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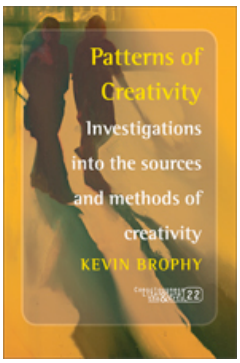

Kevin Brophy
Patterns of Creativity: Investigations into the sources and methods of creativity
Rodopi, 2009
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Patterns of Creativity is the latest of Kevin Brophy's three scholarly books theorising creativity, writing and poetry. His first, *Creativity: Psychoanalysis, Surrealism and Creative Writing* (1998) was a founding study in the development of academic creative writing. By 2009 Brophy has continued to contribute prolifically as both research scholar and creative writer. He has also published eight books of poetry (the latest being *Mr Wittgenstein's Lion* Five Islands Press, 2007), and it is as poet, scholar and writer that he so thoughtfully engages with further questions about creativity and the arts and about the role of consciousness in creativity and learning in his latest book.

Having read a number of these essays earlier—many have been published in journals including *TEXT*, *New Writing, Westerly* and in the collections *Creative Writing: Theory Beyond Practice* (eds. Nigel Krauth and Tess Brady) and *Creative Writing Studies: New Writing Viewpoints* (eds. Graeme Harper and Jeri Kroll)—I was interested to see how they would fit into a book format. As a book, we're offered the chance to experience the full range of a writer-scholar's interests and to experience the essays' relationships to each other. In assembling a collection, thematic connections appear that are not available when pieces are read separately and these thematic areas are expanded with the essays contextualised anew. In book form (and it is clear that much thought has gone into the sequencing of these essays) the whole is indeed greater than the sum of its parts. The range of Brophy's concerns and the disciplines he is prepared to go to in searching for ways to answer the questions posed are many: neuroscience, art history and criticism, consciousness studies, philosophy

and literary theory amongst others result in a study of creativity and its patterns that is interdisciplinary, highly original and absorbing to read.

One of the most exciting things for researchers of creative writing seeking ways to understand functions of art and writing—the creative processes involved in creating art, and in this case poetry—is that approaches to the topics of art and poetry must be made in ways other than, although not exclusive of, literary or art criticism. The difference is in the reading position adopted by the creative writer as reader or researcher. Of course, writers and poets are also readers and critics (writing cannot be separated from reading, the writing process involves both), but the shift in orientation to researching as a writer incorporates investigations of the *process* that generates the product, rather than critically engaging with the product, the text, which is what literary criticism does. The writer researcher engages with how writing is made, and for Brophy this involves finding a language to articulate creativity and reading as process.

The first essay 'Art and Evolution: A Partnership in Excess' explores the place of creativity within the context of evolutionary human development. This requires looking at the role of art in human evolution, and concluding that in terms of evolutionary survival, art is 'excessive'—it is not essential, and yet, Brophy argues 'art brings us to the core of our being, for it manifests and expresses evolution itself—in all its glorious uselessness, excess and creativity' (18). The origins of art are also social; art involves the human capacity for expressiveness, an aesthetic sense, and its function is communication. By engaging with evidence-based science, artists, critics and art historians can gain 'unexpectedly insightful perspectives' (21), but as Brophy cautions, 'the tendency of the scientist is to arrive too soon at explanations that have in effect confined the experience, touch and intuition involved in art to functional terms that miss the subtleties at the centre of the practice of art' (21-2). One of these subtleties is the role of the unconscious in creative artistic activity: it is more than the use of 'consciously acquired skills' (27). This argument is, of course, not new but Brophy reaches a convincing conclusion which has implications for creative writing in contexts of research and teaching: the 'artist submits to a process outside their ego and outside their knowledge [a 'not-knowing'], but not beyond their capacity' (27), an explanation that provides space for creativity to occur, but also the application of learned skills and, as the next essay asserts, conscious attention.

'Peculiarities and Monstrosities: Consciousness, Neuroscience and Creative Writing' focuses, as its title indicates, more closely on the relation of thought and language to creativity: 'How do forms of perception and understanding rise to our awareness?' (32). To address this, Brophy surveys the role of consciousness: its definitions, differences and difficulties of definition. His interest here is on the speed of consciousness—or rather, its slowness in relation to decision making and intention which have been discovered to occur in a delayed manner compared to brain activity around sensory responses. In fact, '… consciousness is it seems a reconstruction of what has already been perceived, what has already been understood and what has already been decided' (40). Creative thinking, says Brophy, involves an element of 'waiting'—what creativity studies have called periods of 'incubation, consolidation, a waiting for inspiration or insight' (40): 'the logical work has been prepared for

consciousness before a thought or an understanding arrives in it' (41). Presenting a range of research, he flags the counterintuitive idea that consciousness seems, from neuroscientific studies, to be 'a far more passive element in brain processes' (44) than we might consider; that 'insights seem to be connected with the simple maintenance of conscious attention upon a task' (43). He thus speculates that 'it might be possible to make particular uses of the permeable boundary between the conscious and unconscious to enhance learning, particularly in situations where creative and complex thinking is the skill being developed, as is the case in creative arts' (49). This statement, in addition to the research articulated in all of Brophy's work and his emphasis on creative writing as *art*, highlights the value of this book for those teaching and researching in all the creative arts, not only creative writing.

