

Reflexivity and aesthetic inquiry: Building dialogues between the arts and literacy

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ABSTRACT: Reflection can form the basis for powerful dialogue between the arts and literacy as we seek interpretive and expressive fluency across modes. Through deep, cumulative reflection we make aspects of our world and experiences more perceivable, and open them up for artistic expression and aesthetic inquiry. Such reflections are also the catalysts for self-awareness and identity-building. Theories of reflexivity offer a useful lens with which to understand our relationship with the world and the people, texts and things within it. The reflexive process can prompt us to challenge our understandings and change our representations of self and others through text. This paper offers a discussion of reflexivity and the ways in which it can be expressed and performed in discursive and non-discursive ways to develop literacies through and in the arts.

KEYWORDS: Reflexivity, aesthetic inquiry, arts literacy, reflective learning.

INTRODUCTION

Reflection can form the basis for powerful dialogues between the arts and literacy as we strive for interpretive and expressive fluency across modes. It is through deep reflection that we interpret and express feelings and emotions, and, concurrently, make aspects of our world and our experiences more perceivable (Langer, 1950). The arts are rooted in human experience and feeling. It is impossible to consider an art work without acknowledgement of the human conditions under which it was brought into being and the human consequences it provokes in real-life experience (Dewey, 1934). These human conditions and experiences are the catalysts for self-awareness and identity-building, both in the perception of aesthetic works and through the expression of creative outputs (Ryan, 2014).

The arts are powerful spaces to interrogate how our own personal understandings are mediated by contexts of schooling, curriculum and sometimes by hegemonic views of the world – important considerations in becoming literate in a rapidly changing, globalised world. Literacy in contemporary times includes a repertoire of skills, understandings and knowledges that are intertwined in multiple ways; various aspects of the repertoire are in prominence at different times, for different texts and contexts. The repertoire is variously comprised of knowing about patterns of and relationships between semiotic codes: written, visual, spoken, multimodal modes; competence in connecting texts (in the broad sense) to social and cultural backgrounds and prior knowledge; understandings of text rituals, dynamics and structures that facilitate everyday use; and interrogating the underlying values of texts and the assumptions they ask the reader/viewer/listener to make. The ways in which individuals draw upon and apply these different knowledges and understandings are intensely personal and shape their literate identities across contexts. The arts, in their appropriation and re-

appropriation of multiple meanings, semiotic elements and dynamics of production, can potentially challenge and prompt a heightened awareness of one's literate identities.

First, this article will discuss the arts as a site for mediating one's literate identities and how reflective prompts and a theory of reflexivity can guide such deep learning about self. Next, it will apply these ideas, using practical examples, to the three interrelated and cyclical sites (see Figure 1) in which reflection and reflexivity can be a productive learning process in becoming literate in and through the arts.

MEDIATION OF SELF IN AND THROUGH THE ARTS

The social and cultural functions of creative and artistic work in context help to shape the semiotic elements and life experiences that are foregrounded by the creator and by the perceiver of art. In order to truly understand art, we must not divorce it from human experiences (Dewey, 1934). A feature of the arts is its capture or representation of human experience and emotion. So, whether we are creating or responding to a creative or artistic work, we cannot dissociate our own emotions, beliefs and cultural values.

Each of the arts draws on social meanings as its subject matter. These social meanings, according to Bezemer and Kress (2008), are recontextualised (after Bernstein, 2000) when meaning material is moved from one social context with its particular organisation of participants and modal ensembles (for example, a real event or phenomenon), to another social context with different organisations of participants and modal ensembles (for example, a play or a novel). It is in this recontextualisation of real-life experience and emotion through new modes in the arts that reflective learning and reflexive transformation can occur. Bezemer and Kress (2008) outline four rhetorical/semiotic principles in operation during multimodal recontextualisation: selection, arrangement, foregrounding and social repositioning. These principles align with Langer's "perceivability theory" (Bufford, 1972; Langer, 1950), which holds that it is the task of works of art to make perceivable or more perceivable to us aspects of our own experience or of the world around us. Langer argues that each art has a primary illusion, which is created with the first brush stroke or keystroke or movement or chord. This illusion is the move from the real world to the world of illusion or abstracted image.

