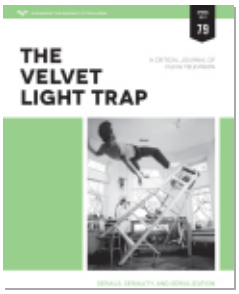
New Perspectives on Seriality

The Editors

The Velvet Light Trap, Number 79, Spring 2017, pp. 81-125 (Article)

Published by University of Texas Press



DOSSIER

NEW PERSPECTIVES ON SERIALITY

COMPILED BY **THE EDITORS**

MOVIE STARS AND SERIALITY IN THE 1910S

by Richard Abel

Scholarly work on seriality in fiction, at least in my limited view, chiefly seems to have taken on one of two subjects: (1) standardized media practices in production and distribution, or (2) narrative construction, whether in a related series of discrete stories or in lengthy texts divided into continuing episodes. Familiar studies include, among others, those on nineteenth-century fiction, early twentieth-century comic strips and film serials, later network soap operas and comedy series, more recent "bodice-rippers" and detective thrillers, and current series hits, as well as experiments on the web. Those studies obviously have been needed, insightful, and invaluable. Let me propose a slight shift in focus to the figure of the hero or heroine (or sometimes a pair) whose recurrence, I would argue, was crucial to the unusual success of seriality in mass culture at the turn of the last century. My examples come from American dime novels, pulp fiction, and early film series and serials. And my argument, put simply, is that seriality in the movies was not the same in substance and function as that in print fiction because the appeal of personalities or stars for moviegoers differed from that of the figures and characters of print fiction for readers.

In the late nineteenth century, a good number of publishers featured detective stories that appeared first in weekly magazines and often were reprinted. For Street & Smith, the most important was Nick Carter, who quickly became such a popular hero that in 1891 his exploits were serialized in the *Nick Carter Detective Library*, which later in the decade appeared simply as the *Nick Carter Weekly* or *The New Nick Carter Weekly* and as *Tip Top Weekly*.[1] Detectives like Carter shared a major characteristic: they were less characters than imaginary figures that, beyond employing different tactics and stratagems (often involving disguises), changed hardly at all from one story to another. In other words, they served as a recurring name, sign, or brand that guaranteed a pleasurable adventure and perhaps also tested a reader's skills of imagination in solving a fictional crime (fig. 1). Intriguingly, in 1909 the Nick Carter stories made motion pictures a significant element in their plots. In *The Man in the Biograph*, for instance, the detective drops into a nickelodeon and in one film sees a man doing some slick pickpocket work only later to discover that the pickpocket was not an actor but the "real thing."[2] In what may be the first movie novelette, *Shown on the Screen*, Carter has to solve not one but two related cases involving movie actors. First, he gives relief to a former pickpocket who is horrified to see his son picking pockets in a movie street scene, yet the young man turns out to have been hired to act in the film. Later, the young man and an actress are abducted, ironically, while acting in a kidnapping scene; in rescuing the couple, the

DOI: 10.7560/VLT7907

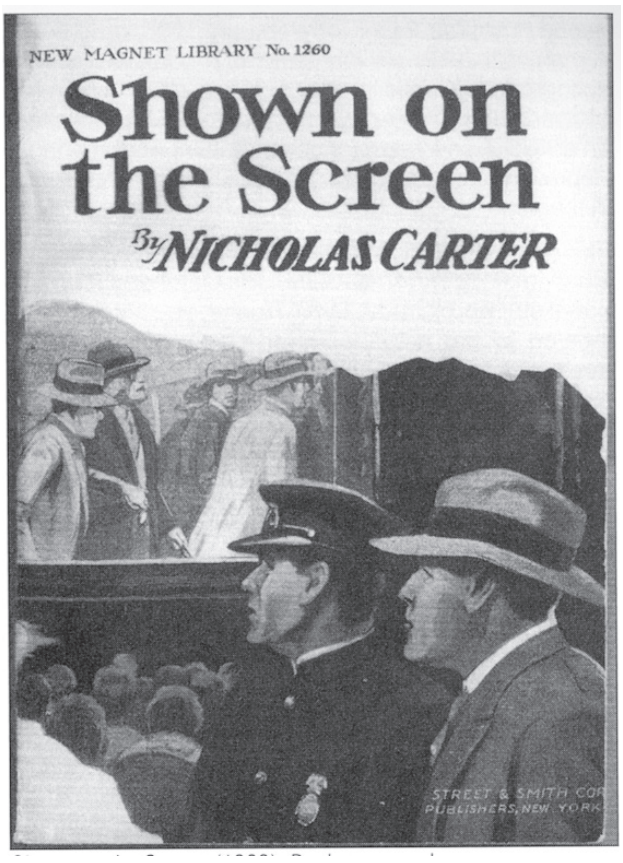


FIGURE 1. *Shown on the Screen* cover (New York: Street and Smith, 1909).

FIGURE 2. Original book cover (1914). Author's collection.

detective uncovers the kidnappers' motive: the actress turns out to be the heiress to a fortune. If these stories' mysteries and settings seem to keep up with the changing times over two decades, Carter himself remains little changed, never developing the attributes of a more dimensional character.[3]

Most juvenile pulp fiction that engaged more closely with the movies, beginning in 1913–14, involved heroes and heroines that similarly underwent little change. For examples, there is the series published by Grosset & Dunlap: *Moving Picture Chums*, *Moving Picture Boys*, and *Moving Picture Girls*.[4] Then, there is the *Ruth Fielding* series (fig. 2). It begins with the teenage Ruth in a boarding school where, sometimes with the help of friends, she plays detective, solving one mystery after another. In the ninth volume, *Ruth Fielding in Moving Pictures* (1916), however, she writes a photoplay in order to raise money for the school after the dormitory is destroyed by fire. Not only does she write the scenario, she also enlists the other girls as actors, contacts a film production company, reaches out to alumni for financial and artistic support, plays an important supporting role during the filming, and, at the same time, works toward her graduation. After numerous other adventures, Ruth enters the movie industry, rapidly masters various filmmaking skills (acting, directing, and producing), and eventually becomes a film mogul. If the series as a whole reads like a lengthy bildungsroman, it also constructs Ruth in a double sense—as if to attract two different kinds of readers. On the one hand, she seems a prototype of the New Woman, in that she can access and move between public and private spheres with agility and grace, offering a model of modern female mobility and possibility. On the other, she resembles an older female type, the saint, in that she possesses the exceptional intrinsic quality of goodness, recognized by both school administrators and teachers: "Since the inception of the Sweetbriers [a group organized by Ruth] a better spirit had come over the entire school. Mrs. Tellingham [the principal] in secret spoke of this as the direct result of Ruth's character and influence."[5]

FIGURE 3. Reproduced souvenir postcard (undated). Author's collection.

In the early and mid-1910s American movie companies came up with a parallel economic and aesthetic strategy of producing and distributing one- or two-reel films in series. That strategy involved a wide range of genres or types, for example, cowboy films (Essanay's *Broncho Billy* series, starring G. M. Anderson), newspaper reporter stories (Edison's *Dolly of the Dailies*, starring Mary Fuller), and railroad thrillers (Kalem's *Hazards of Helen*, starring Helen Holmes) (fig. 3). Each series featured a recurring figure, like those of the dime novels and pulp fiction, who courted danger in the process of righting wrongs in one discrete story after another. If those stories tended to stage repeated narrative arcs, as a whole they did not allow those figures to experience the lengthy character development exemplified by Ruth Fielding. Broncho Billy often first appeared as an outlaw or drifter, only to undergo, through one or more plot twists, a redeeming transformation. That transformation could involve an unexpected love interest, as in *Broncho Billy's Christmas Dinner* (December 1911), or a confession of guilt, before dying, to a woman whose husband he had long ago killed, as in *The Reward for Broncho Billy* (December 1912).[6] In Edison's monthly series, Dolly Desmond is an intrepid New York City newspaper reporter who, in covering a story, often has to extricate herself from a dangerous situation that leads unexpectedly to solving a crime. In *The Chinese Fan* (April 1914), she accidentally provokes a fight at the Chinese Theater, in the chaos discovers a kidnapped banker's daughter in a locked room, escapes with the victim as the building goes up in flames, and takes her to the newspaper office to write a "scoop" of the story.[7] In Kalem's long-running weekly series, Helen is a railroad telegraph operator who, working alone, repeatedly encounters life-threatening mishaps or villainy and has to prove she is as good as, if not better than, any man at her job—and at capturing thieves. In *Escape on the Fast Freight* (February 1915), she loses her job after two crooks rob her office strongbox; but she then spots the robbers escaping on a passing freight train, drops off a bridge onto the moving train, fights with one man until, tangled together, they fall into a river, and struggles to shore with the subdued man—and into the arms of waiting lawmen.[8]

The serials that, beginning in 1914, became so greatly popular obviously differed from such series. A suspenseful arc of repeated startling dangers, violent threats, and risky escapes—usually involving the heroine or serial queen—carried through one episode after another and concluded (though hardly were exhausted) in the last of twelve or more biweekly two-reel films. Here, too, the star playing the heroine often was paired with a male actor, for example, Pearl White with Crane Wilbur in Pathé's *The Perils of Pauline* (1914) and then with Creighton Hale in *The Exploits of Elaine* (1914) and *The New Exploits of Elaine* (1915), and Grace Cunard with Francis Ford in Universal's *Lucille Love* (1914), *The Broken Coin* (1915), and *The Purple Mask* (1916). Yet even when paired, the figure of the serial queen, like the series heroine, rarely followed the path of becoming a full-fledged character, an individual with some degree of interiority. She too served, in Jennifer Bean's apt phrase, the "relentless narrativity" of the serial story.[9] In the movies, however, unlike the *Ruth Fielding* series, that sense of character did emerge elsewhere, through the body of the star. For what most attracted moviegoers, not only

in features but also in the series and serials, was what the *New York Dramatic Mirror* heralded in January 1913 as the "picture personality,"[10] a concept of the performing self that circulated widely in the early twentieth century, especially in self-improvement manuals and psychology textbooks that stressed self-fulfillment and self-expression.[11] The ineffable quality of that attraction the trade press sometimes called a star's *magnetism*.[12] Mabel Condin allegedly experienced it in a 1914 interview with Mary Fuller; and another writer, watching a Blanche Sweet film the same year, felt "a sense of her actual presence," adding, rather creepily, that he believed "he could touch flesh if only his hand could come in contact with the figure on the screen."[13]

On-screen magnetism, however, was only part of what made the picture personality attractive to moviegoers. Long ago Richard deCordova argued that the early star was constructed as a double body.[14] Whereas a star embodied a fictional heroine in film after film, each also existed as a singular performing self, regularly recognizable in whatever the role. Equally important, I would add, that self took on a "life . . . outside the films" (shall we call that a tripled body?),[15] multiplying through moviegoers' engagement with the "screen talk" of fan magazines and newspapers—from interviews and profiles to answers to fans' letters.[16] Preparing to interview Francis X. Bushman in late November 1912, Gertrude Price ventriloquized her readers: "What is he like? How does he look? What does he wear? What does he think? Where does he live? . . . These are the questions we have all been thinking since the moving picture player found a place on our regular list of friends."[17] Beverly Bayne, who often acted with Bushman, Price summed up as "a talented painter, a clever horsewoman, a quick wit and a good conversationalist," with a spacious dressing room at Essanay's Chicago studio "fitted up with cozy corners and pretty pillows and bits of bric-a-brac."[18] A fellow gossip writer, Britt Craig, later wrote this of Grace Cunard: "one of the few women who can write, direct and play leads in a photo-play then write the titles, assemble the parts and even operate the machine."[19]

By early 1914 most manufacturers and distributors had set up publicity departments to supply newspapers with "news" of the movie stars and their films. Such news served as "the backbone of every industry," wrote Philip Mindl of Vitagraph's publicity department, "the product of which depends on the patronage of millions."[20] To sell something that "the American people want," he continued, "organized, systematized and intelligently directed publicity is necessary."[21] Companies already, either directly or indirectly, had been using fan magazines as "publicity machines" to sell stars. Now publicity departments began to play an important role in producing and managing the discursive bodies of the stars, whether, in their pages and columns, newspaper editors and writers relayed that churned-out material in toto or excerpted, rewrote, and extended it to fit the supposed interests of their own local or regional readers. Through such regularized discourse, moviegoers could join in the pleasurable (and profitable) work of gradually coming to know the picture personality as a familiar, multifaceted, idiosyncratic character closely aligned with yet separate from her or his screen presence. Whatever transformations a character like

FIGURE 4. *Chicago Sunday Tribune*, 21 June 1914.

Ruth Fielding underwent remained within the boundaries of her pulp fiction series. In the case of film series and serials in particular, the boundaries of characterization extended beyond the screen to include an expanding spatial and temporal field of self-performance.

Nowhere are the performances of a star's extended discursive body more evident than in the pages of two rival Chicago newspapers and in a long-running column from one of the most popular photoplayers at the time. The highlight of the *Chicago Sunday Tribune*'s "Right Off the Reel" page, edited by Mae Tinee beginning in March 1914, was "In the Frame of Public Favor," a large photo profile of a star chosen by readers as the most popular of the week. The first photo profile aptly belonged to Kathlyn Williams, the star of Selig's serial *The Adventures of Kathlyn*, which had been heavily promoted by the *Tribune*. The profile described her as "of the Anglo-Saxon strain—fair-haired and blue eyed," with "the classic cast of a heroic face"; after a relatively successful stage career, at Selig she now "courted a dangerous situation for the sheer spice of novelty" and thought it "all in a day's work."[22] Weeks later, the profile puffed Francis X. Bushman as "an expert swimmer, boxer, horseman, swordsman, and wrestler"; his Essanay film work even led several artists to have him pose as "the typical American . . . for paintings and for statues" (fig. 4).[23] In late June the favorite was Pearl White, who, after "graduating" from primary school, had spent two years in a touring circus and then five years onstage before "becoming a 'movie' actress [in the] moving picture field": "It's a great game—and then one gets so much time to be out of doors."[24] In mid-September it was the turn of Grace Cunard, whose "brown hair and gray-blue eyes" could not register well on-screen: she was brought to America from Paris when very young and, at age thirteen, began to take on stage roles, once playing opposite Eddie Foy, before eventually pairing up with Francis Ford in Universal serials like *Lucille Love*.[25]

The following year in the *Chicago Sunday Herald*, Louella O. Parsons edited several series of featured stories perhaps modeled on earlier *Motion Picture Magazine* articles such as "Extracts from the Diary of Mary Fuller," "Extracts from the Diary of Crane Wilbur," and "Ruth Roland, the Kalem Girl."[26] In one of her series, Parsons got major stars to tell "The Story of My Life," accompanied by a large publicity photo, with the help of either a press agent or Parsons herself. This series began, again aptly, with Kathlyn Williams and continued with others such as Marguerite Clark, Lillian Gish, and Clara Kimball Young.[27] Of these, undoubtedly the most important was "The Story of My Life by Charley Chaplin," whose six installments, running for much of that summer, made Chaplin, then starring in a wildly popular comic series at Essanay, the most publicized movie star in the city.[28] In late 1915 Parsons initiated another series, "How to Become a Movie Star," also with a photo and short text supposedly supplied by the star. The first of these, in early October, featured Crane Wilbur, who had "the benefit of ten years of stage experience."[29] Others in this series included Helen Holmes, who first dreamed of being an artist and writer (she did publish several short stories) and then discovered that her athletic abilities were perfectly suited for Kalem's railroad thriller series;[30] Swedish-born Anna Q. Nilsson, a former Parisian fashion model who came to New York and posed for artists such as Charles Dana Gibson;[31] Roland, the former comic series star at Kalem whose stage work included "Baby Ruth" parts and later singing in vaudeville;[32] and Marguerite Clark, whose highly trained singing voice allowed her, after her parents died, to have an early career in musical comedy and light opera.[33]

As for the long-running column mentioned earlier, that was "Daily Talks by Mary Pickford," which the McClure Newspaper Syndicate distributed to dozens of metropolitan and small-town newspapers from November 1915 to October 1916 (fig. 5).[34] Although Pickford's column was written by, or dictated to, her friend, scriptwriter Frances Marion, Pickford's apparent aim was to maximize control over the dissemination of her discursive body and make "the most popular girl in the world" a frequent and "welcome visitor" in millions of American households.[35] In the first column of this serialized "daily talk," Pickford imagined her readers as friends sitting with her around a table; "to make us feel more like home," she added, she would share "something about myself."[36] That sharing included stories of her early childhood, for example, her father's death when she was four (the oldest of three children), which led her to act as "the Daddy of the family," and the games she and her sister Lottie dreamed up to make housework bearable.[37] She also told stories of her off-screen activities in New York City: "slumming" with Clara Kimball Young to "the largest of the East Side motion picture theaters" and walking through the "crooked crowded streets" of Little Italy to reach the clean "cubbyhole" apartment of a character actor in *Poor Little Peppina*, who had invited her to join his family for a spaghetti dinner.[38] Throughout the

The Most Popular Girl in the World

—AND—

The Highest Paid Artist Who Ever Lived,

MARY PICKFORD

will talk every day on the Woman's Page of THE WASHINGTON HERALD, beginning tomorrow

She will write on all sorts of vital and absorbing subjects in which her remarkable career since the age of five, and her phenomenal success on the moving picture stage, have made her experienced beyond her years, while she still retains the understanding and heart of a child.

Her articles will be full of anecdotes and the personal experiences of a young girl who has made herself famous.

This girl, who is loved throughout the world on account of the sweetness, grace, love and sympathy she can silently express in her face and figure, is going to talk through THE WASHINGTON HERALD every day, and is going to say things worth reading.

You are invited to write Miss Pickford, through THE WASHINGTON HERALD, on any subject on which you would like her opinion or advice. She will reply either direct to you or in the correspondence department at the end of each daily talk.

Mary Pickford is only 22 years old, but it must be remembered that she has been an actress for seventeen years.

In that time, by her own efforts and without any "pull," she has become the most popular girl in the world. Her weekly guarantee, which continues irrespective of the number of plays she appears in, makes her the highest paid artist in the world, not excepting Caruso.

She receives over 200 letters a day from practically all over the world. With the aid of a secretary and stenographer she answers every letter.

Mary Pickford's experiences have been more varied, her work has been more continuous and severe and her opportunities of studying human character have been more extensive than the average person can boast in a lifetime. She is therefore fully fitted to write a daily letter for publication in a manner that will inform, entertain and help.

FIGURE 5. *Washington Sunday Herald*, 7 November 1915.

FIGURE 6. Edna Vercoe scrapbook, volume 2, Margaret Herrick Library.

column's run, Pickford presented herself as an adolescent girl speaking to other girls, much like an older single sister; never ever was she a sexualized figure, a married woman, or a savvy businesswoman (yet she was one of the smartest in the industry). Instead, she usually was part of a family, whether with her mother, brother, and younger sister or with one or more of her movie family—or with her fans, of course, gathered around that imagined kitchen or dining room table.

Perhaps the most telling evidence of how moviegoers could play with such traces of the star's multiplying body comes in the scrapbooks put together by fans. One scrapbook collection (its six volumes survive almost intact at the Margaret Herrick Library) was composed by Edna Vercoe, a teenager in Highland Park, north of Chicago, between July 1914 and January 1915.[39] Cut-out and pasted synopses of serials—*The Perils of Pauline*, *Lucille Love*, *The Trey O'Hearts*—cover nearly half of each volume's pages; the rest are devoted to scores of stars. Moreover, those that Vercoe seems most to have adored (other than Pickford, perhaps) acted in popular series and serials: Pearl White and Crane Wilbur, Mary Fuller, and Grace Cunard. Following in the late nineteenth-century tradition of girls' scrapbook practice, Vercoe arranged their images along with snippets of text and commentary (most drawn from the newspapers and fan magazines already cited) within her own discursive realm, peopling the imaginary landscape of her pages with highly individualized, compact profiles of her favorite stars (fig. 6). In her profile of Mary Fuller, for instance, she included photos displaying Fuller's versatility in various roles and textual excerpts, noting that she first went onstage at seventeen, made "her own costumes," and wrote "several successful scenarios" (fig. 7).[40] In the case of Pearl White, on one page Vercoe pasted in the photo cut from "In the Frame of Public Favor"; on other pages she added clips of text that sketch White's early life in the theater and her grit in redoing a stunt for *The Perils of Pauline*, diving from a cliff into a lake in the Adirondacks.[41] The profile of Grace Cunard stresses her Parisian origins, her "vivacity and a certain roguishness," and her love of "horseback riding and automobiling" (fig. 8).[42] By contrast, Vercoe's admiration for Crane Wilbur seemed ambivalent; not only did she select a comic story from Wilbur's stage-acting days, when he was forced to spend the night in a store window bedroom display,

FIGURE 7. Edna Vercoe scrapbook, volume 2, Margaret Herrick Library.

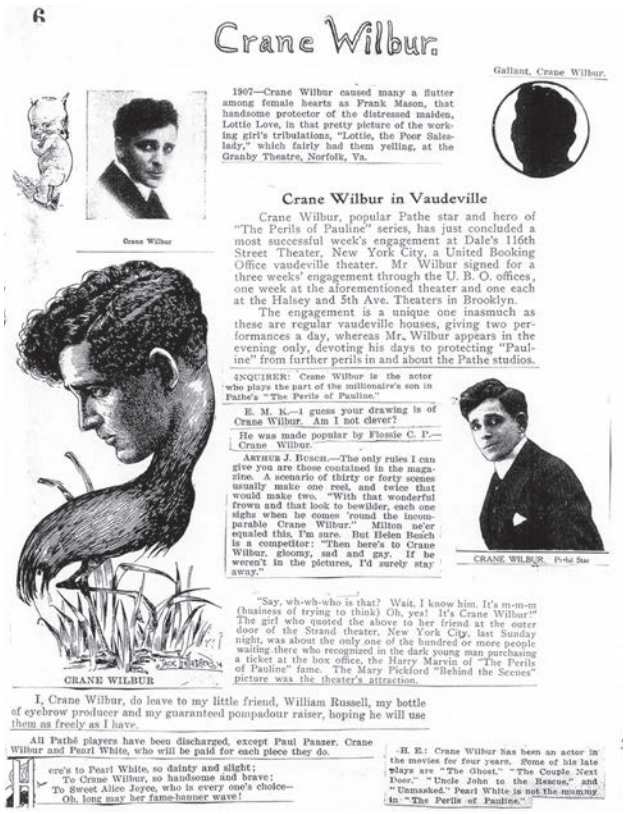


FIGURE 8. Edna Vercoe scrapbook, volume 1, Margaret Herrick Library.

but she also included a caricature taken from *Motion Picture Magazine*'s "Penographs of Leading Players."[43] Even more important for this analysis, by having the profiles of White and Wilbur circulate, in slightly different guises, through each of the six scrapbook volumes, Vercoe created her own pattern of seriality, as if to match that on the screen.

