

ARTISTIC OUTPUTS AS RESEARCH OUTPUTS EQUIVALENTS IN A SOUTH AFRICAN UNIVERSITY ENVIRONMENT.

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Art is always aimed at a cognitive outcome. The conventional engineering of, say, a bridge or a drug compound is aimed at a specific physical outcome. In contrast, art is aimed at a specific cognitive outcome... Their (art works') major social functions are cognitive: they influence memory, shape public behaviour, set social norms, and modify the experience of life in the audience (Donald, 2006:7, emphasis in the original).

ABSTRACT

In this article I argue for the acceptance of artistic outputs as equivalent or congruent to research outputs when these artistic outputs are generated by lecturers at tertiary institutions. Central to the argument is the implementation of critical peer-review mechanisms. I argue that, whereas in research outputs the justification and substantiation of the research takes the form of an article, thesis/dissertation or book, for example, and the further justification and substantiation is confirmed in the publication peer review, for artistic outputs the presentation of the article equivalent - the artwork - requires the justification and substantiation to be carried out by the peer-review process itself. The article then suggests how this might be carried out in practice.

Keywords: artistic outputs, research outputs

Permit me to start with a Van der Merwe² story. Once there was an installation artist called Van der Merwe employed as a lecturer in a prominent South African university, who exhibited his work nationally and internationally, had just had a hugely successful retrospective exhibition at the prestigious National Art Gallery in Pretoria - a benchmark of national (indeed, perhaps international) recognition as an artist, and was one of the prescribed artists for the Secondary Schools Art syllabus for school leavers in South Africa. Van der Merwe has been the sole exhibitor or part of an exhibition in over 80 exhibitions during his career, both nationally and internationally. Arising from his work, and commenting critically on it (that is to say that examination of his work has been embedded in research work), there have been at least two master's degrees, one doctorate in preparation, and approximately 5 articles published in accredited journals on his work.³

¹ This article emanates from a paper delivered at the SARIMA (South African Research and Innovation Management Association) Conference, Potchefstroom (North West University), 9-11 May 2007.

² In the South African context, "Van der Merwe" is regularly used as a generic surname for jokes and stories in the same vein as the "Paddy" stories in Ireland, for example. In my story the artist's name is, in fact, Jan van der Merwe.

³ By way of example, R Kruger has presented a paper entitled "Research generated by the installation sculpture of artist Jan van der Merwe" which contains many of these references. The paper was presented at the International Conference on the Arts in Society, Kassel, Germany.

Within the South African context, those “research” works that have arisen from Jan van der Merwe’s work have been rewarded by the South African Department of Education (DoE) in actual fact, the reward is given to the university in which the writer works, which then distributes the largesse as it sees fit. In essence, using the DoE formula, the research outputs generated by the analysis of Jan van der Merwe’s work has amounted to 10 units, or approximately R850 000:00, according to the latest funding formula. All of this will go to institutions and scholars other than Van der Merwe, and these institutions and scholars will be able to access the money in various ways to do further “traditional” research. Furthermore, the building of a research *curriculum vitae* by the researchers in this way leads directly to consideration for promotion and the like in most universities.

However, there are no mechanisms at national level in South Africa to reward Van der Merwe as a university “researcher” (a concept that I shall argue below), without whose work the 10 units could never have been generated, and, for that matter, a large section of secondary school arts students might have turned out differently. The implication of this is that those who can’t make art at the level, intensity and quality required, in other words, those who are also employed at a university but cannot do what Van der Merwe does, *need* Van der Merwe’s output on which to carry out their research. To all intents and purposes Van der Merwe’s sole (soul?) reward is *possible* promotion, *possible* commissions, *possible* selling of the artwork.

Furthermore, the money required to develop and produce his art is dependent on no university or official, university sanctioned, research entity (such as the National Research Foundation), but either on his own pocket, or on grants from such organisations as private companies, arts festivals and the National Arts Council, whose priorities and agendas do not necessarily include the cutting edge artistic work that Van der Merwe develops. Indeed, under the latter conditions, the work comes closer to commissioned work or perhaps contract research.

Furthermore, in a rather lugubrious turn of logic, lecturers are generally appointed because of their ability to do research in their domain (amongst other skills, but predominantly the academic qualification, which is the benchmark of research, carries most weight), and these lecturers are then rewarded for their expertise when they produce more research.⁴ In the arts, however, although this research aspect is also a factor, lecturers are more often appointed because of their artistic acumen, reputation and standing. It makes more sense to have the director of an Oscar-winning film employed to teach directing in a film discipline, than to have a person teach directing who only knows the front of a camera because he or she has researched the history of directing.⁵

⁴This is standard practice at most South African universities.

⁵The point here is not to denigrate academic or scholarly approaches to education, but to highlight the nature of practice based pedagogy and appointments.

