The Australian National University

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To whom it may not concern – a 100 line researchpoem

Abstract:
This creative contribution can be described as an experimental non-Bayesian mixed model reader-response design with categorical observations in poetry, research methods inspired prose, and meta-texts. It uses the techniques of the 19th century dramatic monologue (100 lines of poetry), Brecht’s ‘distancing effect’ (134 text-integrated authentic bibliographic references), as well as a list of self-referential pronouns and politeness markers (17 items). The writing style of scientific research methodology is used throughout to create a hybrid meta-referential conceptual researchpoem.

The status of poetry as research is pragmatically explored through a concentrated reader-response approach which repudiates both structuralist’s and post-structuralist’s conceptualisations of the poetic realm. The tendency towards increased formalisation induced in contemporary creative practice by the peer review process in the creative arts is implicit and the epistemology of poetic injustice is exercised.

The expressive use of bibliographical references and lists of politeness markers is also explored, and they constitute the more important aesthetic contribution of this piece to the Australian poetic landscape.

Biographical note:
Daniel Martín teaches Spanish in the School of Literature, Languages and Linguistics at the ANU. His traditional research output includes papers on the Spanish-speaking community in Australia, the politics of language teaching in Australia, and the use of technology in language teaching. His non-traditional research output includes eight books, scripts for three films, two radio plays and four theatre plays, as well as shorter works published in literary and science fiction magazines and anthologies in Argentina, Spain, Colombia, Venezuela, Italy and Australia.

Keywords:
Reader-response – Research methodology – Dramatic monologue – Narratology
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for the word had passed around

A.B. ‘Banjo’ Paterson,
‘The Man from Snowy River’

Reader, dear reader, anonymous reader
I have to confess that I rarely think of you, but today
because of reasons that ’scape me
(or reasons that I strategically omit to mention for the time being)
I thought of addressing these lines to you,
a little theoretical & research driven, not too inspired, but at least sincere.
According to the old & faded wankologists that still interrogate Semiotics,
I am not the author but the narrator (or poetor?)
& you are the literary addressee (or enunciatee?) of these lines.
The deferred communication & the place where this is published
& the use of ampersands & the breaking-down of the text in lines
in a solitary hotel in Wagga Wagga with a partial view of the Murrumbidgee
makes this missive function as a poem rather than a letter.
Besides, even if I seem to directly address you, as in a proper letter
I am not really addressing you but a fictional narratee (or poetee?)
with whom you may happen to confuse yourself
especially if you have been brainwashed enough by Semioticians or literary theorists.
These people (or others, I am not sure) even dare to say that this is not a poem
when the book is closed or the computer is turned off.
It is a poem just now, in this very moment when you read it.
At some level, however, we are still in communication
but this is not real, but ‘deferred’ communication
because we, as flesh & bone people, even if we happen to know each other,
we would not really communicate through this poem;
we are just accomplices to make this fiction of communication (the poem)
play its trick
& consequently the moral is that you interest me if & only if
I can manage to engage you long enough in the reading of the poem
that will make you exist as a reader, narratee (or poetee?), & most importantly
make ME exist as an implied author.

