


THOROUGHLY MODERN THESES

EXPLORING THE PHENOMENON OF THESES WITH MULTIPLE FORMS OF MEDIA

Bronte Jean Somerset

Faculty of Education
University of Technology, Sydney
Student No. 

Certificate of Authorship/Originality

I certify the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledge within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledge. In addition, I certify all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

Within this thesis, I have complied with all participants' wishes regarding identity or anonymity.

Signature

Bronte J Somerset

A grey rectangular box redacting the signature.

Date:

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all ultimo lavoro!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Certificate of Authorship/Originality	i
Acknowledgements	ii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iii
Text formatting	viii
Sound tracks	viii
ABSTRACT	ix
THESIS STRUCTURE	1
1 CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	2
1.1 Verse.....	9
2 CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	16
2.1 Doctoral knowledge	16
2.1.1 Doctoral knowledge: implications of thesis submission policies	17
2.1.2 Doctoral knowledge: novelty & innovation	20
2.1.3 Doctoral knowledge: knowledge & change.....	21
2.1.4 Doctoral knowledge: supercomplexity & interdisciplinarity.....	23
2.1.5 Doctoral knowledge: knowledge modes & research training.....	24
2.1.6 Doctoral knowledge: doctoral identities of the future	25
2.2 The doctoral experience	28
2.2.1 Experience: justification of media in theses	28
2.2.2 Experience: doctoral candidacies	31
2.2.3 Experience: acquiring new literacies.....	33
2.2.4 Experience: the Net. Gen. & research skills.....	34
2.3 Supervising media theses candidates	35
2.3.1 Supervision: opinions.....	36
2.3.2 Supervision: creative arts media theses.....	37
2.3.3 Supervision: across-disciplines	39
2.3.4 Supervision: composition advice.....	40
2.3.5 Supervision: relationships	41
2.4 Examining media theses	42
2.4.1 Examining: problem of assessment/establishment of criteria.....	42
2.4.2 Examining: criteria.....	43
2.4.3 Examining: examiners' media preferences.....	46
2.5 Publishing media theses.....	46
2.5.1 Publishing: the situation	46
2.5.2 Publishing: the perils	47
2.5.3 Publishing: the promises	48
2.5.4 Publishing: the future	51
Summary.....	52
3 CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY.....	56
3.1 Theoretical perspective.....	56
3.2 Methodology	59
3.2.1 Phase 1: Phenomenology	59
3.2.2 Phase 2: Interpretivism.....	66
3.3 A case for case studies	68

TABLES OF CONTENTS

3.4 Method	70
3.4.1 Gathering research materials	70
3.4.2 A pilot study	71
3.4.3 The meetings	71
3.4.4 Ethics, identification & process.....	72
3.4.5 Appendices.....	73
4 CHAPTER 4: PHASE 1	74
Case study 1: Lexi reveals behaviour through Egyptian decorative figures	76
Case study 2: Naomi uses art & design for self-understanding	82
Case study 3: Anthony creates a computer program on artificial life	86
Case study 4: Elanor’s cross-disciplinary thesis is a suitcase.....	91
Case study 5: Grant paints from a sub-conscious state	97
Case study 6: Jana submits her thesis in folio format	103
Case study 7: Marcia ‘does it her way’ in Business faculty.....	108
Case study 8: Carson investigates the breast cancer rates of Indigenous women.....	112
<u>Case studies 9, 10 & 11</u>	115
Candidates whose media components were rejected	115
Case study 9: Matthew creates an illustrated novel.....	116
Case study 10: Vanessa designs a multi-dimensional digital model	121
Case study 11: Rick creates a photographic exhibition	126
<u>Case studies 12, 13 & 14:</u>	130
Case study 12: Isabel improves classroom practice	133
Case study 13: Mei, on becoming a classroom teacher in Australia.....	136
Case study 14: Bronwyn critiques effectiveness of a program.....	140
4.1 PHASE 1: DISCUSSION	145
4.1.1 Metaphors.....	145
4.1.2 Perceptions of the media thesis experience	147
4.1.3 Research partners	153
4.1.4 Transition	157
4.1.5 Future	158
5 CHAPTER 5: PHASE 2	159
5.1 Nature of media theses	160
5.2 New languages of research	164
5.3 Examination of media components	167
5.3.1 Intent	167
5.3.2 Examination & examiners	169
5.4 Attitudes & reactions.....	170
5.5 Supervision	172
5.5.1 Co-learning between candidate & supervisor.....	173
5.6 Advice.....	175
5.7 Ideas for the future	176
5.8 PHASE 2: DISCUSSION	178
5.8.1 Confluence	178