Given this line of thinking, should one not appoint artists who are experts in their field of art, and then encourage them to make art and be rewarded for this? At the present moment, the notion is that lecturers are appointed because as artists they are good in their domain, and then universities promptly ask them *not* to practise their art, but to do research on it instead. There is something skewed here, and the purpose of this article is to attempt to suggest a way out of this seeming conundrum. I offer the above as a general overview of the state of affairs in South African universities, acknowledging that there are some universities that are developing mechanisms to address this conundrum. It would perhaps not be ethical of me to highlight these universities, as this would, by a process of elimination, perhaps indicate those that are not addressing the matter. The key concern in this article is to argue a way forward on the matter.

It is perhaps apposite to review at this point what is occurring in other parts of the world at universities that consider and offer the arts. The review is of necessity brief, but there are essentially two paradigms at work. The first paradigm (well developed, and in place for some time) is represented by the universities in the United States of America. Postgraduate study in the arts offers two streams: the MFA (Master of Fine Arts in a particular discipline a practice-orientated degree) which is a terminal degree (in the majority of cases), and the MA and PhD track, which is the domain of the “traditional scholar.” The lecturer appointed to work in the MFA track builds his or her recognition and reputation by contributing to the art world through making art (developing art products), and the universities have sophisticated systems in place to document, evaluate and benchmark the output. Many of the suggestions I offer later in this article draw on this type of thinking. In essence, reward and promotion, for example, are embedded in accepted peer-review mechanisms of contributions to the discipline, in the medium of the discipline.

The second approach is represented by much of the work in Britain and in Australia and the development of the argument is reasonably new and therefore contested. Seminal texts in this area include those by Gray and Malins (2004), and Barrett and Bolt (2009). The central paradigm is around “practice as research.” The argument is that the *making of art process* constitutes the research, and requires both a making *and* a reflecting on the making of the product. Discoveries about the “human condition” and about art are made as the artwork is made, and the act of reflection/exegesis *post facto* combined with the artwork constitutes the research. In Britain this is accepted as valid research by the United Kingdom Council for National Academic Awards, as well as the Arts and Humanities Research Board (see Gray and Malins, 2004:1-8).

I will not address this approach in this article, simply because the central thrust of my argument is that the act of reflection firstly occurs from moment to moment in the artist's work and is reflected *in the work* as it develops or is generated (Sawyer, 2006), and secondly, because it seems to me that the act of reflection, as mandated here, returns the work to the written medium, and, as I shall argue, becomes the domain of the critic and the reviewer.⁶

Given the above, artistic outputs are considered contested fields in research circles (and therefore, by extension, many university circles). Generic arguments around the acceptance of the arts at tertiary institutions include the following concepts. Firstly, universities acknowledge that artistic outputs are "good for culture," suggesting, perhaps, that the support of the arts is a social responsibility because it appears to "grow culture." Indeed, the cultural debate is sandwiched neatly between, on the one hand, the necessity for culture as an ideological tool, or put more "objectively," as a way to engender social cohesion, and on the other hand as a way to challenge dominant culture. Secondly (and perhaps more conservatively), they are seen as ways of demonstrating or indicating some "level of sophistication" and perhaps this "level of sophisticated engagement with society" brings one closer to the notions of research, as I shall argue below. Thirdly, and perhaps most cynically, artistic outputs are often seen as being "good" for the public image of the university. However, by and large at universities, artistic outputs are not seen as research and perhaps (contentiously) this is because of a seemingly pervasive positivist paradigm.⁸

Nevertheless, most South African universities acknowledge the importance of the arts at their universities. Indeed many of them have departments of some form of art or other, ranging from music to fine arts. Many of them have mechanisms for integrating the artistic outputs into promotion paradigms. Many of the universities use cross-subsidisation in their funding for what is admittedly an expensive training, research and development area. However, many universities balk at support for artistic outputs as being congruent or equivalent to research outputs, beyond some form of promotion formula and sabbatical assistance. The key problem in the thinking is this: whereas research (and innovation) brings in financial support (in the form of grants and subsidies for peer-reviewed articles, patents, Master's and Doctoral work, and the like), artistic outputs bring in very little, if any, money from subsidy. If the financial is the yardstick, then it becomes imperative, according to this philosophy, to put more money into those areas that generate more money.

⁶ It may be argued that there is a third paradigm at tertiary institution level, and that is the removal of the arts from the classic university and the embedding of the advanced practice based work in separate Arts Academies, Conservatoires and the like. The German "Hochschule" is an example of this.

⁷ I use the notion of culture here in a superficial way, indicating some pre-knowledge notion that regularly enters the debate "she has culture" seems to indicate that there is something refined about her. In actual fact *all* people have some form of culture or other, sociologically speaking. The collection of articles in Hallam and Ingold's book *Creativity and Cultural Improvisation* presents many cogent arguments around this matter, by way of example.

⁸ I do not in any way denigrate the positivist paradigm of research. It is a vital part of many research endeavours. What I do argue, though, is that it is a dominant paradigm in many universities and research considerations, but it does not fit with the arts-as-research debate, in the same way that it has difficulty reconciling qualitative research methods.