As a kind of epilogue, let me again shift the focus slightly to glance briefly at a major difference between American and "foreign" series/serial fiction and stars. As is well known, to choose a pertinent example, American series fiction was readily translated into French and adapted into French film series. This was the case with the Nick Carter stories that Eichler began to translate in biweekly booklets in early 1907, which in turn inspired Éclair one year later to produce two separate series of one-reel films starring Pierre Bressol as the famous detective.[44] A compact actor with dark Mediterranean features, Bressol was the antithesis of the American dime novel figure, a model of the heroic Anglo-Saxon hero (fig. 9). This was also the case with the first three Pearl White serials, which Pathé recut, reedited, and combined into a single film of twenty-two episodes, *Les Mystères de New-York*, released weekly in conjunction with Pierre Decourcelles's serialized version in the Paris newspaper *Le Matin* from late 1915 through early 1916. As Rudmer Canjels has shown, the American plot and characters were "Frenchified" and, in the context of the Great War, made explicitly anti-German.[45] In both the novelization and the film, for instance, the American serial's hero becomes Justin Carel, a French professor at Columbia University who cooperates with the Parisian police's hunt for one of several villains that turn out to be German or linked with Germany. In the last episodes, Carel and Elaine (Pearl White) depart for France just after the declaration of war, and the "brilliant Frenchman" offers his torpedo invention to the French military.

But what of French film series such as *Zigomar, Fantômas*, and *Les Vampires*? They were different, of course, being comprised of feature-length films released in France on a less regular basis and having not detectives but devious criminal figures in the primary roles.[46] Yet, most important, although the films did gain release in the United States in the early and mid-1910s, for American audiences the stars—Alexandre Arquillière as Zigomar, René Navarre as Fantômas, Musidora

FIGURE 9. *Les Mystères de New-York* poster, 1915.

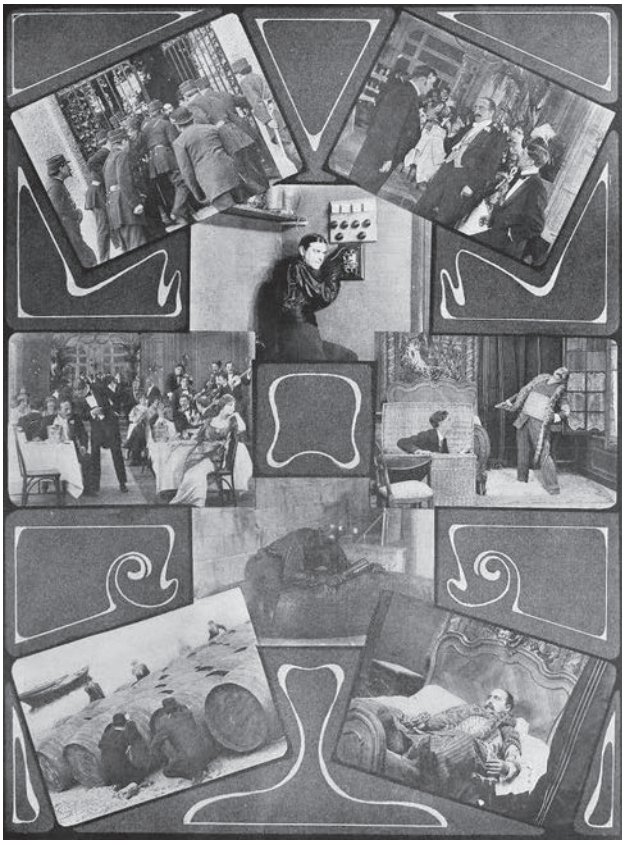


FIGURE 10. "Scenes from 'Fantomas' (series 2), Gaumont's coming feature release." *Motography*, 1 August 1914.

as Irma Vep—lacked almost any off-screen dimension through profiles and photos in newspapers and fan magazines (fig. 10). These French stories of notorious violence, deceptive trickery, and amazing escapes were sensational enough to make the films relatively popular on the US market, but they had far less impact than their later status in cinema history might lead one to expect.[47] In the context of a heavily Americanized mass culture at the time, that was because French stars like Arquillière, Navarre, and even Musidora (at least then)—much like Asta Nielsen before the war[48]—were little more than ghostly figures, paling in comparison to their widely adored "movieland" counterparts. Without the advantage of the extended performance of a familiar, recurring discursive body, they simply did not "go over" with American movie fans. After all, fans like Vercoe relished the opportunity to interact with all those malleable American movie star bodies populating the newspapers and fan magazines and engage with them in their own off-screen performance play.

About the Author

RICHARD ABEL is professor emeritus of international cinema and media studies at the University of Michigan. His most recent books include *Encyclopedia of Early Cinema* (edited, 2005, revised, 2010), *Americanizing the Movies and "Movie-Mad" Audiences, 1910–1914* (2006), *Early Cinema and the "National"* (coedited, 2008), *Early Cinema* (four edited volumes, 2014), and *Menus for Movie Land: Newspapers and the Emergence of American Film Culture, 1913–1916* (2015). Currently he is working on a study of early movie culture in Detroit, *Motor City Movies, 1916–1925*.

Notes

1. For a brief but insightful analysis of Nick Carter and *Tip Top Weekly*, see Michael Denning, *Mechanic Accents: Dime Novels and Working Class Culture in America*, 2nd ed. (London: Verso, 1998), 204–6.

2. For an invaluable bibliography of early motion picture fiction, see Ken Wlaschin and Stephen Bottomore, "Moving Picture

Fiction in the Silent Era, 1895–1928," *Film History* 20, no. 2 (2008): 217–60.

3. Much of this and the following paragraph summarizes material in Richard Abel and Amy Rodgers, "Early Motion Pictures and Popular Print Culture: A Web of Ephemera," in *Oxford History of Popular Print Culture*, vol. 6: *US Popular Print Culture 1860–1920*, ed. Christine Bold (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 191–209.

4. See, for instance, Victor Appleton, *The Moving Picture Boys; or, The Perils of a Great City* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1913); and Laura Lee Hope, *The Moving Picture Girls; or, First Appearances in Photo Dramas* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1914).

5. Alice B. Emerson, *Ruth Fielding in Moving Pictures; or, Helping the Dormitory Fund* (New York: Cupples & Leon, 1916), 84.

6. Richard Abel, *Americanizing the Movies and "Movie-Mad" Audiences, 1910–1914* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 68–69, 108–9. See also David Kiehn, *Broncho Billy and the Essanay Film Company* (Berkeley: Farwell Books, 2003).

7. Akiva Gottlieb, "The Active Life of Dollie of the Dailies, Episode #5," research commentary for Screen Arts & Cultures 602: Seminar in Cinema Historiography, University of Michigan, Winter 2011.

8. Scott Simmon, "The Hazards of Helen, Episode #13," in *Treasures III: Social Issues in American Film, 1900–1934* (San Francisco: National Film Preservation Foundation, 2007), 71–75. See also Nan Enstad, *Ladies of Labor, Girls of Adventure: Working Women, Popular Culture, and Labor Politics at the Turn of the Twentieth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 193–99.

9. This phrase comes from Jennifer Bean's unpublished manuscript, "The Episodic Art: Seriality, Modernity and the American Narrative Film."

10. "Personality as a Force in Pictures," *New York Dramatic Mirror*, 15 January 1913, 44.

11. Mary Whiton Calkins, *An Introduction to Psychology* (New York, 1902); and Warren Susman, "Personality and the Making of Twentieth-Century Culture," in *Culture as History: The Transformation of American Society in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Pantheon, 1973), 281–83.

12. Jennifer M. Bean, introduction to *Flickers of Desire: Movie Stars of the 1910s*, ed. Jennifer M. Bean (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2011), 15.

13. Mabel Condin, "True Blue," *Photoplay*, May 1914, 61; "Screen Magnetism Distinguishes Blanche Sweet," *Motion Picture News*, 19 December 1914, 34.

14. Richard deCordova, *Picture Personalities: The Emergence of the Star System in America* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990).

15. "Gossip of the Silent Players," *Chicago Sunday Tribune*, 1 May 1914, 5.3.

16. For a more extensive analysis of such "screen talk," see Richard Abel, "In Movieland with the Film Stars," in *Menus for Movieland: Newspapers and the Emergence of American Film Culture, 1913–1916* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2015), 140–70.

17. Gertrude Price, "Want to Be a Leading Man in 'The Movies'? Here's What You've Got to Have, as Told by One of the Biggest," *Des Moines News*, 25 November 1912, 4.

18. "Movie Girl in Social Whirl Is Artist-Horsewoman-Wit," *Des Moines News*, 8 April 1913, 4.

19. Britt Craig, "Behind the Screen," *Atlanta Constitution*, 21 March 1915, M.11.

20. Philip Mindl, "Publicity for the Pictures," *Moving Picture World*, 11 July 1914, 217. See also the interview with publicity director Joseph Brandt of Universal in Ernest A. Deuch, "Getting the Public to Ask for Universal Moving Pictures," *Judicious Advertising* 13, no. 11 (November 1915): 33.

21. Mindl, "Publicity for the Pictures," 217.

22. "Right Off the Reel," *Chicago Sunday Tribune*, 1 March 1914, 5.3.

23. "Right Off the Reel," *Chicago Sunday Tribune*, 15 March 1914, 5.3.

24. "Right Off the Reel," *Chicago Sunday Tribune*, 21 June 1914, 8.3.

25. "Right Off the Reel," *Chicago Sunday Tribune*, 21 June 1914, 8.5, and 13 September 1914, 8.6.

26. "Extracts from the Diary of Mary Fuller," *Motion Picture Magazine*, July 1914, 82–83; "Extracts from the Diary of Crane Wilbur," *Motion Picture Magazine*, September 1914, 83–85; and Jean Darnell, "Ruth Roland, the Kalem Girl," *Motion Picture Magazine*, August 1914, 84–85.

27. "The Story of My Life by Kathlyn Williams," *Chicago Sunday Herald*, 13 June 1915, 5.2; "The Story of My Life by Marguerite Clark," *Chicago Sunday Herald*, 27 June 1915, 5.6; Louella Parsons, "The Story of Lillian Gish—'Most Beautiful Blonde in the World,'" *Chicago Sunday Herald*, 11 July 1915, 6.5; and Louella Parsons, "Here's the Ideal Film Personality—Clara Kimball Young Is Playful Child and Brainy Woman," *Chicago Sunday Herald*, 18 July 1915, 6.6.

28. "The Story of My Life by Charley Chaplin," *Chicago Sunday Herald*, 4 July 1915, 5.6, and 8 August 1915, 5.6.

29. Louella O. Parsons, "How to Become a Movie Star," *Chicago Sunday Herald*, 3 October 1915, 6.3.

30. Parsons, "How to Become a Movie Star," *Chicago Sunday Herald,* 28 November 1915, 5.4.

31. Parsons, "How to Become a Movie Star," *Chicago Sunday Herald*, 9 January 1915, 5.4.

32. Parsons, "Modern Aladdin Enters Filmland," *Chicago Sunday Herald*, 30 January 1916, 5.4.

33. Parsons, "Do Wives or Husbands Mar Success of Movie Stars?," *Chicago Sunday Herald*, 12 March 1916, 5.4.

34. Advertisements, *Buffalo Enquirer*, 31 October 1915, 33; *Washington Herald*, 7 November 1915, 10; and *Canton Repository*, 7 November 1915, 27. See also "Daily Talks by Mary Pickford," *Saginaw (MI) Daily News*, 4 October 1916, 4; and *Dallas Morning News*, 10 October 1916, 10.

35. Cari Beauchamp, *Without Lying Down: Frances Marion and the Powerful Women of Early Hollywood* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 53, 64.

36. "Daily Talks by Mary Pickford," *Chicago Tribune*, 8 November 1915, 15; *Buffalo Enquirer*, 8 November 1915, 5; *Canton Repository*, 8 November 1915, 5; *Dallas Morning News*, 8 November 1915, 9; *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, 8 November 1915, 6; and *Macon (GA) Telegraph*, 8 November 1915, 3.

37. "Daily Talks by Mary Pickford," *Canton Repository*, 16 February 1916, 7.

38. "Daily Talks by Mary Pickford," *Chicago News*, 8 March 1916, 10.

39. For a more extensive analysis of this scrapbook, see Abel, "Edna Vercoe's Romance with the Movies," in *Menus for Movie Land*, 257–72.

40. Edna G. Vercoe, "Moving Picture Pictorial," 1: 74, 3: 89.

41. Ibid., 3: 4, 5.

42. Ibid., 3: 4, 120.

43. Ibid., 1: 6, 6: 8. See also "Penographs of Leading Players," *Motion Picture Magazine*, December 1914, 131. Other caricatures include Broncho Billy, Francis Ford, and Francis X. Busman.

44. Francis Lacassin, "The Éclair Film Company and European Popular Literature from 1908 to 1919," *Griffithiana* 47 (May 1993): 61–87.

45. Rudmer Canjels, "American Mysteries in France," in *Beyond the Cliffhanger: Distributing Silent Serials* (Stockholm: University of Stockholm, 2005), 77–86.

46. Richard Abel, *The Ciné Goes to Town: French Cinema, 1896–1914* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 195–98, 358–61, 366–67, 370–79.

47. Sarah Delahousse, "Reimagining the Criminal: Marketing Louis Feuillade's *Fantômas* (1913–14) and *Les Vampires* (1915) in the United States," *Studies in French Cinema* 14, no. 1 (March 2014): 5–18; and Richard Abel, "Fantômas, the Mutable Phantom," Centenary Celebration of *Fantômas*, Yale University, 12 February 2011.

48. Although her films circulated relatively widely from 1912 through 1914, Asta Nielsen suffered a similar lack of presence in American newspapers and fan magazines. See Richard Abel, "Asta Nielsen's Flickering Stardom in the USA, 1912–1914," in *Importing Asta Nielsen: The International Film Star in the Making, 1910–1914*, ed. Martin Loiperdinger (John Libbey, 2013), 279–88.

EARLY MYSTERY-CRIME FILMS, SCIENTIFIC SERIALITY, AND THE IMAGINATION OF WONDER

by Jennifer M. Bean

On 21 May 1915, midway through the notorious three-year run of the Kalem Company's action railway series *The Hazards of Helen*, the Universal Film Manufacturing Company released "The Great Egg Robbery," the inaugural episode of *Lady Baffles and Detective Duck*. This ten-week series follows the adventures of an investigative hero, Detective Duck (Max Asher), in his attempts to aid police halt a crime wave organized by a mysterious criminal known only as Lady Baffles (Gayle Henry). The opening episode is set in the home of Mrs. Gotta Millun (Lillian Peacock), who recently received six large pearls from India. That night Detective Duck substitutes six eggs for the precious pearls and uses the "hen fruit," an intertitle explains, to lure Lady Baffles into Mrs. Millun's safe. He manages to lock her in, but not before she slips a sleeping powder in his drink. In the episode's final phantasmagorical scene, Detective Duck sees Lady Baffles in a dream and pursues her as she jumps over the balcony. But when he lands on the ground he sees her laughing on the balcony above him. A quick patter of cuts shows him chasing her shadowy figure through a grove of trees, but when he reaches her she disappears, poof, into midair. The opening episode ends as he wakes up to find she has disappeared from the safe.

Produced at Universal, *Lady Baffles and Detective Duck* is a not-so-thinly disguised parody of Grace Cunard's Lady Raffles character, a jewel thief with a delightfully reckless charm who first appeared in shorts such as *The Mysterious Leopard Lady* (1914) and *The Mystery of the White Car* (1914), both written by Cunard and costarring Francis Ford. The two continued working together, codirecting and starring in *The Twin Sister's Double* series (1914), described by *Photoplay* as "remarkable photoplay successes" in which "Miss Cunard not only takes the part of twin sisters, but of an adventuress who impersonates them as well, and she appears in several scenes as all three at once."[1] The astonishing mathematical formula implicit in the series title is tacitly expounded by the reviewer, whose description attends to a representational field in which a single figure (Cunard) is first doubled ("twin sisters"), then tripled ("impersonated"), and ultimately revealed together in a single frame ("at once"). In the most general and obvious way, what is revealed here is not any singular identity (whether that of a represented character or that of Cunard), but rather identity represented in the form of a *series*, with the latter understood in the broadest sense as the temporal or spatial succession of similar or related objects. Insofar as *The Twin Sister's Double* series both flaunts and undermines the logic of scientific seriality

as a dominant organizing principle in post-Enlightenment modernity, it emblematizes the central conceit of what I call the mystery-crime serial, arguably the most prolific genre in American serial film production between 1914 and 1924.

My use of the label "mystery-crime" deserves some clarification before proceeding. As with the array of railway adventure, jungle-safari, and cowboy-and-Indian serials of the period, the films I discuss here were often assimilated by the trade press as "sensational" or "thriller melodramas." Yet a critical uneasiness emerges when we comply with the vagaries of such a category, a gesture that sacrifices the variables of iconicity, characterization, and narrative structure in favor of a perspective oriented solely to thrilling affect. Nor need we travel far to find that exclamatory adjective—thriller-sensation!—run amok in the period, its marketing value as capacious for newspaper dailies as for amusement parks, for stage productions as for film. As Ben Singer has demonstrated, the relationships among these modern forms of expression are critical. He also demonstrates that part of the burden we shoulder in recovering cinema's generic past is the need to impose finer categorical distinctions than the purview of trade discourse immediately allows. Isolating the variables of form (seriality) and character (active female protagonist), Singer claims categorical integrity for a group of films in which the physiological ravishment associated with sensational thrills is infiltrated by a discourse on female emancipation, giving way to a peculiar but distinctive version of the "woman's film." This he calls the "serial-queen melodrama," films in which fantasies of "female power" take precedence, the representations of which Singer links to a "pervasive and codified discourse on the New Woman" derived from cheap 10-20-30 stage melodramas, newspaper discourse, fashion magazines, dime novels, and the like.[2]

While it is impossible to underestimate the value of Singer's work in bringing critical attention to the history of cinematic seriality, I find it peculiar that he hesitates to value the corpus of mass-produced, mass-consumed films that he labors to recover. Unexamined quality distinctions haunt his discussion, a hesitation one can hear in his description of the serial-queen melodrama as "an extraordinarily formulaic product"; this "bare-bones narrative structure—the repeated capture and recapture of the weenie, along with the entrapment and liberation of the heroine—afforded a sufficiently simple, predictable, and extensible framework on which to hang a series of thrills over fifteen weeks." However paradoxically, this lack of narrative depth produces a "narrative unmappability," a confusing "unwieldiness" that Singer attributes to factors such as the "relatively slap dash production process of early pulp fiction" and the "inherent difficulty of setting up so many different situations of melodramatic crisis."[3] The analytic upshot means that early film serials depended on the vast array of newspaper tie-ins and published stories of the films to render their narratives legible. That Singer chooses to support this point by scrutinizing in detail a single episode, "The Mystery of the Dutch Cheese Maker," from a "box office flop," *Zudora*, seems odd. Odder still, he writes: "Daniel Goodman, the director of 'The Mystery of the Dutch Cheese Maker,' was clearly no Griffith, and Thanhouser was no Biograph." Assuaging the reader for such a deficit on the part of the serial film, he clarifies that "very few directors told stories as clearly as Griffith, and it is misleading to regard him as a yardstick for the standardization of film language. The codes of classical narration developed unevenly," he continues: "Many filmmakers, and many spectators, struggled with narrative unintelligibility throughout the Teens."[4]

Several questions arise for me here. Why, for instance, does Singer choose to linger over Thanhouser's box-office failure, *Zudora*, and fail to mention the company's blockbuster hit, *The Million Dollar Mystery* (1914)? "The story itself is a model of plot—a wonder in logic—a hair-raiser in action," wrote reporter Lloyd Kenyon Jones for readers of *Photoplay*: "It establishes a new standard for movie features. It brings in the real art of story-telling, and it grips the audiences with such tense interest that mobs congregate at the Mystery theaters on Mystery nights, and struggle and smother in the heat, awaiting admittance, just to see what's next."[5] And how are we to account for *Motography*'s review of the Pearl White vehicle *Pearl of the Army* (1916), in which neither the star's popularity nor a "series of thrills," as Singer would have it, but rather "the mystery—something to be solved, that something which plays upon the natural curiosity of the human mind"—commands the writer's attention?[6] Before exploring these alternative terms further, a particularly urgent question, it seems to me, is why assert this qualitative hierarchy? Why is it so difficult to avoid engaging in the cartographic activity that has produced and reproduced a distinction between "low" modes of cinema and mass media culture, as is so often the case with discussions of commercialized serial fiction in particular, and "high" variations in the form of, for instance, so-called classical

narration? Ironically, as the scholar who introduced the question of how contemporary critics might assess the history of cinematic seriality and the role or figure of woman within it, Singer seems to fall back into the very dichotomy of the mass culture critique so prevalent in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century discourse, the "great divide," that is, to borrow Andreas Huyssen's phrase, constructed by self-appointed cultural guardians who sought to feminize "mass culture as woman," associating its products with the unthinking crowd, the reproducible, the formulaic, and the infantile and hence distinct in all ways from the authentic and original work of art produced by the individual male genius, the modernist artist *par exemple*.[7]

What would it mean to evaluate early film serials relative to the logic intrinsic to sensational serialized fiction rather than to any presumed aesthetic norm? What if we were to side-step the term "mellerdrammer," often used pejoratively in press reviews at the time, and draw instead from rhetoric in which the conjunction of thrilling affect and the lure of "mystery" prevails? As with *The Million Dollar Mystery*, noted above, an array of titles promises plots thick with enigma: *The Mysteries of Myra* (1916), *The Crimson Stain Mystery* (1916), and *The Mystery of the Double Cross* (1917), for instance, as well as *Les Mystères de New-York*, the French release title for *The Exploits of Elaine* (1915). Other titular phrases such as *The Hidden Hand* (1917) signify that which is secretive or most simply "hidden" from view, just as *The Screaming Shadow* (1920) hints at a realm somewhere beyond the fully visible or fully illuminated (however noisy that realm may be). I could continue this way, noting the allusion to cryptic signs in titles such as *The Broken Coin* (1915) and *The Red Circle* (1916), to horrifically cloistered space, as in *The House of Hate* (1918), or to indeterminate and unnatural things, as with *The Iron Claw* (1916). But let me skip to the point and say that "mystery" in the broadest sense refers to the unknown and the potentially unknowable; as such, it shares a profound correlation with seriality as a form of modern aesthetics capable of infinite varieties and outcomes, of deferring, toying with, ramping up, and rerouting viewer expectations.

