Patchworked Selves: Tattoos as Permanently Becoming

Tina Le and Jackie Chicalese

Abstract: "Patchworked Selves" introduces a collaborative autoethnographic exploration of tattooing as a feminist rhetorical practice of agency, identity construction, relationality, and meaning-making. The authors borrow from the relationality of tattoo consultations and the approach of patchworking tattoos to bring their identities and experiences as tattooed feminists into focus through narrative vignettes. The included vignettes gesture toward how tattooed authoring and reading are complicated by dimensions such as race, gender, and class. They argue that though tattoos are permanent artifacts, their meanings are not static; in the authoring and reading of tattoos, identities and meanings are under ongoing construction.

Keywords: art, autoethnography, bodies, conversation, narrative

Doi: 10.37514/PEI-J.2026.28.2.13

Inspiration

Tattoos can be conceived as embodied visual artifacts upon which we analyze, negotiate, and compose stories about our lives and identities. Jaan Valsiner (2020) has described how "our skin becomes the arena for human meaning construction," in which "the 'real body' becomes a 'cultivated body'" (p. 23). Cultivated by tattoos, the body carries "bold statements (i.e., resistance, contradiction, upheaval, satisfaction, etc.) that can be read and understood" (Diptee, 2011, p. 43). As an alternative modality for rhetorical agency (Feibush, 2024), tattoos can be understood as acts of feminist agency that allow "individuals to make their own decisions about how they wish to live their lives…to constitute their worlds as they choose" (Foss & Griffin, 1995, p. 4).

Tattoos are opportunities for the wearer to agentively construct meaning, as Nancy Kang (2012) has written, "Each moment of [tattoo] acquisition is accompanied by a set of motivations and circumstances that the wearer often wishes to narrativize" (p. 74). Tattoos then provide rhetors modalities to write themselves into relationship with themselves and others—and to be read (DeMello, 2000). However, in addition to, or despite, its origin story, a tattoo gets shaded by additional narratives each time it is viewed. What viewers "read" or inscribe onto someone's tattoo is textured by what they "bring to the table"—the meanings that viewers "walk away with after experiencing a tattoo" are influenced by personal histories and dimensions such as race, gender, and class (Baltzer-Jaray & Rodriguez, 2012, p. 45). The rhetorical interplay between how tattoos are composed, narrated, and read provides rich grounds for exploring how feminists may use tattoos/tattooing to assert rhetorical and bodily agency and create relational spaces.

Taking inspiration from tattooing's relationality and narrativization, our article is an autoethnographic conversation exploring tattooing as a feminist rhetorical practice. Much like the tattoo consulting process, we began with oral conversations, telling stories and reflecting on our experiences with tattoos as embodied visual artifacts. We took notes while listening to each other share. Then, similar to how artists layer sketches to arrive at a stencil, we layered our ideas and scholarly voices to arrive at autoethnographic vignettes that explored tattoos as sites of meaning-making. We printed, cut out, and arranged our vignettes on a canvas, testing out proximity and distance that we felt resonated or complicated our experiences and the ways our

tattoos have been authored and read. Our work, in essence, is a patchwork of narratives—reminiscent of tattoos acquired over time, in which each tattoo holds its own significance, but coalesces into more dynamic constellations of meaning.

We view autoethnography, which allows researchers to gaze "through an ethnographic wide-angle lens, focusing outward on social and cultural aspects of their personal experience; then, [to] look inward, exposing a vulnerable self that is moved by and may move through, refract, and resist cultural interpretations" (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 739), as epistemologically feminist in its refusal to silo the critical and personal. Foregrounding the personal in critical exploration is especially crucial in feminist practices, as Vicki Bertram (1998) has noted that "feminist theory was, from its onset, shaped out of women's personal experiences" (p. 232). In the context of tattooing, this autoethnography is pointedly a response to how "before the popularization of tattoos in the late twentieth century, women were more often the subject of tattoos than the bearers" (Kang, 2012, p. 70). In other words, in using a feminist autoethnographic approach, we shift attention to our agency as bearers of tattoos and meaning-makers rather than subjects. We pose in reclaiming skin as a site of authorship, tattooing can be a feminist rhetorical practice—complicating externally-imposed readings, provoking conversations about the cultural forces that shade these readings, and creating relational spaces of solidarity where stories are exchanged.

