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Resonant voices: The poetic register in exegetical writing for creative practice

Abstract

Quality, exegetical writing can be constrained when students marginalize poetic ways of thinking and replace them with carefully edited accounts that reshape the role and nature of emotional response. In the pursuit of rational, theoretically groomed accounts of practice, they can sometimes end up misrepresenting the embodied nature of their inquiries. Considering burgeoning research into Poetic Inquiry (PI) in the Social Sciences, this article employs a case study of five doctoral graduates in art and design who have articulated the role of poetic thinking in their creative practice theses. In addition to offering illustrations of how practice-led researchers use poetic inquiry, the examples demonstrate ways in which poetic approaches can be employed to enhance communicative clarity beyond the constraints of conventional academic writing. Specifically, the examples demonstrate how poetic writing is used to process and articulate indigenous knowledge, enhance embodied thinking and inquiry, and deepen levels of reflection and understanding. Such uses can cause a researcher to view the world differently and by extension, expand the nature of what it means to conduct research. In discussing the nature of poetic writing, the article considers three distinct profiles: exegetical writing employed when the nature of the practice is poetic; poetic writing that draws on indigenous approaches to scholarship, and poetic writing used as a method for reflection.

Key words

Cultural perspectives

Exegetical writing

Field notes

Method

Poetic inquiry (PI)

Poetic writing

Resonant voices: The poetic register in exegetical writing for creative practice

In 2015, Patricia Leavy, in her discussion of poetic writing in research observed, ‘... poetry is a form that itself brings attention to silence (or as a poet might say, to space) and also relies on emotional evocation as part of meaning making while simultaneously exposing the fluidity and multiplicity of meaning’ (2015: 66). While her discussion was in the context of research writing in the Social Sciences, it offers some consideration for thought in exegetical writing in creative practice inquiry.

One of the concerns I face as a doctoral supervisor helping candidates to develop exegetical writing, is the distortion of what has been experienced. At its most flawed, an exegesis can become a re-narrating of experience that is artificially groomed into an expression of something that didn’t occur. What is written can end up suggesting a clarity of logically realized intention that was never part of the journey. At worst, when flawed exegetical writing is not questioned, it can impact on the nature of practice-led research, to the extent that a candidate sets aside discovery and pursues a systematic illustration of theory. Thus, it is a concern that when developing an exegesis, candidates can sometimes lose their voice in an anxious pursuit of what they presume to be scholarly discourse.

I have supervised and examined doctoral, practice-oriented theses in Art and Design for 20 years. Over 30 of these candidates have, in some form or other, engaged with exegetical writing. In truth, I do not have substantial issues with such writing where it relates directly to actual practice and enables a researcher to articulately account for the manner in which they create and refine thinking. I remind myself that the word exegesis has deep roots in scholastic thought. Coming from the Greek ‘*exegeisthai*’, meaning to ‘interpret, expound or explain’ (Davidson, Seaton and Simpson 1985: 337), in theological writing, the exegesis has long been concerned with elucidation and critical interpretation. Upon its application in creative practice research, it became a device used to take a reader critically through the complexities of a research process, drawing out from the practice an explicit discussion of context, method and ideas inherent in the work. However, I have found that such an undertaking can be a distorting expectation for students when their thinking

processes are unable to be adequately accounted for inside the rational, linear nature of conventional academic writing.

The poetic voice

Paltridge, et al. (2012: 342) have noted that in the pursuit of effective exegetical writing, researchers in creative practices 'do not necessarily have to fit with a pre-conceived template, or indeed straight-jacket.' Nelson maintains that if exegetical writing is to engage effectively with creative practice, it is imperative that writers 'explore scope for emotional content within the academic' (Nelson 2004: para. 22). In her discussion of exegetical writing in art and design, Doloughan (2002: 62) has argued that language might usefully embrace the poetic and 'that to write about metaphysical concepts and reflective practices requires a new kind of discourse'. Her thinking builds on Baker's (1995) assertion that it falls to creative practice researchers to 'loosen our grip on the distancing effect of academic discourse and replace it with a more ... embodied response to things' (Baker, 1995: 74). A number of researchers into the nature of exegetical writing in Art and Design have made similar claims (Barnacle, 2012; Mäkelä 2007; Ings 2015), and empirical studies of postgraduate, practice-led projects have observed that in creative inquiries, often an exegesis is required to assume 'a dual orientation, looking outwards to the established field of research, exemplars and theories, and inwards to the methodologies, processes and outcomes of the practice' (Hamilton 2011: para. 1).

