

The PoP QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER #7
02|2024
Poetry Off the Page: Literary History and the Spoken Word, 1965-2020
(ERC/FWF)

Dear PoP community,

(Belated) happy new year and (even more belated) season's greetings from the PoP team! We're starting 2024 off the right way: with a lot of poetry and our tri-annual newsletter, which we will continue to insist on calling 'quarterly' (it sounds snazzier that way). As always, if you have any questions about our research or the project, contact us anytime at pop.anglistik@univie.ac.at; we love hearing from you and discussing all things poetry!

Past Research Activities

In the past few months, PoP has been quite busy. Let us give you a quick digest of everything we've been up to. For more up-to-date information, though, we always suggest following our X / Twitter (@PoetryOff_Page), our Instagram (@poetry_offthe_page), or our Facebook (Poetry Off the Page).

On **11-12 November 2023**, PoP collaborated with **Prof. Andrea Brady** and **Prof. Peter Howarth** at Queen Mary University of London and our former postdoctoral researcher **Dr. Shalini Sengupta**, now at the University of Newcastle, to organise the conference **All Borders Blur: Mapping Intersections and Genre Crossings in UK Spoken-Word Poetries Since 1965**. With Shalini's tireless work and many vibrant and exciting artistic and academic contributions, we were able to take two whole days to celebrate genre diversity within the varied field of spoken-word poetries. Panels covered a vast array of topics and were chaired by our team members **Shefali Banerji**, **Prof. Martina Pfeiler**, **Claire Palzer** and **Dr. Helen Thomas**, as well as our amazing conference delegates **Bhumika Billa** and **Ross McFarlane**. Our two keynote lectures, held by Dr. Anthony Joseph and Joelle Taylor, delighted and excited audiences with their blend of scholarly reflection and artistic virtuosity. They were chaired by PoP PI **Ass-Prof. Mag. Dr. Julia Lajta-Novak** and **Dr. Shalini Sengupta**. Keep your eyes peeled for the conference report, which is authored by the team administrator Marie Krebs and is set to be published within the coming weeks.

In October 2023, we were joined by long-time friend of the project and visiting research fellow **Dr. Rachel Bolle-Debessay** for ten weeks. Those of you who followed our first PoP conference, **Taking the Mic: Black British Spoken Word Poetry Since 1965 – Aesthetics, Activisms, Auralities** in 2022, will recognise her as an accomplished academic, musician, and fellow poetry buff, whose work on dub poetry has been a vital contribution to poetry research. In our project, she works on intersections of music and poetry and is always concerned with the valuable task of how to make our research useful outside the realm of academia. She holds a PhD from King's College, London, with her dissertation entitled 'Dub poetry: A study beyond predefined interpretations' and was awarded the Essay Prize 2022 by Wasafiri Magazine for her analysis of a theatrically-driven aesthetic in the poetry of Mikey Smith. **On 14 November 2023**, Rachel recently conducted a workshop for the PoP team on Edouard Glissant's *Poetics of Relation* as a productive theory for analysing poetic forms.

On the topic of new team members, we are also beyond excited to introduce our new postdoctoral researcher **Dr. Helen Thomas**, who joined us in snowy Vienna in early December 2023. Helen is a poet, author and researcher whose work focuses primarily upon Black British writing, history, and culture, as well as the medical humanities. She obtained

her PhD from Oxford University and her interests span a wide field from as early as the 18th century to the modern day. Beside her many academic publications, Helen's poetry collection 1562 was published in 2022, and her semi-autobiographical poetic dance / play, Salve, was showcased at the Theatre Royal Plymouth. We look forward to our collaboration with Helen, who will continue to enrich our discussions about poetry and performance.

Martina Pfeiler has been interviewing poets and would like to thank Dan Simpson, Paula Varjack, and Maria Ferguson for sharing their valuable insights into the Anti-Slam show.

We are also happy to celebrate the launch of our [PoP Blog](#). The inaugural blog article, written by our doctoral researcher **Claire Palzer**, is already up and can be found [here](#). Our blog will be mainly concerned with theories and methodologies for the study of spoken word poetics, and we very much welcome submissions from all researchers working in the field! You will find our submission guidelines on the [PoP blog page](#). We have also attached the call for submissions for our blog to this message in case you are interested in contributing!

Upcoming Research Activities

2024 is going to be a big year for the project. The hard work of the past two and a half years is beginning to manifest in manifold publications that will be made available over the course of the year. There is a lot to be excited for!

The first episode of the **PoP Podcast**, written and produced by doctoral researcher **Shefali Banerji**, is currently in production and is scheduled for publication in mid-February. This first episode deals with the topic of spoken word theatre and shows Shefali's expertise in this matter, which will certainly excite a diverse range of listeners! In the meantime, the podcast trailer, written and produced by our research assistant **Marie Krebs**, is already up and running. You can find it [here](#) and on Spotify!

Beyond this, **Helen Thomas** is working on the second PoP special issue, which will be completed this year and is set to be published in early 2025. Please find the Call for Papers in the attachments to this email and message poetryoffthepage2024@univie.ac.at for questions, queries and submissions – we're excited to read your work.

As you can see, many things are happening, both behind the scenes and right in the spotlight. As always, we thank you for being part of our PoP community and can't wait to see what the next few months will bring!

All the best,
the PoP team

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