Time and Space in the Neoliberal University

"The editors have brought together a rich and insightful collection which add specificity and nuance to our understanding of neoliberalism - and resistance to it - in contemporary academia."

—Professor Rosalind Gill, *City, University of London, UK*

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Editors

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Futures and Fractures in Higher Education

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Foreword I

This is a refreshing contribution, full of straightforward discussions about the possibilities and tensions facing academics, particularly academics who have less power such as early career academics or as a result of a combination of characteristics such as gender, race, faith, sexual orientation, disability and social class.

The contributors to this book are challenging the orthodoxies that are embedded in the Academy. If you read the chapters, as I have had the privilege to, you will see that the chapters make liquid again the spaces that tradition, disciplinary parochoialism, pedagogical stasis, colonisation have solidified. This book loosens academic straightjackets and helps us to rethink. This is very important in the disjointed and challenging times we find ourselves in whether that be globally or in the Academy.

The authors draw form the formal but also hidden curriculum of the academy (e.g. ethos, networking) to require us, the reader to acknowledge our positionality not just as educators but as members of society.

It asks us to acknowledge that as academics we are in positions of power and that we can use that to enable and transform or indeed to maintain spaces of privilege, inequity and misrecognition.

In reading this book, to maximize impact, critical self-reflection is key.

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Foreword II

Academia has a geography of its own. This geography can be traced in those who are visible and where they are placed within the academy; it is equally evident in who is not there, who leaves, who is marginalised, and who has less power or opportunity to speak. This geography is, of course, similar to the geography of the wider world and reflects society's inequalities, hierarchies, and injustices. Yet, academia is a place of knowledge production; a place where ideas about people and the world are made. The borders, boundaries, and blockages of academia are also constituent of what comes to be known about the world, whose world views are accepted, and whose knowledge is taken to be credible (Collins 1991: 203; Gutierrez y Muhs et al. 2012).

The specificity of this geography is often ignored; questions about being 'inside' or 'outside' academia abound. 'Becoming an academic' and subsequently 'being an academic' are key to the identity-production process which upholds, in part, the wider geography of being inside or outside the academy (Thwaites and Pressland 2017). The development of an arguably prestigious (academic) identity takes place throughout higher education processes, as students are slowly inducted into

the 'hallowed halls' of universities, supposedly becoming more valid 'members' with every postgraduate certificate, and then later, publication acquired. The path to ultimate academic success (from a Western perspective), seemingly clear to all: Ph.D., Research Fellow, Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, Reader and Professor, with publications mounting in length, scope and importance, and the grant capture in amount and significance of funder, as the pay and status grades increase (Breeze and Taylor 2018).

However, this journey is by no means straightforward, linear, or accessible for all budding academics in the uncertain, neoliberal times in which we live. In fact, in our recent publication (Thwaites and Pressland 2017), early career academics from across the globe expressed their fears about their futures in higher education, in spite of their desire to 'become academics'. A number of contributors questioned seriously the possibility of progressing in academia, due to precarious contracts, the requirement to be hyper-mobile, challenging childcare arrangements, high workloads, unfair treatment during illness, and gender discrimination. These contributors asked themselves daily questions in relation to their identity, location, and whether their vocation was ultimately worth it. The fear of 'what could I do professionally if I did not work in academia' was felt sharply by many and perhaps reflects the high walls which surround academia, at once to restrict access, protect insiders, and create a sense that leaving is not an option.

By contrast there can be a sense externally that academia is a progressive, inclusive, and open space, where ideas are shared in a context of horizontal power.[1] Unfortunately this is rarely the case, and, as with any organisation, academia has myriad power hierarchies. Despite sometimes desperate attempts by universities to showcase their 'progressive' gender/race/class/religion/sexuality campaigns and demographic data, the reality of minority students and academics is exposed by or

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[1]Alongside a discourse that academia creates low-level and poorly crafted work, with an ideological slant, intended to indoctrinate students and others; the recent Sokal Squared hoax was intended to 'expose' this kind of work—focusing in gender and ethnic studies—and therefore shows this is both an internal as well as an external narrative. For an overview of this hoax see: https://www.chronicle.com/article/Sokal-Squared-Is-Huge/244714.

via national newspapers in the UK (for example, Bates 2015; Bhopal 2017) or they are used as token representatives, which can be equally painful.[2] These power hierarchies ensure that certain knowledges are more accepted than others, certain voices more acceptable, and indeed certain bodies. And alongside the people/workers, the subjects they study are also in a hierarchy with the perennial debate about the difference in value (for the individual, the university and wider society) of hard versus social sciences continuing to reinforce this. This hierarchy has a wider-reaching impact on research funding priorities and subsequent successful applications. Moreover, women face an uphill battle not experienced as regularly by men in the academy, to be seen as credible knowledge producers and to be respected in their teaching practice (Thwaites and Pressland 2017).

It is without doubt that universities have historically been male-dominated. The higher proportion of female HE students in the UK perhaps obscures this idea, but nonetheless a lingering feeling of masculine power and male dominance remains in many a university council chamber or senior management meeting. This inequality is exacerbated when considering the whiteness of the university, the middle and upper-class dominance, and the difficulties of access for those who break this mould. As Ahmed (2007: 153) argues, '"Doing things" depends not so much on intrinsic capacity, or even upon dispositions or habits, but on the ways in which the world is available as a space for action, a space where things "have a certain place" or are "in place"'. Certain bodies seem more 'in place'; certain spaces more 'comfortable' for certain contours (Taylor 2016). The constructed nature of this is masked by power and comes to be normalised.

In Ranciere's argument (1991), education is built upon inequality, and it is only through facing this, minimising it, and understanding

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[2]Or see the treatment of Lola Olufemi by a national newspaper, which misrepresented a campaign to decolonize the curriculum at Cambridge: https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/telegraph-lola-olufemi_uk_59f1fe0fe4b077d8dfc7eaf9?guccounter=1&guce_referrer_us=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZ29vZ2xlLmNvbS8S8&guce_referrer_cs=1x4oPKOjpMQwQSxTy-wn3og.

that everyone has something to contribute and teach that we can all become emancipated. In a time, in the UK at least, where 'experts' are derided and professional skills undermined,[3] this argument has the potential to be co-opted for a different agenda than the one initially intended. However, attending to the original, radical ideas of Ranciere, reminds us that the education system has gatekeepers, and that it can exclude and devalue. This collection highlights this issue within the contemporary UK and Australian university, and calls us to move beyond this and seek a more equal and just higher education.

Inequalities of gender, ethnicity, class, age, place/accent, sexuality, dis/ability, job role, insecure versus secure staff (and so on) continue. The Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) found that in 2015/16 there were 158,405 white academic staff and just 3,205 black academic staff; women drop steeply in numbers the higher up the academic career ladder one goes (Savigny 2014). Indeed, in the United Kingdom women account for 45% of academics at universities; however, they occupy only 20% of professorships (HESA 2015). There are only 99 female professors of colour in the UK on permanent contracts (Solanke 2017). At the highest rank in universities, only 14% of vice-chancellors are women (HESA 2015). This within a changing academic context, in which neoliberal values have become the norm in higher education and the political austerity agenda has decreased spending across the public sector.

