

Introduction

JUDITH GOLDMAN AND JAMES MAYNARD

This volume is the second in the SUNY Press series *The University at Buffalo Robert Creeley Lectures in Poetry and Poetics*. Named for the internationally renowned poet who was a member of the University at Buffalo's (UB's) Department of English from 1966 to 2003 and a founder of the Poetics Program, the Robert Creeley Lecture is now a lecture on poetry and poetics, with accompanying events, featured by the program biannually. These lectures focus on such issues as exploring methodologies or key terms that might reconfigure the operating frames that define current poetic fields; recovering past histories or genealogies of poetics that have been occluded or not yet identified, or constructing futures of poetics; proposing the social, ethical, and political work poetry may do in its potentially spatially and temporally dispersed contexts, vis-à-vis variously situated audiences; and examining poetry's investigative, generative, as well as critical role in language-use and knowledge-formation.

Given this potentially wide range of topics and tenors, and in keeping with the aesthetic values of the UB English Department's Poetics Program, we envision the Creeley Lectures as a discrete series of explorations of different topics in poetics presented by a

given set of speakers and respondents in dialogue with a particular audience and through a specific set of programming events—all of which might differ from year to year. The second Creeley Lecture, “Reading Poetry,” was presented by the renowned literary and textual scholar Jerome McGann (professor emeritus, University of Virginia, Department of English), whose wide-ranging critical and editorial work traverses the fields of nineteenth- and twentieth-century British and American Literature, Romanticism, Modernism, textual studies, and digital humanities. Focusing on the significance of recitation in Anglophone poetry from the late eighteenth to late twentieth century, the lecture was introduced by Robin Schulze, dean of the college and professor in English, and took place in Baird Hall at the University at Buffalo on March 30, 2017. Also featured at this event were an excerpt from a concert film of SUNY Distinguished Professor David Felder’s *Les Quatre Temps Cardinaux*, responding to Creeley’s poems “Spring Light” and “Buffalo Evening,” and a conversation with the composer, along with a poetry reading by the winners of a high school poetry contest collaboratively sponsored by the UB English Department/Poetics Program and Just Buffalo Literary Center. “A Colloquy on Poetry and Poetics”—a roundtable response to McGann’s lecture featuring Alison Fraser, Steve McCaffery, John Rigney, and Nikolaus Wasmoen followed by a community conversation—occurred the next day, hosted by the UB Poetry Collection and organized and moderated by its curator, James Maynard.

The third Creeley Lecture, “*Dous Chantar*: Refrain for a Nightingale,” was presented by Canadian poet, essayist, and novelist Lisa Robertson. Author of over twenty-five books, Robertson is known for her innovative, feminist poetics that create highly atmospheric literary spaces, critique gender while performing an erotics of newly imagined relationalities, and produce expansive modes of philosophical inquiry alongside consideration of material culture, often through fascinating engagement with previous texts; she is also a brilliant stylist of lyric prose, whether in her

An event to celebrate poetry
as it is lived and studied,
in the world and in Buffalo



Robert Creeley Lecture and Celebration of Poetry



John Stewart Bryan Professor at the University of Virginia

Jerome McGann

Jerome McGann, “Reading Poetry”

March 30, 2017, 4:00-6:30, University at Buffalo, 250 Baird Hall

Jerome McGann is a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and of the American Philosophical Society. His twenty-four books and editions have transformed the study of several poets and contemporary editorial theory. His most recent books include *A New Republic of Letters: Memory and Scholarship in the Age of Digital Reproduction* and *The Poet Edgar Allan Poe: Alien Angel* (both with Harvard University Press, 2014). McGann is also a co-founder of the Institute for Advanced Technology in the Humanities (IATH) at the University of Virginia and Director of *The Complete Works of Dante Gabriel Rossetti: A Hypermedia Research Archive* (IATH). His lecture, “Reading Poetry,” will track key stylistic innovations developed in England and the U.S. during the Romantic and post-Romantic periods, arguing that these innovations were directed at reimagining the character and practice of human perception.

Also Featuring

Excerpt from a Concert Film of SUNY Distinguished Professor David Felder's *Les Quatre Temps Cardinaux*, responding to Creeley's poems “Spring Light” and “Buffalo Evening” and conversation with the composer.
UB English/Poetics Program and riverrun High School Poetry Contest, reading by winner and runner-ups.

