

Call for Papers

Lektüreabbruch – Anschlußlektüren: Journale lesen

Interrupted Reading – Follow-on Readings: Reading Journals

International conference of the DFG Research Unit “Journal Literature” (FOR 2288)

17-19 September 2018

Ruhr-Universität Bochum

The international conference “Lektüreabbruch – Anschlußlektüren: Journale lesen” (“Interrupted Reading – Follow-on Readings: Reading Journals”) will take place from 17-19 September 2018 at the Ruhr-Universität Bochum. It will be organized by DFG Research Unit 2288, Journal Literature, in the framework of the programme priority “Coherence/interruption”. The aim of the conference is to examine journals of the 19th and early 20th century, taking the concrete materiality of the journal’s form of publication, and its potential to govern reception, as a methodological starting point. The specific temporality and materiality of journal literature governs processes of generation and superimposition of meaning, and both the conditions and the consequences of these processes will be explored. Areas of enquiry will therefore include materially offered reading paths and directions of reading, forms of reflection on journal mediality, and journal-specific logics of format and practices of reception. Case studies are welcome, as are historical and international comparisons, or work in the area of comparative media studies. Proposals focusing on the following areas are invited:

1. Conditions: production/distribution/communication

The contemporary reading of journals is subject to specific historical conditions. Developments in the production and distribution of the periodical press can thus be seen as dictating reception processes: they form the technological and economic basis for the diverse forms of periodicity, thereby determining the pace and rhythm of journal reception, and they develop formats and economies which condition journal-specific reception processes. In this sense, discontinuous reading of periodical publications is to be regarded as an effect of journalistic conditions, which are worthy of closer examination. The same goes for the development of coherence-forming practices of reception. This is closely linked with cultural, institutional and medial conditions of contemporary reading, which mediate the media-specific openness of the journal, and develop journal-specific forms of communication. Some of the questions to be asked here are: What developments in printing technology govern the timing of journal reception? At what pace, in what ways, and via what institutions do journals reach their readership? What economic considerations underlie periodical interruptions and their literary counterparts, cliffhangers? In which formats are there tendencies to encourage and institutionalize communication with readers, and what binding force is generated by relevant sections of journals, i.e. the printing of readers’ letters, or sections for correspondence and advertising?

2. Forms: materiality/time/space

Secondly, the conference will investigate the temporal and spatial format-related conditions of journal publications, and their effects on the reception of journal literature. The basic temporal and textual-spatial conditions of the journal as a media format, conditions to which both the publication and reading of journals are subject, are not aimed at closure, but at continuation, not at homogeneous coherence, but at heterogeneous diversity and permeable boundaries between written and pictorial components. Possible areas of enquiry therefore include forms of seriality and sequentiality, as well as narrative, thematic or media-format-specific forms of periodic interruption and the development of coherence, which condition both interruptions in reading and follow-on readings. The aim will be to examine micro and macro levels of coherent and discontinuous reception, and ways in which the materiality of journals governs reception: What reading paths and directions of reading are offered by narrative, structural, textual or visual elements? What modes of reception do journals, in their specific structure, mediality and materiality, invite? What reader expectations can be reconstructed in this way, and how are these fulfilled or disappointed?

3. Consequences: practices/semantics

The economic and institutional parameters and the resulting forms of journal communication, with their respective format-related conditions, favour the development of certain practices of reception and corresponding semantics. This raises the question of what practices of reception are implied by the logic of the format, which is based on coherence/interruption. The development of coherence takes place, for example, on the level of archiving: the binding of a year's issues into a single volume, the issuing of title pages, the supplying of covers at the end of the year, and perhaps even indexes or library classification systems emphasize the nature of journals as works. Another question to be asked in this context – as part of the focus on coherence and interruption – is how to evaluate different options for reception resulting from parallel editions of a journal with differences in quality and design, or different intervals of publication (daily, weekly or monthly); different rhythms of distribution (e.g. depending on the place of residence of the subscriber) should also be taken into account. In this context we would also welcome contrasting studies on book and journal reception, on contexts of reception relevant across different works, and on 'migrating' texts and figures, which transcend the boundaries of more than one issue or of different journals. Removed from the context of the individual journal, individual (segments of) texts appear as mediated through decontextualized and recontextualized practices, embedded in partly private, partly public forms of reception and presentation such as scrapbooks, albums, reprints or grangerized books. These also seem a promising object of study in the framework of this section.

Submissions

Presentations should be 25 minutes long. The conference languages will be English and German, but papers in French are also welcome. Travel and accommodation costs will be covered by the research unit organizing the conference. Applicants should send an **abstract** (maximum length 500 words) and a short **CV** (maximum length 150 words) to journalelesen@rub.de by **5 March 2018**.

The conference will be organized by sub-projects 2 (Nicola Kaminski, Volker Mergenthaler, Nora Ramtke, Sven Schöpf) and 6 (Monika Schmitz-Emans, Christian A. Bachmann) of DFG Research Unit 2288, Journal Literature.

Please address any queries to journalelesen@rub.de

Website of the research unit: <https://journalliteratur.blogs.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/>