

**POETRY. EXPERIENCE. ATTENTION**  
**The 4th Biennial Conference 6-8 June 2023, Oslo**

**Individual abstracts alphabetically organized**

**Panel proposals from page 111**

**A**

**Carina Agnesdotter**

Senior lecturer

University of Gotenburg

[carina.agnesdotter@lir.gu.se](mailto:carina.agnesdotter@lir.gu.se)

**”Light a fire under your rage” from peace movement to #MeToo**

Ever since the rise of the Swedish social movements in the second half of the 19th century, poetry has held a significant position in the activities of the movements. Poems were performed at public manifestations and internal meetings, and were printed and spread in movement magazines, daily press and poetry collections. The tradition lived on in the new social movements that arose in the 1960s and 70s, with the new women's-, peace- and environmental movements as examples. Thus, in the context of collective social and political struggles, poetry has been used in similar ways in different eras.

In a previous study I have shown that the poems in these contexts contribute, among other things, to exploring the problems and conditions of the rhetorical situations the movements engage in, to convincing readers and listeners to adopt the movement's ideological positions, and to strengthening the movement's collective identity. They do so precisely by poetic form. When aesthetic concepts are used in a poem whose purpose is persuasion in a rhetorical situation, the concepts become rhetorically effective. The complexity of the poetic language and the limited concretization of the poems' arguments allows for a collaborative audience, thus contributing to the poems' rhetorical effectiveness and cognitive and emotional functions (Agnesdotter, 2014). One could say that the poetic form draws the audience's attention and directs it to both the poem itself, and to political and social problems in the outside world.

The movements' poems are often strongly time-bound and many fall into oblivion when the problems they address disappear from the political agenda and movement activity fades away. However, some poems survive and are reused in new situations. An example of this is the Swedish writer Ingrid Sjöstrand's poem "Elda under din vrede" ["Light a fire under your rage"] from the collection *Det blåser en sol* [A Sun is Blowing] from 1979. The poem was originally used mainly within the new peace movement of the 1980s, but has since been used by new movements engaged in quite different issues. Since the fall of 2017, the poem is seen more and more often in connection with #MeToo and the phrase "Light a fire under your rage" increasingly appears as a motto for the Swedish metoo-movement. Thus, for more than forty years the poem has retained its relevance, drawing the attention of new readers and in relation to new rhetorical situations.

What makes this poem so useful in these different contexts? How does it relate to the rhetorical situations where it is used, and how can it be understood in relation to concepts such as *poetic attention* and *poetic experience*? In this paper, I discuss these questions based on some of the uses of the poem, with a particular focus on the peace movement of the 1980s and today's metoo-movement.

### **Johan Alfredsson**

Associate Professor

Gothenburg University

[johan.alfredsson@lir.gu.se](mailto:johan.alfredsson@lir.gu.se)

### **The Overturning Potential of Poetic Language**

Poetic form varies, poetic forms vary – not least in our time. This variety is one of the paradoxical traits of what we might refer to as “poetic”. This aspect could be, and has been, described from a number of theoretical positions. Joseph M. Conte has referred to as a binary between “protean” and “proteinic”, Paul Hernadi has spoken of it in terms of “concurrency”, Mutlu Konuk Blasing calls it the “non-rational order” of poetic language, whereas Lucy Alford has recently talked in terms of varieties of “poetic attention”.

In contrast to other discourses, the poetic does invariably involve (the potential to) its own negation, and a certain, unavoidable and inherent, degree of randomness and arbitrariness, no matter how much a poet attempts to be in control of the process. This has to do with poetry’s actual working on language, not only with it, or through it. Or in Alford’s terms: “how poems compose attention and how attention is in turn poetry’s most essential ‘raw material’” (Alford 4). In his critique of the legacy

of Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic theory, Jean-Jacques Lecercle states that this legacy tends to overlook the premise that saying "I speak language" always needs to be complemented by also claiming that "language speaks". Furthermore, Lecercle claims that it is within poetry and nonsensical texts that this premise is most obvious. What he refers to as "the remainder of language" is precisely that which cannot be controlled. The more we try to control it, the more it tends to become performative – and bite back! It could be claimed that Lecercle's complementary statement might be stretched even further, into "language speaks me" (Alfredsson 45).

In my paper, I study these facets of the poetic within a few various poetic forms. The general idea is that through the poetic aspect of "concurrency", poetic texts always come with a potential to overturn not only themselves and their claims, but also other control and power structures. The remainder of language might – in its biting back – bring with it other remainders, groups and discourses that are being kept out of power. My readings will exemplify a number of such power structures, such as class, gender, race, and age.

### **Hadle Oftedal Andersen**

Professor

University of Stavanger

[hadle.o.andersen@uis.no](mailto:hadle.o.andersen@uis.no)

### **Shaun Ryder: 'Most of these men sing like Serbs'.**

Derek Attridge describes poetry's movement "From Homer's Listeners to Shakespeare's readers". A continuation of this focus on media could involve the emergence of recorded sound. For most people, this is the medium of what may be described as the contemporary poetry most relevant to the masses: popular song lyrics.

In this paper, I will investigate some aspects of popular song lyrics mediated through recordings. And I will focus on the fact that the medium may offer permanence, but it also offers an uncertainty as to what the lyrics actually say. This is in part due to the vocals in various forms of dance-oriented music not being mixed so clearly in the foreground. And it is in part due to audiences not having the language of the lyrics they listen to as their mother tongue.

I will focus on lyrics by Shaun Ryder, on the Black Grape album *It's Great When You're Straight...YEAH!* (1995). These are printed as a poetry volume, Shaun Ryder: *Wrote for Luck: Selected Lyrics* (2019). What is of special interest to me, is obvious misunderstandings that has been

visible on various websites prior to this publication. Ryder chose to print these instead of what he actually sings. Here are two examples:

Misunderstandings, printed in *Wrote for Luck*:

We are the chi-chi tribe/ And we are over-friendly  
Don't talk to me about heroes/ Most of these men sink like subs

The actual lyrics, not printed:

We are the tea-time tribe/ And we are over-friendly  
Don't talk to me about heroes/ Most of these men sing like serfs

While this is quite clearly a result of Ryder's sense of humor, it is at the same time a recognition of the fact that not even the band's most devoted fans understand what he is singing.

Against this background, I will offer a phenomenological interpretation of Ryder's lyrics, as they appear and (partly) disappear within an offered space of continuous, musical presentation. In this sense, the listening experience will unfold as a continuous interplay between listening to the lyrics as lyrics and listening to the sound of the language in its material form, so to speak, as it hides its semantic levels. The result is a received text consisting of larger and smaller extracts. And it is my suggestion that these may be interpreted by the listener partly as individual fragments, partly as starting point for establishing a metonymic connection between these fragments.

I will also show how Ryder's lyrics, even when printed, reveal a fragmented form. Because of this, it is possible for the casual and/or foreign listener to understand what the song is about, and even enjoy the eloquence of the parts where he can recognize the words.

The points presented within this specific analysis has overall relevance to much of recorded song lyrics.

**Leira Araújo-Nieto**

Personal Investigator

University of Granada, Spain

[leira@ugr.es](mailto:leira@ugr.es)

**Nature is the home of the unwanted: Lyrical analysis of The Grove's Tremor, by Mariza Cino**

Maritza Cino (Guayaquil, Ecuador, 1956) has defied time, politics and gender. In the 80's, while Ecuador was going through one of the most conflictual periods marked by conservatism, dictatorship and warfare, Cino published her first poetry book, *Algo parecido al juego* (1983), where she explored the female condition, erotism and her own troubles with religion. Her strong poetic voice shocked the literary scene, mostly composed by male writers at the time.

Almost twenty years later, and after a decade of silence, she revisited some of her *leitmotifs* with the perspective of an intimate and indoors exile in which she've managed to live and write eight collections of poems. In *El temblor de los huertos* (*The Grove's Tremor*, 2022) Cino explores her physical health issues and her difficult upbringing while using the nature as her scenario and the figure of the grove as a symbol to talk about her being a "bad seed", an unloved child: "I'm the most cherished mother/ who turned herself for the arrival of her breed [...] I'm the daughter of an absent mother/ I'm the mother of an absent daughter". Sometimes, she even employs the features of her local environment (the humidity, the swamp that surrounds her city) to express her sense of despair: "I'd crossed the neighborhood the bridge the river/ I'd crossed the river the bridge/ entangled with the neighborhood the bridge the river/ I'd crossed my arms/ and I'd opened my arms to the swamp".

Cino's work emphasizes on the experience of being a female artist, a writer and a poet in Latin America, creating imaginary refuges in order to survive. As the book is structured by spaces, imitating a home that orbits around a grove, this paper aims to analyze Cino's writing by contrasting the ideas proposed by Gaston Bachelard in *The Poetics of Space* (1957) and the concepts explored in *Ecofeminism: Feminist Intersections with Other Animals and the Earth* (2021), by Carol J. Adams and Lori Gruen.

**Åshild M. Aspøy**

PhD Candidate

University of Oslo

[a.m.aspoy@iln.uio.no](mailto:a.m.aspoy@iln.uio.no)

### **The pastoral experience – Sensations of solace and joy**

This paper concerns Gustavian sung poetry, the complex nature notions of the 18th century and the experience of both. In C.M. Bellman's collections *Fredman's Epistles* (1790) and *Fredman's Songs* (1791), he constructs a nature that constantly relates to a human presence, in tension or *equilibrium* (balance). This resonates with thinkings of his time: The 18<sup>th</sup> is the century that first spawned ideas that we now know as ecology.

Depending on how we define and limit the 18<sup>th</sup> century concept of nature, in Fredman's songs and epistles it can be regarded as displayed on a spectrum with two extremes: On the one hand nature appears as a threat to human existence. Man has yet to subdue it completely. On the other hand, nature is kind and provides sanctuary and solace. The first is a dangerous nature. The latter brings joy and indulgence. Bellman's pastoral poetry bestows its lyrical subjects with moments of bliss and ecstasy. He places them in a rural idyll, and – through a double exposure – as urban residents of marginalized spaces, grants them temporary asylum in Arcadia. Aesthetically, this is idyll in the style of Rococo. Mythological references abound. On another level, the idyll works as escape strategies from reality – escapism for a life and conditions far from the rococo mirror-halls and salons.

But Bellman also creates nature poetry without an immanent human presence, without direct lyrical subjects or objects. In these pieces, the aforementioned strategies work directly on the receivers (us), without a lyrical "trigger figure" that conveys what they (we) indirectly are expected to experience. Through the performance, the pleasant experience hits immediately. The result is a highly sensuous poetry, which reaches the recipient's sensory apparatus on various levels with emotional, lyrical, and acoustic hits – and because of an impressionistic quality – even visual. Bellman paints landscapes with words and melody and guides his audience into them. Mediated only by poetic devices, particularly through frequent use of synecdoche – Bellman is a *pars pro toto*-poet – the poetic experience becomes strong and direct. Happiness is bestowed upon us directly, without us relating to an acting "I". At the same time, Bellman often does this through dramatic monologue and paraphrase. An external presence is often invoked, a "you" who receives instructions from a poetic "I".

I will present two examples of Bellman's nature poetry *sans* human presence, the one that pulls the receiver directly into the subject matter. I also ask: What about the unmentioned, what the idyll stands in opposition to? Can we understand the hunt for pleasure as escape from reality? To put it bluntly: When encountering the butterfly at Haga Castle, are we all turned into Bellman figures seeking refuge from a brutal existence? With these questions in mind, I will discuss the experience of immediate pleasure. Furthermore, I discuss the range and implications of poetic experience, rooted in 18th-century nature *topoi*, with notions of bliss and sensitivity.

**Thomas Austenfeld**

Professor

University of Fribourg

[thomas.austenfeld@unifr.ch](mailto:thomas.austenfeld@unifr.ch)

## Poetry is Tuning!

The conference's *Call for Papers* ends with a rich and curious assertion: "Poetry is tuning, and the experience of poetry is a particular kind of tuning with attention to the materiality of language, to the world, and to the forming of attention." The grammatical subject of this sentence shifts subtly from the poem (or "poetry") which is said to be "tuning"—a transitive verb—to the recipient who is said to undergo the experience of "tuning" in granting attention to the poem. The writer evokes both Derek Attridge and Lucy Alford in their complementary arguments about the specific kind of attention that poems require. Attridge emphasizes the physicality of the poem's language, while Alford introduces the eminently useful distinction between the transitive attention to objects evoked by poems and the intransitive attention to the self **provoked** by poems.

A reader must *attend* to the text: this means not only focusing one's mind but—a secondary meaning of "attend"—it also requires waiting. What do readers wait for? Probably a revelation, or a self-revelation of the poem, which will come about over the course of the poem's own time horizon. Or perhaps we're supposed to wait **on** and **with**, rather than **for** the poem.

Neither of the two critics or, for that matter, the author of the CFP, fully considers the musical metaphor inherent in "tuning." In my paper, I want to propose that we employ the term "tuning" more consciously to describe that portion of our attention to a poem that concerns its most characteristic feature: its music. Since poems don't exhaust themselves in letters on a page but are intended to be performed and heard—whether silently or *viva voce* is irrelevant—they, and we, require tuning. A poor performance of a poem is a musical failure as much as it is a semantic or dramatic failure. A lullaby is spoken in a different key than an epithalamion; an ode needs to be tuned differently from a lover's complaint.

Tuning is hard work. Baroque musicians who perform on period instruments are often derided as "spending half their time tuning their instruments and the other half playing out of tune." They know that tuning is a time-intensive business. Tuning an instrument determines the relative pitch of the eventual performance and enables the musician to play a tune that, in the best case, is a "tune beyond us, yet ourselves," in Wallace Stevens's words. From Baroque to Modern, from epic to lyric, poems and their performers require tuning if "attention" is to be rendered efficaciously. While critics have examined Elizabethan poems under the rubric of tuning, contemporary poems still require the same attention.

What would it mean to approach a poem well-tuned? As an analogy, imagine going to a concert, not as an audience member, but as a performer. Broadly, we would begin by slowing down, as every

poem asks us to do. We would attune ourselves to the musical pattern the poem offers, whether this be metrical, accentual, or structured by line breaks as is common in free verse. We would remember that every poem has a "heartbeat," as Alfred Corn puts it; that its structure is architectural, as Brad Leithauser reminds us; that "the music of what happens" (Helen Vendler) is latent in the text and asks to be realized and interpreted by us. With particular attention to 21st-century poems, I will explore in this paper the implications of "tuning" as a constitutive feature of the attention that a poem asks of us as we experience it.

## B

**Ana Barroso**

Researcher

CEAUL (University of Lisbon Centre for English Studies)

[anabarr@gmail.com](mailto:anabarr@gmail.com)

### **Ocean without a shore: memories of tragedy and redemption. Confluences of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and Bill Viola's video art.**

This presentation explores how Shakespeare's ocean and its intersections manifest in Bill Viola's video works. By engaging with the idea of water as a key element as a destructive and transformative force, we illustrate how specific Viola's pieces can be illuminated by the ocean imagery that pervades the Shakespeare work.

Viola's use of water can be traced to the near-drowning experience when he was still a child and it has been acknowledged that a letter by William Strachey describing the shipwreck (of the *Sea Venture* off Bermuda in 1609) provided Shakespeare with details for *The Tempest*, making real near-death experiences mesmerizing underwater moments of fictional transformation and redemption. Reality gives way to illusion and the suffering in the physical world to a spiritual and tranquil ambience, touching deeply readers and viewers.

Shakespeare draws upon some properties of the endless sea such as the flow, the colour and the sound to create a dramatic and poetic effect. The manipulation of filmic time is one of the most striking features in Viola's visual images. It allows the viewer to watch a diffuse figure coalesce, moving from



obscurity into light gradually. In *The Tempest*, the action begins with a storm and ends with the promise of calm seas, a sign of hope and belief: “though the seas threaten, they are merciful.”

Water opens up a dialogic space between literature and video art to inscribe raw human emotions and life experiences while creating a high level of engagement with the readers/viewers.

### **Rosa Berbel**

University of Granada (Spain)

### **Matter Matters: A Poetic of ‘Geoexperience’ in *La piedra alada* [*The Winged Stone*] by José Watanabe**

The ecological crisis has led to an increasing interest in the relationship between humans and the more-than-human world. In the realm of thought, this is attested, for instance, by the rise of New Materialisms, which seek not only to think about animals or plants but also about things, all the rest of material life, addressing their affects and experiences. This reflection is being undertaken not only from philosophical texts but also (or above all) from literary ones. The categories of ‘affect’ and ‘experience’, central to poetic practices, are thus subjected to a deep redefinition that expands the limits of lyric representation beyond the anthropocentric one. This genuine position transforms poetry into a fundamental genre in order to subvert the accelerating loss of diversity and destruction of life typical of the Anthropocene, harnessing empathy like an ethical force.

In this framework, the ideas of Jane Bennett (2010) aim to dislodge our vision of any given nonorganic matter, certainly including geological ones. The Deleuzian-inspired concept of ‘vibrant matter’ tries to show the world as made up of heterogeneous components, each of them with their own will and propensities to desire. In the Latin American context, whose idiosyncrasy makes it a particularly sensitive territory to the effects of environmental crisis, poetic production has largely focused on questioning the binary of nature and culture, imagining new ways of encountering matter in the poem. Hence, my talk is exploring how recent Latin American poetry grapples with the otherness of inanimate non-human beings, inducing an empathy that defamiliarizes the traditional poetic subject to find a specific ‘geoaffect’ (Bennett, 2010) or ‘geoexperience’, a vital materiality called to make the poem a posthuman device.

Specifically, I aim to examine the work of the Peruvian poet José Watanabe, whose book *La piedra alada* (2005) [*The Winged Stone*] participates in this vibrant and effervescent understanding of the matter, chiefly of the stones, in this way to alternatively representing impersonal and non-subjective

ways of life. Following Gabriel Giorgi's ideas in *Formas comunes: animalidad, cultura, biopolítica* (2014), contemporary literature is facing a formal crisis of the living, in which the living is no longer an objectifiable, functional, and measurable reality but an experiment with error, openness, and contingency. Life and the living are not separated from matter, but open to its indeterminacy. Maybe guided by this new materialist purpose, the poems collection by Watanabe actively thematize the limits among humans, animals, plants, and other forms of life, trying to abolish them and claim their vibrant and vital materiality.

To sum up, in their attention to multiple experiences and affects, these poems confirm the transformative potentiality of poetic strategies, uncovering the entanglement of the ecological and political for sustainable futures.

### **Mikayla Bortscher**

Graduate student

University of Alberta

[bortsche@ualberta.ca](mailto:bortsche@ualberta.ca)

This paper takes up the experience of intuitively writing a song as it is unfolding through a phenomenological investigation invoking thinkers such as Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, and Jean Luc Nancy. Husserl writes in *Crisis III* "...let us establish a consistent universal interest in the "how" of the manners of givenness and in the *onta* themselves, not straightforwardly but rather as objects in respect to their 'how...(145)." Which is to say that he aims to approach the ways in which "*onta*" appears before me as a conscious being. This is a primary framework that I shall be working from. During the act of writing a song, I have to let go of myself in order to allow some unknown part of myself to take control. This unknown part produces the melody and lyrics, which seem to appear *for* me instead of merely *from* me. One could say then that I am not merely *expressing* something, but that I am *listening* for a meaning that was previously unknown to me. Relating to ideas in Jean Luc Nancy's book *Listening*, I invoke his notion of "a sense beyond sound(7)" and a sense that "has a propensity to become sound(7)" in the two-pronged meaning-making *onta* of melody and lyric. When I write a song intuitively, that is, without strict guidelines as to what the song will be about, I end up *learning* about things which are occurring in my unconscious mind as they relate to the world. I am simultaneously listening to myself as a reflection while being listened to as a pre-reflective entity. Scruton calls music making a "response." But this is a response that is also a "solicitation" in the words of Merleau-Ponty. Therefore, the songwriting process highlights my enmeshment with the world and objects. The process of intuitive songwriting is a meaning-making process that ultimately highlights the ways in which different aspects of the self, objects, and world, are ultimately enmeshed.

## **Denise Brassard**

Professeure titulaire

Université du Québec à Montréal

[brassard.denise@uqam.ca](mailto:brassard.denise@uqam.ca)

### **'écriture des pierres dans la poésie de Madeleine Gagnon**

Pourvue d'une grande cohérence, l'oeuvre poétique de Madeleine Gagnon (une écrivaine québécoise contemporaine marquante) s'élabore à la faveur d'une gravitation autour de quelques motifs fondateurs et structurants, telles que l'eau et les pierres, ce qui lui confère une charge sensuelle très importante et qui dénote l'attention particulière que l'auteure porte au vivant. Dans sa préface au *Chant de la terre*, Paul Chanel Malenfant remarque l'importance que revêtent ces dernières dans la poésie de l'auteure, que sous-tend une volonté de réconcilier le concept et la matière. Alors que sa démarche poétique est polarisée par la figure de la mère, Malenfant fait l'hypothèse que la pierre y convoquerait le père. « Cette hypothèse d'un lieu de solidarité entre la figure du "père", le thème de la "pensée" et le motif (ce "mot actif" que définit Kristeva) de la "pierre" corroborerait le caractère jubilatoire de l'écriture lapidaire de Madeleine Gagnon. » (Malenfant : 2002, 21) Pour être juste, cette hypothèse ne rend pas compte de la complexité de ce motif, de sa richesse, et surtout ne mesure pas l'importance qu'il revêt sur le plan formel – précisément son caractère actif –, alors qu'il travaille, module, voire transforme l'écriture poétique. En se mettant à l'écoute de la mémoire géologique, le « géoscribe », figure aussi éloquente que mystérieuse, établit cette synonymie parfaite entre *naissance* et *connaissance* que remarque Malenfant. Dans cette communication, je propose d'observer comment, de *Pensées du poème* à *Rêve de pierre*, l'écriture des pierres permet d'articuler lecture et écriture, pensée abstraite et tellurisme de l'expérience-femme, en donnant voix à un sujet qui transcende les catégories du féminin et du masculin en renversant les rapports de filiation.

## **Robert Britten**

University of Cambridge

[rb790@cam.ac.uk](mailto:rb790@cam.ac.uk)

**(T)reading Carefully: Uncertainty in Perception and Poetry**

Conceptions of poetic uncertainty or ambiguity – in language and in its presentation of objects and experience – often contrast these features with the supposed superficiality of ordinary language and day-to-day perceptual experience: ‘a good poem’, writes American poet Jane Hirshfield, ‘[...] startles its reader out of the general trance, awakening an enlarged reality’ (Hirshfield, 63). This basic story is told remarkably often and goes something like this: ordinary perception is habitual and tends to yield a single and stable “way things are”. This being undoubtably useful in most practical situations, poetry restores to us a refreshed gaze at the world, and turns our attention to all the oddities and indeterminacies, the fleeting strangeness of experience, that is ordinarily dropped off the edge of attention. I demonstrate in my paper, however, that it is fruitful to study poetic and day-to-day experiences side by side rather than in this kind of opposition to one another. If poems do put us on unfamiliar and uncertain ground, if they interfere with the single “way things are” (or ordinarily appear to be), if they direct and refocus our attention in peculiar ways, then it is nonetheless possible to understand such readers’ experiences as grounded in ordinary perception and the psychological mechanisms that underly it.

I make this case by drawing on recent pragmatist views on perception in psychology and the philosophy of mind – in particular on work on embodied and enactive cognition and on predictive processing (see Newen et al.; Clark). The former research paradigm holds that perceivers, as whole embodied agents, bring their environments actively and dynamically into view. The latter offers an information-possessing explanation for this and other psychological capacities: brains function like probabilistic prediction machines, which meet incoming information from the world with prior models of what it is likely to be, constantly weighing ‘top down’ predictions against ‘bottom-up’ signals, and adapting these models accordingly. Both frameworks offer ways of challenging pervasive conceptions, gestured to by Hirshfield, of day-to-day perception as disengaged, passive, or impoverished. They enable us to think of perceptual processes not only as efficient and highly reliant on prior familiarity and attunement, but, crucially as error-prone, flexible, and adaptable, and, as a result, ‘thick with perceptual oddities and achievements, puzzles and insights ripe for harvest’ (O’Callaghan, vii).

Lyric poetry makes for an ideal corpus to pursue these ideas. Poems, I argue, often function by a delicate interplay between prior inter- or intratextual familiarity and defied expectation, for example through the omission or addition of a foot from an otherwise familiar metrical structure, missing or jarred rhymes, or sudden tonal or thematic shifts. In being forced to switch off the perceptual auto-pilot (or, in other words, to pay attention) we are not being shaken out of some trance. Rather, being already efficient and dynamic perceivers, poems encourage us to tread carefully.

**Jessica Brofsky**

PhD Candidate

Princeton University

[jbrofsky@princeton.edu](mailto:jbrofsky@princeton.edu)

### **The Microaggressive Lyric**

Claudia Rankine's *Citizen: An American Lyric* (2014), a lyric full of accounts of microaggressions—those non-events in which “something happens, but it might be nothing; or it might just be all in your head”—is also a critique of the lyric as a microaggressive genre (Long Chu). The text tells a story—silenced from subtitle to subtext through the silent white space of the page at the limits of microaggressive and lyrical language—of the structure and history of the lyric as microaggressive. To arrive at this reading, I take up and extend Anthony Reed's argument that lyricization is a race project that “corresponds with and provides an aesthetic basis—that is, a set of common norms of beauty and harmonious form—for the emergence of Man.” The exclusionary descriptive statement that overrepresents Man as human, as Sylvia Wynter explains, governs both the microaggression and lyric. Rankine points toward this shared definition of the human structurally linking microaggressions, racial violence, and the lyric by incorporating unmarked citations, recontextualizing the violence of lines from the history of the lyric; by using the second person pronoun not only to comment on the lyric's exclusions from its first person domain but to enact in its referential and tonal confusion (which includes the accusatory, connoting secondary status) a microcosm of the ambiguity of meaning emerging from the exploitation of the invisible difference between forms of social acceptability condensed in a microaggression; and by foregrounding apostrophic address with its silent presupposition defining the person to de/animate and deconstruct the human. In the end, I ask with Kamran Javadizadeh and Rankine, “How [...] can poetry continue to offer the opportunities for mutual recognition once thought of as lyric's purview after the very idea of the lyric has been exposed as theoretically naïve, even politically suspect?” I will attend to how *Citizen* answers.

C

**Francisco Javier Calderón de Lucas**

Ph.D. Student

University of Granada

[javiercalderon@ugr.es](mailto:javiercalderon@ugr.es)

**When the body reads a poem. Reading scenarios for Maria-Mercè Marçal's poetic Work**

In this paper, we defend the irrelevance of the textual unity of the poem because the reader's body can transpose its meaning after experiencing it. For such a transposition, a verse, a word, a sound, or even the mere existence or perception of the poem's visual format are enough.

The situation and state of the reader's body is the most fundamental condition for meaning transposition. This includes: attention (which involves external situational aspects, such as noise, that have direct consequences on the internal state of the body), exhaustion, tiredness, physical illnesses (blindness, acute or chronic postural pain), mental illnesses (depression, anxiety, eating disorders, ADHD), lack of interest, haste, poor digestion, and intense feelings while reading, such as euphoria, sadness, anger, or falling in and out of love, which are directly related to memory, especially traumatic and short term ones. Following this hypothesis, we ask how reading can influence a subject's social behavior and what discourses can emerge when the reader focuses on the interaction between its own body and the text rather than on what the text pretends to say. In other words, we want to investigate what happens when a reader imposes her own body's current state on the text being read, to the point of deforming the text's meaning so that it reproduces the body's current state, even if it appears to have nothing to do with the text's pretended meaning.

In order to verify our hypothesis, we recreate several reading scenarios for Maria-Mercè Marçal's (1952-1998) poetic work, employing some tools and reflections from cognitive studies applied to literary reception from the perspective of embodied cognition. In doing so, we draw on the work of the Spanish research group "Inscripciones literarias de la ciencia", as well as on the collective publication *The Cognitive Humanities*, edited by Peter Garrat. We don't forget authors like Francisco Varela, Deirdre Wilson, Gilles Fauconnier, Mark Turner, Michael Burke, Emily T. Troscianko, and, of course, Mark Johnson and George Lakoff, who are essential for any cognitive approach to literature.

## **Nursan Celik**

Research Assistant

University of Muenster

[ncelik@uni-muenster.de](mailto:ncelik@uni-muenster.de)

### ***Ostranenie* in Digital Poetry: Revisiting Viktor Šklovskij's notion of defamiliarization**

In his influential essay *Art as Device* (alternatively translated as *Art as Technique*; Russ. *Iskusstvo kak priem*) written in 1916/1917, Viktor Šklovskij, the famous Russian literary theorist and founder of Russian Formalist School, develops and declares the concept of *ostranenie*, which roughly translates to defamiliarization and alternation in English, to be the key principle and goal of art. In the aforementioned paper, Šklovskij distinguishes two kinds of seeing: firstly, seeing as a mere recognition of objects (e.g. I see a tree outside my window due to my recognition of its typical shape of a tree), and secondly, and for works of art most importantly, *actual* seeing of objects, that is paying full attention to the represented object as if it is being seen for the very first time. The latter type of seeing is what Šklovskij considers to be a common effect caused by works of art and coins as *ostranenie*. He states, that “[t]he purpose of art [...] is to lead us to a knowledge of a thing through the organ of sight instead of recognition” (1990, p. 6). *Ostranenie* refers to breaking through our usually highly automatized processes of perception, eventually resulting in an intensified form of perception as an effect often times caused by works of literature, or art in general.

Although the notion of *ostranenie* which Šklovskij discussed in connection to prose literature only has been highly influential in theory of the novel, so far, it has hardly been applied to theories on poetry. Therefore, we aim to discuss *ostranenie* in the context of poetry, with a special issue focus on contemporary works of digital poetry written by English poets. By doing so and adding central aspects of cognitive psychology, we will show that attention and defamiliarization are highly intertwined and hence, *ostranenie* can be found to be an universal aesthetic principle both across all genres of literature and epochs in the history of literature.

## **Mallory Chipman**

MMus

MacEwan University

[ChipmanM@macewan.ca](mailto:ChipmanM@macewan.ca)

### **Untamed Melodies: Songwriting, Selfhood, and the Music of Alberta Birds**

Untamed Melodies is a creative research project that falls at the intersection of songwriting, zoomusicology, and conservation, and will be presented in multi-media form at the 2023 INSL conference. In 2021, songwriter and zoomusicologist, Mallory Chipman, drove over 900 kilometres through the Canadian prairie province of Alberta capturing field recordings of at-risk and endangered Alberta birds; namely the Peregrine Falcon, the Black Throated Green Warbler, the Black Tern, the Red-Winged Blackbird, and the Burrowing Owl. Upon capturing their bird songs via audio recording, she transcribed them, quantized their calls into standard music notation, and used said calls as seed melodies off of which she based five unique compositions, all written in the key of the birds' natural music. Along with writing the melodies and harmony of each piece, lyrics were carefully composed to bring awareness to the birds' current decline. The pieces, entitled "Mother" (Peregrine Falcon call); "Oh, Blackbird" (Red-Winged Blackbird call); "Diving" (Black Tern call), "To My Song" (Black Throated Green Warbler call); and "Cradle Me" (Burrowing Owl call) embody poetic response to the changing environment of Chipman's home province, the ongoing climate crisis, and her reverence for and experience with the birds themselves. Chipman included these four compositions on an album entitled *As Though I Had Wings* (out May 5, 2023 on Tunnel Mountain Records) and, along with the music, has been sharing her research on field recording, the composition process, and art as a means of conservation both in her home country of Canada and internationally.

### **Gulsin Ciftci**

Research Assistant

University of Muenster

[gulsin.ciftci@uni-muenster.de](mailto:gulsin.ciftci@uni-muenster.de)

### **Haunting Forms: Reading Grief in Diana Khoi Nguyen's *Ghost Of***

What happens when different forms of expression collide in our everyday affective experiences? How do these collisions find reflections in lyrical form, not only in their linguistic becoming, but also in becoming more-than-itself. Diana Khoi Nguyen's poetry collection *Ghost Of* offers a glimpse into the potentialities such collisions possess in the poetic realm. Khoi Nguyen, in this collection uses her own family photographs from which her late brother had cut himself off years before committing suicide. Khoi Nguyen's poetry is a reconciliation of this loss, grief, and trauma. By suturing poetry with photography, Khoi Nguyen alters the experience of poetry from merely semantic and linguistic to the visual and generative. The poems' play with absences and presences is multi-layered. They feature absences both as an affective embodied experience of a feeling subject, while at the same time as a



visual absence of the composition, of form. Presences, on the other hand, are not only negated but also re-created; for example, by lyric-filling the gaps left by the cut-up of the lost brother's images, as well as by the poet's recreation of the frame around the image through text. Such a play with absences and presences in the experience of grief on both narrative and formal level reveals itself in the spoken performance as to make space for the fragmented images and texts, reader must fragment the experience by cutting up their utterances. The loss, hence, haunts the poem, the form, and the reader. By taking the notions of haunting and grieving beyond the level of diegesis and an ascribed quality of a (grieving, haunted) subject, I aim to treat them as a matter of formal and affective experience. In the paper, tentatively titled "Haunting Forms: Reading Grief in Diana Khoi Nguyen's *Ghost Of*," I will read the affective experience through an analysis of haunting forms — poetry and photography. By offering a reading of Khoi Nguyen's poetry through the lens of experience and phenomenology, I aim to find answers to how attention is produced in multimodal poetry that manipulates the reading experience both semantically, visually, and affectively. Finally, I ask what it means to close read poetic forms without occluding the experiential and the affective.

## **Hal Coase**

PhD candidate

University of Romeho

wardrobert.coase@uniroma1.it

### **‘subsisting in layered zone’: Barbara Guest, twining and tabularity**

If verse gives shape to attention, then how is such ‘giving shape’ constituted or confounded by form? This paper takes on the notion of ‘tabularity’, developed by William Watkin to describe poetic structure as a mode of thinking which moves forwards and backwards, depending on lineation but non-linear in its procedures. Whilst the tropes of sedimentation (Merleau-Ponty), stratigraphy (Agamben), and the fold (Derrida) conceive of poetics as a cumulative layering of meaning, Watkin suggests that the poem might also be ‘defined by the diagonality of its spatial and temporal tabularity’. The work of New York poet Barbara Guest can be taken as a test case for this poetics of tabularity. Turning to a set of ‘vine’ poems from Guest's collections *Fair Realism* (1989) and *If So, Tell Me So* (1999), I argue that Guest is interested in ‘twining’ as a model for poetics: verse as a series of diagonal moves and intersections which draw attention to the dichotomies of sound and sense, voice and sign, semiotics and syntax. This reading moves out from the ‘metapoetic layering’ that Sara Lundquist has celebrated in Guest's work and argues that such ‘layering’ can, in fact, provide insight into some fundamentals of poetic form (enjambment, rhyme, and caesura) and their combined calling for an attention which is a-linear and unsettled. If this ‘tabular reading’ is capable of keeping our

attention suspended between forward and backward moves, I conclude with the suggestion that this is also because it rests upon the poem's dual presence as voice and text, spoken discourse and visual inscription. The spatial zone of the poem's visual stratification on the page is, in Guest's poetics, often in tension with the temporal thrust of the poem's vocalised momentum. I end with the suggestion that this was a duality which Guest remained alive to as a result of her collaboration with visual artists and her own immersion in debates about form, formalism, and its limits, in the post-war era.

### **Aurelia Cojocaru**

Assistant Professor

Bilkent University, Ankara

aurelia.cojocaru@bilkent.edu.tr

### **Feminist rationalism/ rationalist feminism: Laura (Riding) Jackson's poetics of self-actualization**

The modernist poet Laura (Riding) Jackson famously renounced poetry shortly after the publication of her *Collected Poems* in 1938. In her occasional explanations of this gesture, she confessed that her serious concern for finding universal truths in language clashed with poetry's investment in language that is both particularizing and sensuous. This fact, along with her later theoretical commitment to "Rational Meaning," has seemingly provided a retroactive interpretive lens for her work as a whole. But is Laura (Riding) Jackson's own poetry indeed rationalistic, abstract, and suspicious of materiality?

