

Popular Culture and the Civic Imagination: Conference with Henry Jenkins at the Department of Culture and Aesthetics, Stockholm University, May 2–3, 2022

Monday May 2

9:25–9:30 **Welcome**, Staffan Bergwik, Professor of History of Ideas, Department of Culture and Aesthetics, Stockholm University.

**Moderator** Doron Galili, Research Fellow, Department of Media Studies, Stockholm University.

9:30–10:30 **Keynote. From the Harry Potter Alliance to the BTS Army: Fan Activism, Civic Imagination, and Social Change** (ONLINE), Henry Jenkins, Provost Professor of Communication, Journalism, Cinematic Arts, and Education, University of Southern California.

10:30–11:00 Coffee

11:00–11:30 **Flipping the Paranoid Chronotope**, Frida Beckman, Professor of Literature, Department of Culture and Aesthetics, Stockholm University.

11:30–12:00 **Troubling Aesthetics When Rewriting the Everyday: Mapping Vulnerability as a Generative Force in Community Theatre**, Elsa Szatek, PhD Student in Teaching and Learning, Stockholm University.

12:00–12:30 **Expanding Southeast Asian Social and Political Discussions via Political Cartoons on Social Media: Cases from Indonesia and Malaysia** (ONLINE), Indah S. Pratidina, Lecturer, Department of Communication, University of Indonesia; Suraya binti Md Nasir, Lecturer, Department of Creative Multimedia, Sultan Idris Education University.

12:30–13:30 Lunch

**Moderator** Jacob Kimvall, Assistant Professor, Department of Visual Arts and Sloyd Education, University of Arts, Crafts, and Design, Stockholm.

13:30–14:00 **Transnationalism and Critique in the Global Culture TV Magazine *Kobra***, Kristina Riegert, Professor of Journalism, Södertörn University.

14:00–14:30 **“A Whiskey Lullaby” – Functions of Alcohol in Country Music Lyrics**, Tindra Thor, Senior Lecturer in Media and Communication, Örebro University; Ketil Thorgersen, Senior Lecturer in Music Education, Stockholm University/University College of Music Education in Stockholm.

14:30–15:00 Coffee

15:00–15:30 **We’re Here: The Queer Labor of Empathy, Allyship, and Drag in Reality Television**, Candice Roberts, Associate Professor of Communication Arts, St. John’s University, New York.

15:30–16:00 **Visuality and Civic Imagination: El Lissitzky and the Russian Avant-Garde**, Lisa Källström, Senior Lecturer, Department of Communication Studies, Lund University/Department of Communication, Language and Media, Malmö University.

16:00–16:30 **Art of Recursion: Labor and Creativity as Technical Individuation**, Per Israelson, Assistant Professor, Department of Culture and Aesthetics, Stockholm University.

16:30–17:00     **Concluding Discussion**, moderated by Sonya Petersson, Assistant Professor/Research Officer, Department of Culture and Aesthetics, Stockholm University.

## Tuesday May 3

**Moderator** Per Israelson, Assistant Professor, Department of Culture and Aesthetics, Stockholm University.

- 9:00–9:30     **Nuclear Spectators: When Globocide Turned Entertainment**, Fannie Frederikke Baden, PhD Student in Art History and Visual Studies, Lund University.
- 9:30–10:00     **Internet Memes for Civil Disobedience: Reflections from Recent Hong Kong's Protest Culture**, Lee Wing Ki, Assistant Professor, Academy of Visual Arts, Hong Kong Baptist University.
- 10:00–10:30     **Queer Motifs of Desire and Identificatory Reading in the Jane Austen Fandom**, Camilla Wallin Lämsä, PhD Student, Department of Culture and Society, Linköping University.
- 10:30–11:00     Coffee
- 11:00–11:30     **Participatory Travels of Poetry – How New Practices of Poetry Distribution Puts Poetry back into Popular Culture**, Camilla Holm Soelseth, PhD Student in Library and Information Science, Oslo Metropolitan University.
- 11:30–12:15     **Panel. Comics and Stuff: A Discussion on the Importance of Matter and Materiality in Post Digital Culture**, Catherine Anyango Grünwald, Artist and Senior Lecturer, University of Arts, Crafts, and Design, Stockholm; Fredrik Jonsson, Publisher at Lystring Förlag, Stockholm; Per Israelson, Assistant Professor, Department of Culture and Aesthetics, Stockholm University.
- 12:15–12:20     **Final Words**, Per Israelson, Assistant Professor, Department of Culture and Aesthetics, Stockholm University.