A Colloquy On Poetry and Poetics

March 31, 2017, 3:00-5:00, University at Buffalo, Poetry Collection 420 Capen Hall

On “Reading Poetry”: A Roundtable Response to Jerome McGann, inviting scholars, poets, and all readers of poetry to respond to McGann's Creeley Lecture, initiated and moderated by James Maynard, Curator of the UB Poetry Collection. At the close of this event, members of the audience are invited to read a poem—their own, or by a favorite author.

Creeley Celebration
For more information contact
english-department@buffalo.edu

Co-sponsored by UB Poetics Program & Department of
English; riverrun; UB Humanities Institute; the James H. McNulty
Chair, Comparative Literature; the David Gray Chair Steve
McCaffery; Just Buffalo Literary Center; The Poetry Collection
of the University Libraries.



University at Buffalo
Department of English
College of Arts and Sciences

Figure I.1. Poster for 2017 University at Buffalo Robert Creeley Lecture in Poetry and Poetics. Image courtesy of the Poetics Program, UB English Department.

Third Annual Poetics Program, Department of English, UB

Robert Creeley Lecture in Poetry and Poetics
April 12 & 13, 2018

LISA ROBERTSON

Dous Chantar: Refrain for a Nightingale

lecture by Lisa Robertson

Thursday, April 12, 5:45pm

403 Hayes Hall
School of Architecture & Planning
UB South Campus
3435 Main Street, Buffalo 14214

Reception to follow

*"the severed tongue lies palpitating on the
dark earth, faintly murmuring"*

Ovid, Metamorphosis Book VI, l. 557-8

Focusing on Troubadour poetry and poetics, namely 11th-13th century poets working in the Occitan language, Robertson's Creeley lecture will address the constellation of vernacular, lyric, and politics by taking up the poetics of literary formations spanning centuries, languages, and continents.

Roundtable, Community
Discussion & Reading

with Lisa Robertson,
Liz Howard & Shannon Maguire

Friday, April 13, 2pm

Poetry Collection
420 Capen Hall
UB North Campus, Buffalo 14260

Reception to follow



Canadian poet Lisa Robertson recently published her tenth book, *3 Summers*, with Coach House Books, as well as a chapbook, *Startings*, with Kruspakya. Previous titles include *Cinema of the Present*, *The Men*, and the essay collections *Nightingale and Occasional Works* and *Seven Walks from the Office for Soft Architecture*. This year she is the inaugural recipient of the C.D. Wright Award for Poetry from the Foundation for Contemporary Arts in New York. She lives in France.




Liz Howard is Infelecta Critique of the *Shelley Trust* and the 2014 Griffin Poetry Prize, the first time the prize has been awarded to a debut collection. She is of mixed European and Antiochian descent. Born and raised in Toronto, she currently lives in northern Ontario, where she works in Toronto and engages with research on the aging brain.



Shannon Maguire is an Assistant Professor in the Department of English at the University of Calgary. The author of two full-length poetry collections, *Partly Permeable and Myriam*, an English Studies Showcase editor, and writer of the critical introduction to *Poetry Now: Selected Poetry of Gieve Mauer* (McGraw-Hill University Press).

Hayes Hall is the large clocktower building facing Main Street. Parking for the lecture available in the Townsend, Thelenfeld, and Parker lots on South Campus. A map of South Campus can be found at: www.buffalo.edu/interact/data/www/ubabcd_amsoc/campus_mapsp/roadmap_sampus_hayes_rotaion-opt.pdf

For more information on the lecture and events, visit creeleylecture.weebly.com

 University at Buffalo The State University



THE POETICS PROGRAM GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES SPONSORSHIP OF THESE EVENTS BY THE DAVID GRAY CHAIR OF POETRY AND LETTERS (STEVE MCCAFFERTY), THE LAMES H. MCELNETT CHAIR (DUNCAN ROY), THE EDWARD H. BUTLER CHAIR (CHRISTIAN MILLER), THE ABBOTT FUND, THE CONSUL GENERAL OF CANADA, AND THE OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION. THESE EVENTS ARE IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE CONSULATE GENERAL OF CANADA IN NY. UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED, ALL EVENTS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.

