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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'

1 Reader, dear reader, anonymous reader
2 I have to confess that I rarely think of *you*, but today
3 because of reasons that 'scape me
4 (or reasons that I strategically omit to mention for the time being)
5 I thought of addressing these lines to *you*,
6 a little theoretical & research driven, not too inspired, but at least sincere.
7 According to the old & faded wankologists that still interrogate Semiotics,
8 I am not the author but the narrator (or poetor?)
9 & *you* are the literary addressee (or enunciatee?) of these lines.
10 The deferred communication & the place where this is published
11 & the use of ampersands & the breaking-down of the text in lines
12 in a solitary hotel in Wagga Wagga with a partial view of the Murrumbidgee
13 makes this missive function as a poem rather than a letter.
14 Besides, even if I seem to directly address *you*, as in a proper letter
15 I am not really addressing *you* but a fictional narratee (or poetee?)
16 with whom *you* may happen to confuse yourself
17 especially if *you* have been brainwashed enough by Semioticians or literary theorists.
18 These people (or others, I am not sure) even dare to say that this is not a poem
19 when the book is closed or the computer is turned off.
20 It is a poem just now, in this very moment when *you* read it.
21 At some level, however, we are still in communication
22 but this is not real, but 'deferred' communication
23 because we, as flesh & bone people, even if we happen to know each other,
24 we would not really communicate through this poem;
25 we are just accomplices to make this fiction of communication (the poem)
26 play its trick
27 & consequently the moral is that *you* interest me if & only if

28 I can manage to engage YOU long enough in the reading of the poem
29 that will make you exist as a reader, narratee (or poetee?), & most importantly
30 make **ME** exist as an implied author.
31 There are some other thinkers
32 (I believe among the postmodernist & poststructuralist post-wankonanists)
33 that affirm that the author & the reader do not matter a bit.
34 All literature is only a set of texts that internally contradict each other
35 & tropes that address themselves cross-textually
36 (tropes are, according to Wikipedia, something like the theme or the motif of the
37 poem, but also figures of speech or clichés [in the case of this poem, *you*],
38 but don't ask me, **I** never really cared to understand what they are)
39 The important (& in my personal view scandalous) thing
40 is that for these intellectual-eunuchs parasitic-creatives & forgers
41 you & **I** do not really play a role at all
42 in this big game of texts, texts on texts & peer reviews contradicting each other
43 like mirrors reflecting other mirrors forever.
44 I know this sounds very complex, & apparently it is
45 but I feel I need to clarify now
46 that I hope you don't believe in any of these things, because I don't either.
47 I just write for myself (without the crutches of literary theory), because I can't help it
48 because it feels better to write poems to an anonymous faceless reader
49 from a solitary hotel room, waiting for the five o'clock tide that may never come¹
50 than to write letters to myself in first or third person
51 or even to write to a fictional character who is really a plain notebook called 'Dear Diary'.
52 Regarding you, I don't give a hoot who you are
53 & I am not concerned with you as a real fictional semiotic or postmodern reader
54 I do not care either
55 who you are as a person admirer book-lover human-being culture-consumer critic
56 enemy whatever &c. &c. &c.
57 I know it could feel a little treacherous to tell you this now to your deferred face
58 After all I should have some respect for someone
59 who has had enough interest or rage to keep reading until here
60 and make this poem exist for so long

61 (allowing as well the internal tropes' contradictions it contains
62 to persist in the abstract poetic space, attacking or contradicting this text & others).
63 Well, it is better at this stage to abandon good manners & tell _{you} right away
64 that **I** have no respect for _{you}
65 I have lived long enough with myself
66 to not have any respect for **me** or anyone else.
67 Why should **I** have any respect for a deferred reader?
68 What are _{you} still doing here?
69 Why are _{you} an accomplice to these intellectual games
70 that are only hiding the pain of the author's soul's internal contradictions?
71 You should read the classics that edify without complications, that have not been
72 influenced by Semiotics or the postmodern condition of this chaotic age.
73 You should be writing
74 poems for _{yourself}
75 poems that **I** would never be interested in reading
76 unless **I** had the bad luck of being asked to peer-review them
77 or the even worse luck of meeting _{you} in one of these unavoidable poets' talk-fests
78 especially if _{you} have bought, peer-reviewed or read my poems
79 & _{your} comments make **me** feel that **I** have a dim chance
80 of existing as an author in _{your} head, & **I** have to oblige
81 & buy _{your} self-published book of poems or
82 _{your} contribution to a grant-receiving anthology
83 & **I** feel this terrible guilt that **I** should make the effort to read _{you}
84 to make _{you} exist as an (implied) author, even a little bit, by engaging with _{your} poems,
85 one or two, just to keep up appearances
86 when **I** am not really interested.
87 Let's avoid misinterpretations
88 don't sell them give them lend them hint at them email them to **me**
89 **I** am not interested in poetry
90 **I** don't give a tinker's damn about the poetor &/or the _{poetee}
91 **I** don't really care
92 **I** write just because **I** cannot do otherwise, & if **I** could close all books forever,

93 if **I** could quit writing without going insane
94 if **I** could leave texts alone as they contradict or kill themselves
95 without my indolent intervention
96 **I** would happily do it.
97 Why are **we**, in spite of everything
98 still
99 praising reading deluding analysing peer-reviewing
100 each ↔ other?

Appendix A: Self-references

- 101 Yours very truly
- 102 Yours truly
- 103 Yours sincerely
- 104 Yours respectfully
- 105 Yours hopefully
- 106 Yours faithfully
- 107 Yours cordially
- 108 Yours affectionately
- 109 Your obt svt
- 110 The implied author
- 111 The author
- 112 Sincerely yours
- 113 Poetor
- 114 Narrator
- 115 Myself
- 116 Me
- 117 **I**, Daniel

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.

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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:

[118-146] Commonwealth of Australia and Australian Research Council (2011) *ERA 2012 Submission Guidelines*. Page 76. Australian Research Council, Majura Park, ACT.

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

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

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

Research Contribution

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

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

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

Research Significance

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

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