

Wordless Silence of Poetic Mind: Outlining and Visualising Poetic Experiences through Artmaking

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Key words: belief,
suspense,
contradictions,
nature,
detachment,
beauty, wisdom,
union, freedom

Abstract: This paper approaches visionary poetry from the point of view of an experiential observer. The paper explores the "poetic silence" that occurs in the moments before the poem is written, attempting to capture the moments in which a thought of poetry is formulated. This silence is defined by RILKE (1950, p.20) as "nameless", thus may pose a challenge for a paper that uses names, i.e. written words, to convey ideas. To assist in this challenge I shall use visuals in form of short films that were created as part of my research. Visuals seem most suitable for demonstrating visionary poetry, which relies on visions and imagination. Creating films played a role in developing my understanding of the topic. Hence, I shall share with the reader some relevant insights regarding research practice that were brought to my attention in the process of making the films.

I will examine three elements that characterise the process of poetic activity: Thought, Emotion, and Inner knowledge.

Thought transforms emotion to words; emotion stirs the impetus to create; and inner knowledge is a higher source from beyond the poet him/herself, which can be seen as a spiritual force that is the meaning and the energy of creativity itself.

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1. Introduction

The concern of this paper with inspiration and formulation of thought in poetry writing draws on my interest in the way people communicate and understand the meaning of communication. It seems that the effective ways to communicate a message can differ depending on the context. For example, one could present or perform his or her artworks quite freely in front of audiences, yet must observe certain formalities once presenting a paper in academic context. Such formalities seem too limiting in my case of being both a researcher and an artist. Hence I have experimented with uniting academic and artistic forms of presentations by attending conferences where my paper would be presented and also "performed" or "acted" in a way that reminds an actor on a stage or a video artist at work.

Attendances had the opportunity to ask questions which were filmed using a videocamera at end of the presentations, and to hand a written feedback. [1]

By "academically performing" papers I hope to raise the debate regarding the influence of the researcher on the way knowledge is formulated and transferred. Aiming to challenge the notion of "fixed truth" to be found, I explore the notion of creating truths, which seems to me a dynamic system of inspiration affecting the ways one chooses to look at knowledge. [2]

Knowledge is approached to the extent that it relates to creativity in art, which is my area. This paper will examine the process in which knowledge seems to unfold from the subconscious level to an expressive level through poetry. [3]

2. Chapter 1—Thought

In writing poetry poets are using words which come initially through language. Language, according to the philosopher of art Susanne LANGER (1982, pp.65, 103), is not just a form of symbol of things but also the tool through which humans can think. This chapter examines the process of thought in the poetic activity, through three aspects: *Belief*, *Suspense*, and *Contradictions*. [4]

The search for understanding better "Who We Are" can benefit from an examination of what is it that we believe and what we have been taught to believe (DEWEY, 1933, pp.7-11). Holding to a belief system could turn into an active elimination of other belief systems and information (DE BONO, 1994/1995, pp.ix, 2). To illustrate this let us consider a man standing on a bridge, determined to count all the red cars that pass under. Focusing only on red cars, he will probably ignore completely the blue cars that pass. We should ask ourselves, what such "cars" or knowledge have we all been missing out due to millennia of cultural conditioning? What are the beliefs that make the bridge on which we all stand and from which we observe reality? One of the most prevailing belief system that people tend to hold to is the accuracy of sight. People tend to believe in what they see, probably because it is easier to acquire fashionable ideas of the moment than to acquire standards by which to judge fashions (RAINE, 1975, pp.38-39). As we look around us we tend to claim that most of what we see is an objective experience, and if one claims to see things in one's "mind's eye", that his or hers is imaginative, subjective experience. Subjective experience is understood in Positivism as internal, private, and therefore cannot be shared with others. Thus, it is seen as having no social value (MASLOW, 1994, p.6). [5]

However, close examination may suggest that even objective experiences contain subjective and internal elements. According to KANT's transcendental idealism (1781/1964, p.27), perception goes through stages in which pre-assumptions filter the external events. We perceive events, which are presented to us through the filters of our own thoughts. When we mention the word "table", for instance, it is perceived as an objective and somewhat scientific fact of the existence of an object by that name. We tend to agree and see that object, and therefore make such belief a truth. Our contact with objects, EINSTEIN (1962,

p.136) explains, produces the concepts of their existence. Yet, each person may differ in the way he or she relates to objects. Each and every one of us has a unique background and views with various gradations of emotions that propel us to observe the same object "table" and yet share different expectations, images and experiences. Each person projects his or her personal experience on the external symbol, transforming it to a subjective experience. It follows that the use of so-called "facts" in observation is actually a description of personal experiences (ROBERTS, 1994, p.43). DESCARTES (1972, p.75) argues that observation does not collect information from the senses, but rather from a mode of intellect which is separated from the senses. [6]

