Multimodality, identity and self-representation

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'Identity' (or rather 'identities')
can be thought of as stories,
"social profiles"
(Champ 2007; du Gay et al 1997: 10)

Identity – Mediatization
Johan Fornás (1995) Cultural Theory and Late Modernity:
The "growing media presence in identity
construction which has been termed
mediatization"
– not necessarily digital, but today usually so

Circuit of Culture

Identity, multimodality and self-representation on YouTube

Lasse Gjertsen - the HYPERACTIVE Norwegian

Literature
David Gauntlett, Professor at
Univ. of Westminster, London.
Participates in Mediatized Stories.
The book is NOT about digital
storytelling, and not DIGITAL,
not even about the MEDIA
It's about self-representations.
How identities are constructed.
Relevant to digital storytelling.
New visual methods, sociology.
Short version of findings in his
Peter Lang chapter.
Serious LEGO

Two of the groups in his study from the University of Oslo
- one group of media students
- one group of InterMedia staff
"Lego Serious Play": Building identities in metaphors
Metaphor "draw on the basic human cognitive capacity for noticing similarities between disparate entities" (p. 142)

Findings on identity

Gauntlett chapter 10:

Finding 4: Recognition of 'identity'
Finding 5: Identity theories are common currency
The reflexive narrative of the self (Giddens 1991)
Finding 6: Identities are typically unified, not fragmented
Finding 7: Relationship between the individual and society
> People are carving out their individuality, within a social sphere

Ricoeur on what identity is

"To state the identity of an individual ... is to answer the question, "Who did this?" Who is the agent, the author. ... But what is the basis for the performance of this proper name? ... The answer has to be narrative. To answer the question 'Who?' is to tell the story of a life. The story told tells us about the action of the ‘who’. And the identity of this 'who' must therefore be a narrative identity. ..."

(Ricoeur in Time and Narrative III
see Gauntlett p. 169)

Identity is shaped as a narrative

The whole model as a metaphor
Mediation between time and narrative

Mimesis 1: Prefiguration (practical field)
- life elements (structural, symbolic, temporal)
Mimesis 2: Configuration (mediation)
- creating the digital stories of faith
Mimesis 3: Refiguration (reception)
- reading, sharing the stories back into life

Raw material for the story:
- Concepts on
  - structure
  - symbols
  - time

Mimesis 1 Prefiguration
Mimesis 2 Configuration
(whole)
Mimesis 3 Refiguration

Reading of the story:
- weaving with
  - own life story

Finding 11: A role for media in thinking about identity

Gauntlett chapter 10:
Stories in the popular media commonly engaged with.
Such narratives give people the chance to think of a desirable identity.
Such stories are resources to draw upon when one constructs one’s own narrative identity.
Likely that people’s identity-storytelling include a sampling from the media stories in their social and cultural worlds.
Individuals are unlikely to admit they base their narrative identity
on a particular story from the media.

Key texts on multimodality

Modes, logics and affordances

Kress (2003):
The two modes of writing and image are each governed by distinct logics, and have distinctly different affordances.
The new media make it easy to use a multiplicity of modes.
They change, through their affordances, the potentials for representational and communicational action by their users.
The single code of the digital technology (in music, image, graphics, words) offers the potential to realise meaning in any mode.
Multimodality is made easy, usual, ‘natural’ by these technologies.

Multimodality in Digital Storytelling

The careful multimodal analysis

“Randy’s story offers a strong counterclaim to the argument that digital media simply facilitate the multimodal composing that could and does exist apart from computer technologies”.
Nelson & Hull (2008) Self-presentation through multimedia
According to Bakhtin one cannot “speak” without orienting toward an addressee. In digital stories one can say multiple things, via multiple modes, to multiple addressees.

“Lyfe-N-Rhyme” (DUSTY)

digital storytelling in australia: from a(cm) to (tallstoree)z

Dr Kelly McWilliam
Postdoctoral Research Fellow
Queensland University of Technology
**Similarities: ACMI v. tallstoreez**
- adopt a workshop-based pedagogy;
- produce personal film digital stories in, by and large, reality-documentary style;
- distribute digital stories, for the most part, among the personal networks of their participants, rather than professionally distribute or publish them;
- centred around a community-oriented ethos or ethic of giving people the opportunity to tell their own story using previously unfamiliar media;
- and frame digital storytelling as about developing skills for greater civic participation and/or developing individual creativity.

**Differences: ACMI v. tallstoreez**

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<tr>
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<th>ACMI</th>
<th>tallstoreez</th>
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<tr>
<td>instant</td>
<td>public-sector</td>
<td>private-sector</td>
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<tr>
<td>participants</td>
<td>cultural institution</td>
<td>company</td>
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<td>scope</td>
<td>individual, digital, &amp; analog</td>
<td>site-based and finite</td>
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<td>task</td>
<td>collaborative, real-world, self-selected</td>
<td>self-selected</td>
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<td>adaptation</td>
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<td>inclusion</td>
<td>user-generated, future-oriented</td>
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<td>time</td>
<td>regulatory, site-developed</td>
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**Conclusions: Digital storytelling is**
- for ACMI:
  - a site-based and finite tutoring of citizen creativity as a form of facilitated cultural memory
- for tallstoreez productions:
  - a service that coaches (pre-citizen) youth in a larger, and ultimately unforeseeable, journey of lifelong development into digitized citizens

- ‘A discursively ordered domain’
  - multimodality in different organisational settings

**Dynamics of the digital**

Power of the multimodality of digital media
Digital stories makes the Producer a Reader

Back to Paul Ricoeur: Mimesis theory
The "mediating role of employment"
The "power of configuration"

**Digital power of configuration**

Changes the "dynamic of employment"?
- the "mediating role of employment"

New "power of configuration"?
- with the multimodality of digital media
- "prefigured time becomes figured time through the mediation of a configured time"