This paper argues that (Riding) Jackson's early poetry in fact merges a rationalistic, analytical impulse with a radical vision of women's embodied experience. I describe two poetic techniques which make this juxtaposition visible. On the one hand, poems explore the very linguistic and conceptual entity "woman," in ways prefiguring (Riding) Jackson's essay "The Word 'Woman'." Repeating this word in various declensions across different contexts, the lyric "I" captures how an externally viewed social construct "woman" blends with a subjective sense of self: "Of such women as I am, they say,/ 'Woman, many women in one,' winking." ("The Tiger"). On the other hand, poems imagine a woman's body as an entity in space: "My flesh is at a distance from me./ Yet I approach and touch it:/ It is as near as anyone can come." ("The Virgin"). Describing the physical body as having a palpable boundary, the poems then situate this image within a more geometric vision of space as a whole. This negotiation of the body's position in space alludes to how women seek to find their actual place, both social and ontological, in the world: "They cage me on three sides./ The fourth

is glass./ Not to be the image of the beast in me,/ I press the tiger forward. I crash through.” (“The Tiger”).

Ultimately, I argue that Riding (Jackson)’s poems perform a woman’s process of self-actualization—but each poem retraces this journey from the ground up, from the basic fact of what it means to be a “woman” in the space of the poem, and in the space of the world. I bring this idea of poetic self-actualization in dialogue with (Riding) Jackson’s theoretical pronouncements in “A Survey of Modernist Poetry” (1928), namely, that modernist poetry does not provide a method or a procedure to be applied indiscriminately, rather, each poem formulates its own unique method, anew.

### **Michel Collot**

Academic title: Professor Emeritus

Affiliation: Université Sorbonne nouvelle Paris 3

Email address: [michelcollot@free.fr](mailto:michelcollot@free.fr)

### **Experience and Writing in the Poetry of Jean Laude**

The notion of poetic experience was criticized in France in the 1960s and 1970s by the avant-gardes who intended to refocus the conception and practice of poetry on language work. As it had been developed in particular by Rolland de Renéville in a famous essay (*L'Expérience poétique*, Gallimard, 1938 ; rééd. Le Grand Souffle, 2004), its detractors criticized it for renewing the lyrical illusions and myths of romanticism and for giving the poet the ambition to reach an ethical or even metaphysical horizon; and they opposed to it a formalist or textualist poetics, which made poetry an essentially verbal experiment.

This debate is illustrated by the poetic career of Jean Laude (1922-1983), who made himself known after the war through poems expressing a spiritual and existential concern in tune with the historical situation and the intellectual climate of the time (*Le Grand Passage*, Éditions du Dragon, 1954). In the 1960s et 1970s, in contact with the group Tel Quel and under the influence of Blanchot, he was convinced that the poetic experience resided exclusively in the work of writing and he orientated his practice in this direction. I will illustrate this evolution by analyzing the modifications he made to the original version of his main collection (*Les Plages de Thulé*, Éditions du Seuil, 1964), notably reducing the place of myth and lived experience, by view of a definitive edition which will not see the light of day until after his death (*La Lettre volée*, 2012) and by studying the reflections carried out in an unpublished manuscript entitled *Du fin fond de l'aphasie*.

At the end of the 1970s, which marked a turning point in French literature and philosophy, Laude became aware of the risks of a poetry that was too abstract and disembodied, and gave back its rightful place to experience in poems who find the voice and the way of a high lyricism (*Le Dict de Cassandre*, Fata Morgana, 1982). This exemplary itinerary is now worth his poetic work to emerge from the oblivion in which it had been kept since its premature death, which occurred in 1983: evidenced by the issue of the magazine *L'Étrangère* which will be entirely devoted to it in January 2023.

**Ulf Cronquist**

PhD

Gothenburg University

ulf.cronquist@bahnhof.se

**and Torben Knap**

Ass. Professor

Copenhagen University

knap@outlook.com

**“What is the price of experience – do men buy it for a song?” The Lyrics of Van Morrison in Relation with William Blake**

On the 1985 album *A Sense of Wonder* Van Morrison devotes himself to the Blakean question expressed in the title of this paper. Especially so in his rendition of “Let the Slave (Incorporating the Price of Experience)”, with the lines from Blake’s *America a Prophecy* and *Songs of Innocence and Experience*, but also in original compositions “Ancient of Days,” “The Master’s Eyes,” and “A New Kind of Man.”

This presentation aims to shed light on Morrisons poetic and visionary influences while also discussing his own particular enunciation of existential matters expressed in both his writing and singing. The analysis will steer clear from rock music pseudo-journalism; grounded in cognitive semiotics, we investigate signs and sounds back-to-back to understand the music of meaning.

**Jonathan Culler**

Class of 1916 Professor of English and Comparative Literature, Emeritus

Cornell University  
[culler@cornell.edu](mailto:culler@cornell.edu)

### **“Apostrophe as Attention”**

In 1977 I published an essay entitled “Apostrophe,” seeking to rehabilitate this figure of address, which seemed to be systematically ignored in critical accounts of poems in which it appears. I argued that Apostrophe, in animating fictional addressees, is both a mark of the ambitions of poetry (lyric poetry especially) and example of the poem’s attempt to be itself an event rather than a representation of an event. I expanded the discussion in my 2015 *Theory of the Lyric*, which treats lyric poems’ play with the enunciative apparatus (especially the indirect address by which the poem addresses the audience through address to a fictional addressee) as one of the important parameters of lyric. I propose now to revisit the topic of apostrophic address to natural entities, taking account of a recent discussions by critics such as Jonathan Kramnick, Anahid Nersessian, and Alan Richardson, which have stressed not the vatic or extravagant aspect of apostrophic address on which I initially focused but “low affect apostrophe,” such as a turn to things presumed to be there in the situation of a poem that makes no special demands of them.

Does such address to natural objects, forces, or creatures have a different effect, encouraging acts of attention rather than implying vatic poetic power? And does the animating of nature, the treatment of addressees as subjects which are asked to do something or refrain from doing it, take on a different character as we confront climate change -- as nature, far from requiring animation through poetic discourse, seems quite prepared to act without poetic prompting. As Bruno Latour writes, « the Earth has taken up the task of being the most agitated agent of history! » Nersessian speaks of the “slender promise” of momentary solace that Romantic poetry offers in the face of the calamities of capitalism. Is this what we get when we talk to clouds or winds or flowers or do such poetic acts promote a different attitude through the quality of their attention?

## **D**

### **Eleonore De Felip**

Academic title: Dr.

Affiliation: University of Innsbruck

Email address: [eleonore.defelip@uibk.ac.at](mailto:eleonore.defelip@uibk.ac.at)

### **Attention and Lyrical Intensity: Annotations to Paul Celan's poem "Psalm" (1961)**

Using Paul Celan's poem "Psalm" (1961) as an example, I intend to illustrate how lyrical intensity correlates with the highly increased attention, which the speaking lyrical instance gives to multiple phenomena, and the author devotes to the materiality of the poetic language. Originating as a physical term in the 18th century, 'intensity' quickly developed into a descriptive model for continuously changing phenomena. The discovery of 'intensity' was owed to the critical spirit of the Enlightenment, which recognized the need to find a descriptive tool (dimension) beyond the categories of either-or. In particular, it is emotions and mental states that are in a constant process of change. Applied to poetry, the concept of intensity – understood as a figure of thought and as a category of scientific description of a text – bundles several dimensions: not only the semantic tension within a text, but especially its acoustic and visual tension, which is always rising and falling, increasing and decreasing.

To put it very simply, Celan's poetics revolve around separation and reunion, and the gradual build-up of tension between semantic and tonal opposites. The focus on opposites creates a movement of never-ending approach to a centre that remains semantically unoccupied and thus wide open. Poetic intensity arises from the tension between metonymic speech and an unoccupied centre which cannot be grasped with language. Celan's poetic procedure consists in the fact that no thought, no sound – once uttered – is later erased, but that the focus of attention is merely shifted. What once entered poetic existence in Celan always remains in the world of his text. As the text progresses, it merely fades into the background, while other images and sounds come to the fore. The emergence and apparent disappearance of poetic images and sounds creates a movement in the text, which in turn creates tension.

Current neuropsychological research on 'high sensitivity' or 'perceptual sensitivity' (sensory processing sensitivity), as initiated by Elaine N. Aron and Arthur Aron (Aron and Aron 1997), shows that an existential intensity is linked to a high level of perceptual sensitivity. Intensive language images and sound sequences bundle inputs of the most diverse provenance like converging lenses: subtle external optical and acoustic stimuli as well as reflections of a complex inner reality. They reflect the high level of perception of the lyrical speaker, who not only sees and hears the physical presence of things, but also their invisible and silent dimensions. To the same extent, the materiality of the poem demands the increased attention of the listener. Only in this way can the sound frequencies, the pauses, the repetitions be understood as the medium of meaning, better: of openness to meaning, i.e. as a possible direction of meaning, for Celan understands the poem as directed towards a 'you', as a dialogue with someone opposite.

The materiality of Celan's poems has inspired many composers to set them to music. To cite just one example: In Michael Nyman's setting of the poem "Psalm" (1990) the suspense that connects the beginning with the end and one detail with the other is striking. The audio sample is supplemented by a recording from 1963 in which Paul Celan reads the poem himself.

### **Dunja Dušanić**

Associate Professor of Comparative Literature and Literary Theory

University of Belgrade

[dunjadusanic@gmail.com](mailto:dunjadusanic@gmail.com), [dunja.dusanic@fil.bg.ac.rs](mailto:dunja.dusanic@fil.bg.ac.rs)

### **"DOWN WITH GUTENBERG!": Orality and Experience in Clandestine Poetry**

Commenting on the clandestine composition and circulation of contemporary poetry, Anna Akhmatova famously said to Viacheslav Ivanov that poets from the Soviet Union "live according to the slogan 'Down with Gutenberg.'"<sup>1</sup> By this, she meant that the survival of their work, and, to a certain extent, their own survival, depended on the mnemonic powers of a highly literate community that had been forced to revert to the conditions of the "pre-Gutenberg era."<sup>2</sup> Since they could not publish their poems and it was dangerous to keep manuscripts, poets like Mandel'shtam and Akhmatova were obliged to memorize and orally transmit portions of each other's work, obliterating all written traces of its existence.

These practices, however, were not limited to Akhmatova's circle or Soviet Russia. Examples of memorized and orally transmitted poetry can be found in various traditions, where "pre-Gutenberg" methods of circulation, and even composition of verse, served as the chief strategy for ensuring the survival of one's work and testifying about the experience of terror and persecution. When created in extremely repressive contexts, such as prisons or camps, where access to writing materials was limited or forbidden, clandestine poetry bore visible traces of this enforced orality. Unlike their predecessors from (primary) oral cultures, poets operating in a regime of "pseudo-primary" orality lacked the mnemonic and improvisational skills of folk singers, who were trained to hold long narratives and set pieces in their memory, as well as to adapt the memorized material to new circumstances. These limitations, aggravated by the particular conditions under which this poetry was

---

<sup>1</sup> Вяч. Вс. Иванов, "Беседы с Анной Ахматовой" <https://www.stihi-rus.ru/ahmatova9.htm> (accessed November 19, 2022).

<sup>2</sup> Akhmatova, quoted in: Nadezhda Mandel'shtam, *Hope against Hope: A Memoir*, translated by Max Hayward (New York: Atheneum, 1970), 380.

composed and how it was transmitted, influenced both formal elements (such as metre, rhythm, and rhyme) and larger semantic structures.

By drawing on examples of clandestine poetry from Russian, Serbian/Yugoslav, Czech, and Polish twentieth-century literature, I will explore the role of these methods in shaping and altering the experience of poetry for authors, their immediate audiences (the community in charge of memorizing and transmitting the poems) and their subsequent readers.

## F

### **Vladimir Feshchenko**

Russian Academy of Sciences

[takovich2@gmail.com](mailto:takovich2@gmail.com)

### **Language-Game as Poetic Device: Carla Harryman's performance writing**

The paper analyzes Carla Harryman's "performance writing" realized in a series of hybrid poetic-dramatic texts by one of the representatives of American "language poetry". Harryman's plays are based on "language-games" (in the sense of Ludwig Wittgenstein) as a dialogic form of aesthetic expression. "Grammaturgy" of such texts exposes the infrastructure of language and the interface of activities between the speaker and the language. Discussed here are Harryman's texts of different periods, those that challenge the concepts of communication, everyday language, attention, and subjectivity.

Starting from the earliest Harryman's plays of the turn of the 1970s and 1980s, the main conflict in them is the interaction of everyday communication with other discourses. The page is a stage to perform the dialogue, it serves as an interface between texts and voices: "I use the page to perform the dialogue, first, although I think of the page also as a staging device". In the play-poem *Sue in Berlin*, performative acts become operators of a communicative game of attracting/distracting attention, while (de)focusing affects the very language of communication: *Will they move over, here? / Look inside? / Come inside? The door's off/ Look / Its hinges. It's / No beauty / Look, it's / Happening now*. The grammatical connections between elements, phrases, and subjects/objects here literally become the main framework of the dramatic action. The linguistic particulars as objects draw the attention away from and toward communication, to and from language as a set of material relations.



Finding herself, like everyone else in the Covid pandemic, in a situation of communicative quarantine, Harryman dedicates new texts and new performances of them to this new communicative situation, exploring the pragmatics of verbal action in the Internet environment. Over the last three years, she has released a trilogy, the first part of which, *A Voice to Perform*, she published in the first months of the pandemic, in 2020, and includes two operas intended for performers to read and post these readings as videos on YouTube. A particular focus of my analysis is on her most recent 2021 poem-play *Cloud Cantata*, which “plays out” the situation of communicative proximity and remoteness in conditions of self-isolation and virtualization of communication.

### **Camille Fort**

Senior Professor

Université de Picardie Jules Verne, France

camillefort@yahoo.fr

### **To Queer or not to Queer: Translating Carol Ann Duffy’s *Rain***

This proposal is based on a recent experience, my translating a series of Carol Ann Duffy’s poems in view of a study of the female monologue in her lifelong work. Duffy’s successive volumes of poetry have displayed her skills in reworking the dramatic monologue into a conduit for the silenced female voice – notably in *The World’s Wife* (1999), in which the speakers are all identified as mythical or historical figures. This proved an Ariadne line to translation: a « the voice is the thing » motto. However, things became more complicated when it came to *Rapture* (2005), Duffy’s remarkable sequence of one-sided monologues recording a passionate affair between an unidentified speaker and an unidentified love interest. Having, like other French academics, first interpreted *Rapture* as a book of lesbian poetry, I chose to include the lyric *Rain* in my project and translated it as spoken by a female speaker – a choice reflected in grammatical gendering. Later, however, I discovered a statement by Duffy that the *Rapture* lyrics be not be assigned to a definite gendered voice, so that readers of all genders might empathize with the anonymous speaker. This led me to wonder how I could remain true to the author’s wish while retaining the poem within the pale of my project. In the end I struck a number of compromises: using the metrical and rhyming pattern to shift the speech away from rigid grammatical gendering; testing the pliable line’s capacity to host the equally pliable, but still controversial French inclusive writing; quoting Duffy’s comment in the preface to balance the thematic context grounding the volume.

In so doing, I was reminded of Lyotard’s definition of the “local truth”: a truth only valid in a given circumstance, and for a limited span of time. My translation of *Rain* may (hopefully) spark a moment

of meaning when read as another occurrence of the silenced female voice; but it offers itself as a circumstantial reading – as is, or should be the case with all translations.

## G

### **Claire Gheerardyn**

Associated Professor

Université Toulouse II Jean Jaurès, France.

Claire Gheerardyn <claire.gheerardyn@gmail.com>

### **Experiencing Poems in Landscapes: The Case of Simon Armitage's *Stanza Stones* (2012)**

Since the 1990s, a feature has been developing all over the world: the installation in public spaces of poetic texts written in a wide variety of languages. These “site-specific poems” can be defined as texts whose meanings are modified or nuanced by the relationship with the sites that hosts them. Such poems, inscribed in all kinds of mediums on the most diverse surfaces, can be found in cities, as well as in smaller towns and in natural spaces (from Quebec to Uruguay, including Scottish hills, Alsatian vineyards, the Vosgian forest, the German countryside) In order to study how site-specific poems function, and how they renew the experience of reading poetry, I would like to examine one particular example: the *Stanza Stones* by Simon Armitage (2012), set in the Yorkshire moors.

This sequence of six poems was engraved by the lettercarver Pip Hall on exceptionally beautiful crags that Armitage selected himself during long walks. These rocks are now scattered along a fifty-mile path created by the poet himself. These “public” poems are secluded, and they are not always easy to find. Are these texts really read in their entirety, or are they simply touched with the eye, felt in the walking body? What does the hiker do with a poem, once it has been discovered? Is a “close reading” really possible when has to climb on a crag in a quarry to try to reach the text? Does the walk, and the particular kind of attention it involves, become part of the reading experience, or do they supplant it?

Reading these texts on location and on the page gives rise to two entirely distinct experiences.

Armitage and Pip Hall had to adapt the texts to the stone rugged surface. The engraved texts might be touched with the hand. When rain fills up the engraved word “Rain”, rain itself writes the poem.

Armitage's texts gain new meanings when they are read out-loud at the landscape, in the wind.

Moreover, the *Stanza Stones* do not stand on their own. They invent continuities with everything that surrounds them, and especially with other remarkable local rocks which have names, inspire folklore or rituals, and bear cup and ring marks engraved in the Neolithic period.

It appears that the precise analysis of a site-specific poem must therefore focus on the interactions between four different elements:

- the text itself
- the typography of the text and the material characteristics of its support.
- the significance of the site and its configuration.
- the “expanded landscape” enveloping the textual objects: the artefacts I am studying draw their meanings from proximal elements. They are carried by physical, cultural, artistic, literary and imaginary landscapes. Indeed, Armitage’s *Stanza Stones* respond to the poetry of stones developed by Ted Hughes, notably in *Remains of Elmet* (1979). And while Armitage placed his texts directly on the moor, Ted Hughes invited the landscape into the book, in the form of black and white photographs taken by Fay Godwin.

The question at stake is indeed that of the interrelation between poems and landscapes. Armitage’s poems are re-articulated to their referent in order to gain immediacy: the *Stanza Stones* are realized in the site, and the texts attempt at translating into words the landscape’s natural language.

### **Anke Gilleir**

Professor

Faculty of Arts KU Leuven

[anke.gilleir@kuleuven.be](mailto:anke.gilleir@kuleuven.be)

### **The truth of the lyric is its form. Margrete Susman's theory of the lyric.**

"It was the lyrical I that confused the reader. Yet the more one expands the historical scope of the lyric, the more incomprehensible this mistaking of the lyrical I for the unique persona of the individual becomes." Though rarely acknowledged in theories of the lyric today, it was the German Jewish-philosopher and literary critic Margarete Susman (1872-1966), who coined the concept of the lyrical I in her 1910 book *Das Wesen der modernen deutschen Lyrik* (The nature of the modern German Lyrik). Susman introduced the term in her defence for the absolutely "objective nature" of the lyric against the tendency of her time to conceive lyrical poetry as a subjective form of art. Because words always carry a meaning in the real world - from the most banal to the highest intellectual – lyric is too often confused with the real world. Readers of poetry flood lyrical texts with logic and meaning,

disregarding that the laws of the lyric are sound, rhythm and symbol. The ethics of the lyric lies in its form.

In this paper I want to represent Margarete Susman's theory of the lyric as she developed it in her 1910 monography, in the many reviews of contemporary poetry she wrote for the *Frankfurter Zeitung* between 1900 and the late 1920ies, and in her reflections on lyrical poetry after the Shoah. In this postwar period Susman harked back to the symbolist poet Stefan George, who had become controversial in Germany, but also acquainted herself with the work of Paul Celan, who reached out to her. The idea is not to recover the work of a largely forgotten thinker, but to trace a rare strand of theory of the lyric against the backdrop of the abrupt events in 20<sup>th</sup>-century German history and some of its main cultural thinkers.

### **Jane Griffiths**

Dr.

Literary Editor, The Oxford Magazine

Wadham College, Oxford

[jane.griffiths@ell.ox.ac.uk](mailto:jane.griffiths@ell.ox.ac.uk)

### **Making, Knowing and Judging: James Ryman and 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Poetics**

Philip Larkin famously said that a poet was about as welcome at a university as a cow at the headquarters of United Dairies. Drawing on my experience as both a poet and an academic, this paper asks to what extent it is possible to pay adequate attention to poetry in purely academic terms, and what kinds of reading might result if direct experience of poetic composition processes is also brought to bear.

It takes as a test case the lyrics of the Franciscan James Ryman (fl. 1476-92), whose work is characterised by extensive repetition, both of Latin phrases taken from Scripture and the liturgy and of English lines of his own composition. Arguing that Ryman uses these repeated phrases and lines as building blocks of thought, it demonstrates that this practice not only reflects established medieval mnemonic techniques, but also shows him anticipating, in practice, the discoveries of 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>-century poets and scholars who posit the language of poetry as an essentially material medium: one that shapes as much as conveys what it communicates.

The paper then asks how it is possible to present this argument in acceptable academic terms. One obvious way of doing so is to draw on formalist theory, arguing that to read Ryman's lyrics as ones

where the material qualities of language constitute rather than expressing their subject-matter is as fruitful as to read poets of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries in this way. But to do so misrepresents why I first considered doing so, which was because of my own poetic working practices. This paper will argue that to consider Ryman as a practitioner – a writer engaged in the difficult and timeless business of making – is helpful in countering engrained habits of thought, according to which a poet who is literally dead, white, male, Christian and medieval is othered by the value judgements that are now attached to those terms. Yet to ground that argument in my experience of the writing process is to risk undermining it – or, at the very least, *feels* illegitimate, as if it were the wrong kind of attention to pay.

Aside from its significance for Ryman, then, such a revisionist way of reading also raises wider questions about different ways and forms of knowing. Is personal experience valid grounds on which to base an analysis of poetic process? Is there a space for ‘I’ in academic work (and does the difficult negotiation between personal and impersonal relate to the difficulty of characterising the lyric ‘I’)? Should praxis be granted legitimacy in academic discussion, and if so, how can a space for it be found? This paper will not attempt to answer these questions, but its reading of Ryman will demonstrate that praxis is a potentially valuable way of knowing, and thus that the questions are ones that need to be asked.

### **Peter Groves**

Adjunct Research Fellow (formerly Senior Lecturer)

Monash University, Melbourne

[Peter.Groves@monash.edu](mailto:Peter.Groves@monash.edu)

### **Enjambment and the Management of Attention**

Unlike an image, a text (and its performance) is designed to unfold in a particular sequence, and it is the fixed nature of this sequence that allows the possibility of managing levels of attention in the reader or listener: given that attention cannot simply persist at some established level, such management is one of the fundamental skills of effective writing and speaking. Metred verse has, because of its heightened regulation, more resources for such management than prose or free verse, and among these resources is, of course, enjambment, which might almost be called the figure of surprise. Critical discussion of enjambment in English, however, has tended to be impressionistic, and *ad hoc* in its explanations. It has also tended to be linguistically uninformed, as have (more surprisingly) attempts to enlist variation in tolerance of enjambment in forensic stylistics: Marina Tarlinskaja, in her most recent work, is unusual in carefully distinguishing “three degrees of syntactic cohesion” at the line-end (2021: 12). The goal of this paper is to explore a more complex and nuanced

model of enjambment in the English pentameter, and thus to encourage a more sophisticated stylistic and forensic analysis. It draws systematically upon four kinds of variable that can contribute in some degree to the disruptiveness and surprise of an enjambment: compression (of the *rejet* or overflow), connection (between ‘base-line’ and overflow), completeness (of base-line as syntactic structure) and complication of the overflow in various ways (syntactic, metric, discursive). Though partly generalizable, it is confined to the pentameter because (as Derek Attridge (1980: 132–41) has pointed out) even such closely related forms as pentameter and tetrameter differ where enjambment is concerned, due to the greater ‘rhythmic independence’ of the pentameter which allows it to operate without rhyme. For this reason, ambitious studies like Golomb (1979) and Koops van ’t Jagt et al. (2014), which treat enjambment as a universal substrate-independent phenomenon encompassing all verse forms (free or metered, demotic or ‘accentual-syllabic’) will only take us so far in analysing its particular functioning in iambic pentameter. Susan E. Linville, in arguing that pentameter enjambment can be “an immensely powerful stylistic tool,” observes that “a fuller, firmer, more efficient technical vocabulary is needed” for its analysis (1984: 81). It is one aim of this paper to supply such a technical vocabulary.

### **Marit Grøtta**

Professor

University of Oslo

[marit.grotta@ilos.uio.no](mailto:marit.grotta@ilos.uio.no)

### **Contemplating a Portrait Photograph: Rilke’s “Jugend-Bildnis meines Vaters”**

This paper examines Rainer Maria Rilke’s ekphrastic poem “Jugend-Bildnis meines Vaters” (Portrait of My Father as a Young Man), a poem where the speaker dwells over a daguerreotype of his father as a young soldier. It first considers how the act of looking at a daguerreotype is dramatized in the poem, stressing the prolonged attention to the sitter’s gaze and gestures, as well as the speaker’s emotional investment in the picture. Next, it discusses the sitter’s position of rest and ease in terms of the concepts of power and *désœuvrement* (idleness). In closing, the paper considers how the poem’s engagement with a portrait photograph creates a peculiar moment of aesthetic contemplation.

## **Trond Haugen**

Research librarian

The National Library, Norway

[trond.haugen@nb.no](mailto:trond.haugen@nb.no)

### **The musical-poetic origins of modern Norwegian poetry**

The history of the Norwegian printing press begins with a song. In 1643 Tyge Nielssøn set up his printing press in the Danish-Norwegian province of Christiania (now Oslo). During his first year in business three known publications left his press: An almanac for the year 1644, and two booklets of sung poetry. One of them called «Encke-Suck» («Sighs of a Widow»). The poem never received proper attention from literary critics or historians. In 1924 Professor Francis Bull (UiO) waved it off as «naïve and pathetic». The result was scandalous: We don't know the first poems printed in Norway. It's time we did, and the INSL conference «Poetry. Experience. Attention» is a perfect occasion.

The author of «Sighs of a Widow» is H. F. The poem consists of 16 eleven-verse stanzas. It's in the voice of a woman describing her personal experiences. She never tells us her name, but the initial of each stanza forms an acrostic: Helle Nielsdatter. She seems to be a woman of the common people. The composition of the poem forms a dialectic structure. Stanzas 1–4 describes the warm, and loving marriage between the widow and her former husband («We saw our children grow with zeal / like blue lilies of the field»). Stanzas 5–10 describes her fall from happiness to misery, at the loss of her husband at sea. She invokes all the world to bear witness to her sorrow («Leaves, trees, and moor! Thou heaven, and thou earth! Thou sea and shore! Thou perfect rounded orb! My sorrows doth deplore»). Stanzas 11–16 transforms the widow's lament into a defiant, yet religiously affirmative reconciliation with her own faith («Right! Right! All's right! It had to be this way; weary and tight, then vigorous and bright, if it suits my Lord's desire»).

My close reading of «Sighs of a Widow» argues that the words of this poem alone, testifies to a powerful female experience of loss and reconciliation. But «Sighs of a Widow» is more than words. The title page also announces the timbre of the poem: «Bedrøffuelig leffuer jeg hen min tid» («Lamentably I live out the time of my life»). My paper will demonstrate how it is possible to find this beautiful melody and retrace its provenance from Copenhagen around 1632 back to Great Britain around 1611. Once the words and the melody of «Sighs of a Widow» conjoin, we realize that we might have to rewrite the history of Norwegian poetry, to include one of the most fascinating musical-poetic poems in 17<sup>th</sup> century Denmark-Norway.

**Bianca Hein**

PhD Student

CAU Kiel

[bianca@poetryaction.com](mailto:bianca@poetryaction.com)

### **The poetic experience within an expanded notion of poetry**

*A poetic experience is marked by the experience of an aesthetic condition. (Bense 1979).*

Multimodal and mediatized poetry such as videopoetry challenge not only theories of the lyric, but reshape the aesthetic condition of poetry and thus its experience. “As an event of and in language” (Attridge 2019) and a site “of and for social and aesthetic activities” (Bean and Chaser 2006) poetry is marked as both an intelligible and materialised form, which is embedded in a context intertwined with intertextual and extratextual semiotic resources that make up the aesthetic condition for the poetic experience. The ontological implication, that “poetic language (...) is a temporary suspension of Dasein’s entrapment in world (understood as a historically conditioned horizon of understanding)” (Abbott 2010) can be conjugated with Badiou’s concept of the event as a radically contingent moment, in which an index is pointed at the previously unrepresented condition in which truths, subjects and new social systems are emerging (Badiou 2013). Thus, the event signifies the transformatory potential of the poetic experience, which requires a sensitive function of attention to the occurrence of the event. The framing of attention by the aesthetic condition of poetry enables the recipient to experience the factors that condition the experience. Mediatized poetry like videopoetry is an example of the time-based multimodal expansion of the poetry through juxtaposition of images, text and sound (Konyves 2012) as well as the digital display or screen at poetry film festivals, that produce the poetic experience. Alongside the analysis of poetry, whether by classical, structuralist means or in the dialectic of co-poetic thinking (Metz 2018), comes the investigation of the intermedial embedding of poetry into video and further of videopoetry in the social context in which its meaning is accessed, expanded, multiplied, and “read.” This social-medial context can be understood as a hybrid context (Schneider 1993), in which attention is cross generationally organised between hyper and deep attention (Hayles 2007). Analogous to Joseph Beuys’ “expanded concept of art” I would like to outline an expanded concept of poetry following Heidi R. Bean’s notion of pluralized poetics (2017), as well as the performative approach linked to it, and exemplify it with the analysis of relevant works of videopoetry. This expanded concept of poetry is to be extending Bean’s postulate that “poetics of all sorts have long been not just active but essential in the production and reproduction of everyday life”



(Bean 2017). Bianca Hein has studied Visual Communication at HfbK Hamburg (Dipl.) and is currently a PhD student at CAU Kiel at the Department of Literary and Media Studies.

### **Jane Hedley**

Professor Emeritus

Bryn Mawr College

[ehedley@brynmawr.edu](mailto:ehedley@brynmawr.edu)

### **Apostrophe in Poems of Mourning**

Fear no more the heat o' the sun,  
Nor the furious winter's rages;  
Thou thy worldly task hast done,  
Home art gone, and ta'en thy wages:  
Golden lads and girls all must,  
As chimney-sweepers, come to dust.

Like many elegies, this song from Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* is framed as an apostrophe to someone who has died. Ostensibly it offers to console its addressee. No one could blame him for dying: having completed his "worldly task," he is due for a rest. He has nothing more to fear, as the poem's second stanza points out: not poverty, not misfortune, not man's inhumanity to man. Everyone someday dies—to dust we shall return. And thus it is really we, the poem's audience, to whom this consolation is offered. Its ultimate purpose vis-à-vis the deceased is not interlocutory, but memorial: "And renownèd be thy grave."

I want to de-familiarize this apostrophic gesture, so often encountered in poems of mourning, with the help of some poems that call attention to its strangeness in that context. Apostrophe, as its etymological roots suggest, is the figure of speech a poet or an orator uses to *turn aside* from his poem's or his speech's literal, public audience toward "a dead or absent person, or an abstraction or inanimate object." Its addressee is fictive; as Jonathan Culler points out, apostrophe calls attention to a poem's status as a work of imagination. The "first voice" of poetry, T. S. Eliot influentially suggested, gives us a poet "speaking to himself, or to nobody"; apostrophe secures this posture of soliloquy by addressing someone who is *not* a potential interlocutor, not literally addressable. And yet a poem of mourning often troubles its own posture of soliloquy with a baulked desire for presence, for contact with the living human being.

In “The Yoke” Frank Bidart calls attention to this: “*don’t worry,*” his poem begins, “*I know you’re dead . . .*” Well, but does he? If so, how can he go on to speak as if the poem’s addressee might nevertheless, just this once, respond to his urgent summons— “*but tonight // turn your face again / toward me . . .*”? Part of the answer to this question lies in the versatility of the “you” pronoun, its capacity to transact both intimacy and publicity.

I propose to explore some further instances in which this gesture’s strangeness is powerfully on display: Ben Jonson’s “On my First Son”; Thomas Hardy’s “The Voice”; Gwendolyn Brooks’s persona poem, “the mother”; Sylvia Plath’s “Daddy” and “The Colossus.” In *Dying Modern*, Diana Fuss remarks that “in addressing the dead, [elegiac apostrophe] inevitably draws attention back to the living.” In doing so, I will suggest, it is apt to become self-problematizing: “a yoke that is not a yoke,” to quote Bidart once again.

### **Gunilla Hermansson**

Professor

Department of Literature, History of ideas and Religion, University of Gothenburg

[gunilla.hermansson@gu.se](mailto:gunilla.hermansson@gu.se)

<https://www.gu.se/en/about/find-staff/gunillahermansson>

### **Poetry meant to be sung as a challenge to literary history**

In this paper I argue that studying poetry-as-songs carries a potential that is vital for understanding the historically changing social functions of poetry as well as a productive impetus for literary history. It builds on my forthcoming work *Poetry meant to be sung – The afterlives of “Vårvindar friska” as a challenge to literary history*, in which I follow one poem across two centuries, in different cultures, contexts, and media, in order to explore the richness and vastness of the network of this one text and the intricate connections between actors in it: other texts, co-creators, and audiences it has participated in. On basis of this I discuss what kind of literary history that becomes visible if song lyrics and song practices are taken into account as uses of poetry.

“Vårvindar friska” (Fresh Spring Breezes) by the Swedish romantic poet Julia Nyberg started its public life in 1828 between the covers of a book as a poem meant to be sung. It became a widely popular song in shortened versions in the 1860s and has since then continuously been shared and disseminated through almost all available media in the modern era, interestingly enough in low key and often “banal” (Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* 1995) ways: It has never been at the absolute

centre, part of any official canon or at the top of any list, but somehow always present. It has been performed in the most surprising contexts both in Sweden and abroad and by this become infiltrated in political history (both emancipatory and racist-fascist movements), consumer history, and in school history, in various stages of textual and musical transformations – mostly in Sweden but also outside of Sweden. It connects very different actors across both time and space, and sheds light on how poetry as song lyrics has been embedded in both official and everyday practices in different cultures.

From the perspective of poetry-meant-to-be-sung, Franco Moretti's verdict that poetry lost its social function around the middle of the nineteenth century ("The Slaughterhouse of Literature" 2000) stands out as reductive and almost un-worldly. Generally, the importance of song practices for the circulation and transmission of poetry in the ages of mechanical and digital reproduction has become a blind angle in most literary histories and studies of world literature. Somehow, it appears safer and more manageable to acknowledge the integration of poetry and singing in remote, primarily oral cultures. In this paper I argue that an approach to literary history through song lyrics may – among other things – contribute with otherwise hidden patterns of transnational circulation and expose unexpected connections between texts from different national ecologies and cultural spheres. It makes slower developments of unacknowledged canons or shared repertoires visible (audible) and enrich our understanding of literature's complex temporalities. It may bring in new aspects of the co-dependence of writing and singing, and of poetry's place in different markets and consumer culture. It stretches the problematics concerning the production of meaning and the instability of the text even further and it adds new perspectives on the importance and non-importance of authors.

### **Markel Hernández-Pérez**

Academic title: PhD

Affiliation: University of Granada

Email address: [markel@ugr.es](mailto:markel@ugr.es)

### **Poetry on stage in the plays of Maria Velasco**

The Argentinian researcher Jorge Dubatti establishes these three conditions for the event of theatre to happen: the expectation, the *convivio* and the *poiesis*. While the first two refer to the happening during the time of a play (the viewers gathered in a specific place following the rules of the drama), the *poiesis* is the non common use of the body or the word, the suspensión of its natural use in order to reach a poetic image or stage that can only happen in theatre. The contemporary theatre uses the language in a postmodern style, far from the naturalistic way of speaking, it is a language with no referentiality, that creates continuous metaphors, or long speeches that stop the action of the play and

focus it on the beauty or cruelty of the word and its capacity to build and destroy parallel worlds in an instant.

The Spanish playwrighter María Velasco, world widely acknowledged, is a perfect example of the irruption of the poetry in the theatre, which Dubatti calls ‘liminal theatre’, the mixture of theatre with other arts. A crossroad between the poem, the performance and the drama, her play *Talaré a los hombres de sobre la faz de la tierra* (‘I will cut down men from the face of the earth’), which obtained the 2022 Max Prize for Best Play, presents a story broken by the presence of the word. It is a play about a special gaze at the masculinity, due to the influence that men have over the main character, a PhD student, who is about to finish and present her research.

