European Journal for Biblio/Poetry Therapy (2025) Vol. 1. No. 1. 22-34.
DOI: https://doi.org/10.65018/vol1iss1pp22-34

"Lyrical vandalism"
A template for the sublimation of rage in the age of ecological despair

Thor Magnus Tangerås

Associate Professor of Applied Literature
Westerdals Institute of Creativity, Kristiania University College, Oslo, Norway
ThorMagnus.Tangeras@kristiania.no

Abstract

The article presents a poetry therapy template for the sublimation of feelings of despair and rage in relation to ecological destruction. Based on examples of my own exploration of eco-poetry in *Landscape with Wind Turbines* (2024), I will show a three-stage process of working through feelings of anger, moving from semiotic to expressive modalities: destructive writing (using techniques of inversion, erasure, mutilation and interpolation); parody; and defamiliarization. I discuss how this process, which I have called *lyrical vandalism,* relates to the psychoanalytic concept of sublimation, where feelings of anger are redirected into a socially valuable form of representation. I then suggest a framework where sublimation is achieved by means of a gradual transmuting internalization of intertexts consisting of famous nature poetry. The template is based on two central premises: the iso-principle (meet the participant where they are emotionally) and the affection-principle (the participants must select model texts that they have been moved by).

Keywords: poetry therapy, ecological despair, anger, vandalism, sublimation, intertextuality, parody, shock-effects, defamiliarization

Introduction

Many students today are plagued by eco-anxiety, manifesting in either anger or apathy. A student in our BA programme in creative writing, in her early 20s, told the following story which resonated with her classmates: since her adolescence she has been very anxious about climate change and full of fury at adults for their unwillingness to deal with the crisis. And when she would express her concerns to parents, teachers and other persons of authority, she was typically met by the following response: "we are very sorry that you should feel this way". I consider such a response to be an instance of *empathic failure*: it intimates that the problem is *hers*, and that it is an intra-psychic one – *she* ought to change her feelings, it is not the world that must change. How can her emotions be met, and how may poetry help her channel her deep concern constructively? I share her despair about the destruction of the environment, and I have been exploring ways of addressing ecological disaster in my own poetry. Previously I have investigated how poems may create awe and wonder and thus increase connectedness to wonder. In this article I will trace a different path: how can poetry work with, and work through, the negative emotions of despair and rage felt by so many people in today's society (see for instance Pihkala, 2020 for an instructive analysis of Eco-Anxiety in the time of ecological crisis). Timothy Clark, in *The Value of Ecocriticism,* says that the conventional "emotive/spiritual" poetry is no longer possible within an "anthropocene context" (2019, 58–59), because it is little more than "a kind of personal therapy" collapsing

into "pastoral fantasy"; what is needed is a poetics that attends to the limits of the human in comprehending the environment (2019, 68). Various new forms of ecopoetics have been proposed in recent years (see for instance the volume *Redstart: An Ecological Poetics,* 2012, an experimental collaboration between poets Gander and Kinsella that combines both poetry and prose). I will outline an approach I have called *lyrical vandalism* that take the negative feelings as a point of departure. It aims to progressively clarify, modify and transform the emotion of anger. It is inspired in part by the self-psychology of Kohut, in which he shows how narcissistic rage may slowly be transformed into object love through a gradual process of transmuting internalization (Kohut, 1966). I will discuss a three-stage process which may be regarded as a method for the sublimation of rage. I will first discuss some problems related to ecological awareness and poetry. Thereafter I will attempt to differentiate between rage and justified indignation, in relation to the psychoanalytic concept of sublimation, before I move on to exemplify the method and discuss the principles of this eco-poetry therapy template.

