

## Creativity within the Academy: A Subjective Academic Narrative

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**Abstract.** This paper practises a subjective academic narrative to tell my scholarly story of creativity within the academy. In doing so, it considers the self as data and refers to ego histoire as well as narrative discourse. In considering the role of storytelling as creativity within the academy, I also develop a sense of the importance of scholar-practitioners and of practice as academic scholarship, identifying Enlightenment practices as 'eurowestern'. I survey the Cartesian binary and argue for laterality. As the academy grows more at ease with including creative practicum within its knowledge domain, many more PhD candidates are undertaking their studies in the artefact and exegesis model. This paper utilises my experience in founding and supervising this model within Swinburne University of Technology to make a narrative that explores how practicum- and theoretical reflections upon it- together bring breadth and dynamism into scholarly discourse.

**Keywords:** Self as data; Ego Histoire; The subjective academic narrative; Creativity within the academy; Scholarship as/and practicum

### **Introduction**

Gregory Ulmer in his discussions of 'electracy' or e-media literacy discusses a scholarly methodology that he calls a 'mystory'. Ulmer (1989) describe this as producing a 'mystorical' approach to thinking and research. Ulmer's 'mystory' challenges and even erases claims to fact, empirical certainty and even authenticity in writing. He claims that all writing is personal and also quite mysterious (my story and mystery). Much scholarly work claims to be both authentic and yet depersonalised. Ulmer's work challenges this and shows all academic texts to involve a more complex knitting together of the academic, the personal narrative and the cultural positioning. Thus it both questions and opens up new possibilities by such questioning of the academy's Enlightenment analytico-referential model of knowledge. In doing so, it is in accord with much postmodernist discourse about oneself, one's culture and also the world itself as a constructed text able to be deconstructed, read, critiqued and even read against (Derrida 1978-1984; Barthes 1977).

This is mystery of thinking about the opportunities presented by the creativity and research nexus as potentially transformative for scholarship. This nexus provides scholars with academic prisms that enable looking at the world in novel ways, looking through different theoretical lenses and through other narratives so as to develop new knowledge (Liu & Lazlo 2006). Ulmer's personal and mysterious model of academic writing opens up opportunities for scholarship. Academics can speak gives in many models of 'voices' that illuminate knowledge as both personal and professional experiences. Such open discourse models act not only to challenge the expectations of the establishment/academy, but also to bring into knowledge structures a richer understanding of the academic discussion and its relevance to the lived experience. It also acts to bridge the negative aspects of the 'qualitative/quantitative' binary (Mello 2002). It may then be seen that when empirical knowledge structures are revealed as creative non-fictional constructions, new possibilities may emerge both of knowledge and contributing more fully to knowledge models and discourses. Elsewhere, I have called this 'fictional truth' (Arnold 1994) and 'the subjective academic narrative' (Arnold 1994-2012).

Through their creativity, practitioner-academics make strong research contributions. Relatively new qualitative methodologies based on personal narrativity and practice led research (PLR) express a movement towards a resolution of the tension between the academy and such knowledge construction as occurs in the art world, creative industries, and through arts practitioners (Makela 2007).

These practitioner academics come from such areas as film, multimedia, dance, architecture, design, drama and writing. Yet clarifying practice is intellectual knowledge is a challenge in an academic environment that finds it difficult to align has not always seen practice and knowledge (Rinne & Sivenius 2007). In PLR we reject the idea that only traditional models of scholarly discourse are scholarly, and that the exegesis provides an academic element that acts to legitimise creativity. Bringing creativity into the academy acts itself to legitimise creative works and provides an acknowledgement of creativity as knowledge and not just the object of study.

Creative industry itself is as an area of artistic exploration, and bringing it into traditional research is challenging. In PLR, such challenges include the struggle against reducing the artefact or the creative work by becoming over- explanatory when analysing such a non-traditionally academic practicum from a traditional scholarly position, and the setting up of academic priorities for creative works. Today there are numerous models for undertaking PLR. One resolution of this tension between theory and practice is PLR, a form of scholarship that honours practicum within the academy. The most prevalent example of this is the artefact and exegesis PhD model. For example, in writing today there are 26 Australian Universities that offer a PhD in writing by artefact and exegesis As a result there is an increasing pressure to understand such illustrate non-traditional methodologies within a traditional framework (Maarit 2007).

