INTRODUCTION TO SECTION 3

This section of the book picks up the central concerns of the volume both in providing exemplars of how the transformative approach is being instantiated in practice and in foregrounding how Academic Literacies can engage generatively with other theories which inform approaches to writing. It focuses in particular on the "semiotic stuff" of writing for knowledge making with an emphasis on changing textual and semiotic practices in society more widely and the implications of these for text creation and meaning making. Although the contributions in this section range widely in terms of both approach and contexts, they all point to the transformative possibilities in the work they describe. Whilst some focus upon the theoretical underpinnings necessary for understanding emergent textual configurations, challenging our taken-for-granted assumptions about what we value, others provide detailed accounts and/or personal reflections of practice around supporting student writers. In three of the contributions the "digital" offers an organizing frame with regard to the changing status of knowledge and the potential for engaging in transformative practices for both readers and writers. All offer a window onto everyday work that we hope will inspire readers to scrutinize and rethink some of their/our own practices.

Fiona English takes a close lens to the notion of genre, arguing that we need to move on from identifying the features of genres and teaching these to students. Her research indicates that our concern should be with what genres can actually *do* and how they come to shape our thinking and our knowledge production. Her interest is in how a transformative academic literacies perspective can underpin both classroom activity and theory with respect to genre pedagogy. For English, genre is no longer merely a pedagogic goal but becomes a pedagogic resource. Illustrating this move, she offers examples of what she calls "regenring" and explains what happened when her students reworked their essays using a range of different genres. This not only made visible how genres work but impacted on student's disciplinary knowledge, engagement and understanding. English's approach shows how an academic literacies perspective can actively engage with other theoretical traditions to transform how we might think about writing work. As she points out, genre work in writing pedagogy is drawn from a range of theoretical traditions but there is a danger that when these become translated into practice the focus for students is on the reproduction of genres and, therefore, of knowledge. In contrast, "regenring" draws in the academic literacies frame, theoretically and methodologically, and helps student to engage at the level of epistemology (thus revealing the transformative nature of what she proposes), so that students can become producers of knowledge.

Lynn Coleman also extends the theoretical lens in offering a further illustra-

tion of how academic literacies can engage generatively with other traditions. She does this through a detailed exploration of the semiotic practices that emerge when sets of practices drawn from the contrasting contexts of industry and academia are brought together in a graphic design course. Her interest is in broader structuring processes and how texts come to be within the curriculum, arguing that combining academic literacies research and Bernsteinian perspectives can help us to understand how curricula, subjects and assessment practices are constructed. In this respect she explores "scamping," a term used in graphic design which refers to the process of making ideas visible through creating a drawing or sketch. She highlights the literacy practices that support scamping and uses Bernstein's concept of recontextualization to illuminate how these practices emerge from bringing together those from both professional and academic domains. She argues that we can track the privileging of particular literacy practices as professional-based practices intersect with and become transformed by academic-informed values and practices.

The transformative possibilities of visual representation are at the heart of Fay Stevens' chapter as she explores the value of collaborative journal writing in relation to issues of self and identity. Her concern is with the potential of collaborative journals for both individual and collective transformation. She contrasts students' expression of loss of identity and lack of creativity in their assessed academic writing with their experience of contributing to a collective journal and being able to represent who they felt they were or wanted to be. Stevens provides examples of the richness, diversity and combination of text type and image in this collaborative, social and creative space. Although contrasting strongly with the academic writing tasks with which they are more familiar, contributing to the journal appears to have enabled the students to develop an awareness of self, both in relation to being at university more generally and being a writer in a particular discipline. The entries created by the students suggest that image is central to this process of transformation and meaning making. In addition, Stevens draws on a range of theoretical perspectives—which broaden what we might traditionally see as those associated with academic literacies—to develop her argument that the journal is a method of inquiry rather than merely a space for writing.

Claire Penketh and Tasleem Shakur's concern is with a collaborative blog as an emergent textual practice. They outline how they used blogging in order to help make visible both students' and tutors' reading and writing practices. The blog was introduced on a course in human geography as a way of helping students to explore their understanding of key texts and make connections between these and their broader experiences. They did this by encouraging students to combine words with "found" images in their postings to the blog. Although the authors acknowledge that the reading of postmodern texts—a prerequisite for this course—was both challenging and difficult for students, the blog provided a shared space where students were able to explore what it meant to read and write differently in this context

using the combination of word and image. Penketh and Shakur believe that this gave their students the freedom to read in unpredictable ways, rather than always expecting the text they were reading to be transparent. The blog was not only potentially transformative for students, in relation to their reading practices, but also for the teachers as authors, who found themselves rethinking the role of writing in enhancing reading, which, they suggest transformed their own practices.

