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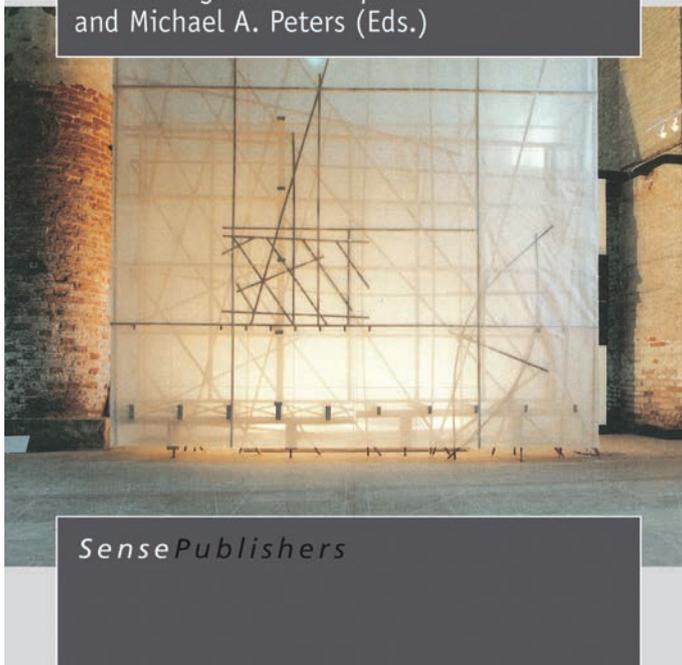
## RECENZIJA

A.-CHR. ENGELS-SCHWARZPAUL AND MICHAEL A. PETERS:  
OF OTHER THOUGHTS: NON-TRADITIONAL WAYS TO THE  
DOCTORATE

# Of Other Thoughts: Non-Traditional Ways to the Doctorate

**A Guidebook for Candidates and Supervisors**

A.-Chr. Engels-Schwarzpaul  
and Michael A. Peters (Eds.)



Research paradigms in the fields of architecture and arts have been developing and changing during the last decade. Part of this development is a shift to include design work and artistic work into the knowledge processes of doctoral work. This work evidently also needs supervision. At the same time doctoral degrees have been developing in relation to indigenous ways of thinking. The book *Other Thoughts: Non-Traditional Ways to the Doctorate* discusses the challenges one is facing, either as a PhD student or as a supervisor, when doing or supervising a PhD in a less established field.

The book contains a wide range of perspectives and subtle discussions which can in no way be given enough credit through this short book review. Nevertheless, I hope, through a short discussion and a range of quotes, to trigger the reader to engage in the full book in order to reflect either on being supervised or on his/her supervising practice. They have been carefully chosen by the

book reviewer and are intended to give the reader a glimpse of the rich discussions and are intended to collectively give a picture of the many rich discussions and statements of the authors in the book. The book contains 335 pages: endorsement, acknowledgements, and introductory chapter, part 1: Non-Traditional Candidates including 8 testimonies and 8 more chapters, part 2: Emerging Fields of Research including 8 more chapters. The book is concluded with an Index.

The book starts with 8 testimonies of the difficult process of developing or establishing a PhD. Each of these is four pages long and describes the context, the challenges and the way forward in developing the doctoral research. They also describe the cultural context of the university and that of the candidates. The testimonies report on the uncertainty candidates experience in their confrontation with knowledge systems that do not provide an easy fit for their research interest or their acquired cultural background. The candidates report on how their doctoral research work raised questions that are likely to unsettle what is usually taken for granted. Throughout the uncertainty of producing research work, epistemological and methodological pluralism helped them to create openings and unfurl a horizon in which the specific kind of knowledge of their work can be shared, framed and understood.

The majority of the testimonies come from a Maori and/or New-Zealand background. If there is one critique on this wonderful book, it may be that the authors of the different chapters are mostly (there are exceptions) geographically located in New-Zealand and Asia. They explore how the cultural origin of the candidate and supervisor affects the research outcomes and the supervising process.

