

The “other” literacy narrative: The body and the role of image production

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ABSTRACT: Literacy literate has become a contested and dynamic concept in the 21st century (Leu, Kinzer, Coiro & Cammack, 2004). Images are increasingly a primary means of communication and they have been emancipated and democratised in the post-literate age. Images are accessible, and are being endlessly reproduced and manipulated on a scale never seen before. Their significance to intertextual narratives cannot be underestimated. Seeing and being seen, or visibility as identity, is an important aspect of self (Jones, 2007) and an important aspect of the learner in the classroom and representation in curriculum (Green, 2010). Its impact on body representations as identity constructs links with the skill of visuality (Meskimmon, 1997; Stafford, 1996; Thompson, 2004; Rose, 2007) and is integral to any pedagogy that purports to be relevant to the contemporary learner and interdisciplinary inquiry. More specifically visual pedagogies are unique in their performative and material practices and are connected in profound ways to experience, meaning and the construction of self. This paper draws on student art examples from ARTEXPRESS and student works completed for the NSW Board of Studies Stage 6 Visual Art Syllabus.

KEYWORDS: Visual performative pedagogies, visuality, subjectivity, visual learning

INTRODUCTION: POSITIONING THE NARRATIVE

This paper is positioned as a narrative of inquiry in the context of a post-literate age and from the philosophical position of the post-structuralist Gilles Deleuze, who talks of becoming-other, with the other being “the existence of the encompassed possible” (Deleuze, 2004, p. 347). As an academic and a practicing visual artist, I am connected at the deepest level to the role of images in critically and performatively shaping subjectivity and I have used my own art-making to this end. In recent years I have come to realise that much of what I have been researching and teaching to my pre-service, visual art teacher educators is now equally important to the majority of pre-service teacher educators, and interdisciplinary education. I have designed and co-teach a course called *Iconography 4 Learning* with my history educator colleague. The course aims to cross all epistemological fields and attract a range of pre-service secondary teachers. It is a course about visual digital technologies and performative pedagogies and the aim is to reposition and disrupt past assumptions about the visual in learning within curriculum and the new literacies debate (Grushka & Donnelly, 2010).

This narrative aims to capture the depth and breath of the debates that inform the role of the visual in learning. It is informed from the positions of the artist as image-producer and the pre-service teacher educator working to connect the production of images into the pedagogies of all secondary pre-service teachers. It is a narrative of

inquiry (Mcquillan, 2000; O’Toole & Beckett, 2010) which aims to raise questions around “becoming-other” and the performative role of imaging in knowing and meaning-making in shaping subjectivities. In particular, I will explore how the discreet epistemological fields of formal literacy education and visual education may be at the brink of new creative futures in the classroom informed by the concept of edusemiotics (Danesi, 2010).

The narrative commences with an examination of how adolescent subjectivity and body representations in the post-compulsory, visual art classroom represent insights into the ways images and new media work towards the construction of identities. It reveals how the skill of visuality (Meskimmon, 1997; Stafford, 1996; Thompson, 2004; Rose, 2007) as literacy has entered the debate surrounding the image as a legitimate means of representation for the adolescent in curriculum theory. It is anticipated that this narrative may inform understandings about learning as fundamentally concerned with identity work and affective practice. That learning can be located in the performative, self-authoring, embodied and material role of image construction. More specifically, visual performative pedagogies will have a place in the evolution of new forms of learning representations.

The voice of the student and visual art education

...I wonder if anybody notices me anymore? I feel invisible, continuously ignored + rejected by society. What do I need to do in order to be accepted for the individual I am?... my only friend at the moment is my artwork. I’m its creator and it obeys me (an extract from the Visual Art Process Diary [VAPD] of Kim Goldthorp, 2002, p. 20)

This quote from a post-compulsory secondary visual art student captures the most significant aspect in all the research I have done on the most important issues represented by students doing visual art in post-compulsory education in New South Wales, Australia. The “Who am I” question and representations of the body as visual narratives are overwhelmingly present (Grushka, 2007). The quote is found in the student’s Visual Art Process Diary published in the 2002, ARTEXPRESS Exhibition Catalogue. The text was located next to a detailed study of the student’s eyes, and his major artwork was a self-portrait.

