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Some (post-romantic) reflections on creative writing and the exegesis

Abstract:

The link between creative practice and research outcomes in universities remains a vexed issue, as does the associated question about the function of the exegesis in creative and practice-led higher degree theses. This paper reflects on these issues through discussing the nature of inspiration and some of the features of creative work, arguing that research and art are intimately connected.

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In their Introduction to the 2004 special issue of *TEXT* entitled *Illuminating the Exegesis*, Julie Fletcher and Allan Mann wrote that ‘Before we can adequately clarify the role of the exegesis within the creative thesis, we need to reflect on how art can be undertaken as research’. In 2010, and notwithstanding the recent Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) initiative, art’s relationship to research continues to be disputed.

The ERA Submission guidelines, drawing on the Frascati definition (OECD, 2002: 30; ERA, 2010: 10) define research as ‘the creation of new knowledge and/or the use of existing knowledge in a new and creative way so as to generate new concepts, methodologies and understandings’ and states that ‘This definition of research is consistent with a broad notion of research and experimental development (R&D) as comprising “creative work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of humanity, culture and society”’. The promulgation of this definition followed ERA’s invitation for the submission of creative works as research products.

However, despite ERA’s embrace of creative works, the academy generally doesn’t recognise them as delivering ‘new knowledge’. Further, while it is indisputable that creative works use existing knowledge ‘in a new and creative way’ such works are not accepted by many Australian academic institutions as representing, in themselves, ‘new concepts, methodologies and understandings’ for research purposes. Kroll (2004b), for example, has stated that

I will say that I don’t believe that [creative] practice in and of itself constitutes research, although this does not mean that I think that the government should not fund straight practice as readily as it funds scholarship. I certainly do. But at some point in the process of research questions need to be asked, if not fully answered, and those findings communicated to the intellectual and artistic community.

But why does art need to be buttressed by ‘findings’ in this way? And even if the Australian university context demands that it does, could not art be understood as its own legitimate form of research?

The vexed position of creative work within the academic sector—it is accepted and simultaneously erased—is the reason that the role of the exegesis still needs to be scrutinised after more than ten years of publications on the topic. It is the exegeses that accompany creative (or practice-led) theses which are usually understood as the research component of those theses and which are typically accorded the role of justifying (or even explaining) the art of artist-academics.

I am particularly interested in how such issues might be teased out with reference to creative theses in writing. There is no clear agreement about how such theses should be assessed or what the exegesis should be. In 1998 Kevin Brophy wrote that ‘Issues of assessment in creative writing courses must remain ... a place of debate and uncertainty’ in order to be committed to ‘the unpredictability and open-endedness of creative projects’ (242-43). Kroll (2004b) commented some years later that ‘The proximity of the creative and critical is what makes an exegesis ... both daring and dangerous.’ Although attempts to define the role of the exegesis in creative writing research has continued with considerable energy since then, Camilla Nelson (2009)

recently commented on ‘the extent to which the discipline of writing lacks any sort of consensus about its aims, objects and methods’.

Yet various models for exegetical writing have been proposed. One example was given in an illuminating essay by Nigel Krauth (2002) in which he contended that the idea of exegesis ‘reinvigorates the territory of the preface’ and ‘is a long-term and also current feature of our overall culture’. He concluded that

Exegetic activity provides opportunity for postgraduate writers to ‘speak twice’ about the literary nerves of their work, about the creative mechanisms driving it, and about the personal and cultural orientations that inform and frame and guide it.

Jeri Kroll (2004a) suggested that one of the roles of the exegesis might be as a support for a student’s creative work; that postgraduates ‘are first commentators on their own original texts’. This followed her earlier characterisation of an exegesis as something that ‘discusses origins, possible options, explains why certain paths were followed ... It might set the work in a contemporary context ... referring to the student’s developmental stage’ (Kroll 1999).

Tess Brady responded to Kroll’s 1999 paper by asking ‘why would a student want to set out any or all of these beliefs ... The exegesis here functions as a kind of insurance policy against a poorly received creative product’ (2000). This comment closely echoed Dawson’s remark that he suspected that an exegesis ‘also acts as an insurance policy’ (1999). Brady argued ‘that both the creative work and the exegesis can stem from exactly the same research, the same concerns, and yet one is not the other’.

