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Poetry in Relation[1]

Poesía en Relación

Poesia em Relação

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RESUMEN

Este artículo explora la poesía como una práctica relacional, reflexiva y transformadora que profundiza la comprensión de uno mismo, de los demás y de la experiencia humana. A partir de un taller interactivo presentado en el Primer Simposio de Emociones, Cultura y Arte (Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, 2026), los autores examinan cómo la lectura, el escuchar, y la escritura de poesía favorecen la empatía, la reflexión crítica, la imaginación y el desarrollo profesional. Más que presentar la poesía como un producto literario acabado, el artículo propone la poesía en relación como un proceso dialógico, en el que el significado emerge de la interacción entre autor, lector, memoria, lenguaje y experiencia vivida. Al invitar a los lectores a participar en ejercicios de escritura creativa y reflexión a lo largo del texto, el artículo presenta la poesía como un método de investigación y una práctica pedagógica capaz de enriquecer el desarrollo personal, la educación y la formación profesional.

Palabras-clave: Poesía en Relación; Investigación Poética; Investigación Basada en Arte; Pedagogía Relacional; Práctica Reflexiva.

ABSTRACT

This article explores poetry as a relational, reflective, and transformative practice that deepens our understanding of ourselves, others, and the human experience. Drawing on an interactive workshop presented at the First Symposium on Emotions, Culture, and Art (Pontifical Catholic University of Chile, 2026), the authors examine how reading, listening to, and writing poetry foster empathy, critical reflection, imagination, and professional development. Rather than presenting poetry as a finished literary product, the article proposes poetry in relation as a dialogic process through which meaning emerges from the interaction among author, reader, memory, language, and lived experience. By inviting readers to engage in creative writing and reflective exercises throughout the text, the article presents poetry as both a research methodology and a pedagogical practice capable of enriching personal growth, education, and professional formation.

Keywords: Poetry in Relation; Poetic Inquiry; Art-Based Research; Relational Pedagogy; Reflective Practice.

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RESUMO
Este artigo explora a poesia como uma prática relacional, reflexiva e transformadora que aprofunda nossa compreensão de nós mesmos, dos outros e da experiência humana. Com base em uma oficina interativa apresentada no Primeiro Simpósio sobre Emoções, Cultura e Arte (Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Chile, 2026), os autores examinam como a leitura, a escuta e a escrita poética fomentam a empatia, a reflexão crítica, a imaginação e o desenvolvimento profissional. Em vez de apresentar a poesia como um produto literário acabado, o artigo propõe a poesia relacional como um processo dialógico no qual o significado emerge da interação entre autor, leitor, memória, linguagem e experiência vivida. Ao convidar os leitores a participarem de exercícios criativos de escrita e reflexão ao longo do texto, o artigo apresenta a poesia como um método de pesquisa e uma prática pedagógica capaz de enriquecer o desenvolvimento pessoal, a educação e a formação profissional.

Palavras-chave: Poesia Relacional; Pesquisa Poética; Pesquisa Baseada em Arte; Pedagogia Relacional; Prática Reflexiva.

Arte Poética. Viviana Ayilef, Argentina.

La poesía viene después.

Antes están los eternos compañeros,
las miradas de los hijos,
los viajes extendidos por los hombres,
–entre sus sombras,
sobre sus cuerpos,
por sus historias otras–.

Y la palabra
–siempre– vendrá después:
antes la lluvia, el desplazarse.
Vivir migrando entre lo propio más ajeno:
en las ausencias,
en los despojos.

Porque si viene,
aunque tardía,
toda palabra llegará
únicamente

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para calmarnos.

Antes la sed.
Antes,
la vida.

1 Introduction

1.1 Opening

This article is based on our presentation that took place during the 1st Symposium on Emotions, Culture and Art, held at the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile, Faculty of Social Sciences, School of Psychology, in collaboration with the Catholic University of Maule, Faculty of Health Sciences, Department of Psychology, which took place from January 7 to 10, 2026.