A research project in engineering, for example, will generate qualifications, will generate research outputs in the forms of articles and conference proceedings, and may even generate patents, and other forms of intellectual property, all of which are to the financial benefit of the research in the university, to the researcher for further research, and perhaps even to the country. And all of this is *measurable* - research brings financial capital and can therefore be entered into a balance sheet. The arts only bring, at best, cultural capital in the form of reputation and the like - nothing seemingly tangible, nothing seemingly measurable. Donald's comment, at the beginning of this article, reflects this dilemma: how does one "measure" a cognitive outcome?

It is important at this stage to define for the purposes of this article an "artistic output." Fundamentally, an "output" is a product that can be experienced through one of the senses - one could argue that it is therefore in some form both material and tangible. Secondly, implicit in this definition is the notion that the output has been deliberately constructed through processes of selection, construction, combination, manipulation and the like. Furthermore, the output has set parameters of deliberation: there are theoretical discourses available that can engage with the artwork. Thirdly, the processes mentioned are brought about by the output-maker's engagement with his or her material, physical, social, political, philosophical and spiritual world. Fourthly the output is generated as a response to the cognitive engagement with those aspects of his or her world, as a way of questioning, interrogating, contradicting, reaffirming or deepening an understanding of those aspects of the world encountered. Finally, the results of these engagements and deliberations are presented in deliberate material form one that is specific to the artistic discipline in which the artist is operating. (I shall return to the "artistic" aspect below).

I would argue that four of these five dimensions in the definition of an artistic output parallel very coherently the demands of so-called "traditional research" that leads to "traditional research outputs." Essentially the traditional researcher engages with aspects of the material world (physical, material, social, political, philosophical and the like) in an enquiring and/or interrogatory manner, with the purposes of pursuing/discovering a new understanding of that world moment. He or she then orders, combines, constructs and manipulates the findings of the enquiry or interrogation into a coherent argument or output. Such an output, then, traditionally takes the form of an article, or book, or qualification, or even a patent.

The material nature of the output is the key issue: what form should it take? However, there is one other dimension that needs to be considered, and this goes to the heart of the matter. Essentially, the quality of the research output (and, as I shall argue, the artistic output) relies on mechanisms of evaluation.

To a large extent, the material output is submitted to some form of evaluation process. In traditional research, this is the peer-review mechanism.⁹ Fundamentally, the research itself is not submitted for peer-review it is the *documentation of the outcomes of the research* (in material form) that is submitted for the review. Flowing from this position, it can be argued that in research there are not one but three processes at play: the research itself, which entails the gathering of data, the manipulation of the data, the verification of the data and so forth; secondly, the presentation of the findings in a "acceptable format" - the article, for example and thirdly, the evaluation through peer review of the findings of the research. Put another way, one has a twofold approach: the *doing* of the research, and the *justification and substantiation* of the research findings (both through the argument developed in the research article, and in the validation of the argument through peer review).

This "two-step" understanding allows for a series of binaries in the process to emerge. These binaries attempt to demonstrate the parallels between the research process and product, and the artistic process and outputs.

Research / Substantiation: In classic research the gathering of data is often determined by the demands of substantiation to validate conclusions. In art the making process (and the "validity of the conclusions reached") is substantiated, I would argue, by the review of the material outcome/output.

Exploration / Justification: In classic research explorations are carried out (and can therefore be justified) following set methodologies, whereas in art the explorations are embedded in the making process itself and the justification is embedded in the "fitness for purpose" of the medium selected.

Thinking / Documenting: In both classic research and in art making the operation of rational (or subconscious) cogitation on a particular area of investigation remains incomplete until such time as the cogitation has become concrete, or at least put into material form: the article or the artwork, for example.

Making/doing analysing: In this binary the making or the doing process (of both research and art) are subjected to analytical processes that are both moment-to-moment occurrences (that is, reflective practices) and interrogative practices at the completion of the outcomes. Furthermore, the analytical process embeds the notion of coherence by virtue of the fact that it pursues the competency of logical presentation (also perhaps known as the rhetorical moment). Both the article and the artwork present a coherent whole for examination and criticism.

⁹See, for example, the following: Feldhusen, JF & Goh, BE. Assessing and Accessing Creativity: an Integrative Review of Theory, Research, and Development. IN: *Creativity Research Journal* 1995, Vol. 8, No. 3, 231-247. 1995; Hocevar, D & Bachelard, P. A Taxonomy and Critique of Measurements used in the study of Creativity. IN: Glover, JA., Romning, RR & Reynolds, CR (Eds). *Handbook of Creativity* (pp 53-57) New York: Plenum. 1989; Taylor, CW. A high-tech high-touch concept of creativity - With its complexity made simple for wide adaptability. IN: Isaksen, SG (Ed.). *Frontiers in Creativity Research: Beyond the Basics*. (pp 131-155) Buffalo, NY: Bearly. 1987; Treffinger, DJ. 1987. Research on Creativity Assessment. IN: Isaksen, SG (Ed.). *Frontiers in Creativity research: Beyond the Basics*. (pp103-119) Buffalo, NY: Bearly.