A transformative approach to meaning making is a key orientation to the work of Gillian Lazar and Beverley Barnaby. They consider the meaning and value of grammar outside of a prescriptive agenda and how working with grammar can relate to an academic literacies approach that scrutinizes the dominant values, norms and institutional practices around academic writing. Working with both university lecturers and students on the thorny issue of "poor grammar," they ask whether an academic literacies perspective can usefully incorporate a specific focus on grammar, when on the face of it this might signal a "study skills" approach. In tackling this conundrum, they offer worked through examples of the activities they introduced to students to help them reflect upon the relationship between choices of grammatical forms with aspects of their own identity. The authors explore some of the tensions that emerged between students' desire to "learn the rules" and the exploratory approach that they were asking students to engage with, which met with some resistance. They also examine their experiences of working with academic staff and moving away from surface level notions of grammar towards considerations of meaning making. They conclude that the role of the writing specialist is always to provide spaces for questioning and exploration in order to enable both students and their teachers to recognize the power of genuinely transformative attitudes towards grammar and its relationship to meaning making.

Diane Rushton, Cathy Malone, and Andrew Middleton's interest is with the integration of digital technologies into writing work with students. In attempting to open up possibilities for transformation, they consider the relationship between the spoken and the written word. In their chapter they report on the use of Digital Posters, which they have found offer students a different kind of space for them to experiment with their own academic voice. The authors argue that this contrasts with what is possible when students are working on their own academic writing. The screen capture technology they use relies on visual prompts from just one power point slide. Key to its success is that it requires students to respond verbally and spontaneously and that creating their own Digital Posters helps them to engage in their chosen topic in ways they are then able to take forward into their own academic writing.

Helen Bowstead's call for transformation goes out to academic literacies researchers and practitioners themselves, who, she believes, should be transgressing and challenging normative texts in their own work if the field is going to have a lasting impact on what we expect from our students. She develops this position

through a personal account of reflection and her dissatisfaction with the way in which, she argues, we attempt to impose one voice on our students, despite the diversity of an international student body. Her interest is in working with personal narrative and textual forms that embrace student heterogeneity, and in doing so she brings some complementary theoretical perspectives to sit alongside the academic literacies literature. Bowstead examines and questions her own complicity in imposing rules and norms around writing that the academy sanctions, which she suggests serve to make invisible issues of personhood for her students who are bringing rich experiences from outside the academy. She concludes that although academic literacies has opened up spaces for the exploration of meaning making, identity and power it is perhaps the case that those working in the field are not doing enough to actually challenge the institutional practices which are implicit in the kinds of texts they/we produce.

In the final chapter of this section, Colleen McKenna raises important questions about the spaces the digital offers for the transformation of writing practices. Through an expansion of Lea and Street's original framework, she demonstrates the dialogic and oppositional potential of some forms of digital academic writing. Her interest here is in the possibilities that online writing offers to be transformative for readers and writers, academics and students. Drawing on examples of digital texts from both these groups, she introduces the term "intertext" in order to capture the ways in which online texts are much more than a translation from one text type to another. She argues that digital intertexts always bring dimensions that are highly significant in the processes of meaning making and can disrupt the ways in which we build academic arguments and subvert the taken for granted conventions of academic writing. Although design always has rhetorical requirements that are central to meaning, McKenna illustrates how digital academic texts are offering new possibilities for reader-writer relationships, text production and distribution. Her contribution reminds us of the dominance and power of historical academic writing practices but at the same time also points to the slow uptake in valuing digital textual forms. The latter, she argues, have a transformative potential both in disrupting institutional regulation and offer different ways and opportunities for building scholarly identities.

This section closes with a conversation between Bruce Horner and Theresa Lillis who seek to understand each other's positions on the link between "difference" and transformation in the academy. At the centre of their conversation is the question of what is understood by "difference" and in particular what difference looks like in semiotic or textual terms. Horner cautions against valuing "different" textual forms (for example the mixing or meshing of languages) as necessarily indicating a challenging of dominant conventions, or of assuming that texts which use semiotic practices that differ from conventional academic writing necessarily signal greater authorial agency than texts which seem to simply enact dominant conventions.

Lillis agrees that there is a danger of reifying or fetishizing any specific semiotic form but also argues that there is an urgent need for the academy to recognize and value a greater range of linguistic and semiotic forms and practices than is currently the case within dominant assessment regimes. Horner argues that a way out of any potential impasse is to adopt what he calls a "spatiotemporal framework" and, drawing in particular on the work of Lu (e.g., 1994), emphasizes that a pedagogic goal must always be to explore with student writers the significance of their choices, whether these be, as Horner states "to iterate conventional discursive forms" or to make "ostensible breaks" with these forms.