### **The subjective academic narrative**

There is a growing sense of the subjective self as a singular aspect of knowledge production. This has become known as the *ego-histoire* in the study of history, and this is a useful term within PLR methodology and in my own subjective academic narrative. This term indicates that the scholar inevitably inserts her or himself into the academic discourse. In exploring the application of the qualitative methodology of the *ego-histoire* within the academy, this paper relates it to the subjective academic narrative. In doing so it recognises the contributions that life stories make to scholarly knowledge, and shows the importance of recognising the academic work as coming from the autobiographical status of the subjective self (Spry 2001; Holt 2003). Thus the disinterested critical and analytical model that has grown from the Enlightenment is challenged not to defeat it, but to expand it from its narrow traditional and quite dominant trajectory within the academy (Arnold 2010-2012).

This paper explores how the personal elements of autobiography are extended- as within *ego-histoire*- to place the individual scholar within an academic context and how such work facilitates the scholarly exploration of *practicum*. In doing so it develops further insights into the importance and contribution of the integration of hitherto peripheral or under-recognised forms of knowledge into the academy.

Revealing, describing and using as data the relationship of self within scholarly discourse has become more and more acceptable, and even sought-after, as qualitative methodologies have entered the academy. This is so not only of the humanities and the social sciences, but also of the traditional 'hard sciences', even within the Enlightenment templates that many quantitative studies follow.

### **PLR within the artefact and exegesis PhD**

The PhD process is made more complex for both candidates and supervisors when PLR challenges Enlightenment empiricist research models (Denholm & Evans 2007). In my experience, such PLR supervision has its own particular trajectory that calls for particular interactions over the course of the PhD project. There is an upward curve over the first year of candidacy when the supervisor acts as a helper. Such an interaction between supervisor, candidate and the project draws on a working diary, to result in the first rough draft of the artefact. At this time the guidelines for the exegesis drawing are been developed and a working bibliography established. Readings for this come from the writers' own insights into and reflections about the creative work, other exemplars from writers' work and reflections and, most importantly, from current academic discussions about issues raised.

As the candidate takes more and more responsibility for researching the academic dimensions of the exegesis and their relationship to their practice, this trajectory flattens. This is both a difficult time for the supervisor who must become more hands-off whilst still interacting with the project and candidate. The supervisor enables the student to begin to find their scholarly 'voice' and to

utilise their reflections upon their creative process to enter into academic discourse (Nelson 2004).

After writing the artefact and reflecting upon it in a working journal, working on the exegesis itself becomes appropriate and possible. By following threads revealed through reflection upon the artefact, the exegesis can be developed by the practitioner. The exegesis, then, becomes a more scholarly 'voice' that still has strong elements of creativity and re-invention through narrativity. It is complementary to the artefact and lies alongside it as together the PLR dialogue offers new ways of clarifying the project and situating it more clearly within current academic discourse, showing how such creativity is both new and significant as a contribution to scholarship. By drawing together these 2 complementary elements of PLR, methodology is developed about the artefact and the theoretical aspects of the project in the exegesis. It is, then, a space in which the candidates' practices are shown as seeking definition and understanding rather than being constrained by a given model. PLR enriches the academy through experimentation within a given genre of work and through learning from this practice what theoretical models are appropriate for the development of the scholarly observational and reflective 'voice. Thus, PLR brings to the academy creativity in both elements of the artefact and exegesis PhD.

