Qualitative Studies
Vol. 8, No. 1, 2023, pp. 388-410
ISSN 1903-7031

Banksy's street art: A catalyst for doctoral criticality and creativity

Farrah Jabeen[1] & Susan Carter[2]

[1]*School of Critical Studies in Higher Education, Faculty of Education and Social Work, 74 Epsom Avenue, Epsom, Auckland, New Zealand*

[2]*School of Critical Studies in Higher Education, Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Auckland, N - BLOCK. EPSOM - Bldg 6EN, EPSOM CAMPUS 74 EPSOM AVE, EPSOM, AUCKLAND, 1023, New Zealand*

Internationalization of doctoral study means more doctoral writers working across language and cultural borderlands. How can their access to a self-reliant understanding of English language be enabled? How can they acquire the confidence to find their textual voice? How can academics supporting these writers help them to adapt to western cultures of thinking, learning, and communicating? Behind this article sits an extensive investigation into how to support international doctoral candidates to make such crossings pleasurably: eight doctoral candidates from across disciplines at the University of Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand, collectively close-read literary items, and Banksy's street art. The purpose was to deepen understanding of argumentation, critical analysis, rhetoric that persuades, voice and creative positioning. Two interactive classroom sessions used Banksy's street art to promote creative thinking about powerful communication. Here, we explain how Banksy's graffiti gave a good foundation for the development of analytical skill, socio-political confidence, and cultural learning—and doctoral participants found the courage to be more creative thinkers and thesis writers.

Keywords: Doctoral writing; doctoral identity transition; Banksy analysis; creativity; critical analysis

> How does meaning get into the image? Where does it end? And if it ends, what is there beyond?
>
> (Barthes 1964, p. 152)

What do we want? How can we get it?

Doctoral writers are usually critically analytical in their thinking but often have trouble with textual demonstration of this amongst the nuancing of English language. International candidates whose first language is not English often find it particularly hard to fulfil the academic expectations of text, at the same time crossing the cultural divide between their own language and English (Robinson-Pant, 2010). Culture matters in multiple ways. A definition of culture in this study would need to span linguistic, national, discipline and academic cultures—an entangled mesh of values and habits that inflect doctoral writing. The textual performance required of a PhD is complex—text must demonstrate critical analysis, voice, discipline savvy and genre awareness. While creativity can be defined in many ways, our focus is in terms of creativity in doctoral learning and writing. Brodin (2018, pp. 656-657), discussing Kaufman and Beghetto's (2009) analysis of creativity in relation to the doctoral thesis, concludes that 'Within the context of doctoral education, it can also be added that the concept of independence is frequently associated with doctoral students' creative process' (Brodin 2016; Frick 2011; Gardner 2008; Lovitts 2008). This creativity-based independence must be accepted by a discourse community with a circular economy where doctoral success depends on examiners, and publication depends on reviewers: as Helgerson (1992, p.13) notes 'Texts, nations, individual authors, particular discursive communities—all are both produced and productive, productive of that by which they are produced'. International doctoral candidates who cross cultures and languages must understand the demands of their discourse community as they produce writing—establishing voice, and taking and defending a position are acts of creativity in this context.

This article provides empirical evidence of how using Banksy's graffiti to teach critical analysis to a group of international doctoral candidates reinforced their confidence with creative positioning and cultural literacy in their research writing. Banksy began political protest street art in the United Kingdom in the 1990's and is well-known around the world for his daring, tenacity, and playful delivery of serious critique shown in stylishly stencilled graphics (Banksy, 2001—see too Banksy's *Existencillism*, 2002). The Roland Barthes epigraph above signals to our use of Banksy images for close-reading exercises to elicit meaning-making from the international doctoral participants of the study.

The larger study behind this article was led by Farrah, who facilitated nine two-hour sessions with eight international doctoral candidates from different disciplines at a large research-focused university in Aotearoa New Zealand. The goal was to support not just literacy but also identity development in international doctoral writers. Farrah has always sought for her teaching to prompt transformational learning; this study is one such attempt. Doctoral candidates in their second year were selected as target participants because first year candidates at our institution must pass a rigorous First Year Review so are time pressed, and candidates in their third year have submission as another time pressure. Results from these participants proved strong in that at the mid-phase doctoral level of study they brought different discipline perspectives to close-reading and development of critical analysis. Most of the sessions included participants' discussion about cultural artefacts followed by writing exercises that demanded both critique and creativity. However, the first and last sessions focussed on Banksy's street art, which we recognise as 'heavily cultural' to use Barthes term (1964, p. 154). Data were gathered from in-class guided discussions, in-class writing tasks, two Focus Group Discussions and 14 interviews. Our article is based on a thematic analysis and in this article we present findings relating to the Banksy sessions. In what follows, direct quotes from interviews will appear in italics and without quotation marks.