Selection, arrangement and foregrounding of meaning materials and modes are dependent upon the discipline and the context (Bufford, 1972; Langer, 1950). For example, in the plastic arts, space is the primary illusion. Painting and drawing thus create a virtual scene through the selection of shades, strokes and colours to foreground space. Sculpture creates a virtual kinetic volume through the selection of materials that are manipulated in space. In music, time is the illusion made audible in its form and continuity. Music spreads time out by letting our hearing organise and shape it in its voluminous complexity and variability. Dance makes visible the illusion of forces—physical, psychical, mythical and magical—and the power that surrounds them. The choice of movement and proxemics denote the gathering, driving and spreading of forces in our lives – darkness, military power, birth, death, marriage, puberty and love. In the literary and mass media arts, human experience is fore-

grounded and made imaginable: destiny is presented in drama through tension, action and passion. The media arts portray the image of our pervasive interest in contemporary society through the arrangement of space and interrelationship between modes and media (Ryan, 2014).

In all of these arts, social relations exist and are repositioned between the creator and the perceiver of the art. The primary illusions abstract our experiences and emotions to make them more visible to us and enable us to reflect on our relationship with the world and the people around us. Margaret Archer's (1995, 2007) theory of reflexivity is useful to explain how powerful transformations can occur through such reflection, as we mediate our (personal) subjective conditions with the (normalised) objective conditions of the arts discipline and the social and cultural expectations of our world. This mediation of self and context through reflection and reflexivity can occur in three interrelated and cyclical ways as we perceive or create arts.

1. Aesthetics: reflections as perceiver of artistic works
2. Expressivity: reflecting as creator to improve/change in the moment
3. Expression through symbolic capture: reflecting on and learning about self through the semblance produced

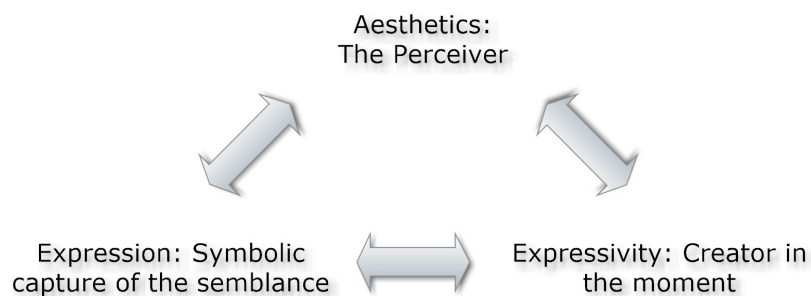


Figure 1. Interrelated sites of reflection and reflexivity in becoming literate in and through the arts (from Ryan, 2014)

The next section unpacks these three sites for reflection and provides ideas for the application of theory to practice as we both respond to and create arts.

REFLECTION AND REFLEXIVITY: A CASE FOR ARTS/LITERACY DIALOGUES

Reflection is an intensely personal undertaking, yet a conscious awareness can prompt deep learning about our relationship with the world and the people around us. Reflection is thus both an individual and a social process (Moon, 2004) as we respond to experiences and feelings always in relation to the context in which the response was prompted. Reflection has been variously defined from different perspectives (for example, critical theory or professional practice) and disciplines (see Boud, 1999), but, at the broad level, the definition used here includes two key elements: 1) making sense of experience in relation to self, others and contextual conditions; and importantly, 2) reimagining and/or planning future experience for personal and social

benefit. This definition reflects the belief that reflection can operate at a number of levels, and suggests that to achieve the second element (reimagining), we must reach the higher, more abstract levels of critical or transformative reflection as outlined below.