The third essay takes us into the classroom: 'Workshopping the Workshop and Teaching the Unteachable' examines the question of 'How complex is the relation of idea and feeling, feeling and idea, and how might the artist-writer manage it?' (54). The emphasis here is on the importance of 'workshopping the workshop and aiming to teach the unteachable when education in the creative arts is at stake' (56). These categories owe their awkwardness to the difficulties creative activity presents in simultaneously bringing ideas and excitement into play: 'It is, perhaps, rather in a *contest* between excitement and ideas, between intellect and emotion, that art is produced' (56). What is often lost sight of when students under stress take the path of least effort is this contest between excitement and ideas, and the fact that this most significant part of the writing 'needs to happen outside the workshop' (59) with the workshop providing audience and feedback 'as the natural consequence of the necessary and primary solitude of the writer writing' (60). The writing must come first, with students left on their own initially to confront the blank page—good professional practice if one is to continue as a writer beyond university courses. Brophy provides inspired examples of poems that enact such situations from which, no matter how apparently unpromising, poems are generated. Their readings show their capacity to 'enact' thought. It is a matter, according to Brophy, of allowing the mind to shape the poem, to tip 'images out of the mind into a poem' (61), to take up 'what is to hand and work it' (62).

These poetic examples transition neatly into the next essay 'The Shadow that is Light: Influence, Imagination and Imitation in Poetry'. Here Brophy's investigation turns to the question of 'imitation', that is 'the apparent paradox in the act of writing a unique or original poem and at the same time producing a poem that will fit a preconceived pattern or set of conventions by which poetry is recognised' (68). Through an articulation of the variety of meanings of 'mimesis' in Aristotle's *Poetics* we discover, perhaps surprisingly, that art based on mimesis is not done for the sake of 'strict likenesses or the production of copies' (71); it is an instinctive and human trait in all the arts and has 'the exquisite and instinctual purpose of pleasure. This pleasure is both motivation for the artist, and if the art is successful, it becomes present to the audience' (72). Alongside creating 'likeness' for and as pleasure, art also imitates its artistic predecessors. There is an almost too obvious clarity to this if we consider the use of exemplary texts as part of learning an art form, and it must be considered together with the paradox of bringing innovation to it. Brophy turns to T. S. Eliot's

1919 essay 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' as he develops his case for poetic influence drawing on modernist and then post-structuralist approaches. For Eliot, criticism is too much concerned with what is individual in a poet and insufficiently with how the poet's predecessors 'assert their presence and influence' (77). Tracing nuances of this argument in post-structuralism, Brophy turns variously to Bakhtin's 'dialogism', Kristeva's 'intertextuality' and Barthes' '"tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture" (1977: 146)' (80). While it might be argued that these familiar territories offer little that is new, my response is that the framing here situates these theoretical concepts in a new light, especially with regards to creative writing. They offer opportunities for creative, not only critical, responses and opportunities for creative reading through theoretically informed (even metaphoric) lenses through which to read poems and see where they take us. It is not surprising that the poet as researcher must find ways of negotiating post-structuralism and deconstruction. Re-inserting the *writer* into these predominantly textual approaches by contesting Harold Bloom's combative 'struggle' (anxiety) of influence, Brophy sees influence less as a battle and more an adopting of creative identity (87). The seeming constraints of influence and imitation are alleviated by an 'evolutionary understanding of influence' that allows for 'throwing emphasis on the experience of messiness, of dead ends, … a general inefficiency of working methods so important to the arts' (88)—a messiness and randomness characteristic of evolution which has its own creative impulse. Here we see the connection Brophy draws between creativity and evolution, the process allowing the writer to 'disengage poetry from … struggles that are part of poetry's history, but do not go to the heart of the experience of being a poet' (89).

The essay '"Man-Moth" and the Flame of Influence: A Poet Reading Poetry' brings praxis to the discussion of influence. There is, I think, some significance in this essay's placing at the fulcrum of the collection, for it is with this essay's detailing acts of both reading and writing that the emphasis of the collection shifts towards a sharper focus on writing and language. Through a detailed reading of Elizabeth Bishop's poem 'The Man-Moth' Brophy explores how reading a poem in particular ways can generate one's own poetry—making influence conscious, which is exempified in Brophy's own poem of influence, 'The Dream of Moths'. In this essay, we learn ways of reading poetry adopted through the setting of 'questions that lead eventually, through the essential but sometimes difficult process of influence, to the poet's own poem' (93). What is clear here, in contrast to contemporary forms of textual critical analysis, is the acknowledgment of 'the poet', the person who has written the poem effaced in the close reading practices of New Criticism and post-structuralism's emphasis on culture and text. The questions are practical and perceptive: 'How does this poem work?'—highlighting 'analysis, poetics and prosody', and 'What does this poem show me about writing?'—'extracting from the text what it has effected as performance' (94). Then, more subjectively, 'In what ways does it move me?' and 'Can I hear or sense the presence of a living person in this writing?' Although the latter can be a distraction, 'it is a useful question … if it brings the reader to experience a text as it is enacted by another writer making progressive choices and exposing to view the risks and nuances of a performance—a performance that comes into its full existence as a collaboration between writer and reader' (94). The fifth

question, 'What evidence of reading is there in this poem?' addresses the matter of tradition and influence: it 'opens the way to this poem influencing a poet-reader's next poem' (94). The close reading Brophy advocates is not that of the New Critics, nor of any criticism: it 'has its basis in my concern as a poet for learning from the ways matters of poetics and prosody have been negotiated by another writer. The choices or decisions enacted in a poem are the clues for me to what gives it life or kills its life' (95).