The text is titled "Poetry in Relation." True to the principle that inspired the Symposium, this article seeks to extend the dialogue between the authors and audience of that event to present-day readers. Thus, our approach is eminently conversational, with spaces designed to foster interaction so that the reader of this article can experience rather than simply understand. We begin with a brief presentation of the use and value of poetry in academic, professional, and personal work, which should be considered secondary and complementary to the experience of poetic practice. We will then share some of the questions that guided us, some of the poems we shared, fragments we used to stimulate reflection, and conclusions about what emerged during the session.

We hope that you – readers imagining yourselves there with us – will try to be with us here, dare to experience, to feel, to think, and to write poetically. Even if it's uncomfortable, we invite you to suspend the need to understand and surrender first to feeling. This article is designed for that purpose, and after all, what's the worst that can happen?

1.2 (Academic) presentation

In the fields of education and social sciences, we could say that we are in the midst of a "transdisciplinary turn" that invites us to integrate the arts into our

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research practices (MARXEN; GONZÁLEZ GUTIÉRREZ, 2022). More than a superficial change, this represents a quest to develop our methodological imagination and thus better understand the affective aspects of human experience (GÖRLICH, 2016; 2020). By writing and using poetry, we seek to transform traditional academic language into one that promotes its humanization and, consequently, the humanization of our workspaces (FITZPATRICK; FITZPATRICK, 2021).

We propose that through poetic work we can develop our empathy with others and with ourselves. A clear example would be using poetry as a research method: with it, we would become "worthy witnesses" of the experiences of others, positioning ourselves alongside them in their search for justice and healing (DAVIS, 2019). In this way, poetry offers us a means of articulating the cognitive with the affective/sensory (SÁNCHEZ, 2023), allowing both authors and readers to "feel" the other's experience instead of "only" reading about it. This capacity of poetry to "approach the true taste of life" is what allows us to connect deeply with the human condition (FAULKNER, 2016; 2021).

Likewise, poetry is a valuable medium for critical reflection. We propose that through it we can question dominant narratives and neoliberal structures, biases, and reductions, developing an interrogative stance where the poetic text becomes a site of resistance against oppression and silencing (DAVIS, 2019; LEGGO, 1998; PHIPPS; SITHOLÉ, 2022). Thus, poetry opens up possibilities, sometimes becoming a necessity for naming what until then seemed unnamable (QUINN, 2016). Here, we use it as a method of (self-)analysis, where themes emerge from the verses themselves, offering “multivocality” to the experience under questioning: the voices of the participants, the researcher, and the theory are combined through poetic dialogic transformation (FAULKNER, 2016; GLESNE, 1997; LAHMAN, 2010; SCHOONE, 2023). We thus affirm that the poetic exercise offers us a new opportunity to develop ourselves and our imagination by allowing us to "inhabit the possibility" of being and feeling as if we were someone else (SNÆVARR, 2022; STREET, 2017). With poetry, knowledge is not understood as something given, fixed, or stable, with a single voice or solution; on the contrary, it emphasizes its relational construction.

We conclude this section by reaffirming the role of poetic writing in professional development. Following HOWARD, NASH y THOMPSON (2023), poetry

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collaborates in the negotiation and articulation of complex identities, such as that of the "motherscholar." For these authors, poetry can be used in an autoethnographic process, offering a means to integrate the personal and professional in relatively coherent ways. This aligns with SÁNCHEZ's (2023) proposal, who argues that poetry, given its tentative, open, dialogical, and relational nature, allows contradiction to coexist with both individual and shared meaning. By writing (ourselves) in our texts, we enable ourselves to articulate parts of ourselves: ourselves as professional/researcher and subject/researched, guided by an ethic of care for ourselves (MANLEY, 2022; THI NGUYEN, 2024). Ultimately, we write poetry not only to try to understand the world, but to transform it and, in the process, transform ourselves.