Creation / Criticism: In this binary, both the research output and the artistic output have created new knowledge, and this new knowledge is subjected to crucial (and accepted) critical practices that are geared both towards technical expertise, and the validity of contribution to society and the discipline. Critical engagement is both descriptive and evaluative in nature, but also determines contribution to new knowledge.

The central argument I wish to make here is that in traditional research outputs *contain* the justifications and substantiations of quality, contribution and validity and these lead the peer-review evaluation (the article is submitted to peer review) – whereas in artistic outputs, the justification and substantiation of the artwork is *carried out by the peer-review mechanism* the artwork itself is held up to the peer-review process for scrutiny, justification, substantiation, analysis, criticism and (historical) documentation.¹⁰ Furthermore, both research (and research article) and artwork are developed fully cognisant of the fact that the output will be presented for scrutiny, interpretation, analysis and evaluation in one form or the other.

This position on the outputs needs to be interrogated in the light of the notion that research is by its very nature innovative and therefore by and large creative - research “pushes the frontiers,” so to speak. Inevitably this implies that any peer-review process starts from the position that the reviewer, as a specialist in his or her field has to all intents and purposes *not* encountered the results of the research before - the researcher is the only one who has. Yet the peer - review is expected to validate the research as research, or, as this argument has unfolded, the art as art. It is necessary to determine how the peer - reviewer can bestow this accreditation on such research or art, and for this argument I turn to the nature of creativity itself. The three examples that follow speak to the demands on the peer-review process, and also resonate with the congruency between art and research.

R Keith Sawyer (2006) has done extensive research on the nature of creativity and innovation. Firstly, he draws much of his data on creativity from both the sciences and the arts. He postulates that in any act of creativity there are three interwoven dynamics at work. The first dynamic is the presence and potential of the *individual* with his or her own strengths and weaknesses, insights, competencies and proclivities. The individual is also embedded in a particular *zeitgeist* and moment in history. The second dynamic is that of the *domain*, which contains the demands, techniques, procedures and principles at play in the area of investigation (soil science, for example, or jazz piano playing) or discipline, and for which and in which the individual researcher or artist has trained and is mastering. The domain has embedded within it the strategies of research where applicable, and the processes and procedures for the making of art in that discipline or domain.

¹⁰ As an example (together with the above) see Amabile, TM. Within you, Without you: The Psychology of Creativity, and beyond. In: Runco, MA & Albert, RS (Eds). *Theories of Creativity*. (pp 61-91). Newbury Park, CA: Sage. 1990. See also Sternberg, R.J. The Nature of Creativity. In: *Creativity Research Journal 2006*. Vol 18, No. 1, 87 - 96. 2006.

The third dynamic is the *field*, which encompasses the principles, procedures, insights, values, norms and standards embedded in the *people* operating in the domain (the science peer - reviewer, for example, the curriculum developer, the curator or art gallery or theatre owner, the teacher and so on). All work generated by the individual needs to operate successfully in the domain, and the measure of success is foregrounded by the field. This means that any research and art generated by the individual must not only be innovative in the sense that it manipulates the demands of the domain in innovative ways, but that it is perceived to be innovative by the people operating in that domain.¹¹ In essence then, the dynamics at play in the making of art and the process of “making science or research” are intrinsically the same.

The second argument draws on the notion of “whole brain learning” as developed by Ned Herrmann (1995, 1996), amongst others. In this theory on cognitive functioning the central thrust of their argument is that individuals (both in the generic sense and therefore also in the sense outlined above) have cognitive preferences in the way that they operate as cognitive beings. Inevitably these preferences resonate with the individual's abilities, but they do not inevitably follow hence the need to educate by also using strategies that engage other areas of cognitive preference and capacity in students, for example. The metaphorical four-quadrant model of the brain's functioning describes how individuals are drawn to these preferences and that their outputs reflect such preferences. The implications however, are that not only researchers and artists have the propensity to work in certain metaphorical areas of the brain, but that the people who use art or “read research” do so too. This means that, whereas researchers in the natural sciences, for example, might engage with “likeminded” researchers, i.e. individuals whose preferential cognitive processes are steeped in the demands of the domain and the influences of the field as outlined above, so will artists. Therefore, the matters of society that can be or need to be debated, need to be presented in the areas and forms of preference of the people who are in such a debate at that particular time. If society needs to debate societal issues, it therefore needs a medium through which it can debate, and the various arts and the various arts disciplines engage with diverse but domain-specific media, as do the sciences. Expert peer-reviewers, as representatives of the field operating in that domain, reflect therefore not only their expertise as individuals in the field, but also reflect on and with the cognitive preferences that are relevant to, or embedded in, the domain. (The argument is also captured in the work of Neethling, 2005.)

