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# Periodical Formats in the Market: Economies of Space and Time, Competition and Transfer

NORA RAMTKE\*, MIRELA HUSIĆ^, AND CHRISTIAN A. BACHMANN\*

\*Ruhr University Bochum

^University of Bonn

nora.ramtke@rub.de

The 9<sup>th</sup> ESPRit conference hosted by the DFG Research Unit 2288 ‘Journal Literature’ and the Ruhr University Bochum was centred on the question of competition and transfer between periodicals within both regional and international markets. A wide range of presentations inquired into periodicals from the eighteenth to the twenty-first century within the market and its sociocultural, economic, and legal frameworks, exploring economies of time and space. These two factors have been described as the ‘conditions that structure periodical form’, and as such they challenge our understanding of what is the ‘object of periodical studies’.<sup>1</sup> Although they seem to be two abstract categories, spatial and temporal aspects determine the sequence of issues as a succession in time and of volumes as archival objects, and, in terms of material, as a juxtaposition on a double-page, within an issue or a volume.<sup>2</sup> Periodical time is thus ‘an already abstract and contested concept but one rooted in material practices and textual conventions’, to quote Margaret Beetham summing up this paradoxical relationship that also applies to periodical space.<sup>3</sup> For instance, as Sean Franzel has pointed out, the spatial metaphor that underlies the notion of the ‘magazine’ ‘engages the tension between theoretical design and the practice of knowledge production for it implies the drive toward both order and coherence and heterogeneity and asystematicity’.<sup>4</sup> Spatio-temporal aspects become manifest in the periodical’s materiality and pragmatics and they provide an analytical framework for research on production, distribution, and reception of serialized media formats.

Furthermore, economies of space and time determine the literary market in which print artifacts operate and position themselves synchronously and diachronically in relation to one another, thus constituting the basic coordinates for the relationship between different periodicals, and, more generally, between proliferating serial formats

1 James Mussell, *Science, Time and Space in the Late Nineteenth-Century Periodical Press: Movable Types* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), p. 2; Gustav Frank and Madleen Podewski, ‘The Object of Periodical Studies’, in *Periodical Studies Today: Multidisciplinary Analyses*, ed. by Jutta Ernst, Dagmar von Hoff, and Oliver Scheiding (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2022), pp. 29–53.

2 Tom Gretton, ‘The Pragmatics of Page Design in Nineteenth-Century General-Interest Weekly Illustrated News Magazines in London and Paris’, *Art History*, 33.4 (2010), 680–709.

3 Margaret Beetham, ‘Time: Periodicals and the Time of the Now’, *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 48.3 (2015), 323–42 (p. 323).

4 Sean Franzel, ‘Metaphors of Spatial Storage in Enlightenment Historiography and the Eighteenth-Century “Magazine”’, in *The Radical Enlightenment in Germany: A Cultural Perspective*, ed. by Carl Niekerk (Amsterdam: Brill/Rodopi, 2018), pp. 328–52 (p. 328). On time as a fundamental feature of periodicals, see Mark Turner, ‘Periodical Time in the Nineteenth Century’, *Media History*, 8.2 (2002), 183–96; James Mussell, ‘Repetition: Or, “In Our Last”’, *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 48.3 (2015), 343–58; and Laurel Brake, ‘Time Management: Economies of Interruption’, in *Journale lesen: Lektüreabbruch – Anschlusslektüren / Reading Journals: Coherence and Interruption*, ed. by Volker Mergenthaler, Nora Ramtke, and Monika Schmitz-Emans (Hannover: Wehrhahn, 2022), pp. 31–45.

within print culture. In this way, periodicals are never singular phenomena but enter into a relationship of competition or alliance, and they either actively seek or avoid the transfer between each other across time and space. For this purpose, we consider periodicals as agents that react to sociocultural space configurations while simultaneously participating in their nascency, formation, appearance, and perpetual transformation. Whereas seriality developed into the ‘dominant cultural form of the nineteenth century’, formatting not only print culture but the public sphere and the very perception of time (as Clare Pettitt argues), it remained a selling point that facilitated the differentiation of print formats.<sup>5</sup>

What is more, periodicals themselves have been recently described as ‘small marketplaces’ where heterogeneous material seeks to catch the readership’s attention. The basic quality of periodicals is to gather various contributions, images, advertisements, and editorial matter, in short, to bring together textual, visual, and paratextual material in a recognizable, repetitive format. Its constitutive heterogeneity leads to these elements being in a relationship of competition with each other on a double-page spread or within an issue or volume. Just as individual magazines function on a small scale, with their pages and issues marketplaces for the various elements competing for the readers’ attention on them, the literary market functions in a certain place, at a certain time, on a large scale.<sup>6</sup>