Purposeful risk: Entry into saying what you think

Making learning interesting is one of core components of our teaching philosophy—Farrah was careful to apply this here. For the first session, a crucial one where the culture of the research sessions would be established, we wanted something that would break the ice, truly engage participants, amuse, and challenge them and push them into talking about their own perspectives. Discussion of Banksy's street art seemed likely to do all of this. The course of nine classes was enfolded by Banksy, whose 'writing on the wall' leaps further; it encompasses '… the influence of social, political and cultural events, together with personal ones, and the element of risk involved in executing the deed' (Lynn and Lea, 2005, p. 43). As Banksy puts it, 'Graffiti has been used to start revolutions, stop wars, and generally is the voice of people who aren't listened to. Graffiti is one of those few tools you have if you have almost nothing' (Banksy, 2001). Banksy's graffiti was our tool of choice for enabling strangers from different epistemologies to cross literacy and

cultural barriers and step comfortably into critical analysis. Only later did we see that Banksy's inherently risky method of grabbing public space for voice was brought into the class talk about doctoral writing practice. Doctoral writers face what feels risky when they claim a space in their discourse community. We want to suggest that for many doctoral writers, saying what they think is an act of risky self-creation and Banksy can help show how to get there.

The model to follow: We are human!

Banksy's street art is powerful in part because of its informality and serious playfulness. Branscome (2011, p.116) has defined Banksy as the pioneer of 'high-street irony'. Street art portrays the 'messy and necessary business of being human' (Sammond and Creadick, 2014, pp. 152-153)—often novice research writers need to be assured that they should bring their human values and voice to their writing and Banksy models this. Sammond and Creadick (2014, p. 151) argue that graffiti could be 'revolutionary, reactionary, aggressive and hostile' and therefore could initiate dialogue. The socio-political-cultural dynamics of Banksy's graffiti art resonated with our study's focus—giving participants confidence in their own perspectives, values, arguments and voice. The session was not intending to rely on the theory of meaning, for example as spelt out in terms of the literal and the symbolic or the denotive and connotative (Barthes, 1964, p. 158 & p. 153), although arguably the participants' close-reading critical responses demonstrated theory.

Using graffiti to prompt writers across cultural and literacy borderlands is novel. Despite its potential for generating critical analysis and creative expressions, graffiti does not appear much in literacy classrooms at any level. Calvin (2005, p.527) pointed out how language teachers generally choose pictures of famous places and everyday life for discussion, avoiding the messages underlying graffiti that could lead to a more profound provocation–and that provocation was what we wanted at doctoral level.

Is this the way of the world? First session questioning

Expressing authentic opinions can be daunting for students in any first class. We purposefully selected a number of Banksy's striking, thought-provoking slogan artworks for the study's first session, with an open-ended question— Is this the way of the world?

Banksy (2006); Banksy (2010); Banksy (2018)

The first stage of discussion included two general prompts: 1) What does the painter want to portray in these images? and 2) What is the underlying message?

The artwork intrigued the participants and they offered various interpretations. In the first image discussed, the heart-shaped balloon flying away and the ambiguity of whether the little girl had deliberately let it go or was trying to reach the string prompted participants' comments about *losing childhood innocence,* and *loss of happiness and positive aspects of life*. The balloon was defined as *a symbol of optimism and love that are flying away from human beings***.** However, the balloon was also a positive *trigger for reminiscing childhood memories*. Meaning floated freely with that balloon.

The message in the second image discussed, 'I remember when this was trees,' in red and with a boy holding a tagger's tin of red paint and brush, grimly shows the disappearance of nature to make space for rapid urban expansion so that city children grow up in a deforested environment where tagging is one way to protest. Participants effortlessly focused on climate issues and listed ecology as *one of the ways of the modern world today.* They weighed *the reality of peoples' choice for migrating to a city in search*

of better living opportunities and industries' demand for cheap labour as contributing factors for growing need for housing to accommodate people. Discussion concluded that Banksy probably wanted to draw a comparison between the life before and after urbanization in different parts of the world.

Caring about meaning-making

For the first half of the two-hour session, Farrah as facilitator avoided extensively guiding the participants as their spontaneity was key to establishing the class culture: informal, friendly, and good-humoured with no specific close-reading guidelines. Then, the class moved to take that further with the legend I WANT CHANGE. In the second half of the first class, participants close read with some guidance, a short exercise where ideas were presented creatively, and from there the class finished with talk about life as candidates within the ways of the academic world.