2 Development

2.1 Questions that Served as a Guide for Reflection

We begin our recreation of the workshop by presenting the question that guides our exploration: How can reading, listening to, and writing poetry deepen our understanding of ourselves, others, and human experience, and what does this imply for our personal and professional development? Let's examine this proposal step by step.

Regarding poetry and human experience, what is it about poetry that allows us to understand experiences in ways that everyday language cannot? Regarding poetry and reflection, how does it transform our relationship with poetry into an experience of reflection, of seeking meaning in experiences, and of personal development? Regarding poetry and knowledge, in what ways can poetry be understood as a legitimate way of knowing, learning, and conducting exploration and research? Regarding poetry, dialogue, and transformation, how can poetry, through language, metaphor, memory, imagination, and dialogue, transform our understanding of human experience, fostering empathy, critical reflection, and a deeper connection with ourselves and others? Regarding poetry in professional practice, how might reading, listening to, and writing poetry enrich our professional training and practice?

Before continuing, we take a first break so that readers can write their reflections – we point out that it does not necessarily have to be written in a poetic way, but we strongly suggest it.

DOI: http://doi.org/10.14393/OBv10.e2026-45

I do not believe in the peaceful way. Nicanor Parra. Chile.

I do not believe in the violent way
I would like to believe
in something, but I do not
to believe is to believe in God
the only thing I do
is shrug my shoulders
forgive my frankness
I do not even believe in the Milky Way.

2.2 Poetry in Relation

Poetry can be understood as an integrated process encompassing countless complementary dimensions. Three aspects of poetry that we explored in the workshop were listening, reading, and writing. We, as facilitators, along with the workshop participants, had the opportunity to experience these three ways of engaging with poetry.

By listening to poetry, we were able to see how it helps us develop attention span, sensitivity, and openness to the experiences of others. Listening involved recognizing voices different from our own and cultivating empathy as the foundation of human connection.

Having been exposed to poetry, we saw how it fosters critical interpretation. Each reader negotiated meanings, established connections with their own history, and discovered new perspectives from which to relate to reality. In this way, we appreciated how reading poetry strengthens tolerance for ambiguity and the diversity of interpretations.

In the workshop, we saw how poetry constitutes an exercise in self-exploration. The act of writing allowed us to organize emotions, reconstruct memories, and process complex experiences through symbolic language. Many other dimensions converge in this process, and poetry simultaneously becomes research, learning, memory, creativity, and dialogue, giving rise to the concept of poetry in relation.

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2.3 Listening to and Reading Poetry

During the workshop, we had the opportunity to listen to and read poems by several Latin American poets, as well as two poems written by us as facilitators. These poems were shared in the context and spirit of stimulating, exploring, reflecting on, and shaping the writing and composition of poetic creation.

In this article we have included samples of these poems and, as in that presentation, we invite readers to give us some time for slow reading, ideally aloud (if this produces uncomfortable sensations, so much the better).

Your faces [excerpt]. Mario Benedetti, Uruguay.

I have a loneliness
so crowded
so full of nostalgia
and of faces of you
of long-ago goodbyes
and welcome kisses
of sudden beginnings
and the last train car.
I have a loneliness
so crowded
that I can organize it
like a procession
by colors
sizes
and promises
by era
by touch
and by taste.
Without trembling unduly
I embrace your absences

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which attend, and attend to me,
with my face of you.
I am full of shadows
of nights and desires
of laughter and of some
curse.

Poetry in Relation seeks to propose that poetry is never finished nor self-contained; on the contrary, it is necessarily a relational exercise. Poetry is simultaneously for the author and for the reader. Poetry needs us; poetry needs of us. Thus, we offer here some of the ideas we used in the workshop to nurture poetic production and stimulate the participants' thinking so that they would reflect on "Poetry in Relation." We expand upon these ideas here, again providing space for further elaboration; for each contribution, write down some ideas, either individually or together.