Deep reflective learning can lead to personal transformation, new ideas (Dewey, 1933) and new forms of practice (Ryan & Ryan, 2013). Through the arts, we can make visible new forms of reflective expression and modalities that recontextualise our social meanings and engender new understandings of self in relation to the world. These deep, critical levels of reflection must be constituted by action if they are to move into a transformative or reflexive approach to learning and practice. Reflection on its own, without action, can render the re-imagining useless. By moving into a process of reflexivity, we can use the reflective thought as a catalyst for action, so beginning a continuous cycle of reflective deliberation, action and effect.

In foregrounding action, critical reflection is considered now in relation to Archer's (1995, 2007) theory of reflexivity. Archer provides a useful framework which characterises reflexivity as mental and self-referential "bending back" upon oneself of some idea or thought such that one considers associated factors and influences and decides whether and how to respond or act in any given situation. In studying the arts, reflection can be undertaken in response to an artefact, a performance or an idea, and can trigger action at a later time. In artistic creation, however, reflection is also bound up in the immediacy of reflexivity as the creator weighs up the conditions of the moment and self-consciously (through internal conversation) alters their artistic (re) presentation. An understanding of this often-subconscious reflexive process is a key way of knowing and working in the arts; thus it is important to explore the role of critical reflection and reflexivity in becoming "arts literate".

For Archer (2007), the interplay and interconnection between individuals and social structures is crucial to understand courses of action and/or response produced by individuals through reflexive deliberation. In this way, individuals are seen as active agents who mediate their subjective, or personal, concerns and objective social circumstances to respond and act in certain ways. While our powers and actions are conditioned by social structures, these structures are not considered by Archer to be "forces", but rather as "reasons for acting in particular ways" (Archer, 1995 p. 209). These actions can be transformative (morphogenetic), in that they transform the social structures or cultural systems within which they operate, or they can be reproductive (morphostatic), as they maintain structural and cultural forms. Even though some ways of being become normalised, they are always shaped rather than predetermined. In the arts, for example, social and cultural norms are often challenged as the artist or creator poses new ways of thinking or doing. It could be argued that morphogenesis underpins the arts.

The decisions we make and the responses we have when we perceive or create art are constituted by three D's: Discernment, Deliberation and Dedication (Archer, 2007). Discernment occurs when we identify something of concern to us - a priority for now. Deliberation involves weighing up all of the mitigating factors, including our personal views, motivations and emotions, along with contextual factors, social norms and possible effects of our decisions. We sift through and decide what we are willing to concede or what we want to change or what is worth a response. Dedication is the

point where we decide if we are capable and/or willing to follow through, and we decide on action or inaction, either of which could lead to change or to maintaining the status quo in our lives and the lives of others.

Different people will move through these moments in different ways. Archer (2012) suggests that we tend to develop and practise a particular mode of reflexivity, which may change at different times in our lives, but often stems from our experiences growing up. These modes are 1) communicative reflexive, 2) autonomous reflexive, 3) meta-reflexive, and 4) fractured reflexive. For communicative reflexives, decisions need to be confirmed and completed by others before they lead to action. Autonomous reflexives, on the other hand, are clear about their pathway and goal and their deliberations lead to direct action. Meta-reflexives tend to critically analyse past deliberations and actions in society to make decisions that will best serve the common good. Fractured reflexives, however, cannot use their deliberations to lead to purposeful action. Deliberation only serves to distress and disorient them, and they can't work out how to put things right or make effective decisions. Each of us can adopt all of these modes at some point and in some contexts, but Archer argues that we generally have a dominant mode. Understanding our mode of reflexivity is a crucial step in becoming self-aware.

In examining and articulating these reflexive deliberations, creators and perceivers of art can identify their motivations and potential for taking different courses of action for improved outcomes in their artistic endeavours or in their lives. Reflexivity is thus a powerful learning process for developing literate identities in and through the arts.