By exploiting the aesthetic logic of seriality, these films participate in a genealogy of serialized fiction ranging from Eugène Sue's *Les Mystères de Paris*, published as 147 installments in the *Journal des Debats* from 9 June 1842 to 15 October 1843, through the nigh-infinite plotting mechanisms intrinsic to televised soap operas, to more contemporary mind-benders such as *Twin Peaks* (ABC, 1990–91) and *Orphan Black* (BBC America, 2015–). In each case, "the pleasure of the text," to borrow and rescript Roland Barthes's well-known phrase, depends on the text's fierce resistance to closure, to a storied labyrinthine that makes the "anticipation of an end an end in itself."[8] "The fans have to be ready with our show for the left turns to happen all the time," explained John Fawcett, cocreator of *Orphan Black*, to readers of etonline.com in 2015. "I kind of like it when people don't know what to expect. That's kind of the way we like to leave that."[9] As Tania Modleski writes in her now-classic essay on soap opera narrative: "Tune in tomorrow, not in order to find out the answers, but to see what further complications will defer the resolutions and introduce new questions."[10] A particularly ingenious strategy for introducing new questions took place when ABC executives pressured David Lynch to answer the question "Who killed Laura Palmer?" in season 2 of *Twin Peaks*. Lynch ultimately acquiesced, but only in part. Although the story reveals that Leland Palmer murdered his daughter, the revelation simultaneously puts Leland's identity into question, insofar as he was possessed at the time by the malevolent spirit of Killer Bob. Who then is Leland? And who or what is Bob, a figure who mysteriously reappears after Leland's suicide, searching (the viewer surmises) for alternative hosts, one of whom may (or may not) be the prime investigator of Laura's case, Agent Dale Cooper. Such flagrant and sustained uncertainties remind us that "serial fiction," as John Docker sums up, often works by "calling attention to its own storytelling, its own delight and resourcefulness not in presenting reality but in making culture, inventing narratives, creating suspense and endless mysteries that beget not solutions but more suspense and new mysteries."[11]

I do not mean to imply that mystery-crime films of the 1910s, post-1970s soap operas, and contemporary prime-time dramas share identical characters or themes. But when Docker, following Modleski, describes a narrative structure geared to "constantly present viewers with the many-sidedness of any question, never reaching a permanent conclusion, breaking identification with a single controlling character, providing multiple points of contradictory, ever-shifting viewpoints and perspectives," he might very well be describing the Essanay Company's 1915 serial offering, *The Strange Case of Mary Page*.[12] The story begins with the murder of a prominent businessman in the backstage of a theater

where Mary Page (Edna Mayo) is performing. Rumor has it the actress was involved with the victim. In short order, the police arrest her, she is placed on trial, and the serial launches an investigation that takes place entirely in a courtroom in the present; each episode is structured as a flashback to the events surrounding the murder; each story is relayed by a different character who takes the witness stand to recount his or her perspective. The reliability of these perspectives is repeatedly questioned, including that of Mary herself, who is subject to fits of mental disturbance and blackouts when she is frightened, as the viewer learns when her mother takes the witness stand in episode 4. The mother also clarifies that during these fits a set of fingerprints appears on Mary's shoulder (which a previous witness and the viewer assumed to be a clue in the crime), a rather unusual "birthmark" visually manifest in Mary's childhood only when her father burst into one of his drunken rages. The slippage between a psychological state and the somatic status of the body, of the body as a shifting text, emblematizes the ever-shifting stories that structure the twelve flashbacks of this decidedly strange case. Significantly, these texts and the perspectives of their tellers never fully "add up." Thus the serial sidesteps resolution in favor of ongoing reflection. More specifically, the viewer is asked to reflect, as the judiciary body requests in a direct address to the spectator in the serial's final reel, "Who did it? You be the judge."

Judging—or, that is, reviewing—mystery-crime serials such as this one incited reporters of the day to deploy imaginative analogies. When Genevieve Harris described *The Strange Case of Mary Page* to readers of *Motography*, for instance, she compared the serial's narrative structure to the process of photographic development arrested *in medias res*, to the blur nestled at the place between negative and positive: "Following this serial is as interesting as watching a picture 'come up' in the developing fluid," she opines. "For, after the main outlines have appeared, details of the foggy background are becoming clear and standing out as important." The point is that the *process* of development structures a series of never quite completed photographs, since "the testimony of each witness clears up some points and reveals others."[13] In like manner, one reporter for *Variety* explained the narrative chicanery of *The Red Circle* (1916), Ruth Roland's first serial for Pathé, by playing with a technological metaphor, in this case a sort of semaphore signaling a directional change on crisscrossed tracks: "What you think is going to happen, doesn't. Picture scenarios as a rule are not so mysterious. And 'The Red Circle' is very frank. It raises a haze of doubt, then lets every one in on it, meanwhile creating another mystery train."[14] Not coincidentally, the story driving this "mystery train" replays narrative elements familiar from the case of Mary Page. Although *The Red Circle* includes neither a murder trial nor a series of flashbacks, the plot follows the adventures of June Travers, a wealthy girl reformer cursed with a family taint that causes her to commit crimes against which her "other" self revolted. "Imagine a beautiful, talented girl who finds herself the battle ground of two warring natures, the one good, the other evil!" advertisements bellowed, headlining Roland's part as "A Feminine Jekyll and Hyde."[15] Unlike the self-experimentation that transforms Jekyll to Hyde and back again in Robert Louis Stevenson's 1886 novella, however, the duality that inscribes June's unstable identity exists as a biological taint inherited in one way or another from her father, signaled by a "red circle" (rather than fingerprints) that repeatedly appears and then again disappears on the surface of her hand (rather than her shoulder).[16]

Significantly—and this is where things get mysteriously fun—the indeterminacy and inconstancy of these bodily signs, their resistance to legibility, dramatically oppose the function of scientific seriality as an organizing principle in the nineteenth century both as a means of understanding how the world is ordered and as a means of expressing data, images, and information in series form. In their introduction to a recent special issue of the *History of Science* on seriality, the editors observe that the concept of "series represent[s] much that was new and significant in the sciences between the French Revolution and the First World War." In English the "sole technical use [of the term 'series'] before 1800 was in mathematical analysis." But in the nineteenth century "the word series was used within specific sciences to describe the idiosyncratic arrangement and meaning of their objects: in accounts of entities such as strata and crystals from the 1820s, within statistics, paleontology, chemistry and botany by the 1850s, and soon after in newer enterprises such as anthropology and analytic spectroscopy."[17] In the 1870s a methodological use of serial images formed the organizing principle of the new field of physiology, most often associated with the work of Étienne-Jules Marey, who took as his task the study of bodily movement. The chronophotographic machine that Marey perfected for his serial studies of bodies in motion, an obvious precursor for the cinema, drew

from a photo revolver envisioned by Marey's colleague, the astronomer Pierre Jules César Janssen. In 1876 Janssen prophetically described how such a photo revolver could assist physiologists: "The property of the revolver, to be able to automatically give a *series* of numerous images as close together as one desires . . . , will allow one to approach the interesting question of physiological mechanics related to the walk, flight, and various animal movements. A *series* of photographs that would embrace an entire cycle of movements relating to a determined function would furnish precious information."[18]

The information produced by Marey's chronophotographic studies ultimately "facilitated the establishment of a productive dynamic economy of the body," as Lisa Cartwright argues in a definitive study. "By theorizing the physiological forces that drove the body to move, think, and act, Marey contributed to the determination of a more efficient rate of locomotion, or a more effective use of the limbs in the military, in industry, and in athletics."[19] Insofar as Marey's serial studies were conducted, in part, "to make the body conform to physiological standards," his project intersects with the production of a physiognomic type that Francis Galton popularized and through which a policing of criminal profiles (and the rise of eugenics) took shape. As Allan Sekula notes, the double exposure and superimposition of a series of photographic portraits provided Galton's governing methodology. His initial description of these photographs first appeared in 1878 in a paper that attributes the genesis of the idea to the use of a stereoscope in which *cartes de visite* from two different people were used to create the illusion of a single face that merged the attributes of both persons. He gradually refined the procedure to superimpose a series of meticulously registered portraits of criminals into one photographic plate, producing a single image of what he called a "criminal type," or a "generic" and "ideal" image of an abstract individual with a biological predisposition to criminality.[20] For Galton, this "type" was at once constructed and capable of revealing an essential truth, an evidentiary proof: the composite "brings into evidence" the facts of difference, based on the law of averages. At the same time, composite pictures are "much more than averages; they are rather the equivalents of those large statistical tables whose totals, divided by the number of cases and entered in the bottom line, are the averages. . . . The blur of their outlines, which is never great in truly generic composites, except in unimportant details, measures the tendency of the individual to deviate from the central type."[21] Galton's statistical calculations in the field of criminology perfectly illustrate the serial exposition that John Tresch describes in emerging fields of medicine and social sciences, where "statisticians depended on forms of probabilistic reasoning that anticipated future results on the basis of previous instances and employed the calculus with its series expansions and taxonomy of convergent and divergent series."[22] As with Galton's criminal "type," statistics were increasingly viewed not just as a static calculus of existing conditions but also as a way of understanding, predicting, and policing dynamic social behavior.

My fascination with early mystery-crime films stems from the genre's capacity to both flaunt and undermine the serial logic inherent to new methods of controlling social behavior and comprehending the natural world. The point is often rendered thematically in serials such as *The Screaming Shadow* (1920) and *The Crimson Stain Mystery* (1916) that feature criminals "born" from scientific experimentation with eugenics. But it also surfaces aesthetically, and nowhere more profoundly than in *The Mysteries of Myra* (1916), a sort of test case for the limits of the early serial film's representational capacities. Here the denunciation of scientific seriality as a method for understanding and explaining the world, much less for predicting and controlling social behavior, saturates the visual field. Phantasmatic doubles attain hyperbolic status in this serial, in which the thematic focus on astral projection, thought photography, colossal hypnotic machines, and psychical and occult "sciences" motivates a phantasmagoric choreography. Producer Leopold Wharton explained the process involved in making the film: "Nearly every piece of film used has to be run through the camera twice on account of the large amount of necessary double-exposure work. It is almost like producing two pictures at once."[23] The phrase demands repetition: "two pictures at once" simultaneously conjures the processes employed by Galton in producing his statistically calculated "type" while also hinting at the dynamic instability of any one identifiable image or body, an uncertainty that formally inflects the incipit of the story. Motivated by the concerns plaguing the eighteen-year-old Myra (Jean Southern), daughter of the belated John Maynard (a member of a scientific-occult secret society, the Black Order), the film's opening scenario shows the young woman wandering in a somnambulistic trance. A series of flashbacks elliptically unfolds the back-story: Maynard's will

specified that if none of his three daughters live past their eighteenth year, his entire fortune will be inherited by the Black Order. The two elder daughters have mysteriously committed suicide on the eve of their eighteenth birthday, and the serial opens with the suggestion that Myra's mind is directed by the concentrated mental efforts of the Black Order's thirteen members. While only fragments of *The Mysteries of Myra* remain extant, a scene from episode 5 reveals the "spiritual" body of Myra entering the physical body of the Black Order's grand master, and vice versa, a spiraling deconstruction of the body's status as a signifier of narrative and social meaning.

Through its suggestion that things and people should be constantly subjected to reexamination and rereading, its insistence that nothing should be taken at face value, the mystery-crime serial generates what might best be termed an "imagination of wonder," a phrase I employ in two ways. First, insofar as "to wonder" means "to experience some doubt or curiosity; to be desirous to know or learn," as the *Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED*) glosses, then the act of "wondering" as such neatly captures the compulsion driving viewers to return, week after week, for serialized mystery-crime dramas. At the same time, notes the *OED*, "to wonder" means "to be struck with surprise or astonishment, to marvel." There can be little doubt that the propensity to render the modern world—the realm of the everyday—uncertain, marvelous, or surprisingly strange, wholly resistant to statistical logic and objective reasoning, distinguishes the cinematic legacy I have been discussing. I also have in mind a longer history of serialized tales, particularly the *roman feuilletons* of the early nineteenth century such as *Les Mystères de Paris*, *Les Trois Mousquetaires*, or *Les Exploits de Rocambole*. It is not simply that these stories provide fodder from which later mystery-crime serials overtly draw; it is also that such voluminous texts and their overwhelming popularity in postrevolutionary France posit a historical counterpart to what Peter Brooks famously termed a "melodramatic imagination," one shimmering with moral imperatives and coming-of-age as a drama of signs on the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century French stage.[24] Understanding these respective "imaginations" as divergent responses to an increasingly secular society and the loss of providential plots is the task that remains as we continue to explore serialized fictions' vast legacies. It must suffice, for now, simply to prompt my reader to wonder.

About the Author

JENNIFER M. BEAN is an associate professor in the Department of Comparative Literature, Cinema and Media at the University of Washington–Seattle, where she also directs the Cinema and Media Studies Programs. She has published widely on silent-era cinema, including her edited and coedited collections *Silent Cinema and the Politics of Space* (2014), *Flickers of Desire: Movie Stars of the 1910s* (2011), and *A Feminist Reader in Early Cinema* (2002).

Notes

1. Royal H. Shaw, "Clever Grace Cunard," *Photoplay*, April 1914, 38.

2. See Ben Singer, *Melodrama and Modernity: Early Sensational Cinema and Its Contexts* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 224.

3. Ibid., 209.

4. Ibid., 286–87.

5. Lloyd Kenyon Jones, "At the Home of the Million Dollar Mystery," *Photoplay*, October 1914, 100–101.

6. Review of *Pearl of the Army*, *Motography*, 16 December 1916, 1344.

7. See Andreas Huyssen, "Mass Culture as Woman: Modernism's Other," in *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 44–62.

8. I borrow this phrase from Tania Modleski's essay "The Search for Tomorrow in Today's Soap Operas," in *Loving with a Vengeance: Mass-Produced Fantasies for Women* (New York: Routledge Press, 1990), 88. Regarding Barthes's oft-cited phrase, see Roland Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text*, trans. Richard Miller (New York: Noonday Press, 1989).

9. Leanne Aguilera, "Orphan Black: Six Things to Know before Watching the Shocking Season 3 Finale!," *ET Online*, 19 June 2015, accessed 17 June 2016, http://www.etonline.com/tv/166514_orphan_black_6_things_to_know_before_watching_the_shocking_season_3_finale/.

10. Modleski, "The Search for Tomorrow," 88.

11. See John Docker, *Postmodernism and Popular Culture: A Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 257.

12. Ibid.

13. Genevieve Harris, review of *The Strange Case of Mary Page*, *Motography* 15, no. 8 (1915): 420.

14. Review of *The Red Circle*, *Variety*, 26 November 1915, n.p.

15. Advertisements for *The Red Circle* also emphasized that the "story is forever in doubt." See *Motion Picture News*, 19 February 1916, 951.

16. Not every mystery-crime serial incorporates a birthmark or other inscription on the body, but the trope is prevalent. *The*

Mystery of the Double Cross (1917), for instance, focuses on the search for an heiress with a "birth mark, in the shape of a double cross, located on the right arm just beneath the shoulder," a search repeatedly derailed by "the masked stranger," a figure who, mysteriously enough, also bears this precise birthmark.

17. Nick Hopwood, Simon Schaffer, and Jim Secord, "Seriality and Scientific Objects in the Nineteenth Century," *History of Science* 48 (2010): 251–85, 252.

18. Qtd. in Marta Braun, *Picturing Time: The Work of Étienne-Jules Marey (1930–1904)* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 55, my emphasis.

19. Lisa Cartwright, *Screening the Body: Tracing Medicine's Visual Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), 37.

20. See Alan Sekula, "The Body in the Archive," *October* 39 (1986): 3–64, particularly 40–54.

21. Francis Galton, "On Generic Images," *Proceedings of the Royal Institution* 9 (1879): 166, qtd. in ibid., 47.

22. John Tresch, "The Order of the Prophets: 'Series' in Early French Socialism and Social Science," *History of Science* 48 (2010): 315–42, 316.

23. "Difficulties in Producing Myra," *New York Dramatic Mirror*, 8 July 1916, 24.

24. See Peter Brooks, *The Melodramatic Imagination: Balzac, Henry James, Melodrama and the Mode of Excess* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985).

FURTHER THOUGHTS ON PLAY AND THE SOUND SERIAL

by Scott Higgins

By the standards of classical Hollywood, contemporary television, or almost any other dramatic form, sound serials are narratively inadequate. They are not thematically unified or emotionally rich works. Characters are thin, events are predictable, and the drama doesn't build so much as repeat itself. But this is not their failing. The serial's strengths aren't unity, coherence, or even continuity but strongly drawn situations, starkly physical characters, and foreseeable, inhabitable worlds. They aim to engage viewers with regular bouts of rapidly unfolding action in heightened but familiar spaces and to leave them with vivid, projectable scenarios. In part, sound serials are models for play. In *Matinee Melodrama*, I explore a few of the ways that concepts from the study of games and play, rather than classical narrative, can help us understand serials. Henry Jenkins's notion of narrative architecture and Jesper Juul's observations about the projection of fiction onto gameplay, borrowed from analysis of digital gaming, illuminate some of the serials' structures and pleasures.[1] Here, I want to develop this exploration of ludic seriality by briefly taking up some ideas offered by Jesse Schell, Mark LeBlanc, Raph Koster, and other game designers who are helping to formalize an analytical vocabulary for digital gaming.

One benefit of listening to game designers is that they decenter narrative as an explanatory framework. Robin Hunicke, Marc LeBlanc, and Robert Zubek (in a paper based on LeBlanc's lectures on the subject), for instance, regard games as "more like artifacts than media" because "the content of a game is its *behavior*—not the media that streams out of it towards the player."[2] They propose the mechanics/dynamics/aesthetics model for analyzing game artifacts. Mechanics includes "the various actions, behaviors and control mechanisms afforded to the player within a game context," most commonly referred to as "the rules" but what Hunicke, LeBlanc, and Zubek describe as system specifications. Dynamics refers to "run-time behavior of the mechanics acting on player inputs and each other's outputs over time," or, roughly, the interaction between the player and the system and the components of the system and itself. Finally, and most relevant here, is aesthetics, or "the desirable emotional responses evoked in the player when she interacts with the game system," more commonly known as "run."[3] On this model, aesthetics is not bound to story, though narrative can be part of the mix. LeBlanc carves aesthetics up into "8 Types of Fun" (also the name of his website), which include sensation (sense pleasure), fantasy (make-believe), narrative (drama), challenge, fellowship (social interaction), discovery (of uncharted territory), expression, and submission (or pastime).[4]

LeBlanc's schema presents an alternative way of thinking about serials as artifacts. Serial action scenes often piggyback on playground activity, taking the form of folk games. For example, in *The Ladder of Doom*, chapter 9 of *Daredevils of the Red Circle* (Witney and English, 1939), our trio of heroes, Tiny (Herman Brix) the strong man, Bert (David Sharpe) the acrobat, and Gene (Charles Quigley) the leader, high-dive artist, and ladder climber, race after henchmen through a gas plant. They scramble, climb, swing, and leap through an industrial maze, subduing bad guys along the way. The race ends with a henchman tipping Gene's ladder (of doom) away from a platform. The sequence works like a variant of tag or cops and robbers. The good guys pursue the bad guys across

an obstacle course and tap them out, until the final bad guy innovates by attempting to dispatch his pursuer, luring him to a trap. *Daredevils* borrows its mechanics from the playground and casts them in the dynamics and aesthetics of film spectatorship. This shifts our focus from the film as a story and its telling, though that is part of the experience, and lets us think about sensation, fantasy, challenge, discovery, and other potentials associated with gameplay.

The mechanics/dynamics/aesthetics model captures the way that similar or even identical mechanics can appear in different fictions, different aesthetic settings. Early videogames that worked with bare-bones processing and graphics make the modularity of mechanics and aesthetics particularly visible. In the austere high minimalism of the Atari 2600 home cartridge system, for instance, a maze game that emphasizes discovery and avoidance can take the form of *Pac-Man* (Atari, 1982) or *Shark Attack* (Apollo, 1982), in which a scuba diver collects bubbles and sharks are free-ranging ghosts. A 2D scrolling shooter can take place as science fiction (*Defender* [Atari, 1982]), terrestrial warfare (*Chopper Command* [Activision, 1982]), or a western (*Stampede* [Activision, 1981]). The sound serial, with its constant format, limited set of situations, and repeated procedural logic, exhibits a similar relationship to genre. *Dick Tracy* (Taylor and James, 1937), *The Lone Ranger* (Witney and English, 1938), and *Flash Gordon* (Stephani and Taylor, 1936) share mechanics in the form of cliff-hangers, chases, fights, and regular alternation of exposition and action, despite their far-flung settings and iconographies. Viewer engagement is premised less on a specific genre or story than on the resilient experiences of physical problem solving and capture and escape. At its furthest reaches, serial mechanics could support bewilderingly incompatible generic elements, as in *The Phantom Empire* (Brower and Eason, 1935), Mascot Pictures' sci-fi, western, and musical *Gesamtkunstwerk*.

In digital games, this quality leads designers to discuss story as the dressing or wrapping of game experience. Raph Koster, for instance, explains that "by and large people don't play games because of their stories. The stories that wrap games are usually side dishes for the brain."[5] Since, for Koster, games are essentially about pattern recognition and mastery, they "train their players to ignore the fiction that wraps the patterns."[6] Gamers who routinely skip cutscenes and intros to get right to the shooting resemble the matinee audiences of American films observed by British sociologists during the 1940s.[7] After a screening of *Don Winslow of the Navy* (Taylor, 1942), J. P. Mayer reported that during scenes of lengthy dialogue "restlessness and boredom were expressed freely by moving about and chattering," and Mary Parnaby and Maurice Woodhouse, who attended the entire run of *Jungle Queen* (Collins and Taylor, 1945), observed that "there are scenes of mere talk and sentiment which bore the children, but they are not numerous, nor, as a rule, do they last long."[8] Serial viewers wait out exposition to get to the middle action and cliff-hanger of each episode. The reasons why the Daredevils are pursuing henchmen and their broader goals in doing so pale in importance compared to the execution of the chase. The chapter format that guarantees action about every four minutes alternately encourages distracted viewing and intense engagement. Commentators who judged serials and their fans as unsophisticated had their eye on the side dish rather than the entrée.

Whatever mechanics serials share with gameplay, their dynamics are necessarily different. Watching a game of cops and robbers lacks direct interactivity and must translate physical participation into processes of cognition and embodiment. In terms of LeBlanc's aesthetics or kinds of fun, sensation and narrative have greater weight in film than challenge, discovery, or even perhaps make-believe. Designer and author Jesse Schell discusses the relationship between viewer or player (he uses the term "guest") and an entertainment in terms of what he calls psychological proximity, or the extent to which guests "put themselves into the experience."[9] There are different paths to proximity. Traditional storytelling relies on building character empathy, while serial experiences aid immersion through persistence of characters and world across multiple visits. Games offer the strongest kind of proximity because they are directly interactive: guests can "be" the main characters. If film aesthetics generally prevent interactive identity between viewer/player/guest and character, they can achieve proximity through spectator empathy and identification. Serials, with their flat and static characters, tend not to explore empathy beyond the recognition of roles like hero, villain, or henchman. But they do offer sustained contact with familiar worlds week after week and, more importantly, a strong interactive potential.

Schell points to merchandising of toys as a method of extending proximity by giving children a point of entry into the established fantasy world. A good fit between toy

and primary experience (*Star Wars* [Lucas, 1977] is his example) boosts immersion by making the story a source of make-believe.[10] A similar dynamic obtains in sound serials not only because they were sometimes tied in with product lines associated with radio and comics but because they borrowed the mechanics from well-established folk games. Serial interruption works like an aesthetic transformer. The cliff-hanger that brakes the chase funnels action back to the playground. The narrative and sense pleasure of *Daredevils* become the challenge, make-believe, and discovery of cops and robbers, capture the flag, or hide and seek.

