What happens when a researcher wants to publish differently? : A vision of the possibilities – Cabaret as academic discourse.

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Beyond Borders? Approaches and pathways in Arts, Design and Media research.

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Abstract

Research publication is one of the core factors of research practice. From the Medieval *studia generalia,* in which prospective applicants had to orally defend themselves against all comers, through to the Excellence for Research in Australia (2010) processes that put value on individual research publications, research publication, as an aspect of research practice, has undergone enormous change. Like many practices associated with research, there is hegemony that often inhibits creativity. The dissonance surrounding this hegemony begs a question 'what happens when a researcher wants to publish their research differently?'

Biog

Dr Geof Hill has been teaching research supervision to academic staff in U.K. and Australia for the past twenty years. His initial university teaching appointments arose out of his doctoral investigation into the ways in which post positivist inquiry is undertaken, supervised and examined. His dissertation included a cabaret titled 'Doing a doctorate'.

Geof has been presenting one-man cabarets as academic presentations throughout his academic career. He has a background in the performative arts and training as an opera and musical theatre singer on which he has drawn lecturing in Communication, Management, Education and Research. His first one-man cabaret was written in 1995 on 'Being a Reflective Practitioner'. Following his cabaret on 'Doing a Doctorate' he wrote and performed a subsequent one-man cabaret on 'Research Supervision' which was performed at the International Conference on Quality Postgraduate Research in Adelaide, Australia in 2006. In 2015 he published a practice-led inquiry focused on his cabaret about publishing research differently.

Geof is the principal author and instigator of 'The research supervisor's friend' – a Wordpress blog https://supervisorsfriend.wordpress.com/ .

Overture

[1]Someday, somewhere, somehow:

A vision's just a vision if it's only in your head.

If no-one gets to hear it, it's as good as dead.

It has to come to life.

Bit by bit putting it together.

Piece by piece, only way to make a 'work of art'.

Every moment makes a contribution; every little detail plays a part.

Having just the vision's no solution.

Everything depends on execution.

Putting it together. Word by word!

Art isn't easy.

Overnight you're a trend, you're the right combination.

Then the trend's at an end, suddenly you're last year's sensation.

All they ever want is repetition!

All they really like is what they know!

You've got to understand what's their tradition.

(You've) got to learn to trust your intuition while you reinvent your own position and you get your work on exhibition.

Putting it together; bit by bit, phrase by phrase, word by word, thought by thought, dot by dot, song by song, spat by spat; and that, is the state of the art!

Welcome

Thank you. Let me say at the outset how pleased I am to have been invited to present this plenary. Some of you will be aware that I secured the invitation because I had been putting out my performative research for peer-review, both in this university and in the wider research world. I can't tell you how important it is to take every opportunity to solicit peer review of your research work. What many of you are doing today is exactly that – putting your research on exhibition, and that is a threshold element of research practice and research publication.

Many of you will have come to this university with a vision of the types of doctoral contribution you want to make to knowledge, but as Sondheim rightly suggests '*A vision… has to come to life'.* Hopefully this presentation will help you develop some skills and strategies to bring your visions to life!

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[1] 'Putting it together' from 'Sunday in the Park with George' (Sondheim, 1984)

Introduction

What I am presenting today is a performance in the context of both performative inquiry and practice-led inquiry. This performance has a track record. It was originally written for and performed at the *Inaugural Global Storytelling Conference*, in Prague in 2012 (Hill, 2012). It was subsequently re-presented at different university symposia and conferences; each time being tweaked as a performance to accommodate the context in which it was being performed as well as what I learned as a performer from performing it. It has been tweaked and rewritten again for today's delivery.

Since 2002, when the OECD redefined the nature of research to include performative work, I have come to see these iterations and tweakings of performance as cycles of action inquiry and thus a way of undertaking practice-led inquiry into my performative work (Hill, 2015). My practice of performing my research <u>is</u> the practice that leads my inquiry!