DEVELOPING LITERACY THROUGH REFLECTIVE PERCEPTION AND CREATION IN THE ARTS

By its very nature, work in the arts is formed and informed by cerebral dialogues with self and others that question and discuss the world, and form part of the creative process (Hilton, 2006). In each of the sites of reflection (aesthetic, expressivity, expression), we can intervene as teachers to enable self-scrutiny and potentially deep learning about art and about self in relation to the world. In arts education we can develop aesthetic inquiry skills and knowledge, but we must also teach students to apply these skills and knowledge in a way that relates back to self – what feelings and emotions do they evoke in me? What aspects of humanity do they cause me to question about my own life? Making students self-conscious about those aspects of self that influence their deliberations, and exploring other ways of seeing and experiencing the world, can lead to transformation of some of those world views, beliefs and knowledges they have as a literate person. Similarly, making students aware of the social structures and accepted ways of knowing and doing within the discipline that provide reasons for acting the way we do, can prompt action to problematise or question these accepted ways of being, and can even lead to social change (Kushner, 2006).

Teachers can ask students to reflect on their own or others' artwork using scaffolded prompts for deep reflection and reflexive action. For example, the 5Rs framework provided by Bain, Ballantyne, Mills and Lester (2002), and adapted by Ryan and Ryan (2013) as 4Rs, is useful in education contexts as it guides the teacher in

scaffolding students' reflections along a depth continuum (see Table 1). It involves four elements which are progressively more abstract and complex: 1) Reporting and responding; 2) Relating; 3) Reasoning and 4) Reconstructing.

Level	Questions to get started
Reporting & Responding	Identify the primary illusion, the media, and/or the feelings/emotions or experiences that the artwork elicits. Why are these relevant? Respond to the work by making observations, expressing your opinion, sharing experiences or feelings or asking questions.
Relating	Relate or make a connection between the illusion, your response and other life or art experiences you may have had. Have you seen or experienced this before? In what ways are the conditions similar or different, for example, the media used, or the expected ways of doing, being or knowing in this context? What does it prompt me to imagine?
Reasoning	How have the aesthetic elements been creatively manipulated? What meanings do they suggest? Why have you responded in this way? How do others seem to respond? What intertextual meanings are elicited? What assumptions have been made? How are metaphor, symbolism and irony used? What do I know of other works by this artist (even if it is yourself)?
Reconstructing	Reframe your understanding of the art experience. What have you learnt about yourself? How can you apply this new knowledge or understanding to your life? Do you empathise with the artwork in its primary illusion of space or time or human experience? Have you had new ideas or made new connections between ideas in response to this art? What will you change about your approach to art or to life or to people as a result of experiencing this art? Can you make changes to benefit others?

Table 1. Prompts for the reflective scale in the arts

These prompts can help students to articulate reflexive deliberations so that they can be made visible and opened up to analysis. Such self-conscious forms of learning facilitate transformation. These prompts do not need to be undertaken in a linear fashion – they are cyclical and can be engaged from different points. Some cultural understandings, for example Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, foreground relatedness, and this is a starting point for reflection. Meanings are tied to emotion and feeling and the deep histories of the culture (Barton & Barton, 2014). The next section unpacks these reflective and reflexive strategies in terms of the three areas of aesthetics, expressivity and expression.

AESTHETIC INQUIRY: PERCEPTION AND REFLEXIVITY

Aesthetic education has as its aim the development of a disposition to appreciate the capacity of art works to intensify and enlarge the scope of human awareness (Smith, 2006). Part of this capacity of art relates to an evaluation of artwork. However, more importantly for my purposes here, it also involves a reflection on our experiences of art. Dillon (2007) concurs, in suggesting that it is not enough to consider the

physicality, visuality or auralty of art, but that we also must consider how we may be moved or meaningfully engaged by artwork. Perception of art can provide a new outlook on the world, can help us to see familiar things in unfamiliar ways, and can enable us to perceive new connections between things, all of which can prompt us to organise and reorganise our experiences of reality (Smith, 2006). Images can be both expressive and interpretive and seek not to portray predetermined sets of knowledge, but rather to invite multiple responses to dilemmas within (Barone & Eisner, 1997; Grushka & Donnelly, 2010).