Addressing the examiners is the final high-point of supervision and follows the period in which we as supervisors become quasi-examiners. The Indian cultural theorist Gayatri Spivak words provide guidance here: *'...leaders read the world in terms of rationality and averages, as if it were a textbook. The world actually writes itself with the many-leveled, unfixable intricacy and openness of a work of literature (Spivak,1988)*

### **University Practices and Qualitative Research.**

A foundational aspect of the challenge to Ethics Committees for artefact and exegesis PhDs is expressed by considering Barbara Myerhoff's statement: *'...thinking with my viscera, feeling with my brain'* (1992). A number of exegetical PhDs act to develop artefacts that are personal insights, and narratives that bring forward scholarly opinions. Such artefacts are the data for the exegetical component of the PhD (Arnold 2005.) These often include identifiable photographs and refer to lived experiences that contribute to the richness of stories and to the new and significant contribution to knowledge of the PhD by exegesis. (Bochner & Ellis 2003). This storytelling must inevitably involve references to other people involved in the storytellers' lives. Where these are direct quotations it is appropriate that clearances should be sought and/or pseudonyms used. In other cases, for example observed family histories from a personal perspective, pseudonyms are inappropriate and/or unsustainable. In most cases, however, the stories involve PhD candidates retelling their own perspectives of people involved in their lives. These are personal opinions, yet still need a clearance, as there are significant ethical questions inherent in writing one's own story as qualitative research.

An intrinsic question has arisen in the postmodernist moment about the ownership and the telling of one's own story. This is embedded in the proposal that all discourse is a created narrative that is personal and subjective. Yet a gap still exists between 'real' methodology and 'other'. In this mystorical paper, I am proposing that important qualitative research methodology is situated within postmodernist theories of discourse that show it to be fragmented, personal and non-replicable (Smythe & Murray 2004).

My interest in such alternative research methodologies arose initially in my own PhD where I discuss postmodernist textuality (Arnold 1994). From this arose my work of entering into such academic discussion of the personal in the scholarly through reading and responding to significant academic works and commentaries (e.g Barthes 1977, Derrida 1978, 80, 82,84; Cixous 1991; Eagleton 1989; Norris 1985). I became (and remain) engaged in revealing in scholarly discourse in all areas of knowledge production the acknowledgement of the personal being an inevitable and even central part of research. This enables an enrichment, a deepening and a broadening of the dominant Enlightenment model of analysis of a given research question that dominates the scholarly milieu on which much university research is modelled. It demonstrated that all research can be seen to be a 'narrative' or a story told by particular researchers within a particular research culture and hence following or promulgating a particular Enlightenment based research methodology.

Such a model of academic discourse as Gregory Ulmer's (1989) mystorical approach involves a recognition that there is no singular reading available for any text up the text: there is no 'one way' to understand its content. This challenge to an authoritative reading and/or discourse shows the frail nature of knowledge itself. This brings forward many possibilities for scholars. Academic writing can be undertaken as being dynamic and ever-shifting. It is quite galvanising to be involved in academic debate that is explorative rather than aiming to be definitive. Like all forms of written discourse, scholarly writing is aware of its own frailty as an expression of ideas, opinion and data arising from the self as well as from the project. Thus it respects multiple ways of knowing, and brings the persona of the scholar forward as an integral aspect of data production.

Rather than espousing a form of mere relativism, postmodernist theories and practices of scholarly textuality and discourse show us that Enlightenment models of linear and analytico-referential knowledge need no longer dominate scholarship. They are able to be embedded in a more lateral postmodernist discourse model that acknowledges the frailty of the 'author as god'. This is discussed by John Caputo (1987) as a dispersal of certainties and by Ulmer as a 'mystory'; others call it a pastiche. This debate flourishes as it addresses the limitations of the Cartesian binary when it's applied to the Arts and Social Sciences.

The established the quantitative model espoused by the natural sciences has arisen based upon the Cartesian binary of 'Cogito ergo sum': I think, therefore I

am, and it has produced many wonderful advances in the natural sciences. Unfortunately, this influential and productive scientific model has become the qualitative vs. quantitative debate. In many areas of scholarship, then, the quantitative has been valued over the qualitative. Nevertheless, there has been an increasing use and acceptance, following the postmodernist dispersal of paradigms, of alternative ways of knowing. These bring together many ways of thinking, enquiring, researching, theorising and practicing scholarship (Midgely 2004; Gallop 2002; Deleuze and Guattari 1981).