This essay explores several approaches to reading in critical writing: those that rely too much on the capacity of text to be read as a reproduction of an author's consciousness, or those who pay too little attention to the "intellectual and imaginative work that goes into a successful poem" (quoting Helen Vendler), who argues, says Brophy, to restore 'a sense of complicity and intimacy with writers to her writing' (97). The most exciting aspect of this essay is its emphasis on reading a poem as a performance *in time* –'as an act' in the sense that J. L. Austin meant when he wrote of speech as performative. Brophy's understanding that the poem 'must achieve its existence as an experience rather than a meaning (it must be doing something, not just saying something—it has a "force" as well as a "meaning" and this force, this power to move us is more to the point than any meaning)' (95)—provides a key statement on poetry. The value of this essay, and its centrality to the collection, is its insightful offering to creative writers and to teachers who are avoiding poetry because it is too 'difficult' for both teacher and student, too obscure, too hard to understand. Brophy hereby gives permission to the reader to trust his or her own responses through careful attention to the poem and how it is made.

The two more subjective questions asked of the poem in the previous essay, 'In what ways does it move me?' and 'Can I hear or sense the presence of a living person in this writing?' pertain to a sense of 'aliveness' in the writing, what Brophy attenuates in the next essay 'The Politics of Style: Staying Alive'. This essay is a consideration of style, not as a cultivated fashion, which is a very limited definition of style; rather 'What matters is whether we can find a style that works' (112). Style is not imposed, it is the result of the decisions and choices a writer makes for the particular effects he or she wants to achieve. This relates to the earlier essays' discussions of creativity and consciousness: these choices and decisions are rapid, intuitive or more, or less, consciously reflective. It also relates to the essay on 'teaching the unteachable': style cannot be a matter of advice nor even teaching:

> The test of the success of a piece of writing cannot be how well the writer has found a balance between extremes or achieved both clarity and dignity but, I want to argue, how close what has been produced comes to a quality we would call *aliveness*. There is no balance to be sought, I would argue, between an elaborate and a plain style, but rather there is nearly always the ambition to achieve a style that communicates tinglingly rather than falling into a pattern that is so enclosed the work dies before it begins to communicate with its audience (116).

The sense of 'a life' within the writing is expanded in the subsequent essay 'Repulsion and Day-Dreaming: Freud Writing Freud', a case study of Freud's 1907 essay "Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming", in which Brophy argues—in answer to

his own questions 'Do we make our selves or find our selves? Or do we follow our selves through life?' (126)—Freud's essay is an example of how the narrative of his own helplessness from his early life experience 'is imprinted on his ideas and carried in his writing' (127). Brophy applies Freud's own psychoanalytic ideas to his reading of Freud's essay. While Freud disarms the reader by distinguishing himself as a 'lay person' different from creative writers, Brophy says 'surely this is a sign of both his own day-dream of being a creative writer, and of the fact that creative writing is what he is doing himself in any case' (138). Having established Freud's own narrative as the subject of the essay, that its style includes a sense of confession, Brophy slyly points out that 'Nearly a hundred years later … [there] is no shortage of students wanting to fill classes, lectures and workshops in creative writing':

> … Creative writing, though, remains for the moment an uncanny phenomenon in universities, because I suggest, while it gives prominence to the strangely expressive power of unconscious desire and individual talent, it is bound by a commitment to critical intellect as long as it aspires to a place in tertiary education. Its connection with day-dreams (including erotic possibilities) and its unruly "power to say everything" in Derrida's phrase (Derrida 1992) give it an attractive edginess in the academy. It has become a testing ground for the mind and the self. Almost anything could be said in a creative writing class (though nearly always the predictable is what emerges' (139).

Although Freud wants to tie himself down to the predictable, as so often creative writing students also do, given this presence of creative writing in universities I think it is also possible to argue the role of creative writing in contributing to 'graduate capabilities' required by universities such as 'professional and personal judgement and initiative', 'being creative and innovative', 'critical, analytical and integrative thinking' and, of course, 'effective communication' (Macquarie University 2008).