Aesthetics can offer insight into human existence and social nature, which derive from the highest levels of self-consciousness – awareness of self and a detached understanding of human aims and undertakings (Gotshalk, 2001). It is through art that we can develop a form of reflective self-awareness that is not found in life – the detachment and abstraction of experience and emotion engendered by Langer’s (1950) primary illusions of art.

APPLICATIONS OF REFLEXIVE PERCEPTION IN AESTHETICS

I provide two examples of how these reflexive ideas can be applied to develop literate identities through the arts: Ekphrastic poetry and Fan fiction.

Ekphrastics is a generative form of writing that lends itself to a fulsome reflexive dialogue between an artwork, a piece of writing, the writer and the reader. It has traditionally been considered “writing on art”. The ekphrastic poet explores the relationship between visual and written text whereby they describe a scene or a piece of visual art. The Greek translation is “description”; however, it is commonly used to reflect on, speculate and add new meanings to the art and what it might suggest intuitively, emotionally, intellectually, and technically (Al-Joulani, 2010).

Contemporary forms of ekphrasis relate to, and indeed take the form of, other arts such as music, prose, photography and theatre, and the boundaries have been pushed in terms of the power relations between the original artist and the ekphrastic (Harrow, 2010). It is no longer necessarily viewed as a “comment on art”, but rather, it sets up a dialogue between two creative works, their creators and their audience. In this way, it opens up a space for interrogation of the subjective and objective conditions (Archer, 2007) in which both the original and the new creative work are produced. Aesthetic inquiry in this sense becomes more about placing oneself (beliefs, emotions, values) squarely into the main dialogue, rather than about stepping back to comment on or critique an artwork. Even though, in the latter approach, one’s beliefs and values may be evident, it is in the self-interrogation of one’s ideologies in relation to the original art and the ekphrastic form, that can promote deep learning and re-formation of one’s literate identity.

In teaching ekphrastics, we can use the 4Rs (Table 1) as a framework to prompt students to reflect on the technical aspects of the work that contribute to the primary illusion (Langer, 1950) and the intellectual or emotional underpinnings of the work. For example, the way line or form or proxemics or layout or tempo are used to denote relationships or human desires can enable us to perform a detached assessment of abstracted human activity. However, it is in the reflective awareness of self in relation

to this abstracted human activity that we begin the inner dialogue of clarifying our prominent satisfactions or dissatisfactions with our own life. We can notice in ourselves similar desires or characteristics or fears or attitudes and start to weigh up whether these are worth hanging on to or need to be changed or examined.

Fan fiction or fanfic in many ways is a contemporary form of ekphrasis. It is commonly written by fans of particular books, movies, games, television programs and even celebrity bands as they create parallel plot lines, character relationships and/or settings to “fill the gaps” of the original work or lives of their protagonists (Jenkins, 2006). Fanfic is commonly found online – either on specialist fanfic sites or through blogs such as LiveJournal, and takes the form of many different fiction genres. Similar to ekphrastics, fanfic can be introduced in classrooms as a way to engage with particular arts and their social contexts and meanings, in this case, most likely the media arts. A productive focus of reflexivity in relation to fanfic can be our persistent interest in contemporary society through the arrangement of space and interrelationship between modes and media.

Reflexivity in this example can often involve visual projection of scenarios or self-spectatorship (Bolton, 2000). We could imagine the way of life that might ensue if we address a particular concern, whilst listening to our emotional commentary that is provoked or evoked when imagining that way of life. For example, we might see in a moving image the depiction of revenge. We might consider the ways in which we empathise with the characters in wanting the “evil nemesis” to pay for bad deeds, because we believe that it is fair and just and we are rooting for the “good” character. We can use the 4Rs framework (Table 1) to identify the social norms of “good” and “evil” and how they are determined and enacted in different contexts. We can then start to apply this abstraction of revenge to our own lives and how we approach relationships with those with whom we differ in worldviews and priorities. Are there different ways I could mediate such relationships? Could I be assuming too much about their priorities or beliefs? Have they made poor decisions in this instance (as we all do at times) and am I not giving them the benefit of the doubt? What can I do differently when I engage with people who do not share my worldview? These internal deliberations can be powerful reflexive moments of self-awareness.

