

Call for Papers

GENEALOGY OF POPULAR SCIENCE. FROM ANCIENT ECOPHRASIS TO VIRTUAL REALITY

International Conference, 15-16 June 2018, Karlsruhe

ZAK | Centre for Cultural and General Studies, Karlsruhe Institute of Technology

Popular Science¹ is an intricate phenomenon with socio-political, economical, and aesthetic dimensions. Because of this multi-layered reality, research in Popular Science is probably not completely covered by one single discipline. In interdisciplinary research fields such as Science Studies, the Sociology of Science, or Science and Technology Studies (STS), the approach to the phenomenon of Popular Science seems to be fed back by the issues of the present. Here, historical approaches are missing. The History of Science, on the other hand, lacks methodological approaches to explain the poly-medial dimension of Popular Science. Finally, philological and iconographic disciplines, such as Classical Philology or Art History, seldom bring into focus the dissemination of scientific and technological knowledge.

The aim of the conference is to initiate an interdisciplinary, genealogically reflected debate about Popular Science as a recurrent cultural technique. The category Popular Science will be elucidated in an interdisciplinary and diachronic way, focusing on both its socio-anthropological construction and the formal and functional techniques, which characterize the dissemination of scientific knowledge in its production and reception contexts. For this purpose, philological and iconographic research approaches are especially welcomed, but other disciplines such as the Sociology of Science, the History of Science, and Gender Studies are also beneficial for the main goal. The multi-layered examination of the cultural technique “Popular Science” will throw light on a research field that has hardly been investigated so far.

The lectures given during the conference will be published in an edited volume on the “Genealogy of Popular Science. From Ancient Ecphrasis to Virtual Reality”.

Possible topics may include, but are by no means limited to:

- **Antiquity:** ancient rhetoric and the ancient public, progymnasmata, ecphrasis, technical ecphrasis, didactic poetry, techniques for seeing the unseeable (*enargeia*), satire and science, protreptical speeches and exoteric texts, the public of ancient historiography, poikilography as science popularization, art and *sophia*, dissemination of myths and history in Greek pottery, aesthetics of education, places of knowledge and performance, depictions of philosophers and “scientists” in Antiquity.
- **Middle Ages:** the preacher as a human medium, vulgar latin and Weltanschauung, world history in vernacular languages, encyclopaedic telling, origin of the Studia Generalia, goliardic traditions, sacred art and Weltanschauung, the public of illuminated manuscripts, reformation and popularization of knowledge.

¹ We use the umbrella term “Popular Science” for different practices of knowledge dissemination such as Science Communication, Popularization of Science, or Public Understanding of Science.

- **Renaissance:** emigration of Byzantine scholars and ideas to the West, impact of the printing machine in the popularization of knowledge, ecphrasis and painting, public lectures, the *Theatrum Anatomicum*, new science *ex suppositione* and superstition, the public of the cabinets of wonders, impact of the *paragone delle arti* on the dissemination of knowledge, public communication of inventions and discoveries.
- **Modernity:** the first modern science communicators, scientific experiments as spectacle for the public, the figure of the experimentator in the arts, satire, and mode periodicals as source of popular scientific knowledge, relationship between inventions and decoration (e.g. Newton's cradle), legitimation discourses on natural sciences, social acceptability, depictions of scientists, women as early science communicators, poetry and science in Romanticism, scientific bestsellers.
- **Contemporary:** history of modern science communication, origins and means of public understanding of science, scientific literacy, public engagement, the golden age of science publicists in the mass media (Carl Sagan, Attenborough, Kenneth Clark etc.), gender equality in science communication, art as science communication, new media and old techniques of science communication, virtual reality and museums etc.
- **Cross-epochal topics:** political function of science communication, gender issues, continuity and / or recurrence of certain communication formats, diachronic discourse analysis, representation of scientists and the public in the course of time.

Who can participate?