Reading KEEP YOUR COINS I WANT CHANGE: Careful viewing, discussion, and writing exercise

For close reading of 'KEEP YOUR COINS I WANT CHANGE' that informal, engaged talk was steered slightly more formally: Farrah adapted first look (literal description), second look (interpretation of meaning) and the third look connection of critique to their own lives (Eisenberg, 2014). The third critique brought out talk about what change participants wanted as international doctoral candidates at a western university. Discussion shifted from close reading of Banksy's meaning-making to talk that made meaning of participants' own experiences of social change.

Banksy (2010)

The slogan I WANT CHANGE underpinned the main intention of the larger research project: to capture evidence of transformation through the doctoral experience. We were aware of the difficult changes participants had to make as they came into a western institution. At the same time, participants were aspirational: they intended doctoral success to radically improve their lives. We were also establishing that, as part of that overarching transformation of successful doctoral writing, close-reading that led to talk and to writing would be expected throughout these classes. Reader-response entails close reading of a text taking efferent and aesthetic stances and prompting readers to make meaning in response to a particular text (Rosenblatt, 2005, p. 10). In taking an efferent stance, a reader aims for information and stays within the text, with their comments based on their first look. The second look requires readers to be attentive to 'the qualities of the feelings, ideas, situations, scenes, personalities, and emotions' and, with a third look, to participate 'in the tensions, conflicts, and resolutions of the images, ideas, and scenes as they unfold' (Rosenblatt, 2005, p.11). The second and third stages are where creativity of thought and text might be teased out in terms of meaning.

In each stage of response to the following three prompts, critical analysis of ideas was involved, and Banksy's artwork prompted thinking, interpreting, and voicing individual opinions:

1) What do you see in the artwork?

2) What could be the possible changes this art is indicating?

3) Can you relate this art with any global issue or personal interest?

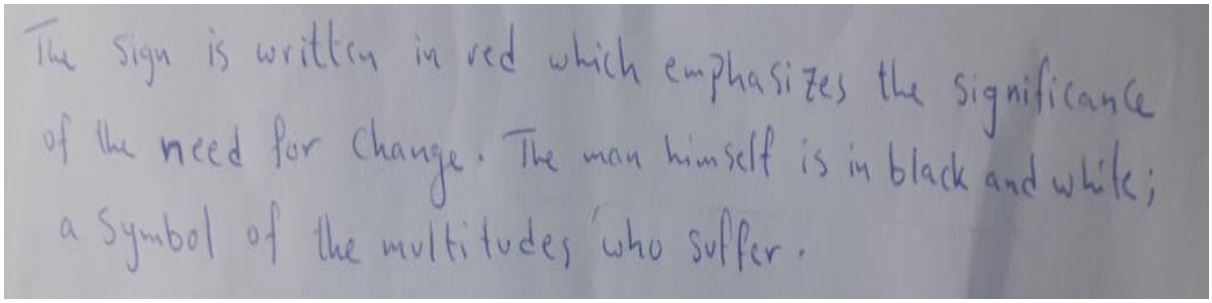
Each prompt was a summary of the questions mentioned in Eisenberg's (2014) different stages of artwork analysis.

How hard is this?: Doctoral learning or poor and homeless?

The responses to I WANT CHANGE for the first prompt described the man as homeless and poor, with some literal description— *man holding a piece of paper containing a message, with a bucket on the floor*. Participants noted that in the streets of big cities, it is common to come across a homeless person asking for money—a sign of socio-economic struggle.

Different perspectives: Double vision

Participants recognised '*double meaning*' although one participant initially proposed that the phrase KEEP YOUR COINS was *a mistake from the artist*. Colour was read for its symbolism, in two cases with personal interpretations. Red is often seen as symbolising either danger or the imperative to stop, but for one participant those caveat meanings were taken further to where red heightened significance. Black and white is often a metaphor for polarisation of issues into just good or bad with no middle ground, but here this participant saw it as signalling a dreary world.



This Banksy artwork is provocative because begging is often stigmatized, but an individual might have valid reasons for begging. Poor and homeless asking for change as coins is a common scenario in expensive cities, so participants would be aware of the context of this protest. A satirical play on the ambiguity of the word 'change' enables a demand for significant social change not small change. Paradox is an essential part of Banksy's street art. We suggest that appreciating paradox and being able to work with it is relevant to doctoral experience. Banksy gave the opportunity to talk about this. Sometimes doctoral writers need to give their views on research paradoxes bringing that critique into their thesis writing—that can seem as challenging as any other act of creativity.