EXPRESSIVITY: REFLECTING AS CREATOR IN THE MOMENT

Expressing oneself through the arts can be a powerful form of self-discovery because the expression lays open one’s ideas and musings to an audience and thus invites dialogue. Dewey (1934) argues that acts of expression and art become such only when raw materials (emotions, paint, marble, notes, movements, digital code and so on) are consciously entertained as media and are reflectively interpreted by an observer (even if it is oneself). In this way, expressivity that constitutes art is a construction in time, rather than an instantaneous act of discharge. This expression of the self in and through a medium is “a prolonged interaction of something issuing from the self with objective conditions, a process in which both of them acquire a form and order they did not at first possess” (Dewey, 1934, pp. 67-68). Elements from prior experience (emotions, feelings, experiences, ideas) are inspirations that are stirred into action in fresh desires, impulsions and images as they find the objective fuel on which to nourish. Expressivity does not take forward an inspiration already complete, but

rather the inspiration is inchoate and is carried forward through the mediation of the personal with the contextual. Dewey's theory of expression has much in common with Archer's (2007) theory of reflexivity, in the negotiation of both personal considerations and contextual structures in the expression of concerns, responses and actions.

The stirring up of attitudes and meanings from prior experience renders them conscious as thoughts, emotions and images ready for action. Dewey's (1934) view is that if people have no art of expressive action at their command, they can become tortured and full of turmoil. This suggests that the arts provide this outlet, whereby inspiration comes to fruition and useful responses to emotions and feelings can become intense and clear, ready for action. Looking at Archer's (2012) modalities of reflexivity – communicative, autonomous, meta-reflexive and fractured – I suggest that the arts can potentially provide an expressive outlet for internal deliberations, and enable a clearer process for action (Ryan, 2014).

Each of the reflexive modalities (introduced earlier) can learn about deliberation and decision-making through the arts. For communicative reflexives, expression through art can enable one to gauge audience reaction and response to one's proposals – in a more abstract way than simple confirmation of courses of action. This means the communicative reflexive takes more responsibility for abstracting their ideas and interpreting others' reactions, and they start to learn about making decisions with less reliance on specific advice from others. For autonomous reflexives, the single course of action can be tempered by considering other novel alternatives as new ways to respond to issues. In today's society, the single-minded approach is almost untenable, as we are much less able to predict outcomes in ever-changing contexts. Thus expression through art can provide the catalyst for new ways of imagining and being. For meta-reflexives, expression through art provides the fodder for analysis of different possibilities, particularly in relation to social or cultural norms and the interactions with the observer of the art. Analysing the potential effects of the art on people and places can engender powerful deliberations for action that will serve the common good. Fractured reflexives (who are unable to commit to decisions or actions) can benefit most of all from expression through art. Expressivity through the arts can make emotions more intense, can help to abstract the core issue and feeling from the fractured context and make appropriate action clearer. One mediates prior experience, new emotions and new conditions for fresh inspiration and images about how things can be.

APPLICATIONS OF REFLEXIVITY IN THE EXPRESSIVE MOMENT

In creative disciplines, then, reflection plays a large part in the learning journey of both student and teacher (Garner, 2000; Kolb & Kolb, 2005), both about themselves and about their performance. I offer two examples of how these reflexive ideas can be applied to develop literate identities through the arts: creative writing and game design.

Creative writing is a literary art in which the creator draws on textual and intertextual techniques and literary devices such as allegory, allusion, metaphor, and amplification and so on to express the human experience. The choices made by the writer/artist

about how to combine, hybridise and exploit these elements for known and unknown audiences, through different media, constitute expressivity.