People seem to portray internal subjective personal reality using objective external terms. In other words, the external reality is observed through the internal reality. EINSTEIN and INFELD (1938, p.310) explain that impressions and interpretations of sense experiences derive from humans themselves, not from the physical phenomena. And yet, to what extent are people's internal realities shared and understood by other people? Let us consider this question with the following illustration: Image or word can be illustrated as a "suitcase", which on the outside may look the same to all those who observe it (a rectangle bag with a lock). However, each person can possibly believe that it contains different things (blue jeans, white shirt, black dress, etc.). We may all look at the suitcase and utter the word "suitcase", yet believe that it encloses different things (jeans, shirt, dress). In order to share our inner ideas we need to open our own "suitcases" and examine our belief systems, i.e. examine the way we observe reality. The visionary poet seems to embark on such endeavour, opening up the suitcases of his inner thoughts, and acting as a mediator to others (TAYLOR, 1989, p.378). The poet seems to describe his internal reality through the external, expressing his thoughts through the objects and symbols of the external world. Doing so, the poet tries to transform his personal experience from private to universal experience that can be shared with the reader (RAINE, 1975, p.19). Situating the poet in this way, poetic experience is elevated to a point of value and social significance rather than entertainment for its own sake (JUNG, 1990, p.82). [7]

Visionary poets seem to use methods of observation that challenge accepted notions, thus largely regarded as "different" and private. Yet, observation may not necessarily require one to look at life through glasses of pre-conceived cultural concepts which one was taught to believe. "I must Create a System," says BLAKE (1994, p.293) "or be enslav'd by another Man's ...". What are the systems by which the poet arrives at alternative modes of obtaining information? [8]

William WORDSWORTH (*The Prelude*, 1971, pp.326-330) suggests:

"... I would stand,
beneath some rock, listening to sounds that are
the ghostly language of the ancient earth,
or make their dim abode in distant winds.
Thence did I drink the visionary power." [9]

WORDSWORTH reveals his method of observations: "I would stand", he says, which can be understood as physical stop or as a mental stop; a suspense from pre-learned belief systems. Contemplation is characteristic to the Romantics (DAVIES, 1988, p.22), and is seen as a point of forgetting in WORDSWORTH's method—forgetting past experiences and feelings (JAY, 1984, p.53). Suspense is such a simple idea that it may be dismissed as too simplistic. Yet, it seems to provide the poet with not only a new perspective on observed reality, but also with a new notion of time, which is argued to be experienced as "Eternity in an hour" (BLAKE, 1994, p.127). But, how can anyone experience eternity in an hour? Notions of time were amongst the first challenges I faced in the beginning of this research. It seems that perception of time may well be a subjective experience, which is constructed by the human mind itself as EINSTEIN and INFELD (1938, p.311) suggest. Indeed, many people tend to agree that time seems to "pass so quickly" in some situations and yet "pass so slowly" in others, depending on the person's emotional state. This suggests that time could be defined as the length of emotion. Put into a short poem:

"Time is the length of
emotion." [10]

A more structural definition comes from YEATS (1966, p.5), who sees time as a thought connected to emotion and place. I have explored these issues in relation to the Theory of Relativity as well as Quantum Physics. Yet, I learned that notions on the relativity of time may not be useful in understanding the question of poetic "eternity in an hour" experiences, simply because eternity can be defined as non-time altogether. SPINOZA, according to PRAWER (1981, p.875), explains that eternity is not a collective time, i.e. time added to time added to time, but rather a concept detached completely from time. If indeed the poet arrives at a notion of eternity, which is detached from the perception of time as we know it, it may well be that within such experiences poetic observation could hold different coherency to that obtained through the linearity of common past/present/future experiences. Hence, the poet may well observe "a World in a grain of sand, And a Heaven in a wild flower ..." (BLAKE, 1994, p.127). [11]

At this point it is worth to discuss the first year of my PhD research, which can be summed up as "A Scientific Quest by Art Student". I was attending numerous conferences on science and art, approached scientists, and published my first article (DEKEL, 2006), which is heavily influenced by scientific thought. I have learned that science can offer art studies with useful terminology, which is regarded as "objective" and communicative. Yet, overall it seems that there may be no such thing as a "scientifically proven experiment" later to be borrowed into art studies, simply because scientists seem to disagree on most issues that science explores. More so, prevailing scientific paradigms seem to constantly shift as our understanding keeps changing: PTOLEMY—GALILEO—EINSTEIN—Quantum (KUHN, 1970). Human understanding creates an ever-changing picture of the universe (EINSTEIN & INFELD, 1938, p.9). Obviously, science provides for much needed progress in life; however, it seems that arguments for a unique

poetic observation cannot be approved or disapproved in scientific thinking, i.e. cannot have a full dialogue with science, since science knows but little about the role of the brain in the process of poetic inspiration. [12]