Sound serials also build bridges between story and play by way of operational aesthetics, the concept that Tom Gunning brought to film studies from Neil Harris's book on P. T. Barnum. For Gunning, the term describes an essential fascination with seeing systems at work, "visualizing cause and effect through the image of the machine."[11] It well characterizes the appetite for observable processes that drives the sound serial as a whole and constitutes its chief source of invention. In depicting visually transparent causes and effects, serials convey circumscribed schematic worlds of physical processes, erector sets of action. Pleasure derives from seeing a system at work, interrogating the function of its parts, appreciating its cleverness, and predicting its outputs. The operational aesthetic involves viewers in tracing, speculating, and anticipating elegant and sometimes counterintuitive spatial/causal linkages. Cliff-hangers set the system in motion but withhold the final output, thus requiring viewers to puzzle out the possibilities and test the system for loopholes, a task also shared by audiences viewing a P. T. Barnum hoax or playing through a platformer.

Action scenes pit characters with known affordances against shifting obstacles, running permutations of familiar chases and fights. Repetition trains viewers' attention on processual detail: the outcome is known and negligible. The Daredevils, for example, neither apprehend nor interrogate the thugs. They engage fleeing heavies and knock them cold, then run on to face more pressing threats. Story serves as an occasion for demonstrating spatial proficiency; it is the launching point for an ongoing series of discrete material challenges and acts of inconsequential violence. We clear a level to advance to another chapter, where the challenge is essentially the same.

The operational aesthetic is a path to proximity through physical and spatial patterning. It invites embodied and cognitive engagement, primes viewers to assimilate the film's rhythms, and anticipate actions and their outcomes. When the procedure borrows a game mechanic like cops and robbers, as in *Daredevils*, operations mesh with and reinforce proximity. Movement on and through industrial ductwork calls on pattern recognition, the navigation of obstacles, and spatial problem solving, all prime for playground application. When the thug that Tiny is chasing locks himself in a storeroom, the strongman, instead of breaking down the door, finds an open window through which to deliver his knockout punch. The gag is simple, but it shows Tiny solving his problem with cleverness rather than brute strength. It demonstrates the tactical value of finding an alternate route to achieve an end. Meanwhile, when Burt discovers that his target has climbed into a different building, he quickly finds a rope and swings from one structure to the other, races down a flight of stairs, and executes a cartwheel that ends with the thug in a headlock between his legs. The routine marks him as a resourceful gamer, able to repurpose his surroundings with speed and ingenuity. The fleeing henchmen and maze of physical obstacles create a mechanic that casts our heroes as players in a dynamic system. Viewers can follow, if not actively play, the game. The system's operations are easily grasped as a compelling pattern of spatial goals, physical causes, and visible effects. Cliff-hangers halt film dynamics and aesthetics, but the machine is left running to extend beyond the theater either as a cognitive puzzle (how does our hero survive?) or as a prompt for play, probably both.

It shouldn't surprise us that playground mechanics, the beating heart of serial action, continues to power digital games. As Koster notes of shooters, fighting games, and war games, "The gap between playing these games and cops and robbers is small as far as the players are concerned. They are all about reaction times, tactical awareness, assessing the weakness of an opponent and judging when to strike."[12] These are durable and malleable systems. They are the stuff of narrative, but that is only one, and perhaps not the most salient, of their generative possibilities. Of course, the conversation between play and film continues in the contemporary action genre, though now videogames are likely to provide the shared mechanics. Thus when space raccoon Rocket defends the planet Xandar from plummeting Krill fighter ships during the climax of *Guardians of the Galaxy* (Gunn, 2014) he enacts the mechanics of

Space Invaders (Taito, 1978), albeit with photoreal digital animation.

In the sound serial we find something like an analog precursor of digital gaming, an action form in which the pleasures of visual story entangle with ludic registers. I've said elsewhere that seriality makes stories playable. The language of videogame designers and scholars might put us in a better position to describe that process. Vivid procedural depictions and interrupted continuity help film become artifact and cross the border between representation and play. In his book Raph Koster turns the question of game's storytelling inadequacies on its head: "Getting emotional effects out of games may be the wrong approach—perhaps a better question is whether stories can be fun in the way games can."[13] Serials are a partial answer. True, they are not much as stories, but they are indeed fun.

About the Author

SCOTT HIGGINS is professor of film studies and chair of the College of Film and the Moving Image at Wesleyan University. His interests include genre, narrative theory, film aesthetics, and technology. His first book, *Harnessing the Technicolor Rainbow,* is published by the University of Texas Press. His second, the edited volume *Arnheim for Film and Media Studies,* is published by Routledge, and his third, *Matinee Melodrama,* is published by Rutgers University Press.

Notes

1. Scott Higgins, *Matinee Melodrama: Playing with Formula in the Sound Serial* (Piscataway, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2016).

2. Robin Hunicke, Marc LeBlanc, and Robert Zubek, "MDA: A Formal Approach to Game Design and Game Research," in *Proceedings of the Challenges in Games AI Workshop, Nineteenth National Conference on Artificial Intelligence* (San Jose, CA: AAAI Press, 2004), 2, http://www.cs.northwestern.edu/~hunicke/pubs/MDA.pdf.

3. Ibid.

4. Marc LeBlanc, "Mechanics, Dynamics, Aesthetics: A Formal Approach to Game Design," lecture presented at Northwestern University, April 2004, http://algorithmancy.8kindsoffun.com/MDAnwu.ppt.

5. Raph Koster, *A Theory of Fun for Game Design* (Scottsdale, AZ: Paraglyph Press, 2005), 86.

6. Ibid., 80.

7. Phyll Smith, "'Poisoning Their Daydreams': American Serial Cinema, Moral Panic, and the British Children's Cinema Movement," *Literatur in Wissenschaft und Unterricht* 47, no. 1–2 (2014): 39–54.

8. Jacob-Peter Mayer, *Sociology of Film* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1946), 62; Mary Parnaby and Maurice Woodhouse, *Children's Cinema Clubs Report* (London: British Film Institute, 1947), 7.

9. Jesse Schell, "Understanding Entertainment: Story and Gameplay Are One," *ACM Computers in Entertainment* 3, no. 1 (January 2005): 6.

10. Ibid., 8.

11. Tom Gunning, "Crazy Machines in the Garden of Forking Paths: Mischief Gags and the Origins of American Film Comedy," in *Classical Hollywood Comedy*, ed. Kristine Karnick and Henry Jenkins (New York: Routledge, 1994), 100.

12. Koster, *A Theory of Fun*, 58.

13. Ibid., 88.

FROM RECURSIVE PROGRESSION TO SYSTEMIC SELF-OBSERVATION: ELEMENTS OF A THEORY OF SERIALITY

by Frank Kelleter

I begin this short piece with a grand statement: what we call culture is fundamentally dependent on the repetition and variation of narratives. But anthropological verities are just that, and they have a regrettable tendency to serve as their own results. So when we study modern series and serials (mid-nineteenth century until today), we should immediately go on to acknowledge the existence of a highly specific storytelling culture, one that is tangled up with the logic of industrial reproduction and the technological affordances of mass media. As always, historical precedents can be traced back even further, say, to the early days of print capitalism, but it was in the wake of early newspaper novels such as Eugène Sue's *Les mystères de Paris* (1842–43) that mass-addressed serial narratives began to dominate Western entertainment formats. Today, they constitute a large-scale system of commercial storytelling—an increasingly self-aware field of narrative practice best described as popular seriality.[1]

There are numerous ways to map and evaluate this development. For example, one can proceed in a formalist manner, identifying different narrative types according to their degrees of continuity (distinguishing first between "series" and "serials" and then categorizing all kinds of historical hybrids

in between). Others have opted for an overtly critical hermeneutics, describing serial repetition as ideological inculcation and arguing that serial variation offers mere illusions of freedom that advance a hegemonic system of capitalist production. In essence, this is the conclusion drawn by both the Frankfurt School's theory of the "culture industry" and Jean-Paul Sartre's critique of serial "practico-inertness." Still another critical tradition accepts the underlying premise of these approaches (i.e., the belief that the commodity status of serial artifacts poses an ideological problem) but finds hope in a populist theory of reception. Thus, British and American cultural studies have demonstrated how the fluid mass address of serial storytelling allows for antitotalitarian moments of resistance or how audience participation fosters democratic acts of meaning making. By contrast, if one's interests are more philosophically inclined, one can identify seriality as an abstract "logic" or fundamental "force" of culture, so that television series, comic books, and other serial forms will be seen to enact a vitalist aesthetic of multiplicity and transgression. In this fashion, many postmodernist and posthumanist interpretations, often taking their cue from Deleuze, value seriality as a transcendence-bound principle of nonlinear intensity, sometimes with barely concealed metaphysical or religious associations.

None of these models is wrong; each discerns something important about modern commercial storytelling. At the same time, their competition—and occasionally their hostility to each other—tells us something about popular seriality itself, because feedback between serial narratives and the practices of sense making mobilized by them has always been a crucial feature of this particular storytelling culture. A *theory of popular seriality* should therefore strive to integrate and readjust existing theories rather than claiming to speak from some impossible outside position. For this purpose, I propose three interlinked conceptual perspectives.[2]

Evolution, Proliferation, Recursive Progression

An important feature of seriality that distinguishes this type of storytelling from narratives based on the notion of a formally self-contained work is that the reception of serial forms need not "follow" the production and publication of a finished text. Rather, serial reception can happen—and usually (initially) *does* happen—in interaction with an ongoing story.[3] A series is being watched or read while it is developing, that is, while certain narrative options are still open or have not even materialized as options yet.

In other words, we find a particularly close entanglement of production and reception in serial storytelling: reception and production are typically intertwined in a feedback loop. Of course, in work-bound aesthetics, reception and production also stand in a relationship of mutual dependence, but they are routinely addressed and enacted as temporally distinct areas of practice. By contrast, serial aesthetics do not unfold in a clear-cut chronological succession of finished composition and responsive actualization. Rather, repeated temporal overlap between publication and consumption allows serial audiences to become involved in the progress of the narrative. In more general terms, seriality can extend—and normally *does* extend—the sphere of storytelling into the sphere of story consumption.

Conceptually, this special ability of popular series to stimulate involvement and even creative activities among its consumers can be captured in two ways. First, it allows us to think of audiences as *agents of narrative continuation*. This is true even when readers "do" nothing but read, because the sphere of production will then automatically make inferences about their behavior as *customers*; a drop in sales thus becomes a readers' response. Beyond that, there are countless examples of more explicit consumer reactions contributing to the development of narrative universes. Second, this type of productive consumption, in turn, enables a serial narrative to observe its own effects on readers or viewers. In this sense, we can think of series and serials as *evolving narratives*: these narratives register their reception and engage it in the act of storytelling itself. Series watch their audiences watching them—and react accordingly. They can adapt to their own consequences, to the changes they provoke in their cultural environment (which is another way of saying that there is a feedback loop).[4]

To analyze commercial series, therefore, means to focus on moving targets. These narratives exist not so much as structures that can be programmatically designed but as structures whose designs keep shifting in perpetual interaction with whatever they set in motion. Of course, this is not to say that series cannot behave like works of art or produce artful or epic results. They can and frequently do. However, the effect of structural unity that this requires is not in their ontological makeup; rather, it has to be (re)produced by the series and its various agents of continuation in the act of interactive and evolving storytelling.

If a serial narrative can adjust itself to its ongoing reception, serial audiences, in turn, possess more freedom than work audiences to impact the stories they consume. As commercial culture expands, audiences become increasingly inclined to make use of this freedom. The history of popular seriality is full of amateur and reader productions, ranging from early unauthorized renderings of Sherlock Holmes to fan fiction, fan edits, and beyond. These constant appropriations, modifications, unofficial continuations, and so on tend to generate *authorization conflicts*.[5] Since the nineteenth century, such conflicts have arisen in numerous historical and structural varieties. A random list includes mild feelings of authorial resignation, as in the case of L. Frank Baum, who after a number of Oz books came to recognize that the serial universe was in charge of its originator rather than the other way round;[6] intense ownership battles among coauthors (especially in superhero comics); and openly hostile fights about output efficiency, usually between a single author and highly engaged readers who regard serial authorship as a delegated office (the most visible current example being George R. R. Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire*).

Such and similar conflicts of authorization ultimately feed into genre profusion and genre diversification. From a systemic standpoint, it can be said that the culture of serial storytelling *generates* both commitments and conflicts that serve as reliable forces of its own reproduction.[7] I shall return to this idea. At this point, let me simply say that ever since the first newspaper novels, popular-serial storytelling has been characterized by *proliferation*. Even after just a few episodes, a series has commonly accrued so much information and so many narrative possibilities that it will sooner or later develop side formats to accommodate this diegetic overflow. Such formats can be authorized (spin-offs, tie-ins, or more recent types of transmedia storytelling) or unauthorized (letters to the editor, fan fiction, etc.). In either case, commercial series tend to proliferate beyond the bounds of their original media and core texts. Significantly, this narrative sprawl affects not only individual series but the development of popular seriality at large. This is so because commercial series operate in a storytelling market that (1) compels every single series to keep repositioning itself with an eye to its competitors and (2) encourages the entire field of serial entertainment to maximize future profitability through the creation of generic repertoires or transgeneric "multiplicities."[8] As a result, popular series are strongly disposed *to serialize themselves*. In this manner, the first *Harry Potter* novel is followed not only by a second and third *Harry Potter* novel but by a multitude of competing series about wizards and sorcerers, complete with engaged audiences and countless media transpositions.

Long-running episodic series are no different in this regard. Superhero comics, for example, often lack a single authoritative manifestation or text, even for their origin stories. Instead, we are confronted with proliferating variations. So while it is true that Superman does not *age* as a character (i.e., there is no clear sequential trajectory within a coherently unfolding fictional world or work), Superman nevertheless does *develop* as a figure of seriality.[9] This is to say that we can trace countless transmutations of the character without ever being able to decide which one is definitive: a process that produces a narrative of its own, evolving at a higher level of pop-cultural self-observation. And after a while, the sprawling versions can also include an aged, even a dying Superman. But these continuations will always be marked as variations, that is, as temporary and revocable innovations within a storyworld that progresses more in the sense that it spreads than it unfolds.

As a result, serial stories will often appear more untidy than work-bound structures when they are consumed *as if they were* predesigned works. Since narrative organization takes place on the go, while the story is still moving forward, producers usually cannot revise an overall product before final publication to get rid of inconsistencies. In other words, popular series have to do their work of coordination, pruning, and coherence building within the ongoing narrative itself. A constantly growing excess of things already told (in the case of television, an excess of connecting options that increases every week) forces these stories to engage in incessant continuity management. This is true even for episodic series, once we recognize them, and once they recognize themselves, as "cumulative narratives."[10]

This state of affairs underlines the *recursive* character of serial progression. Recursivity here means the continual readjustment of possible continuations to already-established information. Long-running series, in particular, are forced repeatedly not only to reinterpret and even change their pasts but to do so in the very act of continuing themselves. Thus, new elements or unexpected developments, often intruding from presumably extranarrative realms such as production economics (e.g., an actor leaving after failed contract negotiations), have to be realigned with previously

told events. To do so plausibly is a major structural challenge for all running series; failure to do so sets up the narrative for ridicule. CBS's *Dallas* (1978–91) provided a classic example of this problem when the series declared that an entire season had never taken place.

Less extreme strategies of serial recursivity include the gradual rearrangement of character constellations within a larger ensemble cast, collaborative "canon" constructions by fans, "retconning," and many other operations.[11] What all these practices have in common is that they foster an intensive tendency toward *self-observation* in serial narratives. Precisely because these stories progress recursively—and because they compete with each other as commodities—series and serials are obliged to monitor their own developments. Both their recursive operations and their competitive operations force them to pay attention to their own evolution, and this includes not only the variation possibilities of their *stories* but the history of popular seriality itself, that is, the generic options, technological requirements, and media affordances of their continued existence. In this sense, commercial series offer one of the most compelling opportunities to observe how modern popular culture observes itself.

Self-Observing Systems and Actor-Networks

But isn't this just a rhetorical sleight of hand? Couldn't it be argued that I am personifying series, ascribing agency to something that is really the result of deliberate human actions? It all depends on what we mean by agency and how we want to account for the presence of nonhuman factors in serial storytelling. Based on the points discussed so far, we can describe popular series as *self-observing systems* in the sense that they are never just the "product" of intentional decisions, even as they require and involve intentional agents (most notably, people) for whom they provide real possibilities of deciding, choosing, using, objecting, and so on. In shaping the self-understanding of their human contributors, series attain agential status themselves. As praxeological networks, they experiment with formal identities and think about their own formal possibilities. And they do not do so *instead* of human beings but *with* and *through* dispersed participants, employing human practitioners (who are sometimes much younger than the series in question and who will often express a sense of practical commitment to it rather than a sense of originating authorship) for purposes of self-reproduction. Series are not intentional subjects but entities of distributed intention.

Henry Jenkins's definition of popular culture as "participatory culture" can be rephrased here to denote a field of practice in which the responsibility for formal developments rests in the often conflicting division of labor of the production process itself, a process that increasingly comes to include readers and viewers as self-aware agents of narrative continuation.[12] If we describe things this way, recipients appear no longer as mere "users" of prefabricated commodities. The idea of "usage" suggests the prior existence of a consensus industry that is separated by an almost ontological divide from its human subjects, while these subjects, in turn, are said to repurpose hegemonic dictates only in a secondary process of productive reception (hopefully for counter-hegemonic purposes). However, if the study of popular seriality teaches us anything, it is that supply and demand are more closely entangled in serial storytelling than the model of hegemonic production suggests. They are more closely entangled not only *temporally* (a serial commodity is not supplied once and for all and *then* utilized forevermore; instead, supply and demand feed back into each other) but also *emotionally* and *institutionally* (descriptions of the production/reception divide in terms of calculating providers vs. intractable users fail to account for the high degree of permeability between professional and amateur practices that is such a noteworthy feature of commercial storytelling).

This is not to deny that there are power relations and hierarchies in serial production cultures. On the contrary, it is to stress their full force outside the reassuring round of populist character constellations (heroes vs. villains, rebels vs. the empire, the people vs. the power bloc, etc.)—constellations that our critical theories have often inherited from popular storytelling itself.[13] Of course, there are jealously guarded borders of access, responsibility, and ownership; countless authorization conflicts attest to this fact. But these inequalities exist and reproduce themselves through contested practices that evolve in reaction to their own results. In other words, production and reception, or industrial and quotidian actors, are best understood as *coevolving* forces.

Rather than raising the question of usage, therefore, it seems useful to raise the question of agencies. Scriptwriters, fans, executive boards, television scholars, cable networks, camera setups, genre conventions, program slots, canons, internet memes: they all *do* something in the act of serial

storytelling, but their actions and interactions are highly specific to each evolving narrative. For the type of research advocated here, it has proven valuable to think of popular-serial practice along the lines of an *actor-network* model because popular series are appropriately described as active cultural institutions that consist not only of the stories they tell but also of the manifold proceedings and forces that are gathered in their acts of storytelling.[14] These are actor-networks in the sense that they consist of acting persons and transpersonal organizations, as well as action-conducting forms, narrative conventions and inventions, technologies with specific affordances, nonpersonal objects, and aesthetic theories about such objects.

Therefore, rather than draw an axiological distinction between "production" and "reception," it seems more promising to reconstruct how these and other positions (i.e., historical action possibilities) are created, maintained, and complicated through evolving practices of pop-cultural self-description and self-performance. The methodological challenge of this approach is to map, in dense descriptive detail, the concrete actions and carriers of action that come together, however disharmoniously, in a given serial narrative. This perspective is suitable for seriality studies because commercial series are inevitably multiauthored, produced, and consumed in many-layered systems of responsibility and performance and are always dependent on the material demands of their media and the constraints of their cultural environments. In fact, series habitually reflect on these conditions in their own (acts of telling) stories, inviting us to think of serial agency as something dispersed in a network of people, organizations, machineries, and forms.

Imagined Collectivization, Democratic Performance, and Capitalist Self-Reflexivity

Popular series should not be thought of as mere resources of culture that can be used freely for autonomous follow-up actions. Rather, as actor-networks, serial narratives contribute to how the people who produce and consume them (sometimes doing both things at the same time!) understand themselves and proceed in these roles. Thus, while consumers, producers, media scholars, and so on operate as agents of narrative continuation, serial narratives in turn operate as agents of role differentiation: they produce "producers" just as they make fans or encourage people to act as critics or scholars.[15]

Put another way, series can be understood as entities of distributed intention that are nevertheless unified *procedurally* as cultural agents. As a result, more than work-bound narratives even, they evade symptomatic readings that would seek to reveal a tightly controlled motive underlying whatever is being told. This is not to say that serial storytelling takes place in a realm beyond ideology. But popular seriality's ideological dimension seems to be little dependent on acts of encoding. Instead, it calls to mind those acts of communicative assembling that Benedict Anderson sees involved in the creation of "imagined communities."[16] In other words, the analysis of seriality requires a nonsymptomatic model of ideology because Anderson's notion of "imagined communities" addresses implausibly large-scaled yet strangely sustainable collectives that are held together not by shared convictions or consensual fictions but by linked communicative practices that thrive on debate, controversy, and even polemics.

Seen from this perspective, popular series are ideological not so much by means of their narrative content (which, being the result of dispersed authorization, cannot easily be pinned down to canonized propositions or unified effects anyway) but more by means of their self-adaptive narrative operations and media procedures. Their evolving, recursive, proliferating, and multiagential mode of storytelling enables cultures of commitment—*imagined communities*—that are all the more powerful for being held together by shared communications (shared conflicts and anxieties, too) rather than shared opinions. This helps explain why in many *self-descriptions* of popular seriality, including scholarly accounts, words such as "engagement" and "participation" have widely ceased to function as descriptive statements and have become value statements instead—an observation that is especially true for popular seriality's prime culture, the United States of America. In terms of its *ideological practice* (its practice of sustaining *ideas*), then, commercial serial storytelling has widely come to understand and to perform itself as an essentially democratic culture. More importantly, it has come to configure the democratic (originally based in theories of communal face-to-face deliberation) as an expansive culture of—frequently commodity-based—representational struggle, mediated involvement, and ubiquitous choice.

What are the practical results of such self-descriptions? What do all these controversies about participation, authorization, canonicity, choice, and so on bring into existence? At its most abstract, my (systems-theoretical) argument

suggests that popular seriality, understood as a larger historical phenomenon that has accompanied Western modernity since the mid-nineteenth century, supports a practical *regime of continuation* itself. What is being continued is the contingent but historically forceful association between democratic ideologies and a particular system of cultural production. It is worth remembering here that one of the most difficult problems of serial storytelling consists in translating repetition into difference. Following Umberto Eco, this has been said so often that we sometimes like to move beyond these terms.[17] But we ignore Eco's lesson at our own peril, because what looks like a simple matter of narrative technique on closer inspection turns out to be a core problem of modernity itself: the problem of renewing something by duplicating it. This problem lies at the heart of an entire system of cultural production that, for want of a better term and without need for revelatory pathos, is still best described by the name it has chosen to describe itself: capitalism.