In teaching creative writing, the foregrounding of self as writer (the subjective or personal in Archer's terms) is of utmost importance. It is not about imposing structures, but more about flouting them in innovative and interesting ways to prompt responses that are deeply personal, from writer and reader. Reflexivity in the moment when writing can stimulate deliberations that push the writing to levels beyond the immediate experience and can educe particular writerly voices (Baird, 1952; Elbow, 2000; Harris, 2012; Ivanic, 1998) as one performs the text. We can teach students to take a self-conscious approach using the 4Rs (Table 1) as a framework to interrogate and imagine the raw material they are drawing on (their emotions, experiences, beliefs, mood) and how their choices and manipulations of the artist's literary tools afford them voice. Do they lean towards particular tools when they are feeling certain kinds of emotions or if they have recently experienced significant events? The creative process is not stifled with this double-sided thought process, but rather it can flourish through such self-awareness and reflexivity to elevate the performance.

Game design is also a creative process, yet is quite different in its aim and purpose. Spatiality, proxemics, colour, sound, narrative, dialogue, multimedia and creative "hooks" (enhanced game opportunities as rewards) are used to feed the potential player's hunger for achieving the quest in a microcosm of social structures mirroring human society. Social status, dignity, honour, freedom, history, rage, humour, deftness, love and so on are expressed and induced through and by the design process. This creative process is more dialogic and corporeal at the basic level of interaction. Its primary aim, following Butler's (1997) work, is performativity (see Dezuanni, 2006 for application to game design) or in Fairclough's (2003) terms "activity exchange" – getting people to do things or have an experience. The activity exchange is not just through language, however. It is achieved through multiple semiotic systems and a three-dimensional environment with avatars and virtual props. It is almost like a directorial role with unknown and as yet unseen actors. Reflexivity in the design process can be undertaken as the designer "performs" the design. Gaming is about strategy and so too is game design. Game design comprises persuasive text at the same time as social comment, creative, informative and entertaining text.

Reflexive awareness of one's decision-making and possible effects and spin-offs throughout the design process can open the designer up to new possibilities. They can be encouraged to identify key design issues and work through them using the 4Rs (Table 1) to find solutions that are satisfying for them but will also be ultimately sustainable for the game and its longevity. The designer's assumptions and vision can be opened up to self-scrutiny and deliberation (Archer, 2007). Am I perpetuating hegemonic discourses of masculinity, femininity and/or sexuality through my design decisions (Dezuanni, 2006)? Is my initial vision still appropriate given the market conditions in gaming right now? Does it offer an edge? Have I made assumptions about who will be attracted to it and what they might want in a game? Have I designed iterative processes to allow player feedback to systematically inform design decisions (Tan, 2010)? What response does the design evoke in me? How are my personal beliefs, desires and motivations reflected in the vision? How are they captured in the semblance of the final game product? The next section explores reflective expression through and on the rendered creative work.

EXPRESSION: REFLECTION THROUGH THE SEMBLANCE

The making of the semblance is both purposeful and expressive (Langer, 1953). Different semiotic systems are used to portray knowledge, action, interaction and/or reaction (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006) as the reflective designer disrupts norms and demonstrates new ways of seeing self in relation to values and conduct (Ryan, 2012). Within the different realms of art, semiotic systems and materials are constantly being remade and recontextualised (Bernstein, 2000) by artists to achieve various social and cultural purposes. Even though the materials and the signs are already there, are already known, the artist assimilates them through feeling, emotion and experience in a distinctive way to reissue them to the world in the creation of a new object.

As discussed in the previous section, reflexive expressivity in the moment can change the creation or performance and simultaneously has the potential to change one's ideas and life concerns. However, it is in the reflection on the semblance or the artwork rendered that Archer's (2007) self-referential "bending back" on oneself of ideas, concerns and beliefs, to deliberate about new courses of life action, can occur. For the artist, the cycle of reflection presented in Figure 1 is brought back full circle. The creator of art now becomes the perceiver of the art, yet with an intensely personal perspective on the art, different from that of other perceivers. This bringing into existence a creative product through purposeful expression is akin to abstracting a piece of self and holding it out for scrutiny. This self-scrutiny constitutes the highest level of self-consciousness, that is, an awareness of one's own human aims and undertakings (Gotshalk, 2001). When the artist steps back to reflectively analyse these aspects of reality that they have expressed, it is a means for personal transformation about their relationship with their art, with the world and with others.