Despite my personal interest in scientific thinking, this paper is not set up to provide evidence on science, but rather on art. In trying to bridge what seemed an intellectual activity of the mind and an emotional one of the heart, i.e. producing a poem, I tried to link science to art. And it seemed that there was a good reason for such an interdisciplinary approach. The realm of poetic creativity is so wide that it requires the researcher to become familiar with a wide range of subjects. WARNER (2006, p.371) indicates that the study of human consciousness has been moving from one discipline to another: from theology to philosophy, from biology to neuroscience. One cannot allow limiting oneself to a narrow exploration within what JUNG (1990, p.85) calls a "thickly walled specialist fortress". The findings of my "Scientific Quest" year were applied to the poetic process, culminating in the production of a short film, *Interdisciplinary Mud* (2006), as part of my research. Looking back it seems that I was afraid that my claims would not be considered serious or "academic" enough, unless "proven" through scientific modes. We may ask, why is it that a poet, who has been writing poetry since the age of five and is engaged in practice-based research within the university, is at all worried to express his creative spark unless referring to well-known scientific thoughts? Is it that our culture tends to invalidate the authenticity of poets when claiming for experiences that are not yet "proven"? Or perhaps it is simply that I was not aware at that time of the use of qualitative research methods within academia? And if the latter is the case, then what is to be made of the arguments of millions of poets around the world who are not fortunate enough to go to university and take a qualitative research method course? How they are seen by society when claiming to have creative sparks or experiences that are "difficult to explain"? RAINE (1975, p.59) answers this question by claiming that feeling is at a disadvantage when arguing its truth against that of reason. [13]

Yet, I would add that RAINE's claim could be reversed; that is, reason could be seen at a disadvantage when arguing its truth against that of feelings. Whilst we may agree that we can be sure of what we feel, we may not be so sure as to what we perceive through reason. DESILET (1999, p.348) explains the nonlocality phenomenon, which is much discussed in Quantum Physics, and argues for the possibility of contradictions in observation. An electron can display particle behaviour from one point of view, yet at the same time display wave behaviour from a second point of view. Exploring science I have learned about the unsolved contradictions in the way in which we understand the process of thought. It seemed that the mind cannot be shown to be the source from which poetry flows, and contradictions that are present in the thought process may not explain or evidence on poetrymaking. Time and space, as demonstrated through science, brought contradictions. This conclusion almost led to a dead end in the development of my research. However, drawing on my own poetic experiences, I noted that contradictions are not present in the mind only, but also in the complete process of writing visionary poetry. Visionary poetry seems to come in a

contradictory form of chaotic inspiration on one hand, and the logical and structural verbal expression of words on the other hand. The poem is the result of complex psychic unknown activities, which are intentionally and consciously shaped by the poet into words (JUNG, 1990, p.86). But how can we determine if the above is not mere nonsense? How can we decide whether the visionary poet is a madman or a sensible man? At the very least, how can we examine whether the poet is guided by an objective observation or by a subjective escapist imagination? For answering these questions we should first examine the role of subjectivity. [14]

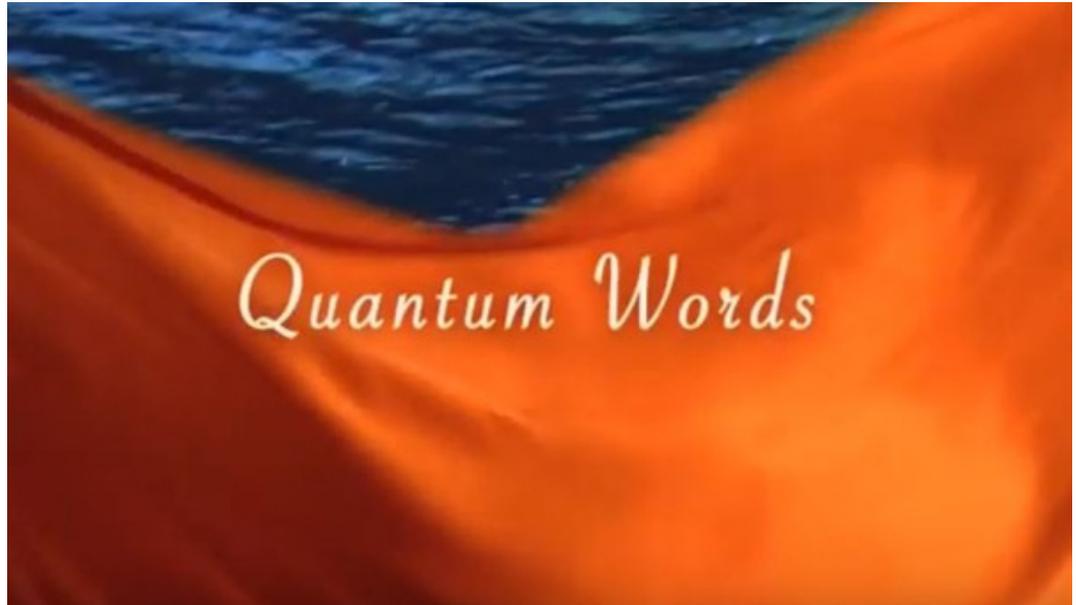
Belief systems, suspense and contradictions suggested the need to explore subjectivity, which can be seen as a mode of behaviour that does not rely on the limited linearity of thought (DE BONO, 1994/1995), but instead allows and "understands" the free chaotic flow of contradictions. That mode, I would argue, is emotion, and will be discussed in the next chapter. [15]