Moral meaning: Connection with real life

The close reading of the street art picked up on moral implications. One participant wrote

> *I feel this graffiti advocates the sense of respect towards those who need help. I know in some cultures the behaviour of giving coins to others is disrespectful. So maybe that's true for the writer of this graffiti and he was trying to express through the perspective of the homeless that although the poors [sic] need your help, that doesn't mean they don't care about dignity and decency. So the genuine kindness is called for, kindness without pride, pity or superiority.*

It is possible that idea of self-esteem was triggered by the slogan KEEP YOUR COINS—temporary financial gain is not the solution if there was no real change in people's mindset towards those who are socially and economically deprived. The idea of change stretched beyond gaining financial assistance and highlighted the *dignity* that economically disadvantaged individuals lack and need. *I feel*… and *I know*… illustrate the participant's personal connection with the artwork's message.

Political, social, and economic issues: Do we care?

The group understood that I WANT CHANGE was a plea for a sustained social change, not temporary monetary assistance. One participant wrote tersely *Protesting against system*.

The class design was based on the assumption that Banksy's socio-political nudges should connect with participants' personal experience and attitudes, leading into critical analysis on issues that mattered—this artwork did just that. Participants moved from the literal into deeper level interpretation during the first question analysis.

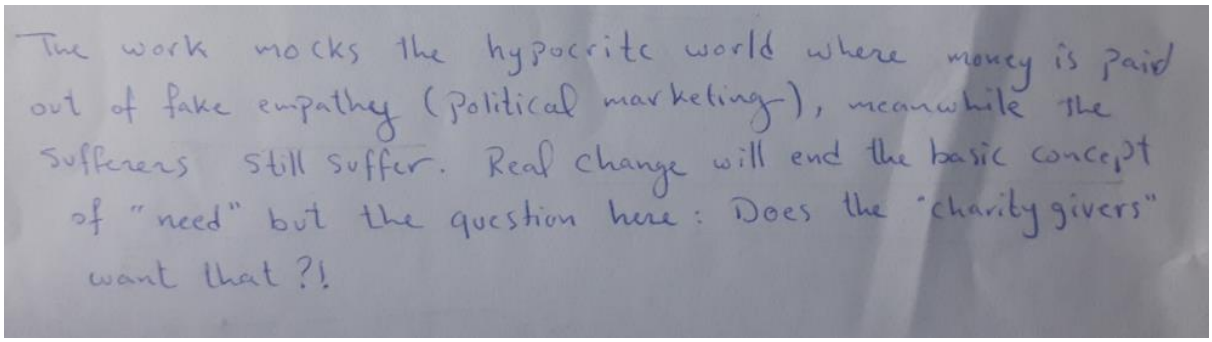
Change: We want it!

The analysis based on the second question (What could be the possible changes this art is indicating?) prompted further deep level interpretation—participants talked about how only providing small change will not empower a homeless person or change their deprivation. One strong personalized stance took the analysis further *I feel the graffiti is trying to convey the meaning of dissatisfaction of how people from low social rankings are treated* and introduced *social ranking*–something that still exists in most social contexts, including academia. The word CHANGE was applied to real-life experience. Participants' interpretation included changes in *education, politics, laws*. Each written text produced was creative in the sense that each showed different subjective analysis. An interesting evaluation depicted the CHANGE as *real change,* not a *tiny solution which are* [sic] *going to solve what I am going to eat now, but not tomorrow,* expressing the idea of a change in circumstance with the concrete image of eating or going hungry. The interpretations mainly depicted that change that was needed, demanded, but not ensured. As we hoped, the punning word-play and strong images engaged international doctoral participants in unpacking satirical undertones and practicing critical analysis while being aware of the force of creativity Banksy shows in getting his message across.

