

## ***Interactive comment on “This bookmark gauges the depths of the human: how poetry can help to personalise climate change” by Sam Illingworth***

**Anonymous Referee #1**

Received and published: 24 September 2019

Thank you very much for the opportunity to review this manuscript. I found the work to be particularly well written, and the topic especially timely. I also appreciated the author taking the time to set-out and give detail to the methodology that informed and framed this research - this is often a over-looked element of qualitative research that I believe is important with regards to interpreting the dependability of the study and allowing reviewers like me to follow, audit, and critique the study. I also found it particularly valuable to have lines from different poems represented within the text and in relation to the different codes identified through the study.

I really only have minor feedback that I would ask the author to consider.

Introduction

C1

Starting on Line 79. I know the focus of the paper is on the nonexpert communicating about climate change, but as you also note in your methodology and evaluation of the author's of the poems in your study, sometimes scientists are poets, poets are scientists. I wonder if you could highlight, even if just briefly in this paragraph of the introduction, the potential value, indeed examples of, scientists who do communicate about climate change through poetry? This has been highlighted in a related paper as one way that they [scientists], and others, can communicate and generate dialogue about complex topics (see Januchowski-Hartley et al. 2018 and the text about scientists who write poems in relation to their research and even their interpretations of climate reports). Perhaps this only warrants a brief mention in the introduction, and potentially then also revisited in your conclusion section, as noted below. I believe it is important that we not make an unnecessary dichotomy between scientists and poets, and as you found in your study, these people do exist, and it is possible that even others who were not explicit about their professional life in their author bio are also scientists (here in the broadest sense).

Conclusion

Starting on Line 779. Here I think you could potentially highlight how poetry can be used as a venue/method/or conduit for diverse people, including scientists, to establish a dialogue amongst each other. The paper referenced above by Januchowski-Hartley et al. 2018 also highlighted the value for scientists, and indeed those learning science, to include poetry in their practice and lives to engage with the topics they work on (or learn about) and to communicate about those topics in broader dialogues. I noted above that it would be a shame to segregate out scientists, not all scientists are climate scientists either, from consideration of non-specialists. I do appreciate that you retained those people in the study who did self-identify as scientists.

Perhaps my above point also links into your closing paragraph. You could link to /cite related works where scientists, particularly climate scientists, are also using poetry (and visual artwork) to interpret climate change; that can be interpreted as being for

C2

non-specialist audiences and move toward broadening the dialogue. I leave it for you to consider; I thought it potentially strengthens or broadens your closing argument.

Finally, I do see value in multiple colleagues undertaking the content analysis; even if conducting separate content analyses and then comparing the messages that emerge. Perhaps this is an additional direction that could be pursued in future works that you or others lead. This would be valuable in also recognizing different people's interpretations of poems, because after all, 'Do nothing to a poem that it never was written to have done to it' (Robert Frost), and whatever our interpretations are of a poem, are potentially not those of what the author intended. This could also suggest some potential value in a follow-up study that couples content analysis with interviews [of poets] (though I recognize some poets might not be comfortable with that).

Thank you again for the opportunity to read and contribute ideas and feedback on this manuscript. I hope that some of the ideas and feedback that I shared are useful for this or broader research that you go on to conduct.

---

Interactive comment on Geosci. Commun. Discuss., <https://doi.org/10.5194/gc-2019-19>, 2019.