This presentation aims to study in more detail that special use of the language and the word that the author develops in her work. In fact, this research is related with my current investigation of the Spanish political theatre in the late XXth century and first decades of the XXIst century, held within the PhD program from the University of Granada. The conclusion of the study is to understand the effect of the poetic language in the drama and, therefore, the viewers, but also in the published play.

### **María Elena Higuero**

Academic title: Predoctoral Fellow

Affiliation: University of Granada (Spain)

Email address: mehiguero@ugr.es

### **Anne Carson’s Poetics of Transparency**

In her 1999 essay *Economy of the Unlost*, Canadian poet and scholar Anne Carson introduces a brief *Note on Method* where she speaks directly to the reader: “Attention is a task we share, you and I. To keep attention strong means to keep it from settling” (p. viii). To pay attention actively is indeed a very important task within Anne Carson’s poetics, which aligns with the vital conviction that attention is a restorative activity, as we can gather from her interview for *The Paris Review* (2004), where Carson states that “however bad life is, the important thing is to make something interesting out of it. And that has a lot to do with the physical world, with looking at stuff . . . How consoling—that this stuff goes on and that you can keep thinking about it and making that into something on a page”.

Doubtlessly, Carson’s poetry presents this phenomenological bent, that is, the concern for how the experience of the world occurs in the mind and how such consciousness can be expressed through writing. As a matter of fact, attention has been a central issue in modern poetry and literary theory:

Romantic poets such as Wordsworth and Coleridge understood poetry as a form of bringing the absent to the present through “emotion recollected in tranquility,” for which previous attention was needed; Russian formalist Shklovski held that art’s main task is to defamiliarize reality to perceive objects freshly as for the first time; and French philosopher Paul Ricoeur put into value living metaphors that establish new associations between unexpected parts of reality. More recently, also political theorists such as Jacques Rancière and Jane Bennett have discussed how literature can widen the scope of attention traditionally reserved for some human subjects to other forms of existence.

All these concerns are present in Carson’s poetic thinking, but her poetry adds some new questions as for attention. How can poetry make us sense what is not visible? And to what extent is the writerly “I” an opaque obstacle between the reader and the object of their attention? Certain excerpts from *Economy of the Unlost* may reveal some of Anne Carson’s ideas about transparency since she wonders about clarity (“It is the clearing that takes time. It is the clearing that is a mystery”, p. vii) and in/visibility (“‘If to you the invisible were visible,’ says Simonides to his audience, ‘you would see God’. But we do not see God and a different kind of visibility has to be created by the watchful poet”, p. 58). This presentation inquires into this watchfulness in Anne Carson’s writing, which goes back and forth between vision and blindness, between transparency and obscurity, in works such as *Glass, Irony & God*, *Short Talks*, and *Decreation*, for instance. Anne Carson’s poetics of transparency leads to a new understanding—or strangeness—of what poetic attention may consist of and the epistemological and ethical meaning of the poet’s enterprise: to make visible the invisible.

### **Agata Holobut**

prof. UJ

Jagiellonian University in Kraków

[agata.holobut@uj.edu.pl](mailto:agata.holobut@uj.edu.pl)

### **The Taste of Rothko – Abstract Expressionism Re-expressed**

Museum audio-description is a service provided for blind and vision-impaired viewers who wish to appreciate visual works of art by listening to a specially-prepared audio track that presents the artefact. As Lou Giansante (n.d.) put it, it is “a way of using words to represent the visual world, which enables sight impaired persons to form a mental image of what they cannot see.” As such, it is perceived by some scholars and practitioners as an accessibility service, i.e., a form of technical writing governed by specific guidelines, which can be perfected by training and tested for quality to meet the requirements of the target. Others, by contrast, emphasise its evocative qualities and define

audio description as an art rather than a craft, which should “aim to get to the heart of a work of art and to recreate an experience of that work by bringing it to life” (Holland 2009: 184).

Taking the latter stance, I wish to present the outcomes of an interdisciplinary research project *Sounding Abstraction*, in which an interdisciplinary team of researchers and artists attempted to explore the fuzzy borderline between museum audio description and art-inspired (mostly ekphrastic) poetry. Focusing specifically on colour-field painting, i.e., non-figurative abstract style aimed at inducing viewers’ strong emotional and spiritual responses, I will comment on Anglophone audio descriptions of Mark Rothko’s artworks (published online by MOMA, Metropolitan Museum of Art, National Gallery of Australia and Tate Modern) and selected poems inspired by his oeuvre (written by both acclaimed and self-published poets, amongst others Patrick Wright, Michael Goldman, John Taggart, Irene Latham), pointing to similarities in the ways they re-express/model aesthetic experience. I will be interested specifically in the recurrent conceptual metaphors, such as FORM IS A MOVING OBJECT, COLOUR IS TASTE and SEEING IS TOUCHING, PAINTING IS ENERGY TRANSFER, which give rise to interesting embodied (mostly synaesthetic) conceptualizations of Rothko’s output.

### **Josef Hrdlička**

Associate Professor

Charles University, Prague

[josef.hrdlicka@ff.cuni.cz](mailto:josef.hrdlicka@ff.cuni.cz)

### **To See the Invisible: Poem as a Scene**

The mediality of poetry has undergone a significant change throughout history. While in oral cultures poetry is itself a medium (especially a medium of memory, as Eric Havelock demonstrated on Homer’s epic), in modern times, on the contrary, a significant part of poems shows a certain initial inaccessibility and the poem often needs to be mediated: by interpretation, by commentary explicating the context, or by paying attention to it and thus overcoming the inaccessibility. How to understand this mediation? Is it possible to speak here of a secondary mediality or a form of McLuhan’s statement “the medium is the message”? In my talk I will try to answer these questions by using the concept of the poem as a *scene of the imaginary*.

Roman Jakobson defines the poetic function as a focus on the message for its own sake; however, the poem exhibits a contradictory character from this perspective. On the one hand, it is a speech that flows (as a transparent communication of meaning), and on the other hand, it is an object that focuses attention. This paradox, which manifests itself on multiple levels, most notably between sound and

meaning, is constitutive of the perception of the poem: if we pay special, intense attention to it, it creates a temporary imaginary scene on which seemingly contradictory elements coexist and communicate. Attention here is partly analogous to immersion as described by narratology. However, it differs significantly from it in that it requires effort and is not an immersion in a fictional world, but rather a focus on the experienced present. This lyrical presence, unlike practical presence, also includes the imaginary or ideal dimension of reality. In this sense, the lyric poem is a medium of the absent (that which is not actually present) or the invisible (that which cannot be present or is normally uncommunicable) and showing it as present and intertwined with actual reality.

A large number of poems can illustrate the conception, beginning with nonsense poetry that can “rhyme” together incongruous or non-existent objects. In my talk I will focus primarily on the Western elegiac tradition in a broader sense, for which the scenic nature of the poem is important. The elegy, as a poem of mourning for the dead, is also a poem that makes the dead and the living temporarily present on the same imaginary scene and thus overcoming the fundamental contradiction between life and death.

**Esther T. Hu**

Ph.D.

Boston University

[ethu@bu.edu](mailto:ethu@bu.edu)

### **Victorian Women Poets and the Poetry of Experience: Voice, Performance, and Song**

The rediscovery of the work of women poets has proved an exciting development in literary history from the 1970s and onward, with developments in feminist criticism in the 1990s including the work of not only Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1806-1861), Christina Rossetti (1830-1894), and Emily Brontë (1818–1848), but also the poetry of Dora Greenwell (1821–1882), Jean Ingelow (1820–1897), Adelaide Procter (1825– 1864), Amy Levy (1861–1889), Michael Field (Katharine Bradley [1846–1914] and Edith Cooper [1862–1913]), and Augusta Webster (1837-1894), among others. Victorian women poets worked within a set of conventions and expectations, inherited from their Renaissance and Romantic predecessors, and experimented with or developed new forms and genres, including the dramatic monologue, the sonnet sequence, the ballad, the verse novel, and the religious lyric. Lyrics were mediated through print, as opposed to earlier eras where manuscript circulation and oral performance constituted modes of reception: Women’s poetry appeared in periodicals, a print medium with circulations of 20,000–60,000 or even 100,000. Prosodic experimentation included, for example, the “licences in rhyme” of Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Christina Rossetti in their use of

assonances such as “glory” and “for thee” (Hopkins 1959: xxvii; 286–7), as observed by the Jesuit poet-priest Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844–1889).

This presentation focuses on how Victorian women poets attended to matters of voice, particularly in their concern with the conditions permitting the subject of the lyric to speak, as well as lent their voice to traditionally silent, mute, or neglected subjects. It discusses how they experimented with performative address, a prosodic element (in addition to rhythm and sound patterning) which ordinarily differentiates the lyric from narrative fiction and mimetic modes generally. How do structure, language, figure and sound assist in the mode of enunciation originally distinguishing poetry from eloquence as articulated in 1833 by John Stuart Mill (1806–1873) in “What is Poetry?” (1833), where he describes the latter being heard and supposes an audience, whereas poetry is overheard and lies in the poet’s “utter unconsciousness of a listener” (Mill 1833a: 64)? Finally, what happens when lyric is set to music, presupposes an audience, and becomes song?

### **Irmtraud Huber**

Professor

University of Konstanz

[irmtraud.huber@uni-konstanz.de](mailto:irmtraud.huber@uni-konstanz.de)

### **Reading for the Line – Bernardine Evaristo’s *Girl, Woman, Other* and the Form of the Verse Novel**

On the back cover of Bernardine Evaristo’s Booker-Prize-winning novel *Girl, Woman, Other*, the book is heralded as unprecedented: “This is Britain as you’ve never read it. This is Britain as it has never been told”. Clearly this is meant to refer to the content of the book, to its multiplot tale of marginalised lives. Yet, what I aim to argue in this paper is that this applies with more justice to the form of the book. Arguably, this is the first novel in verse to win the Booker Prize. I will argue that approaching *Girl, Woman, Other* as a novel in verse demands specific acts of attention, as it encourages us to read for the line as well as for the plot. I will explore how Evaristo dexterously manipulates her lines to draw and guide attention, to heighten affective charges and to isolate central images. Moreover, I will contextualise Evaristo’s use of the form both historically, looking back at the development of the verse novel since the nineteenth century, and in view of the contemporary rise in popularity of the form. My contention is that the main challenge of the form is to our common practises of reading, researching and teaching literature, separated neatly into drama, narrative and poetry. Perhaps, I would like to suggest, asking what kind of acts of attention a text elicits may ultimately be a more productive approach to genre than the traditional triadic distinction.



# I

## **Jordana Infeld**

PhD candidate

Deakin University (Melbourne, Australia)

j.infeld@deakin.edu.au

### **Ceaseless rhythm: waulking's constraint and freedom**

This paper considers the pre-industrial practice of *waulking* as a site of poetic activity. Practised by women in the Hebrides, Scotland, waulking was the final stage in the production of tweed fabric, and combined song, choreographed movement, and textile work. After spinning and weaving, the fabric would be wetted and beaten against a table by a circle of women to the rhythm of their singing, passing the cloth along on the beat. The rhythm of the waulking songs affords repetition and synchronicity, facilitating the physical coordination required for this kind of collective task. Both the choreography and the songs adhere to pre-determined forms, and much about the waulking is ritualistic, arguably even spiritual. Drawing on Caroline Levine, I argue that the practice of waulking is an institution that preserves forms, 'imposing order on bodies, discourse and objects.' The institution of the Waulking Day did this work of imposing order and marking time through its layers of repetition and rhythm. I imagine form here as 'an arrangement of elements—an ordering, patterning or shaping,' including 'all ordering principles, all patterns of repetition and difference' (Levine 2015, p. 3). The paper will then go on to show that waulking uses form, rhythm and repetition to convert constraint into freedom. The waulker is constrained economically, socially, temporally and by her gender. However, freedom 'always arises from constraint—it's a creation conversion of it, not some utopian escape from it' (Massumi 2015, p. 39). While capitalist logic would have us understand the songs as instrumental to the production of cloth, I invert this logic, and show how the production of the economic good becomes the tool for poetic creation, and this convergence of song/poetry and manual labour a means of locating desire within work, and freedom within constraint.

**Sabina Ivenäs**

PhD candidate

Göteborgs universitet

[sabina.ivenas@lir.gu.se](mailto:sabina.ivenas@lir.gu.se)

### **Traveling Through Time: (Postmigrant) Poetry in Motion & Towards a New Poetic Experience**

Since the beginning of the 21st century, the theme of migration has grown strong in contemporary Scandinavian/Nordic poetry. Two movements can be observed: new writers with different migrant backgrounds enter the poetic stage, and new ways of writing poetry are explored. In other words, there are new ways in which poetry both seeks attention through new migrant experiences and calls for attention through new poetic expressions. Johannes Anyuru, Yayha Hassan, Maja Lee Langvad and Athena Farrokhzad are just a few examples of poets that have famously put migration poetry on the literary map and brought attention to the migrant experience in new ways.

However, little has been written about this new poetry using a migrant perspective. For instance, when Peter Stein Larsen maps out recent expansions of Danish poetry in his book *Poesins expansion* (2015), it is not included as part of the research conversation about poetry. The concept of “postmigration” enables questions to be asked about the relationship between poetry and migration experience: what is an experience of (post)migration, to whom belongs (post)migration and which encounters meets the poem and the poetic language? The term originates from the German theater scene and carries a potential of performativity that resonates with contemporary conceptual poetry. In short, postmigration can be defined as what happens *after* a migration has taken place and include the experience of second generations immigrants and transnational adoptees. It may also include different other perspectives on migration. My analysis departs from the specific poetic encounter between Athena Farrokhzad’s poetic work *I rörelse* (2019) and Karin Boye’s highly canonized poem “I rörelse” (1927), and I explore how postmigrant poetry moves within contemporary and historically literary settings through different media, textualities and traveling.

My presentation is part of my dissertation that focuses on postmigration in Swedish and Danish contemporary poetry.

**J**

**Sofie Njåsdatter Johannessen**

Doctoral research fellow

University of Oslo

sofie.n.johannessen@ilos.uio.no

**Repetitions and Interruptions in Claudia Rankine's *Citizen: An American Lyric***

Claudia Rankine's *Citizen: An American Lyric* (2014) is a collection of poems of different length that vary from anecdotes about her and others' experience of racism to longer essay-like poetry that address issues on race. The collection is, in many ways, composed of repetitions both in form and content. Through the seven sections of the book, Rankine retells, in a repetitive and almost monotonous tone, moments of micro-aggressions and revisits and reconsiders important historical events. These meditations are, however, interrupted by eighteen images as well as scripts to Rankine's and video artist John Lucas' on-going video-series titled "Situations". These images and visual elements are sometimes given in their original form, and other times they have been photoshopped or altered in some way. Critics who have previously commented on the use of remediation, adaptation, and appropriation in her work with images, reads them, amongst other, as "punctuations" that serve to offer a break from the repetitive discourse that runs throughout the collection<sup>1</sup>. In an interview, Rankine herself, has similarly stated that the images should function as "a form of recess ... including both the break from and passage back to the unbearable" (Berlant, 2014). Building on these observations, this paper suggests that Rankine's repetitive discourse mimics the patterns of every-day and systemic racism in a so called "post-race" US. These repetitions ultimately aestheticize continuous, seemingly endless cycles of racism, taking the shape of a loop. In attending to the visual elements in the collection and considering one particularly productive, albeit challenging, example from the book, I read the images as caesuras in the discourse that not only serve to produce breaks in the reading process, but in the aesthetics of the continuous loop as well. Based on, amongst other, Gilles Deleuze's (1968) theories of repetition as experimental actions that opens up for the potential of renewal and possibility, I explore the space within these caesuras as moments where we encounter a possible liberation from the restraints of the repetitive discourse. The images interrupt our temporal experience of the collection, and, as Rankine states, creates a "passage back to the unbearable" but altering its course however slightly.

**Jan Oliver Jost-Fritz**

Associate Professor

East Tennessee State University

[jostfritz@etsu.edu](mailto:jostfritz@etsu.edu)

### **Vivifying Attention in Enlightenment Aesthetics and Romantic Poetry**

In 1796, shortly after the publication of Erasmus Darwin's "Botanic Garden," Samuel Taylor Coleridge reflects upon the shortcomings of descriptive poetry: "Dr Darwin's Poetry, a succession of Landscapes or Paintings – it arrests the attention too often, and so prevents the rapidity necessary to pathos. – it makes the great little." While both Enlightenment grammarian James Harris and Gotthold Ephraim Lessing were mainly interested in the semiotic distinction between visual arts and poetry, Coleridge gracefully ignores such technical issues and points to the fact that the problem lies in the way, descriptive poetry governs the receptive attention of the potential reader. There is an incongruity between static images and the dynamic essence of nature, which calls for more "rapid" evocations of mental images.

Without explaining the issue at stake in his remarks on Darwin in more detail, Coleridge implicitly conceptualized (successful) descriptive poetry in an aesthetic framework build around the idea of the picturesque, which allows for effecting attention more dynamically. He picks up the idea in a conversation with Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock a few years later, when both poets discussed poetic potentialities of their respective native languages. In his writings on poetics and grammar, Klopstock had posited that the aesthetic effect is determined not simply by the rapid succession of thoughts and images, but by the rapidity and intensity of the representations of the individual thought and image: "the more rapid thought is livelier, has more force!"

Taking this observation as a starting point, I will trace in my paper how descriptive poetry generates, directs, and functionalizes attention, and how conceptual shifts within the field of aesthetics during the 18<sup>th</sup> century changed these means of description at large. In the process of breaking away from traditional rhetoric, poetry was supposed to be anchored in vivid expression, which became accordingly the prerequisite for a successful visual evocation of images and thoughts. The necessary vividness of poetic speech, as Johann Gottfried Herder put it, arises only where "attention is either maintained in due tension at all, or is especially directed to this idea or another." Without such an effect on the faculty of imagination, which is controlled by attentional impulses as Christian Wolff had argued, every particular imagination would remain amorphous; perception condenses into knowledge only through an alternation of lesser and greater motion, an idea that goes back to Aristotle. Thus, my thesis is that attention as conceptualized in aesthetic and poetological writings in the 18<sup>th</sup> century was thought of as a major vehicle of poetic cognition; implicitly, attention became a central feature of poetic style.

Jan Oliver Jost-Fritz is Associate Professor of German at East Tennessee State University; he has published on German Romanticism, Ludwig Tieck, Achim von Arnim, concepts of style in Brockes,

Klopstock, and Adelung, as well as Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock and John Milton. He is currently working on a project on concepts of language and poetry in the long 18<sup>th</sup> century.

## K

### **Anne Karhio**

Associate Professor

Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences

anne.karhio@inn.no

### **Poetry, technology, and the ethics of attention in the work of Paul Muldoon and Nick Laird**

This presentation will consider the question of attention in poetry through the relationship, or tension, between attention and distraction, particularly in poems engaging with present-day media technologies and online environments. Jonathan Crary has argued how "modern distraction can only be understood through its reciprocal relation to the rise of attentive norms and practices". If in the 19th century poetry and art challenged the mechanical processes of the modern industrial economy through "subjective withdrawal" as "inattentiveness and reverie" as Crary observes, in the network economy poetry faces the challenge of reclaiming our attention as agency and responsibility by bracketing the fragmented continuous present for a degree of critical distance.

In the 1998 essay "The Point of Poetry", Paul Muldoon describes his ination with words that have unexpected underlying meanings or curious etymologies, like "focus" which comes from the Latin for "hearth". Muldoon's own poetry has been criticized for the kind of *lack* of focus that such constant slippages between words suggests, yet he highlights poetry as a medium not for endless associative distraction but for sustained attentiveness: "rhyme is a potent tool in the business of attracting and holding our attention". In a society filled with catchy advertising slogans and purpose-driven rhetoric, it is "the poet [who] must shoulder his responsibility to the language". In the later *One Thousand Things Worth Knowing* (2015), a number of poems approach this idea of responsibility in the context of new technologies and the knowledge economy, and their limited potential in determining what is worth preserving, or remembering.

Rather than responsibility in the face of information overload, Nick Laird's 2018 collection *Feel Free* addresses technology's complicity in obscuring the problematic tension between the present environment and the world beyond perceptual experience. In the title poem, this is done through an exaggerated repetition of the lyric "I" in phrases beginning "I like", as the quite literally self-centered speaker persona "likes" to "interface / with Earth", his "mind to feel[ing] a kind of neutral buoyancy". A fashionable, socially disengaged exercise of mindfulness as "a mental mode characterized by attention to the present moment without emotional reactivity or conceptual engagement" distracts the speaker from how "coloured pixels" on screens rely on the minerals mined by "mud-grey children".

In these poets' work, the relationship between attention, technology, and experience is approached through a sense of ethical urgency.

### **Ole Karlsen**

Professor

Innland University of Applied Sciences

[ole.karlsen@inn.no](mailto:ole.karlsen@inn.no)

### **The long poem in Norwegian contemporary literature**

The long poem has long been the dominant form in Norwegian contemporary literature and over the last twenty years or so this genre (or poetic mode) has become a well-established term in Norwegian criticism. The sonnet sequence, however, is rarely – if at all – mentioned; the term virtually seems unknown even though the sonnet sequence historically has been the dominant form for Norwegian sonneteering poets from the Romantic Age onwards with a remarkable renaissance in recent years. Also in neighbouring Sweden and Denmark some notable works have been written in the sonnet sequence form counting among others poems by such notable poets as Göran Sonnevi, Pablo Henrik Llambias, and Simon Grotrian.

In my presentation I will discuss the hows and wherefores of the sonnet sequence form in three recent books of poetry, Åsmund Bjørnstad's *Kvit stein* (2009), Karin Haugane's *Oder til Fenn* (2013) og Morten Langeland's *Zoonetter* (2017).

**Mateusz Kucab**

PhD student

Jagiellonian University

mateusz.kucab@doctoral.uj.edu.pl

**Being Sentient. Ecology-Experience and Edna St. Vincent Millay's poetry**

Timothy Morton advocated giving up the notion of Nature as a broad and misleading concept. Contemporary ecocriticism and environmental humanities take up the theme of seeking a new relationship between man and the non-human. In my paper I would like to follow a different track. I would like to see how a poem can be read without this division, and therefore the clear boundaries of the world of humans, animals, plants and the abiotic. Using the category of *sentient*, and therefore capable of feeling, I would like to interpret the poems of Edna St. Vincent Millay, an American Pulitzer winner. In Millay's poetry there is an interesting fusion of the articulation of human experience and ludic emotions and the world of non-human nature. I would like to show the concept of *sentient* as an interesting and inspiring interpretative category, and at the same time as an expressive destabilization of the division between "human" and "non-human." Thus, I will interpret Millay's poems as a record of attentiveness and experience that permeates boundaries and reveals itself through images of nature, and thus - for example - of a human, a bird, a flower, a reptile, the soil.

For Millay, using the classical poetic form, does not treat nature as a poetic embellishment, but as a phenomenon of experience. For this reason I use the term ecology-experience to emphasize that in Millay's poetry they perform each other. The paper is related to my doctoral project, but at the same time it opens new fields of my research exploration. A presentation at the INSL conference would be the first viewing of my methodological proposal.

**L****Peter Stein Larsen**

Aalborg University

[pstein@ikl.aau.dk](mailto:pstein@ikl.aau.dk)

**The struggle of the poetic genre field**

While several scholars in recent years have investigated a particular prototypical and transhistorical theory of the lyric (Culler 2015; Hempfer 2017; Attridge 2019), other scholars have focused on the historical and dynamic structure of the poetic genre (Ramazani 2013; Altieri 2017). In “The Lyrical Impulse” (2017), Charles Altieri argues that the dominant feature of modern poetry is the rebellion against genre norms by “disrupting and mixing generic expectations” (Altieri 2017: 13), and Jahan Ramazani adds in *Poetry and Its Others: News, Prayer, Song, and the Dialogue of Genres* (2013), that modern poetry consists of “works that summon, resist, remix, defy, and remake those encoded presuppositions” (Ramazani 2013: 99). Altieri's and Ramazani's point of views are related to important previous reflections on how poetry evolves, from T.S. Eliot's “The Methaphysical Poets” (1921), claiming that “our civilization comprehends great variety and complexity, and this variety and complexity, playing upon a refined sensibility, must produce various and complex results” to Hugo Friedrich's notion from *Die Struktur der modernen Lyrik* (1956) that modernity combine new experiences with new poetic forms and stylistic innovations (Eliot 1969: 289). My thesis in this paper is threefold. First, in agreement with Eliot and Friedrich, I argue that modern Western poetry is fundamentally different from poetry of earlier times. Second, I argue, in agreement with Altieri and Ramazani, that the distinctive feature of modern poetry is that certain aesthetic norms are constantly being challenged, attacked, and developed. Thirdly, and most important, I argue that a crucial project in modern poetry is to obstruct and traverse the norms of classical poetry by constantly bringing four issues into play, namely 1) the genre-defining paratext (from Apollinaire's *Calligrammes* to Pound's *Cantos*), 2) the straight right margin (from Rimbaud to Søren Ulrik Thomsen), 3) the unity between the instance of enunciation and the enunciated utterance (from Gertrude Stein to Eva Ström), and 4) the poetic idiom (from Hugo Ball to Kenneth Goldsmith).

### **Karen Leeder**

Academic title: Schwarz Taylor Professor of the German Language and Literature,

Affiliation: University of Oxford

Email address: karen.leeder@new.ox.ac.uk

### **Towards a Listening Poetics. Ulrike Draesner and Alice Oswald attending with the ear**

The OED defines lyric as ‘poetry expressing the writer's inner emotions usually briefly and in stanzas or recognized forms’. When thinking about poetry, we have a tendency to place great weight (especially historically) on the self and experience of a poet figure and the unique voice of that poet projected into the world, the more so since many poets work hard to place themselves at the centre of their lyric. Here I would like to make some observations about two female contemporary poets: one German, Ulrike Draesner; and the other English, Alice Oswald. Draesner's *Subsong* (2014)\* and



Oswald's *Falling Awake* (2016) foreground a different mode of locating oneself in the world, through listening though in truth they are representative of a larger group of what might call 'listening poets' across history and internationally.

Sketching in the background to ways of thinking about listening in modern times, this paper will then explore the trajectory of a 'listening poetics' and ask how far it offers an alternative way of conceptualising the poetic impulse and experience: a notion of the lyric that constitutes itself in another way, though listening, and ends up articulating the other of experience and the experience of otherness. Poet Kathleen Jamie talked in 2005 about 'listening and the art of listening, listening with attention. I don't just mean with the ear; bringing the [sic] quality of attention to the world'. John Burnside in 2003 emphasized the 'dissident work' of listening and attending to the song of the earth. By and large these poets do not, however, pronounce an ecological message, rather they perform ecological work by 'putting our inner worlds in contact with the outer world' (Oswald) through the work of listening. At stake is a way of thinking about experience and attention which opens out onto a poetics, and even a potential politics, of our relationship with the earth and the everyday and maybe even implies new lyric forms.

\*I will use the original German and provide translations for discussion

### **Tin Lamac**

Academic title: Assistant Professor, PhD

Affiliation: Univesrity of Zadar, Department for Croatian philology

E-mail address: [tinlamac01@gmail.com](mailto:tinlamac01@gmail.com) [tlemac22@unizd.hr](mailto:tlemac22@unizd.hr)

### **Stylistic Model and Typology of Poetic Image**

Poetic image is a category related to spiritual, linguistic and literary interpretation. Authors like Gaston Bachelard, Henry Caminande and Henry Pongs wrote about its spiritual dimension, Janosz Petőfi wrote about it like linguistic fact and Clive Staples Lewis wrote about it like literary phenomena. In this paper we analyse her stylistic interpretation based on poetic style, category of literary description, figures, aspects of semiosis defined by Charles Morris, connotative induction and linguistic levels of its realisation (by the author of a paper). In traditional, modern and some avantgarde poetic styles (expressionistic, surrealist and imaginistic) we find poetic image like main part of poetic language. The difference between these styles lays in poetics of each poetry and growth of connotative meaning in poetic sequence. In traditional poetic style poetic image is basic poetic element. Literary description is defined by cultural knowledge and some elements like figures

epithetons. Basic figures for generation the imaginative meaning are metaphor, simila and epitheton. Semiosis of Charles Morris is well based for analysis of imaginative semiosis including the sign operations and interpretator. Connotative induction is semantic operation of generating the imaginative meaning and linguistic levels for realisation are syntagmatic, sentential and discursive level. We discuss about imaginative utterance (more precise stylistic term than poetic image) because it is derived from imaginative metaphor. We offer typology of this category related to stylistic, poetic, receptional and critical criteria. These are linguostylistic level of realisation, criteria of complexity, criteria of origin, criteria of lyrical communication, criteria of thematic strata, criteria of stylistic field, receptional criteria, poetic criteria, criteria of pretextual relation and criteria of critical and estetic function. We explain each criteria, offer types of it and poetic examples for each type.

### **Edvard Lia**

MA Student in English Literature

University of Tromsø

[eli050@post.uit.no](mailto:eli050@post.uit.no)

### **“One of the most powerful images in our time of powers”: Juliana Spahr’s *This Connection of Everyone with Lungs* as Eco-Lyrical Meditation on the Earth as Unhomely Home**

This paper examines Juliana Spahr’s meditations on the ethical and political relevance of poetry in a time of crisis, as embodied in her eco-political lyric *This Connection of Everyone with Lungs* (2005). Written in the period from September 11, 2001 to the U.S. invasion of Iraq in late March 2003, the book is composed of dated entries which Spahr wrote in response to following the 24-hour news cycle about world events, especially the American preparations for war. In an explanatory note, Spahr asserts that the aftermath of 9/11 forced her to rethink her unwanted but intimate complicity with the U.S. state. Throughout the book, she recognizes that even her most intimate moments with her beloveds are infused with disturbing thoughts about all the horrors being committed in their names as American citizens. Upon realizing that an invasion of Iraq was imminent, Spahr “began to sort through the news in the hope of understanding how this would happen. I thought that by watching the news more seriously I could be a little less naive. But I gained no sophisticated understanding as I wrote these poems” (13), in particular because certain events were not deemed worthy enough for the news. To effectively convey the feeling of intimate complicity, Spahr employs the lyric genre because “its attention to connection [and] its dwelling on the beloved and on the afar” (13) felt, for her, like an appropriate mode of writing to explore the potential ethical and political relevance of poetry in a time of crisis.

A similar attempt to understand the forces of globalization in recent decades is offered by contemporary philosopher Kelly Oliver in her book *Earth and World: Philosophy After the Apollo Missions* (2015). She claims that the first images of Earth seen from space, *Earthrise* (1968) and *Blue Marble* (1972), required a theoretical and practical reorientation of our relation to the Earth as our unhomey home. The divergent responses to these images, Oliver argues, highlight the multifaceted nature of technological globalization and the implications for our ethical and political commitments as finite beings living on the same planet. By reading Spahr and Oliver in conjunction, I seek to elucidate the necessity of embracing the struggle for a reconceived ethical and political relation to the Earth which thereby rejects the promise of space colonization as a solution to our self-imposed problems here on Earth. Both Spahr's poetry and Oliver's philosophy are highly relevant for reckoning with our responsibilities for not only our concretely embodied beloveds but likewise those faraway earthlings which we will never meet during our finite lifetime. Because it attends to the singularity of each living being without neglecting our commonalities, I argue that Oliver's "earth ethics" productively illuminates Spahr's own eco-political insistence on the intimate complicity in which we are all unevenly and uniquely embedded together.

### **Andreas Lombnes**

Professor Emeritus

Agder Universitet

andreas.g.lombnas@uia.no

### **What Everybody Knows.**

Presentation and representation in lyric poetry, á propos Jan Erik Vold's poem "Det alle vet" (1968) Hermeneutics starts where meaning breaks down, or where no meaning is found in the first place. Meaning I take to be 'opinion' of a subject matter related in a code known to the participants, a code that in this respect is silently agreed upon and should remain invisible so as not to distract attention from the object represented. The academic discipline labeled 'communication' as taught in Media studies in Norway I take to consider this as the normative, optimal use of verbal signs. By contrast poetry by its very defining characteristics highlights the code by way of drawing attention to material (musical) aspects of the sign system. Generally speaking one could see the many rhetorical schemes typical of poetry as so many ways to problematize the linguistic code or spread doubt as to what code is the appropriate one. That is, the poetic ideal is ambiguity while the ideal of communicative prose is unambiguity.

Meaning is contextual, based on relations - not on some essence residing in words or entities. This applies to poetry as well, but poetry is aware that meaning is just as dependent on the code used. This double aspect has led to the conflict between contextualist and so called autonomist approaches to literature. The problem as I will try to demonstrate in this paper is that we as readers are principally unable to focus meaning and materiality (form), *at the same time* that is, not *per se*.

On these assumptions I shall make a distinction between 'prosaic' communication of something familiar, a 'representation' of something already known because of the shared (tacitly presupposed) code, and a poetic presentation of confounded reality, a 'direct' experience of mediation as such. If the allusion can be excused, I see this in light of the contrast between the Biblical term "know" (as in "to know a woman") and the ordinary meaning of the term.

In my paper I shall refer to some aspects of H.U. Gumbrecht's *Production of Presence: What Meaning Cannot Convey*; and I shall take my examples from the Norwegian author J.E. Vold, foremost "Det alle vet" ("What everybody knows", 1968), a poem with a triple rhythm corresponding to its visual, musical and linguistic aspects.

## M

### **Alicia Maddalena**

Academic title: Associate Lecturer in Medieval Literature with Old Norse

Affiliation: University of York

Email address: alicia.maddalena@york.ac.uk

### **The Use of Pre-Conversion Form and Vocabulary in the Old Norse *Hugsvinnsmál***

This paper will discuss how the lexicon of wisdom was used by Old Norse poets working after the Christian conversion of Iceland to marry Christian content and traditional Icelandic poetic tradition. My PhD thesis demonstrates that there is significant overlap of a number of wisdom adjectives in their application to pagan and Christian figures. *Fróðr* [wise], for example, applies to Óðinn in the eddic poem *Hávamál* in reference to his acquisition of the power of runes, as well as to the Christian God and Christ in post-conversion poetry. Although poets composing after the conversion clearly understood that there was a need for new vocabulary to accommodate Christian ideas that had not

existed in pre-Christian thought, the vocabulary of wisdom survived and flourished during the post-conversion period and beyond, suggesting that it did not need replacing with more appropriate, Christian alternatives. This continued use of pre-conversion wisdom vocabulary in Christian poetry is part of a larger trend in which Christian poets employed forms and conventions that would have been familiar to an Icelandic audience from pre-conversion verse in their own poetry, possibly hoping to invoke the tradition and authority these conventions would have held. As my primary case study, I will discuss the form and vocabulary of the Christian wisdom poem *Hugsvinnsmál* in relation to its Latin source, the *Disticha Catonis*, as well as to the form and conventions of eddic poetry. The *Hugsvinnsmál* poet's preference for impersonal constructions – as opposed to the *Disticha*'s preference for the imperative construction – invites the semantic field of wisdom to become an integral part of the poem, as wisdom adjectives are used to apply to (or stand in for) the gnomic Everyman. Thus, I argue, the language as well as the form chosen by the *Hugsvinnsmál* poet recalls that of pre-conversion eddic poetry, calling upon its familiarity and its authority. The strength and elasticity of the semantic core of wisdom allowed it to play an integral role in the creation of a new Christian discourse for skaldic poetry, as it was maintained and tailored to the changing needs of post-conversion poets.

**Claus K. Madsen**

Associate Professor

Helsinki University

Email address: [claus.madsen@helsinki.fi](mailto:claus.madsen@helsinki.fi)

**Apostrophe and semantic patterning as shaping poetic attention**

I propose a paper on apostrophe and semantic patterning as shifts in mode that present an alternative means of shaping poetic attention to create a lyrical poem out of an observation. I do this to further engage with Lucy Alford's idea of poetic attention (2020).

The two poems, I will be discussing and presenting, are an observation of strawberries and of white thorn, called "strawberries" and "white thorn", from the debut poetry collection *\*Luseblomster\** (1954) of the Danish writer Cecil Bødker. Bødker started out as a poet, but is today broadly renowned for her later children's literature. To the minor extent her early works of Danish modern poetry are canonised and anthologised, it is for their modernistic endeavours, which leaves a large part of her poetry unrecognised.

In my work on Bødker, I have found an interest in nature unlike her Danish fellow writers of her period, specifically the early danish modernism of the 1950'es. In the poems, I will be presenting, Bødker utilises attention shifts caused by a sudden apostrophic outcry and a subversive metaphoric patterning, to catch and engage our imagination.