3. Chapter 2—Emotion

DEWEY (1933, p.55) asserts that there is no single uniform power of thought, but rather a power consisting of multitude of observations, imagination and emotions. This chapter explores the role of emotion in poetic experiences through three elements: *Nature*, *Detachment*, and *Beauty*. [16]

While observation seems a natural human capacity, poetic observation apparently is a skill that requires development and attention. It is not enough to stand and look at the skies, trees or rocks, but rather one needs to perceive things from the things' own "point of view". The poet seems to allow himself to dissolve his identity and arguably to become emotionally someone else, imbued with what WORDSWORTH (*The Prelude*, 1971, pp.326-330) calls "the visionary power". The readers are invited to share the experience, expand on it, and later perhaps even claim it their own. [17]

Observation of nature seems a tool used by the visionary poet to enter a state where he can distance himself from his own ego-self (KUMAR, 2006, p.86). Unlike looking at another person, which can be argued a projection of inner feelings unto another person where the experience still remains internal and subjective, nature provides a neutral reference point. By comparing and distinguishing himself from the shapes and symbols in nature the poet detaches himself from ego-centred identity. The short film *Quantum Words* (2006) explores poetic detachment through observing nature. The story and visuals for this film haunted my imagination for more than two years, begging to be manifested, until finally put to practice in this film. Using special effects in the editing process, it took about ten hours to complete each second of this one hundred and two seconds film. Metaphorically speaking, it should be noted that special effects created on a computer take a while to render images, whereas "special effects" used in the imagination seem to render images and visions instantaneously in the poet's mind.



Video 1: Quantum words (2006). Please click [here](#) or on the picture to access the video [18]

The film portrays images of nature through which the poet detaches himself from pre-assumptions and enters a fresh observation, symbolically visualised as a black void of neutral surroundings in which the poet resides. Three short poems were written for this film. The first poem reads:

"Each person is a lost ship
Searching for its shore." [19]

This poem indicates the problem that I would like to discuss in my research—the search for inner knowledge. The second poem reads:

"Emotions and thoughts run through you
As the wind does—
Do you take it to be yours?" [20]

This poem indicates what may be the reason behind the problem—a set of habitual presumptions and behaviours that we live by, and which needs to be challenged. The third poem reads:

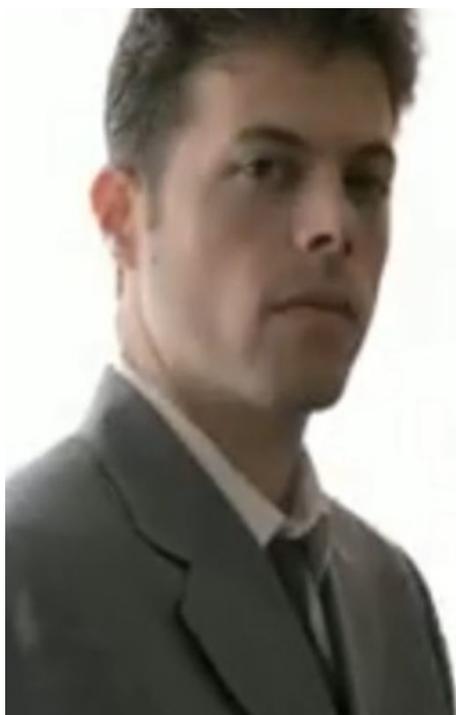
"Enlightenment—
Finding the right
Word/smell/sound/touch
That reminds you of
Your Soul." [21]

This poem hints at a way, or method, of tackling the problem—putting attention to something that exists within the individual and his or her reality, and which communicates with the person. [22]

It seems that these three poems anticipated the structure of my research to come: a social problem, its cause, and a suggested poetic method to solve it. When I created this film I had no idea it would be a kind of condensed experiment that reflects the structure of the whole research. But, the images and symbols for this film were suggested to me by a seemingly collective unconscious, which, one may argue, can penetrate to the mystery of life and provide poets with metaphors that have a relevance to their past, present and future. The film was viewed by more than one thousand people at festivals, cultural evenings, conference presentations, exhibitions and online. I have obtained more than one hundred written feedback from audiences, who had been asked to tell me what they thought was the film's theme. This proved challenging because alongside poetry written in English, there is the use of Hebrew chanting in the film, which most members of the audiences said they could not understand. In this way I hoped that cultural contexts were removed, and a more objective observation of the essence of the film could be achieved. Most of the viewers said that they were not sure what is the exact theme of the film, but that it was clear that the film suggested a form of expanded consciousness that is bound to nature. [23]