Provenance[i]

In my writing about practice-led inquiry I have advocated that every practice has a history and each practitioner has a history with the practice. I describe that notion as 'provenance' (Hill, 2014; Hill and Lloyd, 2015; Hill, 2015).

If I think about my personal provenance for my performative practice it includes

- My early singing experiences in choirs and folk groups;

- My musical theatre exposure to Stephen Sondheim's music that opened up the idea of music performance as research for me;

- And the parallel development of my academic work and research into practice, that started when I trained as a work-study analyst in the 1980s, and is now the basis for much of my performative practice.

In the context of today's presentation for ADM research it is pertinent to address **creativity**. It has always amused me that by definition, doctoral research invites creative and new ideas, but that this creativity can be hampered, even shackled by the hegemony of universities and of research practices. Creativity can impact on your research in that you might be investigating various creative practices or you may be applying creativity to your research practice by generating new and sometimes unheard of ways to investigate. Or, like me, you might be exploring creative modes of publishing your research.

Research in the contemporary world is driven by what is often referred to as the 'so what' question (Selwyn, 2014). It is important that all research is seen to make worthwhile contributions and is not simply esoteric. The 'so what' of this cabaret rests in the heart of what research is and the role played by publication within research. Research is systematic and transparent investigation of an issue or topic leading to a contribution to knowledge. Research publication therefore is essential for communicating the outcomes of research and, as I believe that there are many different ways to communicate, when we talk about communicating how we have undertaken a study and the results of our research, it is important to look to a variety of methods. This can ensure that we communicate to a variety of people.

In Business and Management, which is my predominant discipline, two different modes of knowledge have been identified (Starkey and Madan, 2001): Mode 1 knowledge is knowledge arising from traditional research practices; and Mode 2 knowledge is knowledge arising from practitioners, or what some would refer to as practice-led knowledge. In my research, I have not only been trying to access Mode 2 Knowledge, I am also exploring alternative ways to communicate that knowledge to make my research more usable for other practitioners.

More generally in research practice, there is hegemony. This is the dominant way of doing anything. We can deepen an understanding of the hegemonic practices by looking to the edges in the form of marginal practices. Presenting academic material in cabaret represents a form of marginality.

The Provenance of Research Publication

Alongside each individual practitioner's provenance, we find general provenance of the practice knowledge or literature about a practice. Research publication as a practice has its own provenance. In the early or ancient cultures in which research was undertaken as dialogues between thinkers and students – pedagogy, research was published orally through the spoken word. Some of these dialogues became documented, and as writing came to dominate research publication and the literature about a given practices!

[2]*You can open doors and take from the shelves all the books you've longed to hold.*

You can ask all the questions the whys and the wheres as the mysteries of life unfold.

As you walk through the forests of the trees of knowledge,

and listen to the lessons of the leaves, you enter a space to discover debates

wrapped in the shawl that learning weaves.

I remember, everything they taught me!

What they gave me look at what it's brought me.

You can travel the past and take what you need to see you through your years.

What philosophers have learned and scientists as well

That was there for their eyes and ears.

Like a link in a chain from the past to the present that joins me with my future yet to see.

I can now be a part of this ongoing stream that has always been a part of me.

I remember, everything you taught me

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[2] The lyrics of this song have been adapted from the musical Yentl (1983); Music by Michel Legrand and Lyrics by Alan and Maralyn Bergman. The song refers to the Talmudic scholars and their reference to the many old texts which inform the way in which people understand and make choices in contemporary life.

What you gave me, look at where it's brought me.

There is literature that once you've read no-one can take away,

No wave can wash away, No wind can blow away

No tide can turn away, No fire can burn away

No time can tear away

And now they're about to be mine.

There are things to remember all your life

Those thoughts that fuel your dreams until the fall of your life.

Find meaning in those moments!