It is not a coincidence, then, that seriality has become the distinguishing mark of virtually all forms of capitalist entertainment. This is so because serial media embody what may well be the structural utopia of the capitalist production of culture at large: the desire to practice reproduction *as* innovation and innovation *as* reproduction. Little wonder that commercial series have an almost innate interest in issues of renewal, expansion, and one-upmanship.[18] In this sense, they can be regarded as prime sites of *capitalist self-reflexivity*, especially concerning capitalism's increasingly tenuous alliance with the idea of democracy. Consider that capitalism, as a self-aware and self-theorizing economic system, only functions under the condition that it creates belief in its continued existence in the future. Credit transactions are possible only if everyone involved has confidence that there will be further transactions tomorrow.[19] Continuation is the name of the game, and serial media play an important part in creating systemic trust in the improbable reality of their own, and hence their own culture's, persistence. By packaging proliferating narratives into variation-prone structures, schedules, and genres, popular series day in and day out sustain the illusion that the unexpected always comes in a familiar format: that there will forever be something *following* from our present-day excitements, and that each disaster is simultaneously a continuation of our stories and controversies because the new and the unsettling always reach us in the reassuring shape of what is already known. Whatever else popular seriality tells us, whichever plots it offers us, whichever characters it lets us love or hate, it always also assures us that there will be no end to the return of our stories, no end to the multiplication of our conflicted story engagements—and thus no end to the world we know and imagine and practice as our own. Serial media reproduce a sense of infinite futurity, without which capitalist market cultures would threaten to collapse at every crisis point.

About the Author

FRANK KELLETER is chair of the Department of Culture and Einstein Professor of North American Cultural History at John F. Kennedy Institute (Freie Universität Berlin). He is the initiator and director of the Popular Seriality Research Unit (2010–16), a multidisciplinary group consisting of thirteen subprojects funded by the German Research Foundation. His main fields of interest include the American colonial and Enlightenment periods, theories of American modernity, and American media and popular culture since the nineteenth century. His most recent book publications are *Serial Agencies: "The Wire" and Its Readers* (Zero, 2014) and *David Bowie* (Reclam, 2016) and the edited volumes *Populäre Serialität: Narration—Evolution—Distinktion* (Transcript, 2012) and *Media of Serial Narrative* (Ohio State University Press, 2017).

Notes

1. See some publications connected to the Popular Seriality Research Unit (2010–16), based at Free University Berlin, with additional projects in Göttingen, Hannover, and other places: Frank Kelleter, "Populäre Serialität: Eine Einführung," in *Populäre Serialität: Narration—Evolution—Distinktion. Zum seriellen Erzählen seit dem 19. Jahrhundert,* ed. Frank Kelleter (Bielefeld: Transcript-Verlag, 2012), 11–46; Kelleter, *Serial Agencies: "The Wire" and Its Readers* (Winchester: Zero, 2014); Kelleter, ed., *Media of Serial Narrative* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, forthcoming); Christian Hißnauer, Stefan Scherer, and Claudia Stockinger, eds., *Zwischen Serie und Werk: Fernseh- und Gesellschaftsgeschichte im "Tatort"* (Bielefeld: Transcript-Verlag, 2014); Ruth Mayer, *Serial Fu Manchu: The Chinese Supervillain and the Spread of Yellow Peril Ideology* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2014); Jason Mittell, *Complex TV: The Poetics of Contemporary Television Storytelling* (New York: New York University Press, 2015); Shane Denson and Andreas Sudmann, "Digital Seriality: On the Serial Aesthetics and Practice of Digital Games," in Kelleter, *Media of Serial Narrative*; and others.

2. The following points offer an early and shortened version of Frank Kelleter, "Five Ways of Looking at Popular Seriality," in Kelleter, *Media of Serial Narrative*.

3. Obvious exceptions are so-called miniseries, which by this definition are not serial forms but segmented work narratives. On the difference between first-order and second-order seriality (shifting serial feedback from the level of the episode or installment to some higher level of cultural continuation), see Frank Kelleter and Kathleen Loock, "Hollywood Remaking as Second-Order Serialization," in Kelleter, *Media of Serial Narrative*.

4. Incidentally, the existence of such adaptive feedback loops explains why narrative failure is a permanent companion of serial storytelling. As in most evolutionary processes, success only means avoiding disappearance, not reaching a final state of fulfillment.

5. Frank Kelleter and Daniel Stein, "Autorisierungspraktiken seriellen Erzählens: Zur Gattungsentwicklung von Superheldencomics," in Kelleter, *Populäre Serialität*, 259–90.

6. Frank Kelleter, "Toto, I Think We're in Kansas Again (and Again and Again): Remakes and Popular Seriality," in *Film Remakes, Adaptations, and Fan Productions: Remake/Remodel*, ed. Kathleen Loock and Constantine Verevis (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 19–44.

7. As indicated by concepts such as *reproduction, self-observation, improbability,* and so on, my conceptual framework is systems-theoretical; see Niklas Luhmann, *Die Gesellschaft der Gesellschaft* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1999). On the compatibility of systems theory and actor-network-theory (discussed below), see Kelleter, *Serial Agencies*.

8. Amanda A. Klein and R. Barton Palmer, *Cycles, Sequels, Spin-Offs, Remakes, and Reboots: Multiplicities in Film and Television* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2016).

9. On the question of Superman aging (or not), see Umberto Eco, "The Myth of Superman," *Diacritics* 2, no. 1 (1972): 14–22.

10. Horace M. Newcomb, "*Magnum*: The Champagne of TV?," *Channels of Communication,* May/June 1985, 23–26.

11. Frank Kelleter, "'Whatever Happened, Happened': Serial Character Constellation as Problem and Solution in *Lost*," in *Amerikanische Fernsehserien der Gegenwart*, ed. Heike Paul and Christoph Ernst (Bielefeld: Transcript-Verlag, 2015), 57–87.

12. Henry Jenkins, *Textual Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1992).

13. Compare Luc Boltanski, *Mysteries & Conspiracies* (Cambridge: Polity, 2014), on the parallel emergence of sociology and the detective novel. Similar investigations could be launched, with different temporal arguments, for political economy and the sentimental novel, literary phenomenology and the romance, the modern metaphysics of nonhuman being(s) and the modern horror film, or network philosophies and the picaresque novel.

14. Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

15. This is the Latourian question: What needs to be already in place—how many productions need to have already occurred—before some individual can act as a "producer" and lay claim to that title?

16. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991).

17. Umberto Eco, "Interpreting Serials," in *The Limits of Interpretation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 83–100.

18. Andreas Jahn-Sudmann and Frank Kelleter, "Die Dynamik serieller Überbietung: Amerikanische Fernsehserien und das Konzept des Quality-TV," in Kelleter, *Populäre Serialität*, 205–25.

19. Joseph Vogl, *Das Gespenst des Kapitals* (Zürich: diaphanes, 2010). For a more detailed discussion of these issues centered on American radio during the Great Depression, see Frank Kelleter, "Trust and Sprawl: Seriality, Radio, and the First Fireside Chat," in *Media Economies: Perspectives on American Cultural Practices,* ed. Marcel Hartwig, Evelyne Keitel, and Gunter Süß (Trier: wvt, 2014), 47–66. Also see Kelleter, "Four Theses on the News," in *Knowledge Landscapes North America*, ed. Sabine Sielke et al. (Heidelberg: Winter, 2017), 211–30.

HISTORICIZING THE INFLUENCE OF SOAP OPERA

by Elana Levine

While the history of serialized storytelling far precedes that of mass media, since the dawn of broadcasting one genre has been especially central to American cultural conceptions of serialization: the daytime soap opera.[1] For better or worse, daytime soaps, also labeled as serials, have frequently served as shorthand for the kind of moving image narrative that continues from episode to episode, resisting resolution and instead telling the tale of an "indefinitely expandable middle."[2] While no cultural forms continue their stories as long as do daytime soaps (which can and have stretched over more than half a century of weekday installments), the idea of an ongoing tale that carries audience involvement from episode to episode is frequently articulated to the soap genre.

In American television in particular, the growing presence of serialized storytelling in prime time since the 1980s, but most noticeably in the "convergence era" of the early twenty-first century, has occasioned a number of comparisons between daytime soap opera and these more culturally respected programs. In industrial, popular, and critical discourse, both journalistic and scholarly, these comparisons tend to refuse any similarity between daytime's daily installments and the kinds of series that have accrued to fictional television such labels as "peak" and "golden age" TV.[3] These refusals arguably may be explained as classist and masculinist denials of an association

between aesthetically legitimated content and the feminized world of daytime drama.[4] But the difficulty in acknowledging and understanding the relationship between daytime and prime-time serialization is at least in part a historiographic failure. Thus far, the histories of television in the United States and much of the rest of the world have not detailed the influences between and across day parts and genres.[5]

Even as soap opera is one of the most examined topics in the relatively short history of television scholarship, this work tends to emphasize the generically consistent rather than the historically variable.[6] It is easier to make assumptions about that which does not have a specific history, and the path of soap opera on television has yet to receive the kind of historicization that can help us make sense of its change, or lack thereof, over time. My current research, a book-length history of US daytime television soap opera as both a feminized cultural form and a crucial component of the production and reception of American television since the 1950s, seeks to remedy this gap. The project grapples with many aspects of the genre, including the relationship between daytime's serialized tales and the more gradual emergence of serialization as a storytelling feature of prime time, and opens the door to more detailed explorations of these relationships. Here, I offer an overview of some of the intersections I have uncovered between daytime drama and other kinds of TV storytelling. Historicizing a serialized, feminized genre like soap opera is crucial to understanding its historical position and to acknowledging the formative influence of otherwise dismissed cultural spheres.

The transition of the daily, serialized stories of US broadcast network radio to television was hardly a smooth process. Many in the industry were loath to risk the profitability of radio's daytime schedules for the unknowns of daytime TV.[7] The costs of daily dramatic TV production were also seen as an impediment.[8] As a result, some of the first experiments with soap-style continuing narrative in the new medium were weekly prime-time offerings rather than daily daytime ones. The short-lived DuMont network produced TV's first serial drama, *Faraway Hill*, as a prime-time offering in 1946.[9] When radio serial creator Irna Phillips scripted her first TV soap, a resurrection of her former radio serial, *Today's Children*, in 1949, she urged NBC to broadcast it at 6:30 p.m. so as not to interfere with the housewife's radio-listening habit during the day. She made clear that she did not see the program as strictly suited to either day part—she just wanted women, and men, to be more likely to get involved with the soap by protecting it from radio serial competition.[10] Other of the earliest attempts at TV serialization moved fluidly between daytime and prime-time slots—DuMont's *A Woman to Remember* aired in each, and the TV version of radio's *One Man's Family* moved between afternoon and evening across its run. While the radio precedent of daytime as the appropriate place for soap opera would be established for TV during the early 1950s, the initial experiments with the form were more flexibly scheduled.

Daytime soap opera was solidified as a TV genre (rather than one associated with radio alone) by 1954, and the video version of serialized storytelling was an art form in progress across the rest of the 1950s and early 1960s. The value of daytime's serialized tales was well enough proven by the early 1960s that there were a number of efforts to bring the format to prime time in that decade and the next. Between 1962 and 1964 various soap writers, ad agencies, and sponsors contemplated plans for prime-time serials.[11] The most successful such effort began in 1963, when producer Paul Monash began to work with ABC's director of program planning, Douglas Cramer, on a TV adaptation of *Peyton Place*. Monash's résumé had been centered on prime-time drama, but *Peyton Place* had deep ties to the daytime soap world. Cramer came to ABC in 1962 from his position at Procter & Gamble, where he worked with ad agencies and writers to craft daytime soaps. And ABC contracted Irna Phillips as a prime-time programming consultant.[12]

There were other signs of interest in bringing serialized narration to prime time in this period as well. A few prime-time series tried out two-part episodes early in the 1960s, and a five-part continuing story on *Lassie* was a ratings hit. When the US industry realized that the British soap *Coronation Street* was drawing wide viewership with its early evening time slot, some were eager to try the same at home.[13] Nonetheless, Monash was quite resistant to the influences of Phillips and the daytime soap sphere on *Peyton Place*.[14] As Caryn Murphy has detailed, Monash regularly bristled at Phillips's recommendations and sought to avoid her name being associated with his show. He encouraged promotion that differentiated the program from daytime drama, even if critics and audiences tended to see it as more in keeping with soap proper.[15]

Peyton Place quickly became a popular sensation, and the TV industry eagerly hopped on the prime-time serial

bandwagon, chasing the next hit. As early as the spring before *Peyton Place* debuted, Hollywood studios and major sponsors were anticipating the prime-time serial trend, and it was widely assumed that experienced daytime writers would play a part.[16] Once *Peyton Place* debuted, Phillips was slotted to script a prime-time spin-off.[17] Producers pitching new series for the 1965–66 season began describing the ways their premises could be readily serialized.[18] Programs that would eventually land in daytime, like *Days of Our Lives*, were considered for a prime-time berth or were envisioned as a potential fit for daytime or prime time.[19] And the producers of *Dr. Kildare* announced their plan to serialize the strictly episodic program for the next season.[20]

It was in this period that CBS ordered a prime-time spinoff of daytime's *As the World Turns* from Philips and Procter & Gamble. *Our Private World* ran in the summer of 1965, a scheduling demotion from the hype that initially attended the acquisition, perhaps as a result of its champion, CBS president James Aubrey, being unceremoniously fired from the network amidst scandal in February 1965.[21] The ratings for the spin-off were decent, improving on recent numbers for the time slot, but the limitations of CBS's investment in the project prevailed, and it ended its run in September 1965.[22]

Even as *Our Private World* failed, the possibility of movement between daytime and prime time continued into the 1970s. Not only did executives and creative talent move between the two realms, but serialized narrative continued to wend its way into the higher-profile world of evening TV. In 1965 prime time's *The Doctors and the Nurses* became daytime's *The Nurses*, while in 1972 *Peyton Place* was revived as daytime's *Return to Peyton Place*. Meanwhile, miniseries, first imported from Britain in the form of *The Forsyte Saga* and then taken up by Hollywood producers, were closely connected to daytime storytelling both in their continuing narratives and in their focus on family, romance, and emotional drama.[23] By the mid-1970s prime-time mogul Norman Lear, in partnership with experienced soap writer Ann Marcus, pitched his comedic soap, *Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman* to all three networks for daytime, and all declined, leading Lear to distribute it through first-run syndication.[24] Soap opera fan magazines debated whether to cover it in their pages, inviting readers to weigh in and eventually asserting the program's status as soap.[25] In 1977 ABC's serialized comedy *Soap* was also a site of controversy. As Jason Mittell details, much of the sensation surrounding the show dealt with its generic status in relation to its weekly evening scheduling.[26]

By the mid-1970s multiple network programmers recognized the impact of daytime's soaps on the serialization potential of prime time. As CBS's Michael Ogiens noted, "The serial is the most successful form in TV."[27] In this period, not only were miniseries signaling the potential of soap-like storytelling across the schedule, but so too were a number of weekly series increasingly experimenting with continuing storytelling and character memory.[28] ABC executive Brandon Stoddard, like many network successes a former director of daytime programming, argued in 1977 that soap-like storytelling gave prime time "richness, continuity, and depth." He asserted that the "concentration on character and personal relationships" from daytime drama was the tradition he sought to develop in prime time.[29] Critics saw these soap-originating principles across the prime-time schedule in the 1970s in comedies and in drama.[30] The influence of daytime soap opera pervaded classic network era programming.

The growing experiments with prime-time serialization across the 1960s and 1970s resulted in the gradual serialization of CBS's oil family-drama, *Dallas*, beginning with its second season in 1978–79. *Dallas* embraced serialized storytelling most fully in its third season, peaking in a cliff-hanging final episode in the spring of 1980. By that point, its spin-off, *Knots Landing,* was under way, and its chief competitor, *Dynasty*, was a pilot-in-the-making. NBC's *Hill Street Blues*, the "quality" version of the prime-time serialization trend, was also in the works, debuting alongside *Dynasty* in January 1981. In the spring of 1980 a *Broadcasting* headline trumpeted, "Next season will shower screen with soaps," referencing these prime-time developments.[31] Meanwhile, powerful daytime soap personnel, like *General Hospital* executive producer Gloria Monty, got prime-time development deals, and other soap talent, both behind and in front of the cameras, worked in prime-time efforts.[32] It was during the 1980s that both these explicitly labeled "prime-time soaps" and other forms of serialized dramatic narratives demonstrated what Jane Feuer has called "the pervasive influence of serial form and multiple plot structure upon *all* of American television."[33]

A more detailed analysis of the creative and economic exchanges between daytime and prime-time serialization would help us to better understand the degrees of influence

in both directions between the 1950s and 1980s, as well as the ways that prime time's history of serialized narrative has developed from the 1990s on. Even as prime-time serialization has charted its own trajectory since the late twentieth century, the foundational influence of daytime drama has lived on. Daytime's on-screen talent has continued to move fluidly between the two realms. Writers and producers such as Charles Pratt Jr. and Mary-Ellis Bunim took their experiences in daytime soaps to prime-time dramas and reality programming, respectively. Bunim's history as a soap producer is cited as a formative influence on the "alternative serial drama that combined the elements of soap opera and documentary . . . for what is recognized today as reality television," which her company, Bunim-Murray Productions, pioneered with *The Real World* in 1992.[34] Even when creative talent has not traversed these genres, the influence of daytime soap storytelling is visible, whether in scenes that continue, or even backtrack, across commercial and episode breaks (as in the CBS drama *The Good Wife*) or in arcs that lead viewers through the moral variations of characters over time (as in AMC's *Breaking Bad*).

That many of these programs are explicitly differentiated from soap opera in industry, audience, and critical commentary, as well as, at times, in their narrative form, does not mean they are unrelated to their daytime foremothers. That we no longer notice the influence of daytime drama on prime-time serialization in fact may signify just how deeply the soaps' influence has pervaded our senses of what TV storytelling *is*; soap opera is so deeply embedded in TV narrative that its roots have become invisible. My research aims to remind us that serialization has a history; it is a story that has only just begun to be told.

About the Author

ELANA LEVINE is a professor in the Department of Journalism, Advertising, and Media Studies at the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee. She is the author of *Wallowing in Sex: The New Sexual Culture of 1970s American Television* (Duke University Press, 2007), coauthor of *Legitimating Television: Media Convergence and Cultural Status* (Routledge, 2012), coeditor of *Undead TV: Essays on Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (Duke University Press, 2007), and editor of *Cupcakes, Pinterest, and Ladyporn: Feminized Popular Culture in the Early 21st Century* (University of Illinois Press, 2015). She is currently working on the manuscript for *Her Stories: Daytime Soap Opera and US Television History* (Duke University Press).

Notes

1. Jennifer Hayward, *Consuming Pleasures: Active Audiences and Serial Fictions from Dickens to Soap Opera* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2015).

2. Dennis Porter, "Soap Time: Thoughts on a Commodity Art Form," *College English* 38, no. 8 (April 1977): 783.

3. *Sopranos* creator David Chase was purportedly "determined from the start not to make a soap opera or serial of any kind." David Lavery and Robert J. Thompson, "David Chase, *The Sopranos*, and Television Creativity," in *This Thing of Ours*, ed. David Lavery (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 23. See also Daniel Mendelsohn, "The *Mad Men* Account," *New York Review of Books*, 24 February 2011; and Jason Mittell, *Complex TV: The Poetics of Contemporary Storytelling* (New York: New York University Press, 2015), 233–60.

4. Michael Z. Newman and Elana Levine, *Legitimating Television: Media Convergence and Cultural Status* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 80–99.

5. Robert C. Allen began the process of historicizing soap opera in *Speaking of Soap Operas* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984). See also Elana Levine, "Historicizing Soap Opera: The Rise and Fall of Daytime Drama," in *Blackwell Companion to the History of American Broadcasting*, ed. Aniko Bodroghkozy (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, forthcoming).

6. For example, see Tania Modleski, *Loving with a Vengeance: Mass-Produced Fantasies for Women*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2008); and Horace Newcomb, *TV: The Most Popular Art* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Press, 1974). Charlotte Brunsdon, *The Feminist, the Housewife, and the Soap Opera* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) historically contextualizes this scholarship.

7. Lynn Spigel, *Make Room for TV: Television and the Family Ideal in Postwar America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 75–76; William Boddy, *Fifties Television: The Industry and Its Critics* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990), 20.

8. "Problems of a TV Soap Opera," *Sponsor*, 29 November 1951, 39.

9. "A Unique Twist" and "Faraway Hill," *Televisor*, November–December 1946, 29.

10. Irna Phillips to Irving E. Showerman, 14 January 1949, box 54, "*These Are My Children*, #1–7"; Irna Phillips to Richard Davis, 4 December 1948, box 54, "*These Are My Children* correspondence," Irna Phillips Collection, Wisconsin Historical Society (WHS).

11. Frank and Doris Hursley, creators of daytime's *General Hospital*, proposed a prime-time serial in 1962 (box 5, folder 41, Bridget and Jerome Dobson Collection, WHS) and a prime-time spin-off of *GH* in 1964 (box 21, Frank and Doris Hursley Collection, America Heritage Center [AHC]). Compton Advertising explored a prime-time serial for Procter & Gamble in 1962 (Lewis Titterton to Robert E. Short, 6 June 1962, box 1, David Lesan Collection,

AHC). See also "P&G Experiments with Prime Time TV Version of Soaper," *Advertising Age*, 7 January 1963, 2.

12. "Irna Phillips Pacted as ABC-TV Consultant," *Variety,* 15 April 1964, 28.

13. Rick DuBrow, "Soap Operas on TV Screens," *Pasadena Star-News*, 4 September 1964, 8.

14. Paul Monash to Douglas S. Cramer, 28 April 1964, box 18, Correspondence—Letters 1964, Paul Monash Collection, AHC.

15. Caryn Murphy, "Selling the Continuing Story of *Peyton Place*: Negotiating the Content of the Primetime Serial," *Historical Journal of Radio, Television, and Film* 33, no. 1 (May 2013): 120–21.

16. Bob Foster, "TV Screening," *San Mateo Times*, 21 May 1964, 26.

17. Alan Patureau, "Peyton Place to Spread Woe," *Newsday*, 14 January 1965, 5C.

18. George Rosen, "TV's 'Mainstream of Morality,'" *Variety*, 23 September 1964, 80.

19. George Rosen, "Television's Changing Value," *Variety*, 30 September 1964, 29; Aleene MacMinn, "Happy 'Days' for Carey," *Los Angeles Times,* 8 May 1966, L4; *All My Children* proposal, box 130, *All My Children* binder, William J. and Lee Phillip Bell Collection, UCLA.

