

SLOW SCIENCE WORKSHOP

Expressing poetic correspondences

Anna-Emilia Haapakoski & Salla Jutila

Anna-Emilia Haapakoski
Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Lapland, Rovaniemi, Finland
anna-emilia.haapakoski@ulapland.fi

Salla Jutila
Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Lapland, Rovaniemi, Finland
salla.jutila@ulapland.fi

In today's societies, where industrial structures determine the pace of life, people are constantly exposed to time poverty. Time poverty is a vicious circle, where the lack of time leads to a spiralling need to be faster in order to make time, which in turn deepens the state on both personal and collective levels. Research has shown that time poverty leads to not only tiredness but superficial engagement and processing of knowledge, among other issues (e.g. Hyde et al., 2020; Oh et al., 2016). Some might experience this as a lack of depth in our relationships with each other (Roeland, 2023), while leading up to extractivist approaches and exhaustion of the Earth (Chaudhary, 2024).

Resistance to the ever-accelerating modern culture has been expressed through a variety of social movements in the name of slowness, increasingly and with different focal points since the start of the first slow movement, Slow Food, in 1986 (van Bommel & Spicer, 2011). As contemporary philosopher Isabelle Stengers (2018, p. 104) articulates: "slow, today, designates all those social movements that endeavor to escape what has been put forward in the name of efficiency, and discover that in this name many relations have been cut or destroyed, to be replaced by divisions and oppositions between contractionary interests." Slow science is one of the slow movements that do not share an organizational structure but are active in their attempts to remake social practice, in this case science, from the ways that the demand to move fast forward has done it an injustice.

...I would characterise slow science as the demanding operation that would reclaim the art of dealing with, and learning from, what scientists too often consider messy, that is, what escapes general, so-called objective, categories. (Stengers, 2018, p. 120)

In addition to being inspired by the reclaiming operation of the slow movements and joining this with slow science, we were curious about the responses that people, in this case the participants of the SuMu symposium, may have to the matter of fast-paced society. We wanted to know how they feel about it, make a space for expression, and, as we knew them to be scientists themselves, we thought it would be fun to try out a method of slow science to experiment with, and to develop into further use.

Slowing down is often linked with pausing, reflecting, and creating a safe space for identifying one's needs and desires. This is important, especially since time and the use of it are not divided equally (Hersey, 2024; Hyde et al., 2020). Tricia Hersey (2024, p. 121), who has framed rest as resistance, writes: "It's about more than naps and is a full-on pushback and political statement against the systems that want to see us constantly moving, doing, and going in a frenzy". Slowing down has also been explored relationally, for example, from the perspectives of sensitivity and fragility, paying attention to the intertwined relationships of different agencies and their assemblages (Jutila et al., 2024).

Slow science points out the symbiosis between science and technical-industrial innovation that has developed into a relation of capture in which the scientist in service of the capitalist system (Stengers, 2018). Similar limitative power predefining knowledge can be found on the ontological and epistemological levels, foundational for science, in the demand of 'justification' which in the field traditionally (and still dominantly) requires proof of knowledge, as words, numbers, and logics, in contrast to the dynamic, living, embodied, sensual, and untamed (see Barone & Eisner, 2012; Ulmer, 2017).

Like many phenomenologists and researchers in support of non-representational and more-than-human methodologies (e.g. Rantala et al., 2024; Vannini, 2025), we have come to appreciate the role of 'experience' and 'encounter' at the core of understanding and thus are compelled to explore their transmission into words. In our workshop, we hosted a poetic exercise. The method uses a constellation of words to depict an experience, but our focus was on the 'correspondence' of ideas between the film, the audience, the personal, and the collectively shared.

We started by watching an experimental film *Requiem for growth* by the HIDAS art collective³. **HIDAS art collective** studies time, change and identity by making films, photography, music and audiovisual installations. In their work, they engage with slowness also methodologically in their choices of production. The film in question has been shot on 16 mm film using a photogram technique, where various objects such as pieces of equipment, plants, soil and printed material are placed directly on film and exposed manually.

³ Explore the works of HIDAS art collective: [HIDAS – Taitelijaryhmä H I D A S](#)

The duration of the workshop was 30-40 minutes. (Note: an hour would be more ideal!)



Figure 1

Slow Science Workshop. Photograph by Emily Höckert

The idea of endless growth has been a religion-like concept in our societies for over a century. The experimental film "Requiem for Growth" is a kind of funeral for the idea of endless growth. The film explores and reflects on thoughts and feelings related to the end of growth, destruction and the construction of the new before and after the tipping point.

Hannu Nieminen, HIDAS art collective



Film 'Requiem for Growth' by HIDAS art collective.

Available in: Requiem for Growth – HIDAS. Concept, visual and edit: Hannu Nieminen.

Film exposures: Timo Jansson. A HIDAS production 2022.