Through the observation of nature the poet seems to allow himself to stop and detach from a judgemental perception of life, and instead to move towards a mode of listening (WORDSWORTH, *The Prelude*, 1971, pp.326-330). Applying a straightforward approach of "looking and listening", as LORCA (GIBSON, 1989, p.23) describes it, the environment is "experienced" as opposed to "noticed" (RAINE, 1975, p.119). Verses, RILKE (1950, p.19) reminds us, are not the result of simply feelings, but rather of actual experiences. Authors such as BLAKE, T.S. ELIOT, YEATS and Kathleen RAINE describe walking in nature and decoding minute and delicate details of external realities, later used as metaphors for their inner state of emotions. Such experiences provide deep understanding, allowing for reflection and evaluation. Evaluation produces balance, which gives way to appreciation. Through appreciation of life the poet allows his senses to open up to perceive the beauty that underlies every single thing around us, or as KEATS (ACKROYD, 2006) puts it, "the principle of beauty in all things". I wish to assert this argument not as an abstract idea to be read in this paper but rather as an actual poetic experience in real life. Even when confronted with pain and destruction, a sense of poetic harmony that allows beauty can be found. My experience of serving in the Army whilst a pacifist at heart brought this sense of beauty through pain and cynicism. Poetic experiences helped me to decode beauty that hides behind events, thus easing pain in times of need. YEATS (1966, p.272) sees this power as a revelation, where the important element to look at is passion, regardless of the form that we give it—be it the form of joy or pain. Poetry seems to have a strong hold in reality, as well as the power to lift awareness above that reality with an overflow of emotions to release pain. Poetic release of pain can be a useful instrument in education, since pain itself can hide the fact that a person may turn harmful. Hiding behind pain and feeling ourselves

victims of the world, we tend not to see that our helplessness is a destructive force within us that hurts others, as RAINE (1975, p.60) explains. This notion is explored in the short film *Whispers in the Dark* (2006). The film describes the distressing feelings of writing a PhD in the UK at times of war back home. More than three thousands missiles were fired, aimed at killing my mother, father, brothers and others, whilst I engaged in contemplating the power of poetry to share love in peaceful England. So, how was this contemplation done? I am a poet, and poets fight through their words and emotions—visualised in a film in my case. The viewer is left to decide whether that film managed to penetrate pain through poetry, and elevate the essence of beauty that unites all people.



Video 2: *Whispers in the dark* (2006). Please click [here](#) or on the picture to access the video [24]

Poets describe experiences of intensity and abundance of beauty (RAINE, 1975, p.148), which SHELLEY (TAYLOR, 1989, p.378) sees as the original source of all forms. That beauty touches and "fills up" what I shall term the poet's "Sense of Beauty" until it explodes from within the poet in the form of composing descriptive words or images. JUNG (1990, p.78) describes that process as autonomous, and sees it offering an analogy to other physiological processes of the human body, such as the beating of the heart or breathing. A process where words and images flow, aimed at being shared with others. The short film *Unfolding Hearts* (2006) is a homage to beauty, and was created as a documentation of a true poetic experience I had back in 2002. Through images of unfolding flowers I attempted in this film to evidence on moments of inspiration, where the poet's heart "unfolds" and opens to receive the beauty of life. The flowers in the film were captured mainly in the streets of Portsmouth, UK, using a digital camera. The still images were later converted to moving unfolding images in the editing process on the computer. At

the same time I was reading Kathleen RAINE's autobiography (1975) and learned of the compassion, beauty and poetic peak-experiences that this poet and botanist arrived at from appreciating flowers. While it can be argued that flowers are beautiful, we could ask, what can be beautiful in their delicacy that dictates they die so quickly? Compared to a tree, a flower is all too vulnerable. This I have asked my mother, an Israeli poet, who replied that the death of flowers actually suggests its strength in insisting on returning next year, blooming again and again each season. In one word—rejuvenation. The poet seems to observe that mode of strength and rejuvenation, which can symbolise the poet's own mode of rejuvenation of emotions, insisting on penetrating the beauty and mystery of life. Yet, I would argue that these mysteries are not remote from daily life. As the film shows, poetic experiences can occur in the middle of the street where beauty is deduced from the mundane by focusing on trivial elements in life.



