The understandings which children have of Indigenous identity provide means by which to explore the ways in which Indigenous identity is both projected and constructed in society. These understandings play a powerful part in the ways in which Indigenous peoples are positioned in the mainstream society with which they are connected. The research presented in this edited collection uses children’s drawings to illuminate and explore the images children, both mainstream and Indigenous, have of Indigenous peoples. The data generated by this process allows exploration of the ways in which Indigenous identity is understood globally, through a series of locally focussed studies connected by theme and approach. The data serves to illuminate both the space made available by mainstream groups, and aspects of modernity accommodated within the Indigenous sense of self.

Our aim within this project has been to analyse and discuss the ways in which children construct identity, both their own and that of others. Children were asked to share their thoughts through drawings which were then used as the basis for conversation with the researchers. In this way the interaction between mainstream modernity and traditional Indigenous identity is made available for discussion and the connection between children’s lived experiences of identity and the wider global discussion is both immediately enacted and located within broader international understandings of Indigenous cultures and their place in the world.
Children’s Images of Identity
This book series is dedicated to the radical love and actions of Paulo Freire, Jesus “Pato” Gomez, and Joe L. Kincheloe.
TRANSGRESSIONS: CULTURAL STUDIES AND EDUCATION

Cultural studies provides an analytical toolbox for both making sense of educational practice and extending the insights of educational professionals into their labors. In this context Transgressions: Cultural Studies and Education provides a collection of books in the domain that specify this assertion. Crafted for an audience of teachers, teacher educators, scholars and students of cultural studies and others interested in cultural studies and pedagogy, the series documents both the possibilities of and the controversies surrounding the intersection of cultural studies and education. The editors and the authors of this series do not assume that the interaction of cultural studies and education devalues other types of knowledge and analytical forms. Rather the intersection of these knowledge disciplines offers a rejuvenating, optimistic, and positive perspective on education and educational institutions. Some might describe its contribution as democratic, emancipatory, and transformative. The editors and authors maintain that cultural studies helps free educators from sterile, monolithic analyses that have for too long undermined efforts to think of educational practices by providing other words, new languages, and fresh metaphors. Operating in an interdisciplinary cosmos, Transgressions: Cultural Studies and Education is dedicated to exploring the ways cultural studies enhances the study and practice of education. With this in mind the series focuses in a non-exclusive way on popular culture as well as other dimensions of cultural studies including social theory, social justice and positionality, cultural dimensions of technological innovation, new media and media literacy, new forms of oppression emerging in an electronic hyperreality, and postcolonial global concerns. With these concerns in mind cultural studies scholars often argue that the realm of popular culture is the most powerful educational force in contemporary culture. Indeed, in the twenty-first century this pedagogical dynamic is sweeping through the entire world. Educators, they believe, must understand these emerging realities in order to gain an important voice in the pedagogical conversation.

Without an understanding of cultural pedagogy’s (education that takes place outside of formal schooling) role in the shaping of individual identity – youth identity in particular – the role educators play in the lives of their students will continue to fade. Why do so many of our students feel that life is incomprehensible and devoid of meaning? What does it mean, teachers wonder, when young people are unable to describe their moods, their affective affiliation to the society around them. Meanings provided young people by mainstream institutions often do little to help them deal with their affective complexity, their difficulty negotiating the rift between meaning and affect. School knowledge and educational expectations seem as anachronistic as a ditto machine, not that learning ways of rational thought and making sense of the world are unimportant.

But school knowledge and educational expectations often have little to offer students about making sense of the way they feel, the way their affective lives are shaped. In no way do we argue that analysis of the production of youth in an electronic mediated world demands some “touchy-feely” educational superficiality. What is needed in this context is a rigorous analysis of the interrelationship between pedagogy, popular culture, meaning making, and youth subjectivity. In an era marked by youth depression, violence, and suicide such insights become extremely important, even life saving. Pessimism about the future is the common sense of many contemporary youth with its concomitant feeling that no one can make a difference.
If affective production can be shaped to reflect these perspectives, then it can be reshaped to lay the groundwork for optimism, passionate commitment, and transformative educational and political activity. In these ways cultural studies adds a dimension to the work of education unfilled by any other sub-discipline. This is what Transgressions: Cultural Studies and Education seeks to produce – literature on these issues that makes a difference. It seeks to publish studies that help those who work with young people, those individuals involved in the disciplines that study children and youth, and young people themselves improve their lives in these bizarre times.
Children’s Images of Identity

Drawing the Self and the Other

Edited by

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INTRODUCTION

From Personal Connection to International Collaboration

This edited collection is a result of notable connections across place, time, interests, leisure, horses and languages. We were riding through the Won Wron State Forest in regional Victoria almost three years ago and coined the idea for this book. Our excitement increased during the ride as we thought of more and more contacts that we had who had connections with Indigenous groups.

The importance of connection to place has particular significance for us both as we connect with nature, with animals and with friends while we enjoy a leisurely pastime. The sharing of stories and experiences occurs as we ride together through the native bushland and we often discuss things not possible if we were sitting beside each other in an office space. These relationships we have with the living and animal worlds are strongly reflected in our personal respect for Indigenous cultures and the ways in which other people around the world engage with their own special places.

The potential for this project was mediated by the international connections that Jill mainly has as a result of her extended academic career, but also because of her doctoral supervision of multiple students from various countries throughout the world. We initially had hopes of acquiring data from minority groups in Peru, Brazil, and the USA, but we were pleasantly surprised with the widespread collection we did obtain for this collection. It amazed us how many academics we knew who had a passion for or knew about particular minority groups that they were able to access.

Jill’s long-standing friendship and working relationship with Professor Eva Alerby (Sweden) was first initiated by a love of horse riding. Eva, a keen horsewoman, was a guest scholar at Monash and keen to continue riding during her time in Australia. A day’s riding in mountain country during a heavy storm resulted in an enduring friendship and a strong research relationship between the two universities. The first thing that Jill asked Nicola when they met at Monash University in February 2010 was, “Do you ride?” Fortunately the answer was yes.

From these initial seeds, other people like Gunnar Jonsson and Anna Podorova have also been cajoled into horse riding and driving. Ahmad dates his doctoral journey in relation to the birth of Jill’s first foal – ‘my thesis is the same age as Took’ (a full blooded Waler gelding).

This work builds on previous collaborations with Jill Brown and Eva Alerby (Voices of the Margins: School experiences of Indigenous, refugee and migrant
children), but this work is different in that it makes space both for expressions of Indigenous identity and for the connection and disconnection between the imaginings of the other by mainstream and Indigenous children.

The geographical spread of the various cultures highlighted in the following chapters is also reflected in the international collaborations of authors. We include Australasian perspectives, Asian perspectives, North American perspectives and Scandinavian perspectives. Across both hemispheres, there are minority groups who are treated as different, and unequal. In contrast there are powerful cultures such as the New Zealand Māori who occupy a central place in the life of all New Zealanders – both white/European (Pakeha) and Indigenous (Māori).

