

**CALL FOR PAPERS:
NEW ANTHOLOGY ON CHARACTERS IN FILM, TV, AND INTERACTIVE MEDIA**

SCREENING CHARACTERS

Editors: Johannes Riis (University of Copenhagen)
Aaron Taylor (University of Lethbridge)

Often the most immediate object of interest for audiences, characters frequently serve as the direct means by which we engage with a work of media. The figures represented onscreen tend to be one of the moving image's most captivating elements. We are absorbed by their fictional dilemmas, preoccupied by the circumstances of their creation, fascinated by their varying treatments across traditions, and engrossed in debates about their broader cultural impact. An ambitious collection of new essays, *Screening Characters* will be the first major English-language anthology with a concentrated focus on this relatively neglected subject.

While the study of characters and characterization has long been of significant interest to literary and theatre studies, media studies has approached the subject in much more piecemeal and indirect fashion. Outside of a few seminal, single-volume studies – Seymour Chatman's *Story and Discourse* (1978), Murray Smith's *Engaging Characters* (1995), and the collected works in *Characters in Fictional Worlds* (2010) – film studies has been slow to examine an inarguably central aspect of the art form in a concentrated way. Comparably, both television and game studies have arguably made the study of characters a more central preoccupation of their respective fields. Therefore, *Screening Characters* will serve as a definitive enquiry into this shared essential element of the moving image. Following in the tradition of recent major publications in literary studies – *Why Do We Care about Literary Characters?* (2009), *New Literary History's* special issue on character (2011) – as well as the forthcoming revised edition of *Engaging Characters*, this collection seeks to foster cross-media considerations of the possible people who continue to enthrall us on a variety of screens.

With these ideals in mind, this collection aims to:

- offer new theoretical accounts of characterization as a component of form
- discuss varying treatments of character across media and consider a given medium's specific impact on characterization
- consider the specifics of characterization within prevalent genres, as well as comparatively overlooked generic and modal categories
- renew debates involving audience engagement with characters in light of recent developments in reception theory, cognitivism, and cultural studies

Possible Sections and Topics

Contributing scholars are invited to submit essays on various subjects related to characters and characterization in film, television, and interactive media. Subjects of interest correspond to the categories listed below, and include – but are not limited to – the following topics:

Form

- Character function after structuralism

- Characters and visual stylization
- Performance and characterization
- Protagonists, antagonists, and other narratological types
- Screenwriting, production environments, and character creation

Medium

- Adaptation and/or transmedia franchises
- Characters vs. avatars in video games
- Influence of television, games, and/or other new media forms on cinematic characters
- Literary/novelistic/dramatic vs. screen-specific conceptions of characters
- Television and/or other forms of serialization

Genre

- Avant-garde and non-narrative traditions
- Classical vs. art cinema characterization revisited
- Children's cinema and/or animation
- Documentary & non-fictional characterization
- New generic developments

Reception & audiences

- Apprehending/comprehending characters
- Emotional engagement and/or moral evaluation
- Fandoms, audience production, and/or cultic engagement
- Identity politics and/or community-building
- Stereotypes and cultural impact/influences

Submission Information and Guidelines

Interested authors should send a 500-word proposal to:

Johannes Riis (johriis@hum.ku.dk) and Aaron Taylor (aaron.taylor2@uleth.ca).

Please ensure that your proposal includes the following components:

- 1) a working title
- 2) a 500-word abstract that includes your essay's relationship to the anthology's objectives
- 3) a list of 5 to 10 secondary sources
- 4) a 50-word author biography

Proposals must be submitted by **Thursday, December 31, 2015**. Successful contributors will be notified by mid-January, 2016.

Contributions should be 5000 to 7000 words and must not have been published elsewhere. Essays will likely be formatted along MLA conventions, and first drafts must be submitted by September 1, 2016. Final revisions must be completed by December 31, 2016. The completed collection will also likely be submitted for review to Routledge, whose commissioning editor has expressed her enthusiasm for the project.