These attention shifts will be discussed in relation to literary history, as both the apostrophe and the patterning are employed to make modern poetry out of an attention towards what could easily have been romanticised objects, but instead of working with feelings and sensibilities, the shifts act to further an attention shaping or sharpening.

### **Bjarne Markussen**

Professor

[bjarne.markussen@uia.no](mailto:bjarne.markussen@uia.no)

University of Agder

### **Kae Tempest – between rap and spoken word poetry**

English poet, dramatist, novelist, and rapper Kae Tempest (former Kate Tempest) has been called «a poet for people who don't read poetry, a rapper for people who don't listen to hip hop» (*The Guardian* 30.04.17). As a teenager Tempest – whose gender is nonbinary – entered London's live poetry scene and became increasingly engaged in music. Inspired by William Blake and James Joyce as well as hip hop artists Kendrick Lamar og Ms. Lauryn Hill, this has led to a number of albums of rap (*Everybody Down*), spoken word poetry with or without music (*The Book Of Traps And Lessons*, *Running Upon The Wires*), or combinations of rap and spoken word poetry (*Let Them Eat Chaos*, *The Line Is A Curve*). The lyrics for *Running Upon The Wires* and *Let Them Eat Chaos* have been published as poetry books, while *Everybody Down* was re-mediated into the novel *The Bricks That Built The Houses*.

In this paper I will examine Tempest's 2016 concept album, *Let Them Eat Chaos* – a co-production with producer Dan Carey – with regard to how rap and spoken word interact. The title is a pun on the statement (wrongly) attributed to Marie Antoinette during the French Revolution, «Let them eat cake», suggesting a political theme. The album tells the story of seven lonely young adults – five women and two men – and a storm. They live in the same London neighbourhood but don't know each other. We meet them in the middle of the night at precisely the same time, 4:18 a.m. (an intertextual reference to 1 John 4:18). Their personal concerns are economic as well as existential, and

related to a society characterized by increasing social differences, gentrification, selfishness, and climate crises. Eventually the storm breaks loose, forcing the self-focused characters out on the street.

The listener gets to know the characters partly through music, partly through words. Musically, each of them is given a melodic and rhythmic pattern reflecting his or her personality. Lyrically, they are portrayed in two ways: by the narrator's presentations and by their own expressive 'inner' monologues. The presentations are performed as *spoken word* with background music, while the monologues are performed as *rap* with a rhythmic flow and a heavier beat. In addition, the monologues have a more fragmented, modernist poetic style. Thus, there are considerable differences in perspective, narrative distance, and emotional force. In the language of opera, the presentations are like recitatives, while the rap-monologues are like arias. *Let Them Eat Chaos* is at the same time a polyphonic chaos (everybody 'speaks' at the same time, 4:18 a.m.) and a well-structured narrative centred around the only 'active' agent – the tempest.

### **Scott Mehl**

Assistant Professor of Japanese

Colgate University

### **Modern Japanese Poets and the Affordances of Syllabary-Ideographic Script**

To the best of my knowledge, the Japanese writing system is the only major writing system that consistently combines ideographic writing and phonetic syllabary writing.<sup>3</sup> Three different corpora of written characters are used in modern Japanese: the ideographic *kanji* (derived from Chinese *hanzi*), and the two phonetic *kana* syllabaries (the *hiragana* and the *katakana*). What this means is that, in modern Japanese, the transcription of even a quite basic utterance (e.g., “I drink coffee”) can normatively deploy all three of those scripts (コーヒーを飲みます, in which the red character is a *kanji*, the blue characters are *hiragana*, and the green are *katakana*). An additional feature of Japanese is that every *kanji* can be “spelled out” in *hiragana* or *katakana*; the reverse, however, is not always the case.

One of the premier poetic devices in modern Japanese poetry is the use of surprising or unexpected script—for example, spelling a word ideographically in one line and phonetically in the next. The manifold script possibilities in Japanese that I described in the previous paragraph become a means of,

---

<sup>3</sup> It is my understanding that the old Korean *mixed script* also used to combine ideographs with a phonetic script; but the use of ideographs in written Korean today is infrequent, and becoming ever more so.

among other things, directing a reader's attention within a poem. In the early twentieth century, Japanese Symbolist poets and free-verse poets explored the many affordances of the modern Japanese writing system, creating new forms of difficulty and scriptural density. In a fifteen- to twenty-minute presentation, it will not be possible to plumb all the ramifications of this phenomenon, but—after a brief introduction—there are three examples that I will examine closely: Kanbara Ariake's (1876-1952) unrhymed sonnet "Ada naramashi" (How fleeting it would be, 1901); Hagiwara Sakutarō's (1886-1942) free-verse poem "Ryojō" (On a journey, 1913); and, for contrast with a text from an earlier period, Yosa Buson's (1716-1784) haiku that begins "Na no hana ya" (In a field in bloom, ca. 1774). Each of these poems makes an overt visual appeal to the reader, subverting or otherwise manipulating the conventions of script usage in order to direct the reader's attention to certain aspects of the textual surface, in ways that run in parallel to the play of meaning. In this manner, the poems I will be considering each "treat [poetry] not [...] only as an event of meaning, but as an event of and in language, with language understood as a material medium as well as a semantic resource" (Derek Attridge, *The Experience of Poetry*, p. 2).

### **May Mergenthaler**

Associate Professor

Ohio State University

[mergenthaler.4@osu.edu](mailto:mergenthaler.4@osu.edu)

### **Light as Medium of Experience in the Poetry of Greiffenberg and Brockes**

This paper argues that the often-described shift, in the 18th century, from poetry tied to religious, social, and political frameworks to an experiential lyric – Goethe's famous *Erlebnislyrik*, that is freed from conventions and allows the newly emerging individual to express their emotions and ideas, often in the face of nature, is dependent on the medium of light. This thesis will be explained by investigating the poetry of Catharina von Greiffenberg (1633-1694) and Bartolt Heinrich Brockes (1680-1747), which will be read on the background of the German tradition of Baroque poetry (Gryphius; Hoffmannswaldau; Gerhard). Greiffenberg, whose work was not well-known during her lifetime, has been seen by literary scholarship as anticipating, with her deeply religious, mystical poetry, the poetic expression of individual experiences (van Ingen 1995 [1982]). Brockes, in turn, is being regarded today as one of the first proto-ecological poets who turned his gaze outward to nature, and based his poetic descriptions of landscape on his individual empirical observations (Detering 2015; Bühler 2016), despite the fact that his celebration of nature took place in the framework of physico-theology (William Derham 1714). In fact, however, Greiffenberg, the a protestant mystic, already turned her gaze outward, while Brockes took inspiration from medieval Christian mysticism



(Mergenthaler 2021). Both movements, inward and outward, are, this paper argues, inextricably linked in the development of modern lyric poetry – and modern individuality in general. Only the sense of freedom and individuality enables a person to observe nature outside of religious structures, in what we call an empirical manner. Conversely, the observation of the individual aspects of the material world enables the person to experience itself as individual. The figure and concept of light mediates between those two aspects of the modern individual and its poetic expression in Greiffenberg and Brockes anticipating similarly light-infused experiential poetry of the later 18th century.

Greiffenberg famously described herself as inspired by a ‘divine, dark-bright light’ (“dunkel-helles Licht ... was Göttliches”; in: “Über das unaussprechliche Heilige Geistes-Eingeben”); Brockes opens the first of his nine-volume poetry collection *Earthly Pleasure in God (Irdisches Vergnügen in Gott, 1721-1749)*, with a frightening vision of the “light darkness” (“lichter Dunkelheit”) of an infinite-seeming cosmos (“Das Firmament”). While Brockes turns his gaze back to earth in most of the following poems, divine light, mostly manifest in sunlight, continues to enable his observations. In his poem “Grass / at the beginning of spring” (“Das Gras / im Anfange des Frühlings”), when the “bridegroom” of earth and “prince of light”—a metaphor invoking a mystical union, returns to earth in springtime, both earth and humans can ‘see’ the splendor of nature and recover from their wintery blindness. As Brockes’ poem continues, light acquires empirical qualities and is described as inflecting the color and shape of blades of grass visible to the human eye. While Greiffenberg focuses most of her poems on the direct praise of God, her spring poems, while much more formulaic and allegorical, bear surprising similarities with Brockes’ physico-theological praise of nature as manifestation of God. Her poem on “Grass Song” or “Meadow Song” (“Wiesen Liedlein”) describes the colors of flowers as reflecting the fire of God’s heart; in her poem “About the flowers” (“Über die Blumen”), the gaze (“Blick”) of the poem’s first-person speaker “shines” and thereby sees the “radiance” of God in nature. She praises “every little leaf” (“Blätlein”) and “line” (“Strichlein”) of the flowers as expression of God’s power, grace, and wisdom. By describing experiences of the divine and of its manifestation in nature with the help of figures and concepts of light, both poets evoke, with the help of partially similar poetic devices, intensive visual experiences. The paper will elaborate on how Greiffenberg and Brockes use both traditional (allegory, rhyme, alliteration) and innovative (detailed descriptions; figures of reflection) poetic devices to represent and incite new ways of seeing light, seeing with the help of light, and becoming light, combining religious and Enlightenment traditions.

**Matthew Mewhinney**

Assistant Professor

Florida State University

[mmewhinney@fsu.edu](mailto:mmewhinney@fsu.edu)

### **Listening for Life: Breath, Rhythm, and Reading in a Modern Japanese Prose Poem**

“The poet is he who, in the word, produces life,” wrote Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben, arguing that life and poetry come together in language. Speaking to the conference theme of “Poetry, Experience, Attention,” my paper explores how the poetic form of Japanese novelist Natsume Sōseki’s (1867–1916) memoir *Recollecting and Such* (Omoidasu koto nado; translated as *Recollections* by Maria Flutsch) tunes the reader’s attention to how “the word produces life.” I argue that *Recollecting and Such* enlists the reader to imagine the invisible, vital sign of both human life and the experience of poetry: breath.

*Recollecting and Such* is a retrospective, autobiographical narrative about, among other things, memory and illness, detailing Sōseki’s recollection of, and recovery from, a near-death-experience after coughing copious amounts of blood and falling unconscious. It was published in 1910 as a daily serial in thirty-two installments in both the Tokyo and Osaka Asahi Newspapers.

Sōseki’s work allows for the reader to imagine breath in two ways that inform each another: through the literary representation of both physiological and metaphysical breath—respiration and Pneuma—and through the rhythm of the narrative’s experimental poetic form. To explain what I mean by rhythm, I lean on the conceptual work of Henri Lefebvre, showing how Sōseki’s narrative reveals itself as a poetic form—a prose poem—of measurement and its first-person narrator a “rhythmanalyst,” or someone who listens to the internal rhythms of his own body and then to that of the external world. The narrator’s heightened awareness of time, frequency, and the intensity of sensation as well as his regular compositions of metered verse—haiku and *kanshi* (traditional Chinese poetry)—across installments, I propose, are ways that the narrative measures the limits of life, memory, and sensory experience, reminding us of it means to be human and to breathe again after a close encounter with death. I also show how the oscillation between modern vernacular prose and lyric poetry in the narrative generates an organic rhythm, simulating a breathing body, which, I contend, invites the reader to breathe together—“to conspire” in the literal sense—with the text as a form of sympathy.

My close reading of Sōseki’s *Recollecting and Such* converses with scholarship on Anglo-European Romanticism, theories of the lyric, and nineteenth-century vitalism and empiricism. More broadly, it aims to offer new ways to think about the relationship between poetry, rhythm, and reading.

### **Călina-Maria Moldovan**

Academic title: PhD student

Affiliation: Faculty of Letters, Babeş-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca, Romania

Email address: [calina.moldovan@ubbcluj.ro](mailto:calina.moldovan@ubbcluj.ro)

### **Reading matter as text. Poems for, to, and by (our) bodies of water**

My research will revolve around material ecocriticism's claim that matter should not be thought of as passive and inert, but understood instead as vibrant and lively, able to tell stories of its own. Material ecocriticism "investigates matter both in texts and as a text", according to Juha Raipola. In this respect, I aim to investigate how water bodies and waterscapes such as the ocean, rivers, lake and so on can be read as both matter *and* text, being therefore able to "write" their own poetry in waves, currents, raindrops. For doing so I chose a volume of poetry published in 2013, *The Lake Rises* (edited by Lisa Wujnovich and Brandi Katherine Herrera). Even though the poets in this volume are, indeed, human, they seem to step aside and let the non-human speak for itself, becoming mere translators from one language (the language of non-human bodies) to another (our human language). Touching on matters of affect and fluidity, the volume celebrates water as vibrant matter, to use Jane Bennett's term. Water is a breach, an anomaly, a disrupter. As Astrida Neimanis postulates, water flows in, through and between bodies, connecting and creating bridges between humans and non-humans. What can water tell us about us about ourselves? How can it write poetry on its own, and how can we understand and read matter as a text? The poets of this volume tried to answer these questions, investigating how different water bodies created and influenced their own human identities. In other words, the water *wrote* them. If we understand water molecules as letters, the world is just an immense canvas on which everything is "written" or imprinted, and every little thing that exists, be it human or non-human, is just another permutation, another re-arrangement of particles.

### **Erica Camisa Morale**

PhD Student

USC

[camisamo@usc.edu](mailto:camisamo@usc.edu)

### **What Can East Slavic Early Modern Poems Tell Us about The Nature of Lyric?**

We hear "Russian lyric"—and the mind goes to Aleksandr Pushkin, Anna Akhmatova, Marina Tsvetaeva... However, what are the origins of this East Slavic experience of lyric poetry? In the paper, I investigate theorizations of lyric elaborated between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries

in territories corresponding approximately to today's Belarus', Russia, Ukraine, and areas of the Baltic states, to ascertain what the notion of lyric was at the time and what their role and their interaction with their interlocutors were. At the turn of the eighteenth century, when the modern ideas of originality and authority were not established yet and the spheres of influence of religion and literature were still evolving, the defining characteristics of lyric are the open text, variety, hybridism, and a dialogic relationship with their interlocutors. Earl Miner, Jonathan Culler, Guido Mazzoni, and Jahan Ramazani have omitted the East Slavic experience from their comparative research, excluding it from international debates on lyric poetry. Analyzing the poetic treatises of Simeon Polotskii, Teofan Prokopovich, Mikhail Lomonosov, Apollon, and Gavril Derzhavin, I argue that these lyricists should be included in studies of the genre for their uniqueness and their contributions to understanding the nature of lyric. "Even as it stays attuned to local histories and specific languages, the field [of lyric studies] also needs to draw inspiration from, and contribute to, world literary studies, global studies, transnational studies," affirms Ramazani. By considering East Slavic lyrics, we see how the notions of brevity, fictionality, and purity are not key to defining lyric poetry from a transnational standpoint. Instead, the concepts of impurity, openness, and dialogism were present in early modern East Slavic poems. Studying this poetry allows us to include a new instance of the tension between the local and the translocal, while helping us to understand the specificities of East Slavic early modern lyric and contributing to defining lyric poetry dynamically.

### **Mantra Mukim**

Academic title: Early Career Research Fellow

Affiliation: University of Warwick, UK

Email address: mantra.mukim@warwick.ac.uk

### **Lyric Impossibility: Muktibodh, Césaire, and the Experience of Long Poems**

Writing about the epic German poem, *Nibelungenlied*, Hegel makes the frustrated claim that 'we do not manage to see the thing but only notice the incapacity and drudgery of the poet.' It is the lyric elements of *Nibelungenlied* that Hegel blames for this obscurity, which 'above all lack the specific reality of a ground and soil'. In reading one of the longest and most celebrated poems of Hindi modernism, G.M. Muktibodh's *Andhre Mein* (In Darkness), this paper investigates a poetics that precisely refuses the 'reality of a ground and soil' and instead pursues difficult and at times tautological set of questions that Muktibodh's speaker poses to himself and to unreconcilable circumstances around him, thus creating an experience of a long poem that is guided by both inquisition and obscurity and defies codes of nationalistic long poems whose stretched and hyperbolic quality was at the service of imagining a new and robust postcolonial state.

Muktibodh's questions in this 1964-poem both occasion and result in an epistemic darkness for his speaker, varying from 'Who is it/who we can hear/but cannot see?' to 'who is it/who can be seen/but is impossible to know!/Who is that human?'. The questions range from the illogical ('have i lived?'), to enigmatic ('was that a sign, an omen?/a letter from someone?'), to hopeful ('will i really find an image?'), but none of them find a clear resolution. The poem itself provides a commentary on these questions: 'these were serious questions, perhaps even dangerous'. Muktibodh's questions are indeed dangerous and threatening for a lyric mode and a poetic structure that Hegel defines as 'illuminative' and 'connective'. Instead, this paper argues, Muktibodh offers us a radically destabilised and impossible lyric form, where the key experience of a post-industrial and post-colonial voice are questions without manifest answers.

The paper will also juxtapose the experience of long poems in Muktibodh's work to that of the Martinique French poet Aimé Césaire, whose poem *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal* invokes the impossibility of homecoming for a subject whose origins have been irreversibly displaced under aegis of colonial migration and cultural imperialism. The paper would argue that Césaire's long poems are an experience of returning without arrival, with his poetic lines extending this experience of impossibility through their paratactic reversals and slippages into prose. Césaire, not unlike Muktibodh, employs the long poem not to comprehensively illuminate or glorify his subject—a pre-colonial past—but to be able to repeat the impossibility of arriving at such a past and to simultaneously deal with the limits of representational language.

### **Jan Musil**

Academic title: Mgr. Jan Musil (M.A. equivalent, in front of the name)

Affiliation: Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic, Faculty of Arts, Department of Czech and Comparative Literature, PhD Student

Email address: [me@janmusil.net](mailto:me@janmusil.net)

### **The Violence of Tradition in David Harsent's Poetry**

The poetry of David Harsent, a contemporary English poet, navigates a difficult territory of violence, grief, and memories. Yet these themes, which at least since T. S. Eliot's *Waste Land* have often been rendered by a multiplicity of faltering voices, take on a rather traditional form in Harsent's writing. Ever since the collection *A Violent Country* (1969), through the books *New From The Front* (1993) or *Legion* (2005) to the *Fire Songs* (2014), Harsent has been developing uncomplicated narratives and using regular meters and bold rhyme patterns, creating a conspicuous contrast between the disturbing

topics and musical beauty of his poems.

Many of Harsent's poems can be roughly categorised as elegies or ballads (one being simply called *Ballad*). This is not surprising, since throughout different interviews, Harsent gives hints on the reasons behind this inclination towards what I call—for the lack of a better term—traditional lyricism. He regularly mentions *The Oxford Book of Ballads* by Arthur Quiller-Couche he was given by his grandmother and read when he was injured as child, creating a myth about himself as an author. In my analysis, I would also like to clarify to what degree can this collection of works be treated as an actual formal influence. Apart from the lyric genres, Harsent widely draws on the prose genres of legends and folktales. Their most important property is that they feature a memorable character whose fate is supposed to teach the readers a lesson, be it a simplification of a theological truth or a piece of advice for their everyday lives. An excellent example of such a text is the rhymed modern legend *Fire: a song for Mistress Askew* from the *Fire Songs*, about the martyr and one of the earliest English female poets Anne Askew, which depicts the last moments of her suffering that are interwoven with unedited quotations in Early Modern English by the bishop John Bale.

All the above genres share heightened emotionality and formal clarity. I read Harsent's use of traditional poetic devices and rhetorical strategies as an early example of metamodernism with an ironic twist. Using the central term of Shklovsky's formalism, *ostranenie* (defamiliarization), I aim to show that Harsent's revival of premodernist forms and their imposition on serious topics as those of war or any form of everyday suffering can be as violent and defamiliarizing as their very destruction once was.

### **Richard Müller**

Academic title: Senior Researcher, Research Professor

Affiliation: Czech Academy of Sciences, New York, University in Prague

Email address: [muller@ucl.cas.cz](mailto:muller@ucl.cas.cz)

### **The Cybernetics Moment in Experimental Poetry of the 1960s, and New Modes of Reading and Perception**

My talk explores the position of the 'cybernetics' and 'information' current within the context of 1960s Czech (and German) experimental poetry (and its avant-garde antecedents), and associated new modes of perception and reading. First, I relate this current to the impact of information theory and cybernetics on literary aesthetics during the 1950s and 1960s, as it contributed to the formulations of information aesthetics by Max Bense, information poetics by Umberto Eco, and structuralist literary

theory by Miroslav Červenka. Given the limitations of information theory vis-à-vis some crucial questions of communication, what was the foundation of this inspiration? My proposal is that the deeper implications of the ‘cybernetics moment’ can be found in the context of the development of communication and media technologies, a sense of civilizational shift and a felt crisis of language and taste. Then I ask what the media nature of experimental literature and artistic works was, and how the mediality of literary work was transformed and why, given the ambiguous medial character of the concept of information. I bring into particular focus the new regimes of reading and perception which were developed within the information and cybernetics current of experimental poetry, as characterized by intermittence, a multi-phase process of confrontation and evaluation. While these new regimes exhibited only limited success in the sphere of literary communication, they also partly and inadvertently adumbrated, as I claim, ‘dispersed’ forms of attention and communication associated with the new media (internet) platforms of today.

### **Louise Mønster**

Associate Professor

Aalborg University

[louise@ikl.aau.dk](mailto:louise@ikl.aau.dk)

### **The experience of poetry as a shared experience. Ten theses on poetry reading**

What are the defining features of poetry reading, and what are the community-forming potentials of poetry reading in public spaces and on digital platforms? These are the two fundamental questions raised in my talk, which rests on a book on poetry reading (*Digtplæsning. Former og fællesskaber*, 2022), I have written together with Hans Kristian S. Rustad and Michael K. Schmidt. The talk will sum up some of the main results of our research project on poetry readings and social communities by focusing on ten claims, or theses, regarding poetry reading as a performative genre, which offers poetry to be heard on stages, in public spaces and on digital media platforms. Thus, poetry is revealed as a social art form, constituted by and constitutive for a gregarious and collectively oriented event culture, and as part of aesthetically defined communities. The talk draws its attention towards two central and interconnected dimensions of poetry reading, i.e., its fundamental characteristics and community-forming potentials. The ten theses concern the institutional framework of poetry reading, its situatedness in time and place, poetry reading as a genre, text and performance, its prologues, body, voice and pauses, its political aspect, and poetry reading as an event of co-creation. Poetry reading unfolds in a dynamic interaction between poet, poem and audience in which these ten aspects are highlighted to varying degrees, regardless of whether the form of reading is physical or digital.

## N

### **Thorstein Norheim**

Professor University of Oslo

[thorstein.norheim@iln.uio.no](mailto:thorstein.norheim@iln.uio.no)

### **Attention on form. Some remarks on Henrik Nordbrandt's dream poetry in *Drømmebroer* [*Dream Bridges*] (1998)**

The recently deceased Danish poet Henrik Nordbrandt (1945–2023) is one of the leading post-war writers in the Nordic region. Among his most central publications is the collection of poems *Drømmebroer* [*Dream Bridges*] (1998), for which he received the Nordic Council's literature prize, a book which celebrates its 25th anniversary this year. As the title suggests, we are dealing with dream poetry, a type of poetry that pays particular attention to the relationship between reality and dream, content and form.

A noticeable feature of this dream poetry is that spatial and temporal categories are exceeded and broken down, so that there are no divisions, boundaries or contradictions between past, present and future, between here and there, between dead and living, between love and loss of love, and between the self in the poem and other people. Accordingly, the poems break down all established forms and allow them to dissolve; they seem to lead us into the boundless and amorphous. But this is only one side of the story. As the dreams are following a logic that is mediated in and through the poems, it also seems as if the poems have a formative effect that manages to gather everything in an extended here and now.

On the basis of this somewhat paradoxical relationship between formlessness, formative activity and form which unfolds in the *Drømmebroer* poems, I will go on by asking what this could mean for our understanding of form when it comes to both Nordbrandt's dream poetry in particular and lyric poetry in general.

### **Karin Nykvist**

Associate Professor

Lund University

[karin.nykvist@litt.lu.se](mailto:karin.nykvist@litt.lu.se)



### **Tuning into Reality through Poetry. Reading contemporary documentary lyric**

How does contemporary poetry show us the world? One way of many is through the use of factual materials, such as photographs, newspaper clips and quotes from living or historic persons. Poets have used documentary methods and quotes for decades, but in recent years this practice has gained ground, with many works of documentary poetry both being published as well as gaining widespread critical attention. In my paper I explore how the documentary practices in poetry writing presents new challenges to the study of the lyric as event: documentary poetry is lyric but not quite, as well as documentary but not quite. I reflect on how the lyric is changed through the use of the documentary and how the documentary is changed when it is turned into poetry. Some work on this topic has been made by Michael Leong and others, often taking the route of conceptual poetics (where poets such as Kenneth Goldsmith are studied). I suggest that the study of documentary poetry would benefit from a thorough consideration of its reception – which both differs from and is akin to the reception of other lyric genres – as well as from being read through the lens of theories on other documentary genres such as film and photography.

My paper mainly explores recent Swedish poetry that has met with wide acclaim, such as Marit Kapla's *Osebol* (2019), which is made up exclusively from quotes from interviews with people living in Kapla's childhood village of the same name, and Ida Börjel's *Ringa hem [Calling Home]* (2022), which makes use of translated quotes from intercepted phone calls to friends and family from Russian soldiers deployed in the Ukraine. As there is much common ground to be found, their work will, however, be compared with contemporary documentary poetry written in other languages in Europe and North America. Taking my cue from how my chosen material has been read and received in media and criticism, I explore how documentary poetry brings genre-related as well as ethical and political questions to the fore, turning poetry to document and the poet into an ethnographer, journalist and/or activist, all the while foregrounding the ontological and epistemological qualities of poetry. While uses of documentary methods are changing how poetry is read and discussed, my paper will show that the generic traditions and fore-judgement (*Vorurteil*) of the lyric as a genre still plays a vital role in the making, publication and reception of documentary poetry.

## **Kjell Andreas Oddekalv**

Postdoctoral research fellow

RITMO Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies in Rhythm, Time and Motion / Department of Musicology – University of Oslo

[k.a.oddekalv@imv.uio.no](mailto:k.a.oddekalv@imv.uio.no)

### **The Long Lines of André 3000**

Poetic and musical structure and the experience of ambiguous lineation in rap

Rap is probably the most prevalent and widespread poetic expression in the cultural mainstream and is subject to constant colloquial and scholarly analysis by both music and literary scholars, practitioners, and laypeople. Its nature as a musical expression primarily distributed and disseminated as recorded sound means that it invites and necessitates different analytical frameworks than printed and oral poetry. The structural tapestry of musical rhythm, poetic and linguistic form, musical background and density of rhyme makes rap's aesthetic expression one that revolves around a constant play with expectation, attention and ambiguity. Since rap lacks the graphic line breaks of printed poetry, it showcases clearly how lineation is an implied form (Fabb, 2002). The interaction of syntax, (primary) rhyme position, rhythmic and linguistic parallelisms, genre conventions, form, performative delivery and genre conventions unfolding through time is the basis for the listener's experience of lineation – which can consist of both clear dominant lineation with the presence of weaker alternative lineations, ambiguous lineation, and successive reinterpretations of lineation. As Tricia Rose notes, the aesthetic expression of Black art forms are “center[ed] around three concepts: flow, layering and ruptures in line” (Rose, 1994, p. 38), and these concepts are at the heart of how rap's lineation is experienced. The layering of different structural parameters and their competing or coinciding suggestions for rupture (or breaks) into lines constitute how the flow is experienced.

The main analytical examples for this talk are from verses by one of hip-hop's most legendary figures, OutKast emcee André 3000. Through the placement of rhymes, performative delivery, extending syntactic units and playing with words, pronunciation and grammar – André 3000 masterfully manipulates listeners' expectations by presenting potential line endings which ends up not being line endings after all. Or, rather, they both are and are not, as the listener is pulled along in the flow and is prompted to reinterpret the poetic structure continuously.

The talk engages with the growing field of rap flow analysis, a field populated by scholarship from multiple disciplines. Music scholars have been most prominent (Ohriner, Adams,

Duinker and many more), but linguists (Katz, Gilbers) and literary scholars (Bradley, Pate) have also made substantial contributions to the interdisciplinary field. This talk aims to showcase how the approaches from this field and the particular poetic structure of rap presents a potential avenue for expanding the analytical toolbox also for other types of poetry.

**Irene Beatriz Olalla-Ramírez**

Pre-doctoral researcher (State FPU Program)

Teaching and Research Staff at University of Granada.

University of Granada and KULEUVEN

ireneolalla@ugr.es

**Poetry in Maeterlinck's theatre: non-narrative devices in *Pelléas et Mélisande* and *L'Oiseau bleu***

Maurice Maeterlinck's symbolist theatre is world-renowned. He is one of the most successful playwrights in bringing this mainly poetic movement to its fullest theatrical development. In Belgian symbolism, *fraternité-des-arts* is a key foundation. This author managed to incorporate in his plays elements considered mainly poetic in the literary panorama of the time. Some of these are the preeminence of symbols, images, analogies and metaphors, as well as the static *mise-en-scène* as opposed to the dramatic and narrative aspects of romantic, realist and naturalist theatre. In addition, he introduced the pictorial in the scene, which became a fundamental element as a poetic device in his theatrical work.

This contextual framework is completed by exploring the categories of the anti-narrative, the performative and the musical as resources linked to the poetic condition of both plays and their adaptations. These anti-narrative, performative and musical elements are strengthened in the adaptations to other arts such as opera or cinema, but also in performance, dance or instrumental music. In these adaptations, it is worth highlighting the relationship established with the narrative, anti-narrative and poetic elements of the original works. These elements are transformed in different ways by being remediated in different artistic genres and media.

Thus, the dramatic works *Pelléas et Mélisande* (1893) and *L'Oiseau bleu* (1908) are fundamental to study these features. They are the works whose adaptations have had the widest dissemination and greatest success, both for Claude Debussy's key opera of musical symbolism, *Pelléas et Mélisande* (1902), and for the multiple and successful film adaptations of *L'Oiseau bleu*.

For this, the categories of visual and dramatic poetry will be essential, as well as the incorporation of the study of the body, the voice and all those visual signs that the theatre allows to incorporate and re-

signify in the new symbolist scene that Maeterlinck takes to its maximum expression. Furthermore, it is necessary to consider the peripheral condition of Belgian literature in the French language and the specificity of the Belgian symbolist movement, as well as its relationship with the generic and inter-artistic (and therefore poetic) experimentation of Maeterlinck's theatre.

In conclusion, this analysis aims to provide a complete overview of the poetic features of Maeterlinck's plays. It also aims to study how these features are transmedialised to other arts and in what way, with what new contributions and with what losses depending on the medium of origin and destination, in order to understand and explain the importance of the poetic in the symbolist theatre of this Nobel Prize winner, Maurice Maeterlinck.

## P

### Isobel Palmer

Assistant Professor

University of Birmingham

[i.m.j.palmer@bham.ac.uk](mailto:i.m.j.palmer@bham.ac.uk)

### **“Ну вот опять / ты умудрился опоздать” [*Well how predictable / Now you've gone and missed it all*]: German Lukomnikov's montage of distractions**

On 29 February 2003, an unusual event took place in Moscow: “A Whole Literary Day (and Night) with uber-Boniface, German Lukomnikov” [*Literaturnye sutki sverkhbonifatsiia Germana Lukomnikova*]. At the event, Lukomnikov—whose pre-1994 poetry was published under the name of his alter-ego, Boniface—undertook to read his entire body of work aloud with no intermissions, a feat that took 23 hours and 25 minutes. Asked to explain the motivation behind the event, Lukomnikov/Boniface describes his feelings of frustration at ordinary poetry evenings, where, just when he and the audience have really begun to focus, someone comes along and says that it's time to stop. And indeed, at the event in 2003, Lukomnikov became so involved in reading his work that he did not even pause to eat and took only one break all day, to use the bathroom.

This marathon reading is particularly significant in light of Lukomnikov's preferred mode, minimalistic one- and two-line poems. Many of these consist of everyday phrases or idioms arranged

so as to highlight rhyme (“A little bird / laid a little egg” [*Ptichka / snesla iaichka*]; “The window / of a shop” [*Vitrina / magazina*]); others do the same with ordinary but unrelated words, brought together to create snippets of nonsensical rhymed dialogue or palindromes (“Boas / where you going” [*Udavy / kuda vy*]; “The moo / is no more” [*Umolklo / mu*]); still other ‘poems’ are made up of nothing more than expressive sounds and head movements. The brevity of these poems is exaggerated in Lukomnikov’s performances, during which he switches rapidly between voices and moods as he conjures the context and tone for each successive poem.

Lukomnikov claims to spend all day, every day writing poems, an activity he compares to fishing: he is always alert and ready to reel in the next bite—the rhythm, rhyme, or palindrome hidden in plain sight. In other words, what we might call his poetics of distraction or diversion (the two-second reading ideally suited to our scroll-happy social media age) is produced through intensive and sustained attention to the detail of everyday speech. If Lukomnikov builds on the Russian tradition of ‘estranging’ everyday language—from Viktor Shklovsky’s first articulation of this concept through Daniil Kharms’ absurdist poetry of the early Stalinist period and the performative deconstruction of Soviet bureaucratism in the work of poets such as Vsevolod Nekrasov and Dmitry Prigov —his work does not simply “revive” the reader’s perception of (attentiveness to) language, but makes the work of attention one of its main subjects. Both poet and audience thus participate in a performance of poetry and its characteristic structures of attention.

This paper develops this thesis through discussion of Lukomnikov’s performance style and a number of his longer poems, many of which stage the act of writing and address the reader directly, drawing attention to the dynamic of attentiveness and distraction involved in poetry conceived as performative process.

### **Karolina Pettersson**

PhD student

University of Gothenburg

[karolina.pettersson@gu.se](mailto:karolina.pettersson@gu.se)

### **But what’s the point of teaching poetry? - A systematic literature review on the legitimacy of poetry in educational contexts**

Within the field of literature didactics, there is an increasing interest in poetry didactic issues, which is made visible in a review of poetry didactic research from 2000-2019 (Höglund & Jusslin 2021), and it also becomes obvious when poetry didactic conferences and seminars are organized. But why should

students read, write and study poetry and what can the latest research say about its value in an educational context? I hope that the present systematic literature review will be able to provide answers to these questions.

Although the field of poetry education is small, new research is continuously presented and that moves the field forward. Common to several of the poetry didactic discussions that are conducted is that the researchers argue that poetry needs to be made explicit in order for it not to be marginalized in favor of other text types that often receive more space within the framework of literature teaching in school, in teacher education and in research contexts (Degerman 2015; Dahlbäck, Lyngfelt & Bengtsdotter Katz 2018; Simeck & Rumbold 2016 et al.). The present study is an attempt at such explicit visibility by adding yet another scientific contribution to the poetry didactic field. This systematic literature review aims to analyze and discuss the research within poetry didactic from 2012-2022 with a particular focus on how poetry is legitimized within the school context. Based on the purpose of the study, the following questions will guide the analysis:

- What results, which concern the legitimacy of poetry in the educational context, emerge?
- What methods and science traditions predominate in the various articles?
- Which school stages are the most and least frequent in the articles?

A search of relevant articles has been carried out in December 2022 in the databases: ERIC Ebsco, Education Database, Scopus and Web of Science. In order not to miss late published research and for the search to include a full 10-year period, a supplementary search was carried out in January 2023. There are several possible analysis methods in systematic literature studies (Eriksson Barajas et al. 2013). I will carry out two analyses. First, a descriptive analysis of the material in order to answer questions about the methods, design of the previous research, which school stages are focused, etcetera. The second analysis is an inductive thematic analysis that will be used to identify different patterns in the voluminous material. Results and analysis will be completed in the spring of 2023. Trying to find all the research that somehow speaks out about the legitimacy of poetry didactics is an impossible mission because many of the discussions about why teachers should or should not teach poetry are conducted in concluding reasoning or as part of an analysis chapter and therefore do not need to be visible in title, abstracts or keywords. The very extent of the study means that even if I systematically search databases, enlist the help of experts, duplicate checks, hand-search and quote tracking, it is not only possible but even likely that relevant articles will escape my attention. That being said, I still hope that this systematic literature review will contribute with more and important knowledge about poetry didactics and that this knowledge will benefit both researchers and teachers, but above all, future students.