The self-portrait, in all its variants, pervades adolescent, student art culture. The self-portrait or self-authoring as imaging, incorporates meaning-making activities from the orientations of the intrapersonal, cognitive and interpersonal domains of development (Jones, 2009). The self-portrait may take the form of a Western conventional upper torso to full body, as an expressive image of “me”. It may also respond to the accompanying question of “How do I know who I am”, and shift the subject matter toward concepts of constructed identities that include, me and family or me and friends, me as musician, dancer, writer, or me at home, on holiday or in special locations of personal significance. Students may reference themselves (being present in the picture frame) as artist, or may ask these questions from the orientation of understanding self, through understanding other.

Visual art students draw from a variety of visual forms, they experiment with relational aesthetics (Bourriard, 2002), in that they combine the collective sensibilities of multiple sources of ideas and their representational forms, often through

appropriation. Contemporary art students utilise an array of reproduction and re-representation methods. These can vary from photography, digital media, painting, to the existential video of self-performing life or installations, all work in relation, to inscribe new meaning through a variety of technologies.

The collective published exhibition catalogues of ARTEXPRESS, as evidence of student learning, hold a vast store of data on the way imaging technologies have been used by students and teachers to continually respond to the shifting ways adolescent subjectivity is shaped by society and how students consistently test assumptions about hegemonic messages of adulthood. In the “tendency for human life to form images of itself” (Deleuze, 1990, p. 95), this form of representational practice is becoming increasingly popular and intertextual self-narratives, like the above quote, are overwhelmingly concerned with the identity, the body and, of course, visibility (Grushka, 2009) in this curriculum area.

CONTESTED LITERACIES

What it is to be literate has become a contested and dynamic concept in the 21st Century (Leu et al., 2004). Literacies have been historically determined by the social, cultural and technological contexts in which they operate. Literacy learning practices, after the cultural turn (Dikovitskaya, 2006) are not exempt from this challenge. As new technologies continue to emerge and impact on communication representations, these tools will thus continue to persistently shape us (Ridley, 2009). Szerszynski and Urry (2006) challenge educational systems to remain relevant to their clients and to consider the speed with which students can both inhabit the past and present events from afar, while imaging the future almost seamlessly through these new technologies. All semiotic systems and objects as artifacts are now seen as coequal texts with documents. Texts, for example, are now film, television, fashion, food and clothing. The symbolic meaning(s) carried by images are culturally encoded, learnt, negotiated and transferred through the literacies within curriculum.

New literacy skills will depend on students developing the strategic abilities to work effectively across many new information platforms dominated by this paradigm from text to imaging and multi-modal practices in learning (Lambert & Carpenter, 2005). Multi-modal literacy practice(s) must teach students to construct their own appropriate and culturally relevant literacy forms (Jablonski, McQueen, Knodel & Easton, 2010). In so doing, teachers will need to accept that a paradigm shift has occurred and that our sense of the world is significantly shaped by images in this pictorial turn (Carrington & Robinson, 2009), and that “seeing comes before words” (Rose, 2007, p. 2).

Over the last decade, the notion of what it is to be literate has been expanded in response to the above phenomenon, and the problem of knowledge representations continues to emerge even in the face of the discourses of reproduction in the curriculum (Green, 2010). Competency in reading and writing paper text is no longer viewed as sufficient for future citizens, as rapid and dramatic advances in technology, and the resulting globalisation and social change, require a more wide-ranging set of skills and understandings (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006; Anstey & Bull, 2006; Lankshear & Knobel, 2006; Kalantzis & Cope, 2005). The term “multiliteracies” has

been coined to address the multiple ways knowledge is represented and communicated. It requires discernment on the part of the educator to identify the appropriate social context, the relationship between sources of ideas and the relevant communicative practices.

VISUALITY AS LITERACY

The term *visuality* has entered the learning and literacy debate of an ocularcentric culture. Evolving from cultural studies, this term is now central to an understanding of how individuals are constructed and shaped by society and how they communicate in society. Rose (2007) defines *visuality* as “the way in which vision is constructed” (p. 2) and the term is now central to imaging discourses. Emme (2001) talks of *visuality* as encompassing the combination of synthetic cognitive and physical functioning within interdisciplinary encounters. *Visuality* in teaching and learning will need to address the role of images as performative agency (Avgitidou, 2003) and the critical and performative in pedagogy (Giroux, 2001; Pineau, 2002) if classrooms are to accommodate the adolescent perspective in contemporary curriculum.

