Reading in theory
and in higher education practice

Over the past few decades, the field of literary studies has increasingly been interested in the question of *how* we read (Bennett 1995; Littau 2006). Developments in cognitive and cultural studies, hermeneutics, reception theory as well as digital humanities have contributed to enlarging our understanding (of theories) of reading and have gradually brought together previously separated domains of study such as reader-response theory (Iser 1976), narratology (Genette 1972/1983), sociology of reading (Bourdieu 1979) and history of reading (Manguel 1996). While, initially and most influentially, approaches to reading in the context of literary studies have viewed reading as a cognitive process and focused on the content of texts, cognitive literary studies and narratology (Herman 2002) shifted the focus to the mental processes by which readers make sense of texts. More recent approaches have pushed further in this direction by conceptualizing reading as social cognition and exploring it as an embodied act (Caracciolo 2014; Kukkonen 2017, 2019). In distinction to the field's tradition of 'close reading', different ways of reading have also engendered methodological innovations, tellingly called 'distant reading' (Moretti 2005, 2013; see also Bode 2017) or 'hyper reading' (Hayles 2012), which, in turn, have played a role in the current rise of interest in the future of reading in the attention economy of the (post)digital age (Berg/Seeber 2016; McLean Davies et al. 2020; Sommer 2020).

We invite articles which engage with reading as either cognitive process, physical activity, social behaviour or institutionalized practice (Birke 2016: 8-11) or blend these aspects in considering their interactive dynamics. Contributions may engage with, but are not limited to, the following questions: If meaning is no longer recognized as being carried solely by texts, where do we locate (the production of) meaning? Do experimental, hybrid and/or intermedial texts require different reading strategies? How are readers constructed and written (about)? How are we to account for the challenges posed by gendered and intersectional theories of reading? How do digital textualities affect reading practices? How do the readings we teach relate to the flourishing of online book culture and layman's criticism? What are the (disciplinary, social, neurological) consequences when analysis through machine algorithms is recognized as a form of reading as valid as close reading? How do we as scholars understand (ourselves as) readers? In the age of the entrepreneurial neoliberal university, how (much

time or credit points) do we invest in reading and what kind of readers and readings do literary curricula foster in the face of demands of employability?

For the special issue publication, we welcome contributions of 5,000 words (incl. footnotes) in Dutch or English. **The deadline for articles is 15 October 2021.** Please send an **abstract of max. 500 words and a 100-word author bio** to Janine Hauthal (janine.hauthal@vub.be) and Hannah Van Hove (havhove@vub.be) **by 15 July 2021**. Contributions will be published in a special issue section of *CLW – Cahier voor Literatuurwetenschap*, a peer-reviewed journal published by Academia Press. All manuscripts should reference and be formatted according to the *CLW* style guide and may be submitted in Word format. All manuscripts are peer-reviewed and are scheduled for **publication in autumn 2022**.

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