Consultation & Stenciling

> *In the transfer from the two-dimensional to the three-dimensional, the artist asks us to move around in front of the mirror, noticing how the stencil shifts with our movements and the contours of our body.*

Tina: During high school, I slowly saved money from my foodservice job for the day I could get my first tattoo. I remember asking my coworker, mid-40s, where he got his tattoos. He had accumulated most of his collection during "$30 Thursdays" at a now-defunct shop. Although he laughingly said that he would choose a different shop if he could go back in time, he spoke fondly about his reasons for the tattoos as he pointed at each one. I felt drawn to how tattooing could mark time and meaning. Rachel Falkenstern (2012) has explained that "the bearer of the tattoo is an integral part of the work, and yet, at the same time, he or she is not the artwork itself . . . . just as the tattoo is integrated into the person's body, so too is the bearer a part of the work" (p. 98). Looking at my tattoo collection now, I think about the self I was at the moment that I got each one. Each tattoo is like a prism's side; taken together, they reflect and refract how I understand myself as a whole.

Jackie: As a poet, I'm drawn to metaphorical understandings of space and topography. As Jacqueline Jones Royster (2003) has written, landscaping is a metaphor for the interpretive process wherein we "select, focus, and develop, bringing more clearly and vibrantly into view particular features that we frame and foreground, while simultaneously disregarding or minimizing other features and dimensions that we might have selected, developed, and showcased instead" (p. 148). Royster's metaphor lends easily to writing—we choose what to attend to in our writing and what to bypass or discard. Concurrently, I'm interested in how tattoos similarly define space and curate gaze.

My patchwork tattoos, for instance, are oriented horizontally and draw the eye up and down my arm. A crow's skull angles toward my wrist; a frond, alternating black and hatched leaves, bridges my forearm and upper arm, creating movement and elongating the visual surface of my arm. Against the high-contrast designs of my tattoos, my skin becomes white space. While it can be tempting to read negative space as empty, my poet-mind focuses on space. As Falkenstern (2012) has written, "Tattooing utilizes the body . . . the tattoo's medium is that its very existence depends on a person" (pp. 97–8). Falkenstern used this logic to pose the interdependence of body and a tattooed meaning, which I view not wholly dissimilar to the collaboration between poetry and page. Poet Jane Hirshfield (2017) has written that "most good poems hold some part of their thoughts in invisible ink" (p. 109). She spoke here primarily to hiddenness—what's left unspoken in a poem—which can be signaled by the presence of white space. Like a poem speaks in both white space and ink, so too does the tattooed body. The curation of my sleeve means that I'm able to exert agency over what or how I render hidden or visible of my body.

Tina: While my first tattoos came after long deliberations about symbolic meaning, my most recent ones could be categorized by some as "meaningless." They were the result of feeling drawn to an artwork—simply that *I liked it.* One is a dancing skeleton that, in my partner's words, is "gettin' silly with it," contrasting with my more serious tattoos. In "Bearing the Marks: How Tattoos Reveal Our Embodied Freedom," Jonathan Heaps (2012) shared the story of his first "meaningless" rather than "symbolic" tattoo and argued that the thought process behind seemingly "meaningless" tattoos also holds weight: "My willingness to get tattooed for different reasons has been expanded . . . . By making a series of decisions in this small way, I have developed my freedom" (p. 144). Similar to Heaps, each tattoo I've gotten has been a practice of asserting agency. In years of therapy, I've worked on separating my thoughts from others' voices that vie for attention during decision-making—the voices that say I should or shouldn't do something. It's hard to know what feels right, what feels like myself, when decisions are filtered through these audience apparitions. My tattoos, then, are external, embodied marks of this ongoing interior work.