TABLES OF CONTENTS

5.8.2	Constraint	183
5.8.3	New languages of research.....	189
6	CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION.....	194
6.1	Research purpose.....	194
6.2	Universities	195
6.3	Candidates	195
6.3.1	Positive aspects of the media thesis experience	195
6.3.2	Candidates' individual qualities & expressive preferences	196
6.3.3	Capabilities & strengths required for media theses	197
6.3.4	Challenges & criticism	198
6.4	Supervision	199
6.5	Examination	200
6.6	New languages of research	201
6.7	New thesis identity	202
6.8	Which mode of knowledge?	203
6.9	Thoroughly modern theses.....	204
6.10	Recommendations for media theses	205
6.10.1	Advice for Candidates.....	205
6.10.2	Recommendations for Supervisors.....	205
6.10.3	Recommendation for Examiners	205
6.10.4	Recommendations for Universities	206
	Epilogue.....	207
7	APPENDICES	208
7.1	APPENDIX 1: Interview with Professor Naguib Kanawati	209
7.2	APPENDIX 2: Modes of knowledge.....	214
7.3	APPENDIX 3: Website and sample letters.....	221
7.4	APPENDIX 4: Ethics approval letter	225
7.5	APPENDIX 5: Identity of participants	226
	REFERENCES.....	227

TABLE OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Helping a staff member in the studio	2
Figure 2: One of my poems in rough form	13
Figure 3: Structure of <u>Literature review</u>	16
Figure 4: Image from <u>A bear blanketed by words</u> (Burrows, 2004c)	29
Figure 5: Kunibídjí people using a touch screen computer (Auld, 2002a)	30
Figure 6: Opening screen of a web-based UK media thesis (Burt, <i>circa</i> 1999)	48
Figure 7: File structure of a digitally published multiple media thesis (Ma, 2003)	49
Figure 8: Chapt6mov.tar file's contents decompressed (Ma, 2003)	50
Figure 9: Title page of a digitally published single media thesis (Williamson, 2005).....	50
Figure 10: Title page of a digitally published multiple media thesis (Haggerty & Ruth, 2006)	51
Figure 11: Research structure	68
Figure 12: Structure of <u>Phase 1</u>	74
Figure 13: An animation of wall figures from <i>Lexi's</i> thesis	76
Figure 14: <i>Elanor's</i> cross-disciplinary thesis	91
Figure 15: One of forty artworks from <i>Grant's</i> thesis	97
Figure 16: Structure of <u>Phase 2</u>	159

TABLES OF CONTENTS

Figure 17: http://www.lib.mq.edu.au/bsomerse/	221
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TABLE OF VERSES AND POEMS

Verse 1: <u>Verse</u>	9
Verse 2: <u>Night dawning</u>	14
Poem 3: <u>Dolphins</u>	15
Verse 4: <u>Reality theatre</u>	56
Verse 5: <u>Understanding phenomenology</u>	61
Verse 6: <u>Synchrony</u>	79
Verse 7: <u>Out of the shadow</u>	81
Verse 8: <u>Conundrum</u>	84
Poem 9: <u>Binary ecology</u>	89
Verse 10: <u>‘Yes’ but ‘no’ from the committee</u>	95
Verse 11: <u>Mark making</u>	99
Verse 12: <u>Towards socially just pedagogies</u>	104
Poem 13: <u>Railroads</u>	119
Verse 14: <u>Post examination</u>	123
Verse 15: <u>Pioneering folly</u>	125
Poem 16: <u>Ballad of the <i>Practical Doctorate</i></u>	130
Verse 17: <u>Perspective on practice</u>	134
Verse 18: <u>My examination</u>	138