The shadow side of our Sense of Connectedness to Nature

Positive emotions may result from people being captivated and engrossed by their natural surroundings; for instance, Ballew and Omoto have established experimentally how contact with nature elevates positive emotions. Their results "indicate that nature fosters awe and other positive emotions when people feel captivated and engrossed in their surroundings" (2018, 36-45). And conversely, a study conducted by Yang et al. "indicate that awe helps broaden the self-concept by including nature and increase connectedness to nature, which in turn lead to ecological behaviour" (2018, 1). However, contact with nature may also produce negative emotions. For is it not a fact today that the closer we get to nature, for instance by taking a walk in the woods, the closer we also get to negative emotions of fear, grief and anger as we are confronted by humanity's destruction of the environment? This is the *shadow-side* of our being connected to nature. The Connectedness to Nature Scale is a construct that has been operationalized in order to "measure individuals' experiential sense of oneness with the natural world" (Mayer et al., 2004, 504). However, all the questions of the CNS scale pertain to positive feelings of oneness and harmony. It does not thematize the tension between awe at nature and the fear, anger and despair we feel at seeing the consequences of our own actions.

Ecological anger is a complex phenomenon. According to Aristotle, any emotion involves not just an affection of the body and a cause, but also *intentionality:* towards whom is the anger directed? (Rossi, 2018). We feel angry, yet we ourselves are also part of the problem. In her article about the poetry of Peter Larkin, Emma Mason argues that our responses to ecological destruction

> have understandably been defined by anger and hostility to those who are perceived to be most at fault in the continued onslaught on trees and resulting wildfires, loss of clean water, and reduction of biodiversity in forests. The fury that drives these responses, however, is arguably founded on the same aggressive or strong thinking that underscores the violence it aims to oppose. The kind of thinking that might lead to a broad shift in consciousness with the potential to negate the logic of violence towards the other-than-human is a gentler one (2021, 68).

So how can we be gentle, and yet not suppress our despair and anger? Art therapy, according to Dalley (1984, 10) is "a path for expressing confused and improperly understood feeling via guiding them toward clarity and discipline". The expressive-creative category of Poetry Therapy encourages people to write, according to Mazza, as it "provides a vehicle for the client to express emotions and gain a sense of order and concreteness" (1999, 20). How would this apply to the most destructive of our negative emotions, anger and rage?

Eco-anger

Eco-protest may be regarded as a dialectic: a golden mean between acting out and repressing our destructive feelings. The most primitive form of eco-protest involving works of art consists in acts of vandalism where activists throw tomato soup onto famous paintings in museums. In such forms of protest there is no intrinsic connection between sign and referent. The art object is subjected to damage simply because it is very expensive. The wrath of the protesters is spilled onto art in an act of projected, and projective, rage. In no way can this be considered performative art. This is an anti-social action, born out of despair but perhaps mingled with self-righteousness and narcissism. It may be contrasted with that of animal rights activist Gary Yourofsky, who was livid at the injustice and cruelty towards animals, but "transformed his fury into a beneficial organization that improves and protects the lives of other sentient beings." (cited from Wisely, 1999, 1).

For something to qualify as art or poetry there must be some kind of transformation of materials. But there are other ways of metaphorically vandalizing famous artworks. The street artist Banksy has a painting in which he has used an impressionist technique to copy Monet's bridge over pond with waterlilies, but he has subverted the idyll by collocating debris, a traffic cone and a damaged shopping trolley, with the lilies in the pond. The Guardian art critic Jonathan Jones dismissively evaluated it thus: "A horrible matted version of a Monet painting with shopping trolleys and a traffic cone in the water. Is it satirising water pollution or mocking Monet? Either way it's kind of stupid." Jones misses the point here. Banksy himself has not categorized it as art. Secondly, the object of the satire is indeterminate. I will call such an approach destructive art, in the sense that it does symbolic damage to previous works, and at the same time does damage to the artists own reputation as artist, in the name of truth. The use of art and poetry to create a bridge from raw emotion to socially constructive behaviour is what in psychoanalysis is termed sublimation: diverting the expression of an impulse from its unacceptable form to one that is considered more socially or culturally acceptable. Before discussing what this process involves, I will look more closely at different aspects of anger.