The invention of photography heralded this shift. Its entry into the fine art arena began this process, and now with the ever-increasing capacities of new technologies and digital memory, every student uses images on a daily basis, appropriating and manipulating them at will. However, simply using images does not constitute a developed understanding of the literacy practices that inform this communication form, nor how to develop thinking that supports the generation of images as re-representations. It is essentially defined by the complex ways in which images carry messages of feelings, experiences and contextual influences such as family, culture, race, gender and their relationships to privilege and power in the emergence of social identities. How we see and communicate subjectivities is increasingly about working with the socialisation and communication capacities of images through new media.

To understand and communicate in images, the skill of *visuality* requires that we grasp images from a range of theoretical and experiential perspectives and an understanding that images are generated from multiple discourses such as discourses of perception, epistemology, semiology, visual cultural conventions, mimesis, illusion, disruption, image as representations and as re-representations. Images as re-representations or new meaning must be performed, or put another way, they must be made if they are to inform subjectivities in the cultural construction of life in contemporary society (Mirzoeff, 1998; Rose, 2007). Thus identity in this article is presented as critically and reflectively constructed through the production process primarily, but can be supported through the decoding of other images to provide insight into the relationship between the lived-experience and referential experiences such as our cultural beliefs and social practices. It requires an acknowledgment that images in popular culture drive messages about beliefs, desire, cultural values and embed social structures. Therefore, *visuality* is the skill to critique and encode meaning using images (Emme, 2001, Rose, 2007) as they inform subjectivities.

With images increasingly triggering more complex cognitive understandings (Stafford, 1996, 2007), images and symbols are now a significant part of communicative competence and a key aspect of the performing self (Grushka, 2007)

and creative resistance (Darts 2004). The following example is by Christian Zapf (Zapf, 2002), *Friend Ben*, from the catalogue of the 2002 ARTEXPRESS Exhibition¹. The student refers to his work in the following way, “my work is concerned with individuality and the ways we choose to define ourselves and how others define us” (p. 96). It is an example of a student encoding meaning about his own identity reflectively understood through critiquing how his friend Ben’s identity is represented through his physical body, his dress, music and fashion and how this bodily representation is constructed by cultural behaviours. The portrait of his friend Ben is overlaid with the words “customised”, “labelled”, “choice”, “isolated”, “misfit” and “individual”. The image punctuated in this manner clearly indicates how the combination of image and text can work as statements of creative resistance. Christian works to both decode the way media and society shapes his and his friend’s identities and how performing self through art-making can move one towards becoming other.

BECOMING OTHER, IDENTITY WORK, IMAGES AND CURRICULUM

A shift to the production of images as re-representing acts (Bolt, 2004) rather than the critical analysis of images alone embeds the significance of personalisation and cultural relevance through performative learning. Semetsky (2011) describes such a pedagogy as one that values experience and creates meanings from “the multiplicity of events in practical life” (p. 38) and one that is able to critically reflect. More importantly, it draws on the tenet of many educational philosophers, including Dewey (1934), Eisner (1972) and Greene (1995), that being educated is marked by a disposition towards a reasoned and imaginative understanding. More recently, the link between the thinking of Deleuze and Dewey and their adherence to the importance of experiential and experimental inquiry as moving, iterative and operative is presented as a more appropriate way to describe the multiplicity of meaning-making about one’s subjectivity (Semetsky, 2003). Curriculum and literacy as social reproduction or a top-down curriculum or reproduction model in Western curriculum are no longer appropriate for the way knowledge is co-constructed, mobile and transnationally communicated in the 21st Century.

Literacy theory has been quick to acknowledge the significance of images, film and television through the development of decoding in terms of composition, comprehension and interpretative framings, as they inform the complexity of multiple interpretive understandings in the classroom (Leu, 2004). However, iconographic skills in the literacy lexicon are still contested with verbal literacy being taken more seriously than visuality, as demonstrated in the quote: “Rational and critical debate or the development of critical thinking depends on a particular kind of subjectivity, this can only be achieved through the reading of novels” (Habermas in Hocks and Kendrick, 2003, p. 37).