We write from the UK, where divides between the 'elite', 'ancient', and 'selective' universities versus the 'modern', 'post-1992', 'teaching-focused' universities continue. The system divides up spaces, staff, and students across numerous lines. In the UK the higher education system varies across the four different nations, but nevertheless there are acute and pressing problems across the board. Despite this, the UK Higher Education system has arguably been seen historically and contemporarily as globally exemplary; the legacies of Oxford and Cambridge universities, the journals and publishing houses based in the UK, the flow

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[3]See for example the notorious comment from UK politician Michael Gove to Sky News that Britain 'has had enough of experts' in the lead-up to the Brexit Referendum in 2016.

of publications which are produced at UK HEIs and the interest from international students and academics alike wishing to study and work in these institutions suggest a certain international reputation of 'excellence'. These aspects give a certain privilege to those who study and work in the system. However, this situation is not natural or spontaneous, but reflects the global distribution of resource and power that pushes English as the dominant international language of academic knowledge and publishing (Pereira 2017), and connects with and sustains the flow of people to jobs and role, compounding the drive to be 'mobile' as part of being 'excellent' as an academic. Furthermore as UK campuses expand to other countries, having 'satellite campuses' situated around the world, there is a neo-colonialism built into this that should be of concern. There is also increasing scrutiny within the UK and UK universities—sometimes in the form of identity checks on students and staff—as cultures and structures of border control are engendered by a shift to the political right. Tight immigration controls, high student fees and cultural boundaries are limiting factors for access into the UK and other Western academic institutions.

Also, for those in academia—staff and students—there is unequal access to the privilege associated with it, as this collection emphasises. For those who do not fit the comfortable contours and feel the landscape of academia as uncomfortable, their 'difference' is emphasised. This has been found in research on class and sexuality (Falconer and Taylor 2017), along with gender and ethnicity (Ahmed 2007). It can increase stress and likelihood of dropout (Loveday 2018). The changes in the funding landscape and the rise in fees for many parts of the UK are seeing changes in access and the retrenchment of inequality. With implications for the future, and future-orientated governance and subjectivities, of academia.

Given these uncertainties, precarities and questions about the future, it is crucial that we take stock of where biases can be interrupted, where boundaries might be identified, and where blockages are being resisted. Mahony and Weiner (2017) write about creative strategies employed by senior management, senior academics, lecturers and union representatives in the face of institutional pressures caused by neoliberal styles of

management at universities. In our collection about early career feminist academics' experiences in HE, contributors wrote of a plethora of innovative methodologies employed in order to overcome the (sometimes) gloomy, depressing and demoralising daily realities of working in HE. Creative methods such as collaging thoughts and experiences are discussed by Jauhola and Saarma and by Tarrant and Cooper (Jauhola and Saarma 2017; Tarrant and Cooper 2017) who employed collaboration and a dialogic form of writing to explore methods of resistance to daily struggles as ECR. The Res-Sisters, a collective of nine authors from across UK HEIs, draw on examples of in/exclusion in academia and subsequently wrote a 'Manifesta' which sets out ways to live within the system while resisting it at the same time (The Res-Sisters 2017). These are some contemporary examples of how certain groups are interrupting norms and attempting to shake up the status quo with boundary-shifting actions and behaviours. However, this is only the beginning and we need to advance this conversation in order to create a broader understanding of how the geography of academia, locally and globally, can be disrupted. This disruption might just leave space to design a new future for higher education.

When we conceptualised our *Being an Early Career Feminist Academic* collection (Thwaites and Pressland 2017), we envisaged a truly global volume. The reality of this aim was much harder to achieve and ultimately the contributions, while diverse, do not represent all. We are cognisant that this is problematic and that we occupy a particularly privileged position. We also recognise the need to address those voices that are not being heard and 'unblock' the perceived/real boundaries which privilege a certain viewpoint and position of knowledge production. This book is therefore a highly important and welcome collection. It adds to a growing and important conversation about the state of academia in the contemporary moment. It provides significant reflections on the inequalities of UK and Australian academia, in the context of global fractures, and provokes questions around structural, political shifts, while also reflecting on what possibilities there are for academics to make change together. The boundaries, borders, and blockages of academia are clear, but with hope for changed and different futures. Its scope is wide,

attempting to look at as many areas of concern as possible, and to shine a light on the state of higher education at a critical moment.

The on-going conversations advanced in our publication (Thwaites and Pressland 2017), are extended, deepened and to an extent reinforced in this new collection. We have been invited to take part in discussions on the past and present status of academia and of those academics inside, outside, and on the margins. In this collection, the conversation develops further around future-orientated temporalities and truly questions what lies ahead for academia and (higher) education more broadly. Several important themes emerge from this book, and we wanted to pull out a few of these for discussion here. Race and ethnicity as important concerns about who is 'in' and who is 'out' of academia; chapters in the book discuss race in the Scottish literature curriculum (Mahn, this volume) and experiences of the whiteness of the academy (Dear, this volume). The experience of being a minority in a white dominated academy is characterised strongly, as structural inequalities and institutional racism emerge in personal experience; the barriers of academia creating anger, division, and violence to self and others. Alongside discussions of other structural inequalities, the book examines in critical and careful ways the experience of exclusion and— and its widest sense—the violence of this on those who are marginalised within academia.

This violence can, in part be enacted through division across career stages too (Breeze and Taylor 2018): separating people into groups of 'us versus them' in terms of power, opportunity, security, demands, entitlements, and expectations (from the university and colleagues at other career stages). The stages of the academic career—which have become more encoded and formalised through recent discussion of them, alongside job and funding application eligibility criteria which has implications for how resources are distributed, the recognition that can be awarded to individuals, levels of reward and prestige—do mean that individuals are presented with particular opportunities and challenges. We have been part of this discussion ourselves and maintain that it is important to look at the difficulties that emerge at different points in the career and how wider social, political, and economic impacts shape the academic career (Thwaites and Pressland 2017). However, as Breeze

and Taylor (this volume) point out, in so doing we can minimise the connections between career stages and the need for solidarity. There is a lot of connection between academics at all stages of their career and it is important this is recognised, rather than setting ourselves up as career stage 'enemies'. This is especially significant for those whose voices are marginalised within the university. Standard means of 'working together' are challenged by this volume, for example by critically examining collegiality (Lipton, this volume), but by making space for discussion of career stages and ways of working together this collection asks the reader to look again at how they themselves are placed within academia, and what boundaries and borders they may be creating for themselves and others that could be dismantled.

By creating spaces for feminist collegiality, without fear of consequence, it might be argued that those academics have created safe spaces, without labelling them as such. Waugh (this volume) discusses safe spaces in relation to student populations. The alarming resistance to safe spaces by prominent politicians and university leaders, as described by Waugh (this volume) outlines the precarity which students face in the current university climate. While most of this collection focuses on academic staff, it is concerning that on both sides of the classroom, vulnerabilities are being exploited by the powerful; rather than a protectionist, welfare-led approach, individual resilience and 'grit' are promoted. The resistance to safe spaces seems to be fueled in part by a fear of censorship, and yet the market-driven, neoliberal approach to free speech in universities have led to scenarios for both staff and students which are harmful to individuals' learning, self-confidence and careers (as seen in Hook, this volume). Here the neoliberal model of subjectivity, which promotes individuals to seek bespoke solutions to structural problems, results in a lack of collective regard for student/staff welfare.

While this collection provokes the individual academic to look in the mirror and beyond their individual career stage in order to enhance collegiality, it also underlines the perennial assumption that the 'softer skills' namely pastoral, collegial, care, and emotional labour—the ones which bridge differences and break down barriers—are the work of women. While Lipton (this volume) explores strategies which feminist

academics have employed to create alternative intellectual spaces for collaboration and collegiality, she also highlights a wider problematic which is that collegiality ultimately advances the neoliberal agenda; by doing the 'caring', organising the staff social events, sitting on welfare committees, providing pastoral care, and generally being responsible for the often unseen emotional labour that is the glue of universities, women are *feeding the machine*. While feminist academics are to be lauded for finding collective feminist space for themselves, and their colleagues, they must also be cognisant of complying with the wider gendered roles and hierarchies which make universities prosper, at the expense of excluded groups. Here is further evidence that change is needed, and quickly.