Research has always been a part of human existence, but when we write about research we often refer to Ancient Greeks and their practice questioning what was happening around them which we now study as philosophy. That Greek provenance is evident in research discourse in the words that are used to discuss research practice - such as ontology and epistemology. Research publication at that time was predominantly oral with the occasional written form (Hamilton, 2001), for example Plato's recording of Socrates arguments that enabled later generations to read the exact words of the philosophers. Even religious texts, such as the Torah, were used to explicate arguments or theses posited by the religious philosophers.

Research practice and research publication are both considered contested practices. Both have experienced changes across their histories. Critical incidents in philosophy of research have given rise to new practices of undertaking research and thus new practices of publishing research. New technologies have also changed research publication. For example, the invention of the printing press meant that limited written publications became more available for public reading, provided people could read.

The ways in which research publications were written initially followed an ancient Greek form of argument or rhetoric. This was still common in the time of the precursors to the universities, the *studia generalia*[ii] established by Emperor Charlemagne (Noble, 1994, 10, citing Schachner, 1962, 322-30) to develop administrators for his kingdom. Students [men] aspiring to study at these schools had to present an argument in Latin and/or verse (Winter, 1996). By the 1600s, when Boyle (1660) published his invention of a pneumatic pump, writing style had shifted to make explicit the process of research, often referred to as scientific method[iii]. Boyle's (1660) publication was intended to enable readers of his description to 'witness' his experiment which would have previously only have been possible by direct observation (Shapin, 1984). This was the start of what became peer review in subsequent research publication.

Scientific method, the style of doing research, generated a way of writing about research. Scientific method was subsequently proclaimed by Comte (1848, summarised by Habermas, 1968, 77) as the only true knowledge and called positivism. So we moved towards hegemony

of research practice and a dominance of a writing style for research publication. This occurred at about the same time universities became the centres of research rather than being places only for teaching (Noble, 1994, 6). Thus research practice and research publication both had hegemony linked to positivism.

The practices and beliefs of research practice, dominated by Scientific Method, were challenged by the likes of Thomas Kuhn (1962), and in USA, the Chicago school (Fine, 1995) and the ensuing paradigm wars generated a variety of research methods (Guba and Lincoln, 1982; Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). Ways of writing about research changed. A good example is how academic writing using the third person to signify objectivity changed to accepting the first person (Somekh, 1995, 347). Thus we saw a change in the style of academic publication.

Developments in electronic technology also changed the ways in research writing was structured and subsequently published. The traditional method for writing about research was linear in that the argument had to follow the structure of the book in which it was published. With the advent of electronic publications, an argument could be constructed with non-linearity providing electronic portals through which a reader could jump to other parts of the argument. The late Lesley Jarmon is often credited as being the first person to submit a digital doctoral dissertation (Topracc, 2011). As electronic technology developed, research was published electronically; certain conference publications were published electronically and so were certain journal publications, via web pages. This meant that the publication of one's research following presentation at a conference was faster than the lengthy delays associated with journals and some of these forms even advanced to double blind peer review.

In a philosophical revolution of sorts, the OECD in 2002 redefined creative works as research and research publications. Some authors saw these creative approaches to research publication as vehicles for the researcher to express their own voice (Matsuda, 2001). There were offshoots as evidence by Bob Dylan receiving the Nobel Prize for literature in 2016, signalling a shift in what counts as literature.

Each new researcher is faced with a history of research practice and the history of challenges to the hegemony of practice. Each new researcher in an effort to address the uniqueness of their inquiry, may come up with new ways for both undertaking research and for publishing it. The path for most researchers is arduous at best, but when a researcher chooses to do something different there can be barriers placed in the way. Their research might be described as marginal in that it is positioned on the edges of what is accepted practice. It might be described as aberrant, meaning that the example is so different that pursuit of this direction might even be discouraged. Those sort of people might be told to 'not rock the boat!' At an extreme, those people who consider themselves gatekeepers of research practice may describe certain research as not even research.

³ I am speaking for the people

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³ 'Everybody says don't' in Stephen Sondheim's (1964) Anyone Can Whistle.