The third argument, similar in design but slightly tangential to the second one, is embedded in the world-renowned educational psychologist Howard Gardner's notions of multiple intelligences (1999, 2004).

¹¹ In this sense, then, the article that I am writing here, (1) as an *individual* (steeped in research and art), must draw on the acceptable strategies of persuasion that are to be found in journals of this nature, that is to say (2) the *domains* of the journal and of research and art; but my output in the form of this article must also be acceptable to the reviewers of this article who are themselves also embedded in the domain, but, by virtue of their position in the domain, they are representatives of (3) those members of the *field* who are “expert reviewers in the domain” – the custodians of those domain demands and any innovative contributions to the domain.

Whereas Herrman suggests a metaphorical four-quadrant understanding of the cognitive processes of the brain, Gardner convincingly argues that all humans are born with up to 9 streams of cognitive competencies, but that each individual develops one or more of these to greater intensities than the others. These “core competencies” include the logico-mathematical (the engineer, for example, or the physicist), the linguistic (putting the results of science into the written form), the spatial (the architect or fine artist, for example), the auditory (the composer, for example), the kinaesthetic (the sports coach, the choreographer, for example), the interpersonal (the ministers of religion, or the politician, for example), and the intrapersonal (the psychologist, the therapist and the educationalist, for example) intelligences, to name a few.

From this list one can argue that “traditional universities” have foregrounded the importance of developing the logico-mathematical and the linguistic (“you make a good argument in the article, and the statistics are wonderful”), but that the outputs of the other intelligences are only recognised once they have been transformed into the output shapes of the logico-mathematical and linguistic - the article, the thesis or the book. Yet all those employed to “do research” at tertiary institutions engage with the material world to explore, order, understand, develop, and share their engagements with the material, social, spiritual, political and philosophical world and to present their findings in a material way. If Gardner holds true, then that material way should align itself with the core competencies and intelligences of the researcher doing the explorations - the researcher cuts his or her coat according to the cloth at his or her disposal, and that includes drawing on his or her own competencies and intelligences.

Argued another way, this implies that certain intelligences exist outside the “mainstream, positivist” debate, and these would form much of the bulwark of the Humanities and the Arts. So, whereas the natural sciences and economics, for example, foster and develop the intelligences that are geared to the logical and mathematical as well as the verbal to a certain degree, they do not necessarily foster the inter- or intrapersonal intelligences, nor the kinaesthetic, auditory or even the visual. However, in our world of inclusivity, it would make sense to foster these as well. The danger exists that, drawing on the Van der Merwe example, where this artist is obviously visually and spatially extremely astute (his work is known as “installation art”), only those who are verbally and logically astute are rewarded. Simplistically put, clever people, whatever their ways of using their cleverness to the benefit of society might be, need to have the outputs of their cleverness acknowledged and rewarded. The question is, why should they have to reform their cleverness into a form of presentation that only a part of the intellectual community might deem fit and proper? It would follow from this third argument, that researchers and artists might have differing “intelligences.”

If this is the case (as I believe it to be), one would then have to assume that the peer-review process needs to engage with those people who are operating in those differing intelligence paradigms or clusters. However, this is not as obvious as it may seem, and there is a divergence here in two areas. Firstly, if one assumes that the "only" people that can peer-review artefacts that are generated by the people operating in the same cluster are people with the same intelligences, then one can argue that the presentation of the peer review should ideally take the form of the outputs of the cluster - a peer review of a choreography should be danced. This is patently problematic as it makes a small community even smaller, and makes the process never-ending. Secondly, it would also assume that peer-reviewers are equally as proficient as the person who has created the work under review. This may or may not be the case, but it does suggest that the peer-reviewer must have similar intelligence insights to the artist/researcher for example, but must also have, added to this, abilities in the verbal domain. Fundamental to this understanding of the peer-review process, is that, just as not everyone can read, understand and evaluate a science paper, not everyone can "view," understand, and evaluate a work of art - the notion of the universal accessibility of good art is a myth. Central to this latter position is the problem of the recognition of outputs - to all intents and purposes the reviewer/critic gets the reward in the case of the arts, but the artist gets potentially nothing or very little. The argument is that the reviewer can write the linguistic competence/intelligence and that is potentially all that the university (or, in the South African case, the Department of Education from whom subsidies flow) acknowledges.

Given all of the above, it would appear that it should be possible to find a way in the South African tertiary context to bridge this situation. From a scientist/positivist paradigm it is possible to summarise the problem: outputs need to be measurable (and how does one "measure art"?), verifiable (but art deals with philosophical positions, and how does one verify an opinion, therefore?), generalisable (but the very nature and value of art is its uniqueness, one might argue). More particularly, given the nature of the research process, where in the work of art is the second part of the research project, the justification and substantiation, to be found?

