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Splitting the atom

Lexical creativity and the image of the Icelandic atom poets

1 Introduction

New Icelandic compound words formed with the first element *atóm-* ‘atom’ in the mid-twentieth century reflect aspects of the popular image in Icelandic culture of poetic modernism and other modernist and avant-garde artistic movements, as well as the ethos of the early Cold War. Because free verse and poetic modernism emerged in Iceland only in the 1940s, the “atom” became a symbol of this movement and aesthetic – through the resonance of a coining by Nobel author Halldór Laxness, adopted by the poets through various metaphorical connections to their aesthetics and political concerns. Reflections of the nuclear proliferation of the early Cold War infiltrated different areas of culture widely in Europe and North America, with connotations of technical achievement and promise coupled with existential fear (see e.g. Paju 2004). However, the explicit connection between the atom bomb and a literary movement is specific to Iceland. Some of the atom poets’ work thematicized issues of the nuclear age, but the connotations of “atom” pertain less to the content of the poetry than its form, in metaphors that Eysteinn Þorvaldsson (1980:104) explores – paring poetic language down to its basic elements, as well as “exploding” the conventions of poetry.

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Compounds containing *atóm-* show a wide range of referents, some of them quite distant from the basic meaning ‘atom’, but connected metonymically to various aspects of the “atomic age”, to modern free verse and, by extension, abstract visual art and modern art music, as well as to the figure of the bohemian “atom poet”, inspired by Halldór Laxness’ novel *Atómstöðin* [The Atom Station] (Halldór Laxness 1948, transl. Magnús Magnússon 1961).

The use of an international term rather than a native Icelandic word or neologism marks the *atóm-* compounds as (potentially) different and metaphorical, enabling their metonymic use in a wide range of compounds and collocations. By contrast, the accepted Icelandic neologism for ‘atom’, *frumeind* ‘basic unit’, retains its transparency as a compound and tends to decompose semantically to ‘basic unit’ when used in other contexts, rather than carrying the same connotations as *atóm*.

As a loan word used in the post-war years, when the puristic tradition was largely uncontested but the language was widely perceived as being under threat due to English influence from the new American military presence (Ari Páll Kristinsson 2012:348–349), *atóm-* also iconizes the foreign influences that came with World War II. The collocation “á þessari jassöld og atóms” (Rödd framliðins talaði af diktafón í Ríkisútvarpið í fyrrakvöld 1957:12) [in this jazz and atom age] uses two loan words to summarize the period in arts and sciences.

The article is structured as follows: In section 2, the Written Language Archive (*Ritmálssaftn Orðabókar Háskólans*, henceforth ROH) is introduced and some of the difficulties of working with such a lexicographic archive are noted. Section 3 presents the concept of lexical creativity (Ronneberger-Sibold 2000) and discusses its relationship to productivity, as well as the potential for highly varied interpretations of noun-noun compounds noted by Downing (1977). Section 4 concerns the distribution and connotations of *frumeind* vs. *atóm* ‘atom’. Section 5 introduces the atom poets and modernist literary movements in mid-twentieth century Iceland. Section 6 focuses on the figure of the atom poet in Halldór Laxness’ novel *Atómstöðin*. Section 7 presents examples of *atóm-* compounds used in connection with the atom poets in their own words and in critical discourse, and section 8 discusses the image of the atom poet as a broader cultural trope as it emerges from citations. In section 9, a comparison is made to a short-lived later fashion for compounds in *gúanó-* ‘guano’, relating to types of popular music that in some cases were contrasted expressly with atom modernism. Conclusions are summarized in section 10.

2 The Written Language Archive and uses of traditionally sampled lexical archives

This paper is based primarily on data from the Written Language Archive (*Ritmálssafn Orðabókar Háskólans, ROH*) of the Árni Magnússon Institute for Icelandic Studies. *ROH* contains a total of two million examples representing some 600,000 headwords, taken from a broad range of Icelandic texts in different genres dating from 1540 onward (starting from Oddur Gottskálksson's translation of the New Testament, used as a cut-off point for the distinction between Old and Modern Icelandic). The examples are classified by period (from the mid-sixteenth to the late twentieth century). A large part of the archive is available online, the rest of it on paper slips in Reykjavík (some examples are found only in the digital archive). The archive thus provides a broad cross-section of word usage in texts of different types. Most examples appear in the database with an immediate context (a sentence or two) but also a reference to the original source, which makes it possible to recover a broader context. This archive, which provides a manageable number of examples so that each attestation can be examined individually, can thus be used for pilot studies which will either proceed in a quantitative direction (working with larger corpora) or in a qualitative direction exploring in greater depth the use of words in specific texts. Although the data are limited, they can be used to explore patterns of coinage and semantic change.

ROH is a lexicographic database based on traditional sampling, a hand-collection method widely used in the days before electronic corpora and processing. Traditional lexicographic sampling involves hand-skimming sources and noting examples which strike the lexicographer's eye; they may be perceived as representative, or as distinctive or novel. Card archives such as this one form the basis for many lexicographic projects of the twentieth century. The selection mode favors novel uses and nonce formations. It does not reflect statistical frequency in usage but can give a sense of the lexical potential of words and morphemes.

Čermák (2003:18–19) discusses ways in which traditional lexicographic sampling differs from modern corpus linguistics. He criticizes hand-sampling as unreliable, as humans may not be reliable judges of “typical” or “specific” uses of words, although research suggests that speakers are sensitive to frequency of words and collocations (e.g.

Arnon & Snider 2010). Despite their shortcomings, traditional lexicographic databases represent significant resources and vast amounts of effort, and it would be desirable to find ways of making use of them that meet today's standards.

The data presented in this study include a number of words that are probably nonce formations and may never have become established in common usage; at least, their attestations in *ROH* are restricted to a single text and they do not appear in standard dictionaries. However, the possibility of their creation and their intelligibility to readers and hearers depend on a shared context for interpretation of nonce compounds (cf. Downing 1977). This context includes non-linguistic factors such as literary and artistic trends as well as the political situation. In the period leading into the Cold War, as modernism emerged in Icelandic poetry and arts, the atom became a potent symbol for both the cultural and political climate of the time.

The focus here is on compounds formed with the prefix *atóm-* that relate to the atom poets and their context, emphasizing the cultural connotations of the words in light of the attestations found in the archive.