The example from ARTEXPRESS, *Dangerous Looks* (Ingleby, 2003) is a work that draws on the skill of decoding images from Andy Warhol’s famous Campbell’s Soup Can icon and draws significantly on the skill of visual critical interpretation. The student in her artwork appropriates the key concepts, often explored through writing about, drawing and appropriating the Warhol cans. She then re-contextualises the

¹ See <http://www.artexpress.nsw.edu.au/>

cans, labelling them FAT, and creating a bricolage of images that depict the wounds of cosmetic surgery and raises issues of bioethical behaviour of the cosmetic industry, as well as questioning “what is beauty?” In her artwork, the centre image is the self-portrait. Her hand of pain touches her anguished young face that is carrying the signs of surgery. This portrait can be interpreted as an example of how she is literally torn or cut by the multiplicity of forces that impact on one’s identity. For this student, her work is about commenting on “modern society’s obsession with beauty and the risks people take” (p. 43) and it demonstrates how she puts herself into the position of others and performs the agony of experimenting with different subjectivity representations of beauty. This is done through using the same semiotic practices of the media and fine art to creatively contest beauty constructs in the representing for her ideas about beauty and identity through words and text.

As demonstrated in *Dangerous Looks* (Ingleby, 2003), an essential aspect of an individual’s capacity to produce or construct self is dependent on their capacity to make choices and take actions or develop agency (Salih, 2002) in relation to the evolving self. The narrative above is therefore an inquiry into how new literacies are working with the typo-iconographic referent as a medium of meaning. Making art, particularly art that represents personal experiences and the experimental investigation of self, as ways of “seeing” can, therefore, be positioned as performing self or agency (Butler, 1997; Bolt, 2004; Holman Jones, 2005) with visual art curriculum responding as a curriculum of semiosis.

The issues surrounding curriculum and representation have been propelled by new media technologies that increasingly value the work that images can do in performing the self through the recording of life events, life emotions and relationships as multiple image narratives. Walsh (2007), writing on literacy in the multimodal classroom, also emphasised the role of creativity as capital, further supporting the ideas that a creative disposition will be an important aspect of new learning. Green (2010) presents curriculum as a representational practice, that can problematise reproduction theory and shift thinking towards a more critical and performative interpretation of curriculum. Green (2010) also acknowledges that the post-linguistic turn positions learning as more about debate, contestation, struggle and dissent, creativity and invention drawing on all semiotic practices.

IDENTITY, AGENCY AND THE BODY

Literacy is extra-linguistic, and draws on a wider concept of the field of semiotics, the study of signs and their signification to enfold all raw experience and is a “vital psychosocial connection between their developing bodies and conscious thoughts to [the] world” (Danesi, 2010, p. ix). It includes responses as sign signification, such as “body language, aesthetic products, visual communication, media, advertising, narratives, material culture and rituals... anything informed by sign based activity” (Danesi, 2010, p. vii). The concept of edusemiotics will embrace all life and learning as being activity-centred and learner-aware. It invites students to develop their own worldview that requires challenges to student self-identity (Staples, 2010). Moreover, investigating meaning-making, through image construction is presented as a legitimate inquiry tool (Sullivan, 2005; Finley, 2005) with a performative or autopoietic (self-producing) attribute for its learners.

To be literate in this context requires the individual to mediate between personal experience, emotions and the realities of self and others as one’s subjectivity is increasingly represented through the bodies (or forms) as images as they, and we, inhabit the world, and experience the forms or work we create in the world (Sahil, 1990).

Identities are therefore bodies constructed, embodied and performed within specific cultural sites (Butler, 1997). Media images and popular culture, which represent hegemonic constructs about gender roles in society, have been central in much of the discursive debate in cultural studies. Questions about culture and ideology are central in any investigation of subjectivity and identity along with the signifying practices of the culture and its representational forms. Both are a significant focus of post-compulsory, student, visual arts learning as self-inquiry.

The self-portrait in visual art education opens up many possibilities for how students can question social expectations about becoming an adult and test assumptions about self and others. When investigating identity signified through everyday habitus, dress, work and behaviours are a rich field of inquiry for new subjectivity insights. The “what do you want to be when you grow up” question, common to many students, has been answered by Imran Kamal (1997) in the following example: “My answer began with four male stereotypes....I studied the stark works of Chuck Close and Robert Mapplethorpe....I chose the medium of photography....I struggled with how to display and aid viewer interpretation, I hope the work does not need explanation” (p. 52). The body of work produced by the student contains six, full-length, self-portrait photographs. Four frames show the strong hegemonic expectations of his family as photographic self-portraits. He is dressed in an academic gown, a suit, jogging gear and in conservative casual attire. The student’s photographs are representations of the successful young male and are juxtaposed by the remaining self-portraits of resistance – the transvestite and the spy. These representations or re-representations (Bolt, 2006) of self allow the student to explore other possibilities, disrupting any chance of a stereotypical conclusion. Such literacy activity allows for the opening up of multiple possibilities of fantasised or imagined becoming through desire.