But, what should an exegesis be? Brady’s solution was to embrace and develop ‘a model which celebrates the creative, privileging its discourse ... in an open-ended manner, picking and choosing and embracing incompleteness’. More recently, Camilla Nelson, in responding critically to Paul Dawson’s 2008 article, ‘Creative Writing and Postmodern Interdisciplinarity’, wrote that ‘the central attraction of the exegetical component of the research degree [is] ... to situate that work within a culture, and elaborate the potential knowledges, or interventions in knowledge, to which the work gives rise’ (Nelson 2008). Thus Brady and Nelson argue for a model where a creative work and an accompanying exegesis will be connected as aspects of the same research project but where each are likely to have a significant degree of independence. The creative work and the exegesis would function as alternative ways of approaching, and addressing, a research question.

In 2009, in assessing the impact on writers’ work of a double-blind peer review process, Nelson observed that both referees of ‘an extended piece of novelistic realism’ ‘felt that an exegesis was needed in order to frame the work successfully in terms of its questions and methods’ even though ‘authors statements can in fact raise more questions than they answer—for which reason, the concepts of intention and affect have been longstanding problems in critical theory’. In pointing this out, Nelson further problematised the notion of what an exegesis might be and how it should function. Francesca Rendle-Short’s (2010) subsequent suggestion that students might write an eisegesis rather than an exegesis to allow for ‘a more subjective exploration of text, for play and uncertainty—[and] “faulty interpretation”’ even questions the exegesis’s function in critically analysing and interpreting texts.

So, how do art and research intersect and what are some of the things an exegesis might do in articulating this relationship? Do we even need exegeses in creative research? One way of exploring these questions is to consider the work of poets and the creative process.

Poetry and the creative process

Over the centuries there have been a great many statements made about poetry and the creative process and I won't rehearse many of them here. However, it is worth noting that some of the most well-known are tantalising rather than conclusive. A famous example is Keats's often-quoted remark in a letter to his brothers in December 1817 about

Negative Capability, that is, when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact & reason ... This pursued through Volumes would perhaps take us no further than this, that with a great poet the sense of Beauty overcomes every other consideration, or rather obliterates all consideration. (1977: 43)

Keats's comment emphasises that he understood the writing of poetry as an open—and perhaps even passive—process that, if it can be said to relate to existing bodies of knowledge, does so intuitively rather than through any form of explicit analysis. The phrase 'Negative Capability' suggests space and absence—much in the way that artists talk about the negative space between and around images and sculptures. In Keats case, however, this is hidden interior space in which language and imagination coalesce in undertaking their creative work.

Rainer Maria Rilke, in a letter to Baron Emil von Gebsattel in 1912, was also highly sensitive to the special nature of the creative process, writing that

after the most serious reflection I have come to the conclusion that I could not allow myself the loophole of psychoanalysis unless I were really determined to start a new (if possible, uncreative) life ... it seems certain that if my devils were driven out my angels also would receive a slight, a very slight (shall we say) shock, and, you see, I cannot let it come to that pass at any price. (Rilke 1946: 204-205)

Rilke was resisting what he believed would be the deleterious effects of psychoanalysis on his creativity, even if psychoanalysis promised to resolve some of his personal unhappiness by yielding him greater knowledge of his unconscious life. Like Keats he preferred to remain in 'uncertainties, mysteries, doubts'—even if his uncertainties were more personally disabling than those Keats had in mind in 1817. Both Keats and Rilke privilege certain kinds of unconscious processes as key to their creative practice but neither eschews the idea of research. Indeed, Keats's mention of 'fact & reason' demonstrates his assumption that a body of knowledge has been acquired by the poet prior to his 'sense of Beauty overcom[ing] every other consideration'.

More recently, Paul Engle (1974: 28), perhaps taking his cue from Keats, stated that that 'The university originally was intended to give knowledge. Poetry is not

knowing, but feeling; although there may be wisdom in the poem, it must be felt, not merely understood. The poet is not describing or analysing a subject, but offering a vision of it.' As with Keats's and Rilke's comments, Engle's emphasis on feeling does not deny the poet a role as researcher—presumably the poet's 'wisdom' and 'vision' are underpinned by some accumulation of knowledge. What it does do is make a clear distinction between the transmission of knowledge through the analytic and descriptive writing sanctioned by universities and its transmission through artistic or creative means (I read 'feeling' in Engle's statement as meaning that poems incorporate insights that are not fully paraphraseable in analytic or descriptive language, but which elicit deeper psychological or embodied responses from readers). However, while analytic and poetic modes of writing may be different, the underpinning research activity can, at least in theory, be identical. I will say more about this shortly.