Feminism, as a social movement, risks itself being complicit rather than resisting the damaging draw of the traditional university. Scandrett and Ballantyne's chapter (this volume) explores the danger which social movements face as elements become incorporated and entangled in university system, reappropriated, and therefore co-opted. This is the 'dangerous liaison with neoliberalism' which Fraser (2008: 14) warns of. This is truly walking on a knife edge; much feminist work has its foundations in the informal education of consciousness raising, however there is an element of 'safety' for social movements at universities, not least due to the valuable knowledge production which authenticates and brings social capital to the message. As such, feminism and other social movements alike, must learn to exist in the system whilst engaging in a meaningful critique of that same system.

In looking at academia, we are looking at ourselves. This collection calls academics to face the power hierarchies that organise academia, the painful exclusions and injustices we may feel, as well as the exclusions and injustices we may be a part of maintaining. This is hard work, but work that is critical.

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Acknowledgements

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Discourses of dissonance: enabling sites of praxis and practice amongst Arts and Design doctoral study

Jacqueline Taylor

Abstract

PhD study occupies a fractional and anomalous space in the university both structurally, pedagogically and otherwise. This chapter contends that the Arts & Design PhD and its complex relationship with practice, inhabits a dissonant terrain that further disrupts the normative frameworks of the academe and the landscape of doctoral research itself. Underpinned by a conceptual model of 'research-practice-pedagogy' and research at the intersection of these fields, transformational, performative and embodied spaces of learning, teaching and becoming are explored as part of a spatiotemporality that brings to the fore spaces of praxis and practice. Whilst dissonance is normally conceived as a negative lexicon, the dissonance of the Arts & Design PhD is reconceived as a generative para-dox in relation to academia's doxa vital in eliciting 'doctoralness'.

Keywords: Arts & Design, Doctoral, Pedagogy, Practice-led, Praxis

A prologue

PhD study occupies a fractional and anomalous space in the university. Indeed, in UK Higher Education (HE), not only do PhD students almost exclusively represent the smallest student population, they also inhabit an uncertain identity somewhere amidst 'staff' and 'student'. Pedagogically, the PhD too inhabits an ambiguous terrain that does not readily cohere with traditional views of 'teaching and learning'. In this context, this chapter contends that the Arts & Design PhD (in particular that which incorporates artistic practice) inhabits a dissonant terrain that further disrupts normative frameworks of the academe and the landscape of

doctoral research itself by encompassing various paradoxes, particularities, peculiarities and complexities. Based on a conceptual model of 'research-practice-pedagogy' in which I purposefully bring together the discourses of art practice research, doctoral pedagogy and research training, I draw on two interrelated bodies of research: the first, research concerning art practice research and the second, doctoral education underpinned by my role as Doctoral Training Coordinator in a Faculty of Arts, Design and Media. I propose that such territory can be understood as a multi-dimensional, plural, and heterogeneous topology, which enables transformational, performative and embodied spaces of learning, teaching and becoming to be opened up beyond fixed boundaries. Focusing in particular on non-accredited and fluid spaces of doctoral provision throughout the PhD journey, such a model brings to the fore spaces of praxis and practice normally considered peripheral to the academe (and with it associated risk, creativity, failure and unknowing) as vital in eliciting 'doctoralness'. Whilst dissonance is normally conceived of as connoting conflict or a lack of harmony, the very dissonance of the Arts & Design PhD is here reconceived as a site of empowerment.

Elucidated through examples at the intersection of research-practice-pedagogy, I argue that rather than resisting educational structures, the very spaces of fracture and dissonance are in fact embraced – by both learner and teacher – to enable an expanded understanding of practice and embodied knowledge as praxis for the researcher, allowing them to inhabit the academe as subjects amongst Arts & Design doctoral borderlands. The Arts & Design PhD is here considered both as a form of para-dox in relation to academia's doxa and in light of Rolfe's concept of the *paraversity* as a subversive community of dissensus that 'exists alongside and in parallel to the corporate university' (2014: 2). It is acknowledged that there are global, disciplinary and other differences in doctoral programs, as well as nuances in what is understood by the term 'doctoral' itself. This chapter is rooted in a UK (and to some extent

European) context and therefore positioned in relation to its particular policy frameworks and sector benchmarks. Whilst 'doctoral' is understood here as an expanded and porous territory, namely in terms of education, pedagogy and experience, I refer specifically to what in the UK is loosely called the 'traditional PhD' (that is, as different to the Professional Doctorate or PhD by Publication) as a qualification. Notwithstanding, the Arts & Design PhD disrupts this very categorization; in which it most often falls outside the parameters of a 'traditional' approach to academic practice and by its very nature challenges the conventions of the doctorate to effectively demonstrate 'doctoralness'. Working in the context of the Arts & Design has afforded me great creativity and flexibility in developing doctoral provision; it is my aim that this chapter provides possibilities for all those invested in (re)conceptualising time and space in the neoliberal university beyond the contexts I discuss.

Para-doxa, the academic precariat and the landscape of doctoral education

PhD students almost exclusively make up the smallest student population of the university. Indeed, in the 2016-17 academic year only 4% of the 2.32 million HE students in the UK were studying for a doctoral degree (HESA 2017). This marginal proportion aligns with the global context of PhD study[i] and thus could be said to reflect the doctoral landscape on a wider scale. As the doctorate is the highest qualification available, the small contingent of PhD students is perhaps not unexpected. Yet whilst PhD students are vital to the ecology and economy of the university (in terms of labour as well as intellectual and financial capital), doctoral study seems to be at odds with wider institutional frameworks, processes and logics and inhabits a fractional, anomalous and often precarious space, somewhat 'othered' in an undergraduate-centric paradigm. As Brabazon notes in relation to the prevalence of neoliberalism in HE, doctoral study is often a deeply neglected component of an institution (2016: 19).

The precarity of PhD study is reflected in its necessarily flexible and fluid structure. In the UK, undergraduate and postgraduate programs are governed by credit descriptors that define the expected 'level of challenge, complexity, and autonomy … on completion of a defined and bounded learning activity such as a module or program of learning' (SEEC 2016: 1). Here, students progress through clearly delineated levels or stages determined by grades according to specific criteria, and that neatly align with regulated temporal frameworks such as the university academic year. The PhD on the other hand, whilst too defined by various descriptors – most prominently an original contribution to knowledge (SEEC 2016: 13; QAA 2014: 30) – is not conceived in normative terms of modules, credits or even assignments. It instead culminates in the final viva voce examination after a significant period of independent study in which institutional progression points act as markers that assess doctoral progress rather than credits or modules per se. PhD students also arguably determine their own subject-specific curriculum (signified in the PhD project title). The fluidity and multiplicities of the PhD, even within smaller departments, thus could be said to be counter to the normative curricular structure and logic of the university.

The highly individualized nature of the PhD is also reflected in the unique temporal framework of the doctoral journey; the PhD is awarded, essentially, when it is awarded. Whilst there is a definite beginning and end point of the PhD, some students may complete before the standard full-time three years, others may take longer. Institutional administrative and procedural structures used to monitor progression and ensure timely completion therefore need to be flexible and reflexive to account for the inherently fluid nature of the PhD. For example, it is not uncommon (and possibly preferable for administrative and timetabling purposes) for viva examinations to be scheduled apart from one another rather than for a

group of candidates to all be examined on the same day; not only are there multiple and simultaneous durations of individual PhDs, temporally they are also in many ways unpredictable and inconsistent.