Cartesian-based norms become a dominant methodological modality in the academy. Mary Midgely ascribes this to our being seduced in our research models through the seeming simplicity of Enlightenment models (2004:5). She asserts, however, that: 'science, which has its own magnificent work to do, does not need to rush in and take over extraneous kinds of questions (historical, logical, ethical, linguistic or the like)' (2004:6). Ulmer is far more critical as he sees such knowledge models as producing for the academy a 'collective blindness'. The Enlightenment paradigms and norms have dominated scholarship and, moreover, have not solved the dilemmas of being human in this world. He asks: 'How do we account for the persistence of error in our lifeworld even after centuries of adopting scientific method as the dominant mode of collective reason?' (1999-2000:15). Ulmer playfully expresses ideas through producing neologisms so that he can express himself more freely and more freshly. One that challenges traditional is the 'emplyrical'. Such a new knowledge model combines the empirical with the lyrical so that data production is both personal and poetic and scholarly and orderly. This will enable us to to grasp holistically the true condition of our problematic world.' (1999-2000:19).

This can be seen in the work of anthropologist Barbara Myerhoff who realised that the scientist inevitably inserted themselves personally in any project: 'I felt more of my reactions being used, wholistically, the way we are taught to study societies. I was thinking with my viscera, feeling with my brain, learning from all my history and hunches and senses.....I could never imagine trusting my own or anyone else's work as fully again without some signposts as to how the interpretations were arrived at and how the anthropologist felt while doing so' (1992:294-5). Acknowledging both the visceral and intellectual aspects of her knowledge production. Myerhoff's work accords with Ulmer's mystery and the subjective nature of academic knowledge that I espouse.

It has been a significant achievement in the academy to accept into PhD credentialing the artefact and exegesis model of creative and academic research. Bringing together what has been separated as a binary opposition has many advantages such as acknowledging and utilising theory and practice as complementary ways of knowing within the academy; encouraging the self-reflexive nature of all research and drawing practice into academic and intellectual preserves for academics and artists. In doing so, it challenges the insular eurowestern ways of knowing that underpin traditional academic knowledge models, thus enabling a new dynamism to enter the academy

through the scholarly realisation that all research is a narrative based upon the self as data (Riley & Hawe 2004).

There continues to be a lively discussion about practice led/based research or studio research or any practicum that enters the research domain. I utilise PLR as an umbrella term to describe/hold this qualitative methodology that I call 'a dynamic way to knowledge' (2007). Yet such 'subjective academic narratives' appear to have to continually defend themselves from critics within as well as from a broader academic research community that has a great deal of difficulty in acknowledging the place of practicum within the academy. The Australian Association of Writing Programs (AAWP) provides a good example of this tension. On the one hand, it has been a fundamental supporter of PLR in its various iterations and modes. On the other, it appears to be as unsure of this in its 2012 special edition on PLR as it was with its germinal publication in 2002 (Brooke & Magee 2012).

One of the tensions that is central to the artefact and exegesis model of the PhD is the freedom from a regulatory form that enables not only the artefact but also the exegesis to display knowledge in modes other than the traditional Enlightenment based PhD model. Each artefact is by its own genre quite singular: there is no central research question being addressed. What is being addressed is increasing scholarship through reflections upon one's practice, creative input, choice of genre etc. Supervising such a project is exciting as there is always a dynamic activity being undertaken by the candidate in developing the artefact (Arnold 2012).

As each artefact differs from any given formulae or research question, so each reflective working journal identifies the contribution to academic knowledge that self as data can contribute. Elsewhere, I have shown how the journal entries provide issues for the exegesis and illuminate the process of PLR (Arnold 2005). Thus each exegesis develops a sense of the authorial voice that complements the practicum artefact by recording the intellectual journey made and by placing it within current academic discourse.

So it is that there is great difficulty in making pronouncements about how the exegesis might be written. No one research methodology should be brought to bear as a model: there is space within the academy for variation. Underpinning this assertion sits my belief that all knowledge production is personal and subject to the cultural impacts upon the researcher even as it enters into the privileged academic discourse about the matter, it makes a story albeit one told within that scholarly/creative discourse. Discussing PLR lends itself readily to comparisons and the use of metaphors, for they provide new ways of thinking through new connections and analogies. In doing so, they provide 'an important way of using language to explain abstract ideas or to find indirect but powerful ways of conveying feelings' (Cameron & Maslen 2010. Intro).