Both the medium and the context in which the semblance is shared or expressed can stimulate different responses and representations of knowledge. The artist's "motor dispositions" previously formed (Dewey, 1934), or their skill in the manipulation of the media, render their perception more acute, with meaningful depth. Aesthetically, they know what to look for and how to see it, and they have the additional experience of living through the manipulation and creation process. However, once the artwork is viewed in a context removed from the context of creation, that is, when it is viewed from outside rather than from within, it can be inspected from all angles. The artist may well see new meanings which were unintended by them, but which now stare them in the face. Further, if the semblance is perceived in a different physical setting from that in which it was created, for example, in a gallery, on a blog or website, on film or a digital recording or in an oral performance, the visual, audio and/or gestural cues can engender new connections of ideas, new focal points and intertextual references. The artist's witnessing of the interaction of others with their work adds another layer of meaning and can prompt deeper reflection on the original purpose and the development of the performance and the self over time.

APPLICATIONS OF REFLEXIVITY ON EXPRESSION: THE SEMBLANCE

Deeper reflection on one's work and self can be facilitated through a "stepping back" strategy, which uses one's own work in a new context as an artefact to prompt reflection. Examples of this strategy can include dialogic reflections that draw on

one's own response and that of others to the work, and contemplative reflections that focus on the new context as a stimulus for response. Each of these involves recontextualising the creative work to evoke newly reflective artist response.

Dialogic reflections can be carefully facilitated so that the work itself and the responses of others to the work can provide the raw material upon which to reflect. Blogs or "Conversations with the artist" are two ways to open different artistic works to multiple responses. However, it may be pertinent to limit access to a particular audience or group for response. Blogs can provide anonymity if so desired, but also allow time for responses to accumulate over days or weeks, each response potentially prompting others to respond in new ways. "Conversations with the artist" are similar to group interviews or panel discussions about a creative work and the meanings and emotions it evoked in the panel or interviewer. This strategy tends to be face-to-face but can be recorded for later viewing by the artist. The responses in both of these strategies can be guided by the 4Rs prompts (Table 1) for critical reflection on the work. In this way, the original artist can use these intensely personal, reflective responses of others to engage in a second-order reflection. They can use others' recontextualised raw emotions and thoughts to reflect more deeply about what they had hoped to achieve and how they feel about the responses evoked by the work.

Contemplative reflections can be undertaken by the artist, when they perceive their work in a new setting or medium. This may include, for example, the performance of their play script, an oral reading (by someone else) of their creative writing, display of their work in a new space or the online launch of their video game. The new setting becomes a prompt to "see" and "hear" the work in new ways (Ryan, 2014). The contemplative reflection can be prompted by the 4Rs (Table 1), but with particular focus on how the new setting infuses new meanings or enables the artist to see what wasn't visible in the original setting where the work was created.

CONCLUSION

Each of these interrelated sites of reflection in the arts – aesthetics, expressivity and expression – can provide the means and the substance for teaching reflection in and through the arts. Reflective skills can become self-conscious and can be abstracted, refined and reapplied in context to improve literate practice and to make visible one's literate identities. If reflection becomes an end in itself, a private or solitary pursuit, we lose the capacity to subject our purposes to scrutiny (Kushner, 2006). Making reflection visible in its multi-layered dimensions transforms it into a rigorous space for learning and action.

Human conditions and experiences form the basis of artistic expression and aesthetic inquiry. They are also the catalysts for self-awareness and identity building. Critical reflection and reflexivity are the means by which we can bring together this knowledge of the abstracted human condition and a self-consciousness of one's relationship with the world and the people and things within it. The arts provide a powerful teaching platform for making visible and audible our internal deliberations about life concerns and actions as we mediate our subjective or personal understandings with the objective structures and norms of society. This reflexivity

forms the basis of learning in the arts, and underpins the dialogues between the arts and literacy.

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