Video 3: *Unfolding hearts* (2006). Please click [here](#) or on the picture to access the video [25]

The poet is positioned in this paper as a keen observer, not as a unique "prophet". I attempt to suggest that perception of beauty is available to all people, since it exists everywhere, here and now. It only takes a mode of attention and emotional acceptance. It is interesting to observe how emotional modes change people's perceptions. This was evident in a poem appearing towards the end of the film *Unfolding Hearts* (2006):

"What if every leaf was afraid
to fall?" [26]

This poem was read for the film by the UK poet Maggie SAWKINS, and her smile at the end of the reading suggests a moment of joy. However, I read the same poem on the BBC's *Emancipation Slam Poetry* event (18 March 2007, Southampton, UK), where it stirred huge laughter from the crowd. This is probably due to the fact that the two poets who had read before me set the atmosphere to humorous, and the crowd was expecting the same from me. Emotional settings seem to affect our perceptions. Moreover, CLANDININ and CONNELLY (2000, p.17) argue that knowledge comes through point of view, and if we shift our position, we then shift our knowledge, because frame of reference is not merely where we stand and look from, but rather a determination of the positions of external bodies themselves (EINSTEIN & INFELD, 1938, p.163). [27]

Perceptions of beauty and the realisation that beauty underlies every single thing around us shift the position of beauty from merely aesthetic and sensual appreciation to being a motivator. The poet is motivated by beauty to create and put it down in words or images for the reader. Yet, while beauty motivates the poet to write it also challenges the assumption that poetry flows from the poet's emotions. We should ask, what does it mean that beauty motivates a poet to write? Or, what is the power behind beauty that touches the poet's emotion and motivates him? If emotions are not the poetic source, but merely a tool to manifest it, and the mind is not a poetic source, but merely a tool to shape it—what then is left? What is the source of poetic experience? Approaching this question I have examined the diaries I have kept since the beginning of this research, and observed the films that were created as a form of documentation of poetic processes. I have noted that most of my ideas, which are formulated into poems, images and music, flow from a spontaneous burst of creativity, which can be defined as a visionary and non-verbal (JEPHCOTT, 1972, pp.16-17) sense of inner knowledge. [28]

While nature, detachment and beauty seem to touch the poet's emotions and allow a flow of poetic inspiration, they do not appear to be the source from which poetry "arrives", but rather tools to allow the source, or inner knowledge, to manifest itself. The role of inner knowledge will be discussed in the next chapter. [29]

4. Chapter 3—Inner Knowledge

In interviews with poets as well as by personal experience I have observed that poetry does not come from the mind or the heart. It occurs from without and gradually makes itself known to the poet as a notion of familiarity entering the consciousness. RILKE (1950, p.25) reflects that in these experiences "you were like a vacant place". This chapter explores the "vacant place" of inner knowledge through three aspects: *Wisdom*, *Union*, and *Freedom*. [30]

As a child, I was told off one day, probably because of mischievous behaviour. I defended myself, saying that I knew what I was doing, but was informed by my elder that since I was only eight years old I could not know my own mind as much as he did. That rationalisation sent a chill of frustration and dismay through my spine. I had the utter conviction that I held a mode of inner knowing, which was

as valid as that of others, regardless of age. But I kept silent, since, so it seems, children have the vocabulary of the heart, not of the tongue. If I could go back to that child today I would tell him not to worry too much, since in a few years' time he will embark on PhD research exploring these issues through art. But that he, together with myself, will have to wait to the end of that research and see what it yields, since PhD process is like a winding road and I do not know yet what may be its direction. Today, I am father to Yael, two years old, and I wonder how will I react if she ever makes mischief? Will I argue that I am her senior, who is engaged in PhD research, thus knows better than her? YEATS (1966, pp.271-272) was brave enough to declare that he saw signs of significant knowledge coming to his three year-old child, from beyond the child's mind. His child could see her unborn brother within her mother. Reading YEATS' account I drew much courage, for it is more than a few months now that my two years old child is looking intensely at her mother's tummy, indicating with her finger her unborn sibling, looking back at me and calling for my attention. [31]

The notion of inner knowledge is well articulated in studies of the Romantic epoch (RAINE, 1975, p.197), yet I wanted to test it in today's terms, and see if it holds any relevance for today's reality. Thus, I have conducted humble interviews with eight contemporary poets from the UK, Israel and Canada, and am looking to interview some more. The interviews were filmed for the purpose of analysis and a future film. I chose to employ the "narrative interview method" (HOLLWAY & JEFFERSON, 2000/2005), where I do not select the topics, order the questions or word them in my own language, but instead become a listener and the interviewee is the story teller. I have found that in telling a story, the poets, being narrators, seem to take responsibility for making the relevant points clear and understood. Relevance is created within the interview itself and by the interviewee (HOLLWAY & JEFFERSON, 2000 / 2005, p.31). Although the poets differed in their approaches of understanding poetry, I found a common thread underlying their stories—all seemed to sense that the poem is coming to them from beyond the ego-self with which they usually associate themselves; from something unacknowledged, something akin to a unified sense of energy or spirit that manifests itself creatively through writing. This feeling of an unacknowledged source seems to indicate the relevance of Romantic notions in today's thinking, which eased my worried mind regarding the relevance of my research, and my sympathy for inner sources that cannot be seen by the human eye and are hard to describe in words. I have noticed that by writing poetry at every stage of my life the language becomes automatic and "wisdom" seems to flow through the words. That "wisdom" seems to hold information, or being of spirits, shaping the growth of my poetic mind. I would like to suggest that the poetic search for inner knowledge is timeless. It was needed in past times as it is needed today, and may I suggest that it will be needed in the future as well. Students proposing PhD research are required to answer the question, "how is your research relevant to our times?" Taking a postmodernist approach, I would like to answer that practice-based research on self-knowledge is needed today because it was always needed and nothing has changed under the sun in regards to the need to "know thy self" (CASSIRER, 1946, p.2). It is strange, DESCARTES (1972, p.71)