In my experience, Hamilton's discussion of a 'dual orientation' in exegetical writing might be seen not as a binary, but as a continuum. Here, a writer might speak in fluid, well-crafted registers that express the diversity of their thinking processes. At one end of this spectrum we might encounter an objectively analytical voice that reviews contextual knowledge, while at other points we might read the register of a narrator (Scrivener and Ings 2009), a reflective thinker (Mäkelä 2007), or a poet. While all of these voices are of interest, this article is primarily concerned with the last register: the role and nature of poetic writing.

By poetic writing I am not referring to the writing of poems (as in lines written in verse), but to a broader form of non-traditional academic writing that can focus on feelings, tone, emotion, rhythm, ambiguity and affect.

Beyond the discipline

Calls for poetic exegetical writing about creative practice inquiry may be aligned somewhat with Prendergast's (2009) discussion of the use of poetic writing in social science research. In the Social Sciences, she suggests that poetic forms of research have largely grown out of the arts-based inquiry movement that began gathering traction in the 1990s. She proposes that the rise in artistic approaches to qualitative research have also been, in part, a response to Denzin and Lincoln's (2011:33) concerns about the 'crisis of representation' in the Social Sciences.

Poetic writing as a research method has been discussed in a number of studies (Hanauer, 2010; MacNeil, 2000; Prendergast and Galvin, 2015; Prendergast, Leggo and Sameshima 2009; Vincent 2018), and the use of poetic devices has profiled in disciplines as diverse as Anthropology, Education, Health Care, and Sociology. Poetic writing as a method has also appeared in transdisciplinary 'liminal' research spaces (Sinner, Leggo, Irwin, Gouzouasis and Grauer, 2006; Neilsen, 2008; Leggo et al., 2011).

In fact, the role of poetry in qualitative research has a significant history that can be traced back to the work of Hayden Carruth in the late 1940s. By 2009, Prendergast had identified over 230 published, peer reviewed publications that employed poetry as a significant element of the research processes or presentation. Often grouped under the broad definition of Poetic Inquiry (PI), such writing in research has continued to expand.

In 2010, Hanauer suggested 3 ways in which poetry is employed as a method in qualitative research studies. These are:

- 1) to represent and reinterpret existing data
- 2) to collect data, and
- 3) to collect field notes

(Hanauer 2010: 75).

Vincent (2018: 51) suggests that poetic inquiry is not 'selected by researchers as a way to ... diminish the need for thorough, well-supported studies, but is chosen as a method to realize new or different ways of knowing.'

This pursuit of different ways of knowing is a relatively common experience among many of the candidates that I have supervised. Often expressed apologetically and then asked if it should be included in their exegesis, they talk about states of fertile indwelling where thinking is 'felt' and where emotional resonance becomes a compass while navigating territory without a roadmap. In this realm, what is discovered often takes the form of poetically worded impressions. This nebulous space, I recognize as similar to Keats' realm of negative capability, 'when a man [sic] is capable of being in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact or reason' (Keats 1958, I: 193). It is therefore not unexpected that such space of thinking and experience might seek expression.

Methodology

In illustrating ways that candidates have navigated such spaces, this article employs a case study of Ph.D. graduates from AUT University in Auckland, New Zealand, who have used poetic writing registers when crafting exegetical writing.