The essay 'Integrational Linguistics and a New Poetics for Thinking' continues the theme of written discourse, in particular the language of scholarly writing in both research and creative PhD theses. The focus here is on language as communication, which is also about style. Academic writing should be considered as text 'or as performance of a certain kind of text' (145). This includes the 'effect of critical theoretical movements that go under the banners of psychoanalysis, semiotics, structuralism, post-structuralism, Marxism, feminism and deconstruction' which all insist in one way or another that any writing is caught 'in the rhetorical strategies and undecidable uncertainties surrounding the meaning of words' (145). This emphasis on text—both communicable and under question, creative and scholarly—is a force exerted on and within the PhD context. Another force 'is the requirement that whatever the project is, it must be developed around a question that arises from a deeply informed position as both creative writer and passionate scholar. The creative work must be one way of tackling a problem or question' (158). This requires the willingness to 'work from a question or problem (a flash of intuition) at both creative and scholarly critical tasks' (159). Brophy also explores the possibilities of bringing creative and scholarly writing closer together, considering the value and even the necessity in terms of human cognition and thought, of metaphor. Here, the poet offers research writers an approach to writing that can communicate and touch the reader, pointing out the dryness and plain bad writing of some academic prose. The following

essay 'Original Thinking: what does poetry have to do with it?' continues the exploration of metaphor in writings of philosophy, medical prose and other disciplinary areas. Brophy articulates the value of developing a capacity, in all forms of thought and investigation, for metaphoric connections—'a willingness to allow unconscious processes to take their course' (174) in research. This idea loops back to the first two essays in the collection, on creativity and consciousness. I urge research candidates and their supervisors to read these two essays, and to read them again.

The final short essay 'State of Play: a Tale of Two Manuscripts' rounds off the collection with a tribute to other poets who are at developmental stages of their creative work. Each manuscript has the potential for publication with further revision and editing: 'hard work and hard thinking while staying alive to the chaos and happy accidents of creative composition'. He concludes: 'This is the key, and it is perhaps one of the keys this whole collection of essays has been shaping to: to be responsive to what happens, what is thrown into the mind, what one comes upon' (184).

Coming upon this fine collection of essays when asked to review it has been a privilege. This book offers a great deal to those involved in the creative arts as researchers and creative practitioners, whether they are poets or not. The range of Kevin Brophy's scholarship interests is wide and always focused towards questions around the key themes of this book: a true indication of the potential of creative writing research to offer new ways of seeing text, creativity and writing. As a teacher, supervisor, poet and researcher I find this book inspiring and often exciting. A collection of essays need not be a set of disparate writings: in this case the commitment and integrity to the writing and scholarship ensure a coherence of the interests of what is, indeed, the life of a writer. I was only saddened that such compelling scholarship was not always treated with sufficient respect by the publisher's editing, as even occasional errors in proofing and layout and insufficient attention given to paragraphing made reading this book at times less than smooth. A small cavil, however, to my mind an important one given the calibre of the scholarship in this text.

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Annette W. Balkema and Henk Slager (eds.)
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Artistic Research is a provocative collection about visual arts artistic research. Its genesis was two-fold—a 2004 workshop that canvassed the territory and key concepts followed by an 'international two-day symposium …organized in co-operation with the European Cultural Institutes in the Netherlands'—comprising bodies from Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Sweden and the UK. Some of the most significant administrators, artists, curators, educators and critics from key schools, universities and museums were involved—stakeholders in the future of European visual art. (And, as I found out at the end of the collection, one unnamed participant from Australia.) Here readers will find some of the first debates about the wisdom and necessity of doctoral programs in visual arts in Europe (Will we? Won't we? Should we?), set within the context of the EU and the Bologna Process, including a brief history (Woodfield 103-108) of UK Fine Art and Art and Design Higher Degree Programs.

What made this collection so lively was its robustness—full and frank discussion obviously took place and that spice has been translated into the text. It was refreshing to find participants forgetting their academic manners on paper and writing about how they felt being attacked or dismissed for their opinions. The debates and negotiations embodied in these essays replicate what occurred in the field of Australian creative arts in the mid-nineties, and readers will find many of the contributors' positions familiar. In fact, comments during the Discussion phase from the Australian

participant provoked Sarat Maharaj to say about the PhD in art that 'this is now a bit of an old hat as you have noticed in Australia' (168). In general, the essays proffer arguments ranging from 'we all know what good work is and how to evaluate it, so why do we need to explain it,' through 'let's play the game and manipulate research definitions for our own purposes' to 'visual art has its own methodologies and values but research into, about and through it is a valid and indeed critical part of being (and educating) a contemporary artist, whether that artist is studying or simply practicing. In other words, this collection does not offer anything radically new to creative writing researchers who have kept up in the field and have tracked the development of their peers' theorising of it in tandem with the push for higher degrees, which in the case of visual art has also been both student and teacher-driven.

That said, the shift in perspective this collection offers, through the lens of another art form, can be fruitful, leading to new insights about creative writing and its various genres. Some contributors discuss cutting-edge conceptual visual art at length as well as hybridity and that might stimulate those writers who want to produce more experimental and/or cross-disciplinary artefacts. Immersing oneself in another aesthetic vocabulary can facilitate a clearer articulation of one's own work. Visual artists, perhaps more than creative writers, seem engaged in continually interrogating what 'art' is and what it might be in each project. Collaborative projects discussed here, especially those across media and with stakeholders in the community (such as local government entities), will give readers insight into how cerebral as well as interdisciplinary much contemporary European art is.

Artistic Practice is divided into four sections: 'Prologue;' 'Preliminary Workshop, Art and Method' (followed by 'Elements of Discussion' picked out by the editors to summarise the workshop); 'Symposium, Artistic Research;' and 'Discussion.' The latter section offers the editors' distillation of key talks with comments by significant respondents. Initially the editors and contributors are concerned with defining the field of visual art research, expanding research definitions or re-conceiving them. The 'Prologue' asks a seminal question: 'How is artistic research connected with… scientific research, taking into account that the artistic domain so far has tended to continually exceed the parameters of knowledge management?' (9). This is a debate that every art form has to engage in when situating itself within the context of institutions of higher education and government funding paradigms.

