



Metacritic Journal for Comparative Studies and Theory

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CFP: INTERSECTIONS OF POST- AND ECO-CRITICAL THEORIES IN PRESENT-DAY HUMANITIES AND CULTURAL STUDIES

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Proposal deadline (150-word abstract, 5-7 keywords, 150-word bioprofile): **1 May 2023**

Acceptance notice: **15 May 2023**

Deadline for full papers (5,000-7,000 words for articles, 2,000-3,000 words for book reviews, 150-word abstract, 5-7 keywords, 3-5 theoretical references, 150-word bioprofile): **31 July 2023**

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Metacritic Journal for Comparative Studies and Theory is an open-access, peer-review, online publication for academic research, published twice a year by the Faculty of Letters, Babes-Bolyai University of Cluj, Romania. It promotes free-access for academic work and it welcomes authors who want to share their research and resources with their peers. It encourages, recognizes and rewards intellectual excellence in interdisciplinary and intermedial approaches of literary culture, visual culture and theory. The journal welcomes papers in English (or, for regionally oriented topics, Romanian) from the following domains: comparative studies, including digital and posthuman studies; literary studies, cultural studies, including social and gender studies; media and film studies, literary criticism and theory, cultural poetics.

In keeping with Bruno Latour's aesthetic and philosophical anthropology, the figures of fiction are mediators, "diplomatic" agents that contribute to the development of a *composition*. Latour's *Compositionist Manifesto* from 2010 is the *mise en abyme* of an entire cultural poetics which does not deconstruct, but prefers to recompose "ruins," out of ecological care for cultural retrievals in the age of the Anthropocene: "While critics still believe that there is too much belief and too many things standing in the way of reality, compositionists believe that there are enough ruins and that everything has to be reassembled piece by piece" (Latour 2010, 475-476). The compositionist, reconstructive method takes its inspiration from artistic practice (literary, pictorial, musical, visual, or performative), therefore offering an

alternative to iconoclastic, deconstructive manners of doing critique within humanities and art studies.

Invoking the Latourian insistence on composition over critique, literary historian Rita Felski argues against the “school of suspicion” and proposes instead a postcritical approach (which is not necessarily an equivalent of anti-critique), a “curatorial”, restorative method of text analysis. The so-called postcritical turn in cultural, literary and media studies brings forth new interpretive methods focused on the particularities of the objects of analysis (whether literary texts, visual artworks, or intermedial products) rather than on a pre-existing critical-ideological apparatus: the “descriptive turn” (embraced by the literary theorist Heather Love), Stephen Best and Sharon Marcus’ plea for surface reading, the strategy of “reading with the grain” (propounded by Timothy Bewes, in a polemical take on criticism that goes *against* the grain), the “object-oriented” criticism advocated by philosopher Graham Harman, and the “reparative reading” (derived from the work of Melanie Klein and promoted by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick).

Other theorists reaffirm an ecology of reading and artmaking, considering literature and artistic activities as generators of social coexistence, of behaviour patterns and ways of self-relation, which pertain to the aesthetics (and ecology) of existence. Certain concepts that belong to the art world are reconsidered and, although they do not entail whole paradigm shifts, they have been lately expanded beyond the aesthetic sphere. Relevant in this respect is the kind of aesthetic anthropology practiced by literary theorist Marielle Macé, who argues that *style* can be recontextualised as a way of being/ *manière d’être* and thus accounts for a stylistics of existence.

Taking into account the ecological reappraisal of aesthetic and cultural theory, the forthcoming issue of the *Metacritic Journal for Comparative Studies and Theory*, to be published in December 2023, will be dedicated to a comprehensive range of methodological approaches, placed in between postcriticism (as promoted by Rita Felski, in the aftermath of Latour’s “nonmodern” cultural anthropology), contemporary ecocriticism as practised within intermedial studies, environmental humanities, affect ecologies and the *new aestheticism* in humanities and art studies, posthuman and (post)medial studies.

