, people referred to this quality as “that certain something,” the term “sex appeal” took over to evoke a similar meaning. Her article showcases the complexity of defining sex appeal, noting the issue in pinpointing its exact nature. Thus, the evolving nature of language and societal ideals showcases how concepts like sex appeal shape cultural perceptions and aspirations. It is crucial to look at this article in the broader context of the democratic Weimar Republic. During the 1920s, Germany underwent what some would call a cultural renaissance.⁵ This cultural shift goes hand in hand with the idea and prominence of the phrase “sex appeal.”

Although the article of focus, “Sex Appeal: A New Catchword for an Old Thing”, has not played a prominent role in the historiography of Germany, the magazine it was published in, Uhu Magazine, had more of an influence. Not only does Uhu Magazine have a Wikipedia page but it has also been consistently cited in scholarly articles discussing Germany during the period from 1924 to 1934. Uhu Magazine’s Wikipedia page is not incredibly developed but does highlight some notable authors and articles.⁶ According to the page, the magazine took an early stand against the National Socialists. This could potentially explain why Jewish writers like Anita Daniel are not as commonly cited as other information.

Anita Daniel wrote a series of guidebooks in both German and English in which she provided readers with important information about popular tourist sites. Some of these destinations included Italy, Paris, Switzerland, and different parts of the United States.⁷ She settled in New York where she contributed to articles for The New York Times magazine. After struggling with an illness for a while, she passed away in 1976 at the age of 85.⁸

⁴ Anita, “Sex Appeal: A New Catchword for an Old Thing.”

⁵ “Weimar Republic,” Wikimedia Foundation, last modified February 26, 2024, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/UHU_\(magazine\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/UHU_(magazine)).

⁶ “Uhu (magazine),” Wikimedia Foundation, last modified October 22, 2021, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/UHU_\(magazine\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/UHU_(magazine)).

⁷ Daniel, Anita. *I am going to Italy*. New York, New York: Howard-McCann, 1955: Daniel, Anita. *Ich reise nach Paris*. Basel: Birkhäuser, 1959: Daniel, Anita. *I Am Going to Switzerland*. New York: Coward-McCann, 1952: “ANITA DANIEL.” *New York Times (1923-)*, Jun 19, 1978.

⁸ “ANITA DANIEL.” *New York Times (1923-)*, Jun 19, 1978.

<https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/anita-daniel/docview/123662714/se-2>.

Much work and translations are still needed to fully understand Anita Daniel and her work. One piece of the historiography that is still missing is if there was any written response to Anita Daniel's article *Sex Appeal: A New Catchword for an Old Thing*. Understanding the reception to this article would help historians properly understand the true impact of Daniel's article. Hopefully, through efforts focusing on highlighting female and Jewish voices, more talented writers from the past will be uncovered.

Annotated Bibliography in Chronological Order

Anita, "Sex Appeal: A New Catchword for an Old Thing" (1928), in *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook*, edited by Anton Kaes, Martin Jay, and Edward Dimendberg. University of California Press, 1994, pp. 667-68. This article was published in German in Uhu Magazine in October 1928. The author Anita Daniel typically would publish articles under her first name rather than her whole name. This text was initially in German and the English translation of this article was made accessible through the Weimar Republic Sourcebook. This text explores the emergence and the significance of the term "sex appeal." The term was portrayed as a catchword for a certain indefinable allure that goes beyond simply conventional beauty. Even though it was new in terminology, it has long existed in human perception. The term was an American invention that was experiencing international adoption during the time of publication, 1928.

Daniel, Anita. *I Am Going to Switzerland*. New York: Coward-McCann, 1952.

This text is a guidebook for those planning on traveling to Switzerland. It is 236 pages long and includes illustrations by J. Marianne Moll. This book is not available online and can only be accessed through a physical copy.

Daniel, Anita. *Ein bisschen Glück*. Basel: Birkhäuser, 1953.

The title translates into English as "A bit of Luck." Anita Daniel wrote this 172 page book in German. There is little information about it online as this book can only be accessed through a physical copy.

Daniel, Anita. *I am going to Italy*. New York, New York: Howard-McCann, 1955.

Daniel wrote this guidebook for people traveling to Italy. This book is 250 pages long and includes illustrations by J. Marianne Moll. This book is not available online and can only be accessed through a physical copy.

Daniel, Anita. *Ich reise nach Paris*. Basel: Birkhäuser, 1959.

