

Benchmarks/Abstracts/Keywords

[Roman Katsman](#) is a Full Professor in the Department of Literature of the Jewish People, Bar-Ilan University, Israel. He is the author of the books *The Time of Cruel Miracles: Mythopoesis in Dostoevsky and Agnon* (2002), *Poetics of Becoming: Dynamic Processes of Mythopoesis in Modern and Postmodern Hebrew and Slavic Literature* (2005), *At the Other End of Gesture: Anthropological Poetics of Gesture in Modern Hebrew Literature* (2008), 'A Small Prophecy': *Sincerity and Rhetoric in the Works of S.Y. Agnon* (2013), *Literature, History, Choice: The Principle of Alternative History in Literature* (2013), *Nostalgia for a Foreign Land: Studies in Russian-Language Literature in Israel* (2016). Beginning with his article in Hebrew on GA in Agnon's works (2001), Katsman has written on the issues of GA in almost every one of his publications in English and Hebrew. Also his new book *Laughter in the Heaven: Symbols of Laughter in the Works by S.Y. Agnon* that is expected in 2018 incorporates originary thinking in its method.

Article: [Crisis of the Victimary Paradigm in Contemporary Russian Literature in Israel \(An applied case study of Eric Gans's Generative Anthropology\)](#)

Abstract: The article describes the paradigm shift that can be viewed as a constitutional characteristic of the contemporary Russophone literature in Israel: the rejection of, in Eric Gans's terms, victimary thinking. The analysis reveals that the narrative of hero and warrior in the works of such writers as Dina Rubina, David Markish and Alex Tarn has been challenged by the narrative of aborted gesture of appropriation and return to the originary scene, the narrative that seems to become the most inherent and dominant chronotope in the works of such writers as Dennis Sobolev, Elizaveta Mikhailichenko, Yury Nesis, Yakov Shechter, and Anna Fain.

Keywords: Russian literature, Israeli literature, Generative Anthropology, victimary thinking, violence in literature, contemporary prose

[Marina Ludwigs](#) teaches English Literature at Stockholm University. She has a PhD in Comparative Literature from UC Irvine and has worked with, and presented papers on, both Girardian theory and Generative Anthropology. Her current interest is bringing into dialogue narratology and Generative Anthropology.

Article: [Cringing and Other Desacralizing Affects in Post-Millennial Aesthetics](#)

Abstract: This article argues for the emergence of a new film aesthetic that evokes and plays on the viewer's extreme discomfort, cringing, and a feeling of awkwardness. These effects and affects build on exploiting what Generative Anthropology refers to as the *scene* of human communication and representation. While earlier, postmodern,

experiments worked on deconstructing the narrative form, such as subverting the audience's assumptions about the plot structure or violating the separation between the story and narrative frame, the new aesthetic, by contrast, overturns the conventions of narrative ethics. The main claim here is that some recent films deliberately disrupt narrative communication on the performative level by undermining the *scene* that enables it. The viewer, who is first invited to share in laughing at a person or situation, later realizes that it is he or she who is the object of the joke. What distinguishes this moment of self-recognition from other, more conventional satirical treatments that include the audience as the target of satire is the way the postmillennial staging of this moment utilizes and underscores the temporality of aesthetic response. The audience experiences a cognitive and emotional "turn"—a swing from the feeling of inclusion to that of exclusion and betrayal. It is the temporal nature of this experience that is crucial, it is argued. By making temporality palpable, the new aesthetic strategies highlight the performativity of narrative communication, which, in turn, reveals and thematizes the *scene*.

Keywords: postmodernism, postmillennialism, metamodernism, performatism, high art, low art, the cinematic narrator, rhetorical affects in film

Richard van Oort is Professor of English at the University of Victoria. In 2014 he organized the [GA conference in Victoria](#) and in 2018 was elected to the office of President of the Generative Anthropology Society and Conference. He has published over 20 articles and is the author of two books, *The End of Literature: Essays in Anthropological Aesthetics* (Davies Group, 2009) and *Shakespeare's Big Men: Tragedy and the Problem of Resentment* (University of Toronto Press, 2016). Links to his articles can be found [here](#).

Article: [Sad Stories of the Death of Kings](#)

Abstract: This paper reviews Simon Simonse's recently updated monograph *Kings of Disaster*. One of few anthropological studies documenting the scapegoating of kings among African societies, Simonse's field work would seem to provide irrefutable evidence for René Girard's theory of the violent origins of human social organization. I summarize the author's argument and offer some criticisms of the underlying theory. Simonse's account of human origin, like Girard's before him, assumes precisely what it needs to explain, namely, the reasons why humans engage in scapegoating in the first place. These reasons cannot be reduced to a biological drive to defend the home or territory. On the contrary, they exist only within the cultural and symbolic context of the hypothetical scene of human origin. Once this fact is recognized, we are free to modify the model to include only those elements necessary for anthropological explanation.

Keywords: Simon Simonse, *Kings of Disaster*, rainmaker kings of central Sudan,

dualism, centralism, scapegoat, René Girard, Eric Gans

[Dr. Joakim Wrethed](#) is associate professor and senior lecturer in English Literature at Stockholm University. He primarily explores the contemporary novel in English without any particular emphasis on national boundaries. He has published on several contemporary authors, including John Banville, Margaret Atwood, Don DeLillo and Tom McCarthy. Phenomenology, epistemology, aesthetics, technology and theology are overarching themes in his scholarly work.

Article: [Suffering as the Embodiment of the Sacred in Hugo von Hofmannsthal's "A Letter" and "Tale of the 672nd Night"](#)

Abstract: In Eric Gans's theoretical framework, the sacred may be seen as a ritualised re-enactment of the inaccessibility of the appetitive object. This set-up calls attention to more formalised situations in which the separation of the profane and the sacred are upheld. Drawing on the work of C. Jason Throop, as well as Gans, the present article attempts to trace the blurring of this distinction in terms of embodied suffering in two short stories by *fin de siècle* author Hugo von Hofmannsthal. Throop highlights the encounter with the sacred not only in terms of an experience of a limit or a zone of the unknowable, but also as a phenomenological transformation of aspect (what Wittgenstein called "aspect-dawning"). This experiential conversion in itself obscures a clear line of demarcation between the sacred and the profane. In Throop's words, the instants focused on are "moments in which the reality of our singularity, vulnerability, and finitude is made manifest. The seeds for such forms of phenomenological modification are also found in more mundane, profane, and everyday experiences. This includes everyday experiences of pain and suffering." The article analyses literary manifestations of phenomenological modifications that display the suffering of the lack of adequate language as manifestations of the sacred in the fiction of Hofmannsthal.

Keywords: generative anthropology, sacred, embodied suffering, Gans, Throop, limits of language