Who have wondered what would happen if they chose to publish research somewhat differently.

Will they be overawed by the rules and regulations? or see it as their chance to voice creatively?

Make just a ripple.
Come on be brave.
This time a ripple,
Next time a wave

Sometimes you have to start small,
Climbing the tiniest wall,
Maybe you're going to fall-
But it is better than not starting at all!

Everybody says no,
Everybody says stop.
Everybody says mustn't rock the boat,
Mustn't touch a thing!

Everybody says don't,
Everybody says wait,
Everybody says can't fight city hall,
Can't upset the cart,
Can't laugh at the king!

Well, I Say Try!
I Say Laugh at the kings or they'll make you cry.
Lose Your Poise!
Fall if you have to,
But(lady), make a noise!

Everybody says don't,
Everybody says don't,
Everybody says don't-
It isn't right,
Don't-it isn't nice!

Everybody says don't,
Everybody says don't,
Everybody says don't walk on the grass,
Don't disturb the peace,
Don't skate on the ice.

Well, I Say Do,
I say, 'Walk on the grass, it was meant to feel!'
I Say Sail!
Tilt at the windmill,
And if you fail, you fail.

and if I say 'don't'

I say 'Don't be afraid'

Clearly, when you look at the provenance of academic writing and particularly research publication, there is evidence of a genre being consistently challenged and reformed as a result of philosophical and technological innovations. Challenging things as they are, is part of the critical agenda that goes with being doctoral.

Alternatives to the traditions

In the second part of this presentation, I want to look at ways in which you might argue for something different.

One way to look at how one would propose something different is by returning to the threshold concepts of academic writing to recognise that any publication of research is an extended argument and even the way of writing or publishing can be part of that argument. This takes us back to the way in which prospective students in the medieval monasteries and the *studia generalia* would present their cases for admission (Noble, 1994, 10)-: they argued a position against all comers.

When you are not doing anything different you are often adhering to the standard rules or the hegemony. Here there is no need to argue because what you have done is exactly what is expected. When there is a variance from hegemony then I can see there are a number of ways to proceed.

1. Precedent.

2. Paradigm and

3. The Precipice – more commonly referred to as The Gap

Precedent is perhaps the most common form of argument for a research study. We identify how others have investigated a similar topic and suggest that we are going to do the same as what they have done. The argument rests in the ability to be able to show that your study is similar to the one you want to mimic. While this is predominantly done in the same discipline, there are examples of taking an investigative approach from one discipline and suggesting it be carried over to another because of the similarity in the topic being investigated.

Although precedent is the most common, the unsung hero in my opinion is the paradigm.

Arguing from the point of view of an inquiry **paradigm** is another way to put forward a case for difference. The idea of paradigm is attributed to Thomas Kuhn (1962), and while Kuhn

did not explicitly define it, subsequent use of the term in a range of arguments, has generated a variety of meanings (Burrell and Morgan, 1979; Reason, 1988). The paradigm debate is a discussion about belief systems underpinning research practice and was particularly advanced by Guba and Lincoln (1982) and Denzin and Lincoln (1994). They argued <u>against</u> the use of a traditional paradigm for undertaking what they described as human inquiry – research with or involving people. Others in that debate named the elements of the inquiry paradigm to include ontology and epistemology (Burrell and Morgan, 1979; Reason, 1988). These terms also have various definitions and I tend to think of ontology as relating to issue of truth or reality and epistemology related to issues of knowledge. When Gray (1996) introduced her notion of practice-led inquiry, she drew on this Guba and Lincoln (1982) arguments and suggested that the practical structuring of practice-led inquiry involved two initial philosophical considerations – the epistemology and the ontology. Thus she was arguing from a paradigm basis in her methodology argument.