A selection of many interesting discussions in the first part of the book on Non-Traditional Candidates:

"To maintain a promising supervision relationship, it is vital for supervisors and candidates to understand the differences arising from their respective diverse cultural backgrounds" (p. 84, K. Tong Ho)

"In the perception of art and design, for instance, experience is a primary factor, while comparative reflection and analytical observation are integral parts of the process towards intellectual understanding. I would add that aesthetic experience also involves negotiation between interiority and exteriority, both for individuals and for the relationship between internal and external worlds." (p. 86, K. Tong Ho)

"Both dispositions and institutional conditions are important for an open-minded analysis of social problems and solutions. To forge new paths by transcending dysfunctional logics of reproduction and to develop new competencies for dealing with given situations is the goal of transformative concepts aiming not only at individual but also social, cultural and institutional reflectivity." (p. 124, S.M. Weber)

"It (this chapter) outlines some issues that might be overlooked if we were to take a cursory glance at the implications of scholarly sexual minority identification and disclosure. I hope that in thinking

through these experiences, we might also think more broadly about supervision and the experiences of sexual minority researchers – across the rich spectrum of disciplines available in institutions of higher learning. In so doing, we potentially enrich both our own lives and the lives of those with whom we work." (p. 143, W. Ings)

"The path of PhD scholars is a fundamental will to power and an attempt to impose an order on the world, or to give their description an inflection that makes it, at least, interesting. While there are conventions to be mastered and literature to be read (sometimes only a mere selection is acceptable), and methods or approaches to be understood, it is the PhD scholar who marshals all her resources and imagination to give coherence to an argument or description." (p. 157, M.A. Peters)

"There is a generative connection between non-traditional candidates' approaches and emerging knowledge fields that are opened up by new research engagements. Non-traditional candidates are often very familiar with the uncertainty and marginality of knowledge. (...) Despite the overlap between the ontological, epistemological and methodological positions assumed by candidates and supervisors in the first part of this book, there are also significant differences. Aspects of a shared marginality (...) arise from a diasaffection with the urge, predominant in the academy and particularly in positivist and instrumental sciences, to control and to exploit the world (...). Paradoxically, the sources of a shared sense of alienation can also be divisive, as they cut very differently into the fabric of knowing for different candidates." (p. 164, A.-Chr. Engels-Schwarzpaul)

"The last decades have seen not only Indigenous peoples, but also "women, gay and lesbian communities, ethnic minorities, and other marginalized communities" taking charge of the translations concerning their research engagements. They have challenged "the epistemic basis of the dominant scientific paradigm of research" and developed new approaches to knowledge and getting-to-know. Such acts of translation, relocation and recounting contribute to the emergence of new fields and types of research." (p. 167, A.-Chr. Engels-Schwarzpaul)

"There is, perhaps, a significant difference between conventional research modes and arts-based and creative practice-led research. The latter often tends "to work at the edge of possibility", as it attempts to address different questions from those posed in traditional research, and aims towards the creation of new worlds rather than the discovery of facts. In this situation, knowing "takes on the attributes of a verb" – it is "a process rather than an object or product that is fixed and definitely knowable". (p. 171, A.-Chr. Engels-Schwarzpaul)

The second part contains chapters discussing supervising in emerging fields of research such as arts, interaction design, architecture etc. It discusses the nature of research outcomes and the problems related to supervising this type of research.

A selection of many interesting discussions:

"In the emerging Next University (Baecker, 2007), the strict separation from society is eroded and the focus shifts towards the Unity of Practice, Research and Teaching. Researchers and teachers abandon their positions as external observers to become active, committed co-designers of social, cultural and economic realities. Research (producing knowledge), teaching

(disseminating knowledge) and practice (using knowledge to guide action) can no longer exist separately, nor can technology, design and art. Like it or not, the best way we can do is to examine and reflect the dynamics of these developments." (p. 186, W. Jonas, R. Chow and S. Grand)

"We introduce the concept of trans-domain to create an experimental space for discussions of transdisciplinarity, research through design, not-knowing and other, not yet solidified of substantiated aspects of a new intellectual tendency. The provisional character of this trans-domain allows for a multitude of alternative approaches, including the preservation of traditional disciplines and their interaction." (p. 193, W. Jonas, R. Chow and S. Grand)