A second fruitful focus area is one that Creative Writing as a discipline perhaps should explore more, since it concerns the interface between the private artist and the various publics they might address as well as the relationship between those who are highly skilled practitioners *and* researchers in their art form. The editors explain: 'Another major topic concerns not only the specificity of the object of artistic research but above all whether and how artistic research and its institutional programs will influence topical visual art, its artworks and exhibitions' (9). This statement points to the belief by contributors that universities, art schools and museums might (perhaps should?) have a direct connection with the shape of contemporary art and its dissemination.

In the 'Preliminary Workshop and Method' section contributors are primarily concerned with defining the field and expanding research definitions. 'Methododicy,' by 'philosopher, editor, curator, [and] coordinator' of artistic research (182), Henk Slager (12-14), is a key essay. He defines his neologism in this way: 'I would rather embrace a methododicy, i.e., a firm and rationally justified belief in a methodological result, whose existence ultimately cannot be legitimized apriori' (14). This can be understood as a conceptualisation of practice-led research that allows the investigation to follow where the practice leads, gathering 'data' from artistic experience, the a posteriori facts or 'effects' that the project discovers. Essays in this collection play with this idea again and again to varying degrees. The fine tuning of research questions and directions happens as needed. Even 'the presentation of novel questions and a tentative, yet courageous, unravelling of failures' (72), as Mika Hannula asserts, can be embodied in this process.

Visual artists might work primarily with images (although more and more incorporate a range of media), but they are not, Balkema suggests, 'wordless creatures' (31). Although artists do not superimpose outcomes or theoretical propositions in the course of their practice, they should always keep control by manipulating a methodological and theoretical framework that allows them to engage in a discourse with peers and the public, arguing for valid results at project's end. These arguments for the oversight of methodology are useful correctives to those artists who feel that research might hinder creativity. They also dovetail with the precepts of action research and rhizomatic research—it is worth noting that a number of contributors talk about Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus* and *What is Philosophy?*, using excerpts to stimulate postgraduates to encourage them to see research as a form of 'mapping.'

Another insight I gained from this collection is the sense that, whether artists were practicing within the safety net of an Art School, subsidised by a fellowship, working towards an MFA or undertaking a university PhD, self-reflexivity and engagement with current debate in their art form was widespread. Contributors generally agreed that visual art was 'past modernism' and 'the modernist project.' The necessity of being aware of the latest trends and theories seemed to be accepted by all; there was, therefore, no effective demarcation between those inside or outside the academy, as sometimes is the case in creative writing. For instance, writing academics are familiar with students who want to write their novel, but baulk at the exegesis, which they see as either irrelevant or burdensome, taking them away from their primary purpose. They might have welcomed being subsidised by an arts' grant rather than a postgraduate award. Slager's formulation of the visual art context neatly summarises the shift in practitioners' orientation to the theoretical: '…practice has turned into a dynamic point of reference for theory-driven experimentation in general. While the traditional academic, artistic model could be described as one where experimentation is embedded in experience, the topical model is one in which experience is embedded in experimentation' (12).

This is where higher degree study has taken the lead in making more explicit the results of artistic experiments and disseminating them more widely than might be possible through isolated exhibitions, for example. It also helps to articulate to those

inside as well as outside the art form the type of knowledge gained: '...artistic research is directed towards unique, particular, local knowledge' (13). This contention seems to be held by a majority of contributors, especially those who realise, like Hermann Pitz, that the art world comprises cliques and coteries, and being part of a particular gallery or curator's stable can help a career but hinder experimentation. Institutional support for art, therefore, in the form of fellowships and degrees, can be 'a new tool … for fostering ideas that could not survive otherwise in the tribal structure of the art world' (27).

Another strong motif throughout the collection is the comparison between scientific and artistic research's goals, methodologies, validation procedures and demand for aesthetic shape. This debate involves the networks of stakeholders that hold disciplines together, and supports an understanding of artistic knowledge as grounded in the particular. James McAllister's 'Seven Claims' argues for a historical conceptualisation of knowledge; even in the sciences, he affirms, it is not absolute 'but … a rather contingent succession of events for which it is very difficult to find a pattern' (19). The necessity, therefore, of a 'differentiating description' of results argues for 'a unique, particular, local knowledge' (19), a point that Slager makes in his essay. Annette Balkema (14-16) in her turn talks about 'Liquid Knowledge.'

Centralised as well as decentralised networks of experts must validate research results therefore. McAllister, a Professor of Philosophy of Science, develops this argument in a way that bears on governmental audits of research excellence, where impact in one form or another winds up being interwoven in claims for research significance. Context always has to be taken into account in order to comprehend an artwork's quality: 'So, the extent of, for example, communication of an artwork would also count as empirical success' (22). McAllister even suggests that experts might pre-validate a project's success before it 'can be exported to the outside world' (29). It is worth debating whether the award of a higher degree might offer this type of validation. Gerard de Vries in 'Beware of Research' notes the significance of peer approval of results as well, so that research can be understood as 'a collective system of selection. In other words, emerging ideas only become good ideas when colleagues or peers select them, i.e. cite them in articles or employ them in their research. That is how scientific ideas circulate and are legitimized' (17).