As you will see, many of the Indigenous groups described in this collection of chapters are minorities. They have tended to be marginalized and lauded as uncouth or uncivilized, but the images provided in this book demonstrate their prowess, their knowledge, their strengths and their loves. That the drawings by mainstream children depict the Indigenous children largely in terms of stereotypes is not to be understood as criticism of the mainstream children. When we are confronted by the unfamiliar, our only means of understanding is through shared cultural images. That this is so is neither unexpected nor, in the main, problematic. What is a very real problem is that, when mainstream children are only able to imagine Indigenous children in terms of stereotype, there is no space for Indigenous peoples to take their place as part of the modern mainstream society. If we are not able to change these ways of imagining the other, we will all be deprived of rich opportunities to share and extend our diverse understandings of the world and our place within it.

Each chapter includes a random selection of only a small number of the images produced by the Indigenous and mainstream children. The theory of imagining the other is enriched by Phiona Stanley’s contribution in chapter 2. The phenomenological methodology employed is explained in detail via Eva Alerby’s chapter (3). Chapter 4 by Jill Brown is the first study of children’s drawings. This chapter contrasts drawings by Indigenous children in the far north of Australia and mainstream children in a large city in the south. The next chapter by Raqib Chowdhury focuses on the Chakma, an Indigenous minority in Bangladesh. The drawings here are presented side by side, one half showing self, the other half the imagined other. Chapter 5 by Anna Podorova and Inna Makarova which explores the Komi community in Russia through a delightful series of water colour paintings is particularly poignant. Anna’s grandfather was Komi but this is part of her identity which was not valued and as a result is largely unknown. The following chapter by Gunnar Jonsson and Iva-Maria Svonni contains drawings by children living in a city in the far north of Sweden. The children were asked to draw themselves as both Sami and as citizens of their city thus making available the connections and complexities of being both Indigenous and mainstream. Chapter 7 by Nicola Johnson provides a marked contrast to other studies. The Maori occupy a central role in New Zealand identity, playing a powerful part in construction of the ways in which mainstream New Zealanders present themselves to the world. The children in the next chapter by Xuhong Wang are not
INTRODUCTION

Indigenous but, as the children of migrant workers, they are a marginalized minority in modern China. Chapter 9 by Ahmad Bukhari-Muslim focuses on a little known Indigenous minority group in Indonesia. The Baduy are a forest dwelling people in Java whose traditional lifestyle is threatened by illegal logging and land clearances. The next chapter, by Sayako Saito, documents her struggle to connect with the Ainu community in Japan and concludes that the past history of marginalization means that there is no ethical way for an outsider to speak for them. Chapter 11 by Megan Blight and Michelle Eady takes us to an Indigenous community in the North West Territories of Canada where Indigenous culture and identity remains a strong part of everyday life. The final chapter by Dat Bao further explores notions of identity. There are identities that Indigenous children construct for themselves and these are documented in many of the preceding chapters. There are identities constructed by others and imposed on Indigenous children, often limiting possible future ways of being as part of mainstream society. A third depiction of identity can be the futures that children construct for themselves via their imaginations, hopes, dreams and fantasies. It is this important work that Bao focuses on in his chapter on the Hmong and Yao children from northern Thailand.

We hope you enjoy and appreciate the tremendous insight and poignancy of these images and the rich descriptions surrounding these phenomena.

Jill Brown and Nicola F. Johnson
February 2015
PHIONA STANLEY

1. THEORIZING THE CULTURAL BORDERS

Imag(in)ing “Them” and “Us”

INTRODUCTION

When you have to call about a utilities bill and the call centre keeps you on hold for ten minutes, do you draw? Doodle? Me, I fill scraps of paper with long, looping flowers and squat, fat cats with long whiskers. What about when you’re waiting for someone on a dusty road and you happen to have a long stick to hand: do you sweep patterns into the dirt? I draw swoops and spirals, the patterns of soaring seagulls and walks I'm yet to take. These are not really drawings of anything, they're movements, habituated actions. One could, undoubtedly, read meaning into my unthinking lines, but (or because?) they’re not entirely conscious; I do not aim to communicate meaning to anyone beyond myself. Indeed, if I do want to communicate, I have plenty of other tools at my disposal: I can use language (several, in fact). I can dress a certain way or wear specific shoes. I can show through the paralinguistic subtleties of gesture, posture or facial expression how I feel.

As adults, many of us rarely draw beyond these kinds of swooping, looping doodles, perhaps because we have no need (or no talent? or it is not culturally all that common?) to communicate through visual art. But many, perhaps most, children create visual art across diverse cultures, and many will imbue their creations with meaning (Alland, 1983). This is not to say that children have no other recourses for meaning making; drawing is just one way of depicting the world and one’s place within it. But children’s art offers a window both into the minds of individuals and their socialization environments (Bertoia, 1993; Gernhardt, Rübeling, & Keller, 2013; Hall, 2010; Lorenzi-Cioldi, et al., 2011; Rübeling, et al., 2011).

As a parallel to this, I draw cats because I like them and because they are common animals in my environment. My cats are stylized, influenced by other cat depictions in my culture, including cartoon cats such as Jim Davis’s ‘Garfield’ and Simon Tofield’s ‘Simon’s cat’. I also know that cats have whiskers and so I draw them in, even though, when I look at a cat, its whiskers are not necessarily visible, and other animals have whiskers too. But in my mind cats are all about the whiskers, so my (conventional) drawing of a cat has long, obvious whiskers. So although ‘my’ doodled cats are ‘mine’, they are also products of my culture's relationship with cats and they are influenced by the way my culture relates to, and depicts, cats (in particular) and the natural world (in general). My cat, for instance, sits on a mat
rather than prowling the Australian outback in search of small, hopping marsupials to
devour; my cultural view of cats is cozy domestication rather than rural destruction.
So while my doodles, perhaps, allow an insight to my individual mind, they also,
perhaps more significantly, offer an insight into my culture. The same is true of
children’s drawings.

This chapter is not mainly about children’s drawings, however. This chapter, like
the book as a whole, is mainly about intercultural relations. Children’s drawings
simply provide data about how Culture A sees both itself and Culture B, and vice
versa. Additionally, the intercultural interfaces in the contexts discussed in later
chapters is of a specific kind: that between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people
in myriad global contexts. This chapter therefore provides a theoretical background
to later discussions: an overview is given of (intersectional) ‘cultural’ identities and
the construction and uses of Others in defining (and feeling good about) the Self.
As examples of these processes that may perhaps be termed ‘Selfing’ (a little used
term) and ‘Othering’ (a widely used term), I draw in this chapter on a wide variety of
historical and geographically diverse cases: contemporary British Internet memes,
1960s New Englander constructions of imagined ‘Russians’, ancient Athenian
pottery depictions of Thracians and ‘Amazons’, 1950s US American identity
work through imagined science fiction futures, ancient and contemporary Chinese
notions of (racialized) Self and Others, and intersectional identity constructions of
Indigenous Peruvians in contemporary urban novels from Lima.