## Venue

Department of Culture and Aesthetics, the Auditorium, Frescativägen 24 E. See more information here: <https://www.su.se/departement-of-culture-and-aesthetics/calendar/popular-culture-and-the-civic-imagination-1.581116>.

## Organizing Committee

**Staffan Bergwik**, Professor of History of Ideas, Department of Culture and Aesthetics, Stockholm University; **Doron Galili**, Research Fellow, Department of Media Studies, Stockholm University; **Per Israelson**, Assistant Professor, Department of Culture and Aesthetics, Stockholm University; **Jacob Kimvall**, Assistant Professor, Department of Visual Arts and Sloyd Education, University of Arts, Crafts, and Design, Stockholm; **Johan Klingborg**, PhD Student, Department of Culture and Aesthetics, Stockholm University; **Sonya Petersson**, Assistant Professor/Research Officer, Department of Culture and Aesthetics, Stockholm University.

## Abstracts

**From the Harry Potter Alliance to the BTS Army: Fan Activism, Civic Imagination, and Social Change**, Henry Jenkins, Provost Professor of Communication, Journalism, Cinematic Arts, and Education at the University of Southern California.

Young people around the world are conducting politics through a vernacular drawn from popular culture. As they do so, they borrow practices and build on the infrastructure created around media fandoms. Many of the skills fans use to push for the renewal of their favorite television series or to support their favorite boy band are the same ones that can make a difference through networked activism. The language of fandom may help fuel the civic imagination necessary to bring about social change. And the more imaginative side of fandom in turn can provide the resilience needed to sustain a long term social movement. In this talk, I will make the case for how fan activism provides the blue print for a wider range of social change efforts.

**Flipping the Paranoid Chronotope**, Frida Beckman, Professor of Literature, Department of Culture and Aesthetics, Stockholm University ([frida.beckman@littvet.su.se](mailto:frida.beckman@littvet.su.se)).

With a starting point in Bakhtin's classic conception of the chronotope as delineating the inherent interconnectedness of space and time, I recently developed the concept of the paranoid chronotope. As a recurring feature in fiction, society, and politics alike, I identified this as a doubled chronotope which enables the co-existence of two different layers of reality: one that most people perceive as such, and another, which only some recognize as the true reality. The most classic and illustrative example of this can be found in the *Matrix*-films and, indeed, its red pill/blue pill trope has also become a common feature among conspiracy theorists in general and in the online manosphere in particular.

But does a dual layer chronotope necessarily have to be paranoid? Is such a chronotope necessarily and exclusively evoked in paranoid imaginary or can it also be used as an enabling, critical tool in more balanced critical approaches to society? In fact, what happens if we flip it? Employing Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's influential essay on paranoid and reparative reading, this paper explores the possibility of identifying, not just a paranoid but also a reparative chronotope in contemporary popular culture. Its hypothesis is that, and like Sedgwick, or rather her use of Melanie Klein's, two positions – the paranoid and the depressive – the nature of the dual chronotope depends on how the subject's position is imagined in the first place. While the paranoid position continually strives to forestall pain by always imagining the worst, the depressive one accepts pain and is thereby capable of recognizing the brokenness of others and of matters. The paranoid chronotope, I have noted, strives to maintain and protect the conception of a strong white masculinity. What kind of critique and what kind of subject position does a reparative chronotope enable?