As an alternative to acquiescing to imposed *shoulds*, Audre Lorde (2007) has offered erotic understanding, using "'It feels right to me'" as a "guiding light" (pp. 53-54). Using erotic understanding is subversive when "a 'woman's social existence' can be summed up as the 'object of the gaze of another'" (Baltzer-Jaray & Rodriguez, 2012, p. 43). Despite the potential for self-determination in how "a tattooed woman redefines beauty on her own terms, according to her individual taste," Kimberly Baltzer-Jaray and Tanya Rodriguez have pointed out that "universal taste" often overrides individual taste (p. 43). What I find beautiful—such as a dancing skeleton—might be dismissed as not capital-B Beautiful. While others have tried to convince me to not get tattooed through reasonings related to respectability and taste, the noticing of *what feels right* when encountering art to be tattooed is a small practice of honing Lorde's erotic understanding, defying "universal taste" and embracing self-determination (Baltzer-Jaray & Rodriguez, 2012, p. 43).

Outlining & Shading

After completing the outline—the tattoo design in its most distilled, straightforward form—an artist once explained that she shades colors in a particular order because certain colors tend to smudge and stain, making it difficult to see the intended design.

Tina: After a tattoo appointment, I ran into a former classmate from our conservative Catholic high school. She glanced at my wrapped wrist and said, "Why would you get a bumper sticker on a Ferrari?" In this comment, I didn't only hear her voice, but voices we had heard our entire upbringing: voices saying, "Your body is a temple of the holy spirit," voices condemning hemlines for not reaching our knees. They told us our bodies were valuable—in the objectifying way that Ferraris were valuable—but that they weren't ours. Margo DeMello (2000) has echoed Judith Butler in observing that the body is simultaneously a site for "the inscription of power" and for resistance and "counterinscription" (p. 173). While the primary intent of this tattoo wasn't to resist religious control of women's bodies, that took the foreground in this conversation. Baltzer-Jaray and Rodriguez (2012) have proposed that tattoos make an emotional claim on the viewer, related to "one's own experiences, cultural background, or taste. The quality of meaning you walk away with after experiencing a tattoo has as much to do with what you bring to the table" (p. 45). Sometimes, the tattooed person is seen more as text than rhetor. The audience brings logics, emotions, and histories that color how they perceive a tattoo and the tattooed person, making it difficult to understand the tattooed person in the way they wish to be understood. Krista Ratcliffe (1999) has asserted that understanding "means more than simply listening for our own self-interested intent," but "with the intent to understand" (p. 205). Flabbergasted and caught off guard after the Ferrari comment, I had quickly excused myself from the conversation. Looking back, I wonder what it could have sounded like if we had both approached it with rhetorical listening, with intent to understand the forces animating our choices and reactions.

Jackie: When I moved and began receiving tattoos away from the purview of my childhood, my mother, after we were reunited, turned over my arm and inspected my tattoos. Many of my 'harder' tattoo designs—a skull, a scythe, an archer's bow—are softened by fine lines and florals. She said, approvingly, "They're pretty—they still look feminine."

My mother's relief over my tattoos as still appearing feminine reflects a reading of tattoos as innately defeminizing. Indeed, tattoos, at least in Western societies, have historically been associated with men and masculinity (Antoszewski et al., 2010; Baltzer-Jaray & Rodriguez, 2012; Thompson, 2015). Since tattoos are, as Sheila Namir (2006) has indicated, "one way of expressing to oneself and to others many aspects of the presentation, performance, politics, principles and practices of self" (p. 221), under this historical influence, tattoos may be interpreted as expressions of masculinity or, at the very least, non-femininity. On my feminine-presenting body, tattoos can be read as incongruous with gender expectations, a sign of failure to ascribe to norms. In a more agentive sense, my tattoos, in addition to their aesthetic and/or symbolic appeal, allow me to self-make and articulate my own notions of gender and beauty. Though I don't view tattoos as gendered, I take pleasure in being read, with my tattoos, as non-prescriptive, indistinct.