After the screening (6:53 minutes), we continued to work individually with the experiences evoked by the film. We handed out a selection of newspapers and magazines. Everyone also got a piece of blank paper, scissors, and a glue stick. The instruction was to choose 6-16 words to cut out from the newspapers to organize on one's own blank paper.

Why the choice of poetics to explore correspondence?

Poems are constellations of words, but poetry is also a practice that offers a very particular form in which to interpret and represent (human) experience and should not be viewed simply as another writing template (Leavy, 2020). Poems have the ability to escape and flood over the preassigned form of sentences, leaving space for knowing that might well not fit into their frames. Importantly, as we claimed at the beginning of the workshop, there is no need to be a poet to experiment with poetic expression! We quoted a favorite poet (and a Black feminist icon) Audre Lorde, who says that poetry is not a luxury, but a vital necessity for survival and change. Learning from Lorde (1984, p. 36), this is poetry as illumination, for it is through poetry that we give name to those ideas which are, until the poem, formless, about to be birthed, but already felt. Lorde directs her empowering message of the use of poetry especially to

those marginalized by the mainstream language and discourses, as she believes poetry can transform suppressed experiences into hope and action.

What makes the use of poetics exceptional for research purposes is precisely that poetic inquiry is sensitive to the non-verbal, the intuitive. According to Patricia Leavy, author of various method books for arts-based research, poems are highly attentive to space, which includes breath and pauses, using words sparsely in order to paint what she terms ‘a feeling-picture’. As she describes (2020, p. 85): “poems use words, rhythm, and space to create sensory scenes where meaning emerges from the construction of both language and its absence”. The film we screened did not include words despite the title. We also didn’t share the short description, kindly shared to us by Hannu Nieminen from the HIDAS collective, before the screening, to avoid giving any substantive cues for the experience. There was no need for the experiences to be similar.

After the private period of working (20 minutes, note: ideally this would be at least 30 minutes), some of the poems were shared out loud. This was a powerful moment. From what we have experienced before with the method, poetic expression often surprises even the one responsible for its constellation. Sharing the experience with the poetic method includes a sense of vulnerability from the one expressing, and togetherness, that is evoked by the others listening, some even holding their breath, silently weaving a safety net for the words to land.



Figure 2

Poems created during the workshop. Photograph by Anna-Emilia Haapakoski

We concluded the workshop by discussing the potential of evocative artistic methods to offer new insights into multilayered socio-ecological relationships. We were happy to receive questions on how to apply the poetic method further. Many of the participants working as university teachers and lecturers, like us, found the exercise to be a creative add to the classroom. For slow science, poetry works well as it offers a format for the thought to transcend common timelines and to engage with the unexpected.

As the SuMu symposium focused on sustainable naturecultures and inclusive multispecies futures, we of course considered the possible benefits of the method for the benefit of more-than-human understanding. If we think of correspondence as a way of exploring and arranging reciprocity in multispecies relations, we might find it a useful notion. We might become more careful, considerate and creative in translating worlds into language. We might want to rethink the metrics with which we assert value and meaning to things, to each other, and ponder upon the actual possibilities of creating common ground – like in correspondence between states. It has to be even more nuanced in an ‘naturecultural’, or ‘multispecies’ setting where only humans use words to begin with. While poetic inquiry still utilizes the element of words, it takes a bottom-up approach in the use of language as it taps into and prioritizes the moment that precedes words.

To conclude, we enjoyed the workshop and hope it sparked inspiration for action (of some kind) – perhaps it is a series of naps or a poem. We hope it also offered a fine start to the three symposium days of togetherness to follow. Here we would like to leave you with words of one of the poets who inspires us to continue the work of slowness, Tricia Hersey:

The work is to first gain deep awareness that the pace at which this culture is functioning is not normal or sustainable. This understanding offers an invitation for the collective pilgrimage we are on as we attempt to disrupt and push back against a system that has no pause button. Stay here for a while. Stay in the space of knowing that you are not a failure, inadequate or unworthy because you are tired and want to rest. (Hersey, 2024, p. 67)

