

Serial Fiction in the Western World

This volume explores the long and intricate evolution of serial forms, presenting them as one of the cornerstones of Western culture. The first part traces the archaeology and early mainstream of serial narration: from antiquity to the medieval romance, from the first Baroque culture industry to the feuilleton, photographic reproduction, pulp fiction and the cinematic serials of the 1930s. The second section moves into the later twentieth century and the contemporary world, examining comics, post-television seriality, B-movies, video games, and the new forms of online serialisation. The final part turns to today's myths, analysing the serial dimension in fiction and advertising, music and the arts, architecture, fashion, and design. Across these trajectories, seriality is interpreted not merely as a specific mode of cultural production but as a basic anthropological model and, at the same time, as a foundation of the processes underpinning modern and current consumer society.

Giovanni Ragone has been Full Professor of Media Studies at Sapienza University of Rome.

Antonio Rafele is currently serving as Professor of Media and Cultural Studies at the University of Rome La Sapienza and as a research fellow at the University of Paris La Sorbonne.

Literary Criticism and Cultural Theory

Myths of the Golden Age in European Culture
Edited by Stephen G. Nichols and Claudia Olk

Poetry and Culture in Britain, Canada and the United States
20th and Early 21st Century Literature
Jonathan Locke Hart

The Fool and the Clown in Western Culture and Literature
Homo Insipiens
Svetozar Poštić

Reading Wayde Compton
Geohistorical (Re)Constructions of Black Vancouver
Fernando Pérez-García

Queer Reading Practices and Sexology in *Fin-de-Siècle* Literature
Wilde, Stenbock, Prime-Stevenson
Zsolt Bojti

Muslim Writing, Writing Muslimness in Europe
Transcultural Perspectives
*Edited by Carmen Zamorano Llena, Billy Gray, Carolina León Vegas
and Carles Magrinyà Badiella*

Serial Fiction in the Western World
History and Theory
Edited by Giovanni Ragone and Antonio Rafele

For more information about this series, please visit: www.routledge.com/Literary-Criticism-and-Cultural-Theory/book-series/LITCRITANDCULT

Review Copy – Not for Redistribution
File Use Subject to Terms & Conditions of PDF License Agreement (PLA)

Serial Fiction in the Western World

History and Theory

**Edited by Giovanni Ragone and
Antonio Rafele**

 **Routledge**
Taylor & Francis Group
NEW YORK AND LONDON

Review Copy – Not for Redistribution
File Use Subject to Terms & Conditions of PDF License Agreement (PLA)

First published 2026
by Routledge
605 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10158

and by Routledge
4 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 4RN

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

© 2026 selection and editorial matter, Giovanni Ragone and Antonio Rafele;
individual chapters, the contributors

The right of Giovanni Ragone and Antonio Rafele to be identified as the authors of the editorial material, and of the authors for their individual chapters, has been asserted in accordance with sections 77 and 78 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

For Product Safety Concerns and Information please contact our EU representative GPSR@taylorandfrancis.com. Taylor & Francis Verlag GmbH, Kaufingerstraße 24, 80331 München, Germany.

Trademark notice: Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

ISBN: 9781041067917 (hbk)
ISBN: 9781041067924 (pbk)
ISBN: 9781003637103 (ebk)

DOI: 10.4324/9781003637103

Typeset in Sabon
by Newgen Publishing UK

Contents

<i>List of Contributors</i>	<i>viii</i>
SECTION I	1
1 Seriality and the Media: Outlines for a Theory GIOVANNI RAGONE	3
2 At the Sources of Serial Imaginaries: The Ancient World and Its Legacies FABIO TARZIA	19
3 From Arthur to Amadís: The Knightly Romance Series DONATELLA CAPALDI	33
4 Archeology of Modern Seriality: The Baroque Age GIOVANNI RAGONE	48
5 The Feuilleton: Transitions in the Cultural Industry from the Hero to the Superman SERGIO BRANCATO	63
6 Subject, Metropolis, and Other Spaces in 19th-Century Serial Genres ALESSIO CECCHERELLI AND EMILIANO ILARDI	78
7 The Serial Image: Photography and the Long Nineteenth-Century Media GIOVANNI FIORENTINO	94

vi *Contents*

8	Serialization and Transmedia Narratives: An Archaeology (1900–1939)	110
	MARIO TIRINO	
	SECTION II	127
9	Post-cinematic and Televisual Seriality: Narrative Strategies between Mass Media and New Media	129
	SERGIO BRANCATO	
10	Seriality and Time of Consumption	141
	EMILIANO LAURENZI	
11	A Reflection on American Comics Seriality: From the Sunday Supplements of the Late 1800s to Contemporary Graphic Novels	152
	STEFANO CRISTANTE	
12	Talent and Habituation: On Television Series and the Genesis of the Fan	168
	ANTONIO RAFELE AND TITO VAGNI	
13	Manga and Anime: Japanese Seriality Conquering the World	180
	EMILIANO ILARDI	
14	Classic Cinema and B-Movie	191
	ALFONSO AMENDOLA AND PIETRO AMMATURO	
15	Seriality in Video Games: Forms, Mechanisms and Strategies	204
	ALESSIO CECCHERELLI, EMILIANO CHIRCHIANO AND ANDREA PIANO	
16	Serial Structure in Contemporary TV Series	216
	DANIELA CARDINI	
17	Rethinking Seriality in Platform Cultures: Self-Serialised Identity Narratives and Participatory Micro-serialisation	226
	GIOVANNI BOCCIA ARTIERI	

SECTION III	239
18 Media <i>Smarginatura</i> and Seriality: Blurring the Edges of Representation GIOVANNI BOCCIA ARTIERI AND GIOVANNI FIORENTINO	241
19 Material, Immaterial, and Phygital: The Technical Reproducibility of Fashion in Three Main Phases NELLO BARILE	245
20 Seriality: From Radio to Podcasting TIZIANO BONINI	254
21 The Gastronomic Discourse and Seriality Forms GIANFRANCO MARRONE	263
22 Seriality in Advertising Communication VANNI CODELUPPI	273
23 Serial (Theatrical) Performances: Observing Liveness as Format and Media Frame LAURA GEMINI	284
24 Architecture as the Art of Repetition ANNA RITA EMILI AND MASSIMO ILARDI	294
25 Sometimes the Best Choice Is Not to Choose: Viewer Indecision and Machine Decisions MARIO PIREDDU	304
26 Contemporary Seriality on the Counterfield of Visual Arts: After the Turning Point DONATELLA CAPALDI AND GIOVANNI RAGONE	315
<i>Index</i>	330