In my own first doctoral inquiry (Hill, 2002), which examined the process of undertaking my doctoral degree I described my inquiry paradigm as ontologically being based on Kelly's (1970) notion of constructionism – there is no single truth; and Schon's (1983) notion that knowledge arises from Reflection on Practice. I published some of my doctoral dissertation in the form of a cabaret titled 'Doing a Doctorate' and in that I described my paradigm this way

<p align="center"><i>[4]I am what I am</i></p>

<p align="center"><i>My world's my own social construction.</i></p>

<p align="center"><i>I know my own truth</i></p>

<p align="center"><i>Some would say- 'struth, that's an obstruction.</i></p>

<p align="center"><i>But my world is my own unique ontology</i></p>

<p align="center"><i>It's my world</i></p>

<p align="center"><i>It's the only place I want to be.</i></p>

<p align="center"><i>For life's tough for a man</i></p>

<p align="center"><i>Till he can say</i></p>

<p align="center"><i>Hey world, I am what I am.</i></p>

<p align="center"><i>I am what I am</i></p>

<p align="center"><i>And what I know comes from my practice.</i></p>

<p align="center"><i>I've learned what I've learned</i></p>

<p align="center"><i>Yes it's been tough but there's the praxis.</i></p>

<p align="center"><i>I know that when I think about the things I see</i></p>

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[4] "I am what I am" from "La Cage au Folles". Herman, J. and Fierstein, H. (1983)

I start to build my own unique epistemology

As you can see

This makes up me, and my inquiry paradigm

The gap

Having looked at the literature in a particular practice, you may be troubled by what appears to be a divide between what practitioners think about a practice and what academics write about the same practice (Baden and Higgs, 2015). This dilemma is common across many practices and is an example of one of the 'gaps' that you might encounter if you pursue the argument to address the gap.

Other common examples in this gap thinking are

- The literature has explored the practice from a quantitative approach but lacks a qualitative approach.

- The practice is so new that very little has been written.

Many of you may be arguing your inquiry from the perspective of practice-led perspective, and in so doing you are giving voice to practitioners whose knowledge and experience has traditionally been ignored or sidelined in research. This gives your research a political edge in that you are giving voice to the minorities or the disempowered and makes your inquiry a form of emancipatory inquiry (Boog, 2003).

> [5]*I wish I knew how*
> *It would feel to be free*
> *I wish I could break*
> *All the chains holding me*
> *I wish I could say*
> *All the things that I should say*
> *Say 'em loud say 'em clear*
> *For the whole round world to hear*
>
> *I wish I could share*
> *All the love that's in my heart*
> *Remove all the bars*
> *That keep us apart*
> *I wish you could know*
> *What it means to be me*
> *Then you'd see and agree*
> *That every man should be free*
>
> *I wish I could give*
> *All I'm longin' to give*
> *I wish I could live*

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[5] 'I wish I knew how it would feel to be free'. Lyrics Bill Taylor and Dick Dallas (1963). Music by Billy Taylor

Like I'm longin' to live
I wish I could do
All the things that I can do
Though I'm way overdue
I'd be starting anew.

Well I wish I could be like a bird in the sky
How sweet it would be
If I found I could fly
I'd soar to the sun
And look down at the sea
And I sing 'cause I know
How it feels to be free

Conclusion

Now it is time to draw this cabaret to a close. I hope you have enjoyed it. I hope that it has provided some insights for you. Most importantly, if you were one of the people who have secretly thought 'I want to do something different' I hope that this has encouraged you. It is one thing to present an argument for difference; the other important factor is that you have faith in your beliefs and you take that step of faith and go and do it. This not only establishes the case for you, but also lays the ground work for others who might follow in your footsteps. If you have created a new way forward, they can argue from a position of your precedent. This is the way new methodologies are created, particularly those that are relevant for investigating practice.

[6]This is the moment!
This is the day,
When I send all my doubts and demons
On their way!

Every endeavour,
I have made - ever -
Is coming into play,
Is here and now - today!

This is the moment,
This is the time,
When the momentum and the moment
Are in rhyme!