In the meantime, it may be objected that the three quotations about creativity and poetry I have given are Romantic. They give priority to feeling over thought, receptivity and intuition over rational analysis and question the relationship of creativity to knowledge—or what Keats calls 'irritable reaching after fact and reason'—and none are strictly contemporary. Yet novelist and short fiction writer, Marion Halligan's reflection about her personal creative process, published online in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 17 January 2009 and subsequently quoted in Nelson (2009), would be recognisable to many writers, whether 'Romantic' or otherwise:

If I think, everything is lost. I've known this for a long time. Most writers do. That is why they have a superstitious dread of telling people what their next book is about (or their last one, come to that). In order to describe it they have to think about it in a way that is nothing to do with the way they write it, and they are afraid that the rational account will destroy the imaginative process.

Nelson is uncomplimentary about Halligan's comment in concluding that 'this, too, is a cultural assumption—a legacy of Romantic and proto-Romantic discourse. And there are many writers who have long ceased to subscribe to the discourse of 'inspiration' and 'art genius' that underpins Halligan's position'.

Following on from Nelson's provocation, and after reading Paul Magee's recent paper, 'Is Poetry Research?' (2009), in which he quotes a number of poets talking about the ways they write, I thought I would ask Lucy Dougan—a contemporary poet who has published three collections of poetry and who, in 2009, successfully completed a creative PhD by writing a collection of poetry and an exegesis (1)—to reflect on her experience. I did so by asking her on the telephone whether she would be willing to send me comments and on 16 December 2009 sent her an email: 'Regarding the article I'm thinking of writing, it would be great to see one or two poems from your thesis and also to receive a response to the following question, from Paul Magee's article in the recent issue of *TEXT*. He asked Alison Croggon "What research—research defined in any way you want—goes into the writing of your poetry?"'

Part of my interest in this question was the dual nature of Croggon's responses to it. She initially said to Magee that 'none [i.e. no research] goes into it [i.e. the writing of

my poetry]’ but later asserted that ‘To take a broader view, and to think in terms of reading, I’m researching all the time. Only I wouldn’t think of it as research’. This summarises a key issue that attends to many discussions of the relationship of research to writers’ creative practice: such practice may potentially involve (and, as I argue below, even encapsulate or embody) significant research but, as a number of Magee’s interviews demonstrate, creative writers can be reluctant to speak of ‘research’ in such a context. In other words, for many writers the word ‘research’ means (or has come to mean, perhaps because of relatively narrow academic definitions) something disconnected from creativity—or, alternatively, it is understood by writers as a belated process of checking facts in the aftermath of the creative impulse (Magee, 2009). While Croggon was willing to reconsider her position (that ‘none goes into it’), first of all she had to redefine her concept of research as ‘reading, writing, walking round’.

Given these (fruitful) difficulties, and Magee’s various paths of inquiry, it is not surprising that the latter part of his paper shifts away from the question of whether poetry is, or can be called, research. However, along the way, he raises

the possibility that a modern poem is not a knowledge-report, not even a mode of self-expression, so much as a device for generating creative desire—the desire for meaning, for resolution, for further aesthetic experience, for an infinite number of things—in others.

Poems can undoubtedly be many things and the idea that they may be ‘a device for generating creative desire’ is fascinating. However, after reading Magee’s paper, I was most interested in seeing whether Dougan shared Croggon’s perceptions about creativity—and, also, how her views about poetry and research may, or may not, extend to a consideration of her own creative thesis, the creative component of which was a poetry collection. Consequently, my email to her also stated that:

I’d ... be interested in any reflections you might have on the nature of creative theses such as the one you’ve just completed ...

A contemporary poet and her approach to writing

Lucy Dougan sent her response as an email attachment on 14 January 2010, beginning

I think that I’ve pretty much always worked in a dreamy magpie-ish sort of way. For me a poem may be based on an experience that has settled deeply and then niggled itself to the surface. Along the way lots of loved, filed scraps may also make their way into the poem: snippets from songs; small details in paintings or movies; or quotes from books. These might not necessarily be apparent to readers but this field of associations—this tatty virtual folder—is what sustains my writing. And I would have to add to that movement—walking, swimming, immersion in a landscape—is a very important part of the way in which my poems make themselves known. So, I don’t think of this as any kind of active research because, for me, that would be to become too self-conscious about processes and that would not be a good thing.