The main body of *Artistic Practice* comprises essays from the Symposium where initial questions and propositions about research, method and theory raised in the 'Workshop' section are extrapolated, taking account now of the aesthetic, social, political, and institutional implications. Among various subjects explored, which would again be familiar to those cognizant of past and current debates in creative writing, are: the multiplicities inherent in artistic research (Deleuze and Guattari again, by way of Henri Bergson and George Bernhard Riemann 59-60); the difficulties of knowing the unknowable; the myth of scientific research as hard and unchanging; the romantic notion of the artist as isolate genius ('Arteleku [In the Crisis of the Modernist Project]' Eraso 109-113); the solipsistic nature of traditional art education; the cultural assumptions and responsibilities of the academy, the gallery and the museum (Anke Bangma 'Observations and Considerations'126-134 and Gioni and Kuzma, 'Manifesta 5: Curatorial Research,' 151-155); the role of art education in

not only fostering but also anticipating new directions and preparing artists for professional life (Multipoint 89-102); the need for periodic re-examination and re-evaluation of artistic discourse and standards; and the challenge of government regulation (EU, the uber-manager, looms large in some essays).

One of the delights of the collection for me was discovering every so often an example that illuminates a familiar text through another art form's practice. Sarat Maharaj, located at the Malmö School of Art in Sweden, discusses reading as a 'mapping' process in classes where students/participants were asked to undertake 'a two-track-reading of the Rhizome section of *A Thousand Plateaus* (Gilles Deleuze & Felix Guattari 1980)' (47). One participant 'chased up Footnote 21–excavating Joëlle de La Casinière's Absolument Nécessaire (Minuit.Paris.1973) and its "nomadic logic"' (47) … He unearthed this somewhat overlooked inspiration of "Rhizome," hunting down the artist to her boathouse lair on the Belgium river-networks. She would eventually contribute to a Test Site event' (47). This is literalising the metaphor of embodiment—here the idea of networks and links as well as concept and human source—and incorporating it into the research process.

This is a provocative, uneven and yet exciting collection, as one might expect when the informed opinions of a range of practitioners, administrators, educators and curators come together to debate the concept of artistic research, which, everyone here at least seems to agree, is vital for the future of the arts. Like contemporary writers, artists are called upon 'to display expanded authorship–the ability to verbalize, analyze and interpret their own and other artists' works, and other aspects of the art world' (69), as Jan Kaila of the Helsinki School of Art claims. The book is certainly worthwhile reading for creative writing researchers who wish to expand their conception of artistic research as well as to gain some understanding of what has been driving European visual art research in the past decade.

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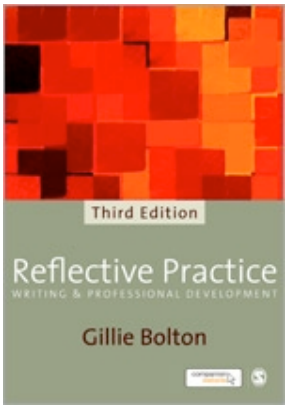
Dominique Hecq



Gillie Bolton
Reflective Practice: Writing & Professional Development
Sage 2010
ISBN: 978-1-84860-212-0
Pb, 279pp, £ 67

Though not aimed at creative writers, the new updated and revised third edition of *Reflective Practice: Writing & Professional Development* is useful in the context of practice-led research, research-led practice and practice-based research in the Creative Arts. In particular, it might provide practitioners with a mode of conceptual inquiry which helps them explicate their methods, methodologies, experiences and processes by creating a diverse yet connected set of thought events underpinned by ethical principles including trust, self-respect, responsibility and positive regard. Some of the principles and exercises offered in this book might also enrich both the experiences of supervision and writing workshop in university writing programs.

In *Reflective Practice: Writing & Professional Development*, the author—a medical educator—draws on her own experience and research to propose a dynamic mode of reflection and reflexivity. Using what she calls *writing-through-the-mirror* writing, an expressive and explorative writing underpinned by critical examination of practice, Gillie Bolton offers an exploratory approach that aims to increase motivation, satisfaction and self-awareness. She clearly explains notions of reflection, reflexivity, perspective and values, narrative and metaphor, as well as the distinction between authority and responsibility, and she grounds her literary and artistic methods in educational theory and values from the start of the book.

In a similarly pragmatic vein, clear step-by-step practical methods are given for every aspect of the process. New to this edition are: ‘a new chapter presenting different ways of undertaking and facilitating reflective practice’ and further international coverage, including material from Australia, New Zealand and the USA. This third

edition also includes an annotated glossary explaining key terms, end of chapter activities and exercises, suggested further reading in addition to clear guides on chapter contents and how to use the book. An accompanying website features discussion blogs, workshop exercises, glossary and online readings. It is claimed that the methods discussed have been tested by students and professionals across the fields of education, medicine and healthcare, psychology, social work, business management and leadership training.