Desire as becoming, or subjectivity as being and producing existence (Deleuze, 1990), can help us understand how the adolescent moves between subjectivity states. The adolescent explores, experiments, imagines and plays with the possibilities of different bodies, referenced, of course, from real-life experience. Desire is informed by “inter-subjectively recognised self-identification” (Habermas, 1976, p. 107), signified by “signs of taste, beliefs, attitudes and lifestyles” (Barker, 2000, p. 166) that are increasingly inhabited by images. Becoming subjects are not identities, “identities are points of temporary attachment to the subject positions which discursive practices construct for us” (Hall, 1996, as cited in Rasmussen, 2006, p. 58). Subjectivity work is dependent on access and investigation into the interpretive possibilities afforded by life, society and curriculum. Knowing as becoming is therefore a process of “inventing new possibilities of life” (Deleuze, 1990, p. 45). New meaning and a body is formed through its relationship with other bodies, eventually investing in the possibilities of new images of self. Desire is positive, carries affects and subjectivity and for the adolescent is brought about by the assembling forces of social codes, family, peers and events as they influence the power of becoming other. Being is also

about multiple identities or assemblages formed by a “disjunctive synthesis” (Deleuze, 2004, p. 205) in a creative dynamic space and time. Curriculum as identity work will see an investment in performative and creative acts via the exploration of new representational forms that have contemporary relevance.

If curriculum is about knowing as an autopoietic process, or self-producing, rather than mimesis or the reproduction of knowledge and meaning, it is therefore about identity work, becoming and an affective practice. Fine art activities are performative and iterative acts (Deleuze, 1990; Semetsky, 2003). Art, through material representations, draws on the affective self; the intellectual self and the imaginal dimensions of the learner. As such art-making can be described as a technology of self that draws on the self-reflexive and attends to change phenomenon through creative activity towards transformation. It can also be described as a self-performance and as a technology of embodiment (Jones, 2002), where the artist uses art-making and its performative powers, as a means to fold the past and will oneself into the future.

JOANNA AND HER STORY ABOUT BECOMING

Joanna loves photography and dancing. Joanna created a series of three collaged photographs, the title “Shedding Skin, Freedom, Renewal, Growth”. It is a self-portrait or biographical narrative. She has combined images of herself and her friends as bricolaged photographs, cut up, overworked and re-arranged in complex associations all carried through the parallel imagery of a snake skin and its associated metaphor of “shedding skin” (Figure 1: Shedding Skin, Freedom, below). In her artist statement she writes, “‘Shedding skin’ focuses on the various ways we can grow, renew, and free ourselves. By eliminating previous biases and judgements, one can be liberated to think imaginatively”. Joanna’s work is a visual artefact, “[the] shedding skin idea [is] all throughout it... freedom of their old skin, for growth because they grow out of it ... for the renewal of their body”.

The creation of these images has been an experiential and experimental inquiry over an extended period of approximately seven months as she worked towards her final examination in Visual Art. Her diary demonstrates the moving, iterative and operative process that draws on multiple, aesthetic and semiotic relationships. The diary is filled with multiple meaning-making events, dutifully recorded as performance works, drawings and photographs, with all of the above, then further manipulated as bricolage and re-represented as the inquiry process continued towards a point of resolution. All of the images and texts are evidence of subjectivity and a shifting adolescent identity in construction, a subjectivity that draws on recorded lived experiences events and referential experiences.

Subjectivity as the skill of visibility, being and producing existence through imaging acts for Joanna has been generated by multiple discourses. Firstly her diary and her photographs are a record of her perceptions of her world, visual, expressive and intensely felt. While visual art students work significantly with images, many equally draw on their abilities to record their feelings in words. Key headings punctuate Joanna’s diary and indicate points of generative meaning-making such as “makeup as

a means of covering up – second skin”. Joanna used words as description, reflection and as a cognitive mapping tool.