3 Lexical creativity and productivity

There has been much discussion of the relationship among productivity, analogy and creativity in word formation. The view favored here is that productivity is a gradient property (cf. Bauer 2001); that rather than a difference in kind between productivity and analogy there are variable prototype and frequency effects (cf. Bybee 2001); and that word formation is always creative, though it varies in its degree of self-consciousness. Ronneberger-Sibold (2000:103) refers to the ability to coin words as “creative competence”.

Creative competence is our capacity to exceed the limits of our linguistic system in a creative manner, thereby anticipating the reactions of the other members of our speech community in order to influence them in a certain way. This means that creative competence is not a hermetic or individual phenomenon – in this case it would not be a part of linguistic competence in the strict sense – but a social one. (Ronneberger-Sibold 2000:103)

New words must not only be coined but also understood by hearers. The interpretation of new words depends on both the general cultural context and the specific speech situation; in the absence of a usage context, subjects may interpret a compound in a wide variety of ways (Downing 1977). Noun-noun compounds in various languages admit a broad range of semantic interpretations regarding the relationship between the elements. They are interpreted according to cultural scripts, which can be quite complex and can even encapsulate narratives (like kennings in Old Norse skaldic verse). Downing (1977) reports on an experiment on English noun-noun compounds (often written as two words) in which she asked subjects to suggest or evaluate possible interpretations for such nonce formations as “pumpkin bus” or “pea princess”. Meanings suggested by subjects for the latter included:

a fairy princess who rules the pea people; the fairy-tale princess who felt the pea under her mattresses; the princess who can feel a pea under 20 mattresses; the princess of the Pea kingdom; the princess with a pea-shaped head, shaped like a pea, with the color of a pea, size of a pea, power of a pea; someone who is very sensitive to very small things being unusual; a princess whose identity is accidentally discovered; a princess whose family is rich with pea farms; someone overly sheltered – spoiled, ‘soft’ etc.; daughter of a pea magnate; princess chosen by passing the pea test; fairy-tale princess of a pea patch; (over)sensitive person; a genuine princess, one who passes the test of a pea under 20 mattresses. (Downing 1977:820)

These interpretations evoke the semantic frame of the wonder tale of the princess and the pea, as well as aspects of the fairy-tale genre more generally. The subjects have also interpreted the fairy tale metaphorically to create terms of more general applicability based on the salient characteristic of the princess in that story. Meanings such as “daughter of a pea magnate” are clearly modeled on other similar “princess” compounds in English (X *princess* = heiress to a fortune made on commodity X).

Trying to pin down the semantic relation between the parts of a compound in terms of traditional categories may be beside the point, as the precise relation between the elements may be fluid and less

salient to speakers than a general connection that may involve several steps of association.

It is characteristic of self-conscious “creative” coinages in particular that they invite reinterpretation and “folk etymology”, and that several interpretations are present at once. This can be seen, for example, in nickname formation. For instance, one Icelander had been called Bassi since childhood, probably as a hypocoristic form of *barn* ‘child’ plus diminutive suffix *-si*. However, as an adult, Bassi played the string bass (*bassi*) and sang with a deep bass voice (*bassi*) (Willson 2007:91). Independent of the ultimate origin of the nickname, the latter connotations are synchronically part of its meaning to the informant who reported the anecdote.

4 Loan words and neologisms: *atóm* vs. *frumeind* ‘atom’

Icelandic is famous for the comparative success of puristic efforts to avoid loan words in favor of neologisms. *Atóm* is of course an international term taken from the Greek, while the “proper” Icelandic term is *frumeind* or ‘basic unit’, a neologism from the early twentieth century (the oldest attestation in *ROH* is from 1910).

In contrast to many language communities, in Icelandic native terms (neologisms) often belong to a more formal register or are regarded as higher status than loan words; this was shown, for example, in a cross-Nordic comparison using match-guise tests (Halldóra Björt Ewen & Kristiansen 2006:36–37). Subjects were presented with different versions of the “same” news story which varied in the density of loan words. They were told that the speakers were interviewing for jobs as radio reporters and asked to assess their qualifications and personal characteristics. The cultural salience of the choice between loan words and neologisms in Iceland is sufficiently high that many subjects immediately figured out that this was the focus of the experiment and commented that anyone should know that one could not use such loan words on the radio. Similar results have been obtained using other methods (Hanna Óladóttir 2009, Ari Páll Kristinsson & Hilmarsson-Dunn 2015).

In the case of *atóm* and *frumeind*, it is the loan word which acquires a secondary meaning and which dominates metaphorical uses in com-

pound formation. The status of the Nobel laureate Halldór Laxness may well have helped contribute to the acceptance of the loan word in this specific context. The use of the foreign term also connotes the international impulses behind the movement, whereas calques and neologisms are “nativized”, partly stripped of international connotations and history. If democracy is calqued as *lýðræði* ‘people-rule’, the transparency is highly democratic in that you do not need to know Greek to parse the term, but on the other hand the history of the concept with its Greek roots is obscured.

Frumeinda(r)- does appear as the first element of compounds – no fewer than 62 different compounds listed in *ROH*, 50 formed with the genitive plural *-a-* and 12 with the genitive singular *-ar-*. These compounds seem in general to refer to the literal meaning of ‘atom’ in the context of physics, chemistry or nuclear technology. The first citations for a large fraction of them date from the mid-twentieth century and are found in encyclopedic or scientific words such as *Alfræðasafn AB* (1965–1968) or *Undur veraldar* (Shapley et al. 1945). While many of these compounds are not listed as such in other dictionaries such as *Íslensk orðabók* (2002), their meanings are for the most part transparent.

The compounds formed with *atóm-* also date from the twentieth century. While some are first attested in similar scientific contexts (e.g. the periodical *Náttúrufræðingurinn*), the range of sources for attestation is greater and includes literary works, such as Þórbergur Þórðarson’s *Bréf til Láru* (1924:199) (*atómakening* ‘atom theory’) and *Íslenzkur aðall* (1938:155) (*atómasveifla* ‘atomic oscillation’) as well as essay collections such as Einar H. Kvaran’s *Eitt veit ég* (1959:30) (*atómaumblytting* ‘atomic revolution’). Even when the topic of discussion is atomic science, these citations seem more often to refer to broader philosophical or societal implications of atomic science and technology – a less technical and more “imaginary” atom.

