

At the Dusk of Literature?—literary extremities.

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Discussing new challenges for the 21st-century literature in the wake of the newly emergent neurobiological scheme of thought in her *Plasticity at the Dusk of Writing: Dialectic, Destruction, Deconstruction* (2003, trans. 2005), the French philosopher Catherine Malabou famously argued that writing must now face the dawn of the post-deconstructive era. Venturing beyond deconstruction, Malabou points to a necessary “reorientation of literature” along the lines of neurobiological research, whose objective is to reclaim the body from either philosophical or scientific reductionism.¹ Interrogating the notion of writing construed in the influential paradigm of deconstructive thinking of Blanchot and Foucault as *the thought from the outside*, a neutral space where the subject finds shelter, in more recent works *The New Wounded: From Neurosis to Brain Damage* (2007, trans. 2017) and *The Ontology of the Accident: An Essay on Destructive Plasticity* (2009, trans. 2012), the philosopher speaks of the outside as an unthinkable post-traumatic space that literature must confront in new ways. According to Malabou, the textual domain now finds itself at the twilight point, where the Derridean model no longer holds and where writing finds itself *in extremis*. At the same time, *the dusk of writing* signifies a possible transformative horizon for writing.

One notable example of present-day poetic writing’s renegotiation of extremity has been offered by the American conceptual poet, scholar and editor Divya Victor, curator of the special feature *Extreme Texts* published in *Jacket2*. For Victor, writing the call for papers in 2017 only several months into Trump’s presidency meant taking into account the reality in which “a majority of Americans had acquiesced to live, *normally*, under *extreme* conditions, with denuded civil rights, attenuated freedoms of press, increasing inequality of wages, and diminishing access to medical care, and under misogynist, transphobic, and supremacist policies.”² *Extreme*

¹ Malabou, Catherine. “What is Neuro-literature?” *SubStance: A Review of Theory and Literary Criticism*, vol. 45, no. 2, 2016, p. 81.

² Victor, Divya, editor. Preface. *Extreme Texts*. <https://jacket2.org/feature/extreme-texts>

Texts offers an impressive range of modes of thinking about the notion of extremity in contemporary experimental poetry and poetics, reclaiming the term's complexity visible in the ways the contributors investigated the condition of texts in terms of their own limit(s) and excess(es), evident in their material or affective extremity, as well as manifested in their radical philosophical and conceptual stakes, which, as Victor had certainly hoped, successfully accounts for the complexity of the term "extremity," freeing it from the current association with "extremism." Similarly, during her keynote lecture at the 2017 Annual American Comparative Literature Association Conference in Utrecht, Mieke Bal insisted on reclaiming the words "radical" and "radicalization" from the discursive grip of mass media and politics in order to make these two terms usable again for art and literature.

We welcome both individual scholarly abstracts that consider the topic alongside Malabou's new materialist post-deconstructive reflection on writing's extremity as a space from which to think its present and future; and we equally encourage a variety of other approaches that reflect on the significance and complexity of the notion of extremity as it continues to affect, transform and manifest itself in literature in the 21st century. The possible range of topics include, but are certainly not limited to, the following:

- neuro/biological approaches to narrative(s);
- post-trauma, witnessing, silencing & reorientation in literature;
- writings addressing extreme dislocation, displacement, dispersion, erasure, and effacement;
- textual dissonance, text as noise, asemic writing;
- literary responses to biopolitics, technopolitics, psychopolitics and necropolitics;
- poetic (de)formations *in extremis*;
- hermetic and recalcitrant texts, non/narratives;
- radical intersections of writing and other disciplines (e.g., philosophy, science or the arts);
- performance and performativity *in extremis* / extremity in theatre;
- (dark) ecology in narrative(s) in/of the Anthropocene and Neganthropocene;
- radical ways of narrating posthumanism;
- radical facts & radical fictions;
- translating extremes / extreme translations;
- extremities, appendages, horizons, margins;
- boundaries, borders and (non)binaries;
- radical or extreme textual affect(s).

An abstract [max. 300 words] should be submitted as an email attachment to the issue editors:

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In your email, please include your name, affiliation, email address, title of the proposal, abstract, 5 keywords and a brief bio.

Important deadlines:

Deadline for submission of article proposals (max. 300 words): **January 31, 2022**

Deadline for editors' acceptance/rejection of proposals: **February 28, 2022**

Deadline for submission of full articles (max. 6000 words): **October 1, 2022**

Deadline for peer review and final acceptance/rejection of articles: **December 1, 2022**

Deadline for submission of final versions of articles: **February 1, 2023**

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