There are some other thinkers
(I believe among the postmodernist & poststructuralist post-wankonanists)
that affirm that the author & the reader do not matter a bit.
All literature is only a set of texts that internally contradict each other
& tropes that address themselves cross-textually
(tropes are, according to Wikipedia, something like the theme or the motif of the
poem, but also figures of speech or clichés [in the case of this poem, you],
but don't ask me, I never really cared to understand what they are)
The important (& in my personal view scandalous) thing
is that for these intellectual-eunuchs parasitic-creatives & forgers
you & I do not really play a role at all
in this big game of texts, texts on texts & peer reviews contradicting each other
like mirrors reflecting other mirrors forever.
I know this sounds very complex, & apparently it is
but I feel I need to clarify now
that I hope you don't believe in any of these things, because I don't either.
I just write for myself (without the crutches of literary theory), because I can’t help it
because it feels better to write poems to an anonymous faceless reader
from a solitary hotel room, waiting for the five o’clock tide that may never come
than to write letters to myself in first or third person
or even to write to a fictional character who is really a plain notebook called ‘Dear Diary’.
Regarding you, I don't give a hoot who you are
& I am not concerned with you as a real fictional semiotic or postmodern reader
I do not care either
who you are as a person admirer book-lover human-being culture-consumer critic
enemy whatever &c. &c. &c.
I know it could feel a little treacherous to tell you this now to your deferred face
After all I should have some respect for someone
who has had enough interest or rage to keep reading until here
and make this poem exist for so long
(allowing as well the internal tropes' contradictions it contains
to persist in the abstract poetic space, attacking or contradicting this text & others).
Well, it is better at this stage to abandon good manners & tell you right away
that I have no respect for you
I have lived long enough with myself
to not have any respect for me or anyone else.
Why should I have any respect for a deferred reader?
What are you still doing here?
Why are you an accomplice to these intellectual games
that are only hiding the pain of the author’s soul’s internal contradictions?
You should read the classics that edify without complications, that have not been
influenced by Semiotics or the postmodern condition of this chaotic age.
You should be writing
poems for yourself
poems that I would never be interested in reading
unless I had the bad luck of being asked to peer-review them
or the even worse luck of meeting you in one of these unavoidable poets' talk-fests
especially if you have bought, peer-reviewed or read my poems
& your comments make me feel that I have a dim chance
of existing as an author in your head, & I have to oblige
& buy your self-published book of poems or
your contribution to a grant-receiving anthology
& I feel this terrible guilt that I should make the effort to read you
to make you exist as an (implied) author, even a little bit, by engaging with your poems,
one or two, just to keep up appearances
when I am not really interested.
Let's avoid misinterpretations
don't sell them give them lend them hint at them email them to me
I am not interested in poetry
I don’t give a tinker’s damn about the poetor &/or the poeteet
I don't really care
I write just because I cannot do otherwise, & if I could close all books forever,
if I could quit writing without going insane
if I could leave texts alone as they contradict or kill themselves
without my indolent intervention
I would happily do it.

Why are we, in spite of everything
still
praising reading deluding analysing peer-reviewing
each ↔ other?
## Appendix A: Self-references

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Expression</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>101</td>
<td>Yours very truly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>102</td>
<td>Yours truly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>103</td>
<td>Yours sincerely</td>
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<td>104</td>
<td>Yours respectfully</td>
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<tr>
<td>105</td>
<td>Yours hopefully</td>
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<td>106</td>
<td>Yours faithfully</td>
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<td>107</td>
<td>Yours cordially</td>
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<td>108</td>
<td>Yours affectionately</td>
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<td>109</td>
<td>Your obt svt</td>
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<tr>
<td>110</td>
<td>The implied author</td>
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<tr>
<td>111</td>
<td>The author</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>112</td>
<td>Sincerely yours</td>
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<td>113</td>
<td>Poetor</td>
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<tr>
<td>114</td>
<td>Narrator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>115</td>
<td>Myself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>116</td>
<td>Me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>117</td>
<td>I, Daniel</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Appendix B: Researchpoem Line References

Each of the following references is linked to the corresponding line of the researchpoem. When there is more than one reference for a particular line, this is signalled by a second level of referencing (e.g. references 14.a and 14.b both correspond to line 14). References with the number 0 correspond to the whole researchpoem.

[0.c] Culler, A. D. 1975 Monodrama and the Dramatic Monologue, PMLA, 90, 366-385.
[0.j] Rader, R. W. 1984 Notes on Some Structural Varieties and Variations in Dramatic "I" Poems and Their Theoretical Implications, Victorian Poetry, 22, 103-120.
[0.k] Rouse, J. 1984 Brecht and the Contradictory Actor, Theatre Journal, 36, 25-42.
[0.m] Schoeps, K.-H. 1989 From Distancing Alienation to Intuitive Naiveté: Bertolt Brecht's Establishment of a New Aesthetic Category, Monatshefte, 81, 186-198.
[0.t] Wenger, C. N. 1941 The Masquerade in Browning's Dramatic Monologues, College English, 3,


[60] Longmuir, A. (2009) "Reader, perhaps you were never in Belgium?: Negotiating British Identity in Charlotte Brontë's The Professor and Villette, *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, 64, 163-188.