As always, a metaphorical example clarified for me the challenge to linear academic discourse dominated by Enlightenment and Eurowestern (Achebe

2009; Spivak 2004) values that exemplifies much academic discussion and debate. My own subjective academic narrative is founded in postmodernism and feminism (Arnold 1995 ) two words often used to describe a binary but that I show as having complementary elements. In this paper, my chosen metaphor refers to architecture, where one may well have thought that building was within strict parameters. This drawing together of different structural elements is today practised in the post-postmodernist architecture of parametrics. Enabled by electronic programs and new apps that permit architectural patterns to be challenged, parametrics shows that even the solid buildings are a narrative expression of the subjective self of the designing and supervising architect. I would compare this to poetics, especially feminist poetics that give me deeper personal and academic insights into non-linear thinking and practice that lie within my appellation 'the subjective academic narrative'. Such 'performative architecture' in the words of Salisu Abubakar and Mukhtar Mahommed Halilu is '... giving the architect new controls over his designs and restoring the architect back to his pedestal as master builder'. In other words, they are drawing together theory and practice into 'parametric worlds' that offer new and dynamic ways of enacting space and time in buildings. Mahesh Senegala describes how everything in the universe is mobile and now in architecture the static building is able to be replaced by a kinetic one: He calls upon the rhizomatic in the work of Gilles Deleuze to demonstrate that 'instead of working within a dualistic and outmoded framework of space and time (or timeless space), the new architectures altogether dump that framework' this is because 'the world is now a colloidal network' that can be experienced with 'simultaneity' (45). Particularly appealing to me in this context is his assertion that 'time-like architectures now present time as a non-linear, fragmented, non-geographical tapestry of spatially distant but temporarily adjacent spaces, surfaces, information and global connections' (45).

The poetic, the rhizomatic, the narrative discourse, are affecting knowledge debates and research activities in a manner that invites theory and practice to enact itself as a singular, personal story that interfaces with the academic in the carefree yet dynamic growth patterns of rhizomatic grass that in architecture Senegala describes as a 'colloidal network'. These I describe in textuality and discourse as 'a subjective academic narrative' such as this paper displays. One purpose of such academic discussions as this is to continue developing insights into the ways in which practice and theory can be drawn together within the academy by such research activities as PB/LR.

### **Theory and practice as complementary ways of knowing within the academy.**

There has long been an uneasy relationship between these 2 aspects of human endeavour within an academy formed and informed by the Enlightenment. Theory has gained precedence over practice as it is seen as not subject to the vagaries of the individual but as meeting scientific requirements of proof. The scientific model is simple and has been very successful: there is a proposition; this is studied under strict guidelines that make it able to be evaluated by peers & then replicated. In Cartesian terms, the doubt has been followed until it is resolved. This empiricist view of knowledge is positivist and leads to an



unfounded belief in a natural order of things. It thus leads to a knowledge/power regime that does not recognise the dynamism offered to knowledge constructs by destabilisation brought about by transgression and diversity and leading to transformation.

Yet the broader acceptance of multiplicity means that speculative guidelines are appropriate for all research activities. As I have shown, today, even 'architecture faces a radical reshuffling of a number of its principal underpinnings such as context, place, orientation, boundary, space, adjacency, contiguity, connectivity and materiality' (Senegaal 48). This strikes me as relevant to what Shane Strange (2012) discusses as the 'radical gesture' provided by 'creative research'. Such research is put forward by Strange (2012) as having multiple positive attributes for the academy. These include not only meeting the demands of knowledge production in new and dynamic ways that invigorate the academy, but also both contributing to creative industries and at the same time acting potentially 'as a means of the transcendence of capitalist social relations'. Rather than discussing creative research, then, as a means of introducing multiple ways of knowing into often rather hidebound empirically based and/or judged academic structures, Strange discusses PLR as offering new research opportunities that challenge (and overcome?) 'orthodox research paradigms'. As he argues, the theory that is in the exegetical material does not justify the practice: the 2 are 1. A metaphor for this is one-ness such as in the egg with its white and yoke, or, as Donald Winnicott (1989) asserts, as is mother and baby. Investigating this one-ness, Strange points out that research is not hampered by creativity: it is itself in all its modes, a creative activity. This is an important point, as it takes practicum from an exteriorised position within the academy to a central one in which an inefficient binary ceases to exist. This position enables other cultural ways of expressing knowledge and research to extend the eurowestern domination of knowledge production within the academy.