A discussion of Icelandic neologisms in *Tímarit Verkfræðingafélags Íslands* from 1946 claims that the loan word *atóm* became *de facto* accepted in the wake of the atom bomb and broader social relevance for the concept:

Fyrir fáum áratugum voru það aðeins örfáir menn á Íslandi, sem töluðu um atóm og mólekúl. Þeir tóku sig strax til og mynduðu orðin frumeind og sameind, sem voru góð orð, og voru þau orð notuð af mörgum, þegar þekking á þessum

efniseindum tók að breiðast út hér á landi. En svo kom allt í einu atómsprengjan, sem allir tala um, og enginn lætur sér detta í hug að nefna hana frumeindasprengju. Orðið atóm er þar með orðið fast í málinu, við eins konar þjóðaratkvæðagreiðslu, og það fer ekki þaðan aftur. (Sigurður Pétursson 1946:32)

[A few decades ago there were only a few people in Iceland who talked about atoms and molecules. They immediately prepared themselves and formed the words *frumeind* 'atom' and *sameind* 'molecule', which were good words, and these words were used by many when knowledge of these units of matter started to spread in this country. But then suddenly came the atom bomb, which everyone talks about, and it doesn't occur to anyone to call it *frumeindasprengja*. The word *atóm* is thereby established in the language through a kind of referendum, and it will not be gotten rid of.]

Indeed this is the sole attestation for the word *frumeindasprengja* in *ROH*.

The standard dictionary *Íslensk orðabók* (2002:49) lists ten compounds beginning with *atóm-* as separate lemmata: *atómeðlisfræði* 'atomic physics', *atómfræði* 'atomic science', *atómknúinn* 'atom-driven', *atómkveðskapur* 'atom poetry', *atómskáld* 'atom poet', *atómstyrjöld* 'atomic war' (variant *atómstríð*), *atómstöð* 'atom station', *atómtala* 'atomic number', *atómvopn* 'atomic weapon' and *atómpungi* 'atomic weight' (variant *atómpyngd*). Two of these (*atómkveðskapur* and *atómskáld*) relate to the modernist poets, the remainder to atomic chemistry, physics, power or war. The dictionary lists the lemma *frumeind* (396) but does not include any complex compounds formed with *frumeinda(r)-*. It is likely that many of the compounds listed with only a few attestations in *ROH* are not established but are understood as nonce formations.

While both the loan word *atóm* and the neologism *frumeind* appear in the literal meaning of 'atom' both alone and in compounds in *ROH*, the loan word dominates metaphorical uses in compounds. One reason for this may be that the lexicalized meaning of the compound may dissolve when it is combined with further elements. As *frumeind* is itself compound, further compounds formed with it are already complex compounds; while these are not uncommon in Icelandic, they are somewhat marked. A complex compound generally

requires genitive compounding (Baldur Jónsson 1984:74), making the prefix *frumeinda(r)*- three syllables, longer than *atóm*-. This may also contribute to making *atóm*- compounds somewhat catchier. The influence of *Atómstöðin* is likely also a factor contributing to the popularity of *atóm*- compounds.

Of the 23 examples of *frumeind* in *ROH*, 20 refer to its literal, scientific meaning. Seven of these include the gloss “atom”. The three examples of metaphorical usages are all from the mid-twentieth century.

- (1) Ég tel allar tilraunir til þess að leysa estetiskar kenndir upp í frumeindir sínar ekki einungis hæpnar og tilviljunarkenndar (Brynjólfur Bjarnason 1961:106)
[I regard all attempts to separate aesthetic sensibilities into their basic units as not just unlikely and haphazard]
- (2) Efnahagsleg undirstaða hins gamla samfélags hefur rofnað. En frumeind hennar var búið, heimilið. (Einar Olgeirsson 1954:245)
[The economic basis of the old society has fallen apart. For its basic unit was finished, the home.]
- (3) að grafast fyrir um einföldustu „frumeindir“ gáfnanna. (Matthías Jónasson 1955:43)
[to root around for the simplest “basic units” of talent.]

In the last of these examples, the quotation marks indicate a metaphorical usage. The other two examples could either be taken as metaphorical usages of the scientific term or a reversion to the more basic meaning of ‘basic unit’, as indicated in the glosses.¹

The archive lists 62 head words which are compounds containing *frumeinda(r)*- as their first element. The citations (a total of 94) appear to refer in almost all cases to scientific concepts used in their literal sense or metonymically for the branch of science concerned with these.

23 of 25 examples of *atóm* (n.) and all 5 examples of the alternate form *atóma* (f.) also refer to the concept in its literal, scientific sense. However, while the majority of the 104 compounds formed with *atóm(a)*- also do so, a substantial number of these formations (around 25) also relate to the atom poets, modern arts or the associated aesthetics and world situation.

¹ A more general term for ‘basic unit’ is *frumeining*, used e.g. in the context of weights and measures.

Hence while *frumeind* and *atóm* appear to be largely interchangeable in the scientific meaning, *atóm*, when used in compounds, has an additional set of connotations and metaphorical meanings. The societal connotations are also seen in some compounds formed with *kjarnorku-* ‘nuclear’, as illustrated with the presumed nonce formations in (4):

- (4) að bak við hina stórmennskubrjáluðu kjarnorkustjórnmálamenn og kjarnorkusendiherra stendur enn ein manntegund, kjarnorkuauðkýfingarnir. (Leonidoff 1948:49)
[behind the megalomaniac nuclear politicians and nuclear ambassadors stands yet another kind of person, the nuclear tycoons.]

However, the connection to literary and artistic modernism appears to be restricted to *atóm* and its compounds.

5 Modernism and the atom poets

The “form revolution” (*formbylting*) and advent of free verse came late to Icelandic compared to many other European traditions, only in the mid-20th century (although Eysteinn Þorvaldsson (2006:474) points out that Iceland was in fact not far out of step with other Nordic nations, with the exception of Sweden). In addition to the late and rapid modernization of Icelandic society in the 20th century, one reason for this delay is that the status of regular structural alliteration in the Icelandic poetic tradition was so strong that, as Peter Carleton puts it, “alliteration was not a limit on poetic expression, it *was* poetic expression” (Carleton 1967:152, emphasis in original). In the first half of the 20th century, Icelandic translations of European modernists, e.g. by Magnús Ásgeirsson, adapted free verse forms to include structural alliteration in accordance with the expectations of the Icelandic reading public (Eysteinn Þorvaldsson 2006:471). The expectation of alliteration in metrical verse remained strong even in the 1990s (Willson 2008). In a manifesto for the modernist movement (*Til varnar skáldskapnum* [In defense of poetry]), atom poet Sigfús Daðason (1952:268) dismisses the view that Icelandic poetry must alliterate. The modernist “form revolution” was presented in a way as a means to an end, a way to liberate poetic language from a restrictive tradition that valued form over content. However, Þorsteinn Þorsteinsson (2005) points out that the change was more gradual than “revolutionary”.