If undergraduate and postgraduate programs might be considered structuralist, then PhD study might very well be understood as its unruly poststructuralist counterpart; fluid, multiple, iterative and reflexive. To return to Rolfe's *paraversity*, the PhD could be argued to exist on its own terms as para-dox (2014: 4), running alongside and potentially disrupting the university's doxa. As I later elaborate, the Arts & Design PhD arguably further fractures any sort of singularity and normativity within the PhD itself in which what denotes 'thesis' and 'viva' for instance might take alternative forms. Yet, it is important not to romanticise the PhD as inhabiting a space entirely removed from the neoliberal university: as well as being para-dox it also enacts a paradox in that at particular moments it too is complicit in a neoliberal agenda. Indeed, the increasing emphasis on timely PhD completions to meet funding obligations and sector requirements means that such a closely regulated doctoral timeframe (with more doctoral candidates and completions) commodifies the PhD, providing metrics for funding, ranking and other purposes. This is echoed in concerns that a managerial approach to completion rates mean performance indicators of efficiency are proxy for the quality of PhD submissions, training and supervision (Parks 2005: 194). As Brabazon spells out: 'Beginnings matter. Endings matter more. The number one priority for a PhD student, supervisor and university is a rapid completion, examination and graduation' (2016: 24).

PhD students themselves can also be perceived as anomalous by inhabiting an ambiguous and uncertain identity in the university. In the UK, this is arguably in part because PhD students are often grouped under the broad category of Postgraduate Researcher or

'PGR'.ii Such a label risks homogenizing PhD students under a singular identity, 'other' to students on undergraduate and taught postgraduate programs, as well as ignoring the specificities of the PhD in terms of descriptors and frameworks. In addition, those undertaking the PhD navigate multiple and ambivalent roles: they are both 'student' and 'researcher' expected to actively contribute to the university's research environment alongside staff 'peers' such as early career researchers and professors. The ambiguity of identity is confounded as funded PhD students are 'employed' by the university, for example via funding bodies or teaching fellowships. However, they are neither quite students nor academic staff (as employees) in the normative sense and often there is a lack of access to benefits such as maternity and sick leave. Moreover, many PhD students are simultaneously employed as staff in hourly-paid, sessional teaching and research roles. However, in an 'age of casualised academic labour' (Jones and Oakley 2018: 3), these roles are highly precarious: not only are they extremely competitive, but most often temporary, part-time, zero-hours and include ''Fellow' and 'Associate' job descriptions invented to describe non-salaried academic posts' (Garland 2014: 74). Whilst assuming the identity of staff, these PhD researchers can be argued to be part of the 'academic precariat' where 'as precarious as this material existence is - arguably because of it - they have little choice not to be' (Garland 2014: 74).

Within established academic hierarchies, those undertaking PhD study might be considered to be 'at the top' as students, contributing to university's research environment (and shaping teaching agendas). However, whilst students they might also be more adept as researchers than staff whose primary responsibility is teaching and thus directly challenge traditional staff/student hierarchies. Moreover, although some students arrive at the PhD through a fairly linear trajectory – progressing through different levels of the education system – many are professionals highly respected in their own fields. They thus might be

more 'expert' than staff in their subject area whilst simultaneously being 'students'; not only does this disrupt epistemological academic hierarchies but PhD students most often have the same privileges as their undergraduate counterparts (i.e. student email accounts and security access). The prevalence of practitioners undertaking research in the Arts & Design also enhances this complexity whereby the very category 'researcher' might extend to artist-researcher, designer-researcher, composer-researcher and so-on. Not only do PhD students inhabit a precarious and liminal space in how their identity sits amidst 'staff' and 'student', but they reveal a complexity in how they are positioned – and often challenge – established power structures amidst the governance of labor and intellectual capital.

The PhD is also pedagogically unique. Whilst the Professional Doctorate incorporates a substantial taught element (QAA 2014: 30), in the UK at least, PhD supervision traditionally forms the central mode of support. Supervisors together perform a number of roles that are highly fluid changing at different points during the PhD; for example, project manager, enculturation, critical mentor, disciplinary expert, facilitator (Lee 2008). However, whilst PhD supervision is recognized as a form of pedagogy, it does not cohere with 'teaching and learning' in the normative sense whereby the teacher teaches and the learner learns; rather than 'teaching' relevant subject matter as such, the supervisory team instead could be said to facilitate doctoral thinking. Indeed, as Manathunga notes team supervision supports students' engagement with new knowledges that cross institutional, disciplinary and epistemic boundaries (2012: 29). Whilst the supervisory team might provide subject specific expertise, a successful PhD student also arguably emerges as more of an expert in their area of study through their contribution to knowledge. This disrupts the neoliberal economy of the university in which large numbers of students are the consumers of new knowledge. The PhD in fact, reverses this model; it is the learner that creates new knowledge, in which there are

multiple staff supporting one PhD student. In this sense, the PhD embodies a pedagogical para-dox in which precisely by demonstrating 'doctoralness', it eschews traditional understandings of teaching and learning where students act as their own teacher to create both new knowledge and determine their own curriculum of doctoral development.

'Doctoral pedagogy' too remains an ambiguous terrain understood primarily in terms of the Professional Doctorate (Bourner and Simpson 2014; Maxwell 2003) and PhD supervision. However, the increasing emphasis on doctoral training to meet UK policy and sector benchmarks,[iii] means that institutions are also required to support the development of their researchers, prompting a shift from the PhD being the creation of the doctoral thesis per se. To follow Parks, there is a distinction between the PhD as a product and the PhD as a process (Parks 2005: 198). Unlike the doxa of teaching as understood in undergraduate programs, doctoral training provision for the PhD tends to be both non-accredited and elective, instead running throughout the PhD in a more fluid manner to develop the 'knowledge, behaviours and attributes of successful researchers and … realise their potential' (Vitae 2011: 1). Such courses are often run by Graduate Schools (or similar) to cohorts of doctoral students or PGRs across the university and provide generic rather than discipline specific research training alongside PhD study. This is often complemented by training that is accredited in the form of a concurrent qualification (such as a Postgraduate Certificate in Research Methods) in addition to the PhD proper; structurally and pedagogically, it is both part of the PhD yet at the same time separate to it. However, the paradigm of *training* researchers tends to adopt a rhetoric of a 'how to' approach, for example centered on research methods, preparing to submit the PhD thesis and careers development in preparation for an increasingly competitive job market. Whilst these skills and behaviors are vital in preparing PhDs researchers and doctoral training is now recognized as important in supporting

researchers alongside supervision, it does not necessarily elicit doctoral learning on a deeper and transformative level.

A dissonant terrain? Practice *in*, *as*, *through*, *and* research in the Arts & Design

As we can see, the PhD inhabits a distinct yet equivocal space within the University; structurally, pedagogically, hierarchically, spatially and temporally. Whilst alternative spaces are often made to accommodate doctoral study, they nevertheless are often precarious as well as less visible or at odds with the university at large. Within the discourse of doctoral study itself, I would argue that the Arts & Design PhD occupies an even more uncertain and unruly territory even within the meta-structures, processes and protocols of smaller faculties or departments. This is in part due to the significant increase in practitioners undertaking Arts & Design PhDs, and in particular in those incorporating artistic practice *as* research, which encompasses certain particularities, peculiarities, tensions and complexities. In my own institution, this is evident through an increase in practitioners undertaking PhD study prompted by their own practice and directly informing this practice upon completion. There has also been an increase in practitioners undertaking research in which practice forms a key part of the research enquiry. It is also the latter, that I would argue is invariably more messy, complex and difficult to comprehend both by PhD researchers themselves but also by the academe and has been the subject of much debate over the past decade (Barrett and Bolt 2007; Gray and Malins 2004; Macleod and Holdridge 2007; Nelson 2013; Sullivan 2011; Van Ruiten and Wilson 2013).