Relating global issues to self

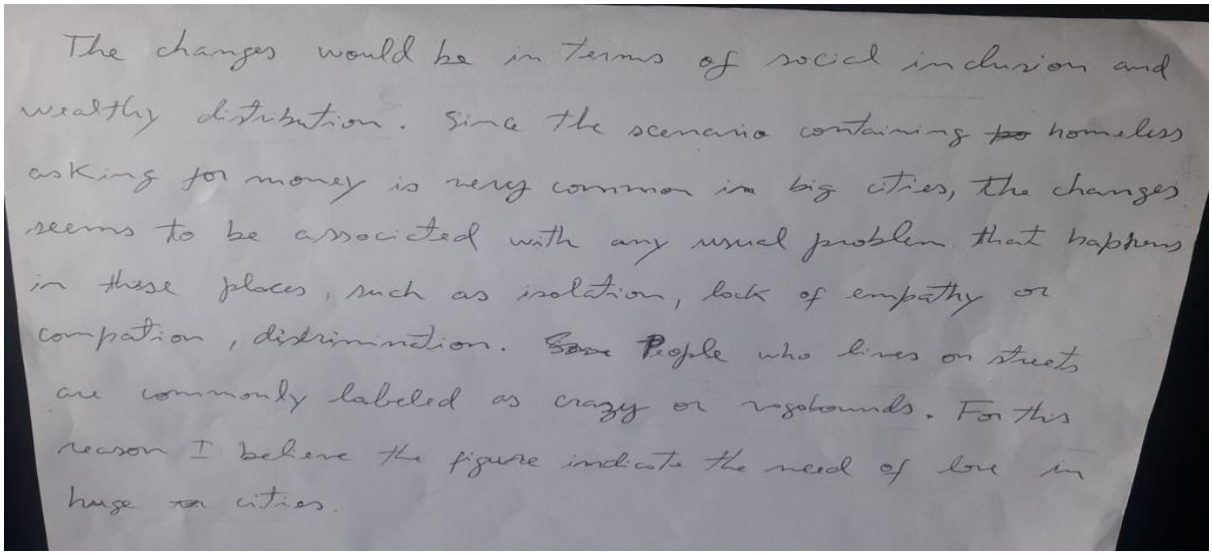
Responses to the final writing prompt (Can you relate this art with any global issue or personal interest?) included politicised expressions showing compassion and charity. One participant reflected, *We tend to think that only giving away a few coins (mere tangible*

support) will change the poverty with *we tend to think* showing self-critique. Another more cynically located the complex hypocrisy of *political marketing*, questioning whether charities and politicians really want the major changes that would end poverty.



The use of *mocks* here locates Banksy's satirical perspective towards politicians—recognition that real empowerment would change the political dynamics of power in a way that those in power would not countenance. Ferrell (1993, p. 197) considers novel and artistic features of graffiti works as a 'stylish counterpunch to the belly of authority.' Socio-political analysis of Banksy's street art led participants to express their thoughts with reasoning—an important skill in doctoral writing.

One of the interpretations offered a different response to the artwork, pointing out that some people accept their situation and *do not demand political change*. That participant wrote that *Younge* [sic] *people are not interested in political problems*. Their opinion did not give further detail but perhaps gave evidence of how personal experience within a particular socio-cultural context (perhaps here the privilege of doctoral education) shaped the response. Farrah was surprised since in Bangladesh, her own background, youth in the past led two significant revolutions—the language movement in 1952 and a fight for independence in 1971. Back then, strong socio-political and cultural values were connected with the youth-led movements. However, she had sought individual perspective and got it. Another participant's interpretation suggested the experience of international candidates. They focused on loneliness: Change was interpreted as a plea for change from *isolation, lack of sympathy* and *discrimination* that plagued life in big cities:


The changes would be in terms of social inclusion and wealthy distribution. Since the scenario containing ~~to~~ homeless asking for money is very common in big cities, the changes seems to be associated with any usual problem that happens in these places, such as isolation, lack of empathy or compation, distrimination. People who lives on streets are commonly labeled as crazy or vagabounds. For this reason I believe the figure indicate the need of love in huge ~~a~~ cities.

The man in the I WANT CHANGE artwork was defined as representing *the need of love in huge cities* — a possible criticism of urban life. Individual inference also included *I can relate this art to particularly the inequality between rich and the poor*.

Another participant told a story from his own experience. He began by being critical of *liars* who beg for money when they can work, and recounted *I met a man in the train station and he told me he loss [sic] all the money. He asked me if I can give some him money to buy a train ticket. I believed him and give him the money. However, he proved to be a liar.* Throwing a real-life experience into the discussion allowed for talk about how moral stances were influenced by previous experiences. Connecting with real life engaged the participants in thinking about how their own social, cultural, and political experiences contributed to shaping their close-reading and analysis. They showed the personalised critical analysis that might strengthen doctoral writing. In practice, various ideas emerged from creative thinking prompted by focus on Banksy's creative communication.

Closing the study with Banksy: Let me speak

The other classes of the course focused on review of literary extracts and writing, but the final class returned to Banksy for closure. The image was of a masked man in the physical stance of hurling a bomb but holding a bunch of flowers in his hand rather than a grenade:

Banksy (2003)

The graffiti was Banksy's response to and protest against the construction of West Bank Wall to separate the minority Palestinian population from the Jews within Israel. Building the wall was defended by the Israeli authority as meeting 'safety concerns' but denounced by critics as 'frighteningly apartheid-like' (Brenner, 2019, p. 35). The strong political artwork attracted a global audience. We noticed that the graffiti questions the intention of the powerful nations' euphemistic term 'safety concerns' and instead showcases the missed potential for good cross-cultural relations. The participants did not know about the specific background and issues involving the creation of this work but were aware that Banksy's graffiti gave eloquent voice to protest. The scope for multiple readings was the justification to use this Banksy in the last session.