Anger and indignation

In *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle says: "Anybody can become angry; that is easy. But to be angry with the right person and to the right degree and at the right time and for the right purpose, and in the right way—that is not within everybody's power" (Barnes, 1984). That anger is a negative emotion most would agree: It is unpleasant to have it and frightening to be exposed to it. What to do with it, bottle it up or act it out? That it can vary in intensity, from irritation to violent rage, is reflected in our language. Sometimes it can be childish and narcissistic ("I wanted that for myself!"), but it can also be justified: a considered and deliberate response to someone's transgression of our shared human values and laws. But this

crucial difference between my desires being thwarted and the violation of the common good is not clearly reflected in language. We have words such as wrath and ire, used more or less synonymously. It is clarifying to look at their etymology. Ire comes from the latin ira, which was deemed one of the seven deadly sins (from PIE root *eis- (1), forming various words denoting passion (source also of Greek hieros "filled with the divine, holy,"). Here we see that it is a passion or sin, but it is also being filled with the divine. Whereas wrath places the emphasis on being tormented or offended by evil or cruelty: Old English wrað "angry" (literally "tormented, twisted"). One could say that being filled with the divine or holy was an indication of a justified anger, but it is more pertinent to think that it is a self-justified sense of having the right to act out one's anger. The word that comes closest to signifying the torment at witnessing the suffering of other beings in the face of evil or cruelty, is indignation. It is defined as "anger aroused by something unjust, unworthy, or mean" (cambridge.com). According to Spinoza's Ethics, indignation is hatred toward those who have injured others (1996). Again, there is a painful and destructive component. How can one 'purify' indignation, so that it becomes a justified and socially constructive feeling or action?

One may consider destroying or damaging a painting in a museum as an expression of ire: a self-righteous passion. Whereas a non-violent form of protest at the suffering of other creatures at the hands of human-inflicted climate change and nature loss, would be an expression of moral indignation. The transformation of rage to moral indignation thus implies a double process: I must go from being certain that I am (in the) right to a state of negative capability, and I must go from blindly acting out to a measured and fitting response. In *All the Rage,* a psychoanalytically oriented investigation of the complex forms anger may take in our culture, Josh Cohen asks how we can obtain a "sense of what it would be to have a positive and meaningful experience of our anger" (2024, 152). To answer this question he distinguishes between "aggressive anger", which "stakes itself on the premise that if we already know we are right, we never have to get up close to our angry feelings, to listen to what they are saying, to what unknown anxieties and desires might secretly be driving them," and a libidinally driven anger, searching and vulnerable. The former is "an anger that is discharged in aggressive action before it can be contacted and listened to by the self who is feeling it" (2024, 179). The latter means that one neither allows "the wild horse of rage to hurtle towards blind action", nor does it mean suppressing or denying the anger. Citing Damasio, Cohen argues that this involves the experience of feelings rather than emotions. Whereas emotions are effectively stimulus responses to an event, feelings involve mapping these reactions to produce internal images of and ideas about them:

> Where emotions in Damasio's sense are essentially reactive stimulus responses (the realm of aggressive energy), feelings involve the internal mapping of those immediate stimuli, listening to and making sense of what they're telling us, raising our trigger responses to a higher level of consciousness. (…) *The transition into feeling means that emotion finds a footing in ideas and words, a mode of expression beyond reaction*. (153, my emphasis).

Feelings creatively process our affective reactions, facilitating "the possibility of creating novel, non-stereotypical responses" (xv) In Cohen's perspective, then, anger is "of a higher order than aggression, a transformation of reactive behavior into a kind of self-reflection" (2024, xv).

Thus the question becomes: how can the initially inchoate, and partly unconscious/unsymbolized aggression be transformed? Cohen cites literature as a way of exploring how anger can be marshalled as a source of creative energy. For instance, in the novel My Brilliant Friend by Elena Ferrante, there is an episode where the main character protects herself from her abusive husband by creating a work of art. She uses a photo of herself in her wedding dress, and subjects it to careful deformation. (2024, 166)

Sublimation

Sublimation was a central concept in Freud's psychoanalytic theory, developed over time. According to Hartmann,

> When first used by Freud, 'sublimation' referred to certain cultural or otherwise highly valued achievements and to their derivation from instinctual (...) sources. These phenomena were also studied as ways to avoid conflict while still achieving discharge, to escape the necessity of repression; their relations to the reaction formation (and) their role in artistic creation was recognized (1995, 9)

