Seriality Seriality Seriality

The Many Lives of the Field That Isn't One

On **June 22-24, 2016**,

the **Popular Seriality Research Unit**

(DFG Forschergruppe 1091 "Ästhetik und Praxis populärer Serialität")

will hold its final conference in **Berlin**, Germany.

After six years, thirteen subprojects, nine associated projects, numerous conferences, workshops, and publications it is time to reach some kind of **conclusion**.

Together with our international collaborators over the years, we would like to explore **future** possibilities and **alternative** visions of a "field" that we always claimed existed. Thus, the focus of our final conference will be on the histories, conceptualizations, and methodologies of **seriality studies** itself.

Trying to sidestep the formats of the project pitch, the case study, the "reading" of individual series according to pre-existing theoretical models or their translation into philosophical master vocabularies, we invite scholarly practices—including those just mentioned—to reflect on the challenges and limits of (their contributions to) seriality studies as an **ongoing**, perhaps fantastical, **project** that traverses disciplinary and methodological paradigms.

Each of the Research Unit's current subprojects will organize a section. Section formats will vary but they will always stress **discussion** and **exchange**. Hence, **workshops** and **panel discussions** will provide at least 40 minutes for Q&A. **Time limits** for papers (20 minutes) and panel statements (5 minutes) **will be strictly enforced.**

We invite paper proposals for **sections nos. 3, 7, & 11** by **October 31, 2015**. Please specify which of these sections you are applying for; note that other sections are already complete.

Section 1: Panel Discussion

After Television

What does it mean for the study of popular serialities that its most visible research paradigm is (American) television? How can television studies be re-imagined as part of seriality studies? Should it be? Is there serial life after television?

Chair: Frank Kelleter (Berlin)
Format: Five 5-minute statements followed by a moderated discussion.
This section is complete.

Confirmed Panelists:
Jason Mittell (Middlebury) . Sean O'Sullivan (Ohio State) . Gabriele Schabacher (Weimar) . Jeffrey Sconce (Northwestern) . Robyn Warhol (Ohio State)

Section 2: Workshop

Digital Serialities

Today, series of all sorts are encoded in digital formats and circulated in digital media, but has seriality perhaps always been digital—or never yet completely? This workshop explores the genealogies that connect computational and analog forms of seriality. Investigating the meaning of seriality at the level of code and hardware, we ask how one can think of digital serialities not only in terms of forms and operations but also with regard to our broader media environments.

Chairs: Shane Denson (Duke/Hannover) and Andreas Jahn-Sudmann (Berlin)
Format: Three 20-minute papers.
This section is complete.

Confirmed Speakers:
Stephanie Boluk (Pratt) . Shane Denson (Duke/Hannover) & Andreas Jahn-Sudmann (Berlin) . Till Heilmann (Bonn)

Section 3: Workshop

Detection & Concealment

Since its beginnings in the 19th century, modern serial storytelling has shown a strong affinity for plots of crime and detection. This workshop aims to consider the conflation of detective stories and seriality as more than a historical coincidence or a matter of genre. Looking beyond individual case studies, it investigates how series and serials, even outside the crime and detective genres, engage in practices of detection and concealment.

Chair: Ilka Brasch (Hannover)
Format: Three 20-minute papers.
We invite proposals for 20-minute paper presentations by Oct. 31, 2015.

Section 4: Workshop

Gender. The Series

Gender studies, feminist media studies, queer studies, and critical race studies have long labored toward an understanding of gender as an intersectional, ongoing, and negotiated process of performance. This conception would seem to be particularly germane to the analysis of serialized media texts, but questions of gender and its intersections are still being treated as specialized concerns. Must feminist scholars "console their passions" for popular culture? Might the prevalence of representationalist readings be part of the problem? How is the "seriality of gender" related to the serialities of popular storytelling?

Chair: Maria Sulimma (Berlin)
Format: Three 20-minute papers.
This section is complete.

