Acknowledgements

In writing this book, I have had the pleasure and the honor of benefiting from the input of many bright scholars, close friends, and simply brilliant human beings. The single most influential person in this project was Ruth Mayer, my adviser, who offered both encouragement and criticism throughout the years, and who, when the project felt most overwhelming and the chapters didn’t seem to form a flowing argument, stepped in and told me what I needed to do to get this finished.

I am indebted to a group of people at and around the University of Hannover in Germany, who encouraged me to start the project, who shaped its very beginnings, and who continued to be influential over the years. These include everyone who read and commented on my chapters in the American Studies colloquium, especially Felix Brinker, Shane Denson, Svenja Fehlhaber, Florian Groß, Christina Meyer, Bettina Soller, and Kirsten Twelbeck. Felix deserves special credit for alerting me to the operational aesthetic of serial forms, and Svenja for being the best possible office buddy. Additionally, Sandra Dinter and Stefanie John proved to be invaluable friends. I thank them for being my library family and emotional support system. Some of the people just mentioned spent additional time reading and commenting upon individual chapters in the final stages of this project—thank you all, again. In Hannover I am also indebted to Kerstin Sjöstedt-Hellmuth, who never doubted my capacity to do this in the first place.

This book is one result of a shared project with Ruth Mayer on film serials and mass culture, which was part of the larger Berlin-based research unit on ‘Popular Seriality – Aesthetics and Practice’. Particularly its speaker Frank Kelleter, who functioned as my second adviser, deserves credit for insisting on some necessary final alterations to the manuscript. I am indebted to all members and associates of the group but especially to Kathleen Loock, whose input is most notable in the chapter on The Exploits of Elaine, and to Maria Sulimma for all of her work within the research unit. I would also like to extend my thanks to my advisers in the research unit’s workshop sessions and in the international mentoring program, particularly Scott Higgins, Rob King, Sean O’ Sullivan, and William Uricchio. Scott’s input on shared conference panels and in numerous moments of ‘shop talk’ was immensely valuable, as was his meticulous review of the final manuscript.

I would also like to acknowledge the help and input of some people who enabled my various research trips throughout the years. Thanks especially to John V. Richardson Jr. at UCLA and to Jeanne Roe Smith, who enabled my
stay in Los Angeles. I’m also grateful for the support of the staff at Margret Herrick Library, the UCLA Film and Television Archive, the Hugh M. Hefner Moving Image Archive at USC, the George Eastman House, and the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. I would furthermore like to extend my thanks to the series editor Thomas Elsaesser and to everyone at Amsterdam University Press. At this point I am sure I have failed to mention some people who’ve been helpful along the way, so allow me to apologize in advance.

The final paragraph of my acknowledgments is reserved for the people who contributed to the whole enterprise in ways they may or may not realize. Gretchen Colon and the entire Colon and Innerst families taught me English and showed me the Midwest, sparking my interest in American Studies. My own family (the Brasch, Knaack, Thomas, and Windmüller branches) plus my friend Anne Pohl never questioned the value or feasibility of what I was doing and were supportive all along the way. My final and most important acknowledgment goes to Arne Knaack, who has shared his life with me for more than a decade and who experienced the ups and downs of the entire process with me. I couldn’t have done it without you, and I wouldn’t have wanted to.