A case study as a methodology recognizes that a consideration of phenomena is open to subjective creations of meaning (Miller and Crabtree 1999). As an approach it is useful because it enables one to consider complex phenomena within its contexts (Miles and Huberman 1994). By exploring manifestations of poetic writing and the way that researchers use them to discuss the nature of their practice-led inquiries, we are able to consider 'a variety of lenses which allow for multiple facets of the phenomenon to be revealed and understood' (Baxter and Jack 2008: 544). This said, because a case study considers a discrete participant pool, one can draw conclusions only about that group and only within a defined context. However, although case study research cannot purport to establish universal, generalizable 'truths', it is able to describe, consider and contextualize distinctive approaches that have been used successfully by a diverse range of creative practitioners (Feagin 1991).

So, let us turn to examples of how poetic writing has been employed in practice-led, doctoral research projects in Art and Design. In an examination of the exegeses of five Ph.D. graduates, it is possible to identify three distinct manifestations of poetic writing. They are:

- Poetic, exegetical writing employed when the nature of the practice is itself, poetic
- Poetic writing that draws on indigenous, cultural approaches to scholarship
- Poetic writing used as a method for reflection on an environment or experience.

Poetic, exegetical writing employed when the nature of the practice is itself poetic

In certain instances, the nature of the practice undertaken by a doctoral candidate is poetic and, in such cases, one often encounters a connection between what is created and the manner in which it is discussed. Two examples serve as useful illustrations and in both instances the graduates were film poets.

Chen Chen

Chen Chen completed her practice-led Ph.D. in 2018, with a study that considered how the Chinese *Xiang* system might be applied to the artistic development of film poetry.¹ Within the inquiry she was particularly interested with the potential of *menglong* (enigma or ambiguity) as an artistic and narrative device.

Film poetry is a distinctive media form that draws upon certain conventions of film and poetry. Wees (1999) positions it as a subgenre of film, where an artist combines written or spoken word poetry, visual images and sound into a new text. However, Chen's film poems extended this idea to reflections on the enigmatic 'spirit' of the writing of the late Tang Dynasty, Chinese poet Shangyin Li.

Her exegesis was physically designed to complement the ethos of her practice. Accordingly, the document sought to express ‘the beauty of Yi Jing which corresponds to what we may feel in poetry’ (Chen 2018: 25). Given that the exegesis drew heavily on Chinese ways of knowing, she opened it with a chapter where she positioned herself as a researcher operating between cultures. Her text was divided into six sections, each of which was prefaced with a poem. The poems that she wrote functioned as a delicate orienting device that introduced discussions about her childhood, adolescence and adult artistic practices that drew her to the inquiry.

Although much of her exegesis was analytical, at times Chen also wrote in a manner that blurred stylistic divisions between poetry and prose. This writing normally referenced what she called the ‘poetics of the everyday’ (ibid.: 90). The elevation of the ordinary to the state of the poetic, typified her creative work and had meaningful cultural roots. Ames and Hall (2003) note that Chinese philosophy is embedded in everyday life. In discussing this phenomenon Chen said, ‘In my work I appreciate the lyrical nature of the everyday ... This is because I perceive the poetic in ordinary objects, in unaffected environments and people’ (Chen 2018: 25). This attention to the lyrical beauty of what might be unnoticed by other people, is delicately accounted in the closing paragraphs of her exegesis.

It was a cold spring morning in 2014 when I walked along a quiet street in Auckland with the tentative idea of a film poem forming in my head. In front of me a small white flower petal landed on the ground ... then drifted past. I looked around but I could not find a blossoming tree. When I watched the petal, small and fallen, I saw beauty and loss, I saw aging and recalled the familiarity of the town in China where I had grown up. I saw a piece of myself lying quietly ... and in this moment, I remembered a delicate line from Shangyin Li’s poem:

The east wind lacks strength, all the flowers fade.

[东风无力百花残].

A quiet melancholy descended.

Today, recalling this flower petal,

I realize how deeply certain Chinese poetic concepts, (including Xiang system and menglong) have become rooted in my heart.

Accompanying them, in the last four years I have experienced the beauty of elderly women, I have felt the nature of dying towns, I have sensed the texture of human emotions ... and I have experienced the power of the ordinary.

This has been the journey of the thesis.

... It has also been the journey of my heart.

(Chen 2018: 151 -152).