**Marcelo Pellegrini**

Associate Professor

University of Wisconsin–Madison

[pellegrini@wisc.edu](mailto:pellegrini@wisc.edu)

**Eugenio Montejo: Poetry as an Experience of Heteronymic Synesthesia**

In *El cuaderno de Blas Coll* (*The Notebook of Blas Coll*) Venezuelan poet Eugenio Montejo develops a heteronymic theory of language. Through the apocryphal Canarian amateur linguist Blas Coll, who has been living for some years as an émigré in Puerto Malo, a fictional coastal town in western Venezuela, we learn about an impractical and eccentric, though seductive, project: the abbreviation of the Spanish language by eliminating “redundant” grammatical structures converting Spanish into a language of monosyllabic and bisyllabic utterances. This project can be seen as an oblique comment on Montejo’s own poetic practice, as he stated in several poems of his attempt of transcribing songbirds and other sounds in nature, and to develop a sparser language that could better consider all the possibilities of human experience. Critic Juan Pablo Lupi sees this project as a “cleansing of the house of language” (2011). Indeed, Coll/Montejo see their task as an attempt to write in a more exact (and exacting) way without leaving behind lyricism. However, my contention is that this project has another, less obvious but equally important, purpose, which could be described as follows: by way of cleansing language, Coll/Montejo prepare the poetic field to develop in it a synesthetic experience of poetry which allows them to forge a quiet disorder of the senses. A sparser language means a better tool for such an endeavor. This endeavor, ultimately, is an exploration of the limits of language. My aim in this paper is to demonstrate how far this project can go, and how important such an idea can be for the experience of poetry in the context of Latin America’s late capitalism zeitgeist.

**Ioana Raluca Petrescu**

University of Aldo Moro, Bari, Italy

[irpetrescu@outlook.com](mailto:irpetrescu@outlook.com)

**The Inhuman Voice: Poetics of Expression in Non-Anthropocentric Lyricism (Guillevic, Hartnett, Stoica)**

“Le flot fut attentif”, says the most famous of French Romantic poems, Lamartine’s *The Lake*, with mimetic assonance. The fragment of physical reality is given the presence of an entity, in a state of attentive listening to the human feelings expressed in ample poetic discursivity. This communicational structure tends to be thought of as defining of the lyrical genre since Romanticism: a flow of human

language, expressing sentiment and vision, starts at the core of the self and spreads over the natural world, who is swayed. In the age of the critical appraisal of the Anthropocene, it could be stated conversely that listening is more important than producing discourse. This paper calls for a redefinition of the lyrical ethos as an attentive stance. It focuses on a few modern poetries which up-end Lamartine's scheme. Namely, they present natural realities in a non-romantic, arguably ecological way, which revolutionises the source of poetic utterance: the lyrical self quietens to the point of approaching reification ; opens itself up in a listening posture and lets the natural world take up a symbolic vocal authority, letting it transform from object of the poem to subject. These works attempt the almost paradoxical task of capturing a song which does not stem from human problematics and consciousness but contains the alterity of the real world considered capable of its own poetic interests, in so much as existing is already speaking. An important pioneer of this view is, in Anglo-Saxon poetry, Gerard Manley Hopkins, who expressed natural and physical realities as self-revelatory sources of their own resounding utterance. We will present a few more recent examples of this typology in the works of three poets : the French Carnac-born Guillevic (1907-1997), whose densely material, geologically-inspired poetry abides by a strict discipline of listening to the stones and landscape of Brittany ; Petre Stoica (1931–2009), the Romanian poet whose concise and subtle lyricism prays to the “angel imprisoned in the quince” (“îngerul închis în gutuie”) and who inserts snippets of regular syllabic and rhythmical meter in his otherwise typographical free verse poems to mark the fact that an insect is talking in its language ; and Michael Hartnett (1941–1999) the Irish working-class poet, listening to “stark talk of hawkvoice and houndvoice”, who represents his lyrical anointment into the wordsmith craft by the auctorial writing of wren claws, marking his body. We argue that in this type of poetries, the act of speech and the soliloquy of the self in the poem can be analysed with instruments that have been catalogued in the disciplines of meditative attention (such as the *Satipatthana* stage of Buddhist meditation, or Gaston Bachelard's psychological state of *rêverie matérielle* where imagination is swayed by the contemplation of physical matter). The phenomenology of the reading experience is also influenced by this change in stance, in that reader and poet converge and convene in the act of listening, giving it a particular intensity.

**Eva Pitronová**

Academic title: PhD-candidate

Affiliation: University of Agder

Email address: eva.pitronova@uia.no

**Exploring the “imagepoems” of Ellen Einan**



In 1994 the art historian and literary theorist W.J. Mitchell published his essay collection *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation*, where he discussed interrelations between these two types of representational structures. Among other things, his discussion of the dialectic of image and text, the visible and the readable, counterpoints a triplet of “imagetext”-issues – the problematic, ruptured one, the synthetic and combining one, and the relational one. This paper pertains to the term “imagetext” as a composite whole where the material ambiguity of the artistic representation is not understood as a similarity, or, on the contrary, rupture, but rather as a homogenous and unifying artistic expression.

Referring to Mitchell's term “imagetext” and in accordance with his set of concepts, I intend to elaborate on the term “imagepoem” as a specific form of lyric poetry that combines verbal and visual representation. The empirical basis for this paper is grounded in a particular group of the Norwegian poet Ellen Einan's unpublished poem manuscripts from 1980s where the distinction between the text and the image is rather complicated. One could be tempted to call these manuscripts “commented drawings” or “illustrated poems” to accentuate only one form of representation and divert attention from the other one. However, such a reductive view does not pair well with the fact that they both participate on creating an impression of something which I called in my thesis *a fictional world of the poems*. In this paper I would like to restrict myself to the categorisation of Einan's “imagepoems”, argue for their interstitial complexity and focus their materiality in relation to the act of creating such a poem through means of automatic writing, where a one-stroke line drawing is immediately followed by a poem-like text; where just a set of dark lines creates a lyrical intricacy.

Eva Pitronová (1990, Slovakia) has recently submitted her doctoral thesis «*Jeg skaper meg en ny klode.*» *Fiktive verdener og Ellen Einans lyrikk* at the University of Agder in Kristiansand. In the thesis she investigates the construction of fictional worlds in Ellen Einan's poems and unpublished manuscripts.

### **David Powelstock**

Academic title: Associate Professor

Affiliation: Brandeis University, USA

Email address: pstock@brandeis.edu

### **Attunement to Folk Poetry as a Foundation for the Social Lyric: The Case of Nikolai Nekrasov**

Nikolai Nekrasov (1821-1878) was Russia's “poet of the people” (*narodnyi poet*) *par excellence*. He was committed to ‘representing’ the Russian peasantry in two related senses: advocating for their

welfare and presenting a sympathetic and authentic image of them and their unjust social conditions to the literate classes.

What distinguished Nekrasov from any number of like-minded peers was his determination to pursue this cause through the lyric. He began his career at the dawn of the age of Russian Critical Realist prose, which developed in close connection with criticism of Russian society. In Turgenev's *Sketches from a Hunter's Album* (1847-52), for example, an implicit condemnation of serfdom emerges through closely observed portraits of peasant characters, who emerge as fully-drawn human characters without literary precedent in Russia.

The strong association of social critique with prose was one reason Nekrasov's resolve to represent the peasantry through lyric might seem "untimely" (in the Nietzschean sense). Moreover, up to that point Russian poets had exerted themselves fiercely to establish a form of discursive subjectivity grounded in principled moral independence of inimical political and social regimes. This highly individualized lyric subjectivity was entirely a creation of the educated, Westernized urban elites of the gentry class. But in fighting for the constitution of an independent lyric subject, Russian poets ultimately created a dead-end for themselves: a lyric subject resembling an embodied monad, whose very existence was predicated on a state of terminal alienation from its surroundings verging on solipsism.

Nevertheless, it was in lyric that Nekrasov discerned the sole possibility of including the illiterate peasant's voice in literature. This paper traces the poet's development of this potential in a lyric subgenre I call the 'frame lyric,' by analogy with frame narrative. Looking at three such poems spanning eighteen years, I examine how Nekrasov used the frame lyric to stage encounters between gentry and peasant speaking subjects, first to dramatize social and discursive inequality, then ultimately to demonstrate how the formal texture of the lyric could serve as a space for the meeting of subjectivities across the class divide in a virtual act of co-creativity, whose horizon shone as a kind of 'poetopia.'

What is perhaps most surprising in the developmental arc of Nekrasov's frame lyrics is that even in the first poem of the series, where the incompatibility between gentry and peasant discursive subjectivities is most starkly dramatized, there are subtle resonances between the two on the specifically *lyric* level of language, suggesting the possibility of co-creative poetopia even where the dramatic situation itself suggests the absolute impossibility of mutual understanding. By the third poem in the sequence, Nekrasov has developed *lyric* communion to the point where it begins to suggest an egalitarian form of subjectivity that transcends class.

## **Helena Van Praet**

Academic Title: Teaching Assistant & PhD Candidate

Affiliation: Université catholique de Louvain (Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium)

Email address: [helena.vanpraet@uclouvain.be](mailto:helena.vanpraet@uclouvain.be)

### **Touching the Reader: Bodily Images and Affective Knowledge in Rozalie Hirs's and Anne Carson's Poetry**

The advent of the cognitive turn in literary studies has resulted in an extensive body of literary criticism focusing on aspects as embodied simulation (e.g. Wojciehowski and Gallese) and empathy (e.g. Hammond and Kim), but the field of poetry has so far received comparatively little attention, with most (empirical) studies focusing on novels and short stories. While recently Freeman has analysed how an embodied process of poetic metaphoring underlies the way poems manage to evoke a semblance of reality and Alford has explored different kinds of poetic attention, these studies do not account for the ways poems can invite readers to enter the poetic world and immerse themselves in the interior perspective, as evoked in the process of enunciation. Part of the difficulty in addressing such questions may lie in poetry's 'universality' (dating back to Aristotle's conception of poetry) or its "minimal world building" (Wolf 155), which can lack a (temporal or spatial) setting and characters. To phrase the matter more stringently: How can the minimal world of a poem invite readerly engagement and thereby stimulate alternative ways of thinking?

In this paper, I will propose that an embodied focus on focalization, as adapted to the realm of poetry, can shed light on how poems allow readers to engage with them. To this end, I take my cue from Caracciolo and Kukkonen's study *With Bodies* (2021) by exploring what their applied embodied narratology could contribute to the study of poetry. The authors argue that "'trying' on the character's perspective" (70) involves an important bodily dimension: readers construe "situation models" that are not only rooted in their previous embodied experiences, but also in the character's body (70). I aim to extend their argument to the poetic speaker as focalizer (see Wolf 154), who is not necessarily a character. They further contend that the "thickening" of these situation models is aided by mental imagery, which is grounded in "sensorimotor patterns and kinesthetic experiences" (73), and empathetic engagement with the focalizing character, especially of a somatic kind, focused on "another person's bodily feelings and sensations" (76). I will build on these findings by highlighting the bodily dimension of poetry, specifically when it comes to communicating alternative, affective kinds of knowledge through empathetic mechanisms. Equally, I want to bring this embodied focus into conversation with the aesthetic dimension of poetic language. After all, research by Koopman has suggested that aesthetic feelings of beauty and feelings of identification can reinforce each other. To

explore this hypothesis, I offer readings of poems from Rozalie Hirs's *oneindige zin* (2021) and Anne Carson's *Glass and God* (1998), which deconstruct entrenched discourses about the (female) body.

While the aim of this paper is not to give a cognitive account of literary mechanisms in poetry, and the empirical evidence surrounding the workings of empathy in literature is in any case inconclusive (Matravers), I do suggest that heightened attention to bodily images in conjunction with the lyric's focus on language can offer an important reflective supplement to poetry's immersive and critical potential.

### **Tessie Prakas**

Associate Professor

Scripps College, Claremont, CA

[TPrakas@Scrippscollege.edu](mailto:TPrakas@scrippscollege.edu)

### **Lyric (In)Discipline**

This paper examines how the early modern poetic modesty *topos* locates literary expertise in departures from lived experience. In a moment when individual fields of expertise (artistic, professional, academic) were typically less articulated than they are now, poets nonetheless often sought to define limits to their abilities in order precisely to surpass them, and to claim mastery in those transgressions. Many resorted to metaphors of childbearing and birth to assert their compositional difficulties; Astrophil opens Sidney's sonnet sequence *Astrophil and Stella* by framing his struggle after "fit words" as the "throes" of childbirth; the speaker in Shakespeare's *Sonnets*, too, describes "labouring for invention." The sometimes visceral nature of such accounts is particularly striking when articulated by male authors and speakers; that they are personally inexperienced in the bodily processes to which they lay metaphorical claim slyly frames their poetic efforts—and thus their accomplishments—as especially impressive.

The increasing conventionality of this literary strategy created a peculiar opportunity for female early moderns interested in or hesitant about their own claims to poetic authority. John Woodbridge, publishing the poetry of his sister-in-law Anne Bradstreet in 1650, anticipates in a prefatory poem of his own that she "will blush, complain, 'tis too unkind: / To force a woman's birth, provoke her pain, / Expose her labours to the world's disdain." Given that Woodbridge seems not to have had Bradstreet's consent for the publication, his sense that she may feel "expose[d]" by it is perhaps well founded, but it is nonetheless notable that he takes a trope that is itself conventional in the period (the claim of premature publication) and combines it with procreative language in a manner that

foregrounds both tropes' aptness to the conditions of female authorship. Woodbridge's apostrophe lays the groundwork for Bradstreet's actual response, printed in the 1678 edition of her verse. "The Author to Her Book" wittily adopts and extends Woodbridge's metaphor of strained maternity by recounting her attempts to improve the "ill-formed offspring of [her] feeble brain." Lamenting that she "stretched thy joints to make thee even feet, / Yet still thou run'st more hobbling then is meet," Bradstreet's own apostrophe figures her book as a victim of prosodic torture. This language seeks readerly sympathy for her work's shortcomings, but it also demands the recognition that she has tried not just to amend but also to punish them. Any "hobbling" in the verse medium of the poem becomes a record of the painful process that has produced it. This figuration affords Bradstreet considerable disciplinary authority. She goes beyond claiming the "throes" of childbirth to portray her lyric child as a metrically indisciplined "brat" subject to her correction. That portrayal demands readerly attention to her versification—even, perhaps especially, in its imperfection—as the mark of Bradstreet's expertise. It also suggests that the forms of lyric might shed light on how we navigate the issues of discipline, rigor, and expertise in our own critical practice.

**Michael J. Prince**

Professor

University of Agder

michael.j.prince@uia.no

**Imminent and Striated Spaces in Harry Partch's *The Wayward***

Harry Partch's approach to lyrics and music can be regarded as extreme. As expressed in his groundbreaking work from 1947, *Genesis of a Music*, text should only be included which is semantically available to the listener. Words as frames for complicated melismatic virtuoso was anathema. His works include lyrics from Li Po and Shakespeare.

This paper investigates a series of four works, all completed by 1943, and collected as *The Wayward*. Partch's unique approach to harmony, and rejection of the reigning concert music of his day, opens for a lyrical presence frequently in the register of recitative. These compositions employ original and found lyrics outlining a cross country Hobo odyssey of the narrative persona "Slim" based upon Partch's own experiences wandering America during the Great Depression. This paper will discuss the lyrics in two of these works with a focus on the modern spaces implicit in the highway system ("Eight Hitch-hiker Inscriptions on a Highway Rail in Barstow, California"), and the railroad ("U.S. Highball").

“Barstow” is in eight movements and includes first a recitative based upon found poetry, followed by a musical rendering of those lyrics to the accompaniment of Partch’s handmade instruments. While sung, Partch’s melodies are not far from conversational speech, in line with his dogma of “corporeality” and manage to convey an ironic playfulness while at the same time describing and refining the challenges of the indigent unemployed on the move across America.

“U.S. Highball” contains Partch’s lyrics, but in a similar vernacular to “Barstow”. It entwines the conductor’s hail, which declares the route of the train, with conversational snippets Partch is said to have jotted down in his notebooks during his travels, attesting to a weary vagabond’s stoic aspirations. A thematic element common to both is an implied embracing of a highly networked infrastructure (what Deleuze and Guattari would call “striated space”) with an attitude of fluidity and detachment embracing these controlled networks as imminent spaces of possibility and freedom.

## R

### **Jahan Ramazani**

Professor

University of Virginia

rr5m@virginia.edu

### **Poetry and Climate Change: Elegy, Anticipatory Mourning, and Ecocritique**

Twenty-first-century climate change poems mourn the dying and possible death of the planet. In this talk, I explore questions concerning the complex temporality of such poems, which look back to elegiac tradition and yet direct attention to loss on an unprecedented scale. Because twenty-first-century climate poems in English by Ed Roberson, Franny Choi, Juliana Spahr, Jorie Graham, Peter Reading, Simon Armitage, Patience Agbabi, Pascale Petit, Seamus Heaney, and others recall even as they distort, upend, and scramble recognizable features of elegy, it’s worth asking, What are the ethics of anticipatory mourning for the planet? Can ecocriticism on the poetics of climate change help revise and develop the paradigms of poetic mourning in elegy scholarship, which has usually been focused on retrospective mourning for individuals? Can elegy scholarship help address ecocriticism’s qualms about mourning and elegy in relation to climate change? Are there ways of thinking about elegies for the world that clarify their ethical purchase, elucidate their literary power, and embrace their necessity in the age of the Anthropocene?

Although humans have been significantly affecting the climate at least since the Industrial Revolution, it wasn't until the start of the twenty-first century, when the Third Report (2001) of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) established a scientific consensus around human-caused global warming, that a significant number of poets began grappling with the issue in a sustained way. Since then, many poets have lamented the anthropogenic changes resulting in the sickening and prospective death of the planet—ice melt, atmospheric warming, floods and fires and droughts, human and species displacement and possible extinction.

But prominent ecocritics have raised questions about whether elegy is suited to ecological grief, foremost among them Timothy Morton. “Ecological poetry must thus transcend the elegiac mode,” asserts Morton, adding that “Ecological elegy weeps for that which will have passed,” a “future perfect that hollows out time.” “Ecological apocalypticism” is Morton’s term for such elegy. On this view, elegiac futurity symbolically enacts the death of what it mourns. In this talk, I explore the aesthetics, ethics, and temporality of elegies for the world. Focusing on examples by Ed Roberson, Franny Choi, and Leslie Marmon Silko, I respond to Morton’s thoughtful critique with arguments for why we might champion the particular capacities of poetry for mourning the planet.

**Valentina Ramirez**

École doctorale

CY Cergy Paris Université.

advarael@gmail.com

**and Guofan Xiong**

École doctorale

Université Paris 8. Groupe Spatial

Média, EnsADLab, Paris.

**From 鹿柴 to "En la ermita del parque de los venados": Translation between cultures, languages, and supports**

Wang Wei's poem 鹿柴 has been the object of diverse translations, analysis, and debates; the most notable is Weinberger's "Nineteen Ways of Looking at Wang Wei" essay, which includes Octavio Paz's afterword and his translation proposition. The corpus of versions and translations in different languages, as well as the rising interest, highlights the importance and relevance of the

author and his work.

Octavio Paz's interest in China and Eastern cultures is documented by Wang Jun<sup>1</sup>. Likewise, Paz's translation of Chinese poetry to Spanish and in his thoughts about the stakes behind the consolidation of a faithful version of oriental poetry and writing to romance languages are an example of this interest. In addition, Paz's explorations have been referenced in numerous essays from Latin America, Europe, and Asia.

We propose an analysis of Paz's translation of 鹿柴(The Deer Park)<sup>2</sup> titled "*En la ermita del parque de los venados*" in three axes: First, regarding the obstacles of the work with their languages, focusing primarily on Paz's thoughts about translations present in his book "*Versiones y Diversiones*".<sup>3</sup> Second, focusing on the challenges that emerge from the translation, critically evident in distant cultures, as shown in Weinberger's book "Nineteen ways of looking at Wang Wei".<sup>4</sup> Both axes are linked with the INSL Conference's call for papers questioning how approaches to experience and attention shed light on poetry across languages and cultures. And third, concerning what can or cannot be translated into a poetic experience, regardless of language. The last points to the question of poetry as events of languages and explorations made around the poetic experience.

Our proposal centers around the various supports recently opened to poetry and the possible use of digital environments to consolidate poetic experiences beyond language concerns, opening the question: can the poetic experience be dissociated from the linguistic experience? Is it possible to translate to digital supports the elements that cannot be translated from one language to another?

### **Rachel Rankin**

PhD Student

The University of Edinburgh

[s1233461@ed.ac.uk](mailto:s1233461@ed.ac.uk)

### **Breaking the Window: Three Experiences of 'Septemberveld' by Halldis Moren Vesaas**

Literary translation is often dogged by metaphors that imply a singularity of experience. A common metaphor is that of the translation as a pane of glass, a window that allows the reader to experience the original text, with the window of lesser translations being marred by chips or cracks that draw attention to the fact that we are viewing the original through a prism. This singularity is particularly prevalent in poetry translation scholarship, where much is made of the so-called untranslatable nature



of poetry together with concepts such as faithfulness and loss. Indeed, one of the most famous aphorisms about (and, indeed, against) poetry translation is Robert Frost's comment that "poetry is what gets lost in translation."

In his 2019 polemic *Contra Instrumentalism*, Venuti makes a case against this attitude, namely an instrumentalist approach to translation that "conceives of translation as the reproduction or transfer of an invariant that is contained in or caused by the source text, an invariant form, meaning, or effect" (1). Instead, he makes a case for a hermeneutic approach to translation, which he describes as "an interpretive act that inevitably varies source-text form, meaning, and effect according to intelligibilities and interests in the receiving culture" (1). This tension between instrumentalism and hermeneutics is largely what underpins the theoretical debate surrounding poetic (un)translatability, which has ultimately given rise to a number of different methods of poetry translation.

My doctoral research serves to creatively illustrate this debate through a practice-based methodology whereby I explore the feasibility of three different poetry translation approaches on two different styles of Norwegian poetry, namely the metrical rhyming poetry of Halldis Moren Vesaas and the hybrid, genre-bending style of Cecilie Løveid. The approaches in question are: the literal approach, as championed by Burnshaw and Nabokov; the double aim approach, as championed by Holmes; and the poetically viable or "writerly" approach, as championed by Folkart. These approaches can be said to fall along the spectrum of poetic (un)translatability, with each of them being characterised by either instrumentalist or hermeneutic attitudes.

Based on my doctoral research, this paper will therefore present one poem by Halldis Moren Vesaas – 'Septemberkveld', or 'September Evening' – according to these three different approaches, thereby offering three different experiences of the same poem. I will briefly outline each of the three methods employed in my research before presenting the corresponding translations and discussing how each method has influenced and dictated the translation choices made. By doing this, I aim to achieve two things. Firstly, I aim to creatively illustrate a prominent theoretical debate within poetry translation scholarship and further the case for the use of practice-based methodology within a Translation Studies context. Secondly, I aim to present the notion of poetic translation not as the carrying-over of a singular experience, but as an interpretive act that allows for multiple experiences. In other words, I aim to break the window, countering the concept of translation as pane of glass and championing a creative, interpretive approach to poetry translation.

## **Emmanuel Reymond**

Academic title: Postdoctoral researcher

Affiliation: Université de Strasbourg

Email address: emmanuelreymond2@gmail.com

## **The Sovereign and the Beast: the figure as issue of attention in the poetry of Jørn H. Sværen**

This paper proposes to explore the work of contemporary Norwegian poet Jørn H. Sværen, who works with very small books that he addresses through the mail to people with his press England Forlag, and with prose pieces that he publishes in literary journals and anthologies before gathering most of this material to make a collection with an established publisher, Kolon Forlag – two to date, *Dronning av England (Queen of England)* in 2011 and *Britisk museum* in 2020.

I propose in this presentation to focus on the tension between the heightened attention to details and the remoteness of the material at play in Jørn H. Sværen's poetry. Although based on operations that bring their few words to the fore, the poetry books keep images at a certain distance, enhanced in the context of the collections by the fact that the prose pieces refer to far-off historical data like myths, emblems and blazons.

Both evocative and critical, this poetry can be seen as addressing attention through an original investigation of the question of the *figure*, not only as an aesthetic issue, but as a crossing point between production and reception, taken in decisive anthropological and historical dynamics. Rather than telling us what to look at, it shows how complex the logics of attention really are, torn between the opacity of personal experience and the communities of meaning that influence it. In doing so, it creates the conditions for a re-engagement of literature as archaeology of the gaze, performing how attention in itself – regardless of the contemporaneity of its object – might be decisive in building new legibilities for the present.

## **Delphine Rumeau**

Professeure

Université Grenoble-Alpes

[delphine.rumeau@univ-grenoble-alpes.fr](mailto:delphine.rumeau@univ-grenoble-alpes.fr)

## **Poetry and Touch: Experiencing Whitman**

“Camerado this is no book / Who touches this touches a man.” With these lines, Walt Whitman concluded his final address to the reader, and invited him to future encounters that would transcend language and would amount to a physical embrace. The very title of his collection, *Leaves of Grass*, indicated that the poems were not intended as a combination of words but as the equivalent of grass to tread on, or even better, as grass itself. These lines have been quoted over and over again by poets who claimed Whitman’s heritage and advocated the idea of poetry as experience. One can think of Pablo Neruda, who wrote that he “touched a hand / and it was Walt Whitman’s hand,” Allen Ginsberg who quoted these lines in a poem about why he was so “touched by this desperado’s farewell,” or Jean S enac, whose idea of the “*corpo eme*” (portmanteau combining “body” and “poem”) was inspired by Whitman’s poetics.

In this paper, I will first analyze these readings of Whitman, which pretend to abolish the mediation of language and book and promote corporal experience through poetry. But I also want to look at responses to Whitman that put the materiality of the book to the forefront and even turn it into the very condition of experience. This is particularly evident into artistic responses, in book arts or visual arts. Whitman himself played on this materiality of the book for his first edition of *Leaves of Grass* in 1855, using texture and color to create the conditions of an experience, especially of touch. Many later editions did the same, from miniature books to huge wooden ones. I will especially investigate the work of the artist Giuseppe Penone, whose series of paintings *Leaves of Grass* (2013), puts touch at the center of the poetic experience and of artistic work. According to Penone, touch is indeed a principle of both cognition and creation. While touching a book, the reader takes away tiny particles, which he redistributes around him. Each canvas is made of a series of fingerprints (70 000 in total), which turn a tactile experience into a visual one. Drawing on Penone’s work, I would like to bring together reception and intermedial studies as well as the expanding field of sensory studies to shed new light on the idea of “experience” in Whitman’s poetry.

## S

**Knut Olav Nordstoga Sandvik**

Pre PhD Candidate

University of Oslo

koasandv@student.ifikk.uio.no

## **The Poetic Function in Overdrive: Foregrounding Parallelism in Ancient Greek and Latin poetry**

This paper presents some Greek and Latin examples of how an *intensification* of what Roman Jakobson has termed “the poetic function” of language can draw attention to itself, and how this attention might consequently be put to various kinds of literary use. Ancient poetry’s original connection to song and ritual explains much of its synchronizing and mnemonic force: an inherent collective potential (what Mikhail Bakhtin calls “the possible chorus”) is present in all kinds of lyric (monodic as well as choral) through its carefully measured, repeatable and predictable qualities. And it is precisely these qualities that Jakobson’s poetic function supports by projecting “the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection to the axis of combination”, in other words, by promoting different types of formal parallelism to the rank of main constitutive factor. However, this underlying organizing principle does not necessarily need to be perceived consciously by the reader/listener to be effective, and although, as Mikhail Gasparov says, “verse is text that is felt to be language of particular seriousness”, its materiality and artificiality can be downplayed (for example by smoothing over the joints between metrical cola, so-called “dove-tailing”). Indeed, several ancient handbooks of rhetoric and works of literary criticism clearly display their authors’ animosity towards a too conspicuous use of parallelism in the “putting-together” (Latin *compositio*, Greek *synthesis*) of words: the famous *Rhetorica ad Herennium* quotes a strongly alliterating line from the Latin poet Ennius as a negative exemplum (*O Tite, tute, Tati, tibi tanta, tyranne, tulisti*), while Quintilian holds that it is of central importance to hide the effort that goes into composition (*dissimulatio curae praecipua*), so that rhythm seems to flow spontaneously. In spite of this, the poets themselves sometimes crank up the volume of the poetic function, highlighting more intensely the form of their texts and directing the focus of their public to specific aspects of the verbal material in meaningful ways. Illustrative examples from central Greek and Roman poets, composing in different genres, will be given.

**Judhajit Sarkar**

PhD Candidate

Universität Heidelberg

judhajitsarkar2@gmail.com

## **A Poetics of Excess and Excreta: The Scatological Universe of a (Not–So)Classical Urdu Poet**

Sheikh Baqar Ali (1797–1832), more popularly known as ‘Chirkeen,’ was an early nineteenth century Urdu poet who lived in the princely city of Lucknow during the declining years of the Mughal empire in the Indian subcontinent. Belonging to the “Lucknow school” of Urdu poetry, Chirkeen is credited to have fashioned *sui generis* a diction and repertoire of scatological parodies and verses amid the

highly stylized world of classical Urdu poetry, which occupied a pride of place in the cultural ecosystem of the Mughal imperium, crucially bearing upon questions of aristocratic civility and etiquette. In this paper, I want to examine the manner in which Chirkeen's poetry sought to capture the attention of the polite society of pre-colonial ("Islamicate") North India; the thematic, rhetorical, and performative resources he utilized to this end; and the aesthetic character and "worldedness" of his poems that allegedly made them disagreeable to aristocratic taste and "civilizational" ethos.

Although the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries are considered as the period of the Mughal empire's gradual disintegration, it is also the time when Urdu slowly came out of the shadow of Persian, the official language of the Mughal empire, and developed into a highly sophisticated and polycentric cosmopolitan literary culture with poetry as its mainstay. Cities like Delhi, Lucknow, and Hyderabad emerged as some of the major centers of this burgeoning literary "cosmopolis," sustained by an intricate web of client-patronage networks and rivalries. Buttressed by a well-developed system of Perso-Arabic poetics and anchored in an expansile repertoire of traditionally authorized conventions, Urdu poetry came to denote the quintessence of Persianate high culture in South Asia during this time. Chirkeen himself lived surrounded by poet-luminaries now considered "masters" of the classical Urdu poetic canon. Despite (or perhaps precisely because of) this, he chose to carve a different path that comprised writing in a less elegant and significantly less elevated style and on topics not considered serious or worthy of poetic elaboration by contemporary aesthetic standards.

Although classical Urdu poetics did not allow for unbridled thematic innovation, Chirkeen maneuvered his way around classical diction, themes, and motifs in a way that bequeathed upon his quirkiness, his choice of unusual subjects and imagery the seal of authoritativeness. The scatological excesses of his poetry, its obsession with excreta and the act of defecation did not defy the standard protocols of classical poetics, but reworked classical conventions and stretched their semantic limits in order to offer a view of the world very different from the one seen through the works of the classical masters. For example, the idealized figure of the beloved, around whom many of these classical conventions revolved, appears in Chirkeen's poetry not as the epitome of pristine beauty, but is shown to be caught off-guard by the poet-lover in the act of defecation. To what end were such maneuvers undertaken? Were they meant purely as instruments of parody or did they also serve other functions insofar as the traditional method of enlarging classical poetry's repertoire of signification was concerned? What kind of a view of the phenomenological world did they seek to turn the audience's attention to? These are some of the questions I wish to address in the course of this paper.

**Kate Shaw**

### **From Ovid to Covid: Pandemic Poetry**

Why did poetry emerge as the pre-eminent form of expression and identification during the biggest global pandemic in living memory? In moments of crisis, certain cultural forms come to the fore, and in the midst of the covid pandemic, poetry found its moment. Over the last three years, poetry has emerged as a dynamic form capable of contesting statistics, government briefings and media reports to offer a dynamic counter-narrative about lives lived in lockdown. The unique intersection of time and space provided by lockdown, and the democratising potential of social media, have conspired to produce the conditions necessary for a pandemic poetry renaissance. Quarantined in domestic spaces, people turned to digital platforms to share canonical poems from the past or to author new work in response to the covid pandemic. Capturing thoughts on the rapidly shifting contexts of lockdown life, literary responses to covid remind us not only of the universal element of art, but the enduring nature of human experience. This paper will reflect on some early materials from Shaw's forthcoming book *Can Poetry Save The World?* (MUP, 2025) to consider the role of the poetic in our understanding not only of the global pandemic, but of the ways in which societies navigate change and challenge in the twenty-first century.

**Ingrid Skjerdal**

Associate professor

Inland University of Applied Sciences

[ingrid.skjerdal@inn.no](mailto:ingrid.skjerdal@inn.no)

### **Text and textiles – fabric and ekphrasis in the Scandinavian medieval ballad**

The Scandinavian ballad, a medieval form preserved and further developed in oral tradition, is usually understood as narrative songs accompanying dance. The texts are depicting dance-scenes, and dance also appears as motif and metaphor within the narratives. Ballad dancing is known from a living tradition on the Faroe-Islands, but not witnessed or recorded anywhere else in Scandinavia. Lars Lönnroth sheds in his book *Den dubbla scenen (the double scene – oral poetry from the Edda to ABBA)* light on another context where ballads often are sung, also mirrored in ballad text, namely women's textile-production; sewing, weaving and embroidery. E. Jane Burns shows how a related genre, the Medieval French *Chanson de toile* is exploring the connection between the narrator's position as a sewing craftswoman, and motifs of design and ingenuity in the narratives, and a similar connection seems to appear in a great number of Scandinavian ballads. In some of them, descriptions of woven fabrics or embroidery forms ekphrasis. Woven and embroidered pictures of queens and

kings, sun and moon, faraway places, Madonna and child, the receiver of the work or the weaver/seamstress herself are described, as well as the craft required to depict these figures, and sometimes assistance from supernatural powers is needed. These ekphrastic stanzas, their connection to the song they appear in, and the context of craft they are known to have been performed in, is the subject of this paper. The reading of the ballad as an extended *chanson de toile*, makes certain roles available to the performer: designers, fates (*norns*), visionaries, crafters and dreamers. It also enables the performer to identify with the protagonist. And, like in classic epics and poetry, ekphrasis can often assume the character of *mise en abyme*, commenting on happenings on other diegetic levels in the text.

### **Avery Slater**

University of Toronto

avery.slater@utoronto.ca

### **Personhood and Petromodernity**

How does lyric address toward Nature change when the poet addresses a natural “resource” — for example, an oil field? “Resources are a kind of thing | A resource can be thing or a person. || Resources can stop being,” writes Christine LeClerc in *Oilywood*, a poetry collection concerned with oil pipelines like the Kinder Morgan. This paper will examine the ways that personhood is constructed in lyric poetry when the natural entity in question has been deemed a field for the extraction of some “resource”. Thus, the poetry under consideration will be located at a middle point of transformation, working against the prior rendering of nature as “resource”—an alchemy originating in state or corporate power.

This argument will focus on contemporary Canadian poets writing against fossil-fuel extraction, addressing nonhuman entities that are difficult to conceptualize as “addressable objects”—vast fields of oil sands, international networks of pipelines, or centuries of anthropogenic pollution. Poet Shannon Maguire’s collection *fur(l) parachute* addresses natural resources as intimates: “Underneath thou fateful gusher coast [...] summer-clime thou largest offshore | thou but burning round.” This paper will investigate such intimacies, predicaments, and potentials of poetic address that grant *personhood without anthropomorphism* to natural “resources” framed by state and corporate capitalism. In the global context of fossil-fuel industries, what we might call a counterextractive poetics of petromodernity has arisen in the Canadian context. My argument will explore how the capacity to “stop being” a resource can grant even nonhuman entities like hydrocarbon deposits a

species of personhood. Thinking through these nonhuman scenes of poetic address, this paper will explore the political ecology of strategic personhood in the lyric.

**Robin Jewel Smith**

PhD in English Literature and Creative Writing (Post-1945 Fiction & Post-1945 Lyric Poetry) and Faculty at the American College of Norway

[Robin.j.smith@ndus.edu](mailto:Robin.j.smith@ndus.edu)

**Renunciations of Victimhood: an Analysis of How Post-Confessional Poetry is More than Mere Survival— in the poetry of Donika Kelly, Ocean Vuong, Paul Tran and Olena Kalaytiak Davis**

Even though trauma studies and the lyric have in many ways intersected, there has been a distinct lack of scholarly attention to the post-confessional lyric. In my essay, “Renunciations of Victimhood: An Analysis of How Post-Confessional Poetry is More than Mere Survival” I explore the ways in which the post-confessional mode is a dysfunctional marriage of lyric strategies and traumatic content. And the ways post-confessionalism not only critiques the confessionalist movement of the 1950s-1960s but explodes it. Contemporary readers and scholars of poetics should be made aware of what is being written *now*. Post-confessionalism is a dynamic and powerful paradigm shift among post-modernist poetics and it deserves attention. My work analyzes vibrant and forceful poets such as Donika Kelly, Olena Kalaytiak Davis, Ocean Vuong, and Paul Tran among others to showcase how these poets use carefully crafted lyric strategies and traumatic content to push what we know and expect of a lyric poem forward. My work offers a fresh take on an established link between the lyric genre and trauma studies. It shows the ways that even esoteric and scholarly pursuits can be made accessible and meaningful to a wider audience by contemporary poets.