20. Caryn Murphy, "The Continuing Story: Experiments with Serial Narrative in 1960s Prime-Time Television," *Journal of Screenwriting* 5, no. 3 (2014): 388–89.

21. "'Soap Opera' Are Bad Words at CBS," *Oakland Tribune,* 15 March 1965, 10; Richard Oulahan and William Lambert, "The Tyrant's Fall That Rocked the TV World," *Life*, 10 September 1965, 90–92+.

22. Val Adams, "CBS Soap Opera Is Going Off TV," *New York Times*, 3 August 1965, 63.

23. Cecil Smith, "Writers See Soap Operas as Therapy," *Los Angeles Times,* 7 April 1970. In the early 1980s the creator of daytime's *Dark Shadows*, Dan Curtis, would produce the miniseries *Winds of War* and *War and Remembrance*.

24. Jay Sharbutt, "*All in the Family* Daytime Reruns to Battle Soap Opera," *Chillicothe Constitution Tribune*, 12 November 1975, 9.

25. "Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman: Satirical, Split-Level Humor . . . but Is It Soap Opera?," *Soap Opera Digest,* April 1976, 15–17.

26. Jason Mittell, *Genre and Television* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 166–71.

27. Al Haas, "Will TV and Soap Opera Live Happily Ever After?," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 5 September 1976, 3E.

28. Newman and Levine, *Legitimating Television,* 82–89.

29. Quoted in Stephen Zito, "Prime-Time Soap Opera," *American Film*, 1 February 1977, 24.

30. Ibid.

31. "Next Season Will Shower Screen with Soaps," *Broadcasting,* 28 April 1980, 72.

32. Georgia Dullea, "As Gloria Monty's World Turns," *New York Times,* 11 July 1986, A26.

33. Jane Feuer, "Melodrama, Serial Form, and Television Today," *Screen* 25, no. 1 (1984): 5.

34. "About Us," Bunim-Murray Productions, http://www.bunim-murray.com/about-us/, accessed 23 May 2016.

SERIALITIES AND JAPONISME IN LUMIÈRE BROTHERS' ACTUALITY FILMS

by Daisuke Miyao

As early as 1979, film historian Marshall Deutelbaum claimed, "There is little reason to continue to regard them [Lumière films] as naïve photographic renderings of natural events which happened to occur before the camera."[1] If we pay attention to the graphic awareness and compositional artificiality of Lumière films, 1,428 of which are available for viewing at Institut Lumière in Lyon, we become aware of their impulse toward serialities in terms of what should be called transmedial and transnational mimesis. In particular, Japonisme, the influence of Japanese art, culture, and aesthetics on European art roughly between the 1860s and 1910s, had a significant impact on the impulse toward serialities in Lumière films.

The concept of transcultural mimesis in film was coined by film scholar Michael Raine

> because it entails "translation" or "adaptation" across a marked cultural boundary, something that was always part of the production and reception of these films, and *mimesis* because the relation of original and copy is ever-present in this "mimetic medium." Rather than the reductive sense of mimesis as naïve copying, I would like to restore to mimesis some of the complexity of its original uses: in classical Greece, mimesis and its cognates encompassed ritual repetition as a form of ontological re-presencing, the dramatic staple of the parodic stereotype, and the Aristotelian sense of learning by imitation that was revived by Frankfurt School thinkers. There is a "closeness" to mimesis that is not part of all copying, what Michael Taussig calls "the nature that culture uses to create second nature"—a pre-rational intimacy that Adorno and Benjamin also saw as a way out of the subject-object divide.[2]

Raine argues that there are three elements in transcultural mimesis: "homage," "parody," and "learning."[3] Lumière films aimed at "learning" from the composition and techniques of Japanese art as well as re-creating and paying "homage" to

the subject matters of Japonisme in a serialized manner. It is easy to dismiss their endeavor because of their Orientalist and imperialist inclination. But it is also important to recognize that early cinema and its specific aesthetics of composition and motion developed in an adaptation and appropriation of cultural artifacts on a global scale.

First, learning. Lumière films shared the contemporaneous attitude toward the sense of vision, realism, and seriality with impressionist and postimpressionist painters. In order to challenge the dominance of liner perspectives in paintings since the Renaissance era, impressionist and postimpressionist painters found inspiration in Japanese *ukiyo-e* woodblock prints by Katsushika Hokusai (1760–1849), among others. Lumière films often imitated the subjects of impressionist and postimpressionist paintings and *ukiyo-e* and applied their compositions, methods, and impulses toward seriality to their films (transmedial mimesis).

Panoramic View during Ascension of the Eiffel Tower (*Panorama pendant l'ascencion de la Tour Eiffel*, 1897–98) is a typical example. This film consists of a single, almost fifty-second shot and gives a view from an electrically operated fast machine that takes a rider to the top of the metal tower. The film is basically divided into two planes: in the first, we see numerous metal bars that form the tower moving across the frame from the top to the bottom; in the second, we see the Palais du Trocadéro, which would be demolished for the Exposition Internationale in 1937 and replaced by the Palais de Chaillot. As each of these metal bars coming from different directions passes by, the Palais du Trocadéro comes in and out of sight and gradually changes its position because of the change of the viewing position of the camera. Eventually, the Seine also becomes visible at the bottom of the frame.

Panoramic View during Ascension of the Eiffel Tower can be juxtaposed with the photography and the lithograph of Henri Rivière (1864–1951). Rivière was a photographer and printmaker who was heavily influenced by the woodblock prints of Hokusai. Rivière recorded the building of the Eiffel Tower with a series of thirty-six sketches from 1888 throughout the 1890s. *Les trente-six vues de la Tour Eiffel* was published as a lithograph in 1902. Rivière's series of sketches were based on Hokusai's popular serial of *ukiyo-e* prints, *Thirty-Six Views of Mt. Fuji* (*Fugaku sanjurokkei*, ca. 1830). Serial publication was a basic component in the marketing and selling of sheet prints of *ukiyo-e* in late eighteenth- to early nineteenth-century Japan.

Compositionally, *Panoramic View during Ascension of the Eiffel Tower* was not a realist approach of Renaissance perspective; instead, its focus was on the contrast between the first and second planes. Hokusai was well acquainted with the concept of perspective in Renaissance paintings by way of China.[4] Instead of simply following the rule, Hokusai divided the space within the picture frame in order to exaggerate the contrast between the front and the back, gigantic versus tiny. Hokusai thus formulated a dramatic composition that directly connected two layers, the front and the back.

According to James King, about forty series were marketed each year in a five-year period in the mid-1760s. By the mid-1770s, 100 had been sold during a similar time span; by 1795, about 120.[5] Series publication of *ukiyo-e* was almost always identified by a designation on the print itself, which listed, in addition to the artist's name and the title of the print, the series' name and the sheet's number in the series. The same marketing strategy was adopted by Rivière and by the Lumière brothers. Each Lumière film is serialized with a number, a series (such as "Exposition Universelle de Paris 1900"), and the cameraman's name. There are at least two more films in the Lumière catalog that depict the Eiffel Tower, *Le château d'eau vu de la Tour Eiffel* (1900) and *Le Tour Eiffel vue du Trocadéro* (1900), in the Exposition Universelle de Paris 1900 series; both of them were photographed by an anonymous cinematographer.

In addition to the composition, it is also noteworthy that impressionist and postimpressionist painters and critics highly valued the method of capturing movements in *ukiyo-e*: instantaneity of brush strokes. As film historian Mary Ann Doane points out, impressionism "has been described as the concerted attempt to fix a moment, to grasp it as, precisely, fugitive."[6] The attempt included a strong awareness of the impossibility of such an act. That was why they used the word *instantaneity*. Claude Monet used the word *l'instantanéité* to describe his project of capturing the landscape on site, under the exterior light.[7] Instantaneity is not equal to an instant. No matter how hard a painter may try, it is impossible for him or her to complete a painting in an instant. It takes a certain amount of time, and there are always delays. Impressionist and postimpressionist painters were conscious of this temporal gap between a particular moment and the painting time. They understood that it was impossible for any human eyes and hands to extract an instant from time or a moment from moving objects. But they tried to represent by

their hands the movement that they sensed with their eyes. In addition, they needed a series of paintings to physically capture things and light in motion. The series *Haystacks* (1890–91) was Monet's attempt at instantaneity in order to physically represent his bodily sense of light on canvas.[8]

What Monet, among others, valued highly was the sketching skill in Japanese art.[9] "The attraction of sketching," according to Maurice Letouzé, who reviewed the Japanese paintings at the 1900 Exhibition in Paris, "comes from precise and graceful techniques that nobody can deny."[10] Letouzé continues, "The best example of how Japanese painters display their masterful techniques with their hands is in their expression of animals. See the two tigers by Ohashi Suiseki. One of them is resting half of its body and yawns with its mouth wide open. The other tiger, which has just climbed upon a rock, turns around and shows its grin, the grin that characterizes cats."[11] Under such conditions, Monet attempted to incorporate sketching in his paintings and to physically represent his bodily sense of light on canvas using the touch of his brush in *Haystacks*.[12] Théodore Duret, a critic and an advocate of impressionism, claimed that the purpose of sketching for both Monet and Hokusai was to "stabilize" the striking conditions of living things and nonliving objects as they were without adding or deleting anything.[13] Curiously, Duret's comment connects physical endeavors by Monet and Hokusai to the field of mechanical reproduction typified by motion picture cameras.

With the elevator's continuous movement in *Panoramic View during Ascension of the Eiffel Tower*, a contrast between the front and the back is much more exaggerated than in the works of Hokusai and Rivière. By imitating the subjects of impressionist paintings and applying their compositions, Lumière films participated in the project of instantaneity that impressionists initiated. Moreover, a motion picture camera is technologically capable of extracting instants in continuous movements even if it cannot capture time and moving objects as themselves. Lumière films thus resulted in incorporating both the physical sense and the mechanical reproduction. They simultaneously presented instantaneity and instants. As each metal bar of the Eiffel Tower comes on- and off-screen as black shadows, the Palais du Trocadéro appears and reappears within the frame. This game of hide and seek comes close to the notion of *à travers* that art historian Akiko Mabuchi suggests when she discusses Claude Monet's paintings.[14] According to Mabuchi, Monet used a composition that emphasized the contrast between the front and the back in order to express the sense of vision that transits or moves from one end of a plane to another.[15] I would call *Panoramic View during Ascension of the Eiffel Tower* an *à travers* cinema that emerged by way of the process of transmedial mimesis.[16]

Second, homage and re-creating. The Lumière Company sent two cinematographers, Constant Girel and Gabriel Veyre, to Japan and produced a series of films, *Japon*, which apparently captured scenes from everyday life. In fact, the French cinematographers were projecting their Orientalist images of Japan, which were based on a series of Orientalist paintings and photographs of the same era, onto the real places and things (transnational mimesis).

Among the eighteen films that Constant Girel photographed in Japan, there is one titled *Dîner japonais* (Japanese dinner). In this film, numerous women, supposedly geishas, play the samisen (a three-stringed musical instrument), sing, and serve cups of sake to only two men at the table. A Japanese-style *goza* mat is on the ground, and a Japanese screen is seen at the back. Because of the location in Japan and the appearance of Japanese people, it looks as if the entire scene really happened as an everyday practice in Japan. However, if we place *Dîner japonais* right next to a painting such as James Tissot's *L'enfant prodigue* (*The Prodigal Son in a Foreign Land*, 1880), which is exhibited at the Musée d'Orsay, it is easy to notice the similarity of the subject matter and the characters within the frames. They clearly share the Orientalist discourse, in which an imaginary Orient (in this case, Japan) was presented as an ahistorical and timeless entity, while a temporality such as progress or development was an attribute of the West. Indeed, during his Japan trip, Girel collected seventy photographs of Japan. All the photographs were in the album, whose cover is a sophisticated carved lacquer ware that shows a geisha riding in a rickshaw pulled by a running man in front of Mount Fuji and Kyoto temples. The photographs inside are a series of exotic scenery and people, including geishas, Shinto priests, castles, shrine gates (torii), Mount Fuji, and cherry blossoms.

Similarly, Gabriel Veyre's *Danse japonaise: II. Harusame* (1898–99), *Chanteuse japonaise* (1898–99), and *Japonaise faisant sa toilette* (1898–99) replicated such European paintings of geisha by Edward Atkinson Hornel and Charles Wirgman (transmedial mimesis). Veyre wrote about Japanese women: "In order to fully understand the social status of Japanese

women, we need to completely wipe out the sense of Western morality from our minds. . . . Japanese girls are extremely attractive because they combine decency and indecency, obedience and obscenity."[17]

Such images of geisha first appeared in the published journals and diaries of Europeans who traveled to Japan in the mid-nineteenth century, including those by Aimé Humbert (*Le Japon illustré*, 1870) and Émile Guimet (*Promenades Japonaises*, 1878). In these writings, geisha were one of many Japanese cultural entities, but they naturally caught the eye of readers who had never visited Japan but were looking for the sensual attractions of Orientalist painting. With the popularity of Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Mikado; or, The Town of Titipu* (1885) and Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* (1904), the image of the geisha was serialized, being played by Caucasian actresses. *The American Film Institute Catalog 1893–1910* lists ninety-four films that were released in the United States under the category of "Japan and Japanese," and the same catalog of 1911–20 lists forty-three films under the categories of "Japan" and "Japanese" combined.[18] In particular, fully half of the films that were released in the United States from 1909 to 1915 portraying cross-cultural relations took the form of ill-fated romance, which were the reworkings of *Madama Butterfly*'s narrative of doomed romance between a geisha and an American man.[19]

Thus, two aspects of adaptation existed in Lumière films and their impulse toward serialities, especially in relation to the prevailing discourse on Japonisme at the end of the nineteenth century. Lumière films could be read as a transmedial and transnational endeavor to reproduce other artifacts in an animated form. First, the sketching skill, the unusual composition, and the method of seriality that impressionists and postimpressionists observed in *ukiyo-e* had a significant impact on the conceptualization of instantaneity. Second, in the trend of Orientalist painting and in Japonisme, Japanese (and other non-Western) people and landscapes were repeatedly placed in premodern spheres even when those people and landscapes were captured in Japan.

About the Author

DAISUKE MIYAO is a professor and the Hajime Mori Chair in Japanese Language and Literature in the Department of Literature, the University of California, San Diego. He is the author of *The Aesthetics of Shadow: Lighting and Japanese Cinema* (Duke University Press, 2013), *Eiga wa neko dearu: Hajimeteno cinema sutadizu* (Cinema is a cat: An introduction to cinema studies) (Heibon sha, 2011), and *Sessue Hayakawa: Silent Cinema and Transnational Stardom* (Duke University Press, 2007). Miyao is also the editor of *The Oxford Handbook of Japanese Cinema* (Oxford University Press, 2014). He is currently writing a book that is tentatively titled *Japonisme and the Birth of Cinema*.

Notes

1. Marshall Deutelbaum, "Structural Patterning in the Lumière Films," in *Film before Griffith*, ed. John L. Fell (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 312. Originally appeared in *Wide Angle* 3, no. 1 (1979): 28–37.

2. Michael Raine, "Adaptation as 'Transcultural Mimesis' in Japanese Cinema," in *The Oxford Handbook of Japanese Cinema*, ed. Daisuke Miyao (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 115.

3. Ibid.

4. Inaga Shigemi, *Kaiga no rinkai: Kindai higash Ajia bijutsushi no shikkoku to meiun* (Images on the edge: A historical survey of East Asian transcultural modernities) (Nagoya: Nagoya daigaku shuppankai, 2014), 102.

5. James King, *Beyond the Great Wave: The Japanese Landscape Print, 1727–1960* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2010), 48.

6. Mary Ann Doane, *The Emergence of Cinematic Time: Modernity, Contingency, the Archive* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 10.

7. Quoted and translated into Japanese in Mutobe Akinori, "Mone 'Tsumiwara' rensaku no saiko: Mochifu, shunkansei, koten" (Rethinking Monet's series painting, *Haystacks*: Motifs, instantaneity, private exhibition), in *Situation actuelle de l'histoire de l'art moderne francaise: Du point de vue de l'après "New Art History,"* ed. Nagai Takanori (Tokyo: Sangen sha, 2007), 171.

8. Ibid., 188. Mutobe argues that physicality was lost in the postimpressionist paintings by painters such as Georges Seurat and Paul Signac when they started to approach colors more scientifically and formulate the theory of colors (ibid., 177).

9. Inaga Shigemi, *Kaiga no tasogare: Eduaru Mane botsugo no toso (Le crépuscule de la peinture: La lutte posthume d'Édouard Manet)* (Nagoya: Nagoya Daigaku shuppankai, 1997), 276.

10. Maurice Letouzé, "La peinture japonaise," in *L'exposition et ses attractions* (Paris, 1900), 16:49–52, quoted and translated into Japanese in Tano Yasunori, "Pari bankokuhakurankai to Nihon bijutsu" (Paris Exhibition and Japanese art), in *Nippon Bijutsuin Hyakunenshi*, 2 kan Jo (Zuhan hen) (One-hundred-year history of Nippon Bijutsuin, vol. 2-1, graphics), ed. Nippon Bijutsuin Hyakunenshi Henshushitsu (Tokyo: Nippon Bijutsuin, 1990), 445. English translation by the author.

11. Ibid.

12. Mutobe, "Mone 'Tsumiwara' rensaku no saiko," 188.

13. Théodore Duret, *Histoire de Édouard Manet et de son oeuvre* (Paris, 1902), quoted and translated into Japanese in Inaga, *Kaiga no tasogare*, 284. English translation by the author.

14. Mabuchi Akiko, *Japonisumu: Genso no Nippon* (*Japonisme: Représentations et imaginaires des Européens*) (Tokyo: Brücke, 1997), 91.

15. Ibid., 100–101.

16. For more detailed analysis of Lumière films' connection to Japonisme, as well as Japanese reactions to those films, see Daisuke Miyao, "Japonisme and the Birth of Cinema: A Transmedial and Transnational Analysis of the Lumière Brothers' Films," *Journal of Japonisme* 1, no. 1 (February 2016): 66–92.

17. Gabriel Veyre, *Opérateur Lumière: Autour du monde avec le Cinématographe Correspondance (1896–1900)* (Lyon: Institut Lumière/ Actes Sud, 1996), 275–76. English translation by the author.

18. Elias Savada, comp., *The American Film Institute Catalog of Motion Pictures Produced in the United States: Film Beginnings, 1893–1910: A Work in Progress* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow, 1995), 350; Patricia King Hanson and Alan Gevinson, eds., *The American Film Institute Catalog of Motion Pictures Produced in the United States: Feature Films, 1911–1920* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 338.

19. Gregory Waller, "Historicizing, a Test Case: Japan on American Screens, 1909–1915," 11 (unpublished manuscript obtained from Sumiko Higashi).

ADDITIONALITY AND COHESION IN TRANSFICTIONAL WORLDS

by Roberta Pearson

Vast and expansive fictional storyworlds built upon an accumulation of multiple texts have existed for millennia; the Greek gods, the Christian god, Robin Hood, and King Arthur are but a few instantiations of humanity's propensity for the narrative form. For example, the Christian god, Jesus Christ, had his textual origins in the four gospels of the New Testament, but the character almost immediately span out across successive periods' available media, from painting to sculptures to illuminated manuscripts to stained-glass windows and eventually to analog and digital screens. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, interconnected cultural industries such as publishing, newspapers, advertising, and the cinema gave rise to industrially produced storyworlds such as the Wizard of Oz and Tarzan.[1] Beginning in the 1980s, the media and industrial convergence of the cultural industries established expansive storyworlds as a dominant narrative form—from Harry Potter to *Star Wars* to the Marvel Cinematic Universe and beyond.

Narratologists and media studies scholars have addressed the narrative and industrial relationships in some expanded storyworlds.[2] However, little consideration has been given to the specific narrative and industrial factors that determine particular producers' strategies for creating additions that consumers are likely to accept as part of the previously established storyworld.[3] This essay offers some tentative hypotheses concerning producers' strategies for additionality and cohesion in different types of fictional storyworlds, using as its case studies Sherlock Holmes, Batman, and *Star Trek*. But prior to discussing these particular instantiations of the broader narrative form, some definitions followed by a taxonomy.

Rather than continuing to use the term "storyworld," the essay draws upon Marie-Laure Ryan's concept of transfictionality, "the migration of fictional entities across different texts."[4] Transmedia transfictions are a subset of transfictionality, crossing over two or more media. This essay concerns factors that may influence the additionality and cohesion of both single-medium transfictions and multiple-media transfictions, although most contemporary high-profile transfictions are transmedial, as are my three case studies.

Two reasons motivate my use of the term "additionality" rather than "expansion." First, the term "addition" doesn't necessarily imply a narratively meaningful expansion, that is, one that enlarges or reworks a transfiction's previously established settings, events, and characters. Jan-Noël Thon says that "two single works" within a transfiction

> can be defined, first, by a relation of redundancy, when one is aiming to represent the same elements of a storyworld that the other represents; second, by a relation of expansion, when one is aiming to represent the same storyworld that the other represents but adds previously unrepresented elements; and, third, by a relation of modification, when one is aiming to represent elements of the storyworld represented by the other but adds previously unrepresented elements that make it impossible to comprehend what is represented as part of a single, noncontradictory storyworld.[5]

Two adaptations of the same Holmes story add to the transfiction but do not expand it in terms of new events, new settings, or new character details—this is a relationship of redundancy. But additions to the Holmes transfiction may

(and frequently do) include new events, settings, or character details, as, for example, in the Granada television series of the 1980s and 1990s starring Jeremy Brett—this is a relationship of expansion. Additions may also (and frequently do) rework previously established events, settings, and character details, as, for example, in *Sherlock* (BBC, 2010–)—this is a relationship of modification. Additionality refers to all these cases, with expansion a subset of a broader industrial practice.

Second, expansion seems implicitly to imply cohesion, whereas additionality does not; an addition can have fairly minimal points of contact with the previously established transfiction. Referring to newly added texts as additions rather than by another label such as installments avoids implications of narrative continuity. Speaking of iconic characters such as Holmes and Frankenstein, Shane Denson hypothesizes that these figures "exist as the concatenation of instantiations that evolves, not within a homogeneous diegetic space, but *between* or *across* such spaces of narration." Denson continues: "These characters . . . carry traces of their previous incarnations into their new worlds, where the strata of their previous lives accrue in a non-linear, non-diegetic manner."[6]

Denson's traces of previous incarnations are my points of contact, the overlaps with previous texts that identify an addition as part of an established transfiction. Maximum points of contact lead to strong cohesion, while minimal points of contact lead to weak cohesion; the degree of overlap establishes a spectrum between strongly and weakly cohesive transfictions. Ryan's distinction between logical and imaginative storyworlds speaks to the opposite poles of this spectrum.

> If a text rewrites an existing narrative, modifying the plot and ascribing different features or destinies to the characters, it creates a new storyworld that overlaps to some extent with the old one. While a given storyworld can be presented through several different texts, these texts must respect the facts of the original text if they are to share its logical storyworld. In an imaginative conception, by contrast, a storyworld consists of named existents and perhaps of an invariant setting (though the setting can be expanded), but the properties of these existents and their destinies may vary from text to text.[7]

This essay discusses those factors that may result in the construction of logical versus imaginative storyworlds, or, in my terms, the points of contact between an addition and cumulative previous additions.