While the grace of poetic writing comprised part of Chen's exegetical expression, it also formed a method inside her research. When she encountered locations that might form the context of her film poems, her first response was to 'feel' their potential by writing to herself. She included an example in her exegetical discussion of method, explaining how she wrote while visiting her mother's ancestral home before composing the film poem *The Heart of Spring*. In this poem she 'sees' as a filmmaker, describing how it feels to be in her mother's garden and to experience both the nebulous nature of grief and the delicate sensuality of memory.

I collect the glistening light of waves
White fog and fresh wind
I hear the breath of the sea beyond the mountain
I touch the slight coldness below the leaves
Black rain and warm smoke
I see the shadow of spring waking.
Lost in the sound of water and ink
I breathe the scent of dreams
Remember who forgot you on that day.
Don't glance back
When you are looking.
I am old.

(Chen 2018: 71).

David Sinfield

David Sinfield's thesis inquired into the potential of typography, sound, imagery and the content of recorded speech, to capture the poetic nature of remembered space. The context for his study was Pātea, a small town located in the North Island of New

Zealand, that had been struck by an economic calamity in 1982 when its factory closed down leaving most of the workforce of the district unemployed. Using extracts from interviews he conducted with local people years after the event, he designed a family of typefaces that captured the dialect and paralinguistic nature of their speech (Figure 1). He then applied the type to excerpts of their speech which he laid over filmed footage of the abandoned factories. These experiments were formatted as film poem films.

David considered the voices of these workers and the spaces where they had once worked as poetic. What was significant in the study was his assertion that typography itself might be poetic. Like Brumberger (2003), he argued that typefaces can have personas and the visual appearance and structure of typography ‘can convey a visual texture, tone, and mood, that suggest a rhetorical stance’ (Brumberger 2003: 208).

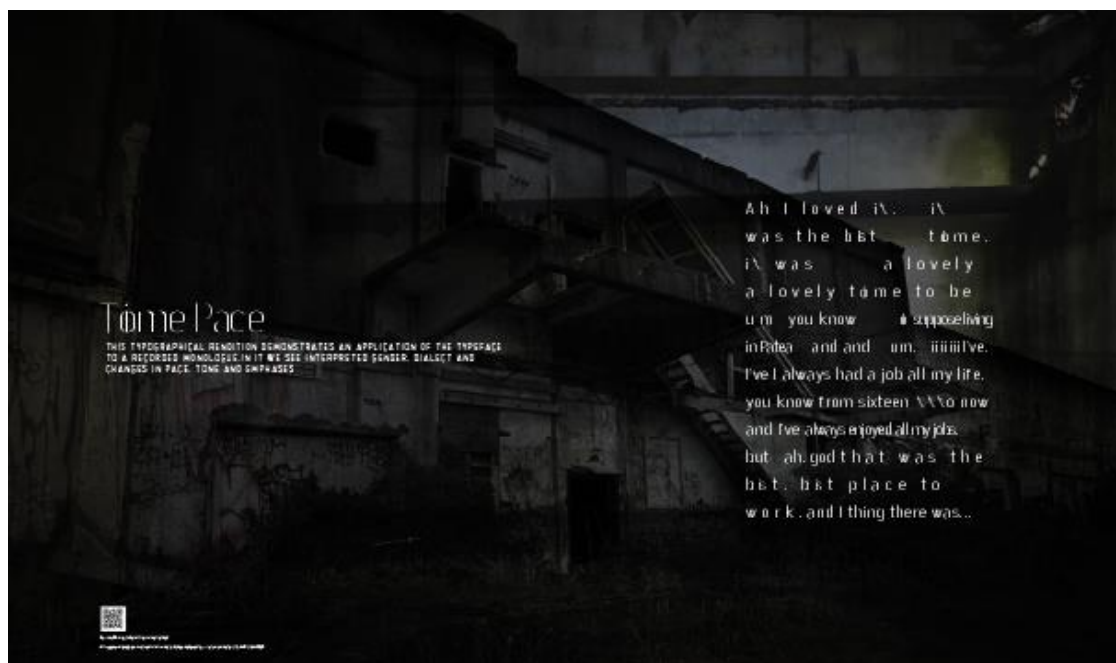


Figure 1: David Sinfield, A typeset segment of Joy McBeth’s recollection of working at the Pātea factory, 2019. The text is set in the typeface Toime which the researcher designed, based on the dialect, clarity and paralinguistic features of the woman’s speech. When reading the interactive exegesis, one can click on the image and the segment of the recorded interview will play. This enables a reader to observe how the type works as a responsive interpretation of what is heard. (Image used with permission. ©. David Sinfield).