Perhaps more controversially, I would suggest that doubt is cast by the artists themselves on the matter of recognition of the artworks as legitimate research outputs.¹² Speculatively, I would argue that there appear to be three overarching yet interrelated reasons for this: **The "Van Gogh"¹³ paradigm:**

¹²There have been a number of conferences in South Africa (NRF in 2001, University of Cape Town hosted one in 2004, Witwatersrand Technikon in 2005, Stellenbosch in 2006) and all have struggled to reach some form of consensus on the benchmarking process.

¹³Legend has it that Van Gogh only sold 1 painting in his lifetime, and that was to his pitying brother, whereas his works now sell at astronomical sums. The implications of course are that Van Gogh's "true genius" was never recognised in his lifetime, but that he was a genius, nevertheless.

The central argument suggests that if one were to attempt to set norms and standards in place for the evaluation of the quality of an artwork, then, because these are normative and because the nature of art is to push the frontiers (thereby deliberately moving away from norms and standards) it might occur that this process will not recognise "true artistry" (as Van Gogh was not recognised in his time). *Ergo*, one should not, or indeed cannot, construct norms and standards. There is some merit in this it is perhaps apocryphally noted that Einstein failed at school, too. But two arguments militate against this. Firstly, one is dealing here with one artist (or at best a few) (see Sawyer, 2006:22), and therefore it does not seem fair to ignore the large collection of solid, committed, competent artists who are operating at tertiary institutions. Put another way, many international universities evaluate and place journals in hierarchical order to benchmark quality. This does not imply that one publishes only in the best and if not there, then not at all. Not all artists can win Oscars but many get very close to this. The second reason, as Sawyer argues (2006), is that norms and standards change depending on who is setting the norms and standards - this is the dynamic of Sawyer's "field." Thus such norms and standards will be continually under review. Indeed, in as much as art changes, so standards change. And indeed, in as much as science discoveries are made, science changes.¹⁴

The Romantic paradigm: The Romantic paradigm argues that great art will transcend the very norms and standards set for it - the "Van Gogh" argument. There is a hint here of the Structuralist paradigm as well, in as much as "true art" leads the viewer to access the Deep Structural universal, whereas less than great art simply negotiates through the Surface Structure manifestations perhaps in the spirit of "craft" rather than "art." Given this, the task of norms and standards would appear to be either futile, or unnecessary. I would, however, argue that following the Romantic argument, *artistic* genius can only really be recognised by *critical* genius, otherwise known as the expert. Furthermore, claiming to be in the presence of genius might in fact simply be in that one is in the presence of the *outputs* of the genius, captured, for example, on canvas and open to interpretation, admiration and metaphorical dissection. In this sense, the cognitive control over the outputs, it might be argued, lies not in the cognitive control of the artist *per se*, but in the critical control of the reviewer - the artistic lies in the artwork, not in the artist, and this is only recognised by the critic. This is an argument that simply realigns the critical power position of who "creates" art - the artist or the critic.

The counter to this centralised, Structuralist-like paradigm lies in the post-structural, post-modern philosophical debate, whose contortions are too many to navigate in the space of this article.

¹⁴ It may also be argued that artists working at universities have no qualms or problems with attempting to assess and assign value to the work of their own students, indicating that there are areas that in fact can be reviewed and to which one might bring norms and standards. One might struggle, therefore, to define a moment in time, context, experience or purpose, where these norms and standards "suddenly" fall away.

It suffices to claim the post-modern position, that one lives and communicates in a post-modern, imitative world where nothing is real, final, ultimate, and the like, and therefore all norms are by their very nature temporal / temporary, fleeting / ephemeral, arbitrary / constructed and the subject of power and authority only.¹⁵ In as much as this speaks to the artistic output paradigm, it must of necessity and fairness speak also to the “classic research” paradigm, and thus the constructivist / deconstructivist debate must perforce question the legitimacy of statistics, for example. Quantum physics and quantum mechanics have done similar work to the “finality” of science, I would venture to argue. Indeed, its seeming relativism appears to undermine its position or task, as the “peer-reviewer” attempts to provide a “value judgement.” This is specifically difficult if the assessment is to bring some form of reward with it.¹⁶

The third overarching reason is/was around the purpose of great art, which was seen to be **challenging the very accepted norms of society**. Central to this concern is whether these norms are embedded in aesthetic norms or socio-political norms (in as much as one can separate these two for the purposes of the argument). The central theoretical question was therefore whether “new art” was challenging “old art” or “established art” and to do this the artist drew on extant socio-political / philosophical situations (but placed them in “new” aesthetic formations), or whether the artist was keeping and maintaining the central (aesthetic) tenets of “established art” and was using this to challenge socio-political situations - the artwork’s “statement” or theme was fundamental, and the discipline-driven aesthetic secondary.