The generation of poets who introduced free verse and other aspects of modernist aesthetics in Iceland are known as *atómskáld* 'atom poets', a term coined by Halldór Laxness in his satirical novel *Atómstöðin* (1948), where an atom poet is one of many figures in the tumultuous milieu of post-World War II Reykjavík. The term was appropriated by a group of poets most of whom came of age around 1950 and who were associated with the journal *Birtíngur* (named after Halldór Laxness' calque of *Candide* (Voltaire 1945)).

Eysteinn Þorvaldsson (1980:312) uses the term *atómskáld* primarily for a core group of five poets: Einar Bragi (1921–2005), Hannes Sigfússon (1922–1997), Jón Óskar (1922–1998), Sigfús Daðason (1922–1997) and Stefán Hörður Grímsson (1919–2002). Other names have been connected with the atom poets, such as the slightly older Steinn Steinarr (1908–1958) and Jón úr Vör (1917–2000) and the slightly younger Vilborg Dagbjartsdóttir (b. 1930). It has been pointed out (Soffía Auður Birgisdóttir 1989, Kormákur Bragason 2007) that Eysteinn Þorvaldsson's discussion excludes women and that numerous other writers could also be connected with the movement. The term has been used in common parlance to refer to free verse and modern poetry more generally.

There are substantial differences among even the central atom poets in their techniques and concerns. Eysteinn Þorvaldsson (1980) emphasizes that the atom poets did not present a unified ideology or movement. Atom poet Hannes Sigfússon is quoted as saying, "Við vorum engin framúrklíka sem var að reyna að koma af stað nýjungum. Hver fór að leita á sínu einstigi að sínum skáldskaparmálum" (Silja Aðalsteinsdóttir 1989:22, quoted in Silja Aðalsteinsdóttir 2006:41) [We were no avante garde clique that was trying to bring about innovations. Each undertook to seek his own individual path to his own poetics].

Modernism in poetry has been understood and realized in many different ways, and discussion of the nature of modernism continues in Icelandic literary scholarship (Þorsteinn Þorsteinsson 2005, 2007; Örn Ólafsson 1992, 2006). Modernism is not necessarily a single aesthetic, and is partly defined by its relation to earlier traditions, the "aesthetics of interruption" (Ástráður Eysteinnsson 1990:179). Eysteinn Þorvaldsson assesses in the English summary to his book:

One might argue that Modernism in poetry is a composite of surviving qualities from all these revolts against traditional

norms. If what has endured is understandably a wide range of poetic expression, its prime defining features are a richness of imagery, the subtle uses to which it is put and the absence of restrictions in the handed-down forms.² (Eysteinn Þorvaldsson 1980:312)

Eysteinn Þorvaldsson (1980:321) outlines central features of the atom poets' aesthetics: exploring the range of possibilities of the language, a focus on conciseness, emphasis on imagery, avoidance of narration and explanation and an expectation that the reader will be willing to work to find meaning in the poem. Typical for atom poetry is "compression", maximum economy and precision of expression. The poems' imagery may involve surreal juxtaposition or may be abstract, as in Stefán Hörður Grímsson's prose poems in which the grammatical structure of the poem itself functions as imagery. As Carleton (1967:199) puts it: "In Modernism the form and the content do not merely co-operate, but are inextricably joined."

Carleton's description can be applied to Stefán Hörður Grímsson's (1970:13; 2000:71) prose poem "Eter" (Ether), presented here as one example of an atom poem. Although, as mentioned above, it is difficult to generalize across the different poets involved in the atom movement, this poem illustrates some aesthetic tendencies and concerns that are widespread in the movement. It is concise and deceptively simple. Grammatical structures and rhythm themselves become a kind of imagery. The whole poem concerns intangibility and absence. It addresses philosophical and psychological questions in a playful manner.

Eter

Þú sem ert ekki hér, hvers vegna skyldi mér vera ljóst að þú ert hér ekki? Ég slæ þessari spurningu fram af því mér finnst það skrýtið að ég, sem tek mjög illa eftir því sem hér er, skuli veita því athygli sem er hér ekki. Mig langar til þess að vita hvar þú ert, hvernig þér líður, hvort þú ert að brosa eða ekki, hvort þú ert vakandi eða hvort þú ert sofandi og hvernig þú ert ef þú vakir og hvernig þú ert ef þú sefur, og hvort þú sért

² Cf. Icelandic text on pp. 284–285: "Vel mætti halda því fram að módernisminn í ljóðagerð væri það sem áfram lifir af eigindum þeirra byltingarkenndu stefna sem geystust fram á öndverðri öldinni og átti rætur í þeim öllum. En þessi lifandi jurtt með margskiptri rót þekktist frá eldra gróðri á stórauðnu myndmáli og flóknara hlutverki þess og á því að hún er óháð allri reglubindingu í formi."

yfirleitt til. Það langar mig að vita. (Stefán Hörður Grímsson 2000:71)

[Ether

You who are not here, why should it be clear to me that you are not here? I throw out this question because I find it strange that I, who notice very poorly what is here, should observe what is not here. I want to know where you are, how you are feeling, whether you are smiling or not, whether you are awake or whether you are asleep, and how you are if you wake and how you are if you sleep, and whether you exist at all. That's what I want to know. (Translation by Sigurður A. Magnússon 1982:71)]

The poem appears at first glance to contain little imagery besides a vague image of an absent person. Gunnlaugur Ástgeirsson says that the poem is "... ekki myndrænt í eiginlegri merkingu þess orðs, nema segja megji að brugðið sé upp mynd af engu, því sem ekki er hér heldur einhversstaðar annarsstaðar" (1980:365) [not visual in the true meaning of the word, unless one could say that it conjures up an image of nothing, that which is not here but somewhere else]. The poem constructs this "image of nothing" in part by avoiding conventionally poetic language or imagery. Nonetheless, the absent person or personified abstraction is described using vivid, active verbs. Although it reads like a personal love poem, the text carefully avoids any indication of gender in the "you" and the abstract title invites a more philosophical interpretation. In the Icelandic poem, the rhythm and word order echo the content of the poem and hence the grammatical structure of the poem itself functions as subtle imagery. For instance, the fact that *þú* 'you', the focus of the poem, appears only in subordinate clauses and in direct address rather than as an argument in a main clause emphasizes the absence and distance.