The conference will be attended by renowned researchers from various disciplines, as well as Master's, doctoral, and junior scientists.

Researchers from Germany and abroad are invited to participate with relevant contributions in securing evidence and interpreting cross-temporal and cultural forms of Popular Science. The inclusion of disciplines and cultural perspectives that are not common within the STS context is an important factor in expanding our scientific horizon. We expressly encourage the participation of investigators dealing with rhetorical issues and ancient as well as modern language and image-based media, such as papyri, tablets, inscriptions, manuscripts, sculptures, miniatures, frescoes, paintings, or drawings, as well as photos, films, e-books, digital images, media art installations, or VR applications. We invite them to take a closer look at their knowledge and methods in order to produce novel philological and visual culture research on Popular Science. STS researchers with current topics, especially those with a focus on new media, such as web videos, social media, and microblogging are also necessary discussion partners.

Please send your proposal of up to 500 words (in English or German) for either a 30-minute lecture or a work-in-progress talk (15 minutes) to jesus.morcillo@kit.edu by **Wednesday, 31 January 2018** (midnight). The languages of the conference will be German and English. The publication of the papers in an edited volume is envisaged. See detailed information below.

Guidelines for Abstract Submission

Researchers from Germany and abroad are invited to email an abstract for a paper (up to 500 words, in German or English) and a short CV to Dr. Jesús Muñoz Morcillo (jesus.morcillo@kit.edu) by **Wednesday, 31 January 2018, midnight**. The time allocated for a paper presentation is 30 minutes and 15 minutes for work-in-progress presentations. Please follow the instructions below.

- Language: German or English
- Format's description: Lecture (30 min.) or Work-in-Progress Talk (15 min.)
 - Lecture: relevant contribution to research
 - Work-in-Progress Talk: preliminary results
- Participation in the publication (yes/no)
- Length of the title: max. 150 characters
- Text body: 500 words (Arial 12px; 1.5 line spacing)
- Bibliography: quoted texts and further literature
- Curriculum Vitae
- Contact details: surname, first name, E-Mail, institution, telephone number

Guidelines for Paper Submission

Selected papers will be published in an edited volume. The language of the book will be English. In case you have been notified about the admission of your proposal, we expect you to participate in the publication of the edited volume. Please follow the instructions below. Deadline for the Submission of papers is **Thursday, 31 May 2018, midnight**.

- Language: English
- Length of the title: max. 150 characters
- Keywords: max. 6
- Abstract: max. 150 words
- Font and font size: Arial 12px
- 1.5 line spacing
- Long paper (Lecture): 9,000 words, plus bibliography
- Short paper (Work-in-Progress Talk): 4,500 words, plus bibliography
- Bibliographic references after APA 6th Style Referencing
(https://library.sydney.edu.au/subjects/downloads/citation/APA%20Complete_2012.pdf)
- Captions with references

Peer Review

There will be a peer-review process for the submitted proposals and papers, carried out by a Scientific Committee of renowned experts.

Deadlines

You will be notified of the acceptance of your proposal by **Wednesday, 28 February 2018**. If you are going to participate in the publication, please notice that the deadline for papers submission expires on **Thursday, 31 May 2018, midnight**.

- Submission of abstracts: **Wednesday, 31 January 2018, midnight**
- Author notification: **Wednesday, 28 February 2018**
- Submission of papers: **Thursday, 31 May 2018, midnight**
- Conference: **Friday, 15 June 2018 (4 p.m.-8 p.m.) and Saturday, 16 June 2018 (9 a.m.-6 p.m.)**

Location

Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT), Campus South, Karlsruhe.
The location will be announced in due course.

Scientific Head

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Patronage

The conference “Genealogy of Popular Science“ is funded by the Schleicher-Stiftung in cooperation with the KIT-Stiftung. We would like to thank the Schleicher-Stiftung, the Commerzbank and the KIT-Stiftung for the great support that makes this project possible.

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