The image of Alice going through the looking glass runs through this book. Alice found herself in a world where everything was as different as possible to any expectations, and Bolton introduces the reader to ways of making the familiar strange, and in doing so, of envisaging ways in which the familiar can be changed. This motif is pertinent to the fields of practice-led research, research-led practice and practice-based research in the Creative Arts as multidisciplinary methodologies and modes of production. As Stephen Muecke has recently written,

> What academics produce as research 'outcomes' … now rarely takes the form of commentary, critical or otherwise, on others' creative work. More often we are composing our own works. In other words we have shifted from *appreciation* to *production*, from critical difference to a sense of progressive engagement from which there is no pause. (Muecke 2010).

Therefore 'the real challenge' remains 'to generate a critical vocabulary and body of knowledge *through* and *about* practice' (Nelson 2008), for the tensions generated within and by this process of production can only be successfully managed if we develop a heightened sense of reflexivity. This reflexivity means adopting a position whereby practitioners are self-aware and able to reflect upon themselves and their practice. In so doing, they can also provide an account of their own position of enunciation. *Reflective practice* provides a useful tool to this effect in either multi-method or multi-disciplinary projects, for its '*through-the-mirror*… writing model involves wide potential interactions' and 'opens up developmental reflexive and reflective space'.

The book takes its cue from Richardson's claim that writing is a method of inquiry (Denzin and Lincoln 2000). It is divided in three sections. Section I focuses on 'Reflection and reflexivity: what and why'; section II on 'Reflection and reflexivity: how' and section three on 'Reflective writing: foundations'. The book's argument develops by accretion: concepts are first introduced and then revisited and further explained in subsequent chapters, each time from a slightly different perspective. For example, chapter one introduces and describes reflective practice, outlining its political and social dimension. Chapter two in turn throws light on the intangible nature of reflection and self-reflection inherent in the very notion of reflective practice while chapter three revisits the principles of reflective practice from an educational perspective. Chapter four introduces the *through-the-mirror* approach while specifying its three foundations, and suggests facilitating exercises for practitioners. Chapter five broaches some theories of reflective writing as a reflective and reflexive process. Although I found this approach enticing and particularly successful in the transition from chapter two to three, with its emphasis on ethics, I found it repetitive

and counter-productive in other sections. Chapter five is a point in case, but this may be because the book is pitched at professionals who are not familiar with the craft and techniques of, and theories about, writing. For the same reason, Section III was for me the least satisfying of all. Although a richly exemplified discussion of the role of narrative in personal and professional lives, it is a bit light on 'the power of metaphor' (chapter 13) and 'other writing forms' (chapter 14). The book ends with a succinct, though solid, bibliography.

Reflective Practice does not claim to 'offer solutions to final solutions, but enlightening provisional answers'. In that sense, it lives up to the author's promise. It is certainly well worth a dip.

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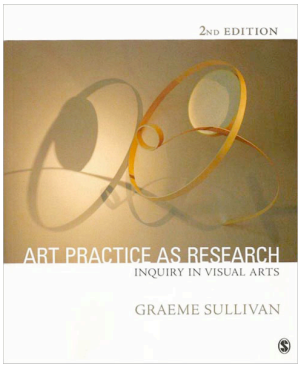
Emily Sutherland



Graeme Sullivan
Art Practice as Research: Inquiry in Visual Arts
2nd Edition
SAGE Publications Los Angeles London New Delhi Singapore Washington DC, 2010
ISBN: 10: 978-1-4129-7451-6 (pbk)
281 + xix pp. illus.

This is a substantially updated and revised edition of a book that was originally published in 2005. Its purpose is to 'explore and explain the capacity of visual arts research to create knowledge that can help us understand in a profound way the world we live in and how we learn to make sense of it.' While the focus is on visual arts there is much in the book that could be applied to any of the creative arts, including literature. As well, the book is suitable in particular for research communities within academic institutions, aiming to stimulate ideas about research, which go well beyond the accepted scientific model approach.

Art Practice as Research is organised around three parts and then subdivided into eight chapters. Part I is titled Contexts for Art Practice as Research. Part II is titled Theorizing Art Practice as Research and Part III is titled Visual Arts Research Practices. The first section sets out to place art research within the context of history and 'reviews some of the practices used by artists in modern times as they respond to the challenge of the new'. Within this framework reference is made to the Enlightenment and the way this movement influenced not only philosophers but also scientists and artists. Sullivan writes that: 'The patterns of practice that emerged during the Enlightenment saw the scientist and the artist share a common purpose in wanting to understand how the world works'. He later compares the insights provided by modernists and postmodernists in literature in framing how people interpreted a text with the advances in neuroscience, which give a 'fuller picture of the biology of vision' and thus how images may be considered and interpreted.

It is not just the research undertaken in order to produce a piece of art, but the art practice itself which has worth, thus moving away from the more readily accepted and rigid idea of what research entails. This assertion is tested and explained through a series of illustrations, reproducing an artwork and an explanation by the artist of what she or he set out to reveal in it. Sullivan provides diagrams that illustrate the theoretical relationships between the practices of visual arts research and the domains of practice located around visual arts research. Visual arts research practice describes both a process of enquiry, and in its manifestations through visual art, leads others to question and explore, thus adding to the sum of knowledge. A geographer and an artist or photographer may explore the same territory seeing it from different angles and perspectives. The result of their observations will differ, but each is valid.