Laplanche and Pontalis argues that "the lack of a coherent theory of sublimation remains one of the lacunae in psychoanalytic thought." Furthermore, they ask, should the social esteem accorded an act of sublimation "be taken as a defining characteristic of sublimation?" (1973, 433). Ken Gemes has attempted to give a coherent account of sublimation and its relation to social value, stating that sublimation involves redirection of drives ("aggressive drives may find sublimated discharge in nonaggressive behaviour") to more socially valuable aims (2009, 39). He identifies two problems herein: "the problem posed by the introduction of social valuation as a defining characteristic of sublimation, and the related problem of distinguishing neurotic symptoms from sublimations." (41). An issue connected to the latter is whether repression is part of sublimation, or whether the latter is an alternative to the former. A drive has both an ideational and an energetic/affective component. The repression of the former involves not letting the aim be apprehended consciously, whereas repression of the force involves not letting it be expressed in outward action. But "all sublimations involve an expression of a pent-up quota of affect", argues Gemes (43). What sublimations undo is the repressing of the energetic component, directing it into a 'higher' or socially valuable outlet. Gemes brings in a Nietzschean perspective to differentiate, saying that "sublimations involve integration or unification, while pathological symptoms involve splitting off or disintegration" (48):

> It is not that the ideational component of the drive ceases to be suppressed but that the suppression takes on a conscious form that *somehow* allows the energetic component formerly associated with it to be redirected to new, more acceptable ends. (44, my emphasis).

It is the somehow that my approach to poetry therapy explores. How may symbolic writing exercises lead to a "cathexis of a substitute" so that the impulses "find their outlet" and work towards an increased integration of the self? Hanna Segal, in her "A Psychoanalytical Approach to Aesthetics," concludes that "a satisfactory work of art is achieved by a realization and sublimation of the depressive position." (1952, 206). Through symbolic

representations art allows us to take objects towards which we have sadistic hostile impulses and reintegrate them into a world that is "whole, complete and unified" (1952, 204).

In the following I will explicate how I have employed this in my latest poetry collection, Landscape with Wind Turbines (2024), for working with the aggressive impulses towards reintegration.

What kinds of poetics are appropriate?

The irony of the Green Shift is that in our efforts to remedy man-made climate change by introducing renewable energy, we create new problems by further destroying the landscape and wildlife. I have explored the emotional space between grief over lost species (past-directed) and anger (future-oriented) at ongoing demolition of the natural environment. The first section of the book deals with a double loss: birds that are becoming increasingly rare, but also our bird blindness: the fact that many people can no longer discern different birdsongs and different types of birds. These poems may be a form of lamenting the loss of pastoral fantasy, but are still in the elegiac mode. But in the second section I attempt to follow Jahan Ramazani's injunction that "eco poetry must transcend the elegiac mode" (2020) and acknowledge the strangeness of our situation. It explores various anti-aesthetic strategies for creating protest poetry, ranging from shock effects to concrete poetry. I found myself working with and through my own rage, in a three-stage process. The first stage may be called destructive writing, not so much a creative-expressive form of writing but of performing operations on already existing nature poetry in a mimetic act of repeating the destruction of nature and landscapes. The second stage used the satiric form of parody. The third stage returns to expressionism using defamiliarization and foregrounding. I will in the following briefly explicate each strategy.

From Eco-Anxiety to Creative Action: A Three-Stage Framework Proposal for Poetry Therapy

Stage 1: Destructive Writing

I took *nature poems that I love* and subjected them to inversion, erasure, mutilation and/or interpolation. This involves working with the materiality of the poem, or on what Julia Kristeva has called the semiotic dimension of language. For Julia Kristeva, the semiotic and the symbolic refer to two interdependent aspects of language. The semiotic is defined as the matriarchal aspect of language that show the writer's inner drives and impulses, manifesting in the tone, rhythm, images and non-semantic elements used. The symbolic is the rule-governed aspect of language, which show itself in grammatical structures and syntactic structures. The semiotic is associated with the maternal body. The symbolic, on the other hand, corresponds to grammar and syntax and is associated with referential meaning. With this distinction, Kristeva (1985) attempted to bring the "speaking body" back into linguistics and philosophy. In avantgarde poetic practices she found the recovery of elements of the semiotic that had repressed not only by society but by the symbolic order.