Appendix C: Original ARC Information regarding Contents of Research Statement for ERA Peer Review of Non-Traditional Research Outputs

For non-traditional research outputs which are nominated for ERA peer review, a statement identifying the research component of the output must be provided as part of the submission of an institution. The statement must be no more than 2000 characters (around 250 words) and address the following categories:

1. Research Background
   - Field
   - Context
   - Research Question

2. Research Contribution
   - Innovation
   - New Knowledge

3. Research Significance
   - Evidence of Excellence

The following is an example of an acceptable visual arts research statement:

*Research Background*
Current international developments in painting have identified the need to establish complex forms for representing identity in terms of facial expression. While this research recognises the significance of facial expression, it has overlooked the unstable nature of identity itself.

*Research Contribution*
The paintings *Multiple Perspectives* by Y address the question of the unstable nature of identity as expressed in painterly terms through a study in unstable facial phenomenon using the philosophical concept of ‘becoming’. In doing so it arrives at a new benchmark for the discipline in understanding visual identity, namely that identity is not bound to stable facial phenomena but, like other forms of meaning, is constantly undergoing change.

*Research Significance*
The significance of this research is that it overcomes barriers for visually understanding the complex nature of identity and its expressive painterly possibilities. Its value is attested to by the following indicators: selection of the painting for inclusion in the international exhibition Documenta, Kassel, Germany; its inclusion as a case study in the renowned Courtauld Institute, University of London, *Issues in Contemporary Art* graduate seminar series; its being the subject of a chapter in the book *Identity Reframed* published by Thames and Hudson and authored by the renowned art historian Z; its forming part of a competitively funded ARC project.

Research Evaluation Committee (REC) members and ERA peer reviewers will evaluate Non-Traditional Research Outputs selected for ERA peer review in the context of the research component as identified in the research statement.

Taken from:


**Endnote**

1. According to the Macquarie Dictionary: *'Five o'clock wave' or 'seven o'clock wave, Riverina, Colloquial (humorous) - a fictitious wave passing down the Murrumbidgee River through Wagga Wagga each day, supposedly created by the release of water from an upriver dam.*
Research Statement (according to the ARC guidelines contained in Appendix C) corresponding to this researchpoem

Research Background
The dramatic monologue is a lyrical-dramatic-narrative hybrid poetic genre created in Victorian England, regarded as the most significant poetic innovation of the age. A significant characteristic of the “dramatized speakers” in the dramatic monologue is that they are often morally objectionable characters, who present point of views and experiences which were unacceptable to the Victorian public, such as priests fascinated by carnal beauty, stranglers, monomaniacs, self-sabotaged artists, etc.

The genre pays also considerable attention to reader’s response, as the implicit dialog with the narratee is a defining characteristic of the canonical poems of the genre.

Research Contribution
The creation of a foundational anti-post-structuralist “researchpoem” was undertaken, inspired by the ARC example of an acceptable visual arts Research Statement for ERA Peer Review of Non-Traditional Research Outputs (Appendix C).

The trope of the identity of the reader of poetry was identified as the most promising to be developed, using the main characteristics of the Victorian dramatic monologue reviewed above. This poetic trope is analogous to the unstable nature of identity as expressed in painterly terms provided in the ARC example that inspired the researchpoem. This was complemented with the Brechtian “distancing effect” or Verfremdungseffekt in the compilation and matching of the bibliographic references (Appendix B) for each line of researchpoetry.

The character of the implicit narrator was chosen to be morally reprehensible to creative writers who are also academics, and to readers of literary criticism in general. Hopefully, the categorical poetic injustice committed against the reader would generate urgently needed reflexion and debate on the relationship between poetry and research in an academic context.

Research Significance
The researchpoem presented here is the first attempt to anti-post-modernise the dramatic monologue using the Verfremdungseffekt. Its value is attested to by its selection for inclusion in the creative peer reviewed proceedings of the 18th annual Australasian Association of Writing Programs Conference in 2013.

The expressive use of bibliographical references (Appendix B) and politeness markers (Appendix A) constitute the most important aesthetic contribution of this piece.