Tina: One day, my mother casually came home with swollen lips and eyelids after getting permanent lipstick and eyeliner—the same process as getting tattooed. Laura Feibush (2024) has proposed that makeup is rhetorically "a form of subtle feminism not just in the way that it appears to others once finished and on display, but in how it instantiates a particular relationship to the self in its application" (p. 108). My mother's lipstick and eyeliner were rhetorical ways of conveying "presence and self-possession" to herself and others (p. 119). Yet, when I asked why she thought those procedures were okay but my tattoos weren't, she rationalized that permanent makeup enhanced beauty, while my tattoos detracted from beauty.

When we view makeup and tattoos as rhetorical acts, interrogating what makes the situations different can illuminate underlying ideologies. Karma Chávez (2018) has asserted, "If the body conforms to conventions, it is insignificant; if it does not, it becomes central to inquiry" (p. 247). What made permanent eyeliner seem closer to makeup than tattoos, and thus more conventionally beautiful and socially acceptable? In Chávez's words, "What kinds of actual bodies warrant unusual scrutiny, and whose voices and views are taken to be civil and appropriate?" (p. 248). To avoid scrutiny, the women in my family have endeavored to preserve youth, which they viewed as synonymous with beauty. In addition to makeup, they wielded dye and tweezers to combat white hairs, sunscreen and floppy hats to prevent wrinkles. Laura Hurd Clarke and Meridith Griffin (2007) have highlighted how "aged, female bodies become increasingly excluded from cultural acceptance and social currency" (p. 199). My family finds it ludicrous to spend money on something for the skin that doesn't have to do with anti-aging. Their thoughts echo the cliche worry, "What will your tattoos look like when you're 80?" Unlike many other body modifications, tattoos don't preserve youth. They age along with the bearer—my goldenrod's lines have blurred, petals merging into petals. My thistle's vibrant purple has faded to lilac.

Jackie: When I asked for my parents' permission to receive my first tattoo, they were initially hesitant in a way that surprised me. Tattoos weren't foreign to my family—my father and middle brother, who worked technically skilled, labor-intensive jobs, had tattoos in highly visible places. The placement I had in mind was the crook of my forearm, easily concealed by long or three-quarter sleeves.

My parents' hesitancy represents an awareness of how tattoos are contextualized within purviews of class and gender. As DeMello (2000) has tracked, around the 1990s, "the tattoo community was still largely working class" (p. 108). My father would have grown up exposed to tattoos' working-class beginnings, and by the time I became interested in tattoos, tattoos still would have had this association. My eldest brother and I are first-generation college students. In the years following the 2008 economic collapse, my family believed, like many others, that a college education was necessary for economic advancement and mobility for those who couldn't or didn't desire to work blue-collar jobs (Aronowitz, 2000). Still distantly associated with working-class professions, tattoos could sabotage opportunities for middle-class jobs for which college was thought to serve as a precursor.

Indeed, this fear is not unfounded. As Beverly Yuen Thomspon (2015) has explored, tattooed employees may bump up against dress code mandates to cover tattoos or promotion limitations due to tattooed appearances (pp. 91-92). Additionally, women may face heightened discrimination. Because tattoos are per-

ceived as masculine, "tattoos could be deemed acceptable for male employees but not female" (p. 94). As a feminine-presenting person breaking into white collar work, I could face a double-bind. I'm lucky that as a graduate instructor of record, I have been hired based on my scholarly and teaching potential and don't face much aesthetic oversight. I don't yet know how my tattoos will impact my navigation of the job market. Perhaps I'll follow Katharine Barlett's approach of "strategically covering up tattoos" until I'm established in my career (as cited in Thompson, 2015, p. 100). Or perhaps I'll use my tattoos as sites to exchange investments, bodily knowledge. This dilemma, at the very least, provides me with the opportunity to make a choice of how to present myself.

