

**Popular Culture – Serial Culture:
Nineteenth-Century Serial Fictions in Transnational Perspective,
1830s-1860s**

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Conveners: Prof. Dr. Daniel Stein / Lisanna Wiele, M.A.

North American Literary and Cultural Studies

Recent publications such as *Transnationalism and American Serial Fiction* (Okker 2011) and *Serialization in Popular Culture* (Allen/van den Berg 2014) remind us that serial modes of storytelling, publication, and reception have been among the driving forces of modern culture since the first half of the nineteenth century. Indeed, as studies of Victorian serial fiction, the French feuilleton novel, and American magazine fiction indicate, much of what we take for granted as central features of contemporary serial fictions traces back to a particular period in the nineteenth century between the 1830s and the 1860s. This is the time when new printing techniques allowed for the mass publication of affordable reading materials, when literary authorship became a viable profession, when reading for pleasure became a popular pastime for increasingly literate and socially diverse audiences, and when previously predominantly national print markets became thoroughly international.

These transformations enabled, and, in turn, were enabled by, the emergence of popular serial genres, of which the so-called city mystery novels are a paradigmatic example. In the wake of the success of Eugène Sue's *Les Mystères de Paris* (1842-43), a great number of these city mysteries appeared across Europe (especially France, Great Britain, and Germany) and the United States, adapting the narrative formulas and basic storylines of Sue's *roman feuilleton* to different cultural, social, economic, and political contexts. These city mystery novels constitute what may be described as the first transnational and multilingual genre of popular serial fiction, and they will serve as one focal point of our conference. We are particularly interested in papers that analyze the evolution of the city mystery novel from a single popular text to a popular serial genre, but we also invite papers on a wide range of issues dealing with all aspects of serial popular culture of the 1830s to 1860s. We explicitly encourage interdisciplinary and transnational approaches within but also beyond our own American Studies focus.

Please send abstracts (max. 250 words) and short bios to stein@anglistik.uni-siegen.de and wiele@anglistik.uni-siegen.de by September 1, 2015.

This conference is organized by members of the DFG Research Unit *Popular Seriality – Aesthetics and Practice* (<http://www.popularseriality.de/en/index.html>) and part of the subproject “Serial Politicization: On the Cultural Work of American City Mysteries, 1844-1860.”