**Troubling Aesthetics When Rewriting the Everyday: Mapping Vulnerability as a Generative Force in Community Theatre**, Elsa Szatek, PhD Student in Teaching and Learning, Stockholm University ([elsa.szatek@su.se](mailto:elsa.szatek@su.se)).

In this presentation the risks and potentials of staging vulnerability in a community theatre practice with teenage girls will be explored. This presentation will explore vulnerability as a potentially generative matter that enables resistance in line with Judith Butler (Butler 2016). The empirical material in this presentation comes from a

one-year ethnographic study following the theatre-groups' work creating a performance based on girls' stories and experiences of becoming woman in a particular Swedish town (Szatek 2021). Exploring how vulnerability becomes a generative, or restrictive force in the performance work, the tensions produced in the process are discussed with the aim to highlight the multitude of ethical dilemmas that arise when staging the everyday through participatory methods. One such dilemma is how aesthetic spaces emerge when interwoven with spaces of vulnerability. By drawing on post-constructionist (Lykke 2010) and spatial theories (Massey 2005) this presentation also intends to discuss the embeddedness of the drama practice as it merges with, and challenges, the local context and the participants' everyday life. One idea I wish to discuss is how this embeddedness is a prerequisite for turning vulnerability into a generative force, enabling the participants to feel hope and be proud of what and who they are in relation to limiting structures.

**Expanding Southeast Asian Social and Political Discussions via Political Cartoons on Social Media: Cases from Indonesia and Malaysia**, Indah S. Pratidina, Lecturer, Department of Communication, University of Indonesia ([ispdina@ui.ac.id](mailto:ispdina@ui.ac.id)); Suraya binti Md Nasir, Lecturer, Department of Creative Multimedia, Sultan Idris Education University ([suraya.mn@fskik.upsi.edu.my](mailto:suraya.mn@fskik.upsi.edu.my)).

Political cartoons are studied as a means of political communication and social criticism. Social media is argued to have democratic functions which enable access and expression for its users. Without media outlets' gatekeeping and censorship, political cartoons disseminated through social media can potentially reach a broader audience and address sensitive social and political issues. No longer restrained to conventional media, followers can access the works and participate in the social and political discussions highlighted by the cartoonists. Themes vary from social issues, e.g., corruption, governmental policies on social welfare, and the efforts surrounding COVID-19, also portrayals of the countries' prominent politicians.

This study selected six cartoonists from Indonesia and Malaysia who are notable and have published works in the countries' conventional media. The two countries have a long and turbulent history of political cartoons which hinder their development, particularly with governments' media censorship throughout different regimes. The countries also have large social media users in Southeast Asia. The Indonesian artists are Mice, famous for his works in Indonesia's oldest and largest newspapers KOMPAS, Kendra Paramita who has published his works for the Indonesian leading political magazine TEMPO, Hary Prast for his works for President Jokowi's official Instagram. The Malaysian artists are Ernest Ng, popularly known for his rendition of Malaysia's pandemic situation, Nixon Siow who poke fun at the 1MDB scandal through his Crazy Rich Guy comics, and VulpineNinja who shares discussions on sensitive topics of religion, racism, and feminism.

The study aims to explore the Indonesian and Malaysian cartoonist's motives and perceived outcomes by consciously choosing social media to reach their audience. Data will be collected through interviews and observations of posts and comments in the cartoonists' social media accounts. It hopes to harvest insights on how effective the posts are in harnessing engagements and perhaps potentially, political activism from Indonesian and Malaysian social media eager netizens.

**Transnationalism and Critique in the Global Culture TV Magazine *Kobra***, Kristina Riegert, Professor of Journalism, Södertörn University ([kristina.riegert@sh.se](mailto:kristina.riegert@sh.se)).