The increase in PhDs incorporating practice has resulted in a myriad of terms being used (see figure 1), something that Teikmanis usefully refers to as 'typologies' of artistic research (2013: 163).[iv] This has largely been driven by a need to define what is a relatively

emergent research paradigm and which often rethinks the very boundaries of research and the PhD itself. For example, the designation 'practice-led research' (Mottram, Rust and Till 2007) is often used in the UK and is the term employed by the Arts, Humanities and Research Council (AHRC), the primary funder of PhD research in the Arts & Design. 'Practice-based research' (Candy 2007; Rubidge 2004) is also frequently used across institutions and more recently 'practice as research' (Nelson 2013) has been adopted as a more overarching term. The multiplicity of terms varies by discipline, institution and in different global contexts. Moreover, many of these terms have been subject to critique even by Arts & Design researchers themselves. Indeed, as Emlyn Jones argues, "practice-based research is too loose a term to be useful" (2006: 228). In addition, as I have argued elsewhere there are also contradictory definitions amongst the same terms (Taylor 2018). The multiplicity and divergence of these typologies themselves in fact encapsulates the inherent slipperiness and
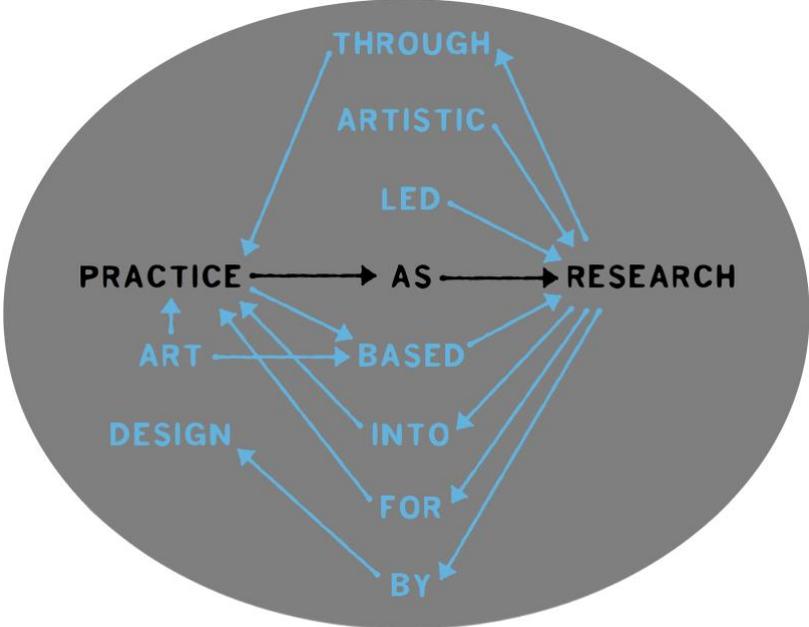

Figure 1. Typologies of practice as research, Paul Norman and Jacqueline Taylor (2018)

instability of the very discourse of Arts & Design research itself. Precarity and dissonance

might be seen in positive and empowering terms, to echo Rolfe's notion of para-dox and the *paraversity* in that: 'Dissensus is not dissent … thinking in parallel is to keep discussion and debate open and alive precisely by avoiding coming to agreement' (2014: 4). Dissensus as a practice and dissonance as a condition (perhaps an alternative habitus) highlights the very richness of Arts & Design research and its commitment to thinking alongside and in parallel to multiple ways of working. It could be said to be dissonant in itself, let alone to the wider research, institutional and pedagogic structures and discourses.

In the context of this chapter, I use the term 'art practice research' to encompass and acknowledge the multiplicity of approaches and terminology used to refer to research incorporating creative practice in the Arts & Design. Eschewing practice-led or practice-based here removes any potential simplistic reading of practice leading or being the basis for research but instead positions the two as having a mutual relation (Taylor 2013). Whilst the discourse of such research has emerged very specifically out of the artistic disciplines (in particular, performance, creative writing, dance and fine art), both 'Arts & Design' and 'art practice research' are considered here as expanded fields including architecture, curation, jewelry, design and theatre to name just a few. I contend that art practice research can in fact be defined precisely by its resistance to be defined and by its fluidity, multiplicity and heterogeneity in which practice is highly nuanced and individualized (Taylor 2018). Indeed, many students undertake research in relation to their creative practice. Practice may more explicitly refer to the creative practice and artistic work *as* the research itself. It may *lead* to research or be the *basis* for the research enquiry. Practice might also refer to methods, the articulation of the thesis and the final submission itself. The practice might, following Candy, result in the production of a creative artefact or end product as the basis of a contribution to knowledge (2006: 3). Equally, practice might be understood as a process imbricated with the

research in which the end object (or indeed performance, artefact or design) are not important. It can also extend to one's professional creative practice and associated discourses, for example as a designer, curator or performer.

Frequently, the art practice research PhD requires the parameters of what constitutes 'thesis' to be expanded in order to most appropriately articulate and position the practice in question. A solely textual submission might suffice even though practice has been vital in the production of new knowledge. Equally, the PhD often deviates from this tradition taking many different forms encompassing textual, material, visual, sound or performance-based elements. Writing too may take different forms that enact the argument embodied in the thesis; for example, Hayley Newman's thesis (2001) took the form of a self-interview which she identifies as a performance in itself. The viva voce examination too might also include an exhibition or exposition and incorporate practice alongside the submitted thesis or that reconceptualizes the physical properties of the traditional thesis. It is therefore difficult to generalize on the position of practice in the art practice research PhD as it is unique to its doctoral and creative context. Arguably precisely what is doctoral is articulating, positioning and critically grounding the practice itself.

As the PhD is primarily defined by a contribution to knowledge, the incorporation of practice *as* or *part of* the research also raises epistemological tensions and ambiguities. In particular, there has been much written about praxical, embodied, tacit and material knowledge bound up in art practice research (Bolt 2007; Vincs 2007). The unknown has also been identified as a crucial part of the artistic process, yet it is commonly understood as a negative lexicon as *un*certain, *in*visible and *in*comprehensible (Fisher and Fortnum 2013: 7). Within the doxa of 'research' and the 'doctorate' it is thus at odds with both the academe and

the communication of new knowledge required by the PhD. To follow Haseman, the 'material outcomes of practice represents research findings in their own right' (2006: 104). As a result, such research has been argued to be thorny in that its goal is not primarily communicable knowledge (Frayling 1995: 5). Indeed, the AHRC themselves note that practice-led research prompts 'vexatious' epistemological and ontological questions (Mottram, Rust and Till 2007:11). Developing mechanisms to make visible and effectively communicate this knowledge thus become especially important, rather than assuming that artefacts (and their processes, performativities and materialities) articulate themselves. Art practice research could be said embody a para-dox in that this necessary self-reflexivity means some element of dissonance is in fact a condition of the research itself.

To add to this complexity, there is no one established method to undertake art practice research; rather, PhD students are often required to appropriate various methodologies to come towards new knowledge by knitting together new ways of working from across paradigms, approaches and fields. My experience in working closely with PhD students in the Arts & Design has revealed that the methods that emerge from research incorporating practice often embody the conceptual and theoretical ideas being grappled with. For example, a painter exploring ideas concerned with liminality might inhabit and push the boundaries of various methods to conceptualize a liminal methodological space, in turn thinking through and providing new insights that feed into the research. Most likely, this is because practice also functions as praxis; that is, a lived and embodied experience and its knowledge emerges through its practicing. This further highlights the precarious epistemological nature of art practice research. Indeed, as Sullivan points out, art practice is not necessarily captive to existing frameworks of knowledge but instead open-ended and exploratory reflexive action, and encourages a working from the unknown to the known where 'serendipity and intuition ...

direct attention to unanticipated possibilities' (2009: 48). Such a process too resonates closely with the performativity of research in which the practitioner-researcher tends to dive in and commence practicing to see what happens (Haseman 2006:101–2). Methodologically and epistemologically then, art practice research presents a direct challenge to and is dissonant with established value systems of research and knowledge production and does not sit easily within the wider landscape of doctoral study.

