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Review of Radio Benjamin by Walter Benjamin and edited by Lecia Rosenthal

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Radio Benjamin

Benjamin, Walter. *Radio Benjamin*. Verso. Oct. 2014. 424p.
ed. by Lecia Rosenthal. tr. from German by Jonathan
Lutes with others.

This title is a collection of transcripts of radio broadcasts that philosopher Benjamin (1892–1940) made from 1927 to 1933, translated into English. The broadcasts vary widely, with some offering advice for adults while others are sophisticated programs aimed at children. Editor Rosenthal's (*Mourning Modernism*) thorough introduction focuses on radio as a new medium and on Benjamin's life, including his exodus from Germany during World War II. Rosenthal divides the book into four sections; the first covers radio stories for children and contains almost 40 short stories--allegories exploring technological advancement, morals, and politics. The second part includes two radio plays aimed at children. Section three documents a variety of radio broadcasts of different kinds and topics, and the final segment features Benjamin's off-air writings on radio.

VERDICT For scholars interested in the philosophy of Benjamin, this collection offers an important supplementary resource. Similarly, historians concerned with the early days of radio and the era will find these writings fascinating. Recommended for academic libraries.--William Simkulet, Univ. of Wisconsin-Marshfield/Wood Cty., Marshfield