

УНИВЕРЗИТЕТ У БАЊОЈ ЛУЦИ  
ФИЛОЛОШКИ ФАКУЛТЕТ

# ФИЛОЛОГ

ЧАСОПИС ЗА ЈЕЗИК, КЊИЖЕВНОСТ И КУЛТУРУ



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# WOMEN AND THE LYRIC IN AND BEYOND THE TWENTIETH CENTURY<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** *The article provides an overview of publishing and critical debates concerning women's poetry and moves on critical practice from binarist conceptions of gender. Looking back over the twentieth century, it demonstrates how poets had to negotiate with taboos against female self-expression as an artistic enterprise for women. Drawing upon the recent tendency towards "geopolitical identity", I suggest ways in which we might read variations of the lyric that free it from a feminised sentimentalised notion of confessionality. Adorno (1974), Culler (1975), Maguire (2000) and Wills (2000) view it as the most potent of literatures because it validates literary expressions of empirical experience as counter-discursive. Reading geopolitically, we avoid the reductions of a postmodern scepticism towards the articulation of a fixed, universalising unitary self or the politics of identity which seeks authentic self-expression. All through the century we find women who expertly reorientate lyrical expression through disruptive syntax, sophisticated metaphors, internal or social dialogues. Into the new century, Duffy's acclaimed *Rapture* (2005) is autobiographical yet richly intertextual; the indeterminate pronouns and rich symbolism set up a benchmark for reading "beyond gender", that is both personally specific and globally mobile.*

**Key words:** *Women's Poetry, twentieth-century, twenty-first century, geopolitics, post-gender, Carol Ann Duffy, Claire Pollard; Gwyneth Lewis; literary criticism.*

In her Introduction to *Making for Planet Alice* (1997) Maura Dooley registers the debate between celebrating the number who are published read and heard versus the absence of decent and substantial criticism (12); she was followed by Germaine Greer introducing *101 poem for women* (2001), "The best women's poetry may be still unrecognised if, as I suspect, we have not yet understood how to read it (x)"; and the challenge was taken up by the Irish poet Colette Bryce (b. 1970) in Deryn Rees-Jones' anthology *Modern Women Po-*

*ets*, 2005, "While publishing has opened up, criticism has not, and the work of some of our best women poets continues to be neglected or ignored in the current critical climate" (402). The persistence of this alarm bell in the face of increasing critical studies and scholarship wakes us to ask what kind of critical readings the poets want. Perhaps the binarist preoccupation with the female-authored "I" and a pressure to be ideologically political have swamped the pleasure, for poet and reader, in poetry's function of evoking, and compensating for, what is missing from other discourses. In "Poetics of the Lyric", Jonathan Culler puts it: "Poetry lies at the centre of the literary experience because it is the form that most clearly asserts the spec-

<sup>1</sup> This article is based on the talk the author gave at the University of Banja Luka in March 2008, and it has also been submitted to *Literature Compass*, a web based journal.

ificity of literature, its difference from ordinary discourse by an empirical individual about the world" (162). Somehow, the given that a poet aesthetically transforms experience goes out of the window when it comes to a female-authored first person pronoun. In the hands of women as well as men, poetic discourse can produce feelings and thoughts that shift between the private *and* public, the individual *and* every-person, personal experience *and* the artistically constructed representation of it. Accordingly, we can prove that women's variations with the lyric are neither a side-show nor just going with the flow. Women participate in and extend literary trends and critical practice needs to keep up by attending to the best.