Anita Daniel wrote this guidebook in German and it focuses on travel to the city of Paris. The title of this book translated into English means “I am traveling to Paris.” This book is 218 pages and includes illustrations by J. Marianne Moll. This book is only available in print and cannot be accessed online.

Daniel, Anita. *Ferien in USA: keine Hinweise für die grosse Reise*. Basel: Birkhäuser, 1962.

Anita Daniel wrote this guidebook in German and it includes advice on traveling to the United States. The title of this book translated into English means “Vacation in USA; little tips for the big journey [by] Anita.” This book is only available in print and cannot be accessed online.

"Anita Daniel." *New York Times* (1923-), Jun 19, 1978. <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/anita-daniel/docview/123662714/se-2>.

The New York Times published Anita Daniel's obituary after she died in 1978. Her obituary highlights her career as an author and editor as well as providing more information about her life.

Kaes, Anton, Martin Jay, and Edward Dimendberg. . *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook* University of California Press 1995.

This book is a comprehensive collection of primary sources that redefines the boundaries between politics, society, and culture during the Weimar Republic. The primary sources include many that were not accessible to Weimar Republic historians and many that had never been translated into English before. Its thirty chapters cover various aspects of Weimar culture, from the intricacies of democracy to the cabaret to Bauhaus architecture to the rise of fascism. This book is a comprehensive collection of sources that serve as a large resource for scholars.

Reed, Maryanne. “Weimar’s Witnesses: The Dissolution of the Weimar Republic as Represented Through *Neue Sachlichkeit* Literature, 1929-1933.” 2005. MA thesis University of Regina. Library and Archives Canada.

<https://ourspace.uregina.ca/server/api/core/bitstreams/ce72c56c-12ab-40ee-bbdb->

[e204db7d941e/content](https://doi.org/10.204db7d941e/content).

This master's thesis was written for the degree of Master of Arts in History at the University of Regina. This thesis explores the attitudes towards the Weimar Republic during its years of crisis, 1929-1933, through examining three popular novels, Hans Fallada's *Little Man, What Now?* (1932), Irmgard Keun's *The Artificial Silk Girl* (1932), and Erich Kastner's *Fabian* (1932). Through using these books as well as other sources, the study is divided into three sections. One of the primary sources that was used is Anita Daniel's article *Sex Appeal: A New Catchword for an Old Thing*. This article was used to explain the benefits that accompany achieving the US-American ideal of "sex appeal." Although this thesis provided little additional information about the publication or its author, the citation showcases how the article can be used to explain the cultural and social implications of the text in the Weimar Republic.

Daniel, Anita. *Mondän ist nicht mehr modern : Feuilletons über die Mode, die Kunst und das Leben : Texte aus »Die Dame«, »Uhu«, »Aufbau« und Büchern*. Edited by Katja Behling and Thomas B. Schumann. Erstveröffentlichung. Hürth: Edition Memoria, 2021.

This book is a compilation of 120 of Anita Daniel's published texts throughout her sixty-year writing career. The title translated into English means Mondän is no longer fashionable: feature articles about fashion, art, and life: texts from "The Lady", "Uhu", "Aufbau" and books. Mondän does not have a direct English translation on Google Translate, the word means a combination of sophisticated, fashionable, and high-class. The description of the book provides a large amount of information about Anita Daniel's life that is not available in other sources. Anita Daniel was born in 1892 in Romania to a wealthy Jewish family. She lived in Germany for a while before emigrating to the United States in 1933. These texts available in this book used to be unknown and now can provide insights into life in Berlin during the 1920s and focus on topics like sex appeal. Alongside the text are beautiful images and illustrations. This book highlights the work and life and the once-forgotten Anita Daniel. This book is written entirely in German which makes it difficult for those who only speak English to properly analyze all of Anita Daniel's works.

"Uhu (magazine)," Wikimedia Foundation, last modified October 22, 2021,

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/UHU_\(magazine\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/UHU_(magazine)).

The Wikipedia page for Uhu Magazine provides basic information about notable authors and writers for the magazine. The English translation for Uhu is the eagle owl. The first issue of Uhu Magazine was in October 1924. The magazine took an early stand against the National Socialists and was viewed as a pioneering publication. One publication in the magazine by a conservative gynecologist took a stand against women engaging in sports. This article did not previously mention Anita Daniel, but I have added her name and created a new Wikipedia page about her.