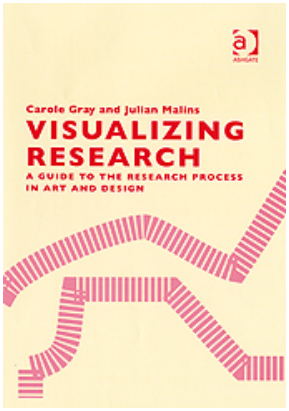
The final section provides strategies to assist conceptualizing and planning a visual arts research program.

This book is aimed directly at visual artists, but creative writers could adopt many of the ideas and strategies expressed therein. It certainly robustly refutes the idea that non-scientific research and activity is less valuable and therefore to be less valued than that of the scientists.

Emily Sutherland is a Visiting Scholar at Flinders University. Her doctoral thesis was concerned with historical fiction. At present she is co-editing a book, which looks at the concept of using historical research with integrity in fiction and film.

CQUniversity, Australia

Donna Lee Brien



Carole Gray and Julian Malins
Visualizing Research: A Guide to the Research Process in Art and Design
Ashgate Publishing, Farnham UK & Burlington USA, 2004
ISBN: 978-0-7546-3577-2
230 pp

Carole Gray and Julian Malins' *Visualizing Research: A Guide to the Research Process in Art and Design* was published in 2004 and has been available since then in print and more recently in e-book format. Although this means that this important early guide to creative arts research has been available for some six years, and there have been considerable developments in our collective understandings of practice-led and practice-based research in the intervening period, on a recent reread, I can attest to this volume still having much to offer on this subject. Moreover, although focusing on visual arts and design, this volume has significant relevance for research in the specific area of writing.

The Australian Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research's OECD-derived definition describes research as 'creative work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of man [sic], culture and society' (DIISR 2010: 6). Much of the work undertaken by writers, both inside and outside the academy can, therefore, be classed as 'research' in these terms. Creative writers working in the higher education sector obviously make a contribution to these 'stocks of knowledge' with the content of their scholarly books, articles and theses about writing, but this definition means that creative works can also be assessed as research if they can demonstrate that they also add to these knowledge stocks. It is the conceptualising and processes of creating new knowledge and its demonstration that lie at the heart of what is now understood in universities as creative practice-based research.

The book sets out to guide postgraduate students in Art and Design through this new knowledge generating research process. I especially like how it does this in a detailed and what could be characterised as a logical way. I use the word logical here as, in my experience, this text not only meets many of the questions beginning and emerging researchers have, but does this largely in the categories, and often the order, in which they have them. In a series of chapters, the volume thus guides practitioners into research, via understanding the importance of methodology and mapping the field in order to locate one's own research in that field, defining the research question, deciding on a methodology, and writing a developed research proposal. It then offers guidance on how to manage the research project, including detailed information on how to collect data and evidence and develop claims from these. It then offers guidance on how to evaluate, analyse and interpret this material, giving examples of analysis and tools that can be usefully employed in analysis. Although this discussion is very much situated in art and design creative practice, it is easily applicable to writing projects. A very useful chapter then details the definition of new knowledge and how to recognise it, and then outlines how to communication the findings of the research project in a thesis. The tenets of this communication can also readily be extrapolated into writing a research article for peer review.

I have personally used this book with masters and doctoral level students in writing in developing and working through their research projects. I have found it, moreover, useful for emerging and established researchers, in its clarity and comprehensiveness. It includes series of tips and hints that I return to again and again, such as suggesting that a thesis may need a glossary as well as a set of keywords. In many cases, much confusion over terminology and how it is being employed in a particular research project can be clarified in such a glossary of terms. In Gray and Malins' words: 'This is all in the pursuit of accessibility and transparency, and to reduce the risk of your research being misinterpreted and/or misunderstood' (174). Many theses that I have examined would have benefited from this inclusion, and following closely the guide to communication of findings outlined in this work.

Another aspect of this book that I like is how it derives from a deep belief in, and promotes, the relationship between research, practice and teaching in the creative arts. This is what makes it a valuable aid for established researchers who are struggling to more comprehensively and efficiently integrate these components of contemporary academic practice. This is especially useful when time to dedicate to the various components of our work is the scarcest commodity we have.

The book includes a large number of diagrams, visual illustrations and other figures (some 45 in total) that are very helpful in explaining the processes and concepts. A useful website http://visualizingresearch.info presents colour versions of these visuals. The website also develops and, helpfully, updates a number of features of the book. For instance, each chapter of the book ends with a series of 'reflections and actions' for the reader to undertake in relation to the material explored in that section. The website provides example tasks to extend this resource and, in this, provides especially helpful illustration of areas which can seem complex without detailed examples. In common with many other printed texts which now provide extended

online bibliographies, the website includes links to some of the resources cited in the book.

In an era when practice-based and practice-led research is in the process of becoming more widely accepted as research, Gray and Malins' advice to argue for its worth and virtues: 'clearly and patiently' is further elaborated in the directive that: 'We should not do this defensively, but assertively from a position of self-belief and confidence' (xi). This is still a valid suggestion. This work is, moreover, a solid handbook to assist researchers in producing the kind of research outcomes that back up that argument with evidence, and in demonstrating that they have produced these outcomes.

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