The self-reflexive nature of all research challenges eurowestern knowledge paradigms. It is possible to discuss all research as being a subjective narrative within the academy rather than an objective search for proof of givens. Strange has an interesting take on this: that science 'is based upon the objectivising process of fracturing subject from object and of reifying human activity' (Strange 2012:7). That is, creativity is not a separate human activity but a central 'human practice, of purposeful activity...' (8). Thus research and creativity are brought together and the 'artist-academic' (Webb 2012: 2) appellation is true of all research scholars.

In PLR, a creative practice leads to and relates closely to the exegesis. The practice explores the practicum and in reflecting upon it enables issues to come forward that lead to an intellectual and scholarly journey that continues it rather than validating it for the academy. Exploring self as data in an autoethnographic study of the creative project applies a qualitative research method that relates autobiographical personal experiences, analysing and interpreting the self as data. Whilst its beginnings can be traced to anthropologists who immersed themselves in their own data, it is now a metaphor for much self-reflexive

scholarship. 'Stemming from the field of anthropology, autoethnography shares the storytelling feature with other genres of self-narrative, but transcends mere narration of self to engage in cultural analysis and interpretation' (Chang 2008: 43).

### **Drawing practice into academic and intellectual preserves for academics and artists and other practitioners**

Praxis is a central aspect of bringing together the practicum itself with well-established academic ways of knowing. Such praxis honours both the academic credentialing structure and the practice itself and draws the 2 together as having equal measures of importance within the academy. In doing so it adds dynamism to the academy (Arnold 2007) and enriches practice with self-reflexive observations that review the literature and add to the current privileged academic discourse about ways of knowing. It also acts to challenge the insular eurowestern ways of knowing that underpin traditional academic knowledge models.

In addressing the idea that the academy is an Enlightenment utopia, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak agrees that a 'white mythology of reason' makes for a 'subordinate culture' whilst arguing that this involves all rural poor as 'subaltern' or 'removed from lines of social mobility' (2004:531). In education, she recommends reading literature because 'a training in literary reading is a training to learn from the singular and the unverifiable' (532). Spivak describes the non-western modes of knowing and even of being as subaltern and alienated by, as well as distanced from, the postmodernist discourse that underpins the dominant western social and cultural landscape that informs the academy. She states that: 'It is impossible for contemporary French intellectuals to imagine the kind of Power and Desire that would inhabit the unnamed subject of the Other of Europe' (Spivak 2002:265). This exclusion of non-Europeans is exacerbated by the assumptions underpinning such colonialism that continue to exist both within the colonised and colonising society and that are shown too often and too certainly as 'norms' within the privileged discourse of the academy.

In his reflections upon his Igbo boyhood lived less as a Nigerian than as a 'British-protected child', Chinua Achebe reveals the depth of the 'million differences-some little, others quite big-between the Nigerian culture into which I was born, and the domineering Western-style that infiltrated and then invaded it' (2009:68); nor is this over. He describes in details his discovery that his 4 year old daughter is being taught reading from a book that valorises a white boy and shows the problems of a black boy dominated by superstition. Achebe describes these books as 'poison' (2009:71). Achebe is very aware of eurowestern influences that linger still in the postcolonial era: this, he sees, as having given Africa a 'tarnished name' in which Africa has '...come to occupy in the European psychological disposition the farthest point of otherness...' from Europe. Much of this he ascribes to sensationalist literature that in its own way supported the commercialisation of Africans as export materials in the slave trade. However, even more confronting is his assertion that Joseph Conrad in a 'serious' and permanent piece of literature in 'The Heart of Darkness' has

delivered a 'coup de grace' to the African: 'Were these creatures really human?' (81). Achebe says there is a strong belief from this (and preceding narratives) that has developed a tradition that 'has invented an Africa where nothing good happens or ever happened', an Africa that waits for Europeans to come and 'to straighten it up' (85). Arising from this is the concept that Africans always have a heart of darkness as well as dwelling within it so that 'a highly educated African might be shown sloughing off his veneer of civilisation along with his Oxford blazer when the tom-tom begins to beat' (88). Africa then is always the other of Europe and always holds a subordinate and suspect position vis a vis its culture.