As an example of the inversion and mutilation techniques I will explain the operations I performed in relation to the romantic Norwegian lyric *Haugtussa,* by Arne Garborg. I was in

part inspired by the avant garde poet Lautreamont, who in his *Poesies II* (1978) states that plagiarism is necessary: "It clasps the author's sentence tight, uses his expressions, eliminates a false idea, replaces it with the right idea." So I would take the opening, where the lyric subject says he will give his song to the landscape, I invert some of the words ('to' is changed to 'from', 'give' is change to 'take') in order to transform its meaning into its direct opposite – the human celebration of nature becomes a theft of the moors and their vegetation:

Fraa deg, du Heid og bleike Myr
med Bukkeblad,
der Hegre steig og Heilo flaug,
eg tek mitt Kvad.

Fraa deg, du visne Lyng um Haug,
der Draumar sveiv,
eg tek min Song um Dimd og Draug
og dulde Liv:[1]

Moreover, Garborg goes on to describe the beauty of the landscape. But since his time, the coastal nature has been much changed as wind parks have destroyed wildlife and natural formations. Thus I simply erased the very words for those objects that are now removed from the landscape, or the view that has been obstructed – leaving blank spaces on the page:

Det stig av Hav eit Alveland
med ;
det kvi mot Himmelrand
i kveldblaa .

Eg saag det tidt som sveipt i
bak Havdis graa;
det er ein huld, ein ,
me ei naa.[2]

[1] My own prose translation into English:

From you, Heath and pale Moor
With your marsh trefoil,
Where Herons rose and Golden Plovers flew,
I take my Song.

From you, withered Heather on the Hill
Where Dreams hovered
I take my Song about the Creatures unseen
And Life hidden

[2] My own prose translation, with the parentheses marking the words I erased:

Out of the Sea rises a land of elves

European Journal for Biblio/Poetry Therapy (2025) Vol. 1. No. 1. 22-34.
DOI: https://doi.org/10.65018/vol1iss1pp22-34

This is not an instance of what is called erasure poetry. "An erasure is the creation of a new text by disappearing the old text that surrounds it", writes Mary Ruefle (2010, 78). It is the creative discovery of a new poem within an old text. Whereas the operation I have performed merely takes something away by removing elements from the poem's very landscape.

In Japanese poetry one can find a technique which combines copying with micro-transformations. The 17th century buddhist monk Enku used a technique called *okikae uta*, where he would take an entire pre-existing poem as source and simply change a few words: "change a word – / You make a new poem" (*In Heaven's River*, 2015, 17). The original poem was, according to the translator Julian Daizan Skinner, "usually one that was well known and would stand behind the new work providing depth and resonance." (2015, 17). Thus I took Goethe's famous and much-loved poem Über allen Gipfeln, ("The Wanderer's Night Song" in English, translated by Henry Wandsworth Longfellow) and first translated it into Norwegian with utmost care and devotion. Then I took a red marker pen and crossed out one word, and wrote another word over it, mimicking acts of vandalism often seen in public spaces:

over alle tindar	(O'er all the hill-tops
ei ro	Is quiet now,
i alle lin~~der~~ VINDTURBINAR	In all the t~~rees~~ WIND TURBINES
høyrest no	Hearest thou
så vidt eit sòg	Hardly a breath
småfuglane teier i lia	The Birds are asleep in the trees
vent, snart kjem tida	Wait, soon like these
for di kvild òg	Thou too shalt rest.

It was inspired by a literary movement known as *Turpismus* (after the Latin word *turpis,* 'ugly') that arose in Poland after the second world war, in which poets attempted «Elemente des Hässlichen in ein Werk einzuführen, um einen ästhetischen Shock zu bewirken»

---

with (Mountains and Moors) ;
It (rests so clear against the sky)
In the (still) blue evening

I saw it often draped (in Air)
Behind the sea mist grey
There is a (whole and holy home)
We (cannot) reach

(Fleischer, 1989, 35)[3]. For me this simple act of interpolation (a term used in music theory to signifiy a device used to extend what would normally be a regular phrase into an irregular and extended phrase, by the addition of extra music in the middle of a phrase (Caplin, 2000) contains complex emotions: after the labour of love of translating it, the process of subject the poem to a violent act felt almost masochistic. But it also felt symbolic: a means of expressing despair and anger in a physical act of vandalism that at the same time re-actualizes the model text.