However, in my view, the argument becomes entangled in the highly problematic interface between form and content. It seems that the idea of challenging the norms of *art*, for example, was seen as the same as challenging the norms of *society*: examples are the notions that good art by its very nature and definition is elitist, or, conversely, good art is always message driven, that is to say, good art should “speak to the masses.” It is inevitable that form and content in the art debate should be interwoven (in much the same way as the “doing” of research and the gathering of “content data” is inextricably linked to the form that the results of the research should take). But the search for innovation very often pursues the innovation of *form* (the most obvious place to “represent” challenge) and denies, or at least undermines, a standard form that might, from the position of *content* or debate, challenge society. By way of example, orchestral forms were to be challenged, but new melodies in old forms, for example, were seen as not nearly as innovative and “artistic,” so to speak. It is the difference between saying something (perhaps the same things as others have said) *differently*, and saying something *different*, but using the form that others have used, that causes the debate. Of course, ideally, one would want to do both, but the problem is that too much of a new thing obfuscates everything.

¹⁵ The fact that this sentence seems to indicate a “final claim” speaks to the problematic of post-modernism, as well as to the potentially arbitrary nature of an assertion such as this - the ground from which it arises is potentially unstable.

¹⁶ Of course this does not preclude the artwork itself, in its material finality, challenging its own finality - a worthy task of the post-modern!

My contention is that the peer-reviewer, operating in Sawyer's "field" would need to sort through this.

Accepting that these areas outlined are problematic in the peer-review mechanism, but assuming that the argument is accepted that artistic outputs (as I have argued above) might be seen to be at least equivalent or congruent to research outputs, yet also acknowledging that the cornerstone of the evaluation lies in peer review, how might a tertiary institution set about doing this evaluation? (From here on in the article, the argument becomes somewhat speculative and therefore inevitably open to interrogation. This, indeed, is the purpose of the article - to offer a mechanism that would assist in the process of peer-reviewing artistic outputs by tertiary institutions).

In my view the key mechanism that needs to be in place for any sense of fair and equitable accreditation of the artistic outputs must be a peer-review mechanism of some form or another. In essence, the legitimacy of artistic outputs as research outputs must lie in determining quality and even-handedness across the board, that is to say, the intensity and rigour of the peer-review process, as well as the perceived scope, magnitude, relevance and importance must be of equal application for both traditional research outputs as they are for artistic outputs. And because artistic outputs by their very nature appear to be ephemeral, or, put another way, present more of a cognitive as opposed to a physical outcome, one needs reasonably complex mechanisms to achieve this parity of peer review.

In essence I offer the interfacing of three accepted critical (that is to say evaluative, as well as peer-review) practices, each of which has its own strengths and weaknesses. The first approach is rooted in the normative approach as taken up in the South African education context and is known as Outcomes-based Education and Training (OBET).¹⁷ The concern here is to take a particular cluster of art objects (say paintings, for example) and then to decide upon selected yet interlinked categories of enquiry for that cluster. In the case of paintings it might be colour and texture, line and form, balance and tensions, statement, technical prowess, aesthetic acumen, and so on. On a scale to be decided upon, where 1 is a particularly low value, and 10 a particularly (perhaps almost impossibly or unattainably) high value, the peer-reviewer can then interrogate each category and award a mark to it, based on the reviewer's background, standing and experience. (This approach therefore uses a Lickert scale, 2007). In this manner at least there is an attempt to justify a decision and to force the reviewer to interrogate beyond the intuitive response - this is one of the strengths of this process. Such a normative process creates some theoretical and philosophical issues with some peer-reviewers, as it appears to smack of statistics and therefore it is a difficult paradigm to convince artists of, when they are evaluating their own work.

¹⁷ See Genis, E. "Principles and Practice of Outcomes-Based Education. Proceedings of the International Conference on Agricultural Education. South Africa: Kruger National Park. 15-17 October 2001; OLIVIER, C. 2000. *Let's educate, train and learn outcomes-based education*. Clubview: Design Book; *Norms and Standards for Educators*. 2000. Government Gazette no. 20844; Coetzee, E. 2004. *An Introduction to Theory of Education: Current Challenges in Education*. Pretoria: IEM Coetzee

Furthermore, there is an opinion that such categorisation will lead artists to attempt to produce work that will speak to the categories. Indeed, classic research already does this as I have argued above. It would seem churlish, however, not to foster peer - review of this kind, simply because it does (or does not) address such categories of evaluation. Nevertheless, it is imperative that each discipline/domain should gather the key players in its field, and decide on the types of evaluative categories it would consider appropriate to this part of the peer-review process.