In addition, many Arts and Design PhD researchers negotiate multiple identities beyond those of 'staff' and 'student' as outlined previously but which the ambiguity and precarity of this identity is enhanced as it extends to creative, professional, practitioner and academic. Many could be argued to aspire to be 'para-academics' rather than 'academics' per se in which they position themselves both inside and outside academia on their own terms (Taylor and Vaughan 2016) through purposefully maintaining an array of creative and professional activities in addition to or as research. Interestingly, the para-academic as a broader term has been conceptualized as being aligned with concept of the *paraversity* and para-doxa in which 'para' signifies an ongoing and transformational process (Wardrop 2014: 15) that enables mobility 'in/outside and – in spite of – the academe' (Garland 2014: 78). The traditional narrative of linear 'progress' for PhD students relating to assumptions of an academic career is disrupted by the position of the para-academic in general but also in the more multifaceted aspirations of Arts & Design researchers in which practice (and practicing) are complexly intertwined with and inflect traditional understandings of academia. Moreover, progress from one academic category to another is precarious, whereby the traditional perspective of the postdoc as a transitional role from PhD to academic lectureship is changing in response to fewer permanent jobs (Jones and Oakley 2018: 3).

I would argue that by its very nature the art practice research PhD challenges the conventions of the PhD itself as part of its 'doctoralness' is in testing out, justifying and making valid appropriate and robust methods, modalities of articulation, the forms that the thesis may take and epistemologically grounded relations between theory and practice. There are a great many risks for the researcher (and supervisor) in undertaking such practice as what is 'new' also extends beyond the knowledge gained through the intellectual enquiry itself. This also extends to the examination of the art practice research PhD, where to follow Elkins, the 'problem' of evaluating such doctoral study can only be solved if examiners move beyond strict disciplinary boundaries and their normal interpretive habits and that whilst this makes such research exciting, it is also exactly what ensures that it cannot be commensurate with other degrees (2009: 163). As a result, the Arts & Design PhD forms a complex and contested territory, elusive for those do not know how to go about it or what it comprises (Nelson 2013: 4). Echoing Elkins above and considering the descriptors outlined previously as conventionally underpinning undergraduate and postgraduate degrees and even those of Vitae's Researcher Development Framework, it is interesting to note that Wilson raises concerns about attempts to confine art practice research to a set of descriptors as it risks obscuring the many fields of practice it might encompass (2008:2). I would like to argue that the unruly, incongruent and troublesome nature of the Arts & Design PhD forms a discourse of dissonance. One underpinned by tensions between on the one hand producing, framing and articulating practice *as* research as robust, rigorous and valid (not just practice as practice and artists doing what they do) and on the other retaining its integrity as emergent, experimental, cross-disciplinary, performative, innovative and individualized. Rather than resolving these tensions, they are instead a very quality of Arts & Design research in claiming recognition as research within dominant frames while at the same time troubling or reworking those frames.

Research-practice-pedagogy

There are huge implications for how the Arts & Design PhD can be conceived pedagogically. In particular in reconciling how it might function as a productive para-dox with the dominant paradigm of Researcher Development and the centralized structures of the Graduate School model which favor generic provision, training *how to do* research or gaining certain skills based on assumptions of career trajectories, identities and academic aspirations. My own institution comprises four Faculties: 'Arts, Design and Media', 'Business, Law and Social Sciences', 'Computing, Engineering and the Built Environment' and 'Health, Education and the Life Sciences'. Whilst the university's Doctoral Research College is a centralized structure that provides some university-wide research training, doctoral education is developed on a local level in each Faculty; whilst there is indeed porosity between this provision it is able to be developed and adapted to its disciplinary contexts. The Faculty of Arts, Design & Media encompasses the largest cohort of PhD students at the university. Whilst numbers fluctuate, there are around 160 students working within and across eight specialist disciplinary schools of Art, Architecture & Design, English, Fashion & Textiles, Jewelry, Media, Music and Performing Arts (the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire) and Visual Communication. The boundaries of these disciplines are highly permeable; indeed, a PhD student working in the area of design might easily find themselves in the Schools of Art, Architecture & Design, Fashion & Textiles, Jewelry or Visual Communication depending on their research. In addition, cross-disciplinary supervisory teams provide fertile ground for PhD students to work across multiple Schools and under the University's STEAM agenda, which encourages cross-disciplinary collaboration between the Arts and STEM subjects, a number of PhD students also work across faculties.

Arts, Design & Media PhD students thus form an extremely diverse cohort. There are

a number of students who do work in fairly traditional projects and draw on established methods and approaches. Yet the vast majority, undertake research that deals at least in some part with the messiness of practice; from those approaching their artistic practice *as* research, in which creative work is submitted as part of the thesis, to practice forming part of the research process and practitioners undertaking more 'theoretical' PhDs that interrogate an other's practice. Many actively critique established research paradigms, conceptions of knowledge and the thesis itself. Whilst the discourse of the art practice research PhD has emerged specifically from areas of performance, creative writing, dance and fine art as I have discussed, Arts, Design & Media students appropriate and draw on elements of art practice research in relation to their own contexts. The PhD as incorporating creative or artistic practice is not set up as separate to the 'traditional' PhD. Rather, all research is approached as part of a spectrum in which there are different nuances of practice to avoid setting up a binary between research involving creative practice and that which does not, and risk 'othering' practice against more traditional research. Within the context of the Arts, Design & Media then, PhD students can be seen to inhabit a dissonant terrain. One the one hand, they disrupt the cohesion and 'purity' of art practice research found in discrete disciplinary areas such as the visual arts or performance. One the other hand, areas such as Media and Cultural Studies which might otherwise draw heavily on conventions within the Social Sciences, are themselves disrupted with the positioning and framing of practice as crucial to the research.

For the last five years, I have developed doctoral education in the Faculty of Arts, Design & Media at my institution as an academic (or indeed artist-researcher or para-academic). Doctoral provision is underpinned by two primary areas of pedagogic practice: the 'Postgraduate Certificate in Research Practice,' (PGCert) a formal accredited course for PhD students and 'The PGR Studio,' a non-accredited and more fluid space of provision

throughout the PhD journey. The PGCert is a mandatory course for all new PhD students across the university. It has a university-wide course structure underpinned by a set of learning objectives relating to the theoretical, methodological and practical dimensions of the research, as well as critical reflection of the development of the researcher. Whilst administered centrally by the university's Doctoral Research College, its development and delivery is entirely devolved to each of the university's four faculties. This has afforded a unique and crucial opportunity to develop the course specifically in the context of the Arts, Design & Media that exposes the complexities and dissonance of art practice research alongside the many nuances of research practice extending beyond the arts into areas of professional practice (for example, journalism, curation and museology) and where practice might function heavily but not manifest in and through the creation of artistic work per se.

The PGCert runs over a ten-week period and includes a mixture of seminars, talks and smaller group workshops. These cover the principles of research, such as positioning oneself as a researcher (in terms of literature and within wider communities of practice), developing research questions and ethics. Importantly, in the very first week there is a focused session on praxis and practice making this aspect of research visible from the outset in reference to the discourse and complexities of art practice research I have previously discussed. Rather than limit this discussion to the first week, it is unraveled as a thread to be unpicked throughout the course so as to provide another – potentially contrary – lens for students to approach their research. Grounded by this discussion, the definition of 'literature' for example, is critiqued as potentially also including compositions, exhibitions and artistic work. Longer interactive workshops are facilitated by two members of the core course team, who (deliberately) represent different approaches to these principles themselves and thus do not always agree. Colleagues and I act as provocateurs to encourage students to unthink what they think they

know, challenge assumptions and actively critique both emergent and more established ways of working to push epistemological boundaries and the various doxa intertwined with the fields, paradigms and practicing in which they are working.