Since around 1980, a body of critical work has circled around the question of the "voice". One arm foregrounds writers' circumventions of the devaluing epithets "poetess" at the start and "woman poet" at the end of the century. In *A History of Twentieth-Century British Women's Poetry*, Dowson and Entwistle mine dynamic practices that were often discernible by a gender-conscious avoidance of the "personal", namely androgyny, modernist self-evasions, linguistically disruptive lyrics and the ventriloquising of social voices. The woman poet's imperative to shrug off cultural idealisations of femininity is taken up by Deryn Rees-Jones in *Consorting with Angels* (2005). With reference to Judith Butler's treatise on gender as a performance of difference (1990), Rees-Jones showcases how poets, from Edith Sitwell to Jo Shapcott, masked or meddled with reductive essentialising assumptions about the poet as subject, through such performative strategies as the dramatic monologue, multivocality, surrealism and intertextuality. The other critical arm finds the distinctive "voice" inextricably wrought from cultural ideologies of gender with which the poet negotiated. A number of

anthologies are confined by sexual/biological identity (such as lesbian or motherhood) or nationality (African, Scottish, Welsh, Irish, Black) and in critical studies like *Contemporary Scottish Women Writers* (ed. Christianson and Lumsden, 2000) or DeCaires Narain's *Contemporary Caribbean Women's Poetry* (2001), the aesthetic is primarily conceived through a writer's specifically female experience of her national/racial identity.

On the one hand, then, criticism concentrates on how women skillfully avoid the lyric "I", while the other accentuates and proclaims their defiance of negative stereotyping and promotes female expressionism. Both collude with a binarist conceptualisation of gender and unwittingly reinforce taboos against female self-expression as the enduring benchmark: the former group proves that women do other things and the latter that she has every right to it. Both approaches implicitly reinforce the problem of the poet as lyric subject for women that dogged them throughout the century and unwittingly exclude them from the quintessential poetic form.

In her Introduction to *A Book of Verse by Living Women* (1910), Lady Margaret Sackville articulates women poets' gender-consciousness in relation to their constructed persona at the start of the century:

There is still too often the feeling that the poet is expressing, very admirably it may be, emotions and ideas which have been read and heard of, but which are often no more than vivid reflections. To some, women's poetry is a glass reflecting nothing but themselves . . . When women have fully proved their capacity for freedom, we can begin to estimate better their capacity for poetry.

Sackville alludes to the no-win preconception that women's lyrics are either imitative, and thus censured for being inauthentic, or "merely" personal with the derogatory assumptions of being self-absorbed and narcissistic. The difficulty of

finding a voice within the lyric tradition is troublingly echoed in 2000 by Clair Wills:

Arguably, the representation of an inner life in lyric poetry, through personal address or solitary meditation and reflection, has always also been a mirror of social and cultural forces. But given the nature of the poetic tradition and history of poetic practice, this mirroring has also been gendered. This has led some contemporary women poets to seek to “reclaim” the lyric, by making explicit within the lyric itself its relation to the broader external forces which pervade it, and which have traditionally defined the poetic personal - among other things - as masculine. (119-20)

She identifies the feminist politics of the female-centred lyric as a kind of “writing back” that implicitly maintains a margin/centre separatist model. Also in 2000, Sarah Maguire, one of the New Generation poets of 1994, reclaims the lyric by collapsing the private with the public:

Of all literary genres, lyric poetry is the most subjective, personal and private. And if we think of subjectivity as something secret and individual, separated from history and society and politics, then there’s every chance for lyric poetry to be conservative, costive, narcissistic and smug. But ... this special focus on the self can be lyric poetry’s most radical strength. “The personal”, as that definitive feminist statement has it, “is political”. ... It’s precisely because the poem can render the most intimate and elusive of subjective experiences in language that it’s able to bear witness to what’s excluded from dominant discourses. (250)

Many of us sympathise with Wills’ and Maguire’s claims that good lyrics are not really a personal matter after all but politically loaded. We have been comfortable endorsing Adorno in his seminal “Lyric Poetry and Society”: “the lyric poem is always the subjective expression of a social antagonism, ...” (56). Wills gestures towards a social voice and Maguire preserves the “intimate” as a counter-discourse. However, writing in 2001, the newer generation poet Clare Pollard resists proving the so-

cial politics implicit in personal expression and calls for a “new confessionalism” to rejuvenate the kind of poetry associated with Robert Lowell and the postwar American school. It explores the deepest thoughts and feelings and draws in the reader as fellow sufferer and confidant/e in a way that other discourses do not. It has, however, a damaging legacy for women:

The rejection of confessionalism by women is also often a careerist move, but for very different reasons. It has frequently been perceived as a particularly female mode of writing in its concern for the intimately emotional and physical; the domestic power play of lovers and families rather than the larger philosophical questions. It has also - via sectioned Anne and suicidal Sylvia - been attached to the image of woman as hysterical harpy: disturbed, hormonal, her own muse before she is an artist. In order for women poets to be taken seriously they have increasingly been trying to break away from the intimate, physical language of Sixties and Seventies feminism - with its links to Kristeva’s *écriture féminine* - and instead show that they can take on “male” territory: wider political issues, social commentary, metatext, and irony.

Pollard leads us to summarise the knotty issue: a feminised “personal” has been pejoratively pitted against the “literary” and/or the “social” and women have responded in contradictory ways: they insist that the “personal” is a linguistic and/or social construction, thereby devaluing the writer’s representation of personal experience; at the same time, they want to express and explore individual experience, sometimes as an antidote to social narratives and sometimes as an antagonistic repudiation of them. The way forward is to assert that women have the right to the lyric in its most traditional sense of making the personal a shared and artistic utterance and that they do it especially well. We can also argue that an inhibition against the traditional lyric in favour of the social text is a post-Freudian, post modernist, twentieth-century, not simply a female, phenomenon. Introducing *The Bloodaxe*

*Book of C20 Poetry* (2000) Edna Longley, declares, “The drama of lyric poetry begins where the merely personal ends” (22) and stylistically, “the lyric is hard to define except as ‘a short poem’” (15). In the twenty-first century, we find an appetite for what we might call geopolitical poetic discourse, an approach or practice that dissolves the hereditary polarities of life and art, the individual and global, masculine and feminine literary traditions.

In *Gendering Poetry: Contemporary women and men poets* (2004), Vicki Bertram’s interrogation of masculinity alongside femininity and men along with women poets signals what Susan Stanford Friedman coins as the shift from “binarist ways of thinking” to a unifying “geopolitics of identity” that allows for differences to be multivalent, global yet contextually local and specific (4). Here, we can approach diverse lyric representations as centering female poetic expression yet dislodging binary conceptions of male and female creativity. Friedman charts this “both/and” dialogue of differences as “beyond gender”, meaning beyond “fundamentalist identity politics and absolutist poststructuralist theories, as they pose essentialist notions of identity on the one hand and refuse all cultural traffic with identity on the other” (4). In writing poetry, women especially address and transgress available means of expression. So we look for shifting pronouns, customised metaphors and defamiliarising syntax that configure not one “voice” but the self-reflexive processes of speaking. For example, in *Poetry off the page: twentieth-century British women poets in performance* (2004), Laura Severin traces theatrical devices that unsettle a page/stage divide and that contiguously deconstruct gender prescriptions, by pairing Charlotte Mew with Anna Wickham, Edith Sitwell with Stevie Smith, and Liz Lochhead with Jackie Kay.

The “geopolitics of identity” respects the poet’s national and historical contexts

but can run continuities and changes across orthodox poetic movements to offer alternative models of poetic practice that run through the decades. Some critical markers of the best might include: the lyric’s evocation of the unsaid that may or may not involve the element of social mirroring cited by Wills; self-reflection about the difference between poetic language and ordinary discourse; and intertextuality that connects with and frequently comments upon literary as well as cultural norms. In the rest of this article, I will offer samples from across the last hundred years to nominate streams of practice that bury any no-win homogenising and that resurrect the lyric’s negotiation *between* being discretely but not “merely” personal.