CULTURAL DESCRIPTIONS AS CULTURAL PRODUCTS

In early 2014, a series of Internet memes appeared called “British people problems”.
Tongue-in-cheek, these “problems of excessive politeness” included the following:

- I don’t feel well but I don’t want to disturb my doctor.
- Having my hair cut, the barber said, ‘Is that alright?’ I nodded. It wasn’t.
- A man in the supermarket was browsing the food I wanted to browse, so I had to
  pretend to look at things I didn’t even want until he left.
- Yesterday, I arrived at a mini roundabout simultaneously with two other drivers
  from other directions. We’re still here.
- I live outside the UK so when I say ‘with all due respect’ nobody realises I’m
  insulting them (The Meta Picture, 2014).

These extreme (and yet oh so everyday!) non-confrontational behaviours,
putatively ‘typical’ British and funny because they are so recognizably familiar, are
examples of an important discourse type within intercultural relations: cultural self-
descriptions.

Online social space, including social media such as Facebook, Tumblr, Instagram,
and Flickr, can be theorized, in Habermasian terms, as public sphere (Chen, 2012).
This is a discursive space in which social ‘realities’ are negotiated and constructed.
This process, the ‘social imaginary’, works through the complex mutual presence of action and reaction, display and response:

I wear my own kind of hat, but in doing so I am displaying my style to all of you, and in this, I am responding to your self-display, even as you will respond to mine. If my hat can express my particular kind of cocky, yet understated self-display, then this is because of how the common language of style has evolved between us up to this point. … It matters to each one of us as we act that the others are there, as witness of what we are doing, and thus as co-determiners of the meaning of our action. (Taylor, 2004, n.p.)

Over time, social constructions produced in this way become invisible social ‘realities’, as tangible and ‘real’ as any other products or artifacts of a cultural environment. Thus the ‘social imaginary’ is described as:

That set of symbols and conceptual frameworks particular to a social collectivity or network, which have been built up, modified, mediated and transformed over time, and which are drawn on in the sense-making process … The imaginary refers to the ways in which a nation or other grouping sees both itself, and others, that is, those considered not part of itself. … The media here is understood as a mediator and shaper of that set of projected and shared envisionings. (Lewis, 2009, p. 227)

In the same way as technologies are products of a given place and time, social constructions are similarly produced rather than natural. However, discursively produced social ‘reality’ is just as ‘real’ as any other cultural products:

The child is brought up in a culture where he or she simply takes social reality for granted. We learn to perceive and use cars, bathtubs, houses, money, restaurants, and schools without reflecting on the special features of their ontology. They seem as natural to us as stones and water and trees. (Searle, 1996, p. 4)

Searle (1996, p. 12) differentiates between intrinsic facts (e.g. ‘this object is a stone’) and observer-relative facts (e.g. this object is a paperweight). And the problem with social ‘reality’, produced in social imaginary, is that while it purports to be intrinsically factual (e.g. British people are excessively polite) it is, instead, observer relative. That is, as Holliday (2013) describes, cultural descriptions (whether of the Self or the Other) are, themselves, non-neutral cultural artifacts, products of the culture making the description.

So whether a culture is ostensibly describing itself (as in the example above, of British over politeness) or describing another culture (as below, in the case of Steinbeck's 'Russians') cultural descriptions are cultural products specific to the culture that is doing the describing. This is particularly obvious when a cultural Other is constructed in the absence of any real-life experience of the cultural Other.
Quoting conversations from his 1960 travels around the USA, Steinbeck (1962, p. 143–144) shows how ‘Russians’ were discursively constructed as a foil to American identities:

‘Hardly a day goes by somebody doesn’t take a belt at the Russians’ … I asked, ‘Anybody know any Russians around here?’ … [He] laughed. ‘Course not. That’s why they’re valuable. Nobody can find fault with you if you take out after the Russians. … Man has a fight with his wife, he belts the Russians.’

You think then we might be using the Russians as an outlet for something else, for other things? … Maybe everybody needs Russians. I’ll bet even in Russia they need Russians. Maybe they call it Americans.

In addition, culture-specific social imaginaries divide society discursively into taxonomies and categories that are, themselves, no more intrinsically ‘real’ than statements made about characteristics supposedly true of those deemed to be in the various categories. Who, for example, is culturally ‘Western’? Who are “the 99%”, or the “1%”, of society? Who are “the global poor”? What does it mean to be ‘Indigenous’? Who is a native speaker of a language? What does it mean to be Black, or White, or any other category?

Our modern imaginary [includes]. categories of process and classification which happen or have their effects behind the backs of the agents. We each can be placed in census categories in relation to ethnicity, or language, or income level, or entitlements in the welfare system, whether or not we are aware of where we fit, or what consequences flow from this. (Taylor, 2004, n.p.)

So both the allocation of cultural categories and the ascribing of ‘typical’ characteristics to people in these categories are observer-relative constructions rather than natural ‘facts’. Why, then, divide the world discursively into Self and Other and ascribe descriptions to each side? In the next section, I consider the uses of cultural divisions and descriptions.

CULTURAL DESCRIPTIONS AS CULTURAL MIRRORS

Visual representations of cultural Otherness have long been used to make sense of the Self by drawing a defining boundary around characteristics of the putative non-Self. Twenty five centuries ago, for instance, following violent altercations with cultural Others in the Persian and Peloponnesian Wars, Athenian identity work was undertaken through visual art appearing on pottery: vases of this period depict stylized, Athenian-imagined cultural Others, including both real (e.g. Thracians) and imagined (e.g “Amazon”) out-groups. Thracians were portrayed as savages, wild, and stupid, with beards and tattoos marking them as Other (Moodie, 2013, p. 36), while the mythical Amazons, a formidable and fearsome female enemy, symbolized Athenian fears about matriarchal society and the dangers of women’s
power over men \((\textit{ibid}, \text{p. 43})\). This both reflected, and in part constructed, the way Athenian citizens of the period understood their \textit{own} identities in contrast to those of imagined, and/or constructed, cultural ‘Others’ (Miller, 2000; Moodie, 2013). As has been theorized of this context, as now, a group’s depictions of those it regards and constructs as cultural Others reveal as much, if not more, about the depicting culture themselves than those they purport to represent (Bohak, 2005). Indeed, Miller (2000, p. 413) describes as integral to the discourse of \textit{ipséité} (Selfhood) the construction and articulation of \textit{altérité} (Otherness). So Athenian culture, masculine and civilized, is saying as much about \textit{itself} as the Other in its visual depictions of Otherness.