This relationship of productive competition and transfer between or within serial print formats at temporally and locally determined points within cultural history is what we had in mind when we chose the theme of ‘Periodical Formats in the Market’ to be the centre of the 9<sup>th</sup> ESPRit conference and also of this special issue. The demands of modern societies, which are characterized by a fundamentally open concept of history and progressive accumulation of knowledge, and the demands of an increasingly fragmented market are ultimately a nucleus of periodical culture, precisely because periodicals are situated in specific historical constellations out of which they develop forms and formats.

The panels and lectures addressed the conference’s broad theme from temporal and regional as well as medial and cultural-economic perspectives. Several panels explored the importance of regional markets and transregional relations as sites of economic competition, the importance of the literary market for periodicals as a place of competition, but also as a force for the formation of literary circles and imagined communities and, more generally, the establishment of cultural identity. From feminist and postcolonial perspectives, social transfers and competitions were of particular interest. Media competitions were brought into focus, with the relationship between image and writing given prominence in many presentations, whereas other contributions brought capitalism as the driving force of media competition to the centre of academic attention.

The present special issue offers contributions selected from this rich programme (most of it still available on the [conference website](#) and the [ESPRit YouTube channel](#)) that have been expanded into articles. They address a wide range of phenomena from mass-market periodicals to niche publications in the smallest print runs. One approach to describe the commodification of periodicals within the increasingly differentiated

5 Clare Pettitt, *Serial Forms: The Unfinished Project of Modernity, 1815–1848* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), p. 15. See Laurel Brake, ‘Star Turn? Magazine, Part-Issue, and Book Serialisation’, *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 32.3 (2001), 208–27.

6 Nicola Kaminski and Volker Mergenthaler, ‘Zur Einleitung: die Marktszene. Literarisches, publizistisches, literaturwissenschaftliches Darstellungsmodell’, in Stephanie Gleißner, Mirela Husić, Nicola Kaminski, and Volker Mergenthaler, *Optische Auftritte: Marktszenen in der medialen Konkurrenz von Journal-, Almanachs- und Bücherliteratur*, ed. by Stephanie Gleißner et al. (Hannover: Wehrhahn 2019), pp. 7–24 (pp. 17–18).

capitalistic print media market with both niches and mass segments is to pursue their 'life' as a history of successful or failed adaptation to this market. However, we understand periodicals in the market only as a starting point to explore the cultural significance of the format, temporality, materiality, and visibility of relations of transfer or competition within and between print products.

In line with this key interest, the first article, 'Periodicity, Subscription, and Mass Circulation: Mail-Order Book Culture Reconsidered' by Corinna Norrick-Rühl, gauges the potential in the study of contaminations between book formats and periodicals by discussing the mass-market book club 'Reader's Digest Condensed Books' as an overlap between mail-order book culture and periodical culture. Practices of condensation and republication provided the basis of these economically successful publishing activities that shaped the reading culture of the twentieth century, and they are a case in point for the tendency of the capitalistic book market to develop serial formats based on economies of transfer by cross-marketing, reissuing, and reusing textual material.

The rendering of an abstract notion of transfer into material and praxeological dimensions is not merely a matter of editorial relations and collaborative networks but also (or even more) a matter of the mediality of magazines — and it applies also to visual aspects of periodical culture, as Vincent Fröhlich, Alice Morin, and Jens Ruchatz remind us by exploring 'Logics of Re-Using Photographs: Negotiating the Mediality of the Magazine'. They use three case studies that focus on different forms of re-uses, namely reproductions from magazine to book as an example for intermedial transfer (*Collier's Weekly*), intra-medial re-uses of photography within different international editions of the magazine *Vogue*, and re-uses of film stills in illustrated film magazines, and demonstrate the economic motives of re-using pictures as well as time limitations of magazine production.

The interpretation of time and space as a relationship of competition analysed in Ruth Mayer's 'Girls Girls Girls Girls Girls: The Trans-Atlantic Mass Magazine Culture of the 1920s as a Gendered Affair' is one of multiplication in terms of producing more of the same in variations on a transatlantic scale between the United States as a futuristic model for German culture in the 1920s. Mayer considers the gendered aspects of the Weimar society magazine *Uhu* and to what extent it represents itself as a magazine of American lifestyle including the iconic figure of the 'Girl' and thereby also pointing at the gendered aspects of magazine reception as well as its production, especially the work of female writers, illustrators, and photographers. By referring to Kracauer's 'mass ornament' the Girl can be read 'as an ornamental configuration of modernity'.