For Sackville, creative development went shoulder to shoulder with social emancipation but it was slow in the early twentieth-century. Alice Meynell (1847-1922) epitomises the independent literary woman whose poetry is oddly restrained, presumably defining itself against the solipsism that Sackville bemoaned.<sup>2</sup> The muted voice in Meynell’s poetry often seems at odds with the free articulation of her opinions in her essays and criticism. Another significant figure whose political activities were at odds with her writing include the Irish born Eva Gore-Booth (1870-1926) who was a vociferous social reformer but her poems tend towards the mystical, are gender indeterminate and abstractly universalising. An exception that is hard to classify is Charlotte Mew who appropriates the spirit of the lyric but defamiliarises the form. “The Quiet House”, written in 1913 and in her words, “perhaps the most subjective to me of the lot” (Fitzgerald 88), explores the losses of her childhood. Self-reference occurs through alternating first and third person pronouns and its strong symbolism and typographical markers of secret and unsayable pain exemplify what

2 For further discussion of Alice Meynell see Leighton, 1992.

Isobel Armstrong describes as “impersonal self-exposure” (367). “The Quiet House” has the length of narrative verse and its line lengths are too disordered for the conventional lyric, but rhyming and symbolism provide some linguistic, and implicitly psychological, coherence.

As the century progressed, steadily, but not uniformly, women developed a more self-assertive colloquial voice, but subjectivity is still masked through dramatised monologues; notable here are Mew and Muriel Stuart. Uniquely, Anna Wickham’s boldest poems depict complex female psychology with the poet as speaker (and got her locked up in a mental hospital). In “Return of Pleasure”, her unashamed assertion of the right to self-expression in free verse is a marked shift: “I thought, ‘I have skill to make words dance, / To clap hands and to shake feet, / But I will put myself, and everything I see, upon the page.” (*Writings* 194). Notably, she maintains some distance through quotation marks. As she cross-dresses the lyric with dramatic monologue, we find the boundaries of the lyric increasingly difficult to draw.

Stevie Smith, whose publishing history spreads from 1937 to her death in 1971 and then posthumously through the 1980s, meddles with the lyric in dramatisations that anticipate the widespread dialogism at the end of the century. The interplay of voices not only explores social relations but recognise the individual’s unconscious drives. “The Word” both enforces and questions the spontaneous expression of feeling associated with Romantic lyricism: “My heart leaps up with streams of joy, / My lips tell of drouth” (*Collected Poems* 542). Like Wordsworth, Smith raises the status of oral speech to literature, but draws attention to the gap between experience and the written word. The exaggeration of the pronoun (“My”/“I”) both asserts and parodies the personal centre of the poem. The compensating musicality of the

traditional lyric is both evoked and undermined by the exaggerated repetition, rhyming and uneven prosy lines. The provocation of feeling which is the pleasure and power of lyrical poetry had been pejoratively feminised by Modernism’s reaction against excessive Victorian sentimentality. In *Over the Frontier*, Smith challenges the dismissive essentialising of feminine feelings:

Even manly hearts may swell  
At the moment of farewell . . .

How true the poet’s sentiment, benign, how noble. And if the manly heart, what of the heart feminine, may not that swell and fail and tear and burst for the sadness of a mismanaged love-situation, that is so much the situation between my departed Freddie and myself. (18)

As Freddy is her fictional name for an ex-fiancé, Eric Armitage, Smith shapes the general human condition from her own experience. Although “anti-feminine”, rescuing emotion from the bin of denigrated “sentimentality” is one of her major achievements. In “Sonnet: ‘How Life Too is Sentimental’”, Smith’s contemporary, Gavin Ewart, also confronts and overrides the strain of anti-sentimentality that inhibited lyric expression of emotion. He describes the unutterable anguish of taking his baby son, who was at the point of death, to intensive and confidingly concludes:

And the word “sentimental”  
has come to mean exaggerated feeling.  
It would have been hard to exaggerate *our*  
feelings then.  
(Astley 184)

We see how the anti-emotional tide constrained men along with women. I have also illustrated the enrichment of placing poetry by men and women in dialogue. Andrew Motion, whose lyrics spill into the twenty-first century, implicitly cuts across the conventional male/female head/heart divide in his definition: “With music, with cadence, with form, poetry speaks for what

cannot be spoken, as well as what can. It does not baffle or confound the due process of thought, but opens a corridor between head and heart" (232).