The poems of the atom poets vary greatly in their formal techniques, imagery and tone and it is difficult to find a single poem to represent the movement. However, the actual substance of the poems is not the only factor shaping the popular image of the atom poets.

6 The atom poet in *The Atom Station*

Halldór Laxness' *Atómstöðin* (1948) describes the experiences of a country girl Ugla from "the north" who has gone to Reykjavík and is working as a domestic helper for a member of parliament Búi Árland while she learns to play the harmonium. It is set immediately after the Second World War; the title refers to the decision on the part of the leaders of the newly independent country to allow foreign powers to build an "atom station" in Iceland, i.e. the NATO base in Keflavík. *Atóm* in Halldór's novel refers to the general context of the dawn of the Cold War and Iceland's entry into NATO.

Bizarre nicknames, epithets and titles, such as *atómskáld*, are a central aspect of the narrative technique of *Atómstöðin*, associated with the turmoil of a society in rapid transition. The sense of an alien milieu is emphasized by continual renaming. Búi Árland's children are called Dídí, Dúdú, Bóbó and Bubu. Ugla has a difficult time connecting these nicknames to their baptismal names Guðný (Dúdú), Þórður (Bóbó), Þórgunnur (Dídí), and Arngrímur (Bubu). Their father explains, "Þau komast ekki af með minna en Afríka einsog hún er svörtust: bu-bu, dú-dú, bó-bó, dí-dí" [But they cannot get by with any less than Africa at its very darkest - bu-bu, du-du, bo-bo, di-di ... (Halldór Laxness, transl. Magnús Magnússon 1961:4)]. These reduplicative nicknames are particularly associated with the time around World War II in Iceland. Laxness, in a brief essay "Ónöfn" [Un-names] (1942:285), condemns this innovation in similar terms.

Nýr gælunafnasiður hefur komist á í kaupstöðum á síðustu tímum, sérstaklega telpunafna. Fögrum íslenskum kvenheitum, sem veita þeirri konu tign og virðuleik, sem ber þau, eins og dýrir skartgripir fornir (nöfn einsog t.d. Ragnheiður, Ásthildur eða Guðrún), er snúið í hin herfilegustu orðskrípi, líkt og fyrirmyndir væru sóttar í dreggjjar útlends stórborgamáls eða til villipjóða: Dídí, Sísí, Fífí, Gígí, Dúdú, Gógó, Dódó. Afkárleg orðskrípi af þessu tæi fara senn í bág við íslenskt mál-far og mentaðan smekk. (Halldór Laxness 1942:285)

[A new nickname practice has been introduced in towns in recent times, especially for girls' names. Beautiful Icelandic feminine names which grant elegance and dignity to the woman who bears them, like precious and ancient jewelry

(names like, for example, Ragnheiður, Ásthildur or Guðrún), are turned into the most abominable caricatures of words, as if the models were sought in the dregs of foreign urban speech or among uncivilized tribes: Dídí, Sísi, Fífí, Gígí, Dúdí, Gógó, Dódó. Grotesque parodies of words of this type are in variance with Icelandic usage and educated taste.]

Eventually Ugla takes the matter into her own hands by assigning poetic names to the children: “ef þið viljið ekki heita fallegu nöfnunum sjálfra ykkar þá skíri ég ykkur upp eftir mínu höfði; því aldrei skal ég ávarpa ykkur á afrísku. Arngrímur skal heita Landaljómi, Guðný Aldinblóð, Þórður Gullhrútur, og jólakortabarnið hennar Jónu skal heita Daggeisli” (Halldór Laxness 1948:125) [if you don’t want to be called by your own lovely names I shall re-christen you out of my own head, for I shall never address you in African. Arngrim shall be called World-glow, Gudny, Fruit-blood, Thord Goldram, and Jona’s little Christmas-card child shall be called Day-beam (Halldór Laxness, transl. Magnús Magnússon 1961:89)]

The atom poet Benjamín in *Atómstöðin* is introduced as a self-conscious posturing figure of a poet:

Þá heyrst sagt með ofstækisfullum guðhræðslusvip í dyrunum: Það vildi ég að ég færi nú loksins að fá krabbameinið.

Maðurinn var svo úngur að það var flíabeinslitt á honum andlitið og ekki nema smávegis ló á vanganum, æskumynd af útlendum snillingi, póstkort einsog hánga fyrir ofan orgelið á sveitabæum, og fást á Króknum, Sjiller, Sjúbert og Bæron lávarður hristir saman með hárautt slífsi og foruga skó. Hann leit í kringum sig með voveiflegum áreynslusvip manns sem geingur í svefni, og sérhver hlutur, svo dauður sem lifandi, var honum æsileg dulsýn. Hann rétti mér lánga hönd sína, sem var svo lin að mér fanst ég geta kreist hana í mauk, og sagði:

Ég er benjamín. (Halldór Laxness 1948:30)

[Then a voice was heard from the doorway, saying in fanatically religious tones, “How I wish I could at last get that cancer now”.

The newcomer was so young that his face was the colour of ivory, with only a trace of down on his cheeks: a youthful

portrait of a foreign genius, a postcard like the ones that hang above the harmonium in the country and which can be bought in the village of Krok – a mixture of Schiller, Schubert, and Lord Byron, with a bright red tie and dirty shoes. He looked around with the sudden strained expression of the sleepwalker, and every object, whether animate or inanimate, affected him like an overwhelming mystical vision. He offered me his long thin hand, which was so limp that I felt I could crush it into pulp, and said, “I am Benjamin”. (Halldór Laxness, transl. Magnús Magnússon 1961:18)]

The title of *atómskáld* is bestowed on him later on the same page by the organist whose home is a gathering place for artists, intellectuals and other characters: “Gerðu svo vel og fáðu þér kaffisopa atómskáld” (Halldór Laxness 1948:31) [Have a cup of coffee, atom poet. (Halldór Laxness, transl. Magnús Magnússon 1961:19)]. Slightly earlier the organist asked the “god” Brilliantine, the atom poet’s companion, about the whereabouts of the latter (Halldór Laxness 1948:29; Halldór Laxness, transl. Magnús Magnússon 1961:17). The casual introduction of the atom poet contrasts with the overt presentation of another character slightly earlier: “Þetta er guðinn briljantín, sagði organistinn” (1948:28) [“This is the god Brilliantine”, said the organist (Halldór Laxness, transl. Magnús Magnússon 1961:17)], but the title is adopted by the narrator in the following sentence: “Hvar er Kleópatra, sagði Benjamín [svo] atómskáld” (1948:31) [“Where’s Cleopatra?” asked Benjamin the atom poet (Halldór Laxness, transl. Magnús Magnússon 1961:19)].