The eurowestern enculturation of Achebe (and his daughter) is recorded throughout his reflections upon his life as well as in his fictional narratives. They indicate that the ways of knowing that are available in African culture are unaccepted and unacceptable in the academy. Nor is this confined to academic practices: Africa has been riddled with opposing ideologies generated from the cold war in Europe 'which encouraged the emergence of all kind of evil rulers able to count on limitless supplies of military hardware from their overseas patrons, no matter how atrociously they ruled their peoples' (2009:93). The collapse of the cold war, says Achebe, has resulted in 'war, genocide, military and civilian dictatorships, corruption, collapsed economies, poverty, disease and every ill attendant upon political and social chaos!...evil thrives best in quiet, untidy corners' (93). Underneath this is Achebe's insight that 'Race is no longer a visible presence in the boardroom. But may lie, unseen, in our subconscious' (95). If Western imperialism is to be addressed about this 'cultural bondage' then the academy has an important part to play.

### **Showing the encultured and narrow nature of eurowestern academic patterns of knowing**

The quantitative ways of knowing that came to the academy from the Enlightenment reasoning and subsequently dominated academic methodologies are very successful in their application within science. Mary Midgley says that their success should be acknowledged and respected but not built into a singular model for the social sciences against which other ways of knowing are evaluated within the academy. The academy is flexible enough to be enriched by multiple ways of knowing that come to it from non eurowestern academic patterns of knowing.

This is currently an on-going struggle as eurowestern cultural colonialism has not been able to be fully rejected in the struggle for independence of ex-colonies. The challenge for postcolonial knowledge structures to develop and expand within the academy is on-going. Too often multi-perspectivism is derided as mere relativism yet many perspectives exist beyond eurowestern certainties. As Achebe indicates precolonial 'nations' did not exist. He takes us into his Igbo people's postcolonial 'nation' of Nigeria to show that:

'...in precolonial times was not quite like any nation most people are familiar with. It did not have the apparatus of centralised

government but a conglomeration of hundreds of independent towns and villages each of which shared the running of its affairs among its menfolk according to title, age, occupation, etc; and its womenfolk who had domestic responsibilities, as well as the management of four-day and eight-day markets that bound the entire region and its neighbours in a network of daily exchange of goods and news, from far and near' (2000:6).

The coloniser's 'absolute narrative' (2000:24) changed that, and Africa as the heart of darkness, a place that harboured 'the grotesque imagery of the African mind (Achebe 2000: 68) began. The subaltern is 'the West's constructed culture of other' (Abuker & Halilu 2009:3). The language of Western discourse is seen as gendered by Luce Irigaray (1985), but for non-europeans, it is also a way of reproducing knowledge patterns that are in sympathy with such eurowestern models. This indicates the encultured nature of knowledge within the eurowestern based academy that focusses upon a linear discourse based on scientific modes or evaluated against them and too often found wanting.

### **Creative Industries: Creative scholarship**

Enabling a new dynamism to enter the academy through stories bridges multiple gaps. For example, Donald Winnicott notes that: '...for the purpose of statistical inquiry simplifications have to be made...' (Winnicott 1989:424). His reflections are based upon the consideration that 'something new and valuable always turns up when old things are stated in a new way' (Winnicott 1989:427). This adds scholarly and practicum knowledge to the realisation that all research is a narrative based upon the self as data.