Tina: My parents' indignation was partly due to the religious "your body is a temple of the holy spirit" reasoning, and partly due to worries about employment. They had always worked blue-collar jobs after immigrating to the United States from Vietnam—assembly line manufacturing, housekeeping, and catering. They were adamant about capitalizing on opportunities for "better" employment and financial security. They didn't want their children to also work overtime for minimum wages under employers who viewed employees as expendable. In their minds, tattoos were a privileged waste of hard-earned money, a self-imposed hindrance to employability, and an affront to their efforts: "If you loved us, you wouldn't get any more tattoos." On my graduation day, their first reaction after I took off my gown—after becoming the first in my family to get a bachelor's degree—was, "You need to change into something that covers those tattoos before relatives arrive." Despite my having secured a teaching job, their fears lingered and overshadowed the celebration of my graduation. There was no such thing as reaching solid ground. Worries about the fluid precarity of employment and finances are hard to reconcile with the permanence of a tattoo.

Aftercare

Every artist gives slightly different tattoo aftercare instructions. Some insist on keeping it covered with SecondSkin overnight, while others advise to expose it to air after a few hours of being bandaged. Concealment and openness can both be acts of care.

Tina: Unprompted, my mother said, "Your wedding dress needs to have sleeves to hide the hideous tattoos you insisted on getting." Yet, I view the tattoos as the most beautiful parts of my body. I don't struggle to love them as I struggle to love other parts. They evoke early memories of noticing beauty: a red flower reminiscent of my bà ngoại's embroidery, a fan as a nod to my bà nội's collection. I did get wedding dress sleeves—but detachable and sheer. This choice was an assertion of embodied agency in self-presentation. I knew my mother would be angry seeing them, but that was simultaneously the point and not the point.

Most of the time when I see my parents, however, my clothing conceals my tattoos. They know the tattoos exist, so it isn't about preventing discovery. Perhaps it's a protective mechanism, shielding them from what they find appalling and shielding myself from their judgment. Perhaps I'm too cognizant of audience perception, knowing the tattoos' messages can't and won't be received in the ways I want.

Jackie: I have the opening image of Brigit Pegeen Kelly's (1995) poem "Song" tattooed on my arm: a goat's head hanging by ropes in a tree. I first encountered the poem in a graduate writing workshop and felt

afterward, as poet Jane Hirshfield (2017) has suggested readers often are, "ineradicably changed" (p. 264) having read the poem. On a literal level, my tattoo represents how the poem has altered me—both internally and externally.

The tattoo also signals to a niche few, typically poets, that we share a language and attention. At writers' conferences, writers are initially drawn to my tattoo for its aesthetic appeal. Once I mention it's after a poem, I can often see the recognition flash across their eyes. In this way, my tattoo is relational: it links me to poetic forebears, such as Kelly, and to other contemporaries who share similar investments in the written word.

Though I intend for my tattoo to be legible to a particular audience, I also have to contend with how it is perceived by folks beyond my intended audience. Some years after receiving my tattoo, in a hotel lobby, a woman approached me, saying, "She's a beauty." She clarified, "Your goat," and let her fingers skim my skin as she pointed. In that moment, I became aware of the way my tattoo was read as an invitation to begin a conversation and, quite literally, reach out to me. I thanked the woman, not exactly knowing what she read in my tattoo, it certainly wasn't the poem, but more aware of tattoos as a site of relationality, exchange.