noted in 1642, that it is easier to know external bodies than the real thing, the self, which is aware of the external bodies. [32]

I have conducted another "interview" experiment, where I attempted to "interview" my own inner knowledge. In the short film *Interview with authorial-Self* (2007) I have confronted my "academic-self", with my own source of poetic creativity, the "creative spirit". Both are presented as one personality in the film, but split into two aspects of that personality for the purpose of research. It might well be that the idea for a self-interview film was suggested to me by SHELLEY's vision (ACKROYD, 2006) of an image of himself walking towards him and asking, "how long do you mean to be content"? [33]

The film is an exploration of the psychological activity of poetry, to which I would like borrow the term "psychopoetry". It followed approaching psychology schools in UK universities, and talking to psychology teachers. I have learned, as Kathleen RAINE (1975, pp.55-56) has indicated before me, that these schools focus mainly on the physiology of the sense organs and not on the knowledge of the soul. The poetic soul, as discussed by visionary poets and academics such as Carl JUNG, Rudolf STEINER and Abraham MASLOW, is my interest, as explored in this film. I invite the viewer to ask questions and raise the debate on the process of translating inspiration to the physicality of art, by presenting myself as a case study.



Video 4: Interview with authorial-self (2007). Please click [here](#) or on the picture to access the video [34]

Among the feedback received for this film, one suggested that although both "selves" were played by one actor that they really seemed to differ in their behaviour and way of speech. This, I should admit, was an easy task, since the "academic self" character conducted a real interview, which was not staged or acted at all. I have been interviewing my own authorial-Self character, who "visited" me through an automatic speech experiment I conducted with my wife, following YEATS' experiments with his wife (see the first part of YEATS' book *A Vision*, 1974). Later I had to react my wife's part, replacing her part with myself in the editing process. The main difficulty in making this film was actually having no assistance, thus I had to be the cameraman, lightperson and soundman (and being the actor at the same time), and do the editing on the computer. The filming took place late at night, and I was worried that if I spoke loud and clear, that I would wake up our child who was sleeping in the other room. [35]

In this interview film, the academic-self asks the authorial-Self four main questions: Why do I write poetry? Who are you? Why do you inspire me to write poetry? And, how does this process of inspiration unfolds? Examination of the answers to these questions suggests that inner knowledge is a form of information coming from beyond the poet's identity, and yet is integral part of the poet himself. Once again I have stumbled upon a contradiction in my research. Yet, this time the contradiction did not suggest two opposing directions, but rather a unification of two opposing elements. The self and the higher-self are suggested as one form of awareness, which the poet taps to once having poetic experience. Poets seem to walk on a bridge connecting emotion and logic, trying to link these elements. Yet, it is the standing still in the middle of such a bridge that seems to unite contradictions and suggest that they actually make one thing. This conclusion was an insight into my poetic processes, which indeed indicate a feeling of enlarged reality, something bigger than myself that communicates wisdom to myself—all in all, a unified experience of wholeness, making an integral part of myself. This unification has been talked about for aeons by poets and scholars. The physicist John POLKINGHORNE (in a lecture at Southampton University, UK, 9 May 2007) asserts that every carbon in people's bodies was once in a star. Humans and the universe are made of the same stuff. JUNG (1963, p.355) defines the soul as the inner image of an external event. KANT's "... starry sky above me and moral law within me". PARACELSUS' (JUNG, 1990, p.20) "as in the heavens so in the human body ..." [36]

Unification allows the poet to experience abstract ideas while staying anchored to the physical corporeal self and earthy symbols. Over the last years I have been playing with earthy symbols, exploring the mysterious region where the language of images, words and sound meet and speak to each other. Writing a PhD and poetry and making films are humbling experiences for they provide inspiration coming to a person from his higher source, or "invisible guides". This research is a collaboration of my own earthy self, together with my willing to open up (sometimes) and listen to what is described in Judaism as "separated minds". Together these have inspired the words written here, as in my poetry and in the films. To be delivered with inspiration by such sources urged one to see the "light" within all people, regardless of their age, race, culture, opinions, or any

other form of division which we as society have devised. Division, or comparison, is a tool of comprehension by which the mind can understand things (EINSTEIN, 1962, p.141). In this research, comparisons have led me to a conclusion of Union. A union-experience seems to occur when the poet acknowledges the various forces at work behind every act, thoughts and emotions that pass through him as a channel. Elimination of doubts allows for creativity through Oneness (DAVIES, 1998, p.13), where the mind of the poet presents to itself the consciousness of itself (RILKE, 1950, p.25). Robert ELLRODT (2000/2002, p.356) defines this consciousness as an immediate reflexivity in the very moment of the experience. Whereas beforehand I experienced without conscious analysis, now I sense every step of being a poet. Hopefully, I have become a willing explorer of my heart. [37]