Confirmed Speakers:
Julia Leyda (Berlin) . Amanda Lotz (Michigan) . Maria Sulimma (Berlin)

Section 5: Workshop

Seriality between Fictionality and Factuality

This workshop is concerned with the relationship between fictionality and factuality in popular serial formats. Examining examples from different media—including magazines, newspapers, web series, (reality) TV series and their coverage—it investigates the characteristics of factual and fictional types of seriality and traces various modes of their interaction. Workshop presentations will be held in German; discussions of papers can be conducted both in German and English.

Chairs: Stefan Scherer (Karlsruhe) and Claudia Stockinger (Göttingen)
Format: Five 12-minute papers [in German].
<u>This section is complete.</u>

Confirmed Speakers:
Fabian Grumbrecht (Göttingen) . Christian Hißnauer (Göttingen) . Thomas Klein (Hamburg) . Madleen Podewski (Berlin) . Stefan Scherer (Karlsruhe) & Claudia Stockinger (Göttingen)

Section 6: Panel Discussion

Dimensions of 'Produsing': Writing, Producing, and Consuming the Serial in a Globalized World

Producing serials and consuming them are clearly interrelated practices, though one is coded more as work, the other more as leisure. Media anthropology has generated focused, site- and country-specific methods to understand series' ecologies and economies; media studies has preferred to cast a wider analytic net. Both fields are trying to make sense of the transnational (often digitally-based) circulation of genres and plots on the one hand and of nation-specific modes of production and consumption on the other. This panel discussion brings together media scholars and cultural anthropologists who consider how their methodologies might address issues of "produsing" that are at once global and deeply local.

Chair: Regina Bendix (Göttingen)
Format: Five 5-minute statements followed by a moderated discussion.
<u>This section is complete.</u>

Confirmed Panelists:
John Caldwell (UCLA) . Christine Hämmerling (Zürich) . Nathalie Knöhr
(Göttingen) . Britta Lesniak (Göttingen) . Annemarie Navar-Gill (Michigan)

Section 7: Workshop

Non/Humans: Institutions – Agencies – Networks

Investigating commercial storytelling one quickly learns to think of seriality not in terms of sequentiality but spread and sprawl. Popular series, with their feedback loops of production and reception, are force fields of connection; they activate practices and mobilize practitioners far beyond their textual bounds. This workshop attends to the institutions and non-personal agencies of serial storytelling. But rather than searching for representations *of* non-human actors or network-figures in serial texts—as if series were allegories of ANT—it asks: what would it mean to study (textual/narrative) structure *as* (consolidated, habituated, institutionalized) practice, or (networked) practice *as* (improbable) structure?

Chair: Babette B. Tischleder (Göttingen)
Format: Three 20-minute papers.
<u>We invite proposals for 20-minute paper presentations by Oct. 31, 2015.</u>

Section 8: Workshop

Seriality High 'n' Low

We've heard about popular seriality but what about its more respectable counterpart: the seriality of avantgarde music, abstract poetry, experimental art, or other "serious" areas of expression? When the low is related to the high, this often happens in the guise of the legitimating simile ("a TV series *like* a novel"), while post/modernist seriality is typically aligned with universal

philosophies of repetition & difference but rarely with the variation practices of commercial culture (how often do we hear, "a Gertrude Stein novel as inventive and complex as a *Seinfeld* episode"?). Is seriality a genuinely popular principle invading other fields or should we approach it as a formal-aesthetic principle that is *also* exploited by commercial cultures? (How) does seriality allow us to rechart the cultural landscape between high 'n' low?

Chair: Ruth Mayer (Hannover)
Format: Three 20-minute papers.
This section is complete.

Confirmed Speakers:
Eva Geulen (ZfL Berlin) . Julika Griem (Frankfurt) . Ulla Haselstein (Berlin)

Section 9: Panel Discussion

Textbooks, Handbooks, Anthologies: Are We Legitimating Comics to Death?