In the second half of the century, one line of women continued to prefer what Martin Pumphrey calls Smith's "disruption, discontinuity and indirection" to a "consistent poetic persona or self" (87). Veronica Forrest-Thomson, Wendy Mulford and Denise Riley were joined and succeeded by the likes of Carlyle Reedy, Geraldine Monk, Maggie O'Sullivan and Caroline Bergvall. These poets foreground and defamiliarise what Claire Wills refers to as the masculine associations of the lyric tradition. They do not, as is sometimes assumed, completely undermine representation but, as Friedman observes, traverse the legendary gap between poststructuralist disregard for authentic expression and the reductive imperatives of identity politics. Similarly, Medbh McGuckian, acclaimed for her postmodern self-referentiality, famously writes in "Harem Trousers" (1988, 43), "A poem dreams of being written / Without the pronoun 'I'" but the poem fulfils the dream. Consecutively, in the eighties and nineties, Jo Shapcott, always chary about self-disclosure, treads the tightrope between disregard for artistic representation and the urge to articulate sensed experience but without the feminist consciousness-raising of the others. In interview (2006) Lidia Vianu pressed her on the question "Is autobiography bad for poetry?" and Shapcott's reply perpetuates the polarity between the personal and literary quality: "You are right that I'm not interested in self revelation but I don't see why I should be. I simply don't believe that's what poems are for. ..." <sup>3</sup> Along with Selima Hill, she avoids gendered or indeed any human affiliation through the *personae* of vegetables or animals, as in her famous "Goat".

3 Interview with Jo Shapcott. Published in Vianu.

Concurrently, towards the end of the century we find a striking number that write unashamedly about female experience. As never before, there are poems on their bodies, mastectomy, sexuality, female infidelity, a complex relation to food and shopping. In *Aquarius Women*, 1992, Leonie Rushworth complained of "a rather monotonous empiricism" (135) and was not alone in wondering whether such brazen female-centricity was to be celebrated or seen as antithetical to the project of establishing women as serious poets. Do we view her dismal dismissal as a rear-guard reaction against women's visibility whereby they are scapegoated for a more general zeitgeist where "confessionalism" is marketable? I believe it stems from the fear that poets will be tagged by the weakest links, as Sackville found in 1910, and that spurred Dooley, Greer, Bryce and Pollard to push for critical discourses that sort the wheat from the chaff.

If we want evaluative markers of the "geopolitics of identity", Jackie Kay's frequently anthologised "In My Country" imaginatively crosses national and gender boundaries yet is locally and gender specific. (We know that Kay is a black Scottish native.) It is a brilliant counter discourse to the devalued currency of "political correctness" in the 1990s:

Walking by the waters  
down where an honest river  
shakes hands with the sea,  
a woman passed round me  
in a slow watchful circle,  
as if I were a superstition;

or the worst dregs of her imagination,  
so when she finally spoke  
her words spliced into bars  
of an old wheel. A segment of air.  
Where do you come from?  
"Here" I said, "Here. These parts".<sup>4</sup>

4 Jackie Kay, "In My Country," from *Other Lovers* (Bloodaxe, 1993), copyright © Jackie Kay 1993, used by permission of the author and Bloodaxe Books Ltd.