Daniela Gretz and Marcus Krause also draw on the ornament concept by linking it to the materiality and the modes of reception of modernist magazines in their article 'From Pure Art to Sheer Luxury: Magazines as Ornamental Constellations and the Emergence of Aesthetic Capitalism in the Early Twentieth Century'. They examine two different forms of elite culture, both of which turn out to be adaptations to the international capitalist print market and its niches, namely the Symbolist little magazine *Blätter für die Kunst*, artistically ambitious, and the transformation of the former sports magazine *Sport im Bild* into a 'marketplace' for luxury goods. Both magazines address an exclusive readership with their extravagant materiality and thereby generate 'symbolic capital' in terms of an aesthetic lifestyle.

The refusal to be a commodity can be a successful publishing strategy, which applies to modernist little magazines as well as to current microzines. The article 'Outside the Mainstream Press: Language, Materiality, and Temporality in Microzines' by Jutta Ernst, Sabina Fazli, and Oliver Scheiding follows this line of argument by exploring how microzines resist the commodification of the market by focusing on their avant-garde language, materiality, and temporality. Based on their three case studies focussing on

the Chicago-based modernist *Little Review* as well as the contemporary publications *NXS* from the Netherlands and *Burnt Roti* from Great Britain, the authors point out how the aesthetic strategies of microzines challenge mainstream periodical cultures.

The last essay of this *JEPS* issue is dedicated to periodicals as a subject and object of theories of time and their entanglement with philosophies of history. By looking at several German journals and magazines such as Friedrich Schiller's *Die Horen*, Friedrich Schelling's *Allgemeine Zeitschrift*, the *Deutsche Jahrbücher für Wissenschaft und Kunst*, and the new-left *alternative* from the period between 1800 and 1968, Moritz Neuffer's 'In Time: Periodical Theories and Philosophies of History in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries' elaborates on how these media formats reflect and likewise produce historical time, highlighting temporal aspects of competition and interferences in theoretical reflections on periodicals and on history. The market for theory has been significant in the course of modern intellectual history, but even for these journals, the question was how to respond to a contemporary market: how to write time and ultimately how to end when this time has passed.

Conferences are at the heart of scholarly exchange. The value of this form of exchange became clear to many of us only at the very moment it could no longer be taken for granted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Travel bans, restrictions on public gatherings, closed universities, locked libraries and archives, and the impact of the pandemic on private life challenged research and the exchange of research to a previously unknown extent. The organizational answers we found to this challenge are described in the *JEPS* article 'Planning Virtual Conferences in the Humanities: A Detailed Look at the 9th International ESPRit Conference'.<sup>7</sup> In short, they aimed at creating a sense of community, a connection, and mutual commitment by encouraging participants to share on the conference website and in virtual meetings not only their papers, their expertise, and ideas, but also their time, and, above all, enthusiasm for periodicals across the distances.

This *JEPS* special issue emerging from a conference that had to break new ground to bring researchers together echoes the desire to create commonality through and in research. We tried to continue the conference discussions and incorporate the exchanges in and between panels into the articles. Half of them are co-authored by two or three authors, reflecting the collaborative working practices of joint projects and research groups. Even more, the report of the roundtable transports the vivid discussion of the conference into the written form of an article to bring 'Some Voices and Visions' from Fabio Guidali, Mara Logaldo, Jutta Ernst, Jens Ruchatz, and Fionnualla Dillane into *JEPS* as a stimulus and basis for further discussion. We owe a huge debt of gratitude to Evanghelia Stead for hosting and compiling this discussion. With it, and in lieu of an afterword for the guest-edited part of this *JEPS* issue, we would like to bridge over to the Field Notes section where this report is featured.

Transdisciplinary and collaborative research is a major challenge and hard work, as both contributions and the round table overview show. This applies even more so to the humanities, with scholars used to individual research with specific fields of expertise within national institutionalized settings. However, it is the very objects of our studies that require joint approaches or those across disciplinary boundaries: periodical research often deals with inherently international material, both visual and textual, or brings questions on the margins of the disciplines to the fore, because both periodical and

7 Christian A. Bachmann and Nora Ramtke, 'Planning Virtual Conferences in the Humanities: A Detailed Look at the 9th International ESPRit Conference', *Journal of European Periodical Studies*, 6.2 (2021), 109–18.

bookish serial formats overlap and complement each other under the conditions of a differentiated capitalist print media market.