Another vivid example of this type of projecting of the artist’s paradigm onto that ostensibly under scrutiny is given by Gilbert, who writes about the difficulty of extracting ourselves from our own time and paradigm in order to imagine ourselves in another:

Most reasonably sized libraries have a shelf of futurist tomes from the 1950s with titles such as \textit{Into the Atomic Age} and \textit{The World of Tomorrow}. If you leaf through a few of them you will quickly notice that each of these books says more about the times in which it was written than about the times it was meant to foretell. Flip a few pages and you’ll find a drawing of a housewife with a Donna Reed hairdo and a poodle skirt flitting about her atomic kitchen, waiting for the sound of her husband’s rocket car before getting the tuna casserole on the table. … You’ll also notice that some things are missing. The men don’t carry babies, the women don’t carry briefcases, the children don’t have pierced eyebrows or nipples, and the mice go \textit{squeak} instead of \textit{click}. … What’s more, all the people of African, Asian and Hispanic origin seem to have missed the future entirely. (Gilbert, 2007, p. 111)

In the same way as the ancient Athenians and the 1950s futurists were paradigm bound in space, culture, and time, and could not depict cultural Otherness except through their \textit{own} ontological, epistemological and normative paradigms, so the children’s drawings that are the subject of this book provide insight into the young artists’ \textit{own} cultures and times, including dominant social imaginaries and narratives about cultural Others, and normative notions of the Self as defined by the boundaries of cultural Otherness.

This same process, of constructing and reducing an Other to feel good about the Self, lies behind Edward Said’s (1979, 1986, 1993) notion of Orientalism: the ‘Orient’ is a cultural and political construction of the hegemonic occident’s imagination. The Orient is essentialized, exoticized, and marginalized; it is denied its own voice and is, instead, (mis)represented through categorization, distortion, and reductionism. The Orient is thus Othered by Western discourse, a process enabled by imperialism and postcolonial maintenance of hegemony. Orientalism may exaggerate positive as well as negative traits, for instance Su-lin Yu (2002) critiques Julia Kristeva’s (1977) book \textit{About Chinese women} as an Orientalist fantasy in which Kristeva
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romanticizes China as historically matrilineal and Mao-era Chinese women as ‘autonomous, active, and sovereign rather than passive and non-participating … They are culturally superior to Western women’ (Yu, 2002, p. 6–7). Clearly, though, this is just as reductionist as negative Orientalism, as it constructs Chinese women as unchanging and homogenous. It may be a ‘nicer’ Orientalism, but it still disallows Chinese women individual variation, selves, and agency. So Orientalism, whether ostensibly positive or negative, entails reduction and essentialism of cultural Others.

Occidentalism is similar, and has been variously defined (Conceison, 2004, pp. 40–67). Here, I am taking it as the mirror image of Orientalism: the reduction and misrepresentation of the West by the East (Buruma & Margalit, 2004). One example of ‘foreignness’ being constructed for the purposes of self identity work is the use and positioning of foreign nationals in the People’s Republic of China; I have written about this more extensively elsewhere (Stanley, 2013). One venue in particular in which this is evident is on (party-state-controlled) television shows, in which the role of foreign nationals is “performing [as] China-loving foreigners” (Gorfinkel, 2011, p. 288). Gorfinkel and Chubb (2012) describe their own experiences of appearing on Chinese television, analysing both the way they were depicted and also the underlying purposes of these constructions. Having foreigners dressed up in traditional Chinese clothes, speaking Chinese, experiencing Chinese cultural artifacts (supposedly for the first time), and singing Chinese children’s songs works on a number of levels. First, it is a performance of ‘Chineseness’ that reflects how this is constructed locally. Second, it is a “showcase of foreigners’ love for China … contestants’ performances are frequently scripted to directly express attraction to, and love for, every aspect of China they encounter” (Gorfinkel & Chubb, 2012, p. 21). This serves to validate Chineseness through foreigners’ approving gaze and to construct a China that is the envy of outsiders. Third, these shows infantilize foreigners, positioning them in subordinate positions looking up to and learning from China; this includes “scenes of them bowing to a Chinese master, often a child” (Gorfinkel & Chubb, 2012, p. 22). Foreigners are asked to feign struggling to use chopsticks and are represented as “wide-eyed, comedic, and eager to learn and discover the wonders of a mysterious and alien, yet wise and patient, China” (Gorfinkel & Chubb, 2012, p. 13). This constructs a Chinese-dominated ‘cosmopolitanism’ and the “metanarrative of China’s national revival to its former, exceptional, central status under the guidance of the [Communist Party]” (Gorfinkel & Chubb, 2012, p. 18). Finally, these shows construct Chineseness as unique and foreigners as essentially different. As an example, song lyrics on one show described ‘people with different skin and hair colours “curling their tongues” to speak the “elegant Chinese language” devised by the “clever Chinese people”’ (Gorfinkel & Chubb, 2012, p. 11). The message is that although foreigners may speak Chinese and appear on Chinese television they are irreducibly foreign and not Chinese. This reinforces a strong construction of a deep-seated binary of Self and Other in Chinese discourses. While foreigners may be accepted, they are always excepted in China. McDonald (2011) writes:
A series of … ‘Great Walls of Discourse’ has over the years been erected between ‘the Chinese’ … and ‘the Foreigners’, who with the best will in the world will never succeed in bridging the awful gap of their inherent foreignness. (p. 1)

The Chinese habit of dividing the world into two parts – commonly expressed as guόnewi ‘inside the country’ and guόnewai ‘outside the country’ – is a persuasive one, and is supported by a whole discourse[.] (pp. 54–55)

BUT THEY ARE (RACIALLY?) DIFFERENT FROM US!

In some of the cases in this book, as with the Great Wall of Discourse described above, racial differences may be cited as an irreducible, essential, ostensibly biological difference. But race, in most literature, is a social construction (Coleman, 2009; Curtis & Romney, 2006; Johnson, 2003; Kubota & Lin, 2006; Kubota & Lin, 2009; Lott, 1999; McDonald, 2011, pp. 214–216; Romney, 2010; Root, 2007). This is not to deny that human bodies are different from each other and that some of these differences have social salience. Rather, racial categories are a human invention that are not supported biologically; our genetic makeup does vary, but this variation does not reliably correspond with our racial categories (Kubota & Lin, 2009, pp. 2–3). One researcher/performance artist working on the social construction of race and identity has conducted a series of ‘Projects’ in which she performs different racialized identities:

After observing particular subcultures and ethnic groups, Nikki S. Lee adopts their general style and attitude through dress, gesture, and posture. … She then spends several weeks participating in the group’s routine activities and social events … From schoolgirl to senior citizen, punk to yuppie, rural White American to urban Hispanic, Lee’s personas traverse age, lifestyle, and culture. Part sociologist and part performance artist, Lee infiltrates these groups so convincingly that in individual photographs it is difficult to distinguish her from the crowd. However, when photographs from the projects are grouped together, it is Lee’s own Korean ethnicity, drawn like a thread through each scenario, which reveals her subtle ruse. … [W]hat convinces us that she belongs [is] her uncanny ability to strike the right pose. … Lee believes that ‘essentially life itself is a performance’. (Museum of Contemporary Photography; Chicago, 2005–2009)

As Lee’s photographs indicate, race is constructed as much by dress, gesture, posture, and ‘attitude’ (i.e. performance) as it is by phenotype.