The final in-class analytical exercise was to write a slogan for a Banksy artwork. Precision in terms of choice of words and syntax is integral for academic writing—this final task

using graffiti was designed to make the participants aware of the importance of accuracy in selecting words to illustrate ideas. Obviously, the participants were mindful of their subject-specific use of language for doctoral writing; the task using the street art was an added learning experience because being within a different genre meant being able to notice the process of choosing a lexicon that would speak strongly yet succinctly.

One slogan opted for irony, with the striking slogan *I use these nuclear bombs to destroy my enemies,* demanding the thought 'but he's throwing flowers' to unpack the message—kindness has power to resolve antagonism. The bouquet of flowers, replacing the bomb, directed the response of the close reading—throwing a bomb will breed destruction and hurling flowers will breed concord.

The slogan is a political critique of military threat to world peace. A similar but more simply-worded slogan advised *Show love not hatred*.

Another slogan, *Happy Wedding,* suggested that the personal over-trumps the political. Each slogan was different—a capitalized slogan *DON'T JUDGE ME BY MY LOOK, BUT MY ACTIONS* picks up the way that individuals are being judged, sometimes unreasonably, by their appearances, in this case as a radical enemy, rather than based on characteristics, values and practices that are unexpectedly benign. A relatively long and somewhat cryptic slogan seemed to relate to doctoral study, a topic that ran through the sessions—*To be better, you must forget all of your previous ''flowers'' and achievement. Start form* [sic] *beginning again!* Indeed. We had intended the Banksy classes to foster critical analysis and confidence in argumentation; in the final session there was evidence that the exercises can be seen as creative for novice researchers who are unused to them.

One slogan demanded freedom to speak—a democratic practice that is not allowed in many parts of the world including where some participants were from. The catchphrase can relate to individuals' experience—constitution allows freedom of speech; politicians boast about it, but the general population are dubious about their freedom as anti-authority remarks are sometimes punished. The slogan also can stand for the doctoral writer's acceptance of the power of finding their voice and joining their discourse community.

For some of these participants, western assumptions about democracy's freedom of speech could be seen as a metaphor for the expectations of doctoral writing that opinions will be clearly articulated. And as these participants left the nine-week research project's course, they needed to speak through their doctoral writing—to express authentic views accurately and to own their positions and defend them. In the first session, we'd talked about the possible applications of I WANT CHANGE. This opened up depth-of field discussion—the CHANGE international doctoral students experienced in a western higher education context, and what they might want to change, or want institutional systems to change.

Graffiti, critical analysis, nuanced meaning, argumentation

Lyn and Lea (2005, p.43) argue that a graffiti work stretches beyond the graphic presentation and involves '… the influence of social, political, cultural, political events' along with the personal views. Bakhtin (1981, mentioned in Lynn and Lea, 2005, p. 43) has theorised that all utterances are 'heteroglot', that is, different voices carry different world views into every discourse. This theory resonated for us when considering

participants' close reading and analysis of Banksy's street art. Participants' heteroglot interpretations of the graffiti works brought together their different perspectives (Lynn and Lea, 2005, p. 43) and the experience of talking through difference showed them that differing analysis was fine and what mattered was being able to justify your own viewpoint. Each individual participant assigned a newly nuanced meaning. We found that dynamic analysis of Banksy's graffiti works was a strong initial approach to cross-cultural development for international doctoral students from different disciplines.

Our suggestion with this article is that those supporting doctoral writing could try using Banksy's work to encourage talk that leads to critical analysis, to taking a position and to gaining understanding of democratic western cultures. Data signalled how this worked in our study. Edward, an Education and Social Work faculty student from China, linked the talk about graffiti directly to writing in English:

> *I find for the graffiti it is not helping me directly, but it is helping me in terms of how, the way the other people are describing the graffiti their structure - it's quite different from the way how something is introduced or described, in a Chinese way. Because in Chinese culture the most important idea is put at the very end of the story because you need to be humble, you need to be covered, you cannot be too straightforward that's some principles of Chinese culture. But in the graffiti it is describing in a way that it feels like people need to put their argument at the very beginning of the description so that that makes me aware of the different mindset when describing things.*

He also found it insightful to see that he sometimes had different interpretations about the meaning of the Banksy works than others, and applied this, almost like a parable, to doctoral work, where there is a need to respect others' ideas, but also use one's own interpretations of what research means:

> *For me the graffiti one was also helpful. I was thinking about the balloon flying away from the little girl. I remember I had a different perception about the content in that graffiti. For me it feels like something like happy saying hallo to the balloon*

> *flying near to her. But then for some other group members, it feels like farewell to the, like, carefree childhood and something else. So the idea of how we use our own interpretations in our own research is really helpful. And to cherish the multiple perspectives and interpretations.*

Abeer, a Business faculty doctoral student who was from Bangladesh, felt that stimulating imagination by talking about Banksy's graffiti was helpful for developing critical thinking (which was one of the intentions of this course)

… the way like you have done it … so, you can give them a, like, picture and tell them like you know… so what its gonna do, it will help them to improve their imagination … because different people will interpret the same thing differently, right? We always tend to create our own social reality based on our understandings … I can see there is a relationship between the… you know these images and critical thinking. It can boost your efficiency

Lucas, an Engineering candidate who was from Brazil, felt more comfortable about questioning everything, and looking at details as part of critical analysis:

> *I think I agree with the point of critical analysis, graffiti analysis that it is a photograph…some variety, you need to give some more feedback in something … if you actually seeing some book or something, … I think be aware of you can critically analyze the small things… like questions everything. It makes easy to analyze everything in more details… I think it helps you a lot.*

Farhaan, a business faculty student who was from Bangladesh spelt out that the course had resulted in him seeing the benefit of being creative, something that is often overlooked in sessions that support doctoral writing:

One thing I really valued was creativity, I think that is something doing this classes because through this literary items, that was there I think. I think these items that

you have used, I think can facilitate some levels of creativity to researchers … It's good to be creative as a researcher…

This article has reported on the Banksy sessions that book-ended the whole course, the first and last sessions that together established the value of a creative approach to serious messages. Might Banksy analysis empower doctoral candidates to take creative ownership of their research and of their expression of their views?

Conclusion: 'But if it ends, what is there beyond?' (Barthes, 1964, p. 152)

Others who support international doctoral writers might try stimulating talk about meaning-making by beginning with Banksy's street art. This research project was successful in trialling a course of sessions designed to take international doctoral candidates within a western academy to a deeper level of understanding the research writing expected by their discourse communities. Goals included inspiring confidence to express own opinions, appreciation of the benefit of multi-perspectives on a topic, and recognition of style as part of the message. These were lofty aims. In terms of basic pedagogy, talking about Banksy's graffiti work established an open class culture where participants were intrigued enough to stay the distance of the course. The graffiti sessions also established that the course was somewhere where participants could safely say what they thought about doctoral experience in a western institution and about the large amount of writing in English that they needed to produce.

Banksy's skilfully constructed street art are ironic elaborations of social and political aspects or life in general; his presentation involves mystery and invites readers to solve the puzzle (DeTurk, 2015, p. 22). That intrigue took our participants through self-consciousness to where they were willing to try to be as critically analytical as possible, and to express their ideas as accurately as possible. They had seen how powerful messages could be delivered playfully, stylishly, and succinctly. Chung (2009, p. 32) strongly suggests 'Banksy's street art, in particular, can guide students …to reflect upon the immediate, if not unjust, world in which they live, to transform that world, and to possibly initiate change.' Appreciation of transformation was the purpose of the two sessions where Banksy's provocative art led towards creativity of thinking and perhaps fresh

approaches to research writing. Banksy's work proved a catalyst for the development of authorial identity that we believe will continue into future careers.

References

Bakhtin, M. M. (1981). *The dialogic imagination: Four essays*. M. Holquist ed., C. Emerson and M. Holquist trans. University of Texas Press, Austin.

Brodin, E. M. (2018) The stifling silence around scholarly creativity in doctoral education: Experiences of students and supervisors in four disciplines. *Higher Education, 75,* 655-673.

Banksy. (2001). *Banging your head against a brick wall: Banksy*. Self-published: ISBN 978-0-9541704-0-0. https://ia800700.us.archive.org/8/items/fp_Banksy-Banging_Your_Head_Against_A_Brick_Wall/Banksy-

Banksy. (2002). *Existencillism*. Self-published: ISBN 978-0-9541704-1-7 https://www.amazon.com/Existencilism-Vol-1-Banksy/dp/0954170415

Banksy. (2003). *Flower Thrower*. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flower_Thrower

Banksy. (2006). *Girl with Balloon*. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Girl_with_Balloon

Banksy. (2010). *I remember when all this was trees*. https://www.julienslive.com/lot-details/index/catalog/160/lot/68098