Stage 2: Parody

The second stage explores a different way of working with intertextuality: parody. In 1755 Samuel Johnson defined parody as "a kind of writing, in which the words of an author or his thoughts are taken, and by a slight change adapted to some new purpose." D'Angelo, in looking at the political uses of parody, states that "a parodist's play with a model's words was central to presenting a political development in a new light. An effective parody required retaining key words from the model within a new, coherent argument" (2010, 33), thus creating a dialogical relationship with its model. The manners in which parody used intertextuality was integral to its meaning. In her interesting article on the implications of parody in early American political song, Laura Lohman investigates how parodists representing competing political parties balanced mimesis and critique of their models "to mock political adversaries, refute opponents' arguments, and expose 'truths' obscured by their rhetoric" (2020, 36), thereby providing narratives that helped communities comprehend a rapidly changing political landscape (38). Parodic lyrics were a powerful and appealing means of exposing political truths during the first party system. The aim of the parody could be to ridicule, exaggerate, caricature, create incongruity or even pay homage, but in ways both satirical and serious. (Kiremidjian, 1969). The methods they applied to the model texts were many, according to Lohman: "imitation, alteration, quotation, adaptation, allusion, substitution, changes in tone or diction, and textual rearrangement" (2020, 39). Thus we see that parody in political lyrics was much more than how it is usually understood, namely as "the comic refunctioning of preformed linguistic or artistic material" (Rose, 1993, 52).

I created several such parodies. In one of them, Shelley's Ode to the West Wind, I translated the first stanza to correspond as closely as possible to the original, only to deviate from the second stanza onwards. Thus the original's

> Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
> Pestilence-stricken multitudes: O thou,
> Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed

is modified into the epoxy-grey flakes of paint and the PFAS-particles from the wind turbine blades being charioted to their dark wintry bed.

Stage 3: Defamiliarization and foregrounding

[3] My translation into English: "to bring in elements of the Ugly into the work, in order to bring about aesthetic shock-effects".

The third stage seeks to integrate "destructive" and creative writing by combining intertextual elements with foregrounding of fresh imagery to create defamiliarization in order to let the reader see things in a new light. This is a gradually more 'creative' stage, in as much as it increasingly involves active imagination. I will give two examples (my own translations from the Norwegian). Firstly, I will quote the following poem in which Lautreamont's definition of surrealism is modified and extended further to point our attention to endangered species in Norwegian nature:

poetry is
the wind in the leaves

poetry is
winged flight

beautiful as
the unexpected meeting

between a
wind turbine and

a white-tailed eagle flying
over the open coast

A translation problem here is that the Norwegian word «blad» means both leaf and blade. The intention is to initially give the reader conventional lyrical imagery. Thus the reader will assume that «the wind in the leaves» innoculously refers to the wind playing in the trees, whereupon the shock effect of the collision with the turbine is introduced, shifting the meaning of leaf into turbine blade.

The second example is a poem-suite, «Fugues», based on the famous Norwegian fairy tale *The Twelve Wild Ducks* (by Asbjørsen and Moe), in which twelve princes are transformed into birds. The poem addresses the reader directly, asking whether they have seen or heard a series of twelve different birds that are now critically endangered. Here are the opening two stanzas:

have you heeded the call
of the black-throated loon
looming over
the islets
in sultry hours

have you stumbled upon
a willow grouse nest
among downy birch sallows
while searching
for rest

The concluding stanza then introduces the re-configured fairytale by alluding to the (now more than) 1200 windturbines along the Norwegian coast:

have you heard the fairytale
of the twelve hundred princes
who were bewitched
and transformed into
wind wights

Thus the dialectic between familiar and the alien is intended to produce an aesthetic shock effect through defamiliarization.