However, in some cultural contexts, ideas and discourses about ‘race’ are rather different. Invocations of ‘race’ as a unifying or dividing category have recurred in Chinese political and social life for centuries (Befu, 1993; Gries, 2005, 2006; Sautman, 1997; Suzuki, 2007), and national mythmaking holds that the Yellow Emperor, born almost five millennia ago in (or of) the Yellow River valley, is the
progenitor of all modern Chinese people; the ‘yellow race’ (Allan, 1991; Chow, 1997). Since the early twentieth century, Darwinian science has been invoked and indigenized in China, with ‘race’ constructed as extending from Yellow-Emperor patrilineage and legitimized by taxonomies of human bodies and the ‘fact’ of unique, homogenous ‘Chinese’ phenotypical characteristics. This has included the use of *homo sapiens* fossil finds in China as evidence for a racial ‘Chineseness’ and the use of anthropometrics to assess the bodily dimensions of minorities, including Tibetans, to ‘prove’ their Chineseness. The ideas of place, race, and nation have thus been put to work in the name of national unity and state legitimacy. This includes the creation of a selective official history whose goal is:

[T]o present a singular correct view of ‘the real China’ … [t]he party-state works hard to assert an essentialized primordial view of Chinese civilization, identity, and territory. … by promoting [what Jiang Zemin called] ‘correct theories and unified thinking’. … Any arguments that offer a more complex view of Chinese history [and] identity … are dismissed as ‘unobjective’ examples of ‘Western bias’. … This unified understanding of China leads to a proliferation of pronouncements in the official media about what ‘the Chinese people think’ and what ‘the Chinese people feel’. (Callahan, 2009, pp. 33–34)

China’s national identity discourse is constructed on the basis of a (raced) Self and in opposition to (raced) foreign Others. Foreign gestures that are less than fully supportive of this dominant construction of Chineseness, including the putative integrity and uniqueness of the Chinese ‘race’, are routinely condemned as (at best) foreigners’ inability to understand China ‘properly’ or (at worst) *ad hominem* attacks and accusations of ‘China bashing’ (Callahan, 2009, pp. 33–34).

CULTURAL IDENTITY: THE INTERSECTIONAL AND THE NARRATIVE

The same may be true of other cultures’ and individuals’ identity discourses, including those of the Indigenous cultures discussed in this book. Race may be invoked as the primary defining characteristic of an individual’s identity affiliation. However, racial labels, like identity narratives themselves, are constructions, and individuals’ identities are also situated in other ways that are salient to their (cultural) identities. Martin describes how individuals’ (and groups’) identities are constructed and narrated:

One proposes one’s identity in the form of a narrative in which one can re-arrange, re-interpret the events of one’s life in order to take care both of permanence and change, in order to satisfy the wish to make events concordant in spite of the inevitable discordances likely to shake the basis of identity. Narrative identity, being at the same time fictitious and real, leaves room for variations on the past – a ‘plot’ can always be revised … it is an open-ended identity which gives meaning to one’s practice. (Martin, 1995, p. 8)
This means that phenotypical characteristics are a factor in our identities, both in terms of the identities we appropriate for ourselves and the identities attributed to us by others, but they are not the whole story. Also salient are the ways in which we perform, or display ourselves; as Taylor says above ‘I can wear my own kind of hat’. This means that ascribed identity labels are not deterministic of who we are and what we are like:

[M]eaning and identities are created in actual daily performances against a backdrop of norms and expectations held by speakers about how actors in certain social categories do, or should, act and talk. Thus, speakers and hearers have knowledge about forms of language typically used by speakers of different identities in particular situations … [the resulting] indexes, and knowledge of them, become part of Discourses that are shared widely in a culture, and are therefore resources which can be used in interaction for identity performances. (Kiesling, 2006, p. 265)

This is important to the chapters that follow, as it is important to pluralize both the Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultures discussed. Other identity labels including gender, sexuality, age, occupation, income, place of residence, and even race/ethnicity, may be more or less salient to the identity narrative/s of any individual or group than the fact of their Indigeneity or non Indigeneity (whether ascribed and/or appropriated). This speaks to the intersectionality of identities: we are much more than members of the Indigenous or non Indigenous ‘cultures’ to which we are allocated in the binaries of this book, and elsewhere. So while this book’s premise is to explore how the Self and Other are discursively constructed and represented(depicted), the binary labels of Self and Other are necessarily arbitrary and may be problematic, and should not be seen as the only, perhaps not even the main, and certainly not deterministic, identity labels or narratives of the people concerned.

So, for instance, in the novels of Peruvian writer Jaime Bayly, Indigenous characters are frequently represented. Indigenous identities in Peru, particularly urban Lima, are widely regarded as a ‘ruinous deficit’ (Niño-Murcia, 2003, p. 125), and Bayly’s depictions are no exception: ‘cholo’ men (to use a common derogatory term for Indigenous Quechua and Aymara Peruvians) are routinely depicted as savage, drunk, dirty, and immoral, while ‘chola’ women are flimsy caricatures of people at the very edges of acceptability: maids and whores (Aguiló Mora, 2013). This is rather ironic in novels that lament the discrimination suffered by (urban, male, middle-class) homosexuals in Limeña society: Bayly’s protagonists are mostly young, White, relatively wealthy, educated, and urban, and shuttle transnationally between Lima and Miami. These depictions speak to identities that are rather more complex than an Indigenous/non-Indigenous binary would suggest. Identities are gendered, so while Indigenous men may be stereotyped as drunk and wild, Indigenous women are regarded as controllable, subservient housemaids. Here, attributed gendered identities trump Indigenous identities, creating intersectional identities of gender-and-ethnicity. The same process occurs along other axes of
perceived and constructed difference, too: youth, Whiteness, relative wealth, education, urban(e) identities and transnationalism and travel. ‘Cultural’ identities, then, are intersectional and narrative, rather than binary and deterministic.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has provided a brief overview, and various examples, of the practices and problematics of cultural labelling, describing, and Othering. My intention is to inform and problematize the discussions that follow: to what extent, in the chapters that follow, are participants on either ‘side’ erroneous conflating intrinsic facts with observer-relative ‘facts’? To what extent are within-culture constructions, whether about the Self or the Other, being taken as true (like the British people’s problems) rather than for what they are (which is constructions and stories about who we are, or wish to be)? And, when this occurs, as surely it will (after all, when I doodle even a simple cat I cannot help but say a lot about my own culture and norms; what more will be exposed when children draw the Self and the Other?) when this occurs, what happens? Is the process of in-group construction being used to support and feel good about the Self, as we saw with Athenian depictions of Thracians, Steinbeck’s ‘Russians’, and Western foreigners appearing on Chinese television shows? Is it being used to create cultural unity and harmony (perhaps a good thing), and is this being done at the expense of cultural Others (perhaps a bad thing)? And how are cultural groups allocated anyway? Do I (mainly) appropriate my own cultural labels, or are they (mainly) attributed to me? And which of the many axes of potential difference and significance are most salient in my own, and my groups’, identity narratives, and how do I negotiate the intersectionalities of culture, gender, race, place, and every other potential label?