I have collaborated with other artists on poetry reading events in Southampton, UK, and have come to acknowledge that poetic experience consists of both giving and receiving. It involves conception of an idea, its bearing, and eventually its reading or performance. One reading event was made into the short film *Explorers of the Heart* (2007), where I tried to unify these aspects in one film and one process—the author, the performer and the audience; the emotion, the intellect and the unified sense that receives the message. Alongside poetry, questions were inspired by the audience. I feel that I have actually missed one question that I was asked, namely "Does the final appearance of the poem changes the feeling that initiated it?" Having the audience sitting and watching me, I was probably influenced to answer that the appearance of my poetry hold a strong ending-line aimed at creating strong emotion to be transferred to the reader. Looking back, it feels as if I did not answer the question fully. First, because my poetry is short-verse anyway, i.e. it consists of one or two lines in total. So, any "ending-line" is basically all the lines that make up my short-verse poems. And second, it seems the question referred to the feeling of the poet, and how it changes once the poem is written. Here I would like to answer that the poetic experience of elevated joy seems never to be fully described in the words of the finished poem. Once emotions are caged in a poem, words limit the poetic experience. RAINE (1975, pp.36-37) suggests that words on the page are for the poet the end of an imaginative process, yet for English Schools it is the beginning. RAINE's notion goes against the mainstream notion of such authors as JAY (1984, p.33) and TAYLOR (1989, pp.374-376), who argue that the act of writing poetry is in itself the act of formulating the poetic source, and thus the bringing of it into existence. My experiences indicate on a higher realm, which exists in itself regardless the poet or the poem, but which asks to be shared with others, by writing it into poetry. The poet must speak out, or otherwise remain ineffective (YEATS, 1966, pp.357-358). Visionary poems are not "sacred" in the activity of writing, but rather are a limitation of an activity since words are limited. I attempt to turn poetic experience into a three-dimensional one that will ignite in others the spark of desire to create. [38]

This attempt was tested in a performative experiment during a conference held recently in Germany. In this experiment, a group of students actors ("Playback Theatre", initiated by Dr. Michelle EBERT-FREIRE, Theatre Arts Dep., California

State University) took upon themselves to manifest and perform theatrically the intent and emotion of a poem I recited for the first time. While I was in the audience, the actors then performed the words I spoke from improvisation. There was no rehearsal or pre-planning.



Figure 1: Three dimensional poetic experiment in inspiration. Production image from *A Fallen Angel* (film in editing process) [39]

The results of this experiment indicated that sharing poetic experience invites others to express a similar pattern of experiences and emotions. The idea is not to direct a viewer to a particular ethical or social position (although to a certain degree this cannot be avoided), but to create an experience of contemplation and reflection. That was the task of the English Romantic poets (BOWRA, 1976, p.291) and the question of whether they succeeded or failed in their task is to be left for another research. As an experiment on reflection, I have stopped more than three hundred people in shopping centres in the UK, during weekends' rush hour, and asked them the unexpected question "what is love?" The various answers were made into a short film *What is Love?* (2007), which is aimed at raising the debate regarding what we know about the most important things in life, and allowing participants (those who took part in the film as well as the viewers) to take a moment to reflect on the meanings of inner knowledge. [40]

Inner knowledge can transform the action of poetic writing from passive adaptation to an active self-transforming experience, where the poet can control the creative flow, never to lose the creative impulse nor feel dissatisfaction with the outcome. This is Freedom.



Video 5: What is love (2007). Please click [here](#) or on the picture to access the video [41]

5. Conclusion

It seems that to become a poet one needs not be born a poet, but rather listen to one's heart and intuition, and observe reality through these inner senses. [42]

The artist is positioned in this paper as a tool of expression rather than the source of expression, implying that connection to inner wisdom is available to everyone who is ready to tap to the unknown by means of communicating with the self through words, images and emotions. This is a process that visionary poets seem to follow, suggesting that inner knowledge can be of use by all people in their daily lives, and not just by poets in their creative activities. It is my hope that I also demonstrated in this paper that inner knowledge can provide inspiration to be used as a form of primary source for PhD research. [43]

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Citation

Dekel, Gil (2008). Wordless Silence of Poetic Mind: Outlining and Visualising Poetic Experiences through Artmaking [43 paragraphs]. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 9(2), Art. 26, <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqs0802261>.

Revised: March 2023