**Danila Sokolov**

PhD Candidate

University of Iceland, Reykjavik

[sokolov.daniel@gmail.com](mailto:sokolov.daniel@gmail.com)

[danila@hi.is](mailto:danila@hi.is)

**Thresholds of Form in Seventeenth-Century Metaphysical Lyric**

The label “metaphysical” in connection with seventeenth-century English lyric has, since its coinage, been at times treated with skepticism, some of it deserved. As recent scholarship on the subject



(Wendy Beth Hyman and Liza Blake, among others) has demonstrated, however, the deep fascination of seventeenth-century poetry with questions of natural philosophy, especially ontology and epistemology, suggests that the term does capture some of the fundamental concerns of the period's poetic imagination. Developing this renewed interest in the nuances of the term, my paper considers how seventeenth-century English lyric probes the conceptual caesura within "meta/physics" by looking at poetic texts whose attention is focused on entities that exist on the threshold of physics and metaphysics. The microscopic atoms of dust in Ben Jonson's 'Hourglass,' the vanishing spiral of a snail shell in Richard Lovelace's 'Snail,' the tiny insect consumed by its own flames in Thomas Stanley's 'Glowworm,' and the miniscule evaporating globe of water in Andrew Marvell's 'On a Drop of Dew' all dwell on the border of the natural physics of perception and the ungraspable, subvisible world only accessible by science equipped with prosthetic devices (such as the microscope) and complex epistemological and theological frameworks (such as Lucretian atomism or Spinozan modality). This paper, however, is interested primarily in poetic form. The radically complex textures of seventeenth-century lyric configure a particularly sensitive technical apparatus for responding to objects that exist at a point of transition from the physical to the metaphysical. When called to account for these entities that all but elude capture and, as a result, plunged into complex negotiations of matter, temporality, space, knowledge, body, and desire, early modern lyric activates the affordances of baroque poetic form. From radical metaphors to stutters and deferrals of rhythmic disorientation, from incongruous, self-negating imagery to the silences effected by caesuras and enjambments, and from the violent compression of language and meaning to the noise of rhyme, early modern metaphysical lyric interrogates the threshold of visible and subvisible, of audible and inaudible, of sensual and intellectual. The resulting idea of lyric finds the genre in a constant negotiation of actuality and potentiality (in the Aristotelian sense), where material form at once promises the certainty of knowledge and withdraws from corporeal experience.

**Ivan Sokolov**

PhD Candidate

University of California, Berkeley

[ivan\\_sokolov@berkeley.edu](mailto:ivan_sokolov@berkeley.edu)

### **Russian Twenty-First Century Analytic Lyric**

For over a century, to foreground one's development of a new form, a poetic or lyric practice in the west has often meant to claim oneself as the incarnation of anti-lyric. Shifting our understanding of literariness, avant-garde poets have striven to act out a departure from the field of literature at large. It was the despicable "tout le reste," to which Verlaine famously relegated "littérature"—which was

picked up by Mandelstam half a century later: “a real writer—a true mortal enemy of literature.” The recurrent cycles of the avant-garde’s afterlives highlight precisely this dynamic of (ab)negation: to attain the ultimate lyric, each subsequent poet must do everything in their power to disrupt the very lyricity as previously established. One could argue that the anti-lyric is in fact our most romantic, most tender, most fragile idea of poetry’s horizons.

It was this very horizon that the most innovative, experimental Russian lyric found itself reaching for when in the late 2000s a new generation of poets began captivating the readers with their fragmented, seemingly depersonalised, seemingly disaffected work often presented as prose poems, which further confused the scene that was relatively unaccustomed to the genre. Beyond a select few predecessors, most of their references were not poetic but addressed “all the rest” that *was not* “literature” for the Russian audience of the time: theory, science, politics. New syntax, new prosody, new vocabulary: every poem the epitome of the modern lyric’s “difficulty,” every poem born *qua* poem by virtue of its shedding a lot of the signs of what had previously been taken for poetry—and, simultaneously, valorising other, previously more peripheral traits.

There is a historical argument to be made for the uniqueness of Nikita Safonov and Eugenia Suslova as well as their peers and followers: the restructuring of the public sphere under Putin, with its brutal marginalisation of contemporary literary production, which the Analytic Poets mirrored in their allegedly “hermetic” style; the predominance of “lyric-hero”-based poetic projects in the post-Soviet period, with its values of bohemian entertainment, to which they opposed abstract or embodied fragmentations of language that sought a greater and more critical universality of lyric experience, etc. Specific genealogies should also be emphasised: the Analytic Poets’ focus on language came not only from a sustained rereading of the Russian tradition stretching from Mandelstam through the radical underground to Arkadii Dragomoshchenko, but also from a momentous reception of western experimental poetry—chiefly the American Language poets (Michael Palmer above all) and their French counterparts (Emmanuel Hocquard above all).

My presentation, however, will stress the more theoretical problems stemming from this latest revision of the “negative modernity” precepts as reflected in lyric. What is it that survives the ruthless “analysis” conducted by the new Russian poets? I will argue that the disjointed, monotonous, seemingly dehumanised sequences of the Russian Analytic Lyric not only generate new lyric subjects but equip us with an updated, more experiential model of lyric subjectivity as such.

**Olga Sokolova**

**Institute of Linguistics, RAS**

[faustus3000@gmail.com](mailto:faustus3000@gmail.com)

### **Attention shifts in contemporary Italian poetry: new roles of Channel and Code**

The paper deals with the changes taking place in contemporary poetic discourse under the influence of new media. I will consider these changes in a case study of innovative Italian poetry.

The digital interface affects the transformation of all communication parameters, which is due to the dominance of the information contact and code. According to R. Jakobson's communication theory [Jakobson 1960], contact is a channel of a physical communication or of a psychological connection between the addresser and the addressee, which corresponds to a phatic function. The goal of this function is to attract and retain the addressee's attention. In comparison with the previous age, when the information transmission channel had an instrumental function, it has become one of the dominant communication parameters influencing the message in the era of new digital media. Whereas in the process of natural communication the metalanguage plays the role of a code, in Internet communication the "computer language" or "programming language" serves as a way to form the utterance meanings due to the uniformity of the code.

In contemporary poetry, the "shift of addressee's attention" (R.W. Langacker's term [2008]) occurs with the help of semiotic transcoding and actualization of linguistic pragmatics. "Transcoding", i.e. the transfer of a message from one format to another [Manovich 2001], is a way to convert the message from paper (or analog) format to digital, and vice versa. In addition to semiotic transcoding, pragmatic markers (deictics, discourse markers, modal verbs, etc.) also help to attract the attention of a poetic text addressee. In everyday language, pragmatic markers serve to express subjectivity, as well as to convey the phatic and metatextual functions of the language. They contribute to attract and retain the addressee's attention. However, in contemporary poetry in new media, pragmatic markers participate in the formation of poetic communication and serve as signs of transcoding between different formats.

The study aims to explore the mechanisms of focusing in contemporary poetry, considering the Neo-Avant-garde movements in Italian poetry of the second half of the 20th century - the beginning of the 21st century, such as Gruppo '63 and Gruppo '93. I will investigate the transformation of the experiment with new media in these practices: from the Gruppo '63's conception of the revolutionary development of mass media (cf. "operazione dall'interno", i.e. destruction from within the system itself cit. ex [Buttitta 2013: 396]) to Gruppo '93's idea of "transmedial poetry" [Voce 2016: 45].

## **Annkathrin Sonder**

Research assistant and Doctoral candidate

Bergische Universität Wuppertal

[asonder@uni-wuppertal.de](mailto:asonder@uni-wuppertal.de)

### **Creating and transforming poetic attention in Rose Ausländer's writing process**

Based on the estate of the Chernivtsi poet Rose Ausländer (1901–1988), this proposal aims to illustrate the crucial link between her work on poetic language in different versions of a poem and different types of forming attention during the writing process. The transformation of a poem published posthumously, neither completed nor published by the author entails and inspires a consideration of how its different handwritten versions activate shifts in the field of spatiotemporal perception.

My presentation takes up several forms of poetic attention differentiated by Lucy Alford<sup>1</sup> and supplements them with insights from the field of writing process research based on Rose Ausländer's German language poem *Auf der Sternwarte* (*On the Observatory*)<sup>2</sup>. This previously unpublished poem opens up a revealing perspective because it was written in two different places of exile. Rose Ausländer wrote the first versions in the 1950s in the U.S., while the last ones were written in the 1970s in Düsseldorf. Although she considered publishing individual drafts, she did not publish them during her lifetime. In this context, a new text-genetic edition of the 16 drafts shall be presented to show how different forms of attention are generated in both the reading and writing processes. In accordance with the poetological premise of Rose Ausländer and Paul Celan that poetry is always dialogical, it is to show how this repeatedly described dialogicity between object and subject takes place on the medial and material level, from draft to draft.

Since the special attraction of the poet's autographs concerns their semantic and syntactic shifts within the handwritten compositions of the poem, specifically their fleeting fixation on paper, the main focus will be on the programmatic question of the *Woher und Wohin* of the writing movement, which manifests itself in the manuscripts as a process open to meaning and dynamic. Consequently, the lecture aims to discuss the potential incompleteness of posthumous poems and thus focuses on the methodological consequences for both edition and interpretation. Furthermore, the issue of creating and transforming poetic attention must be examined in a diachronic, transnational perspective. Special attention will therefore be paid to the poet's very exciting poetic network with authors from Czernowitz, the U.S. and Germany.

### **Johan Magnus Staxrud**

Academic title: Ph.d. research fellow

Affiliation: University of South-Eastern Norway

Email address: [johan.m.staxrud@usn.no](mailto:johan.m.staxrud@usn.no)

### **Embodiment of song lyric – Experience and attention**

In Nordic folklore the motif of the werewolf repeatedly appears. Connected through similar content and structure one finds several ballads and folk tales in which this motif is central and serves as title: “Varulven” (the Werewolf). In my presentation, I will examine one version performed by two different groups, more precisely the version Grammarna (Sweden) and Grove horn (Norway/Sweden) has used in their recordings, respectively in 1996 and 2015.

The main object of the examination is to analyze how the lyrics are performed by the two music groups, while also taking into consideration the content. In what way is the performance of storytelling determined by the voice? In recordings of songs, the voice is the representation of the verbal text and embodies the storytelling of the ballad. The analysis will not focus on the cultural and historical meaning of content, but rather examine the connection between song lyrics and voice. This perspective also facilitates an examination of the experience of the recording, as well as an analysis of the different aspects of attention that is put into effect in the performance. On the one hand, the presentation will focus on the material, verbal, and musical aspects of song lyrics, and on the other, the presentation will focus on how song lyrics and the performance creates attention and somehow suspends time, thereby creates a room of experience and reflection.

### **Joosep Susi**

Junior Lecturer of Literature didactics and Estonian Literature at Tallinn University, PhD student and Junior Researcher of Estonian literature at Tartu University

### **and Agnes Neier**

PhD student at Tartu University

Affiliation: University of Tartu, University of Tallinn

Email address: [joosep.susi@gmail.com](mailto:joosep.susi@gmail.com); [agnes.neier@gmail.com](mailto:agnes.neier@gmail.com)

## **Lyric crisis or prosperity? The dialogue of poetry and photography in contemporary Estonian poetry**

Despite the growing visuality in the literary field, the popularity of life-writing, and the ambivalence between fiction and documentary, photographic images in poetry collections still mostly adhere to the traditional illustrative function. At least in the field of Estonian poetry. While recent literature is often characterized by a desire for non-textual reality, the inclusion of photographs in poetry collections can present a tangible opportunity to play with the contours of factual and fictional, and to highlight the autobiographical or documentary and physical aspects. However, the potentially fruitful dialogue between the visual and the verbal manifests itself only on rare occasions in contemporary Estonian poetry. Why don't we see an influx of photographic images in poetry?

The scarcity of photographic images in poetry collections can be attributed to the tension between lyricism and narrativity. This study investigates the impact of photographs on the prototypical features of lyric poetry and analyses some of the most noteworthy cases where picture and word are in an intensive dialogue. The reader is presented with a twofold meaning making process: intertextual meaning, created between the photograph and the accompanying poem, and intersubjective meaning stemming from the result of the word and image co-operation process.

The close dialogue of poems and photographs serves to mutually strengthen the narrativity of two weak narrative ways of (re)presentation. The stronger the narrativity of the poem, the weaker the interaction is between the two mediums. Photographs lend a deictic concreteness to lyrical poems, while poetry extends the temporal-spatial dimension of photographs. This has a decreasing effect on the lyricism of the texts. Thus, we see that if the performativity of the photo is strong enough, the characteristics of the poem also change: time-space becomes more concrete, the question of reliability and factuality emerges, the photo of the author changes the indeterminacy between the real author and the lyric speaker, and the reader's opportunity to become immersed in the poem weakens. When the lyrical poem retains its distinctive features, the photograph is reduced to a mere illustration and loses its strength. It seems that lyrical poetry and photographic images can coexist in one body of work only when one or the other forgoes some of its prototypical features and functions.

**Otto Swaantje**

Diplomassistentin

Universität Freiburg, CH

swaantje.otto@unifr.ch

### **“Unter den Alpen gesungen”: Hölderlin’s Variation on the Sapphic Stanza**

Friedrich Hölderlin (1770–1843) is considered one of the most difficult German poets, whose lyrical work presupposes a great deal from the reader. Scarcely any of his poems can be contextualised and understood without knowledge of classical philology, philosophy and theology, including broad knowledge of the intellectual world and languages of Greco-Roman antiquity. However, while Hölderlin’s reception of Greek culture and literature has been extensively researched, the influence of texts by Latin authors on the imagery, form and sound of his poetry has received little attention. This is the case even though his Tübingen hymns and late poems in free verse, in addition to other lyrical forms used in both his early and late works, were heavily shaped by the pervasive influence of Latin language and poetry, especially that of Horace, whom Hölderlin cites as his favourite Latin poet: his verses are moulded and permeated by Horatian metres, images, similes and compositional methods. In his odes, Hölderlin employs – from among the range of ancient stanzaic forms introduced primarily by Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock – the Alcaic stanza (58), the third Asclepiadic stanza (23) and the Sapphic stanza (1), which he adapts following the model of Horace.

*Unter den Alpen gesungen* (comp. ca. 1801, publ. 1802) is the only Hölderlinian ode written in Sapphic stanzas. Surprisingly, previous interpretations of the poem have paid little attention to this unique use of stanzaic form and the potential impact of its distinctive *vis formans*. The present article aims to change this situation, in dialogue with these studies. The proposed interpretation makes critical use of studies of the concept of ‘song’ (*Gesang*) in Hölderlin’s poetry, by figures such as Hans Joachim Kreutzer<sup>1</sup> and Hannah Eldridge, while simultaneously integrating groundbreaking findings from works on Hölderlin’s metrics and rhythm by Winfried Menninghaus<sup>3</sup> and Boris Previšić,<sup>4</sup> who have explored, among other topics, the rhythmic and visual power of ancient metres in Hölderlin’s free-verse poems.

This paper provides a glimpse into my dissertation on Hölderlin’s reception of Latin authors, undertaking an extended interpretation of the ode *Unter den Alpen gesungen* with a focus on the term ‘song’, the metrical art form of the Sapphic ode and Hölderlin’s appropriation and adaption of this ancient metre in the transition from the language and prosody of Latin to that of German.

“... und frei will ich, so  
Lang ich darf, euch all’, ihr Sprachen des Himmels!  
Deuten und singen.”

*Unter den Alpen gesungen*, v. 26–28.

## T

### **Cecilie Takle**

Academic title: Associate Professor

Affiliation: University of Agder, Norway

Email address: cecilie.c.takle@uia.no

### **Both Words and Worlds: The Figure and Character Eva in Håkan Hellström's Sung Poetry**

The Swedish songwriter and artist Håkan Hellström often lets the lyric "I" in his song lyrics address specific named personae, and he even uses the same names in several of his songs, which causes many listeners to perceive these names as references to instances resembling narrative characters. Some of these characters have been "brought to life", materially speaking, in a movie called *Känn ingen sorg* (2013) and in a musical called *Kärlek skonar ingen* (The Göteborg Opera, 2021–2022), because they are easily perceived as fictional characters in narratives.

Jonathan Culler (2017) rejects that the lyric poem should be regarded as fiction and insists on a conception of lyric as epideictic discourse. He claims that considering lyric poetry as fiction trivializes the lyric and relativizes the poem's claims by reducing it to expressing something not about our world, but merely about a fictional one.

Eva Zettelmann (2017) questions Culler's dichotomic dismissal of lyric poetry as a genre that could have fictional elements and narrative qualities, and she characterizes him as "indifferent" to "the specific tension involved in the interplay between imagined world and linguistic matter" (p. 199). She further claims that "[t]ypically, the experience of reading a lyric poem thus involves the reader's cognitive focus oscillating between a textually prompted fantasy world and an intricately textured artifice" (p. 197).

Hellström's song lyrics, although perhaps being closer to dramatic monologues than to lyric poems, have lyrical qualities, and the addressed names also have lyric or linguistic functions in the songs. This paper investigates if and how it could be possible to combine Culler's and Zettelmann's views in a constructive manner in applied analysis, and analyzes "Eva" as both figure and character in Håkan Hellström's sung poetry, in the songs "En midsommarnatts dröm" ("A Midsummer Night's Dream"), "Uppsnärjd i det blå" ("Tangled Up In Blue") og "Det tog så lång tid att bli ung" ("It Took Such a Long Time to Become Young"). What happens if we regard "Eva" as both a character in an imagined world (or in several worlds) *and* linguistic matter?



## **Thor Magnus Tangerås**

Academic title: Associate Professor

Affiliation: Westerdals Dept of Creativity, Kristiania University College

Email address: [thormagnus.tangeras@kristiania.no](mailto:thormagnus.tangeras@kristiania.no)

### **Experiencing Connectedness to Nature through attending to strangeness**

In *Being Ecological* Timothy Morton (2018) acknowledges the importance of finding new ways of increasing ecological awareness that may overcome carelessness and irresponsibility on the one hand, and guilt and helplessness on the other. He criticizes the conventional fact-lumping ‘information dump,’ advocating instead an experiential approach that opens up for aesthetic modes of creating and sustaining attention to the environment. Lyric poetry may provide rich affordances (Cave 2018) for experiencing connectedness to nature. Many environmental psychologists assert that a person’s relationship with nature is a key antecedent of ecological values, beliefs and actions. Connectedness to Nature is a construct that has been operationalised in order to “measure individuals’ experiential sense of oneness with the natural world.” (Mayer et al 2004, 504). Studies provide evidence of a “strong positive relationship between the Connectedness to Nature Scale and eco-friendly actions” (2004, 512). Yang et al have found that experiences of awe can increase connectedness to nature (2018). Accordingly, in my previous work (Tangerås 2022; 2021) I investigated the potential of lyrical forms such as the sestina in creating experiences of wonder and awe.

However, Morton argues that we must also acknowledge the strangeness of our situation (2018:60). How can poetry help us to acknowledge the loss of nature and biodiversity? I propose three different strategies of strange-making based on my current poetic project, which thematizes the potential conflict between climate concerns and preserving the natural environment. An explicit aspect of this is Wind Power: to what extent should we sacrifice wild nature in creating renewable energy? The central motif of my project is the wind turbine. One experiential approach is what I term ‘lyrical vandalism’: translating romantic lyrical poems by e.g. Goethe and Shelley into Norwegian, and subsequently ‘damaging’ them by replacing nature-words with words related to wind-turbine technology. The second strategy is by way of metaphor and hyperbole: e.g. representing the wind-turbine as a giant insect or plant. The third strategy is irony and satire: e.g. looking at the wind turbine as a musical instrument, a modern aeolian harp. The paper will provide concrete examples of these strategies in specific poems, and discuss how they may create and sustain attention to our ways of experiencing nature through processes of defamiliarization.

## **Chloé Thomas**

PhD candidate

Université Paris-Cité

[Chloe.thomas@posteo.net](mailto:Chloe.thomas@posteo.net)

### **The experience of “bad” poetry**

“Bad” poetry has been an object of interest and a source of pleasure to poets and readers for long time, although critics have been slower to take up the subject. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in Michigan, people flocked to hear Julia Moore deliver her verse and jeer at her (she is said to have declared: “You have come here and paid twenty-five cents to see a fool; I receive seventy-five dollars, and see a whole houseful of fools”). In Scotland William McGonagall gave readings at a circus for money; the public was allowed to throw eggs and flour at him, which was why they came for. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a number of anthologies celebrated bad poetry, most famously Wyndham Lewis and Charles Lee’s *The Stuffed Owl* (1930, named after an occasional sonnet by the late Wordsworth) and Keith Waldrop, James Camp and X.J. Kennedy’s *Pegasus Descending* (1972). Poetasters have been laughed at in the play of the same title by Ben Jonson, in essays (Eliot), but also in fiction (Nabokov’s *Pale Fire*) and in poems themselves (Wallace Stevens, “The Comedian as the Letter C”) – in the last case becoming a Doppelgänger of sorts to the writer. It is clear, then, that poetry regarded as “bad” does not only trigger feelings such as disdain, disinterest, avoidance or even hatred (which are, on the contrary, often associated with “good” poetry, as has been largely discussed by Ben Lerner in *The Hatred of Poetry*, for instance). “Bad” poetry seems to be enjoyable, at least up to a point, to readers and listeners, who laugh at it but also with it. Based on close studies of anthologies, biographies of “bad” poets, fictional and critical discussions, this paper would like to examine the affects associated with the experience of “bad” verse: the mix of pain and pleasure, the comforting sense of community created by distaste, the relief at not having to deal with praiseworthy poetry, as well as the intellectual stimulation.

## **Herbert F. Tucker**

John C. Coleman Professor of English

University of Virginia

[ht2t@virginia.edu](mailto:ht2t@virginia.edu)

### **What’s the Matter with Poetry**

Whether in somatic, collective, or textual embodiment, and despite frequent and valiant attempts to pretend otherwise, poetry is bound to the condition of matter. The collisions of value to which this condition gives rise will be illustrated in some half dozen poems from the last several millennia, roughly 2000 BCE to 2000 CE, that refer more or less directly to the fallibly material media that transmit them: *Gilgamesh* (the Megiddo tablet), an elegy by Theognis and an ode by Horace, Shakespearean and Shelleyan sonnets on statuary, Browning's epic *ars poetica* in *The Ring and the Book*, and a lyric published last year by the American poet Jenny Xie. These poems for all their manifest differences pursue a common agenda of surpassing the embodied mediation whose decay they insist on; yet the way they flourish clay or marble or paper, in tablet or scroll or codex inscription, finesses but can't repress a doom that awaits them likewise.

Whatever else these texts may mean, they mean to *survive*, by virtue of their status as perennial "events of and in language" (Attridge). They bet their lives on a sharply drawn distinction between the physical media of their conveyance and the allegedly incorruptible media of language and form, whose airy abstraction transcends the grossness of the concrete, as spirit does matter or the soul the body. But at their best poets know that the refuge they seek in the repeatable *now* of fresh performance, while it may double in lyric imagination as *forever*, pointedly shares – indeed, rehearses – a version of the same fate they ostentatiously repudiate by imputing it to the material vehicle on which they ride. Not only does language fray and vanish in long time; but, at the formal level of prosody, versification is pre-emptively invested in the embodiment of the phoneme, the syllable, the consonant – leaving poetry hostage, from the very beginning, to an inexorable temporality that it can deny but never really forget.

## U

### **Karin Ulvelid**

Academic title: Teacher educator, university lecturer

Affiliation: Göteborgs universitet

Email address: [karin.ulvelid@gu.se](mailto:karin.ulvelid@gu.se)

### **Where does a Bridge of Poetry lead?**

In autumn of 2021, the anthology *A Bridge of Poetry* was given to all six-year-olds in Sweden. The initiative is part of *Svenska Akademien* with *Litteraturbanken Skola*, a digital resource for promoting

literature reading and a guide to the Swedish literary heritage. The anthology contains both older and contemporary poetry, both children's poetry and poetry written for inaugurated readers. The idea is that, with the help of an adult, text and image, and in some cases: short movies, together they will stimulate thoughts and initiate conversations and also arouse children's curiosity about poetry.

This study focuses on teachers experiences from working with *A Bridge of Poetry* with six-year-olds, to see what kind of learning is made possible through working with the anthology but also to see how teachers embrace children's thoughts and reactions to the poems and to see if work flow in to children's own expressions of poetry. In this study, 11 teachers in preschool class were interviewed according to how they used *A Bridge of Poetry* to inspire young poetry readers, initiate language development through poetry and to linger on the question why it is essential for young children to read and even write poetry. In the analysis a modified version of Lindströms model (2012) of aesthetic learning has been used. While Lindströms model focus on aesthetic learning this analysis focus on what kind of learning is made possible using poetry (*A Bridge of Poetry*) as a medium to learn *about, in, with* and *through*.

This is at the moment an ongoing study, expected to be completed this spring, though modest thoughts about results to dates are that the teachers interviewed see great opportunities working with poetry and young learners. Children are given many opportunities to the understanding of poetry but also to learn reading and writing through poetry. The result to dates also implies that young children in the beginning of their reading and writing development are helped by poetry, expressing their thoughts in various ways and that poetry also is an early introduction to other literature. All teachers in the study express that the anthology itself, with poems, illustrations and short films is appealing to young learners all though the poems are not always written for children.

The form of poetry; shorter texts that are thick with meaning and feelings, small on the outside and big on the inside, can be a didactic tool successful for teaching and an approach to early reading and writing. Poetry can be one way to language development and possibilities for small children to explore and play with language but also an approach to children's own poetry reading and writing.

**Jakub Vanek**

PhD. student

Charles University

[vaneks.jakub@gmail.com](mailto:vaneks.jakub@gmail.com)

### **Ritual, experience and care in Charlotte Delbo's *Days and Memory***

Recalling the title of Blake's *Songs of experience* – in contrast to *Songs of innocence* – this paper will examine the *how* the experience of poetry is sensed by the reader (the experience of poetry and of the language itself) beside the *what* of the experience construed and transmitted in or by the poem. I will use the concept of *ritualistic dimension* of lyric worked out by Jonathan Culler in the *Theory of the lyric* (2015). In this sense, it's interesting to look closer at rhythm and other sensual aspects of poetry as well as the way in which the *fictional* or referential dimension of lyric reflected on these aspects, such as the references to the ritual in a broader sense.

In *Days and Memory* (1985), the collection of fragmented text in which the lyric is mixed by the narrative and drama features, French writer Charlotte Delbo presented the experience of and in the poetry of extreme conditions of war and other political violence. In her texts, she examines the experience of concentration and extermination camps together with reflections of contemporary political events as well as the process of constructing memory itself.

It's possible to discern three aspects in which the relation between poetry and experience can be examined in the texts of Delbo. First, the authoress references to memorizing and recitations of poetry in the extreme conditions (thematized experience), then the writing of poetry itself as thematized in other texts or in the poem (constructed experience) and finally the experience of the other evoked by the text (transmitted experience). These aspects go together with the reader's experience of Delbo's text, which can be also discerned in triadic manner: the texts in verses (individualized poems), the texts mixed poetry, prose and drama, and the prosaic texts referring to the texts in verses.

By connecting the experience with the construction of memory on one side, and with the ritualistic dimension on the other, the paper proposes the extension of the Culler's concept by the questioning of the historical frame (memory, politics, radical otherness of the past), marginalized perspective (the perspective of women, which is brutally constructed by the separation of the people in the camps) and multigenericity of the texts involved.

## W

### **William Waters**

Associate Professor

Boston University, USA

[waters@bu.edu](mailto:waters@bu.edu)

### **Do Poems Exist?**

In a letter of 1926, Rilke conjectured that gramophone recordings of poets reciting their work could be of great value to a reader who, with book in hand, might listen “in order to be better informed of the relevant poem’s existence.” Rilke’s formulation here is striking in at once affirming that poems enjoy a deep objective reality, an incontrovertible “thereness,” while also suggesting that a poem, even in book-published form, may be insufficient evidence of, paradoxically, its own existence.

This same curious phrasing can stand for in for all of the various ways in which Rilke persistently characterizes his poetry, almost from the start, as something whose existence or substantiality is permanently open to question. At other moments, as if compensatorily, we find Rilke presenting his work in excessively, even weirdly material terms (the *Duino Elegies* are designated a “possession” of their dedicatee; the *Sonnets to Orpheus* form, collectively, “a grave-monument” for theirs). The persistence of these ambiguities bespeaks Rilke’s lasting concern for what his sentence goes on to call the “invisibility” of poetry. But writing in 1920’s Europe, Rilke means “invisible” in a sense quite different from, say, Dana Gioia’s provocative 1991 essay “Can Poetry Matter?” which traces the decline of a general readership for poetry over the later 20<sup>th</sup> century. The invisibility of poetry, for Rilke, is not that, not contingent, has no relation to measurements of readership. Rilke is pointing, instead, to an intrinsically elusive, ambivalent, fleeting, potential quality in poetry’s mode of being, as if a poem were as much an absence as a thing created. Again, the counterpart – a kind of exaggerated materiality about some of Rilke’s characterizations of his own poetry volumes – I see as another reflex of this same awareness. Some quality of poetic utterance that is hard to specify nevertheless tends to render the poem – perhaps uniquely even among artistic forms – unconfirmed.

In one respect after another, recent Rilke scholarship has been rediscovering how this poet’s astonishing sensitivity brought him to register tiny shifts in the winds of culture and thought that would remain imperceptible to his contemporaries, manifesting only long after. So too here: in part, I contend, Rilke’s multiple characterizations of the doubtful existence of poetry are a reflex of historical, socioeconomic and intellectual developments in his era and afterwards. Especially salient is

the impending precarity of poets' work, here registered *avant la lettre* even in the peak years of high modernism. Simultaneously, though, what Rilke seeks to articulate is not time- or place-bound: there is here a probing, even radical insight into the phenomenologically ambiguous condition of all poetry as we know it in modernity. Poems really are, on the one hand, made "things," visibly and audibly present. But at the same time they cannot do otherwise than come in the place of what they say, appearing as so many empty contours, feints at existence, outlines or traces of something already withdrawn.

Rilke's provocation concerns, I hope to show, the condition of poetry *tout court*. As my title suggests, then, this talk is not aimed at Germanists, much less at Rilke specialists; instead, my intent is primarily to take up the broad considerations of how and why poems in modernity (as prototypically written, published, and encountered between book covers) possess this phenomenological ambiguity through the particular qualities of the attention we bring to them.

### **Christian P. Weber**

Associate Professor

Florida State University

[cweber@fsu.edu](mailto:cweber@fsu.edu)

### **Literary Realism Reconsidered: Goethe for Example**

Realism has made a comeback – at least in philosophy. In a recent collection of articles, Markus Gabriel and Maurizio Ferrari (2014) announced a "New Realism," which comprises a great variety of cognitive and ontological approaches to what is considered real: "common-sense" vs. "scientific realism" (de Caro), "negative" (Eco) vs. "positive realism" (Ferrari), "innocent" (Haack) vs "metaphysical realism" (Putnam). To this Hubert Dreyfus and Charles Taylor added the plea for a "robust realism" in their manifesto *Retrieving Realism* (2015) and John Searle a realist conception of perception in *Seeing Things as They Are* (2015). Most recently, the neuropsychologist Thomas Fuchs proposed a phenomenologist theory of "interactive realism" in his book *In Defense of Humanism. Foundational Questions of an Embodied Anthropology* (2021).

The title of the latter points to the relevance of these debates for the humanities. Yet, the absence of any significant contributions by literary studies to "New Realism" is telling. This can be attributed, I contend, to the limiting conception of realism as mimesis – based on Aristotle – that has prevailed in literary studies since Auerbach's monumental study on modernist 'realist' literature. Ever since, the term "literary realism" has been restricted (mainly) to the 19<sup>th</sup> century novel (for a recent example, see

Jameson's *The Antinomies of Realism* (2014)), stripping this term of its philosophical but also poetical potential.

My current book project on Goethe's realism aims to reverse this trend. At the conference, I will present Goethe's "poetic realism" as a specific method of inquiry and representation rather than understanding it in terms of literary genre or style. As I will show based on a few lyrical examples, esp. the poem "Heidenröslein/Rose on the Heather," attention is a key component in the task of poetic realism to process an experienced object, which can be any kind of impactful (aesthetic) phenomenon or urgent (scientific) problem that presents itself as "real" (in the sense of the German term *wirklich*). Goethe's literary productions and his scientific experimentations both painstakingly observe and record the series of oscillations between the recognized phenomenon and the embodied mind as well as the (poetic) language that serves as the medium of reflection and representation in this process of inquiry. As such, Goethe's poetic method of realism does not discriminate between literary and scientific discourse. It thereby reaches a level of meta-realism that can contribute to the philosophical debate of "New Realism" by adding a poetical perspective currently lacking.

**John S. Westbrook**

KIMEP University, Almaty, Kazakhstan

[j.westbrook@kimep.kz](mailto:j.westbrook@kimep.kz)

**On Rilke, Rabies, and the Threat of Poetry**

By examining themes related to rabies in the biography, correspondence, and poems of Rainer Maria Rilke, this paper proposes a viral – and more pointedly, a rabid – poetics through which to interpret the lyric in an intellectual climate increasingly self-conscious of the relationship between rhetoric and the virosphere. How, for instance, does our interpretation of a lyric poem, and of lyric poetry more generally, evolve once we consider lyric expressions of language as modern, human manifestations of genetic communicative strategies that have driven the evolution of life on Earth for millions, if not billions, of years? And why rabies instead of any other virus? Because this paper seeks to identify "the threat of poetry" as a threat to an established sociopolitical order, it is necessary to develop a working definition of sociopolitical group identity. As a range of post-humanist research suggests, the evolution of ethical and moral codes that define and delimit what constitutes human social groups is inextricably linked to humanity's coevolution with domestic canines, a relationship itself shaped in no small part by dogs' propensity to spread rabies to humankind. Moreover, rabies presents us with a rather unique case, in that humanity's relationship to this particular virus marks a number of firsts in



humanity's understanding and treatment of viruses. An overview and analysis of the rabies virus grants an entry point into leading theories of evolutionary virology, which seek to reconsider widespread, longstanding notions about the biological and chemical mechanisms of viral evolution as parts of a greater communicative paradigm. The fact that viruses likely played a central role in the development of cellular olfaction is of twofold consequence to this paper's argument: as cellular olfaction prefigures our own olfactory systems, whose organs are responsible for the production of verbal language, it is also lies at the root of the formation of group identities, such as those inherent in ideas of nationality or, if you will, of literary "taste." As humans evolved with dogs, so bats evolved an immunity to the rabies virus. Extant philosophical investigations into the phenomenology of chiropteran species invite questions into both the phenomenological implications of the coevolution of genetic entities and the nature of a rabid phenomenology. A close reading of the conclusion of Rilke's "Eighth Elegy," in which a bat flits on- and offstage, posits this bit of verse as an apogee of the Western lyrical tradition, for the very reason that it conceals anxieties about humanity's – and, by extension, the lyric's – biological and social conditions.

### **Kathrin Wittler**

Academic title: Dr.

Affiliation: Freie Universität Berlin, Peter Szondi-Institut für Allgemeine und Vergleichende Literaturwissenschaft

Email address: [kathrin.wittler@fu-berlin.de](mailto:kathrin.wittler@fu-berlin.de)

### **Experiencing the Loneliness of the Lyric**

It is a common, if contested, notion that modern lyrical poems emerge from the poet's solitary writing process and that they require solitary reading for full appreciation. In my talk, I will explore how the poems themselves relate to this notion, that is, how some poems reflect loneliness through their linguistic form. Focussing on poems by Ilse Aichinger and E. E. Cummings, I will highlight two features that link them to loneliness: Firstly, poems are perceived as lonely if they evoke – semantically, visually, grammatically, by sound, or otherwise – privations such as emptiness, darkness, silence, stillness, or coldness.