Figure I.2. Poster for 2018 University at Buffalo Robert Creeley Lecture in Poetry and Poetics. Image courtesy of the Poetics Program, UB English Department.

prose poetry, fiction, or expository writings. Introduced by Judith Goldman, director of the Poetics Program and associate professor in English, Robertson's lecture took place at Hayes Hall on April 12, 2018. Robertson spoke on the reciprocities between aesthetic form and sociality in Occitan troubadour poetry, contextualizing and theorizing its innovations in rhyme, irreducible multilingualism, intertwined oral-written registers, and its specialized erotic, ethico-political vocabularies, to generate more general reflections on voice, lyric's carrying of repressed histories, and the social affects and epistemology created and mobilized through poetry's soundfields. The next day, a "Roundtable, Community Discussion, and Readings" event, featuring Robertson, with Shannon Maguire and Liz Howard, was hosted by the Poetry Collection and organized and moderated by Goldman, followed by poetry readings by all three.

As a means of expanding the public scope of the lectures and surrounding events, the University at Buffalo Robert Creeley Lectures in Poetry and Poetics series allows us to share these local performances and conversations in an edited format with a wider audience. *Soundings in Context: Poetry's Embodiments* brings together revised versions of the second and third Creeley Lectures by McGann and Robertson, along with responses to those talks by some of the scholars and poets who joined us, and is accordingly divided into two halves to represent each year's lecture and related programming. The volume's first half thus collects extended versions of Wasmoen's and McCaffery's responses to McGann's lecture; the second presents Maguire's and Howard's replies to Robertson's, appearing in their different formats.



For over fifty years, Jerome McGann's work as an editor, textual scholar, and literary critic has examined in myriad and overlapping ways the historical, social, and especially material contexts in

which writing is produced and transmitted. In his essay “Reading (I Mean Articulating) Poetry, a Multiplayer Game,” based on the talk he delivered under the title “Reading Poetry” as the second Robert Creeley Lecture in Poetry and Poetics, he focuses on a different kind of embodiment: the act of reading a poem out loud. It begins by describing the struggles of students to produce competent readings of poems out loud and their misguided belief that the meaning of the work lies somewhere other than in the words themselves. This fallacy he attributes to the legacy of the influential anthology *Understanding Poetry* (Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren, first published in 1938) and its New Critical lesson that poems should be deciphered through the various methods of formalist analysis associated with “close reading.” The result, he laments, is a body of students who “approac[h] poetry as if it were a vehicle for delivering ideas rather than an expressive, verbal event,” and in response he began altering his methods in the classroom to emphasize “the oral ground of the language” through recitation rather than interpretation.

Proceeding from this diagnosis, McGann examines the role of recitation in English language poetry from 1760 to the present, looking at length at how “poetic recitation” was “pivotal” to Wordsworth’s *Lyrical Ballads* and its premise that in diction and in prosody there was no “essential difference between the language of prose and metrical composition.” McGann shows how Wordsworth’s poetics were influenced by the British Elocutionary Movement and in particular his relationship with the poet and educator John Thelwall. For McGann, Thelwall’s views offer a basis for understanding recitation as interpretation—and thus a rationale for changing one’s methods for teaching poetry to students. A proponent of teaching elocution, Thelwall believed that both poetry and prose were based on an “abstract rhythmus” that shaped the sounds of the language and that by practicing recitation one could become more conscious of and proficient at employing these organizing forces. In Thelwall’s view, the read-

er's spoken articulation of a poem or prose work is an equally creative act of "performative recomposition," with elocutionary "exercises . . . designed to develop an 'instinctive' appreciation and 'perception of the abstract rhythmus' of vernacular English." His aim of teaching elocution was "a recognition of the 'poetic liberty' that the language itself promotes in both writer and reader," with the most effective texts for practicing such enunciative freedom being those with verbal organizational patterns that are both less apparent and mixed, thus placing a greater responsibility on the reader to recognize and interpret them in order to recite them.

Despite what he had written in the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* about there being no fundamental difference between the language of poetry and prose, Wordsworth would later disagree with Thelwall's valorization of the freedom of mixed measures in recitation and instead argued that, in contrast to prose, poetry depended upon the regularizing effect of iambic pentameter in order to limit the multiple rhythmic possibilities of the English language. However, through a reading of "Michael" and "She Dwelt among the Untrodden Ways," McGann argues that, despite his protestations to the contrary, Wordsworth's writing actually demonstrates the more nuanced and varied meters and sounds that are closer to the compositional freedom of Thelwall's poetics. And in discussing the latter, he observes how certain poems gain their affective significance by presenting the reader with a multitude of interpretive possibilities that no single recitation can ever fully satisfy. In commenting on one's failure adequately to give voice through a single spoken reading to the open-ended possibilities of the lines of the Lucy poem, he writes: "Every effort at recitation, every failed performance, restores the passion of a subject that has no ending."