Sessions interrogating the 'principles of research' are followed by talks by invited researchers centred upon an exploration of these principles in practice alongside those focused on 'methods in practice'. The ethos of provocation and indeed eliciting critical sites of paradox is continued in these sessions. Rather than teach researchers *how to do* research, the talks instead aim to *expose* students to the multiplicities of approaches that peers – from professors to fellow PhD students – have developed and approached principles of research and methods in practice. These could themselves said to purposefully represent a sense of dissonance whereby 'the practice of dissensus is a commitment to thinking alongside and in parallel to another with no pressure to reach agreement' (Rolfe 2014: 4). Talks range from creative approaches to using fairly traditional methods, such as using archives and ethnography, to performance-lectures that enact alternative forms of articulation, writing and dissemination, for example research *about* and *through* art writing articulated *via* art writing, and everything in-between. Within broad methodological themes such as 'working with participants' and 'dealing with the performative, reflexive and experimental,' speakers that explore established ways of working which are deliberately juxtaposed against those that embrace, question and push the boundaries of art practice research to prompt critical discussion. The facilitation of enabling learners to learn how to learn and thus do doctoral research (in the most part by the doing itself through sites of praxis in the course and critical reflexivity) is arguably here what elicits doctoralness itself. In doing so, the PGCert establishes an inter/ multi/ cross/ trans-disciplinary and cultural Arts, Design & Media community and critical collaborative collective that brings researchers together from smaller disciplinary Schools (themselves split

geographically across the City over a number of sites). The course at once sits within and respects the parameters of the university-wide course structure and the academe, yet at the same time it is purposefully dissonant and sets up the conditions to challenge and rupture the normative structures and conventions of both research and researcher development through facilitating sites of praxis enacted through debate, conflicting points of view and by pushing pedagogical boundaries themselves.

This provision is complemented by The PGR Studio, which forms doctoral provision throughout the entire PhD journey, as well as facilitating routes into and out of PhD study. It is an experimental, creative and practice-based space that resonates across all the academic schools and disciplines in the faculty (though not specifically for practice-based researchers). Studio here can be seen as a generative space associated with new thinking and the cross-fertilization of ideas removed from the power structures of the university and might be interpreted in any number of contexts such as writing, film, visual art, theatre, music, radio. Importantly, The PGR Studio isn't a physical space per se; that is, an actual studio with a fixed location inhabited by PhD students. Whilst indeed a number of institutions do have spaces for PhD students, these are difficult to secure and often under threat as space allocation is instead prioritized for undergraduate students as the dominant student population and consumers of the university. These spaces also tend to be in the form of PGR hubs for all postgraduate researchers and are often university-wide spaces situated in Graduate Schools or equivalent. There has been much written about the importance of community in the formation of identity, particularly for practitioners transitioning to being doctoral researchers (Hockey 2008: 117). Whilst there are benefits to the crossdisciplinarity afforded by university-wide doctoral cohorts found in Graduate Schools, there is a risk that this undermines the richness of more delineated communities of practice that are inflected by the specificities and

complexities of discourses such as art practice research and their potential as a pedagogic space. Indeed, if a PhD student in the area of music composition is located within a Conservatoire, they are too positioned amongst peers in their field that can facilitate their integration into a research community and enhance their professional identity formation within that particular field. The fluid nature and conceptualization of The PGR Studio as a spatiality is thus open, inclusive and porous yet disrupts the potential homogenization of students under the label of 'PGR' in their physical habitus within the university but rather enables them to be embedded into the academe as an expert on their own terms.

As a faculty-wide entity aimed at students across Arts, Design & Media, The PGR Studio facilitates *opportunities* and *moments* within its spatiotemporality for crossdisplinarity, as well as the unknown, creativity, experimentation and risk. Provision is nomadic and takes place across multiple sites both within, outside and on the peripheries of the physical university in which students across different Schools are brought together. There is also an online space (comprising a professional website and growing social media presence) and so the spaces of learning and teaching that are opened up are multiple and fluid. Across these spaces doctoral learning might be explicit but more often than not is embodied, tacit and praxical. The PGR Studio does not cohere with the logic of the academe in that it is not-quite-a-course and not-quite-a-programme, yet at the same time this is arguably precisely what affords a great amount of freedom in which The PGR Studio can exist on its own terms both within and against the structures, processes and understandings of research in the university. In many ways, it embodies the very concept of the *paraversity*. To refer to the one of its online hashtags, The PGR Studio is 'a safe place for unsafe things'; thus the para-academic may very well cohere, in its very incoherence, and *become* doctoral. Structurally this facet of doctoral education can be seen to resonate with the dissonance of art practice research in

which its very dissonance creates spaces of learning, teaching and becoming for the PhD researcher.

Rather than running a program of events 'on the ground' normally found within Researcher Development provision, I have developed a conceptual framework of 'research-practice-pedagogy' that underpins Arts, Design & Media doctoral education. As I have argued elsewhere, this framework can be understood as a multidimensional, heterogeneous, plural and fluid topology (Taylor 2018). Structurally, it is malleable and comprises various components and interrelations that remain unaffected by reflexivity and flux amongst its parts. As I will elaborate, a multicity of transformational, performative, and embodied spaces of learning and teaching are opened up through formal, informal, implicit and explicit pedagogic events. Such a topology allows for an element of reflexivity, performativity and the emergence of relevant provision subject to repeated adjustment like the qualities of art practice research itself. Rather than separate provision for those explicitly engaged with artistic research, all of The PGR Studio's activities are underpinned by an ethos that all research, regardless or not of its relation to practice, is indeed research and its relation to practice represents a spectrum of approaches. In developing an expanded understanding of doctoral training *as* pedagogy, this lens enables doctoral education to be approached as embodying, celebrating and acknowledging the nuances of practice in the context of the Arts, Design & Media and thus as enfolded into the fabric of the topology of research-practice-pedagogy as signified in the imbrication of these normally separate fields.

This *is* research: opening up sites of praxis and practice

The provision facilitated by The PGR Studio incorporates a mixture of workshops and explicit training alongside happenings, events and 'stuff' that encompass more performative

and tacit spaces of doctoral learning. In the same way that it is acknowledged that there is a plurality of ways to understand practice as part of the PhD, there are a plurality of activities to meet the needs of such a diverse cohort. Indeed, training opportunities (i.e. how to use particular referencing software) are set alongside workshops including articulating research through spoken word, PhD writing retreats exploring different aspects of the writing process with space to write, and viva survival where students, viva 'survivors' and an experienced viva examiner navigate different aspects of the viva through a discursive and interactive format. Rather than having strictly social events per se, happenings, events and 'stuff' enable PhD researchers to engage with aspects of Researcher Development via social and/or creative means. They could in many ways be seen to form an alternative habitus as a site of learning. For example, pop-up 'Coffee & Chats' take place across various coffee shops on site as well as those peripheral to the campus. Researchers are invited to meet and chat; this provides a way to interact with peers in what can otherwise be potentially isolating and thus enhances wellbeing. At the same time, it is a way to share information on the ground and often promotes discussion around the PhD experience itself in which students can listen, share experiences and connect with peers in their wider research environment and thus enhances the skills of researchers such as networking and knowledge exchange. As part of a larger and more formalized framework, there is also a peer mentoring scheme (see fig 1) that runs throughout the year where PhD researchers at different stages in the PhD are paired with one another. This provides both psycho-social support in addition to the supervisory team but also enhances the skills of mentees and mentors (Boultwood, Taylor and Vaughan 2013). These events also subvert the normative neoliberal logic of being too busy to care for oneself by opening up time and space for a sort of 'radical care' (Hawkins 2018)

More structured and formalized happenings that at the same time are spaces of fluidity

are also set up, such as a mid-year PhD festival in which students share their work in progress in the form of pecha kucha-style talks, provocations and poster presentations lasting no more than five minutes each. Students are invited to apply via a proposal including a single image and what they will present in under 280 characters (akin to a tweet). Rather than teaching PhD students *how to* present their work, think creatively or write proposals or indeed *about* disseminating their research as tends to be adopted in Researcher Development Programmes, the conditions are set up where this happens praxically and students learn by doing, as well as learn about learning by learning. Moreover, the festival – called Inside/Out – provides a platform for researchers to get 'inside' ideas 'out' there,' thus enacting, making visible and celebrating the different methods, modes of articulation and different approaches to research in the Arts, Design & Research through its performative

Figure 2 and 3. Selected images of speakers at 'Beyond Borders:

Approaches and Pathways to Arts, Design & Media research' conference, July 2017

Figure 4. Images gathered from participants as part of the Arts,

Design & Media PhD mentoring scheme

utterance. Indeed, the previous event included research in the field of experimental opera articulated through the medium of opera and research exploring the body in film art and virtual reality incorporating an actual virtual reality experience. The sheer creativity of the event is embodied in participants receiving festival wristbands on arrival, as well as coffee vouchers, pizza and drinks in red party cups (even for those who consider themselves to be undertaking 'traditional' research) and facilitates a generative space that embodies the potential of 'studio' itself that also enables criticality, socialization and community-building.