In aesthetic terms, these privations are closely related to solitude and can therefore give a poem a lonely air. Secondly, poems are perceived as lonely if they suggest the absence of an addressor and/or addressee. By this effect, often brought about by a bewildering use of deictic pronouns like 'I' and 'you', a poem can appear as a form of auto-communication that is overheard or as a personal speech.

The impression of lyrical loneliness, I argue, stems from interrelations between these two aspects: privative aesthetics and absential poetics.

I contend that this interplay of privative aesthetics and absential poetics is unique to the genre of the lyrical poem and that it allows for a special kind of loneliness experience. While all literary genres, and other art forms, too, can in one way or other address loneliness as a topic, it is the lyrical poem's specific power to engender an aesthetic experience of loneliness by its use of language. The extreme reduction and detachment of some modern poems – on a semantic and grammatical level in the case of Aichinger, on a visual level in the case of Cummings – may induce feelings of loneliness, as they confront their readers with privations of sense (and of the senses) and with vexations of their human need for communication. Facing such poems, many readers feel lost. They do not understand much, they do not feel addressed and/or cannot identify an addressor. Once a reader accepts and embraces this disorientating feeling, however, s:he can turn it into an aesthetic experience, exploring its richness through the engagement with the poem. By being 'difficult' for the reader, lyrical poems may enhance the miserable feeling of loneliness with an experience of meaningful solitude. This potential in turn explains, I think, what makes modern poems so fascinating.

**Julie Koblížková Wittlichová**

PhD Candidate

Charles University, Prague

[julie.wittlichova@gmail.com](mailto:julie.wittlichova@gmail.com)

### **Experiments without form. Neo-avantgarde poetry by lens of aesthetic anti-empiricism**

What do we need to appreciate experimental poetry? Is it enough to use our eyes, ears and “verbal understanding”, or do we also need information about the context of a particular work? The field of experimental poetry might sometimes be tricky to navigate. On one hand it is filled with different movements, artistic manifestos, and author's methods. On the other hand, many experimental texts – especially in comparison with “traditional” poetry – utilize very similar formal features, such as a restricted language, distinctive graphic design, non-standard syntax, minimal use of figural expressions or other usual poetic devices. In my paper I will approach experimental poetry with the theory of aesthetic anti-empiricism (Walton, Lamarque, Danto), according to which it is not possible to judge a work of art correctly solely based on evidence given by our senses, in other words by observing the formal features of a work and searching for their interplays and meanings. What plays a key role in our aesthetic appreciation is the knowledge of the facts related to the provenance of the

work, e.g. thoughts, beliefs and intentions of the artist, his connection to some distinctive artistic program, affiliation of the work to a certain *category* (Walton) etc. To what extent does the knowledge of the *provenance related facts* change the way we are experiencing a work of literature? Inspired by the cases of *indiscernibles* – distinguished objects with identical properties – I will examine several experimental texts from the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century which use similar formal methods to different aesthetic purposes leading to different aesthetic experiences. Attention to the context, in both broad and narrow sense, permit us to make judgements based on different criteria than the formal ones and thus better differentiate between individual works as well as broader tendencies in experimental poetry. At the same time, it permits us to see the history of experimental poetry in a new light.

## Y

**Oren Yirmiya**

PhD Candidate

University of California, Berkeley

[oren\\_yirmiya@berkeley.edu](mailto:oren_yirmiya@berkeley.edu)

### **"Yet, I Shall Wake Up from the Dreadful Dream of Biography" – Lyric Personhood and Self-Estrangement in the Poetry of Shimon Adaf**

How can one know that his self is himself? Critical thought of selfhood and perception leads us to a conundrum: if all selves are the same in their form, what makes the specific assortment of thoughts, experiences, and Swaantjememories one has a cohesive, unique, and possessed entity? How can one such constellation be related to not just any "I" but the specific "I" articulating these words?

These are some of the questions asked in the works of Shimon Adaf, a provocative poet, who declared in 2002, "Yet, I shall wake up from the dreadful dream of biography." In his early career, Adaf (b. 1972) was enthusiastically welcomed into the Israeli poetry scene, but later, he protested his erstwhile readership for biographically interpreting his writing, pigeonholing him into the position of a minoritarian Jewish-Moroccan writer and nothing more. Since then, Adaf's oeuvre exhibits two contradicting drives: one committing to his experiences from childhood and adolescence in the peripheral city of Sderot, and at the same time, another distancing these experiences from his own extratextual self, and in that, from any one specific "self." As I show in this paper, in the dialectics between these trends, Adaf searches for a lyrical personhood that is estranged from the idea of a

"biography." In doing so, Adaf transcends the particularities of his life not by searching for their universal aspect but by rearranging and replacing them, thus drawing out his poetry's biographical aspects' contingent nature, tracing the non-universal essential truth of his being.

To substantiate this argument, in the paper, I read three poems by Adaf, showing the poetic and dramatic devices the poet employs to explore selfhood. These poems are "Autobiography" from his first poetry book (1997), "Finale," which concludes his second volume of poetry (2002), and "I encountered the world," which opens his multi-genre novel *The Wedding Gifts* (2014). As I show, in these poems, Adaf draws our attention to one implied biography while negating readers' expectations of that biography's unity. In doing so, Adaf tests the capabilities of lyric poetry to carry forth a cohesive lyric personhood that is not reducible to extratextual truths but without marginalizing non-universalizable markers of place, time, and heritage. Adaf marks his selfhood as his own by shaping it as the residue that survives a negation articulated in lyric form.

### **Yuki Tanaka**

Assistant professor

Hosei University

[ytanaka@wustl.edu](mailto:ytanaka@wustl.edu)>

### **Travel and Attention: On Jenny Xie's Eye Level**

What happens to poetry when one is traveling? Traveling in a foreign country often diverts our attention from our inner life to people and objects around us. When poetry is written in this way, what would happen to the status of lyric self? These are some of the questions I will consider when I look at Jenny Xie's debut collection *Eye Level* (2018). Throughout the book, the speaker travels through Southeast Asia while presenting a self that is constantly moving and passing through places. Her "I" becomes an eye, a distant observer who pays minute attention to her surroundings. Xie's speaker is barely present, just like a traveler who stays in one place for a short period of time and disappears from the view of locals. In my paper, I will argue that by emphasizing the role of attention, Xie reimagines the lyric self as relational—not as a solitary speaker who is given a special, privileged status over her surroundings, but as someone who pays attention to others and exists in relation to them.

By exploring how attention and the lyric self intersect in Xie's poetry, I will also engage with Jahan Ramazani's notion of "traveling poetry," which celebrates the capacity of poetry to leap from place to place and be culturally inclusive. Ramazani's "traveling poetry" envisions the

lyric self as free and all-compassing, a self that can go anywhere and include and unify various cultural experiences. Xie's poetry presents a different kind of self—it is more self-effacing and is aware of the distance between the observer and the observed. In Xie's work, the act of paying attention is twofold: it expresses not only the longing to be connected and rooted in a foreign place, but also a feeling of alienation from it.

## Z

### **Christian Zehnder**

University of Fribourg / University of Geneva)

christian.zehnder@unifr.ch

### **Attention to the Small: A Central Trope of the Poetry of the Soviet Underground**

The Soviet Underground (often referred to as 'unofficial' or 'second' culture) is anything but a uniform phenomenon. A particular artist belonged to it rarely through an entirely deliberate choice, and contingent factors played a more important role than many memories depict it in retrospect. Nevertheless, there can be found several recognizable tendencies within the literary, especially the poetic, production of that cultural space: some of its most remarkable figures fundamentally shifted poetry's attention from a heavily conventionalized focus on both average and monumental dimensions and themes in 'official' poetry towards a specific cultivation of the "small" (*maloe*). One of the original features of Underground poetry lies, then, not so much in political dissidence as in the very sharpening of attention to a realm that Soviet mainstream culture typically did not recognize. A poem by Olga Sedakova calls life a "small little thing" (*veshchitsa*), which appears "at the end of an eyelash" (*Starye pesni* [Old songs], 1981/82). In a poem by Elena Shvarts, the body of a friend lies in the coffin "[l]ike a weak butterfly pinned / With a needle to a box without a bottom." ("Vliublennye na pokhoronakh" [People in love at a funeral], 1983). This is not to say, however, that unofficial circulation knew only artists of the small, and the reverse, that official culture produced only artists of the grandiose. In fact, the unpublished grandiloquent early poetry of Joseph Brodsky and the published but 'quiet' lyric of Arsenii Tarkovskii speaks to the exact opposite. Still, this example hardly changes the overall tendency. If historians of the Soviet Underground have long considered the new attention to the small as a general pattern, they have rarely described it as a poetic principle (with the notable exception of poetic Minimalism as practiced by the Chuvashian poet Gennadii Aigi and

the poets of the Lianozovo School, especially Igor' Kholin and Ian Satunovskii). While attempting a more comprehensive account, one faces the further difficulty that former actors of the Underground such as Sedakova, Tat'iana Goricheva and Viktor Krivulin use the category of the small to interpret their own outlooks of the 1970s and 1980s. Understanding these later descriptions as being part of Underground culture in a broad sense, I propose a conceptualizing of the "small" that encompasses poetic and rhetorical as well as axiological, anthropological, and religious dimensions of the trope. Thus, Soviet Underground poetry compellingly exemplifies the universal nexus between poetry and attention in an historically embodied way.

### **Eva Zettelmann**

Professor

Vienna University

[eva.zettelmann@univie.ac.at](mailto:eva.zettelmann@univie.ac.at)

### **Lyric Mood**

In everyday usage, 'mood' is a term used to convey some key quality of a literary text. "The poem is written in a sombre mood", we might say, or, in more modern parlance, "The text gives off sad vibes". While the broader meaning seems clear here – the text is about sad things and/or is intended to make readers sad – in the context of literary scholarship, 'mood' has not had much traction (Iser 1984, Burke 2010, Jacobs 2016, Breidenbach 2020). One could argue that this is largely due to the term's elusive vagueness: as with many phenomena concerned with human emotion, the triggers and exact components of a given text's 'mood' are often difficult to determine. Also, if, at closer inspection, it should emerge that there is little to distinguish the category of 'mood' from a text's *histoire* or its mentally projected recreation on the side of the reader, then 'mood' would indeed have little to offer in terms of a discrete analytical category.

Still, the fact that in everyday conversations about poetry, 'mood' continues to be an important heuristic could be taken to indicate that a poem's unique amalgamation of sensory and emotive data may supply the experiential core of the lyric encounter.

Making recourse to frameworks from modern reader-reception studies and cognitive literary theory, this paper attempts to place the phenomenon of 'lyric mood' as a separate, if composite quality and hopes to show possible ways of salvaging a potentially important experiential category for the theory of the lyric and the practice of poetry analysis.

## PANEL PROPOSALS

### Panel: "Song lyrics"

A presentation and discussion of the book *Sanglyrikk: Teori – Metode – Sjangrer*

[*Song Lyrics: Theory – Method – Genre*]

Song Lyrics Research Group

University of Agder, Norway

Song lyrics are without a doubt the most popular form of poetry in our time, and also one of the oldest forms of poetry. Hymns have been preserved from ancient Mesopotamia dating back to 2200 BC, and in Plato's *Republic* (ca. 380 BC) Socrates will only accept two forms of poetry in the ideal state - both lyrical: Hymns to the gods and praises of the good men.

Pre- and early modern genres such as hymns, troubadour verses and ballads have long had their place in academic studies. In recent decades, the study of modern song lyrics has also seen an upswing, including popular music. This can be due to several reasons: the hierarchy between "high" and "low" culture has been reduced, literary researchers have grown up with popular music and are acquainted with the semiotic codes, and digital streaming services (such as Spotify) function as enormous music libraries, providing access to recordings that previously had to be searched for in private record collections. Bob Dylan's 2016 Nobel Prize in Literature has also contributed to raising the status of song lyrics.

Song lyrics are experienced in different ways than written poetry, and this presents song lyrics researchers with several challenges. That its medium of expression is the human voice, not writing, makes "the phenomenology of voice" an unavoidable topic. Another challenge is the epic and dramatic character of the song lyrics, which breaks with what some consider as the essential features of written verse. The ballad is a narrative genre, and many - perhaps most - songs can be perceived as dramatic monologues, where the singer assumes a role, from which he or she tells a story, expresses a mood, or reflects on a state of affairs. A third theme is the melodic and temporal characteristics of

song lyrics. Here, the words are adapted to a melody and arranged in a rhythmic pattern, which charges them with meaning.

In 2018, the Research Group for Song Lyrics was established at the University of Agder, Norway. The group is led by Professor Bjarne Markussen and Professor Michael Prince, and consists of 30 literary scholars, musicologists and artists from Norway, Sweden and Denmark. The group's aim is to explore song lyrics in various genres and historical periods. In 2021, they published two books on the broadside ballad (*skillingsviser*) tradition in collaboration with researchers from the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU): *Skillingsvisene i Norge 1550-1950* and *Arven fra skillingsvisene*. In 2022, three more anthologies have been published: *Den radikale Bob Dylan. Studier i et omskiftelig sangverk* (The Radical Bob Dylan: Studies in a variable opus of song), *Flytsoner. Studier i flow og rap-lyrikk* (Zones of Flow: Studies in flow and rap lyrics), and *Sanglyrikk. Teori – Metode – Sjangerer* (Song lyrics: Theory – Method – Genre).

This last book, edited by Ole Karlsen and Bjarne Markussen, provides a broad introduction to lyrical genres – medieval ballads, hymns, Sami *joik*, Scandinavian *viser*, broadside ballads, blues, pop, rock, Indie-Folk, and rap. In addition, it addresses theoretical and methodological issues about the distinctive features of song lyrics, the importance of the voice, the relationship between text and music, the song's structure, and address to the listener, as well as issues concerning authenticity and satire.

In the panel, *Sanglyrikk. Teori – Metode – Sjangerer* will be presented and discussed by members of the Song Lyric Research Group:

Ole Karlsen, Professor of Nordic Literature, Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences

Email: [ole.karlsen@inn.no](mailto:ole.karlsen@inn.no)

Bjarne Markussen, Professor of Nordic Literature, University of Agder

Email: [bjarne.markussen@uia.no](mailto:bjarne.markussen@uia.no)

Gisle Selnes, Professor of Comparative Literature, University of Bergen

Email: [Gisle.Selnes@uib.no](mailto:Gisle.Selnes@uib.no)

Liv Kreken, Research librarian, The National Library of Norway

Email: [liv.kreken@nb.no](mailto:liv.kreken@nb.no)

Ingrid Skjerdal, Associate Professor, Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences

Email: [ingrid.skjerdal@inn.no](mailto:ingrid.skjerdal@inn.no)

Sigrun Blaavarp, Teacher, Numedal Upper Secondary School

Email: [sigrunbl@viken.no](mailto:sigrunbl@viken.no)



**Panel: “The challenges and potential of cross-disciplinary and multilingual terminology of lyric theory. The case of the compendium ‘Poetry in Notions’”**

**Gustavo Guerrero**

**Philip Lindholm**

**Philip Mills**

**Ralph Müller**

**Antonio Rodriguez**

**Kirsten Stirling**

Academic titles: Dr. [Mills, Lindholm]; Prof. Dr. [Guerrero, Stirling, Rodriguez, Müller]

Affiliation: project “Poetry in Notions”; University of Fribourg / University of Lausanne / University Cergy-Paris.

Email address: [ralph.mueller@unifr.ch](mailto:ralph.mueller@unifr.ch) (corresponding contributor).

Since 2020, the project “Poetry in Notions” (funded by the Sinergia programme of the Swiss National Science Foundation - SNSF) has been preparing selected articles for an online compendium on the international terminology and theory of lyric poetry. The general objective of the project “Poetry in Notions – The Online Critical Compendium of Lyric Poetry” is to develop an international open-access resource on the study of lyric poetry that will serve as a platform for recording and assessing similar and divergent views on various theoretical challenges (e.g., ‘address’, ‘performance’, ‘multimodality’) of lyric poetry, and to thereby encourage and facilitate scholarly exchange about lyric poetry among the members of different disciplines.

During this roundtable, we will discuss the challenges and potential of collaborating on the study of lyric poetry across the disciplines and in different cultural contexts and linguistic traditions. What are the theoretical challenges of working together on, and having different concepts of, the phenomena of lyric poetry? The panel participants will bring not only their experience of actually editing articles of the compendium, but also present their drafts of articles that provide insights into the actual challenges of discussing central notions of lyric theory. The article drafts by the panel participants will touch on epistemological issues of understanding lyric poetry and look at the benefits of cross-philological exchange on these concepts:

- The panel discussion will be moderated by Ralph Müller (University of Fribourg / Switzerland). The panel will include the following participants:
- Antonio Rodriguez (University of Lausanne): “Genre and Mode” underlines to which categories the lyric is opposed historically and culturally, and why this question addresses the specific challenges and potential benefits of the project's interdisciplinary format.
- Philip Lindholm (University of Lausanne/Switzerland): “Song, song-like” re-examines the formal and historical relationship between lyric poetry and song in order to examine the fruitful connections between—as well as the challenges of critically discussing—the oral tradition, printed poetry, and musical performance.
- Gustavo Guerrero (Cergy-Paris/France): “Publishing poetry” explores a particular aspect of practices associated with modern forms of distributing lyric poetry, e.g. publishing houses, anthologies, but also the more recent developments of digital publishing and multimedia resources.
- Kirsten Stirling (University of Lausanne/Switzerland): “Space and time” in lyric poetry have received little systematic treatment so far, although they concern fundamental experiences of lyrical representations.
- Philip Mills (University of Lausanne/Switzerland): In contrast to “Space and time”, there is an intensive international debate about “Fiction and referentiality”, and, hence, the status of persons and objects in lyrical texts.

### **Panel: “Rethinking Lyric Communities”**

Organizers: **Francesco Giusti** (University of Oxford)  
and **Laura Banella** (University of Notre Dame)

From the circulation of poetic forms across different languages and traditions around the globe, through the envisioning of national and transnational discursive communities, to the use of poetry in episodes of political resistance and its dissemination on a variety of media, lyric poetry seems to be a privileged site for an inquiry into community formation and its politics. Various theoretical approaches cast poetry in this peculiar role, from French and French-oriented political philosophy (exemplified in the famous exchange between Maurice Blanchot and Jean-Luc Nancy begun in the 1980s) to the reevaluations — in reader-response criticism as well as in postcolonial and decolonial studies — of poetry’s roots in orality and performance.

The panel aims to bring the investigation of historical poetic communities into dialogue with recent developments in the theory of the lyric and in theories of community. While discussing a variety of phenomena that have been at the center of the critical debate — the memorability and repeatability of the lyric, apostrophe and triangulated address, the indexical function of language — the panel will also explore the lyric, in its longer history and transnational features, as a particular discursive mode that may offer alternative models of community formation. Some of the topics that will be addressed are: the direct exchange of poems, sharing of poetic codes, forms of co-authorship and collective writing, lyric poetry as a collective practice, the construction of collective voices, strategies of inclusion and exclusion, the practice of commentary for and within specific communities, transhistorical and transnational poetic communities.

This panel will be the fourth installment of a series of events with the same title: the workshops held at Christ Church (Oxford) on 23 June 2022 and at the ICI Berlin Institute for Cultural Inquiry on 5 July 2022; and the panel at the congress of the European Society of Comparative Literature in Rome (5-9 September 2022).

**Speakers:**

**Laura Banella**

Academic title: Assistant Professor of Italian

Affiliation: University of Notre Dame

Email address: [lbabella@nd.edu](mailto:lbabella@nd.edu)

**Dante and Lyric Communities (1290-1550)**

The paper investigates the lyric community created by Dante through his human relationships and historiographical writing, and the ways in which it was received and mirrored by the following generations of poets, from its immediate reception in the fourteenth century to sixteenth-century printed anthologies. It focuses on a pivotal moment for the lyric, the driving force behind the rising vernacular writing culture, when lyric writing was experienced as a social activity not only for the elites, with utterly anti-normative results. No poet existed outside a literary circle, whose members expressed themselves in a shared but ever-changing lyric code, and the lyric voice became the voice of competing communities. Such voice was social currency, and was used to express and legitimize a wide range of values, from religion and love to politics and historical thought. Later, in the age of Petrarchism, when the lyric code tended to crystallize itself, Dante and his fellow poets remained a competing example of both a linguistic model and a model of writing within a community, thus mirroring Petrarchist communities while being reformulated according to Renaissance ideas of an intellectual community.

## **Nicolas Longinotti**

Academic title: Doctoral Candidate / Research Associate “Petrarchan Worlds”

Affiliation: Freie Universität Berlin – EXC Temporal Communities

Email address: [n.longinotti@fu-berlin.de](mailto:n.longinotti@fu-berlin.de)

### **Empty deixis – transferable communities. Petrarch’s addressees in the 15th-century verbo-visual commentary to the *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta***

Francesco Petrarca’s (1304–1374) lyric collection *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta* was widely commented already before Petrarchism became a central literary movement in Europe in the 16th century. While recent scholarly accounts have claimed the irrelevance of 15th-century commentaries for understanding Petrarch’s lyric collection, these works, produced all across Italy, represented a vast array of competing cultural and political communities that harnessed in various ways Petrarch’s lyric. Therefore, the exegesis becomes an occasion to highlight aspects of Petrarch’s texts that may be particularly relevant to the commentator’s milieu. The milieu’s role becomes particularly evident in the verbo-visual commentary on the incunabulum G.V. 15 (Venezia, Vindelino da Spira, 1470) attributed to Antonio Grifo, the only 15th-century copy of Petrarch’s *RVF* extensively illustrated. Even more than the brief glosses, the illustrations seek to contextualize Petrarch’s lyric enunciation by depicting selected moments from the poems and filling the empty deixis, especially for the addressees. Among the various images, the quantity of birds is striking and goes far beyond the birds mentioned in Petrarch’s *RVF*. By addressing the vast presence of birds in the Queriniano manuscript and combining it with Virginia Cox’s concept of “social poetry”, this contribution aims to investigate how Petrarch’s empty deixes are re-enacted and contribute to future community formations.

## **Francesco Giusti**

Academic title: Fixed Term Fellow and Tutor in Italian

Affiliation: Christ Church, University of Oxford

Email address: [francesco.giusti@chch.ox.ac.uk](mailto:francesco.giusti@chch.ox.ac.uk)

### **Gestural Communities: Lyric and the Suspension of Action**

As Jonathan Culler argues, lyric poems offer themselves to re-enactment as a “memorable language” that only finds its realization in its re-enunciation. Yet, what is it that makes lyric poetry shareable across time and cultures? What is it that could actually be shared – or, just as importantly, not shared, rejected – by readers? How can lyric poems enable community formation? By mobilizing a notion of *gesture* developed from Bertolt Brecht, Walter Benjamin, and Giorgio Agamben, this paper will explore an idea of community based not on pre-existing identities, but rather on the shareability and repeatability of gestures, which departs from the views on poetry in French political philosophy. The members of such a community re-enact historically available gestures in their particular context, thus

showing how individuals are not agreeing on a prior truth, as community formation is often understood, but rather turning a gesture, which has no goal nor meaning in itself, into an action by applying it to their own singular case. By examining a poem by Brecht that rejects a gesture performed by Dante and revived by Rilke, the paper intends on the one hand to provide an explanation of lyric's repeatability based on the notions of deixis and open referentiality, on the other hand to look at the lyric as a repertoire of gestures which can attain the status of Baudelaire's "cliché", and perhaps even of "poetic kitsch" as described by Daniel Tiffany.

### **Sabine I. Gölz**

Academic title: Associate Professor of German and Comparative Literature

Affiliation: University of Iowa

Email address: [sabine-golz@uiowa.edu](mailto:sabine-golz@uiowa.edu)

### **"Millay Repairs Baudelaire": Beyond the Aura of a Poetics of Control**

In this presentation, I will draw on my recent contrastive reading of two poems—Charles Baudelaire's "L'invitation au voyage" and Edna St. Vincent Millay's 1936 retranslation "Invitation to the Voyage." In that essay, I interpreted Baudelaire's poem as both prefigurative and meta-poetic: it models—and therefore also theorizes—the gendered mechanisms it puts in place to direct the attention, and ultimately to script the perceptions of its readers. Millay responds by translating the poem not just from French into English, but also out of Baudelaire's misogynist poetics of control and into a self-reflexive and open one. Millay *repairs* Baudelaire's poem. The divergence between the two is paradigmatic for a deeply gendered rift that runs through Western literary and cultural spacetimes, and that opens not just between two starkly different *poetics*, but also between two very different *subject positions* they generate. The first of these subject positions promotes a scripted mode of reading. It conscripts certain readerly subjects into a "community" that rests on a normalized, unselfconscious acceptance of language as sign and representation, and that systematically denies acknowledgement to the second position as being that of a "subject" at all. Only from the perspective of the latter, however, does a mode of reading become possible that allows us effectively to pit the singularity of our embodied self-reflexive experience against the apparatus of language itself. The exemplary comparison between the two poems thus yields a larger theoretical insight—one that can be reproduced in comparable constellations!—that has profound implications for the powerful and for the most part invisible role that language and poetics play in shaping our perceptual world—and thus our cultures and social relations. The reading also poses a fundamental challenge to our normalized literary-theoretical business as usual, and lays the foundation for a conceptual framework for reading the works of certain women poets—those that confront and rewrite the apparatus of control that

literary and poetic traditions have put in place, and that continues to rule us. A critique of Walter Benjamin's "definition" of "Aura" helps clarify the mechanisms at work here.

**Panel: "Making the lyric present: contemporary poetry and audience"**

This panel explores the character of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century poem as co-created by poet and audience in performance— whether the public performance of the live poetry reading, or the experience of the reader with the poem as text. The three papers share concerns with reader address, with unsettled relationships between past and present and between composition and reading/hearing, and with the complicating of 'voice,' 'self,' and 'personality' by the poem as performed and experienced, here and now.

**Reena Sastri**

Teaching Fellow, Centre for Open Learning

University of Edinburgh

[rsastri2@exseed.ed.ac.uk](mailto:rsastri2@exseed.ed.ac.uk)

**The repatterning of experience in Williams and Glück**

How does a poem's character as an event that is experienced in the present interact with its capacity to evoke growth and change that happen in time, particularly repatternings of past experience or as we say learning from experience? By what means do late twentieth and early twenty-first century poets explore such themes without producing examples of what Lyn Hejinian called the 'coercive' scenic mode, poems (in Louise Glück's terms) 'weighted at the end with insight,' mired in the 'claustrophobic...inertia of emphatic closure'? This paper looks at two poems in which the accumulation of experience over a span of years yields something new: understanding, forgiveness, the ability to 'caution' others (while recognizing the futility of such caution). At the same time the poems feel 'like experiments,' open-ended inquiries, their 'illuminations' (again, Glück's words) like 'Psyche's, who did not know what she'd find.'

Williams's 'My Mother's Lips' (1983) and Glück's 'The Sensual World' (2001) explicitly concern the making and re-making of the self and the finding or re-finding of poetic voice. As those verbs imply, 'self' and 'voice' here are not static achievements, but ongoing processes. The temporality of these processes is both unassailably linear (we are born, grow, age and die in a one-way sequence),

and, as enacted in the poems' patterns, psychically complex and varied, returning repeatedly to past moments, re-seeing and re-imagining them. Circling around a conflict between mother and child, 'My Mother's Lips' moves backward and forward in time, juxtaposing, layering, and making a new exploratory pattern that implicitly roots the poem in the two-way pull between relationship and individuation. 'The Sensual World' recalls childhood's '[d]elight' of 'deep immersion' in 'the sensual life,' then warns the reader not to be lulled by such comforts: 'I caution you as I was never cautioned: //... you will never be satiated,' 'You will want the earth, then more of the earth.' The address lays claim to a wisdom gained from experience, but the lesson is precisely that no wisdom can alter or put an end to desire for more experience. Williams and Glück use poetry's event-like features—address, non-linear temporality complicating the unfolding of the poem in the time of reading, syntax evoking the affective quality of past moments—to bring to life change in time (insight and forgiveness; unusable wisdom; patterns broken and new patterns formed) *as* experience, offering not a distilled lesson demanding a reader's acquiescence, but an experience and an experiment inviting her participation.

### **Elizabeth Sarah Coles**

Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellow

Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona

[elizabethsarahcoles@gmail.com](mailto:elizabethsarahcoles@gmail.com)

### **Reading with Anne Carson and Susan Howe**

Reflecting on his introduction to Anne Carson's *Glass, Irony and God* (1995), the poet Guy Davenport tells us the introduction only exists because the director at New Directions thought Carson 'needs explaining'. Reviewing Susan Howe's *Singularities* (1990), the poet Charles Bernstein praises Howe's ability to 'to transform the archive and chronicle into an elusive, elliptical and yet deeply personal drama.' Both testimonies point to an inwardness and difficulty that is complicated, if not directly contradicted, by the ways both scholar-poets *explain themselves* to readers. In Carson and Howe, explanation is a performance of working that amplifies and reroutes the kinds of performance we often expect from poems; an invitation to intimacy and assumption of complicity that electrifies the kinds of address we expect from scholarly essays.

This paper thinks through modes of reader address that name and seal the shared cause of scholarship and poetry in these two contemporary authors. Taking examples from poems, essays, prefatory and other paratextual material, the paper follows both writers' production of a *mise-en-scène* for explaining their work, and for pre-empting – and/or discharging – critical attention. These scenes are often set by deixis, a potent and performative here-and-now in which the work of composition – and

even the ‘preliminary’ work of scholarship – coalesces around an action and under a scrutiny that is presumed to be *shared* with us. The paper pays special attention to the phenomenon of address in cases where Carson and Howe are reading and responding to the work of another author – Emily Brontë or Emily Dickinson, Melville, Keats, or Paul Celan –, and tries to characterise the forms of attention intuited and emerging in these ostensibly shared actions. I will be interested, too, in how the performance of thought, reading, and composition plays with and against our own position as readers and – in the case of this conference audience – as critics. How does it feel to be positioned and pre-empted, lured by and allied with the work of these compellingly dextrous poets and scholars? Do they micromanage our readings and/or do their appeals and stagings of craft add to the emotional traction of reading them, moving us in unforeseen, not always comfortable, ways?

### **Peter Howarth**

Professor of Modern Literature  
Queen Mary, University of London  
[p.howarth@qmul.ac.uk](mailto:p.howarth@qmul.ac.uk)

### **The Structural Effects of the Poetry Circuit**

In the twentieth century, poetry became a literal event, thanks to the return of the author-led reading. Circuits, institutions and counter-cultural scenes began to support a new poetry-reading economy alongside print, inside which every kind of poet had to learn to perform. But live reading did far more than just re-present poems; it created a constitutive ambiguity between the poem’s past and its present, as modernist poetics did in general. Hearing the older poem in the voice of its author now brought the time of its creation back into the time of its distribution, so that finished poems could simultaneously sound like they were still being written, vulnerable to the contingencies of the poet’s present and the feedback from the reading’s audience and acoustics.

This change towards reading in person, Donald Hall once claimed, is the biggest single change in the history of poetry in the last 80 years. But much of the importance of the reading has been obscured by the fetishization of ‘the voice’ as an original expression of the author’s personality, overlooking the reading’s structural capacity to enable new modes of poetry through that temporal shift, including confessional, modernist and Black Arts styles. In this paper, I suggest that the infrastructure of the poetry circuit meant the poet became a medium for her own poems as they came into that jointly-held present, remediated by commentary and other acts of rapport with or resistance to the listeners. The rapidity and density of the feedback loops readings generate is why the performed poem so often ended up sounding as if it were talking about the here and now, or channelling it. I’ll ground these claims about the reading’s past / present ambiguity by listening to some uncharismatic performances



by John Ashbery. Ashbery was a notoriously monotonous performer who always resisted requests to ‘improve’ his readings by dramatizing them. Yet Ashbery started his career as a writer of poets’ theatre, and in ‘The System’, his punishingly-long prose poem of spiritual meditation, he created a work designed to make a play with this performance effect, creating the feeling of the poem being co-written in the present by reincorporating the wavering attention of its audience. Ashbery’s dull readings are a *de*-tuning of listeners’ attention, aiming for a situation where it is creatively uncertain what belongs to his poem and what to the event, when the poem began and where it ends. For the uncomfortable performer as much as the natural, live readings were the material infrastructure that backed up the feeling that poems were a continuing event, even while it puts that structure on show.

### **Panel: “Unexpected Encounters: Poetry in the Digital Age”**

In the digital age, poetry is claiming new spaces, media and bodies. The panel will discuss these expansions of poetic practices by the examples of mediatized and technological enhanced poetry performances in digital spheres, AI generated book poetry and digital poetry, and by comparing the sites of poems in urban spaces and on Instagram. The papers will ask, how these “unexpected encounters” produce novel kinds of poetic experiences, publics and attention. A central aim of the panel is to present and discuss recent methods and interdisciplinary approaches to poetry in the digital age. It brings together researchers with different disciplinary backgrounds, working in the ERC project “Poetry in the Digital Age” (PoetryDA), situated at Universität Hamburg.

#### **Vadim Keylin**

PhD

#### **(Post)Human Voices: Authenticity, Liveness and Synthesized Speech**

Poems in the digital age can be performed not only by their authors or actors, but also by the text-to-speech engines in a variety of synthesized voices. Robotic, impersonal, and monotone, these voices seem incapable of producing the experience of authenticity and liveness and affectively engaging the listener. What happens, however, when the synthetic voice is the only voice that the poet-performer possesses? Or when their human voice is purposefully trained to imitate the sound of text-to-speech engines? This is the case of the two performance poets that the paper discusses: Dave Young and Ian Hatcher. Young, also known as The Shouting Mute, does not possess biological speech due to his

disability and performs his poems with a communication aid device. Hatcher, on the other hand, makes his voice sound robot-like without any technological alteration, while performing deeply personal lyric poetry. Through a comparative analysis of their practices, the paper will show how they challenge the entrenched notions of liveness and authenticity, but also complicate the concepts of the post- or transhuman.

**Prof. Dr. Claudia Benthien**

### **Odes to Miami: The Poetik Entanglement between Urban Space and Online Sites**

The paper is dedicated to “ZipOdes”, a poem form developed for the annual poetry festival *O, Miami*, as an example of the entanglement between urban spaces and online “sites”. ZipOdes are 5-line poems written by residents, to transform one’s zip code “into an occasion for place-based, lyrical celebration” (festival website). The instruction for composing them is based on a contingent algorithm. In contrast to traditional verse, words rather than syllables are counted. Odes are song-like poems that often express a strong feeling, especially admiration, and are usually addressed to sublime nature or an abstract entity. Here they are directed towards a neighborhood, a peculiar form of ‘place-making’ through poetry. Each year, dozens of such poems are posted in the streets, on public transit, and performed in front of an audience. Another form of “performance” takes place on the festival’s Instagram page, where the odes are animated in serial form. Thus, they create different types of co-presence (temporal, spatial).

**Antje Schmidt**

M.Ed. (PhD Candidate)

### **“Who Creates the Landscape? Technocene Encounters between Humans, Machines and Nature in Digital Poetry”**

Through artificial intelligence (AI), the digital age not only questions human agency but is also the epoch of human decentring through a technologically altered nature. This gave rise to the notion of the ‘technocene’, defined as the age in which technology has become the primary geological force. The paper will focus on Berit Glanz’s digital poetry experiment “Nature Writing / Machine Writing” as an example of technocene encounters between humans, machines and nature. The aim of Glanz’ work is to “let the machine write landscape” – to accomplish this, she uses the neural network *Img2Poem*, which has been trained to translate given images into suitable poems written in free verse – a form of machine ekphrasis. In paratexts, Glanz reflects on the meaning of the click-workers who have trained the neural network but are usually absent in discussions of AI artworks. By analysing the

altered pictures, poems and paratexts, the paper aims to show how this experiment subverts common nature/machine and human/machine dichotomies and reveals political challenges of the technocene.

### **Panel: “Lineation and Attention”**

#### **David Caplan**

Professor

Southern Methodist University.

[dcaplan@mail.smu.edu](mailto:dcaplan@mail.smu.edu)

#### **Stephen Guy-Bray**

Professor

University of British Columbia.

#### **Roi Tartakovsky**

Senior Lecturer

Tel Aviv University

This panel will consider one of the major techniques that poetry employs to direct the reader’s attention: namely, lineation. The three panelists will examine examples that range from the Renaissance to contemporary American poetry to consider how lineation crucially establishes poetic identity, performs crucial artistic functions, and both amplifies and interrupts the poem’s argument and speaker.