Creativity as scholarship provides a great deal to the academy. Another example arises from a study by Ann Markusen et al (2008) that emphasises the economic importance of what they call 'the creative economy' in developing 'creative cities and cultural industries' (2008:24). They note that in the USA as elsewhere, many artists and creative workers are self-employed (33). This makes it difficult to categorize creative industry members and furthermore, 'all efforts to operationalize the cultural economy are forced to work with industrial and occupational categories that have been many decades in the making' (36). Today the term 'creative industries' has become commonplace within the academy as well as more generally within society. This has led to the establishment of what is broadly called 'Creative Industries Groups' in many universities. Their goal is to show how many of our graduates from a variety of courses, but most particularly from practice-based courses, are employed in areas that are not always seen as 'business' oriented. This group might contain design, visual arts, new media, creative writing, dance, theatre arts, circus arts and general writing undergraduate and postgraduate courses that lead to graduate employment in many areas.

Throughout our Eurowestern economic, cultural and social fabric, creativity can be shown to be an important contributor to both the economy and the personal and cultural well-being. Indeed, as in the USA, Creative Industries contribute

significantly to Australia's economy. For example, The Department of State and Regional development report 'NSW Creative Industry: Economic Fundamentals' 2008 defines creative industries rather traditionally as:

advertising; architecture; design; visual arts; music; performing arts; publishing; film; television; radio electronic games' by their own scope rather than including 'downstream stages...such as manufacturing, wholesale, distribution, retailing and second hand sales (2008:7).

The report goes on to state that:

The creative industry is a significant component of NSW's economy, employing over 5 per cent of the workforce (of 150,000) Further, over the 10 years to 2006, employment in the creative industry increased by 28 per cent, against 13.5 per cent for all industries (2008:8).

It adds a further note that : 'creative industry employment growth across Australia was marginally higher than for NSW' (2008:10). So, creative industries employ large sections of the Australian community quite directly. The above report quotes the OECD estimates of cultural/creative contributions in Australia as 3.1% of the GDP, comparable with Canada at 3.5%; France at 2.8%; and the U.S .A. at 3.3% but outflanked by the UK at 5.8%. (2008:8). Such industries also engage informally and more indirectly many creative artists.

## **Conclusion**

The strong narrative that is central to much eurowestern knowledge construction began with Rene Descartes. The Cartesian emphasis upon reason and the proposition that thinking leads us to identify reality is basic to Rene Descartes' main and most influential principle: that intellect is separate from the imagination, the senses and memory. This Cartesian binary has dominated knowledge in the academy as it proposes that all knowledge should arise from the mind: cogito ergo sum. I think, therefore I am. Such critical, intellectual and scholarly thinking leads us to doubt and resolving such doubts takes our rational thinking to a point where the doubt is replaced by absolute certainty. This thinking was ratified by Enlightenment influences, and still underpins much of how we think of scholarship and knowledge. This narrative has come under strong challenges from the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century with its development of feminism, postmodernism and narrative discourses.

As she discusses of the need to rethink and then redress the Cartesian binary, Midgely contends that '...all reasoning is powered by feeling and all feeling has some reasoning as its skeleton. Thought and reasoning are not opponents, any more than shape and size' ( 2004:9). In accepting that co-existence, scholars can practise outside the givens and norms that traditional research structures have declared as logical and reasonable frameworks.

This has led increasingly to the insertion of life stories into academic narratives and autobiographical and cultural references. Like the self, history is evanescent and subject to cultural and personal interpretations. Ego histoire is a concept clarified by Pierre Noris in the 1980's of the academic inserting themselves into

historical data indicates the movement of boundaries between the public and the private within scholarship itself (Popkins 2007). The ego histoire 'approach to the autobiographical act links our notions about processes of self-inscription to our understanding of the ways historical and cultural knowledge and discourse are produced' (Davis 2001). As history claims to verify a lived cultural reality, the acceptance of the subjective self within the study indicates a willingness to develop different ways of viewing scholarly research. The Enlightenment developed the eurowestern view of the rational as the basis of scholarship. In challenging this template, scholarship tolerates ambiguity rather than acts to resolve it. These involve the recognition of a certain singular scholarly narrative as being creative non-fiction. Rather than align itself within the concept of perspectivity, then, such research demonstrates its own style of productivity through singular scholarly 'subjective academic narratives'.

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