

Call for Abstracts for Issue 16 (Spring 2024)

Ways of Reading

With the sixteenth issue of *On_Culture*, we want to explore various approaches to reading cultural artifacts and events in an attempt to answer the question: What are the affordances of particular forms of reading and what do they bring forth? While the ability to decipher words and distinguish individual characters is perceived as a key skill and taught from an early age, philosophical traditions introduce us to critical approaches to interpreting broader cultural phenomena.

Paul Ricoeur (1965) coined the term “hermeneutics of suspicion,” which describes a way of reading between the lines and teasing out how an author is alienated from the text. Other scholars have proposed alternative ways of reading, examples of which can be found in literary critic Eve Sedgwick’s concept of “reparative reading” (cf. 2003 [1995]). This approach offers an alternative to the prescription of “paranoid reading” as implied in the hermeneutics of suspicion. Rita Felski’s “post-critical reading” (2015) makes a similar move through a rhetorical approach that emphasizes the ethos of a given argument rather than its hidden causes. Additional forms of reading include Karen Barad’s “diffractive reading” (2007), which approaches phenomena through the lens of physical metaphors such as reflexivity or diffraction. This begs the question: Which novel forms of decoding can update earlier paradigms?

Many schools of thought have established themselves through their respective ways of reading, from classical ones such as psychoanalysis, Marxism, feminism, to more recent ones such as deconstruction, postcolonial, and queer theory. This is also the case in the traditional literary studies approach of “close readings,” which has interesting parallels in other disciplines, such as Clifford Geertz’s anthropological “thick description” (1973). In addition, the digital turn has enabled the emergence of new forms of reading such as Franco Moretti’s concept of “distant reading” (2013 [2000]): a modality of reading that, rather than focusing on a singular text, as with close reading, decodes a massive amount of texts by means of computational tools and quantitative analysis.

In addition to the above-mentioned concepts, the emergence of multimodal artifacts, notions of multiliteracy (cf. Cope/Kalantzis 2013), as well as multiperspectivity have increased. With multiperspectivity being frequently employed in literary analysis (cf. Hartner 2014), history didactics (cf. Bergmann 2008), and philosophical debate, it becomes apparent how important considerations of subjectivity have become. This realization poses questions regarding the utilization, fostering, and teaching of multiliteracy and theoretical multiperspectivistic approaches to the reading of (inter)cultural texts.

Furthermore, a layer of globalization and a trend toward intermediality (cf. Rajewsky 2002) has fostered the importance of translations and adaptations across various cultures, languages, and media. This development is also visible in the increased popularity of mixed media such as the graphic novel and comic (cf. McCloud 1993), digital and online story-telling (cf. Weigel-Heller 2018), cinematic intermediality (cf. Knowles/Schmid 2021), and musico-literary fiction (cf. Wolf 1999; cf. Teague 2021). With heightened complexity regarding the source media, the literary and interpretative capacity necessary to construct meaning leads us to new ways of reading.

As shown above, scholars have introduced various ways of reading in an attempt to provide orientation within a complex reality. However, there is no prescription as to which way of reading is preferable in a specific context due to the availability of a tremendous amount of alternative or contrasting concepts. This brings forward two of the questions we would be interested in answering. Firstly, how do we choose a particular way of reading in a given context? Do we choose to blend different approaches? And, secondly, why is any (selected) approach preferable to one of its alternatives? To answer these questions, both the affordances of each and the respective medium can be taken into consideration. With these considerations in mind, we necessarily ask ourselves: What are the implications of our acts of reading?

We invite scholars from a diverse spectrum of disciplines—from anthropology, linguistics, didactics, literary studies, philosophy, cultural sociology, political sciences, law, and the arts to information sciences and digital humanities—to contribute to this issue and engage in an interdisciplinary reflection on ways of reading, their limits and potentials.

Possible topics include but are not limited to:

- (New) philosophies of reading (e.g. Marxist, psychoanalytic, genealogical, queer, postcolonial, deconstructivist)
- Relationships between competing ways of reading
- Politics of readership
- Institutional or cultural contexts of reading
- Reading non-textual culture
- Reception of visual culture
- Epistemological consequences of ways of reading
- Performativity of reading
- Corporeality of reading (e.g. tools, embodiment, medium)
- Reading spaces/spaces of reading
- Approaches to multiliteracy
- Implications of multiperspectivity
- Expressions of intermediality
- Considerations of translations and adaptations

Based on the topics mentioned above, we are also particularly interested in the question of how new forms of reading may relate to earlier approaches or alternate forms.

If you are interested in having a peer reviewed academic article featured in this issue of *On_Culture*, please submit an abstract of 300 words with the article title, 5–6 keywords, a short biographical note, and your email address to content@on-culture.org (subject line “Abstract Submission”) no later than **May 15, 2023**. You will be notified by **June 1, 2023** whether your paper proposal has been accepted. The final date for full paper submissions is **September 15, 2023** and the issue will be published in **May 2024**.

Please note: *On_Culture* also features *_Perspectives*, a section devoted to shorter, creative pieces pertaining to each issue topic. These can be interviews, essays, opinion pieces, reviews of exhibitions, analyses of cultural artifacts and events, photo galleries, videos, works of art... and more! These contributions are uploaded on a rolling basis and can be connected to every one of *On_Culture's* issues. Interested in contributing? Send your ideas to the Editorial Team at any time: content@on-culture.org

About *On_Culture: The Open Journal for the Study of Culture*

On_Culture: The Open Journal for the Study of Culture (ISSN: 2366-4142) is a biannual, peer-reviewed academic e-journal edited by doctoral researchers, postdocs, and professors working at the International Graduate Centre for the Study of Culture (GCSC) at Justus Liebig University Giessen. It provides a forum for reflecting on the study of culture. It investigates, problematizes, and develops key concepts and methods in the field by means of a collaborative and collective process. *On_Culture* is dedicated to

fostering such engagements as well as the cultural dynamics at work in thinking about and reflecting on culture.

The journal consists of three sections: peer-reviewed academic *_Articles*, as well as *_Essays*, and the aforementioned *_Perspectives*. *On_Culture* brings new approaches and emerging topics in the (trans)national study of culture 'on the line' and, in so doing, fills the gap__ between 'on' and 'culture.' There are numerous ways of filling the gap, and a plurality of approaches is something for which the journal strives with each new issue.

Please note: As a commitment to the open access to scholarship, *On_Culture* does not charge any Article Processing Charges (APCs) for the publication of your contribution.

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