A template for poetry therapy of ecological despair and anger

The problem with sublimation is in empirically demonstrating that the phenomenon exists:

> Some psychiatrists have claimed support for the existence of sublimation as a healthy defense mechanism. Vaillant and Vaillant (1990) and Domino et al. (2002) found that participants who were rated as using the defense of sublimation showed the most creativity. There has not yet been any even moderately convincing experimental demonstration that sublimation occurs (Kim et al., 2013, 641).

In their own attempt to provide experimental evidence for sublimation Kim et al. found indications that Protestants produced more creative artwork when they were asked to recall an anger-inducing incident and then forced to suppress their anger. They were given instructions to recall a time when someone made them very angry, and then write about it. (2013, 639). However, my view is that to find evidence of sublimation, instead of looking for increased creativity, one should look for a transformation of anger into indignation.

Based on my own explorative process as I have tried to exemplify it above, I wish to suggest a template for a way of working therapeutically with poetry to sublimate despair and anger. Through a gradual process of transmuting internalisation, by moving along an axis from the primitive to the more sophisticated, anger is played out first through mutilating or taking things out of the original model text. Subsequently, one may move into parody, where the intertextual model is extended and bent to one's own purpose. Finally, one incorporates intertextual sources to create new symbolical expressions relying on familiar foregrounding devises, in which anger is brought into dialogue with sorrow and fear (and potentially also wonder and awe), as recommended by Cohen: "Anger becomes less rigidly defensive at the point it makes contact with neighbouring emotions like sadness and anxiety", as this is where it shifts from being an impersonal form of aggression to a manifestation of felt inner life (2024, 168).

The template rests on two futher premises: the iso-principle and the affection-principle, the first of which is a central premise in poetry therapy as well as in music therapy. The iso principle was first postulated in 1944 by Ira Altschuler in regard to the use of music with psychiatric patients. It states that the therapist meets the client at a current body state with a musical element, then moves them to a new body state by modulating the musical element. (Goldsmith, 2020, 1) It is a loose term which can be broadly defined as using one or more elements of music to meet a patient's current state, then changing said musical element(s) to lead them to a different state. The state being changed can be mood, pain level, arousal, or a

number of other states. This principle was introduced in poetry therapy by Leedy (1969) and Lerner (1976) (see Edgar, 1979).

The second principle, that of affection (Fuchs, 2014), is my own suggestion. Why the model intertext ought to be one that the participant loves or is fascinated by, is perhaps more difficult to explain. One possible way of accounting for it is by way of a model derived from Philip Davis' book *Reading for Life* (2020, 70), where he adapts a diagram from David Bleich to show the power of translation and recognition in a two-way connection between the unconscious and conscious part of the self. The unconscius is triggered when meeting the 'right match' emotionally, thereby creating a resonance in which *emergent thinking* may take place in translating and expressing a felt sense. (2020, 71).

Conclusion

This article proposes that poetry therapy for ecological despair ought to, based on the iso-principle, start from the negative emotion of anger, and through a gradual process sublimate passionate anger into a poetic form of moral indignation. By discussing my own ecopoetic explorations, I propose a three-stage process going from «destructive» writing exercises (inversion, erasure, mutilation and interpolation), via political parody, to sophisticated forms of foregrounding and defamiliarisation, in a process of transmuting internalisation of intertexts that the participants have been affected by. The template is based on the twin premises of the iso-principle and the affection-principle, as well as the mechanism of transmuting internalisation in the gradual process of sublimation. Its efficacy for poetry therapy awaits empirical confirmation, but may provide a valuable starting point for poetry therapy practitioners to test the value of this framework across various settings.

References

Ballew, M. T. & Omoto, A. M. (2018) Absorption: How Nature Experiences Promote Awe and Other Positive Emotions. *Ecopsychology*, 10(1), 26–35.

Barnes, J. (Ed.). (1984). *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation*. Princeton University Press.

Caplin, W. E. (2000). *Classical Form: A Theory of Formal Functions for the Instrumental Music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven*. Oxford University Press.

Clark, T. (2019). *The Value of Ecocriticism*. Cambridge University Press.

Cohen, J. (2024). *All the Rage: Why Anger Drives the World.* Granta.

Comte de Lautréamont. (1978). *Poésies and Complete Miscellania.* Allison & Busby.