Just as we have explored new ways to tend to our academic community with the conference in pandemic-marked conditions, we are also pursuing a hybrid publication strategy to make the conference outcomes visible and widely accessible. Most of the pre-recorded papers as well as the recordings of the keynote lectures will remain available via the conference website and the ESPRit YouTube channel. Furthermore, this *JEPS* special issue will be complemented by an edited volume opting for a more rigid focus on the international transfer of illustrations and visual politics in periodicals, a subtopic that attracted a considerable amount of attention across the conference and which, given the need for a rich illustration of visually arguing chapters, suggests a publication in print. *A Mixed Picture: Politics, Media Transfer, and Media Competition in the Illustrated Press* will be published as part of the *Journalliteratur* book series (Wehrhahn, Hannover) in 2023 with contributions from Giulio Argenio, Christian A. Bachmann, Marguërite Corporaal, Shromona Das, Jakob Kihlberg, Mara Logaldo, and Will Straw on aspects of visual transfer processes and their political and social implications in periodicals in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. We hope these impulses and resources will provide momentum for further transdisciplinary research, thus continuing to fulfil the inherent promise of ESPRit's idea of 'Joining Forces'.<sup>8</sup>

Finally, the editors wish to express their gratitude to all contributors for their time and effort. We thank a number of institutions and people who made the conference and the resulting publications happen, first and foremost the German Research Foundation (DFG) which funded this conference as well as the Research Unit 2288 'Journal Literature'. Thanks go out to the Ruhr University Bochum which contributed to the funding and infrastructure as well as the Ruhr University Research School which generously supported the postgraduate workshop. As organizers we could build on help and support from a team of incredibly talented and committed people. Although we cannot include here by name all the ESPRit committee members and members of the Research Unit 'Journal Literature' who dedicated much time and effort to making this conference happen, we know that without Sebastian Mittelberg, Sandra Socha, and our wonderful student assistants the virtual conference wouldn't have been possible. Our heartfelt thank you goes to ESPRit's former chair Kristin Ewins and the new chair Mara Logaldo, as well as Maaïke Koffeman for the wonderful cooperation on this conference and Marianne Van Remoortel for her excellent and patient support during the publication of this special issue.

**Nora Ramtke** holds a PhD from Ruhr University Bochum in Modern German Literature, is ESPRit conference liaison manager and a member of the Research Unit 2288 'Journal Literature'. She is PI of the subproject 'Collections Formats: Practices of Reprinting between Anthologisation of the Periodic and the Periodicisation of the Anthology', funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG). Recent publications include the collaboratively written monograph *Zeit/Schrift 1813–1815 oder Chronopoetik des 'Unregelmäßigen'* with David Brehm and others and the co-edited volume with Volker Mergenthaler and Monika Schmitz-Emans *Reading Journals: Coherence and Interruption* (both Hannover: Wehrhahn 2022).

8 Marianne Van Remoortel et al., 'Joining Forces: European Periodical Studies as a New Research Field', *Journal of European Periodical Studies*, 1.1 (2016), 1–3.

**Mirela Husić** is a PhD student in the DFG Research Training Group 2291 ‘Contemporary/Literature’ at the University of Bonn. Her PhD project considers the relationship between six narratives (1841–47) by Austrian author Adalbert Stifter and how they reflect and construct ‘the present’ by interplaying with their different publication media. She was a member of the DFG Research Unit 2288 ‘Journal Literature’ until 2020 and wrote collaboratively with Stephanie Gleißner, Nicola Kaminski, and Volker Mergenthaler the monograph *Optische Auftritte: Marktszenen in der medialen Konkurrenz von Journal-, Almanachs- und Bücherliteratur* (Hannover: Wehrhahn 2019).

**Christian A. Bachmann** is a postdoctoral researcher of DFG–Research Unit 2288, Sub-Project 6: ‘New Times. Tempo, Acceleration, and the Pluralisation of Temporal Dimensions in Humorous Picture Stories, Cartoons, and Comics between 1900 and 1930’. He is also currently employed at the Department of Children’s and Young People’s Books at Berlin State Library where he researches movable books and video games. He holds a PhD in Comparative Literature from Ruhr University Bochum and has taught at several universities in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. He has published extensively on graphic narrative and visual satire, as well as on the book as a material medium. His most recent monograph is *Little Orphan Annies Transformationen: Medienformatwechsel und mediale Eigenzeit zwischen Zeitung, Buch und Heft* (2021).

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