(also—when I ‘lose’ a poem a way back in may be through immersion in things that sit sideways to the poem—a memory, a letter, a passage in a book)

Dougan’s reflections on her ‘magpie-ish’ process reminded me of Brady’s use of the metaphor of a ‘bowerbird’ to describe the practice-led research she undertook when writing a novel and exegesis for a PhD (Brady 2000): ‘Unlike my colleagues in other more traditional disciplines I needed to acquire a working rather than specialist knowledge, not in one area but in a range of areas and disciplines. I needed to function a little like a bowerbird that picks out the blue things and leaves all the other colours.’ Dougan’s ‘loved, filed scraps’ may vary this metaphor, but the fundamental idea about how practice-led research is conducted is similar. And Dougan’s notion of poetic composition connects to the idea that Keats invoked—especially her remark that a poem may be based on ‘an experience that has settled deeply and then niggled itself to the surface’.

While Dougan writes that ‘I don’t think of this as any kind of active research’, I understand Dougan’s poetic method to be clearly research-driven and I suspect that the issue here is again one of definition. Traditional 20th and 21st-century university research paradigms tend to define research as being characterised by its depth of investigation and its capacity to make an original contribution to a specialised field of knowledge. But research can be conducted and defined in a wide variety of ways and Barbara Bolt (2004) has even argued that ‘the quest for originality and the new, which underpins both contemporary avant-garde and creative arts research, operates according to a faulty logic. By definition the “new” cannot be pre-conceived ... Rather, the new emerges through process as a shudder of an idea, which is then realised in and through language’.

Dougan’s originality and creativity stems from her acquisition and use of a unique body of knowledge—acquired through continuous magpie-ish observation and collection, and through physical activities, including ‘walking, swimming, immersion in a landscape’. In other words, her practice as a poet is that of an attuned and seasoned researcher. Further, her body itself is part of her evolving knowledge-store and is one of the conduits through which she develops her relationship to language and marshals it for her creative use. This last point connects to William James’s observation that the body is ‘the storm centre, the origin of co-ordinates, the constant place of stress in all that experience-train. Everything circles around it and is felt from its point of view’ (1967: 284).

Further, Dougan’s writing practice is reasonably consistent with a good deal of the writing produced within the academy. In the sciences as well as the arts much thinking and writing involves a stage where the knowledge that has been acquired through research is synthesised and conclusions are drawn. The process of arriving at such conclusions is often characterised by a period when the writer suspends her mode of active, analytical thinking in order to let what she knows wash through her—and there are many recorded examples of such processes. For example, in Vernon (1970: 109), E.W. Sinnott writes that it is relatively ‘common for a new idea to arise almost spontaneously in the mind, often seemingly out of nothing’ and cites the example of the brilliant mathematician, Henri Poincaré’s solution to the problem of

Fuchsian functions, when ideas ‘rose in his mind, he says in crowds, sometimes interlocking, and finally making some stable combinations ...’

Poincaré (1913: 383) observed that ‘The genesis of mathematical creation is a problem which should intensely interest the psychologist. It is the activity in which the human mind seems to take least from the outside world, in which it acts or seems to act only of itself and on itself’. As Poincaré himself noted, such intellectual processes are largely intuitive and are sometimes coloured by mental processes that resemble emotional experiences. They are also aesthetic responses. Poincaré states that to think of mathematical demonstrations as only interesting the intellect ‘would be to forget the feeling of mathematical beauty, of the harmony of numbers and forms, of geometric elegance’ (391). Mathematical creation may not produce poems but the associated thought processes are similar to methods of poetic composition and depend on a Keatsian immersion in ‘uncertainties’.

Nelson’s impatience with ‘the discourse of “inspiration” and “art genius”’ is understandable, but one does not have to subscribe to Romantic notions to recognise that the process of creative writing may, as the writing is happening, be characterised by writers in language that invokes imprecise notions that seem to defy conventional (i.e. post-Enlightenment) ideas of knowledge and analysis. Words such as dreaminess, suspension and immersion are characteristic. Such language suggests that a great deal of (creative) writing happens when the writer has yielded to the work-in-progress; has begun to experience waiting, and even procrastination (or laziness, or indolence), as an active state in which the creative process begins to drive the writing rather than the writing driving the creative process. Although it may be mysterious, elusive and, in some respects, opaque to the view, there is nothing magical, mystical or fundamentally ‘Romantic’ about this process.