So many questions. This chapter has raised important, theoretical issues with a view to deepening the debate within and resulting from the chapters that follow. It is not my intention to propose that we stop describing Others -whether in words or pictures- indeed, to aim to do so would be akin to trying to hold back the tide. Instead, I want to raise these issues around what is going on whenever we depict Otherness, and to expose some of the inner workings of why we do it, how the process works, and what happens as a result. It is also important to mention, as I have above, that ‘cultural’ identities are far from unproblematic objectivities; culture is shifting, narrative, and plural, and we are no more determined by the categories into which we can be fitted than Nikki S. Lee is defined by whatever set of clothes and gestures she appropriates in any given photograph.

What does this mean for the readings of the chapters that follow? My advice is to try to approach the racism that you will find with as much compassion as you can muster: the kids who depict Australian Aboriginal Others as living as savages, or who depict urban Swedes as totally out of touch with happiness and nature are not coming from places of hatred. They are, as we all are, acculturated by the social imaginaries around us. No social construction of identity can ever be entirely neutral
and, as with Orientalist and Occidentalist depictions, all cultural descriptions are products of the cultures in which they originate. The stories, and drawings, and descriptions that follow, then, are the starting points for discussions that, I hope, will be informed by the theoretical discussion in this chapter. It is not enough to ‘correct’ children’s perceptions of the Other (as to replace one social construction with another is still to indulge in cultural labelling and describing, a conceptual rabbit hole down which it is possible to disappear for a very long time). Instead, the way forward from what may otherwise be a series of racist, problematic misunderstandings is to raise awareness of exactly the issues discussed in this chapter. This is what the book aims to do, by contrasting kids’ drawings from different cultures so as to show that cultural description is at the same time both particular to the given society and universal. And from a growing awareness of such universals, I hope, can come understanding.

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EVA ALERBY

2. ‘A PICTURE TELLS MORE THAN A THOUSAND WORDS’

Drawings Used as Research Method

INTRODUCTION

‘A picture tells more than a thousand words’, is a common saying. Given that a picture tells more than a thousand words – how can we understand and use this expression? How can a picture, or an image, be analysed and used as part of educational research? In this chapter the use of images, and more specifically drawings, will be explored. First, I will elaborate on pictures as expression and as a form of language. Next, the collection of data in form of drawings will be illuminated and discussed. Furthermore, I will explore one way to analyse drawings, and finally, challenges and possibilities of the use of drawings will be discussed in relation to research. When exploring the use of drawings, previous studies will serve as examples (Alerby, 2008; Westman, Alerby & Brown, 2013). However, focus is mainly on how the drawings have been, and can be, collected and analysed, and not on the results per se of the respective studies.

IMAGES AS EXPRESSION

Human experience, knowledge, visions, attitudes, views et cetera can be expressed and communicated in many different ways. In other words, as humans we have the ability to use many forms of ‘language’, including different forms of symbolic and visual systems, or so called ‘non-verbal’ language (Alerby, 2012). However, the most common way for human beings to express one’s self and communicate with others is to use spoken words. Another common language is written words. By making a brief history of our Western culture, the most valued genres of written texts, such as literary novels, academic texts, official documents or various types of reports, have almost exclusively been produced without images or illustrations (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001). For quite a long time, monomodality, namely the use of one type of character in communication, has been clearly and explicitly advocated. Views of human language have though, over the last few decades, changed in society as well as in schools (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001). Multimodality is now part of everyday educational practice (Hurtig, 2007). This view has broadened perspectives on language, and includes assumptions that spoken or written language may not be
enough to fully represent humans’ experience, knowledge, visions, attitudes, views et cetera. This broadened perspective of language has in turn affected research, increasing the use of multimodal methods, when the purpose is to grasp, for example, humans’ experience of different phenomena in the world.

Beyond our ordinary spoken or written words, there is, according to Polanyi (1969), a rich domain of that which cannot be spoken that constantly beckons us. Given this, spoken or written words alone may not be enough to represent human knowledge – there are also silent dimensions, which he calls ‘tacit knowledge’, beyond what is explicitly expressed. Merleau-Ponty (1995) also stresses that not everything can be communicated verbally – there is something that exists beyond what is said, something that cannot be communicated verbally, which he calls a silent and implicit language. However, this silent and implicit language can appear through visual presentations, such as different kinds of art forms. One way to evoke some of what lies hidden in the tacit domain of our knowledge is therefore to use different forms of visual expression (Alerby & Brown, 2008).

Alerby and Bergmark (2012) explore the use of different visual art forms in research – photographs, lino-prints and drawings – from a life-world perspective, and emphasise the similarities of the process of collecting the data, as well as the process of analysis. It is not the art form per se that is of significance: it is the process of analysing and interpreting the meaning of the image. There are, however, differences to be observant of, for example a photograph can only depict what is in the nearby area of the one taking the photo. This circumstance can be compared with a drawing, in which the person making the drawing can depict imaginary phenomenon or objects, and the same is true for a lino-print. In this chapter the focus is, however, on drawings as a way to express experiences.

A drawing can be used to both express experiences and stimulate reflections, and Alerby and Elídóttir (2003) argue that different ‘non-verbal languages’, in the form of images, evoke reflections, which in turn are connected to lived experience. Because an image, such as a drawing, can be regarded as a form of language, it can be interpreted. Expressed in other words – an object of art can be seen as a text (van Manen, 1990). Even though this kind of text does not consist of a verbal language, it is a language with its own structure and meaning. Given this, a drawing can express something in the same way that spoken or written words can express something. Therefore, language has to be regarded as much more than oral and written speech, and as Dewey (1991) suggests “anything consciously employed as a sign is, logically, language” (p. 170). Following Dewey’s view, paintings, illustrations and other visuals, can be one way to communicate and express, for example, experiences, and therefore also can be used as a method when conducting research. The use of drawings as empirical data on different topics has been embraced by myself and several other researchers (see, for example, Alerby, 1998, 2000, 2003; Alerby & Bergmark, 2012; Alerby & Brown, 2008; Alerby & Istenic Starcic, 2008; Aronsson & Andersson, 1996; Herting & Alerby, 2009; Jonsson, Sarri, & Alerby, 2012; Luttrell, 2010; Sewell, 2011; Yates, 2010).
WHAT A DRAWING CAN TELL – WAYS TO COLLECT AND ANALYSE DRAWINGS

To start, it can be stressed that the methodological basis of an empirical research study consists, in general perspectives, of two parts. One part concerns the methods which are used to collect the empirical material. The other part concerns the method for analysing the empirical material (Alerby, 2003). Let us start with the first part – to collect the empirical materials, in this case, drawings.