Give me this moment -
This precious chance -
I'll gather up my past
And make some sense at last!

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[6] This is the moment from Wildhorn and Bricusse (1997) Jeckyl and Hyde

This is the moment,
When all I've done -
All of the dreaming,
Scheming and screaming,
Become one!

This is the day -
See it sparkle and shine,
When all I've lived for
Becomes mine!

For all these years,
I've faced the world alone,
And now the time has come
To prove to them
I've made it on my own!

This is the moment -
My final test -
Destiny beckoned,
I never reckoned,
Second Best!

I won't look down,
I must not fall!
This is the moment,
The sweetest moment of them all!

This is the moment!
Damn all the odds!
This day, or never,
I'll sit forever
With the gods!

When I look back,
I will always recall,
Moment for moment,
This was the moment,
The greatest moment
Of them all!

Reprise

What a day! No doubt there have been lots of lessons learned; new challenges and new

strengths realised. As you consider your engagement with today's programme, think about the critical incidents that the day contained and how these helped you to present and defend your research

[7]*Something is stirring*

shifting ground

It's just begun

Edges are blurring all around

and yesterday is done

Feel the flow. Hear what's happening

We're what's happening.

Don't you know We're the movers and

we're the shapers We're the names in

tomorrow's papers Up to us now to show 'em

In our hands there is light to see the future

In our hands there are gifts to give the world

In our hands lies a way to make a difference

In our hands in our hands

In our hands is the future

In our hands is the outcome

In our hands is responsibility

There will be joy and sorrow

There will be tears and laughter

There will be a better world

in our hands in our hands

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[7] This arrangement of two songs, Sondheim's (1981) 'Our Time' from Merrily we Roll Along and Lindley's (1999) 'Our Hands' was undertaken by Catherine Solomon.

With our hands we will work to find solutions

With our hands we'll give help along the way

With our hands we will surely make a difference

With our hands with our hands

It's our heads on the block

Give us room now and start the clock

Our time coming through

Me and you now me and you, me and you, me and you

You and you and you and you and you and you and me and you.

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[i] The term provenance, taken from the French provenir, "to come from", is drawn from discourse about art and antiques. Provenance signifies the life story of an item or collection and a record of its ultimate derivation and its passage through the hands of its various owners. In agriculture and hospitality, the term refers to genetic and chemical free origins of food (Keller and Kollmann, 1999; Murdoch, Marsden and Banks, 2000). Davies (2008) used the notion of provenance to examine the policies that predated and informed a particular policy. The act of provenance in investigating practice has been explored under different descriptors by other research practitioners. Dillon (2008), for instance, refers to 'personal reconnaissance' and Hauw (2009, 342) refers to 'reflection on the pre-reflexive consciousness of past experience [which provides] learning from past performance experience and offered possibilities for modifying future experience'. Maxwell (1996, 48) also suggests that 'every researcher begins with a substantial base of experience and theoretical knowledge, and these inevitably generate certain questions about the phenomena studied'. Provenance also resonates with Richardson's (1994, 103) suggestion that when knowledge is tapped it accesses 'biographical, historical, and particularized social locations' about their (the investigator's) practice as well as ideological preferences'

[ii] The *studia generalia were* instituted during the reign of the Christian emperor Charlemagne (742-814) to educate men to take on administrative responsibilities in the empire. Those established in Paris and Bologna, the *studia generalia* to which those aspiring to become teachers in these institutes attended, grew in popularity and their students formed guilds. The term *universitas*, first appeared in pre twelfth century documents describing these guilds of students. By the 15th century, the term *universitas* had begun to apply to the academic community specialising in higher education rather than to the guild of students (Minogue, 1973, 12; Madsen, 1983, 7; Dunbabin, 1999, 30)

[iii] The Oxford Dictionaries Online defines scientific method as "a method or procedure that has characterized natural science since the 17th century, consisting in systematic observation, measurement, and experiment, and the formulation, testing, and modification of hypotheses.