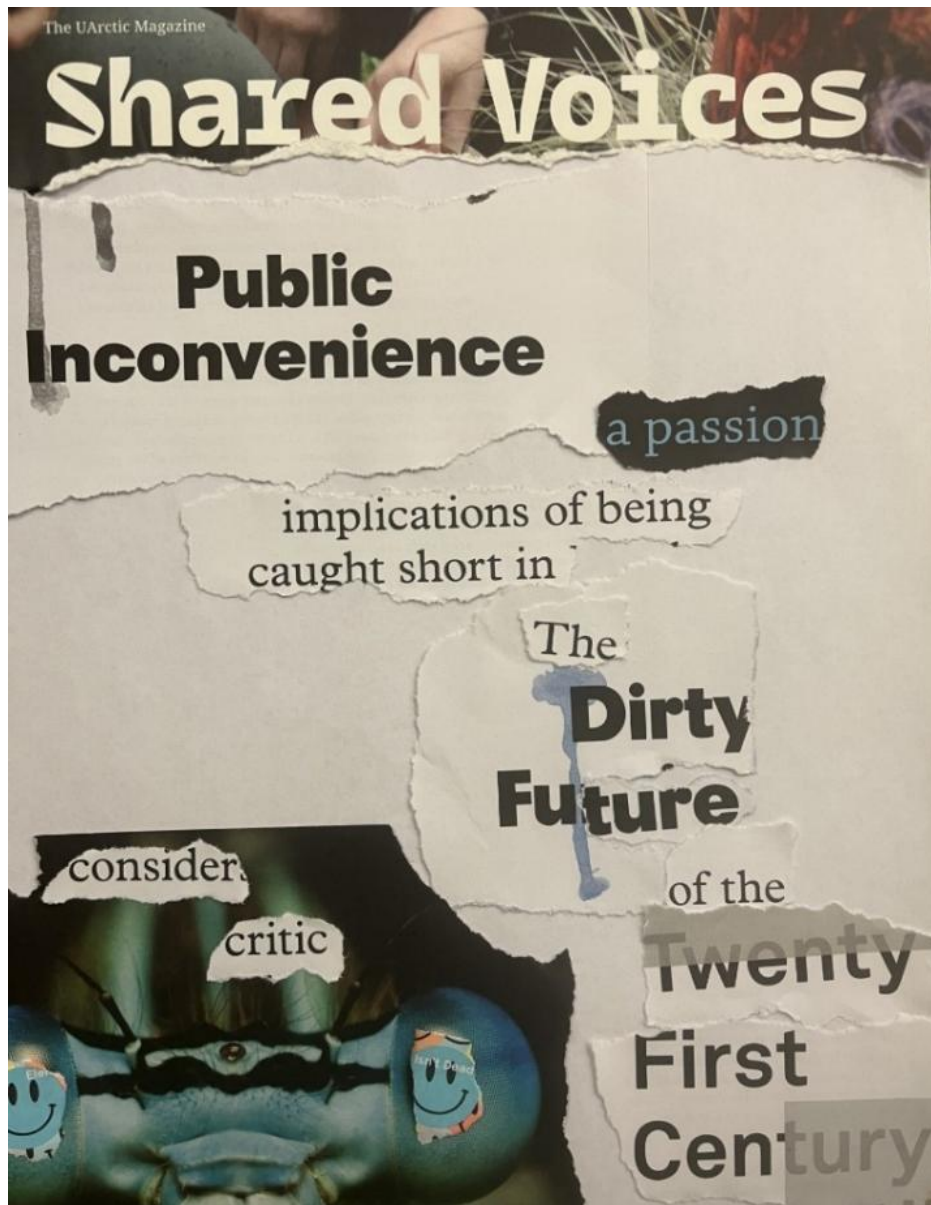


Figure 3

A poem from the workshop. Photograph by Anna-Emilia Haapakoski

REFERENCES

Barone, T., & Eisner, E. W. (2012). *Arts based research*. SAGE.

Chaudhary, A. S. (2024). *The exhausted of the Earth: Politics in a burning world*. Repeater Books.

Hersey, T. (2024). *Rest is resistance. Free yourself from grind culture and reclaim your life*. Aster*.

Hyde, E., Greene, M. E., & Darmstadt, G. L. (2020). Time poverty: Obstacle to women's human rights, health and sustainable development. *Journal of Global Health, 10*(2), 020313. <https://doi.org/10.7189/jogh.10.020313>

Jutila, S., Höckert, E. & Rantala, O. (2024). Becoming fragile. In O. Rantala, V. Kinnunen, E. Höckert (Eds.), *Researching with proximity: Relational methodologies for the Anthropocene* (s. 43-57). Arctic Encounters. Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-39500-0_3

Leavy, P. (2020). *Methods meets art: Arts-based research practice*. The Guilford Press.

Lorde, A. (1984). *Sister outsider*. The Crossing Press.

Oh, H., Assaf, A. G., & Baloglu, S. (2016). Motivations and goals of slow tourism. *Journal of Travel Research, 55*(2), 205-219. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287514546228>

Rantala, O., Kinnunen, V. & Höckert, E. (Eds.) (2024). *Researching with proximity: Relational methodologies for the Anthropocene*. Arctic Encounters. Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-39500-0_3

Roeland, J. (2023). The slow garden: Gardening as deceleration. *Cross currents (New Rochelle, N.Y.), 73*(4), 420-426. <https://doi.org/10.1353/cro.2023.a923593>

Stengers, I. (2018). *Another science is possible: A manifesto for slow science*. Polity Press.

Ulmer, J. B. (2017). Writing slow ontology. *Qualitative Inquiry, 23*(3), 201-211. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800416643994>

van Bommel, K., & Spicer, A. (2011). Hail the snail: Hegemonic struggles in the Slow Food movement. *Organization Studies, 32*(12), 1717-1744. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840611425722>

Vannini, P. (Ed.) (2025). *Non-representational and more-than-human research: Vitalist methodologies for the end of data*. Routledge.