Kay's poem emblematises where the first person pronoun is in conversation with a significant other to produce the emphatically socialised, provisional and mobile processes of self-realisation; the two parts visually reconstruct this self/other mirroring. In contrast, weaker poems lack any evocation of "what cannot be spoken" or self-reflection that Kay maintains through symbols and white spaces. The shaking of hands metaphorically contributes a resolution to the racial barrier that is missing from lived experience. It potently nourishes readers' desire for reconciliation in a way that "other discourses" may not. It typifies the conversational lyric that hinges not really being a lyric and demanding the lyric to be redefined.

Imtiaz Dharker's work has been hard to qualify in literary terms but strong symbolism and an element of self-reflexive exploration renders self-expression "geopolitical" in shifting between individual and global experience. Whereas for Kay the compensatory activity of the poem is implicit, for Dharker it is crucially overt. In her first collection *Purdah* (1988) poetry is an act of rebellion against the literal and figurative veiling of the female body. A controversial motif in *Postcards from god* (1997) is how writing in English, the language of the coloniser, brings solace and release:

call this freedom now,  
Watch the word cavort luxuriously strut  
My independence  
across whole continents of Sheets.  
(“Choice”, 49-50).

In asserting the independence of her body which is ritually the property of her husband, Dharker symbolises the freedom of uncensored writing in a forbidden tongue. The torment of exile from two cultures is partially eased by inscribing it:

And so I scratch, scratch, scratch  
through the night, at this growing  
scab of black on white.  
Everyone has a right to infiltrate

a piece of paper  
A page doesn't fight back.  
(“Minority”, 157-9).<sup>5</sup>

As here, we see women preferring assonance and dissonance to the artificial tidiness of regular form. Along with symbols, they are more flexible for producing the processes of subjectivity as opposed to a unitary poetic persona.

Most of the poets discussed so far eschew the “conservative, costive, narcissistic and smug” (Maguire) in being acutely aware of the politics of language. Carol Ann Duffy is of course the leader when it comes to substitutions of metaphor, literary ventriloquism and scrutinising forbidden drives. With the dramatic monologue as her trademark, she has always excelled in both interrogating and exploiting poetry's expressive function. In 1999, her best-selling *The World's Wife* typically established and investigated a separatist female culture and poetics. The full frontal feminism, or at least female-centricity, continued with *Feminine Gospels* (2002). What she did in the new millennium, however, was produce *Rapture* (2005), which was welcomed for seeming apolitical and “personal”: “*Rapture* ... marks a return to the interiority and personal lyrics of *The Other Country* and *Mean Time*.”<sup>6</sup> It revived her waning reputation and at last she won the T.S. Eliot prize. Now she is poet laureate. *Rapture's* dominant form is the sonnet, the lyrics traverse specific contexts and the pronouns are only female in so much as the poet is. Arguably, the intimacy and the interconnectedness are female features, but Duffy asserts the universality of her lyrics: “The poems draw on a deeply familiar, almost fairytale-like, bank of images – rivers, forests, birds, moons – to map the courses that love can take from its beginnings

5 Imtiaz Dharker *Postcards from god* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Bloodaxe, 1997). Used by permission of Bloodaxe Books.

6 “Selector's Comment”. *Poetry Book Society Bulletin* 206 (Autumn 2005): 5.



through its stops and starts and changes. I hope that these poems deal with matters common to us all and that they transcend the particulars of any individual life.”<sup>7</sup>

Here we have the post-gendered lyric whereby woman can be both a universal signifier and locally personal. Duffy flexes her freedom by appropriating the sonnet to express love between the poet and another (and autobiographically between two women). My anecdote of the male friend who found *Rapture* on my coffee table and captivated, decided to buy it for his wife, stresses the book’s geopolitical mobility. What must not go by the board, is that Duffy continues to scratch at the lyrical costumes she wears. As she adds to her comments above: “In *Rapture*, I was also interested in the love poem itself – in how much distance, if any, there is between the experience of love and the expression of it in poetic language. If love is the most powerful of emotions is the love poem the most powerful of poems?”<sup>8</sup> The fifty-two poems speak of desire, love and loss through elemental metaphors and cultural references that accommodate the everyperson reader. They also maintain and interrogate an art/life distinction: “not there/except in a poem”, she writes in “The Love Poem” (59). It is this position outside as well as inside the lyric and its traditions that can still provide the woman author with special dexterity and insight. As David Morley astutely observed: “Yet the poems are a kind of anti-literature, ... So, while *Rapture* deserves much applause for its emotional honesty, consolation, and generosity, it also deserves praise for its cunning, its impersonality, and its mercilessness, all of which virtues make the invisible work of poetry an act of concentrated ferocity (87).”