Tina: While some viewers have responded with self-interested intent, visible tattoos have also created moments of invitational rhetoric that are "nonhierarchical, nonjudgmental, nonadversarial," creating "an understanding that engenders appreciation, value, and a sense of equality" (Foss & Griffin, 1995, p. 5). Perhaps due to my tattoos' visibility when I teach, multiple high school students have approached me to share excitement about upcoming first-tattoo appointments, showing me screenshots and sketchbook pages of inspiration. In invitational rhetoric, "resistance is not anticipated" and "change occurs in the audience or rhetor or both as a result of new understanding and insights gained in the exchange of ideas" (p. 6). In these interactions, we are both rhetors and audience members. Baltzer-Jaray and Rodriguez (2012) have asserted that "once you get a tattoo, you join that community and running across someone else who is tattooed becomes a moment of shared experience: You share in the feelings about getting tattooed . . . the appreciation of the image and the craft . . . the meanings involved for you both" (p. 46). I have come to learn the significance a student holds about lavender, about another's remixing of motifs from their parents' tattoos. They have learned about my reverence for language from the alphabet monogram on my wrist. The questions asked during invitational interactions stem from curiosity and interest. They don't demand disclosure but create space for a shared reading.

This Isn't Even Our Final Form

Paradoxically, though tattoos are permanent artifacts, their meanings are not static. Our autoethnographic experiences suggest to us that, as the styles, sizes, and number of our tattoos have expanded, so have their meanings. The placement of a tattoo next to an existing one sometimes changes, complicates, or complements the meanings of both. Our original intentions for a tattoo sometimes take a backseat to interpretations based on new life circumstances, changes in audience, or interplays between our identities and viewers' identities.

Understanding tattoos as non-static, we extend conversations of tattoos as rhetorical artifacts to pose tattooing as an ongoing feminist practice of self- and meaning-making. Tattoos are always in a state of becoming—not only in that they may be continuously worked on, extended into a more cohesive piece, or integrated into a patchwork, but also that their meaning is always becoming (Smith, 2012). Baltzer-Jaray and Rodriguez (2012) have described tattoos' meanings as "horizontal . . . each image had some meaning before, that it has a meaning now, and that a new meaning will evolve" (p. 47). As Judith Butler (1988) established, gender is a doing/performance that takes place across time and repetitions. Further, Stacey Waite (2017) has extended queer notions of becoming to highlight that text and readers are always in the process of becoming. Waite has engaged with the contradiction in which "one is at once both a constructed subject and an agent of one's own construction . . . . at once constructing a text and being constructed by that text . . . . at once constructing a self and being constructed by whatever self they had constructed before" (p. 113). A tattooed person is at once constructing a text—their body—with tattoos and becoming, as a hermeneutic identity, constructed by their tattoos. Further, audiences, in their reading of tattoos, also construct meaning of tattoos and the tattooed body while becoming different in the process of their reading. In this way, tattooing is an embodied avenue for a feminist practice of cultivating identity, knowledge, and relationality.

Biographies

Tina Le is a PhD student in Composition and Rhetoric at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, where she teaches writing and teacher education courses. Bridging experiences teaching in high school, college, and community contexts, her research explores narrative identity, teacher development, well-being, and collaborative community-building.

Jackie Chicalese is a PhD student in Composition and Rhetoric at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, where she studies writing pedagogies and the intersections between creative writing and composition studies. Her scholarly work has appeared in *Writers: Craft and Context*, and her poetry has appeared or is forthcoming in the *New England Review, Gulf Coast, the Florida Review*, and elsewhere.

References

Antoszewski, Bogusław, Aneta Sitek, Marta Fijałkowska, Anna Kasielska, & Julia Kruk-Jeromin (2010). Tattooing and body piercing—what motivates you to do it? *International Journal of Social Psychiatry, 56*(5), 471–79.

Aronowitz, Stanley (2000). *The knowledge factory: Dismantling the corporate university and creating true higher learning.* Beacon Press.

Baltzer, Jaray, Kimberly, & Tanya Rodriguez (2012). Fleshy canvas: The aesthetics of tattoos from feminist and hermeneutical perspectives. In Robert Arp (Ed.), *Tattoos – philosophy for everyone* (pp. 38–50). Wiley.