Rather than conventional poetic devices like rhyme, verse structure and thematic development, David's typographical poetry utilized 'the poetics of irregularity, inaudibility and dialect ... artistically integrating atmospheric sound and imagery (often as palimpsests) to suggest beauty and poetic significance in what might otherwise be treated simply as an interview transcript' (Sinfield 2020: 201).

Like Chen, he also employed poetic writing as a reflective research method that enabled him, when inside the decaying remains of the factory's wharf buildings, to record

... a state of embodied, open awareness. Here, I wait with and immerse myself in a process of turning inward to seek questions that are not sharply defined. I search for the nonexplicit. I draw on both poetic and tacit knowing, both of which resource emotional reactions that might be artistically interpreted later in the research.

(Sinfield 2020: 99)

David's poetic writing enabled him to document the sensory nuances of the locations he studied. Given that his poem films combined image, text and sound, he was able to use the same integration when generating field recordings. Thus, in the decayed buildings and the toxic grounds of the factory, he photographed, filmed and recorded sound samples while he wrote to himself poetically. By adopting this approach, he was immersed in a poetic process of coming to know an environment. This synthesis would later serve the poetic work he created.

Because poetic thinking underpinned the study, David's exegesis moved through diverse written registers. His poetic voice especially permeated his descriptive writing about his work. In a chapter he devoted to a critical commentary on his poem films, he briefly described his 2:17-minute work *The Bar*, like this:

In the darkness there are co-ordinates.
They mark the location of Pātea.
The sea slides, turgid in a struggling dreamlike motion.
Over this, a typographical voice speaks to us from an aural realm

Filled only with the battering sounds of the wind and surf.

(Sinfield 2020: 212)

This is not poetry crafted as a publishable text; it is poetic writing used to describe an experience or artefact. David does not see himself as a written or spoken word poet; he is a film poet. Artistically, he experiences poetry in the depth of sound, in the colour of a shadow or the texture of a voice. When he writes poetically, he is simply employing a mode of address that most effectively expresses the nature of his thinking process.

Poetic writing that draws on indigenous, cultural approaches to scholarship

As doctoral education in creative practice becomes more internationalized, assumptions about knowledge and how it is expressed increasingly challenge conventions in the Academy. Although research like Mammeri and Bourdieu's (2004) inquiry into how cultures use poetry have broadening thinking in Anthropology, indigenous perspectives on poetic writing in creative practice research are still relatively sparse and this suggests fertile space for further research. In New Zealand, in addition to my work with doctoral candidates from Persia, China and Pacific nations, I also supervise a significant number of Māori researchers. Māori and Pacific cultures have long and complex histories of scholarship that emanate from ontologies quite removed from western constructs that divorce the spiritual and the poetic from the rational. Accordingly, it is useful to consider two graduates whose theses utilized poetic writing as an integrated part of their study.

Moana Nepia

Moana Nepia's thesis, *Te Kore: The poetics of performance* (2012), considered the indigenous Māori concept of Te Kore through practices that included film, dance, poetry and exegetical writing. Te Kore is a complex idea that has no real equivalence in Western thought but, broadly, it may be understood as the origin of existence in the form of a fertile nothingness from which everything emerges.² Positioning his thesis within a distinctively Māori epistemology, Nepia asked 'How might Te Kore be considered a *kaupapa* (principle) for creative practice?'

His exegesis was formatted in three volumes that considered the research's indigenous methodology (*Aratika*), a review of contextual knowledge, and a discussion of indigenous and western critical ideas in relation to his practice.