It may seem obvious to invoke the well-worn notion that creative writing is in some respects analogous to giving birth. Yet Halligan’s point about the writer wanting to keep the work to herself recognises that, for many creative writers, writing often involves a delicate, intimate process of gestation. The urge that such writers have to keep their creative work untainted and undistracted by outside influences derives from a sense that, as it is being formed, this work is as vulnerable as is a baby within its protective membrane. The ‘body’ of knowledge that supports the creative work—that acquired accumulation of observed details, the influences of reading, the residue of aggregated thought and feeling and other nuanced elements of understanding; all of this is dedicated to feeding one particular creative act and maintaining an unwavering focus while doing so. And such moments tend not to last. As the mind, almost despite itself, continues to accumulate and synthesise various kinds of knowledge that are extraneous to a particular creative work, so it will tend to leave the creative or gestational ‘moment’ associated with that particular work and move towards another. (Interestingly, if a first draft captures a nascent idea well enough it can function as a key to recreating, or at least re-evoking, the particular and often luminous idea that attends, like a genie, to a creative work.)

In this light, Halligan’s *‘If I think, everything is lost’* is pragmatic rather than Romantic. It recognises the delicacy and other-worldliness of much of what we call

creativity and, with Rilke, knows that the ‘angels’ of art are vulnerable. It agrees with Keats that ‘uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts’ are a pre-requisite for producing certain kinds of writing. And perhaps it implies that ‘inspiration’ is simply one, now largely outmoded, way of describing the flow of art that results from a mind that is in touch, at last, with a particular creative moment and subject.

Thus (and returning to my contention that nothing in the Keats, Rilke and Engle quotations deny the efficacy of research) it can be argued that the moment of ‘inspiration’ and the resulting work of art (strangely, sometimes delicately) is as research-driven as any piece of university-sanctioned analysis (e.g. an exegesis); further, that to identify one kind of work as being better able to demonstrate a research outcome simply privileges one mode of discourse (analysis) above another (the creative or poetic).

This is what universities have traditionally done—and often for good reasons—but in assessing art (i.e. creative theses) why not alter this paradigm? If, generally speaking, human societies value art itself above the academic analysis of art—for aesthetic reasons and, also, because many artistic works are acknowledged to be unique (original) storehouses of insight into, and knowledge about the human condition—surely there is no logical reason why universities could not look more closely at how creative practice is directly able to encapsulate research. If, in doing so, university-sanctioned definitions of research needed to be reconsidered and opened up, the ERA initiative provides a possible way forward.

Further, if there was a broad consensus within the university sector that art, by its nature, was able to incorporate recognisable research then it could be assessed on that basis. One or more research questions are usually posed at the start of a creative thesis and perhaps universities now need to determine an appropriate mechanism for ascertaining whether the finished creative work adequately addresses these questions. While the establishment of such a mechanism might present challenges, it should not be an insurmountable problem—and it is unlikely be any more problematic than the current relationship between creative theses and their often problematic exegeses.

The exegesis as its own, tentative art

However, even if such a paradigm shift took place within the university sector, the argument may remain that it is worth retaining the exegesis as part of the creative thesis in order to be able to explicitly demonstrate a link, however tangential, between a particular work of art and the research that underpins it. If so, why not re-imagine the exegesis as equal partner in the creative enterprise?

On 15 January 2010 Lucy Dougan replied to an email I had sent her the same day. I wrote ‘Could you answer just one more question: in a nutshell, how do you see your exegesis connected to your creative work (i.e. your poems)?’ Dougan responded:

I didn’t want to write about my own work directly so I needed to conceptualize an exegesis that would sit side-ways to the poems. The poem destination was Naples and the kind of story I wanted to tell was about a self-renegotiation or self-reconstruction. I became drawn to a series of texts about women journeying to Italy (to Naples

specifically) and to a kind of narrative about self-transformation in a place of peril. That the three texts all shared an interest in post-war cultural reconstruction added another layer—so that the [poems'] narrative of self-reconstruction sat inside a broader cultural one.