It's a truism that academic approaches to comics have finally gained a seat at the table of established disciplines. But it remains unclear which methods and perspectives are best suited for the serial sprawl and the proliferating diversity that have characterized comics ever since their inception. The recent wave of textbooks, handbooks, and anthologies on graphic storytelling raises questions about the role of legitimating discourses of the artwork and streamlined, teachable accounts of comics history in the study of popular serialities.

Chair: Daniel Stein (Siegen)
Format: Five 5-minute statements followed by a moderated discussion.
This section is complete.

Confirmed Speakers:
Will Brooker (Kingston) . Michael Chaney (Dartmouth) . Lukas Etter (Siegen) . Jared Gardner (Ohio State) . Christina Meyer (Hannover)

Section 10: Workshop

Other Speeds and Segmentations: Seriality and the Feature Film

When we think of popular series, we typically think of recurring characters and evolving plot patterns in regular and relatively frequent installments. But cinematic serialities in the form of short-lived film cycles, long-term sequelizations, or cross-generational remakes complicate the standard view of serial narratives as fast-paced episodic formats. This workshop explores how feature-film seriality challenges our understanding of seriality in newspapers, comics, radio, or television.

Chair: Kathleen Loock (Berlin)
Format: Three 20-minute papers.
<u>This section is complete.</u>

Confirmed Speakers:
Frank Krutnik (Sussex) . Kathleen Loock (FU Berlin) . Con Verevis (Monash)

Section 11: Workshop

Seriality Porn

It's good for more than just reproduction. The most *popular* seriality of them all shows every trait of commercial continuation but exists neither as narrative nor play. The massive modular hook-up of human bodies and technological media that defines capitalist cultures of seriality is all but unmentionable, by users or scholars, when encountered in its bluntest form. This workshop addresses the exploitations of pleasure and the pleasures of exploitation that are typical of commodified serial storytelling in general (where every 'again' is always also a 'more') but regularly neglected in their pornographic manifestation. What does it mean that here, as in seriality studies itself, final satisfactions remain ever unlikely?

Chair: Linda Williams (Berkeley)
Format: Three 20-minute papers.
<u>We invite proposals for 20-minute paper presentations by Oct. 31, 2015.</u>

Section 12: Panel Discussion

To End Yet Again

Let's do a recap of what just happened for an imagined next episode. Five observers (readers, viewers, consumers) of the conference and a chairing wrapper-upper will be asked to summarize their impressions and ideas in short closing—or opening—statements.

Chair: John Durham Peters (Iowa)
Format: Four 8-minute statements followed by a moderated panel discussion.
<u>This section is complete.</u>

Confirmed Panelists:

Dan Hassler-Forest (Amsterdam) . Scott Higgins (Wesleyan) . Amanda A. Klein (East Carolina) . Peter Stanfield (Kent) . TBA

Website:

http://www.popularseriality.de/en/konferenz/index.html

Information for Call-for-Paper Sections (3, 7, 11)

We invite **proposals for 20-minute paper presentations** in the workshops **"Detection & Concealment"** (Section 3), **"Non/Humans: Institutions – Agencies – Networks"** (Section 7), and **"Seriality Porn"** (Section 11).

Paper presentations should resonate with the format suggestions listed in the conference's introductory statement and engage with the thematic framework sketched in the respective section description. Please send your **title**, **500-word abstract**, and short **biographical blurb** (150 words) to the Research Unit's administrator, Maria Sulimma (maria.sulimma@fu-berlin.de). If you receive no confirmation of receipt, please contact us again. All proposals must have reached us no later than **October 31, 2015.**

For further information about **"Detection & Concealment"** please contact Ilka Brasch (ilka.brasch@engsem.uni-hannover.de). In this workshop, we are particularly interested in papers that investigate how narrative modes of detection and/or concealment relate to strategies of popular seriality more generally. How do series and serials themselves engage in practices of detection and/or concealment? Do such practices change throughout the history of popular-serial storytelling? Additionally, we encourage papers that analyze how practices of detection and/or concealment shape the experience of listeners, viewers, or readers—or how they are shaped, in turn, by audience engagement.