The pedagogic possibilities afforded by the festival are enacted on a larger scale through the PGR Studio annual conference, encapsulated in previous themes such as 'Research Matter(s)' and 'Beyond Borders?' (see figs 2 and 3). The conference, attracting around 100 delegates including PhD students within and beyond the university, and from within and beyond the UK, is conceived as a significant curriculum event similar to the Arts & Design degree show. The conference rethinks the conventional conference format and

provides a vital platform for students to experiment intellectually, as well as in the dissemination and form of the research itself. 'Curriculum' as conceived here – as well as 'teaching and learning' – thus does not cohere with that of the neoliberal university; spaces are set up for PhD students to expand their sense of doctoralness through being exposed to, questioning and dismantling various conventions and thus arguably learn without being taught as such. Underpinning this provision is something I have called a 'hidden employability curriculum'. Rather than teaching students *how to* apply for, chair or organize conferences (to enhance one's employability as a researcher), these activities enable sites of practice and praxis. These activities can be comprehended in a temporal sense in that they are scheduled and can be understood as discrete entities. Yet it is within this temporal framework that multiple spaces are opened up that facilitate nuances of teaching and learning on an ontological and epistemological level. Indeed, for Atkinson, flexible teaching-learning spaces – or pedagogic events – not wholly contained by learning outcomes accommodate unpredictable or unexpected directions in learning where both learners and teachers take risks, and form real learning through a new or changed ontological state (2013: 138).

Crucially, all of this work is approached *as* research; through pilot projects, action research and mechanisms such as surveys and interviews to elicit data in its various forms, for example through visual images, social media, narratives and the 'stuff' itself. Indeed, in the 'Beyond Borders' conference (2017), a special journal issue was created in the space of a day including creative work created during or in response to the conference itself (Hamilton and Raine 2017). This unveiled and captured valuable data from participants that unveiled its pedagogical dimension; indeed, one participant, a visiting PhD student from a Nigerian University stated: "It will be a summer to remember … when I stepped over the intellectual border into a new world of possibilities." In order to effectively approach this work as

research, The PGR Studio team comprises a staff-student team who are all active researchers engaged with the different nuances of practice and representing different disciplines. This includes two members of staff (including myself) and the employment of three Research Assistants from the Arts, Design & Media faculty who are current or recently completed PhD students. This system to some extent challenges the concept of the academic precariat as outlined previously in establishing paid recognized positions that enhance the employability of students and postdocs in an increasingly competitive market and where applicants are mentored through the process (i.e. in workshops and through feedback). Moreover, rather than enforcing a top-down approach, working in collaboration with PhD students and postdocs themselves (who have in turn collaborated with other PhD students to develop events) means that PGR Studio provision is informed and shaped by its community itself and maintains its grassroots ethos. Evidencing, theorizing and conceptualizing this work, and disseminating it in the sector does not necessarily mean that permission can be granted to do certain things. Rather, I have been emboldened to do them anyway with the knowledge that this evidence supports a pedagogy which is dissonant, disruptive, messy and unruly in a positive way. In another sense, such evidence also justifies failure and testing things out. After all, this *is* research.

Following Cognitive Dissonance Theory (Festinger 1957), humans are innately driven to hold attitudes and beliefs in harmony to create cognitive consistency. By nature, we try to remove dissonance. Indeed, operationally, administratively, financially and otherwise, dissonance would create conflicting processes as well as behaviors and attitudes. The university would be in chaos. Rather than resisting educational structures, I would like to propose that thinking about dissonance as underpinned by the intertwining of research-practice-pedagogy, can be thought of in positive terms and as a site of empowerment; for PhD

researchers themselves, the Arts & Design PhD and in developing doctoral pedagogy that acknowledges and respects structures yet at the same time politely disrespects them. This relates to Atkinson's 'Pedagogy of the not known' (which he also notes could be called 'pedagogy against the state' or 'pedagogy of the event') whereby learners and teachers are positioned as pedagogical subjects through specific discourses and practices that constitute learning and teaching in which they are formed, regulated and normalized (2013: 136). Following Atkinson, in order to challenge the power of the norm when it is no longer useful we must shift from the subject as an effect of discourse to being formed critically in relation to norms. Rather than teaching *how to do* research, the framework I have developed and its activities and spaces value community, collaboration, mess and crossdisciplinarity in which students as subjects – understood pedagogically on an epistemological and ontological level – actively shape their own paradigms of learning and development. Within the terrain of doctoral education I have laid out, pedagogic events can be seen to enable not just learning and teaching, but also becoming – and on an onto-epistemological level – whereby embodied experiences enable the self to be organized, recognized and constituted within this framework no longer understood as norms (Atkinson 2013: 139).

In reference to credit descriptors as defining what is expected of a learning as in terms of "a defined and *bounded* learning activity [my emphasis]" (SEEC 2016: 1) as discussed previously, doctoral education in the Arts & Design can instead be understood as defined and *unbounded*. I contend that the Arts & Design PhD could perhaps be said to comprise doctoral borderlands and is underpinned by a counter-cartographic logic (Rogoff 2000:75). It instead purposefully occupies a spatiotemporality not defined or separated by boundaries, territories or indeed dichotomies (such as practice-led/ non-practice-led); neither conforming to nor totally in opposition to narratives of linearity or dominant epistemologies, but a fertile space

of criticality and of creativity. Indeed, to follow Rolfe, the para-doxical is not inside/outside the orthodoxical university, the perversity doesn't exist 'in space' as such - it operates like a rhizome and is connected with anything other, entangled with as many people and projects as possible (Rolfe 2014: 4). It could be understood as a space where 'rules' exist differently on their own terms in relation to the wider institution. There is a disruption to the norms, structures and assumptions. Yet for Arts & Design PhD study this disruption promotes rigor, facilitates criticality and could indeed be said to be doctoral.

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[i] Whilst it is difficult to disaggregate numbers of doctoral students in the US based on publicly available data, Australia has the same proportion of doctoral students at the UK at 4% (DET 2016) in Europe the percentage is slightly higher for example, with 2015 figures in Germany at 7%,and Sweden at 5% (EU Stats 2015).

[ii] Postgraduate Researcher of PGR encompasses a broad range of research-oriented degrees at postgraduate level and above, including Masters of Research (MRes), Master of Philosophy (MPhil), Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), PhD by Publication and the Professional Doctorate (ProfDoc).

[iii] Quality Assurance Agency, Arts & Humanities Research Council, Research Councils UK, Vitae, The Concordat to Support the Development of Researchers.

[iv] These include practice-led research, practice-based research, research through practice, research for practice, research into practice, art-based research, art practice as research, research by design, art practice research, research-led practice, practice as research.