I propose three different structuring factors, two narrative and one industrial; the first two concern the differences between types of transfictions, and the third involves transfictions' intellectual property status. The consensus among narratologists is that a storyworld consists of settings, events, and characters. In some transfictions, strong or weak cohesion results from the points of contact between additions and previously established settings and events (timeline). These are time/place transfictions, such as *Star Trek*. In other transfictions, strong or weak cohesion arises primarily from points of contact with a previously established character. These are character transfictions such as Batman and Sherlock Holmes.

The definition of events and settings is fairly noncontentious, but narratologists have argued for decades about the definition of character.[8] Let's approach the problem using the Holmes character. Most would agree that character name (Sherlock Holmes or some variant thereof, as in *Sherlock Hound*, the 1980s Japanese animated series) and narrative function (detection) are fundamental elements of a fictional character. In my previous work, I've argued that television characters are composed of a character template composed of six elements; this applies equally well to the transmedial Holmes.[9]

- Psychological traits / habitual behaviors: is intelligent and nonemotional; plays violin; smokes a pipe; takes drugs; has relentless curiosity; is easily bored by lack of action
- Physical traits / appearance: is tall and thin; has an aquiline nose; wears a deerstalker
- Speech patterns and dialogue: "Elementary, my dear Watson" and other characteristic phrases
- Interactions with other characters: Watson; landlady, Mrs. Hudson; police; Moriarty; brother, Mycroft
- Environment: Baker Street, London, in original texts, but setting can vary in additions
- Biography: relatively little in original texts, but additions often fill in the backstory

Some of these elements originated in the Conan Doyle stories, while others originated in additions that have achieved canonical status, becoming widely accepted as defining elements of the character. For example, Conan Doyle's Holmes never wears a deerstalker; Sidney Paget, the illustrator for the *Strand Magazine*, added the iconic headgear. Similarly, Conan Doyle's Holmes never utters the famous phrase "Elementary, my dear Watson"; various

reports attribute these words to actor William Gillette or Basil Rathbone. To use Denson's formulation, the deerstalker and the phrase are the traces of previous incarnations that the Holmes character frequently carries into his new worlds. But the character template is not coterminous with the character; a Holmes character in a single addition cannot manifest all the potential character elements established in the myriad additions to the transfiction. The particular combination of elements manifested by the Holmes character in a new addition results from the producers selecting suitable elements for the intended audience and omitting unsuitable elements. For example, *Sherlock Hound*, intended for a child audience, does not reference the detective's cocaine habit, while *Elementary* (CBS, 2011–), intended for an adult audience, makes drug addiction a central attribute of the character's biography.

The second narrative factor addresses the ontological status of the transfiction: Is it realist or fantastic? Rather than relying on genre theory, I turn to Ryan's concept of possible worlds. Ryan argues that all fictions entail the creation of possible worlds that are linked to the actual world by an "accessibility relation": various similarities/dissimilarities of logical principles, physical laws, material causality, geography or history, populations of natural species, stages of technological development, human inventory, and the like.[10] The Holmes transfiction is a realist one, strongly linked to the actual world, while Batman and *Star Trek* are fantastic transfictions, diverging from the actual world in many respects, including physical laws, geography, and history.

The third factor is an industrial one, the transfictions' intellectual property status. The ownership of copyright and trademark enables the proprietors, either individuals or corporations, to augment transfictions with legally authorized additions, to license other individuals or corporations to produce legally authorized additions, and to prohibit individuals or corporations from producing unauthorized additions. These are proprietorial transfictions, such as *Star Trek* and Batman. Other transfictions have no one central holder of the intellectual property; these are nonproprietorial or public domain transfictions, such as Sherlock Holmes. As of 2015, Arthur Conan Doyle's texts have almost all entered into the public domain (with the exception of a few of the later stories in the United States under copyright until 2023), although Conan Doyle's descendants made no concerted attempt to police the nature of additions even when they owned the IP to all the author's Holmes texts.[11] Producers of additions such as the BBC's *Sherlock* own the copyright and trademark for the new text and, like any other holders of intellectual property, can themselves produce new additions to and both authorize and prohibit new additions by other parties.

And now for the promised taxonomy. The two narrative factors, time/place versus character and realist versus fantastic, together with the industrial factor, proprietorial versus public domain, produce eight types of transfictions set out in the table below.

The rest of this essay uses the three case studies of *Star Trek*, Batman, and Sherlock Holmes to consider producers' strategies for additionality and cohesion in different types of transfictions. First it compares a time/place transfiction (*Star Trek*) to character transfictions (Holmes and Batman). It then compares a realist character transfiction (Holmes) to a fantastic character transfiction (Batman). It concludes by comparing proprietorial transfictions (*Star Trek*, Batman) to a public domain transfiction (Holmes), although given the

TABLE 1.

Transfiction type	Example
Proprietary realist time/place	*The Sopranos*, *Downton Abbey*, etc.
Public domain realist time/place	Austen, Dickens
Proprietary fantastic time/place	*Star Trek*
Public domain fantastic time/place	Greek mythology
Proprietary realist character	James Bond
Public domain realist character	Sherlock Holmes
Proprietary fantastic character	Batman
Public domain fantastic character	Frankenstein

character's vexed and complicated copyright status, it's more accurate to call the Holmes transfiction a semiproprietorial transfiction that has for several decades operated like a public domain transfiction. Some tentative hypotheses arise from these comparisons that may be more broadly applicable to similar types of transfictions.

Time/Place Transfictions versus Character Transfictions

Producers of time/place transfictions create additions through two primary strategies: extending the timeline and establishing new settings. At the time of writing, CBS is producing a new *Star Trek* series that will be distributed via its on-demand service, CBS All Access, in 2017. CBS has divulged very little information concerning this series, except for stating that it will take place in the twenty-third century, sitting in the transfiction's timeline after the events of the original series and before the events of *The Next Generation*, sometime around the events of the sixth *Star Trek* feature film, *The Undiscovered Country* (Nicholas Meyer, 1991). CBS has as yet given no indication as to the new series' setting, but previous *Star Trek* producers have traditionally augmented the transfiction with new settings. The three shows occurring in the twenty-fourth century, *The Next Generation*, *Deep Space Nine,* and *Voyager*, were set, respectively, on a starship in the Alpha Quadrant of the Milky Way galaxy, on a space station in the far reaches of the Alpha Quadrant near a wormhole to the Gamma Quadrant, and on a starship in the Delta Quadrant.

Producers of character transfictions also extend timelines and create new settings. Sherlock Holmes and Batman can be teenagers, as in *Young Sherlock Holmes* (Barry Levinson, 1985) and *Gotham* (Fox Broadcasting, 2014–), or old, as in *Mr. Holmes* (Bill Condon, 2015) and Frank Miller's graphic novel *The Dark Knight Returns* (DC Comics, 1986). Producers can also move the characters to new settings: *Sherlock* updates the character to twenty-first-century London and *Elementary* to twenty-first-century New York City. DC relocated Batman to nineteenth-century Gotham in *Gotham by Gaslight* (1989), the first of its Elsewhere series. But producers of character transfictions can also employ a strategy not so readily available to producers of time/place transfictions: new embodiments of a character. In the rebooted *Star Trek* film series, Chris Pine plays James T. Kirk, but the actor channels William Shatner, the first Captain Kirk, both in appearance and in acting style and will most likely continue to play the role throughout the run of the series. As I was writing this essay, the sad death of Anton Yelchin, Pavel Chekov in the new *Star Trek* films, was announced. Should the film series continue, the producers will face the difficult decision of either providing a narrative explanation for the character's absence or embodying the character in a new actor. Character transfictions generally do not establish such a strong equivalence between actor and character as to cause such dilemmas. Wikipedia's undoubtedly incomplete list of the actors who have played Sherlock Holmes in film, television, and radio and on the stage runs to over ninety entries, while five actors have portrayed the Dark Knight in the Warner Bros. films alone.[12] While new Holmes or Batman embodiers may have based elements of their performance on previous embodiers of the Great Detective or the Dark Knight, they do not have to strongly resemble previous embodiers in appearance and acting style.[13]

Hypotheses:

1. Cohesion in time/place transfictions arises primarily from points of contact between additions and the transfiction's previous events (timeline) and settings. *Star Trek* additions take place in the timeline established by the television series and feature films and must have a family resemblance to previous settings in terms of physical laws, institutions, aliens, history, technology, and design.[14] But cohesion does not arise primarily from the characters—an addition does not require the presence of Captain Kirk, Captain Picard, Mr. Spock, or any other character as a point of contact with the transfiction.
2. Cohesion in character transfictions arises primarily from points of contact between the character in the addition and the character name, narrative function, and template established by the transfiction.

Realist Character Transfictions versus Fantastic Character Transfictions

Are there differences between realist and fantastic character transfictions' strategies for additionality and cohesion? As noted above, both the Holmes and Batman transfictions move the character to new settings, but Holmes additions seem to require fewer points of contact with the established character template than Batman additions. It's telling that texts that expand the timeline or create new settings for

the Dark Knight, such as the television series *Gotham* and the comic *Gotham by Gaslight*, point to the established transfiction through the fictional city's name—Batman and Gotham are coterminous. As the villainous Riddler put it, "When is a man a city? When it's Batman or when it's Gotham. I'd take either answer. Batman is this city."[15] Holmes has strong associations with London but is not coterminous with it; a Holmes addition requires neither Baker Street nor London as a point of contact with the character. In *Elementary*, Holmes relocates from London to New York City but continues to perform his narrative function of detection. By contrast, the Dark Knight could not perform his narrative function of crime fighting in *Elementary*'s realist metropolis where only the deluded pursue careers as masked vigilantes (see "You've Got Me, Who's Got You?," 4:17). Holmes, however, can perform his narrative function not only outside of London but even in a fantastic world, as he does in the graphic novel series *Victorian Undead* or in the animated television series *Sherlock Holmes in the 22nd Century* (Scottish Television, 1999–2001).

Hypotheses:

1. Specific environments may constitute a more essential element of the character template for fantastic characters than for realist characters.
2. Realist characters can function in fantastic worlds, but fantastic characters can't function in realist worlds.
3. As a result, realist character transfictions have more strategies available for additionality and cohesion than fantastic character transfictions.

Proprietorial Transfictions versus Public Domain Transfictions

Do additionality and cohesion strategies differ between proprietorial and public domain transfictions? In both cases, producers of additions can use paratexts to signal alignment with the transfiction, one strategy being the paratextual invocation of the author function. However, it should be noted that the creator/author is not necessarily the holder of the transfiction's intellectual property. During his lifetime, Conan Doyle held undisputed rights to the Holmes character, which then descended to his heirs upon his death. By contrast, National Allied Comics, the precursor of DC Comics, held the IP for Batman, not the original writer, Bob Kane, nor the original illustrator, Bill Finger, while Gene Roddenberry sold the rights to *Star Trek* at a difficult moment in his career. In keeping with cultural propensities to valorize individual authorship, both proprietorial and public domain transfictions invoke revered original author/creators, not the current producers or intellectual property holders, to achieve cohesion.

Additions to the *Star Trek* and Batman transfictions, respectively, include the credit lines created by Gene Roddenberry and created by Bob Kane, and, as of 2015, the latter also credit Kane's cocreator, Finger.[16] Promotional paratexts such as interviews with producers, directors, and stars also invoke the author function. Leora Hadas has demonstrated that Paramount's promotion for the first Abrams *Star Trek* film (2009) aimed paratexts mentioning Gene Roddenberry at *Star Trek* fans, presumably more alert to indices of cohesion than the broader audience.[17] The Roddenberry name holds such value that Gene's son, Rod, serves as executive producer on the new CBS series; the motivation for adding another Roddenberry to the credits probably stems from a desire to appeal to the core fan base of Trekkers. Screen additions to the Holmes transfiction frequently include the credit "based upon characters created by Arthur Conan Doyle," although promotional paratexts do not consistently mention Sir Arthur. For example, Steven Moffatt, *Sherlock*'s showrunner, constantly refers to Conan Doyle's importance and influence, whereas Guy Ritchie, director of the Warner Bros. Holmes films, and Robert Doherty, *Elementary*'s showrunner, speak of the author far less frequently. Proprietary transfictions may be more inclined to invoke the author function than are public domain transfictions. Proprietorial transfictions such as *Star Trek* and Batman have a direct line of descent through intellectual property from the original author(s) (whether or not they originally owned the IP) to the current producers; producers may invoke the author function to implicitly signal the construction of a logical storyworld with multiple points of contact with the established transfiction, thus appealing to the established fan base. By contrast, producers of public domain transfictions may elide the author function to implicitly signal the construction of an imaginary storyworld with relatively few points of contact with the established transfiction, thus appealing to new audiences.

Proprietorial transfictions also employ promotional paratexts to define the precise narrative relationships between new additions to a transfiction originating from different

producers simultaneously exploiting the same intellectual property. Fox Broadcasting has specified that *Gotham*, which it produces under license from Time-Warner, will not impinge upon the narrative continuity of the Warner Bros. Batman films. Kevin Reilly, former chairman of entertainment for the Fox Broadcasting Company, said, "Warner Brothers manages the entire franchise and its [*sic*] one of their top global franchises of all. So there will be an awareness of both and we'll have to coordinate when we're in the market place, but the productions are not piggy-backing off one another."[18] Similarly, CBS, which owns the rights to *Star Trek* television, must coordinate with Paramount, which owns the rights to *Star Trek* films. CBS president Les Moonves announced that the new *Star Trek* television series would not appear until six months after the release of the Paramount film *Star Trek Beyond*. Said Moonves, "Our deal with [Paramount] is that we had to wait six months after their film is launched so there wouldn't be a confusion in the marketplace."[19] Producers of public domain transfictions, or even the semiproprietary-but-acts-like-a-public-domain Holmes transfiction, don't need to engage in such paratextual coordination. Both the *Elementary* and *Sherlock* producers received permission from the Conan Doyle Estate to make their programs, but CBS has no need to specify its program's relationship to the BBC's program, despite the two companies' simultaneous exploitation of the same intellectual property. The Holmes transfiction as a whole lacks the industrial convergence and mutual licensing agreements that underpin most contemporary transmedia transfictions—hence its greater resemblance to a public domain transfiction than a proprietorial one.

Finally, what of textual strategies for additionality and cohesion? Producers of proprietorial time/place transfictions who own the rights to all previous texts can weave additions together through dense intertextual webs linking back to the transfiction's established history. The *Star Trek* transfiction has, for example, used character cross-overs to launch new additions (the original series Doctor McCoy appeared in the first episode of *The Next Generation*) or to celebrate anniversaries (original series characters appeared in episodes of both *Deep Space Nine* and *Voyager* in 1996 to mark the franchise's thirtieth year). But such flashy narrative machinations are usually reserved for special occasions, the intertextual family resemblance between events and settings otherwise sufficing.

By contrast, producers of additions to the Holmes transfiction must rely upon the character as the primary connective tissue. The thousands of additions to the Holmes transfiction that have accumulated since the 1890s have all incorporated character name, narrative function, and minimal elements from the character template to persuade consumers that their story was about Sherlock Holmes. As stated above, each producer selects those elements from the template most appropriate to the intended audience. The Sherlock Holmes character thus manifests extreme divergence: he can be young or old, white or black (as in New Paradigm's comic *Watson & Holmes*); he can live in London or New York or during the nineteenth, twenty-first, or twenty-second century; and he can even be transformed from human to canine, as in *Sherlock Hound*. But the addition must quickly establish connections to the established transfiction through character name, narrative function, habitual behaviors, appearance, speech, and, sometimes, interactions with other characters and environment.

Hypotheses:

1. Proprietary transfictions avail themselves of paratextual strategies for additionality and cohesion to a greater extent than public domain transfictions.
2. Public domain character transfictions exhibit greater reliance upon textual manifestations of cohesion.

Conclusion

This essay has concerned additionality and cohesion in transfictions, arguing that cohesion depends upon points of contact between the addition and the transfiction. However, it has also argued that there is a spectrum between strongly and weakly cohesive transfictions. In concluding, I want to make clear that strong cohesion (maximum points of contact) is not necessarily "better" than weak cohesion (minimal points of contact)—both strategies can attract audiences in an interplay of familiarity and differentiation. Maximum cohesiveness has its uses and pleasures, but so does minimal cohesiveness; producers must assess their audience to determine the most successful strategy. For example, the Basil Rathbone and Benedict Cumberbatch Holmes embodiments have a complicated relationship with the canonical deerstalker, which frequently serves as a primary signifier of the character. Rathbone reaches for it in *The Voice of Terror* (John Rawlins, 1941), only to have

Watson (Nigel Bruce) remind him of his promise not to wear it. Cumberbatch rejects the proffered headgear in "The Reichenbach Fall" (2:3). In both cases, the absent deerstalker indicates the relocation of the character to new settings in the 1940s and the 2010s, the producers quickly differentiating their texts from the original texts and the many additions to the transfiction. Both *Elementary* and *Sherlock* establish a relationship of modification to the original texts and the many additions to the transfiction by updating the character to the present. Audience pleasure derives from seeing the character function in this new setting, although *Sherlock* includes many modified points of contact with the original character template, for example, by having him contemplate a three-patch (nicotine) problem rather than a three-pipe problem. *Elementary* audiences derive pleasure from the gender modification that turns John Watson into Joan Watson. Long-lasting and ubiquitous transfictions may benefit as much from weak cohesion as from strong cohesion, purposively omitting or modifying events, settings, and characters as they seek to retain old audiences and attract new ones.

And finally, a call for further research. This essay has used the three case studies of Sherlock Holmes, Batman, and *Star Trek* to offer some tentative hypotheses concerning additionality and cohesion in transfictions. The case studies were selected partly to represent three types of transfictions from my eight-type taxonomy, but they were primarily selected because they are the transfictions I know best both as fan and as scholar. Decades old, or even centuries old, transfictions comprised of hundreds or even thousands of accumulated additions pose a methodological challenge; analysis requires detailed familiarity, which can only be individually acquired for a limited number of transfictions. Hence the tentative nature of the hypotheses, which must be confirmed or disproved by collaborative research among scholars well versed in multiple and different transfictions.

About the Author

ROBERTA PEARSON is a professor of film and television studies at the University of Nottingham. Her most recent publications are *Many More Lives of the Batman* (BFI, 2015), coedited with William Uricchio and Will Brooker; *Storytelling in the Media Convergence Age: Exploring Screen Narratives* (Palgrave-Macmillan, 2015), coedited with Anthony N. Smith; and *Star Trek and American Television* (University of California Press, 2014), coauthored with Máire Messenger Davies.

Notes

My thanks to Leora Hadas, Jason Mittell, Anthony N. Smith, and Jan-Noël Thon for their helpful contributions to this essay. The usual disclaimer about my retaining sole responsibility for its deficiencies applies.

1. See Matthew Freeman, *Historicising Transmedia Storytelling: Early Twentieth-Century Transmedia Story Worlds* (London: Routledge, 2017).

2. See Paolo Bertetti, "Towards a Typology of Transmedia Characters," *International Journal of Communication* 8 (2014): 1–20; Shane Denson, "Marvel Comics' Frankenstein: A Case Study in the Media of Serial Figures," *Amerikastudien / American Studies* 56, no. 4 (Winter 2011): 531–53; Lubomír Doležel, *Heterocosmica: Fiction and Possible Worlds* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999); Henry Jenkins, *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide* (New York: New York University Press, 2006); Marie-Laure Ryan, "Transmedial Storytelling and Transfictionality," *Poetics Today* 34, no. 3 (Fall 2013): 361–88; Carlos Alberto Solari, "Transmedia Storytelling: Implicit Consumers, Narrative Worlds, and Branding in Contemporary Media Production," *International Journal of Communication* 3 (2009): 586–606; Jan-Noël Thon, "Converging Worlds: From Transmedial Storyworlds to Transmedial Universes," *Storyworlds: A Journal of Narrative Studies* 7, no. 2 (Winter 2015): 21–53.

3. But see Colin B. Harvey, "A Taxonomy of Transmedia Storytelling," in *Storyworlds across Media: Toward a Media-Conscious Narratology*, ed. Marie-Laure Ryan and Jan-Noël Thon (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2014), 219–28.

4. Ryan, "Transmedial Storytelling," 383.

5. Thon, "Converging Worlds," 33.

6. Denson, "Marvel Comics' Frankenstein," 536, 537.

7. Marie-Laure Ryan and Jan-Noël Thon, introduction to Ryan and Thon, *Storyworlds across Media*, 5.

8. See Seymour Chatman, *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1978); Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics* (London: Methuen, 1983); Mieke Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997); Jens Eder, Fotis Jannidis, and Ralf Schneider, eds., *Characters in Fictional Worlds: Understanding Imaginary Beings in Literature, Film and Other Media* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011).

9. For more on the character template, see Roberta Pearson, "Chain of Events: *Lost*'s Unique Construction of the Televisual Character," in *Reading "Lost,"* ed. Roberta Pearson (London: I. B.

Tauris, 2009), 139–58; Pearson, "Anatomising Gilbert Grissom: The Structure and Function of the Televisual Character," in *Focus on "CSI,"* ed. Michael Allen (London: I. B. Tauris, 2007), 39–56; Pearson and Máire Messenger Davies, *Star Trek and American Television* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014).

10. Marie-Laure Ryan, "Possible-Worlds Theory," in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*, ed. David Herman, Manfred Jahn, and Marie-Laure Ryan (London: Routledge, 2005), 446.

11. For an explanation of the Holmes character's intellectual property history, see Roberta Pearson, "Sherlock Holmes, a De Facto Franchise?," in *Popular Media Cultures: Fans, Audiences and Paratexts*, ed. Lincoln Geraghty (London: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2015), 186–205.

12. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_actors_who_have_played_Sherlock_Holmes.

13. Proposed and actual reimbodiments have recently generated controversy in fan communities and the media. Will audiences accept a black James Bond, Captain America, or Hermione Granger as having sufficient minimal points of contact with previous embodiments? This raises issues well beyond the scope of this essay.

14. Although fans are wondering whether the new CBS series will take place in the "prime universe" of the five television series and the first ten feature films or in the "Abrams universe" that resulted from the 2009 film's reconfiguration of the original series' and original series' feature films' timeline. See Michael Hinman, "Trek's Prime Universe 'Closed for Business'?," http://1701news.com/node/1209/treks-prime-universe-closed-business.html.

15. Neil Gaiman, "When Is a Door: The Secret Origin of the Riddler," *Secret Origins Special #1* (1989): n.p. For more on the connection between Batman and Gotham, see William Uricchio, "The Batman's Gotham City™: Story, Ideology, Performance," in *Comics and the City: Urban Space in Print, Picture and Sequence*, ed. Jörn Ahrens and Arno Meteling (London: Bloomsbury, 2010), 119–32. For more on Batman generally, see Roberta Pearson, William Uricchio, and Will Brooker, eds., *Many More Lives of the Batman* (London: BFI, 2015).