A starting point when collecting drawings is that the participants are given the opportunity to consider and reflect on their experiences of the studied phenomena, but instead of putting their experiences into words they are asked to make a drawing depicting those experiences. To do this they are free to choose different types of drawing techniques, using paper and pencils, crayons, watercolours, et cetera. It is of importance that the participants are told that it does not matter how skilful they are in making the drawing, since it is merely a means to elucidate their experiences (Alerby, 2003). The participants can with advantages be divided into smaller groups and spread out over the room in an attempt to avoid influencing each other when making the drawings. The process of making the drawings can also be done as a group activity, where several participants together are reflecting and discussing their experiences and depicting these in a joint drawing. Which approach chosen – as a solitary or a group activity – is all dependent on the aim of the study.

In connection to creating the drawings, the participants are asked to reflect on and orally discuss their experiences depicted in the drawings with the researcher. An alternative, or a complement to oral comments, is to let the participant express their experiences in writing. Thus the participants have the opportunity to discuss their drawings by giving oral and/or written comments on the experiences that they have shaped in the drawing. It is of significance to note that the question is not what they have drawn, but about their experiences depicted in the drawings. These conversions can be audio recorded and subsequently transcribed, or noted in a researcher journal.

The themes, which gradually emerge, consist in turn of internal variations in the form of different aspects. These aspects reflect the great variety of the participants’ experiences within the respective themes and therefore make each theme what it is. It is essential to stress that the emerging themes not should be regarded as independent and self-contained categories, which are qualitatively separate (Alerby, 2003). Instead there are connections and links within and between the different themes that have emerged during the analysis process – the themes are mutually interplaying with each other. Still, there are central and common characteristics in each theme that make the theme what it is, and it is in turn the different themes that make the phenomenon what it is (van Manen, 1990).

Alerby and Bergmark (2012) claim that it is of importance to stress that individual experiences are not the focus per se, when striving to illuminate and explore different phenomena by using images, “but rather a collective understanding of a given phenomenon” (p. 97). Key aspects to keep in mind when analysing the drawings
are, according to Alerby and Bergmark (2012), openness and humility towards the studied phenomenon and the participants. As researcher, it is also of significance to be aware of one’s own pre-understanding of the studied phenomenon, especially when it comes to the analyses. It is though not a question of ridding oneself of earlier experiences and pre-understandings, but to raise awareness about them. In addition, it is of importance that the analysis process is attempting for a holistic interpretation of the meaning of the drawings. To do that, it is of significance to view the drawings with openness and humility, but also with wonder – all with the purpose to get an overall understanding of the meaning expressed in the drawings.

To summarise the analysis process, the analysis of an image – such as a drawing – can be allocated in four steps:

i) searching for qualitative similarities and differences in the meaning of the image and comments,

ii) comparing the data, finding different patterns in all images and comments,

iii) creating a mind-map to document the interpretations, and

iv) formulating themes describing the understanding of the meaning of the images and comments (Alerby & Bergmark, 2012, p. 101).

The analysis process can be described as passing through different phases of “… reflectively appropriating, of clarifying, and of making explicit the structure of meaning of the lived experience” (van Manen, 1997, p. 77). In accordance with Alerby and Bergmark (2012) this work is driven by a desire to understand the studied phenomenon and to make meaning. During the analysis it is therefore a matter of forming themes of the participants’ experiences, and Jonsson, Sarri and Alerby (2012), stress the importance of not letting this process be governed by certain predetermined rules or stages. Instead the process involves allowing the phenomenon to appear precisely as it is, a free act of ‘seeing’ according to van Manen (1990), and not a rule-bound process. Thus, the analysis of the drawings aims to grasp and create understandings of the meaning of the experiences molded by the participants making the drawings. As a final phase of the analysis process, the interpretation made by the researcher can be reviewed by relating the findings to previous research.

Bengtsson (2001) stresses that the process of understanding experiences through images cannot fully lead to a total understanding of a phenomenon, but that it involves exploration and elucidation which is as close as possible to the phenomenon itself. Voicing experiences through images can contribute to a personal and in-depth meaning of a phenomenon (Alerby & Bergmark, 2012).

Using pluralistic methods of expressions – drawings in combination with oral and/or written comments – gives the participants opportunities to express themselves in different ways, which in turn gives extensive perspectives of the studied phenomenon (Alerby & Bergmark, 2012). A fundamental assumption is that oral and/or written comments provide further dimensions to the image and vice versa, and I argue that a movement towards a combination of images and words, written or oral, will enrich
the entire understanding, or expressed in other words – the whole is more than merely the sum of the parts.

The interaction between the image and the words is the strength of this method, which cannot be achieved when relying merely on visual, written or oral data. Alerby and Bergmark (2012) argue that the rationale for using drawings in combination with oral and/or written comments is based on ontological and methodological assumptions stemming from the philosophy of the life-world. These assumptions advocate an inclusive view of humans as participating in the world, addressing the whole being: thoughts, emotions, actions, bodily expressions.

It is now time to give some examples from previous research (Westman, Alerby & Brown, 2013; Westman, 2014) that used drawings as empirical data, with a focus on the analysis process. The study has a focus on teacher work, both from a teacher perspective – teachers’ own experiences of being a teacher, and from a student perspective – how students experience teacher work.

ENACTING THE METHODOLOGY

A group of teachers were given the opportunity to depict their experiences of teacher work. The participating teachers were asked to respond to the following task by making a drawing: Reflect on your experiences of being a teacher. But instead of putting your reflections into words, make a drawing depicting what came to your mind. In addition, each teacher had the opportunity to give written and oral comments on their drawings in direct connection to creating the drawing. One of the teachers made the drawing shown in Figure 1 and commented on it in writing in the following words: “To be a teacher is to protect the students, to take care of them. A teacher has many eyes.”

Figure 1. A teacher made this drawing when asked to depict the experience of being a teacher (in Westman, Alerby, & Brown, 2013, p. 229).

The interpretation of the meaning of the drawing and the written comments is that the drawing expresses dimensions of caring and protection. The significance
of the teacher’s work is to take care of students in a protective manner. The teacher who made this drawing depicted these dimensions of a teacher’s work by literally embracing all the students portrayed in the drawing. In addition, and in order to see and acknowledge all students, the teacher figuratively emphasized the need for having many eyes, which is also shown in the drawing. Westman, Alerby, and Brown (2013) interpreted this drawing as part of the theme ‘To care, nurture and protect’. Some of the drawings in this theme emphasise care as embodied, in this example (Figure 1) as observant eyes, but also as embracing arms. The drawing shows the teacher having primary responsibility for the students’ well-being and security. The teacher is also depicted as the largest figure surrounding the students, thus keeping others out, as in a kind of parent-child relationship.