*Kobra* (2001–2017) was one of the longest running cultural factual programs in Swedish public service television history. *Kobra* had the ambition to be visually creative, to cover classical culture, popular culture and sub-cultures, and to prioritize international culture and Swedish culture's place in it. This study focuses on how *Kobra* constructed transnational relations between different parts of the world through an evolving narrative format, and how *Kobra* exercised cultural or societal critique. Through quantitative and qualitative textual analysis of *Kobra* in the years 2001, 2005, 2011 and 2016 (89 episodes), the study also points to how the narrative format changed. The results show that *Kobra*'s format shifted between 2001 and 2005 when it consolidated two transnational narrative formats: theme-based, or city/country-based. Theme-based formats like "After the Cold War", "Weapons", "Afro-futurism" themselves were often transnational cultural phenomena because they connected various aesthetic areas in different parts of the world to a specific theme. City or country-based programs (e.g. Cairo, Sarajevo, Brazil) established connections between various places, events or hybrid identities related to that geographic place. Critical perspectives are mainly found in the choice and dialogue of the interview subjects, rather than explicit evaluation by *Kobra*'s producers. Criticism of lack of freedom of expression, inequality or racism arise chiefly in episodes about other countries outside of Sweden. *Kobra*'s initial narrative format in 2001 was closer to an internet sensibility: bitingly satirical, messy and unexpected, but with a more stereotypical transnationality. The theme-based and city-based formats naturalized this transnationality. By 2011, *Kobra* had become influenced by actuality and news-like aesthetics, which increased as time went on and by 2016, the program's creative visuality and reflective think pieces had disappeared in favor of a more conventional news-like format. Despite its evolving narrative format, *Kobra* demonstrates how criticism, albeit more societal than cultural, can be exercised in audio-visual narrative text type.

**"A Whiskey Lullaby" – Functions of Alcohol in Country Music Lyrics**, Tindra Thor, Senior Lecturer in Media and Communication, Örebro University ([tindra.thor@oru.se](mailto:tindra.thor@oru.se)); Ketil Thorgersen, Senior Lecturer in Music Education, Stockholm University/University College of Music Education in Stockholm ([ketil.thorgersen@su.se](mailto:ketil.thorgersen@su.se)).

It is Saturday, September 9th 2017, and we are watching a family television show on Norwegian Public Broadcasting (NRK) – "Stjerneekamp" ("Star Battle"). The show concept is having artists performing songs from different genres. Tonight's genre is country music, a genre we only know superficially. The first artists all make decent performances and the mood in the sofa is good when the artist Aleksander Walmann enters the stage. To our surprise, tears are running down both our faces by the end of the first verse as he sings about heartbreak and how the lovers in the song "put a bottle to their heads and pull the trigger."

Studies about country music lyrics often point to the lyrical importance in setting the stage and how some topics are typical for country music lyrics, such as lost love, loneliness, memories, and nostalgia. Further, they often construct a closed narrative that rarely comments actual events in the real world (Jaret 1982; Neal 2007). One tool that is being used to construct these narratives with these topics is alcohol. Alcohol has been shown to be particularly common to describe both unhappy love, pain and anguish, loneliness and failure, and, conversely, enjoying life and a comfort (Connors & Alpher 1989).

In this study we turn our focus to the different functions of alcohol in country music lyrics and explore the purposes and meanings of alcohol in the genre from 1990 up until today. Through a mixed methods approach, we have, first, quantitatively analyzed songs and album songs nominated for Country Music Awards (CMA) (N=1291). The qualitative analysis includes songs where alcohol plays a particularly important part. The lyrics will be analyzed through a narrative analysis and explored through Barthes' concepts of myths; liquid modernity, and retrotopia (Bauman 2017).

**We're Here: The Queer Labor of Empathy, Allyship, and Drag in Reality Television,**  
Candice Roberts, Associate Professor of Communication Arts, St. John's University,  
([robertsc@stjohns.edu](mailto:robertsc@stjohns.edu)).