Banksy. (2010). *KEEP YOUR COINS I WANT CHANGE*. https://banksy.newtfire.org/html/gallery_pages/graffiti/keep_your_coins_i_want_change.html

Banksy. (2018). *Season's Greetings*. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Season%27s_Greetings,_Banksy_(3).jpg

Branscome, E. (2011). The true counterfeits of Banksy: Radical walls of complicity and subversion. *Architectural Design,* 117(b), 114-121. https://onlinelibrary-wiley-com.ezproxy.auckland.ac.nz/doi/abs/10.1002/ad.1301

Brenner, L. (2019). The Banksy effect. *Harvard International Review*, 20(2), 34-37. https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/26617408

Brodin, E. M. (2018) The stifling silence around scholarly creativity in doctoral education: Experiences of students and supervisors in four disciplines. *Higher Education, 75,* 655-673.

Calvin, M. L. (2005). Graffiti, the ultimate realia: Meeting the standards through an unconventional culture lesson. *Hispania, 88*(3), 527-530. https://www.jstor.org/stable/20063155

Chung, S. K. (2009). An art of resistance from the street to the Classroom. *Art Education*, 62(4), 25-32. https://www-tandfonline-com.ezproxy.auckland.ac.nz/doi/pdf/10.1080/00043125.2009.11519026

De Turk, S. (2015). The "Banksy effect" and street art in the Middle East. *Street Art and Urban Creativity Scientific Journal, 1*(2), 22-30. Retrieved from https://www.urbancreativity.org/uploads/1/0/7/2/10727553/deturk_journal2015_v1_n2.pdf

Eisenberg, J. (2014, November 9). First look, second look, third look: Close "reading" with book art. *The open book blog: A blog on race, diversity, education, and children's books*. https://blog.leeandlow.com/2014/11/09/first-look-second-look-third-look-close- reading-with-book-art/

Ferrell, J. (1993). *Crimes of Style: Urban Graffiti and the Politics of Criminality*. North Eastern University Press.

Helgerson, R. (1992). *Forms of nationhood: The Elizabethan writing of England*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Lynn, N. and Lea, J. S. (2005). 'Racist' graffiti: Text, context and social comment. *Visual Communication, 4*(1), 39-63. https://journals-sagepub-com.ezproxy.auckland.ac.nz/doi/pdf/10.1177/1470357205048935

Robinson-Pant, A. (2010). Internationalisation of higher education: Challenges for the doctoral supervisor. In M. Walker & P. Thomson (Eds.), *The Routledge Doctoral Supervisor's Companion: Supporting Effective Research in Education and the Sciences* (pp. 147-157). London: Routledge.

Rosenblatt, L. (2005). *Making meaning with texts*. Portsmouth: Heinemann.

Sammond, N. and Creadick, A. (2014). The writing on the wall: Learning and teaching graffiti. *The Journal of Inclusive Scholarship and Pedagogy*, 24(1-2), 138-154. https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5325/trajincschped.24.1-2.0138

Taylor, F. M., Cordin, R. and Njiru, J. (2010). A twenty-first century graffiti classification system: A typological tool for prioritizing graffiti removal. *Crime Prevention and Community Safety, 12*(3), 137-155. http://web.b.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.auckland.ac.nz/ehost/detail/detail?vid=0&sid=89d794d3-4610-4fe2-9b1a-

c3eb7aaaf9f8%40sessionmgr102&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtbGl2ZSZzY29wZT1zaXRl#AN=51989952&db=i3h

Wraight, E. (2022) Doctoral writing as an assemblage in time and space. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, *46*(5), 605-619.

Acknowledgements

We thank our anonymous reviewers for helpful comments that have enabled us to considerably strengthen this article.

About the Authors:

Motivated by her academic lineage, **Farrah Jabeen** is a passionate teacher (Jabeen, 2014)—the larger study emerged from her certainty about the learning design she wanted to trial in striving for transformational doctoral-level teaching and learning. Farrah has also been engrossed in English Literature Studies and in this research project she has brought her interests together into another area of expertise: international doctoral experience.

Associate Professor **Susan Carter** has honorary status in the School of Critical Studies in Higher Education, University of Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand. After a doctorate in English Literature Studies from the University of Toronto (Passmore & Carter, 2007), she coordinated a doctoral programme for candidates from all disciplines (Carter & Laurs, 2014), learning a lot about doctoral learning (Carter, Smith & Harrison, 2021). She then took up academic development in the Centre for Learning and Research in Higher Education, retaining interest in academic and doctoral writing (Carter & Laurs, 2018; Carter, Aitchison & Guerin, 2020).