Resources for poetic writing:

Memories –

Imagination –

Images –

Or other relationships –

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Having done this, go to your nearest thesaurus (print or online). Look up the words you wrote and now rewrite them. Transform them by thinking about what the change produces.

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Next, we ask you to give yourself space to play with what you've written. Explore rhythm, rhyme, alteration, and metaphors. Intentionally try to structure the text in a specific way: line and stanza length, rhyme schemes, and repetition.

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Our approach to poetry in relation seeks to engage in dialogue not only with what is present but also with what is absent, with what remains unseen. Thus, it explores what is being hidden and revealed, concealed and unveiled. Behind each verse and stanza lie voices and silences, each essential to poetic writing.

truth/s

im/perfection

DOI: http://doi.org/10.14393/OBv10.e2026-45

We arrive at the heart of our argument: poetry aims to feel and to evoke feelings. Form and content serve the intention to poetize, and what we ask together is, in relation to what?

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From our own experience, we present a poem written by each author, dedicated especially to this space:

The p is psilent. Felipe Sánchez

I search where it is not found.
Water washes away
the earth, but you tell me what I see –
the mud that has long been on my face.
God does not play in strange ways.
Just as hyenas laugh, I too laughed.
Like an anthropologist on Mars
or a Ray Bradbury novel
As I study you and given my luck
I see neither the spots nor the tiger
stalking me in silence. Before I wake,
for upon opening an eye, or in opening remind
I might see what from the mud turns celestial.
Avenge before I change;
suddenly, I was a toothless child –
what are you saying? Don't speak slowly
that if there is no noise, I cannot sleep,
and if I do not sleep, do not I know what I feel
when time amuses itself, I fly
and land right between the pages

DOI: http://doi.org/10.14393/OBv10.e2026-45

I owe myself from yesterday.

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Originally. Julio González

I wrote so that
the ink in my cartridges
would not dry up.

Now,
I simply write.

I do not recall
the moment
my endeavor was transfigured.

But I do recall the moment
when impulse
became process.

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2.4 Workshop on Composition, Creation and Reading of Poetry in Relation

Eventually, we reached the part of the workshop where the participants would create their own works. At first, some were very timid, but others weren't. We asked them to take risks and offered them the following guidance and suggestions:

Compose a short poem of 3 to 7 lines containing only 2 or 3 adjectives, no adverbs, active verbs, and most lines ending with words stressed on the last syllable. Also, include words or synonyms for "feel" and "relationship."

We also emphasized that these were only suggestions and nothing more, and we shared the construction of the following poem with them as an example:

Yesterday on the Subway. Julio González

On my way home, I saw
a girl with a lovely gap between her
two front teeth.

She hurriedly moved
from where she was sitting
catching me in her strong arms.

As I felt myself falling,
little by little, she interrupted my
inevitable relationship with gravity.

In the workshop, we saw how the participants, who initially seemed apprehensive about writing poems, gradually relaxed and wrote without worry. To those reading this article, we ask: How have you felt writing poetry while reading this?

All participants generously shared their poems, some rewriting and editing them as needed. When their poetic compositions were shared, they were warmly received and sparked profound reflections among the participants, which were also shared.

We repeat here: poetry in relation – author *and* audience, me *and* others, me as *self* and me as *other*.

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3 Final remarks

3.1 Ideas for continuing to poetize

In this text we have attempted three things: first, to show what we did one day in January 2026 in the city of Santiago, Chile. Second, to offer a way of understanding poetry as an inherently relational production. And third, to invite the reader to continue the exercise with us from a distance and begin to create poetry within this text.

Without seeking to conclude, we instead extend an invitation: to hear from you, the readers. Instead of us providing the final word, you are invited to write (ideally in a poetic style) your own reflections, conclusions, or opening thoughts, whether individual or combined. If you wish, we would like to hear from you.

We end this writing with an invitation: write to us.

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3.2 Coda

Because writing poetry is work, we leave here a non-extensive list of resources that have helped us to develop our "lenses" to see poetry in relation.

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