Queer visibility in media is often conflated with representation, and media scholars along with the wider LGBTQ community grapple with this distinction. HBO's *We're Here* offers a popular culture case study illustrative of the tensions between visibility and representation for queer identities. Using the framework established by Jenkins, Peters-Lazaro, & Shresthova (2020), this paper situates *We're Here* as an exemplar of engagement with the civic imagination on both the dimensions of social connection within a larger community and forging solidarity with others of different experiential backgrounds. This work also argues that the potential for sociocultural conversation through reality television can be understood using lenses of trans theory and rhetorical empathy (Blankenship 2019).

In *We're Here* three drag queens travel to various rural locations across the United States working with residents to stage a drag show. Some participants identify as members of the LGBTQ community while others are straight allies; each expresses a personal reason for participation – generally tied to either their own identity expression or desire to connect to queer loved ones or the LGBTQ community more generally. Keegan (2016) claims that theorizing the queer image in media requires a reconfiguration of the queer subject in contrast to prior iterations of queer media analysis focusing on the reception of straight audiences. Trans theory combined with the notion of rhetorical empathy as understood in the onscreen labor of the hosts and participants in *We're Here* provides an analytical perspective for understanding civic engagement through reality television as cultural object.

This paper focuses on the United States but offers future avenues for international case studies. The relationship between *We're Here* and parent global media franchise *Drag Race* (with spin-offs in ten countries including Chile, France, Italy, Netherlands, Philippines, Spain, and Thailand) provides evidence of global relevance.

**Visuality and Civic Imagination: El Lissitzky and the Russian Avant-Garde,** Lisa Källström, Senior Lecturer, Department of Communication Studies, Lund University/Department of Communication, Language and Media, Malmö University ([lisa.kallstrom@kom.lu.se](mailto:lisa.kallstrom@kom.lu.se)).

In the picture book *A Tale about Two Squares* the author, El Lissitzky (1890–1951), instructs his young readers not to read, but “take paper, wood blocks and posts” and “put [them] together, paint and build.” The book consists of only 33 words and ten striking illustrations. It was published in 1922, just five years after the Russian Revolution in 1917. The lines are stretched diagonally from the bottom left to the upper right corner of the page. Letters are part of the picture. Words are broken up according to geometric shapes. What we see could be a symbolic story about the reinvention of society, a celebration of the revolution or an optimistic vision of the



radical possibilities of the future. The book creates an impression of rhythm, which is emphasized by using only three colors: black, red and grey. It could also be a manifesto of Lissitzky's view on art. In "Art and Pangeometry" (1925) he claims that our sight needs to be freed from visual dogma and conventional order. He is genuinely convinced that art has the power to produce visual strategies for civic imagination. Lissitzky was one of the leading figures in this Russian avant-garde. His work came to influence not only Bauhaus but also Walter Benjamin and his discussion about the detached gaze in the essay *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*. Although written almost ninety years ago it seems that Lissitzky's conceptual thoughts on the production of images is still valuable. The starting point of this paper is three Yiddish children's books, illustrated by Lissitzky in order to promote Jewish culture in Russia. Here he wants to explore the expressions of space in the hope of creating new spatial connections and consequently alternative *imaginary spaces*.

**Art of Recursion: Labor and Creativity as Technical Individuation**, Per Israelson, Assistant Professor, Department of Culture and Aesthetics, Stockholm University ([per.israelson@littvet.su.se](mailto:per.israelson@littvet.su.se)).