The circle of characters surrounding the organist are all called by more or less bizarre or exotic descriptive monikers, while the organist himself and the shy policeman by whom Ugly becomes pregnant are never named. Self-invention – the power of words to deflect from facts or to persuade people of their own reality – is a theme in the novel emphasized by its preoccupation with renaming. A central example is the “selling” of the country (i.e., allowing a US military presence there after the war); others include the broad use of accusations of “communism”.

In *Atómstöðin*, Brilliantine and the atom poet identify themselves overtly with the atom bomb in introducing themselves to the protagonist’s father, a farmer in the rural north: “Og hverra manna eruð þið dreingir? Þeir svöruðu: Við tilheyrum atómbombunni” (1948:228)

[“And who are your people, boys?” “We belong to the atom bomb”, they said (Halldór Laxness, transl. Magnús Magnússon 1961:166)].

Jón Óskar (1971:142–151) suggests that the image of the atom poet was based on Jónas Svafár (Jónas Svavar Einarsson), who was supposed to have become a poet after hitting his head in a fall (1971:144).

The only poem by the atom poet which in its form is “modern” evokes the atom bomb through its phonological structure, as well as being overtly connected with it in the prose frame: “benjamín sagðist hafa ort atómkvæðið ó tata bomma, tomba ata mamma, ó tomma at, sem væri í senn upphafið á nýrri sköpunarsögu, nýum mósélögum, nýu korintubréfi og atómbombunni” (1948:159) [and Benjamin said that he had composed the atom poem ‘Oh tata bomma, tomba ata mamma, oh tomma at’, which was at one and the same time the beginning of a new Genesis, a new Mosaic Law, a new Corinthian Epistle, and the atom bomb (Halldór Laxness, transl. Magnús Magnússon 1961:115)]. This nonsense poem, a parodic representation of modern poetry, simultaneously evokes child language, Western stereotypes of African languages (cf. Adrijan & Muñoz-Basols 2003:243–244) (which were already mentioned in relation to the children’s reduplicative nicknames), primordial murmurs and omega. It is comprised entirely of sounds found in the word *atómbomba* ‘atom bomb’.

The sound similarities of *atóm* to other words may also enhance the connotations of *atóm*. The word *atóm* also evokes *tóm* (n.) ‘emptiness’, reminding one that “atómið sjálft – frumeind efnisins – er að mestu tómarúm” (Lapp 1968:9) [the atom itself – the basic unit of matter – is mostly empty space].

Although Laxness coined the term *atómskáld*, he was marginal to the development of free verse in Iceland. Halldór Laxness’ views of modern poetry were mixed. In a review of *Hin hvítu skip* [The white ships], (Guðmundur Böðvarsson 1939), Laxness (1942:138–140) expressly spoke out against free verse in Icelandic (Jón Yngvi Jóhannsson 2006:400). In the 1930s Laxness mocked both the Icelandic compulsion to rhyme and poems in prose form (Örn Ólafsson 1990:126–127). Laxness published one volume of poems (*Kvæðakver* [Thin volume of poems], 1930), but he is mainly known as a prose writer. Jón Yngvi Jóhannsson views Laxness’ poems “as isolated events in Icelandic literary history ... that did not have a lasting impact on the evolution of poetry or poetic form as such” (2006:396). *Kvæðakver* contains one poem in free verse, “Únglingurinn í skóginum” [The youth in the forest]. Jóhann Hjálmarsson (1971:16–20) discusses this poem as “eftir-

minnilegasta ljóð Halldórs Laxness” (Jóhann Hjálmarsson 1971:19) [Halldór Laxness’ most memorable poem]. Most of Laxness’ poetry after 1930 and those of his poems that are remembered best appear as occasional verses in his novels. They generally observe conventions of rhyme and alliteration. Many are satirical or parodic, and some have been set to music. An example from *Atómstöðin*, sung by the atom poet and the god Brilliantine, is the rhyming and alliterating “Fallinn er Óli figúra” (1948:158, 276) [Oli the Figure is fallen, Halldór Laxness, transl. Magnús Magnússon 1961:114, 202]), which became a popular tune with the band Þokkabót in the 1970s.

7 *Atómskáld* and other compounds

The term *atómskáld* is based on the analogy of other compounds in *-skáld*, which occur in both Old and Modern Icelandic. Apart from designations like *þjóðskáld* ‘national poet/writer’, the most familiar examples of this type are by-names used for individual poets in Old Norse sources, many of which have specific stories behind them: Þormóðr *Kolbrúnarskáld* ‘Kolbrún’s poet’ in *Fóstbræðra saga* [The saga of the sworn brothers] composes an ode to Þorbjörg kolbrún (chapter 11; 1943:171–172); Hallfreðr *vandræðaskáld* ‘the troublesome poet’ is given his nickname by King Ólafur Tryggvason (*Flateyjarbok* 1860–1868: vol. 1, 326; Snorri Sturluson 1949:331).

Scholarship on the atom poets, as well as their internal discourse in both poetic and scholarly media (and all shades in between), has self-consciously exploited the rich connotations of the term *atómskáld*. Eysteinn Þorvaldsson (1980:104) suggests that the term is also appropriate because the atom poets “setja af stað eins konar sprengingu í ljóðagerðinni” [set off a kind of explosion in poetry]. The concept of *atóm* or *frumeind* can be connected metaphorically with the aesthetics of the atom poets. They attempt to compress expression to its most essential and fundamental form.

Allusions to the atom era appear occasionally in poems by atom poets:

- (5) Hver vill gefa snjómanninum flíkur til að skýla nekt sinni, svo hann þurfi ekki að skjálfa eins og brjóstveikur kyndari við að kveikja undir atómkötlum sínum? Enginn, svaraði tunglskinið og renndi sér á ísleggjum eftir skyggðri febrúargljánni. (Einar Bragi 1959:25)

[Who will give the snowman clothes to cover his nakedness, so he need not shiver like a tubercular lamplighter while lighting his atom kettles? No one, replied the moonlight and slid on ice-legs along the shadowed February glow.]