However, significant in the structure of his exegesis, was an initial volume that contained 16 of his poems. This text was titled *Te Huihuinga* (Poetic encounters). It consisted of an anthology of his poetic imagery and writing. Moana saw the volume as providing

... an entrance to cultural and conceptual realms in which the thesis is located. Designed for the reader to enter a sensory realm, the volume was conceived of, as a gathering within a sensory landscape in which multiple voices call and speak to each other.

(Nepia 2012. Vol. 2: 34)

Moana emphasized that the volume responded to Māori traditions of 'utilizing *mōteatea* (poetry), *haka* (dance) and *waiata* (song), to articulate important information' (ibid.). His intension was that the volume should speak to, and with, his video and performance work, providing 'multiple entry points through which the reader might encounter the layers of Te Kore' (ibid.).

As a threshold to both Moana's exegesis and his practice, the anthology of poetry functioned as orientation through which the reader was drawn into sensory, genealogical and spiritual realms of awareness that played out within the thesis. In Māori scholarship these things are intricately connected and they resource how an inquiry is conducted.

In his exegesis Moana's poetry was bilingual, moving between *Te Reo Māori* (Māori language) and English. In so doing it was able touch ideas for which there is no English equivalent and operate as an indigenous, cultural referent to Māori ways of introducing and framing complex thought.

Robert Marunui Iki Pouwhare

A related use of poetry in both exegetical writing and artistic practice permeates the *pūrākau* (narratives) of Robert Pouwhare's Ph.D. thesis project. His study proposed that bowdlerization, dislocation, and infantilization have historically acted as the debilitating agents of colonializing practice, and they have done much to undermine and then erase, the complexity of indigenous storytelling. His 14 filmed and typographically overlaid narratives about the demigod Māui, employed ancient words, phrasing and *karakia* (ritual incantation) narrated in Māori and accompanied by fleeting English translations (Figure 2).



Figure 2: Robert Marunui Iki Pouwhare, Screenshot showing Māori phrasing and an English translation from Episode 10, Te Ika Whenua, (*The Great Land Fish*), 2019. (Image used with permission, ©. Robert Marunui Iki Pouwhare).

These *pūrākau* constituted an effort to return to stories (many of which have been erased from public memory), the power and relevance of the mythopoetic. Robert noted in his exegesis

Māori mythopoetic language is rich with classical allusion, passed down through oral traditions. Such knowledge helps to construct and reinforce te ao Māori reality. This process is thwarted when the sensibilities of a coloniser are employed as a pre-emptive filter for what becomes recorded and disseminated in print.

(Pouwhare 2020: 50).

Robert argued that the use of mythopoetic language links to ‘ancient epistemologies and myth messages embedded into narratives that have become largely stripped of their depth and complexity’ (ibid.: 78).

While the 14 *pūrākau* were poetic in nature, in many instances his exegesis drew upon similar modes of address. His writing was often beautiful, tender, rhythmic, passionate and evocative. At other times it moved towards the coolly analytical and his assertions were studiously supported and cross referenced. But it was the poetic voice of belonging, ancestry, and designerly reconstruction that carried the ethos of his exegesis. In the document’s concluding lines, he stated

Ka hoki au ki taku haukainga ki Te
Urewera
ki taku mārua ki Waiohau,
ka rongu au i ngā rākau o te wao tapu
nui a Tāne
e kōkihikihi ana mo te wā e āmio
kaewa ana ngā atua i ngā pūkohu
haumaringi.
Ka tapaina te whenua ki o rātau ingoa
me ngā ingoa o ōku tīpuna.
Ka whakapāwerawera e rātau te
whenua ki te kura huna,
ki te mātauranga Māori.
Mai i te pae tawhiti ko te kōrero
mahuki o tōku koroua, o ōku tīpuna
mo te wā whaimuri i ngā atua,
mo tētahi tipua whakaharahara a Māui,

me ngā wāhine tipua whakamataku i
noho pūtahi ki to rātau ao.
Ko ngā pūrākau mo Māui ka tāiri ki te
whenua ki te rangi.

