



# Forscherguppe JOURNALLITERATUR

Formatbedingungen, visuelles Design, Rezeptionskulturen

CALL FOR PAPERS

## Periodicals as/in Media Constellations

**International Conference of the DFG-Research Unit “Journal Literature“ (FOR 2288), 25.–26. November 2021, University of Cologne**

From the 19th century on, periodicals—and especially magazines—, because of their capacity to act as meta-media, have been central sites to unfold and discuss media developments and constellations. On the one hand, they develop textual discourses on media and their relationships to one another; on the other hand, they also integrate other media, such as images, illustrations and reproductions, which are incorporated into their own format via intermedial processes and remediation. In doing so, journals not only address the idiosyncrasies of the various media in their environment, but also consistently reflect (on) their own mediality—whether explicitly in articles about their own format and journal culture in general, or implicitly in their layout, their text-image relationships, their graphic design. Because the form of periodicals displays a characteristic openness towards the integration of other media, it makes for an apt starting point to discuss different media constellations and their evolution(s).

The mediality of the periodical is constantly renegotiated and engages in a dialogue with its media environment. This is made particularly visible when the said environment undergoes substantial changes, for instance when new mass media emerge. That was the case in the 19th century, when telegraphy and photography caused great social and epistemological transformations. It was even more so in the first half of the 20th century, when periodicals were confronted with the rise of cinematography and radio, both media whose forms of display and modes of distribution (in contrast to images and news) could no longer be inserted directly into the printed page. Later, television, that much in the same way as periodicals communicates serially with its audience, emerged as a competing medium and became a major site for the transmission of visual news. Yet, the apparition of television, like radio and film before, has foregrounded new genres of magazines focused on organizing and distributing their information. Periodicals thus managed to maintain diverse relationships to these media, relationships in which the issue of how to represent them on the journal page has always been central. These media relations in all their diversity have had multiple consequences on the periodical’s own mediality: they led to a thematical differentiation of the magazine market and the establishment of magazines that—like film and television magazines, for example—specialize in the monitoring of other mass media. Besides, processes of remediation or processes pertaining to the transcription of montage or serialization have had a decisive influence on the periodical’s aesthetics. At the turn of the 21st century, the mediality of the periodical has yet again faced new transformations in the wake of a massive turn to digitalization, questioning the periodical’s (and other medium’s) material ontology. When challenged by new modes of operating—be it turning to digital-only editions, combining print and online versions thus increasing periodicity, or digitizing the entire run of discontinued magazines— can the periodical still be considered a medium at all?

As demonstrated by the questions raised above, the conference aims less at addressing the competitive relationships between various media—a matter repeatedly conjured up in media- and culture-critique discourses—but is rather interested in the productive mechanisms that connect periodicals and other distribution media, from which various historical constellations can be inferred. Against this background, one fundamental question is whether such constellations can be associated with the emergence of various mass media (such as film, radio, television) on the one hand and digital media on the other; and whether these constellations can be organized into a consistent, meaningful periodization. Subsequently, four aspects of periodical medialities emerge, that can be arranged into sets of systematic questions. They deal respectively with 1. the periodical's mediality in shifting material contexts, 2. media constellations in periodicals, 3. periodicals as media constellations, and 4. processes of medial constellation. Of course, these topics are far from exhaustive; and they also often overlap, for example, in cases when the periodical's mediality is defined in contrast with other media's (1. and 3.), or when journals – e.g. in the case of film journals or television magazines – must develop their own medial constellations in order to partake in larger media constellations (2. and 3.).

### **1. The periodical's mediality in shifting material contexts**

When and how does the periodical as a print medium differentiate itself from other print media? At which moments in history does the mediality of the periodical change? To what extent does the periodical reflect on itself as a medium? To what extent does the mediality of the periodical depend on its printed and paper materiality? What happens to the periodical as a medium when its characteristic materiality is lost in the wake of digitization—of formerly paper-based holdings as well as of current titles? What relationships are articulated, for example, between the digital version of a periodical and/or the fluid additional offerings online, and the print edition? How are digital periodicals staged in relation to their journalistic original media format?

### **2. Periodicals as media constellations**

Which are the different media integrated into the media format of the journal? Which methods, forms and formats do journals attempt to “translate”? For instance, under which conditions do art journals integrate works of art—through photographic reproduction, wood engraving, through including a graphic supplement, or simply through describing them linguistically? What concepts (remediation, media quotation, intermediality) can be used to describe such transfers? How are the media included in the journal related to each other within the journal on the one hand, and to the mediality of the journal on the other? Which media engage in stable relationships with certain generic formats of the journal, forming identified constellations? What historical changes are such constellations subjected to, and how do these changes relate to innovations in printing and reproduction technology on the one hand, and to more global changes in the mass media environment on the other?

### **3. Periodicals in media constellations**

Under what circumstances does the journal refer to other media? For example, does the competition developed with a medium like television, that is equally miscellaneous, serially and periodically organized, result in the formation of a new constellation? Does the journal display instances of reflecting on its own place within the network of mass media? Does it reflect on the influence of other media on its own aesthetics? If so, how does this manifest? Conversely, which forms of the journal are represented in other media, and how is its specific mediality characterized there? Are distinctions between journals and journal formats reverberated in other media representing journals? Are there examples where distinct journal formats cohere to form generic, ideological and/or aesthetic constellations with each other, but also with other media?

### **4. Processes of medial constellation**

Are there transmedial processes, pursuing comparable strategies and producing similar aesthetic effects, that are used equally in the journal and other mass media? Alternatively, to which strategies do journals consistently resort to in order to simulate the characteristics of other mass media, which they assume to be specific to them? Which different media are used directly within the journal to create references to other media (such as photography for film, sheet music for music)? In the same way, which processes (such as montage or serialization techniques) are taken over from other media and transcribed into the journal format? From there, can different typologies of remediation be carved out?

### **Submissions**

Lectures designed for a length of 30 minutes are invited to the conference. Conference languages are English and German, although it is recommended to present in English in order not to exclude the international participants from the discussions. Travel and accommodation costs will be covered by the organizing research group.

To apply, we ask for corresponding **abstracts** (maximum 500 words) and a short **curriculum vitae** (maximum 150 words), which should be sent to [media-constellations@uni-marburg.de](mailto:media-constellations@uni-marburg.de) by 15.03.2021.

The conference is organized by subproject 1 (Daniela Gretz, Marcus Krause and Nicolas Pethes) and 5 (Alice Morin, Jens Ruchatz). The conference is to be held in presence or as a hybrid event. In view of the COVID pandemic, it is not yet possible to make definitive statements about the form of the event that can ultimately be realized.

Please contact [media-constellations@uni-marburg.de](mailto:media-constellations@uni-marburg.de) if you have any questions.

Website of the research unit: [www.rub.de/journalliteratur](http://www.rub.de/journalliteratur)