References to atomic science and to nuclear proliferation appear in the journal *Birtingur* in other contexts as well, from literal references in a discussion of Albert Einstein (Magnús Magnússon 1956:40) to metaphorical uses as in (6) (from a review of a biography of Albert Schweitzer):

- (6) Hann [Schweitzer] klýfur kjarneindir hvers viðfangsefnis og skapar sögu, hvar sem hann ber niður. (Þórir Þórðarson 1956:42)

[He [Schweitzer] splits the core units of each subject and creates history wherever he goes.]

The term *atómskáld* is also applied in Icelandic to modernist poets from other countries, though some of them wrote pre-Hiroshima. Steinn Steinarr writes:

- (7) Hefurðu ekki kynnt þér ensku atómskáldin svokölluðu? (Steinn Steinarr 1961 [1950]:11)

[Have you not acquainted yourself with the so-called English atom poets?]

Many of the *atóm-* coinages are introduced (to print at least) self-consciously in critical discourse in connection with the movement. A number of the compounds are first attested in Eysteinn Þorvaldsson's book *Atómskáldin* (1980), which mentions this phenomenon expressly:

Höfundur orðanna „atómskáld“ og „atómkvæði“ er Halldór Laxness, og sáu þau dagsins ljós í skáldsögu hans *Atómstöðinni*. Síðan eru þessi orð tekin til notkunar af öðrum, og fleirum af svipuðu tagi aukið við með því að skeyta orðum við atómið, s.s. *atómljóð*, *atómkveðskapur*. (Eysteinn Þorvaldsson 1980:103) [The author of the words “atómskáld” and “atómkvæði” was Halldór Laxness, and they saw the light of day in his novel *Atómstöðin*. Then these words were taken into use by others, and more of a similar type were added by attaching words to *atóm-*, as in *atómljóð*, *atómkveðskapur*.]

Eysteinn Þorvaldsson also mentions the extension of *atóm-* to other arts: “Nýjungaskáldin eru stundum kölluð „abstraktskáld“ og mynd-

listarmennirnir jafnvel „atóm-málarar““ (Eysteinn Þorvaldsson 1980:162) [The innovative poets are sometimes called “abstract poets” and visual artists even “atom painters”].

The first attestations for *atómljóðlist* ‘atom poetry’ and *atómstefna* ‘atom movement’ appear in Sveinn Bergsveinsson’s (1952:51, 55) discussion of the atom poets. While the former does not appear to be attested elsewhere in *ROH*, the latter also has attestations e.g. in Ólafur Jónsson (1979:42, 95) and Eysteinn Þorvaldsson (1980:103, 164). A few other compounds appear only in the journal *Birtingur*:

- (8) Kannski áþekkt því að ungt skáld sem alizt hefði upp við kvæði ykkar Stefáns fengi allt í einu handrit að atómljóðabók upp í hendurnar. (Einar Bragi 1957:3)

[Perhaps as if a young poet who had grown up with poems by you [Jóhannes úr Kötlum] and Stefán [frá Hvítadal] suddenly got his hands on the manuscript to an atom poetry book.]

- (9) Hann [“Birtingur”] hefur aldrei hirt um að dekra við atómljóðafjendur, abstrakthatarar né handhafa neins konar annarra átoríseraðra sjónarmiða. (Til lesenda 1961:62)

[*Birtingur* has never cared to coddle atom poem enemies, abstract haters or the bearers of other authorized views of any kind.]

Hence the *atóm-* label is seen to be used within the modernist movement in various ways. However, similar *atóm-* compounds are also used by others, sometimes derogatorily, as described in the next section.

8 The image of the atom poet

The word *atómskáld* and other compounds in *atóm-* are used by Icelandic writers contemporary to the movement and later, often ironically, to refer to a particular, self-consciously cultivated image of a poet:

- (10) Hann [þorskurinn] var býsna langur, en ósköp horaður, og melankólskur á svipinn, eins og atómskáld. (Jónas Árnason 1956:125)

[It [the cod] was awfully long but terribly thin and had a melancholy expression like an atom poet.]

- (11) Hann hafði passíuhár og dálítið yfirskegg og hefði vel getað verið atómskáld þess vegna. (Matthías Johannessén 1977–1985:I–II, 107)

[He had Jesus hair and a bit of a moustache and could easily have been an atom poet for that matter.]

- (12) Hann safnaði skeggi eins og atómskáld. Jafnvel þegar hann rakaði af sér þetta brúسانی atómskegg, litu þeir hann hornauga fyrir að hafa rakað það af sér. (Geir Kristjánsson 1961:36)

[He grew a beard like an atom poet. Even when he shaved off that bushy atom beard, they looked askance at him for having shaved it off.]

In the compound *atómskegg* ‘atom beard’, the prefix *atóm-* is obviously metonymic for *atómskáld*.

Some writers play with the atom imagery:

- (13) En þó voru í gær ellefu atómskáld að sprengja spóann í útvarpinu. (Málfríður Einarsdóttir 1978:183)

[But nonetheless yesterday eleven atom poets were blowing up the whimbrel on the radio.]

Atómljóð ‘atom poem’ is used most often to refer to free verse, mainly referring to the lack of formal constraints and implying that composing such poetry is less difficult than composing in traditional forms. In short story “Gatan í rigningunni” [The street in the rain] by Ásta Sigurðardóttir (a modernist writer in prose active around the same time), the protagonist is asked:

- (14) Vi-viltu yrkja eftirmæli um hana – má vera atómljóð (Ásta Sigurðardóttir 1985:24)

[Wi-will you compose a memorial verse for her - it can be an atom poem]

The derogatory terms *atómbull* ‘atom bull’ and *atómþvaagl* ‘atom chatter’, are intended synonyms for *atómljóð*.

In informal popular verse tradition, some versifiers use the title “Atómljóð” ironically for poems with rhyme and structural alliteration which assert the poets’ preference for traditional forms. The Internet hosts several such anti-atom poems, rhymed and alliterative light verse, which in both their form and content protest “free verse” (e.g. Konráð J. Brynjarsson, Þórhallur Hróðmarsson). These satires show obvious contempt or resentment for abstruse “highbrow” cul-

ture as represented by modern poetry, independent of the cultural politics of the original *atómskáld*.

