The goal: to make literary studies relevant for everyday life.

Reading in the Age of Trump

The Possibilities, Practices and Futures of Literary Studies Now

The Problem

What is the use of literary studies in an age of extremes?

Is it to promote reading? To celebrate the usefulness of literature? To support other disciplines in their work, as interpreters of their narratives, as teachers of writing? What, in fact, should the work of literary studies be? Who needs professional readers of books, when anybody can do it, and it does not seem to help, anyway?

The Project

Literary Studies Now: A Three Tiered Research Agenda

1. Contemporary Literary Theory: the Anglophone debate between „critique” and „postcritique,” the notion of engaging literature more affectively and positively, and the relationship between professional and non-professional practices of reading.

The goal: to develop a contemporary theory of reading.

2. Contemporary Literature: the discussion of reading and readers as exhibited by contemporary fiction.

The goal: to discover literature’s own sense of the work of reading.

3. „Literaturwissenschaftsvermittlung”: a project of local, translocal, and online outreach designed to communicate the usefulness of the specific work of literary studies to a wider, non-professional audience.

The goal: to make literary studies relevant for everyday life.

The Object

A Future Literary Studies

To develop a vision for the future of literary studies, one which derives from its critical object, literature, from its own theoretical reflections, and from a realization that whatever work literary studies and the humanities at large do must be public, accessible, and relevant to life. A way of understanding the work of reading.