When I return to my homeland in Te
Urewera
and to my valley in Waiohau,
I hear the trees of the great rainforest.

They whisper of a time when the gods
roamed through the mists

And the land assumed their names
and those of my ancestors.

In this process, the land became
knowledge,
our knowledge.

Across a vast distance my grandfather
and my ancestors speak to me
of a time after the gods,
of an extraordinary character called
Māui,

and the even more powerful women
with whom his world intersected.

The Māui pūrākau in this thesis, play
out against the land and the heavens.

(Pouwhare, 2020: 80).

Poetic writing used as a method for reflection on an environment or experience

Finally, it is useful to consider the use of poetic writing in field notes. Field notes are often associated with the social and natural sciences. Although Newbury in 2001

noted that they were relatively less common in Art and Design research, it has been my experience that field notes are often used by photographers, filmmakers and artists at doctoral level, who seek to record and reflect on material that will lead to later, artistic synthesis. Newbury describes such notes as 'a melting pot for all of the different ingredients of a research project - prior experience, observations, readings, ideas - and as a means of capturing the resulting interplay of elements' (Newbury 2001: 3).

When candidates share field notes with me, I normally encounter highly visual, heavily annotated and idiosyncratic documents that have journeyed into the field with them, accompanied them during their investigation and generally continue as ongoing sites of reflection. In some instances, these field notes can be very poetic, especially where the researcher has put aside an objective lens and is seeking a more deeply embodied engagement with what they encounter. Although field notes are rarely intended for sharing with others, I have observed that excerpts taken from them sometimes appear in exegetical writing about methods and practice. The notes compiled by Marcos Mortensen Steagall may serve as a distinctive illustration.

Marcos Mortensen Steagall

Marcos' 2019, Ph.D. thesis inquired into issues that might be addressed when a photographer seeks to express an embodied, spiritually-attuned relationship between himself and the land.

Methodologically his research was heavily shaped by a reflective field journal inside which he utilized 'photographic recording, descriptive narrative, poetic accounting and interrogative, subjective questioning, as methods for thinking about and responding to practice' (Mortensen Steagall 2019: 178). His field notes accompanied him across 34 months while he immersed himself in 13 locations in New Zealand. In the study he journeyed into deserts as cyclones approached, navigated the depths of underground caves, photographed treacherous coastlines in the darkest hours of night and recorded the resonance of Te Puia o Whakaari island just months before its fatal eruption.

The use of poetry in field notes has a long history that may be traced back to the writing of anthropologists like Loren Eiseley (1972) and Toni Flores (1982). Marcos extended Flores' experimental 'field poetry' (1982: 22) and developed a critically reflective approach to writing that used seamless movements between analytical and poetic registers. In discussing his approach, he referred to a 'distinctive sensory/poetic voice [that can record] emotional or sensory impressions that do not translate into analytical prose' (Mortensen Steagall, 2019: xxxv). As a data gathering and synthesizing method, his notes were collated as a reflective narrative of experience inside which records were made of geographical coordinates, feelings, reflections, questions and accruals of work that, at the time, were formative in his thinking. His entries were normally written while he was in the field or recorded orally while he was driving back from his incursions. (This material he later transcribed). The immediacy of his approach meant that he was able to document impressions and reflections while they were still fresh. It also meant that he was able to validate a voice that spoke naturally in the field but had traditionally been 'written over' by more analytical registers once he returned to the university.

Marcos' writing was not the 'high' poetry referred to by Barone (2001), Faulkner (2007) and Piirto (2002), in their critiques of the expectations of Poetic Inquiry. It was visceral, tactile and immediate. It was used to express an 'ongoing developmental dialogue' (Schatzman and Strauss 1973: 94) where the researcher was able to integrate elements of 'the real 'inner drama' of research, with its intuitive base, its halting time-line, and its extensive recycling of concepts and perspectives' (Marshall and Rossman 1995: 15). Marcos' writing sought to express sensory embodiment that could not be objectively described. As such, his poetry was an attempt to make meaning of, 'the essence of my living self and an essence of something in the land that is immanent, but not yet manifest' (Mortensen Steagall 2019: xxxv).