9 From atoms to guano

In Iceland, the jazz and atom age was succeeded by the age of rock and roll and guano. Parallel to the *atóm*- compounds, a set of compounds in *gúanó*- ‘guano’ emerged, such as *gúanóljóð* ‘guano poem’, *gúanórokk* ‘guano rock’, and *gúanótextar* ‘guano texts’.

- (15) Þorpskvæðið eftir Tolla gefur góða hugmynd um veruleikaskynjun gúanóskálda. (Silja Aðalsteinsdóttir 1980:350)

[The village poem by Tolli gives a good idea of the guano poets’ perception of reality]

- (16) Grein Árna Óskarssonar [...] kom af stað snörpum blaðadeilum um „gúanótextana“ svonefndu. (Silja Aðalsteinsdóttir 1980:348)

[Árni Óskarsson’s article brought about heated newspaper debates about the so-called “guano texts”.]

- (17) Seinna komu „tappar tíkarrassar“ og „sjálfsfróanir“ og gúanómenn voru ekki lengur töff. (Helgi Grímsson 1982:607)

[Later came the “Tappi bitch-asses” and “masturbation” and the guano men were no longer cool.]

Like *atóm*, *gúanó* is an international term for a concept for which native words exist, e.g. (*fugla*)*dritur*. The oldest attestation of *gúanó* in *ROH* is from Jón Sigurðsson’s *Lítill fiskibók* (1859). 14 of the 16 attestations of the word in *ROH* all relate to the fertilizer industry; the transferred meaning appears only in two articles from 1980 in *Tímarit Máls og menningar* by Árni Óskarsson and Silja Aðalsteinsdóttir, respectively, that attempt to characterize cultural trends and shifts. Árni Óskarsson (1980:200) introduces the term to scholarly discourse, suggesting that it already existed in popular parlance: “fyrirbærið fékk heitið „gúanórokk“ – eðlilega, gúanó gegnsýrir jú allt okkar þjóðlíf” (Árni Óskarsson 1980:200) [the phenomenon received the name ‘guano rock’ – naturally, for guano of course permeates all of Icelandic life].

Compounds in *gúanó*- generally refer to popular music and liter-

ature which represent working class experience in local economies dominated by *gúanóverksmiðjur*, ‘guano factories’. The word *gúanóverksmiðja* has 11 attestations in *ROH*, starting from the nineteenth century, all of which appear to refer to the phenomenon literally.

The guano poets represent a popular movement from around 1980, identified with the working class (cf. Silja Aðalsteinsdóttir 1980). The term is specifically associated with Bubbi Morthens and Utangarðsmenn and may stem from the line in “Aldrei fór ég suður” (I never went south [to Reykjavík]) “mig þyrstir í eitthvað annað / en gúanó, tékka og lín” [I thirst for something other than guano, checks and linen]. It is also invoked in some other song lyrics, e.g. *Gúanóstelp-an mín* [My guano girl] (text Ragnar Kjartansson) (Aldrei fór ég suður ... 2014). This is in implicit contrast with the atom poets, who are portrayed as abstruse and pretentious, although the atom poets of the 1950s were concerned with the helplessness of the common man in a dysfunctional world. Helgi Grímsson (1982:606) writes that “Gúanórokkið ... skelfdi marga og skar í brag- og atómeyru” [Guano rock ... startled many and pierced the metrical and atom ear]. Here the *atómeyra* ‘atom ear’ is an ear for modern poetry, parallel to *brageyra* ‘metrical ear’, the intuition for alliteration and traditional form that Einar Benediktsson (1952:328) regarded as an Icelandic national treasure. The popular music genre of guano rock is intended to supplant both the tradition and the modern academic establishment which the atom poets have by then become in the popular imagination.

The parallelism or contrast between *gúanó-* and *atóm-* compounds in the quotations above suggests that the latter may have influenced the coining of the former. The model of *atóm-* may have contributed to the cultural intelligibility of the *gúanó-* compounds. However, *gúanó-* does not seem to have been nearly as productive or long-lived as *atóm-*, and the range of contexts of use and connotations is much more limited.

10 Conclusion

Icelandic compounds in *atóm-* illustrate Downing’s (1977) observation that novel compounds can be interpreted with a wide range of semantic relations between the modifier and the base word, some of which evoke frames or scripts from culture-specific contexts.

The connotations of *atóm-* compounds include many that are

internationally recognizable – the wonders of technology, potential of nuclear energy, and fear of nuclear proliferation in the changing world of the Cold War, as well as the idea of the fundamental building blocks of matter, the “real nature” of things. In the Icelandic case, there was a specific convergence between these changes in the 1940s and the emergence of a modernist poetic movement. The atom poets’ use of the label represents “reclaiming” of Halldór Laxness’ satirical name.

The element *atóm*- became sufficiently iconic for this whole cluster of connotations that it could be combined with a wide range of second elements to form compounds with metaphorical meanings that draw on different aspects of the above complex of associations.

These words are to some extent marked as distinct from non-metaphorical uses by the consistent preference for the foreign *atóm* over the native calque *frumeind*; the latter tends to “decompose” to its literal meaning ‘basic unit’ when used in other contexts and not carry the connotations of *atóm*. At the same time the word’s very foreignness is iconic, as the idea of foreign influence and the presence of global politics and global technology reshaping Icelandic society is a central part of the ethos.

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compounds, word formation, loan words, neologisms, atom poets, modernism, literature, cultural history

Lykilorð

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Útdráttur

Greinin fjallar um samsetningar með forliðnum *atóm-* og byggist aðallega á gögnum úr *Ritmálssafni Orðabókar Háskólans*. Fjöldi samsetninga með þessum forlið varð til eftir seinni heimsstyrjöldina, einkum í tengslum við skáldsöguna *Atómstöðina* (1948) eftir Halldór Laxness og atómskáldin svokölluðu. Í þessum samsetningum kemur fram margvísleg merkingarvísun. Orðstofninn visar til fagurfræði atómskáldanna, nútímaljóða og móðernisma almennt og til andrúmsloftsins í upphafi kalda stríðsins þegar móðernisminn varð til. Nýyrðið og samheitið *frumeind* virðist ekki geta fengið sams konar afleidda merkingu í samsetningum heldur fær aftur bókstaflegu merkinguna 'grunneining' í öðru samhengi en þegar talað er um eðlis- eða efnafræði.

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