TABLE OF TRACKS

Track 01: <u>Dolphins</u>	15
Track 02: <u>Conception</u>	77
Track 03: <u>Out of the shadow</u>	81
Track 04: Supervisor’s nature.....	86
Track 05: Need for contact	87
Track 06: Impact of isolation on project.....	87
Track 07: Comment on examiner’s critique	87
Track 08: <u>Binary ecology</u>	89
Track 09: <u>‘Yes’ but ‘no’ from the committee</u>	95
Track 10: <u>Mark making</u>	99
Track 11: <i>Jana’s</i> dissertation.....	103
Track 12: Social construction of truth (sound only)	104
Track 13: <u>Towards socially just pedagogies</u>	104
Track 14: Schooling as a social practice.....	105
Track 15: Personal influence of exploring socially just pedagogies (sound only).....	105
Track 16: Motivation and tears.....	109
Track 17: Supervisor/student harmony.....	109
Track 18: The right supervisor	109
Track 19: Supervisor’s influence.....	109
Track 20: Need for autonomy.....	110
Track 21: Another disadvantage	113
Track 22: Advice	113
Track 23: <u>Railroads</u>	119
Track 24: Post examination comments on the video	122
Track 25: Second examiner’s opinion	122
Track 26: <u>Post examination</u>	123
Track 27: <u>Pioneering folly</u>	125
Track 28: Supervisor relationship.....	127
Track 29: Reconsideration.....	127
Track 30: Examination at the effervescent edge.....	127
Track 31: <u>Ballad of the <i>Practical Doctorate</i></u>	130
Track 32: Impact of video of self-practice.....	133
Track 33: <u>Perspective on practice</u>	134
Track 34: Media demonstrates the data	141
Track 35: Using digital equipment	141

TABLES OF CONTENTS

Track 36: Action for the future.....	158
--------------------------------------	-----

TABLE OF TABLES

Table 1: Summary of Disciplinary knowledge Mode 1 (Scott et al., 2004)	216
Table 2: Summary of Technical rationality knowledge Mode 2 (Scott et al., 2004).....	216
Table 3: Summary of Dispositional & Transdisciplinary knowledge Mode 3 (Scott et al., 2004).....	217
Table 4: Summary of Critical knowledge Mode 4 (Scott et al., 2004).....	217

TEXT FORMATTING

Normal text

“Quotations from literature”

Titles of theses, poems, sections, papers, etc.

Pseudonyms: Marion or Stewart University


Transcribed content, Century Gothic

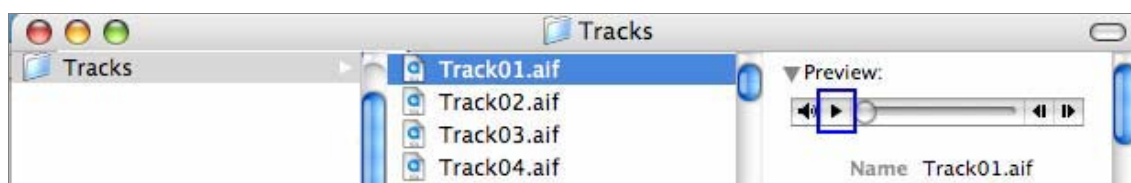
Text transcription of sound tracks

SOUND TRACKS

This thesis includes a CDRom in the front cover containing sound tracks of verses and research participants’ voices.

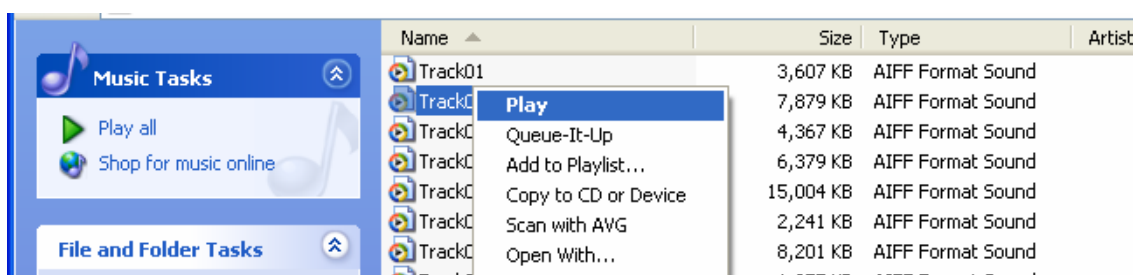
For Macintosh, a program does not need to be opened to listen to them.

- Open the Tracks folder on the CDRom.
- View the tracks in Columns.
- Single click on a Track.
- Click on the play button. 
- Adjust the volume next to the play button and in the Finder menu bar on the right hand side, to an appropriate listening level.