The second approach is the accepted peer-review mechanism of the “panel of experts”, as accepted and defined in and by the field of the discipline. In this approach the most difficult part is to engage with subjectivity, which is why, I would argue, the first approach is necessary to act as a counterbalance to that subjectivity. An argument raised against the panel of experts has been (amongst others) that there is no indication of how they became experts (the power notion) a problem that is compounded, perhaps, in the history of the South African situation. Furthermore, given the academic situation currently in South African tertiary institutions, we rely on those that fit the traditional research mode and who are often considered to be the experts, and not necessarily the practitioners within the discipline - a doctorate is considered more worthy a benchmarking of peer-reviewing potential than a string of national and international exhibitions, for example. However, the panel-of-experts approach is an accepted one internationally. Fundamentally, however, in this outline, what the normative of the first approach does is to ask the panel of experts to attempt to justify their decisions.

The third approach is to acknowledge that perhaps the purpose of art is to push frontiers either (or both) aesthetically or politically. A level of innovation is obviously necessary. The point is to balance this with other aspects predominantly caught in Sawyer's notion of the mastery of the Domain. This third approach, therefore, insists that the panel of experts or peer-reviewers address in their evaluations the two central thrusts that this approach calls for. In the first place the artwork will need to contribute to the domain of the art discipline in some way and at the same time demonstrate a mastery of the domain. It must be remembered that the purpose of the peer - review of the work at a tertiary institution is to benchmark the rigour of the mastery of the discipline, much like the peer-reviewed article does. In the second place (and again it must be pointed out that the making discrete of these two purposes might be seen to be tautological - one can't have one without the other, it might be argued) the level at which the artwork engages in some way with the social, political, philosophical nature of the world, and the complexity and coherence of such engagement should be considered. In “classical research” the question is always raised as to the “relevance” of the research, and perhaps that is the congruency that should be pursued.

In summary, therefore, the peer-review mechanism is fundamental to the task, and the three areas of the normative, the experience of the panel of experts, and the aesthetic and societal contribution form a convenient triad or system of triangulation to guide the process of assessment.

Speculatively, once the peer-review mechanism is in place, it becomes a matter of determining the scope, size, magnitude and potential impact that such an artistic output might have. Two parameters to assist one in the process might be suggested. The first is to use the Department of Education target of the unit as a benchmark. The unit is awarded to a peer-reviewed article that appears in an accepted accredited journal. The second is to use the subdivisions of time that a lecturer is given to fulfil his or her contract for an institution in terms of teaching, research (and artistic work) and community engagement. The average is approximately 200 hours per year that is set aside for research and now artistic work.¹⁸ It is not an ideal measure, but it appears competitive. The assumption, therefore, is that it takes approximately 200 hours to generate a research article, and therefore the scope of the artistic work to be benchmarked would potentially require this type of scope.

This process will be refined by attempting to determine the venue in which the artwork would be housed, or, put another way, the potential recognition that the artwork might generate. For example, being invited to exhibit in a national or international gallery would hold more recognition value than would a local gallery. In essence, thus, the time allocation and the importance of the work are calculated together to determine the potential reward. This potential reward is to be verified/confirmed or adapted by the rigorous peer review that is to follow.

The process will involve peer-reviewing panels of experts who are asked to bring their expertise to bear in certain established categories. The areas of interrogation will be around technical expertise (Sawyer's "domain" concept), unique insight and statement (Sawyer's "individual" approach) and a benchmarking of the two against extant artists working in the field (Sawyer's "field" notion). This triangulation of technical proficiency, insight and aesthetic ability, and contribution to the field and society (as outlined above) provides a way of benchmarking and therefore potentially justifying and substantiating the work of the artist.

¹⁸ This number is generated in the following manner, and I am indebted to some of the work generated at the University of Pretoria. Assuming that the working year consists of 1840 hours (40 hours per week x 46 weeks), and that 2/3 of that time is devoted to teaching and learning (approximately 1200 hours, leaving approximately 600 for other activities). Assume that half of this should go to the administration. One is left with 300 hours. Assume, therefore, that 100 hours is used to keep abreast of one's discipline, and one is left with 200 hours for research. This translates to 5 working weeks per year. Interestingly enough, this is the time frame for the rehearsal of a play from first steps to opening night.

In summary, the actual artistic output could be delimited by the following considerations:

- Scope of the output (the time required to complete, measured against the university expectations for research, for example).
- The locating of the output in the national and international arena. An art exhibition in an acknowledged international gallery might generate 3 units, for example, whereas one painting accepted into the permanent collection of the same gallery might be 1 unit, and in a national gallery, half a unit.
- An expert panel that peer-reviews the body of work presented for scrutiny. As indicated, the review would follow accepted guidelines.
- A written report documenting the findings, which is presented to the university's panel of experts and is scrutinised for complexity, fairness and insight.

This article has argued not only for the necessity of finding the congruencies between research outputs and artistic outputs, but has also suggested ways in which the benchmarking and validation of quality, complexity and contribution might be achieved. It is hoped that the approach may be scrutinised and refined, so that the work of artists at universities that contribute to the cognitive outcomes in society might be fostered. As Donald has intimated about artistic outputs: "They influence memory, shape public behaviour, set social norms, and modify the experience of life in the audience" (Donald, 2006: 7).

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