

The PoP QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER #5

5/2023

**"Poetry Off the Page: Literary History and the Spoken Word,
1965-2020" (ERC/FWF)**

Dear All,

it has been a research-intensive year for the Poetry Off the Page team members so far: We have been interviewing poets, going to conferences, visiting archives and attending poetry performance events. You can find all the details of our activities below.

If you have any questions about our research or the project at large, please contact us at pop.anglistik@univie.ac.at. The best way to keep updated with our current activities is to follow our [Twitter](#) account.

Upcoming Conference: 11-12 November, 2023

Our second conference, 'All Borders Blur': Mapping Intersections and Genre Crossings in UK Spoken-Word Poetries (1965-present day), will be organized by **Shalini Sengupta** (postdoctoral researcher, PoP) along with **Andrea Brady** (Professor of Poetics) and **Peter Howarth** (Professor of Modern Literature) at Queen Mary University of London & online.

The conference is scheduled to be a two-day event over 11-12 November 2023, and will feature a diverse range of panels, workshops, long tables, round tables, and an evening of live poetry on 12 November in London.

Past PoP Research Activities

Shefali Banerji was in the UK from January 22 to February 16 for a research trip. Shefali spent two weeks in England and about one week each in Scotland and Wales visiting the British Library Sound and Moving Image Archive, the Scottish Poetry Library Archive and the National Library of Wales Archive to find archival recordings of poetry performances from before 2000. She also interviewed eleven poets active in the UK performance scenes, and attended Jasmine Gardosi's *Dancing to Music You Hate* in Birmingham as well as the Loud Poets' February Showcase and many other events. Shefali returned with a wealth of knowledge about UK poetry performance and is looking forward to working with all the interviews and archival recordings.



Image 1: Shefali Banerji, Scottish Story Telling Center, Edinburgh

Julia Lajta-Novak had the pleasure to read Maria Manning's thesis *Performing Women's Poetry: An Evolving Craft* and attend her PhD viva at University College Cork in January. Congratulations from the PoP team! On 13 February, Julia Lajta-Novak interviewed Mersey Sound legend Brian Patten, who shared fascinating insights into his performance practice. Recently, she has struck up collaborations with Rob Gee, who ran the performance poetry club *Bright Side* in Leicester, Derby and Nottingham, which took place between 1996 and 2003, to add to the PoP team's archival work. We look forward to examining these new materials in the near future. Together with Martina Pfeiler and Shalini Sengupta, she attended the conference "Audioliterary Poetry between Performance and Mediatization" 11-13 May, organised by the ERC project Poetry in the Digital Age in Hamburg. She presented a paper titled "Authenticity and Activism in Spoken Word Poetry: Staging the Self across Media". The conference gave the PoP team a chance to share their ideas with poetry scholars and to gain insight into new strands of poetry criticism exploring AI poetry and sign language poetry. Julia Lajta-Novak is also currently teaching an undergraduate class on Poetry Off the Page, working with the next generation of spoken word researchers.

Martina Pfeiler attended the SWEAR! Symposium on 12 March 2023 via Zoom and went on a research trip to Scotland from 15 March to 23 March. She visited the Scottish Poetry Slam Final at the Britannia Panopticon in Glasgow and had the pleasure of meeting Robin Cairns, Angie Strachan and Hamish MacDonald. She interviewed Leyla Josephine at the SWG3 Studio in Glasgow and Carly Brown at the Scottish Poetry Library in Edinburgh. During her stay she also exchanged ideas about Spoken Word Poetry research with Katie Ailes at the Scottish Storytelling Centre in Edinburgh. In the meantime she has continued interviewing poets via Zoom and would like to thank all poets for their time and insightful perspectives on

poetry in performance. On 13 May, 2023, Martina presented her paper titled “(Post-)Covid Intermissions: Live-Streaming Poetry in the New Digital ‘Public’ Sphere” at the "Audioliterary Poetry between Performance and Mediatization" conference at the University of Hamburg.



Image 2 (left): MP Scottish Poetry Slam Championships 2023

Image 3 (right): MP Britannia Panopticon, Glasgow

After co-organising the first PoP conference Taking the Mic in November 2022, **Emily Timms** has published the conference report, which is now available at <https://takingthemic.univie.ac.at/>. She is currently working with Dr Deirdre Osborne HonFRSL and Dr Panya Banjoko on curating a special issue on Black British Poetry in Performance. Emily has also been interviewing poets from Yorkshire and the East Midlands and looks forward to conducting more interviews during the summer. In May 2023, she visited the George Padmore Institute and New Beacon Books, both in London. There, she conducted archival research on poetry performances which took place at the *International Book Fair of Radical Black and Third World Books* and other important poetry readings facilitated by New Beacon in the 1960s-1990s. Emily thanks the GPI's archivist Sarah Garrod and New Beacon's director Michael La Rose for their kind facilitation and looks forward to developing these relationships further. In mid-May, Emily presented a conference paper “Restructuring Wellness in Contemporary British Black Poetry in Performance” at the annual GAPS Association for Anglophone Postcolonial Studies, at the University of Konstanz.

Shalini Sengupta was in the UK from 20 January until 8 February 2023 for a research trip. She carried out extensive archival research on British avant-garde poetry and performance at the British Library; interviewed poets in London and Brighton; and attended live poetry performances during her stay. She has publications on Joelle Taylor and Safiya Kamaria Kinshasa forthcoming with *Versopolis* and *Poetry School*. In May 2023, she gave a talk titled “‘I Stop Being Human’: Tracing the Radiophonic Turn in British Poetry and Performance” at the conference “Audioliterary Poetry between Performance and Mediatization” in Hamburg. She is currently co-organising, along with colleagues from Queen Mary University in London,

the 2nd international Poetry Off the Page conference. Titled “All Borders Blur: Mapping Intersections and Genre Crossings in UK Spoken-Word Poetries since 1965”, the conference will be held over 11 and 12 November in London (on-site & online). It will feature keynotes from poets Anthony Joseph and Joelle Taylor.

Upcoming PoP Research Activities

Shefali Banerji is presenting a paper titled “Marginalised Identities, Spoken Word Poetry and Environmental Justice in the UK” at the 2023 European Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies (EACLALS) Triennial Conference in June.

Claire Palzer is looking forward to returning to Ireland in the summer for further research as well as for the 2023 EFACIS Conference at Queen’s University Belfast entitled “Unions and Partitions in Ireland”, at which she will be presenting a paper related to spoken word poetry in all-Ireland spaces.

Martina Pfeiler is looking forward to traveling to London from 31 May to 4 June, 2023 to attend The Roundhouse Poetry Slam Final as part of the Last Word Festival on 1 June as well as the Apples&Snakes Roundhouse Take-Over on the occasion of Apples&Snakes’ 40th anniversary on 3 June 2023. Happy anniversary from the PoP team!

Sincerely yours,

The PoP Team

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