Another example of drawings from the same study, but in this example students have depicted their experiences of teachers work, is shown in Figure 2. This drawing is also part of the theme ‘To care, nurture and protect’, but from a student perspective.

In the drawing, shown in Figure 2, the student has depicted the class as a tree, where the students are the fruit. Into the trunk of the tree, ‘2B’ is carved – the class to which the students belong. The three class teachers are depicted as gardeners, carefully nurturing the tree to ensure that the fruit – the students – grow to their full potential. The student who made the drawing commented on it as follows: “This tree is my class and this one is my classmates. I think classmate like fruit, like apples. The teachers’ job is to grow the tree. Mr X gives me water. Miss Y manure and Miss P mud to make the tree strong and the fruit grow”. This drawing is another example of caring and protecting dimensions of teachers’ work, but also dimensions of nurturing.
Another example of teachers’ experiences of teacher work is depicted in Figure 3. In this example a teacher is occupied with work several hours outside school. The teacher’s oral comment on the drawing is as follows: “The teacher is marking homework at home at 12.15 am while others are sleeping.”

*Figure 3. This drawing, made by a teacher, depicts the teacher still hard at work, even though it is the early hours of the morning (in Westman, Alerby, & Brown, 2013, p. 226).*

This example is showing the teacher controlled by factors and pressures external to the classroom, and the drawing is interpreted as part of the theme ‘To control and be controlled’. Given this, the teacher depicted in Figure 3 is controlled by external factors. However, according to some of the participating students they are in turn controlled by the rule of school and by the teacher (see Figure 4). Thus, it is not only the teacher who controls the students. External factors, such as the time (illustrated by the clock) and the schedule, also control the activities in the classroom and by that also control the students.

*Figure 4. A drawing, made by a student, depicting teacher work connected to control (in Westman, Alerby, & Brown, 2013, p. 226).*
Figures 3 and 4 both depict teacher work as involving aspects of control – teachers controlled by external factors such as marking homework, but also students controlled by the teacher and the role of school – and these drawings are part of the same theme: ‘To control and be controlled’.

In another study (Alerby, 2008), students were asked to express their experiences of school through drawings, complemented by oral comments. When analysing all the drawings, one of the emerging themes focused on social relationships. The drawings in this theme all focused on and depicted different types of social relationships in school, such as friendships between classmates, but also the relationship between the teacher and the students. In Figure 5 one of the students has depicted herself together with her friend; at the top of the drawing it is written “One needs to have friends”.

![Figure 5. Friendship between two classmates (in Alerby, 2008, p. 36).](image)

Another example in the same theme is shown in Figure 6, where one of the students depicted the teacher in the classroom and emphasised orally the importance of a good relationship between the teacher and the students.

![Figure 6. One student depicted the teacher in the classroom (in Alerby, 2008, p. 37).](image)

These two examples both emphasise relationships as positive and appreciated, but also the opposite was depicted and mentioned in the drawings – lack of friendship and
good social relationship between students, and between teacher and students. Given
this, the common feature in this theme was that the drawings depicted some kind of
social relationship – positive and appreciated as well as negative and unappreciated.

There are many ways to use and analyse drawings as empirical materials. In this
chapter I have illuminated and discussed one possible way to proceed. The above
drawings have served as examples to illustrate how this kind of visual data can be
analysed and interpreted. But there are also other ways, grounded in other ontological
assumptions. However, the presented way can be viewed as an inspiration and/or a
raw model to develop further.

When using drawings as a way to collect empirical data, as described and
exemplified above, the purpose of the analyses aims to grasp the meaning of the
depicted phenomenon. What is each drawing expressing, and what are the entire
drawings expressing as a whole? How can the significance of the drawings be
understood? But finally, what can be the benefit of this method, and what risks
can be identified? In the following, some challenges and possibilities when using
drawings as empirical data in research will be discussed.

CHALLENGES AND POSSIBILITIES WHEN USING DRAWINGS

When using drawings as empirical research data, some challenges are to conduct
the research process in ways that are rigorous and trustworthy, as well as accepted
by the scientific field, including other researchers (Alerby & Bergmark, 2012).
However, there are limits with being solely dependent on images as the only source
of empirical data. There is always a risk of over-generalization when presenting,
for example, experiences collectively (Robinson & Taylor, 2007). This risk is
though, not restricted to the use of drawings as a method to collect empirical data.
It is a common risk, regardless of whether the data consists of drawings, interviews
or written reflections, to name a few. However, Cook-Sather (2006) stresses the
potential risk of considering different experiences in a single and unified way. It
is therefore significant to be aware of the complexity of the analysis (Alerby &
Bergmark, 2012). It is also of importance to be responsive to the fact that the use
of images, such as drawings, as a research method, in some cases may not be
fruitful. It is all about the purpose of the study. However, when attempting to grasp
humans’ experiences, knowledge, visions, attitudes, views et cetera about different
phenomena in the world, the use of drawings can be one methodological approach.

It is, however, of importance to emphasise the intertwined combination of images
and words (Alerby & Bergmark, 2012). The oral and/or written comments provide
a further dimension to the drawing and vice versa – something which cannot be
achieved when relying on only visual, written or oral data. This combination of
images and words also enhances credibility and rigor when using images, such as
drawings. The interaction between the image and the words is therefore a strength
of this method, and the rationale for using visual art combined with oral and/or
written language is, as mentioned above, based on ontological and epistemological
assumptions stemming from the philosophy of the life-world. As an approach, the philosophy of the life-world advocates a comprehensive view of humans, expressed as openness and humility to the participants’ experiences. This in turn, results in the need for pluralistic methods, addressing the whole being, with the utmost purpose to accomplish an all-inclusive understanding of a phenomenon.

Given this, a benefit of the use of drawings as a method, presented in this chapter, is that the participants are invited to share their experiences through different expressions. Using drawings in combination with oral and/or written language gives opportunities for the participants to express themselves in different ways. Alerby and Bergmark (2012) claim that pluralistic methods reveal not only a broad perspective, as opposed to a limited view, but also provide a deep perspective of the studied phenomenon. Sewell (2011) stresses that this research method can “provide access to different meanings, interpretations and themes not possible through other methods” (p. 177).

The saying, ‘a picture tells more than a thousand words’ may be true – images tell a lot, can be of great importance, and add tacit information beyond what is expressed explicitly in words. As has been stressed in this chapter, the benefit is to use a combination of different methods – a pluralistic approach – when trying to explore humans’ experiences of different phenomena in the world. To conclude, let people use as many languages, or expressions, as possible – verbal as well as visual – when trying to shed light on and give voice to human experience.

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A PICTURE TELLS MORE THAN A THOUSAND WORDS