The rest of the essay largely examines how other poets from the past 250 years have experimented with the prosodic conventions of poetry "to achieve new kinds of rhythms." His examples include the typographical experiments of William Blake's

verbal-visual constructions, permutations of the same text in different settings by Walt Whitman, and the exploration of sound in prosaic language in the work of Marianne Moore. In part two of the essay he examines the rhetorical stylings and flourishes of Wordsworth's contemporary Byron, whose epic satire *Don Juan* incorporates multiple dialects of English as well as jargons, words from foreign languages, and established genres, often in the mode of parody. The result is a "polyglot English" drawing upon "multiple cadences" that increasingly exploits the sonic potential of presumably prosaic material like the pharmacological stanza in canto ten. By foregrounding the visual or graphic qualities of language that—like the twentieth-century manifestations of futurist, concrete, and conceptual poetry yet to come—"are better seen and not heard," Byron's work further dramatizes the interpretive decisions and challenges imposed upon the reader in the act of reading aloud. Part three begins with what for McGann is a summary of poetry's innovations since Romanticism: "If any feature of language taken at any level can serve as the measure for its structure, there is no obvious limit to how rhythmic recurrence may be imagined and executed." He then closes with Ron Silliman's theory of the "New Sentence" and its attention to the prosodic possibilities of language at or below the level of the sentence as an organizing structure, which like Byron's work keeps the reader's focus on the materiality of language. And though his examples take him centuries away from the scene of the classroom with which he begins, McGann's essay adamantly demonstrates throughout that the act of interpretation is inseparable from the activity of recitation.

In "My speech for that unspoken': Recitation and Recognition in T. S. Eliot's 'Marina': Response to Jerome McGann," critic and digital humanities scholar Nikolaus Wasmoen further develops McGann's arguments that acts of recitation are equally acts of interpretation by turning to Roman Jakobson's theory of translation. Approaching recitation as a form of translation from

written text to vocalized performance, and citing Jakobson's view of "the interpretation of language more generally" as the translation of one sign into another, Wasmoen observes that both activities "propagate" certain "'metalinguistic' operations" of which a speaker must be aware in order for the processes to be successful. "If we can only speak about what we can speak about speaking," he writes, "then it follows that we can only meaningfully recite a poem to the extent that we can marshal its metalinguistic context." The trouble that McGann describes students having with poetry, then, gets restated here as their mistaken view that these "metalinguistic elements" somehow precede recitation when in fact they are only ever discovered in the act of recitation. Wasmoen then surveys the poem "Marina" to show what kinds of interpretive choices the reader/reciter is forced to make in navigating the multiple source materials (Seneca and Shakespeare) and languages that Eliot weaves together. The reader's participation in recognizing and voicing the particular metalinguistic operations in "Marina," a poem characterized by its syntactic subversion, leads to a kind of estrangement that is not unlike the feelings of confusion experienced by the tragic figures of Hercules and Pericles. Wasmoen concludes his response to McGann by considering recitation through the lens of "remediation" as defined by media theorists Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin, arguing that textual encoding can help pass along "prosodic analysis" to future readers by recording the multiple variations in how a text might be presented and recited.

Presented as a dialogue with specific quotations from "Reading (I Mean Articulating) Poetry, a Multiplayer Game," the contribution by renowned visual and sound poet and critic Steve McCaffery presents a series of micro-responses in rebuttal to the "historical trajectory" of McGann's arguments and observations. In an effort to problematize what he identifies as some of McGann's omissions and generalizations, McCaffery questions whether poetic language is changing in the linguistic world of social media, clarifies the historical development and temporal-

ity of concrete poetry, raises “the issue of pronunciation” and the role of “primitivism” for the Romantic poets, considers the relation of John Byrom’s shorthand system to Thelwall’s practices of elocution, and comments on the apostrophe “oh” that appears in Wordsworth’s poem “She Dwelt among the Untrodden Ways.” He disagrees with McGann’s characterization of Blake’s *Laocoön* as an example of concrete poetry, arguing instead that the work is better understood within the context of eighteenth-century political cartoons. McCaffery also adds further proof of the “pentametric pliancy” of Byron by citing lines from Canto V of *Don Juan* and suggests that Italian Futurism as well as Dada contributed to the ongoing history of poetic “freedom.” Finally, McCaffery comments on the essay’s closing remarks on the New Sentence and argues that an alternative to recitation is the activity of performance as practiced in the work of Jackson Mac Low.