If cybernetic capitalism not only capture and reify behavior (Hörl 2017, Zuboff 2019), but also, in the media saturated environments of the contemporary techno-ecology, operate at a temporality prior to the formation of creative subjectivities (Hansen 2015), there seem to be very little room or hope for any future for creativity, as well as for any creative future. However, this presentation argues that by using Gilbert Simondon's theory of individuation (Simondon 2017, 2020) and the neocybernetic concept of sympoiesis (Haraway 2016), the recursion of cybernetic systems is not merely a matter of control and command, but can also emerge in the form of a non-anthropocentric co-creation in which the processes of technical individuation comprise a posthumanist creativity. By discussing conceptual comics artist Ilan Manouach's interventions in the digital infrastructures of contemporary culture, primarily in the comic book projects *The Cubicle Island* (2020), this presentation argues that the postdigital aesthetic put into play by Manouach's work can be framed as an articulation of a neocybernetic and posthumanist conceptuality. The *Cubicle Island*-project employs the distributed labor of the Amazon Mechanical Turk-application (AMT) in a reconfiguration of a number of cartoons belonging to the desert island-genre. Following a given script, new captions have been provided by the microworkers of the AMT, some of which are algorithmic bots. The book comprises an edited reconfiguration of these cartoons and captions, critically layering different forms and hierarchies of labor: human, bot, editor, microworker, artist, and cartoonist, among others. The environmental and distributed agency of *The Cubicle Island*-project thus points to a posthumanist understanding of autonomy in which the recursive feedback loops of cybernetic systems participate in the emergence and technical individuation of a sympoietic subjectivity. Accordingly, the post-digital aesthetics of *The Cubicle Island*-project can be understood as an art of recursion.

**Nuclear Spectators: When Globocide Turned Entertainment**, Fannie Frederikke Baden, PhD Student in Art History and Visual Studies, Lund University ([fannie\\_frederikke.baden@kultur.lu.se](mailto:fannie_frederikke.baden@kultur.lu.se)).

Radioactivity is terrifying. Geiger counters clicking for inevitable cellular destruction and, in more fantastic depictions, green slimy entities and rotting flesh. The fear of the peaceful atom has led to a long political discussion on its proper use – one that has recently been reignited in light of the climate change debate. However, while the atom

used to induce fear of Globocide, it now seems to have become a key part of a blooming entertainment industry. Across popular media, radioactivity is no longer *just* a destructive force, but rather one that seem to have become controllable in the hands of doctors, politicians, and scientists.

This presentation will discuss how popular entertainment products affect civic imagination of radiation in the Anthropocene era. With focus on the 1986 Chernobyl disaster, the presentation approaches its material with the use of Günther Anders' *Ten Theses on Chernobyl*. It will discuss the representations of radioactivity and how this in turn may affect a cultural understanding of nuclear power. Theoretically grounded in aesthetics and new materialism, the presentation will look at transmedial adaptations of the Chernobyl disaster, from videogames to tourist images.

**Internet Memes for Civil Disobedience: Reflections from Recent Hong Kong's Protest Culture**, Lee Wing Ki, Assistant Professor, Academy of Visual Arts, Hong Kong Baptist University ([wklee@hkbu.edu.hk](mailto:wklee@hkbu.edu.hk)).

Internet memes are widely employed by grassroots protestors, activists, "IT armies" and hacktivists for public political persuasion in the virtual realm in different regional and global conflicts in the past decade. A digital artefact of leisure and entertainment that emerged and derived from global popular culture is now transformed into and appropriated into a powerful, "spreadable," and accessible media. Often heavily stressed on the affects and effects of humor, internet memes as political persuasion apparatuses do give rise to questions about their reliability, authenticity and in particular in the post-truth era that requires scholarly attention and endeavor to examine the emergence, however short-lived it will be, of internet memes for civil disobedience activities. Media theorists, for instance, Henry Jenkins (2013) and Limor Shifman (2014), contribute to the establishment of the scholarly discourse on internet memes. In this presentation, the author will articulate Jenkin's and Shifman's framework and understanding of internet memes and, through that, to contextualize internet memes that emerged from recent Hong Kong's protest culture, with incidents including the Umbrella Movement (2014) and the Anti-Extradition Law Amendment Bill Movement (2019). In 2018, the author (Lee 2018) argued for a three-perspective model to understand internet memes from Hong Kong's protest culture, as grassroots participatory propaganda, as sexist and racist expression of nature, and could be recuperated by pro-establishment political lobbyists. In this presentation, the author will revisit the framework proposed in 2018 and provide accounts and reflections on how internet memes for civil disobedience and social transformation that has been changed since the Hong Kong 2019 protest, in particular with the introduction of the National Security Law in Hong Kong.