This issue of the *Metacritic Journal for Comparative Studies and Theory* invites papers that engage with such theoretical debates and reveal their practical-analytical outcomes. Topics may include but are not limited to:

- A postcritical curatorial perspective on literature and the arts;
- Postcriticism as ecological practice;
- The Latourian legacy in art criticism and theory;

- Can we practise criticism beyond critical theory? Posthuman and post/ intermedial challenges to *critique*;
- The transformative and reparative potential of affect theory;
- Creating critical communities in post/ intermedial times;
- Exploring compositionist ecologies in literature and the arts;
- More-than-human/ posthuman relations and assemblages in the Anthropocene.

Please submit a 150-word original proposal that clearly explains how it will contribute to, revise, or depart from existing debates around the relevance of postcritical and ecocritical interpretive trends in cultural theory, as well as in present-day literary studies, media studies, film and performance studies. Both proposals and final texts should be in English and should observe our guidelines as they appear on our website: <http://metacriticjournal.com> for -authors The final submission should include: a 5,000-7,000-word article, including a 150-word abstract, 5-7 keywords, a list of references (only cited works), 150-word author's bio and the author's photo-portrait (jpg, separate file). Proposals and final submissions should be formatted as Word documents and sent to metacriticjournal@gmail.com.

Further Reading:

- Ahern, Stephen (ed.). *Affect Theory and Literary Critical Practice: A Feel for the Text*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2019.
- Bewes, Timothy. "Reading with the Grain: A New World in Literary Criticism", *Differences. A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies*, 21 (3), 2010, pp. 1-13.
- Citton, Yves. *The Ecology of Attention*, translated by Barnaby Norman, Polity Press, 2017.
- Clark, Timothy. *The Value of Ecocriticism*, Cambridge University Press, 2019.
- Di Leo, Jeffrey. *Criticism after Critique. Aesthetics, Literature, and the Political*, Palgrave, 2014.
- Felski, Rita. *The Limits of Critique*, Chicago University Press, 2015.
- Haraway, Donna. "Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Plantationocene, Chthulucene: Making Kin", *Environmental Humanities*, 6, 2015, pp. 159-165.
- Harman, Graham. "The Well-Wrought Broken Hammer: Object-Oriented Literary Criticism", *New Literary History*, 43 (2), 2012, pp. 183-203.
- Ingram, David. "Cognitivist Film Theory and the Bioculturalist Turn in Eco-film Studies", *Framing the Environmental Humanities*, edited by Bergthaller, Hannes and Peter Bjerre Mortensen, Brill Rodopi, 2018, pp. 190-204.
- Latour, Bruno. "Why Has Critique Run Out of Steam? From Matters of Fact to Matters of

Concern”, *Critical Inquiry*, 30(2), 2004, pp. 225-248.

- ---. *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory*, Oxford University Press, 2005.
- ---. *A Cautious Prometheus? A Few Steps toward a Philosophy of Design (with Special Attention to Peter Sloterdijk)*. Keynote lecture for the Networks of Design Meeting of the Design History Society Falmouth, Cornwall, 3rd September 2008, pp. 1-13.
- ---. “An Attempt at Writing a Compositionist Manifesto”, *New Literary History*, Johns Hopkins University Press, 41(3), 2010, pp. 471-490.
- ---. *Enquête sur les modes d’existence: Un anthropologie des modernes*, Éditions La Découverte, 2012.
- ---. *An Inquiry into Modes of Existence. An Anthropology of the Moderns [2012]*, translated by Catherine Porter, Harvard University Press, 2013.
- Leitch, Vincent B., *Literary Criticism in the 21st Century*, Bloomsbury, 2014.
- Macé, Marielle. *Styles. Critique de nos formes de vie*, Gallimard, 2016.
- Weik von Mossner, Alexa. *Affective Ecologies: Empathy, Emotion, and Environmental Narrative*, Ohio State University Press, 2017.