Figure 1. Joanna, 2009 (photography), Shedding skin: Freedom



Figure 2. Why do people shed their skin?

In Figure 2 (above) “ Why do people shed their skin?”, one can clearly see how Joanna has generated multiple reasoned catalysts for why people reach points in their

lives where subjectivity is disrupted, and she has described this as “life changing experiences” (highlighted). She then writes in her diary, “Shedding Baggage – the Human Way” and reflects on these processes as experiential, emotional or physical actions, presenting as stress, loss or anger; or then performed through events, such as talking or forming new relationships, or through performative experimental arts-based inquiry actions, such as dance, music and art. More significantly she reflects on how she will represent this through her art as evidenced in Figure 2: “How do People Shed Baggage”, below. This iterative process happens over time and continues to see her work with the metaphor of the snake and the experience of “shedding skin”.

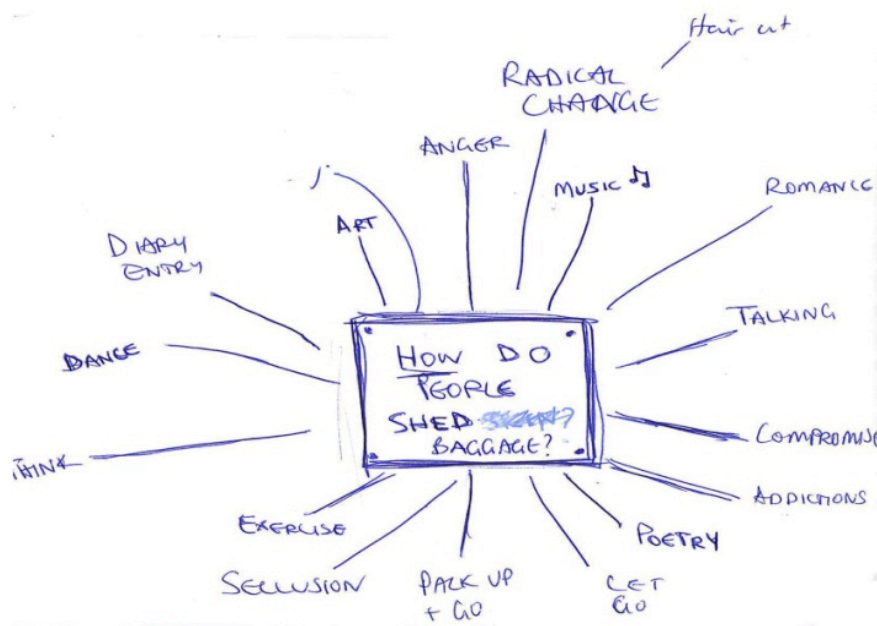


Figure 3. How do people shed baggage?

The performative role of imaging acts as they inform subjectivities, can be seen most clearly in Joanna’s recording of her own experience of shedding skin. In her diary she has documented, using photography, the physical act of shedding an artificial layer of skin. In the actions of application, drying and peeling, Joanna performs the shedding experience, Figure 4 (below). She experiments with this physical phenomenon and, in re-representing this act as images in performance documentation she is able to capture this embodied event. Joanna performs shedding as mimesis, captures this illusion of shedding through photographic means, and then uses these images within the photographic bricolage of “Shedding Skin”

In constructing these relational aesthetic works, Joanna acknowledges that other semiotic systems carry performative capacities, “dance...it’s a form of art and you do it through music, you do it through the actual movements [of your body] just expressing yourself.” Bricolage work, as montage, requires the researcher to employ “high level cognitive processes involving construction and reconstruction, contextual diagnosis, negotiation and re-adjustment” (Kincheloe, 2005, p. 325). Her processes reference the techniques and conventions developed by the artist, David Hockney. “[A]s in David Hockney’s work I have layered images to create a whole story. Like my artist practice, the process of shedding skin takes a long time and only when you

are finished may you step back and see the big picture.” Joanna has accessed images of herself and her immediate friends along with referencing other texts. Most significantly, she references Arthur Stace’s “*Eternity*” text, which carried iconic status as an artefact and has been appropriated by many popular culture artists. Moving between text-types is common practice for many artists and all visual art students and, indeed, many students are actively working across semiotic systems in relational ways.