For PC:

- Insert the CDRom and open the My Computer icon on the desktop.
- Locate the CDRom drive and double click on it.
- Double click to open the Tracks folder
- Right click on a Track, roll to play and the PC’s media program will open.
- Adjust the volume to an appropriate listening level.



ABSTRACT**THOROUGHLY MODERN THESES****Exploring the phenomenon¹ of theses with multiple forms of media**

Modern technologies have changed the way doctoral candidates create theses and present knowledge. The traditional thesis has evolved to include a range of dynamic components. Inroads made by technologies and multiple forms of media provide for “a dazzling array of research and scholarly possibilities for emerging Ph.D.s” (Lang, 2002, p.681). This activity forms a new research paradigm of research literacies and identities in knowledge production and a unique research epistemology.

In order to create knowledge about such ‘thoroughly modern theses’, this qualitative study explores the experiences of fourteen candidates from Australian universities. Literature scarcely publishes the voice of those who take unconventional approaches to creating their theses, so this explorative study uses phenomenology to seek enlightenment and understanding by asking in what ways candidates’ experiences reveal the phenomenon of media theses. ‘Media theses’ is the term used in this thesis to describe those which include narratives, poetry, multimedia, artworks, etc.

Candidates’ individual accounts are represented in case studies using narrative, verse, prose, participants’ voices, and reflection and insight. The exploration found that in most cases, candidates’ boundary pushing endeavours led to successful outcomes. Some considered their enterprising, courageous and inspirational journeys were ‘life-affirming’. Other candidates encountered challenges which reflected their choice of thesis construction. Primarily, these related to unclear guidelines for using media in theses, finding appropriate supervisors and examiners, justifying the inclusion of media elements to research boards, being misunderstood and accessing technological training and expertise. These circumstances sometimes led to candidates’ feelings of insecurity and isolation, and hindered the development of their theses.

To learn what was occurring in this social research activity from a wider perspective, the study also asks how the experiences of academic staff enhance understanding of the phenomenon of media theses. This phase of the research is an interpretive exploration of ten academic staff members’ experiences, opinions and attitudes. They discussed the qualities of media theses and the new languages they brought to research. They shed light on issues relating to supervision and examination and technological skills development. They offered advice to candidates and discussed their ideas for the future of research. There was often consistency of attitude and consensus that the way of the future involved media theses. However, inconsistencies of thought and an underestimation of what was

¹ Holian (2001), Brown (2002) and Fineman (2004) describe the emerging practice of submission of theses containing non-text components as a ‘phenomenon’.

ABSTRACT

possible and of what was occurring could prove to be detrimental for media thesis candidates and the creation of dissertations.

This investigation found that media theses offer more potential for authentic presentation of thesis content. They create the need for amended thesis submission policies and guidelines. They alter candidature and supervisory practices and need specific examination criteria. They also transcend conventional modes of knowledge categories. Based on its evidence, the study suggests advice for candidates and makes recommendations for supervisors, examiners and universities.

This dissertation leads to understanding about candidates' experiences with their media theses and how academic staff and universities contribute to their support. This exploration should benefit doctoral candidates and supervisors who are involved in creating a media thesis. It should contribute to innovative research practices by providing research communities insight into the phenomenon of theses with multiple forms of media and their impact on knowledge creation.

Lang, S. (2002). Electronic dissertations: Preparing students for our past or their futures? *College English*. Urbana, 64(6), 680-695. Retrieved 8th June 2003, from the Proquest website: <http://proquest.umi.com>.

Holian, R. (2001). Emerging forms of data collection and presentation in postgraduate research [online]. In *Emerging forms of representing qualitative data*. C. Boucher & R. Holian (Eds.). (pp. 201-207). Melbourne: RMIT University Press. Qualitative research methods series. Retrieved on 6th July 2007 from: <http://search.informit.com.au>.

Brown, D. (2002). Going digital and staying qualitative: Some alternative strategies for digitizing the qualitative research process. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research* [On-line Journal], 3(2), 1-14. Retrieved on 14th July 2007: <http://www.qualitative-research.net/fqs-texte/2-02/2-02brown-e.htm>

Fineman, Y. (2004). Electronic theses and dissertations in music. *Notes*. 60.4, 893(15).

