

- Call for Articles

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Special Issue »The Practice of Literary Theory«

At least since the establishment of praxeological research, ›theory‹ and ›practice‹ have no longer been conceived as categorical opposites. As Steffen Martus and Carlos Spoerhase claim, »[a]gainst the dichotomy of practice and theory runs the suggestion that contemplating, reflecting, or even theorizing themselves are already activities« (2022, 173sq.). Praxeological research has proven from various perspectives that theoretical speaking can be described as ›theorizing‹ and thus also as practice (e.g., Schmidt 2016). This, of course, also applies to theorizing about literature.

This *JLT* issue welcomes contributions that address the topic of »the practice of literary theory« from a theoretical, praxeological, or historical perspective. While some guiding questions are listed below, they are intended more broadly as prompts to stimulate introspection:

(1) How can a concept of ›literary theory as practice‹ be spelled out *theoretically*? What are the consequences of modifying the established pair of opposites ›theory versus practice‹ or even the triad ›theory – method – practical application‹? Is a self-observation or a self-reflection about literary theory sufficient, or is a particular praxeology necessary? What strategies of inclusion and exclusion do theoretical approaches, e.g., theories of interpretation, pursue with regard to accepted objects, procedures, and ways of speaking? What might be the ›implicit logic‹ and *tricks of the trade* (Becker 1998) for theorizing about literature, and what kind of ›literacy‹ comes into play?

(2) With a *praxeological* focus, one might ask: How is theorizing done? Are there – following e.g., Fleck or Hacking – different ›styles of literary theory‹, i.e., common and distinguishable ways of dealing with literary theory topics? If so, what are they? And how exactly do such styles differ, e.g., in the treatment of literary theoretical terms, such as ›literature‹, ›meaning‹, or ›interpreting‹? Can we identify different styles of argumentation? What sociological factors are to be reckoned with when it comes to implementing theories? How can far-reaching praxeological perspectives – beyond the verbal production of theoretical statements, for example, as a material, technique-related and bodily dimension of actions – be transformed into specific investigations?

(3) Which positions and developments in the history of a discipline can be traced historically with regards to the formation of literary theories, the carrying out of theoretical debates, and the discussion of concepts and procedures? From this perspective, individual positions could be reconstructed synchronically and examined for their characteristics and strategies of presentation. Or, diachronically, one could ask about tendencies that have emerged, prevailed, or simply failed to prevail in different phases of

theory formation. Why did they prevail or not? What role do networks, citation communities, and contexts of specific ›schools‹ play? How might the disruptions and continuities in the history of theory be viewed differently when literary theory is recognized as practice?

We welcome contributions from literary studies and neighbouring disciplines that address these (and further) questions related to the practice of literary theory.

Contributions should not exceed 50,000 characters (including blanks) in length and have to be submitted by 15 February 2024. Please submit your contribution electronically via our website www.jltonline.de under »Articles«.

Articles are chosen for publication by an international advisory board in a double-blind review process.

For further information about JLT and to view the submission guidelines, please visit www.jltonline.de/index.php/articles (»About JLT« and »For Authors«) or contact the editorial office at jlt@phil.uni-goettingen.de.

SUBMISSIONS THAT DO NOT FOCUS ON ONE OF OUR SPECIAL TOPICS CAN BE SUBMITTED CONTINUOUSLY VIA OUR WEBSITE.

JLT aims to publish work on fundamental issues in methodology and the construction of theories and concepts, as well as articles on particular literary theories. Case studies, i.e. studies on specific authors, works, or problems of literary history, are accepted only if they adopt a predominantly systematic perspective, contribute to the reconstruction of the history of literary theory, or pursue innovative methods. Moreover, the Journal of Literary Theory contains work reviewing and outlining trends of theoretical debates in literary theory and related disciplines.

Please contact the editorial office if you have further questions.

References

Becker, Howard S., *Tricks of the Trade. How to Think about your Research while you're Doing it*, Chicago, IL 1998.

Martus, Steffen/Carlos Spoerhase, *Geistesarbeit. Eine Praxeologie der Geisteswissenschaften*, Frankfurt a.M. 2022.

Schmidt, Robert, Theoretisieren. Fragen und Überlegungen zu einem konzeptionellen und empirischen Desiderat der Soziologie der Praktiken, in: Hilmar Schäfer (Hg.), *Praxistheorie*, Bielefeld 2016, 245–263.