**Queer Motifs of Desire and Identificatory Reading in the Jane Austen Fandom**, Camilla Wallin Lämsä, PhD Student, Department of Culture and Society, Linköping University ([camilla.wallin.lamsa@liu.se](mailto:camilla.wallin.lamsa@liu.se)).

This paper considers the identificatory reading practices and collective constructions of gender and desire taking place in the contemporary Jane Austen fandom. Austen's novels, and their numerous multimedia adaptations, deal with themes of love and courtship of an ostensibly heterosexual kind. In the online Austen fandom, however, her novels have inspired a myriad of queer readings and retellings, both in works of fanfiction and in the genre of personal imaginings known as headcanons. For many fans, this is a way to see themselves represented in beloved stories, and through practices of identificatory reading, the haughty Mr. Darcy may instead become a



socially awkward lesbian lingering in the back of the ballroom, too shy to approach the object of her affections. Importantly, although they are often penned by individuals, these fan texts are fashioned on shared online platforms, with comment sections and instant feedback mechanisms between readers and writers, resulting in a collective, ongoing negotiation of textual meaning in a mostly queer and feminine online space. At the same time, Jane Austen fans also tend to display an interest in so-called historical correctness, the mores and customs of 19th century England, and a considerable fidelity to the source text. As such, the attempts to diversify Austen's more conservative romance narratives becomes a complex endeavor, and this paper analyses the tension between the fans' reverence for canon and their wish to subvert it. While some fans engage in transformative practices like genderbending (swapping a fictional character's gender) or slash (making straight stories gay), others strive for deliberately vague depictions of the characters' identities, to allow for indeterminate and fluid gender figurations and for unnamed and multi-directional forms of desire. By reconstructing a historical past populated by queer lovers, the fans help reimagine the romantic norms of our present and future.

**Participatory Travels of Poetry – How New Practices of Poetry Distribution Puts Poetry back into Popular Culture**, Camilla Holm Soelseth, PhD Student, Library and Information Science, Oslo Metropolitan University ([camil@oslomet.no](mailto:camil@oslomet.no)).

A defining practice of the new social media poets, or instapoets, is the practice of publishing poems into the everyday rhythm of people's lives, through the networked infrastructure of social media, where other users participate in the sharing, as well as remixing and adapting the poems for further distribution (Soelseth 2022), on and off social media. In addition, there is a change of focus on the single work, making the single poem primary (Lotman 2021). This aligns also with how people today most frequently experience poems, which are through radio, TV, and the internet (van der Starre 2021).

This change of practice, concerning what is commodified and when (of poetic production), also changes the immediacy and movement of poems in popular culture. We now can stumble quite easily upon a poem in our post-digital everyday life. This in turn gives us more chances at obtaining poetic resources to reflect on our current conditions. Especially in combination with when the poet acts as a creator in the social media ecosystem. The poet as content creator shows a tendency to produce poems related to current affairs of the (imagined) audience, such as the pandemic (Soelseth 2022). The infrastructural change and practice of poetry distribution through social media thus multiply the ways poetry appears when and where people might need it.

The paper will give an overview of the social media infrastructure for content distribution and present some of the benefits of these infrastructural conditions concerning the availability of poetic resources in popular culture. The reasoning for such a focus is to show important the infrastructures are when looking into cultural processes of distribution and circulation, something which in the humanities have often been put in brackets, while the focus has been on processes of production and consumption instead (Parks 2015, p. 356). The paper will illustrate this with the example of the poem "Refugees" by social media poet Brian Bilston, tracing its networked flow and appearances over time and (digital) space.