### Conclusion

Drawing upon the recent tendency towards “geopolitical identity”, I suggest

ways in which we might read variations of the lyric that free it from a feminised sentimentalised notion of confessionalism. Such continuing synonymity fails to discern the best writing and inhibits poetic practice. At the beginning of the twentieth century, its traditionally acontextual abstractions made the lyric seem the most innocuous of forms, especially in the hands of women. However, Adorno (1974), Culler (1975), Maguire (2000) and Wills (2000) view it as the most potent of literatures because it validates literary expressions of empirical experience as counter-discursive. Pollard (2001), however, is mindful to retain the lyric’s compensatory aesthetic purpose. Reading geopolitically, we avoid the reductions of a postmodern scepticism towards the articulation of a fixed, universalising unitary self or the politics of identity which seeks authentic self-expression. All through the century we find women who expertly reorientate lyrical expression through disruptive syntax, sophisticated metaphors, internal or social dialogues. Into the new century, Duffy’s acclaimed *Rapture* (2005) is autobiographical yet richly intertextual; she maintains a self-conscious gap between experience and the language available to express it. The indeterminate pronouns and rich symbolism set up a benchmark for reading “beyond gender”, that is both personally specific and globally mobile.

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7 Duffy, *PBS Bulletin* 206: 5.

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## ŽENE I LIRIKA TOKOM I NAKON DVADESETOG VIJEKA

### Rezime

U ovom radu izložen je pregled izdavačkih i kritičkih debata u vezi sa ženskom poezijom, čime se vrši pomjeranje kritičke prakse od binarnih koncepcija roda. Osvrćući se na djela dvadesetog vijeka, rad ukazuje na činjenicu po kojoj su pjesnikinje morale da pregovaraju sa tabuima usmjerenim protiv ženskog samoizražavanja u službi ženske umjetničke kreativnosti. Oslanjajući se na najnovije tendencije kretanja prema „geopolitičkom identitetu“, autorka predlaže načine na koje mogu da se čitaju varijacije lirskoga koje ga oslobađaju feminizovane sentimentalizovane ideje konfesionalizma. Adorno (1974), Kaler (1975), Megvajer (2000) i Vils (2000) gledaju na ovaj pomak kao na sastavni dio književnosti sa najvećim potencijalom, iz razloga što isti označava (potvrđuje) književni izraz empirijskog iskustva kao kontra-diskurzivni. Čitajući na geopolitički način, izbjegavaju se ograničenja postmodernog skepticizma u vezi sa artikulisanjem fiksnog, univerzalno unitarnog jastva ili politike identiteta koja insistira na autentičnom izražavanju jastva. Kroz čitav dvadeseti vijek mogu da se nađu žene koje stručno vrše preorijentaciju lirskog izraza kroz uvođenje disruptivne sintakse, sofisticiranih metafora, unutrašnjih ili društvenih monologa. Na početku novog vijeka, proslavljena zbirka poezije Kerol An Dafi, *Ushićenje (Rapture, 2005)*, predstavlja autobiografsko djelo, ali ono koje je bogato intertekstualnošću; neodređene zamjenice i raskošan simbolizam postavljaju referentni položaj iz kojeg se čita „izvan roda“, a koji je, u isto vrijeme, lično specifičan i globalno mobilan.

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