Bertram, Vicki (1998). Theorising the personal: Using autobiography in academic writing. In Stevi Jackson & Jackie Jones (Eds.), *Contemporary feminist theories* (pp. 232–46). Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Butler, Judith (1988). Performative acts and gender constitution: An essay in phenomenology and feminist theory. *Theatre Journal*, *40*(4), 519–31.

Chávez, Karma R. (2018). The body: An abstract and actual rhetorical concept. *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*, *48*(3), 242–50..

DeMello, Margo (2000). *Bodies of inscription: A cultural history of the modern tattoo community*. Duke University Press.

Diptee, Jennifer (2011). Tattoos: The power of ink. *Multiliteracies: Beyond text and the written word*. (pp. 41–4). Information Age Publishing.

Ellis, Carolyn, & Art Bochner (2000). Autoethnography, personal narrative, reflexivity: Researcher as subject. In Norman K. Denzin & Yvonna S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed., pp. 733–68). Sage Publications.

Falkenstern, Rachel C. (2012). Illusions of permanence: Tattoos and the temporary self. In Robert Arp (Ed.), *Tattoos – philosophy for everyone* (pp. 96–108). Wiley.

Feibush, Laura (2024). Get ready with me: The subtle, rhetorical feminisms of making up. *Peitho: Journal of the Coalition of Feminist Scholars in the History of Rhetoric, 26*(4), 107–23.

Foss, Sonja K., & Cindy L. Griffin (1995). Beyond persuasion: A proposal for an invitational rhetoric. *Communication Monographs, 62*(1), 2–18.

Heaps, Jonathan (2012). Bearing the marks: How tattoos reveal our embodied freedom. In Robert Arp (Ed.), *Tattoos – philosophy for everyone* (pp. 135–47). Wiley.

Hirshfield, Jane (2017). *Ten windows: How great poems transform the world.* Knopf.

Hurd Clarke, Laura, & Meridith Griffin (2007). The body natural and the body unnatural: Beauty work and aging. *Journal of Aging Studies, 21*(3), 187–201.

Kang, Nancy (2012). Painted fetters: Tattooing as feminist liberation. In Robert Arp (Ed.), *Tattoos – philosophy for everyone* (pp. 65–80). Wiley.

Kelly, Brigit Pegeen (1995). Song. *Song.* BOA Editions.

Lee, Wendy Lynne (2012). Never merely "there": Tattooing as a practice of writing and a telling of stories. In Robert Arp (Ed.), *Tattoos – philosophy for everyone* (pp. 151–64). Wiley.

Lorde, Audre. (2007). Uses of the erotic: The erotic as power. *Sister outsider: Essays and speeches*. (pp.

52–8). Crossing Press.

Namir, Sheila (2006). Embodiments and disembodiments: The relation of body modifications to two psychoanalytic treatments. *Psychoanalysis, Culture & Society, 11*(2), 217–23.

Ratcliffe, Krista (1999). Rhetorical listening: A trope for interpretive invention and a "code of cross-cultural conduct." *College Composition and Communication, 51*(2), 195–224.

Royster, Jacqueline Jones (2003). Disciplinary landscaping, or contemporary challenges in the history of rhetoric. *Philosophy and Rhetoric, 36*(2), 148–67.

Smith, Clancy (2012). My tattoo may be permanent, but my memory of it isn't. In Robert Arp (Ed.), *Tattoos – philosophy for everyone* (pp. 109–20). Wiley.

Thompson, Beverly Yuen (2015). *Covered in ink: Tattoos, women and the politics of the body*. NYU Press.

Valsiner, Jaan (2020). *Sensuality in human living.* Springer International Publishing.

Waite, Stacey (2017). *Teaching queer: Radical possibilities for writing and knowing*. University of Pittsburgh Press.