In “Lineation as Such,” Roi Tartakovsky observes that accounts of lineation in poetry, certainly of the free-verse kind, overwhelmingly view the line as a countermeasure to syntax and consequently tend to prop up the more unusual cases of enjambment for special notice (e.g., Longenbach, Hollander, Hartman). Such creative employment of the line by unexpectedly parsing the syntax at the line end is sometimes used as a defense against the suspicion that some free verse poetry is nothing more than “chopped up prose” (Perloff, Cooper). And yet, the *fact* of lineation is more important, and logically precedes, any specific strategic and local decisions about what *kind* of lineation to use.

Stepping away from special instances of lineation, Tartakovsky highlights lineation in-and-of-itself, asking what it does and how it relates to the poetic function. Besides drawing attention to the text and aiding readers in framing it as a poem, he identifies four other, related functions that reside on the basic level of lineation as such, whether mild and innocuous or radical and unexpected. First, if lineation is a “chopping up” of language, it entails the treatment of language as material. In that sense, rather than dismiss “bad” poetry as merely chopped up prose, he understands the chopping of prose as itself a gesture towards the poetic. Second, the line unit severs its contents from the rest of the poem, turning the poem into a series of discrete chunks, thus imposing a paratactic logic onto its language. Third, along the lines of the projection of the axis of selection onto the axis of combination (as per Jakobson), the line unit turns the text into a series of equivalents, such that the contents of each line are read as paralleling the contents of every other line. Finally, lineation signals the presence of the (implied) poet in the text. Since (visual) lineation comes from outside the diegetic level of the speaker, it marks the separation between speaker and poet and allows the poet to stage an intervention in the discourse of the speaker, effectively talking over the speaker’s head.

In “Lineation as a Method and a Defense,” David Caplan returns to some of the concerns that Tartakovsky raises, but he considers how contemporary poets employ double syntax as a strategy to address them. Scholars as different as Marjorie Perloff and Helen Vendler have condemned poems by rearranging them into prose in order to show that their lineation adds little to their effect. According to this standard, ineffective lineation represents more than a poet’s failure to master a particular artistic technique, one of a number that any given poem might feature. Lineation attracts this level of scrutiny because it bears a greater responsibility. Lineation must justify not only itself but the poem. “[T]he possibility for enjambment constitutes the only criteria for distinguishing poetry from prose,” Giorgio Agamben contends a little too assertively. While this view of the difference between poetry and prose is certainly not uncontested, it implicitly guides many discussions of contemporary poetry. The common disparagement of a poem as resembling as “chopped-up prose” reinforces the idea that ineffective lineation calls into question the poem’s status as a poem.

Responding to this challenge, double syntax makes the line breaks conspicuously meaningful and expressive. However, the maneuver more than guards against certain criticism. In the contemporary moment, when no poetic techniques are obligatory, when a poem need not rhyme or employ a recognizable verse form or meter, double syntax emphasizes the poet’s careful attention to the formal elements that typically remain, namely, lineation and syntax. Double syntax makes a drama out of their interaction. It foregrounds a particular kind of artistry. In particular, double syntax helps the poets of very different ambitions to strike a rather contemporary tone, sorting through possible meanings for different effects.

In “Structures of Expression, Stephen Guy-Bray examines two very different poems, published in different historical moments and in different forms: Andrew Marvell’s 17<sup>th</sup>-century “Upon Appleton House” and Diane Seuss’s “Against Poetry,” published in November 2022. Despite the many obvious differences between these poems, each is concerned with the extent to which poetry works as a form of expression and each compares poetry to another form of expression: architecture, in Marvell’s case and painting in Seuss’s. As well, each is interested in the relation of the poem to the body. And crucially, each is concerned with the line as the basic unit of poetry. Marvell’s lines are iambic tetrameter and Seuss’s have no fixed pattern, but both poets ponder the relationship between poetry’s expressive power and the function of the line as the means by which that power is conveyed. “Upon Appleton House” begins with a discussion of lines and proportion that is ostensibly concerned with architecture but which also gives us important information about Marvell’s poetic theory, In “Against Poetry,” Seuss uses lines of varying lengths to shape and interrupt her argument, so that the form of the poem often seems to be working against its content.

### **Panel: “The Poetics of Automobility”**

#### **Joel Duncan**

Academic title: Postdoc in American Studies

Affiliation: University of Konstanz

Email address: [joel.duncan@uni-konstanz.de](mailto:joel.duncan@uni-konstanz.de)

#### **Poetic Drive at a Standstill: William Carlos Williams, Frank O’Hara, and Claudia Rankine**

In his 2008 book *Autophobia: Love and Hate in the Automobile Age*, Brian Ladd points out that critiques of automobility have existed since the first cars took to the streets. Experimental American poets have also taken part in this critique, while at once finding poetic inspiration through driving. In this paper I will compare three examples of experimental American poetry from the past century that critique the aesthetics and ecological ills of automobility. I will begin with William Carlos Williams’ 1935 poem “View of a Lake” where three children by the highway look toward something that the drivers cannot see. Here Williams figures mass automobility and its detritus as having reached a deadening standstill. About twenty years later, in his undated poem “Palisades,” Frank O’Hara invokes a scene of automotive standstill with striking similarities to Williams’ earlier poem. In O’Hara’s poem walking takes the place of driving as a vehicle for poetic inspiration. I will finish by considering a poem from Claudia Rankine’s first book, *Nothing in Nature is Private* (1994), where a

white man has locked himself out of his car and hails “an other” in the hopes that he will help him break into his car. Rankine reveals how the freedoms of American mobility are inscribed as white, while the movement of racialized “others” are assumed to be criminal. For all three poets driving has come to a standstill, potentially inhibiting creative expression. These poems make apparent, though, how their poetic drive exceeds the logic of automobility, figuring an escape from the system of automobility as both fugitive and romantic.

### **Ian Davidson**

University College Dublin

Email: [ian.davidson@ucd.ie](mailto:ian.davidson@ucd.ie)

### **Mobility and the lyric in the poetry of Bill Griffiths**

Bill Griffiths’s work and life are characterised by diversity and mobility. For many years he wore Hell’s Angels colours, and had ‘love’ and ‘hate’ in homemade ‘prison’ tattoos on his knuckles as memorials of his time as a member of the *Uxbridge Nomads*, a motorcycle gang. His appearance, particularly at a time when Hell’s Angels were seen as potential shock troops for the counter-culture, was a source of intense speculation in the experimental poetry scene, within which he was an immediately recognisable figure. After settling in Seaham in County Durham he immersed himself in the region and the language of the North-East of England, and as well as poetry wrote books and articles on local dialect, essays on botany and geology, local histories and ghost stories. Griffiths also supported a number of individual prisoner’s causes, a recurring theme in his work from the 1970s to his late poems in *Tyne Txts* (2002). He remained throughout his life fundamentally anti-establishment and an anarchist, despising the Conservative party but also critical of the embedded political culture of the labour party in the north of England while a strong supporter of the miner’s cause during the strike of 1984-5.

Primarily a poet, and his poetry is now collected in three volumes from Reality Street, Griffiths simultaneously drew on, and challenged, established poetic forms. As a scholar of Anglo Saxon and medieval literature of Britain the pen and paper were never the only medium for Griffiths, or even the normal one, and his publications range from the manuscript poem to the digital, often in tension between the lyrical and the material. Often trochaic and rarely iambic, his poetry could reflect the qualities of early medieval Welsh verse (which he translated) and its complex sound structures, as well as the rhythms of performance poetry.

His best-known poems, including sequences such as ‘Cycle’ and ‘Sixteen Poems for Vic the Gypsy, Bob and Others’, deal with motorcycling, drawing on the romance and excitement of a petroculture

that offers freedom and mobility, while being attentive to the destructive nature of the lifestyle on human life. The figure at the end of 'Vic the Gypsy' is left on the garage floor, putting together the bits that make up a bike, while an unnamed Hells Angel is found running around a cell, fighting himself.

This paper will give a reading of samples of Griffiths' work, arguing that the forms of his poetry are related to the competing ideas of mobility and freedom and destruction and degradation, that are so much part of cultures of mobility. It will also examine the ways that Griffiths, unique amongst British poets, is able to switch codes so rapidly and to such great effect and in so doing bring into his poetry voices and knowledge, including those of nomad cultures.

### **Justin Parks**

UiT, The Arctic University of Norway

Email: [justin.parks@uit.no](mailto:justin.parks@uit.no)

### **The Man in the Ditch and the Overturned Wreck: The Car Accident Poem and the Limits of Automobility**

"I like cars and such," George Oppen writes in a 1959 letter. "I like them when they're handled beautifully" (*Selected Letters* 33). Yet for all his cheery exuberance concerning mastery over technology in this instance, Oppen's poetry bears a complex attitude toward the automobile as a constitutive symbol of modernity, as the car finally becomes an ambivalent object: on the one hand, it stands in for eroticized modern freedoms, while on the other it embodies an out-of-control and potentially destructive annihilating force. Oppen's 1968 poem "Route," for instance, presents the image of a "man in the ditch, / The wheels of the overturned wreck / still spinning" (*New Collected Poems* 198) as it explores a crash-engendered subjectivity as a means of forcefully initiating the individual into a kind of de-technologized poetic seeing that foregoes mediation in a sudden and insistent renewal of sensory alertness. This presentation takes Oppen's observations concerning automobility and its limits as its starting point as it reads the car crash as a limit case within modernity's liberatory project, or, as Enda Duffy puts it, "an avowal of a more severe and greater power that lurks behind the pleasures available to this energized subject" (*The Speed Handbook* 213). For Oppen and other poets such as William Carlos Williams, Robert Creeley, and James Schuyler, driving famously figures modern subjectivity as choice and agency, yet such agency is never free of anxiety; the car accident furnishes a kind of existential limit to the freedom associated with the subject-as-driver, as the car crash becomes an ultimate horizon of technologized modern subjectivity, re-materializing the erased boundary between human and machine and upending modernity's technocratic fantasy of machine-enabled liberation.

**Panel: “Contaminations: the language in the landscape”**

**Paola Del Zoppo**

Adjunct

Tuscia University, Viterbo; LUMSA Roma; Siena University.

[delzoppo@unitus.it](mailto:delzoppo@unitus.it)

**Amelia Valtolina**

Professor

Bergamo University

The panel proposal aims at investigating those particular linguistic and stylistic strategies in recent German language poetry that have enabled new poetologic attitudes, particularly from the second half of the 20th century onward. We would particularly appreciate *literaturlinguistische* (literary-linguistic) approaches confronting the renewed relationship between the poetic subject and the landscape and its function as catalysator for experimentations. Contributions will be welcomed that, by investigating these strategies, aim at showing how poetic language has dismantled its anthropocentric pretensions to establish a new dialogue with the devastated and contaminated nature of the Anthropocene. A keen attention to the construction of poems and of poetic volumes as revelation of poetological intent of the authors and of investigation of the authentic – or less authentic - connection between subject and form. A key concept will be *contamination*, to be declined in the ideas of border crossing between the worlds, liminal perceptions of the bound between man and nature and liminal conception of nature and landscape as permeability and anti-anthropocentric *Weltanschauung*. Comparative approaches and approaches based on literary theory will also be very welcome. We would like to receive and discuss contribution about:

- Landscape and nature writing in recent German poetry and poetological essays.
- Theorizing different approaches and characteristics of nature vs landscape writing.
- Liminal landscapes in German poetry.
- Contaminated landscapes, contamination in German poetry and its aesthetics.
- The material and the immaterial as contamination elements.
- “Toxic sublime” in German poetry and poetology.



- Contamination as overlapping perceptions: landscape and soundscapes.
- The boundary of the texts as contaminated territory: paratexts, exerga, dedications.
- Intertextuality in German contemporary poetry as contamination.
- German poetry and the oriental concept of nature.
- Natural elements and the affective turn in poetry analysis.

**Panel: “Spinning Poetic Webs: The Entangled Nature of Poetic Experience”**

**Ezra Sibyl Benisty** (University of Lausanne, CH)

**Gabriela Lazaro** (CY Cergy Paris University, FR)

**Philip Lindholm** (University of Lausanne, CH)

**Adela Sophia Sabban** (University of Fribourg, CH)

This panel is based on research carried out in the context of the project Poetry in Notions: The Online Critical Compendium of Lyric Poetry, funded by the Sinergia programme of the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF).

Time and again, webs and tissues have been used as metaphors to describe literature. This association, which goes back to Classical times and is often commented on, is not surprising. Indeed, the word “text” is derived from the Latin verb *texere*, which means to weave, to braid, to assemble, to build, to erect. There are poems and treatises from the early modern period that describe poets as skilful weavers, spiders, clothed butterflies or silkworms. The web they weave, this metaphor of poetry, can be extended to other aspects of it: since poetry is multimodal, it can address and also appeal to different senses – in the case of Romantic poetry for example, one can speak of the interweaving of the senses. Moreover, image and text can be interwoven, and in contemporary digital poems, the reading of poetry can result in the full realisation of a special form of interactive experience between the reader and the poem. Our panel addresses poetry with this multifaceted notion of the “web” in mind.

Our presentations cover poetry written at different points in time and in different languages: poems in English, French, German and Spanish, from the Early Modern period and British Romantic poetry to works of the 20th/21st century. Considering the structuring principle of the “web”, we focus on how poetry captures the reader's attention by interweaving the reader’s experience with the text itself. Our panel offers the chance to weave together different poetic traditions and practices, which reveals

that these have revolved, and continue to revolve, around similar poetic mechanisms.

**Panel: «Stev»**

**Jacqueline Ekgren**

Ekgren Musikk institutt

[jekgren@mac.com](mailto:jekgren@mac.com)

**A Living Oral Tradition with Viking Roots: Norwegian Nystev Features Found in Old Norse Skaldic Poem “Málsháttakvæði”**

In 1914 researcher Ivar Mortensson-Egnund published a short essay proposing a strong connection between the living oral tradition of Norwegian *nystev*, and *Málsháttakvæði*, an Old Norse thirteenth century “proverb poem”, found in Codex regius (GKS 2367.4<sup>to</sup>) which also contains Snorri's Edda. Among the 30 eight-line stanzas in *Málsháttakvæði*, one finds 14 instances of four-lines sharing the distinctive features of *nystev*. A Norwegian *nystev*, “new stev”, is a one-stanza four-line folk poetry performed solo in a living oral tradition called *kveding*, “between singing and saying”. Mortensson-Egnund describes similarities between *nystev* and *Málsháttakvæði*: 1) informal poetry of love and sayings, 2) alliteration, and 3) end-rhymed couplets (Old Norse *minztr runhendr*) in the *nystev* order of feminine end-rhyme (two-syllable) followed by masculine (one-syllable). Furthermore, he mentions that *Málsháttakvæði* has a special type of Old Norse refrain, a *stef*. In *Málsháttakvæði* the *stef* is four lines and endowed with the *nystev* end-rhyme pattern. Old Norse *stef* and Norwegian *stev* are pronounced the same.

Mortensson-Egnund's essay deserves closer scrutiny. We review relevant research, and present additional common features. *Málsháttakvæði* and *nystev* are both accentual poetry, with four stresses per line. *Málsháttakvæði* has situational verse, a major feature of *nystev*. Not only are there metric similarities: despite the differences in language, the 14 instances of *nystev* pattern in *Málsháttakvæði* can be performed in *nystev kveding* style with any *nystev* melody. *Málsháttakvæði* is unique compared to other Old Norse poetry. Not only does the poem adhere to the formal skaldic constraints of a *drápa*, but in addition, the nearly 240 lines are end-rhymed couplets. The anonymous poet, possibly bishop Bjarne Kolbeinsson, displays a rich knowledge of poetry. One may wonder if the *nystev* pattern in *Málsháttakvæði* was the poet's innovation, or an example of older folk poetry. A common assumption

of *nystev*'s originating in the 1600s may be revised: our findings support that the *nystev* pattern could be at least as old as thirteenth century *Málsháttakvæði*.

### **Joe Siri Ekgren**

MD, independent researcher

### **Syllable duration in accentual poetry: audio analysis of *kveding*, the living oral tradition of Norwegian *stev***

**Background:** *Kveding* is the performance of one-stanza, four-line accentual poetry of Norwegian *nystev* and *gammelstev*, . *Nystev* content portrays everyday life, often in barbs and duels, whereas *gammelstev* are often solemn proverbs. The four lines have a basic pattern of two stresses in a half-line, where *nystev* has a stress pattern of 2+2, 2+2, 2+2, 2+2, while *gammelstev* generally has a stress-pattern of 2+2, 2+1, 2+2, 2+1. *Nystev* are end-rhymed couplets. The performer, a *kvedar*, has great liberty in performance, sometimes described as a “flexible metrum”, letting the melody follow the lyrics in a free, irregular rhythm, and yet in a predictable pattern. Thousands of lyrics exist, and are all performed to a handful of interchangeable melodies. The paucity of melodies underscores the focus on text.

**Problem:** The living oral tradition of *kveding* is accentual poetry performed with ease, but a challenge to transcribe in musical notation.

**Method:** We propose a graphic analysis of *kveding* performance in Audacity, an open source audio analysis software, using a pragmatic and reproducible approach for measuring syllable duration. We compare duration of stressed and unstressed syllables as well as caesuras and silences between lines.

**Materials:** Using a *gammelstev* in strict 4/4-time as a baseline, four *kveding* performances are compared: 1) *nystev*, 2) *gammelstev*, 3) reperformance of an Old Norse *stef* (pronounced *stev*) from *Málsháttakvæði* and 4) a modern jazz standard.

**Findings and Conclusion:** Our findings illustrate graphically:

- 1) the great flexibility in *kveding* performance compared to a steady-beat
- 2) that syllable stress is not a predictor of syllable duration, for example unstressed syllables can have longer duration than stressed syllables
- 3) the dipod (the two stresses in a half-line), and also illuminates the assumption of a “virtual fourth beat” in 2nd and 4th lines of *gammelstev*.

## Jon Storm-Mathisen

Academic title: MD, PhD, Professor em

Affiliation: Univ of Oslo

Email address: [jonsm@uio.no](mailto:jonsm@uio.no)

### 'Nystev', like 'Gamalstev', share roots with Old Norse poetry

'Stev' (neuter, singular = plural 'stev') is the oldest form of vocal music and poetry still alive in Norwegian folk tradition. A stev is an independent expression, a word of wisdom or comment. It is often described as consisting of four lines with pairs of stresses (dipods). *Nystev* has 2+2, 2+2, 2+2, 2+2 stresses, *gamalstev* 2+2, 2+1, 2+2, 2+1 (2+1 may be replaced by 1+2, or 3 equal stresses). The structure of *gamalstev* is similar to the structure of the Old Eddic poetry metre, *ljóðahátt*, used *inter alia* in *Hávamál* ('Words of the High One', i.e. Wotan), found in the Old Norse parchment manuscript *Codex Regius*. The current *gamalstev* and Old Norse poetry in *ljóðahátt* share similarities in structure, usage, function and designation (*stef* / *stev*, pronounced the same and of the same etymological root), pointing to common roots. Correspondingly, the >1000 years old poetry can be sung to *gamalstev* tunes (for recordings and details, including peer-reviewed publications, see <https://folk.universitetetioslo.no/jonsm/Old-words-to-old-tunes>).

Recently, Jacqueline Pattison Ekgren, has pointed out that, contrary to general notion, Old Norse literature also comprises verses similar to *nystev*, i.e. *Málsháttakvæði*, found like *Hávamál* in *Codex Regius* (see current abstracts by Ekgren JP and Ekgren JS, and their peer-reviewed publication <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv2fzkpt4.11>).

I will illustrate the fact that verses from *Málsháttakvæði* can be sung to current *nystev* tunes, using examples from Setesdal (after Kirsten Bråten Berg 1950-) and Telemark (after Brita Bratland 1910-1975).

**Panel: "Close Reading as Attentional Practice"**

**Ewan Jones**

University of Cambridge

[ejj25@cam.ac.uk](mailto:ejj25@cam.ac.uk)

### **Reading in a Darkened Room: I. A. Richards and the Uses of Distraction**

‘Close’ reading has long been taken to be synonymous with absorbed reading. Trained readers read short literary extracts, deeply and attentively: this unifocal practice offers a refuge from the distractions and informational overloads of modern mass culture. Or so the story goes. As founder of one of the most influential strands of close reading (‘practical criticism’), I. A. Richards is held to be exemplary in this regard. There is indeed no small number of instances in which Richards understands good textual practice both to spring from, and to develop, attentiveness: in the ‘protocols’ that he famously developed in 1923, he asked his readers to encounter poems at home (rather than in a lecture theatre), so as to give the anonymized and undated works ‘the most suitable kind of attention’. His *Practical Criticism* even quotes a Tibetan prayer: ‘May the consciousness undistractedly be kept in its natural state; / Grasping the true nature of dreams, may I train myself in the clear / Light of Miraculous Transformation’.

This essay will however disrupt the automatic association between close reading and absorption. It follows Richards’s later career as an instance of how ‘close’ reading can proceed through a variety of attentional modalities, ranging from uniform focus to sensory overload and distraction. In a series of documentaries that Richards made for the US network WGBH, Donne’s poetry took on a very different form to what which it had in the home or lecture theatre: attention, here, was compelled, unsustainable, and multimodal. This paper concludes with a plea to redescribe the variety of practices lumpenly described as ‘close’ reading: in place of evaluation or hermeneutics, we might productively re-envisage them as forms of attentional retraining. It tests this theoretical claim with a series of pedagogical protocols that both extend and depart from Richards’s example.

**Jane Partner**

University of Cambridge

### **From Early Modern to Late Modernist: Experimental Typography, Visual Experience and States of Poetic Attention.**

The seventeenth-century devotional poet Thomas Traherne developed flamboyant forms of verbal patterning to shape his reader’s state of attention. In Traherne’s ‘Thanksgivings’, conventional syntax and typography break down into non-linear and multi-directional lists and columns, or into arrangements of words held together by brackets. These innovative diagrammatic techniques

foreground the action of the eye in the experience of reading. Such conspicuous visual ingenuity provides a vehicle for Traherne's theological belief in the importance of the 'Infant Eye', a faculty of seeing from a divine perspective that he endeavoured to model in the reading process of his poems. The diverse modes of Traherne's writing span both the logically analytical and the mystically meditative, and the experimental visual forms of his poetry shape a reading experience that journeys between, and seeks to assimilate, these two cognitive poles.

The mystical character of Traherne's poetry has resulted in stylistic neglect, such that it has seldom been subjected to intensive formal analysis. This paper will carry out a close reading of Traherne's formal techniques and their relation to states of attention through a cross-period comparison with twentieth-century experimental typography: a connection that has not previously been made. My comparative case studies include the poetry and visual scores of John Cage and the typographic experiments of Herbert Spencer in *The Visible Word: Problems of Legibility* (1969). Both these *avant-garde* thinkers sought to find ways to radically reconceive *mise en page* to create a reading experience in which the movements of the eye would engage the mind in a new way.

I will reflect on the mutually illuminating similarities between Traherne's 'Thanksgivings' and late Modernist visual-poetic strategies by making particular reference to changes in reading direction. I suggest that in both cases, the disruptive movement between horizontal and vertical reading constituted an important strategy for mapping the sense of the text in space, in turn exerting a profound influence over the reader's changing quality of attention.

My scholarly analysis is held within in a creative-critical framework, because my research is informed by my own experience of writing poetry using some of Traherne's techniques. My paper therefore seeks to generate both creative and academic responses and avenues for development.

**Marion Thain**

King's College London

### **Technologies of Attention: Poetry in an Age of Distraction**

This paper re-imagines late nineteenth poetic form as a series of aesthetic technologies of attention, whose history parallels the burgeoning psychological theories of cognitive focus. At the very moment that British psychology first takes up attention in a sustained manner, we find in English poetry a persistent fashion for intricate strict poetic forms: the so-called Parnassian vogue for medieval fixed French verse forms such as the villanelle, the rondeau, the triolet, the sestina, all of which constitute 'technologies' of attention to the extent that they extend our cognitive capacities and routines. Selectivity of attention serves to train the reader in a particular mode of reading, which focusses on

bottom-up sensation, to the exclusion of ethical framework or commentary. Taking as my focus Oscar Wilde's *Poems*, I contend that fixed form poetry provides a tool for decadent poets to help change the way we attend to the world, determining not just what we attend to but also what we don't.

This capacity for reading poetry to break and reform cognitive routines or priors proves crucial to the work these technologies of attention can perform. For William James, the selective and habitual nature of attention orients human subjects in otherwise impossibly complex environments – ‘our only hope of surviving the making sense of the world without being swamped by stimuli and drowned in chaos.’ Yet habits of attention also limit and restrict us: short cuts that ensure we follow convention and expectation rather than attending afresh. Habits of perception are difficult to shift, yet the arts more generally, and poetry in particular, have a key role to play in what Joan Retallack has described as ‘reconfiguring geometries of attention’. For decadent poetry this reconfiguration consists in promoting morally-neutral (or amoral) modes of attention, challenging attentional biases that are dictated by conventional moral judgements.

**Atti Viragh**

Bilkent University

### **Hermeneutics, Close Reading and Attention**

Students in literature classes increasingly express a need for poetry that is “relatable” to their personal experiences. The problem is more complex and pressing than it would seem. Taken seriously, “relatability” is only a filler-word for an essential feature of art that is closely linked to our sense of its value and purpose. The question of relatability ultimately leads into a discussion of the basis, nature, and goals of reading literature in the first place. In this talk I focus on one aspect of this question: the challenge of sustaining the attention required for close reading an unfamiliar literary work. Existing accounts of the experience of reading in reader-response theory, cognitive psychology, and cognitive poetics do not address the link between attention, close reading, and familiarity. The relative attention we give to particular works is difficult to operationalize in a formula because it is a function unique to the particular individual's history and the particular work's relation to that history. Familiarity with a text, author, topic, or genre motivates interest and furnishes a starting-ground for attention to its finer elements and features. These features take on significance in relation to the broader context of our acquired knowledge and experience. This means that the attention required for close reading has a hermeneutic basis, not only a cognitive or affective one. Hans-Georg Gadamer's concept of a “fusion of horizons” in the act of understanding offers a useful frame for how, as we read closely, our prior experience and expectations are embedded in a reciprocal structure of familiarity and unfamiliarity, and thus generates and sustains our attention to read further and closer. In fact, this reciprocal

relationship of familiarity and unfamiliarity is at the heart of the well-known concept of the “hermeneutic circle.” I argue that this relationship characterizes the attentional basis of literary experience itself, so that we can speak of a *hermeneutic circle of attention* in the act of close reading.

### **Panel: “Diffracted Self and Lyric Interaction in Multimedia Poetry”**

- *Intention or Attention? The Case of Poetic Documents*, Dr. Philip Mills (Post-doc, University of Lausanne, CH)
- *The Voice Is no Longer the Subject: Lyric Interaction and Multimedia*, Prof. Antonio Rodriguez (University of Lausanne, CH)
- *From Multimedia Metaphor to an Augmented Lyrical Experience*, Melina Marchetti (Doc, University of Lausanne, CH)

This panel brings together various researchers in the French Department at the University of Lausanne working for the *Dictionnaire du Lyrique* (Classiques-Garnier) and the *SNF Poetry in Notions Compendium* (SNF, Sinergia). They also participated in the volume *Lyre Multimédia (Études de Lettres*, 319, 2022).

‘*On the vaporization and the centralization of the Self. All is there,*’ (‘*De la vaporisation et de la centralisation du Moi. Tout est là.*’) wrote Charles Baudelaire in his diaries. The deployment of multimedia poetry forces us to question the means of textual observation on the lyric (Pardo *et al.* 2012). In this panel, we aim to consider three central questions that should be taken up today: 1. Intention; 2. Speaker; 3. Metaphor. We aim to combine a theoretical reflection (with Lucy Alford, Magali Nachtergaele, or Yves Citton) with concrete cases: the document in the poem or the poem in a video-clip. In both cases, we have a ‘remediation’ (Bolter & Grusin 1999), but in distinct senses: of a document that is shaped into a poem; or of a printed poem that becomes a video-clip. These cases of lyric remediations show ‘diffractions’ from the direct expression of the Self expected in poetry, although some effects are augmented (as evocation or rhythm). Our panel aims to highlight that the interaction is complexified, diffracted in attention, but does not prevent a new lyrical relation, as an aesthetical experience (Schaeffer 2015) produced by a ‘intermedial event.’ (Kozak 2022)



## **Intention or Attention?**

### **The Case of Poetic Documents**

Philip Mills

What happens to the concept of intention in contemporary documentary poetry? In this paper, I argue that there is a shift from intention to attention in ‘poetic documents,’ works that are written out of pre-existing texts, with varying degrees of intervention (Leibovici 2007). By focusing on Franck Leibovici and Julien Seroussi’s *bogoro* (Leibovici and Seroussi 2016), a poetic document that explores the reports from the International Criminal Court, as well as contemporary French poetic theory, I aim to explore the ways in which the concept of attention helps understanding contemporary documentary practices.

This shift from intention to attention does not eliminate intention completely, as the author is at work in selecting and rearranging the original text, it emphasises a certain attention that is at play both in the author and in the reader. Lucy Alford’s distinction between active (endogenous) and passive (exogenous) attention provides a framework to conceptualise the two dimensions of attention at play in poetic documents (Alford 2020). Some element of the original text catches the author’s passive attention (which they can then use actively to rework the text, thus using their intention), and the author aims to reveal this element to the reader’s active attention.

The poetic document thus works as an attentional *dispositif* that brings what is usually invisible to be visible (Hanna 2010; Quintyn 2017). The aim of ‘poetic documents’ is thus neither the romantic disclosure of a hidden essence, nor a modernist attempt to bring ‘reality’ back into art, but simply the rediscovery of the ordinary and the familiar (Leibovici 2020). Following a Wittgensteinian interpretation, the power of poetic documents is to reveal what ‘is most striking and most powerful’ although ‘hidden because of [its] simplicity and familiarity.’ (Wittgenstein 2009, §129) This force of poetic documents reveals the power of literature to bring our attention to forms of language and forms of life (Coste 2017).

### **Biography**

Philip Mills is a Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Lausanne in the project *SNF Poetry in Notions Compendium* (SNF, Sinergia). His first book, *A Poetic Philosophy of Language: Nietzsche and Wittgenstein’s Expressivism* (Bloomsbury, 2022), elaborates a philosophy of language that can account for poetic phenomena. His current research explores how to approach poetry from within the framework of ordinary language philosophy (Wittgenstein, Austin, Cavell) and analyses ordinary practices at play in contemporary French poetry.

## **The Voice Is no Longer the Subject**

### **Lyric Interaction and Multimedia**

Antonio Rodriguez

The theories of enunciation enriched the poetry criticism with a deep reflection on the ‘lyric subject’ (according to the French terminology, Rabaté, 1996 a and b) and the ‘polyphony of voices’ (Monte, 2022). The analyses could distinguish between what belonged to a *voice of enunciation*, but also to a main character, or which was projected onto the landscape (Collot, 2005) or onto ‘a scene of enunciation’ (Bigliari & Watteyne, 2019). However, these approaches, inherited from a linguistic field close to Benveniste or Meschonnic, have sometimes confined interaction to silent reading and to a homogeneous ‘re-enunciation’, centered on the voice or the subject. All the signifying phenomena of a lyric poem were attached to a ‘voice’, whereas the meters, the rhymes or the layout could bring meanings that escaped it. The advantage of this approach was to identify the different subjective and emotional features with the ‘speaker’, who became the main ‘subject’ of the poem (Dessons & Meschonnic, 1999).

Several works may have challenged this approach in the early twenty first century (Murat, 2008; Hanna, 2010; Pardo, 2013; Culler, 2015). Today, multimedia, strongly present in international studies on lyric, leads to radicalize doubts about ‘re-enunciation’ and to show more subtle, more diffracted interactions beyond the ‘voice’ in poetry (Théval, 2015; Baetens, 2016; Nachtergaele, 2020).

The aim of this paper is first to highlight how multimedia poems emphasize a stronger diffraction of the Self. The differences between the text, the soundtrack (voice, sound effects, music) and the images incite us to better understand the lyric agency of the film sequences without seeing it simply as an opposition between multimedia and the study of literature. We will take as an example a video poem from the Swiss collection ‘Close Poetry’, in which a poem by Sylviane Dupuis in Switzerland has been put into film by an experienced director.

### **Biography**

Antonio Rodriguez is Associate Professor of French Literature at the University of Lausanne.

### **From Multimedia Metaphor to an Augmented Lyrical Experience**

Melina Marchetti

What is a metaphor in the multimedia age? It is not really a trope in the poetic and rhetorical tradition of Aristotle anymore. Nowadays, it is considered a global process rather than the Aristotelian transference (*epiphora*) of a name ‘either from genus to species, or from species to genus, or from species to species, or by analogy.’ (Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1457 b 6–8) It operates between text and context, poetry and ordinary, reality and fiction. In contrast to French theory (Derrida 1972; Ricoeur 1997), the pragmatic propositions of Black (1977) and others reconsider poetic metaphor as a creative linguistic analogy elaborated through semes, syntagms, and world (Klinkenberg 1999; Collot 1989; Rastier 1987). In cognitivist theories, metaphor restructures our concepts, our experiences, and our relations to the world through conceptual analogy. Far from being only creative and linguistic, metaphor can also be: ordinary, banal, or quotidian (*conceptual metaphor* in Lakoff and Johnson 1985); the centre of human thought (*conceptual blending* in Fauconnier and Turner 2002); and also multifunctional and multimodal (*multimodal metaphor* in Forceville 1996).

Following these research perspectives, I consider metaphor in the age of multimedia poetry as an *augmented poetic metaphor* in which its supports, interfaces, its modalities (oral or written, verbal or non-verbal) and the multifarious types of poetic discourses (from rap video-clip to videopoem, from performance to animated poetry, from instapoem to poetry readings) come to play a significant role. The lyrical experience is thus similarly transformed: metaphors deepen the affective relation to sensations, emotions, and perceptions at play in poetic discourse.

My aim in my contribution is to question the poetic metaphor augmented by the multimedia and to think of its effects on lyrical experience through a comparison between the poem and the videopoem *Le soleil est vieux* by Mathilde Vischer and directed by Yannick Maron (2021). How is the augmented metaphor intensified in the multimedia poem? What are the effects that this intensification produces on lyrical experience? Can we speak of an augmented lyrical experience?

### **Biography**

Melina Marchetti is a doctoral student at the University of Lausanne in the project *SNF Poetry in Notions Compendium* (SNF, Sinergia). She works on metaphor in the multimedia age and more specifically on its augmentation in poetic video-clips representing various practices of poetry.

**Bellamy Mitchell**

University of Chicago

**Anastasia Nikolis**

St. John Fisher University

[anikolis@sjfc.edu](mailto:anikolis@sjfc.edu)

**Melissa Parrish**

Smith College

It has been more than 50 years since M.L. Rosenthal coined the term “confessional” poetry. What began as a derisive characterization of Robert Lowell’s *Life Studies* in 1959, consolidated the work of Lowell, Sylvia Plath, and Anne Sexton into a school of poetry defined by autobiography’s lack of artistry. Once derided for its relationship to autobiography, confession’s enduring legacy suggests a sustained interest in describing poetry that discloses personal intimacies. But confession’s legacy is complicated because of its inherent relationship to autobiography and identity. After all, how can an autobiographical poetic tradition not reckon with the identities of its originators? Especially when its originators were elite, white, able-bodied, cisgender, and straight.

The complexity of confession’s legacy has been questioned almost since its emergence—at first by the school of poets themselves, but by critics too. The 2001 anthology, and inspiration for the title of this panel, *After Confession: Poetry As Autobiography*, collected responses from post-confessional poets about how they saw themselves in relation to the looming legacy of mid-twentieth century confession. In centering questions like, “How do contemporary poets negotiate the often controversial historical, ethical, and critical considerations related to autobiographical poetry?”, the collection begins to navigate the complexities of writing confessional autobiographical poetry. But it doesn’t go far enough in critically engaging with confessional poetry, especially since it doesn’t interrogate how confession can be violent, damaging, or demand certain kinds of response.

This panel aims to address some of confession’s enduring complexity by critically re-considering what happens “after” confession: both its rhetorical and historical after-effects. Our collected papers address rhetorical “afters” in the form of poetic responses, riffs, repairs, or apologies that are offered after a confessional disclosure is made. They also continue recent work done by Christopher Grobe, Kamran Javadizadeh, Deborah Nelson, and Gillian White to reckon with the

historical, social, racial “after”-effects of the original Confessional school poets.

---