16. Graeme McMillan, "DC Entertainment to Give Classic Batman Writer Credit in 'Gotham' and 'Batman v Superman,'" *Hollywood Reporter*, 18 September 2015, http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/heat-vision/dc-entertainment-give-classic-batman-824572.

17. Danny Mac, "Fox's Gotham Is NOT Connected to the Warner Brothers DC Cinematic Universe," *Comic Book Movie*, 13 January 2014, http://www.comicbookmovie.com/fansites/DannyMac/news/?a=92884.

18. Nick Cannata-Bowman, "*Star Trek*: Everything We Know about the New TV Series," TV CheatSheet, 30 May 2016, http://www.cheatsheet.com/entertainment/star-trek-everything-we-know-about-the-new-tv-series.html/4/.

19. Leora Hadas, "A New Vision: J. J. Abrams, *Star Trek* and Promotional Authorship," *Cinema Journal* 56, no. 2 (forthcoming).

THICKENING SERIALITY: A CHRONOTOPIC VIEW OF WORLD BUILDING IN CONTEMPORARY TELEVISION NARRATIVE

by Babette B. Tischleder

"We will give the name *chronotope* (literally 'time space') to the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature," writes Mikhail Bakhtin in his essay on the chronotope, adding that the relevance of this "formally constitutive category" lies in the "inseparability of space and time."[1] In this essay, I argue for the usefulness of Bakhtin's concept of the chronotope for understanding the dynamics of serial storytelling in terms of both narrative production and reception. The modes of storytelling in contemporary television have the power of evoking imaginative worlds that extend beyond the diegesis in a narrow sense. Bakhtin's concept allows us to redefine serial narration by shifting attention away from the dominant focus on temporality to the modes in which space and time intersect in serial practices of world building, often across multiple media. In discussions of serial storytelling, the temporal dimension is usually foregrounded, particularly regarding questions of complexity. Rather than evolving in linear fashion, I argue, narrative time gradually builds up, extends, and "thickens," especially if it interweaves a number of parallel plotlines. Hence the spatiotemporal dimensions of a serial world are flexible, open, and constantly actualized in the narrative process. Rather than constituting a mere backdrop for action, a serial chronotope represents the spatiotemporal coordinates that shape and are shaped by the imagination of producers and audiences alike.

I will turn to the first season of *Orange Is the New Black* in order to illustrate how a serial universe gradually develops in a chronotopic fashion. *Orange*, created by Jenji Kohan, premiered in July 2013 and is Netflix's most watched original series; its fourth season was released in one "drop" in June 2016, and the series was renewed for three more seasons (5–7) to be produced over the next years.[2] The show revolves around the federal women's prison of Litchfield, New York, from which the diegetic universe expands. As is common in long-format series, the storytelling of single episodes progresses both forward and backward in time and interweaves several alternating plot lines. The pilot introduces the viewer to the world of the prison on the day that the show's central character, Piper Chapman, checks into Litchfield. Blonde,

educated, upper middle class, and with a girl-next-door appeal, she is an unlikely inmate, thrown into a world utterly alien to her at first. The main plotline (A) develops from this moment and place and is intertwined with a number of flashbacks—scenes from Piper's previous life. The A plot forms the narrative backbone, providing orientation by presenting Piper's initiation into the unknown world of the prison: we witness her first encounter with fellow inmates and her struggle to understand the prison's social codes, racial dynamics, ethnic and religious alliances, and many unwritten, yet all the more rigidly "enforced," rules. The A plot alternates with the beats of the B plot, which is rather scattered at first, not yet adding up to a coherent storyline: some beats are set years back in time, others relate events that occurred just a few days or weeks earlier. While in the pilot these analepses are restricted to Piper's preprison life, each of the following episodes features a different inmate's backstory, thus adding a new storyline with every installment. Each one opens a window onto the microcosm of individual characters and the circumstances that led up to their incarceration. Together, they expand the serial cosmos temporally and spatially beyond the "walls" of the prison to convey a much larger, diversified social world.

This brief account of the series' first season illustrates the argument I will now present in more conceptual terms. Theorizing ongoing storytelling in terms of the chronotopes that both producers and audiences engage in allows us to grasp the complex interactions and distributed agency of the larger casts of characters that come to define a show's social world centered on a particular institution, group, or class of people. Even when television shows have explicit protagonists, like *Orange*'s Piper, Maura Pfefferman in *Transparent* (Amazon, 2014–), and Annalise Keating in *How to Get Away with Murder* (ABC, 2014–), they don't just follow these characters' trajectories but present them acting and reacting within greater social ensembles and locales. In most series, a particular setting or institution forms a show's center of gravity, structuring the world it engenders—the 1960s advertising world of *Mad Men* (AMC, 2007–15); New Jersey's "Sopranoland" (*The Sopranos*, HBO, 1999–2007); the Texas small town in *Friday Night Lights* (NBC, 2006–11); Baltimore's streets, police, port, and other municipal institutions in *The Wire* (HBO, 2002–8). The funeral home in *Six Feet Under* (HBO, 2001–5) "assembles" (in serial fashion) the dead and bereaved, their life stories and rituals of mourning, inviting us to imagine Los Angeles's cultural diversity as an increasingly colorful social mosaic.

Both the funeral home in *Six Feet Under* and the penitentiary in *Orange* can be read as heterotopic spaces that exist alongside and are reflective of society at large. In both series, this is rendered explicit by the episodic analepses that link the present life in prison and the practices of mourning in the funeral home to the previous life worlds of single inmates or the deceased. These shows thus demonstrate how serial narration, by weaving individual pasts into a collective present, explores the intricate ways in which heterotopic spaces resonate with the larger social world: time is fleshed out as the serial world expands spatially. The procedural, more generally, is a long-established serial format in which a hospital (*St. Elsewhere* [NBC, 1982–88], *Grey's Anatomy* [ABC, 2005–], *ER* [NBC, 1994–2009], *Nurse Jackie* [Showtime, 2009–15]), a police station (*Hill Street Blues* [NBC, 1981–87], *CSI* [CBS, 2000–2015], *NYPD Blue* [ABC, 1993–2005]), or a law firm (*Law & Order* [NBC, 1990–2010], *Ally McBeal* [Fox, 1997–2002], *Better Call Saul* [AMC, 2015–]) evokes the social stratum of a city through "random" cases of the week. Even shows that feature ongoing storylines that carry over several episodes or seasons center on particular locales or agencies (*House of Cards* [Netflix, 2013–], *Homeland* [Showtime, 2011–], and *The Good Wife* [CBS, 2009–16] are cases in point). *The Wire*'s Baltimore evolves as an urban chronotope by virtue of a spatial dramaturgy that focuses on a particular institution or social network in each of its five seasons; it is quite apparent that the city rather than any individual character is the show's true "protagonist."

Yet why is the chronotope a particularly apt concept for understanding *serial* narration? For one, the chronotope offers conceptualizing storytelling as a form of world building that concerns the creation, reception, *and* marketing of a series. *Chronotope* refers to the spatiotemporal nexus of a narrative world that is built and remade imaginatively over time. A chronotopic approach takes into account how a serial world is associated with particular perceptive modes and historical structures of feeling. It is interested in the ways in which fictional chronotopes are informed by, extended toward, and imbricated with the *Lebenswelt* (life world) of audiences.

Seen through a chronotopic lens, fictional worlds become visible as the effect of serial practices that constantly develop, layer, and reconstitute fictional space-time. The

spatiotemporal formation of a serial world is both the result of narrative operations and the principle that guides the expectations, imagination, and memory of those worlds. Serial chronotopes represent a flexible, yet constitutive, architecture of the mind that is perpetually updated, modified, and extended through narrative repetition and variation. The chronotopic approach thus offers a perspective on the temporal materialization of space and the spatialization of time as the two interrelated principles of serial narration.

World Building, Complexity, and Audience Engagement

The critical attention paid to television storytelling in recent years has frequently featured "quality" shows and primetime serials by accentuating their cinematic style, novelistic scope, critical potential, complex character development, self-reflexivity, and epic or poetic form. These approaches express an effort to redefine television in terms of a medium-specific *poetics* and to honor serial storytelling for its creative achievements by aligning it with more established art forms.[3] These approaches are most insightful when they relate narrative strategies to serial form, drawing parallels between television and other media, such as the cinema, the sonnet, or the social novel ("Dickensian television"). Yet they can hardly capture what I consider a crucial aspect of serial television's specific affordances: its particular chronotopic capacities.[4] The critical concern of this essay, then, is to reflect how the vast narrative scope of television series affords the creation of complex serial worlds—a form of imaginative world building best described in terms of its reception and audience investment.

Complexity in this context is indeed linked to *quantity*: a significant feature of vast narratives is the temporal dimension that allows for a number of parallel storylines that develop in different directions and intersect in multiple ways. In his much-cited 2006 essay, "Narrative Complexity in Contemporary American Television," Jason Mittell identifies a number of features that are central for his notion of complex storytelling and rely on an ongoing serial structure.[5] Borrowing Neil Harris's phrase, Mittell speaks of the "operational aesthetic"—the pleasure audiences derive from seeing how intricate storytelling techniques are made to work. Viewers enjoy not only immersing themselves in the storyworld "but also [getting] to watch the gears at work, marveling at the craft required to pull off such narrative pyrotechnics."[6] What Mittell calls "narrative special effects," then, are unexpected turns and twists of the plot that draw attention to the workings of storytelling itself. While he considers these moments of "operational reflexivity" as manipulations of narrative *time*, storyworlds are seldom reflected in their own right, and, if so, they are seen mainly as a setting for human action.[7] In my view, however, complexity pertains not simply to the mechanics of how "narrative information" is released in elaborate temporal arrangements; it also manifests itself in the extended narrative scope, intricacy, and open-endedness of the worlds that producers and viewers build over time.[8] With their specific affordances and constraints, serial chronotopes form a complex imaginary horizon—"a complicated world," as Glen Greeber calls it.[9] Rather than offering a stable frame for temporal narrative operations, they are dynamic formations that are made and remade over time.

What is more, attention to narrative twists and surprises easily misses the effect of the familiar: not just episodic but also continuity-oriented series hinge on *repetition* and *habituation* and combine new plot developments with recurring elements. The diverse settings of a series are usually established early on and are revisited from episode to episode, producing a growing familiarity with places and characters over time. *Orange* shall once again serve as a case in point: like Piper, the viewers gradually become acquainted with the various spaces of the prison and the power relations, occupational practices, behavioral codes, and routines associated with them: the kitchen and cafeteria, the dorms with bunks in the cell blocks A–C (dubbed "the Suburbs," "the Ghetto," and "Spanish Harlem"), the yard, the visiting room, the hall with the pay phone, the electrical shop, the chapel, the hair salon, the library, the TV and recreation rooms, the laundry facility, the offices of the correctional officers, the shower and toilet stalls, and the notorious SHU (Security Housing Unit). These locales are part of a highly restrictive prison architecture that severely limits the possibilities of "doing time," but each one comes with its own constraints and affordances—correctional directives, unwritten laws, divided "responsibilities," and the perpetual power struggles over each inmate's (and officer's) place, rank, and affiliations within this compulsory community.

Orange's diverse locations also exemplify how redundancy informs ongoing serial production and reception, not only the way recurring characters are tied to recurring settings but

also how settings and characters mutually constitute each other. That is also true for frequent stylistic elements on both a diegetic and an extradiegetic plane. Camera angles, framing, lighting, sets, and sound: all contribute to the habituation of audiences to a fictional world by reproducing familiar spaces through familiar aesthetics. The serial dynamics of repetition, accumulation, and variation create a continuous yet flexible storyworld. Horace Newcomb's concept of "cumulative" narration implies forms of condensation and serial layering, where the effect of time is registered spatially.[10]

Jeffrey Sconce has argued early on that world building is a crucial element of long-term storytelling and of the way television series engage their audiences by leaving much room for imaginative investment and narrative conjecture. In his 2004 essay, "What If: Charting Television's New Textual Boundaries," he departs from the observation that "US television has devoted increased attention . . . to crafting and maintaining ever more complex narrative universes, a form of 'world building' that has allowed for wholly new modes of narration and that suggests new forms of audience engagement. Television, it might be said, has discovered that the cultivation of its story worlds . . . is as crucial an element in its success as is storytelling. What television lacks in spectacle and narrative constraints, it makes up for in depth and duration of character relations, diegetic expansion, and audience investment."[11] Serial narratives are not remembered in the linear fashion in which they are rendered (no matter how intricate that rendering is), but they build up to form the space-time of an imagined world. Temporal continuity condenses into depth and spatial expansion, and the duration of watching a show over many episodes and seasons fosters a sense of intimacy with fictional characters that relies on a growing familiarity with the world and specific situations rather than on spontaneous sympathies or identification. As Newcomb already pointed out in 1974, *continuity* and *intimacy* are television's specific strengths—particularly the duration and care with which serials are able to develop characters and engage viewers emotionally.[12]

A relevant distinction between serial television and feature films concerns their narrative structure. Sconce observes that contemporary series are shifting their attention away from the linear mechanics of plot to a nonlinear serial architecture. It's not the goals or actions of characters that propel the story forward (a noted feature of classic Hollywood style); instead, serial narratives evolve slowly by alternating between different storylines that interact in multiple ways and develop in different directions. Our growing familiarity with the increasingly complex configuration of people and spaces creates an "alternative reality" not unlike our lived reality, a parallel world that "viewers gradually feel they inhabit along with the characters."[13] Familiarity with a serial universe goes beyond the cognitive reception of information in terms of accumulating "narrative capital." More relevant for understanding how viewers inhabit a serial universe is the nature of their affective involvement. The sense of intimacy with characters and spaces depends to no small degree on the frequency of spending time with, or in, a serial world. "Interpreters do not merely reconstruct a sequence of events," writes David Herman about storyworlds, "but imaginatively (emotionally, viscerally) inhabit a world in which things matter, agitate, exalt, repulse, provide grounds for laughter and grief, and so on."[14] Immersion, the affective-imaginative involvement in a fictional world, increases with the duration of viewers' imaginary investment.

A fictional world can never be grasped as a whole or at rest but needs to be actualized—mentally "synced"—on the basis of recurring, varying, and novel elements. Serial worlds are perceived as variable yet always within coherent spatiotemporal coordinates—coordinates that organize the relationship of single episodes or beats to an imagined whole. Tudor Oltean speaks of a "narrative operating system" and the "macro constraints" that govern the interplay of serial elements for the production and reception of diegetic worlds.[15] However, a narrative world does not have clear-cut spatiotemporal limits; rather, we need to take into account their *provisional* nature and *permeability*, as Sarah Kozloff emphasizes.[16]

Hence I suggest conceptualizing complexity in terms of vertical narrative options rather than linear progression. Television series are not defined by syntagmatic determinism but rather by "paradigmatic complexity," as both Robert Allen and Tudor Oltean argue.[17] Accordingly, it is not the syntagmatic progression of events but the paradigmatic unfolding of the narrative world that calls for a viewer's active immersion.[18] The alternation between parallel narrative strands in the form of short beats slows down the forward movement of the plot and produces an effect of density and lifelikeness. Narrative complexity thus derives from the repercussions between ongoing, connected, and loosely related plots that evoke the whole of a serial world as a provisional horizon—a

paradigmatic playground for many possible interactions. Considering this processual nature of narrative practice, world building is the effect of such recursive interactions. This also concerns the mnemotechnical processing of serial storytelling: what is presented in sequence is not "stored" in a linear fashion but "processed" in a mode of serial worlding.

In order to conclude, I return to Bakhtin once again. His notion of the chronotope helps us reflect the simultaneously dense and open architecture and complex dynamics of serial world building as both creative and receptive practices. Moreover, the chronotope is not merely a fictional but also a historical concept: "Out of the actual chronotopes of our world . . . emerge the reflected and *created* chronotopes of the world represented in the work."[19] Without elaborating how Bakhtin perceives the association of actual and created chronotopes, I want to still point out the concept's productivity for comprehending how the spatiotemporal orders and narrative forms of fiction (whether television or literature) coexist and are interwoven with historical modes of showing and telling. Fictional chronotopes and historical worldviews can be seen to coemerge, intersect, and inform each other, a relationality Bakhtin defines as essentially dialogic.

The scope of this essay permits only a concise account of the chronotope's fecundity as a critical concept and analytical tool, which I will explore in greater detail with regard to specific chronotopes.[20] Generally, it offers a conceptual frame for shedding light on the cultural work of serial forms: ongoing narratives engage viewers through intricate forms of storytelling that create familiarity through redundancy and stylistic routines and thus produce normalizing effects. Slowly but surely, they enable viewers to inhabit the most unlikely and unlikeable places—a prison, a funeral home, a hospital, or the kitchens, bedrooms, and bathrooms of characters who turn from strangers to quasi acquaintances.[21] Serial familiarity, then, is produced through frequency and permits a chronotopic immersion in the places and predicaments characters find themselves in. We don't have to like Tony Soprano in order to realize the stress he is under trying to juggle his various "families." We don't have to identify with anyone of Litchfield's inmates in order to empathize with their efforts to make themselves "at home" in this inhospitable environment. Conjoining the familiarity of serial worlds with the multiple options and uncertainties they hold in store for characters and viewers alike, serial storytelling, in its open-ended form, reflects the routines, ambiguities, and unknown futures of our life worlds. Bakhtin's words best illustrate the chronotope's ability to provide a thick description of serial world building: "Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history."[22]

About the Author

BABETTE B. TISCHLEDER is a professor of North American studies and media studies at the University of Goettingen, Germany. Her book *The Literary Life of Things: Case Studies in American Fiction* (2014) offers a critical materialist approach and engages with a range of texts, from Harriet Beecher Stowe to Jonathan Franzen, disclosing our affective, aesthetic, and ethical entanglements with the object world. Recent publications include *Cultures of Obsolescence: History, Materiality, and the Digital Age*, edited with Sarah Wasserman (Palgrave, 2015), and "Earth According to Pixar: Picturing Obsolescence in the Age of Digital (Re)Animation," in *America after Nature: Democracy, Culture, Environment*, ed. Catrin Gersdorf (2016). Currently she is collaborating with Jeffrey Sconce on a book project entitled *Serial Chronotopes* that explores serial forms of world building in specific spatiotemporal settings and across different media.

Notes

1. M. M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, trans. Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 84.

2. Because streaming services such as Netflix and Amazon don't release ratings for their shows, no exact viewing data are available. Yet Netflix reports have betrayed that *Orange* is leading among its original series. In July 2015 "Netflix boasted to shareholders that on the Sunday following the third season release of *Orange Is the New Black*, 'members globally watched a record number of hours in a single day, led by *Orange,* despite the season finale of HBO's *Game of Thrones* and game five of the NBA finals also falling on that Sunday'" (Megan Bungeroth, "Beyond Binge Watching at Netflix," *Sync Magazine*, 18 November 2015, http://sync-magazine.com/2015/netflix). In June 2016 the *Wall Street Journal* reported that according to Nielsen findings, *Orange*'s fourth season "came out of the gate strong between June 17 and June 19. The premiere episode was watched by 6.7 million people in the US, which would be comparable to the second most-viewed cable drama on TV behind HBO's 'Game of Thrones'" (Amol Sharma, "Nielsen Unveils Streaming Ratings for 'Orange Is the New Black,' 'Seinfeld,'" *Wall Street Journal*, 29 June 2016, www.wsj.com).

3. See, for instance, Jason Mittell, *Complex TV: The Poetics of Contemporary Television Storytelling* (New York: NYU Press, 2015);

Michael Z. Newman, "From Beats to Arcs: Toward a Poetics of Television Narrative," *Velvet Light Trap* 58 (2006): 16–28; Jean O'Sullivan, "Broken on Purpose: Poetry, Serial Television, and the Season," *StoryWorlds: A Journal of Narrative Studies* 2, no. 1 (2010): 59–77.

4. See Pat Harrigan and Noah Wardrip-Fruin, eds., *Third Person: Authoring and Exploring Vast Narratives* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009) for a collection that explicitly addresses the relations between narrative extent and its possibilities for fictional worlds across different media (comics, television, video games, and other digital media). David Lavery's "*Lost* and Long-Term Television Narrative" in the same volume also describes television series such as *Lost*, *The Wire*, and *The Sopranos* in terms of their Dickensian and "neo-baroque" character.

5. Jason Mittell, "Narrative Complexity in Contemporary American Television," *Velvet Light Trap* 58 (2006): 31–40.

6. Ibid., 35.

7. Ibid.

8. In *Complex TV*, Mittell considers the reception of complex serial narratives primarily in terms of "managing" information. While I would stress the imaginative activity of working a linear viewing process into a three-dimensional world, Mittell sees the viewer confronted with the (no less creative) challenge of "managing the mechanics of memory." He thus maintains his mechanical metaphors of gears, pyrotechnics, and management in order to describe the mnemonic operations of serial viewing (see especially 180–92).

9. Glen Creeber, *Serial Television: Big Drama on the Small Screen* (London: BFI, 2004), 4. Creeber considers the attraction of complex serial narratives with multiple "interconnecting, continuous, connecting and disconnecting storylines" as deriving from the heightened sense of "realism" they produce because they resemble the openness, complexity, and lack of resolution that characterize our "historical world" (4–5).

10. Horace Newcomb, "*Magnum*: The Champagne of TV?," *Channels of Communication* 5, no. 1 (1985): 23.

11. Jeffrey Sconce, "What If? Charting Television's New Textual Boundaries," in *Television after TV: Essays on a Medium in Transition*, ed. Lynn Spigel and Jan Olsson (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), 95.

12. Horace Newcomb, *TV: The Most Popular Art* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Press, 1974).

13. Sconce, "What If?," 95.

14. David Herman, "Storyworld," in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory,* ed. D. Herman et al. (London: Routledge, 2005), 570.

15. Tudor Oltean, "Series and Seriality in Media Culture," *European Journal of Communication* 8 (1993): 5–31.

16. Sarah Kozloff, "Narrative Theory and Television," in *Channels of Discourse, Reassembled: Television and Contemporary Criticism*, ed. Robert C. Allen (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 67–100.

17. See Robert C. Allen, *To Be Continued . . . : Soap Operas around the World* (London: Routledge, 1995).

18. Kristin Thompson, *Storytelling in Film and Television* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), 2003.

19. Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*, 253, emphasis in the original.

20. In our common book project, *Serial Chronotopes*, Jeffrey Sconce and I take a closer look at different chronotopes in film, television, and popular literary genres in order to explore the affordances of narrative worlds as they develop through time and across different media formats.

21. See Ursula Ganz-Blättler, "'Sometimes against all odds, against all logic, we touch': Kumulatives Erzählen und Handlungsbögen als Mittel der Zuschauerbindung in *Lost* und *Grey's Anatomy*," in *Serielle Formen: Von den frühen Film-Serials zu aktuellen Quality-TV- und Onlineserien*, ed. Robert Blanchet et al. (Marburg: Schüren, 2011).

22. Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*, 84.