Lisa Robertson’s essay “*Dous Chantar: Refrain for a Nightingale*” opens a dazzling view of the world of, and made by, medieval troubadour poetry, framing it through a language politic of “rime.” The troubadours wrote in Occitan, an early Romance vernacular with affordances of syllabic stress sensitive to meaning and emphasis not available in Latin, which enabled the poetic innovation of rhyme as technique. Originarily both oral *and* scriptural, Occitan developed in a highly literate, polylingual, cross-cultural society, with the troubadours using a specialized, synthetic version of the language in their verse, creating translingual conceptual terms such as *joi* (joy) and *dolchor* (sweetness) that both crystallized an ethics of communality and became nodes for generating intricate fields of like-sounds. Drawing on such scholars as Jacques Roubaud, Paul Zumthor, and Roland Barthes, Robertson writes that troubadour rhyme does not simply name isolated moments of “the surprise of temporal difference in repetition” in a poem, but becomes

“an epistemological lens,” as she puts it, communicating history. Rhyme refers to how this “active field of the making and reception of verse” encoded an exceptionally culturally and linguistically open, creative milieu’s structures of feeling and relation, whose conviviality indeed extended to birds—especially nightingales, so much a part of the soundscape of Languedoc—as co-composers, and blurred the distinction between speech and song.

Robertson is especially attentive to what she terms the *subsong*: the grain of the voice as trace of the body’s friction with the material it sounds, which does not appear as meaning so much as it is experienced affectively. She is concerned as well with voice as temporally and psychically riven address, voice as openly relational subjectivity, which partly unknowingly transmits its own historicity as it bends towards its futural interlocutor. This alterity of voice rhymes with rhyme’s own potential nonpositive presence, its value produced by resonance or feedback, through “subtextual seeding.” Troubadour rhyme thus involves a textilic, nonlinear interlacement that both propels and sends back the reader in a layered, associative gathering of nuance in a process of re-hearing, re-beginning, and re-knowing; this same motion also presences, through reverberation, word-concepts distributed across the soundfield. Such a caressing performance is a parallel enactment of the libidinal social field it illuminates and reciprocally helps to shape.

Pliny attributed to the nightingale a self-conscious capacity for complex poetic composition, in Robertson’s eyes, tantamount to voice, and the nightingale is a constantly reappearing figure in troubadour verse. Yet what if along with Pliny’s natural history, she suggests, we might hear in these poems the nightingale as Ovid’s metamorphosed, mutilated Philomela? Rhyme performs a cut at which we pivot to re-begin; as Robertson observes, such points of stress also indicate the suppressed space around them—rhyme, as she puts it, “performs a submerged history, in fragments.” Because rhyme relies on a formal structure of belat-

edness, its historical materiality is, too, out of joint with itself, telling the story of its own demise. In its final turn, Robertson's essay elaborates the violent historical rupture that extinguished troubadour culture, when at the beginning of the thirteenth century, the French under papal direction launched a Crusade to end the anti-Church, feminist Christian heretical sect Catharism, as well as the religious and cultural mixing the region was known for. Alongside a renewal of rhyme's communal erotic ethics chez troubadour, she proposes an attentiveness to the cut-edge of rime, the other side of which is loss.

Shannon Maguire's "Making-with Nightingales and Ants: A Response to Lisa Robertson" compellingly traces how the concerns of Robertson's lecture surface in Robertson's poetics, particularly in her recent book of poetry *3 Summers* and her book of essays *Nilling*. Unsurprisingly to Robertson's readers, Maguire turns to Lucretius's *De rerum natura*: a favorite, long-term object of study for Robertson and a source in fact unavailable to the troubadours due to the same Church authority that eradicated the Catharist heresy, but which was nonetheless remotely echoed in their poetry and poetics through its sedimentation in a web of other textual influences. Maguire sees strong affinities between Robertson's creative feminist reading and redirection of Lucretius's atomist materialism and her analysis and reenactment of the troubadour's interspecies poetics of the subsong, noting, for instance that Robertson's poetry "summons new forms and arrangements of letters and sounds, and moves beyond language *as such* to incorporate the sonic fabric of existence and hold space for communications among non-human actors." Maguire helpfully also triangulates the link between Lucretian and troubadour poetics through Donna Haraway's term *sympoiesis*—defined by Haraway as "a word proper to complex, dynamic, responsive, situated, historical systems. It is a word for worlding-with, in company"—particularly interspecies camaraderies. In *3 Summers*, Robertson is preoccupied with hormones and builds a gendered poetics, as Maguire puts it, of "cosmic bodies being phlegmy, oozing, sneezing, dripping enti-