I also wanted the exegesis to have a poetic logic—so it moves from knowing Naples from the outside to within it—Naples lends itself to spatial readings because of its geography and mythology. The defining feature of the city is its porosity—a confusion of outside/in—a revelation of what lies beneath in ruin—the sense in which Pompeii has preserved what otherwise would never have been seen. There's a logic of the cast at work—an empty fullness. My hope is that the poetry provides a kind of analogue for all these issues—centred on the experience of finding out that the subject was someone else inside themselves that they didn't know—and also the impossibility of ever really knowing oneself or fully recovering the past.

If the creative process is often delicate and to a significant extent opaque, even (and sometimes especially) to the writer responsible for producing the creative work, an exegesis that accompanies a collection of poems or other creative writing cannot hope to wholly encompass or even fully know the writing it accompanies. However, it can, as Nigel Krauth suggested, speak a second time as kind of interlocutor for the creative work 'about the creative mechanisms driving it, and about the personal and cultural orientations that inform and frame and guide it'. And, as Dougan says, it can have its own poetic logic. It can 'sit side-ways' to the creative work, in its own creative space.

The idea of an exegesis 'sit[ting] side-ways to the poems' is suggestive. The phrase not only conveys the idea of an exegesis and work of art sitting next to one another, equally and in dialogue (I am reminded here of Tess Brady's (2000) comment that when writing her PhD the 'academic and the creative slid into one another, nestled side by side so that one fed on the other, one became the other')—but it also conjures the idea of looking laterally and at the margins. This is no accident, because Dougan's poetry over more than a decade has continually probed at the margins of life—at the littoral, the lateral and the peripheral. As she has done so, it is almost as if the paradoxical has become a touchstone for her creative practice. The peripheral is central just as the empty cast is full (as we know, in Pompeii the 'empty casts' of bodies reveal the living, agonised shapes of the volcano's vaporised victims). And the idea of paradox takes us back to Keats, for whom the creative capability is *negative*. In other words, it is an inversion of normal capabilities; an activity that results from being acted upon; an intention able to be expressed only through a suspension of the will.

So, given the inherently 'side-ways', inverted or paradoxical nature of much creative practice (and practice-led research), is there any reason why an exegesis cannot be conceived of as an independent creative partner of, rather than helpmeet and support for, the avowedly creative work that it accompanies (note Estelle Barrett's (2004) observation that 'the exegesis may be viewed both as a replication or re-versioning of the completed artistic work')? Indeed, in some circumstances, the exegesis could conceivably rely less on 'research' than a work of art it accompanies (probing, exploring and developing a few particular ideas, for example, alongside a more

widely encompassing creative work), providing that the two works, viewed jointly (side-by-side or side-ways), demonstrated that a research-based project had been successfully completed. If the modes of knowledge-gathering that inform the work of creative practitioners are recognised as legitimate research then an exegesis does not need to justify the research status of a ‘primary’ creative work and, in turn, a creative work is not required to justify an exegesis’s existence.

This would allow the exegesis to pursue its own tentative art; tentative because in every case it would have to find its own way as a species of writing practice. It would glance over its shoulder at the poetry or fiction it accompanied, but would not be beholden to it. One of Dougan’s poems, ‘Embrace (I)’ (2006), written before she undertook her PhD, contains the following lines:

A whole unschooled knowledge of place streamed in
and the liquid visions of boatmen
were mine in constellations.
Just in this moment the way the planet turned
moved through the axis of my bones. (Dougan, 2006 pp 38-39)

The idea of streaming, unschooled knowledge, so reminiscent of Keats’s and Poincaré’s characterisations of creativity, contains its own paradox. What is ‘unschooled’ has in fact been carefully researched and finely tuned by the poet, often over many years. The ‘liquid visions’ that are opened up are susceptible to all kinds of explication—as poem or creative exegesis or both.

Endnotes

1. Lucy Dougan’s poetry collections are *Memory shell* Wollongong, NSW: Five Islands Press, 1998; with Andrew Taylor and Kevin Gillam, *The forest waits: an anthology of poems* Northcliffe, WA: Southern Forest Arts, 2006 and *White clay* Artarmon, NSW: Giramondo, 2008. Her PhD was awarded in late 2009 and undertaken within the School of Social and Cultural Studies at The University of Western Australia. Lucy Dougan’s primary supervisor was Professor Gail Jones, who moved to the University of Western Sydney during the course of the PhD, with additional supervision from Professor Dennis Haskell and Associate Professor Judith Johnston.

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