

## The adoption of 'holographic' procedures in creative writing research

### Abstract

This paper interrogates how far the 'holographic' model that the presenter has adapted for the process and practice of writing poetry in her PhD can be useful in creative writing research more generally and encourage novel and fruitful transdisciplinary approaches. Particularly central are the works and writings of South American holographer and holopoet, Eduardo Kac. In 'Key Concepts of Holopoetry' Kac notes a 'fusion of the 'verbal and the visual' in the artefacts produced and 'redefined notions of 'space'. Each 'viewer' of the holopoem, for instance, will 'read/see' the work differently according to his/her perceptual stance. The traditional notions of reading a 'text', whether visual or verbal, are exploded, in short, and the resulting experience is one of surprise and wonder. The paper also raises further possibilities, then, of how we may re-envision or re-imagine research as a means of engaging researchers outside traditional quantitative/qualitative boundaries.

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The aim of my research is to investigate, through literatures and my poetic practice, 'ekphrastic' procedures in poetry to develop a new body of poetic work. By 'ekphrastic procedures' I mean 'writing which is written in some kind of dialogue with the visual' (Heffernan, 2007, 12) and an investigation of technological methods of production which intersect. At first I cast too widely across a variety of areas (e.g art, film, photography, specifically, holography). After discovering the holopoems of Eduardo Kac I became fascinated by their making and what might be transposed from this to the process of writing poetry and so began collaborating with a holography expert in another discipline.

There is a long tradition of ekphrastic poetry dating back to Homer. My ekphrastic procedures involve appropriating any technological processes in the making of a visual artefact as potential sources for my poetic practice.

I have only to be able to access Kac's holopoems online in inferior 2D form as website images. It is my ambition to view the actual works at another stage of my research. In the meantime his writings have yielded ideas for approaching my own drafting and revision processes. In this paper I discuss techniques and not their application. I am not an expert in holography and make no apology for its exploratory nature of this paper.

## Key Concepts of Holopoetry

I will focus on five key concepts of Kac's holopoetry and a broader reckoning with the properties of a hologram I will give examples of how they have informed my writing and some ideas of how they might apply across other research fields.

The potential of the hologram for the study of literature and science has been written about previously. (Pitts, 1990 )

Broadly, hologram-making comprises:

- A three dimensional object
- Laser beams
- A holographic plate
- Reflection
- Illusion of three-dimensional object

Each single part of the hologram will reflect its entire image:, each part containing the whole, this being an excellent conceptual /creative model foregrounding interrelationships, for instance of syntactical units of a poem and their relation to the whole text or series of texts. A 'laser-like' focus on parts, then the whole, may render the work 'other-dimensionally' and so reflect new compositional possibilities.

A holopoem is a poem 'made, conceived and displayed holographically. It is **organized non-linearly** in an immaterial three-dimensional space and that even **as the reader or viewer observes it, it changes and gives rise to new meanings**. Thus as the viewer reads the poem in space-that is, **moves around the hologram- he or she constantly modifies the structure of the text'** . (Kac,1996) The reader is thus encouraged to read the text in a dynamic way.

## Binocular Reading

This is a perceptual process where reading is a synthesis of two different inputs received by the eyes and is more complex and intense therefore than the normal reading experience. Because of this we constantly change the way we 'edit' the text based on different fixations of each eye on the letters of the poem in space. If a 'laser-reading' gives a sharp focus and illuminates certain areas of text, a 'binocular' reading allows words or lines to be revised or reconfigured.

## Behaviour

In experimental visual poems created for print, letters and words can be said to have a specific position on the page in a unified visual composition. This is not so in holopoetry. They exhibit a certain type of 'behaviour'. Active behavior replaces static structure. A conscious interrogation of how language behaves now or might behave more dynamically has given fresh insights in redrafting.

## **Discontinuous Syntax**

This is not a new phenomenon. Kac's heritage is in working with different experimental poetic styles but found limitations in 2D and 3D and sought a language which would be 'malleable, fluid and elastic' in a different 'space' altogether hence working with holography.

## **Empty Space**

This is the space between the holographic film and the viewer, not the surface of a page. Words do not have phonic resonance in a holopoem. There is no 'silence' of white space. The voids cannot be 'seen' in this spatiotemporal writing. Sound and silence is replaced by an interplay of presence and absence. I wouldn't recommend forgoing the sound of words in poetic composition but that re-envisioning the space on the page in this way can yield unexpected formal developments.

## **Pseudoscopy**

This is opposite of 'orthoscopy' or the correct optical representation of a holographic image. Under certain conditions, a hologram can be made to reverse its image in space and time. A concave object is perceived as a convex pseudoscopic image. An object that rotates to the right is seen rotating to the left and so on. 'Pseudoscopic' technique in poetry composition is word, line, or stanza reversal. A mirroring of sorts but with an awareness of dimensionality. In a wider research it may sometimes be useful to speculate on reverse structures of sections or the whole of a thesis; to reckon with a reversal of an idea or construction to unravel any knots in an argument.

One or more of these techniques can be applied by a writer or other academic or practitioner to the work at hand at any stage of its making or composition to discover fresh insights.

These are just some of the features of holopoems. Without labouring technicalities I have begun to re-conceive these as part of a conceptual framework (poetics) which has given me a fresh eye on my poetry, writing and re-writing; further legitimizes the creative product as research itself; showcases transdisciplinary collaboration which signals future directions for integrated methodologies for creative writing and technologies of perception.

Research in any discipline can benefit from the application of holographic techniques in writing, revision and re-structuring of parts or the whole of a body of work.

## References

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