Figure 4. Shedding skin, diary photograph (detail)

Whitlock and Poletti (2008), writing on adolescent perzine culture or autographics (life narrative as text-images), contend that visual and cultural literacies are embodied representations that are a performance of self. Perzines (personal zines) combine the traditional tension between auto (self) or one’s own writing or use of signs and symbols as life-narrative and graphical representations. Perzine creators use any process of mark-making, such as drawing, designing, painting or through the application of material experiences and/or new technologies to carry identities. For these writers, there is a “strange alchemy” when words and images interact. For perzine writers, it is neither writing, nor painting, drawing or illustration, but a visual autographic. The turn to autographics as narrative life is a literacy practice that is narrowing the fields between visual and textual cultures (Whitlock and Poletti, 2008, p. v). Joanna has also accessed the autographic, but not as a zine or self-publication in the form of a book, but as a body of work made up of three large photographic bricolaged images.

REFLECTIONS ON JOANNA, BECOMING AND THE VISUAL AS PERFORMANCE

Becoming other as a pedagogy of concept (Semetsky, 2011) acknowledges that being able to feel, to know and to conceive of new meanings will always be created and grounded in a relevant cultural context, and will always be through performative acts. Denzin (2003) has also heralded the call to performance. Performance or performance texts, as interpretive events, operate between experience and the self-narrative. Joanna, like the other students referred to in this narrative, have situated their visual performative acts as self-narrative within contemporary literacy practices and have

used political, cultural, interpretive and ethnographic referents. Their artworks as artifacts are representations that are firmly situated in their emotions, memories, imagined futures and all demonstrate movement toward becoming other.

Hocks and Kendrick (2005) make a strong claim that, given the foregrounding of the visual within digital literacy practices, there will need to be a shift from the “deficit view”, a Western fundamentalist concept about reading and writing, to embrace contemporary literacy practices. As a pre-service teacher educator in a traditionally text-based assessment regime, I have in recent years taken on this challenge with my history educator colleague and we now lecture in the compulsory knowledge and technologies course for all pre-service teachers. In the elective *Iconography 4 Learning*, the students fundamentally acquire the skills to work with the software Photoshop. Overlaid with this skill development, we teach both the skills to decode a wide range of images, but, more specifically, how to apply the skill of visuality to re-represent the epistemological knowledge of their curriculum as text and image.

The elective has grown every year since we first offered it. I am amazed at the ease and enthusiasm of the students to take up the challenges we set to create disruptive, visual representations of their curriculum. The flow of pedagogical and epistemological challenges and the insights about the potential of new literacy practice gained for my history colleague and for me have been rewarding. Given my own, still-evolving identity as a new learning, new literacies educator, I am optimistic that other classroom teachers can consider visuality within their literacy lexicon. It is praxis that subsumes visual literacy, as decoding and interpretation, to cultural literacy and the performative role of image construction in contemporary communicative competence (Grushka, 2007).

If curriculum is a course of experience in which human formation occurs, and curriculum as semiosis as “transforming human being anew” (Whitson, 2010), then it will involve understanding, interpreting, learning and knowing within the full repertoire of signs or sign relations as the media of meaning. Curriculum as semiotic formation (Whitson, 2010) is an entering into another’s frame of reference and taking on the perspective of the other.

If being educated is marked by a disposition towards a reasoned and imaginative understanding, then Joanna’s learning is an excellent example of a student being able to draw on her expressive and new digital skills in combination with more traditional literacy practices to enact the performative experience of shifting identities becoming other. Such a pedagogical approach will require literacy educators to recognise the intertextual work of images as a medium of meaning. Both visual art teachers and literacy teachers alike will need to consider how to reconceptualise the classroom and its pedagogies so that students can seamlessly move to the most appropriate technology and performative space they need to represent their learning. Classrooms need to mirror representational practices that provide no division between the real world and its multiple forms of representation. Epistemological boundaries will need to dissolve towards new curriculum that includes all cultural forms, and the field of performative subjectivities (artists or authors). De-siloing of curriculum and new technologies can provide the impetus for the breaking down of the boundaries between linguistic and non-linguistic elements in the activity of meaning-making. This, however, will require imagination in the consideration of how discreet

epistemologies and their relational pedagogies can be re-represented as new learning. Teachers in all classrooms must now embrace the performative and material representational practices located in visual education as central to literacy work.

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