The following entry recorded in December 2016, while photographing the cliffs at Pukearuhe (Figure 3), serves as an illustration.

I was fascinated by the energy and force capable of creating such patterns and I became aware by extension, of the fragile constitution of my own body. I touched the cliff in

places and felt the rough, gelatinous, polished surfaces. I lay my body against the rocks so I could feel depth, strength and resonance. I felt ...

A sense of being overwhelmed,

Flow.

The pulling of breath and emotion.

(Mortensen Steagall, 2019: 71)



Figure 3: Marcos Mortensen Steagall, Tidal flow around the base of the cliffs at Pukearuhe, New Zealand, 2016. Photograph. (Image used with permission. ©. Marcos Mortensen Steagall).

Such recollection appeared at times in his exegesis alongside more analytical writing that was used to unpack the methodological framework behind his research and contextual theories relating to his discoveries. Marcos' poetic writing is closely linked to his personality. I think it would be fair to describe him as a passionate photographer who feels the world on very emotional levels. The permeation of poetic registers in his writing is understandable when one considers that in creative practice inquiries, researchers and their data are intrinsically linked, because one generates the other. An artistic practitioner cannot be separated from what they create because they permeate it, often in very visceral ways.

Accordingly, to speak articulately in an exegesis, often requires such practitioners to move between states of deep, interior reflection and dispassionate, objective, analysis.

Conclusion

Paltridge, et al. (2012: 342) argue that options for presenting doctoral writing 'do not necessarily have to fit with a pre-conceived template.' Indeed, I would suggest that one sign of disciplinary maturity in creative practice research is the appearance of diverse writing registers that can meet the needs of practice while speaking articulately to its explication and context. In the work of the five doctoral graduates discussed in this article, we see examples of three distinctive uses of poetic writing. I am not suggesting that these provide an exhaustive scope of the use of poetic writing in the field. In discussing them, I am simply nominating the concept of poetic inquiry in arts-based disciplines that reside outside of the social sciences.

Hamilton and Jaaniste (2009: 12) note that in creative practice exegeses

Often poetic evocations ... are testament to the depth and breadth of the evocation of the work, how it draws attention to the contingencies of the body/self, and how it provides diverse insights into the subjective qualities of awareness and perception (ways of seeing, being in and knowing-of the world).

Leggo suggests that such poetic evocations can form both a vehicle for rumination (Leggo 1999) and a way of knowing (Leggo 2008) that causes a researcher to view the world differently and by extension, expand the nature of academic writing and what it means to conduct research. In 2008, he discussed a distinctive orientation, familiar to many creative practitioners, where one embodies a 'living inquiry' as a dynamic state of 'learning to live poetically', where the researcher is 'always seeking to understand the ways that poetry opens up possibilities for knowing and being and becoming' (Leggo 2008: 29-30).

As scholars within an Academy that seeks international relevance, we must consciously remain open to diverse ways of knowing and becoming. We must be

mindful of the way in which anxiety and convention can lead to a distortion of what constitutes an articulate account of creative inquiry. We should be prepared to support trajectories and outcomes of scholarship from diverse ontologies, so new scholars can be supported through their doctoral studies, speaking in rich voices about the nature of their thinking.

Understanding the potentials and contexts of poetic writing is one way that we might do this.

Acknowledgements

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Your strength and commitment enables us all.

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¹ The Xiang system is a layered, philosophical and aesthetic system adapted by the candidate from Chinese poetry. It consists of three traditional concepts: Xiang [象] (physicality); Yi Xiang [意象] (the fusion of subjectivity and objectivity), and Yi Jing [意境] (the stimulation of a philosophical feeling and comprehension).

² Te Kore is a complex concept in Māori thought. Nepia, in establishing the concept's relevance to contemporary artistic practice, cites Mohi Ruatapu, a nineteenth century Māori tohunga (scholar), who positioned Te Kore within Te Ao Mārama (the realm of contemporary human existence).