Dalley, T. (1984). *Art as Therapy.* Tavistock Publications.

D'Angelo, F, J. (2010). The Rhetoric of Intertextuality. *Rhetoric Review,* 29(1), 31–47.

Davis, P. (2020). *Reading for life*. Oxford University Press.

Edgar, K. (1979). A Case of Poetry Therapy. *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research & Practice,* 16(1), 104–106.

Fleischer, M. (1989). *Strömungen der polnischen Gegenwartsliteratur (1945–1989). Ein Überblick*. Peter Lang, Frankfurt a. M.

Fuchs, T. & S C Cock, S. C. (2014). 'Embodied Affectivity: on moving and being moved', *Frontiers in Psychology*, 5, 508. Doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2014.00508, 1–12.

Gander, F., & Kinsella, J. (2012). Redstart: *An Ecological Poetics*. University of Iowa Press.

Gemes, K. (2009). Freud and Nietzsche on Sublimation. *Journal of Nietzsche Studies*, 38 (FALL), 38–59.

Hartmann, H. (1955). Notes on the Theory of Sublimation. *The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child*, *10*(1), 9–29. https://doi.org/10.1080/00797308.1955.11822547

Johnson, S. (1755). *A Dictionary of the English Language*. Vol. 2.W. Strahan.

Jones, J. (2024, August 14). *Kissing coppers to rutting rhinos: Banksy's artworks – ranked!* https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/article/2024/aug/14/banksy-artworks-ranked-street-artist

Kim, E., Zeppenfeld, V., & Cohen, D. (2013). Sublimation, culture, and creativity. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 105(4), 639–666.

Kiremidjian, G. D. (1969). The Aesthetics of Parody. *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 28 (2), 231–242.

Kohut, Heinz. Forms and transformations of narcissism. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic association* 14.2 (1966) 243–272.

Kristeva, J. (1985). *Revolution in Poetic Language*. Columbia University Press.

Laplanche J. & Pontalis, J. (1973). *The Language of Psychoanalysis.* Norton.

Lohman, L. (2020). 'More Truth than Poetry': Parody and Intertextuality in Early American Political Song. *MUSICultures*, 47, 34–62.

Mayer, F S & McPherson, F. C. (2004). The connectedness to nature scale: A measure of individuals' feeling in community with nature. *Journal of Environmental Psychology,* 24, 503–515.

Mason, E. (2021). *Tree being in Peter Larkin's "Skies in Flight of Trees".* Etudes Anglaises, 74 (1), 68–81. Doi:10.3917/etan.741.0068 ISSN 0014-195X.

Mazza, N. (1999). *Poetry Therapy: Interface of the arts and psychology*. CRC Press.

Pihkala, P. (2020). Anxiety and the ecological crisis: An analysis of eco-anxiety and climate anxiety. *Sustainability*, 12(19), 7836.

Ramazani, J. (2020). *Poetry in a Global Age*. University of Chicago Press.

Rose, M. A. (1993). *Parody: Ancient, Modern, and Post-Modern.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Rossi, G. (2018). Aristotle on the indetermination of accidental causes and chance. *Journal of Philosophical Research.* Doi: 10.5840/jpr2018925136

Ruefle, M. (2010). On erasure. *Quarter after Eight: A Journal of Prose and Commentary*, 16*,* 78–84.

Segal, H. (1952). A psychoanalytical approach to Aesthetics". *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 33, 196–207.

Skinner, J. D. & Hayashi, S. (2015). *In Heaven's River. Poems and Carvings of Mountain-Monk Enku.* Zenways Press.

Spinoza, B de. (1996) (1677). Of the origin and nature of the affects. In *Ethics*. Penguin Books.

Tangerås, T. M. (2024). *Landskap med Vindturbinar.* Det Norske Samlaget.

Wisely, J. (1999). Activist Risks Life, Liberty and Lawsuits to Protect Animals. The Oakland Press 1 Aug. 1999: n. pag. Web. 25 Oct. 2014.

Yang Y, Jing H., Fengjie, J. & Nguyen, B. (2018). From Awe to Ecological Behaviour: The Mediating Role of Connectedness to Nature. *Sustainability,* 10–14.