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## Vanity Fea

José Ángel García Landa

### **A note on Unamuno's metafiction**

## **Baring the Device of Reality**

A note on the existential significance of Miguel de Unamuno's metafiction. His novels question the 'willing suspension of disbelief' which is the bedrock of workaday human reality. (A retropost from 2011).

Vanity Fea

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*A commentary I post on the PsyArt list (Sept. 12, 2011), in response to Norman Holland's appreciation of Miguel de Unamuno's metafictional devices in Niebla:*

Unamuno is not a great novelist, he's too impatient with the trappings of fiction, but his writings are intense because of his very impatience to get to the core of existence. Fiction is, according to him, essential in the conduct of human lives.

In another novel, "[San Manuel Bueno, Mártir](#)" he tells the story of an atheist priest, who keeps the secret of his unbelief in order to give the faithful the consolations he can't believe in himself: God, the immortality of the soul, etc.

Humans live in a fictional world of their own making, and most of what passes with us for identity and reality rests on Coleridge's "willing suspension of disbelief" —that is, on the conventional basis of *not breaking the illusions of belief*. I suppose this crisis of faith, or this "barring the device" of reality, is at the origin of Unamuno's experiments with fictional form.

[Que se sueñen inmortales: Unamuno, doblemente escéptico](#)

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