ties that spread life in a viral or bacterial way”; Robertson thus plays on and playfully departs, as Maguire reads, from Lucretius’s mechanical Epicurean theory of vision as the imprint of films shed by objects, his theory of the clinamen’s unpredictable swerve, and his preoccupation with pleasure. Observing “the volatile transformative power of these chemical messengers that affect growth and energy flow among other bodily processes as well as desire between bodies,” Maguire in turn draws connections to lines in *3 Summers* that are almost a summation of troubadour poetics: “What if we’ve made the wrong use of joy of our bodies? What if / we’re to be formal translators of bird cries.” Akin to Robertson’s discussion of troubadour subsong is Robertson’s theorization in *Nilling* of noise as a third category, non-value, queerly confounding the distinction between sound and silence.

The transcript of the lively roundtable discussion of “*Dous Chantar*” featuring Robertson, Maguire, and Howard focuses largely on language politics and language endangerment. Profoundly influenced by her poetics and more personally by Robertson as mentor, Maguire and Howard were invited to respond to the lecture by linking it to their own thought and practice. At the roundtable, Maguire delivered an early version of the essay included here, followed by remarks by Howard, and then by conversation amongst the panelists and the audience. In her discussion, Howard recurs to Robertson’s image of Philomela’s severed tongue, in turn setting forth the striking notion of revenants of the dead in the land as providing physical and metaphysical nutriment, from which she explores the *topos* of the transformational returns of cultures traumatized even to the point of extinction. One way her first book *Infinite Citizen of the Shaking Tent* is bound up with her First Nations heritage is through its relation of “survivance” (Gerald Vizenor) or “resurgence” (Leanne Simpson) to the near-lost, sacred, oracular Ojibwe practice of *jiisakaan*, “shaking tent,” in which a human “conjurer” gathers information from an animal spirit who acts as translator of other animal spirits speaking in their separate vernaculars. As Howard

describes, her own practice of making her work involves processes of taking in and then translating information received (implicitly through felt presences). Relatedly, through Jacques Roubaud's *The Loop*, Howard theorizes refrain as a destructive-constructive mode of remembrance, in which retrieval does not simply repeat but corrodes and transforms, registering the act of memory itself.

As the conversation turns to reflect on how the distant past speaks through us in our positions, for instance, as descendants of White settlers and Indigenous peoples, Robertson notes parallels between medieval crusades and settler colonialism, as well as with Fortress Europe's treatment of refugees, so many of whom are cruelly left by states to perish en route. Refrain returns to the discussion, reframed as the deterritorializing "line of flight" in poetry that refuses monolingualism and other purifications of territory. What do language regimes we've internalized regulate or disallow? Should proficiency be what permits us to speak a language, or might we embrace amateur speakership (across multiple meanings of *amateur*)? How do we move in between languages as conditioned by context and interlocutor(s), and what are the politics of "improvising across latins"? Continuing Robertson's investigation of the subsonic, and the historicity of the affective materiality of language, the poets discuss rhyme as bearing the "nonvolitional texture" of the past. Wordplay in troubadour poetry also comes to the fore as Robertson alerts us to archives of drafts in which poems are inscribed on the page in "precodified" ways, generating webs of association and meanings. While rhyme shifts the temporality of our experience of a text, the synesthesia of wordplay brings the body to the fore in the act of reading.



While the lectures simply followed each other in the series, they nonetheless make good companions, with significant echoes reverberating between them and their accompanying responses.

The lecturers and their immediate interlocutors all are concerned with voicing in context; various kinds of lability of the poetic text and what produces the possibility of its differential expressivity; sonic patterning in poetry and its modes of significance; and the foregrounding of an embodied experience of oral and written language, versus its interpretation. All of these contributions propose affective, pragmatic approaches to poetry that allow it to surface as materially formative, alive and lived. Reading them together offers an opportunity to see how these values presence themselves in differing cultures of poetic scenography across space and time.