For further information about **"Non/Humans: Institutions – Agencies – Networks"** please contact Frank Kelleter (frank.kelleter@fu-berlin.de). For this workshop, we welcome papers that analyze issues of dispersed intentionality, non-intentionality, or networked dis/authorization in serial storytelling; papers that put economic conditions of specific media in relation to their narrative affordances (and vice versa); papers that gauge the methodological potentials or theoretical pitfalls of ANT-like approaches to serial media; papers that reflect on the compatibility or competition of praxeological and systems-theoretical descriptions of popular seriality; papers that critically engage with the Research Unit's perhaps too easy claim that seriality is not a narratological

formalism but a cultural practice; papers that do none of these things but surprise us.

For further information about **"Seriality Porn"** contact Frank Kelleter (frank.kelleter@fu-berlin.de). Topics can address serial pornography in all media and periods (not only digital) or reflect on family resemblances between pornography and more legitimate types of commercial continuation. No papers on *Fifty Shades of Grey*, please.

We will select three papers for each of the three sections. Presenters thus invited to sections 3, 7 & 11 will each receive a lump-sum of € 150 to subsidize their travel and accommodation costs (plus two conference dinners and one catered lunch). If you have questions concerning logistics, please contact the Research Unit's administrator.

Please also visit our conference website at http://www.popularseriality.de/en/konferenz/index.html

We look forward to your submissions!

Selected Book Publications by Research Unit Members, Fellows, and Associates

Denson, Shane and Andreas Jahn-Sudmann, eds. *Digital Seriality*. Special Issue *Eludamos: Journal for Computer Game Culture* 8 (2014).

Denson, Shane, Christina Meyer, and Daniel Stein, eds. *Transnational Perspectives on Graphic Narratives: Comics at the Crossroads*. London: Bloomsbury, 2013.

Hißnauer, Christian, Stefan Scherer, and Claudia Stockinger. *Föderalismus in Serie. Die Einheit der ARD-Reihe* Tatort *im historischen Verlauf.* Paderborn: Fink, 2014.

Hißnauer, Christian, Stefan Scherer, and Claudia Stockinger, eds. *Zwischen Serie und Werk. Fernseh- und Gesellschaftsgeschichte im* Tatort. Bielefeld: transcript, 2014.

Kelleter, Frank. *Serial Agencies*. The Wire *and Its Readers.* Winchester/Washington: Zero Books, 2014.

Kelleter, Frank, ed. *Populäre Serialität: Narration-Evolution-Distinktion. Zum seriellen Erzählen seit dem 19. Jahrhundert*. Bielefeld: transcript, 2012.

Kelleter, Frank, ed. *Media of Serial Narrative.* Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2016 (forthcoming).

Loock, Kathleen and Constantine Verevis, eds. *Film Remakes, Adaptations and Fan Productions: Remake/Remodel*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.

Loock, Kathleen, ed. *Serial Narratives.* Special Issue of *Literatur in Wissenschaft und Unterricht* 47.1-2 (2014).

Mayer, Ruth. *Serial Fu Manchu: The Chinese Supervillain and the Spread of Yellow Peril Ideology*. Philadelphia: Temple UP, 2013.

Mittell, Jason. *Complex TV: The Poetics of Contemporary Television Storytelling.* New York: NYU Press, 2015.

Mittell, Jason, and Ethan Thompson, eds. *How To Watch Television.* New York: NYU Press, 2013.

Schaschek, Sarah. *Pornography and Seriality: The Culture of Producing Pleasure.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.

Scherer, Stefan and Andreas Hirsch-Weber, eds. *Technikreflexionen in Fernsehserien.* Karlsruhe: KIT, 2015.

Stein, Daniel and Jan-Noël Thon, ed. *From Comic Strips to Graphic Novels: Contributions to the Theory and History of Graphic Narrative*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2013.

More on http://www.popularseriality.de/en

**POPULAR SERIALITY
AESTHETICS AND PRACTICE**

POPULÄRE SERIALITÄT
ÄSTHETIK UND PRAXIS