"Yet, these changes require new standards and procedures that go beyond the established, traditional ones. New forms of research have to be explored. These challenges are essentially design tasks. In view of the emerging trans-domain, we suggest, it is imperative for design researchers to develop, test and reflect on their own specific processes of knowledge production, in order to contribute – from their perspective and expertise – to new, productive interconnections with scientific research." (p. 199, W. Jonas, R. Chow and S. Grand)

"Both varieties of non-traditional supervisions I have endeavoured to treat here – the endless probing of the discipline in search of its core (applicable equally to theory and design, both being modes of thinking) and the continual rediscovery of one's culture in encounter with others' – involve some meeting in the form of a conversation. Unfortunately, in the contemporary university, accountability to knowledge management rather than any risky encounter with the discipline, its possible future and other cultures seems to predominate." (p. 218, R. Jenner)

"So, it might be helpful for a new artist academic to consider that, when thinking about writing, there are different ways to understand how writing can work within a thesis – and that this 'work' depends on the research approach. (...) Here, writing is understood as translating knowledge inherent in the artwork or creative process to make it accessible to a wider audience. Or, writing can be seen as an essential element of the methodology, where its course runs parallel to the performance practice, with playful interjections a reader can recognize as inspirational to the process in some way." (p. 226, S. O'Brien)

"They [creative-production PhD students] need to find the form of the final thesis – it may be a 'two-hander', where the exegesis and creative work stand separately, even as they spring from a shared research question; or it may be an integrated form where exegetical and creative components 'speak' together across one text, something like the model provided by Julia Kristeva's essay "Stabat Mater" (1997/1987). The important thing is to find a way to work iteratively in relation both to the creative work and the exegesis, and to work between them – not always an easy task." (p. 253, B. Milech and A. Schilo)

"The way one supervises will produce particular responses. And I like to think that my approach to supervision is related to being Māori first and foremost. One of the important things for Māori researchers to appreciate is that the knowledge they are researching actually does not belong to them. The new

knowledge they might generate comes from engaging with prior knowledge, knowledge that has not only been generated by Māori, but also by other people. And it's always important to remember that, whatever they do, the final exposition they generate is something that they are gifting back to the knowledge community." (p. 307, R. Jahnke)

In the final chapter the editors A.-Chr. Engels-Schwarzpaul and Michael A. Peters wrap up and put the different chapters in perspective. A couple of quotes clarify their aims with the book: "Mindful of our own relation to tradition, we encourage in this book an experimental attitude to knowledge sources, processes and creation. There is great value in leaving one's safe and intimately known shores to become estranged from unspoken traditions and to look back from the ocean – another view of the world. A sense of the whole will be different on return. Traditional patterns will shift when they are brought into motion by new researchers and emergent knowledge fields as they raise questions regarding the nature of a literature; the genealogy of a practice; or the status and function of a thesis, exegesis, performance/exhibition, the 'oral' and the 'defense'. This will, in turn, affect the generally held concepts of the scholar and the researcher." (p. 312, A.-Chr. Engels-Schwarzpaul and M.A. Peters)

As can be seen from the above quotes, the book contains an amazing amount of discussions on explorative research developments in many disciplines, with a wide range of perspectives making it even more valuable. It shows that margins and constraints can be stimulating and productive in pushing the borders of knowledge and knowledge processes, exactly what most universities want and define as innovative research.

The book stimulates reflection on what we are doing while supervising. It triggers discussion and exchange of experience, which we all need so much in our fast changing world. It opens our own behavior towards curiosity and inclusiveness in order to enjoy and value explorative and non-traditional ways of doing research.

The book is definitely a vast resource for doctoral students and their supervisors when they want to reflect on their experiences of supervising or being supervised. The book acts as some kind of a mirror which makes you understand that your own knowledge systems are not as universal as you may think and need continuous questioning. That the way you are supervising can be challenged (and in fact needs to be challenged) in order to get the most out of doctoral candidatures. Some of the chapters are excellent reading as part of a training session for supervisors. Hence, this book is a breath-taking reading which will change all one's future supervising sessions. Highly recommended reading for all academic staff!